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The way forward on counter-terrorism: Global perspectives

*Alex P Schmid**

Introduction

There have been thousands of public conferences and closed-door meetings on terrorism and counter-terrorism since 11 September 2001. They usually end up with recommendations and then everybody goes home after the group photo has been taken. What happened to all these recommendations? Who has acted upon them and actually implemented them? Who has evaluated them? Were they any good?

Governments have spent billions of dollars on combating terrorism and while there have been some tactical successes here and there, there has not been a strategic breakthrough that has managed to put an end to terrorism. In 2014 alone, 13,463 terrorist attacks took place, killing 32,700 people and wounding another 34,700 while more than 9,400 people were kidnapped or taken hostage in terrorist attacks. Compared to 2013, there was a rise in fatalities of 81 percent while the number of attacks increased by 35 percent. Almost half of the world's countries – 95 out of 193 – experienced terrorist attacks in 2014. The most lethal groups – Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Taliban, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram – are all Islamist, followed by another totalitarian group, the Maoist/ Communist Party of India. Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria, are the main victims of terrorism. People in these five countries received more than 60 percent of all attacks and 78 percent of all fatalities.[1]

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[1] United States Department of State, *Statistical information on terrorism in 2014* http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239416.htm on July 2015.

* Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed online journal - *Perspectives on Terrorism*, and Research Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in The Hague. He previously served as the Director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV, University of St Andrews) and the Officer-in-Charge of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations (TPB/ UNODC, Vienna).

While there is right-wing and left-wing terrorism as well as other forms of terrorism, it is religious terrorism that is the biggest source of worry in recent years. Here are statistics covering the year 2011 but the proportions have basically stayed the same:

Table 1: Ideologies behind terrorist attacks worldwide (2011)[2]

Religious (mainly Sunni) extremists	8,886
Left-wing: Secular/political/anarchist	1,926
Unknown source	1,519
Right-wing: Neo-Nazi/fascist/white supremacist	77
Other	170
Total (2011)	**12,533**

Why have most governments been so unsuccessful in meeting this challenge? If we want to sketch a promising way forward we first have to look back at what went wrong in the past when it comes to countering terrorism. We also have to leave behind us some of the 'political correctness' issues that have hindered a clearer identification of the problems. Let me give you my opinion on this by addressing five critical issues:

(i)   the definition problem;

(ii)   the communication problem;

(iii)   the political problem;

(iv)   the religious problem;

(v)   the radicalisation problem.

The definition problem

The first thing that has gone wrong in the past fifty years (ever since 1972 – in fact since 1937[3]) – is that the member states of the United Nations (UN)

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[2]   United States Department of State, *Country reports on terrorism 2011*, 31 July 2011 http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195555.htm on 15 August 2016. More than 22,000 people were killed in these attacks.

[3]   The League of Nations tried but failed to reach a definition in the mid-1930s. The convention which never entered into force defined 'acts of terrorism' as 'criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons, a group of persons or the general public' – Article 1(2), *Convention for the Prevention and Repression of Terrorism*

and, before that, the League of Nations, could not agree on the problem, could not reach a universally accepted legal definition of terrorism. How can the international community combat something for which states cannot find a common definition? It has been said that a problem well defined is a problem half solved. We have not reached that stage.

While there are national and regional definitions of terrorism, the UN General Assembly has yet to agree on a legal one that gives teeth to the UN action plan of September 2006 which was accepted unanimously by all member states of the UN. What is the problem? Part of the problem is that some states make a difference between terrorists and freedom fighters. Some UN member states insisted that certain national liberation struggles – particularly those in Kashmir and Palestine – should not be associated with terrorism.[4] While one can accept the legitimacy of some freedom struggles, however, this does not mean that all methods employed to obtain freedom are also legitimate. Another part of the problem is that many Muslim states make a distinction between *jihad* – struggle to defend and advance the rule of Islam in the world – and terrorism. However, Islam too has prohibitions of what are acceptable methods of struggle; suicide bombings and attacks on women and children and the old – something terrorists engage in – are not part of what mainstream Islam considers to be legitimate.[5] Yet others hold that struggles against non-democratic regimes and armed resistance against foreign occupation should not be equated with terrorism.[6] Again, the answer to this confusion is that even the most just struggle does not justify the use of unjust methods of fighting. Lofty political ends do not justify criminal means.

Yet another problem why it has been difficult to arrive at a definition on terrorism in the Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism of the UN General Assembly is that many states want to reserve the use of the term terrorism to certain acts of violence by non-state actors only, ruling out the possibility that states could also engage in terrorism. Each government represented in the UN's Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism has its own political agenda at home and abroad and generally uses the terrorism label on the domestic front to discredit a broad range

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(1937); quoted in Wurth P, *La repression internationale du terrorisme*, Imprimerie la Concorde, Lausanne, 1941, 50.

[4] Schmid AP (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research*, Routledge, London, 2011, 19-27.

[5] Berko A, *The path to paradise: The inner world of suicide bombers and their dispatchers*, Praeger Security International, Westport, 2007, 172.

[6] Schmid AP, "Comments on Marc Sageman's polemic 'the stagnation of terrorism research'" 26 *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 4(2014), 587-595.

of activities by opposition forces at home. A Government like the one in Saudi Arabia can label disturbances of the public order in the form of street protests terrorism.[7] The Chinese Government tends to place terrorism, extremism and separatism all in one basket.[8] Other governments have other opposition activities which they label 'terrorism'.

For many years I have been pleading, both in the context of the UN and in the academic world, that terrorism needs to be defined narrowly and distinguished from other forms of political crime in a similar way that war crimes have been distinguished from legitimate acts of warfare. Yet when we look at the ongoing and seemingly endless discussions in the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism (it has been discussing a Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism since 1997), there is still no definition that can hope to gain the approval of all members of the UN General Assembly. The current wording of the draft definition is both broad and vague and running hopelessly behind the developments of terrorism itself.[9]

The same is true of some other definitions, including the definition which the African Union had adopted on 14 July 1999:

> Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of…any person…and is calculated to
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> (i) intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce, or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or segments thereof, to do or to abstain from doing any act…or (ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or (iii) create a general insurrection in a State.[10]

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7   The new Saudi law of 2014 defines terrorism as 'Any act carried out by an offender in furtherance of an individual or collective project, directly or indirectly, intended to disturb the public order of the state, or to shake the security of society, or the stability of the states, or to expose its national unity to danger, or to suspend the basic law of governance or some of its articles, or to insult the reputation of the state or its position, or to inflict damage upon one of its public utilities or its natural resources, or top attempt to force a governmental authority to carry out or prevent it from carrying out an action, or to threaten to carry out acts that lead to the named purposes or incite [these acts].' – Human Rights Watch, *Saudi Arabia terrorism law tramples on rights: Establishes legal veneer for unlawful practices*, 6 February 2014 https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/06/Saudi-arabia-terrroism-law-tramples-rights on 15 August 2016.

8   China defines terrorism as 'any speech or activity that, by means of violence, sabotage or threat, generates social panic, undermines public security, and menaces government organs and international organisations' – 'Laura Zhou: China narrows terrorism definition by deleting 'thought' from list of crimes' *South China Morning Post*, 26/27 February 2015
http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1723625/changes-needed-chinas-counter-terrorism-law-avoid-human-rights-abuses-say on 15 August 2016.

9   For a discussion of the UN Draft definition, see, Schmid (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research*, 50-60.

10   *OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism*, 14 July 1999, 2219 UNTS 179; Solomon H, *Terrorism and counter-terrorism in Africa: Fighting insurgency from Al Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Ha-*

What is the problem with such a broad definition? It is simple: the broader your definition of terrorism, the more terrorists you have to fight. In that sense the response problem and the definition problem are related.[11] It also has repercussions for international collaboration against terrorism. The existence of different national and regional definitions of terrorism, some more and some less broad, make international cooperation problematical. Some countries would not want to extradite refugees who fled a dictatorship after they had engaged in some violent street protests and acts of non-violent resistance which an authoritarian regime already labels 'terrorism' while the same actions would be legal in Western democracies. However, if we could all agree on a narrow definition of terrorism under which only some of the worst excesses of political violence would fall, greater international cooperation against terrorism would become more likely.

In the past I had proposed to the UN Crime Commission to choose a restricted legal definition of terrorism based on the already universally accepted definition of war crime.[12] A narrow definition of acts of terrorism as 'peacetime equivalent of war crimes' would put terrorism in the same category of internationally outlawed practices as piracy, torture, slavery and genocide. There is no justification for such practices in the modern world and those who engage in such tactics should not be able to claim any moral justification by stating that they fight for God, fatherland, national liberation or any other 'noble' cause. We cannot

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[11] *ram*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015, 6.

[11] Schmid AP, 'The response problem as a definition problem' in Schmid AP and Crelinsten RD (eds), *Western responses to terrorism,* Frank Cass, London, 1993.

[12] In my report for the UN Crime Commission I had argued that 'Terrorists have elevated practices which are excesses of war to the level of routine tactics. They do not engage in combat, as soldiers do. They strike preferably the unarmed. The attack of defenseless civilians and non-combatants is not an unsought side-effect but a deliberate strategy. Categorising acts of terrorism as war crimes is also appropriate in the sense that most terrorists consider themselves as being at war with Western democracies. (…) Since they are not fighting by the rules of war, they turn themselves into war criminals. (…) I believe that policy-makers would do well to choose a restricted legal definition of terrorism as 'peacetime equivalent of war crimes'. Such a definition would include attacks on civilians and non-combatants and acts of hostage taking but would exclude some forms of violence and coercion (such as attacks on the military, hijackings for escape and destruction of property) which are currently labeled terrorism by many governments. ….[A] narrow and precise definition of terrorism is likely to find broader support than one that includes various forms of violent dissent and protest short of terrifying atrocities. Other, lesser forms of political violence (e.g. against property) would still be illegal under national laws while real terrorist offences could be considered in the same way as we view crimes against humanity, offences that require special treatment. If we have clarity on this front, nobody will be able to confuse terrorists and freedom fighters. (…)The good motive (like the fight for self-determination, freedom and democracy) can then no longer exculpate the bad deed (that is: violence against the unarmed, the disarmed and the neutral bystanders)'. – Schmid AP, 'The definition of terrorism: A study in compliance with CRL/9/91/2207 for the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch' LSWO, Leiden, December 1992, 8, 12-13. Quote slightly changed grammatically compared to the original.

abolish armed conflict but we can place certain forms of conflict waging outside the boundaries of what is permitted under any circumstances in humanitarian and human rights law. However, that also implies that those fighting terrorism should not engage in illegal practices like torture – otherwise they forsake (part of) the moral high ground in the fight against those who accept no rules at all.

Terrorists often see themselves as being at war with their opponents – whether the adversaries are ethnic or religious communities, governments, or entire civilisations. However, by fighting outside the accepted rules of war – which turns them de facto into war criminals according to international humanitarian law – terrorists burn their bridges to the civilised world. Their war is a total war without humanitarian restraints. They attack preferably soft targets – civilians, non-combatants, prisoners of war – even women and children. Normal warfare by responsible state actors needs to be discriminate, proportionate and avoid collateral damage. Terrorist warfare, on the other hand, is indiscriminate – and deliberately so since it is, in fact a form of psychological warfare, trying to 'soften up' and ultimately break the will to resist of the targeted population or its government.[13]

This then is the first problem of counter-terrorism: the lack of consensus on a definition of terrorism is a serious obstacle to a more successful fight against terrorism which is increasingly transnational.

Addressing the communication dimension

A second problem I see when it comes to addressing terrorism more effectively, is the failure to see the complicity of our mass media.

'Terrorism' is based on the production of 'terror', which is a '…state of mind, created by a level of fear that so agitates body and mind that those struck by it are not capable of making objective assessments of risks anymore'.[14] That state

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[13] Schmid AP, 'Terrorism as psychological warfare' 1 *Democracy and Security,* 2 (2005), 137-146. Boaz Ganor has argued that '….terrorism is a form of psychological warfare against the public morale, whereby terrorist organisations, through indiscriminate attacks, attempt to change the political agenda of the targeted population.(…) By convincing the target population that terrorist attacks can be stopped only by appeasement of the terrorist organisations, the terrorists hope to win concessions to their demands. The greater danger presented by terrorism is thus not the direct physical damage that it inflicts, but the impact on the way policymakers feel, think, and respond'. – Ganor B, 'Israel's counter-terrorism policy: 1983-1999 – Efficacy versus liberal-democratic values' PhD Dissertation, Hebrew University, August 2002, 1.

[14] Schmid AP, 'Terrorism as psychological warfare', 137. For an elaboration, see, Schmid (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research*, 2-3.

of mind is not just with the victims themselves (who might not have survived a terrorist attack) but with all those who witness the victimisation – directly or via the media – and identify with the victims. Terrorism consists of a combination of violence (directed at the victims) and propaganda (directed, in part, at those who identify with the victims and have reason to fear that they might be the next victims). The communication dimension is crucial and transforms certain acts of armed violence into acts of political terrorism.

Most acts of terrorism are not primarily meant to kill or incapacitate the victims – they are not the real target – but to send a message to those who care for the victims, making them feel both powerless and angry. The old *avant la lettre* Chinese definition of terrorism was 'kill one, frighten ten thousand'.[15] These days, with the help of the mass media and social media, not ten thousand but tens of millions and sometimes hundreds of millions people can be reached by the terrorists' attention-seeking act. Some years ago Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur surveyed 73 definitions of terrorism and looked at what they all had in common. Their minimalist common ground definition brought out clearly the crucial communication factor: 'Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role'.[16]

The main messengers for the terrorist's publicity have, until recently, been our mass media, and, more recently, also our internet-based social media. Without the 'oxygen of publicity'[17] terrorism by non-state actors would simply not be an attractive strategy. However, we have largely failed to address the communication dimension of terrorism. Partly this has to do with our respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which holds that 'everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression…'[18] For the larger part, however, there are more mundane reasons: the commercial (and sometimes political party) interests of mass media in attention-grabbing news stories.

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[15] For this and 259 other definitions of terrorism, see, Easson JJ and Schmid AP, '250-plus academic, governmental and intergovernmental definitions of terrorism' in Schmid (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research*, 99-157.

[16] Weinberg L and Pedahzur A, 'The challenges of conceptualizing terrorism' The Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Panel Empirical Analyses of Terrorism, Philadelphia, 27-31 August 2003, 10-11.

[17] Thatcher M (1987); Nacos B, *Terrorism and counterterrorism: Understanding threats and responses in the post-9/11 world*, 3ed, Longman, Boston, 2010, 253.

[18] Article 19, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III).

There are basically three ways of depriving terrorists of realising their communication goals: (i) censorship of public media by governments; (ii) self-censorship by the media; or (iii) the creation of powerful counter-narratives which invalidate the terrorist messages.

The first option is problematic because the media might lose some of their watchdog functions as governments, in the process of blocking terrorist messages, might also ban a great deal of other undesirable communications in the name of national security. Nevertheless, many governments have engaged in efforts to increase censorship in the last decade.[19]

The second option – self-censorship – would be preferable if the media actually would observe rather than break – in the heat of their competition for audiences – their own internal guidelines (to the extent they have them). When it comes to reporting terrorist stories, media guidelines should be based on the realisation that some acts of violence are performed primarily for the purpose of being picked up and broadcast for free by the news system. It would require a tidal change in the news value system of our media to ban (or at least downplay) that sort of publicity-seeking violence-based incursions into the world's news system. It would mean a change in editors' news values. Currently, the atrocities of terrorists fit very well into the 'value' system of our news media, containing drama and conflict, negativity and human interest – the top positions in our news value system. The ten elements which determine news value are: Immediacy and event-orientation; drama and conflict; negativity (bad news requires attention); human interest; photographic attractiveness; simple story lines; topicality (current news frames); exclusivity; status of information source; and local interest.[20]

Millions of events occur every day in the world. However, only a small percentage of them are deemed 'newsworthy' by our media's selection criteria and even fewer make it to the front pages of our press or into the evening television news. If the public has a 'right to information', does that give terrorists a right to produce violence-based information for the public by means of bombings and shootings? I would argue that there is a trade-off between freedom of

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[19] Press freedom has declined since 2004. Currently only 14 percent of the world population live in countries with a free press; 42 percent of the people enjoyed a partly free press while 44 percent lived in not free environments (data for 2014). See, Freedom House, *Freedom of the press 2015: Harsh laws and violence drive global decline*, 2015, 7.

[20] Based on Peltu M, 'The role of communication media' in Otway H and Peltu M (eds), *Regulating industrial risks: Science, hazards and public protection*, Butterworth, London, 1985, 128-145; Debatin B, '"Plane wreck with spectators": Terrorism and media attention' in Greenberg BS (ed), *Communication and terrorism: Public and media responses to 9/11*, Hamilton Press, Cresskill, 2002, 168.

information and the public's right to know, on the one hand, and citizens' freedom from intimidation by terrorists on the other hand.[21] The second should take precedence over the first if it saves the lives of innocent people who are only used as 'entry ticket' by the terrorists to break into the world's news system.'[22]

The third option: to create counter-narratives and alternative narratives that deprive terrorist narratives of their attractiveness is something talked about for years, without much progress being achieved.[23] The terrorist narrative, especially the jihadist narrative of ISIS, has an appeal for many alienated rebellious young Muslims, which governments and non-governmental actors find difficult to match with a credible counter-narrative. Such counter-narratives exist for example in the form of voices of disillusioned foreign fighters who return home (if they make it home – ISIS, for instance, has shot more than one hundred disenchanted 'deserters' to prevent their voices from being heard.[24] However, so far the voices of the disenchanted terrorist drop-outs who made it back to their home countries have not been magnified by the media. Counter-narratives and counter-messaging addressed to potential followers of terrorist movements ought to be prioritised in the struggle against terrorism, given the problems with the other potential solutions, namely government censorship or media self-censorship.

If terrorists are, as Karl Marx once put it, 'dangerous dreamers of the absolute', we need to know more about their dreams and about how to bring them back to reality.[25] To do so, we have to try to change their mental framework. That is difficult since most of them have, in their fanaticism, 'closed minds' and have become 'fact-resistant', not listening to outsiders. However, those who return disillusioned from jihadi war zones might be able to reach some of those who are in danger of being radicalised. They are within our each and need to be supported and protected from acts of revenge.

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[21]   Schmid AP, 'Freedom of information vs. freedom from intimidation' in Howard L (ed), *Terrorism: Roots, impact, responses*, Praeger, London, 1992, 95-118.

[22]   Or in the words of Brigitte Nacos, herself a former journalist: 'In a real sense, then, the immediate victims of bombings, hijackings, kidnappings, and other terrorist acts are simply pawns in the plays that terrorists stage in order to engage their domestic and international audiences' – Nacos, *Terrorism and counterterrorism*, 254.

[23]   NATO COE DAT. Strategic Communication in Counter-Terrorism: Target Audience Analysis, Measures of Effect, and Counter-Narrative. Ankara, NATO COE DAT, 4-5 June 2014; Schmid AP, 'Challenging the narrative of the "Islamic State"' 6 *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague*, 5 (2015).

[24]   'ISIS 'executes 100 deserters' in Syria's Raqqa' *Al Arabiya News,* 20 December 2014 http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/12/20/ISIS-executes-100-deserters-in-Syria-s-Raqqa-report.html on 7 July 2015.

[25]   Schmid, 'Terrorism as psychological warfare', 143.

The mass media are the nervous system of our societies and social media have brought international two-way communication within the reach of hundreds of millions of young people. Social media like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are also the communication system of choice of terrorist groups seeking to recruit followers and intimidate adversaries.[26] Groups like the so-called ISIS appear to be more successful than governments or non-governmental organisations in exploiting the full potential of social media (chat rooms, virtual message boards, email, mobile phones, online video sharing sites) for their purposes. The possibilities offered by internet-based media to terrorists for free are breath-taking. These include: (i) the internet, especially the dark net with its capacity for hiding the identity and/or location of those sending messages due to sophisticated encryption techniques, provides terrorist leaders with the indispensable infrastructure for giving orders to terrorist cells and receive feedback from them; (ii) the open part of the internet allows terrorist operatives and their supporters to glorify their own deeds and to incite sympathisers of the terrorist goals to become supporters and ultimately operatives; (iii) the Internet allows the terrorists to raise funds for their cause; (iv) the internet allows them to gain intelligence on their opponents, for instance through Google Earth or through active hacking of government websites; (v) the internet allows terrorists to gain know-how, for instance on bomb-making; and (vi) the internet allows them to engage in cyber-sabotage and attacks on critical national infrastructures, exploiting the vulnerabilities of technology-dependent societies.[27]

Since the revelations of Edward Snowden, it has become increasingly difficult for law enforcement authorities to monitor Internet-based communications of terrorists. With the internet lacking regulation and due to the laissez-faire tolerance of social media administrators, we still do not know how to deal effectively with the abuse of the internet by terrorists (and for that matter, by organised crime syndicates and computer-savvy hackers). How can one deny access to, and abuse of, the internet to terrorists and criminals if one wants to preserve the utility of the internet for law-abiding citizens?[28] The introduction of controls, such as positive identification of every sender of a message on the internet, would make freedom-loving citizens in non-democratic states even more vulnerable to

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[26]   Stevens D and O'Hara K, *The devil's long tail: Religious and other radicals in the internet marketplace*, Hurst, London, 2015.

[27]   Partly based on Weimann G, *Terrorism in cyberspace: The next generation*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2015.

[28]   Stevens and O'Hara, *The devil's long tail*, 231.

government repression while many terrorists and professional criminals might still be able to 'beat the system'.

Thinking about the internet and the mass media only in terms of an open market places of ideas with access for all is naive. Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Propaganda Minister, was closer to the reality when he said: 'News is a weapon of war. Its purpose is to wage war and not to give out information'.[29] Today there is, in the eyes of many analysts, an unholy pact between journalism and terrorism. Brigitte Nacos, herself a journalist turned terrorism analyst, brought it on the formula

> The American media and terrorists are not accomplices. However, they are involved in a symbiotic relationship in that they feed off each other.(..)To put it differently, the news media and terrorists are not involved in a love story; they are strange bedfellows in a marriage of convenience.[30]

Breaking up this unholy partnership between mass and social media, on the one hand, and publicity-seeking terrorists, on the other, is a big challenge. To begin with, media should be banned from broadcasting violence that merely serves to access the news system. They need to learn to distinguish between news that would have happened anyway even if there were no media, and pseudo-news where people are killed to gain free access to the news system for spreading propaganda and fear. For that a change in our news values is necessary, as well as a greater degree of editorial control of social media.

Playing politics with terrorism and counter-terrorism

The mutually beneficial relationship between media and terrorism is not the only one that keeps terrorism alive. There are also politicians, members of armed forces, law enforcement and intelligence agencies who play politics with terrorism at home or abroad. The threat of terrorism and public outrage after a major terrorist attack have been used by politicians and others to advance their own particular agenda and short-term interests. Those politicians who promise more forceful measures against terrorists usually win from those who do not fall into the trap of terrorist provocations. The tough politicians find easy allies in the security industries. A whole sector of counter-terrorism industries has emerged

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[29] Schmid AP and de Graaf J, *Violence as communication: Insurgent terrorism and the Western news media*, Sage, London, 1982.

[30] Nacos, *Terrorism and counterterrorism*, 263.

since 9/11,[31] sometimes reminiscent of the military-industrial complex about which President Dwight Eisenhower warned in his goodbye address as American President in January 1961.[32] This link too has to be problematised – something that has, in part, been done by a school of thought called 'Critical Terrorism Studies'.

The securitisation of terrorism – which before 9/11 had been widely seen as a law enforcement problem – led to a Global War on Terror (GWOT) under President George Bush, with the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) taking the lead. It is now widely agreed that the US Government over-reacted after 9/11 and that some of the over-reaction, in turn, produced more terrorism. The intervention in Iraq in 2003 was apparently already decided upon within two weeks after 9/11 and later conducted under the pretext that there was a link between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, while there was none.[33] However, it served the early foreign policy goals of the first Bush administration. Neo-conservative hawks in the Pentagon thought that the United States of America (USA), as only remaining superpower, would be able to bring about regime changes in seven countries within five years. One of those designated seven candidates for regime change was Iraq.[34]

Countering terrorism has also brought changes on the domestic front. In the USA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has infiltrated the Muslim community in the search for sleepers and terrorist cells (which hardly existed). In its attempts to bring as many terrorists as possible to court, the FBI engaged frequently in dubious provocative sting operations that, in a number of cases, produced 'terrorists' where there might have been none without FBI agents' enticements to break the law.[35]

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[31] Hughes S, *War on terror, Inc: Corporate profiteering from the politics of fear*, Verso, London, 2007.

[32] Dwight Eisenhower warned in his farewell address against '….the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist' – 'President Dwight D. Eisenhower's farewell address (1961)' 17 January 1961 https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=90 on July 2015.

[33] 'General Wesley Clark: Wars Were Planned – Seven Countries in Five Years' YouTube interview, uploaded 11 September 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RC1Mepk_Sw on 28 June 2015.

[34] 'General Wesley Clark: Wars Were Planned – Seven Countries in Five Years', the other countries were: Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran.

[35] Aaronson T, *The terror factory: Inside the FBI's manufactured war on terrorism*, Ig Publishing, New York, 2015. The author, an award-winning investigative reporter for Al Jazeera America, argues that the FBI, 'under the guise of engaging in counterterrorism since 9/11, built a network of more than fifteen thousand informants whose primary purpose is to infiltrate Muslim communities to create and facilitate phony terrorist plots so that the Bureau can then claim it is winning the war on terror' http://phibetaiota.net/2016/06/robert-steele-the-orlando-mass-casualty-event-a-false-flag-drama-

Around the US Department of Homeland Security, the Pentagon and other security and intelligence agencies, a whole cottage industry of terrorism experts eager to offer their services to whoever is willing to pay for them has emerged. For many of them threat inflation and even distortion appears to be the order of the day.[36] The same has happened elsewhere.

In Russia, Vladimir Putin, who had become acting Prime Minister in August 1999 after having been head of the Federal Security Service (FSB) [successor to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's Committee of State Security (KGB)], attributed two major attacks on apartment blocks in Moscow in the autumn of 1999 to Chechen perpetrators.[37] This provided him with a pretext to start, on 1 October 1999, a second war in order to re-incorporate separatist Chechnya into Russia.[38] There were two bombings on 9 and 13 September, preceded by another one in Buinaks (Dagestan).[39] Together these bombings killed some 300 people and wounded many more. There have been persistent voices which actually attributed these apartment bombings not to Chechens but to agents from the FSB.[40] While there is no conclusive proof, there is some circumstantial evidence and some of these voices have been silenced in a way that raised further suspicion.[41] Even if responsibility cannot be placed directly at the feet of Putin, he managed to make good use of the Russian public's resulting anti-Chechen sentiments to consolidate his power.[42] His popularity soared and Vladimir Putin has stayed in power ever since.

There have been other instances where people played politics with anti-terrorism, blaming sitting governments for not being tough enough on terrorism.[43] One theatre of conflict where the art of playing politics with terrorism has reached new heights is the Middle East. In Syria, for instance, the dictatorial regime of President Assad blamed a popular uprising in the wake of the Arab Spring on terrorists. Perhaps in order to make the claim more true, the regime

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atrocity-or-hybrid/#_edn121 on 15 August 2016.

[36] Mueller J, *Overblown: How politicians and the terrorism industry inflate national security threats, and why we believe them*, Free Press, New York, 2006.

[37] 'Amy Knight: Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings' *The New York Review of Books*, 22 November 2012 Issue (reviewing Dunlop JB, *The Moscow bombings of September 1999: Examinations of Russian terrorist attacks at the onset of Vladimir Putin's rule*, ibidem-Verlag Publishing, Stuttgart, 2012) http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2012/11/22/finally-we-know-about-moscow-bombings/ on 28 June 2015.

[38] 'Amy Knight: Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings'.

[39] 'Amy Knight: Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings'.

[40] 'Amy Knight: Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings'.

[41] 'Amy Knight: Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings'.

[42] 'Amy Knight: Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings'.

[43] Kassimeris G (ed), *Playing politics with terrorism: A user's guide*, Hurst, London, 2007.

secretly released the terrorist strategist Abu Musab al-Suri (who had been Al-Qaeda's operations chief in Europe until 2005) from an Aleppo prison.[44] The Turkish Government offered members of ISIS for years a safe haven in Turkey, allowing many thousands of foreign fighters to reach the conflict zone in Syria while wounded ISIS fighters were taken care of in a special Turkish hospital. President Erdogan had hoped that ISIS would manage to overthrow Syria's Alawite regime and overrun the Kurds in the north of Syria but when ISIS was more interested in expanding in Iraq, Turkey's policy changed in after mid-2015.[45]

Pakistan has been playing politics with terrorism by training, financing and logistically equipping terrorists both in Kashmir and Afghanistan while at the same time accusing India for doing the same in Baluchistan.[46]

Even democracies play politics with terrorism. The Greek Minister of Defense, Pannos Kammenos, said: 'If Europe leaves us in the crisis, we will flood it with immigrants, and it will be even worse for Berlin if in that wave... there will be some jihadists of the Islamic State, too.'[47]

The use of guerrilla armies and terrorist groups as proxies in wars with neighbours and more distant enemies has a long history in international relations. While this is usually done under deep cover so that it can be plausibly denied, the evidence cannot be hidden forever. At a time of multiple leaks of secret information on the Internet, it has become clear that even democratic states have sponsored armed groups abroad that engaged in various forms of political violence, including terrorism. This predates the internet. The Government of Ronald Reagan, for instance, sponsored Nicaraguan 'Contras' against the Sandinista Government which was seen as being allied with Cuba and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic.[48] The US President even praised the Contras as being the moral equivalents of George Washington and the American founding fathers.[49]

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[44] "Jason Lewis: Syria releases the 7/7 'mastermind'" *The Telegraph,* 4 February 2012
www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/9061400/Syria-release on 28 June 2015. Lewis reported that '….he is said to have been released as a warning to the US and Britain about the consequences of turning their backs on President al-Assad's regime as it tries to contain the uprising in the country'.

[45] 'Erdogan's dangerous gambit' *The Economist*, 1 August 2015
www.economist.com/news/leaders/21660123/-bombing-kurds-well-islamic-state-turkey-adding-chaos-middle on 2 August 2015.

[46] Ataöv T, *Kashmir and neighbours: Tale, terror, truce*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, 2001, 205.

[47] "Peter Martino: The strategic consequences of 'Grexit'" *Gatestone Institute,* 29 June 2015 https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6071/grexit-consequences on 15 August 2016.

[48] Brody R, *Contra terror in Nicaragua: Report of a fact-finding mission: September 1984 - January 1985*, South End Press, Boston, 1985, 12.

[49] Brody, *Contra terror in Nicaragua,* 1.

But much of the Contras' insurgency consisted of little more than war crimes and acts of terrorism.[50]

Not only governments sponsor terrorists; non-government actors do so increasingly. In the case of Syria, for instance, Muslims from more than one hundred countries have sent money and up to thirty thousand foreign fighters to Syria in order to strengthen the insurgency against the regime of President Bashir Assad and expand the Caliphate.[51] Iran has been using Hezbollah, but also its own Revolutionary Guards, to keep in power the Alawite regime in Damascus, which, between September 2015 and March 2016, has also been heavily supported by 3-6,000 strong Russian military.[52]

The range of state-sponsored terrorism varies greatly, going from passive tolerance of use of a country's territory as safe haven to offering the insurgents arms and training facilities as well as financial, logistic and intelligence support.[53]

The rationale for supporting foreign non-state armed groups varies and can be legitimate where people face genocidal violence or suffer from mass atrocities by a dictatorial regime. Yet more often than not power rivalries between neighbouring states and regional or global powers stand at the basis of using terrorists as proxies to weaken an adversary. As long as not all states are willing to make it clear to 'their' foreign armed friends that any support will cease if the armed groups engage in acts of terrorism, war crimes and crimes against humanity, this will continue. However, often the sponsor's own human rights record is far from clean. Few non-state armed groups could survive if states were serious about insisting that standards of humanitarian law and human rights law are to be upheld in return for support.

Religion and terrorism

Perhaps the biggest taboo in counter-terrorism is the denial of the role of religion. Political leaders, especially of Muslim majority countries, are eager to

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50   Brody, *Contra terror in Nicaragua*.
51   'Subaib Ayoub: Tripoli youth recruits fighters to send to Syria' *Al-Monitor*, 14 March 2014 http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/03/tripoli-lebanon-youth-recruit-fighters-syria. html on 15 August 2016.
52   See Budka AJ, 'The Arab revolutions of 2011: Promise, risk, and uncertainty' in Johnson TA (ed), *Power, national security, and transformational global events: Challenges confronting America, China and Iran*, CRC Press, Florida, 2012.
53   Byman D, *Deadly connections: States that sponsor terrorism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005; Coll S, *Ghost wars: The secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, Penguin Books, New York, 2004.

dissociate themselves from terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda or ISIS, saying that such groups have nothing to do with religion and certainly nothing to do with true Islam.[54] The same can be heard from some Western political leaders who are anxious to keep Muslim voters on their side, Arab money in their banks and Arab oil flowing on the international market. One wonders whether they would have also said, some centuries ago, that the Crusades had nothing to do with Christianity. Religious leaders these days present themselves as peaceful and engaged in inter-faith dialogue. At the same time there are plenty of Imams who preach *jihad*. In late June 2015 the Tunisian Government closed down around eighty mosques accused of inciting violence, following an attack by a terrorist on Western tourists in Sousse in which 38 people (30 of them British) were killed and almost as many wounded.[55]

The relationship between religion and violence is ambiguous.[56] Even religions which are said to be particularly non-violent, like Buddhism, have produced religious leaders who condone the use of force and in some cases have been inciting their followers to the use of violence against those who do not share their faith, as has been the case in Sri Lanka and Myanmar.[57] Christianity, despite the preaching of peace by Jesus Christ, has engaged in many holy wars.[58] Islam, while also known for its periods of peaceful coexistence with other religions, has frequently been associated with violence. The crusades are a major part of Christian history and the same is true for *jihad* in Islam. That certainly is the view of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a.k.a. Caliph Ibrahim, the leader of the ISIS:

> O Muslims, Islam was never for a day the religion of peace. Islam is the religion of war…. Mohammed was ordered to wage war until Allah is worshipped alone….He himself left to fight and took part in dozens of battles. He never for a day grew tired of war.[59]

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[54] The then Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Abdel as-Jubeir, for instance said: 'Terrorism knows no religion. (…) It is in violation of every religion in the world, and it is a scourge that must be eliminated through very strong and very robust international measures'. 'Associated Press: Saudi Give UN $ 100m to Fight Terrorism' *Aljazeera* 14 August 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/saudis-give-un-100m-fight-terrorism-201481412824637366.html on 15 August 2016.

[55] "Tunisia beach attack: Gunman 'had help' from others" *BBC News*, 28 June 2015 www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-3305444 on 29 June 2015.

[56] Oberdorfer B and Waldmann P (eds), *Die ambivalenz des religiösen: Religionenalsfriedensssstifter und gewalterzeuger,* RombachVerla, Freiburg, 2008.

[57] See Schober J, 'Buddhism, violence and the state in Burma (Myanmar) and Sri Lanka' in Cady LE and Simon SW (eds), *Disrupting violence: Religion and conflict in South and Southeast Asia*, Routledge, Oxon, 2006, 51-69.

[58] Tyerman C, *Fighting for Christendom: Holy war and the crusaders,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004.

[59] Statement by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi – 'Soeren Kern: UK: Politicians Urge Ban on the Term "Islamic State"' *Gatestone Institute*, 4 July 2015 https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6095/uk-ban-islamic-state on 15 August 2016.

Scholars are divided about the role of religion in violence. A survey I did some years ago, in which I asked nearly one hundred experts, "What, if any, is, in your view, the relationship between 'terrorism' and 'religion'?" produced a whole spectrum of replies, from downright negative to positive. Here are some of the answers: There is no relationship whatsoever; there is no necessary connection; religion often provides a script for what an individual or group wants to do for non-religious reasons; religious belief can be a motivating force for terrorists; many perpetrators rationalise and justify terrorism by invoking religion; and believing that God is on one's side is a powerful incentive to action.[60]

The last of these positions echoes what Blaise Pascal, the 17th century French philosopher, said: 'Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction'.[61] If violence is approved by some credible religious authority, it is more likely to be adopted. It is a fact that many terrorists use (or misuse) 'sacred' texts to justify their extreme violence.[62] To say that terrorism has nothing to do with religion closes the door to a badly needed discussion. Political correctness in this area is blinding ourselves to an inconvenient truth. At the core of most religions is the idea of sacrifice to please a divine authority. That sacrifice can consist of food or gifts, or the slaughtering of animals but also of sacrificing children and other innocent people in 'holy violence'[63] – in addition to sacrificing oneself in an act of martyrdom.[64]

The idea of sacrifice and martyrdom is also a dominant theme in much of contemporary terrorist discourse. To deny that parallel or connection because it is inconvenient is short-sighted. In sociology, there is the so-called Thomas Theorem: 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'.[65] In that sense, saying that terrorism has nothing to do with 'true' Islam is problematic. Four recent opinion polls have shown that more than eight million Muslims in 11 Arab countries are supportive of ISIS while many more are sympathetic to some features of ISIS.[66]

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[60]   Schmid (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research*, 23-27.

[61]   Pascal B, *Pensées*, 1669, Krailsheimer AJ (trans), Penguin Books, London, 1966.

[62]   Burleigh M, *Sacred causes: Religion and politics from the European dictators to Al Qaeda*, Harper Perennial, London, 2006.

[63]   Hogg G, *Cannibalism and human sacrifice*, Nonsuch Publishing, Chalford, 2007.

[64]   Gambetta D(ed), *Making sense of suicide missions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

[65]   Thomas WI and Thomas DS, *The child in America: Behavior problems and programs*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1928, 571-572.

[66]   'Clarion's Ryan Mauro: Results of four separate polls are shocking' the clarion project http://www.clarionproject.org/videos/clarions-ryan-mauro-isis-supporters-arab-world-number-42-million on 6 July 2015.

Religion has at times brought out the best in people, for example, compassion and charity (which exist also in atheists), but perhaps as often it has brought out the worst (e.g. in the Spanish Inquisition[67]). We have to be as critical of religions as we have to be of ideologies. The line between religion and ideology is a thin one – if there is a line. Those who claim to speak in the name of religion or a specific divine authority have to be watched as carefully as secular leaders. Their agenda might not be what it pretends to be. They cleverly use the social capital – people's goodwill towards the religion they were brought up with – to justify their religious-political campaigns against those who are not 'true believers' according to their interpretation. In this way militant Salafists have managed to re-label suicide bombers as martyrs, terrorist attacks on unarmed civilians as glorious acts of *jihad,* and crimes against humanity as deeds that will open the gates to paradise to those who engage in them. Religion is a mobilising device like racism or nationalism and a very effective one at that. In the *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* I tried to summarise the discussion on religion and terrorism in these words:

> Marxists tried to divide human societies by 'class' and propagated class war. Fascists used the equally fuzzy concept of 'race' to identify their public enemy. Salafist Islamists now use religion, dividing humankind into 'true' Muslims on the one hand and unbelievers (*kafir*) and heretics (*takfir*) on the other hand and they alone arrogate to themselves to determine who belongs to which group. In each generation, it seems, fanatics come up with a new justification for killing fellow human beings and find adherents among the uneducated as well as among well-educated ideological entrepreneurs who see a chance to instrumentalise class, race or religion to achieve political power for themselves.[68]

The fight against terrorism – which is mainly Salafist jihadi terrorism these days – cannot be waged successfully if we leave the religious drivers of Al-Qaeda, ISIS and other Islamist militants outside the discussion. Many moderate Muslims have so far not dared to confront Islamist extremists for a variety of reasons such as: denial of the religious roots of terrorism; silent connivance with the goals if not methods of the jihadists, or fear from being targeted as well if they speak out against the religious fanatics who engage in indiscriminate violence against unbelievers.

However, effective opposition to Islamist terrorism must come from within Islam for the words of outsiders are less likely to be heard and believed. If moderate, mainstream Muslims do not stand up against extremist movements on their fringe, they themselves risk to be marginalised in countries where they are

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[67]   Pérez J, *The Spanish inquisition: A history*, Profile Books, London, 2004.
[68]   Schmid (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research*, 27.

forming minorities. As for the Muslim-majority countries, there is the observation attributed to Edmund Burke: 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing'.[69] Many Muslim-majority countries are divided, both internally and among themselves. There are deep divisions between small wealthy ruling elites and the masses, between Sunni and Shia, between the older generation and the young, not counting tribal and other divisions. What is standing in the way of finding solutions to social, economic, political and religious problems is the lack of education of broad sectors of society. That has allowed the spread of, and belief in, conspiracy theories which lack any basis in reality. The usual suspects of such 'theories' are the Jews, the West, the Crusaders, the Imperialists, the neo-Colonialists and the Unbelievers. The cult of victimhood that blames most if not all of Muslim problems on external scapegoats stands in the way of pragmatic problem evaluation and rational conflict resolution. Anybody associating the current wave of terrorism with Islam risks being labeled 'Islamophobic'. Islam, like any major religion, has many currents and sometimes side streams become mainstream and vice versa. While *jihad* contains elements of just war theory and should not be automatically equated with terrorism, the fact is that much of current terrorism originates from Salafist Sunni jihadists whose ideology is totalitarian and who form a danger to other Muslims as well as the rest of the world.

Radicalisation and de-radicalisation

However, if terrorism cannot be blamed (solely) on external factors, what are the root causes of terrorism? These can be looked at on three levels: the macro-level of the international system (including the news system); the meso-level of society and radical communities and sub-cultures, and the micro-level of the vulnerable individuals. Here I will only focus on the last of these three.[70]

Since nobody is born a terrorist, how do mainly young males, many of them Muslims or recent converts to Islam, become terrorists? There is a process called radicalisation that is held responsible for it. What does it mean? There are many definitions. Peter Neumann half-jokingly said that radicalisation is 'what

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[69]   'Edmund Burke' *Wikiquote* https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke on 15 August 2015 (the authorship of this quote is, however, disputed).

[70]   For a discussion of all three levels, see, Schmid AP, 'Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: A conceptual discussion and literature review' 4 *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague*, 2 (2013).

goes on before the bomb goes off'.[71] Radicalisation is a kind of blackbox in which seemingly normal young people enter, are transformed and exit as fanatical jihadist terrorists. The same or a similar process also occurs with left- and right-wing terrorists, ethno-nationalist and single-issue terrorists. The process of radicalisation – or political socialisation to the use of unacceptable tactics of conflict waging – is more general, although there are differences between radicalisation in, for instance, Western diasporas and in Muslim-majority countries.[72]

There are many definitions of radicalisation. Here is my own which views it as a process that can occur on both sides of a conflict dyad:

> an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialisation away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.[73]

What exactly is this process of radicalisation on the individual level on the side of rebellious young people? People can be socialised to various forms of behaviour – pro- or anti-social – by their families, the school, the mosque or other religious institutions, peers and friends they associate with on the street, youth organisations, television or the Internet, or in prison. Their relative influence in social and political socialisation varies, but it is hard to under-estimate the role of the family. Kids from broken families, single parent families, kids with violent fathers or drug-addicted parents, or kids who have experienced incest or rape within their families, naturally look for escape, for family substitutes. They might find these in a street gang, a criminal brotherhood or a religious sect. If families and schools cannot provide young people with adequate role models and positive identification objects, youth will look for these elsewhere. Most young

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[71]   Schmid, 'Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation', 6.

[72]   Anneli Botha, in her dissertation studying militant groups in Uganda and Kenya, has made this point: '....what drives individuals in Europe to extremism is manifestly different to what one would expect in Africa. Even two neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Uganda are faced with very different circumstances and organisations.' Botha A, 'Radicalisation to commit terrorism from a political socialisation perspective in Kenya and Uganda' PhD Thesis, University of Free State, June 2014, 382.

[73]   Schmid, 'Radicalisation, de-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation', 18.

people go through a rebellious phase in which they question the values of their parents. Sometimes adolescents turn against the values of their immediate surrounding, at least temporarily. They look for new identification objects, driven by their longing to belong to a welcoming collective that they can identify with, a collective that is willing to accept them as they are, even if they, in many cases, have been losers in life so far. If there are exciting new identification objects 'out there', these might be able to pull a young person in their direction, especially when a good father figure and a caring mother figure have been absent at home. If the background young people come from is problematic – family problems, economic difficulties, discrimination, marginalisation, humiliation, unemployment, dropping out of school – all these can become push factors of radicalisation. The combination of many push factors and the simultaneous availability of seemingly attractive alternatives – the pull factors of an armed group that promises those who join a Kalashnikov, money, brotherhood, slave girls and adventure – can make some young people susceptible to extremism. Radicalisation towards terrorism then becomes more likely when other conditions conductive to the spread of terrorism are present.

A major external catalyst or trigger that makes radical young people join an extremist organisation bent on terrorism is often mistreatment of family members and friends by law enforcement or other security forces on the street and in prison situations.[74]

The list of factors that can push or pull young people towards terrorism is long and varies from community to community. Here are some general conditions that are, in the view of scholars, conductive to the emergence and spread of terrorism:

Table 5: Conditions conductive to the emergence and spread of terrorism, according to various scholars[75]

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Reaction to (vicarious) traumatic experiences of violence	Existence of extremist ideologies that provide justifications for attacks against out-group members (for example non-believers)

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[74] Botha, 'Radicalisation to commit terrorism from a political socialisation perspective in Kenya and Uganda', 379.

[75] Based on Appendices 4.1. and 4.2, in Schmid (ed), *The Routledge handbook of terrorism research,* 272-279.

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Anger and individual or collective desire for (vicarious) revenge, based on humiliation or (vicarious) experience of perceived injustice.	Presence of charismatic leader who translates grievances into motivation to engage in violent actions/*jihad*
Estrangement from mainstream society by uprooted migrant families in refugee camps and diasporas.	Existence of local peer-group that reinforces individual inclination to become terrorist/foreign fighter
Socio-economic marginalisation or political exclusion.	Imitation (contagion effect) of publicised and apparently successful terrorist mode of operation
Personal identity crisis; individual search for meaning and purpose in life; frustrated aspirations; lack of future perspectives at home and desire to escape; seeking redemption.	Personal recognition: prospect of recognition as valiant fighter for a 'good cause' and opportunity to upgrade one's identity from near 'zero' [in own surroundings] to 'hero' [in the land of *jihad*]
Unresolved political conflicts and perceived absence of solutions by state actors.	Promise of rewards on earth and in afterlife (paradise).

Given these (and other) factors at work: how can we prevent radicalisation to violent extremism and terrorism? The short answer is: through education and community work. Educated people are less likely to believe that there is only one solution to their problem and that this solution is engaging in terrorism. The historical record of the success of terrorist campaigns has been very low – under ten percent – and the individual lethality rates of those who engage in terrorism is at the same time very high.[76] Educated young people will learn such facts and be able to make cost-benefit assessments. Education also teaches young people ethics and compassion for others. Radicalisation can be prevented through community work on the neighbourhood level: if young people are offered enough opportunities to lead a meaningful life – through involvement in youth clubs,

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[76] Cronin AK, *How terrorism ends: Understanding the decline and demise of terrorist campaigns*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2009.

sports, music, art, joint outdoor activities – they are less likely to listen to recruiters from terrorist organisations on- and off-line. If young people are in a career trajectory that will lead them – after schooling and/or apprenticeships – to a secure and well-paid job, allowing them to afford decent housing, get married and found a family, they are unlikely to choose the uncertain career of a terrorist in the underground or a foreign fighter in a foreign country.

The reality in our world, however, is that there are tens of millions of young men and women who cannot look forward to a decent education, a permanent job, marriage to a person they can choose themselves. If they become parents, many of them will not have the means to afford educating their children to have a career at least as good as and preferably better than the one they themselves had. We live in a world where too many come to the labour market without good enough qualifications and without the prospect of a steady, well-paid job, and too many come from families that were unable to give them the loving care young people need. The absence of such resilience factors is a great concern.

The reality of every-day life of too many young people falls far short of the kind of life that they might see in television series or in documentaries about life in the developed world. The gap between what is and what could be is painful. False prophets step in to put the blame for what is and what could be on distant enemies like the allegedly still imperialist West. If young people cannot realise their dreams where they find themselves situated in life but feel entitled to a better life and local governments are unwilling or unable to assist them to realise their dreams, they look for other solutions and pseudo-solutions elsewhere and find these in substance (drug) abuse, gangland crime participation, joining religious sects, attempting emigration, domestic political activism or joining an illegal underground organisation that engages in acts of political violence including terrorism.

Many developing countries experience a 'youth bulge', a demographic over-representation of the 15-24 year old who want to enter and succeed on the job market and the marriage market. In the absence of sufficient secondary and tertiary education opportunities to absorb them and in the absence of enough employment opportunities and with the possibility of emigration not present as a safety valve for aspiring young people in most cases, there is an enhanced risk that many of them can be radicalised to engage in terrorist violence.[77]

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[77] Urdal H, 'A clash of generations? Youth bulges and political violence' United Nations Population Division Expert Paper No. 2012/1, 2012, 9.

The answer to radicalisation is to steer the dissatisfaction of young people into constructive channels, rather than the destruction terrorists have in mind. However, this requires a massive investment in youth education, and an investment in community work which is often difficult to resource. Instead, governments wishing to present and control terrorism often invest in more security forces, more counter-terrorism hardware and more surveillance and repression. Politicians who plead for the application of hard power against terrorism tend to win over those who plead for the use of soft power instruments to steer vulnerable young people away from radicalisation. Once societies are polarised, radicalisation on both sides tends to increase and escalation is more likely than de-escalation of the conflict. Once people are radicalised it is very hard to de-radicalise them. It is for this reason that prevention of radicalisation should be our top priority.

Conclusion: The way forward

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned critical issues: (i) the definition problem; (ii) the communication problem; (iii) the political problem; (iv) the religious problem; (v)the radicalisation problem.

It is my conviction that we have failed to solve these five problems and that this is the main reason why we are losing rather than gaining ground in the fight against terrorism. There are, of course, other reasons.

In the course of my career – both in academia and in the UN – I have had a chance to talk to many people – victims, terrorists, counter-terrorists, policy-makers among them. What I have learned I tried to summarise in twelve rules for preventing and combating terrorism. It is with these twelve points that I want to conclude my contribution

Twelve rules for preventing and combating terrorism

1. Try to address the underlying conflict issues exploited by the terrorists and work towards a peaceful solution while not making substantive concessions to the terrorists themselves;

2. Prevent alienated individuals and radical groups from becoming terrorist extremists by confronting them with a mix of 'carrot and stick' – tactics and search for effective counter-motivation measures;

3. Stimulate and encourage defection and conversion of free and imprisoned terrorists and find ways to reduce the tacit or open support of aggrieved constituencies for terrorist organisations;

4. Deny terrorists access to arms, explosives, false identification documents, safe communication, and safe travel and sanctuaries; disrupt and incapacitate their preparations and operations through infiltration, communication intercept, espionage and by limiting their criminal- and other fund-raising capabilities;

5. Reduce low-risk/high-gain opportunities for terrorists to strike by enhancing communications, energy and transportation-security, by hardening critical infrastructures and potential sites where mass casualties could occur and apply principles of situational crime prevention to countering terrorism;

6. Keep in mind that terrorists seek publicity and exploit the media and the Internet to gain recognition, propagate their cause, glorify their attacks, win recruits, solicit donations, gather intelligence, disseminate terrorist know-how and communicate with their target audiences. Try to devise communication strategies to counter them in each of these areas;

7. Prepare for crisis- and consequence-management for both 'regular' and 'catastrophic' acts of terrorism in coordinated simulation exercises and educate first responders and the public on how best to cope;

8. Establish an All Sources Early Detection and Early Warning intelligence system against terrorism and other violent crimes on the interface between organised crime and political conflict;

9. Strengthen coordination of efforts against terrorism both within and between states; enhance international police- and intelligence-cooperation, and offer technical assistance to those countries that lack the know-how and means to upgrade their counter-terrorism instruments;

10. Show solidarity with, and offer support to, victims of terrorism at home and abroad;

11. Maintain the moral high-ground in the struggle with terrorists by defending and strengthening the rule of law, good governance, democracy and social justice and by matching your deeds with your words;

12. Last but not least: counter the ideologies, indoctrination and propaganda of secular and non-secular terrorists and try to get the upper hand in the war of ideas – the battle for the hearts and minds of those whom terrorists claim to speak and fight for.