FIFTHE ISSUE OF IMCTC MAGAZINE "AT-TAHALOF" IS RELEASED

IMCTC published the fifth issue of its magazine, At-Tahalof, featuring approaches to combating terrorist financing, the development of global structure of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing systems, in light of the UN Security Council resolutions and the recommendations of FATF. It also highlights monitoring financial crimes related to terrorist financing. It further analyzes the challenges of organized crime associated with terrorist financing, and the legal and regulatory capacity of counterterrorism.

It also reviewed the World Peace Index 2020 report, which provides the largest comprehensive analysis of peace trends, using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators, and presented the development of the British counterterrorism strategy and the Tunisian anti-extremism experience.

The analyses conducted examine how the Arab cinema approaches and addresses extremism and terrorism. The issues highlighted in the fifth issue include terrorism in Japan, spearheaded by Aum Shinrikyo, the impact of civil society in Benin in combating violent extremism and the causes and manifestations of extremism in Ghana. It also sheds light on the future of the Ugandan Lord Army Movement. ■

SECRETARY-GENERAL RECEIVES EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION

The IMCTC Secretary-General, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Saeed Al-Moghedi, received, on October 26, 2020 the Head of the EU Delegation to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Patrick Simone, along with the accompanying delegation.

The delegation was provided with an overview of IMCTC, goals and efforts as it puts into action an integrated system of initiatives across the ideological, communications, financial and military domains. Equally important, it seeks to enhance cooperation among the IMCTC member countries to counter terrorism. Ambassador Patrick pointed out that the EU is looking forward to more cooperation with IMCTC in areas of common interest. ■

TENTH IMCTC SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS
ROLE OF VIRTUAL ASSETS IN TERRORIST FINANCING

IMCTC held its tenth monthly symposium in Riyadh on October 29, 2020, featuring "Risks of Virtual Assets in Terrorist Financing Operations and Relevant International Standards".

The symposium was moderated by Abdullah Abdulrahman Al-Mudaifer, Director of the Department of Combating Terrorism Financing, emphasizing that IMCTC attaches great importance to combating terrorist financing. Brigadier General Musa Omar Ahmed Saeed, delegate of the Republic of the Sudan, moreover, provided an introduction to virtual assets, production methods, security and technical risks and the relevant stances of international organizations.

Dr. Adel Hamad Al-Qulish, Deputy Chairman of Anti-Money Laundering Permanent Committee (AMLPC) at the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), discussed the modern international standards issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for virtual assets. Dr. Sunni Dhu Al-Hoda, a faculty member at the International Islamic University in Malaysia, explained the risks of virtual currencies in terrorist financing operations. **Details Page...8**

THE CHALLENGES OF THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
INTERNAL RETREATS AND EXTERNAL DISPUTES

■ Editorial Team

International disputes over responsibility for the spread of COVID-19 have occurred mainly between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China. Before the spread of COVID-19, China had no significant contribution to the anti-terrorist front in the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan; as it was formed and led by the United States. Therefore, we do not believe that the dispute over the cause of the spread of COVID-19 has negatively affected anti-terrorism activities.

However, the retreat of the Nations has an inevitable affect; as the Americans in Iraq and Syria, as well as the French in the Sahel countries, have declared that they have redeployed their forces to seek protection from disease. Moreover, there were countries that contributed to one degree or another in this file then opted declared or undeclared withdrawal, like Germany, Belgium, Italy and Britain.

When the United States declared a halt to its joint anti-terrorist operations in Iraq, in cooperation with the Iraqi army, it did not say that it was only due to COVID-19 pandemic. Rather, attacks multiplied on its embassy in Baghdad, on its bases in Habbaniyah, the capital's airport and beyond. The Americans declared cessation

of cooperation in fighting ISIS, as long as there are elements no less evil than ISIS in killing and terrorism, operating under the cover or silence of the Iraqi government!

In the intervening stage between the Americans' announcement to cease the operations targeting ISIS and the killing of Qassem Soleimani and his companion, which was about two months, ISIS attacks increased in Iraq, but they were linked to targeting the Popular Mobilization Forces and the security forces. After the advent of Mustafa Al-Kazemi's government, the Americans declared the resumption of cooperation and joint operations with the Iraqi army in confronting ISIS, although the deadly waves of the pandemic did not abate.

If we turned toward France, which is a strong partner of the United States in Syria and Africa; we find it has announced the killing of the leader of al-Qaeda in Africa, who became an ISIS member. The French said that there had been some retreat on their part due to COVID-19, and the attacks increased in the vast deserts between Mali and the Algerian borders.

The international forces in the global front against terrorism have thus had an impact on the operations on terrorism due to COVID-19 pandemic, which has

changed the course of life in the world. The amounts of that, however, cannot be calculated with precision.

It remains for us to assess the effects of the policies of the regional states, the major powers and their differences in combating terrorism along with the possibilities for its suppression. When the Russians came to Syria in 2015, they said that they would stay between three and six months, and today they are still there after five years; their number has reached thousands. When the Americans returned to Iraq in the same year, they said that they would not stay more than one year with the front consisting of sixty countries and more; a few thousand of them have remained to this day.

Although terrorism has really been severely weakened, whether in Al Qaeda and its branches, or ISIS and its branches, it is expected that terrorism will remain for years to come. As it has become an influencing factor in regional and international politics.

To clarify the matter, we start away from the far Afghanistan; as the Taliban have been negotiating with the Americans for more than two years in Doha, Qatar. It is understood that in return for the

Americans' withdrawal from Afghanistan, Taliban will share power with the incumbent government, which is backed by the Americans. Rather, it is expected that what had happened in Vietnam will take place; the elected government will fall and the Taliban will return to power! Evidently, if the agreement is concluded, the American withdrawal and steps to build confidence between the opponents will be gradual. These negotiations progress slowly, then relapse into dangerous setbacks. The Taliban need weapons, and they need to communicate. They were receiving support from Pakistan, but about a decade ago they had close relations with Tehran, and even if they were not weakened as ISIS did, then they could not act independently. Tehran, which is engaged in a violent conflict with the United States, influences the Taliban and pushes it to continue fighting and targeting the Americans, and it says to the movement: The Americans will withdraw sooner or later and they say that, and if you will be patient and keep on fighting, Afghanistan will be back yours as you were until 2002. Finally, because of the new types of weapons used by the Taliban, the Americans claimed that the Russians also entered the line of support for the Taliban to spite them!

In the conflict among the major and central countries, some of them take risks and intervene on their own, such as Russia and Iran in Syria, and some favors the use of armed groups (militias) that may be hostile and then incorporated. The Taliban was one of the biggest enemies of the Shiites and Tehran, but when the Americans attacked Afghanistan in 2001, the Taliban and Al Qaeda found no refuge except in Iran. Since then the Iranians have used Al Qaeda and

the Taliban to wrestle the Americans on this side of the front. If the conflict calmed down, the Doha negotiations would return, and if it escalated, the Negotiations stopped and the attacks renewed.

The conflict in Syria and Iraq is more complex. When the Russians and the Americans arrived in Syria in 2014 and 2015, the main intervening parties became four: Russia, America, Iran and Turkey. Both the Americans and the Russians took control of one side in Syria, and the Russians turned to help the Syrian regime strike the moderate rebels who fought ISIS and Al Qaeda. The Iranians did the same, bringing in armed groups from Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. As for the Turks, terrorism is, in their view, Kurdistan Workers' Party only. Thus, after the Americans and their allies broke ISIS in Syria and Iraq between 2016 and 2018, the Turks, Russians, Kurds and Iranians advanced to collect points. The Iranians have the advantage that they have professional armed groups that wage wars by directing them in the East and the rest of the world.

As for the Turks, because of the strong presence on the borders and common interests with Russia, they have become part of the three-way Astana Agreement to resolve the Syrian conflict. If the Americans and the Russians could agree on a solution in Syria, the old and new armed groups run by Ankara or Tehran would have disappeared, but this has not happened so far. Hence, these armed groups are still very active in Syria, as well as in Iraq, in which the groups loyal to Tehran consider the conflict with America one of their priorities. The matter will remain as such until there is a truce or reconciliation between Iran and America. This applies not only to Af-

ghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, but also to Lebanon

Iran is using armed groups to wrestle with the United States and its allies in the Gulf and Lebanon. The Turks are shifting between Russia and America to wrestle with the Kurds on the one hand, and to create a region of oil and gas interests in Libya's land and sea.

International disputes are existing and escalating, but not over fighting COVID-19 Pandemic and preventing its spread. Terrorism has weakened a great deal after the severe strikes, but it will continue to affect more in our homes, our security and our lives. As it will be unable to confront the Americans in their own home as it did before, and it will still have capabilities that it uses at the request of its supporters in our homes. Furthermore, if the Iranians have been doing this in secret for a long time, then others are finally using violent groups overtly, and not only in Syria, but also in Libya, to which they bring a mixture of mercenaries, jihadists and tribesmen.

How did COVID-19 make a change? It changed only a little. The Russians, the Iranians and others have become more inclined than in the past to use subordinate militias of mercenaries and terrorists, and they did not do so before with such frankness.

Thus we, the Arabs, remain the primary stakeholders in the fight against terrorism and the primary interested parties in pushing the old and new imperialisms away from our countries, as well as maintaining our stability and prosperity. We, before and after that, are the primary stakeholders in ending the armed groups, and they are bandits, mercenaries, warriors, and spoilers on earth in the name of religion or sect, falsely and deceptively. ◼

EXCELLENCE CENTER IS NATO COUNTERTERRORISM ARM

The Center of Excellence for Defense Against Terrorism is an international, multinational military organization, and an internationally recognized and approved resource by NATO, and membership is open to all the NATO members. It is based in Ankara, Turkey, and is sponsored by global powers, including the US, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Romania. This center includes 62 different nationalities.

Turkey announced its intention to establish the said center in December 2003, and developed a Memorandum of Understanding, and was officially established on June 28 of 2005. The said center fulfilled the criteria set by the NATO Leadership for Transformation Process, approved by NATO. It was officially designated as an International Military Organization on August 14, 2006. Currently, 8 NATO countries participate in the said center (Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States). Italy and Albania announced their intention to follow suit.

Since its inception, the said Center has made a significant contribution to facing the terrorism-related challenges, conducting mobile educational and training courses and activities, seminars and workshops, for NATO members, the Partnership for Peace Program, the Mediterranean Dialogue Forum, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, relevant international organizations and countries with bilateral relations with Turkey. Equally important, the counterterrorism report is published twice a year.

The said Center aims to enhance the existing resources of NATO and to ensure partnership, coordination and cooperation among its members in order to provide decision-makers with real solutions to the challenges posed by terrorism and seek feasible methods to address such challenges. It is well-known for its counterterrorism expertise, and has become a better and wider network of international, governmental, non-governmental, industrial, and academic communities of common interests. It provides training on developing concepts, improving NATO capabilities and interoperability.

It has conducted activities, including 217 educational and training courses on its official website, with the help of mobile training teams. They sought to partner with more than 2,500 speakers, and hosted more than 12,450 participants from 108 countries, and they also oversaw the approaches of many terrorism-related challenges. It is principally mandated with providing decision-makers with a comprehensive understanding of terrorism and the challenges that make counterterrorism notoriously onerous in order to direct the attention of NATO and the countries that share its unremitting efforts to face future security challenges. This directive is summarized in the three basic tasks declared of NATO: collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security through fostering the awareness of NATO members and supporting their capabilities and efforts. The said Center is keen

to accomplish these tasks by adopting the action program on terrorism and the counterterrorism measures in both planning and implementation. The main activities of this Center are education, training, development of ideas and concepts, as well as contributing to the analysis and derivation of benefits.

It aims to strengthen its position among the centers well versed in counterterrorism and address the relevant issues, continuously develop its missions and responsibilities as a model for communities interested in counterterrorism and support its ongoing self-development by conducting research studies and experiments, supported by analyses and findings in education, training and matching military and civil capabilities. This helps to identify and develop programs, plans and tools to provide advisory to all subject-matter entities, contributing to developing concepts and ideas in NATO counter-terrorism areas.

The quality assurance system of the said center is subject to periodic review by the committees responsible for documented evaluation processes, which include internal activities and practices, course evaluation and reporting. This oversight is subject to continued external evaluation. It follows a system-based approach to training, which includes analysis, preparation, development, implementation and evaluation processes to provide training and educational solutions consistent with international development curricula standards. ◾

THE CANADIAN COALITION AGAINST TERROR (C-CAT)
AN ECHO OF VICTIMS' VOICES OF TERRORISM

Human rights have always been a topical issue when it comes to combating terrorism. International terrorism has become one of the most dangerous situations that humanity faces today. What increases its severity is the exacerbation of the resulting damages, which are not limited to the loss of innocent lives and property damage, but also to threatening the stability and progress of states. Moreover, terrorism does not recognize affiliation. It is striking everywhere, using all possible weapons and benefiting from scientific progress in the field of technology and communication.

The United Nations is pursuing a unique strategy to combat terrorism and encourages countries and governments to do so. This falls within the work plan of its office, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). Its main tasks include leading counter-terrorism efforts, enhancing coordination between entities involved in implementation in the field of counter-terrorism, providing assistance to Member States to build capacity in this dangerous area, promoting the United Nations vision, advocating and mobilizing resources, ensuring that the fight against terrorism is given due priority across the United Nations system and paying attention to preventing violent extremism.

Much of the United Nations concerns are directed at combating terrorism while excluding other types of human rights violations, such as torture and war crimes, although they remain the object of unequivocal rejection and condemnation.

Terrorism is an explicit threat to Canada; its government and its people, and is more severe than other types of violence.

It clearly affects Canadians residing in their country and abroad. Unlike terrorist leaders like Osama bin Laden, perpetrators of other types of human rights violations have not generally declared war on Canada, its allies, or its way of life. Likewise, they have not necessarily adopted the destruction of the West or other nation-states by religious or intellectual necessity, nor have they declared the use of weapons of mass destruction against the international system.

The victims of terrorism are not collateral damage in a conventional war between States, they are not a by-product of an emergency, and they have not been mistakenly caught during the shooting from a vehicle. The experience of Canadian victims of terrorism is both personal and patriotic, and those who have been killed or injured in terrorist attacks often become victims of a larger conflict with a global dimension that includes states, groups and entities affiliated with those states.

Canadian government policy has also demonstrated the position of victims of terrorism in this unprecedented conflict. The fall of victims of terrorism is not just an injustice; it is a failure to deal with what terrorism and a failure to strengthen societies to confront it. Unarmed civilians who have neither the expertise nor the equipment to confront the threat of terrorism face this new war. The experience of these victims defines the parameters of this battle. Thus, the extent to which the impact on victims can be reduced determines the impact of terrorism on societies, and in their confidence in overcoming this crisis. Therefore, we must aim to minimize this impact first, and to achieve this end, the Canadian Anti-Terror Alliance (C-CAT)

initiative is a successful means. Back in years, Canada's prime minister has vowed to tighten anti-terrorism laws; a day after parliament was shot in the federal capital of Canada, Ottawa.

The Canadian Counter-Terrorism Coalition initiative aims to make the victims' voices heard, understand their positive values, and enable their participation in society. This would create a powerful tool to increase people's awareness of the dangers of violent extremism and terrorism. The Government, the army, law enforcement forces, police departments, private security companies and intelligence and reconnaissance agencies have been dedicated to the implementation of the initiative in the State of Canada to combat and root out terrorism.

Counter-terrorism strategies include increasing the efficiency of local police and intelligence, and traditional central activities, such as interception of communications, tracking of people, as well as modern technology that has expanded the scope of military operations. Among the difficulties that impede the implementation of meaningful anti-terrorism measures are the erosion of civil liberties and the individual privacy to which these procedures are often applied of the citizens of countries attempting to combat terrorism or who have been arrested by these countries.

Close strategic alliances, with international, regional and local stakeholders, pursue a clear and comprehensive approach to combating terrorism. Canada has taken this initiative; hoping that the rest of the countries will join it in order to ensure a better and more dignified life for future generations. ■

FACTORS CONTRIBUTORY TO EXTREMISM

■ **Editorial Team**

Extremism per se is glaringly rife in the behavioral manifestations displayed by many people across the world, regardless of their different beliefs, cultures, orientations and affiliations. Extremism often brings about violence and terrorism, fueled by deeply-ingrained motives. It should be well noted that the effects of the extremism-driven propensities may go further beyond the individual, destabilizing society, while also weighing on psychological safety, which is one of the most important human necessities that should be idyllically fulfilled.

CAUSES OF EXTREMISM
First: Historical Factor

It is the main factor contributory to religious extremism; the baseless events and narratives retold over the course of history have heavily ushered hate-triggered manifestations into the subconscious towards the other. Repugnance to include the other serves as a breeding ground for extremism to snowball and slip into the uneducated communities.

Second: Ideological Factor

• The Muslim world is suffering today because of the sharp ideological divisions within. It is the ignorance or nescience about Islam that stokes the suffering along with the impact associated. Among the most glaringly deviant contemporary trends include the following:

Secular Trend: it calls for building life on a purely earthly basis, unconnected with Sharia principles, nor associated with authentic social traditions, customs and legacies; secularists believe that such issues merely constitute obstacles that re-

ally have thrown a spanner in the works of progress, civilization and prosperity.

– Extremist Religious Trend: it opposes modern civilization and progress; exponents of this trend believe such ostentation is a mere façade, moral corruption and the disintegration of family composition and social relations. Each trend rejects and resists the thought of the other, assessing each other with much suspicion and doubt without scrutiny and proper evaluation.

• The lack of moderation and the radicalization of some influencers who have become widely known more than many of the leaders of moderation; they have deceived and fooled many uneducated people, making them believe that they represent Islam and Muslims. Against a backdrop of uncertainty, moderation was lost and tolerance was no longer felt among people.

• Lack of interest of educators and educational and media institutions in promoting critical thinking and constructive dialogue.

• The failure in most contemporary propagation approaches, as they charge followers emotionally, inculcating and imbibing their supporters with rote learning, while also stuffing their minds with conflict-driven ideologies that lack rationality and reasoning.

Third: Religious Factor

It often balloons into reality due to a departure from the legitimate legal approach and moderation, which are the most important bedrock features of orthodox Islam. The religious factor can be displayed in the following:

• **Ideological Corruption:** veering off the spotless pathway of true Islam has brought

about many deviant sects, such as Kharijites, Murji'ah, Jabriyah, Qadariyah, Mu'tazila and other sects and factions, which resulted in intolerance, radicalization and corruption.

• **Misunderstanding and Misinterpretation:** this is a corollary of some bumptious, big-headed, conceited and would-be polymaths, who go too soft with legitimate and illegtimate issues, glossing over and misinterpreting the statutory laws according to their desires and whims, providing a misinterpretation of Allah's scripture, while also producing fatwas drawing on baseless knowledge and false cogency.

• **Ignorance of Rules of Islam:** they feed on the emotions of youth, inculcating emotionally-charged ideas into their hearts and minds, without being closely followed up and monitored by real scholars of Islam. Simply put, this means producing a fragile and ignorant generation. It stands to reason that ignorance per se is a life-threatening menace that blindly fuels sedition.

• **Intolerance and Bigotry:** it is marked extremism, exceeding the limit of moderation, which is thus synonymous with radicalization. Islam has warned against extremism of all manifestations. Messenger of Allah, prayer, mercy and blessing be upon him warns: "beware of extremism". Whosoever is seen radicalized, thus interpreting the texts to extremes, whether in principle or practice, without considering and weighing up the detailed texts, are very much like Kharijites who applied the general texts, while turning a blind eye to the rest, hence did not establish evidence where needed.

• **Distortion of the Image of Islam:** Islam is a religion that calls for justice, dignity, tolerance, wisdom and moderation; Islam is a religion of observing and honoring the good interests and warding off evil. The actions displayed by those who belong to the religion - unfortunately - are usually attributed to the very same religion. One manifestation of the distortions of Islam is that the actions displayed by its so-called believers do not well conform to its true values and principles.

• **Arrogance and Vanity:** this is attributed to the ill-educated people of Sharia, who think that with a modicum of knowledge, they do not need to seek knowledge. As such, they perish overwhelmed by vanity and conceit.

Fourth: Economic Factor

Economy along with the associated fluctuations critically impacts communities, especially the poor ones, making up one of the most dangerous causes that stimulate waves of extremism as manifested:

• **The inability of the United Nations to coordinate serious international cooperation** and address the countries' economic and social problems, by increasing growth, bridging the gap as much as possible between rich and poor countries, and achieving a better standard of life for the great majority of people.

• **Promoting globalization with more economic crises** for impacted countries and communities, which generates extremism and terrorism, due to the increasingly widening gap between countries.

• **Prevalence of unemployment in society; any society** with high unemployment rates and few job opportunities is on the verge of imminent danger.

• **Inflation and declining standard of living** for many citizens, the disproportionate increase in incomes and increaing prices; all of which fuel hostility and stoke extremism and intolerance under the name of religion or otherwise.

Fifth: Political Factor

It is a setup of the following issues:

• **The blatantly flagrant discrepancy between the charters of the international political systems**, including human values and high political ideals, and the reality of actual behavior that violates all such values, bringing about some international terrorist practices as manifestations against such contradictions and discrepancies.

• **Occupation and colonial hegemony**; the ideological or military dominance, killing, destruction and rape and forcing people to flee and leave their territories and homelands lead to more extremism and terrorism.

Sixth: Social Factor

It often develops, drawing on an unhealthy social environment, most notoriously are the following:

• **Ill-mannered peers:** peers have a clear impact on the development and formation of extremism and intolerance, especially among unbalanced, unsettled or unstable personalities in their families. In the same vein, Messenger of Allahprayer, mercy and blessing be upon him admonishes: "a man grows and develops into the religion of his peer; therefore, one needs to be mindful of those to be made one's peers".

• **Emptiness:** with much time being frittered and idled away, a breeding ground snowballs into reality, catering for any destructive ideology intolerance and extremism.

• **Rumor Mill:** Rumors cause society to become a factory of accusations and spurious and baseless assumptions, widening the gap between community members, channeling them to embrace and espouse the excommunication ideologies based on the exclusion of the other.

• **Vulnerable social institutions:** the failure of schools, mosques and social clubs to fulfill their vital roles ushers in extremism.

• **Poor reference group:** a reference group means the individuals who influence the ideas and values of others, be it one's family, tribe or religious, social or political organizations. Poor groups have little impact on others, who fall victims to deviation and extremism.

• **Despair and frustration:** despair, frustration, pessimism, bitterness and inefficiency among other negative feelings make people vulnerable to be influenced by distorted and extremist ideologies and beliefs, luring them to interpret the world's issues to extremes, not to mention the downright low level of morale, loss of hope and self-depravity and self-deprecation, leading to ideological deviation without reasoning.

• **Blind imitation:** it underestimates mental abilities and deviation from proper use of the mind. It usually stems from fanaticism and overconfidence in their blind imitation, methodology and lifestyle.

Seventh: Psychological Factor

It plays a vital role when someone embraces extremist and terrorist ideologies, which can be manifested in the following:

• **Hubris and infamy:** such people desperately seek to make themselves boastfully visible, turning the spotlight on them even if it is for sabotage, murder and destruction.

• **Failure of life and livelihood:** they have profound psychological effects, be it in practical or social life, functional aspects or emotional experiences. In a favorably breeding ground, such people feel that deviant and perverse sects are a springboard for re-igniting their powers to realize success.

• **Poor superego:** it refers to the failure of superego, with one's ego taking power, leading to evil, desire, and passion. This usually happens to people who feel inferior in themselves, or those who have been subjected to cruel family upbringing, with nobody to care for them. They may develop and harbor motives for latent aggression.

• **Feeling of persecution:** it is a symptom of mental illness, and can prompt a troubled leader or president to wage war or carry out a terrorist attack.

• **Troubled relationship:** whether with peers, children and their parents, or children and school or mosque. The conflict mounts, developing into a person's desire to struggle with any icons of power on the social or political levels.

• **Psychiatric disorders:** this includes neurotic disorder, such as anxiety and depression; the person resorts to transferring the field of conflict from the inside of the psyche to the outside.

Eighth: Educational Factor

Deviation or poor education is the first spark that signifies someone is veering off one's pathway. Poorly designed educational systems and curricula lead to extremism in some communities, especially the Arab and Muslim ones, as follows:

• **Poor religious education** in educational curricula from primary to graduate levels, in most Muslim countries.

• **Poor interest in highlighting the virtues and morals of Islam**, such as peace, cooperation, mercy, justice, dignity, freedom, tolerance and other key values that support security, love and justice across communities, especially Muslim ones.

• **Failure to satisfy human needs:** people, especially the youth, have basic needs that must be satisfied to better realize psychological and social stability; otherwise, the youth would slip into either pathway: to seek unjust or illegal ways, or to remain in the shadow of deprivation. Both lead to extremist ideology.

• **The media enormously nurtures the extremist ideology:** with the programs, films, news, etc. presented, the media often adopts the approach of extremism, either by underestimating religious and moral minds and rituals, or by sowing and stirring up sedition and unrest. ◼

TENTH IMCTC SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC RISKS:
VIRTUAL ASSETS AS A NEW SOURCE OF TERRORIST FINANCING

IMCTC held its tenth monthly symposium, October 29 of 2020, at the IMCTC Center in Riyadh featuring "Virtual Assets and Risks of Using Them in Terrorist Financing Operations and Relevant International Standards". The IMCTC Secretary-General, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Saeed Al-Moghedi, stated that terrorism can be nipped in the bud by cutting off the funds funneled. The tenth symposium aims at combating terrorist financing through an efficient practical approach, using the latest technologies and the broadest global partnerships.

VIRTUAL ASSETS

Mr. Abdullah Abdulrahman Al-Mudaifer, moderator of the symposium and Director of the Department of Combating Terrorist Financing at the IMCTC Center, emphasized that IMCTC attached great importance to combating terrorist financing, and that virtual assets have brought challenges the most prominent of which is the possibility of exploiting them in financing terrorism.

Brigadier General Musa Omar Ahmed Saeed, delegate of the Republic of the Sudan, explained the characteristics, security and technical risks of virtual assets and highlighted the stances of international organizations towards virtual assets. He reviewed the development of money from gold coins to the currently known paper and metal currencies, and the function of global financial institutions in organizing, managing and controlling money to prevent its use in criminal activities. He also replayed the technological development that made it possible to use digital technology in managing cash assets, bank accounts and financial transfers. Virtual assets gained prominence at the end of the first decade of the current century; virtual assets were first used in a limited pace, but increased later steadily.

He also defined virtual assets as a digital representation of the value that can be traded or transferred digitally and used for payment or investment purposes. However, it is imperceptible or non-physical; it is only virtually available online. Digital currency has monetary value and carries a financial value that enables dealers to purchase goods and services, meet liabilities and fulfill their financial obligations. Digital currencies are linked to a bank account or prepaid cards such as a bus card, which is available to all.

CHARACTERISTICS AND RISKS

Brigadier General Musa identified the characteristics of virtual assets. They are intangible; they have no geographical or time restrictions and can be used to pay and trade freely outside the traditional banking system. They are not issued by a central bank, and their movement cannot be monitored in global markets. It is a decentralized currency used without any intermediary; it is difficult to freeze or confiscate it. It is characterized by high secrecy and anonymity. It achieves high profits albeit highly risky. The most notorious security risks include:

- Aiding terrorists to obscure their financial and criminal activities, such as money laundering, arms and drugs trafficking and human trafficking.

- It is difficult to track and disclose the funds used in financing terrorism through traditional methods, including monitoring and controlling the land, sea and air borders of countries, or through the traditional banking system.

- The lack of disclosure of the identity of the founders and dealers makes it a possible factor to threaten any national economy.

The most infamous technical risks of virtual assets include:

- Ease of losing virtual assets due to a typo in writing the correct address of the currency, and being vulnerable to theft with the inability to track the thief.

- The ability to hack digital wallets or portfolios for virtual currencies.

- The risk of hacking attacks on the trading process by consumers.

The International Monetary Fund did not issue recommendations regarding acceptance or rejection of virtual assets; it highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of virtual assets, calling for regulation and legislation to combat their risks. The Bank for International Settlements concluded that these assets are difficult to use due to their inconsistency and the poor decentralized networks on which virtual currencies depend. Some companies and financial markets have accepted virtual assets to achieve the largest amount of profits, and ease of transferring money, while others rejected virtual assets.

HOPES AND THREATS

Dr. Sunni Dhu Al-Hoda, a faculty member at the International Islamic University in Malaysia, who specializes in legislation to combat terrorist financing, discussed the risks of using virtual assets and currencies in terrorist financing operations. The vast digital innovations made in payment systems (cards, mobile phones and virtual currencies) have brought together hopes and threats, and created new tools for criminals and terrorist financiers that enable them to move and store illegal money away from law enforcement authorities.

Dr. Sunni attributed the risks of currencies and virtual assets to several sources, such as the risks of legitimacy, anonymity and decentralization, giving way to fraud and abuse without deterrence. The matter is made worse by the absence of any central supervisory body for the circulation of these assets, rendering law enforcement and oversight bodies unable to monitor and control.

Dr. Sunni analyzed some real cases of terrorist financing, including the use of virtual currencies. He called on the world's governments, international bodies and governmental organizations to cooperate to confront the use of virtual assets in financing terrorism, by developing a strategy that takes into account the successive technological developments and innovations in payment systems and services, and includes risk assessment, transaction monitoring, training, governance, and updating the legal framework to combat terrorist financing. This aims to address some important matters such as updating customer due diligence requirements, organizing businesses that use virtual currencies, updating beneficiary reporting requirements in suspicious transaction reports, updating criminal laws, information technology and security laws. Terrorist threat is a complex international phenomenon and requires international cooperation in law enforcement.

GLOBAL STANDARDS

Dr. Adel Hamad Al-Qulaish, Deputy Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Combating Money Laundering at SAMA, discussed the modern international standards issued by FATF for virtual assets. He mentioned that FATF has introduced binding global standards to regulate the financial activities associated with these assets; it has identified the potential risks of virtual currencies in 2014, and in the following year it issued a guideline for the approach based on the risks of virtual currencies. In 2018, it presented two new definitions of virtual assets and updated the fifteenth recommendation with an explanatory memorandum. In October 2019, it adopted the updated criteria for evaluating countries in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, and added criteria for virtual assets and their service providers, most notably:

1. Banning the activities of unofficial virtual asset service providers.

2. Countries should assess money laundering and terrorist financing risks arising from virtual asset operations and take appropriate measures.

3. Putting into action international cooperation according to a legal basis that allows states to exchange legal aid related to money laundering and terrorist financing investigations.

4. Adherence to standards in the event that countries decide to allow virtual asset activities.

5. Licensing and registering for virtual asset service providers, and prohibiting criminals from owning these services.

6. Submitting virtual asset service providers to supervision and oversight, and ensuring compliance with national requirements to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

7. Developing guidelines for virtual asset service providers to help them implement national measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, including detecting and reporting suspicious transactions.

8. Establishing appropriate, dissuasive, deterrent and applicable penalties for service providers, owners, and managers who do not comply with the requirements of combating money laundering and terrorist financing. ■

INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR TERRORISM STUDIES

Established in 1994 in the USA as a prestigious organization, tasked with discussing the scope of the current and future threat of terrorism and proposing feasible counter-terrorism solutions, plans and methods, the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies engage in activities based on the recommendations of the International Research Council that address various aspects of terrorism. It is closely related to universities and research centers in more than 35 countries, spearheaded by the Institute of Homeland Security Policy at George Washington University, the International Center for Terrorism Studies at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, in Virginia, and the Inter-University Center for Legal Studies at the Institute for International Law in Washington.

Driven by the urgent need to educate the public in general and decision-makers in particular of the nature and severity of the terrorist threat in the twenty-first century, the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies has an ideological commitment as well as ethical and practical responsibility to better participate in international counter-terrorism efforts.

To this end, the objectives of the Center include four main aspects:

- Monitoring current and future terrorist threats.

- Developing response strategies at the governmental and non-governmental levels.

- Creating continued communication with policy makers, academic institutions, businesses, the media and civil organizations.

- Sponsoring research programs on emerging issues, especially policy-related technologies and exchanging results at the national and international levels.

It has supervised and participated in a whole host of seminars and conferences in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, India, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Ukraine. In addition, the Center has published nearly 40 books and 18 reports on specialized topics: Super Terrorism and its Biological, Chemical and Nuclear Effects, Terrorism and Law, an Overview of the Terrorist Groups Affiliated with ETA in Spain, the Al-Qaeda Led by Osama Bin Laden, and Terrorism from the USA Perspective, Information Warfare and Cyber Terrorism, Terrorism and Business, and the Legal Aspects of Terrorism in the United States. Other activities are broadcast widely across the global media. ■
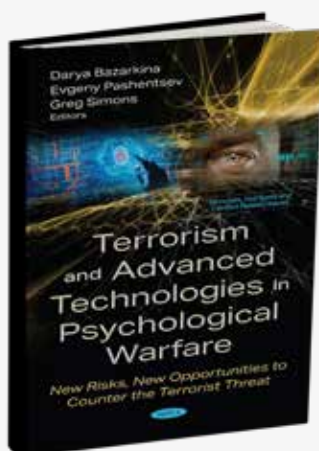
AMERICAN SECURITY PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL

Link:

Founded in 1989, Security Journal is an American academic peer-reviewed journal, that publishes research studies on the latest security innovations. It also provides book reviews, video clips, security sector reports and expert comments on issues of public opinion.

It adopts a reader-friendly, free-flowing and punchy style of publication that attracts a wide range of readership. It features specific types of crimes, including extremism and terrorism, political violence, armed robbery, burglary, organized crime, bomb threats, fraud and violence in the workplace.

It publishes articles, columns, and sections to discuss specialized topics such as nuclear safety, aviation, rail transport, maritime piracy and crime in public places. With the development of cutting-edge AI technology, Security Journal now attaches more attention to computer and information security, electronic crime control, data analysis in investigation and prediction, and detection of threats. The management topics covered include evaluating security measures, and developing and planning methods for combating crime. ■

TERRORISM AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

Author: Darya Yu Bazarkina
Evgeny N. Pashentsev
Gregory Simons

Publisher: Nova Science Pub Inc

Date: August 16, 2020

ISBN-10: 1536179299

Link

Psychological warfare has always been one of the most notorious triggers of conquest, expansion and subjugation. Despite its different causes, motives, justifications, tools and methods, it remains more dangerous and heavier than conventional warfare which relies on direct confrontation and the use of weapons. This book is a first attempt to analyze the current practice and future risks of high-tech psychological warfare waged by terrorists on a national and cross-border basis, whether they are individuals or entities.

Advanced technologies allow solving many social problems in contemporary communities, but the lack of social relations at times in human society makes the use of these technologies completely different, such as being used in targeting human security and the public interest. Perhaps, one of the most glaringly blatant and dangerous manifestations of this use is the activity of terrorist groups. Moreover, psychological warfare has now turned into a scientific discipline that is taught in military colleges by psychologists and strategic subject-matter experts.

An international team of seasoned authors from 11 countries assesses the quantitative and qualitative development of the psychological impact of terrorists on their target audiences, taking into account the wider context of global social, economic and political shifts and acute geopolitical contradictions.

The book also provides new understandings on approaches of countering the psychological impact of terrorists on modern society. These approaches include a wide range of technical and social tools, philosophical concepts, cultural theories, Artificial Intelligence (AI) to prevent terrorism and ensure psychological security of society and its progressive democratic development.

The current book draws the reader's attention to the fact that the implementation of advanced technologies by terrorists in the broad sense of the word is based on the contradictory social role of these technologies. ■

ISIS BEYOND THE SPECTACLE:
COMMUNICATION MEDIA, NETWORKED PUBLICS AND TERRORISM

Author: Mehdi Semati
Piotr M. Szpunar
Robert Alan Brookey

Publisher: Routledge; 1st Edition

Date: April 2, 2020

ISBN-13: 978-0367587277

ISBN-10: 0367587270

Link

The book helps the reader to uncover the hidden facets of extremist groups, accurately understanding their subtle intricacies and laying out the necessary counterterrorism approaches. The authors set the tone by some probing and leading questions: What is ISIS? Is it a quasi-state? Is it a terrorist group? Is it a new philosophical, political or ideological movement? As ISIS has transformed and mutated, gained and lost territory, horrified the world, it has become imperative to define the role of the media to better understand their tumultuous trends and limit their negative effects.
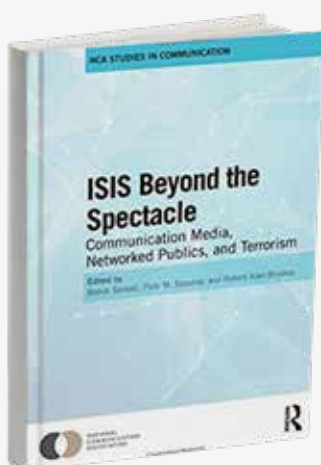
It mainly highlights the ongoing relationship between ISIS and the media and the reliance of its opponents on the media. The authors argue that the stigma attached to ISIS is not only due to the images of mutilated bodies and heinous crimes transmitted directly; rather, its media system is what has stoked this glaring notoriety or infamy. It is an organization and entity that is based on practicing all the known dealings, but in accordance to its own conditions and tools, such as a special currency, the language used, and so on.

The current book reveals that the efforts of ISIS and its adversaries to communicate and make sense of this world share modes of visual, aesthetic, and journalistic practice and expression. The short tumultuous history of ISIS does not allow for a single approach to understanding its relation to media.

To well understand all of the above, the contributions of the authors should be read as specialized analyses that have successfully connected and disconnected the data about ISIS relationship with the media.

The three authors have prolifically and richly contributed to the book; the authors are Mehdi Semati, Professor of Communication at Northern Illinois University, USA, Piotr Szpunar, Assistant Professor of Communication at Albany, State University of New York, USA, and Robert Brookey, Professor of Telecommunications at Ball State University, USA. ■

IMCTC SECRETARY-GENERAL RECEIVES FINANCIAL ACADEMY DELEGATION

The IMCTC Secretary-General, Maj. Gen. Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Moghedi, received on October 18, 2020 the Financial Academy Delegation in Riyadh headed by the Director-General of the Academy Maneh bin Mohammed Al Khamsan. The two sides discussed avenues of cooperation between IMCTC and the Academy, as well as the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two parties for training and capacity building in combating terrorist financing. The delegation was provided with an overview of the goals of IMCTC and its key domains and the progress it makes in coordinating the counterterrorism efforts of the IMCTC member countries (41 countries), and supporting international efforts to promote global peace and security.

The Financial Academy is one of the initiatives of the Financial Sector Development Program for Vision 2030, designed to develop skills, knowledge and experiences in all financial sectors. ■

RECIPROCAL VISITS TO ENHANCE COOPERATION BETWEEN IMCTC AND IMAM UNIVERSITY

An official delegation from IMCTC visited the Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh on October 1, 2020 in response to an invitation from His Excellency President of the University Prof. Dr. Ahmed bin Salem Al-Amri. The said delegation met the Vice-President for International Communication and the team of the University Arabic Language Institute.

The meeting highlighted developing the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two parties, and capitalizing on the capabilities of the university to better realize the goals of IMCTC and its strategies in ideological security and research.

Later, a delegation from the Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University paid a visit to the IMCTC Center, and was provided with a detailed explanation about the training capabilities and methods to support cooperation between the two sides to teach the Arabic language to delegates of the IMCTC member countries. ■

Courses & Conferences

FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS TRAVELLING TERRORISTS AND RETURNEES

Link

4-18 December 2020

(CEPOL)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION 2020

10 - 11 December 2020

Academy of European Law (ERA) Link

TERRORISM AND ORGANISED CRIME NEXUS

Link

November 23 to December 7, 2020

(CEPOL)