



COUNTERTERRORISM AND COUNTER-EXTREMISM STRATEGIES - GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF METHODOLOGY AND SUCCESS REQUIREMENTS

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Extremism *per se* has become today one of the most nefarious challenges, whipping most of the world countries in general and the Arab countries in particular into uneasiness and discomfort. Simply put, extremism can be defined as deviation from the appropriate path rightly tailored by the commonly agreed religious, legal and social norms. Against a backdrop of the whole gamut of poverty, unemployment, lack of access to basic services, lack of opportunities, especially for youth, type of discourse, marginalization, inequality, psychological traumatic stresses coupled with several other potential and existing driving conditions, extremism balloons into full-grown bigotry.

Driven by such a crying need, we should develop strategies and intensify efforts at the local, national and international levels, by employing scholarly-based and knowledge-oriented tools and approaches powered up by interaction and partnership with all stakeholders, including ministries, institutions, civil society organizations, individuals, citizens, residents, refugees and influencers. When all work in tandem, sources of extremism dry up while also addressing and tackling the root causes and current conditions of extremism in line with a meticulously developed strategy that best implements combating and clamping down on extremism.

Such a strategy will not come into play unless otherwise institutional and community partnerships are made to nip extremists in the bud and hold their efforts at bay, while bringing them back on track to better build a society in perfect harmony. To this end, it becomes necessary to empower youth and build institutional capacities as to be more readily responsive to address the pressing needs and priorities, while promoting social capital, putting into action moderation and tolerance, creating windows of opportunities, enhancing equality and linking local and national levels with internationalism.

Counterterrorism and Counter-Extremism Strategies

The implementation of the national strategies development project to prevent and combat extremism up to highly professional standards in line with participatory scientific

methodologies based on scientifically approved key performance indicators (KPIs) should *ipso facto* include the following vital foci:

- **First Focus:** it includes the key components of the counterterrorism and counter-extremism strategy, based on deep and strategic analysis of the models of society and associated segments, in addition to partner analyses, environmental analysis, best practices and relevant strategies at the national, regional and global levels. The strategy includes the following components: vision, mission, values and strategic goals.
- **Second Focus:** it encompasses the implementation plan of the strategy, according to the approved models that include the following elements: initiative, project, action, responsibility, partners, implementation timeframes, requirements, work teams, and key performance indicators.
- **Third Focus:** it includes participation or engagement, which is one of the most important tools for arriving at a viable strategy and for implementation. Analysis of the list of partners and stakeholders is one of the success tools and realization of goals. As such, a list can be proposed as to be the basis for developing a viable strategy, according to the following:
 - The relevant ministries and official bodies: Ministry of Interior, International Planning and Cooperation, Local Administration, Education and Higher Education, Endowments and Religious Affairs, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Youth, Public Security, National Aid Funds, Media and Information.
 - Civil society institutions: parties, associations, unions, chambers of commerce and industry, universities, free press and independent media, community police.
 - Opinion and influence: authors, thinkers, mayors, notables, clan elders, imams, preachers and advocates.
 - The real and practical partnership that is far from formalities is one of the most effective means to better develop a strategy that prevents and combats extremism and terrorism; otherwise, the society behaves in one direction while the government authorities behave in another. The bottom line here is to better channel and transform how people of all walks of life behave into partnership-based behavior.

Who Celebrates Triumph?

The lack of effective strategies to combat violent extremism and dry up its sources, manifestations and possibilities, including promoting development and prosperity, promoting equality, the rule of law and placing a special attention to quality education based on innovation and creativity will open up a Pandora's box of poor strategies of extremism and terrorism.

Against such a backdrop of conflicting strategies, we will inevitably have strategies poles apart and a note of discord will creep into the two sides, vying and jostling for victory.

Seminal to developing counterterrorism and counter-extremism is impeding the efforts of terrorists and sympathizers while bringing them back to the rightly drawn path. This also includes preventing terrorists along with sympathizers from reorganizing themselves, attracting supporters, fundraising and funneling weaponry, obstructing freedom of movement, derailing communication tools and safe havens and preventing them from reaching vulnerable targets. To this end, the following should be immaculately done:

- Practices and manifestations of extremism and terrorism should be categorically prevented;
- Sympathizers-to-extremists communications should be nipped in the bud;
- It is highly advisable to bring sympathizers back to the rightly tailored path of behavior;
- The provision of all types of support to suspects of terrorism should be criminalized;
- Terrorist operations across all their stages should be decisively tackled and addressed;
- Trials for all the people involved and all suspects should be held fairly;
- Providing security actions and protection from terrorism;

On the procedural and executive levels, a whole host of countries have taken effective actions and strategies, especially in light of the ongoing state-of-the-art technology and communication revolution, and have taken a set of measures such as:

- Network monitoring;
- Tackling extremists and theorists;
- Capturing returning fighters;
- Developing security, monitoring and intelligence services;
- Stricter border control;
- Drying up the sources of terrorist financing;
- Criminalizing heading for conflict zones;
- Putting into action the exchange of information and expertise;
- Combating money laundering;
- Strengthening information systems and analysis;
- International cooperation;
- Databases;

- Security agreements;
- Prison supervision and control.

Prerequisite

To put it in a nutshell, it has become futile to keep asking ourselves the same hackneyed and risible question: Do we need scholarly and knowledge-based strategies to crack down on extremism and terrorism? This is true simply because such strategies are practically an indispensable prerequisite, provided that these strategies are developed according to scholarly methodologies, data and strategic analyses based on research and investigation, not on spurious, baseless and illusory ideas. By the same token, these strategies should be equally developed based on a true partnership with all segments of society, including the public and private sectors, citizens and residents, youth of both genders and all age groups, even the poor, the needy and the disadvantaged, while listening to their voices, which help in better developing strategies that prevent extremism and terrorism, preserve human dignity, and safeguard the public interest.