WORKING PAPER

A Future for the Young

Options for helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalization

CHERYL BENARD

RAND NATIONAL SECURITY RESEARCH DIVISION

A Future for the Young

Options for Helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalization

Sponsored by RAND's Initiative on Middle Eastern Youth
Working Paper component of prior RAND Conference
September 22-23, 2005

Preface

In the battle of ideas that has come to characterize the struggle against Jihadist terrorism, a sometimes-neglected dimension is the personal motivations of those drawn into the movement. RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and the Initiative for Middle East Youth (IMEY) sponsored a workshop in late September of 2005 to address the issue of why young people enter into Jihadist groups and what might be done to prevent it or disengage members of such groups once they have joined.

At the initiative of Dr. Cheryl Benard, Director of IMEY, specialists from the United States, Europe, Afghanistan and Iraq ere invited to attend and present and discuss their findings. RAND expresses its appreciation for their participation in what was a stimulating and thought-provoking meeting. These are the proceedings of that workshop.

The RAND Center for Middle East Public Policy is part of International Programs at the RAND Corporation, which aims to improve public policy by providing decision makers and the public with rigorous, objective research on critical policy issues affecting the Middle East.

For more information on the RAND Middle East Public Policy, contact the Director, David Aaron. He can be reached by e-mail at David_Aaron@rand.org; by phone at 310-393-0411, extension 7782; or by mail at RAND, 1776 Main Street, Santa Monica, California 90407-2138. More information the Initiative on Middle Eastern Youth please see www.rand.org/imey. Also you may contact Director Cheryl Benard at CBENARD@rand.org or at 703-413-1100, extension 5791, or her Research Assistant, Kristen A. Cordell at KCordell@RAND.org, or 703-413-1100 extension 5331.

Positive Options to Deter Youth Radicalism

September 22-23, 2005

This working conference explored the hypothesis that youth recruitment into jihadist extremist groups can <u>in part</u> be viewed as a subset of broader youth vulnerability to fringe movements, such as left wing terrorism, the neo-Nazi movement, street gangs and cults.

It surveyed some of the things we have learned about these other phenomena and considered their applicability to the case of jihadist recruitment.

Specifically, it considered:

❑ What motivates young people to join radical fringe movements? Which kinds of young people seem especially vulnerable? What personal needs and hopes are addressed by such groups?

❑ Are there phases of membership during which attachment is stronger/weaker? What do we know about the composition and psychology of radical cells and groups?

❑ Under what circumstances does an individual's loyalty to the extremist group falter? How can this process be encouraged and facilitated? What kinds of support do individuals need, once they decide to withdraw and return to mainstream society?

❑ What competitive alternatives might prevent young people from being drawn into these movements in the first place?

❑ In the minds of young people, what kinds of things diminish the appeal and glamour of radical engagement? In examining radical propaganda vehicles and recruitment messages, what inconsistencies do we find that can be expanded and exploited?

❑ In troubled social and political circumstances, what resources within families and communities can be mobilized to prevent the radicalization and support the healthy development/reintegration of its young people?

The presentations and the discussion focused on three contemporary cases: Diaspora radicalization, jihadist recruitment in the Islamic world, and the Iraqi insurgency. It drew on previous and additional cases, including inner city street gangs, the Baader Meinhof gang, the IRA and others.

The conference concluded with two workshops, discussing:

- *Future research directions: multidisciplinary issues, collaborative tools*
- *Policy implications: conclusions, suggested programs*

The presentations posted here will be made available shortly in a forthcoming print publication.

Presenters and topics:

Tore Bjørgo, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and Norwegian Police University College. <u>Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Extremist Groups: The Case of Racist Sub-Cultures.</u>

Petter Nesser, Norwegian Defense Institute. <u>Profiles of Jihadist Terrorists in Europe.</u>

Sharon Curcio, Military Intelligence Technician. <u>The Dark Side of Jihad: How Young Men Detained at Guantanamo Assess their Experiences.</u>

John Horgan, University of St. Andrews, Scotland. <u>Psychological Factors Related to Disengaging from Terrorism: Some Preliminary Assumptions and Assertions.</u>

Paul Dercon, AIVD. <u>Dawa to Jihad: New Developments in Dutch Policy.</u>

Cheryl Benard, RAND. <u>Cybermullahs and the Jihad – Radical Websites Fostering Estrangement and Hostility among Diaspora Muslims</u>.

Ed O'Connell, RAND, and **Cheryl Benard,** RAND. <u>The Myth of Martyrdom: Young People and the Insurgency in Iraq</u>.

Jonathan Powers, War Kids Relief Project, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. **Mounzer Fatfat,** Ministry of the Interior, Iraq. <u>Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation.</u>

Michael Taarnby, Ministry of Justice, Denmark. <u>Yemen's Committee for Dialogue: the Relativity of a Counter Terrorism Success.</u>

Aida B. Balsano, Tufts University, Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development. <u>The Role of Developmental Assets and Youth Engagement in Promoting Positive Development Among Youth.</u>

Susie Kay, Hoop Dreams. <u>Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund.</u>

Michael D. Wiatrowski, National Center for Education Statistics. <u>Discussion leader: Working Groups 1 and 2.</u>

1. REDUCING RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTING DISENGAGEMENT FROM EXTREMIST GROUPS:
THE CASE OF RACIST SUB-CULTURES -- DR. TORE BJØRGO[1]

Neo-Nazi and other right-wing extremist groups are behind many instances of xenophobic violence, racist harassment, and extremist propaganda. It is therefore important to reduce the size of the neo-Nazi and racist youth scene as much as possible. This article will explain how this can be achieved by addressing processes of recruitment and disengagement.

The size of the radical movement matters. With close to 3,000 participants, the Nazi scene in Sweden has reached a critical mass, and has become a social movement. Their activist scene also has a large number of sympathizers – several thousands – who may serve as a pool of recruits. These sympathizers also constitute a big and profitable 'home market' for White Power music, magazines, and other 'nationalist' products. There is a large pool of talent among the participants of the scene – including musicians, artists, writers, computer specialists, academics, university students, and others with a wide range of skills. This provides opportunities for specialization among a variety of interests and tasks within the movement. Through the last decade, an elaborate organizational, economical and media infrastructure has been built up by the Swedish neo-Nazis. To some young people, it is socially attractive to join the scene. Many stay on in the movement for many years, providing experience and stability. Although they mainly recruit among teenagers, the average age in the neo-Nazi scene is relatively high. It can no longer be described mainly as a youth scene. Many activists are in their 20s and 30s, and have been involved for ten years or more. Due to its size and numbers, the movement (or local group) is not as vulnerable if leaders are put in prison – there are several

_____

alternative leaders who could take over. The movement is also sufficiently strong and intimidating to provide some protection against outside enemies.

In Norway, the situation is significantly different. There are 100–200 active participants concentrated in five to ten locations. Members are young and have relatively short careers in the movement – only a few continue to be active after they turn 20. Thus, the average age is lower than in Sweden. Few have more than basic education, and the pool of talent and skills is very limited. As a result, organization is weak, magazines and music productions have a low quality, and the few local groups that exist are small. There is a very limited infrastructure in terms of music bands, magazines and other media enterprises. To outsiders, the Nazi scene looks like a group of losers, and it is not very attractive to join. The local groups are thus also vulnerable to arrests or defection of leaders and core members – there are few replacements available to take over from those who leave. As a result, the Nazi scene in Norway lacks the critical mass it needs to flourish in the ways it does in countries like Sweden and Germany. However, even if the scene has a limited size at the national level, some of the local groups have a sufficient size and strength to have 'street credibility' – they are able to intimidate people and dominate the streets in their community, or at least a limited territory. In addition, such local groups may reinforce their strength by being connected with other groups nationally or internationally.

So size matters at all levels. And age matters as well. How can we then influence the size and career patterns of the neo-Nazi and racist youth scene?

One approach is to focus on the population balance of the group in a demographic sense. The relevant parameters here are the number of people joining the scene, the number of people leaving the scene, and the length of time they remain in the movement.

Changing the population balance of extremist groups

Entry

Exit

Growing group

Shrinking group
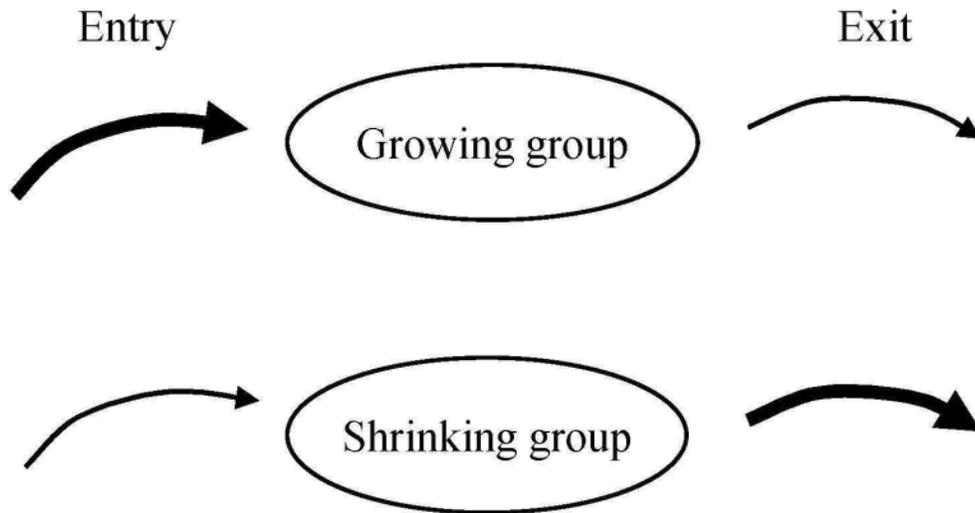
Figure 1: Population balance

Put simply, if there are more people joining the group than those who leave, the group is growing, as illustrated in Figure 1. And conversely, if there are more people who quit than the number of new recruits, the group is in decline and may disappear unless they are able to turn the trend. However, if the overall Nazi scene is large, it is possible to desert a "sinking" group and join a more successful one.

New extreme groups emerge constantly. However, most of them fall apart after a few months or years – only in rare cases are they able to survive for a decade or more. These few 'successful' groups are more likely to keep most of their members over an extended time, and be able to replenish their ranks with new recruits. Other groups suffer from steady defection and turnover in membership without being able to

recruit a sufficient number of newcomers to keep the group strong enough to survive.

Most of those who have joined the racist scene do disengage sooner or later. The goal therefore is to get them to quit *sooner* rather than later – before they hurt others; before they have internalized a racist world-view and a violent pattern of behavior; and before they have ruined their own future by getting a criminal record and a Nazi stigma. The longer they stay the more difficult it is to get out. And the more long-term and experienced activists the movement can produce, the stronger the Nazi scene will become. Experience shows that, it is easier to influence a teen-ager to quit than to get an adult veteran of the movement to do so.

So how can we influence the processes of recruitment to and disengagement from extremist groups? At a minimum, we need to have some answers to the following questions:

- Why do young people join racist groups? What are their motives and circumstances for joining?
- What happens to them once they have become part of the scene?
- Why do most of them eventually disengage? What are the circumstances and motivations?
- And what factors and obstacles prevent the rest of them from doing so?

Elsewhere, I have explored these processes in greater detail.[2] In the following, I will focus on some of the main issues underlying these questions.

_____

[2] The following is based on empirical research that is presented in more detail in Bjørgo, Tore, *Racist and Right-Wing Violence in Scandinavia: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses*, Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1997. Full bibliographical references are provided in that study but are minimized here for reasons of space and readability. The generalizations below are based on interviews with more than 70 former and present participants in the far-right scenes in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

ENTRY

Extremist groups can fulfill or promise to fulfill certain fundamental social and psychological needs held by young people. These groups appeal to different types of persons who may join for very different reasons or combinations of reasons. Only a minority of recruits join the right-wing extremist scene because they agree with its *ideology and politics*. In most cases, young people do not join racist groups because they are racists, but they gradually adopt racist views because they have become part of a racist group.

New recruits are usually less concerned about politics or ideological content, but they frequently have vague feelings of hostility against foreigners. They may respond to what they experience as *provocative and outrageous behavior by immigrants*, such as having been robbed, threatened or beaten up. Or they may feel that they get less access to social services and other scarce goods than those offered to immigrants and asylum-seekers. Some consider immigrants and asylum-seekers as competitors for scarce economic resources, such as jobs, housing and social services. Sometimes immigrants serve as convenient scapegoats for their own misery.

Young people frequently join militant racist groups (or other gangs) to get *protection* against various enemies or perceived threats – whether that be school bullies or immigrant youth gangs. Racist youth groups sometimes actively seek out individuals who are in need of protection and offer them security in the group.[3]

Some of those joining the racist scene are individuals who have no friends and are primarily looking for *friendship, community, and acceptance*. Having failed to be accepted into other groups, they enter

_____

[3] The protection factor came out strongly in our new study: Bjørgo, Tore, Yngve Carlsson, and Thomas Haaland, *Generalisert hat – polariserte fellesskap: Om konflikter mellom ungdomsgrupper i en norsk by (Generalized hatred – polarized communities: On conflicts between youth groups in a Norwegian city)*, Oslo: NIBRs pluss-serie, 2001.

the first door open to them. They often find that the racist group is quite forthcoming and accepting, and in some respects more tolerant than many mainstream youth groups are. However, this holds true only for limited acceptance at the margins. To be accepted into the inner circle is much more difficult. Some individuals of this type may go to great lengths to win that acceptance. Being highly susceptible to group pressure, they may even carry out acts of violence and other crimes in order to be accepted as a full member or to elevate their status within the group.

The search for status and identity is a main factor when youths join racist groups and youth gangs in general. Individuals who have failed to establish a positive identity and status in relation to school, work, sports or other social activities and settings sometimes try to win respect by joining groups with a dangerous and intimidating image. When they don the 'uniform' of the local skinhead group or a neo-Nazi movement, they find that other kids who in the past used to bully them now yield to them. Although often mistaking fear for respect, by joining a racist group they perceive a clear difference in the way others relate to them.

In interviews, former and present members of racist youth groups have also mentioned several additional reasons that played a role when they joined the scene. To youths coming from a troubled family background, the extremist group provided a substitute family, and older leaders also frequently served as father figures. Some young people described themselves as 'tasters' or 'drifters' who join and leave a series of movements, organizations, and subcultures out of curiosity more than real commitment. Several described themselves as thrill seekers who wanted to test their own limits. To some, there was an element of youth rebellion and a wish to provoke their parents and surroundings – and becoming a neo-Nazi was highly effective in this respect. The violent and militaristic aspects of these groups were also attractive to some young men.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND BRIDGE-BURNING

Once a young person has established contact with a radical nationalist, racist or neo-Nazi group, what happens to him or her? For some of the newcomers, very little. They hang around for a while, find that it was not quite what they expected, and leave to search for something better or more exciting elsewhere. The shorter the time they have been inside, and the less they have been involved, the easier it is to get out.

Others have very different experiences, and undergo two parallel and mutually reinforcing processes: inclusion and socialization into a new reclusive and stigmatized community, and a cutting of ties to the 'normal' community outside. As these dual processes progress, it becomes increasingly difficult – sometimes almost impossible – to leave the group.

Newcomers in the group have described how they have gone through a process of socialization. They learn from the others how to behave in order to find their place in the 'family'. One important part of this is the installation of a sense of security consciousness. New members are instructed on which things to stay quiet about, what they can talk about on the phone or send by mail, and where they can safely go and not go in town. There is an element of realism behind these concerns. However, this security consciousness also creates a sense of paranoia among members, a pervasive feeling of belonging to a small group that is surrounded by enemies. This may serve to strengthen group cohesion and loyalty, and add to the mystique and excitement of belonging to a 'dangerous' and more or less clandestine group. At the same time, however, the suspicion that enemies may have infiltrated the group reinforces an atmosphere of distrust and paranoia. New members are not trusted, and even long-term members may occasionally be suspected of being traitors. The fear of being considered untrustworthy or even accused of being an infiltrator is a powerful factor promoting conformity and submission to group values among newcomers.

Sooner or later, most new members will experience violent confrontations with "enemies" such as anti-racists, "foreigners" or the police. Such confrontations are significant events to those who participate, whether the battle ends by victory, defeat or arrest. Regardless of the outcome, these events tend to give the participants the feeling that they share a common fate. Victories are sources of shared pride, defeats give rise to hatred and bitterness against the common enemy. Although violence and harassment from militant anti-racists may serve to raise the costs of joining a racist group, and may sometimes scare recruits into pulling out, the effect is often the opposite. They are pushed further into the scene and become more hateful and violent than they were before as a result of the violence they have been exposed to. These violent confrontations tend to change profoundly how they relate to violence – both in terms of the legitimacy of using violence, and by making them more familiar with the practice of it.

Becoming socialized into a new community, with a world-view and value system completely at odds with mainstream society, and building bonds of loyalty to the new 'family', represent one fundamental process individuals go through when they join a racist group. An equally important process takes place more or less simultaneously: the severing of ties to 'normal' society, as well as to family and friends. Society for its part stigmatizes the individuals as despicable Nazis and racists. This experience is described by one 17 year old Norwegian activist; "As soon as it was known to others that I was with the nationalist group, I was branded. It did not take long before everyone knew that I had become a 'neo-Nazi'. Old friends suddenly shied away from me."

The practice of using a specific dress code, style, symbols or tattoos all identifying the person as a member of the racist or Nazi scene obviously reinforces this stigmatization process. The purpose of using such uniforms and symbols is not only to express loyalty in relation to the group, but also to provoke reactions from the social

surroundings. When newcomers are encouraged to dress up in "full gear" and wear it in public, one purpose is to test their loyalty, dedication and courage by exposing them to negative sanctions from the community. Letting them be branded as Nazis, or even beaten up by militant anti-racists, sorts out the "hard" from the "soft", pulls those who pass the test further into the group, and cuts off their normal social relations and routes of retreat back into mainstream society. Bridges are burnt behind them.

REASONS FOR CONSIDERING LEAVING THE GROUP

At some stage, most activists consider leaving the group and starting to live a "normal" life. What kinds of experiences and factors contribute to this decision? Those who quit the group are usually affected by a combination of several factors. The more reason they perceive, the stronger is the urge to quit.

It is useful to make a distinction between 'push' and 'pull' factors. 'Push' relates to negative social forces and circumstances which make it unattractive and unpleasant to remain in a particular social environment, whereas 'pull' refers to factors attracting the person to a more rewarding alternative.

Push factors:
Negative social sanctions may make some of those who join racist groups reconsider their affiliation. These may range from parental disapproval and social isolation to criminal prosecution by the police, and harassment or violence by militant anti-racists. Such sanctions are normally more effective vis-a-vis new recruits who have not yet established strong ties of loyalty and have not yet severed their ties to the 'normal' community. However, some of these negative sanctions, such as branding them 'racists' and 'Nazis', may have the unintended effect of pushing new recruits further into the stigmatized group, thereby diminishing their exit options and strengthening their loyalty

to the group. This is especially the case when negative sanctions are not combined with positive incentives to choose an acceptable alternative path.

Some activists *lose faith in the ideology and politics of the group or movement*. They experience self-doubt where they come to feel that what they have believed in and fought for is wrong, morally or politically. However, it is probably more common that beliefs change *after* leaving the group, and as a consequence of the dissociation, while it is less common that they change before, and that this is a cause for leaving the group.

A more common feeling among some activists, however, is that '*things are going too far*', especially in terms of violence. They may feel that there are too many violence-prone and extremist people joining the group, doing wild things they themselves cannot accept or do not want to be associated with. Some also fear that the violent conflict with militant anti-racists is escalating and getting out of hand, and that people on both sides may get killed.

Some grow *disillusioned with the inner workings and activities of the group*. Senseless fighting and drinking is one frequently mentioned source of disillusionment. The lack of real loyalty among the members of the group is another. Even those they held to be close friends may stab them in the back, betray or cheat. Paranoia within the group also makes people accuse one another of being infiltrators or potential traitors. Some new members are dismayed by the ways in which veteran activists try to manipulate and control the younger ones, involving them in illegal activities, and trying to cut off their other options.

Even long-term activists are vulnerable to the risks of *losing confidence, status and position in the group*. Although most youth groups do not have formal leadership hierarchies, they are nevertheless highly status-oriented. This makes members highly vulnerable to various accusations and rumors. We have already noted the pervasive paranoia and

fear of infiltrators expose people to accusations of being traitors or
informers. In such situations, when a person's standing and reputation
in the group has declined, the option of quitting will seem more
attractive than at a time when he or she is respected and well regarded
by the others.

A common feeling among many 'front-line' activists is that after a
while they *become exhausted and can no longer take the pressure*. Life in
a skinhead gang or a neo-Nazi group can be quite exciting at times,
involving an almost constant feeling of high tension and uncertainty.
These adrenaline highs make 'normal' life outside seem almost unbearably
dull. However, few people can continue to live this kind of life year
after year without becoming emotionally and physically burnt-out. The
negative aspects of being stigmatized, socially isolated, constantly
exposed to violent attacks by opponents, and consumed by intense hatred
towards various enemies also tend to take their toll as time goes by.

Pull factors:
The negative aspects of life as an activist in a stigmatized,
extremist group often create *a longing for the freedoms of a 'normal'
life*. The notion of being able to live a relaxed life, going about one's
own affairs without always having to be on guard against enemies and
traitors, without fear of violence, without being stigmatized and
isolated, and without all the restrictions of a more or less underground
existence can become increasingly attractive.

At some point, activists in militant nationalist or racist youth
groups feel that they are *getting too old for what they are doing*. They
no longer have the same need for excitement; they may have less energy,
and want to lead a more settled and a calmer life.

Young activists are acutely aware that being publicly known as
neo-Nazis, racists or radical nationalists may jeopardize their *career
prospects and personal futures*. Few European countries practice

Berufsverbot[4] against political extremists in a formal or legal sense (Germany is a notable exception), but it is nevertheless a fact of life that certain types of political extremists are unlikely to be hired for certain jobs, or may be fired once their affiliation becomes known. Thus, for a youth who has ambitions of obtaining a higher education and an interesting and relevant job, it is not a good idea to continue as a racist or neo-Nazi activist.

One of the strongest motives for leaving a militant racist or nationalist youth group is the wish *to establish a family with new responsibilities for spouse and children.* Getting a girlfriend (or boyfriend) outside the group is a frequent cause of quitting. Such situations obviously involve establishing new bonds of loyalty and setting new and different priorities. This may lead to a fundamental conflict of loyalty that can only be resolved by leaving one or the other - the extremist group, or the girl (/boy) friend or family.

FACTORS INHIBITING DISENGAGEMENT

Although activists may develop multiple strong reasons for leaving the group, they may still face strong factors sufficient to discourage them from taking such a step. These relate to the processes of bridge-burning and community-building that they went through when they initially became part of the group.

The group may have several *positive characteristics* that may be considered too valuable to leave behind. High investments have been made by the individual in terms of friendship and social support. The racist group provides community, a substitute 'family', identity, security against external threats and enemies, excitement and adventure. Even if a person has completely lost faith in the group's ideology and politics,

_____

[4] German term for legal prohibition against getting certain jobs.

ties of friendship and loyalty may in some cases constitute a sufficient reason for staying with the group.

Potential defectors may also fear *negative sanctions from the group* – sometimes with good reason. How tough they are on defectors varies from group to group. Some groups let people go without a significant penalty. Other groups consider quitters to be traitors who must be punished or threatened back into the fold. In general, new recruits, who have only on the periphery of the scene and have not been initiated into any of the group's secrets, may leave without any consequences. It is quite different for long-time activists who have been part of the core group. Such persons know things about the group and their fellow members that may cause serious problems if this information gets out. Leading activists who defect quite commonly receive death threats, and some have been targets of severe violence.

Loss of protection against former enemies: A person who quits a racist or neo-Nazi group that has been involved in an ongoing violent struggle with militant anti-racists or violent immigrant youth gangs, may find that former enemies do not necessarily believe that the disengagement is genuine. Also they may not care. Militant opponents sometimes continue to assault and harass a person after he or she has quit the racist group. Worse, the act of leaving the racist group may mean losing the relative protection they enjoyed by being part of a violent gang or organization. The fear of finding themselves in such a precarious situation may serve to dissuade potential defectors from quitting, while the actual experience of such exposure may prompt others to return to the fold.

Nowhere to go: One of the main reasons why potential leave-takers may end up in precarious situations is that former social relations with friends and family were broken or impaired when they joined the racist group. If the person in question tries to withdraw from the group without making a sharp and (in the eyes of the racist group) provocative breach, his or her supposed change of heart will often be met with

suspicion by former associates. Without moral support and protection, the person risks ending up in a social vacuum. Breaking away from an intense social group, many ex-members of neo-Nazi groups describe their new life as being characterized by loneliness and social isolation. They may also fear that their career prospects have been ruined beyond compare.

EXIT OPTIONS

Thus, members of racist groups who for various reasons consider quitting will often decide to stay because they find the alternatives even less attractive. The following overview will discuss various strategies former activists have used or may use to detach from racist groups, and will outline and evaluate the pros and cons of the main options open to persons considering to leave.

The most obvious and spectacular strategy is to make a straight and public break with the racist movement, renouncing the attitudes and the ideologies it represents. This strategy may involve a full confrontation with the group from which the person is disaffiliating, as well as with former friends, and a total upheaval of values and life-style. Such a dramatic breach will therefore in most cases entail psychological strains as well as serious security risks. This high-profile form of disengagement is the exit strategy normally associated with a small number of leading activists. Such individuals have fewer alternative exit options available than the more anonymous activists, who can pull out with less fuss and less risk of being hampered by their extremist past. To well-known activists, a clean and public breach with their past offers them an opportunity to – almost literally – begin a new life.

A number of activists break more or less publicly with the racist groups they belonged to by citing family obligations or other non-political reasons, and without making a complete break with the ideology

and politics of the movement as such. However, the outcome of this more cautious exit strategy is often that the persons in question end up in a highly precarious situation: They may be exposed to harassment and social ostracism from both their former group and from former enemies, but without gaining the support and protection of a new social network. Such 'half-hearted defectors' are often regarded with suspicion, by mainstream society, and are suspected of still harboring racist views. Their attempts to establish new social networks and associations may be perceived as 'Nazi infiltration'. Their past tends to haunt them, hampering both their social and professional prospects – especially if their racist activism was publicly known. Such defectors therefore run the risk of ending up in social isolation and loneliness. After a while, many of them long for their old group, with its sense of community and comradeship. However, this 'half-way' form of dissociation is often only a stage in a process that might eventually end in a full breach. As we have noted earlier attitudes tend to change after a change of group affiliation, rather than vice versa. It may take time to readjust to a new reality. One should therefore not expect defectors from Nazi groups to hold politically correct views the day after their disengagement.

Group members who are *not* publicly known as racist activists have good prospects of a successful reintegration into mainstream society by taking a low-key approach, *withdrawing gradually without ever making an open or public break*. During a lengthy period they gradually make themselves marginal to the group, taking less and less part in political or social activities. Drifting away, they lose interest in the group and make the group lose interest in them. This form of quiet defection is unlikely to provoke reprisals from the movement. In mainstream society, few will know that they were ever part of a racist movement, and, ideally, those who do know will keep it to themselves. Their problem, however, is 'the racist skeleton in the closet'. Throughout the rest of their lives, there is always a risk that the past may return to haunt them. An exit strategy based on withdrawal from the extremist group without ever making a clean and public break may be quite expedient in

the short run, causing few or no negative sanctions. The long-term outcome may be less beneficial.

FROM UNDERSTANDING TO INTERVENTION

I have described some of the factors and processes that lead young people into racist groups, and have discussed what motivates many of them to eventually disengage, and what prevents them from doing so. Most of these factors can be influenced through deliberate interventions.

I have focused on youths because most of the recruitment takes place among young people. They are easier to influence – for better as well as for worse. We know that young people join these racist groups because the groups fulfill certain basic social and psychological needs. By intervening early with youths that are flirting with the racist scene, and offering alternative means to solve their needs, it is possible to prevent them from becoming fully part of the group and adopting its racist values and a violent mode of behavior. Thereby we can reduce recruitment.

It is also possible to increase the individual's motivations to quit the group. The strongest motivations will obviously come as the result of a combination of push and pull factors. Push alone, or pull alone, will not work. If interventions make it costly and unpleasant to remain in the racist group, then, at the same time, more attractive alternatives must be made available, if we want members of such groups to seriously consider disengaging.

However, there are obstacles to disengagement. Many of those breaking with extremist groups do fear reprisals from former friends and former enemies. Some of these people have an obvious need for protection, or at least to find ways to handle their fear. And they also need new social networks and futures.

These considerations, led to the establishment of the so-called "Exit Project".

THE EXIT PROJECT

During the early and mid-1990s, several local communities in Norway were facing serious problems with xenophobic violence and racist youth groups. After a particularly nasty series of incidents in the town Brumunddal, central and local authorities eventually took the problem seriously and made heavy investments in research and development on how to handle this and similar situations. The three-year "Action Plan Brumunddal", based on and followed up by substantial research,[5] had a very positive outcome. The action plan included broad mobilization of public agencies as well as civil society. Some of the interventions focused on reintegrating a group of young marginalized men who had directed their frustrations and anger against immigrants. Xenophobic violence stopped, and the local racist youth scene dissolved.

During this period, local and central authorities in Norway were much more on the offensive compared to the typical response a few years earlier, when denial, belittling or panic were the usual responses to problems of xenophobic violence and racist youth groups. Experiences and knowledge gained from various local projects were also documented and accumulated systematically for later use.[6]

---

[5] In particular Eidheim, Frøydis, *Hva har skjedd i Brumunddal* (*What happened in Brumunddal?*), Oslo: NIBR rapport 1993:20, 1993; and Carlsson, Yngve, *Aksjonsplan Brumunddal – ga den resultater?* (*Action Plan Brumunddal – Did It Produce Results?)* Oslo: NIBR-rapport 1995:13, 1995. Parallel to the Brumunddal studies, there were also two ongoing doctoral projects focusing on other racist youth scenes by Katrine Fangen and Tore Bjørgo, respectively.

[6] Cf. Carlsson, Y., *Industribygda og rasismen (An Industrial Village and Racism)*, Oslo: NIBR-rapport 1997:17, 1997; Carlsson, Y. & H.v.d. Lippe, *Velstandsbydelen og rasismen (An Affluent Suburb and Racism*). Oslo: NIBR-rapport 1999:9, 1999; Bjørgo, Tore & Yngve Carlsson, *Vold, rasisme og ungdomsgjenger: Forebygging og bekjempelse (Violence, Racism and Youth Gangs: Prevention and Intervention)*, Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1999.

One lesson from Action Plan Brumunddal was that interventions can have a significantly stronger impact if public agencies collaborate and coordinate their efforts among themselves as well as with community organizations and NGOs. Another lesson was that in order to get rid of local racist youth groups, it is necessary to find ways to reintegrate the young marginalized participants back into society.

Local actors also found it highly useful to involve external experts as advisors to a community in crisis. As a consequence of the latter lesson, the government decided to establish a permanent pool of experts, "*The Interdisciplinary Advisory Service for Local Action against Racism and Xenophobia*", coordinated by the Directorate of Immigration (UDI). At present, this advisory service consists of 14 researchers and practitioners, including police officers, social workers, pedagogues, conflict mediators, and others, engaged to do counseling jobs on a free-lance basis. Together, they provide complementary forms of expertise to municipalities and local agencies that have to deal with problems they do not locally have experience with how to handle, such as racist violence or local neo-Nazi groups.[7]

Another important useful function of the advisory service has been to accumulate experiences from many affected. Rather than having to 'reinvent the wheel' every time a new local community has a problem with xenophobic violence or racist youth groups, the advisory group is accumulated and systematized knowledge can be consulted for methods and practical experiences that might be of relevance.

Bringing together a group of experts from different professional backgrounds also became an incubator for new ideas and methods. Thus, several members of the advisory service started to work closely together to develop more effective methods to reduce and dismantle racist groups. One of the outcomes of this process was "Exit". The Exit project was

_____

[7] *Mobile Beratungsteams* provide similar services in Eastern Germany.

developed in Norway during the period 1995 to 1997, when it was formally established as a project.

The emergence and proliferation of the Exit approach

During 1995 and 1996, Norwegian police made a series of mass arrests and other interventions in the racist youth scene. The participants turned out to be young, sometimes 13 years of age or below. Many parents were shocked to learn what their children had become involved with, and were desperate to get their children out of the racist scene. In close co-operation with a preventive police unit in a part of Oslo (Manglerud), some parents established parental network groups to support each other and to pool their efforts. These parental groups turned out to be useful. Within a few months, almost all the children of these parents had withdrawn from the racist scene.

Two preventive police officers and this author then started to develop a more general project for parental network groups and other methods to get young people out of racist groups. The project was formally established in mid-1997, funded as a three-year development project by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Children and Family, and the Directorate of Immigration. The NGO 'Adults for Children' hosted the project that eventually was named 'Project Exit – Leaving Violent Youth Groups'. The Exit project had three main objectives:

- aiding and supporting young people who want to disengage from racist or other violent groups,
- supporting parents with children in racist or violent groups, establishing local networks for parents,
- developing and disseminating knowledge and methods to professions working with youths associated with violent groups.

The Norwegian Exit project decided to work mainly through local agencies by providing them with relevant know-how and methods, rather than building a separate Exit agency to take care of these youths. Thus,

it was the local youth workers, child welfare officers, teachers, and police officers that worked directly with the youths. The Exit project has trained more than 700 practitioners from various agencies and professions in prevention and intervention in relation to racist and violent youth groups.[8]

Inspired by the Norwegian model, *Exit in Sweden* was established in mid-1998. The goals were similar but they were implemented differently. The Swedish Exit organization (and its regional branches) works directly with the individuals who contact Exit. Staff members also make school visits to talk to students about neo-Nazism, and train teachers, social workers, and police officers. The head of Exit in Sweden, Kent Lindahl, and several staff members are themselves former participants in the neo-Nazi or the 'White Power' movement. This gives them significant credibility when they talk to young people, and makes it easier to establish contact with individuals that are thinking of disengaging from the Nazi movement.

Exit Deutschland was established in Autumn 2000, led by the NGO *Zentrum Demokratische Kultur*. Also, German authorities set up their own parallel *Aussteigerprogramm*. By mid-2001, such programs had been established in 11 of the 16 states of the German federation, run by various state agencies[9].

There is also an Exit project in Finland and some elements of the Exit approach are being adopted in Switzerland as part of a more comprehensive governmental action plan against neo-Nazism.

_____

[8] Bjørgo, Tore, Odd Arild Halhjem, and Taran Knudstad, *EXIT – Ut av voldelige ungdomsgrupper: Kunnskap, erfaringer og metoder i lokalt tverrfaglig og tverretatlig arbeid (Exit – Leaving Violent Youth Groups: Knowledge, Experiences, and Methods in Local Inter-Agency Work)* Oslo: Voksne for Barn, 2001. The Exit handbook is available on Internet: http://www.vfb.no/nedlasting/Haandbok.pdf .(An Exit handbook is available in Norwegian)

[9] Verfassungsschutz, the Criminal Police, the State Office for Youth Affairs and Social Welfare, and others.

Three methods to promote disengagement from racist groups

Three of Exit's main methods are described below in more detail. The first two focus on early intervention through parental involvement; the third deals with support to persons wanting to disengage.

Parental network groups

Parents are in a strong position to influence their children's behavior, although this influence declines as the child grows up. Parents where young teen-age children have become involved with racist or other violent groups may profit from collaborating with other parents in a similar situation. These parents have a strong need for knowledge and information on what is going on in these groups. By sharing information amongst themselves, parents can together build a better understanding of the milieu that has drawn their children in. They can also benefit from bringing in knowledgeable outsiders, such as police officers, researchers, or ex-gang-members.

In such a forum, parents can discuss their dilemmas, comparing notes on how strict the restrictions should be that they put on their children and their behavior, how to avoid pushing the children away by imposing rules and sanctions that are too harsh, and the like. Parents may also reach agreements on some common positions such as what sorts of events their children will be allowed to take part in, what will be acceptable in terms of (Nazi-style) fashions, or this can strengthen the parents' ability to monitor, control, and care for their children.

Further, having children the neo-Nazi scene can be socially stigmatizing for the entire family. Most of these parents feel a strong need to talk with someone about their problems but do not dare to bring it up in their regular circles. A closed forum with others who are in a similar situation offers an opportunity to talk freely. Single parents in particular need the support such a parental network can provide. And, the example of parents who succeeded in getting their children out of the racist scene may provide encouragement and inspiration to others.

A parental network may also play an important role in disseminating information to parents regarding upcoming events. For example, the parental network can be informed by the police that a Nazi-concert or a large confrontation between rival groups is coming up. This may enable parents to keep their children at home during the event, preventing them from becoming victims or perpetrators of violence, or from being arrested.

There are significant differences among the various parental groups. Some consist of parents with strong personal resources. They have in some cases been able to run the network group mainly on their own. Several of these groups have been highly successful – getting all their children out of the racist scene within a few months. Other parental groups have consisted of parents with weak resources, experiencing personal and family problems, and often holding attitudes that do not differ much from those of their children in the racist group. However, even these parents have often realized that their children are involved with something that will hurt their future. Groups consisting of such parents will usually require outside support. A professional or at least some more resourceful person will have to come in from outside to organize the networking group and to keep it functional over time. These external helpers have often served as liaisons between parents and the police or social agencies.

Not all parents are motivated to take part in such a networking group. Some do not see anything problematic in their children's involvement with a racist group – either because they are happy that their child has finally found some friends, or because they hold views similar to those of their children. Some parents are racist themselves. Others do not realize – or do not want to acknowledge – what their children are involved with. They are afraid of being branded as bad parents who have raised their children to hold problematic values. Some parents feel helpless, apathetic, or just indifferent. And to some it is a completely unthinkable idea to take part in a networking group where

they have to talk to strangers about their personal problems. Thus,
parental networking groups are not for everyone.[10]

    The Empowerment Conversation

    Bjørn Øvrum, one of the police officers who helped found the Exit
project, has developed another powerful method of early intervention.
'The Empowerment Conversation' can be applied when a police officer, a
teacher, or a youth worker detects that a child or youth may be involved
in worrisome activities. The professional will then invite the young
person together with the parents to take part in a voluntary
conversation, centering around the symptom that gave rise to that worry.
This could be theft, drug use, tagging, or participation in a racist
group or another type of gang. The child and the parents will be
informed of the likely consequences of this behavior if it continues.
The purpose of the conversation is not to punish but to create the basis
for reorientation and change in behavior of the child or youth, and to
mobilize the parents' engagement and resources. The professional asks
for the parents' consent to share information with other relevant
agencies in order to create a coordinated effort and to help the child.
If consent is given, this makes it possible to collaborate better by
avoiding obstacles often caused by the strict rules of confidentiality
practiced by social agencies. The conversation session should be seen as
the starting point in a process of reorientation, with other relevant
agencies (school, social workers, etc.) becoming involved in the next
stages.

    The conversation is based on a structured procedure. The
professional, the parents and the child together discuss the behavior
that gave rise to the meeting, and what they believe has caused that
behavior. If, for instance, the young person is participating in a
violent or extremist group, the youth is asked what he or she believes

---

[10] The method of parental network groups appears to have been quite successfully
implemented in some communities in Norway and Sweden, but less so in other communities and
countries – primarily because of differences in the attitudes and resources of the parents
in question.

is leading him/her to get involved with such a scene. The youth will then be presented with a set of alternatives (Is it for example a need for protection, thrill seeking, friendship, or status?) For each type of cause there are corresponding options that can be discussed with the parents and the child. If, for example, the probable cause of the problematic behavior was thrill seeking, they can discuss what kinds of legal and socially acceptable alternatives are available, and how the young person can realize his or her wishes for an exciting leisure time. Together with the youth and the parents, the professional tries to look forward, focusing on solutions in order to stimulate a process of reorientation and alteration of behavior.

Although the Empowerment Conversation model was originally developed during preventive police work with racist youth groups, it can be applied for many other types of youth delinquency problems as well. The Norwegian police have recommended it for more general use. Youth workers, teachers, and other professionals are being trained to apply it. Results so far are very promising.

The five-stage program of disengagement

The Swedish Exit Program has developed a five-stage program describing the process a person typically will go through when leaving the movement and re-establishing themselves into mainstream society, and explaining what Exit can contribute to help them through this process:[11]

- *Phase of Motivation:* The young person is still part of the White Power scene, but has started to have second thoughts about it, and questions his/her involvement. At this point they contact Exit and probe the possibilities for disengagement and assistance. Exit answers questions, provides information, and offers a contact person 'who has been where you are and knows how it is'.

---

[11] The following description is based on the evaluation report on Exit in Sweden by the Swedish Council for Crime Prevention, titled *Exit för avhoppare: En uppföljning och utvärdering av verksamheten åren 1998-2001 (Exit for quitters: A follow-up and evaluation of activities during 1998-2001)*, Stockholm: BRÅ-rapport 2001:8, 2001, pp. 20-23.

- *The Phase of Disengagement:* The person has made the decision to leave the White Power scene. Some have already quit when they contact Exit, others need practical help and advice to do so. Exposed to threats from former friends, and left without a social network, this is a chaotic period. They need someone to talk to, and they need help from Exit (and sometimes the police) to assess the threat in a realistic way. In some cases they will have to move to a different community, and may be in need of financial assistance and social services. The contact person from Exit is available by phone around the clock, and can serve as a guide and liaison to social agencies, the police or other resources. The personal support from the contact person, providing an opportunity to talk out the doubts, fears, problems and thoughts about the future is of great importance in this stage.

- *The Phase of Establishment:* The break is now completed. The young person has secured a place to live and finances (usually with support from the parents or by assistance from social services). Some have a job, others study or get job training, and some have still not found anything to do. But they have cut their ties to the White Power scene and to their former friends within that scene. They are usually in a social vacuum, with a very limited social network, and often feel empty and alone. At this stage the contact person tries to provide new links to 'normal' life, and to expand their social networks. For example, Exit organizes joint activities for persons who have disengaged from the White Power scene, bringing them together with youths from different and more mainstream backgrounds. Group discussions are useful at this stage.

- *The Phase of Reflection:* At this stage the person starts to free up to the kinds of things they have been involved with during their time in the Nazi movement, such as violence, crimes, extreme ideologies of hatred, and recruitment of others into similar activities. Some now experience problems with anxiety, depression, insomnia, or alcohol. Some also need professional help to deal with their violent impulses, traumas, or their lack of confidence.

The Exit staff may refer them to a therapist. Many ex-activists need to reflect on why they got involved with the scene, where the hatred came from, and how to go on with a normal life. Most of the racist thoughts and impulses disappear during this process. Some leave their racist views behind when they break with the group; others need more time to change their worldview.

- *The Phase of Stabilization:* at this stage, the young person has regained a 'normal' life with job, studies, and sometimes a family of their own. They have turned away from hatred, racism, crime, and alcohol abuse. However, they still fear that their past will ruin their future, and they feel guilt and shame for what they have been involved with. Exit no longer works actively with persons in this phase but many of them still keep in touch with their contact person. Exit's period of active involvement usually lasts between six and 12 months.

DOES IT WORK?

This article has argued for the importance of reducing recruitment to racist youth groups, and promoting a preferably early disengagement. It has also described some methods to achieve this, as developed in the framework of the Exit projects in Norway and Sweden.

Parental network groups and 'the Empowerment Conversation' have been effective forms of early intervention. In several cases, recruitment to local racist youth groups has been reduced to almost zero. Using these methods, local police, youth workers and other agencies are now equipped to act promptly once they notice that young people are flirting with such groups. There is reason to believe that the early intervention approach is one of the reasons why the neo-Nazi scene in Norway remains relatively small, young, and is characterized by short careers and few 'veterans'.

Although parental networking groups are not suitable to all affected parents, the results have been quite good. About 130 parents representing 100 youths/children participated in such parental network groups in Norway between 1995 and mid-2000. By the end of that period, only about 10 of these youths were still involved with the racist scene. Of the 90 who quit, obviously the parental groups were not the only factor that mattered – many left for other reasons – but the parental involvement played a decisive role in many cases.[12] An evaluation of a local Exit project in the city of Kristiansand also concluded that the parental network groups seemed to have achieved highly positive results.[13]

When it comes to providing disengagement assistance to older and more established neo-Nazis activists, the Norwegian Exit project has been less successful. The Swedish offshoot of the Exit project, however has achieved better results. [14]

During its three first years of operation, 133 persons turned to Exit Sweden for help, and 125 of these have left the White Power movement. Interviewed ex-activists, parents, and institutions that had cooperated with Exit expressed a very high level of satisfaction with Exit's work and contribution. Several ex-members and parents stated that

---

[12] This is confirmed by an interview study of 11 parents whose children had been involved in the neo-Nazi scene. The children of ten of these informants had left the group at the time of the interview. Eight of the informants claimed that the main cause for this was their own persistent efforts to get their children out – which were made possible by their participation in parental network groups. The study concludes that such parental network groups are highly useful. In a local Exit project in the Kristiansand area (a city on the Norwegian south coast), from1996 to 2001, an inter-agency task force consisting of police officers, youth workers, social workers, teachers, and the Exit worker together used this method in combination with other methods with 60 youths. By the end of that period, 49 of these youths were no longer part of the Nazi scene. Olsen, Hilgunn, *Å være foreldre til en nynazist (To be parents of an neo-Nazi)*, Oslo: Department of Criminology, 2001. http://www.jus.uio.no/ifk/Nett-krim/Olsen.pdf

[13] According to ten involved parents responding to a questionnaire. Cf. Carlsson, Y. & T. Haaland, *Voldelige ungdomsgrupper - intervensjon på kommunenivå. Erfaringsrapport fra Kristiansand 2001-2004*, Oslo, 2004, pp 60-62.

[14] See previous note for bibliographical details. An English summary of the evaluation report is available at http://www.bra.se/dynamaster/publication/pdf_archive/0111226980.pdf

they would not have been able to get through it alone, and that Exit's help was invaluable.

Thus, methods to reduce recruitment and promote disengagement represent a realistic approach and should be key components in a more comprehensive policy to fight racist violence and right-wing extremist groups.

Can the Exit approach be applied to other forms of violent extremism?

Similar approaches have been tried out in a number of countries to facilitate disengagement from terrorist groups of various orientations. There are several varieties of this strategy that follow differing approaches. Some focus on radicals who are in prison or detention, others on persuading militant activists to surrender. Some try to reduce the size of the terrorist movement by reducing the number of active participants, and may require only a personal change of mind and behavior away from violent extremism as the precondition for an individual radical to be released from prison. Other approaches provide amnesty only in exchange for testimony against former colleagues in the terrorist group.

One example of the first variety is being tried in Yemen. Through the so-called Committee for Dialogue, Islamic clerics enter into dialogue with imprisoned jihadists.[15] A similar approach has been tried in Singapore.

The imprisoned leaders of the Egyptian Islamic Group, the militant Islamist organization which was behind a wave of terrorist attacks, including a massacre of tourists in Luxor and an attempted assassination of President Mubarak, have distanced themselves from terrorist

_____

15 See Michael Taarnby's paper, *Yemen's Committee for Dialogue: the relativity of a counter terrorism success*, also in this volume.

strategies and means, mainly because they realized that the population had turned against them.[16]

In Italy, members of the Red Brigades as well as the Mafia were offered reduced sentencing or even amnesty if they agreed to testify against their comrades. This *pentiti* system was an important tool in breaking up both the Red Brigades and the Mafia in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. However, abuses including false testimonies and conviction of innocent persons undermined the *pentiti* system. Similar approaches have been applied – with mixed success – in Northern Ireland, Spain, Germany, and elsewhere.[17]

Another approach is to aim for a *collective* disengagement from terrorism, by giving entire terrorist movements the opportunity to opt for a non-violent strategy by joining the political process instead of continuing their terrorist struggle. If defeating and dismantling the terrorist organization fails, this is another way to end a terrorist campaign. This approach seems to have been relatively successful in Northern Ireland and at least promising in other conflict areas such as Sri Lanka and Israel/Palestine. Co-opting militant dissent into the political process may also be a way to prevent radicalization of opposition movements into terrorism.[18]

---

16 Cf. Sageman, Mark, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, pp. 46-47; 148.

17 Cf. Chp. 6 in: Horgan, John, The Psychology of Terrorism, London: Routledge, 2005; Jamieson, Allison "Entry, Discipline and Exit in the Italian Red Brigades", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol 2, No. 1, 1990, pp. 1-20.

18 In a forthcoming edited volume with the working title Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement, Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan will explore the various experiences and approaches to end or reduce terrorist campaigns by providing individual terrorists (or militant activists) and terrorist groups with opportunities to leave the path of terrorism. John Horgan's paper, also in this volume, describes this project in more detail.

Dr. Tore Bjørgo

Dr. Tore Bjørgo is Research Director and Professor of Police Science at the Norwegian Police University College and Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). A social anthropologist by training, he received his doctoral degree from the University of Leiden, where he was a research associate. His main fields of research have been political extremism and terrorism, racist and right-wing violence, delinquent youth gangs, international crime, and political communication. He has authored or edited ten books, including *Political Communication* (1987, 1992, in Norwegian, Danish and Swedish), *Racist Violence in Europe* (1993), *Political Terrorism* (1993, in Norwegian), *Terror from the Extreme Right* (1995), *Racist and Right-Wing Violence in Scandinavia: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses* (1997), *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture* (1998), *Violence, Racism and Youth Gangs* (1999, in Norwegian), *Generalized Hatred, Polarized Communities* (2001, in Norwegian) and *Root Causes of Terrorism* (2005).

2. PROFILES OF JIHADIST TERRORISTS IN EUROPE - PETTER NESSER[1]

Introduction

What kinds of people join the jihad in Europe? The question is straightforward, but methodologically challenging, defying simple answers. Jihadist terrorism[2] in Europe involves a very diversified group of individuals, encompassing multiple nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, ages, professions, social backgrounds and personalities. Moreover, their affiliations with known jihadist groups and organizations appear to vary significantly, while the information available about the lives of the jihadist terrorist suspects and convicts is often limited and biased.

Over the last three years, the terrorism research group at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI) has gathered open source information about jihadist terrorism inside Europe. The sources include press articles, court documents, transcripts of interrogations and interviews. We have conducted case studies, examining the profiles of core members of jihadist terrorist gangs that planned, prepared and implemented terrorist attacks in the region.[3] By identifying commonalities and differences amongst these persons, we are able to

---

1 Researcher, The Transnational Radical Islamism Project, Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), P O Box 25, N-2027 Kjeller, Norway Email: petter.nesser@ffi.no, Visit our website at www.ffi.no/TERRA
2 When I use this term in this study, it refers to acts (or intended acts) of political communicative violence, mainly targeting civilians or "soft targets", aimed at spreading fear amongst, and paralyzing those governments and populations who are perceived as, enemies. I define terrorism as jihadist in the case that such acts (or intended acts) of violence can be attributed to clearly identifiable radical Islamist individuals or groups.
3 Nesser, Petter, Jihad in Europe, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2004, report 2004/01146; Nesser, Petter, The Slaying of the Dutch Filmmaker, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2004, report 2005/00376; Nesser, Petter, "Post-Millennium Patterns of Jihadist Terrorism in Western Europe - Part I", JANE's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, 27 May 2005.; Nesser, Petter, "Post-millennium patterns of jihadist terrorism in Western Europe - Part II", JANE's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre ,08 June 2005.; Nesser, Petter, "Jihadism in Western Europe after the Invasion of Iraq", Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, forthcoming in 2005/2006.

provide some solid insights into the composition and group dynamics of the cells, and to establish tentative typologies of the various kinds of people involved in jihadism in Europe. The search for the "typical terrorist" is a recurring theme in the study of terrorism. Although leading experts agree that the search for one single terrorist personality or psychological profile is futile[4], it is helpful to establish typologies of various people and personalities who have been involved in extremism and political violence. Although quite rare, one can find examples on such typologies by social scientists in the research literature.[5]

In the following I will first address the scope of jihadist terrorism in Western Europe over the last five years, addressing the main operational and motivational patterns. Secondly, I will present my findings on the composition and structure of the jihadist cells, i.e. group profiling. Thirdly, I move on to individual profiling and a tentative, descriptive typology of jihadist terrorist profiles in Europe based on qualitative empirical analyses.[6] Finally, I will conclude by commenting on changes over time and discussing some implications of my findings as they relate to the future threat of jihadist terrorism in Europe.

_____

[4] e.g. Horgan, John in Andrew Silke et al, *Terrorists, Victims and Society*, West Sussex: Wiley, 2003; Tore Bjørgo et al, *Root Causes of Terrorism, Myths, reality and ways forward*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005; Bjørgo, Tore, *Racist and Right-Wing Violence: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses,* Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1997.

[5] See e.g. Willems, Helmut, et al., *Fremdenfeindliche Gewalt: Eine Analyse von Täterstrukturen und Eskalationsprozessen*, Bonn, 1993.; Willems, Helmut, "Development, Patterns and Causes of Violence against Foreigners in Germany: Social and Biographical Characteristics of Perpetrators and the Process of Escalation," in Tore Bjørgo, ed., *Terror from the Extreme Right*, London: Frank Cass, 1995; and a modified version of Willems typology in Bjørgo, Tore, *Racist and Right-Wing Violence: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses*, Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1997.

[6] As I am a political scientist by education, and not a professional profiler, it must be stressed that the typologies represent empirically generated *hypotheses* by an analyst who possesses detailed knowledge about jihadist terrorism in Europe.

Jihad in Europe, Scope and Patterns

The terrorist attack against subways and a bus in London on 7 July
2005 was the third jihadist terrorist attack in Europe[7] after 2000, and
the second resulting in mass casualties. European security services have
thwarted many terrorist conspiracies by jihadists in Europe. Levels of
jihadist terrorism in Europe have increased commensurate with the
intensification of the efforts of the global jihad movement spearheaded
by the al-Qaeda group [8], and the "global war on terror" initiated by the
Bush administration.

Recent acts of jihadist terrorism in Europe have involved
multinational, transnationally operating terrorist cells, groups or
gangs that were directly associated with, or inspired by Al-Qaeda. There
is little evidence of an overarching organizational structure for the
jihad in Europe. The cases surveyed indicate that these are semi-
autonomous groups, sometimes interacting with each other based on
personal relationships between the members. However, several of the
terrorists were allegedly affiliated with, and received assistance from,
European support networks of Middle Eastern and North African jihadist
movements, such as the Algerian GSPC, the Northern Iraqi Ansar al-Islam,
and the Moroccan-dominated Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (MICG). Such
groups have a local agenda, combating the local regimes, but over the
last years they have strengthened their ties to Al-Qaeda and the global
jihad.[9]

Although in principle the cells were multinational, in reality
members of one ethnic background tended to dominate them. The core of

---

[7] Western Europe; not including Russia and Turkey.

[8] In this text I utilize a very strict definition of Al-Qaeda. The term is used about the
core group of people dominated by ethnic Arabs interacting with the top Al-Qaeda leaders
for shorter or longer periods of time. My use of the word corresponds, by in large, to
Jason Burke's expression "Al-Qaeda hardcore", see Burke, Jason, *Al Qaeda, Casting the
Shadow of Terror*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003.

[9] See Nesser, Petter, *Jihad in Europe*, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment,
2004, report 2004/01146.

the cell often came from the same area in Europe or abroad.[10] In addition to conceiving attack plans, the jihadist terrorist cells in Europe gathered funds, weapons and falsified documents for jihadist groups and individuals operating in other countries. The terrorists were trained in clandestine operations and terrorist tactics. Key operatives had received military and terrorist training in jihadist training camps run by Al-Qaeda and likeminded groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[11] In some cases, the Al-Qaeda link was very direct and tangible in the sense that members of the cells met, befriended each other and swore allegiance to prominent leaders of the global jihad such as Osama Bin Laden, Abu Zubaydah, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The jihadists planned to attack a wide specter of targets including religious, political, military, economic and civilian sites, symbols and infrastructure. US symbols and installations were frequently targeted, as were the populations of central European countries, whole governments supported and contributed to US military operations abroad. The terrorists preferred low-tech weapons, mainly homemade bombs, but they were also interested in manufacturing and utilizing poisons. Although their choice of weapons was traditional, they used sophisticated means of communication. They were indeed Internet savvy, exchanging messages and information using the web. Cell phones and laptops were common equipment in their terrorist "tool-kits".

Members of the terrorist gangs had clearly defined roles and tasks. There was a cell leader and coordinator (often the oldest and most experienced person), a chief of communication, a chief of finances, sometimes a designated suicide-bomber, etc. However, although the core had a fixed structure, there were fuzzy cell boundaries. The cell would receive support from various "hangarounds" ranging from organized jihadist groups, extremist sympathizers, family, friends, criminals,

---

[10] Most probably common ethnic background made it easier to trust each other, but cells were also built upon other bonds (e.g. family relations, common experience in jihad camps, etc).

[11] However, there have been cases, such as the Madrid bombings, in which investigators have not been able to track the perpetrators to jihad training camps, suggesting that the bombers were self-taught, or had an "instructor" visiting them in Spain.

etc. The supporters would not necessarily know about upcoming operations. The conspiracies involved contacts and coordination between jihadists belonging to different terrorist cells in several European countries, and often these contacts were based upon personal relationships established in jihadist training camps in the Muslim world, or in the Islamist underground milieus of European cities.

Individual terrorists, or terrorist groups, also maintained contacts with militants in other regions of the world. To a certain extent, the jihadist groups resembled gangster or Mafia gangs, because there was internal hierarchy, and the cell members developed strong social bonds amongst each other. Sometimes the conspiracies involved families in the manner of the Mafia. However, the "gangs of jihad" had different goals than those of criminal gangs and the Mafia. Although social bonds held the members of the cell together, and the cell in this way offered the social gains of friendship and identity, the group as a whole had a mainly ideological-political purpose: to punish the enemies of Islam and to reestablish the Rule of God on earth. They were not involved for profit's own sake, such as is the case with many criminals.

The most commonly experienced motivation for resorting to terrorism at the group level appears to be the doctrines and ideas of global jihad against aggressors attacking Islam and Muslims. In accordance with Al-Qaeda's ideology they linked together the symbolically important jihadist struggles in Palestine, Algeria, Chechnya and the Iraq war, with regional European issues such as tightened security, restrictive immigration legislation, as well as prosecution of jihadists in European countries in the aftermath of 9/11.[12]

The video statement by the leader of the terrorist cell behind the London attacks, Mohammed Siddique Khan, illustrates how the terrorists

_____

[12] Nesser, Petter, "Post-millennium patterns of jihadist terrorism in Western Europe - Part I", *JANE's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre* 27 May 2005; Lia, Brynjar, and Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi Strategic Studies - The alleged Al-Qaeda policy study preceding the Madrid bombings," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol 27, No. 5, September - October 2004, pp. 355-375.

perceive themselves as soldiers in a global battle, defending Muslims against aggressors all over the world.[13] As for the individual terrorists' motivations for joining the jihad and taking part in terrorism, social and personal grievances and frustrations seem to contribute significantly to making potential recruits receptive to the propaganda of jihad groups. To some discontented Muslim youths in European suburbs, these groups offer the social gains of friendship and companionship, a newfound cultural identity, spirituality, and a consistent ideology that clearly defines the "evil forces" of world politics. For the individual, the newfound identity resolves the problem of a division between the modern West, and the traditional Islamic culture. The activist suddenly has a new independent platform, allowing him to be in opposition against both Western modernity and Islamic traditionalism.[14]

The typical cell – composure, structure and recruitment

So, what characterizes the gangs that want to punish, pressure and terrorize the enemy on European territory? The terrorist cells have typically consisted of a small number (5-10) of male Muslim immigrants (first and second generation) in their 20s and 30s. Most often they are of North African ancestry. However, during 2003 and 2004, several Pakistani dominated terrorist cells and support cells were detected in the UK, Italy, France and Spain. The terrorist profiles also included several ethnic Europeans who had converted to Islam, but they constitute a small minority. The cells involved political refugees, as well as legal and illegal immigrants. From 2003 onwards, one increasingly sees second-generation immigrants participating. Furthermore, the recruits to jihad groups are becoming younger. In fact, recent cases, such as the

---

[13] "London bomber: Text in full," *BBC News* 02 September 2005.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4206800.stm.

[14] Roy, Olivier, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Umma*, London: Hurst, 2004; Nesser, Petter, *Jihad in Europe*, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2004, report 2004/01146.

killing of Theo Van Gogh and planned truck bombings in the UK thwarted in March 2004, involved teenagers.[15]

The terrorist gangs were comprised of criminals, drug addicts or socially misplaced people, but also persons who were gifted, educated, employed and who appeared to be assimilated into European societies. Indeed, several terrorists appeared to be well "settled," having wives and children, steady jobs, proper housing, etc. The majority did not appear to have been fundamentalists or politically active during their upbringing or prior to becoming involved with extremists and radicals. Several people arrested and convicted for jihadist terrorism have been described as "model immigrants", who adapted to Western habits and ways of life. Very few of them resembled the stereotypical profiles of Islamic fundamentalists. Family and friends often expressed disbelief that a friend, sibling or son had become a Holy Warrior, and they portrayed them as warm and caring people with no violent tendencies.[16] However, other accounts of the same people portray them as frustrated, angry young men, capable of resorting to violence under specific circumstances. As people change over time and under new influences, and can play different social roles; then both characterizations might be valid.

The terrorists were most often recruited to the jihad while residing in European countries.[17] A typical pattern is that young "identity seeking" male immigrants become "newborn Muslims", in interaction with friends or acquaintances, and then develop an interest in jihad. It is indeed a typical pattern that individuals would bring

---

[15] Nesser, Petter, *The Slaying of the Dutch Filmmaker*, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2004, report 2005/00376; "He Was Not Political. He Wanted to Play Cricket for England," *The Herald,* 1 April 2004.

[16] It is a quite common phenomenon that militant Islamists have been depicted as warm, sensitive and caring people. We have seen this in studies of Palestiniean and Saudi Arabian martyrs. These character traits also seem to be be reflected in their choices of professions. Amongst the Saudis, there were a considerable number of teachers and nurses etc. See e.g. Hegghammer, Thomas, "Twenty-Five Years of Martyrdom: Profiles of Saudi Martyrs from 1980s Afghanistan to Modern-Day Iraq", unpublished paper.

[17] However, there were examples of operatives who were recruited in North Africa, in Pakistan, or other places.

their friends into jihadist groups.[18] Often, they were recruited and radicalized during transitional phases of their lives or during times of personal crisis, such as a death in the family, loss of employment, depression, divorce, etc. In a few cases, the 9/11 attack was identified as a turning point and a source of inspiration. Recruits visited radical mosques or frequented radical milieus, and at some point encountered people - referred to in the literature as "gatekeepers"- who taught them about jihad and instigated them to join the battle.[19] They were advised to enlist at religious schools and training camps in Pakistan/Afghanistan, Chechnya or Kashmir. The "gatekeepers" were typically "jihad-veterans", people who fought in the Afghan, Bosnian or Chechen jihads, and/or trained in Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan during the 1990s.

Tentative typology of cell members

My analysis focuses on the core group of each terrorist cell, the cell leader and the cadre who were posed to participate in the attacks. Based on observations of what the terrorists said and did themselves, and how others depicted them, I singled out four profiles that recurred across cases; *the entrepreneur, the impressionable whiz kid, the misfit and the drifter*.[20] These are "ideal types" discerned by certain characteristics and similar backgrounds. The categories are by no means exhaustive. Some cell members defied categorization, while in other cases, it was impossible to find information about their backgrounds. In

_____

[18] Ganley, Elaine, "French Trial Highlights Role of Friendship in Europe's Complex Networks of Muslims," The Associated Press, *Militants*, 14 March 2005; Sageman, Marc, *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Taarnby, Michael, *Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe, report*, Aarhus: Danish Ministry of Justice, 2005; and Roy, Olivier, Chp. 7 in: *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Umma*, London: Hurst, 2004.

[19] For the best discussions of the recruitment processes, see Sageman, Marc, *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Taarnby, Michael, *Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe, report*, Aarhus: Danish Ministry of Justice, 2005; and Roy, Olivier, Chp. 7 in: *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Umma*, London: Hurst, 2004.

[20] To some extent, the typology corresponds to one developed by the German sociologist Helmut Willems classifying perpetrators of xenophobic violence, modified by Tore Bjørgo, and adapted to violent right-wing extremists. See Bjørgo, Tore, *Racist and Right-Wing Violence: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses*, Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1997.

addition, certain cells were dominated by one category of people, for example, some cells feature more misfits (i.e. people with troubled backgrounds, such as drug addicts and criminals) than others. Once the cells consolidated, they constituted micro-societies, with their own logic and dynamics. There were examples of infighting within cells, whereby members disagreed with and challenged decisions of the cell leader.[21] Roles and tasks of cell members could change during the course of preparations for attacks.

The entrepreneur

The entrepreneur is the crucial profile; he is the person who makes things happen. No jihad cell forms without him. He is typically the oldest and most experienced man in the group, central to the recruitment and radicalization of the younger cell members. The entrepreneur has an "activist mindset", being driven by ideas rather than personal grievances. He is interested in and committed to social issues and politics, he demands respect from his surroundings and he has a strong sense of justice. He is not into party politics, but he might dedicate himself to NGO activity. He has an "entrepreneurial spirit" (thus the name), and wants to build something for himself and those he considers "his people", based on ethnicity, common background and destiny, faith, or other bonds. *In the end he takes on a "project" for the holy warriors*. He has high aspirations, and sometimes he has failed ambitions on his record. The entrepreneur is affiliated with jihadist groups and individuals, e.g. prominent radical sheikhs, and he is in charge of the cell's external relations with jihadist milieus, religious and operational mentors. Inspired, supported and guided by his mentors, the entrepreneur facilitates and controls the activities of the cell. He might be educated and employed such as the leaders of the Madrid and London cells, but not necessarily. Previous cell leaders lacked higher education, and got by on odd jobs, welfare, legal and illicit business

_____

[21] A terrorist cell belonging to the al-Tawhid movement plotting attacks against Jewish targets in Germany in 2002, experienced infighting between one of the cell members and the leader, resulting in interference by the cell's external mentor, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who is the overall chief in command of the al-Tawhid movement. Source: German court documents with author.

activities, as well as funding by jihadist individuals or groups such as Al-Qaeda. The entrepreneur is typically married with children, but so are several of his accomplices in many cases. He might have participated in jihad in his original home country, or in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, or other places. In future cases he might have a jihad history from Iraq. The entrepreneur can be seen to be functioning as a "gatekeeper" for his accomplices, but he himself relates to a senior "gatekeeper", often a prominent sheikh (such as Abu Qatada), in order to connect to the jihad.

The terrorist cell leader Jamal Beghal, born in Algeria and raised in France, fits the entrepreneur profile. The bright and charismatic activist supported the jihad in Algeria and GIA's terrorist campaign in France, and eventually became a global fighter. Beghal was married to a French woman, and they had children. He forged contacts with an influential jihadist cleric in the UK. Later he encountered top Al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan, and recruited North Africans and Frenchmen for terrorist operations against US targets in Europe. Affiliates of the terrorist cell explain in interrogations how Beghal converted his accomplices to Islam (i.e. recruited them for jihad, in this context). They also depict him as a frenetic person, always on the move, giving orders, making appointments, moving money, people, documents and messages, as well as traveling extensively to Saudi-Arabia and Afghanistan, among other places.[22]

---

[22] Erlanger, Steven, and Chris Hedges, "Missed Signals; Terror Cells Slip Through Europe's Grasp," *New York Times* 28 December 2001, http://www.pulitzer.org/year/2002/explanatory-reporting/works/122801.html; Chichizola, Jean, "The Afghan, the Convert, and the Unknown Kamikaze," *Le Figaro* 18 March 2004 via FBIS; Smolar, Piotr, "Converts to Radical Islam, a Growing Minority of Activists, " *Le Monde* 04 June via FBIS; Nesser, Petter, *Jihad in Europe*, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2004, report 2004/01146.

Figure 1: Mohammed Siddique Khan

Mohammed Siddique Khan, who headed the London cell, is another typical jihadist entrepreneur. He was a second-generation immigrant, born, raised and educated in Leeds, in the UK. He worked as a school mentor for troubled immigrant kids and was a political activist for the Kashmiri Welfare association. He set up two gyms with government funding, one in 2000 and one in 2004, the first as an initiative for the Kashmiri Welfare association, the latter on behalf of a local mosque. In the gym he set up in 2004 in Lodge Lane, the members of the terrorist cell worked out together. In keeping with his entrepreneurial spirit, Khan also ran an Islamic bookshop, which additionally served as a meeting place for the group. Khan appears to have made connections to jihadists in the UK and in Pakistan. His name came up in the investigation of a foiled bomb plot in the UK in March 2004. Khan traveled to Pakistan in October 2004 together with his accomplice Shehzad Tanweer, and probably, Khan spent time in a jihad training camp run by Kashmiri insurgents. One does not know the extent to which he was connected to Al-Qaeda members, but his testament leaves no doubts that he was inspired by the movement's doctrine.[23]

Other leading figures related to jihadist terrorism in Europe who to some degree appear to match the entrepreneur profile are: Ridwan al-

_____

[23] Tumelty, Paul, "Reassessing the July 21 London Bombings," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor,* 08 September 2005 http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369778; Macintyre, Ben, "Hitchhikers to Heaven who created Hell on Earth," *The Times,* 16 July 2005 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,22989-169609400.html; Nesser, Petter, "The London Bombs", unpublished paper.

Issa, and perhaps Muhammad Bouyeri, both of the Hofstad group; Mohammed Abu Dhess heading a cell belonging to the Zarqawi led al-Tawhid movement planning terrorist attacks against Jewish targets in Germany in 2002; Merouane Benahmed, leader of the so-called *Chechen Network* planning to attack the Russian embassy in Paris in 2002; and Sarhane Abd al-Majid al-Fakhet al-Tunisi, the operational leader of the Madrid attacks.

The impressionable whiz kid

The second of our "types" appears to hold a special position vis-à-vis the cell leader. The impressionable whiz kid is someone the leader respects and trusts with important tasks. One might see him as the protégé who admires and looks up to the leader. Typically he is the most gifted and intelligent of the young terrorists. Sometimes the bright youngster can be the *de facto* second in chief of the cell. This profile is almost without exception an educated and well-mannered person, who excels in what he does, professionally, academically, and socially. Through being educated, he provides the cell with needed expertise (for example, bomb making skills or IT-skills). *The profile appears to have an activist mindset also, and, as with his leader, he typically carries a strong sense of justice.* Being young and inexperienced, he is quite easily manipulated by elders he respects. The presence of such a character in the cells tells us something about the sophistication of the entrepreneur and the ideology he offers his younger accomplices. It means that the jihad appeals to highly intelligent, socially skilled and well-off people, social segments that, according to rational choice arguments, would have a lot to lose by engaging in terrorist activity.

One typical example of the impressionable whiz kid is the French-Algerian Kamel Daoudi who belonged to the group of Beghal. Daoudi was born in Algeria and raised in the French suburbs. He was in a math and science program in high school, and went on to study computer sciences at the university before he dropped out after experiencing some personal difficulties and perhaps minor psychological problems. In search for an identity and a firm direction in life, he was drawn towards extremist milieus, and encountered Jamal Beghal, who made him part of his group.

Daoudi was a key node in this terrorist network, trusted with being in charge of the terrorists' communications on the Internet. He was connected to all the key players in the plot, and traveled with Beghal to London and Afghanistan. Daoudi stated in a letter that he embraced Islam in anger because of French support for the Algerian regime, and because of the alienation he felt as a second-class citizen in Paris.[24]

Figure 2: Shehzad Tanweer

Another typical whiz kid is a Briton of Pakistani descent, Shehzad Tanweer, who launched a suicide attack against the London subway on 7 July 2005. Tanweer was a successful athlete, who studied sports science and did well. He trained at the gym set up by Khan. He accompanied Khan on his trip to Pakistan in November 2004, returning to the UK in February 2005. Tanweer also joined Khan on a rafting trip in Northern Wales on 4 June 2005, another sign that that he was the entrepreneur's protégé. His family and friends in the UK portray him as a warm, non-violent person, obsessed with cricket, and with no particular interest in politics. However, they noticed he started to act more religiously the months before the attacks. Relatives he visited in Pakistan say he voiced anti-Americanism and hailed Bin Laden while he was there, and that he complained about the situation in Kashmir, and said India committed atrocities against Muslims.

_____

[24] McTernan, Oliver, "How to Win the Religious wars," *The Guardian,* 08 November 2004 http://www.guardian.co.uk/religion/Story/0,2763,1080654,00.html; Crumley, Bruce, "The Boy Next Door. How a Mild-Mannered Science Student became the Target of an International Terrorist Hunt," *Time Europe,* 25 August 2003, http://www.time.com/time/europe/eu/magazine/0,13716,182925,00.html .

Another convicted jihadist who might fit the whiz kid profile is Salim Bokhari of the cell that planned to bomb the Notre Dame cathedral in Strasbourg back in 2000.[25] This category might also include Mohammed Bouyeri, who seems to be a mixed profile, *a whiz kid and an entrepreneur.* The chemistry-savvy Menad Benchellali of the *Chechen Network* that planned to bomb the Russian Embassy in Paris in 2002, and Jamal Zougam of the 2004 Madrid cell, also fit the profile to some degree.

The misfit

The misfit is someone who performs less well socially, and often has a troubled background as well as a criminal record. He differs from the entrepreneur and the whiz kid because he is not an idealist, appearing to have a somehow "weaker" and more hesitant personality. He joins the jihad to cope with personal problems or out of loyalty to his friends, or some combination of the two. The misfit might be recruited in prison, or he might meet militants in the criminal underworld (as criminal activities are part of the financing of terrorist cells). The misfit is seldom educated, but he is typically "street smart" and physically fit. Several of the misfits were into sports, and some of them were very talented. The age of the misfit varies, but he is younger than the entrepreneur. He might be a friend or acquaintance of the cell leader or one of the other cell members, and they may propose to straighten him out and get him back on the right path by joining the jihad. Some misfits have violent tendencies and some have been convicted for acts of violence in the past. Physically fit, inclined to show violent tendencies, and used to the adrenalin rush often associated with crime, the misfit is suitable for being entrusted with important tasks at the preparatory and operational level, such as being in charge of acquiring weapons and bomb making materials.

The Tunisian Nizar Trabelsi, the designated suicide bomber of Beghal's cell, is in many ways the typical misfit. Trabelsi was a

---

[25] See e.g. "Inside story, A Jihad warrior in London," *The Guardian,* 09 February 2004, http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1143819,00.html.

successful athlete, a professional soccer player, playing the top
leagues of Germany and Belgium. At some point he plunged into crime and
became a drug addict, and his marriage fell apart. There were reports
that he experienced racism on the part of teammates, and this was one of
the reasons he stopped playing soccer. He traveled to Afghanistan
together with Beghal and his cadre. Because of his contacts, he was able
to meet "The Sheikh" himself, Bin Laden, and he even stayed at his house
for a while in Kandahar. He appeared to be driven more by loyalty to Al-
Qaeda leaders and their accomplices than political grievances, although
he did refer to the situation in Palestine during his trial.[26]

The youngest of the London bombers, Hasib Hussain, might fit the
misfit profile. The youngster had a troubled social background, compared
with the other members of the cell. He dropped out of school, smoked
marijuana and was involved in fights with racists. His parents sent him
to Pakistan for religious studies, hoping that this would straighten him
out. He returned a fundamentalist, subsequently hooking up with the
other members of the terrorist cell back in Leeds.[27]

Figure 3: "shoe bomber" Richard Reid

---

[26] See e.g. Andreoli, Marcella, "Under Orders From Osama," *Panorama,* 22 April 2004 via
FBIS; "Al-Qaeda suspect tells of bomb plot" *BBC News,* 27 May 2003,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2941702.stm
[27] Cobain, Ian, "The boy who didn't stand out," *The Guardian,* 14 July 2005,
http://www.guardian.co.uk/attackonlondon/story/0,16132,1528199,00.html; Nesser, Petter,
"The London Bombs," unpublished paper.

The so-called "shoe-bomber", Richard Reid, is another typical misfit, a streetwise criminal with a troubled background. He was well connected to jihadists in the radical milieus in London, including people in Beghal's cell. Reid attempted to launch individually a suicide bombing on a trans-Atlantic flight, but failed. Examples of others who might be categorized as misfits are Jason Walters of the Hofstad group; the Courtallier Brothers of the Beghal cell; Shadi Abdullah of the al-Tawhid cell; Lamine Marouni of the Frankfurt cell and Jamal Ahmidan of the Madrid cell.

The drifter

The drifter is not a clear-cut profile. He tends to be someone who is "going with the flow" rather unconsciously. He is not ideologically committed when he joins the jihadist group. He becomes part of the cell by being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or having social ties to the wrong people. One might surmise that he could have gone in a very different direction if he connected with other people and other milieus. It is his social networks (friendship, common background, shared experience), which determine where he ends up, rather than personal grievances associated with the misfit, or political grievance associated with the entrepreneur and the whiz kid. It can be difficult to differentiate the drifter from the other profiles, as he might have a similar educational background, profession and general background. The drifters are typically not entrusted with very important tasks in the group, and might not be privy to details about the terrorist operation. However, they do fulfill important support functions for the group.

Figure 4: Johann Bonte

Examples of typical drifters could be Abdelkrim Lefkir, who worked in a marketplace together with Jamal Beghal, and the Frenchman Johann Bonte, who is Beghal's brother-in-law.[28] They were recently convicted of supporting Beghal's group, and being part of the activities of the group. Yet they appear to have been at the mere fringes of the cell. Others who might fit the affiliation are people who played less important roles in other detected cells, such as Djamel Moustafa[29] of the al-Tawhid terrorist cell planning operations in Germany in 2002.

Affiliates/supporters

Surrounding the core group constituting the terrorist cell there were a number of affiliates that knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, fulfill various support functions for the conspirators, without being part of the cell. These affiliates can be friends, wives, other relatives, criminals, or other people that the terrorists exploit. The affiliates may sympathize with the broader aims and the means of the terrorists, or they may not.

Concluding remarks

Going through the biographies of people engaged in jihadist terrorism in Europe (i.e. the core members of well-known terrorist cells), I find that the ideal-types above, and combinations of the

---

[28] Ganley, Elaine, "French Trial Highlights Role of Friendship in Europe's Complex Networks of Muslim Militants," *The Associated Press,* 14 March 2005.

[29] "German terror trial defendant breaks year's silence, promises to testify," The *Associated Press,* 12 January 2005 via Lexis-Nexis.

types, apply across the cases.[30] One might of course use additional categories in order to place those who defy the typology, or one might develop and rename categories to improve their descriptive and explanatory utility. However, in a new field of research I hope that the present typology is a viable contribution to the analyses of jihadist terrorism in Europe. The typology tells us important things about the jihadists: for example, it emphasizes the crucial role of the entrepreneur in establishing and sustaining the cell it also shows that he defies the stereotypical profile of a fundamentalist. This might help explain why several entrepreneurs of jihadist terrorism in Europe escaped closer scrutiny by European security services. In fact many key members of terrorist cells, entrepreneurs and whiz kids, such as Jamal Beghal, the leader of the Madrid cell Sarhane Bin Abd al-Majid al-Fakhet al-Tunisi, Mohammed Siddique Khan, Mohammed Bouyeri, and others, appear to have been watched and questioned by police and intelligence services before they launched or attempted to launch operations in Europe.[31] However, partly because the security agencies might have had had a particular set of assumptions concerning the type of person who might become a jihadist, they were deemed harmless, not important players, or not likely to resort to terrorism.

The fact that the entrepreneur appears to be ideologically driven, and the absence of socio-economic factors explaining his rage, calls for concern. The question of how is it possible to keep these highly intelligent people (entrepreneurs and whiz kids) from buying into the political arguments and instigation for jihad by radical clerics and operatives remains a tremendous challenge for the domestic and foreign policies of Western societies.

---

[30] One of the values that my typology adds is that the cases and individuals addressed are indeed representative for jihadists who had a firm intention to resort to violence.

[31] e.g. Contenta, Sandro, "Fear replaces tolerance as racism sweeps Holland," *Toronto Star,* 27 November 2004, p. A01, via Nexis Lexis; Golden, Tim, and Don Van Natta Jr., "Suspect in Madrid Bombings Was Under Scrutiny in 3 Countries", *New York Times,* 17 March 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/17/international/europe/17TERR.html; Paul Tumelty, "An In-Depth Look at the London Bombers," *Jamestown Terrorism Monitor,* 28 July 2004, http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369753.

As for misfits and drifters, social grievance and social networks appear to be key determinants, pointing to the importance of improving integration and taking care of alienated disenfranchised immigrants who suffer deprivation, and offering them jobs and respect, steering them away from extremism.

In terms of future detection of terrorist cells, it is useful to note that the entrepreneur and his accomplices always seem to have some kind of connection to more organized jihadist milieus. They do not exist in a vacuum. This makes it at least possible to spot and intercept individuals and groups planning and preparing terror.

3. THE DARK SIDE OF JIHAD: HOW YOUNG MEN DETAINED AT GUANTANAMO ASSESS THEIR EXPERIENCES -- SHARON CURCIO

Introduction

From November 2003 to July 2004, the author was assigned to Guantanamo Bay Detention Center and tasked with reviewing the interrogation transcripts of approximately 600 young men held at that facility. [1] In addition to the factual materials that were at the core of that assignment, this review also elicited some significant patterns that emerged from the anecdotal and narrative content of the interviews. These patterns pertain to the mechanics and the motives of recruitment; the experiences of the young men while in their training camps, in combat situations, and during their subsequent flight; and perhaps most significantly, to their shifting attitudes and mindsets as their venture into jihad unfolded and – ultimately – began to fall apart. These observations are shared here in the belief that they reveal opportunities to deter, reclaim and in some cases reintegrate young men such as the detainees described below.

Interview Methodologies at Guantanamo

The civilian and military interrogators in Guantanamo were focused on obtaining facts, especially operational facts, from the interrogations. Sociological and psychological data, such as the detainees' subjective or emotional reactions to their experiences and the situations they encountered, were neither sought nor systematically

_____

1 The transcripts summarize only the statements of those who were willing to talk to interrogators. These anecdotal collections do not reflect the comments or opinions of one group of young men at Guantanamo: the UBL bodyguards. The majority of this group did not cooperate with interrogators, and their profiles may be different.

recorded. Interrogators were looking for concrete information, i.e. "who were you with, where did you go, how long were you there, what did you do there, and what did you do next". Interrogators wanted detainees to provide a time/place record of their journey and actions. In follow-on meetings, they were looking for additional detail or for inconsistencies in the detainee stories. Expectations, attitudes, and responses were noted only coincidentally. However, it is precisely these peripheral details that provide us with glimpses into the motivational structure and the mindset of young recruits to the jihad. Their narratives include pivotal moments of doubt and second thoughts. Their stories could serve as important warnings to their peers who may be considering a similar "career path." Their stories also point to weaknesses in the recruitment, training and deployment of young extremists by their handlers, and to possible opportunities to turn and re-socialize these young men.

The Unexpected Side of jihad

In the accounts of many young men[2] who went to participate in jihad in Afghanistan, one striking theme is the extent to which they found themselves confronted with situations and outcomes they had not anticipated and did not feel prepared for. Many detainees related what we can refer to as "they never told me" events and experiences. They were left to deal with difficulties they had not been prepared for, ultimately including the utterly unimagined situation of imprisonment.

_____

2 "Young men" for the purposes of this paper is defined as those between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five The group of young men who opted to talk to interrogators numbered about 50. Perhaps 15% of this group had some form of higher education. Of those with "some college", 90% were students of Islamic Studies. The group was mixed in terms of national background and included North Africans, individuals from the Gulf States, Central Asians and European. The group reporting the highest level of "some college" were those from the Gulf States (i.e. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc.) excepting the Yemeisi, who more frequently reported no college and greater non-completion of high school or its equivalent..

As one pores through the stories of young men who left to go to a training camp, and to engage in the jihad in Afghanistan, one finds that a number of them left comfortable lives in the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia or Western Europe. Their travels, the actual training, and the experience of combat led them to encounter situations they were unable to handle. Only in the aftermath would many admit how difficult and unforeseen much of this had been. Quite a few of those recruited for jihad in Afghanistan, for example, report that they never expected to fight against the U.S. Their recruiters had sold them on the idea of going to Afghanistan by arguing that this would give them an opportunity to observe a "real" Islamic state (under the Taliban) or that it would enable them to attend training camps and get the skills they would need to protect their families and fight for Islam. Several detainees had expected to proceed from the Afghan training camps to Chechnya, where they could participate in jihad. Few expected to remain in Afghanistan and become engaged in fighting there.

Reasons for Joining jihad

Many of the young men had been motivated by Imams and recruiters in their local mosques to leave their countries of origin for Afghanistan, or Chechnya, or Palestine. Visual displays of persecuted Muslims were well-used by the recruiters, and recruits were routinely exposed to films that featured suffering women and children in refugee camps in Chechnya, Palestine or Afghanistan. Multiple persuasions were employed to motivate the young to go to Afghanistan: to perform "zakat", i.e. to distribute charitable donations to widows, orphans and refugees; to teach the Koran; to visit a country governed by Sharia (strict Islamic rule); to perform one's duty as a Muslim male and learn to use weapons to protect one's family; to help Muslim brothers fight off oppressors; to fight against the West, and to stop the corruption threatening Islam everywhere. Besides one-on-one recruitment practices

with visual aides, it is interesting to note that detainees also mention radio ads as a method of recruitment.

Equally compelling were the other reasons a young Muslim male might want to leave home: unemployment, a failed business, a criminal conviction with impending jail time or a drug or alcohol problem. Unemployment motivated a number of Gulf States detainees, particularly young unskilled and semi-skilled laborers. For them, going on jihad was "alternative employment". In contrast, educated young Saudis departing for jihad were more likely to be motivated by a sense of self-discovery and challenge. They felt inspired to go and observe a "pure" Islamic state, as Afghanistan was touted to be. This proved to be a great hook for the more idealistic and wealthier youth. A number of young Saudis with college level education left on jihad, not because they had economic or academic difficulties, but to see how the Taliban had put the rule of Islam (Sharia) into motion in Afghanistan in contrast to the Western tainted Saudi monarchy they despised. For the religious and the political alike, jihad offered a chance to put their spiritual and physical lives in order.

Those with "some college" may have been employed at the time of their recruitment, but took a sabbatical from their jobs or simply quit. Some intended merely to teach the Koran or Arabic in Afghanistan. This group was often funded with personal savings or family contributions, or received a stipend from a religious group. The larger portion of the group, who had no higher education and were more likely to be jobless, went to Afghanistan in connection with a Muslim NGO to work in distributing aide or supplies. Others were routed directly to terrorist training camps. This latter group generally did not have personal funds, so NGOs, the recruitment network and religious groups paid for their travel.

Background of the Recruits

2001 was a banner year for recruiting youth for jihad. Recruitment intensity ran strong, with imams and recruiters busily dispatching the boys and young men they had managed to persuade. Once they reached the training camps, the caves of Tora Bora or the prisons of Pakistan, many of these young men discovered that they had undertaken a journey no one had realistically described to them beforehand. Indeed, the risks had been purposely omitted to avoid discouragement, while the promised rewards were intangible. A few said they went to be paid as a cook or a driver for the Taliban or an NGO. But the majority of the young men had said "yes" to jihad in a spontaneous, impulsive manner. Ten to twenty per cent of the group admitted that they not told their parents they were leaving home.

In general, the group was not very cosmopolitan. One young Saudi related that, prior to going to Afghanistan, he had been abroad only once before, on a shopping trip to Bahrain. Apparently, his father had permitted the shopping trip, and then later approved of his son's foreign travel "to train." While it would be inaccurate to say that all of these young men had such limited travel experience, the Gulf State and Saudi detainees for the most part were not widely traveled. Some of the Saudis had taken pleasure/leisure trips out of the country; fewer Yemenis had been able to afford to do so. Many young detainees mentioned being recruited via the hajj experience. The hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca with religious activities that last a week. The intensely emotional setting of this event was used by more than one clever Al Qaeda recruiter to connect a young man to his next great religious experience: jihad. This was made easier by the fact that, embedded in jihad, are elements seductive to young adults: the rite of passage into manhood and the clear demonstration of one's commitment to Islam, the religion of one's fathers.

Getting the Saudis and the young men from the Gulf States to their destination proved to be difficult, hence the need for facilitators. Recruits from Europe and Africa were characterized by more extensive foreign travel and often had the ability to speak several languages.

They displayed a better ability to get around alone, and could often negotiate their travels more independently. The minimal travel experience of Gulf State and Saudi young men, however, called for additional support. They were more likely to be made to travel in pairs or in a group. Facilitators made sure that they would be received by the right persons in the right places, and would successfully reach their training destinations. Another interesting note is that no detainee ever mentioned that a contact or facilitator failed to appear. The facilitators were precise in meeting recruits, intercepting them at the right time and getting them from point to point across several countries.

Conditions in the Afghan Training Camps

Training facilities in Afghanistan were language specific. Since a shared language speeded up learning, training camps were largely organized by language group. Al Qaeda trained Arabs; Libyans trained North Africans; Uzbeks trained other Uzbeks and Tajiks. Leaving Western Europe or Saudi Arabia behind and going to Afghanistan also meant doing without the medical system and level of care one was accustomed to. Many detainees reported that they became ill at camp within the first month. It was apparently common for a recruit to come down with malaria and dysentery while in training; these and other illnesses could incapacitate the person for months. Central Asians, Europeans and Africans mention sickness experienced at the training camps less often. Gulf State and Saudi recruits talk about extended, debilitating illnesses that prevented them from finishing their training and even left them useless for combat. A few said that they had found it necessary to abandon the training altogether, and head to the border alone to reach Pakistan for medical treatment. The perception was that Pakistan offered "real" doctors and medical facilities whereas Afghanistan did not. Some tried to return home for treatment. Others said that when they became seriously ill at camp, they were removed to a

safe house or to a hospital (the one in Kunduz was mentioned specifically). In the camps, one could get a wound bandaged but there were no other medical supplies. The detainees were quick to realize that those in the camps "practicing medicine" were not real doctors. Therefore sick detainees used an unusual amount of initiative when it came to leaving a camp to seek medical attention.

It is striking that the recruiters in Saudi Arabia or Yemen allowed young men to leave for a destination without vaccinations for common regional illnesses (malaria, or yellow fever or tetanus). Al Qaeda knew what recruits would be exposed to in Afghanistan, yet neglected to educate them about the most common health risks and did not vaccinate them. Money for jihad was spent on plane tickets, hotel reservations, and transportation to safe houses and training camps, yet Al Qaeda put at risk, and lost, a significant amount of man power and man hours as its recruits fell ill in Afghanistan. It could be that Al Qaeda did not use the medical technology available to protect soldiers because their strategy was focused on the mass consumption of recruits, especially these quickly recruited, quickly trained and perhaps not very valuable foot soldiers. Even in detention, a number of the young men continued to hold frightening memories of the sicknesses they endured in the training camps or on the battlefield. Death for the cause of jihad and martyrdom were glorified in their propaganda, hence Al Qaeda may have felt that it had license to throw bodies into the fray. As many as a one-quarter of those in training camps reported getting an illness and suffering with it for months. By overlooking the medical underpinnings of a military operation, Al Qaeda actually commanded far less actual manpower than the number of recruits suggested. Sickness dramatically reduced Al Qaeda's ability to effectively help the Taliban and to stay the Northern Alliance's advance.

Besides lack of medical care, the young recruits also reported low levels of sustenance. Many reported having felt depleted and vulnerable. This army did not "travel on its stomach": camp food was mainly gruel. Recruits were given a subsistence diet and were expected to endure

"rough" physical conditioning at camp. Physical output and the lack of nutrition undoubtedly weakened the immunity of many, and they more readily succumbed to illnesses.[3] Some young men reported that rather than complain about conditions, they would seek to leave the camp. A few just walked out, abandoning training and making their way to the nearest town in an effort to return home. One young man who had volunteered for jihad refused to carry a weapon. He offered his services as an unarmed guard. For that "offense" he was sent to serve as a guard with a Pakistani group of soldiers – this was intended as an insult, because in the racist Saudi worldview that informs Al Qaeda's thinking, Pakistanis are considered inferior. Nevertheless, this young man had joined up with the Pakistani group and served there without complaint. Approximately fifteen of the detainees reported being arrested at a hospital in either Pakistan or Afghanistan. Many were unsure as to how they had gotten there. Some recalled that an Afghan local had taken them. Many did not know how long they had been there. Identified as Arabs or as foreign fighters by those at the hospital, they were promptly arrested by the Northern Alliance, or a Pakistani authority, and later given over to US forces.

The Stripping of Identity

Recruitment for jihad often necessitated the need for an alias. Many young men had settled upon a new name by the time they reached the

---

[3] Medical screening of those sent from Bagram to Guantanamo revealed a high incidence of stomach ulcers. Many detainees also needed medications to improve their psychological or psychiatric functioning. The afflictions found among detainees ranged from depression to the more serious bi-polar and schizophrenic disorders. The medical staff at Guantanamo believed that the fasting regimen of Islam may have contributed to the high incidence of ulcers found in the detainee population. As for the mental imbalances that many detainees suffered, long-term nutritional deficiencies, and the subsistence diets that are part of war did not contribute to psychological well-being. In fact, limited diets deprive the body of the chemical elements necessary for balanced functioning and give rise to chronic low blood sugar levels. This then leads to irritation, excitability, mood swings, and depression. Diet clearly affects mental health, but the degree to which nutritional deficiencies and the subsistence diets of Jihadists lead to extremist behavior has yet to be fully explored.

last of the safe houses they would stay at before arriving at the training camp. Supposedly this new name gave a measure of safety to the new recruit and protected his identity as well as that of his family. Just as they adopted a new identity, they were also asked to surrender any passports or national identification cards that could link them to their former selves. The recruits generally did not object to this, feeling that it was better to place their documents in safekeeping than to risk losing them. They took for granted that they would get these documents back when their training was completed, or when their participation in jihad concluded. Trust accounts for passports and other ID were set up and each recruit was given a retrieval number. The recruits never questioned whether the passports and IDs that they left in the safekeeping would remain in the locations where they were deposited.

Miscalculating the Response to 9-11

This particular batch of recruits had the bad fortune to be in Afghanistan when 9-11 occurred. Some of them were still in the training camps; others were already deployed on the fronts. When news of 9-11 reached these young men, it was natural for them to ask their older and more experienced trainers, some of them former Soviet mujahideen, what significance this had and what might happen next. Universally, they were told that "nothing" would happen. Therefore, many initially shrugged off any worry of post 9-11 retaliation. Many were aware that the Taliban had been hosting Osama Bin Laden, and they knew that Bin Laden moved among the training camps freely. Many had even heard him speak. Approval for the 9-11 attacks, not surprisingly, ran high. Islamic brothers had brought down a symbol of the West and Bin Laden had won a victory. Now, their superiors were assuring them that no danger would accrue to a foreign fighter in Afghanistan in consequence.

But what were the grounds for this widespread belief that "nothing" would happen? Apparently, this expectation was based on a

pattern Al Qaeda believed it discerned in U.S. action. After Khobar Towers as well as the USS Cole incident, the US had not taken strong retaliatory action. The expectation was that this pattern would continue. It is also possible that Al Qaeda just wanted to prevent panic. Though they may have suspected that a larger, far more dangerous game might just have begun, this may be a thought they did not wish to share with their untried young recruits. Whether the answer stemmed from an incorrect prediction of the likely US response, or was a move calculated to keep the troops calm, the result was that these youths, along with the former Soviet mujahideen, and the fighters from Bosnia and Chechnya, all sat patiently together on mountain slopes in Afghanistan waiting to fire upon the Northern Alliance, but expecting nothing more dramatic than that.

Escape from a War Zone

Six weeks after 9/11, the United States embarked on Operation Anaconda and began dropping bombs on suspected Al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan. Training facilities were these targets. By mid October, recruits from Europe, Africa, Central Asia, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States were running for their lives. One detainee explicitly said that when he looked up and saw U.S. planes, he knew that he did not want to fight the Americans. Many felt that they had signed up to fight the Northern Alliance, but had not bargained on the US entering the fray. Even the older men, who had said nothing would happen, were now desperate to leave Afghanistan. Many young men sought cover in the Tora Bora Mountains but were caught up in the bombing and suffered shrapnel wounds, or even lost limbs; some endured single and double amputations later. Several reported stepping on mines in and losing a leg. One African fighter in his mid thirties had his fingers amputated from the frostbite he endured in Tora Bora. Many were now sheltering in caves in the Tora Bora Mountains, not dressed for the cold weather, wondering if

supplies would be coming, and distrustful of the individuals they were now encamped with. They reported shock at the intense bouts of bombing. Several mentioned that while in the mountains headed to the Pakistani border it had seemed wise to ditch their weapons.

For most, this was a nightmarish and chaotic interlude. Some were able to hire local guides to get them out of the mountains, traveling on foot for many days in hopes of reaching the border. Some banded together in small groups. Those who were wounded in the border area could sometimes rely on a local Afghan to transport them somewhere else for medical help, but others were betrayed and turned over to the Northern Alliance. Several experienced abusive treatment in Northern Alliance prisons. Others reported that they could have purchased their freedom from the Northern Alliance but did not have enough money to satisfy the price demanded. A number of detainees retroactively concluded that if they had known what they had to face in jihad, they would not have participated except in direct defense of their homeland.

Stranded in jihad

It was not until the US bombing scattered the young men in the Arab units supporting the Taliban that the issue of national identifications and passports surfaced again. As they tried to escape Afghanistan and cross into other countries, the loss of their official papers became a major worry. Most knew where they had left their passport or ID card, but had no hope of going back to that location to retrieve it. On the one hand, they hoped that having a false name and no identification would make it more difficult for the arresting authority to prove that they were Arabs. But on the other hand, some thought that having a passport would give them some claim to assistance from their respective embassies. Interestingly enough, forged IDs or passports were rare. "Foot soldiers" rarely possessed forged documents; evidently Al Qaida reserved these for higher-level operatives.

A number of detainees said that once Kabul fell, locals warned them to leave Afghanistan, since foreign fighters were being rounded up and arrested. Many detainees then hired Afghan guides to help them cross into Pakistan. Many detainees said that not having passports, identification, or other travel documents heightened their fears of being isolated, trapped and stranded in a hostile place. One young detainee commented that when it came to getting Arabs out of Afghanistan safely, "Al Qaeda took care of their own". Other recruits, he believed, were left to their own devices.

Generally, Arab embassies did not attempt to locate and assist their nationals who had been arrested as foreign fighters. One Saudi representative was observed outside of a prison near Kandahar. It is not known whether this representative was passing through the area on some other business or whether he was sent to specifically examine the prison. This representative did not talk to any of the Saudi detainees. The more sophisticated Gulf State and Saudi recruits seemed clear about why their governments were not looking for them or attempting to aid them. After all, both Al Qaeda and other jihadists oppose the current Saudi government and other Arab governments, which they consider corrupt and illegitimate. But the more naïve recruits insisted that as holy warriors who were fighting for Islam, they deserved support from their governments. They were quite disappointed when help was not forthcoming.

The Unknowns of Capture and Captivity

Perhaps the greatest shock that young men on the battlefield, hiding in caves or in hospitals faced was capture, followed by a series of detentions by different authorities and culminating in their transfer into U.S. custody. The young men who were in prisons in either Afghanistan or Pakistan recall rough handling during interrogations and in their daily treatment. A few observed that other prisoners disappeared from their midst. Whether these men were released or

murdered remains unknown. These disappearances created unease in the group and caused many to wonder if they, too, would "disappear." Several reported that they had witnessed other prisoners being killed. A few recognized some former Taliban interrogators and torturers among the detainees in Guantanamo, and stated that these men had mistreated them in previous confinements. A handful of young men in detention described surviving the Mazar-E-Sharif uprising. One had been shot twice but had managed to crawl to a basement to hide. He had survived a week of explosions and flooding to emerge alive.

The experience of a prolonged detention in a foreign land was one outcome that none of the jihadists appeared to have anticipated. Imams, recruiters and trainers had spoken of martyrdom, but no one had mentioned imprisonment. Recruits were never warned of the hardships of incarceration and were not prepared for this experience.

Reframing jihad

Does the experience of captivity and imprisonment change the younger soldier more than the older? Are the younger jihadists more likely to take action against the US once released? Will a prison experience leave the younger men more likely to again engage in jihad against the West, or have they become sufficiently disenchanted to refuse its call? It is striking that a number of detainees have already psychologically re-framed their jihad experience. Many now state new parameters for engaging in jihad. Some say that they would only go on jihad again if it meant direct "homeland defense". Several stated that they would never participate in jihad again. Others said that they had now fulfilled their obligation and need not go on jihad again. Perhaps one in four of the young detainees would go on jihad again, but the greater portion of them would not. Interestingly, this distinguishes them from the older detainees, who appear to hold more strongly to their former convictions. Several narratives from older men explicitly captured the comment that it had been a great regret to them not to die

for Islam and achieve martyrdom status. The older men appear to be more "hard core" than the younger detainees, perhaps because they are more deeply patterned in their beliefs and behaviors. On first review, they do not appear as amenable to "rehabilitation", that is, to being returned to mainstream society and becoming more moderate in their beliefs. It is more likely that we can expect them back in the global fray, even at a more advanced age.

The younger men, on the other hand, demonstrate less rigidity in belief and behavior. They have already begun to show more fluidity in thinking as they re-frame jihad. Their repeated perception of disillusionment, of having been sold a false bill of goods, seems particularly worthy of further exploration. If there is any group worth the effort of a carefully planned psychology operations (PSYOP) effort to show them the dark side of jihad, it is clearly the young. An information campaign can educate young Islamic males to the negative realities and horrors of jihad. While going off to war may seem like a solution to life's problems for the jobless and the addicted, and while even the rigors of training, the risks of battle and the glories of martyrdom may appear quite glamorous, the same is not true of the malaise of prolonged detention, the betrayal by "brother Muslims" and the loss of health and limbs.

The experiences of these detainees could provide a powerful argument to dissuade other young people from joining jihad. Young jihadists in captivity draw many conclusions that their peers should be exposed to: that recruiters lied to them, that allies sold them out, that they were used and undervalued by their jihadist leaders, and that captivity is a probable and highly undesirable outcome. This message could be an effective counterbalance to the image of heroic jihad.

Sharon Curcio

Sharon Curcio has a B.A. from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA and an MBA in marketing from Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Ms. Curcio spent ten years in consumer marketing and advertising in New York and in Miami, and worked for such firms as The General Electric Company, Wells, Rich Green Advertising, DMBB (formerly Benton & Bowles Advertising), the Block Drug Company and Storer Communications.   In 1984 she assisted former Florida State Senator Jack Gordon in setting up the Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies at Florida International University, and taught for FIU as well as for the University of Miami, the Miami-Dade Community College system and for Dade County Public Schools. She currently continues to work in public education in California.

As an Army Reserve Intelligence Officer, CW-3 Sharon Curcio has been a military analyst for eighteen years with experience in multiple theatre (PACOM, CENTCOM, and SOUTHCOM) operations and intelligence requirements. She was called to active duty in late 2003, and served most of 2004 at Guantanamo Bay as a Fusion Analyst in Joint Interrogation Group (JIG). Her study of the differences in Jihadist thinking between younger and older generation GTMO detainees appears in her ***Minds Unalike***" white paper which was published in "MIPB" and in "Military Review."

4. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS RELATED TO DISENGAGING FROM TERRORISM: SOME PRELIMINARY ASSUMPTIONS AND ASSERTIONS – JOHN HORGAN[1]

Introduction

The relatively poor progress in attempting to resolve outstanding theoretical issues in the study of terrorism represents one of two major obstacles to conceptual development in the area (the lack of empirical data with which to test our hypotheses being the second). Given this, however, we sometimes are too quick to presume a lack of relevance of existing conceptual anchor points, perhaps especially when they emerge from disciplines other than our own. The consequent danger of being without intellectual starting points when studying terrorism is that we can quickly find ourselves with other problems, becoming so absorbed by the complexity of conflicting explanations that we fail to see common themes, and more importantly, fail to focus on more practical objectives.

Related to this, it ought to be pointed out that currently there is not merely confusion about what a 'psychology of terrorism' implies, but that even in some of the simplest critical analyses of the concept of the terrorist or of terrorism, a multiplicity of inconsistent and confusing uses of psychological findings emerges. Because of this confusion, some may conclude that an attempt to develop a psychology of terrorism (let alone a psychology of 'disengagement' from terrorism) is an unattainable objective. The current state of knowledge and debate on this issue suggests that we should attempt to develop a more sophisticated way of understanding involvement in terrorism. This may include an exploration of ways in which our understanding of

_____

1 Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence. School of International Relations, University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Email: john.horgan@st-andrews.ac.uk. Some of the examples presented here are taken from my earlier chapter 'Leaving Terrorism Behind' in Silke, A.(Ed), _Terrorists, Victims, Society_, London: Wiley, 2003, and from Horgan, J. _The Psychology of Terrorism_, London: Routledge, 2005, in which these issues are explored in fuller detail.

psychological processes can inform and improve our understanding of terrorism (and all that that implies). We may also find that 'description' represents a more realistic objective than 'explanation', given our current conceptual and theoretical limitations.

With this in mind, the arguments based in this paper as they relate to understanding 'disengagement' from terrorism remain tentative hypotheses, and until the relevant data are identified and these hypotheses tested, we ought to treat them as limited. Despite these necessary limitations, the views expressed in this paper represent a different approach to understanding the terrorist to those that have traditionally characterized psychological issues in understanding the development of the terrorist. As explained in detail in two other recent papers[2], acknowledging that involvement and engagement in terrorism is best thought of as a *process* brings fresh perspectives via critical distinctions that enable us to understand the reality of involvement in terrorism as well as provide a conceptual base from which we might develop beneficial analyses. By considering involvement in terrorism in terms of *process*, we also help to move aspects of these debates away from complex but essentially sterile discussions that postulate terrorism as some sort of abstract event. This allows us instead to focus on identifiable behaviors and their antecedents, and on expected consequences and outcomes that are associated with terrorism. Furthermore, this way of thinking attempts to capture a meaning for psychological approaches that do not depend upon narrow definitions derived from elsewhere, or from definitions that have to be so general as to be meaningless and of no real utility to anyone.

This perspective represents a very different approach to traditional analyses of the terrorist in that there is an explicit effort made to consider the broader issue of involvement in terrorism as

_____

[2] Horgan, J. and Bowman, L. 'A Psychological Approach to Understanding Initial and Increasing Involvement in Terrorism and Implications for Counterterrorism', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* forthcoming; Taylor, M. and Horgan, J. 'A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of The Terrorist', *Terrorism and Political Violence,* forthcoming.

a process comprised of discrete phases: **'becoming'** a terrorist[3], **'being'** a terrorist (understood as both a) remaining involved and b) engaging in terrorist offences) and **'disengaging'** from terrorism.[4]

A critical conceptual point that is important for informing response strategies (at whatever stage they may be focused) is that the factors that impinge upon the individual at each of these phases may a) not be necessarily related to each other, and b) may not necessarily reflect upon each other. In other words, answering the call of one of these phases of the process may not reveal anything useful or insightful about the other. This logic is consistent with Rational Choice perspectives in criminology. The implications of thinking about terrorism in such a way are essentially a recognition that answering questions about why people may wish to become involved in terrorism then may have little bearing on the answers that explain what they do (or are allowed to do) as terrorists (or something else), or how they actually become and remain involved in specific terrorist operations. Similarly, answering questions about what keeps people involved with a terrorist movement may have surprisingly little if any bearing on what subsequently sees them disengaging from terrorist operations or from the organization (and/or broader movement) altogether.

Becoming Involved in Terrorism

---

[3] The term 'becoming a terrorist' might be more usefully reinterpreted as 'initially becoming engaged and/or involved in doing terrorism'.

[4] Horgan, John, *The Psychology of Terrorism*. London, UK: Routledge, 2005.

In attempting to make practical progress here, identifying issues relating to 'how' people become involved may be more valuable than attempting to arrive at answers 'why' people become involved. Essentially then we need to shift our expectations away from the goal of arriving at a simple, and probably naïve, answer about terrorist motivation. This complexity is captured well by Taylor and Quayle[5] who describe involvement in terrorism as:

> "… in this respect no different from any of the other things that people do. In one sense, embarking on a life of terrorism is like any other life choice … To ask why an individual occupies a particular social, career or even family role is probably a deceptively easy but essentially unanswerable question. What we can do, however, is to identify factors in any particular situation that helps us understand why particular life choices have been made. This same analysis applies to the development of the terrorist."

The common personal, situational, and cultural factors across accounts that reveal why and how people become involved are usually quite broad and seem unrelated in a practical sense, in that rarely is there a clear, singular, involvement catalyst that is identifiable in that decision. Even when an individual him or herself suggests the perceived presence of such a catalyst, we ought to interpret its significance with great caution since personal accounts often obscure acknowledgement of the expected positive features of involvement. We might run the risk therefore of forming quite an incomplete and biased interpretation of an already biased account. When we are in a position to consider accounts from activists around the world, different qualities are certain to emerge, with different emphases on particular 'push' and 'pull' factors, reflecting different roles held by different people under different degrees of ideological content, social, ideological and organizational control, commitment, etc. Sometimes the

---

[5] Taylor, M. and Quayle, E. *Terrorist Lives,* London: Brassey's, 1994.

extent to which evidence of the presence of these issues emerging in interviews can simply reflect the degree to which an individual activist is articulate or not, and whether he or she has verbalized openly the rationale or morality of his or her activities and other such co-incidentals. Frequently the terrorists providing the accounts will have acquired the ability to couch an explanation for their behavior (at whatever stage of the process) into such an elaborate, spiritually or ideologically dogmatic framework that we receive very little (if any) notion of the specific limiting factors that may have impinged upon individual thinking and personal decision-making that led the individual either into the movement in the first place, or further into a sense of 'increased' involvement and engagement.

A sense of gradual socialization into terrorism appears to be a common theme, with an initial sense of involvement seemingly characterized by gradual increases in commitment. Group factors are also centrally important in attempting to identify supportive qualities of initial engagement. Overall, we get a sense that the boundaries between apparent *degrees* of involvement are often more psychological than physical (although engaging in actual terrorist operations can bring with them a sense of ritual aimed at unambiguously solidifying commitment to the group and its activities), with a sense of premium attached not only to membership, but moreover to certain, specific roles.

There are frequently overlooked and misinterpreted positive features of increased engagement for the individual terrorist. These include the rapid acquisition of some sort of skill or skills (be they physical or psychological); an increased sense of empowerment, purpose and self-importance; an increased sense of control which appears to reflect the common effects of ideological control and self-propaganda, as well as the use of particular involvement steps as currency, which mirrors the point above about the necessary distinctions between degrees of involvement. Additionally, the individual terrorist gains a tangible sense of acceptance within the group, and in combination with this, the

acquisition of real status within the broader community, which is often expressed subsequently via identification with the broader supportive community. A perceived sense of reward quite possibly represents the only common denominator across all potential terrorists in terms of understanding the common factors that impinge upon the wide variety of different people who engage in terrorist movements in very diverse ways.

Although it is not difficult to identify the broad socio-political preconditions for a climate that is conducive to the emergence of terrorism[6], it remains the case that few people will be led by that climate to engage in terrorism, let alone in specific violent terrorist activity. In a more detailed analysis, I have identified factors that may help us understand why this sense of *openness to engagement* is more readily found in some people than in others[7] -- even within the same group of people, all of whom may have been clearly exposed to the same assumed generating conditions to terrorism. For all terrorists in all movements, involvement is perhaps best characterized by development based on initial supportive qualities that vary in their significance for the individual, the individual group, and the relationship which both of these have with each other and with their surrounding environment (environment here refers to a broad array of competing influences, be they physical, ideological, social etc.). The reality is that there are many factors (often so complex in their combination that it can be difficult to delineate them, particularly when considering practical counter-terrorism initiatives) that can come to bear on an individual's intentional or unintentional socialization into involvement with terrorism.

In recognizing the group dimension to involvement in terrorism (at whatever stage the individual may be), the consequences of what that recognition implies are obvious: psychological qualities of group membership quickly become apparent for the extreme potential both to attract members as well as to bind them together via sustained

---

[6] Bjorgo, T.(Ed.), *Root Causes of Terrorism*, London: Routledge, 2005.

[7] Horgan, John, *The Psychology of Terrorism*. London: Routledge, 2005, Chapter 4.

commitment and engagement. Extreme conformity and strict obedience are organizational cornerstones that leaders will put in place through various mechanisms to enhance the effective maintenance of what is already a difficult, secret, and above all *illegal* movement. It follows then, that maintaining such conformity is paramount, and having a shared purpose or sense of unity and direction, which in itself is catalyzed by having a clearly identifiable enemy (and its activities), facilitates this. We have also seen that the distinction between where one lies with respect to the 'initially becoming involved' and 'being involved' is in one sense as much a psychological issue as anything else, but thinking of participation in terrorist events as a possible delineation point is useful: any remaining hurdles of finally having one's identity reaffirmed within the terrorist group often comes through engagement in activity considered centrally valuable to the organization.

Disengaging from Terrorism

I will not discuss the phase of 'being a terrorist' as it has been extensively discussed elsewhere[8], but will instead move directly to the final phase - disengagement. At the outset, it seems noteworthy to state that we know very little about what happens for the individual terrorist to leave terrorism behind. It is obvious that the psychological research community has for far too long focused on issues to do with becoming involved, leaving a significant gap in our knowledge. A disheartening reason for this is an ambivalent perception by researchers towards issues concerning and arising from, disengagement. Many researchers assume that terrorists and their movements are somehow no longer 'relevant', or deserving of serious, urgent study, once their involvement in terrorism has ceased (or the movement has entered a cease-fire or peace process). Yet it is precisely at this phase that former terrorists are most likely to be willing to speak to researchers and grant interviews. From a policy perspective, it is clear that

---

[8] Horgan, John, *The Psychology of Terrorism*. London: Routledge, 2005, Chapter 5.

understanding and encouraging disengagement could have a crucial role to play in countering extremist violence.

In thinking about disengagement from terrorism, there are questions we need to answer in relation to what happens to people who leave terrorism, issues relating to what influences them to leave (either voluntarily or involuntarily), as well as the implications of such movement. Indeed, a broader issue here, and one that is especially relevant given the complexity of what 'becoming involved' seems to now suggest, concerns what we mean by 'disengaging' or 'leaving' at all. Leaving terrorism might on the one hand suggest critical cognitive and social changes, in terms of leaving behind the shared social norms, values, attitudes and aspirations so carefully forged while the individual was still a member of a terrorist group. On the other hand it might indicate some continued adherence to these values and attitudes, and engaging in some other socially relevant behaviour but no longer engaging in actual terrorist operations.

Obviously, disengagement cannot be studied in isolation. To gain a fuller understanding of how and why people leave terrorism behind we do need to consider the varied and complex reasons as to why and how people join a terrorist group in the first place, and also how and why they remain in an organization. Also, we will need to consider reasons that can inhibit or block the exit (be it **psychological**—e.g. through disillusionment with some aspect the group— or **physical**—e.g. through apprehension by the security services, or the decision to call a cease-fire). To further complicate matters, we might think of each of these as either **voluntary** in origin (e.g. the decision that continued membership of the group is no longer as important as some overriding personal issue) or **involuntary** (e.g. an individual is forced to leave in the face of some external issue such as the reality of arms decommissioning, or some new legislative initiative, and the implications this has for organizational dissipation), or a combination, for instance in the form of an outright rejection of the group's ideals as a result of a political shift in the group's stance.

We already then have two broad possible categories with in which we can consider the influences 'pushing or 'pulling' a person to leave terrorism behind: voluntary and involuntary disengagement.

The Seeds of Psychological Disengagement

A successful terrorist movement will successfully attract new members by creating and fostering positive perceptions about involvement. If effective, this means that some people will actively seek out involvement in a terrorist movement. It is often the case that in earning trust, respect and a place in the terrorist movement, members (or potential recruits) will encounter psychological barriers that they must overcome or to which they must adapt. If not, the seeds of what we might term 'psychological' disengagement will already begin to set, and a variety of influences appear to directly or indirectly facilitate (or even encourage) the prospect of leaving.

The perceived or actual rewards involved in terrorist groups can include an enormous amount of excitement, status, purpose, admiration, coupled with what McCauley and Segal[9] refer to 'mutual solidarity and feelings of comradeship', and these supportive qualities of involvement are exceptionally important, especially given the kinds of new demands facing the terrorist recruit. Indeed, given illegal underground life more generally, these features can become quite potent. The reality of balancing out the negative features of increased, sustained and focused involvement with the positive supportive qualities is rarely straightforward, however, and the negative intensity of the group is demonstrated by many accounts of members who have left the organisation and have written memoirs or autobiographies. For instance, Michael

---

[9] McCauley, C. R. and Segal, M.E., 'Terrorist Individuals and Terrorist Groups: The Normal Psychology of Extreme Behaviour', in J. Groebel and J. H. Markstein (Eds.), *Terrorism: Psychological Perspectives,* Seville: University of Seville Publications, 1989, pp.41-64.

Baumann[10], a former member of the German 2nd June Movement, reflects on the negative influence exercised by the power of the group:

> … the group becomes increasingly closed. The greater the pressure from the outside, the more you stick together, the more mistakes you make, the more pressure is turned inward … this crazy concentration all day long, those are all the things that come together horribly at the end, when there's no more sensibility in the group: only rigid concentration, total pressure to achieve, and it keeps going, always gets worse.

Increased security often brings greater pressure arising from attempts to safeguard against infiltration or internal disputes. In February of 1969, Japanese police discovered 14 bodies in the snowy mountains outside Tokyo. It transpired that they had all been members of the Japanese Red Army, and had been tortured and killed by their fellow members as a result of internal squabbling over ideological issues.

While some recruits will adjust to the pressure, others do not. Again, there is little reliable data on this issue, but we do know that individual terrorists make requests to 'leave', having decided that the lifestyle is not for them. Anecdotal evidence suggests that sometimes this is not a problem, given the implicit assumption that the member will 'not talk'. Indeed the Italian Red Brigades (on which Jamieson[11] gives perhaps the best glimpse into the factors affecting disengagement) appeared to have realized the importance of identifying probable 'drop-outs' from the outset: "when a firing group went into action, one, or at the most two, 'novices' were taken along to provide cover and to test their nerve and reliability under pressure." The Red Brigades adopted

---

[10] Cited in Alexander, Y. and Myers, K.A.(Eds), *Terrorism in Europe*, London: Croom Helm, 1982, p.174.

[11] Jamieson, A., *The Heart Attacked: Terrorism and Conflict in the Italian State,* London: Marian Boyers, 1989.

what was tantamount to a crude psychometric screening tool via assessment under extraordinary pressure.

For many facing self-doubt, however, leaving may not be so easy. After all, regardless of what stage along the 'becoming involved' and 'being involved' continuum a person lies, the organization will seek a return on their investment and a promise to keep one's mouth shut may not be enough. The leadership of the Baader-Meinhof group never hesitated to clarify this: "Whoever is in the group simply has to hold out, has to be tough."[12] In later stage they threatened that the only way out for any doubters would be "feet first." Similarly, Spire[13], a former member of the French Communist Party, describes the fear of ostracism and marginalization if one "challenges the ideology … or the fashionable beliefs." Spire described in detail his own attempts to rationalize "breaches of faith, oppression, and political crimes" because he felt "terrified at the thought of being marginalized by beloved fellow comrades and colleagues." Adriana Faranda of the Italian Red Brigades also reflects on the pressures associated with membership and the negative social and psychological consequences of sustained membership:

> … choosing to enter the Red Brigades—to become clandestine and therefore to break off relations with your family, with the world in which you'd lived until the day before—is a choice so total that it involves your entire life, your daily existence. It means choosing to occupy yourself from morning till night with problems of politics, or organization, and fighting; and no longer with normal life—culture, cinema, babies, the education of your children, with all the things that fill other people's lives. These things get put to one side, ignored, because they simply do

---

[12] Post, J.M., 'Group and Organisational Dynamics of Political Terrorism', in P. Wilkinson and A.M. Stewart (Eds.) *Contemporary Research on Terrorism*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987, p.310.

[13] Spire, A., 'Le Terrorisme Intellectuel', *Patio*, Vol. 11, 1988, 150-158.

not exist any more. And when you remove yourself from
society, even from the most ordinary things, ordinary ways of
relaxing, you no longer share even the most basic emotions.
You become abstracted, removed. In the long run you actually
begin to feel different. Why? Because you are different. You
become closed off, become sad, because a whole area of life
is missing, because you are aware that life is more than
politics and political work.[14]

Another significant pressure that may later catalyze the move
(psychological or physical) to leave is the uncomfortable individual
realization that the initial aspirations and personal hopes associated
with membership are quite removed from the day-to-day reality of what
the duties and responsibilities of this new role involve. Brockner and
Rubin[15] developed the notion of *psychological traps,* which refer to
situations where an individual, having decided upon some course of
action that the he or she expects will return a reward (in the broadest
possible sense), for example joining a terrorist group or remaining in
such a group, finds that the actual process of goal attainment requires
a continuing and repeated 'investment'. This 'repeated investment', in a
psychological sense, will probably be required of that individual to
sustain his or her involvement, but still the achievement of the
eventual goal may continue to be a very distant realization. Brockner
and Rubin note that somewhere in this process will be an inevitable
stage when people find themselves in a 'decisional no-man's land',
facing the realization that they have made quite a substantial
investment but have still not yet achieved their expected goal.

At this point, the individual is at a crossroads, and experiences
a decisional crisis. The investment of time, energy and hope may seem
too large (especially when combined with the intense social, group, and

---

14 Jamieson, A., *The Heart Attacked: Terrorism and Conflict in the Italian State,*
London: Marian Boyers, 1989, pp.267-268.

15 Brockner, J. and Rubin, J.Z., *Entrapment in Escalating Conflicts,* New York:
Springer-Verlag, 1985.

ideological pressures one must bear per se as a result of membership). On the other hand, withdrawal means the abandonment of what has gone before, and the individual may feel a commitment if only to personally justify the investment already made. The ensuing entrapment, as Max Taylor describes, encompasses "the spiraling of commitment, so frequently seen in members of terrorist groups."[16]

Rubin[17] identifies three critical qualities of these traps: (a) The ability to lure or distract the trap's victim into behavior which may be quite socially psychologically costly to him, (b) the construction of the trap allows only decisions that permit greater movement into the trap, and (c) efforts to escape serve only to increase the trap's bite. The longing for one's former "normal" life, with social contacts, the ability to walk the streets or to simply engage in a romantic relationship are all examples of personal factors which, at any stage of the process, may become prioritized (perhaps arising from, and leading to, distinct emotional states that could be seen to characterize a greater openness to embracing such possibilities) and thereby facilitate at least the beginning of psychological disengagement (probably at the moment doubt arises). What path the member chooses to follow subsequently will be subjected to all of these and further influences.

Other psychological influences

Jerrold Post[18] highlights the fact that the group pressures can have a variety of implications for decision-making within that group. Individual judgment in most decision-making groups tends to be "suspended and subordinated to the group process."[19] Post describes Janis' work on groupthink, the phenomenon that occurs in situations

---

[16] Taylor, M., *The Terrorist,* London: Brassey's, 1988, p.168.

[17] Cited in Taylor, M., *The Terrorist*. London: Brassey's, 1988.

[18] Post, J.M., 'Group and Organisational Dynamics of Political Terrorism', in P. Wilkinson and A.M. Stewart (Eds.) *Contemporary Research on Terrorism,* Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987, p.310.

[19] Ibid.

where group cohesiveness is high and the ability of the group to engage
in critical decision-making processes is interfered with. In such cases,
the desire of group members to portray unanimity in the context of their
decision-making appears to take precedence over their motivation to
'realistically appraise' alternative decisions. The group becomes blind
to the possibility that its decision might not be the most effective,
and ultimately this may prevent the group from attaining its goal. Post
notes that there is an overwhelming sense of 'wishful thinking' in such
groups, but emphasizes that the processes by which such faulty decision-
making can occur are quite simple: when one joins a group, the group's
views become evident from discussion, and new members may seek approval
by sharing those views in an attempt to display commitment to the
group's ideal and thereby demonstrate loyalty.

   At the same time, however, the terrorist may find that some of his
or her most deeply held political ideals – the ones that led them to
become involved the movement in the first place – are being compromised
as a result of the stifling organizational 'climate' within the group or
through the role of certain individuals within it. This can give rise to
enormous dissent, whether expressed overtly or not. A good example comes
from an interview conducted by the author in Northern Ireland in early
1999. The following interview segment illustrates how several factors
can come into play and how conformity, obedience, groupthink and the
influence exerted by a minority can – eventually -- lead to a change in
direction for the group, and can contribute to one member's gradual
disillusionment with the movement:

      The meeting was called, and we all knew there was going
   to be trouble. We were all told we had to be there and I'd
   say a lot of fellas were told they were going to be told off
   in front of everyone. [The leader] came in and called things
   to order. He went around to each of us and wanted reports.
   When he came to me I was last, but I had to speak up. I told
   him that our arms situation was in dire straits and unless we
   were going to do something about it quick, let alone about

the lack of funds, that we were just shooting ourselves in
the foot. I had the greatest faith in that man, but he had
this way of not wanting to see the reality of things as they
were. So I said, we need to elect a Quartermaster, and that
person would have complete responsibility for the procuring
of the stuff as well as managing it, you know? He wasn't
pleased at that because like I said, his ideas about the
organization was that it was 'grand', 'no problem' like. When
the meeting ended, one of the lads caught up with me on the
steps, and I never liked the [man] anyway, but he actually
shook my hand! He said 'congratulations, that needed to be
said'. No one else would have said it if I didn't open up my
mouth.

The organization this person belonged to was the Official IRA, a
movement that became defunct in the early 1970s primarily because it was
unable to develop an effective political presence. This interviewee, one
of the founding members of the group, left the movement and eventually
emigrated:

I went to [country X] for several years I was just so
pissed off with the whole thing. We were originally
established to espouse socialism. And I know we offended a
lot of people [laughs] especially since we were simply
spouting every party line that came from Moscow, but [the
leader] brought the trouble on himself by not being in touch
with the mood on the ground and I never really patched things
up with him after that … It's miserable when you … believe in
it, believe in the movement and the, ah, initial socialist
ideals I suppose. I gave up my house, my car … you had people
give up their farms, and for what in the end? Arguing about
guns all the time because we'd no money.

This man's disillusionment appears to have developed over some
time. Comparison with Alison Jamieson's interviews with Faranda reveals

unmistakable similarities. Faranda described her 'dissociation' from the
Red Brigades as:

> … a process which matured very gradually … it's not a
> traumatic leap, it's more a matter of a thousand little
> stages. It encompasses everything though; reasoning,
> valuations, questions which involve not just one action, not
> one way of conducting the armed struggle, not one
> revolutionary project—everything. It involves the revolution
> itself; Marxism, violence, the logic of enmity, of conflict,
> of one's relationship with authority, a way of working out
> problems, of confronting reality and of facing the future … I
> haven't taken one huge traumatic leap. It's not as if I was
> one person one day and a different one the next.

What is significant here is that both of these accounts point to a
gradual process of disengaging that appears similar to the process that
characterizes involvement in terrorism in the first place.

For others, however, singular catalytic events appear to spur a
more abrupt psychological disengagement. Sean O'Callaghan[20], the former
Provisional IRA (PIRA) terrorist who subsequently became the most
important informer against the PIRA for the Irish and British security
services, describes one of his most important memories as a young PIRA
member:

> I come from the South. I come from a Republican family
> and was heavily influenced in 1969 by the pogroms in Belfast
> and loads of nationalist refugees fleeing south. I joined the
> Provisional IRA at 15 and I ended up in East Tyrone and
> started to become very aware that the Provisional campaign on
> the ground was extremely sectarian. That began to worry me.
> Once in 1975 I was sitting in a flat in Monaghan, along with

---

[20] This example cited in Horgan, John, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, London:
Routledge, 2005.; also see O'Callaghan, S. *The Informer,* London: Granta, 1998.

about eight or ten people from the East Tyrone IRA who were
on the run. A news item came on the television. A policewoman
had been killed in a bomb explosion in Bangor. A person, who
later became chief of staff at the IRA for many years, turned
to me and said, 'I hope she's pregnant and we get two for the
price of one'. I'd been brought up in a kind of romantic,
nationalist background in the deep south and I wasn't
prepared or able to cope with that kind of hate and bigotry.

O'Callaghan describes this as the defining moment that caused him
not only to question his own involvement in the movement, but
subsequently to inflict damage on the movement -- by turning informer.
Of course, we cannot generalize from single examples, but as with the
recalled and presumed significance of single events (either to
characterize involvement or disengagement), their true significance is
likely to emerge when acting upon some state of 'readiness' or openness
towards disengagement. It is likely that O'Callaghan had prior doubts
about his commitment to the movement before the above event that seemed
to propel him into greater certainty that he wanted to leave.

In summary, we can tentatively identify factors that appear to
contribute to a move towards psychological disengagement:

1. Negative sentiments as a result of experiencing the qualities
   associated with sustained, focused membership (e.g. the influence
   of unbearable group and organizational psychological pressures)
   and as a result;

2. A sense of changing priorities (e.g. the longing for a
   social/psychological state which (real or imaginary) the member
   feels is lacking, or existed before membership, often a result of
   self-questioning but mostly following prolonged
   social/psychological investment as a member from which little
   return appears evident);

3. A sense of growing disillusionment with the avenues being pursued (e.g. with the political aims (as illustrated in the Official IRA interviewee example); or with the operational tactics and the attitudes underpinning them (as illustrated by O'Callaghan's statement).

Physical Disengagement

In many ways, the reasons for what might be called 'physical' disengagement may be easier to identify. Relevant disengagement behaviors and their antecedents might be thought of as 'physical' where there is a change in the role of an individual terrorist away from opportunities to engage in violent behavior, whether or not this move results in a lessening of commitment to the group. Often there can be physical disengagement from terrorist activity per se, but no change or reduction in ideological support (or indeed, the social and psychological control that the particular ideology exerts on the individual). Indeed, in some cases physical disengagement from terrorism (in terms of being removed from the activity of committing terrorist violence) might involve any of the following, none of which should be considered exclusive:

- Apprehension by the security services, perhaps with subsequent imprisonment (or if not, forced movement by the leadership of the member into a role whereby he or she is less likely to risk arrest);

- Forced movement into another role, for example as a result of disobeying orders: at the very least ostracism may occur, if not outright execution, but if there is some mitigating circumstance the member may instead be pushed into another functional role;

- An increase in 'other role' activity whereby the original role becomes displaced (e.g. an area of specialization that relates directly to the commission of terrorist offences such as

exploiting one's technical acumen by assisting in the preparation
of equipment), or increased involvement in political activity
(often as a result of imprisonment, which, ironically for some
represents a final consolidation of communal identity);

- Being ejected from the movement (e.g. for improper use of arms,
  money, etc. or some disrespectful behavior that warrants dismissal
  but not execution);

- As with psychological disengagement, a change in priorities.

The crucial difference between physical and psychological
disengagement is that the terrorist may continue playing a part in the
movement but may move into another role/function in order to facilitate
new personal circumstances (e.g. getting married or having children, and
moving into a support or ancillary role as a result): they may still
continue to engage in 'terrorism'-related behaviors, but not in a direct
way with respect to 'terrorist events' or operations per se. The other
direction from which this role change might emerge is from the
leadership, who may place a heavier emphasis on political activity in
the months approaching an election. In simple practical terms, this
might involve an active terrorist engaging in distributing posters or
helping to organize political rallies.

A vital source from which one can formulate hypotheses relating to
disengagement processes is analysis of organizational issues, as far as
the terrorist leadership is concerned, both with respect to promoting
engagement and inhibiting any form of (but especially psychological)
disengagement. In any case, a clear priority for research will be in
understanding role migration between and within members.

Implications of leaving

The focus of this paper so far has been on tentative attempts to
identify some of the influences that might contribute to disengagement.

However, a further illustration of just how complex the issue is can be found when we consider the actual implications of leaving. Terrorists who leave a movement (for whatever reason) might not necessarily have appreciated the extent to which certain aspects of their lives will be limited thereafter. The psychological pressures that follow the former terrorist wherever he or she goes sometimes become so intense as to convince him or her into surrendering. For instance, Kuldip Singh, a former member of the Khalistan Liberation Force, surrendered to the police in 2000 for crimes committed in 1991.[21] Police reports stated that Singh's confession was spurred by his wish to start a new life following his trial. That same year, Hans Joachin Klein, a former colleague in arms of Carlos the Jackal, was tried before a court, 25 years after his role in the infamous Carlos-led attack on the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil ministers' meeting in 1974 and after a lifetime on the run from the authorities. And in the same year, the founding member of the Japanese Red Army terror group, Fusako Shigenobu was arrested in western Japan after more than 25 years underground. While protection from the enemy may not be enough to keep the members part of the group at the initial phase(s), there may be little to protect them from relentless law-enforcement and intelligence efforts to bring them to justice.

Security services will often attempt to recruit ex-terrorists in an effort to persuade them to provide evidence against a terrorist movement. This may even become a factor in facilitating a way out of the group for an individual in the first place. Sean O'Callaghan occupies a valuable educational role in raising awareness about the Provisional IRA. Eamon Collins, another PIRA informer, gave evidence (as did O'Callaghan) at the trial of an alleged PIRA leader. Government credibility is crucial if disengagement is to be promoted as a possible counter-terrorism strategy, but the tactics used by many governments have been less than tasteful in attempting to procure 'supergrasses' in Northern Ireland or the more imaginative 'pentiti' program in Italy

---

[21] These examples from Horgan, John, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, London: Routledge, 2005.

where former terrorists (and members of the Mafia) received reduced sentences or other concessions for their assistance in police investigations.

The Irish and British governments continuously attempted to facilitate organizational disengagement by Irish Republicans by reiterating their view that they did not view the PIRA's engagement in arms decommissioning as an act of 'surrender'. This in effect was part of a 'face-saving' strategy via which the PIRA leadership could attempt to gradually de-escalate its campaign (on all levels bar political). However, the reintegration of terrorists into society poses significant challenges in ways perhaps not considered at the time of the formulation of these policies. In Northern Ireland, despite the monumental progress made in the region, forgiveness does not come cheap, and while high-level terrorist violence may currently remain a thing of the past, the civil violence and naked sectarianism slowly destroying community-based peace efforts have not been encouraging signs of expected progress.

Even when the entire terrorist movement begins to dissipate, the route members may take can vary enormously. Some might drift towards other illegal activity (such as organized crime), an option made easier if the individual was involved in similar activity whilst a member of the terrorist organization (e.g. in the context of fundraising). In such circumstances, the individual may still attempt to employ the nom de guerre of the movement in the face of threats from rival groupings. Others might drift into social isolation and the psychological problems this can create (depression, substance abuse, etc.), while others might find employment and a healthy life with new relationships.

Often the perceived availability of viable avenues might reflect such issues as: (a) the extent of the person's involvement in the group (e.g. very part-time, part-time, or full-time), (b) the extent to which psychological support and identity comes solely from the terrorist group itself, and (c) whether or not the terrorist feels that his or her (perhaps lifetime) commitment to the group has actually been worth it.

Following the decommissioning announcement, many Irish Republicans have continued their soul-searching, and some security analysts believe that it is possibly only because the other dissident groups in Ireland are perceived as either in complete disarray (i.e. the Real IRA) or too 'ideologically motivated' (i.e. the Continuity IRA) that there has not been a mass shifting of allegiance.

Understanding disengagement

As acknowledged at the beginning, it is too ambitious to provide a detailed discussion of disengagement from terrorism from the kinds of individual and group psychological perspectives offered here. In the absence of data, the assertions in this paper can only be considered preliminary; we are only at the beginning stages of uncovering the 'story' of disengagement. Still, we do now have some potential starting points. If anything concrete has emerged from the preceding examples it is surely that our notion of 'leaving terrorism' needs to be considered in a sophisticated way, with the same levels of complexity as the complex combination of factors that push and pull individuals into terrorism in the first place. This does not devalue the any present or future process-based model of terrorism, but we do need to recognize the disengagement phase as the least-informed.

In the preceding discussion, we might well have considered disengagement from a variety of levels of analysis. In many cases, the 'ending' of terrorism is a process that for a terrorist organization begins and progresses over a significant period of time and that often starts with the realization that terrorist violence on its own rarely, if ever, manages to achieve its aims. In the case of the Provisional IRA, the joint development of what senior Republican Danny Morrison once famously described as the "ballot box and armalite strategy"—the pursuit of the movement's political aspirations along with an increasingly discriminating and tactical use of its 'armed struggle'— probably signaled the beginning of the process that recently culminated in decommissioning.

It might be too obvious at this point to suggest that more research
is needed, but given the lack of basic data (from which we might in the
future move from the merely speculative more easily), at least the call
for more research in this particular area should be forgiven: most of
the examples in this paper derive from European accounts, perhaps
unsurprisingly given that it has been home to the most commonly-studied
terrorist movements. There is practically no data on these issues
regarding movements like Al Qaeda. There are many questions to be
answered and the following list of research issues might represent a
modest beginning to such a process. Their common emphasis does not rest
on identifying implications for law enforcement or policy concerns (we
may be too early in our thinking about disengagement to try to do this),
but on illustrating psychological principles inherent in thinking about
disengagement as an important research topic per se:

- Assessing and understanding the nature and extent of the roles
  played by individual terrorists within their organizations in
  terms of promoting either momentary or long-term de-escalation of
  tactical activity, strategic activity or indeed of an entire
  campaign;

- An exploration of the measures taken (if any) within terrorist
  organizations in the psychological preparation of organizational
  de-escalation (with an impending disintegration);

- An analysis of what terrorist documentation and training material
  has to say about individual disengagement;

- An exploration of what happens to members during temporary
  cessations of organizational terrorist activity (e.g. during
  ceasefires) and the steps taken (if any) to attempt to maintain
  organizational unity;

- An exploration of ex-member lives outside the terrorist structure—what are the psychological effects of increased isolation from the group? This might be considered at a variety of levels—personal, family, etc.—and explored as a function of varying pressures on the individual depending on the social, political or organizational climate;

- An exploration of the factors that lead to partial disengagement from role-specific behaviors: for example voluntary movement away from involvement in actual operations (e.g. shootings, bombings) to voluntary involvement in other activities (e.g. political, organizational, financial etc.);

- An exploration of how and to what extent former terrorists express remorse, and what actions are taken (if any) to alleviate the associated stress;

- Comparative analyses of the experiences of involuntarily disengaged terrorists (e.g. imprisoned terrorists or those who have been moved into other roles, and those affected by organizational disintegration etc.); similarly, comparative analyses between different forms of political extremism;

- An examination of the possibility that different roles and functions within terrorist organizations have varying attrition rates with respect to voluntary disengagement (e.g. fundraisers vs. gunmen vs. bombers vs. organizers vs. political actors etc.): we might ask what are the psychological implications of performance within specific organizational functions and are some roles more likely than others to result in voluntary disengagement? This, incidentally, would serve a dual function in moving the nature and direction of other psychological research from the profiling of 'terrorists' per se to the profiling of organizational roles and functions as well as an appreciation of

the sense of the factors that contribute to migration between roles.

The most readily available data from which we might construct a model of disengagement comes from dated autobiographical sources, and while more basic research using such sources ought to be encouraged, caution must be exercised in assessing the value of the data from such sources. Rather than attempting to seek some 'truth' in such sources, a more promising avenue would be to explore the nature of the accounts presented in such texts, perhaps in an effort to identify common themes and processes. This would be one clear way of moving towards a different kind of terrorist 'profiling' that would offer important benefits over vague attempts at constructing personality-based profiles for unclear purposes.

Reliance on autobiographical sources will always suffer from a variety of problems, perhaps the most obvious being that there is little autobiographic material available. First-hand research, primarily via interview, is necessarily limited by a number of different practical issues, not least fears for personal safety. Such research is clearly possible, and the experiences of a small number of researchers have demonstrated that terrorist organizations generally tend to co-operate and be facilitative of researchers' approaches (with the proviso that the researcher is assumed to play some potential role in achieving a greater audience, for instance), and in the context of disengagement we might be able to identify potential interviewee types as physically or psychologically disengaged, 'involuntarily disengaged' across either physical or psychological dimensions, as well as whether or not they are now to be viewed as 'repentant' or 'unrepentant' (this final dimension contains obvious implications for questioning styles and interrogative strategies on the part of the interviewer).

To try to answer why people leave terrorism in straightforward terms obscures the complexity of the question and the possible assumptions that underpin it. It is for this reason that the question

'Why do people leave terrorism?' is as conceptually and pragmatically difficult to answer as 'Why do people become terrorists?' Leaving terrorism may be the result of circumstances outside of one's control, or just like joining a terrorist group it may even resemble a decision made from an array of personal, social or occupational choices. If, as has been frequently argued, terrorism is a product of its own time and place, this thinking can also be extended to terrorist decision-making and to the processes influencing how terrorists see themselves. Disengagement from terrorism from an individual perspective ought to be viewed with the same complexity as issues relating to the phase of initially becoming involved in the first place. If at some future point there are calls for taxonomy of the factors contributing to disengagement (some have been suggested here), researchers will first and foremost to acknowledge the dynamic processes influencing individual behavior regarding any stage, role or function of the terrorist group for the individual involved.

Dr. John Horgan

Dr. John Horgan recently joined the School of International Relations at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, having previously lectured at University College, Cork, Ireland. He has a background in criminal and forensic psychology and has spent several years researching Irish Republican terrorism. He has a PhD from University College, Cork, and his principal research interests address psychological aspects of insurgent terrorism and radicalization, the relationship between ideology, fundamentalism and violence, and a variety of issues related to counterterrorism. His work has been widely published and his most recent book is 'The Psychology of Terrorism' (2005, Routledge).

5. CYBERMULLAHS AND THE JIHAD – RADICAL WEBSITES FOSTERING ESTRANGEMENT AND HOSTILITY AMONG DIASPORA MUSLIMS -- CHERYL BENARD

Considerable attention has been paid to the disruptive activities of terrorist recruiters, radical preachers and extremist mosques within the Diaspora communities of Europe. During 2005, the trial of Dutch assassin Mohammed Bouyeri, the London subway bombings and the protracted riots in France have further underscored the broad range of potentially explosive problems posed by inadequately assimilated Muslim minorities in the West.1

Even as Western governments and institutions begin to understand the dimensions of the problem confronting them, and try to craft more effective integrative approaches, fundamentalists are working to exploit and intensify the estrangement between minority Muslims and the majority populations. This article will look at one of the more creative media they employ for the purpose: websites purporting to give non-political lifestyle advice.

In addition to the ordinary tribulations of adolescence and young adulthood, young Diaspora Muslims face additional challenges that can understandably lead them to seek religiously informed guidance and advice. They may be curious about their origin and uncertain about their identity; they may want a stronger connection with their religious heritage; they may have questions about their faith and how to best live that faith in a modern non-Muslim environment. Youthful rebellion, estrangement from their parents, a natural impulse to curiosity and independence may make them reluctant to turn to their family or their neighbors for advice. Additionally, they may live in a disadvantaged and dysfunctional environment. Searching for answers, one of the places they turn is the Internet. And radical Islamists have been astute in identifying this as an opportunity. Instead of

---

1 Neurink, Judit, "'Mujahideen of the Lowlands' on Trial in the Netherlands," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol 3, No. 24, December 20, 2005; and Radu, Michael, "Europe, Fall 2005: Gangs in Search of an Ideology," *Foreign Policy Research Institute: Watch on the West*, Vol. 6, No. 7, November 2005.

constructive advice or objective religious information, however, these young people are receiving guidance calculated to disrupt integration, foster hostility and make their own lives more difficult.

In some instances, the advice is merely inept and inappropriate, drafted by far-away Saudi scholars who have little personal knowledge of the societies they are condemning or the social situations for which they are providing guidance. The constant advice to seek out a workplace in which women and men are strictly segregated is a good example – such workplaces are hard to find in continental Europe. More often, the advice is overtly ideological and malicious, inviting disregard for the ethical and legal systems of the host countries and displaying a desire to foster alienation, enmity and violence.

In almost all cases, following the advice is likely to make the questioner's life more difficult, success and social acceptance more unlikely. That individual's opportunities in school, in the neighborhood, in the workplace and in society at large will be negatively impacted. And when that happens, the websites will be ready to explain and exploit the disappointment and alienation that result. The two levels of effects are briefly outlined in Table 1.

Primary effects:	Secondary effects
Build "wall of resentment"	Foster non-rational, non-critical thinking
Prevent integration	
Make social and economic failure more likely	Discourage problem-solving approach
Create psychic preconditions for violence	Encourage obedience to clerical authority
Deliberate effort to heighten alienation	*Unintentional consequence of the mental and geographic location of the authoring clerics*

Table 1: Effects of Internet manipulation of Muslim Youths

While fundamentalists have recognized the existence of a specific population segment anxious to receive guidance and therefore open to being influenced, both mainstream Islam and secular social institutions of the countries in question have not. As a result, radicals have been

able to monopolize the advice-dispensing business. Young Western Muslims cannot peruse multiple websites hosted by scholars belonging to a variety of schools of Islamic thought, eventually finding the one that seems most convincing and personally resonant. Rather, this market is cornered – and four years after 9-11 continues to be cornered – by the extremists.[2]

The past decade has seen the emergence of a large number of websites devoted to the Islamic perspective. Many of them include political forums, chat rooms, news commentaries and the like, and span a broad ideological and theological range. Some of these are supported by Western funding or are part of programs launched by Western governments.[3] While many of these offer basic information about Islamic doctrine, they do not include the specific feature of allowing a reader to pose a personal dilemma or problem to an expert and obtain advice. Individual clerics sometimes post their own views and fatwas on personal websites, but these address a very limited number of randomly chosen topics. Also, if they are translated at all, the English is often of poor quality, sometimes to the point of being nearly incomprehensible.[4]

A few broader, larger sites stand out for the obvious expense and professionalism with which they are maintained, for the extensiveness of their archived topics, and because of their popularity. The two that will be referenced in this paper are the Islam Q&A Website (www.islamqa.com) and Islam Online (www.islamonline.org). [5] The Islam Q&A Website is a Saudi-oriented site, addressed to expatriates and online in seven languages, English, French, Spanish, Indonesian, Chinese, Persian, and Arabic. Islam Online is based in Qatar, and stands under the guidance of that country's preeminent cleric, Yussuf

---

2 This is true for the print media as well. For example, a recent study conducted by Freedom House found an abundance of anti-Western, anti-democratic Wahhabi literature still being distributed by U.S. mosques in the spring of 2005. See *Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Fill American Mosques*, Washington , DC: Freedom House, 2005.
3 See for example the website www.qantara.de, supported by the German Foreign Ministry.
4 See for example the website of the Grand Mufti of Syria, www.drhassoun.com
5 Other sites, such as www.ourdialogue.com , are derivative of www.islamqa.com and recycle its material.

Qaradawi.6 Both sites are Wahhabi in orientation. The Islam Q&A Website is sparse and straightforward, while Islam Online is slick and modern in its design, and includes peppy features such as "live fatwa" and "cyber counselor".

Both offer rare access to the content of the radical message. While it is much more difficult to discover what is being said in back street mosques or by itinerant radical preachers, in the case of these websites, the desire to address and influence the Diaspora makes it necessary for their sponsors to use a public platform and the English language. Perhaps in the expectation that most outsiders will not ever come across these sites or if they do, will be distracted by the apparently trivial everyday nature of their content, little effort is made to mask the often overtly subversive content. For example, while Qaradawi himself has generally attempted to position himself as a moderate, on this website he publishes unequivocally extremist statements.7

Who makes up the clientele of these websites? Though the questioners are not formally described, their texts generally give insights into their age, circumstances, and location. Most are young, under 30. Often, they are at odds with the religious stance of their parents – whom they consider either too secular or too traditional – and are looking for a posture of their own. Some are recent immigrants or new converts. The vast majority of their questions address common dilemmas of daily life: feeling unpopular, worrying about finding a job, wanting to meet a member of the opposite sex, facing some minor ethical dilemma and the like. Only a few questions address issues of religious doctrine or of politics.

---

6 Qaradawi has shown strong interest in European Diaspora Muslims and has had a leading role in the European Council for Fatwa and Research. See van Bruinessen, Martin, "Making and Unmaking Muslim religious authority in Western Europe," Paper presented at the Fourth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence, Italy, March 2003. let.uu.nl/.../personal/publications/making_authority.htm

We begin with a typical question, posed by a high school student somewhere in the European Diaspora, looking for guidance on how to interact with his non-Muslim classmates.8

Question:

"In the Quran, it says that we cannot take the kuffar as awliyaa (protectors), but what does that mean? I mean, to what degree? If I'm at school, can we play basketball with them? Can we talk to them about basketball and stuff? Can we hang out with them as long as they keep their beliefs to themselves?"

Answer:

"Praise be to Allah.

Firstly, Allah has forbidden the believers to take the kaafireen as friends, and he has issued a stern warning against doing that…Elsewhere Allah states that taking them as friends incurs the wrath of Allah and his eternal punishment…One of the forms of making friends with the kaafirs which is forbidden is taking them as friends and companions, mixing with them and eating and playing with them…You should not sit and chat and laugh with them…it is not permissible for a Muslim to feel any love in his heart towards the enemies of Allah who are in fact his enemies too."9

Consider the ramifications of this reply. You may attend their schools, but while you are there, in their midst, you must hold fast to the notion that these people are your enemies. Not even the most

---

8 "Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 59879." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 2.22.05). His question is indexed under "What is meant by taking the kuffar as friends? Rules on mixing with the kuffar." Regarding that terminology: "kaafir" is the term for "unbeliever" – kuffar and kafiruun are plural forms. The term is not exactly an insult, but almost. It is certainly not a designation that would generally be considered polite in the contemporary world. Perhaps the best word for it is "anachronistic", befitting an earlier time and a context when it seemed normal to refer to others as heathens, as the godless and the damned. It would not be considered appropriate, today, for non-Muslims to refer to Muslims as "heathens"; kaafir has the same connotation.

9 "Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 59879." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 2.22.05)

superficial and harmless social interaction with them is allowed. Interfaith dialogue? This posture does not even allow interfaith sports. You can face "eternal punishment" for a game of basketball.

This response is in no way exceptional; the same message is echoed again and again in multiple variations. Here, an immigrant woman wants to be friends with her neighbor:

Question:

"Is it allowed for a muslim woman to be friends with a non-muslim woman who is very decent, without neglecting her own religion and is there a severe punishment for it?

Answer:

"Praise be to Allah.

Undoubtedly making friends with a kaafir woman will…lead some ignorant people to disapprove of the ruling of Allah that the kaafirs are disbelievers who will abide in Hell forever…Visiting kaafirs in order to have a good time with them is not permitted, because it is obligatory to hate them and shun them."[10]

Harsh words, all the more so because the phrasing of the question suggests that this is probably not the hoped-for response. After all, our questioner stressed the "decency" of her friend, separated the agenda of their simple human relationship from the issue of religion, and even poignantly inquired about the severity of her punishment, were she to disregard the advice and stay friends with the other woman anyway. What compelled her to write in the first place? Inner ambivalence? A warning from some disapproving outside observer? And what will she do now? She can, presumably, shun her friend. Will she also endeavor to hate her?

---

[10]"Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 23325." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 2.22.05)

A second set of questions addresses the domain of the workplace. Here, the sort of advice being handed out will almost certainly be a hindrance to economic opportunities and advancement:

Question:

I'm a male college student who has begun the process of looking for a job. Our school tells us that it is key, when interviewing for a job, to look the job recruiter in the eye, and not to stare at the ground. Nowadays, women are often the ones giving the interviews, and I was wondering if it is okay to look at her, since she might get a bad impression of me if I stare at the ground. Please help. Thanks."

Answer:

Praise be to Allah.

What your teacher has told you goes against the words of Allah. "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze... That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is all-aware of what they do."

And the Prophet…said…"Avert your gaze."

Who is more deserving of being obeyed, Allah and His Messenger, or your teachers?!"[11]

Within institutions such as the workplace, Muslims are encouraged to cultivate a mentality of unfriendly separation, to be a cultural fifth column within the dominant society.

Question: Is working in a company that is owned by a kaafir regarded as taking the kuffar as close friends?"

Answer:

Praise be to Allah.

Working for kaafirs and doing business with them is not regarded as taking them as close friends, but…it is

---

11"Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 13819." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 12.14.05)

not…permissible for him to love those people in his heart, or to praise them in absolute terms…

The kinds of friendship that are forbidden include…supporting them with words that justify their ways, and feeling proud of their ways…. And if any amongst you takes them as friends and supporters, then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust…"[12]

It seems inevitable that the non-Muslim co-workers will detect this basic posture, which can hardly be beneficial for the overall atmosphere and the possibilities for teamwork and collaboration.

Finally, what about the domain of public life and citizenship?

Question:

What is the ruling on taking European nationality for a Muslim who has come to a European country fleeing from oppression in his homeland, where he has lost his identity papers and has lost all hope of going back to his country?

Given that bleak scenario, we might expect a degree of gratitude to the country and society that took this shipwrecked individual in, offering him safety and a new beginning. This is not, however, how the Saudi advisors see things.

Answer:

…There should be a legitimate need for taking the nationality, such as the benefits for which the Muslim has settled in the kaafir country being dependent upon his taking the nationality. Otherwise that is not permissible for him, because taking the nationality is an obvious manifestation of befriending the kuffaar, and because it <u>involves speaking</u>

---

12 "Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 67610." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 2.22.05)

<u>words which it is not permissible to believe in or adhere to, such as approving of kufr or man-made laws</u>. Moreoever, taking the nationality may lead to staying in the kaafir land permanently, which is not permissible…I hope that Allah will forgive the Muslims who settle in kaafir lands…"[13] (emphasis mine)

Let us take a moment to reflect upon this opinion. It is herein presented as acceptable – in fact as obligatory – for Muslims to perjure themselves, to take an oath of loyalty and citizenship to the new country, promising to respect its constitution and its laws, while inwardly rejecting the substance of that oath. Muslims may do this for opportunistic purposes, for the "benefits" it brings. But they must not regard their new home as permanent, and even as an interim solution, it is regrettable. Obviously, if even a small number of naturalized Muslims can be persuaded to this view, European states have a serious problem – they will then have citizens who do not feel bound to obey their laws or feel loyal, and to whom swearing an oath is meaningless.

The final question to be considered in this paper will make it clear where such a philosophy[14] can lead.

Question:

"I've read that in Islam it is a greater sin to kill a Muslim than a non-Muslim. However, on death a Muslim will be in Paradise whereas the non-Muslim will be in Hell. To kill a

---

13 "Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 14235." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 2.22.05)
14 For an enlightening summary of the recommended conduct associated with that philosophy, see especially: "Islam Q&A Website -- Basic Tenets of Faith, Question # 2179." www.Islamqa.com, (as of 2.22.05), which contains an 18 point list of the things that are not permitted to a Muslim versus a non-Muslim, such as: "Accepting their kufr and doubting that it is kufr at all, or refraining from labeling them as kaafirs, or praising their religion.
Referring to them for judgment.
Befriending and liking them.
Becoming members of their societies, joining their parties.
Taking them as friends in general terms, taking them as helpers and supporters, throwing in one's lot with them.
Praising them and their civilization and culture, defending them, and admiring their behavior and skills, without taking note of their false ideology and corrupt religion. It is also forbidden to honor them, give them titles of respect, initiate greetings to them, give them the best seats in gatherings, and make way to them in the streets. The Prophet said: 'Do not be the first to greet a Jew or a Christian (do not initiate the greeting) and if you meet one of them on the street, then push him to the narrowest part of the way.'
Seeking forgiveness for them and asking Allah for mercy for them."

non-Muslim is to deny them forever the chance of becoming a Muslim, and condemn them to Hell. Is this not then a greater sin?"

Again, it is tempting to try and picture the questioner and to imagine the context. Who is asking this, and why? We don't know. All we have is the answer, which is chilling enough.

Answer:

Praise be to Allah.

Killing a non-Muslim when he is a mu'aahid is a sin, one of the major sins. But with regard to non-Muslims who are at war with the Muslims and do not have a peace treaty with the Muslims or are not living under Muslim rule, then Muslims are commanded to kill them, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning)15: 'Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you, and let them find harshness in you.' (Al-Tawbah 9:123)

But this should be in the case of jihad under the leadership of one of the leaders of the Muslims, or his deputy."

Let us review this advice in the light of Muslim orthodoxy. Islam has several relevant categories to describe non-Muslims. A first important distinction was that between Christians and Jews, who are fellow monotheists, on the one hand, and polytheists and atheists on the other. The second was that of "dhimmis", of Christians and Jews who lived under Muslim rule but, in exchange for certain payments, were to be left unmolested. A third category was that of mu'aahids, citizens of non-Muslim nations who had a peace treaty with a Muslim ruler. The Islam Q&A Website departs completely from Islamic orthodoxy when it defines Christians and Jews as unbelievers, a distinction that Islam reserves for polytheists and atheists.

---

15 This remark in parentheses is from the original, and occurs with some frequency in the responses.

The concept of a mu'aahid, meanwhile, is historic, not contemporary. There is no such thing as a mu'aahid in today's world – there is no officially "Christian" state that has a formal peace treaty with a unified empire or acknowledged ruler of Islam.

Further, the answer refers to non-Muslims who are at war with the Muslims. This is an ambiguous use of language. From reading radical texts, we know that some fundamentalists consider the entire West to be "at war" with Islam, not just in Iraq or Palestine, but categorically through its global cultural domination. But this reply goes much further. If you are a non-Muslim and you have no peace treaty with the Muslims – which we have just established to be an anachronism and thus not possible – and you do not live under Muslim rule, then you are fair game – and worse. Indeed, Muslims are then "commanded" to kill you. The addendum – that it may be better if the Muslims do not individually go out to kill their non-believing neighbors, but should do so in an organized fashion under the guidance of a leader, is hardly reassuring.

Rather, it closes the circle between the supposed "religious advice" offered by these websites, and the overt political incitement to be found on overtly political and terrorist sites.

On matters of social interaction, the website Islam Online takes a somewhat milder position. In the interest of first convincing and thereafter possibly converting non-Muslims, it recommends a more cordial, open interaction with members of other faiths. It is adamant about rigorous hijab and endorses polygamy. Under its hip façade, it offers occasional glimpses into its underlying radical politics. In September 2005 for example, Qaradawi – who generally delegates the "dear Abby" role to other clerics - chose to personally address an issue related to jihad. His reply is well worth an attentive reading:

> "The meaning of Jihad in our present time particularly refers to striving to liberate Muslim lands from the grip of the disbelievers who usurped them and imposed on them their own laws in lieu of the Divine Law. Those disbelievers may be Jews, Christians or both or even pagans…Disbelievers are all

alike. Capitalists, Communists, Westerners, Easterners, People of the Book and pagans are by no means different from one another. They should all be fiercely fought if they attempt to occupy any part of the Muslim land. This duty falls on those closest to the occupied land, who should be aided by those closest to them, who, in turn, ought to be aided by those closest to them, till it becomes incumbent on all Muslims to take part in jihad…If war is waged anywhere to achieve this goal…it is undoubtedly a Jihad for the sake of Allah. It thus needs to be financed from the money of Zakah…" [16]

While European Diaspora Muslims are the primary intended audience of these websites, they have a presence in the United States as well, where in some instances they have been able to use American academic institutions as providers of a platform. For example, the University of Texas in Houston and the University of Southern California host Muslim student websites that not only endorse the Islam Q&A Website as the place to "get your questions answered" but also provide instructional texts explicitly calling upon American Muslims to engage in conduct which is illegal in this country, including felonious restraint, false imprisonment, wife beating and polygamy.[17]

These websites highlight the existence of an underserved need, and the ability of extremists to skillfully identify and exploit "public diplomacy" opportunities. Clearly, a number of individuals from the

---

[16] "Islam Online -- Fatwa Bank," posted 9.13.05. Islamonline.net, (as of 9.21.05) www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar. The exact question was whether zakat money could be used to finance "a journey to take part in jihad". The answer must thus be interpreted to mean that the travel of insurgents and terrorists can be financed by Islamic charities.

[17] They state, for example, that "a husband has the legal right to restrict his wife's freedom of movement. He may prevent his wife from leaving her home without his permission…"; "the wife may not legally object to the husband's right to take another wife"; and "a refractory wife has no legal right to object to her husband's exercising his disciplinary authority. Islamic law, in common with most other systems of law, recognizes the husband's wife to discipline his wife for disobedience." Rahman I. Doi, Abdur, "Women in Society", USC-MSA Compendium of Muslim Texts Website. www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/humanrelations/womeninislam/womeninsociety.html (as of 2.22.05) It is not clear which "most other systems of law" the author is referring to; United States law is not among them, and the conduct recommended in this paragraph is criminal in this country. The French and Italian governments have expelled Islamist clerics for endorsing wife beating, polygamy, and social unrest. "France deports controversial imam," *BBC News*,10.5.04, http://news.cbbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3717452.stm .

Muslim Diaspora community are in search of guidance and advice that addresses their day-to-day problems within the framework of their religious and cultural background. Just as clearly, the extremists have identified this need and are attempting to exploit it. The number of individuals significantly radicalized by these websites is probably small. However, the more likely effect of obstructing integration and communal peace is harmful too. By making it more difficult for Muslims to lead successful and adjusted lives in the West, and encouraging them to view themselves as perpetual outsiders and foreigners, these messages contribute to the risk of greater social disruption in the future. By encouraging the existence of an unassimilated minority community permissive to Islamist sedition and violence, they also pose a security threat. The risk is especially great because at the present time, the radicals hold the monopoly in this field, with moderate and secular messages underrepresented.

Cheryl Benard, Ph.D.

Cheryl Benard, Ph.D. (Director of IMEY) is a senior political scientist with the RAND Corporation. She received her B.A. in political science from the American University of Beirut and her doctorate (sub auspiciis praesidentis) as well as the postdoctoral degree granting tenure ("Habilitation") from the University of Vienna, where she later taught and became an associate professor.

Benard's career has spanned two continents. Her focus has been on published results with a high degree of accessibility for policy makers, media and the interested public. For this she has been the recipient of several awards, including the Theodor Kery Prize for Socially Relevant Research and the Donauland Prize for Nonfiction Writing, and her book publications have been translated into many languages including Turkish, French, Italian, Swedish, Spanish, Hungarian, Russian, Hebrew and Chinese. Her previous research has ranged from refugee and immigrant integration; police intervention in domestic disputes; ethnic cleansing in Bosnia; changing socialization patterns; integration of women into the European military; and problems in the delivery of humanitarian crisis relief; school reform issues; radicalization and youth; and issues of multicultural education.

Benard has been a member of numerous academic and governmental advisory commissions to evaluate reform programs in areas such as basic training in the military, rule of law issues in peacekeeper training, curriculum and school reform, teacher training, gender-unbiased development aid, and the integration of handicapped children.

Since writing her dissertation on Arab nationalism, Islam and the Middle East have been strong themes in Dr. Benard's work. Her study of the Iranian revolution was entitled *The Government of God*, (Columbia U. Press). In another project, she surveyed and analyzed the social and political consequences of Muslim communities and centers in Europe and investigated links between culture centers and expatriate political organizations and known terrorist organizations.

For the U.N. Women's Division, Dr. Benard participated in a cross-cultural survey of gender-specific human rights violations. She has published widely on women in the Muslim world and women in development. The Afghan situation has been of particular interest to her since the 1980's. Some of her publications are *Veiled Courage* (Random House 2002) which describes various forms of civil resistance against the Taliban during the years of their rule, and *Civil Democratic Islam* (Rand 2004) which suggests a way to better understand Islamic groups and movements by aligning them along a differentiated ideological spectrum. Dr. Benard was recently featured as the cover story for her essay, *"Strengthening the Partnership"* (W.O.M.E.N. Inc 2005) in *In Touch* magazine it discusses military civilian cooperation in humanitarian aid. Other recent works include a feature, *"Hizb ut Tahrir – Bolsheviks in the Mosque"* in the Journal of Central Asian Studies. Dr. Benard is also co-author of *The Muslim World After 9/11* (RAND 2004).

6. THE MYTH OF MARTYRDOM: YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE INSURGENCY IN IRAQ -- ED O'CONNELL, CHERYL BENARD

On many levels, today's insurgency in Iraq manifests itself as a "youth issue."

Young people are increasingly found among the daily victims, killed because they happened to be in the wrong place, in the proximity of a roadside bomb or a suicide attack, or in the case of young recruits to the military or police, because they were among those deemed collaborators deserving a death sentence.

Additionally, Iraqi youths are well represented among the perpetrators of this daily violence, recruited as 'paid-for-hire' insurgents to emplace bombs by the side of the road. Military units patrolling the streets of Iraq report that they are increasingly forced to engage young boys -- and as of late, girls as well -- in combat.

On still another level, we must also count the young attackers themselves as victims of exploitation. Insurgent recruiters exploit their youthfulness – their naivety, blind idealism, spontaneity, their admiration for a charismatic leader, and their inability to properly weigh the consequences of their actions.[1] And, whether they succeed or fail, are themselves killed, go on to kill again, or land in detention, their acts are likely to have deep consequences for their subsequent mental and physical well being.[2]

In the chaotic, confusing, and complex environment of today's Iraq, the brutalization of its next generation is an imminent danger. Describing the murder of four U.S. contractors engaged in reconstruction work in Iraq, the Daily Telegraph provides a chilling account of the

---

[1] Observers believe that the young are being increasingly drawn into the insurgency, attracted by the seeming glamour and drama of its operations. Schuster, Henry, "Iraq Insurgency 101," *CNN News*, October 12, 2005, http://cnn.worldnews.com

[2] See for example Grossman, D, *On Killing. The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, New York: Little, Brown, 1995.

involvement of children. The contractors, whose convoy had accidentally strayed from the designated route, were dragged from their vehicles by an angry mob. Three were shot, and the remaining one was doused with gasoline and set on fire. "Barefoot children, yelping in delight, piled straw onto the screaming man's body to stoke the flames," the newspaper reported.[3] Adults tolerated and presumably encouraged this: a devastating lesson in hate for the children involved and for those merely standing by.[4]

The absence of peace and of any safe places must also be presumed to take a toll on the young. Iraqi schoolchildren witness the murder of their teachers in front of their eyes; and have themselves been killed when insurgents attacked their school or when unexploded ordinance combusted in their schoolyard;[5] a recent attack killed children and their mothers waiting to receive donated toys and food outside of a hospital.[6]

Such direct experiences of violence aside, all young Iraqis are at risk of mental, emotional and spiritual harm as their lives stagnate in a toxic mix of fear, boredom and hopelessness. What is it like to be young in today's Iraq? Daily life is a grim affair, with few or no social or leisure outlets and a future that must seem, at best, elusive. Even the more privileged urban young share in the desolation; typically, after a short school day, they are whisked home to the relative safety of locked family compounds. Older teens, and young adults with some sort of work, do not fare much better. A young print shop worker interviewed

---

[3] Cited in Ward Anderson, John and Steve Fainaru, "U.S. Confirms Killing of Contractors in Iraq," *The Washington Post*, October 23, 2005, p. A16.

[4] See Sternberg, Robert J., ed., *The Psychology of Hate*, Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2005.

[5] Finer, Jonathan, and John Ward Anderson, "A Shot to the Heart in Baghdad, One Child Killed in Attack on School," *The Washington Post*, October 21, 2005, p. A 15; "Two Killed in Baghdad School Attack," *Middle East Online*, February 16, 2004, www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=8909; Sinan, Omar, "Iraqi Schools Increase Security," *Associated Press*, October 3, 2005, www.boston.com/news/education; "Tip Helps US Soldiers Foil Car Bomb Attack Near School," *News Release, Headquarters United States Central Command*, October 6, 2005, www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/news_release.asp?NewsRelease+20051021.txt ;

[6] Tomlinson, Chris, "Car bomb kills 30 near Iraq hospital," *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 25, 2005

during the summer of 2005 responded to questions about how he spent his days. [7] Head down and hands behind his back, the shy 17-year-old explained that his parents had banned visits to the local mosque after work, because they feared that insurgents might recruit him. Other activities young people enjoy, such as clubs, sports venues and cafes, were nonexistent.[8] Instead, he returned every evening to an overcrowded home shared by many relatives and retreated upstairs to sit on the edge of his bed. "I stare at the wall for a few hours," he said. What he was describing was a sort of living death, where any way out – however destructive - might begin to seem like a preferable option. For some, including the large numbers of street children, drug use and glue-sniffing serves as that option; as a quick but toxic escape from the reality of their lives.[9] Others are drawn far too easily into petty criminality and from there, into the insurgency.

Lastly, the ongoing conflict in Iraq is a youth issue because of the pivotal significance of the young generation in determining the long –term viability of a nation-building and democratization effort. For this reason, experts advise that youth should be considered a "cross-cutting issue", i.e. an issue of relevance for all or most sectors of post-conflict recovery and therefore demanding inclusion in planning for all sectors.[10]

---

[7] O'Connell, Ed,"A Future Beyond A Funeral," *The Washington Post*, August 5, 2005.

[8] For a discussion of the relationship between sexual repression and terrorism, see Hoffman Baruch, Elaine, "Psychoanalysis and Terrorism," *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Vol 20, No. 4, 2003, p. 698 ff.

[9] Wilding, Jo, "Glue and the circus," *Iraq Diaries*, 11 January 2004, www.electroniciraq.net; Wilkinson, Gina, "Growing number of street children in Baghdad," *The World Today*, 11 September 2003, www.abc.net.au; Hasan Arebee, Amar, "Iraq's outcasts. Many orphans and other poor children are forced into begging and prostitution," *Iraqi Crisis Report*, 6 June 2003, www.iwpr.net .

[10] see for example Kievelitz, Uwe, Thomas Schaef, Manuela Leonhardt, Herwig Hahn, and Sonja Vorwerk, "Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations," *Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit, UNDG, UNDP, World Bank Joint Guide*, 2003.

Figure 1: A cellblock at Abu Ghraib

Like many other extremist, violent movements, Islamist terrorism too feeds on the vulnerabilities of the young. Amrozi, the inappropriately smiling young Jamaat Islamiyah terrorist responsible for the Bali bombings, the confused young American Johnny Walker Lindh, and the Pakistani youths involved in the London subway bombings of 2005, are all examples of how Islamic extremists exploit and brainwash young people.[11] Among the recruits are some who are mentally disturbed or psychologically disoriented, and an increasing number who are not just young, but indeed are still children.[12] And this holds true on a global scale. European security experts report that the typical age of radical recruitment in Diaspora communities is now 13 or 14, that schoolchildren are being lured to jihad through Internet websites and chat rooms.[13]

---

[11] For a description of the operating procedures of an insurgent recruiter and handler, see Ghosh, Aparisim, "Professor of Death," *Time*, October 17, 2005.

[12] Prusher, Ilene, "As Life Gets Bleaker, Suicide Bombers Get Younger," *Christian Science Monitor,* March 5, 2005; Schweitzer, Yoram, "Briefing: Suicide bombers", *Wide Angle: PBS*, www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/suicide/briefing.html, notes the growing use of 10 to 14 year olds as suicide bombers, their prime asset being the fact that people would assume them to be harmless.

[13] Benard, Cheryl, and Angel Rabasa, *Eurojihad*, forthcoming RAND publication, 2006.

In Iraq, insurgent groups do not hesitate to turn children of that age group into killers. The Baghdad Correctional Facility Abu Ghraib (pictured in figure 1) today houses an appalling number of local teenagers. For $50 to $100, they were persuaded to plant an IED, shoot a mortar or fire a machine gun at coalition troops. Upon capture, they are detained in a special section of the prison, surrounded by a high wall of barbed wire. To find themselves in Abu Ghraib, alone, charged with murder, must surely be a terrifying experience. Under this pressure, some youths manifest serious psychological distress and behavioral disturbances (though in some cases they may have been predisposed for this already).[14] No one warns child jihadists about these dark possibilities during their initial recruitment, nor do their recruiters conduct any assessments of their mental and psychological competency before deploying them. In a recent operation in Tall Afar, the Iraqi military numbered among its prisoners a 10-year-old Syrian boy who had made his way across the border to wage jihad. Inglorious imprisonment in a faraway place was surely not what he signed up for.

Anger at their crimes and actions aside - is there a way to rehabilitate these young individuals? If they emerge from capture and detention unaffected, what will they do next? And most importantly, how can others like them be deterred from joining the insurgency in the first place?

These questions remain open and beg attention. Meanwhile, however, we know quite a bit about how these young people are recruited. "Inspirational" videos are one popular and effective medium. These are distributed underground, shown on the Internet and used in mosques and other recruitment venues as a tool to rouse the emotions of young male viewers.[15]

---

[14] Guards at Abu Ghraib relate that one such 'paid-for-hire' young insurgent, only 13 years of age, commonly throws his feces. This is a form of behavioral disturbance associated with prolonged confinement in closed institutions such as prisons, mental wards, nursing homes and zoos. See for example "Behavioral Symptoms," www.nhionline.net

[15] In the presentation of another conference contributor, Sharon Curcio, we saw that videos of this nature were often a prime motivator leading young people to sign up for

As we will see from some examples, these videos rely less on the discerning eye than on making a quick emotional impact. Upon closer scrutiny, their producers often discredit themselves. Shot live, these films provide revealing glimpses into the mindset and mechanics of radical groups. They offer numerous – as yet largely unutilized – access points for counter-information warfare. We could turn these videos into tools that deter rather than inspire recruitment by warning the target audience to be more perceptive, more critical and less vulnerable to brainwashing.

Figure 2: Propaganda Video of Car Bombing

---

jihad, sometimes on the spot. See also Hassan, Nasra, "Are You Ready? Tomorrow You Will Be in Paradise," *Times Online*, July 14, 2005.

For example, the video from which figure 2 was taken is meant to convey the excitement of an actual insurgent attack. It is filmed from the triggerman's vantage point as he waits for the right moment to detonate a bomb placed earlier inside a parked car a hundred yards away. First, a group of U.S. soldiers walk by – a desirable target for the insurgents. Immediately behind them come two Iraqi schoolchildren, a young boy and girl. The bomber does not hesitate to sacrifice their lives. In the last frame, the windshield has already cracked and a fireball is roaring up the street. There will be no way for the children to escape its blast, though the video concludes without showing the grisly end to what its authors deem "a heroic operation". The lyrics of the video's background music go something like this: "Cut off all passages of escape, corner them, slaughter them where you find them." In the vicarious adrenalin rush of an actual filmed bombing, further heightened by the effect of dramatic music, young viewers may not be inclined towards sober analysis. Take away these manipulative devices, and they may be more prepared to ask themselves whether it is really all right for a self-appointed jihadist to deliberately end the lives of innocent Iraqi children.

Figure 3: Young Suicide Bomber

This same easy distortion is reflected in a second video, from which figure 3 was taken. In this clip, we see a teenage boy awakened in the middle of the night. He is a suicide bomber, but as is frequently the case, the exact day and details of his deployment were probably not shared with him.[16] Looking startled, he is hustled out of bed and rushed to an abandoned field. A group of masked, armed men await him – his comrades. He says his last goodbyes and reads a "prepared statement" for the camera, then he is outfitted with the lethal tools for his suicide mission, heaved into a truck and sent off into the night – a video-equipped vehicle following him to document his end.[17] On the face of it, he is a heroic suicide bomber achieving his desired martyrdom – but only if no one gives this tape a second look.

This young man is 17 or 18. Speaking with a Saudi accent, he appears to be a foreign jihadist. He looks stunned, tired, at times even reluctant, as his companions call out their slogans: "We won't forget you…I say goodbye to you…I long to be with you again…I almost die myself from the thought of your leaving us." With the headband of an Iraqi truck driver strapped around his forehead, to facilitate his passage thru Coalition checkpoints, and with a whole group chanting and cheering him to his death, there is no turning back. The young man reads the scripted text put in front of him. "I have fire in my heart from departing. God willing the word of God will be victorious tonight. By my explosion, God will be most exalted!"

As terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman explains, the hours leading up to the suicide mission are carefully choreographed to keep the attacker on course. "'Minders' sequester the bomber in a safe house, isolating him or her from family and friends…A film crew makes a martyrdom video, as much to help ensure that the bomber can't back out as for propaganda and recruitment purposes."[18]

---

[16] This is common practice. See also Ghosh, Aparisim, "Inside the Mind of an Iraqi Suicide Bomber," *Time*, July 4, 2005.

[17] On the ritualistic aspects of suicide bombings, and the choreography of these operations, see Hassan, Nasra, "Are you Ready? Tomorrow you will be in Paradise…", *Times Online*, July 14, 2005, www.timesonline.co.uk

[18] Bruce Hoffman, "The Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2003, p. 3.

Peer pressure and the sheer dynamics of the unfolding event allow for no change of heart, even if the individual had second thoughts.

From extensive studies, we have a good understanding of the coercive dynamics behind suicide bombings. The selected individual is often the weakest member of his cell – tacitly determined to be expendable. In the weeks and days before the event, he is isolated from his usual associates, closely supervised by his handlers. The group that sends him off does not necessarily consist of friends or close companions, who might cloud the event with personal sentiments. As one expert notes, the young person drawn into a terrorist organization has

> "little or no opportunity to exit alive…In the case of the foot-soldiers, who are recruited to carry out the violent attacks and to become suicide bombers, the entire operation of recruitment, training, and implementation…may take no more than 24 hours. Within those 24 hours, the recruited individual is typically given a great deal of positive attention and treated as a kind of celebrity, particularly by the recruiter and by a charismatic cell leader who stays by their side constantly to make sure they don't back out as well."[19]

The image of the courageous, self-sacrificing individual choosing death is, in many cases, far from the truth; instead, this is often just a young person rushed and manipulated by a variety of psychological techniques into a corner he cannot get himself out of. Anyone "doing the forensics" on these videos will soon uncover a prevailing message: that the people manipulating these youths don't value them as human beings, don't respect their free will and have no compunctions about sacrificing the youths' lives.[20]

---

[19] Moghaddam, Fathali, "The Staircase to Terrorism, A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist*, Vol 60, No. 2, 2005, p. 161 ff.

[20] Some attackers may be led to believe that they will merely deposit the explosives and have time to get to safety, when in fact their leaders intend to kill them along with

But how are young men brought to the point where they agree to sacrifice their own lives for the cause of jihad? Recruitment techniques include videos detailing the suffering of women and children at the hands of evil "Crusaders." One such video making the rounds in the Iraqi insurgent underground is staged to show a brutal house search performed by actors playing the roles of U.S. troops. In the background, a terrified young girl weeps while her brother narrates, "Father, can't you hear me? My little sister is crying…she is calling. Father was a martyr…if only he were here…a bunch of monkeys is entering our house…"[21]

Figure 4: Propaganda video portraying harassment

In this propaganda video, shown in figure 4, actors portraying American soldiers break into an Iraqi home and terrorize the women and children.

This script pushes all the buttons. The father is dead, a martyr who sacrificed his life. His surviving dependents should be honored and cared for in his memory, but instead they are left helpless and humiliated – an outcome that is shameful for the entire community. The valorous brother wants to defend his womenfolk, but he's too young to be able to take any action, arousing in the viewer sympathy, guilt, and the desire to step in and help the young boy. This resonates with audiences

---

their victims, by remote detonation. See also O'Sullivan, John, "Perhaps London bombers were dupes, not suicidal," July 19, 2005.

[21] Date, name of video

because house searches are, in fact, a clumsy tool, widely resented and viewed as a collective humiliation.

Figure 5: "Winds of Victory" video segment

The next video we will consider, shown in figure 5, is again devoted to the topic of martyrdom. Part of a series called "The Winds of Victory", it features an eerie, howling wind as its "theme song." The video features a direct appeal to a young man's desire to become a "zefa" or an escort of the beautiful virgins occupying paradise. This appeals to what is denied to youths in life – al hur aleen (the beautiful ladies of paradise). More than one analyst has noted the connection between the sexual repression inherent in Islamic extremism and its pronounced death cult:

". . . hatred of one's sexual impulses is probably involved in suicide bombings Because the 'martyrs' look forward to a reward of 72 virgins in paradise. . . their death wish also involves the hope of delayed gratification in a sexually purified heaven."[22]

On that note, it is interesting that suicide bombers who blow themselves up in a vehicle refer to the car as their "bride".[23] Further

---

[22] Elaine Hoffman Baruch, op.cit., p. 698.

[23] Haqqani, Husain, and Daniel Kimmage, reviewing the online propaganda book "The Martyrs of the Land of the Two Rivers," *The New Republic Online*, 10.3.05 (CHECK THIS REFERENCE)

illustration of conflicted sexual attitudes underlying the martyrdom myth can be found in Al Qaeda's online training magazine, Al Battar. Issue 7 of that publication includes, besides weapons instruction and criteria for victim selection in urban attacks, a sentimental poem by a martyr to the beautiful celestial woman who will be his reward; by contrast, notice the fears associated by the writer with 'real' women: "When I saw her, the sweetness of her beauty lived in me…when I talked to her I felt that paradise is for me…I do not write poems for girls on this earth, I have nothing to do with them…If one of them looks her best, I know that she is just the devil in concealment…"[24]

The particular scene depicted in figure 5 celebrates prior martyrs, showing their names and faces, then causing each of them visually to ascend up a basement staircase towards a celestial light, symbolizing their instant welcoming into heaven. The accompanying commentary lauds each dead jihadist and says: "In the name of God and the Kaaba.[25] Don't be sorry – he is alive and happy in heaven. He said goodbye to the earth. In heaven he is destined for eternity."

Figure 6 – Bereaved Iraqi mothers confront jihadist killers

---

[24] Hamad Al-Aslami, "Al-Ayna", in The Battar Training Camp, Issue 7, March 2004; the entire poem may be seen at www.homelandsecurityus.com/battar7.asp
[25] Black stone in Mecca around which pilgrims make their circuit.

Given their inherent cynicism and their neurotic content, these messages are vulnerable to being successfully exposed and countered. One program that takes this approach quite effectively is called "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice," a now-popular TV program that was developed by the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior. In this program, from which figure 6 was taken, local and foreign jihadists are brought into a room where they are confronted by mothers whose sons have been killed in insurgent attacks. Emboldened by their grief, these women scream, curse and weep as they recall their cherished, lost children. Advancing on the terrorists, they berate them for their parts in the destruction of Iraqi families and communities. Confronted with the rage of these mothers, terrorists who started by swaggering assertively into the room are instantly deflated and rendered speechless. The program is especially powerful because it reverses the assertion, on the part of the terrorists, that they are the defenders of Arab women and children. Instead, here we see mothers – a powerful symbol in Islamic and traditional iconography – who have been robbed of their children by jihadist violence, and who are now publicly accusing the terrorists of having destroyed what they held most precious in their lives. And we see the supposedly heroic jihadists reduced to stammering inarticulate apologies, unable to make their case or to defend their actions in the face of these mothers.[26]

Policy recommendations

Jihadist propaganda aimed at seducing young recruits should be more assertively countered. One way of accomplishing this is to deconstruct it, exposing the flaws within several of its strongest themes. This includes countering the impression that the volunteers are honored and valued for their violent acts, that they have made a considered and free decision, that their families and the population at large agrees with their acts and venerates them. Instead, one can demonstrate that ordinary Muslim families and communities are repulsed

---

[26] Public messages by fathers condemning the seduction of their sons into death missions can also be powerful. "Suicide bomber's dad blasts terror leader," *Pravda*, 10.19.2002, www.pravda.ru .

by these acts[27]; that the suicide attacker was chosen not because he is so cherished by his group but because they consider him expendable; that many do not go to their deaths freely at all but are tricked or pressured into doing so; that their act causes not jubilation, but suffering on the part of ordinary parents and families. The inglorious but quite likely outcomes of radical engagement should be made very clear to young people who may be considering that avenue: imprisonment, detention, lifelong ostracism from normal mainstream society, disapproval of family and neighbors, and the possibility that by the time one changes one's mind, it may be too late. Anything that encourages a reasoned decision rather than an impulsive act should be supported.

In situations where large numbers of young people are deprived of any constructive outlet for their time and energies, setting up alternative outlets should be a priority. These include programs in the field of leisure activities, training and future vocational prospects, and should be combined with civic learning and where feasible, with opportunities for constructive civic engagement.

---

[27] a development supported by recent opinion polls, see for example the results of a 17 country poll by The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Support for Terror Wanes Among Muslim Publics, Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics," July 14, 2005, www.pewglobal.org

Cheryl Benard, Ph.D.

Cheryl Benard, Ph.D. (Director of IMEY) is a senior political scientist with the RAND Corporation. She received her B.A. in political science from the American University of Beirut and her doctorate (sub auspiciis praesidentis) as well as the postdoctoral degree granting tenure ("Habilitation") from the University of Vienna, where she later taught and became an associate professor.

Benard's career has spanned two continents. Her focus has been on published results with a high degree of accessibility for policy makers, media and the interested public. For this she has been the recipient of several awards, including the Theodor Kery Prize for Socially Relevant Research and the Donauland Prize for Nonfiction Writing, and her book publications have been translated into many languages including Turkish, French, Italian, Swedish, Spanish, Hungarian, Russian, Hebrew and Chinese. Her previous research has ranged from refugee and immigrant integration; police intervention in domestic disputes; ethnic cleansing in Bosnia; changing socialization patterns; integration of women into the European military; and problems in the delivery of humanitarian crisis relief; school reform issues; radicalization and youth; and issues of multicultural education.

Benard has been a member of numerous academic and governmental advisory commissions to evaluate reform programs in areas such as basic training in the military, rule of law issues in peacekeeper training, curriculum and school reform, teacher training, gender-unbiased development aid, and the integration of handicapped children.

Since writing her dissertation on Arab nationalism, Islam and the Middle East have been strong themes in Dr. Benard's work. Her study of the Iranian revolution was entitled *The Government of God*, (Columbia U. Press). In another project, she surveyed and analyzed the social and political consequences of Muslim communities and centers in Europe and investigated links between culture centers and expatriate political organizations and known terrorist organizations.

For the U.N. Women's Division, Dr. Benard participated in a cross-cultural survey of gender-specific human rights violations. She has published widely on women in the Muslim world and women in development. The Afghan situation has been of particular interest to her since the 1980's. Some of her publications are *Veiled Courage* (Random House 2002) which describes various forms of civil resistance against the Taliban during the years of their rule, and *Civil Democratic Islam* (Rand 2004) which suggests a way to better understand Islamic groups and movements by aligning them along a differentiated ideological spectrum. Dr. Benard was recently featured as the cover story for her essay, *"Strengthening the Partnership"* (W.O.M.E.N. Inc 2005) in *In Touch* magazine it discusses military civilian cooperation in humanitarian aid. Other recent works include a feature, *"Hizb ut Tahrir – Bolsheviks in the Mosque"* in the Journal of Central Asian Studies. Dr. Benard is also co-author of *The Muslim World After 9/11* (RAND 2004).

LT COL (RET.) EDWARD (ED) O'CONNELL

Lt Col (Ret.) Edward (Ed) O'Connell was commissioned in the U.S. Air Force in 1983 and spent more than 20 years as an intelligence officer. During the first Gulf War Ed initially served as the Air Force targeting liaison onboard the USS Saratoga and later on a combat assessment team surveying Iraq. He was selected as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Air Force Intelligence fellow at RAND from 1993 to 1994 and subsequently served as Chief, Commander's Action Group at the Air Intelligence Agency. Ed's last active-duty assignment was Chief of Current Ops Targeting Branch, HQ USCENTCOM J-2, during the War in Afghanistan. He is currently a senior defense analyst in RAND's Washington office. Ed has co-authored of a study for the Air Staff on "Non-kinetic Operations in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM," is authoring a publication for RAND on the emerging arena of Strategic Communications, and is serving as the RAND Team Lead for the IED Defeat effort in Baghdad. Last summer Ed served a two-month assignment in Baghdad, Iraq where he was a member of an Army Information Operations (IO) Combined Arms Assessment Team (CAAT) and was asked to stay on by the Multinational Force Iraq (MNF-I) Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Communications to advise him on this area. Ed is a graduate of the Naval War College, the Foreign Service Language Institute, and a distinguished graduate of the Joint Military Intelligence College.

Ed can be reached at:
apaddy2@hotmail.com
oconnell@rand.org

7. VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA FOUNDATION -- JONATHAN POWERS AND MOUNZER FATFAT, MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, IRAQ

As a Captain in the Army's 1st Armored Division, Jonathan Powers led reconstruction efforts in the Northern sector of Baghdad, Iraq. Daily his unit witnessed homeless children lining the highways selling cigarettes or setting up soda stands only hoping to make enough money to survive the night. Each month Captain Powers' unit would visit desperately crowded orphanages and provided them whatever support they could because no other group was helping the children. War, sanctions, and now occupation in Iraq has resulted in an increasing number of children in need of assistance while the state homes are steadily in decline because of decreasing resources. After returning from Iraq, Captain Powers began working with the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF), a Nobel Prize winning international humanitarian organization, to develop a program to assist the most innocent victims of this war, the children.

The VVAF's War Kids Relief was conceived in the summer of 2005 as project to address the needs of orphans and street kids in Iraq. It does so by organizing a network of safe havens through existing orphanages

and helping them to develop programs that would teach vocational and life skills to children with no place to call home – who might otherwise land in the hands of insurgents. This program will work with orphanages in the network to create a "Family Program" that reintegrates the children into family situations, and will facilitate construction and staff training for a Baghdad Career and Life Skills Center, developing a safe haven and educational site for orphaned children and young adults. You can read more about the project at the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation website (http://vvaf.org).

Abandoned children in Iraq do not all fit the traditional definition of an "orphan", as many are economic orphans whose parents are not able to support them because of the tough economic conditions in the war zone. Economic orphans are forced into orphanages or out in the streets to live under bridges, in abandoned basements, or wherever they can find shelter between their long days of working in the streets. The number of children in need of government supported institutions and programs are increasing as the number of institutions and programs are in steady decline. It is becoming increasingly important that we engage these children, as they are becoming the targets of insurgent recruiters who hope to persuade them into joining their fight against the new government.

The youth of Iraq are in dire need of "Positive Youth Development (PYD)"[1] so that they are able to develop the assets needed to become socially active and productive citizens. Programs must be implemented and resources must be provided to engage the community to mold these children's personalities so they are able to thrive. War Kids Relief will provide these children the framework needed to learn life skills necessary and become productive citizens, through its network of safe

---

[1] See Aida Balsano's chapter in this volume for a more in depth description of this concept, or Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Hamilton, S. F., & Semsa, A., Jr., "Positive Youth Development: Theory, Research, and Applications," In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner, Eds., *Handbook of Child Psychology,* Vol. I: *Theoretical Models of Human Development*, 6th ed., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, forthcoming.

havens and by providing vocational training, computer classrooms, counseling, family reintegration, and more.

The program, like others working in areas of conflict, has to contend with security and movement issues as well as general project monitoring. These obstacles can be overcome by utilizing the resources available such as local organizations and the government ministries. For programs to succeed in these areas of conflict they must provide ownership to the locals and the community while providing faith in the new government. By working with local organizations instead of only American organizations, it also lowers the aggression toward the children and providers by insurgents.

Dr. Mounzer Fatfat, the Senior Advisor to the US Ambassador to Iraq, intends to utilize the existing 150 youth centers and 300 sports clubs in Iraq to provide a gathering point for youth programs that will provide PYD for the children of Iraq. Dr. Fatfat and Captain Powers are now working on a proposal to put computer classroom in 100 of those Youth Centers throughout Iraq's 18 provinces. Collaboration between multiple Ministries is critical as each have a vital role to play in addressing this problem. It is also important to utilize proven programs that have worked in other parts of the world and adjust them to best fit the local community. Minimal resources have been allocated to these efforts and work is needed to bring more attention to this long-term solution to the problems facing Iraq. The fight for peace in the world begins with the children, and their problems have not yet been addressed.

Jonathan Powers

Army Captain Jonathan Powers spent 14 months serving in Iraq, just after major combat concluded, and as the first uprising of the insurgency took place. Capt. Powers' experiences while serving there were at best heartbreaking, as he patrolled neighborhoods in Baghdad and witnessed firsthand the devastation that war brings to a country.

In particular, Powers recalled visiting St. Hannah's Orphanage when a nun took him aside and requested that he and other soldiers not return to the orphanage. She knew such a visit would attract the attention of insurgents, leading to the likely massacre of the children. This and many other horrific moments inspired Powers to launch a program that provides aid and assistance to Iraq's orphans and street kids with the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation.

Upon returning from Iraq and completing the active duty component of his military obligation, Powers took up teaching in Buffalo, NY, but was soon prompted by his experiences to join a six-week publicity tour for the documentary film *Gunner Palace* - a film in which he appeared that explored the day-to-day lives and experiences of those in his battalion. Powers traveled with director and producer Michael Tucker to introduce the film in markets across the country, where the film was screened and followed by a Q&A with Tucker and Powers. While on the *Gunner Palace* tour, Powers also had the opportunity to assist in hosting a screening on Capitol Hill, where he briefed members of the House and Senate (including Sen. John Kerry, Sen. Max Cleland and Sen. Jim Jeffords) about his experiences. Additionally, Powers served as a media spokesperson for the documentary, appearing on *CNN*, *Fox News, MSNBC,* and *MTV,* as well as in the *Washington Post, New York Times, USA Today* and the *Los Angeles Times.* After the *Gunner Palace* tour concluded, he quickly realized that he still had a strong desire to do more for those in Iraq.

Powers is currently the Program Director of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation's War Kids Relief Project. He is currently raising money and building corporate sponsorships in order to develop a final program that will reach thousands of children who have been orphaned or abandoned as a result of the war in Iraq. War Kids Relief was recently featured on NBC Nightly News during the Making a Difference segment when it was officially launched in early November.

Powers is a 2000 graduate of John Carroll University with a degree in Education.

8. YEMEN'S COMMITTEE FOR DIALOGUE: THE RELATIVITY OF A COUNTER TERRORISM SUCCESS – MICHAEL TAARNBY

Well before 911, Yemen was faced with a terrorist threat on a scale matched by very few other countries. It was not a case of unravelling the occasional sleeper cell but rather a question of how to handle thousands of jihadists, quite a few of whom returned to Yemen with combat experience and motivation. One prominent figure, Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, dispatched several thousands of young Yemenis to Afghanistan and has been singled out by the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee for his association with Al Qaeda.[1] By the time the young jihadists returned to Yemen after defeating the Soviet Union they had acquired a new sense of mission that was directly confrontational to the government. [2]

This extremely complex situation required delicate handling, and perhaps the most interesting approach to resolving it is Yemen's creation of the Committee for Dialogue. The Committee was established in August 2002, when the president of Yemen Ali Saleh summoned five senior clerics who would form the nucleus. Since its inception, the Committee has expanded its membership to 24, which today also includes four ministers. The president of the Committee is Judge Hamoud Abdulhameed Al-Hittar, who is also president of the court of appeal for Sana'a and al-Jawf governorates. The motivation for president Saleh's bold initiative sounded like this,

"We have a group of young people who hold dangerous beliefs. Those people have not committed any crime, but if we

_____

[1] State Department, Global Patterns of Terrorism – Yemen: An overview 1998-2004. http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2005/vol2/html/42395.htm

[2] "Arab Veterans of Afghanistan war lead new Islamic holy war." Global Security Intelligence, Oct 28, 1994.
http://globalsecurity.org/intell/library/news/1994/afghan_war_vetrans.html

leave them on their own, they could cause great harm to themselves and to the country. We need to talk to them."[3]

The work of the Committee has confused, aggravated and astounded a number of international observers who follow Yemen's unique approach to counter-terrorism. What at first glance might appear as a haphazard strategy is in fact much more complicated and made to fit the local circumstances. Some have accused Yemen of being soft on terrorism, conveniently ignoring the substantial number of terrorists being convicted and executed. Moreover, the scheme does not cover those convicted of attacks.

It appears that Yemen, while keeping a keen eye to international opinion and developments, has created a counter-terrorism strategy that deals harshly with immediate threats, yet focuses on long-term and lasting solutions.

Justice for all

Since the war on terrorism began in earnest several hundred young radical Islamists were arrested and imprisoned without trial. Knowing fully well that these suspects were innocent according to the Yemeni penal code, they were nevertheless considered as potentially dangerous to society because of their militant views and known associates. Realising that the suspects eventually had to be put on trial or released, a decision was made to see if they could be convinced of the futility of their jihadist lifestyle. The Committee was to be the instrument to carry off this daunting task of dialogue where it matters - with known Al Qaeda sympathizers.

Expecting little and hoping for the best, the members of the Committee outlined an approach to dialogue with the detainees that would turn out to be as effective as it was simple. The process of dialogue

---

[3] Watkins, Eric, "Yemen's Innovative Approach to the War on Terror," *Terrorism Monitor,* 24 February 2005

between the clerics and the radical Islamists is founded on a single-page manual. The translation of the document follows below.

Rules of the Dialogue

- ❖ Recognition of one another
- ❖ Legitimacy of the dialogue
- ❖ Definition of the goal of the dialogue
- ❖ Definition of the locality of the dialogue
- ❖ Definition of the terminology of the dialogue and definition of the point of reference in case of disagreements
- ❖ Allow both parts of the dialogue the chance to discuss the topic of the dialogue
- ❖ Organize the dialogue's main topics, then the sub-topics
- ❖ Choose an appropriate time and place
- ❖ Begin with the objects of the agreement
- ❖ Follow the scientific methods in the dialogue
- ❖ Search for the truth and avoid prejudices
- ❖ Delineate the conclusive and the hypothetical wordings, and separate independent judgements from personal Fatwa's
- ❖ Accept the results of the dialogue

The Dialogue's Ethics

- ❖ Mutual respect between the two parts
- ❖ Respect difference of opinion and commitment to good conduct in case of disagreement
- ❖ The two parts must respect freedom of opinion and freedom of expression
- ❖ Strive for equality in the discussion, exchange of views and comments while also considering boring prolongations, incorrect abridgements and interruptions in the discussion
- ❖ Strive for high quality in the presentation and correctness in the expression
- ❖ Be a good listener and respect the other person's point of view

❖ Strive for self-control, calmness and non-aggressiveness

❖ Be patient, trustful and humble

❖ Consider the other person's feelings and conditions and avoid irony and satire in expression

❖ Commit to objectivity and prioritize the ideas according to their topics

❖ Set up the argument and the discussion in the best manner

❖ When encountering disputed matters, stick to the agreed upon point of reference

❖ Be fair and avoid aggressiveness and stupidity

❖ Keep a calm voice

❖ Recognize mistakes and welcome what is correct

This interesting document differs from any Western interrogation manual both in size, scope and working principle. The foundation of the dialogue is equality and respect; literally a conversation between individuals of equal standing. The basic fact that one part of the dialogue was behind bars appears not to have had much influence on the process. The manual is simple in the extreme in that it stresses the need for mutual respect and recognition, courteous behaviour and a duty to speak the truth, common definition of goals and methods, recognition of differences and agreement to revert to common ground when the dialogue stalls. As such the manual more resembles a form of social contract than an interrogation checklist - which it is certainly not.

At the very heart of the matter is the very fundamental assumption that the militants are not evil, but have internalised mistaken views on Islam that can be corrected through dialogue and education. This assumption is a far cry from the notion often expressed by Western terrorism experts and practitioners alike.

Typically at the first meeting between the detainees and the clerics there is an unavoidable suspicion that must be dealt with immediately. Unsurprisingly, the detainees have been quite sceptical

about the motives of the clerics and have bluntly asked them why they came. The clerics then proceed to explain that the purpose of the visit is to initiate a dialogue to exchange views on important matters of mutual interest, although seen from different angles. Knowing fully well the detainees' obsession with their religion it was explicitly stated that the foundation of the dialogue would be the Quran, the Sunna and the Hadith's and nothing else.

In an interview in 2004 Al-Hittar stated that dialogue would be used "to uproot the intellectual causes and reasons for terrorism. Because terrorism has faulty intellectual foundations."[4] Quite often the detainees have memorized certain chapters of the Quran, but were unqualified to interpret the meaning of the verses and to place them in a religious and historical context.

On the matter of contextual interpretation, one issue that has been invoked time and again by Al-Hittar is the fact that the Quran contains 124 verses that specifies that non-Muslims must be treated with charity and dignity – but only one verse that urges Muslims to fight non-believers. In this context, the militants are invited to use the Holy Scriptures to legitimise attacks on civilians, which they cannot.[5] Two issues have been central in the discussions. The notion that non-Muslims are legitimate targets in the name of jihad and that Yemen's political system is un-Islamic.

The meetings are conducted in small groups, usually between five and seven people, and the way to attract their interest was through the proposal of an all or nothing deal. The clerics who approached the detainees insisted that the dialogue would center on the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. If the detainees could persuade the clerics of the legitimacy of their jihad, then they would join them. If not, the

_____

[4] Johnsen, Greg, "A Benevolent Alternative to Osama Bin Laden," *Pacific News Service*, 20 January 2004.

[5] Brandon, James, "Koranic Duel Ease Terror," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 February 2005.

detainees would have to give up the idea of armed struggle. Somewhat surprisingly to the clerics, the detainees were eager to accept the deal. However, their arrogance and zeal was seldom matched by their knowledge of the scriptures, and in the end they were not able to present a convincing concept of the jihad based on the authoritative sources. Over time it was proven that the legitimacy of the jihad as outlined by Osama Bin Laden does not stand up to closer examination.

The detainees are a quite heterogeneous group with members from The Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, the Al-Houthi's, Takfir Wal-Hijra, Al Qaeda and a number of Afghan veterans.[6] These members are self-taught and not very responsive to sincere religious dialogue. This rogue's gallery represents a variety of challenges. When asked about the significance of Afghan veterans among the detainees, Al-Hittar was quick to emphasize that an Afghan experience did not necessarily turn Muslims into mindless killers.

While it is certainly true that the hard core of Al Qaeda in Yemen are more often than not acquainted through a lengthy stay in Afghanistan, quite a few gave up the jihad or got involved in the domestic political scene, quite legally. Those detainees who had been exposed to Al Qaeda's ideology for some time were among the hardest cases. Their belief in the mission, their sense of superiority and the endless reference to the Holy Scriptures made them difficult partners in an open dialogue to say the least.

In terms of their social background there is no clear profile of the Al Qaeda sympathizer. They came from all segments of society, including the very top and the very bottom, and were united only in their adherence to Al Qaeda's ideology and their dedication to the cause.

---

[6] Interview with Al-Hittar in Sana'a by the author, 21 June 2005

Evaluation the dialogue programme

The sheer number of detainees who have been released after the introduction of the dialogue programme necessitates further inquiry. As with any exit strategy there has been scepticism of the nature of the programme as well and doubts about the sincerity. Within Yemen, some say Judge Hittar's Committee is a sham and does not motivate any real conversions. Human rights activists working with prisoners have poured scorn on the notion that theological dialogue can change militant views. One observer, Professor Adel Sharjazee, said:

"The results of dialogue are very limited…As these people are being talked to they are put under a lot of pressure and when they are released from prison, nothing has changed." [7]

There have also been unconfirmed reports of former detainees being caught fighting the coalition forces in Iraq. Yemen's Foreign Minister Dr Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi refused to deny that prisoners released under the scheme had turned up in Iraq, where Yemenis are thought to account for more than 10% of the foreign anti-coalition fighters.

An interesting example is the former bodyguard of Osama bin Laden who up till now have been made a showcase model of the success of the dialogue programme. He recently admitted that his basic views had not changed the least. Nasser al-Bahri was a member of Al Qaeda for three years and served as Bin Laden's bodyguard. Speaking to BBC journalists he told them that the dialogue programme didn't work for him; in fact he never participated in any long or deep religious dialogue with anyone. Bahri's interpretation of the situation was that the detainees quickly grasped that the dialogue programme was their way out of prison and played along simply to get out. By telling the judge what they believed he wanted to hear they secured their own release.

_____

[7] Whewell, Tim "Yemeni Anti-terror Scheme in Doubt," *BBC News,* October 11 2005.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/4328894.stm

However, and this is perhaps just as revealing, the former Al Qaeda operative with access to the inner circle had in fact renounced violence and stated that he would refuse to fight on behalf of Al Qaeda. [8] Al-Bahri said the authorities have helped him set himself up as a small businessman, and he will not be returning to his old life as an anti-Western militant.

Judge Hittar, as evidence of the success of his scheme, often cites the lack of attacks in Yemen since the beginning of the programme. According to Al-Hittar, nine out of ten detainees are released and he personally considers the programme a success.[9]

To balance the negative examples mentioned before one success story often pointed out by the Yemeni's is the arrest in 2004 of Mohammad al-Ahdal, the alleged master of the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 in the port of Aden. The information that led to the capture of this particularly high-value target came from one of the released detainees who had gone through the dialogue programme.[10] Other formed detainees have lead the police to hidden arms caches and other have offered tactical advice; they more than anyone knew the militants doctrine.

An earlier success that has caused some controversy in Yemen, was the 2002 assassination of Abu Ali al-Harithi by a US air strike. Al-Harithi was one of the central figures of Al Qaeda in Yemen, and also this time the crucial information came out of the dialogue programme. The controversy that followed was more about US involvement than the actual assassination. Speculations are still circulated on the true nature of what really happened. According to one local rumour, the crater analysis indicated that it was actually a hidden car bomb detonated by remote control, which implies that the US didn't really have the capacity to conduct surgical strikes as claimed.

---

[8] Whewell, Tim "Yemeni Anti-terror Scheme in Doubt," *BBC News*, October 11 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/4328894.stm

[9] "Treat the Cause, Not the Symptoms," *The Guardian*, 2 March 2004.

[10] Johnsen, Greg, "A Benevolent Alternative to Osama Bin Laden," *Pacific News Service*, 20 January 2004.

Future prospects

Being turned around is not enough if the suspect to be released relapses into his old habits and circle of friends. An unspecified period of surveillance follows the immediate release, though this is probably less complicated than a similar affair in say, a Western European country. Great care is being taken to carefully reinsert the former militant Islamists into society in a viable manner. If possible they are returned to their jobs or alternatively a new job is found. Those who dropped out of school or university are encouraged to continue their studies and provided with a government loan if needed.

As of June 2005, 364 suspects have been released, an astounding number by any standard. The answer to the sensitive question of how many of those released have returned to their previous militant lifestyle was evasive. Realistically, the government has little control over the former detainees and can do little to stop them if they want to join the insurgency in Iraq. According to government officials there is very strict control of their movements to make sure they don't leave the country. Yet the borders are not controlled as Yemen's geography makes this option impossible.

The work of the Committee is nearing its third year and the results are worth noticing. The Yemenis are generally quite happy about the work of the Committee and share the impression that its efforts have contributed to the improvement of the security situation and internal stability. The criticism that has occurred over the years has less to do with the idea behind the initiative and more to do with local political agendas. Only recently has the entire concept of the program been questioned and that debate should be followed closely. In essence, this debate is focused on success and how it can and should be measured.

Yemen understands perfectly that international critics are keen to point out the futility of the project. Assuming that it is true that a

handful have returned to wage jihad[11], this raises an important question in itself. What percentage should be considered an acceptable threshold for success? The evidence obtained so far, and it is indeed hazy, suggests that some – but not all – have renounced violence.

When high-value targets have been captured using information from former jihadists, how will this success be measured against the likelihood that some released detainees end up in Iraq? It appears pointless to answer this difficult question in quantitative terms alone. Instead this Yemeni dilemma should serve as an indication of the current state of asymmetrical warfare and the inappropriateness of using traditional bench-marking. In this respect, there is a direct parallel to the U.S. problem in relation to the detainees at Guantanamo Bay. Initially considered as success in the global war on terrorism, it could very well be argued that this operational success turned out to become a liability in the long run.

Perhaps there are other measures of success within this relatively new field of counter terrorism. Judge Al-Hittar has received a number of death threats, a point he did not bother to mention himself, perhaps considering it too trivial. He currently lives under armed protection, an indication that someone is following his work and has drawn the conclusion that the soft-spoken cleric is a danger that should be eliminated. Another way of assessing the work of the Committee is through the words of Al-Hittar himself. Before the Committee started there were two options for the jihadists - to kill or be killed themselves. Now there is a third choice, a return to society.

---

[11] An unverifiable number obtained by author through interviews with others familiar with the work of the Committee.

Michael Taarnby

Michael Taarnby has a Masters degree in social anthropology and political science from the University of Aarhus, Denmark. He has worked on issues related to radical Islamism for almost a decade and has conducted research in the fields of suicide terrorism and recruitment to terrorism in Europe. Fieldwork has been conducted in Lebanon, Israel, Yemen and Kazakhstan among others.

He is the author of several reports commissioned by the Danish government and a frequent contributor in the both local and international media. Over the past few years Taarnby has presented at EUROPOL, NATO, RAND, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and a range of other institutions. He has also served as a consultant on terrorism related issues internationally.

Taarnby is currently working as a Research Fellow at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) on a project that aims to identify how development assistance can be targeted to counter radicalization and terrorism. He also serves as an advisor to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on various issues related to counter terrorism.

9. THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN PROMOTING POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTH—AIDA BALSANO AND RICHARD LERNER[1]

Introduction

How do we counter the seductive influence on youth of radical ideologies (e.g., as found in extreme fundamentalist Islamic groups), and the links among youth of adoption of these ideologies and the enactment of behaviors counter to peace, democracy, and civil society? In virtually all communities there exist human and institutional resources that may promote individual healthy and positive social development among youth.[2,3] These resources (e.g., the presence of adult mentors, school and after-school programs that build skills, and norms for boundaries on youth behaviors and for expectations about community service) have been termed developmental assets.[4] A key instance of such developmental assets are community opportunities for civic engagement by youth; that is, for youth participation in and leadership of valued, community activities linked to the preservation and promotion of civil society.[5] When youth engage in such civic contributions they are regarded as having a "noble purpose," and they are likely to thrive.[6]

The availability of such opportunities within communities provides youth with meaningful, healthy ideologies and social engagement and, as such, these activities have been viewed as crucial to promoting positive development among youth, to combating issues of youth radicalization

---

[2] Benson, P. L., "Developmental Assets and Asset Building Communities: Conceptual and Empirical Foundations," In R. M. Lerner & P. L. Benson, Eds., *Developmental Assets and Asset-Building Communities: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice*, Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 2003, pp. 19-43.

[3] Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Hamilton, S. F., & Semsa, A., Jr., "Positive Youth Development: Theory, Research, and Applications," In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner, Eds., *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Vol. I: Theoretical Models of Human Development, 6th ed., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, forthcoming.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.

[6] Damon, W., Menon, J., & Bronk, K.C., "The Development of Purpose During Adolescence," *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol 7, No. 3, 2003, pp. 119-128.

(from inner-city gang involvement in the United States to youth recruitment into terrorist movements in the Middle East and elsewhere) and, hence, to the survival of democratic systems and the protection of civil society.[7]

Youth engagement in civil society constitutes a key part of the social capital that strengthens democratic institutions by serving as "the currency of a healthy community."[8] This relation between youth civic engagement and civil society implies that the more civic engagement a society can secure across its youth, the more future social capital the society will have at its disposal. Research supports this line of thought.

For instance, civic engagement in high school youth positively relates to the ability of youth to take the perspective of others and to feel sympathy for a friend.[9] Civic engagement serves also as an outlet for adolescents' emerging empathetic behaviors, and it is associated with sympathetic and helping behaviors,[10] increased school attendance and motivation for learning, and higher grade point averages.[11] In addition, civic engagement is linked to an increased sense of competencies among youth, to a drive to get involved in prosocial activities, and to higher self-esteem.[12]

In short, then, from the perspective of either an interest in promoting positive youth development (PYD) (and thereby deterring youth radicalism) or an interest in furthering the social capital present in a community for the maintenance and perpetuation of civil society, there

7 Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.
8 Roulier, M., "Local Community: Seedbed of Civil Society," In J. Burbidge, Ed., *Beyond Prince and Merchant: Citizen Participation and the Rise of Civil Society*, New York, NY: Pact Publications, 1998, pp. 183-196.
9 Estrada, P., "Adolescents' Self-Reports of Prosocial Responses to Friends and Acquaintances: The Role of Sympathy Related Cognitive, Affective, and Motivational Processes," *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Vol 5, No. 2, 1995, pp. 173-200.
10 Roberts, W., & Strayer, J., "Empathy, Emotional Expressiveness, and Prosocial Behavior," *Child Development*, 67, 1996, pp. 449-470.
11 Shumer, R., "Community-based Learning: Humanizing Education," *Journal of Adolescence*, 17, 1994, pp. 357-367.
12 Yates, M., & Youniss, J., "A Developmental Perspective on Community Service in Adolescence," *Social Development*, Vol 5, No. 1, 1996, pp. 85-111.

is great value in enhancing opportunities for youth to become civically engaged. How may such individually and socially valuable relations between young people and their communities be built and/or enhanced?

From the perspective of models associated with developmental systems theories,[13] the key to understanding the trajectory of individual ↔ context relations that result in positive or negative youth development in youth is a focus on the relation between the ways in which youth influence their context and the way in which contexts influence youth. When this relation aligns the strengths of youth (e.g., a key strength of young people is the enormous capacity for change in their cognitive and behavioral repertoires) with the developmental assets of their communities, the likelihood of PYD is increased.[14] However, when such alignment is weak or absent, then negative, unhealthy development may become more likely and such development may be expressed by increased feelings of hate for, and by behaviors that do not support, institutions of civil society.

Accordingly, in this chapter we present a brief overview of the scientific study of adolescence and discuss the role that ideas about the bases of PYD can play in helping identify some of the reasons that youth may become either positively civically engaged or, in turn, involved in radical movements. We emphasize that the alignment of youth strengths with community developmental assets and, particularly, with opportunities for civic engagement, can deter young people from involvement in radical groups and, in contrast, promote positive, healthy development of both youth and their communities.

―――――――――

13 Lerner, R. M., *Concepts and Theories of Human Development* (3rd ed.), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002. And, Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.

14 Lerner, R.M., Balsano, A. B., Banik, R., & Naudeau, S., "The Diminution of Hate Through the Promotion of Positive Individual-Context Relations," In R. J. Sternberg, Ed., *The Psychology of Hate*, Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association, 2005, pp. 103-120.

The Scientific Study of Adolescence

Adolescence represents a developmental period that spans the second decade of life.[15] It is a period of extremely rapid transitions in physical characteristics and of changes in a person's biological, cognitive, physiological, and social characteristics.

Past perspectives on adolescent development have been framed by a "deficit model" of the period. Beginning with the work of G. Stanley Hall and illustrated as well by the theories of Anna Freud and Erik Erikson[16], this deficit view emphasized that the adolescent period was a time of universal and inevitable "storm and stress" and of biologically-based behavioral disruptions or disturbances. Accordingly, because deficits were based in the biological "nature" of young people, all adolescents were characterized as being "at risk" for behaving in problematic ways and, due to their "problematic behavior," as posing a challenge and danger to themselves and to people around them.[17, 18] Simply, adolescents had an inevitable deficit in their behavior, which meant they were "broken" or in danger of becoming "broken."

It was not until 1960s that researchers began to systematically challenge this biologically-based, deficit view of adolescence and to point at the lack of universality in adolescents' experiences and expression of storm and stress. Some adolescents, and in many studies the majority of youth, did not experience storm and stress.

However, even in the light of this new understanding of adolescence, up until the 1990s most research still continued to use the deficit model of Hall and others to study adolescence, and empirical

---

[15]Lerner, R. M., & Steinberg, L., Eds., *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (2nd ed.), Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2004.

[16]Freud, A., *Difficulties in the Path of Psychoanalysis. A Confrontation of Past with Present Viewpoints.*, New York: Int. Univ. Press, 1969; Erikson, E., Youth, Identity and Crisis, New York: Norton, 1968.

[17]Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Hamilton, S. F., & Semsa, A., Jr., "Positive Youth Development: Theory, Research, and Applications," In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner, Eds., *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Vol. I: Theoretical Models of Human Development, 6th ed., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, forthcoming.

[18] Roth, J., Brooks-Gunn, J., Murray, L., & Foster, W. "Promoting Healthy Adolescents: Synthesis of Youth Development Program Evaluations," *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Vol 8, 1998, pp. 423-459.

interest was focused on reducing the problems "caused" by the alleged deficits in adolescents' behavior.[19] Some of these deficits in youth's behavior included school failure and drop-out, alcohol use and abuse, unsafe sex and teenage pregnancy, crime and delinquency, and depression.

The Emergence and Key Components of the PYD Perspective

Beginning in the 1970s scholarship about life-span human development moved away from the biologically reductionist views of behavior, of which the deficit view of youth development was a key example. In place of views that "split" nature from nurture, relational, developmental systems models emerged.[20,21,22] These perspectives emphasized that biology and the contexts or ecology of human development (families, communities, social instructions, culture, and the flow of historical change) were always fused and mutually influential. Therefore, there was always some potential for change over the course of life, and problems of development were not inevitable. Within the context of interest in the mounting evidence for the empirical use of these developmental systems theories both for understanding basic developmental processes and for applications to policies and programs aimed at enhancing human development, a new vision of adolescence emerged in the 1990s. This conception was the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective.

The PYD perspective offered a new, strength-based vision for and vocabulary about youth, one emphasizing that <u>all</u> adolescents have developmental strengths (e.g., the potential for systematic change in their psychological and behavioral functioning) and that greater levels

---

19 Lerner, R. M., & Steinberg, L., Eds., *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2004.
20 Bronfenbrenner, U., "Bioecological Theory of Human Development," In N. J. Smelser and P. B. Baltes Eds., Vol. 10: *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Oxford, UK: Elsevier Science Ltd, 2001, pp. 6963-6970.
21 21 Lerner, R. M., *Concepts and Theories of Human Development* (3rd ed.), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002.
22 Lerner, R. M., "Editor's Introduction: Developmental Science, Developmental Systems, and Contemporary Theories," In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner, Eds., *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Vol. I: Theoretical Models of Human Development, 6th ed., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, forthcoming.

of well-being and thriving is possible for all youth, <u>if</u> their strengths are integrated in health-promoting manners with the resources for positive growth present in their ecologies. The mantra of the PYD perspective is that youth are resources to be developed, not problems to be managed.[23] Accordingly, research and applications predicated on the PYD perspective focus on the promotion of health and positive behaviors in youth rather than on the amelioration and prevention of risk behaviors.

Within the PYD perspective, five general characteristics of psychological and behavioral functioning have been used to operationally define thriving, or optimal development, among adolescents. These "Five Cs" are competence (defined in terms of social, academic and vocational competence), confidence (i.e., positive sense of self), positive connections (to family, peers and community), character (e.g., morality, integrity, and possession of values supportive of both personal and communal health), and compassion or caring. Moreover, within the PYD literature, the hypothesis is advanced that, when youth possess the Five Cs then a "Sixth C," contribution to self, family, community, and society, is believed to emerge.[24,25] That is, when youth develop the Five Cs they are likely to exhibit transcendence of self and self-interest in support of community needs and of engagement in civil society.[26,27]

23Roth, J. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J., "What Exactly is a Youth Development Program? Answers from Research and Practice," *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol 7, No. 2, 2003, pp. 94-111.

24 Little, R., "What's Working for Today's Youth: The Issues, the Programs, and the Learnings," Paper presented at the ICYF Fellows Colloquium, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, October 1993.

25 Pittman, K. J., Irby, M., Tolman, J., Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T., "Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement: Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals?" 2001. The Forum of Youth Investment. Online at: www.forumforyouthinvestment.org (As of August 9, 2004)

26 Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.

27 Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestdottir, S., Naudeau, S., Jelicic, H., Alberts, A., Ma, L., Smith, L., Bobek, D., Richman-Raphael, D., Simpson, I., Christiansen, E. D., & von Eye, A., "Positive Youth Development, Participation in Community Youth Development Programs, and Community Contribution to Fifth-grade Adolescents: Findings from the First Wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development," *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol 25, No. 1, 2005, 17-71.

The Role of Developmental Assets

The development of both the Five Cs and of contribution is believed to be prompted by aligning young people across their adolescence with the developmental assets that exist in their communities. These assets can be found in families, schools, faith institutions, youth-serving organizations, and the community more generally. There is a growing body of research indicating the validity of the key idea within the PYD perspective – that is, of such development becoming more probable when individual strengths and community developmental assets are integrated in the lives of young people.

For instance, researchers at the Search Institute[28, 29] identified 40 person- and environment-based protective factors ("developmental assets") that they hypothesized to be "building blocks" that support and enhance positive and healthy development. These 40 assets included 20 internal resources (grouped into four categories, i.e., commitment to learning, positive values, social competences, and positive identity) and 20 external assets (also grouped into four categories, i.e., support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time).[30] The higher number of assets one possesses, the greater the likelihood that the person will show positive and healthy behaviors and, as a consequence, develop positively.[31] For instance, the overall number of developmental assets present in a life of an adolescent is correlated positively with various indicators of thriving among youth

---

28 Benson, P. L., *Developmental Assets among Minneapolis Youth: The Urgency of Promoting Healthy Communities*, Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 1996.
29 Leffert, N., Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Sharma, A. R., Drake, D. R., & Blyth, D. A., "Developmental Assets: Measurement and Predictions of Risk Behaviors Among Adolescents," *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol 2, No. 4, 1998, pp. 209-230.
30 Ibid.
31 Benson, P. L., Leffert, N., Scales, P. C., & Blyth, D. A., "Beyond the "Village" Rhetoric: Creating Healthy Communities for Children and Adolescents," *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1998, pp.138-159. And, Leffert, N., Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Sharma, A. R., Drake, D. R., & Blyth, D. A., "Developmental Assets: Measurement and Predictions of Risk Behaviors among Adolescents." *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1998, pp. 209-230.

(such as school success, leadership, helping others, maintenance of physical health, and reduced involvement in risk behaviors).[32]

Recently, in collaboration with Search Institute, Theokas and others[33] revisited the above-mentioned list of 40 assets and concluded that the 40 assets do not actually exist as 40 separate entities. Rather, the original 40 assets can be reduced to 14 assets, seven of which are individual and seven of which are ecological assets. A list of these 14 assets is provided in Table 1. The 14 assets were correlated with the above-noted indicators of thriving as well.

---

32 Benson, P. L., Leffert, N., Scales, P. C., & Blyth, D. A., "Beyond the "Village" Rhetoric: Creating Healthy Communities for Children and Adolescents," *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1998, pp.138-159.

33 Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestdottir, S., Naudeau, S., Jelicic, H., Alberts, A., Ma, L., Smith, L., Bobek, D., Richman-Raphael, D., Simpson, I., Christiansen, E. D., & von Eye, A., "Positive Youth Development, Participation in Community Youth Development Programs, and Community Contribution to Fifth-grade Adolescents: Findings from the First Wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development," *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol 25, No. 1, 2005, pp. 17-71

Table 1. The 14 Developmental Assets Identified by Theokas, et al. (2005)

Label	Representative Item
INTERNAL (INDIVIDUAL) ASSETS	
Social conscience	Degree important to reduce hunger and poverty in the world
Personal values	Degree important – do what I believe is right
Interpersonal values	Degree like me – care about others feelings
Risk avoidance	Amount close friends drink alcohol
School engagement	Frequency come to class without books
Activity participation	Hours per week – non-stop school club or organization
Rules and boundaries	My family has clear rules for conduct
EXTERNAL (ECOLOGICAL) ASSETS	
Connection to family	Get along well with parents
Community connection	Adults in town listen to what I say
School connection	Teachers push me to be my best
Contextual safety	Frequency afraid – get hurt by someone at school
Adult mentors	Number of adults give you lots of encouragement
Parent involvement	Frequency parents ask about homework
Positive identity	On the whole, I like myself

However, Theokas and Lerner note that assets measured by Search Institute represent only youth perceptions of the developmental assets that they possess or that are present in their communities[34]. They point out that perceptions of community assets, especially those that are actually functioning to engage youth civically and promote the Five Cs and contribution, do not necessarily relate to any actual, objective assets that may exist in the homes, schools and communities within which youth are embedded. The measurement of actual community assets are crucial, however, since some youth -- because of living in harsh circumstances -- may not perceive or even know about assets available (or potentially available) to them.

Indeed, Theokas and Lerner noted that actual assets can be found in all communities, even in communities that might be characterized as especially challenging due to, for example, gang activity (such is the case with urban Detroit),[35] or post-conflict toxicity of a setting (such is the case with post-war communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iraq.[36] Accordingly, they developed a system for identifying and mapping the actual developmental assets that existed in diverse communities across the United States. Four categories of ecological assets were identified: Human resources, institutional resources, collective activity (by youth and adults in civic activities), and accessibility of assets. These assets were measured in families, school, and communities. Theokas and Lerner reported that the actual assets were linked to the "Cs" of PYD at levels greater than were perceived assets, even after the effects of race and socioeconomic status were controlled. Although different assets were important in

34 Theokas, C., & Lerner, R.M., 'Observed Ecological Assets in Families, Schools, and Neighborhoods: Conceptualization, Measurement and Relations with Positive and Negative Developmental Outcomes," *Applied Developmental Science*, Forthcoming.
35 Taylor, C. S., Smith, P., Taylor, V. A., von Eye, A., Lerner, R. M., Balsano, A. B., Anderson, P. M., Banik, R., & Almerigi, J., "Individual and Ecological Assets and Thriving Among African American Adolescent Male Gang and Community-based Organization Members: A Report from Wave 3 of the "Overcoming the Odds" study," *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol 25, No. 1, 2005, pp. 72-93.
36 Garbarino, J., Kostelny, K., and Barry, F., "Value Transmission in an Ecological Context: The High-Risk neighborhood," In Joan E. Grusec and Leon Kuczynski, Eds., *Parenting and Children's Internalization of Values: A Handbook of Contemporary Theory*, New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1997, pp. 307-332.

different settings, human resources (e.g., the presence of caring and competent mentors, teachers, or parents) were the best predictors of PYD across all settings.

From Developmental Assets to Civic Engagement

Instantiating opportunities for civic engagement constitutes a key developmental asset for youth. Civic engagement fits, for instance, in the frame developed by Theokas and Lerner, as an asset pertinent to the categories of collective activity and, as well, human resources. As such, a potentially positive avenue for youth to get involved in the promotion of their own and each other's positive development. Indeed, youth civic engagement has been described as prosocial behavior exhibited by youth through involvement in activities that have benefit both to them and to institutions within the context through which they are supported; these institutions include schools, local community-based organizations, and the political institutions of civil society.[37]

Involvement in community-based service groups, school- and non-school-based sport activities, arts and literary groups, voluntary associations (e.g., houses of worship), and more formal activism, such as voting and political engagement, all represent identified indicators of civic engagement among youth.[38] However, the communal benefit aspect of youth's participation in these institutions sets apart youth participation in general from *youth civic engagement*.[39]

_____
37 Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.
38 Hauser, S. M., "Education, Ability, and Civic Engagement in the Contemporary United States," *Social Science Research*, Vol 29, 2000, pp. 556-582. And, Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., & Mazer, B., "Voluntary Service, Peer Group Orientation, and Civic Engagement," *Journal of Adolescent Research*, Vol 16, No. 5, 2001, pp. 456-468.
39 Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.

Civic Engagement: Benefits for Youth

Civic engagement may be an ideal means for young people to develop the defining feature of their own being – their identity – and to do so in a manner that is mutually beneficial to self and to society. During the course of adolescence, youth begin to search for tools that will aid them in molding their own identity and, thereby, creating a pathway to leading a fulfilled life. It is during adolescence that youth begin to 1.) question the extent of their agency and the responsibilities that they have toward people and institutions surrounding them; 2.) evaluate their own preparedness to commit to and/or challenge the values and ideologies defined for them by their context; and 3.) developmentally mature enough to understand the nature of civic participation.[40] However, they are also young enough to have flexible and adaptable civic habits.[41]

While identity development is a process that every individual must construct and experience for herself/himself, the forming of one's identity does not take place independent of one's context and historical time. Erik Erikson stressed this socio-historical component in his work on identity development in children and youth.[42] He argued that youth's understanding of actions and events they witness is based on the ideological guides that surround them and that are provided to them by their context. These ideological guides come to represent tools used by adolescents to evaluate and judge what is going on around them. For example, one's religion, race, ethnicity, or country of origin can all be used as potential ideological guides/tools.

During the course of using ideological guides provided by their social world, adolescents are drawn to values (be they noble or ignoble) that have some historical permanence and relevance because such values

40 Balsano, A. B., " Youth Civic Engagement in the United States: Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Social Impediments on Positive Youth and Community Development," *Applied Developmental Science*, Forthcoming.
41 Goss, K., *Better Together: The Report of the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America*, Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2000.
42 Erikson, E., Youth, *Identity and Crisis*, New York: Norton, 1968.

may be the most reliable tools enabling them to transcend self and find a socially prescribed role. Once an ideological guide is identified and "claimed," it also becomes an ideology to protect.

Youth's involvement in prosocial, civic activities provides, therefore, an opportunity for stimulating noble civic involvement and, thereby, serves a personal interest of supporting one's positive identity development. In addition, prosocial involvement also provides youth with a way to contribute to their community and broader society, thereby going beyond personal interest and fulfilling a communal interest.[43] As such, prosocial experiences represent, in a way, a conduit, for attaining the transcendence that allows youth to form productive, healthy identities that are aimed at moving them beyond self-interest and self-indulgence and tows community contributions.

In other words, civic engagement aligns strengths of youth (the changes they are undergoing in the development of their identities and values) with the developmental assets of their communities (e.g., involving collective activity) and has the potential to be a powerful vehicle for promoting both PYD and civil society.

In an effort to explore the connection between participation in community service and identity development in adolescence, Yates and Youniss assessed 132 students (95% African-American) attending the third year of a parochial high school that had a mandatory school-based service program[44]. As part of the program, over the course of the academic year each student had to work at a local soup kitchen on at least four occasions. Students' experiences at the soup kitchen were examined through one-page reflection papers which students were asked to write after their first two visits to the soup kitchen. The writing assignment asked students to reflect on their experiences and feelings associated with the work they performed at the soup kitchen. The

---

43 Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., & Yates, M., "What We Know About Engendering Civic Identity," *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol 40, No. 5, 1997, pp. 620-631.
44 Yates, M., & Youniss, J., " A Developmental Perspective on Community Service in Adolescence," *Social Development*, Vol 5, No. 1, 1996, pp. 85-111.

researchers then assessed the level of students' identification with concrete activities (e.g., mopping the floor) versus transcendent ideologies (e.g., speculating about responsibility for redressing social inequity).

Students involved in the service program exhibited some level of transcendence after the second visit to the soup kitchen, with students who exhibited change in transcendence statements between the first and second visit to the soup kitchen expressing a change that went from lower to higher levels of transcendence. Yates and Youniss concluded that service activities can be used as a vehicle to provide youth with experiences that help them assess their own lives by comparing them to lives of other people (especially people less fortunate than themselves); such experiences may help youth define their own identities through the experiences gained within a socio-historical context of which they are part.[45]

As adolescents' work on defining and understanding their own self, they often take into account both their actual selves (defining what one is really like) and their ideal selves (defining what one would like to be).[46] When ideal selves involve positive civic engagement <u>and</u> when ideal selves are incorporated into their actual selves, youth may be more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors. It may be that their definitions of the self they seek to be might be driving these youth to get involved in activities that go beyond the self and, in turn, to contribute to a cause of communal interest.

Of course, there are individual differences in identity formation. For some youth, identity development represents a more challenging process than it does for other youth. For example, native minority youth and immigrant and refugee youth living in the United States represent segments of the population whose identity development may be

_____

[45]Yates, M., & Youniss, J., "A Developmental Perspective on Community Service in Adolescence," *Social Development*, Vol 5, No. 1, 1996, pp. 85-111.

[46] Hart, D., & Fegley, S., "Prosocial Behavior and Caring in Adolescence: Relations to Self-understanding and Social Judgment," *Child Development*, Vol 66, 1995, pp. 1346-1359.

likely to be significantly molded by their multi-cultural affiliations and, in some cases, dual citizenships, as well as by the extent to which they feel discriminated against or socially marginalized. Nevertheless, Stepick and Stepick, in their discussion of civic engagement among immigrant youth in the United States, argue that multiple identities have a potential to contribute to youth civic engagement by making adolescents open to more diverse forms of civic involvement[47]. In this view, multiple identities, however complex, come to represent an <u>asset</u> in community efforts to encourage or increase civic engagement among their minority youth.

First-hand involvement in community service can also serve as a tool to induce and increase in youth moral feelings toward others,[48] allowing youth to practice and more readily question their own morality. When moral goals are incorporated into one's sense of self, one may exhibit moral motivation from adolescence into adulthood. Such motivation may support the maintenance of moral commitment in terms of, for example, civic and political engagement.[49] In other words, once morality is incorporated into one's identity, a moral identity may emerge that provides a foundation for the "spontaneous morality" that is exhibited in adulthood.[50]

In sum, there is reason to believe that PYD may be enhanced in a manner that benefits both young people and their communities. One way of achieving this is by aligning the strengths of adolescents (e.g., the changes they undergo in their search for an identity) with the assets of their contexts (e.g., providing opportunities for collective activity and access to human resources through affording opportunities for civic engagement). How may this knowledge about the bases of mutually

---

47 Stepick, Alex, and Carol Dutton Stepick "Becoming American, Constructing Ethnicity: Immigrant Youth and Civic Engagement," *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol 6, No. 4, 2002, p. 246-257
48 Yates, M., & Youniss, J., " A Developmental Perspective on Community Service in Adolescence," *Social Development*, Vol 5, No. 1, 1996, pp. 85-111.
49 Colby, A., & Damon, W., "The development of Extraordinary Commitment," In Killen, M., and Hart, D., eds., *Morality in everyday life: Developmental perspectives*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 342-370.
50 Youniss, J., & Yates, M., "Youth Service and Moral-Civic Identity: A Case for Everyday Morality," *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol 11, No. 4, 1999, pp. 361-376.

beneficial outcomes for young people and civil society be applied to improve the likelihood of PYD, especially among young people developing in harsh, challenging circumstances, such as war-torn nations, urban gangs, or poor communities with weak or deteriorated infrastructures? Addressing this question is the chief activity of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development.

Action Items at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development

The Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development (IARYD) at Tufts University seeks to be a model for how an academic unit may use sound research information about PYD to benefit directly youth and communities. The Institute seeks inform policies, help in the design and evaluation of PYD-promoting programs, strengthen future research, and generate ideas for successful, cross-cultural applications of the PYD perspective.

Using the above-described developmental systems approach to PYD, faculty and graduate students at the Institute conduct applied scholarship focused on healthy development of youth and on the role of youth civic engagement in both fostering thriving and in deterring youth from engaging in risk and problems behaviors and in participating in radical groups (such as urban gangs[51]).

For example, the Institute has taken a leadership role in creating measurement tools that allow researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to conduct mapping of internal and external assets within their communities, and thereby provide effective means to support efforts in to introduce or rebuild and to integrate assets crucial for PYD.[52, 53]

_____

51 Taylor, C. S., Lerner, R. M., von Eye, A., Balsano, A. B., Dowling, E. M., Anderson, P. M., Bobek, D. L., & Bjelobrk, D., "Individual and Ecological Assets and Positive Developmental Trajectories Among Gang and Community-based Organization Youth," In R. M. Lerner, C. S. Taylor, & A. von Eye, Eds., Vol. 95: *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research: Pathways to Positive Development Among Diverse Youth*, G. Noam, Series Ed., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002, pp. 57-72.
52 Balsano, A. B., Youth Civic Engagement in the United States: Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Social Impediments on Positive Youth and Community Development. *Applied Developmental Science*, Forthcoming.

In addition, members of the Institute continue to devise and test empirically theoretical (structural) models that seek to identify attributes of PYD and of youth contribution and civic engagement across different cultures, to establish context-sensitive definitions and measures, and to identify, understand, and address social and individual impediments to civic engagement nationally and internationally. To advance this work, the Institute has forged collaborations with several national and international youth-serving organizations, helping to inform and strengthen their work with children and youth by sharing with them expertise in PYD.

Conclusions

Given the enormous costs to individuals, communities, and nations when youth are involved in radical, ignoble movements, there is a great historical need and opportunity to capitalize on the strengths of individuals, families, and communities and to create the conditions whereby youth become thriving agents of democracy, social justice, and civil society.[54,55] As illustrated by the work of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth development, in order to achieve this goal, and to promote the health of individuals and of the institutions of society that assure social justice, equity, and liberty, we must seek to: 1.) understand the genesis of youth radicalism within different cultural settings (in the Middle East and in other venues); 2.) understand the individual ←→ context relations that either promote youth radicalism, or that put young people on a life path marked by positive contributions to civil society and democracy; and 3.) seek

53 Theokas, C., "Promoting Positive Development in Adolescence: Measuring and Modeling Observed Ecological Assets," Ph.D. Dissertation, Medford, MA: Tufts University, 2005. And, Theokas, C., & Lerner, R.M. "Observed Ecological Assets in Families, Schools, and Neighborhoods: Conceptualization, Measurement and Relations with Positive and Negative Developmental Outcomes." *Applied Developmental Science*, Forthcoming.
54 Lerner, R. M., *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004.
55 Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestdottir, S., Naudeau, S., Jelicic, H., Alberts, A., Ma, L., Smith, L., Bobek, D., Richman-Raphael, D., Simpson, I., Christiansen, E. D., & von Eye, A., "Positive Youth Development, Participation in Community Youth Development Programs, and Community Contribution to Fifth-grade Adolescents: Findings from the First Wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development," *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol 25, No. 1, 2005, pp. 17-71.

cross-cultural and contextually-sensitive applications of the PYD
perspective in research, practice, policy, and advocacy.

   We must become scholars and practitioners who effectively and
productively produce thriving youth ←→ civil society relations. We
can accomplish this end by acknowledging adolescents' universal
developmental need for self-definition and for ideologies to pursue and
protect. We need also to understand the appeal that certain ideologies
within particular communities (for example, the ideologies promoted by
Islamic militants across the Middle East) have for youth growing up
within those settings. To combat these pernicious ideologies – linked to
ignoble, not noble, purposes – we must help communities identify diverse
opportunities for meaningful, trusting, and positive civic engagement in
which adolescents are active agents in collective intergenerational
activities. [56] We must then provide such activities to adolescents. As
Lerner et al. note, "what we will gain from such actions are new cohorts
of healthy, civically engaged youth on their way to becoming the leaders
of vibrant democracies in which people have the opportunity to
contribute to their own and others' positive development."[57] These
individuals will refuse involvement in radical movements and choose to
follow, become actively engaged in promoting, and work to protect
ideologies supportive of their and their communities' successful
development.

---

56 Theokas, C., & Lerner, R.M., 'Observed Ecological Assets in Families, Schools, and
Neighborhoods: Conceptualization, Measurement and Relations with Positive and Negative
Developmental Outcomes," *Applied Developmental Science*, Forthcoming.
57 Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestdottir, S.,
Naudeau, S., Jelicic, H., Alberts, A., Ma, L., Smith, L., Bobek, D., Richman-Raphael, D.,
Simpson, I., Christiansen, E. D., & von Eye, A., "Positive Youth Development,
Participation in Community Youth Development Programs, and Community Contribution to
Fifth-grade Adolescents: Findings from the First Wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth
Development," *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol 25, No. 1, 2005, pp. 17-71.

Aida B. Balsano

Aida B. Balsano is a post-doctoral fellow at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, Medford, MA. She received her B. A. in psychology from Grinnell College, IA, and her M.A. in child development from Tufts University. In July 2005, as a Jacobs Foundation Doctoral Fellow, Ms. Balsano completed her Ph.D. in child and adolescent development at Tufts University under the supervision of Prof. Richard M. Lerner. Her thesis work focused on cultural adaptation of Bosnian refugees who are living in the United States.

Ms. Balsano's scholarly and research interests include understanding the role of ecological assets and civic engagement in promoting healthy development in youth, families, and communities. She currently works on two longitudinal research projects: the Overcoming the Odds (OTO) project and the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. The OTO study examines the bases of positive development among African American youth living in Detroit and seeks to identify the assets for positive development among the subset of gang youth who are able to "overcome the odds" and live healthy, productive lives. The 4-H study (conducted at a national level) seeks to understand what individual characteristics and characteristics of youths' families, schools, and communities combine to promote thriving in youth.

Ms. Balsano has assisted in writing competitive grants and has authored, co-authored, and edited a number of chapters and empirical articles about positive youth development, youth civic engagement, and acculturation/cultural adaptation among immigrants. As a scholar, she has also served as a reviewer for *Applied Developmental Science* and *Developmental Psychology*, as an outside grants consultant to Children's Trust Fund, and as a consultant to Universities and youth-/family-serving NGOs in Eastern Europe. In recognition of her contribution to community service and leadership at local and international level, Tufts

University awarded Ms. Balsano the 2003 Robert Hollister Award for Graduate Student Citizenship and the 2003 Presidential Award for Citizenship and Public Service.

Richard M. Lerner

Richard M. Lerner is the Bergstrom Chair in Applied Developmental Science and the Director of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University.

A developmental psychologist, Lerner received a Ph.D. in 1971 from the City University of New York. He has been a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychological Society. Prior to joining Tufts University, he was on the faculty and held administrative posts at The Pennsylvania State University, Michigan State University, and Boston College, where he was the Anita L. Brennan Professor of Education and the Director of the Center for Child, Family, and Community Partnerships. During the 1994-95 academic year, Lerner held the Tyner Eminent Scholar Chair in the Human Sciences at Florida State University.

Lerner is the author or editor of 63 books and more than 450 scholarly articles and chapters.   He edited Volume 1, "Theoretical Models of Human Development," for the fifth edition of the *Handbook of Child Psychology* (1998), edited (with Francine Jacobs and Donald Wertlieb) the four-volume *Handbook of Applied Developmental Science* (2003), edited (with Laurence Steinberg) the second edition of the *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (2004), and is editing (with William Damon) the forthcoming sixth edition of the *Handbook of Child Psychology*.

He is the founding editor of the *Journal of Research on Adolescence* and of *Applied Developmental Science*. He is also the Associate Editor of *Developmental Psychology.*   He is known for his theory of, and research

about, relations between life-span human development and contextual or ecological change. He has done foundational studies of the mutually influential relations between adolescents and their peer, family, school, and community contexts, and is a leader in the study of public policies and community-based programs aimed at the promotion of positive youth development.

10. HOOP DREAMS SCHOLARSHIP FUND - SUSIE KAY, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, RACHEL CLEAVER, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, BRANDON BRADFORD, HOOP DREAMS ALUMNI

During her first year as a teacher in an inner city D.C. public school, Susie Kay attended 14 funerals of students. The contrast, within the nation's capital, between highly educated, affluent professionals, and minority young people growing up in an atmosphere of violence, street crime and absent opportunities, led her to think about opportunities for bridging that gap. In 1996, she founded the Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund. Since then, HDSF has awarded over 1000 scholarships, connected 800 inner-city students with mentors, and matched over 300 students with internships in businesses and government agencies. Of those who graduated college through the help of HDSF, many return to the community to give back through mentoring and networking. (see http://www.hoopdreams.org/)

Hoop Dreams participated in this conference as an example of a program that addresses the exclusion and marginalization of minority youths. In the European Diaspora, Muslim immigrant youths are vulnerable to radicalization and crime for related reasons: because they feel excluded from hope and opportunities, and because their own communities are weak and plagued by multiple social problems. France after its recent riots, the Netherlands and the U.K. after terrorist incidents originating in their minority communities, and those dealing with the Iraqi insurgency, all confront the same question: how to convey to excluded young people the sense that they have a place within the

society; the skills and mindset to actively pursue that place; and the support and encouragement to keep going when they falter. By addressing the needs of disenfranchised youth and respecting their potential, HDSF has helped stem their flow into violent organizations, street crime and other forms of antisocial and self-destructive behavior.

HDSF has found that mentoring and student support programs that link minority individuals with successful members of mainstream society are the most effective among its offerings. By forming relationships with at-risk youths, mentors and advisors who might otherwise not have any contact with troubled communities now have an understanding of the challenges facing these youths. Conversely, young people can learn some of the necessary skills and habits of professional and educational success from their mainstream mentors. HDSF hopes to promote an ongoing commitment to community responsibility and a lasting spirit of service among all participants, in order to keep dialogue open and to improve conditions in the affected neighborhoods.

Susie Kay

Susie Kay is the Founder and President of the Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund. In 1996, she started the Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund, after growing frustrated that so many of her talented students were unable to attend college due to lack of funds and other resources.

Kay taught 12th grade American Government at H.D. Woodson High School, a 100% African-American, inner-city public high school in Washington, D.C. for thirteen years prior to running Hoop Dreams full time. She authored the curriculum guide for STAR-Students Talk About Race—a tool used to instruct teachers about teaching racial reconciliation and how to break down racial barriers. The curriculum, designed for *People for the American Way*, has been distributed to teachers in high schools across the nation.

Susie Kay's other professional experience includes working on Capitol Hill for former Rhode Island member of Congress Claudine Schneider and volunteering on numerous local and national Democratic political campaigns. She has appeared on local and national television (CNN, CSPAN) and radio outlets, speaking on a wide range of issues: education, urban politics, socio-economic disparity, The Hoop Dreams Scholarship Fund and current issues.

The President's Commission on Race honored Kay in 1999 for her work to further racial reconciliation. Kay's testimonial on educational budget cuts was delivered by the late Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) on the Senate floor and was printed in the Congressional Record on March 12, 1996. She was honored with the Myrtle Wreath award for education by Hadassah and was selected as one of the Washingtonians of the Year for 2000 by *Washingtonian* Magazine. In 2002, Coca-Cola selected Kay to be a torch bearer of the Olympic Torch as it passed through Washington, DC on its journey for the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics. In 2002, Kay was presented with the Martin Luther King Service Award by the United Planning Organization.

In 2003, Kay was been recognized by Soroptomist International as a 2003 Woman of Distinction in the area of Education. She is a graduating member of the 2002-2003 class of Leadership Washington and a member of the Washington, DC Non Profit Roundtable. American University awarded her their Distinguished Alumni of 2003 Award and the Jewish Social Service Agency of Greater Washington recognized her with the Lehrman-Pikser Award. In 2004, she served as the keynote speaker for the U.S. Department of Education's Electronic Access Conferences, and was recognized as the "Community Activist of the Decade" by the Urban Independent Music Awards and the Citizen of the Year by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Washington, DC Chapters.

The daughter of a Navy captain, Kay grew up in Newport, Rhode Island and graduated from American University in Washington, D.C.

11. CONCLUSIONS

Working Group 1: Research Questions and Priorities

Working Group 1 was asked to think about what gaps exist in terrorism research today in order to determine which areas would be the most salient and significant for further exploration. The primary conclusion resulting from the group's discussion was that researchers and analysts must view terrorism as a complex phenomenon that requires interpretation through multiple disciplinary lenses. Only after observing terrorism through this broadened conceptual framework can the current gaps in terrorism research be adequately filled and lead to the development of effective counter-terrorism strategies.

Complex Phenomena Require an Interdisciplinary Approach

Terrorism is a highly dynamic and complex phenomenon consisting of many components that constantly change and adapt overtime and as interactions occur.[i] Understanding this, Working Group 1 concluded that no linear analytical framework would be applicable in helping researchers understanding the myriad of issues related to terrorism. Instead a new analytical framework, which considers and complements the complexity of terrorism, needed to be developed. To illustrate the inherent complexity of terrorism, they decided to focus on the developmental process of becoming a terrorist from an individual/psychological perspective.

They began by expressing Petter Nesser's tentative typology of terrorist cell members, where he argues that terrorists can be divided into four categories: 1) the entrepreneur, 2) the impressionable wiz kid, 3) the misfit, and 4) the drifter.[ii] They then proceeded to map out the developmental process of one typological category, in this case the impressionable wiz kid, across a progressive developmental continuum which was broken into three stages: 1) Recruitment, 2) Participation, and 3) Disengagement. In doing so, the participants began to observe numerous complexities in engaging in this task.

First, by examining only one typological category of a terrorist, one is in essence fixing an individual's role within a terrorist group. As an individual progresses along the aforementioned developmental continuum of becoming a terrorist, that individual can move into and out of the four typological categories. Holding observations constant to just one category thus limits one's understanding of the dynamic changes that may occur while an individual is associated with a terrorist group.

Second, the group observed that the reasons why an individual in one particular typological category becomes involved with, participates within, and disengages from a terrorist group are not always the same reasons for other individuals within the same and or a different typological categories. Moreover, the motivations and actions of an individual in a particular stage of the developmental continuum do not always help explain motivations and actions in other stages of the continuum.[iii]

Third, the participants learned that trying to understand the developmental process of becoming a terrorist by observing the event only through an individual/psychological perspective provides only a myopic and incomplete comprehension of this phenomenon. Since terrorism is also a group process, it must be observed from an organizational behavior context as well. Furthermore, the motivations and actions of an individual and/or a group takes place within a unique social, political, religious, and ideological environment. This environment influences why and how an individual and/or a group will act and must be taken into consideration when trying to understand the developmental process of becoming a terrorist.[iv]

After recognizing some of the inherent complexities with their initial approach, the group determined that in order to adequately analyze the developmental process of becoming a terrorist, they would have to view this phenomenon from multiple levels and disciplinary perspectives. Such a broadened and interdisciplinary conceptual framework of analysis would not only examine each individual actor and

component within the developmental process, but also the synergistic relationship between these actors and components.

Currently, however, there is a dearth of research that examines the developmental process of becoming a terrorist, and terrorism in general, from such an approach. In order for effective counter-terrorism strategies to be developed and executed, this multi-level and multi-disciplinary analysis must be applied. Thus, in order to observe how such an analysis could take place and determine where gaps in research currently exist, the participants decided to very briefly analyze the disengagement stage of the developmental continuum of becoming a terrorist.

Disengagement

The group defined the process of disengagement from a terrorist group as ceasing involvement in terrorist activities and or exiting from a terrorist group altogether.[v] In attempting to understand how they could better develop strategies to facilitate disengagement, they concluded that only by understanding the relationship among the three-stages of the developmental continuum of becoming a terrorist would one be able to develop specific disengagement strategies for a particular group.[vi]

Thus, one major area for empirical research is to systematically map the process of recruitment, participation, and disengagement in order to understand during each stage: 1) the specific roles played by individuals, 2) the organizational dynamics within a group, and 3) the relationship of a group with its civil society and government.[vii]

This would require thinking through these issues for each stage from multiple levels such as: 1) individual, 2) group 3) movement, 4) society, 5) state, and 6) international. Then for each level of analysis, a multi-disciplinary team would need to investigate, analyze,

interpret, and recommend specific actions that would facilitate disengagement.[viii]

Since each terrorist group is a product of its own specific time and place, the participants concluded that attempts to generalize and create homogenous templates should be discouraged. While similarities may be present in terms of overall process, the many differences in content and culture will require a context-specific approach.[ix] Thus, applying a multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach would address the inherent complexity of the developmental process of becoming a terrorist and lead to the development of more effective counter-terrorism strategies.

The participants decided to finish their discussion by listing what gaps exist in research today regarding disengagement. The areas they thought needed further exploration from a multi-level and multi-disciplinary framework are as follows:

1) Systematically map the process of recruitment, participation, and disengagement in order to understand during each stage: a) the specific roles played by individuals, b) the organizational dynamics within a group, and 3) the relationship of a group with its civil society and government during each stage;

2) Study the nature of the discourse used to disengage members from groups that are stigmatized or accepted within their operating environment;

3) Identify the specific social and political contexts in which specific disengagement processes may emerge or be accepted; and

4) Engage in intensive case studies of disengagement from individual groups and then proceed with a comparative analysis between groups;

This multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach should be applied to the other two stages of the developmental continuum of becoming a

terrorist. Only after this has occurred will some of the gaps be filled that will enable researchers to develop more effective and robust counter-terrorism strategies.

Working Group 2: Practical Programs and Public Diplomacy

Three overarching ideas came out of the meetings of Working Group 2. First, particularly in the U.S. government, youth programs are often seen as a 'soft issue', or as less important to counter-terrorism and security goals. Many participants acknowledged that this misconception must be addressed and corrected in order to get the U.S. government to utilize youth programs effectively. Second, any program that aims to have an impact on deterring radicalism must be sustainable and long-term, addressing the actual needs and wishes of the population. Related to that, the third idea entailed involving youth in developing programs that would best suit their needs. By respecting youth's input, program implementers can encourage the empowerment process and may uncover effective solutions to population-specific problems.

The discussion in the first round of Working Group 2 centered on promising programs that could be built upon in key areas--reconciliation and disengagement (Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program and Yemen's Committees for Dialog), employment (Provisional Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and the Quick Reaction Infrastructure model), and sports and recreation (Iraqi Olympic Committee model). The discussants also focused on public diplomacy emphasis areas and themes that might prove effective in drawing youth away from violent radicalism: commonality with strife in Western communities (We Are You), resolving personal identity and other cognitive conflicts, and building lives for today's youth.

In the second round, discussion focused on how to implement such programs, and how to address the most immediate needs. The group agreed that a comprehensive, *international* database should be established that catalogs what programs have been undertaken and their success quotient. Additionally, the group stopped to reflect on institutions that they might not have considered in their other discussions—World Bank, UNICEF,

Soros Foundation, and Street Kids International—whose expertise could also be leveraged. Finally, they discussed a way ahead for the community gathered in the two groups and an action plan to be headed by RAND's Initiative for Middle East Youth (IMEY). The plan features a parallel, two-track conference—featuring academic and youth participants—to be held in the region during 2006.

---

[i] Kerbel, Josh. "Thinking Straight: Cognitive Bias in the US Debate about China," *Studies in Intelligence*, VOL. 48, NO. 3, 2004.

[ii] Nesser, Petter, "Profiles of Jihadist Terrorists In Europe," Speech given at the conference *Positive Options to Deter Youth Radicalism* hosted by IMEY, Center for Middle East Public Policy, RAND, Washington DC, September 22-23, 2005.

[iii] Horgan, John, "Understanding Terrorist Motivation: A Socio-Psychological Perspective," Presented at *Initial State of the Art Review of Research on Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm, March 22, 2005.

[iv] Ibid.

[v] Ibid.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Horgan, John, Notes from conference working group, *Positive Options to Deter Youth Radicalism* hosted by IMEY, Center for Middle East Public Policy, RAND, Washington DC, September 22-23, 2005.

[viii] Ibid.

[ix] Ibid.