Winning Without A Fight

How the United States can use Non-Violence in Combating Islamic Extremism

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Abstract:

For the past decade the United States has been embroiled in a series of conflicts in the Middle East in the hopes of eradicating the threat of terrorism. Despite monumental effort, money, and lives lost, many fear that this has not produced the desired results. This paper analyzes a series of case studies that focus on historical examples of how Islamic extremism was challenged without the use of violent force. By exploring case studies on economic incentives, supporting an alternative and moderate religious message, and supplementing programs of grassroots societal reform, the paper explores the ways in which terrorism has been confronted without the use of force. Based on analysis of these case studies the paper draws comparisons between their efficacy and makes policy recommendations as to which would be most amiable to America's counter terrorism strategy.
“The Guerrilla must swim in the people as the fish swims in the sea”

-Mao Zedong

Despite a tremendous need, massive economic and domestic support, the most powerful military in the world, and years of practice, the United States is still unsuccessful at fighting terrorism. The current strategy in Afghanistan is structured around how to cut losses, not around how to win the war. Iraq is a tumultuous country plagued by an uncertain future and still faces the pervasive threat of terrorism. Countries such as Yemen and Pakistan pose an ever-increasing threat to U.S. security and homegrown terrorism is on the rise.

There are many scholarly theories that explain why it is so difficult for the United States to fight terrorism. Some contend that the American military is not sufficiently trained at counterterrorism tactics. Without doubt, the U.S. military is not perfect at counterterrorism and there are still many lessons to be learned and incorporated into our strategy. However, while that may have played a large role at first, the United States military has dramatically changed its methodology for fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Alternatively, the blame could be linked to the absence of successful nation building. It may be too early to tell if Iraq and Afghanistan will ever become functional democracies, but the United States is pouring a massive amount of manpower and money into that cause. Others have proposed that democracies, in particular the United States, fail to combat terrorism
because they are unable to justify to their domestic populations the need for brutal force.\footnote{Merom, Gil. \textit{How Democracies Lose Small Wars}. University of Cambridge, 2003. Print.} Even if this theory is true, not using brutal repression and human rights abuses to accomplish our foreign policy objectives seems like a beneficial strategy.

This paper contends that the United States failed to successfully combat the threat of terrorism because it focused its fight on only one front, a military one. Leading scholars and military advisors, such as Dr. David Killcullen, have made a resounding case for why a counterinsurgency effort can only be successful if it targets the society, as opposed to the specific terrorist groups within the society.\footnote{Kilcullen, David. \textit{The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Mist of a Big One}. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.} He explains that organizations such as Al Qaeda have taken control of communities through their ability to make long lasting connections to local populations and becoming immersed in their everyday life. Thus, to successfully combat terrorism it will take far more than targeted strikes against members of the terrorist organization; it will require a change on the societal level. Perhaps more importantly, it will require a mentality shift in the minds of locals.

This paper makes use of a few key terms that are important to define to provide a clear context. Terrorism is most commonly defined as “violence- or, equally important, the threat of violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of a
While terrorism and guerilla warfare share many similarities in the tactics they use, they are not interchangeable. Most notably is the difference that guerilla’s “operate as a military unit, attack enemy military forces, and seize and hold territory, while also exercising some form of sovereignty or control over a defined geographical area and its population.” An insurgent is more broadly defined to be any individual that takes up arms against a form of authority and does not make prescriptions about the strategy that it employs in doing so. Given these differences, it is important to note that this paper does not analyze how to use non-violence to combat guerilla warfare, but rather focuses on terrorism.

Islamic extremism is another central term used in this paper that is oftentimes misunderstood and misused. Islamic extremism is a broad term that can encompass a number of activities and ideologies, some radical and others not. Ira Marvin Lapidus explains in her book on the history of Islamic society that while Islamic extremism can refer to a wide variety of ideas, it is most frequently used to refer to use violence as a means of implementing Islam in a political sense. This is the specific brand of Islamic extremism that this paper refers to.

This paper is written in response to the need for more research and discourse on ways of addressing terrorism on a holistic level and without the threat of violence.

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4 Ibid.
It analyzes how countries have attempted to tackle terrorism without the use of military power in the past, and from these examples, makes policy recommendations for how the United States’ strategy could evolve. It questions on a basic level if the present strategy is at all viable, and from there, compares the efficacy of different programs. Specifically, it focuses on economic, religious, and social mechanisms of challenging the allure of terrorist groups. In exploring the examples of non-violent counterterrorism, it explains why the tactic was either effective or ineffective in the past and then extrapolates to determine if they could be successfully implemented within the United States. This research is not intended to pioneer a new methodology of thinking about counterterrorism, but rather synthesizes and compares a number of strategies that exist currently.

This paper looks at three different genres of combating terrorism without using violence; economic, religious, and social reform. These three groups of study were selected because they are the major historical ways that nations have attempted to combat terrorism. Further, prominent scholars in the field of counterinsurgency have references similar components as the key methods of ensuring stability.\(^6\) Thus, while other categories exist, and have been explored as methods of counterterrorism, the overwhelming majority of ways to address terrorism without force have focused on economic motivations, religious messages, or societal changes.

Notes on Methodology and Case Selection

There are two main reasons why using case studies was the most viable method of researching the topic of non-violent methods of countering terrorism. First, the phenomena of addressing terrorism on a social level, as opposed to a militaristic one, is relatively new, especially in the context of Islamic extremism. As a result, there are a limited number of instances that could be drawn upon and too few to form the basis of a comprehensive and reliable quantitative study. It would have been hard to create independent research on these subjects, in large part due to the fact that individuals who are susceptible to terrorist influence, or are former terrorists, are hard to survey (not to mention, because of the financial and geographic constraints of this research). Further, even in cases where there is a body of information on the subject, there is very little statistical analysis regarding the successes of these programs.

Second, producing a reliable quantitative study would require that certain variables be held constant in order to prove causality. Since this study is dealing with programs that are of massive importance to protecting lives, and are often grassroots, having a control group that did not seek to eradicate terrorism would be impossible. Thus, the only way to draw conclusions about causality is to study qualitative explanations about why outcomes did or didn’t occur. This paper
focuses more on the ‘why,’ and the ‘how,’ as opposed to definitive measurements of when a specific outcome occurred.⁷

As with all studies, there are limitations on what conclusions case studies allow one to draw. A bias that will be implicit in any study that does not utilize a random sampling, as does this research, there will be a selection bias.⁸ There is more analysis below explaining why each case was selected specifically, but they all hold in common a trait that this paper seeks to explain. Even though selecting case studies based on specific characteristics as opposed to a random selection opens the study up to bias, it is a necessary tradeoff since a successful analysis requires that the “process of interest be transparently observable.”⁹ Additionally, since these case studies were selected because they are prominent it is possible that they are outliers and not all similar attempts at non-violent methods of counterterrorism are equally successful. Further, since there is no control group possible, it is impossible to ever fully determine causality.

This paper focuses specifically on Islamic extremism because the vast majority of American efforts at countering terrorism are centered on the Middle East. While there have been instances of using non-violence to combat terrorism outside of the Middle East, such as political concessions granted to the Irish due to the terrorist

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activity of the IRA, they are not included in this paper because of the massive cultural differences. Since different cultures, and specifically different terrorist groups, behave in different ways, this paper focuses on only one region to minimize the external factors in the study. This paper looks at methods of combating Islamic extremism domestically as well as internationally. The instances of combating homegrown terrorism discussed in the paper focus on the United Kingdom and the United States because of the strong cultural similarity that they share. Since these cultures share so many similarities and belief systems, it is reasonable that a program implemented in one would yield a similar result in the other.

The first case study concerns economic means of dissuading terrorism and focuses on the Sunni Awakening. In Iraq, the Sunni Awakening was claimed to be one of the most pivotal aspects of the surge in 2005. Since the surge was such a fundamental turning point in the war, the Sunni Awakening had the potential to be one of the most effective tools of non-violence in the battle against terrorism in Iraq. Further, it is important to determine if economics are the primary drivers behind terrorism. If it is, then financial incentives for potential terrorists may, at times, be sufficient to override other terrorist recruitment tactics, such as threat of force, religion, or social pressure.

The second case study deals with countervailing religious messages and focuses on the Fiqh Council of North America and a British group called the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board. Even though such group do not have a lot of
publicity, they are one of the pioneering groups of Islamic religious leaders working to counter terrorism. Additionally, the choice was in part practicality since all of their fatwas and general information are translated into English and they are located within relative geographic proximity.

The third case study explores two examples of how terrorism can be combated on a societal level. The Active Change Foundation, based out of the United Kingdom, seeks to target youth who may be in danger of being persuaded by extremism and establish peaceful social ties. This program is one of the most unique mechanisms of countering terrorism and one of the only preemptive tools of doing so. Further, since the United Kingdom has such strong cultural ties to the United States it could be feasible to implement in the United States. On the level of societal changes, this paper also analyzes the Care Program in Saudi Arabia, which serves as a rehabilitative center for former extremists. There are many similar rehabilitative programs around the world, however, since the United States and Saudi Arabia have a strong alliance in fighting terrorism it is a program that would be easy for the U.S. to utilize more fully. Further, it is one of the most successful programs out of all the methods of rehabilitating terrorists, and as such, has unique characteristic that allowed for its success.
Chapter 1: Economic Incentives

“All we have to do is send two mujaheddin to raise a small piece of cloth on which is written ‘Al Qaeda’ in order to make the generals race there, to cause American to suffer human, economic and political losses.”

-Osama bin Laden, unidentified 2004 video message

Introduction

If economic incentive provided to potential or existing terrorists are a viable mechanism of changing their practices, then it would save the United States a significant amount of money and lives. Before analyzing the capabilities of the United States to counter terrorism with economic incentives, it is imperative to answer the question of whether or not economic conditions give rise to terrorism in the first place. There is no academic consensus on this topic, nor is there a clear correlation to illustrate that poverty gives way to terrorism and clear outlying examples on either side. Many would point to the examples of the IRA in Ireland or ETA in Spain; both of which are prominent terrorist organizations based in affluent countries. Or in the context of Islamic extremism, scholars point out that Osama bin Laden was a millionaire and the nineteen individuals behind the September 11th attacks were of wealthy and educated families. Perhaps the most persuasive argument for why there is no link between terrorism and poverty is the fact that
there are billions of individuals living on less than a dollar a day who have not turned to terrorism.

On the other hand, there have been clear cases where individuals were drawn to terrorism purely because of economic incentives. For example, it is documented Saddam Hussein paid Palestinians and their families to become suicide bombers against Israel.\textsuperscript{10} There will only be a select group of terrorists who will be influenced by monetary incentives. Further, it is more likely that individuals in Iraq and Afghanistan, since both countries were ravaged by war, may be more amiable to economic persuasions. Major General Douglas Stone, the commander of Task force 134 in Iraq noted that of the 25,000 insurgents and terrorist suspects detained in Iraq in 2007 78\% of them were unemployed. He further went on to note that many of the suspects described their terrorist activities as ‘job’ opportunities. \textsuperscript{11} Thus, when analyzing the efficacy of using economic incentives to dissuade terrorist activity it is important to keep in mind that while it may work for some, it is not a catchall fix.

Further, the concept of using monetary incentives to change loyalties is not a new concept. In the Vietnam War the United States provided funding, training and rehabilitation for former Viet Cong members to turn in their alliances. These

programs were wildly successful and provided indispensable aid to the American troops. Although not implemented, there was significant debate amongst the NATO allies in Afghanistan about paying lower level Taliban members to give up their arms and help the Americans.

Background

The Sunni Awakening, also known as the Sons of Iraq and concerned citizens groups, was a movement by the American military to provide funding to former Al Qaeda sympathizers, or potential sympathizers, in exchange for them rescinding their terrorist ties. The movement began in the predominantly Sunni province of Anbar in Iraq when American leaders on the ground formed coalitions between tribal sheikhs. General Rick Lynch spearheaded the project and has hailed its success as a mechanism of countering terrorism. The Americans agreed that they would provide Sunnis (and later Shiia) monetary and militaristic benefits, such as a monthly stipend, in exchange for their agreement to renounce their association with Al Qaeda. These groups became known as the sahwa militia and were formed in 2005, around the same time as the surge.

Within a very short amount of time, the movement grew from a small number of Sunni tribes in the Anbar province to incorporate 34 groups in seven regions. The title ‘Sunni Awakening’ can be deceiving since 9 of the 34 groups were Shiia. Estimates state that by 2008 and 2011 there were between 80,000 and
100,000 former insurgents involved in attacking Al Qaeda.\textsuperscript{12} Funding the entirety of the program cost the Pentagon a total of $7.5 million a month, pocket change in comparison to the $3 trillion price tag of the total war effort.\textsuperscript{13}

When Prime Minister Nouri Maliki came to power he did not dissolve the Sunni Awakening groups, although he did reduce its size.\textsuperscript{14} In 2008 the United States transferred the responsibility of the awakening groups to Iraq, including the obligation to provide their pay. Maliki is only paying slightly over half of the 100,000 troops that were converted under American control and it costs Baghdad roughly 15 million a month. However, their roles are now being transferred into civilian and security jobs, and in some cases the Iraqi military.

**Successes**

In conjunction with the surge of troops in 2005, the Sunni Awakening was hailed as one of the most innovative and successful strategies implemented in Iraq. Even prominent Shiia leaders recognized the impact that the awakening had on violence and stability in the region.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} “Baghdad to Pay Sunni Groups” 3 October, 2008. Al Jazeera English. \url{http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2008/10/200810151630737451.html}
In 2007 a GAO report noted a significant decrease in violence. It stated that there had been a 70% decrease in violence; from 180 attacks a day to 50 attacks a day. Further, it credited the Sunni Awakening as one of the major factors in contributing to this decrease in violence. Of course, it is impossible to determine absolute causality between the awakening and the decrease in violence since a number of other factors were changed at the same time, such as an influx in troops and the Mahdi Army agreeing to a cease-fire. However, it is important that the major decreases in violence occurred in the Baghdad and Anbar providences, where the awakening was most strong.

Perhaps an even more important indication of the success of the Sunni Awakening, however, was the reduction of violence of 77% in 2008; even as US troops were pulling out. This gives credence to the argument that the Sunni Awakening was primarily successful at decreasing violence independent of American involvement. The question still remains however, if the Sunni Awakening would be able to sustain itself without any American military support.

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Failures

Despite a relatively strong history of success as a method of stabilizing Iraq, this program could still yield disastrous results. One of the overriding concerns is that no time has elapsed without American military involvement in Iraq to check the actions of the awakening groups. It is possible that without a modernized military to maintain stability in the country, the armed, trained, and now well funded militia groups could change their alliance again to be against democracy and Western influence. This concern brings up a more fundamental issue with the problem of providing funding to former members of an enemy group; how can one ever be sure that their loyalty will remain. And if their loyalty is something that can be bought and has no ideological commitment what happens when a higher bidder comes along? Thus, one of the central problems with the program of buying individuals loyalty is that it does not change any of the root causes that resulted in terrorism. The incentives, ideology, and means still exist. If the occupying force is unable to ensnare enough of the population, than this policy may have no impact.

Further, the strategy is extremely short sighted and only seeks to account for interim stability. The awakening councils, which are now employed by the Iraqi government, have become reliant on the need to use force to make a living. Since they have a history of working in insurgency, it makes little sense that the government would not seek to teach them a different skill aside from fighting to prevent them from switching allegiances. Instead of giving these individuals an alternative means of
providing for themselves, it makes them reliant on the use of force to make a living. If there are not be enough jobs to employ all former awakening members in the army or government, then it creates armed bands of individuals with no other means of income. Iraq already witnessed how harmful such groups can be. Following the 2003 invasion, American Ambassador Jerry Bremmer disbanded the Iraqi army and set loose hundreds of thousands of armed, and now unemployed, men into the streets. The result was predictably disastrous. Insurgency increased, sectarian violence soared and Al Qaeda was left with the perfect opening to come into the country. If Iraq is to learn from its mistakes, then it either needs an end strategy or ought refrain from the use of this tactic.

The use of a monetary incentive to sway alliances also projects the image to the Iraqi people that fighting and violence is purchasable. Instead of promoting ideological values that stress the need for democracy and stability, it shows that money ought be the highest value. Not only does this open up the potential for fighters to switch their alliances, but it also instills a mentality of bribery into society; something which many recognize to be a serious roadblock to stabilization. But further, it becomes very difficult to detect if the Iraqis that are being employed to fight for the Americans are actually using their resources for the objectives that were intended. What if the United States were paying soldiers without knowing that they were using that money to continue the fight for Al Qaeda.
A final hypothetical problem is that it is difficult to determine which fighters are actually ideologically aligned with their enemy and which would be able to come around to the American cause. Obviously, ideology is not impossible to measure, but it is difficult for a foreign country to do so on a mass scale. Especially considering that after the fall of Saddam there were countless acquisitions made purely for political gains that specific individuals were or were not loyal to the Ba’ath party.

Prime Minister Maliki has warned that the awakening groups could lay the framework for a Sunni opposition, especially considering how disenfranchise the Sunni’s have been in politics since the fall of Saddam Hussein. Further, since the Iraqi government was not able to incorporate the entirety of former Sunni awakening groups into the army of government, they may now have an incentive to turn against the state. Considering the already perilous nature of Iraqi security, arming and providing the Sunnis with funding could have massive blowback.

Can it be Implemented in American Strategy?

America’s strategy in Iraq has significantly changed since the initial invasion nearly a decade ago. As opposed to focusing on extracting weapons of mass destruction and the presence of Al Qaeda, the United States is focused on creating a

stable democracy. To achieve this end, the United States will need to focus on how to impact society on a broad level, as opposed to targeting specific threats. A similar mentality has been adopted when looking at conflicts such as Afghanistan; the focus is less on specific targets and more on nation building. Thus, when considering the question of continuing to stress the use of monetary incentives to counter terrorism, it is important to determine if the strategy would fit into the broader context of the wars.

The United States is no stranger to the concept of funding combatants to put down their arms. One of the most prominent historical examples is from the Vietnam War when the United States paid Vietcong to forgo their alliance to the North and spy for the American and South Vietnamese. Additionally, the United States has a long history of providing arms and money to combatants in the hopes that they will defeat our enemy for us, such as how we funded the mujahedeen to fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Considering its prevalence in American strategy, it is important to question if funding insurgents in the hopes that they will comply with our desires is a wise strategy. Especially in the context of nation building, which has been the too-often forgotten cornerstone of American intervention in the Middle East, this is not a salient strategy. If the United States were to better define the end game in terms of how they would treat the Sunni Awakening councils once they fully pull out of Iraq, it would have been a more persuasive tactic.
Many scholars and politicians note that despite America’s military and technological superiority, we still lose wars against nations that are far less advanced than us. The solution has to be one that focuses more on human capital as opposed to weaponry. The Sunni Awakening Councils were developed in response to this recognition. While innovative solutions that focus on winning over the human terrain ought be prioritized, this type of solution is short sighted. Perhaps if the U.S. military had a strategy of exactly how many awakening councils they would be able to fund, and then a plan of how they would wean them off monetary support. The idea of integrating them into the Iraqi military is sound, but it needed to be there from the beginning of the program. For example, the United States ought have coordinated better with the Iraqi government to determine if there would be enough government jobs to sustain the entirety of the program.20 With so many questions remaining it seems almost as if this was a plan that foresaw only the most immediate outcomes and failed to take a holistic approach.

The United States was on the right track when it implemented the Sunni Awakening councils, but it required far more refinement before it was instituted on such a wide scale. The U.S. military needed to have a better exit strategy and a better idea of how the Iraqis would be able to deal with the program after they left. A few years ago Afghan President Karzai proposed a similar program of paying moderate level Taliban to lay down their arms and swear allegiance to the coalition forces. Ultimately this program was axed because there were many remaining

questions. The United State need not have to disregard this program, however, it
did well to learn from the mistakes of Iraq to recognize that this strategy has a
massive potential for backlash.
Chapter 2: Countering Religious Persuasions

“Whoever kills a person unjustly it is as though he has killed all mankind. And whoever saves a life it is as though he has saved all mankind.”

- The Qur’an, 5:32

Introduction

One of the most tragic outcomes of the War on Terror is that it has perpetuated mentality of Islamophobia in the Western World. One need only turn on the evening news to find instances of Quran burning in the United States or the banning of the burka and hijab in France. Actions, such as the Peter King trials or the widespread backlash to a mosque being built near ground zero, harkens back to America in the 1920s, during the height of the Red Scare. In the minds of many, Islam and radical Islam have become indistinguishable.

It is clear to nearly all Islamic scholars that the Qu’ran is not a call to arms, but rather a message on peace and faith. How then, have so many, in the West and Middle East alike, been led astray to think that Islam condones violent extremism? In the Western world, biased media reporting, residual fears from the attacks of September 11th, and a general ignorance about the non-Western world have contributed to the false view of Islam. In regards to the Middle East, however, the question of how extremism took hold is more complicated. It is unlikely that this warping of religion has anything specifically to do with Islam, since nearly all religions and religious texts have been perverted. For example, Christianity was used for generations as a moral basis for slavery.
One theory on how extremism was able to spread through the Middle East is that many radical groups have stepped into the shoes of a local government to provide basic necessities to the people, thus winning over the support of the local population. There are many examples of this happening, such as how the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt provided health care and child support services, or in Gaza where Hamas was able to take control of the government. Others believe that individuals rallied around the flag of extremism because it was one of the only tools for fighting oppression in their society. One of the most salient examples would be the Taliban, who grew out of the mujahedeen in order to fight against the soviets that placed severe restrictions on the Afghan way of life and practice of Islam. Alternatively, some believe that it was the proliferation of interpretations of religious texts by scholars such as Sayyid Qutb, who provided the religious and ideological basis for leaders such as Osama bin Laden.\(^\text{21}\)

The United States has confronted the issue of how individuals are drawn to religious extremism, in particular radical Islam, largely with the use of force; a strategy that has shown little promise. Fighting gives individuals who were otherwise moderate a cause to turn to extremism and fuels the power of extremist leaders. Additionally, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have devastated their economies and infrastructure, creating ideal conditions for individuals to be open to the persuasions of terrorism. Thus, one of the most promising tactics of combating

http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/nov/01/afghanistan.terrorism3
Islamic extremism is to attack it at its source, by providing countering messages of Islam.

**Background**

There are a number of organizations that have taken it upon themselves to counter the extremist views that are perpetuated by radical Islamic groups. This chapter focuses on two organizations specifically, the Fiqh Council of North America and the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB).

The Fiqh Council of North America was formed in the 1980s in response to the complex needs and demands of Muslims living in America. It recognized that there were too many and too divergent interpretations of how a Muslim ought to practice living in the western world. Roughly translated from Arabic, ‘fiqh’ means interoperating the law. The Fiqh council grew out of the Islamic Society of North America. The council is formed of a group of religious scholars and leaders that seek to turn back to the fundamentals of Sharia law and answer religious dilemmas that arise in the lives of Muslims in America. It has issued a wide variety of fatwas on a variety of issues, ranging from terrorism to the whether or not a Muslim should attend Thanksgiving. According to Abd Al Hakim Jackson, a member of the Fiqh Council and a professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Michigan, “jurists in the Muslim world would not have an understanding of American life and could not
give opinions that fit the American context.” In this sense, the council is needed to fill a niche portion of the Muslim community’s needs. One of the overarching messages that the council attempts to promote is that Muslims ought integrate themselves into the ‘acceptable’ aspects of American culture while still retaining their devotion to Islam. While it does attempt to make highly influential statements about the Islamic way of life, its statements are not binding.

The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board was founded much later than the Fiqh council, in 2006. The MINAB is an independent organization that seeks to advise Imams and religious leaders at mosques to ensure that they are best able to reflect the interests of Muslims living in the Western World. Presently, the board has over 600 different mosques under its authority. It certifies that mosques meet its standards by holding them to five criteria. The mosques begin by holding themselves to the standards set out by the board and once they feel they are ready, they submit to become accredited by the board. These standards include corporate governance, ensuring that qualified and experienced personnel administer services, making sure that activities are accessible to groups such as women and the youth, and ensuring that the mosque promotes a broader sense of civic responsibility. In May of 2009, “twelve hundred people representing nearly six hundred mosques and Islamic institutes from across the country and from all sections of the Muslim

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communities, Shi’a as well as Sunnis joined together...to elect the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board.” The central focus of the organization is to not only promote a sense of community and unity amongst the Muslims in Britain, but also help weed out mosques and Imams that may promote extremist ideology.

Successes

Since the Fiqh Council and the Mosques and Imams Advisory Board clearly have different methods and members, their relative successes and failures are divergent. One of the most acclaimed triumphs of the Fiqh Council was its fatwa denouncing the use of terrorism in 2005. The group made use of its social connections to spread the message of non-violence and to counter claims that Islam provided a basis for the use of force against others. Specifically, it outlined that “all acts of terrorism targeting civilians are Haram [forbidden], that Muslims are forbidden to cooperate with any individual involved in terrorism and violence, and that Muslims must cooperate with law enforcement authorities to protect the lives of civilians.” They additionally make use of Quranic verses to illustrate how acts of terrorism are forbidden in Islam. For example, they site in their fatwa against religious extremism that “Prophet Muhammad said there is no excuse for committing unjust acts, ‘Do not be people without minds of your own, saying that if others treat you well you will treat them well, and that if they do wrong you will do

wrong to them. Instead, accustom yourselves to do good if people do good and not to do wrong (even) if they do evil’ “26

It seem that the primary benefit of the Fiqh Council is that it provides an unwavering stance on how to view the Quran. Under this stance, it seeks to ensure that there is unity amongst messages that are sent to the Muslim community. In appealing to the religious credentials of its members writing its fatwas and answering the questions on Islam submitted to the council, it seeks to be a countervailing force to the unreliable messages of the extremists.

The Mosque and Imam National Advisory Board have their own set of merits and successes. The sheer number of mosques and Imams that the board has under its authority is possibly the biggest estimate to its success as an organization. Considering that estimates state that Britain has about 1,300 mosques and Islamic centers, the MINAB has influence over nearly half of the Muslim communities in Britain.27 One of the main benefits of the board is that it can influence authority in circumstances in which the federal government cannot. A think tank called Policy Exchange issued a study of extremism in mosques in Britain. Out of its sample size of 100, the study concluded that nearly a quarter of mosques preached or utilized

extremist ideology. While there was a large reacting within the British
government and amongst the populous to this study, there was little that the
government could do to intervene since they clearly lack any Islamic authority.
While they, of course, retain legal power over their constituents that is rarely
sufficient to counter a religious message since most devout Muslims believe Quranic
law, also known as Sharia law, is above all else. Since the board is a grassroots
movement it has far more legitimacy. Additionally, it does not give off the
appearance that it is forcing change on a community, since the change is coming
from within.

Failures

There have been more controversies and issues linked to the Fiqh Council
than there have been with MINAB. One of the primary criticisms of the Fiqh Council
was that they lack sufficient credibility to persuade a large enough number of
Muslims to listen to their message. Authorities on Islam such as Professor Abou El
Fadl of University of California law noted that the Fiqh Council was adapting to
project a good image to the western world and media, as opposed to actually
interpreting the Quran the way it should be. He additionally stated that he did not
believe that the Fiqh Council was responding to the needs of Muslims living in the

28 Mirza, Munira, Abi Senthilkumaran, Zein Ja’far. “Living apart together, British
Muslims and the paradox of multiculturalism” Policy Exchange Publications. 29
islamic-law-for-american-muslims.html
Western world sufficiently. This problem is not without a solution, however. The Council could appeal to moderate leaders with more extensive and respected Islamic training to join their organization, or at least advocate for it.

Another criticism of the Fiqh council is that it is very difficult to determine how much success they have actually been able to foster since their membership is not easy to measure. They have a number of experts endorse the council, but they do not have a concrete mechanism for determining who is following their messages. Further, research did not indicated that there were many ways they used to advertise their messages about Islam to the greater public. Thus even though there may have been critical groups in jeopardy of falling to extremism, they were not targeting them specifically.

Additionally, the Fiqh Council faced was allegations that they were associated with providing monetary support for terrorist groups. The investigation was carried out by the federal government as part of Operation Green Quest and sought to eradicate extremists and terrorist sympathizers.30 Even though there were no arrests for the crime laid against them, it did provide a serious amount of bad press and diminished their credibility as an organization that stood staunchly against terrorism.

Even though the Mosque and Imam National Advisory Board has faced less controversy, they are still subject to some criticism. As one reporter notes, the founder of MINAB is no universally accepted figure. Dr. Kamal Helbawy has been tied to multiple terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah and Hamas. Perhaps more worrisome, is that other prominent members, such as Dr. Azzam Tamini have written on behalf of Hamas and, when asked, have provided ambiguous at best answers on the use of suicide bombers, “sacrificing myself for Palestine is a noble cause. It is the straight way to pleasing God and I would do it if I had the opportunity.”31 Clearly, such comments have raised eyebrows when it comes to the claims of objectivity and moderation of the board.

A further criticism has been that there is no strong enforcement mechanism to ensure that mosques follow these procedures since everything is done through self-regulation. Mosques that want to preach moderation are benefited from the board, but for those that have a natural proclivity towards extremism, then there is little that the board can do for them. What is especially bad about this is that the mosques and Imams in danger of falling to extremism are the ones that are of most concern to security and the purpose of the board. Thus, without an enforcement mechanism, the board is not fully effective at achieving its goals.

Can it be Implemented in American Strategy?

Before discussing the question of if the United States should invest in promoting similar programs to MINAB or bolster the Fiqh Council, it is important to note how their shortcomings could be fixed. The first major issue that would need to be overcome is how these groups can successfully market their message on a large level without losing their credibility. In addition to recruiting more esteemed and experienced scholars to promote their message, these groups should also make an attempt to market themselves directly to Mosques or religious centers. Second, the problem of enforcement is one that will never be fully fixed since these groups will never have legal authority in a country. However, when they begin to gain prominence and recognition in their communities, failing to meet their standards will be punished on a de facto level, for example, by people changing which Mosque they practice at.

Implementing more effective regulatory councils in the United States would be a hard, but most likely plausible, task. Obviously, the Fiqh Council is already prevalent in the United States but in order for it to achieve maximum potential there need to be some changes to how it operates. The United States government cannot be directly involved in those changes, however. Since there is already a lot of resentment towards the United States, if it provides funding for a religious council to preach a certain message it will make them look like a puppet of the U.S. government and they will lose what’s left of their credibility (not to mention such an
action would violate the establishment clause). Thus, the Fiqh Council needs to develop on the grassroots level.

Perhaps more importantly, however, would be for the council to have better outreach and publicity programs. This should occur on two levels. First they need to find a way to get their message across to more Muslims living in America, especially those who are most susceptible to be persuaded by extremists. Clearly, this type of outreach would require more funding so the council needs to have better mechanisms of soliciting their message and compelling donations. The second level that they need to appeal to is the non-Muslim population living in the United States. While this may seem a little counter intuitive, it is abundantly clear that there need to be strengthened relations between these two groups. One of the reasons that homegrown terrorism exists is because Muslims feel estranged in their own communities, in large part because there are so many misconceptions about Islamic culture and beliefs in America. If the Fiqh Council ameliorates some of those misconceptions then it may ease Muslim and non-Muslim relations.

In regards to MINAB, their model for how to address Mosques and Imams to promote moderation, it is very easily something that could be implemented in the United States. The issue will be garnering the level of respect amongst the Muslim community needed to become a reputable organization. This is a problem that has not fully been resolved in the United Kingdom, and may also prove difficult for the United States. If it were to employ a self-regulation method, similar to one in the
United Kingdom, it would also run in to the difficulty of reaching segments of the Muslim population that have already turned to extremism. Since it would be very difficult to implement an enforcement mechanism in this instance, it may need to be simply one of many resources that the U.S. has at its disposal to combat Islamic extremism.
Chapter 3: Changing Societal Perceptions

“Terrorists are not interested in the deaths of three-or thirty- or even three thousand people. Rather, they allow the imagination of the target population to do their work for them.”

- Boaz Ganor, “Terror as a Strategy of Psychological Warfare”

Introduction

When people think about how terrorists are recruited, images of radical Islamic madrassas or remote Taliban training camps in the mountains of Pakistan most frequently come to mind. What people do not associate with terrorist recruitment, however, are benign occurrences such as children’s soccer games. Yet, in today’s society, terrorists are turning more and more to everyday activities to persuade youth to join the ranks of a terrorist organization and shying away from more extreme methods of recruitment. In Matthew Levitt’s in depth study of Hamas, he recounts how they utilized a child’s soccer team to indoctrinate youth about the ways of radical Islam, “the soccer team of the Hamas-affiliated Jihad mosque in Hebron was another breeding ground for militants. From its athletic ranks came several Hamas terrorists...the team shirt featured a picture of a hand holding an axe with an inscription reading ‘prepare for the enemy and to fight the occupation.’”32 Tragically, the use of this type of recruiting tool is not uncommon. On a very basic level, it illustrates that most individuals turn to terrorism not

because they are uniquely radicalized, but rather because extremism became a norm in their society.\textsuperscript{33}

Social pressure is one of the least contested forces that motivate individuals towards terror. As with all motivators there are some exceptions. In May of 2010 the Rand Corporation reported that there had been forty-six incidents of homegrown terrorism, involving 125 people. While the majority of these occurrences were carried out on an individual level, nearly all of the cases had connections to larger terrorist networks, such as Al Qaeda.\textsuperscript{34} Since there is a very anti-Islamic extremism attitude in the United States (in many cases these views are taken too far to the point of Islamaphobia), the fact that Islamic extremism could manifest in American culture illustrates that there are other factors at play as well.

Within countries that do have large Muslim populations, and especially in areas that are at risk for their youth turning to terrorist activities, preemptive social programs that address the root causes of why individuals turn to terrorism have proven to be one of the most effective mechanisms of combating terrorism. It is also one of the few preemptive methods, as opposed to the litany of responsive ones.


**Background**

There are three main levels that the perception of terrorism can be changed on. First there is the level of individuals who are at risk for becoming terrorists, one of the more important ways of preventing terrorism. Second, changing the viewpoints of people who have already committed terrorist acts to prevent recidivism. The third level of changing opinions on terrorism is of people who are not in danger of falling to terrorism but live in communities were others might. These are the individuals who may contribute to people feeling estranged and thus giving them another reason to believe that terrorist groups are their only alternative.

This chapter focuses primarily on the first two groups of people; individuals who are at risk of falling to terrorism and those who have already done so. Inadvertently some of these programs can also influence the final group, however. Since the programs discussed are community initiatives, there are many aspects of their work that could also impact the views of people who are not directly in danger of falling to terrorism.

The first program discussed is the Active Change Foundation, based in the United Kingdom. Hanif Qadir and Mike Jervis created the Active Change Foundation in 2003. Mr. Qadir grew up in the United Kingdom as a Pakistani and in his youth was drawn to radical Islam. He traveled to Afghanistan to fight for a cause that he believed to be just above all else. However, when he actually lived amongst the
extremists in Afghanistan he realized that they did not honor their obligations and promises to protect individuals, but rather, saw that they were exploiting the youth that they were recruiting. He returned to the United Kingdom with a different mission; to protect the youth in danger of turning to extremism.35

The Active Change Foundation has a dual mandate, to promote a moderate view of Islam and to guard against gang violence in society. It fulfills these missions by identifying at-risk youth and works on a communal level to create connections with a more ‘positive’ lifestyle. The foundation seeks to instill in them the values of education, civil society, and provides with skills they may need later in the workforce. Further, they try to teach different methods of conflict resolution and citizenship. In doing so, it hopes to simulate the same types of conflicts that a child may face in the real world and provide them the necessary tools to deal with those challenges without turning to violence. All of the partners who work with the youth have unique and personal experience with extremism or terrorism, which allows for them to connect on a personal level to the children and teenagers they are working with.

The Care Program in Saudi Arabia is similar to the Active Change foundation in that they both seek to change perceptions of how to deal with conflicts and provide their students with the tools necessary to function in the real world without turning to violence. The Care Program attempts to re-integrate former jihadists into

mainstream Saudi culture. It is most famous for taking former Guantanamo Bay
detainees and rehabilitating them. Since 2004, more than 4,000 former militants
have gone through this Saudi Rehab program.36

The guiding principle of the Care program in Saudi Arabia is that terrorists
are not villains but rather victims. It preaches that they fell prey to the allure of
terrorism because society and a distorted view of Islam tricked them into believing
that they were acting in the service of Allah, when in fact they were going against his
fundamental teachings. To that end, a lot of the focus of the Care program is
religious training to counter the teachings of extremists. It employs many Islamic
experts and Imams to study and teach the Quran and provide a textual basis to
dispel the myth that Islam can compel individuals to violent Jihad. After successful
completion of the program these former militants are returned to their families, give
a monthly stipend of around $700 (US dollars), and in some cases are given a car or
assistance in finding a wife or house.37 The program also monitors former detainees
once they are let back into mainstream society, although it is ambiguous at how
extensive this monitoring is.

36 Stern, Jessica. "Mind over Martyr: How to Deradicalize Islamist Extremists” Foreign
http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1874278,00.html
Successes

Both the Active Change Foundation and the Care Program have been labeled success stories. The Active Change Foundation specifically has been approved and promoted by the Home Secretary and Secretary of State of the United Kingdom. The reports laud the foundation for promoting change on a social level and fundamentally altering group dynamics. It notes that youth are at times drawn to a violent lifestyle because of very basic things, such as social connections, music, fashion or simply social circles. Just as youth can be drawn into a gang, they can also be compelled to join a terrorist network due to social pressures more than ideological pressures. Some groups, such as Al Shabab have even started to employ anti-American rap music as a tool of recruitment, or as they call it “jihad rap”. By making use of these smaller tools, the terrorist mentality embeds itself into the identity of youth, making it far more likely that they will later turn to violence. Thus, often times youth are drawn to extremism because they do not have any persuasive countervailing social forces to explain that its wrong. One of the most beneficial aspects of the Active Change foundation is that it finds a way to eradicate these aspects of a child or teenagers social circle, or at the very least mitigate them.

40 Ibid.
The concept of rehabilitating terrorists is neither new nor unique to Saudi Arabia. In fact, many of the methods that the Care Program uses have been borrowed from its predecessors. In Singapore the Islamic Religious Council attempted to rehabilitated former extremists with the use of moderate Muslim leaders. Of the roughly 40 former terrorists arrested since 2001 it does not appear that any have gone on to recidivate. In fact, the leader of the council went so far as to say that “Singapore is the only place in the world I know of where relations between the government and the Muslim community are better after 9/11.”

Member of the Singaporean group actually helped with detention facilities in the United States. Major General Douglas Stone, who was charged with running the detention system in Iraq stated that typically 15% of detainees would return to the fight after they had been released, after they implemented some of the changes based on the Singaporean model that number dropped to about 1 or 2%.

The Care Program specifically boasts nearly a 100% success rate at rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Many have claimed, however that this number is too good to be true. The statistic was first disputed when in 2009 two graduates of the Care Program posted a video on the internet that were militant in nature. The Pentagon went on to confirm that these men had renewed their ties to

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42 Ibid.
Al Qaeda in Yemen.44 There have been other occurrences where graduates of the program returned to their former ways. Thus, the self-proclaimed 100% is probably lightly fabricated, but the consensus, even from critics, is that the program is wildly successful. Some of their graduates have mad massive changes in their mentality. For example, Nasir Abbas, a former member of Al Qaeda and a participant in the Bali Bombers, was responsible for helping to catch and detain some of his former associates. 45

Further, another major benefit of the program has been that terrorists are no longer estranged by their societies. One of the major causes of recidivism, for terrorists and common criminals alike, is that once they are finished with their detention they are unable to integrate into society and obtain work. By providing them with viable methods of coming back into society they are giving them yet another reason to turn away from terrorism. Additionally, many of the individuals who turned to terrorism initially confessed that they felt they had nothing to live for; by giving them a wife, job and social connections they successfully combat this mentality.

Moreover, by mentally rehabilitating these individuals, as opposed to simply punishing them for their acts, they create individuals who are able to go back into

society and preach moderation. They have a special group of people who know what it is like to be persuaded by extremism and also know how to overcome these forces. Thus, they are the prefect mentors for others who are at risk of succumbing to terrorism.

Failures

To be optimally successful, the Active Change Foundation requires a few structural changes. The first is that it has a naturally limited scope since they rely on a very specialized group of individuals to respond to the at risk youth. Since all of their staff must have personal experience with extremism they cannot simply train new workers when needed. Thus, it is hard to expand the program’s reach to other at risk communities. This will be hard to change since for the program to be successful the workers need to have extensive experience. However, with additional funding, it may be possible to establish rigorous training so more people would qualify to work with the foundation. Second, it is hard to identify which groups are and aren’t at risk. The foundation’s selection method function as a self-fulfilling prophecy if they label a community at risk, that could either alert extremists that this community could be susceptible to their influence, or it could be offensive to the members of the community who did not view themselves in that light. There is no clear solution to this problem; however, it is a safer assumption to make that a group is at-risk instead of assuming that it is not. To have an extensive enough program that no groups would fall through the cracks it would require
additional funding and institutional support, possibly from the government or private donors.

Further, the program is still relatively recent, which means that as a case study there are a couple limitations on the conclusions that one can draw. It is possible that the program has not been around long enough for problems to manifest. Moreover, inherently it is very difficult to measure the success rate of such an organization. Since it is difficult to determine if an individual that the foundation takes under its wing would have otherwise refrained from extremism, there is no ‘control group’ to determine if there is actually any effect of their program.

There are also some needed changes within the Care Program. The first issue is that it places full responsibility on to the Saudi Arabian government to monitor the rehabilitated terrorists. Since the Saudi government has, in the past, had trouble controlling terrorism in its country, many worry that it may not be up to this challenge. Further, these terrorists were brought to terrorism by their connections in Saudi Arabia, releasing them back into that same social, regardless of if they have new tools at their disposal to respond to conflict and extremist ideology, seems risky.

Another overarching concern is that terrorist groups have attempted to exploit these programs and use them for their own ends. For example, Al Qaeda
attempted to permeate the Care program and help maintain the extremist ideology alive in the detainees.\textsuperscript{46}Obviously, this is a problem that has clear solutions, such as better screening of those individuals who are allowed to have contact with the members of the program, but this occurrence still give weight to the skeptics' criticisms.

\textbf{Can this be Implemented in America?}

There are limited means for the United States to take advantage of these two highly successful programs. The Active Change Foundation could be implemented as a means of combating homegrown terrorism, but the U.S. government itself could not be in charge of the program. It could provide funding, however, in the form of a communal grant. They could use the model that Australia pioneered. The Australian government has provided $1.1 million to the Building Community Resilience program, which targets marginalized Muslim youth.\textsuperscript{47} If the United States provided funding for these programs, as opposed to propping them up themselves, then it would not have the appearance of them being a puppet program.

In regards to the Care Program the United States has already contributed and should continue to do so. The U.S. sent all of the Guantanamo detainees that were

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originally from Saudi Arabia to the Care program. It ought continue to do this, and perhaps consider encouraging other nations to establish similar programs. Not only could this promote higher rates of reform, but it would also, in part, solve the dilemma of where to put Guantanamo detainees.

In regards to homegrown terrorism the United States could also attempt to establish a similar program domestically. To do so would require a lot of political capital, especially if the detainees were to be re-integrated back into society. Considering the extreme amount of backlash that ensued to detaining terrorists in the United States as opposed to Cuba, it would most likely be very difficult persuade the people to establish a program that encouraged reformed to come back to being normal members of society.
Conclusions:

“A War against Terrorism’ is an impracticable conception if it means fighting terrorism with terrorism.”

- John Mortimer, Where There’s a Will...

The tragic events of the past decade, such as September 11th, the Madrid Bombings, or the Mumbai Attacks have criminalized anything but an unyielding stance on eliminating the threat of terrorism. The purpose of this essay was not to make a moral call for methods of non-violence to combat terrorism, but rather a practical one. Despite copious speeches from politicians pledging to have a hard stance on terrorism, there is still a dearth of public will to commit to violent tactics against terrorism. With the United States now embroiled in two wars, and engaged in the conflict in Libya, there will be no public will to fight another violent war, if the need were to arise. And in all likelihood, there will be a cause for the United States to take another stance against terrorism in a Middle Eastern nation, such as Yemen. This reality has given birth to the necessity of alternate means of combating terrorism, one that will not require persuading the populous on the need for violence.

In outlining the relative successes and merits of the commonly used mechanisms of combating terrorism without the use of force, this paper sought to contribute to an alternate strategy for the United States to employ in the war against terror. This was by no means intended to be a comprehensive list of the methods of
non-violent means of combating terrorism, but rather was written in the hopes of providing an outline of how these strategies have and can be used.

All of the case studies discussed in this paper have the potential to be implemented by the United States, either by the government or by civilian initiatives. The only roadblock standing in the way of this occurring is the lack of awareness for these types of initiatives. Thus, the first step in implementing these types of initiatives needs to be a shift in mentality; away from thinking that terrorists are always threats that need to be killed and towards an understanding that a comprehensive solution will require reforming the root causes in society.

Second, the United States will be able to conserve time and resources if it can implement these strategies as preemptive measures. In order to do this, the United States will need to identify the most ‘at risk’ countries that it can invest resources into. The process of identification should not be too difficult, since the U.S. already has extensive networks of intelligence on terrorist threats. What will be more challenging is convincing nations that they should allow for the United States to implement these types of programs or provide funding for them to be done on a grassroots level. This challenge will be compounded due to the litany of revolutions occurring around the Middle East. With so many questions of leadership up in the air, it may be difficult for the United States to form stable partnerships to implement these policies.
Additionally, it is important to remember that the three genres of non-violent solutions described above are not homogenous nor are they interchangeable. For example, methods of using grassroots programs to target at risk youth are best utilized in societies that are already stable and have communities that are predominantly already opposed to the use of terrorism. On the other hand, to implement rehabilitative programs requires societies that are willing to welcome back reformed and former terrorists.

Another significant question to consider is how to balance the messages between the need for continued use of violent force and attempting to promote a message of non-violence. It will also be difficult to determine in which scenarios there will be a need for violence and in which cases alternative strategies will need to be used. These types of adjudications will obviously need to be made on a case-to-case basis.

The United States cannot afford to tie itself to a counter terrorism strategy that does not take a holistic approach to the problem. It needs to approach terrorism that will get to the root causes and have a broader approach to why certain societies are more prone to terrorism. To accomplish this, it needs to reevaluate its strategy on how to approach counterterrorism. The United States must move away from viewing terrorists as a threat that needs to be exterminated, and start thinking about it as a social problem that can be preempted and reformed. By
using strategies of non-violence in the arenas of economic, social and religious activity, the United States can better attain its goals of combating terrorism.
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