



Recruitment and Radicalization of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups

FINAL REPORT

April 23, 2009



Homeland Security Institute

2900 South Quincy Street • Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22206-2233

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U.S. Department of Education,
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

HOMELAND SECURITY INSTITUTE

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HSI's research is undertaken by mutual consent with DHS and is organized by Tasks in the annual HSI Research Plan. This report presents the results of research and analysis conducted under

Task 08-37,

Implications for U.S. Educators on the Prevalence and Tactics Used to Recruit Youth for Violent or Terrorist Activities Worldwide

of HSI's Fiscal Year 2008 Research Plan. The purpose of the task is to look at the phenomenon of school-aged individuals being recruited by individuals or groups that promote violence or terrorism.

The results presented in this report do not necessarily reflect official DHS opinion or policy.



*Homeland
Security
Institute*

Catherine Bott
*Task lead, Threats Analysis
Division*

W. James Castan
Robertson Dickens
Thomas Rowley
Erik Smith

Rosemary Lark
*Fellow & Division
Manager, Threats Analysis
Division*

George Thompson,
Deputy Director, HSI

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For information about this publication or other HSI research, contact

HOMELAND SECURITY INSTITUTE

Analytic Services Incorporated
2900 S. Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22206
Tel (703) 416-3550 • Fax (703) 416-3530
www.homelandsecurity.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Terrorists are adaptive adversaries who use a variety of tools and tactics to reach potential recruits and supporters. Unfortunately, there is increasing evidence that terrorist organizations are drawing school-aged youth into their ranks all around the world.

The United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) sponsored this study to gain insight into how school-aged youth are recruited, radicalized, and utilized by various international terrorist groups. The study is intended to analyze the role, if any, played by schools, educators, or others within the school setting (either directly or indirectly) to induce students toward violence or participation in terrorist groups through actions that promote, advocate, or support such groups.

Additionally, OSDFS wanted to know what initiatives have been implemented internationally to address the emerging threat of youth recruitment and radicalization. Consequently, the study also sought to determine what role, if any, is currently being played by schools, educators, or others within the school setting to advance measures or take actions that denounce violence or terrorist groups and/or propose other alternatives.

An examination of the context(s) in which recruitment occurs, the range of tactics used by terrorist groups worldwide, the inducements offered, and the ways in which these issues are being addressed internationally will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues as well as help the Department of Education identify practical implications. It will also allow the Department to review whether modifications to current policies and practices being used by U.S. schools are indicated.

Approach

Preliminary research found evidence that at least 23 of the 42 currently active groups designated by the U.S. Department of State as Foreign Terrorist Organizations utilize school-aged youth in some capacity. These groups, with differing goals and motivations, are located in a variety of countries and regions throughout the world to include Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Thailand, Palestine, Lebanon, Colombia, Somalia, Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, Peru, Bosnia, North Africa, and Western Europe.

A sample of terrorist organizations was selected for further study and a series of case studies were developed. The groups selected for additional research were chosen because they were diverse in terms of geographic location, ideology, and tactics, as well as in how they recruited, radicalized, or utilized young persons. These groups include:

- Hamas
- Hizballah
- Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)
- Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups (primarily includes those active in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and the United Kingdom)
- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
- Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)

In addition to these groups, research was also conducted on radicalization of youth in the Netherlands and on how the Internet is being used by terrorist organizations to reach out to youth audiences.

Key Themes and Trends

Notable themes and trends emerged from across all of the terrorist groups that were examined in depth. The groups systematically prey upon the vulnerabilities of young persons in various contexts offering a range of incentives – from financial assistance, to familial-like bonds, to the promise of something exciting to do – that are intended to make membership in the group attractive. In some cases, youth have been forcibly recruited or tricked into participating in terrorist activities, including suicide bombings. Terrorist organizations have used schools as a recruitment venue in many locations throughout the world, utilizing the education system to transmit group ideologies as well as provide mental and physical training and indoctrination. Youth recruitment and radicalization extends far beyond conflict areas. Of the diverse groups studied, all have reached out to youth populations both locally as well as globally. The Internet has become a resource for disseminating terrorist propaganda and instructions to young persons who might not otherwise have direct contact with group recruiters or supporters.

Implications

While this study has led to a better understanding of how some terrorist groups are recruiting, radicalizing, and utilizing school-aged youth, there is still a great deal of research that needs to be done to further inform our understanding of this dynamic issue. It is necessary to get a more comprehensive understanding of youth radicalization and to share this knowledge with community members who come in contact with young persons on a regular basis, including educators, parents, and religious leaders. Educating these individuals will enable them to better address the needs of young persons and to identify and prevent potential problems.

Given the apparent increase of youth involvement in terrorist organizations, and the changing demographics of those involved or implicated, it is necessary to promote greater awareness that young persons are susceptible to terrorist recruitment and radicalization. Any young person with access to an Internet connection can view websites that promote terrorist groups or provide graphic depictions of acts of terrorism that are commonly portrayed as acts of heroism.

Counter-recruitment and counter-radicalization initiatives should be tailored locally, and should engage members from across the community who are in a position to address specific underlying factors or identify potential radicalization indicators. Counter-recruitment and radicalization initiatives must also evolve with the young audiences they are intended to reach, adapt along with the adversaries, incorporate new developments in technologies, and address changes within environments where young persons are susceptible.

Finally, it is imperative that we as a society make it unacceptable for terrorist organizations to consider utilizing young persons to further their violent goals.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, school-aged youth have participated in a variety of organizations that promote or carry out acts of violence. Youth have helped to fill the ranks of militaries, militias, gangs, and terrorist groups. Young persons' roles within these organizations have varied, from providing logistical support, serving as “lookouts” or “mules,” raising funds, taking part in battles, or carrying out attacks. The process by which youth become involved in these groups also varies, with some being born into radical environments that promote violence, some being “spotted” and directly recruited by groups, some self-selecting into the group, and others being forced into membership.

While much of the attention and research on this topic to-date has focused on the issue of children as soldiers in various rebel armies, there is increasing evidence that youth are being drawn into the ranks of terrorist organizations operating around the world.

- In November 2007, the United Kingdom’s MI5 Chief, Mr. Jonathan Evans, stated that “Terrorists were methodically and intentionally targeting young people and children in the United Kingdom,” and that MI5 has seen individuals as young as 15 implicated in activities related to terrorism.¹ In March 2009, the Association of Chief Police Officers indicated that two-hundred schoolchildren in Britain (some as young as thirteen) had been identified and reported by community members – including parents, imams, and teachers – as being at risk of extremism or of being “groomed by radicalisers.”²
- A special youth facility was developed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba called “Camp Iguana” in order to house the young persons that were captured fighting alongside al-Qaeda and the Taliban.³ At least six boys between the ages of 13 and 16 were captured by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan in the initial fighting there. Likewise, in Iraq, U.S. forces detained more than 100 juveniles in the first year following the invasion, and more than 600 to date.⁴
- Al-Shabaab, “the youth,” is an al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist group based in Somalia that has conducted a range of operations against a number of targets within the country. The group has recently made headlines for its alleged attempts to recruit young persons within Somali diaspora communities. According to March 2009 testimony from Deputy Director of Intelligence for the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), “in the last few years a number of Somali-American young men have traveled to Somalia, possibly to train and fight with al-Shabaab.”⁵ At least one of

¹ Philip Johnston, “MI5: Al-Qaeda Recruiting U.K. Children for Terror,” *Telegraph.co.uk*, 7 November 2007.

² Mark Hughes, “Police Identify 200 Children as Potential Terrorists,” *The Independent*, 28 March 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/police-identify-200-children-as-potential-terrorists-1656027.html>.

³ P.W. Singer, “Too Young to Kill,” *Human Rights*, (Newshouse News Service, Brookings Institution, 9 January 2005).

⁴ Rear Adm. Gregory Smith; and Major General Mohammed al-Askari, Press Conference, 5 February 2008, www.mnf-iraq.com.

⁵ National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), *Hearing before the Senate Homeland Security Committee, Violent Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America*, 11 March 2009.

these young men was killed during a suicide bombing attack in northern Somalia in October 2008, which is the first known instance of a U.S. citizen participating in a suicide attack.⁶

Evidence would suggest that youth's roles within terrorist organizations has changed over time as well, with a growing number of instances of young persons carrying out (or attempting to carry out) terrorist attacks, to include suicide bombings.

- Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers have a long history of using children as suicide bombers. They have manufactured specialized denim jackets tailored in small sizes to enable children to conceal explosives.⁷
- In January 2002, two young Dutch men aged 20 and 21 years were killed in an attempt to attack a heavily armed Indian Army patrol at a border checkpoint in Kashmir.⁸
- Al-Qaeda in Iraq has developed videos to boost youth recruitment. The videos show al-Qaeda members boasting about turning children into suicide bombers and show young boys making statements promoting slaughter and declaring their allegiance to al-Qaeda. These tapes are believed to be training films used to encourage other youth to join the terrorist network. Captured along with these videos was a movie script outlining scenes where children would interrogate and execute victims, plant improvised explosive devices, and conduct sniper attacks against security forces.⁹

The demographics of the young persons becoming involved in terrorist groups also appear to be changing. In many cases the persons implicated are younger than reported in the past; there appear to be more female youth joining the ranks of terrorist organizations; and more young supporters are coming from Western countries that are further removed from actual conflict areas.

- The Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas have recruited children as young as thirteen to be suicide bombers and children as young as eleven to smuggle explosives and weapons.¹⁰
- During 2003, thirteen-year-old twin sisters who had been recruited by al-Qaeda linked groups were caught attempting to commit a suicide bombing against Western businesses and local government buildings in Morocco.¹¹
- Videos have been found in which young persons in the United Kingdom filmed themselves reenacting beheadings. The youth were copying videos of beheadings that had been posted online by terrorist groups or their supporters.¹²

⁶ Philip Mudd, Associate Executive Assistant Director, National Security Branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) statement before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 11 March 2009.

⁷ P.W. Singer, "The New Children of Terror," *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes*, vol. 1, ed. James J.F. Frost, (Praeger, November 2005), 105-119.

⁸ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), *Recruitment for the Jihad in The Netherlands: From Incident to Trend*, Den Haag: AIVD, December 2002, 34.

⁹ Rear Adm. Gregory Smith; and Major General Mohammed al-Askari, Press Conference, 5 February 2008, www.mnf-iraq.com.

¹⁰ Singer, "The New Children of Terror."

¹¹ Ibid.

Finally, the Internet is used by terrorist groups to spread propaganda and garner support for their activities. The Internet is accessible, cheap, and anonymous. It offers terrorists a variety of mediums to disseminate messages and provides connections to recruiters and recruits that might not otherwise be possible. Some groups have established websites designed specifically for youth audiences, disseminating propaganda through colorful cartoons and games. These sites – many of which are available in English – help to get the groups’ message out to a worldwide audience, including any young person that has access to an Internet connection. In recent years, there have been reports of a growing trend of young persons “self-radicalizing” through use of the Internet.

- In 1998 there were a total of 12 active terrorist-related websites existed. By 2003, approximately 2630 such sites existed, and by January 2009 a total of 6940 active terrorist-related websites existed.¹³
- A website sponsored by Hamas, al-Fateh (meaning “The Conqueror”) is updated every week and is designed for children, with a cartoon-style design and colorful children’s stories.¹⁴
- Irfan Raja was a 19-year old British student whose “entire radicalisation occurred online, with hours spent online downloading extremist videos, posting messages, and chatting with other radicals.”¹⁵ In 2007, Raja made contact with an extremist recruiter online and, along with four other young British persons he had never met, prepared to travel to a training camp overseas.

In response to inquiries about missing Somali-American youth, intelligence officials at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) indicated recent statements by some al-Qaeda leaders and affiliates have revealed an emphasis on communicating to international and, notably, English-speaking audiences online.¹⁶

These and other examples provide evidence that youth have been utilized by terrorist organizations. However, the circumstances by which youth became involved with terrorist groups, to include the process by which they are recruited and radicalized, does not appear to be the subject of a significant body of research, at least within the unclassified arena. For example, in 2006, a subgroup of the *NATO Advanced Research Working Group on the Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism* met to discuss approaches for preventing or reducing the recruitment and retention of young people into terrorist groups. The group – comprised of social scientists, terrorism researchers, and educators, among others – acknowledged:

“A great gap exists between what we know and what we need to know in order to reduce the likelihood that young people will turn to terrorism...Collaborative interdisciplinary

¹² Jessica Stern, “Jihad – a global fad”, *The Boston Globe*, August 1, 2006, from: www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/08/01/jihad_a_global_fad.

¹³ Dr. Gabriel Weimann, "The Internet as a Terrorist Tool to Recruit Youth" (presentation given at the Youth Recruitment & Radicalization Roundtable, Arlington, Virginia, March 19, 2009).

¹⁴ Dr. Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* (Washington, DC: USIP, 2006), 91.

¹⁵ King’s College London. "The Internet." in *Recruitment and Mobilisation for the Islamist Militant Movement in Europe*. (University of London, December 2007), 89.

¹⁶ Andrew Liepman, Deputy Director of Intelligence for the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), Directorate of Intelligence, Hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, 11 March 2009.

research is urgently needed to develop policies and practices that are most likely to prevent impressionable young people, especially those that perceive themselves to be part of simmering or active conflicts, from becoming and remaining committed terrorists.”¹⁷

The term *radicalization* has become more prevalent after the 2005 terrorist bombings in London that targeted a bus and the subway system. The attacks were carried out by young men who had grown up in the United Kingdom and did not fit the “profile” of past terrorist perpetrators: “One of the four bombers of 7 July was, on the face of it, a model student. He had never been in trouble with the police, was the son of a well-established family and was employed and integrated into society.” Since this attack, a significant body of research has been aimed at getting a better understanding of why some people are vulnerable to radicalization and the processes through which radicalization occurs.

More recently, the concern that youth are increasingly being radicalized and manipulated by terrorist organizations was expressed in the U.S. Department of State’s 2007 Country Report on Terrorism (released April 2008):

Radicalization of immigrant populations, youth and alienated minorities in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa continued. But it became increasingly clear that radicalization to violent extremism does not occur by accident, or because such populations are innately prone to extremism. Rather, we saw increasing evidence of terrorists and extremists manipulating the grievances of alienated youth or immigrant populations, and then cynically exploiting those grievances to subvert legitimate authority and create unrest. We also note a “self-radicalization” process of youth reaching out to extremists in order to become involved in the broader AQ fight.

Such efforts to manipulate grievances represent a “conveyor belt” through which terrorists seek to convert alienated or aggrieved populations, by stages, to increasingly radicalized and extremist viewpoints, turning them into sympathizers, supporters, and ultimately, in some cases, members of terrorist networks.¹⁸

The Department of State indicates “radicalization to violent extremism does not occur by accident” and there is “increasing evidence of terrorists and extremists manipulating the grievances of alienated youth.” Additionally, they point to the trend of a “self-radicalization process of youth reaching out to extremists,” whereby young persons use the Internet to acquaint themselves to the terrorist group’s ideologies. In addition to understanding how terrorist groups recruit and utilize youth, a better understanding of how youth are radicalized is needed.

Purpose

The United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) has sponsored this study to gain insight into how school-aged youth are recruited, radicalized, and utilized by various international terrorist groups, to include: gaining a better understanding of the context(s) in which recruitment and radicalization occur; the factors that may make youth more vulnerable to recruitment; the

¹⁷ Jeff Victoroff, et al., “Working Group 2: Preventing Substate Terrorist Groups from Recruiting and Retaining Young Members,” *In Tangled Roots: Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2006).

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, “Chapter 1, Strategic Assessment,” *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007*, (Washington, DC, April 2008).

venues and circumstances where youth are targeted for recruitment; the kinds of persons or tools (e.g., the Internet) involved in the recruitment process; and, the incentives offered.

The study is intended to analyze the role, if any, played by schools, educators, or others within the school setting, either directly or indirectly, in inducing students toward violence or participation in terrorist groups, through actions that promote, advocate, or support such groups.

Additionally, OSDFS wanted to discover what initiatives have been implemented internationally to address the emerging threat of youth recruitment and radicalization. As such, the study also sought to determine what, if any, role is currently being played by schools, educators, or others within the school setting, either directly or indirectly, in advancing measures or taking actions that denounce violence or terrorist groups and/or propose other alternatives.

An examination of the context(s) in which recruitment occurs, the range of tactics used by terrorist groups worldwide, the inducements offered, and the ways in which these issues are being addressed internationally will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues as well as help the Department of Education to identify if there are practical implications. Knowledge of the behaviors associated with the recruitment and radicalization of youth will significantly advance our understanding of whether schools, and by extension teachers, faculty, or others within the school setting are in any way either directly or indirectly encouraging or motivating students toward violence or groups that support violence. In addition, knowledge of whether schools, teachers, faculty or others within the school setting either directly or indirectly take actions to denounce violence or violent groups and propose other alternatives, will allow the Department of Education to determine whether modifications to current policies and practices being used by U.S. schools are indicated.

Methodology

This study examines the recruitment, radicalization, and utilization of school-aged youth by international terrorist groups and the initiatives that have been implemented internationally to counter the recruitment and radicalization of young persons. To that end, case studies were developed to examine a set of geographically and ideologically diverse international terrorist groups that utilize school-aged youth in some capacity.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

- *Radicalization* is the process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect societal change.¹⁹
- *Recruitment* is the act of getting recruits or enlisting people for an army or a cause.²⁰
- *School-aged youth* include students ranging from kindergarten through college, which generally include young persons between the ages of five and twenty-two.

¹⁹ As defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

²⁰ Dictionary.com., Princeton University. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/recruitment>

- *International terrorist groups* include those designated by the Secretary of State as “Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs).”²¹
- *Terrorism* is the unlawful use of force against persons or property to intimidate a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives.²²

Case Study Selection

To narrow data collection, preliminary research was conducted on the 42 terrorist groups designated as FTOs to determine if evidence existed that the group utilized school-aged youth. From the initial review, a list of 23 currently active terrorist organizations was identified as utilizing youth. These groups, with differing goals and motivations, are located in a variety of countries and regions throughout the world to include: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Thailand, Palestine, Lebanon, Colombia, Somalia, Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, Peru, Bosnia, North Africa, & Western Europe. From this list, a sample of terrorist organizations was selected for further study.

The groups selected for additional research were chosen because they were diverse in terms of geographic location, ideology, and tactics, as well as how they recruited, radicalized, or utilized young persons. These groups include:

- Hamas
- Hizballah
- Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)
- Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups (primarily includes those active in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and the United Kingdom)
- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
- Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)

In addition to these groups, research was also conducted on radicalization of youth in the Netherlands and on how the Internet is being used by terrorist organizations to reach out to youth audiences

A previous radicalization study conducted by HSI in 2008 looked at what actions were being taken by the government of the Netherlands to prevent and counter radicalization. Through the course of this research, it became apparent the Netherlands has been dealing with a growing problem of radicalization, especially among segments of its youth population. Based on those findings, it was decided to take a second look at the problem in the Netherlands with a specific focus on the radicalization of school-aged youth.

²¹ U.S. Department of State website, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>. Factsheet on Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). Legal Criteria for Designation under Section 219 of the INA as amended: 1) It must be a *foreign* organization; 2) The organization must *engage in terrorist activity*, as defined in section 212 (a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3)(B)), or *terrorism*, as defined in section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. § 2656f(d)(2)), or *retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism*; and 3) The organization’s terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interests) of the United States.

²² U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (28 C.F.R. Section 0.85)

It was evident early into the process of researching the terrorist organizations listed above that many of the groups were utilizing the Internet to reach out to a broad audience of potential recruits or supporters. Similarly, it became apparent that some young persons – especially those living outside of areas where terrorist groups were prevalent – had self-recruited or self-radicalized based on materials and connections they were able to find online. As a result, the topic of Internet utilization by terrorist organizations and by young persons as a means of recruitment and radicalization was included for further study.

Research Questions

Case study research was guided by eight framing questions that were developed at the outset of the study. The questions, which were developed to address the areas of recruitment that were of interest or relevance to the Department of Education, include:

- Are school-aged youth recruited by the group? *(If so, what age ranges?)*
- How are youth recruited? *(What is the process? How does the process vary across the target population of youth?)*
- Who recruits youth? *(Are they being recruited by teachers, family members, religious leaders, or other community members?)*
- What are youth recruited to do? *(Are there differences in terms of what younger versus older youth are recruited to do? Are youth utilized for violent or non-violent roles, or both?)*
- Who is recruited? *(Is there a “profile” of the kinds of young persons who are recruited? Does the group have a vetting process? Are there any specialized skill sets or educational level that groups look for in young recruits? How does this vary depending on the situation?)*
- From where are youth being recruited? *(Is it happening in schools, religious institutions, through youth groups or sporting clubs?)*
- What are the benefits of recruitment? *(For the youth, what incentives are they offered? For the group, how does having young members help them?)*
- Have any programs or initiatives been developed to try to counter the recruitment of youth by this group? *(To what extent has the education system been involved in initiatives to counter recruitment or radicalization?)*

Data Sources

This study is derived entirely from unclassified materials. A wide range of sources was utilized to include governmental reports on terrorism and counterterrorism initiatives, academic and private sector research, media reporting, videos, and books.

Information was also derived through interviews with subject matter experts. Discussions were held, both in person and via teleconference, with representatives from various governments, academic and private sector researchers, and intelligence analysts located within the U.S. and abroad. All persons interviewed were asked to recommend additional resources for the study.

Youth Recruitment & Radicalization Roundtable

OSDFS and HSI co-hosted a one-day *Youth Recruitment and Radicalization Roundtable* on 19 March 2009. The purpose of this session was to bring together a select group of persons to discuss what can be learned from what is occurring elsewhere in the world with respect to youth recruitment and radicalization; to discuss potential implications for the U.S.; and to determine what, if any, role the education system can play in countering youth recruitment and radicalization or in promoting resilience among youth.

This session provided a forum for OSDFS and HSI to vet their preliminary research observations with a diverse audience of experts and stakeholders. Attendees included representatives from across the U.S. government (including the Department of Justice, the National Counter Terrorism Center, the Departments of Homeland Security and Education; school chiefs of police and Safe School Center Directors from across the U.S.; and subject matter experts from academia and the private sector. More detailed information on this roundtable and key points from the presentations provided therein are included as Appendix A.

Parameters and Limitations

This study focused on gaining a better understanding of how international terrorist groups are recruiting, radicalizing, and utilizing school-aged youth. The phenomenon of child soldiers (e.g., those serving in militias in regions such as Africa and South America) was not within the scope of this study because a significant body of research has already been devoted to the topic. However, the cases where young persons were found to be serving as soldiers in the ranks of terrorist organizations (e.g., those that are currently battling against Coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq) were included.

As noted above, this study utilized only open-source materials. It is possible that additional information exists within the classified domain that could have advanced the understanding of how youth are being recruited and utilized by terrorist groups. Additionally, it is likely that further details are available in languages other than English. Some Dutch and Spanish source materials were translated by researchers supporting this study. However, materials in other languages were not utilized. Finally, access to subject matter experts varied depending on the groups being studied. In some cases (e.g., the Netherlands), far more interviews were conducted with in-country experts. It was more difficult to identify in-country experts to interview about the activities of other terrorist organizations.

It appears that minimal research has been conducted to-date that specifically addresses the role youth play in terrorist organizations, as well as how youth become members in these groups. As such, for many of the groups studied, it was difficult to find information available to answer all of the questions that guided this study. In some cases, the information that was available was anecdotal and did not cover all aspects of recruitment in detail.

The situation in some of the regions studied appears to be in a state of flux, to include those in active conflict zones. Some of the groups studied appear to be in the process of changing their tactics, to include the utilization of young persons. As a result, the extent to which the information collected is up-to-date was difficult to measure. However, for all groups studied, efforts were made to get a better understanding of their current practices as well as any applicable group trends.

Lastly, one of the goals of this study was to get a better understanding of the initiatives and programs that have been put in place in various locations by community groups, governments, and schools to counter

terrorist recruitment and radicalization of youth. In some cases, it was difficult to identify specific programs implemented to address young persons directly. There are likely a wide range of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization initiatives as well as developmental aid programs implemented abroad by various governmental and non-governmental actors that may indirectly serve to counter terrorist recruitment and radicalization of youth. However, unless these programs were explicitly linked to countering youth recruitment, radicalization, or utilization by terrorist organizations, they were not included as examples.

Report Structure

The report is organized into three sections, followed by Appendices.

- *Section I* provides an overview of the themes and trends derived from across all of the terrorist groups that were examined in depth. These key insights are organized around the eight research questions that guided this study.
- *Section II* contains research summaries for each of the terrorist groups that were studied, as well as overviews on youth radicalization in the Netherlands and on how the Internet is being used by terrorist groups as a recruitment and radicalization tool. The case studies are intended to address the following key points for each of the terrorist groups studied:
 - Group background
 - Group appeal
 - Reasons for recruiting/radicalizing youth
 - Group approach
 - Initiatives implemented to counter their attempts to enlist young recruits
- *Section III* summarizes the key findings and their implications for countering youth recruitment and radicalization. It also identifies areas where additional research is needed.
- *Appendix A* provides an overview of the *Youth Recruitment & Radicalization Roundtable* co-hosted by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and the Homeland Security Institute on 19 March 2009.
- *Appendix B* provides an overview of the *Cooperative Civic Education and Economic Education Exchange Program* administered by the United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

The report concludes with a glossary of terms, and a bibliography containing the references utilized for this study.

SECTION I. THEMES & TRENDS

This section provides an overview of the themes and trends derived from across all of the terrorist groups that were examined in depth. Key insights are organized into each of the eight research questions that guided the study.

Are school-aged youth being recruited or radicalized by terrorist groups?

The terrorist groups selected for this study were all found to be actively recruiting and utilizing youth. While the ages of the young persons varied depending on the group, across all groups there were examples of school-aged young persons (e.g., kindergarten through college, or approximately between the ages of five and twenty-two) that were involved in a range of support and operational activities.

Who is recruited?

There is not a single “profile” to describe young persons who have been recruited by the terrorist groups studied. There appear to be variations both within the groups, as well as between the different groups overseas. The young persons who have been recruited or radicalized span a range of ages and developmental stages, include both males and females, have varying skill sets and education levels, and appear to have grown up in a variety of environments.

It appears that some of the groups utilize a vetting process to help identify new recruits. In some cases, the group might be looking for more educated, skilled, or committed young persons to fill a particular role in the organization (e.g., future leaders or operational planners), while in other cases the groups appear to be interested in simply filling the ranks. Vetting has occurred through the use of “gateway organizations,” which have included groups similar to the Boy Scouts or through other youth organizations, such as those affiliated with universities or religious institutions. In some cases these gateway organizations are sponsored by the terrorist groups to “grow” future members, while in other circumstances the groups may use the organization(s) as a venue for “spotting” potential recruits. The Internet has also been used to vet potential members by testing language capabilities, specific ideological knowledge, and fervor.

As mentioned above, there appear to be variations within the groups over time with respect to who is recruited. As the group’s goals and situational context change, or as they are affected by retention issues and losses of members due to incarceration or death, the types of recruits they are willing to bring on may change. In some situations where groups have enjoyed broad support from the community, they have been able to be more selective about recruits. However, when support bases have lessened and/or the need for personnel has increased, it appears to have an effect on the types of persons that are recruited (i.e., the group might decide to reach out to even younger persons or persons who have less knowledge of or dedication to the group’s underlying ideology.)

Who recruits school-aged youth?

Looking across all of the case studies, the types of individuals that appear to play a key role in recruiting youth begin to emerge. These persons include (but are not limited to) religious figures and teachers, as well as family members and peers. In most cases, these individuals are members or supporters of the terrorist group and have access to the youth, such as in schools, religious institutions, or social situations.

In regions where the terrorist organization has broad community endorsement, family members (who may also belong to the group) have been known to influence or encourage their son/daughter, sibling, niece/nephew, or grandchild to support the group. Likewise, friends and close social networks that are important and influential in the lives of young persons, have also been a part of the radicalization or recruitment process.

Teachers at the elementary, secondary, and university levels have recruited or attempted to recruit students to join or support various terrorist organizations. It is unclear whether these individuals go into the profession for the purpose of being in a position to radicalize youth, or if they take advantage of their role as a mentor to encourage recruitment or radicalization.

Young persons are not always recruited by others. In some instances, youth appear to become acquainted with the group or radicalized of their own volition. The Internet has been used by some youths to familiarize themselves with radical ideology, or to identify other likeminded persons (e.g., to include recruiters) that can provide additional information and access.

From where are youth being recruited?

Recruitment was found to take place across a wide range of venues. While not inclusive of all locations where recruitment is initiated, common settings used by the groups studied include: schools and after-school activities, religious institutions or events, refugee camps, and the Internet.

For most of the groups studied, the education system (e.g., schools) was used in some form or another to recruit or radicalize young students. In at least one instance, the terrorist organization actually runs the education system, to include infiltration in teacher and student unions, and exerts total control over curricula. In other locations, groups had either established or taken over individual schools – in essence, creating a parallel education system – to teach radical ideology and provide training. In some rural areas, these groups provided the only educational institution available to young persons. In all cases, the ability of the terrorist group to gain access to schools appeared to be due to weak governmental control over the education system.

Some organizations were also found to sponsor after-school activities, youth groups, and summer camps aimed at providing additional opportunities for indoctrination and training. These activities provide an outlet for youth to socialize with their peers, and participate in recreational activities while affording the group more opportunities to identify and train “qualified” recruits.

Religious institutions, specifically mosques, were also highlighted across many of the groups as a location where recruitment occurs. There were examples of both radical mosques (e.g., preaching Salafist ideologies) as well as radical persons within the mosques, that attempted to use the venue to spot potential recruits. In many cases, it appears the recruiters would pull the more promising young persons away from the mosque into a smaller setting where more in-depth recruitment could occur with less fear of being noticed by other, more moderate members of the congregation.

Refugee camps in conflict areas (e.g., Afghanistan) were also identified as locations where youth have been recruited. Some groups in the Afghan region have played upon the vulnerability of the large number of young displaced persons by recruiting and using them in battles against Coalition forces and local government.

The Internet offers thousands of sites, which provide radical propaganda distributed by terrorist groups, to reach potential supporters or recruits. All of the groups studied had an Internet presence, although the extent to which they are online varies greatly.

A trend that was noted across many of the groups was that they did not limit recruitment to local venues, but also recruited globally through some of the locations described above. There was evidence of coordinated outreach to young persons in the groups' diaspora communities. This occurred through the Internet as well as in person, with group members utilizing mosques and social activities in other locations to find sympathetic youth that could enable expansion of the group's reach.

How are youth recruited?

Four broad categories were identified to describe the way in which young persons were recruited or became members of the groups studied. These approaches – “born into a radical environment,” forced into it, recruited or persuaded, and self-radicalization – are not inclusive of all the ways in which young persons are recruited, and are likely to occur in various combinations.

To clarify, saying that some young persons are “born into a radical environment” is not to say they are “born a terrorist.” For some of the groups and regions studied, there is a culture of violence that is reinforced by the community, and many within the community are members or supporters of the group. In situations where the group serves as the pseudo- (or actual) government, providing social services and other support mechanisms, it appears the local community views membership or martyrdom on behalf of the group to be an honor, even if it means young lives are lost. There are also some regions that have been faced with instability for years and, as a result, the only life young persons have ever known is one defined by violence and conflict. In these situations, it appears youth could be more inclined – or have no choice – to support the violent tactics used by the group.

In some cases, young persons have been forced into joining or supporting terrorist groups. Young persons have been kidnapped from locations such as schools and refugee camps. Additionally, some youth have been forced to participate against their will or unknowingly.

As described throughout this study, there are persons within all of the groups studied who have made concerted efforts to recruit or persuade youth to join or support the group's cause. Recruitment occurs in a variety of locations and utilizes a range of approaches and tactics. In some cases, recruiters will place themselves within large groups of young persons (e.g., at mosques or schools), where they will attempt to “spot” potential recruits to pull into smaller settings for additional indoctrination or training. Groups have also established or used gateway organizations (e.g., scouting groups) that provide access to young persons who support (or can be grown to support) the group's cause.

The Internet has also enabled some youth to become self-radicalized. This forum provides access to a wealth of materials and propaganda put out by terrorist groups or their supporters. These websites also enable young persons to communicate anonymously with likeminded individuals and can facilitate introductions to persons with whom the youth otherwise would not have likely come in contact.

For all of the groups studied, another important factor in how they recruit is the communication of tailored messages and targeting of specific grievances aimed at encouraging youth to support the cause. All of the groups took actions as a recruitment tool to manipulate young persons' personal and political grievances and/or to exploit feelings of social or cultural repression.

What are youth recruited to do?

While it is difficult to say exactly what youth are recruited to do, there are examples from each of the groups studied that show how young persons have been utilized. The roles include both operational and support activities, in addition to helping to keep the organization alive.

Specifically, school-aged youth have been used to carry out terrorist attacks or serve on the front line in battles against the opposing forces. It appears that the groups use youth to support operations because they are more likely to evade detection by security forces. In some instances, it also seems that young persons are perpetrating attacks for the groups because there are not enough willing adults.

Young persons were also found to fulfill a range of logistical support needs for the groups. These activities include: conducting surveillance, assisting in fundraising, or helping to move materials or weapons.

Ultimately, it would appear that youth are recruited by terrorist groups in an attempt to keep the organization alive. To that end, young persons are utilized to keep the group's message going. This occurs online (which may also be self-initiated) and through youth participation in videos and other forms of propaganda. In the course of this research, several videos were identified that portray young persons training for terrorist activities, espousing radical ideology, and advocating youth involvement and support for the groups studied, all of which could be used as tools designed to encourage participation of other youngsters.

What are the benefits of recruitment?

The benefits and consequences of recruitment can be broken into two categories: those that benefit the terrorist group, and, those that benefit the young person. For the groups studied, the primary benefit of recruiting youth is that it enables them to fill their ranks, which is crucial to their continued existence. Also, the use of young persons (as mentioned above) is likely to help some groups evade detection by security forces, something that would enable them to carry out terrorist attacks. It does not appear that there are significant negative consequences to groups that have utilized young persons to further their goals.

For the young person, the group offers to meet needs – personal, welfare, and social – that might not already be met by their social or familial networks. In many of the regions studied, parts of the youth population are living in poverty, lack shelter and food, and have limited access to education. The terrorist groups have used these situations to their advantage by offering young persons what they are lacking (or by offering a “way out” through martyrdom). Not all youth who have been susceptible to recruitment and radicalization necessarily come from poverty-stricken areas or conflict zones or are uneducated. Membership in terrorist groups can also help to provide a sense of community, family, or friendships that some young persons, rich or poor, might lack. Membership in groups also appeared to provide youth with a sense of identity, prestige or pride, acceptance, responsibility, outlets for frustration, and excitement – all factors that could just as easily lead youth to other types of violent or non-violent groups or networks.

What programs or initiatives have been developed to try to counter the recruitment of youth?

Initiatives to counter violent radical groups have been developed in many of the locations studied. The approach taken in each of these regions varies, with some focusing primarily on law enforcement and government actions or initiatives aimed at preventing acts of terrorism and shutting down terrorist networks. Some of the regions studied have implemented counter-radicalization initiatives aimed more at understanding why people are susceptible to radicalization and then using that knowledge to minimize its occurrence. However, very few of the counter-radicalization initiatives appear to be aimed specifically at addressing or preventing radicalization and recruitment of school-aged individuals.

There are a few initiatives or programs identified in some of the regions that directly address youth, or are aimed at stemming recruitment attempts in venues frequented by youths. For example, school-based programs have been implemented in some regions that seek to educate both students and teachers about radicalization and potential signs of extremism. Curricula have been updated in some countries to promote integration and multiculturalism, as well as to teach skills that would be useful to young persons seeking employment. In at least one of the locations studied, new schools are being opened in areas where existing schools were either established or infiltrated by terrorist groups in order to provide educational alternatives.

Other youth-based programs that were identified include: ensuring that job opportunities are available for young persons; tackling discrimination that could lead persons to become radicalized; and, developing rehabilitation programs for young persons who have been implicated in terrorist or extremist activity. With respect to countering Internet-based recruitment or radicalization, it appears that existing initiatives are not focused on youth as a distinct group.

SECTION II. CASE STUDIES ON RECRUITMENT, RADICALIZATION, AND UTILIZATION OF YOUTH BY TERRORIST GROUPS

The processes by which school-aged youth become involved in terrorist groups worldwide are not well understood. Research to date that specifically addresses the recruitment, radicalization, and utilization of young persons appears to be limited. This is not to say that the problem is limited. There is growing evidence that the number of young persons from diverse locations across the world who are becoming members or supporters of various terrorist organizations is growing.

The purpose of the case studies below is to provide a better understanding of the context(s) in which young persons are recruited and radicalized by some terrorist groups. The cases address the reasons why these groups appear to have chosen to target young persons as well as the approaches and tactics used. The various ways that groups appeal to their young audiences also is discussed, as are some of the initiatives that have been implemented to counter youth recruitment and radicalization. Information that addresses the role, if any, played by schools, educators, or others within the school setting, either directly or indirectly, in inducing students toward violence or participation in terrorist groups, through actions that promote, advocate, or support such groups also is presented. Conversely, information that addresses the role, if any, that is currently being played by schools, educators, or others within the school setting, either directly or indirectly, in advancing measures or taking actions that denounce violence or terrorist groups and/or propose other alternatives also is provided.

Case studies are provided for the following terrorist organizations, which were selected because they appear to be diverse in terms of geographic location, ideology, and tactics:

- Hamas and Hizballah
- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
- Al-Qaeda and Affiliated Groups
- Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)
- Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

Additional case studies are provided to present research findings on the growing problem of youth radicalization in the Netherlands, and to present research on how the Internet is being used by terrorist groups to reach out to youth audiences, including how some young persons are self-radicalizing online.

The information provided herein represents a high-level overview of the research that was conducted for this study, and specifically addresses the approaches being used by the groups to gain support from young persons. Any evidence found that addresses the ways education systems have been utilized by terrorist groups to reach students has been included. It is important to note that the case studies are not intended to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of any of the tactics being used by the various groups. Based on the limited amount of data that addresses this topic, it is also likely that the recruitment and radicalization approaches described herein are not inclusive of all methods currently being used by these groups. Figure I. highlights the countries and regions discussed in the case studies.

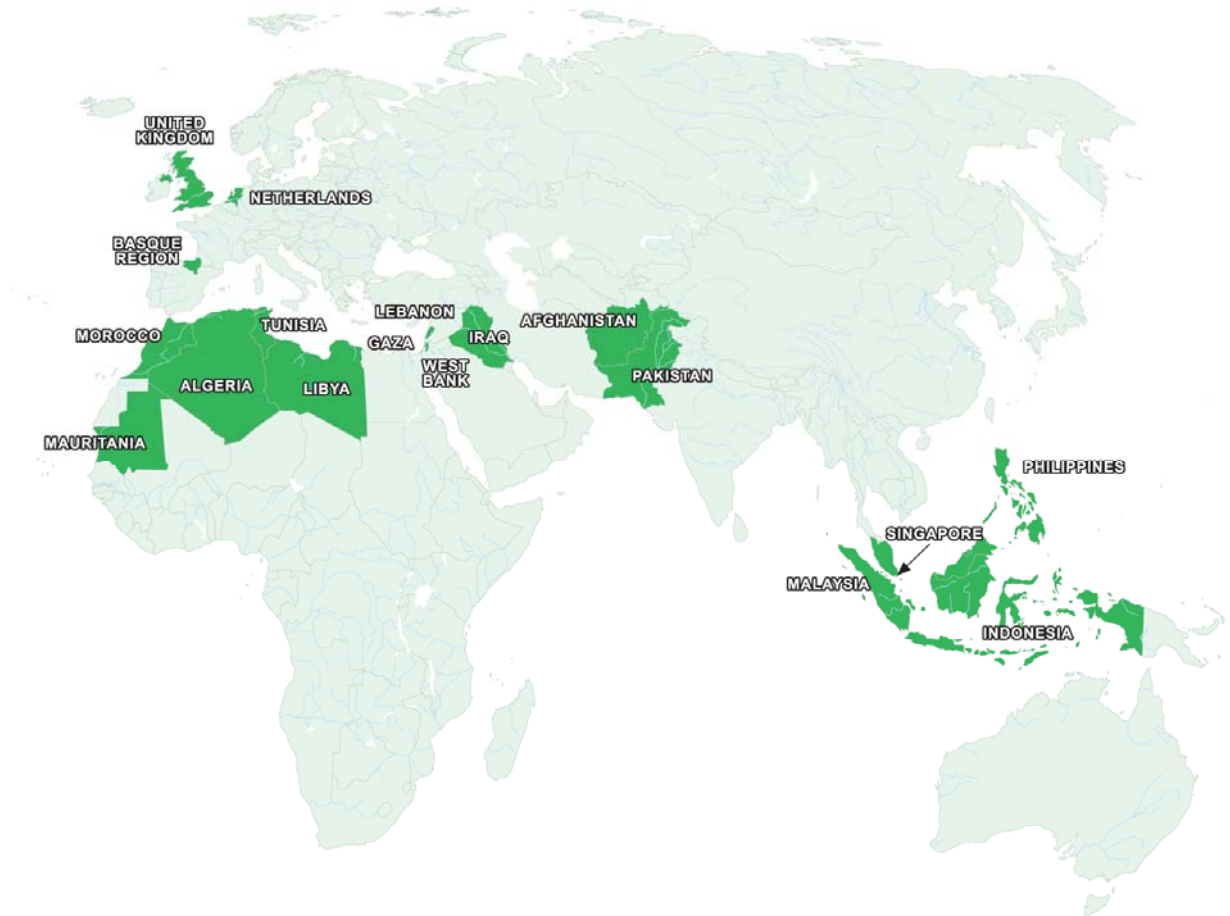


Figure I. Map of the countries and regions discussed in the case studies

Hamas and Hizballah

Hamas and Hizballah attempt to recruit and radicalize school-aged youth by actively reaching out through schools, youth camps, and the mass media. The groups' utilization of various media platforms – including the Internet, TV, and radio – is extensive. Both Hamas and Hizballah have used young persons to carry out violent attacks, including suicide bombings. Initiatives to counter recruitment of youths appear to be severely hindered due to the groups' political legitimacy and their control of the social welfare system. The culture of violence existing within the locations where Hamas and Hizballah operate further complicates the effectiveness of counter initiatives.

Background

Hamas, the Arabic acronym for “Islamic Resistance Movement,” and Hizballah, which means “Party of God,” are similar in that both groups have active roles in governance and terrorism. Both began as resistance groups before evolving into separate controlling authorities. Hizballah, which was established in the early 1980's, is the current de facto authority in parts of Lebanon, currently holds 14 seats in the Lebanese Parliament, and controls 11 of 30 cabinet positions.²³ Hizballah has also maintained its widely

²³ Council on Foreign Relations, "Hezbollah," <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155/>

feared militant arm during its political ascent. While Hamas became active in the late 1980's, with the start of the first Intifada in the Palestinian Territories, it escalated from an armed resistance group to the democratically-elected majority party in the Palestinian Parliament.²⁴ Like Hizballah, Hamas still operates a militant arm, the Al-Qassam Brigades, which are internationally recognized for committing suicide operations and firing Qassam rockets against Israel.

Hamas and Hizballah are both mature organizations containing legitimate social welfare programs and political parties with varying levels of governing authority. Each group is the dominant influence in their respective region that gives them a distinct advantage in maintaining a radicalized and supportive population that, in turn, helps them recruit local youth.



Appeal

Hamas and Hizballah appeal to their bases by acting as the representative opposition on behalf of the Palestinians. While having differences in mission and religious persuasion, both share a combination of factors, including opposition to Israel and other geopolitical grievances, which are used as catalysts for radicalizing the population. Israel serves as the common “other,” or the projected “evil” enemy that pervades rhetoric and lifestyle for both Hamas and Hizballah. By having this common enemy, each organization strategically manipulates the geo-political grievances linked with Israeli occupation or alleged repression in order to keep the respective populations radicalized and potentially ripe for future recruitment.

Hamas is adept at using perceived or real grievances to keep its constituents hostile. There are a number of grievances or social preconditions that can be linked to each respective cause, such as low quality of life, lack of jobs, poor living conditions in the refugee camps, and lack of adequate institutions. According to one expert, Hamas “is able to execute a strategically planned radicalization campaign that translates existing social preconditions – Israeli occupation, military checkpoints, lack of Palestinian leadership, lawlessness – into an active, violent, and radical response.”²⁵ Regardless of the specific grievance or condition, both Hamas and Hizballah use existing circumstances and external factors to appeal to their base.

Why Youth?

Youth are utilized to fill the ranks of both terrorist organizations. While one source observed a peak in the use of young people in suicide terrorist operations in 2002, the Israel Security Agency (ISA) compared the number of minors involved in terrorist incidents and found a 64% increase since 2003.²⁶

²⁴ There have been conflicting reports about whether Hamas helped start the first intifada, or merely took advantage of it after it started. Hamas won the majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority in the 2006 elections.

²⁵ Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, (Yale University Press, 2006).

²⁶ Ibid.

In 2001, the Islamic University in Gaza conducted a poll of 1000 local youth ranging in age from 9-16 years old. The survey findings indicated that 45 per cent of the respondents had taken an active role in the violence and, in addition, 73 per cent of the youngsters stated that they wanted to become martyrs.²⁷ It would appear some youth who grow up in these societies where violence is widespread may be more willing to participate in violent activities or to support terrorist goals.

Not only are youth a source of human capital, they are also a tactical asset as well. Hamas knows that Israeli soldiers are instructed not to shoot at children so the group uses young people as human shields or bait.²⁸ Senior Hamas operative Salim Haja admitted during questioning that he “placed a bomb laboratory close to a school, and that the operatives in the laboratory were disguised as pupils carrying schoolbags and books,” in an apparent attempt to prevent the factory from being destroyed.²⁹ There are indications that “children act as bait, burning tires and shooting slingshots to attract the television cameras and distract the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), in tandem with well-armed Palestinian gunmen in ambush positions.”³⁰

Lastly, young people are the future of any organization, society or culture. By winning over the young generation of children, both Hizballah and Hamas are establishing societal support for future operations and causes.

Approach

Both Hamas and Hizballah use a holistic, authority-approved approach to recruiting and radicalizing youth. The approaches are holistic in that both groups reach out to young persons from an early age (e.g., kindergarten, utilizing a wide range of tools, tactics, and venues aimed at garnering support and preparing recruits for future membership. Attempts to recruit and radicalize the population can be considered authority-approved because both Hamas and Hizballah hold leadership positions in the cabinet and seats in parliament. Both Hizballah and Hamas operate powerful and charitable social welfare systems in their respective regions. The groups fund and operate hospitals and schools, and take care of infrastructure and other basic needs.

While many members of both communities are supportive of the group’s activities, for those that are not, it appears resistance is futile and, at times, met with retribution.³¹ There have been reports that the armed groups have “pressured families of those who have been killed while carrying out attacks, including children, not to condemn but to welcome and endorse their relatives’ actions.”³² Therefore it is likely many people do not speak out against the groups’ methods for recruiting and utilizing youth for fear of retribution.

²⁷ Likud of Holland, “Exploitation of children for terrorist purposes,” Communicated by Israeli security sources, (January 14, 2003), <http://www.likud.nl/extr257.html>.

²⁸ Tashbih Sayyad, “Disposable Children,” (March 31, 2004), www.paktoday.com/children.htm

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

The Education System

The educational system has played a central role in radicalization and recruitment for Hamas and Hizballah. Hamas leader Sheikh Hasan Usef and Hizballah General Secretary Hassan Nasrallah have indicated that the groups “like to grow them (members) from kindergarten through college.” Many young persons in both regions attend schools that are controlled by those respective groups. These schools provide educational instruction that in concert with the groups’ ideologies and beliefs, and often times provide physical training (e.g, drills with guns) aimed at preparing young persons for participation in the groups’ militant wings.

Hamas controls the Palestinian education system, from the Ministry of Education to the school district to the classroom. According to one report, Hamas controls eight of the fourteen West Bank school districts, and has implemented requirements that have resulted in the hiring of nearly 300 graduates of Islamic teachers’ colleges that are located within Hamas strongholds.³³ Hamas established a teacher’s union and claims to have enlisted 58,000 teachers, including those in both private and public schools throughout Gaza and the West Bank.³⁴ At the university level, group members have infiltrated student councils and have established a Hamas-affiliated student association called Kutla Islamiya, or “Islamic bloc.”³⁵

Hizballah sponsors schools within Lebanon. These schools (which are subject to approval by the Lebanese government, of which Hizballah is a part) are privately funded and operated, and exist alongside the state education system and other private schools. Hizballah’s primary and secondary schools teach the national curriculum approved by the Lebanese Ministry of Education, but supplement this with a significant focus on Shi’a Islamic studies.³⁶ These schools have the potential to indoctrinate students and teachers alike, and provide the group with a ready and willing support base. As one Hizballah schoolteacher indicated, “I’ve been teaching at Al-Mahdi School for years, and when your employer asks you to be part of an organized movement that relies on the presence of their supporters, you can’t say no.”³⁷ While in some instances Hizballah-run schools may be preferred to other state or private institutions, in other cases they may serve as the only school available to Lebanese youth, due to the lack of other schools in the area.³⁸

Summer Camps

In addition to the indoctrination and training provided within the school system, both groups sponsor summer camps and other extra-curricular activities for young persons. Hizballah operates the *Imam al-Mahdi Scouts* group for young boys and girls. The Scouts are comparable to boy-scout/girl-scout groups, except that in addition to tying knots, going camping and playing sports, they also teach young persons

³³ Karin Laub, “Hamas pushing ideology as it takes control of education system,” *Desert News* (Salt Lake City, June 19, 2007).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*.

³⁶ See: Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, (IB Taurus, 2005), 84; and Lt. Cl. Rodger Shanahan, “Radical Islamist Groups in the Modern Age: A Case Study of Hizballah,” Working Paper No. 376, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, (Canberra, Australia, June, 2003), 12.

³⁷ Hanin Ghaddar, “Tent City or Ghost City?” *NOW Lebanon*, (19 July 2007).
<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=7204>.

³⁸ Shanahan, “Radical Islamist Groups in the Modern Age: A Case Study of Hizballah,” 12.

how to take hostages and carry out assassinations. The Scouts provide an additional outlet for indoctrination into the group's ideology, placing emphasis on the hatred of Israel. There are reportedly 42,000 young members, with some as young as 8-years-old.³⁹ According to Bilal Naim, Hizballah's former director for the Mahdi Scouts, it appears that many young male Scouts leave the group to join the resistance or the military around the age of sixteen.⁴⁰

Hamas controls the Ministry of Sport and Youth, which sponsors summer camps for young persons living in the Palestinian Territories. Hamas' camps also provide activities for young persons, such as playing sports and participating in other outdoor activities. With many young persons living in refugee camps in the area, Hamas' summer camps appear to be influential in the lives of impoverished young boys and girls by giving them something to do.

Mass Media

Hamas and Hizballah are on the cutting edge of mass communications and media related terrorist propaganda. From childhood, kids watch puppet shows of, for example, former President Bush getting stabbed on television. They read online magazines that advocate violence against Israel, and play online video games that promote violence against the West.

Hamas runs a television station, Al Aqsa TV, and an online magazine, *Al-Fateh*, that promote violence against Israel. The magazine, which is designed for children, uses cartoon characters, games and other content to "demonize Jews and Israelis and glorify terrorism."⁴¹ It provides games and coloring sections, as well as pictures of children with guns and of Hamas leaders. On Al Aqsa TV, there is a children's program called *Tomorrow's Pioneer* that once had a popular character, named Farfur, who closely resembled Mickey Mouse.⁴² In one episode, Farfur the mouse was beaten to death by an alleged Israeli soldier. According to the narrator, the mouse was martyred while defending his land. Farfur was replaced by Nahool the Bee, who was also killed by the enemy.⁴³

Hizballah operates a similar television station, called Al Manar that also has programming reinforcing group goals and ideology. Hizballah also has an Internet division that has released a series of video games for young persons. *Special Force* (released in 2003) and *Special Force 2* (released in 2007) are designed to simulate military missions against Israeli soldiers.⁴⁴

³⁹ The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Hezbollah's Shi'ite Youth Movement, 'The Imam al-Mahdi Scouts,' Has Tens of Thousands of Members," (Gelilot, Israel: Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center, 11 September 2006).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Hamas Online Magazine for Children Promotes Terror and Hatred," Anti-Defamation League, (11 May 2007), http://www.adl.org/main_Terrorism/hamas_alfateh_may.htm.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Mickey Mouse Knockoff On Hamas TV Used To Indoctrinate Children Into Culture Of Hate," Anti-Defamation League, (9 May 2007), http://www.adl.org/PresRele/ASaw_14/5046_14.htm.

⁴⁴ Richard Engel, "Hezbollah Game Celebrates War Vs. Israel," (August 16, 2007), *MSNBC* <http://worldblog.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2007/08/16/320076.aspx?p=1>.

Counter Initiatives

Because Hamas and Hizballah are part of the government authority in their respective regions, it isn't surprising that initiatives in place to counter the groups' attempts to recruit or radicalize young persons are minimal. Initiatives that do exist are primarily sponsored by international governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and are aimed at educational development as opposed to countering recruitment or radicalization. A single locally sponsored initiative was identified, which is aimed at empowering young persons and helping them address issues they have faced as a result of growing up in violent environments.

The U.S. Government is active in aiding Palestinians and individuals in Lebanon. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has allocated over \$10 million toward education development programs in the West Bank and Gaza. The Academy for Education Development (AED) has provided technical assistance to Palestinian education reform, including training future Palestinian teachers, who many contend are crucial to any lasting changes in Palestinian education.⁴⁵ USAID Lebanon is engaged with a variety of programs, including upgrading over 200 schools that house nearly 75,000 students, and providing scholarships for young people in need of financial assistance.⁴⁶ There have been attempts to revitalize the Palestinian education system through the United Nations Work and Relief Agency (UNWRA). The UNWRA coordinated a group of organizations to conduct an analysis on the state of education in the Territories, to include curriculum that is being taught.

The Freedom Theatre is another key initiative in the region. It is run out of the Jenin Refugee Camp in the northern part of the Occupied Palestinian West Bank, which is home to nearly 16,000 Palestinian refugees, almost half of whom are estimated to be under the age of eighteen. Nearly all of these young persons are said to "have witnessed actual or threatened death, experienced serious physical injury, or had threats made to their physical and/or psychological integrity."⁴⁷ The primary aim of the Freedom Theatre program is "to provide children and youth with a safe space in which they are free to express themselves and in which they can develop the skills, self-knowledge, and confidence that would empower them to challenge present realities and to reach out beyond the limits of their own community."⁴⁸ Through theatrical performances and other artistic endeavors, young persons are encouraged to imagine and accept alternatives. The program not only provides a place for young persons to go to get off the street, but also provides an opportunity for young males and females to act, play, and learn together, something that is rare within the Palestinian community, which is often segregated by gender.⁴⁹

The Freedom Theatre, which was initially established by an Israeli woman, has a strong advocate in the head of the Jenin Branch of the al Aqsa Martyr's Brigade, Zakaria Zubeidi, who indicated that "children's

⁴⁵ Aaron D. Pina, "Palestinian Education and the Debate Over Textbooks," *CRS Report for Congress*, (March 7, 2006), 19.

⁴⁶ U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Programs: Investing in Youth, Updated 3 January 2008. <http://www.usaid.gov/lb/programs/youth.html>.

⁴⁷ The Freedom Theatre Website, "Children & Youth in Palestine," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/aboutus-background.php>.

⁴⁸ The Freedom Theatre Website, "Empowering Children & Youth," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/aboutus-new.php>.

⁴⁹ Al Jazeera, "Jenin's Theatrical Oasis," *Al Jazeera.net*, (5 September 2008).

theatre is as important a method for achieving Palestinian statehood as armed conflict.”⁵⁰ Due to his links to terrorism, the theatre director indicates that Zubeidi does not provide funding for the program but does provide “support from the top of the mountain, protecting us, giving us legitimacy to be here.”⁵¹

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) radicalizes and recruits school-aged youth into the organization through Islamic boarding schools and universities, as well as by utilizing communal bonds. Some JI members are known to have been former students and/or instructors at radical schools and universities. Strong familial relations within the terrorist organization means young persons often follow in their relatives’ footsteps into the group, helping to maintain a strong and unified support community. Counter initiatives vary by country, but several have targeted school settings either through the provision of alternative schools, or curriculum that emphasizes multiculturalism and inclusion.

Background

Jemaah Islamiyah, meaning “Islamic Congregation,” is an Islamist terrorist network that has claimed responsibility for several high profile terrorist attacks across Southeast Asia, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. In addition to terrorist attacks, JI operates as a communal social network that conducts economic and social outreach activities in several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.



Jemaah Islamiyah was created in the early 1990’s as an offshoot to Darul Islam, a militant radical movement that opposed Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. In contrast to the Indonesian-centric approach of Darul Islam, group members and Muslim clerics Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, formed JI with the intention of waging global jihad. The goal of JI is to establish strict interpretation of Muslim law (*shariah*) in Indonesia, and then spread shariah law to other neighboring Southeast Asian nations.

Jemaah Islamiyah is currently consolidating its base and focusing on recruiting and training new members to ensure group resilience and strength for years to come. Although counter-terrorism operations have dealt a significant blow to senior JI leadership, with several key members recently being incarcerated or killed, the group continues to pose a threat as key operational leaders remain at large.

The group is known to use schools to radicalize, recruit, and indoctrinate youth. JI is believed to have a systematic indoctrination program that starts as early as the pre-kindergarten years.⁵² The group runs a

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

network of *pesantrens* (religious boarding schools that typically serve youth under the age of 18) that are used to reinforce the extremist ideology of the group. Several JI leaders have been graduates of these schools, and in a few instances have also been instructors.

Appeal

Jemaah Islamiyah's appeal to its supporters partially lies in its ability to supply a sense of 'religiosity.' JI leaders, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, are Muslim clerics that have developed the group's ideology of waging a global jihad. Sungkar and Ba'asyir have sought to create a *jemaah* (religious community) in Indonesia that would abide by *shariah* law. As the terrorist network expanded to surrounding nations, including Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, the network's ideological goal began to encompass these nations as well. After generations of suffering under colonialism and authoritarian rule, a government guided by Muslim principles was appealing to many JI members.

A strength of the JI network is the group's strong communal bonds. Strong social networks ensure the group ideology is continually reinforced, especially from a young age, through family members, friends, and classmates. The strong communal ties shared by group members make disengagement and de-radicalization initiatives difficult. Members who leave – physically or emotionally – feel they are betraying family and friends. Jemaah Islamiyah also reinforces commitment to the Muslim community. The continuing sectarian conflict between Muslims and Christians in parts of Indonesia is used by Jemaah Islamiyah as a recruiting tool, a radicalizing message, and a mechanism for members to demonstrate their commitment to their fellow Muslims.

Why Youth

Jemaah Islamiyah appears to be focusing radicalization and indoctrination efforts on young persons in order to maintain its community of supporters and sympathizers. Sons, brothers, and nephews are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of their male relatives by joining the terrorist organization, while daughters and wives are expected to be sympathizers and supporters. Referred to as "Inherited Jihadism," these family ties ensure that the children of JI members will grow up in the network, allowing the ideology to strengthen the group socially and economically to enable it to survive police and intelligence crackdowns.⁵³

There is a lack of conclusive evidence that suggests JI uses school-aged youth to carry out attacks, reinforcing the analysis that these youth are targeted in order to build a support base. However, the targeted recruitment of university students who display certain technical skills suggests JI seeks individuals possessing characteristics that can be used for planning and preparing terrorist attacks.

Approach

Jemaah Islamiyah radicalizes and recruits school aged youth at *pesantrens*, through universities located throughout Southeast Asia, and through communal ties. The approach taken by the group in each of these settings does not appear to be uniform.

⁵² Sidney Jones, "Inherited Jihadism: Like Father Like Son," *Australian Financial Review*, (4 July 2007).

⁵³ Sidney Jones, "Inherited Jihadism: Like Father Like Son," 2007.

Pesantrens

Pesantrens are Islamic religious boarding schools that are located throughout Southeast Asian nations. These schools often exhibit a diverse curriculum including general education such as language, math, and science, as well as vocational skills and religious studies.⁵⁴ There are approximately 25,000 – 35,000 Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Asia, including 14,000 pesantrens in Indonesia registered with the Ministry of Religion.⁵⁵ Pesantrens serve between 20-25 percent of Indonesian school children as a whole, with certain areas, such as East Java as high as 40 percent.⁵⁶ The popularity of these schools is likely due to the inability of the central governments to provide adequate, state-run educational institutions.

Pesantrens run by Jemaah Islamiyah comprise a very small portion of the 25,000-35,000 schools in Southeast Asia. Most experts agree that JI controls between approximately 20 and 150 pesantrens.⁵⁷ The curriculum in these JI-run schools appears to be significantly different than traditional pesantrens. Education is based solely on Arabic training and Quranic study according to Sungkar and Ba'asyir's teachings, utilizing rote memorization and recitation as teaching methods.^{58,59} Jemaah Islamiyah uses their pesantrens to create a culture of extremism that radicalizes and indoctrinates students according to the JI ideology. Several journalistic accounts of the culture inside JI-affiliated pesantrens located in Indonesia show common themes. School decorations often consist of posters and calligraphies, displaying themes such as, "live as a noble man or die as a martyr."⁶⁰ Students are instructed that they have no obligation to follow Indonesian laws, since these laws are created by a secular government. The Indonesian flag is not flown, and there appears to be an institutional approach to educating students against Western culture. Blue jeans, sunglasses, cigarettes, and Western music are prohibited. T-shirts with images of Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev are commonly worn by students. JI also has an extensive publishing industry that provides radical texts for their schools. These accounts, and others, emphasize that JI use these schools to radicalize students into believing that their faith is under attack from non-Muslims, including the secular governments of Southeast Asia.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Zachary Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia," *The Making of a Terrorist*, Vol 1, ed. James J.F. Frost, (Praeger, November 2005).

⁵⁵ Several sources cite these figures. Zachary Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia", 69; Scott Atran, et al., "Radical Madrasas in Southeast Asia," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 1 Issue 3, (2008), 13; International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous," *Asia Report* No. 63, (26 August 2003), 26.

⁵⁶ Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia", 2006, 69.

⁵⁷ The International Crisis Group estimates that there are approximately 20 JI sympathetic pesantrens located on the island of Java: International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's Current Status," *Asia Briefing* No. 63, (3 May 2007); Zachary Abuza cites JI's claim of 141 pesantrens and Indonesian security forces claims of 60-100 JI sympathetic pesantrens: Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia," 70.

⁵⁸ Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia," 71.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Noor Huda Ismail, "Schooled For a House of Islam," YaleGlobal, (August 25, 2005), <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=6177>.

⁶¹ Noor Huda Ismail, "Schooled for Jihad," *The Washington Post*, (June 26, 2005); Ismail, "Schooled For a House of Islam,"; "Inside a JI School", *The New Paper*, (January 5, 2004); International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's Publishing Industry," *Asia Report* No. 147, (28 February 2008), 3-5.

It is important to note that not every student who attends JI-affiliated pesantrens becomes a member of the terrorist group. There appears to be a specific recruitment and vetting process. According to some terrorism experts, JI recruiters search for specific students who are deemed to be 'pious' Muslims.⁶² This reinforces the importance of the strong religious convictions. Potential recruits are then invited to informal study groups, called *halaqah*. In these study groups, recruiters further advocate the ideology of JI leaders Sungkar and Ba'asyir. They also show video tapes that depict the brutality and inhumanity of Christians in the sectarian conflicts in Indonesia and other conflict areas. After several months of further radicalization through these study groups, potential recruits are invited to further their 'education' by joining the group to engage in military training and further religious education.⁶³

Universities

Radicalization and recruitment among university students in Southeast Asia appears less systematic. Jemaah Islamiyah relies on Islamic student organizations, study groups, and teacher-student relations. On university campuses, Muslim student organizations are common. Although many have no connection to JI, some experts believe a few individual organizations may act as talent scouts for the terrorist network.⁶⁴

The radicalization and recruitment of university students into JI from student organizations and study groups appear similar to the process described in pesantrens, where students deemed religiously devout are approached, indoctrinated into the JI ideology over a period of several months, and then invited to participate in military training. According to an expert on JI, much of the leadership in the group consists of technical faculty members, including architects, engineers, and chemists.⁶⁵ These university faculty members have also been known to recruit their students into the terrorist network. The recruitment of youth from university settings ensures JI a cadre of educated and technically capable operational leaders for terrorist attacks. An example of university recruitment involved JI's former leading bomb-maker, Dr. Azahari bin Husin, who was a professor at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Dr. Azahari recruited a student of his by the name of Noordin Top. Top is currently thought to be the operational leader of JI, and responsible for several high profile terrorist attacks.⁶⁶

Communal Bonds

Jemaah Islamiyah has "survived partly because it is held together by an intricate pattern of kinship."⁶⁷ The reliance upon communal bonds, such as those between family and friends, help radicalize and recruit young persons into the terrorist organization.

Children of group members will often attend the same pesantren their parents did, helping to reinforce the ideology in another generation. Several JI-run pesantrens, referred to as the JI "Ivy League," enroll

⁶² Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia."

⁶³ International Crisis Group, "How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates," *Asia Report* No. 43, (11 December 2002), 22.

⁶⁴ Abuza, "Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

⁶⁶ Zachary Abuza, "JI's Moneymen and Top Recruiter: A Profile of Noordin Mohammad Top," *Unmasking terror: A global review of terrorist activities*, ed. Jonathan D. Hutzley, (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2007).

⁶⁷ Noor Huda Ismail, "The Role of Kinship in Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah," *Terrorism Monitor*, (2006).

students whose parents are members of the terrorist group.⁶⁸ Jemaah Islamiyah members have also sent their children to radical schools abroad, to include schools in Pakistan. For example, nineteen individuals suspected to be members of JI were arrested in Pakistan while attending a radical madrassa run by the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT) terrorist organization. These individuals included the son of JI founding member Ba'asyir and the brother of Hambali, a prominent JI member currently detained by the United States.⁶⁹

Siblings are also prominent among Jemaah Islamiyah members. Several attacks attributed to JI have been planned or carried out by brothers, including the Bali bombing attacks in 2002. The Bali attack featured two sets of siblings who were implicated for planning the attack and procuring bomb making materials.⁷⁰

Marriage alliances are also common within JI. In some cases, it appears that formal membership into the group is partially determined by the trustworthiness of the wife of a potential member.⁷¹ Marriages help ensure group security as well as improve the likelihood that children will be sympathetic to the group ideology.

Counter-Initiatives

In Indonesia, counter-initiatives have focused heavily on intelligence and law enforcement crackdowns, aimed at arresting several high-level JI members. In addition, the Indonesian government has also undertaken some education-based initiatives focused at the regional level to include providing alternative schools and developing curricula.

An expert on JI and Indonesia stressed the importance of non-radical Islamic education in Indonesia, which about 20 percent of kids rely on for basic education: “The fear has always been that Islamic education writ large would be stigmatized if the government moved against schools simply because of the content of their teaching.”⁷² This sentiment has been echoed by the Director of Islamic religious schools at Indonesia’s Ministry of Religious Affairs, who indicated: “We won’t let a wayward few destroy tens of thousands of pesantrens that have brought peace to this country for ages.” Thus, the government has taken steps to provide localities with quality educational alternatives.

For example, in Poso, Indonesia (a region with connections to the JI and to sectarian violence), the government has created a new mega-pesantren with the goal of creating “an educated, open-minded, nationalist student body less vulnerable to recruitment than the young men persuaded to join the radical JI pesantren” located in the same area.⁷³ Officially opened in 2008, with a complex consisting of twenty-two buildings and costing \$2.7 million (USD), this school is meant to be a strong statement from the government of Indonesia to the local population that they are serious about providing a quality education for their children as an alternative to the JI-run pesantrens.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, “Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous,” 28.

⁶⁹ Noor Huda Ismail, “The Role of Kinship in Indonesia’s Jemaah Islamiyah,” and: Abuza, “Education and Radicalization: Jemaah Islamiyah Recruitment in Southeast Asia.”

⁷⁰ Ismail, “The Role of Kinship in Indonesia’s Jemaah Islamiyah,” 7.

⁷¹ International Crisis Group, “Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous,” 28.

⁷² Personal correspondence with Sydney Jones of the International Crisis Group, Jakarta Branch.

⁷³ International Crisis Group, “Indonesia: Tackling Radicalism in Poso,” *Asia Briefing* No. 75, (22 January 2008) 8.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Another educational initiative was “the Development and Cooperation of the Pesantrens in Countering Religious Radicalism” summit and conference held in 2004. The agenda of the conference focused on radicalism and extremism, acknowledging the significant and strategic role pesantrens could play in countering radical misinterpretations of Islam. The conference recommended the following measures to limit the spread of extremism: pesantrens should fulfill their obligation to produce well-educated graduates displaying qualities such as being open-minded and inclusive; pesantrens should implement an open management process; they should promote the theology of affection and peace; and they should attempt building inter-faith dialogues in order to create mutual understanding and avoid religious polarization.⁷⁵

In Singapore, counter-radicalization initiatives focus largely on emphasizing multiculturalism. The National Education Program (NEP) is directed at students and is designed to transmit national Singaporean values across racial categories. In the classroom, this means that students are taught not only in their ‘mother-tongue,’ but they are also taught English so that they are empowered with a common language and can relate to others more effectively. To achieve the goal of greater racial understanding and to build a sense of a singular Singaporean community, the NEP is built around six key messages:

- “Singapore is our homeland. This is where we belong. We want to keep our heritage and way of life.
- We must preserve racial and religious harmony. Though drawn from many races, religions, languages, and cultures, we pursue one destiny.
- We must uphold meritocracy and prevent corruption. This provides opportunity for all according to their ability and effort.
- No one owes Singapore a living. As a nation, we must find our own way to survive and prosper.
- We must defend Singapore. No one else is responsible for our security and wellbeing.
- We must have confidence in the future. United, determined, and well prepared, we shall build a bright future for ourselves.”⁷⁶

These multicultural initiatives demonstrate recognition by the Singapore government that religious extremism is a threat to their national values and that a long-term commitment to developing and instilling these values in their society, and specifically in their school children, requires a significant investment.

The local Singapore Muslim community is also playing a role in countering radicalization among school aged youth. The Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) focuses mainly on providing counseling for detained Jemaah Islamiyah members and their families. The RRG also has published counter-ideological materials and conducts public education campaigns for the Muslim community. Included in these public

⁷⁵ Ahmad Haris, “The Role of Muslims in the Struggle Against Violent Extremist Ideology in Indonesia,” *The Quarterly Journal*, (Winter Supplement 2006), 163-164.

⁷⁶ Norman Vasu and Kumar Ramakrishna, “Countering Terrorism: Multiculturalism in Singapore,” *The Quarterly Journal*, (Winter Supplement 2006), 151-152.

education campaigns are conventions for community youth, students from government schools, and students from local Islamic schools.⁷⁷

Search for Common Ground (SFCG), an international NGO, has also developed pesantren-based initiatives to counter violent extremism. In 2002, SFCG established a peace education program in Madura, Indonesia. The number of serious violent conflicts in the region drove the creation of the program. Community leaders began to wonder whether the education system was partially responsible for the violence, and if it could play a positive role in addressing community leadership, ethical guidance, and education. The target audiences for the program are teachers, students, and pesantren alumni. As a first step, SFCG conducted an assessment to gauge the existence and characteristics of pesantrens in Madura, the level of interest from the community, and the types of targets and indicators the program should consider implementing. To date, the SFCG has established curricula in two pesantrens that teach educators and the broader Muslim community about the need for peace education.⁷⁸

To reach Indonesian youth audiences with messages about tolerance and positive views on inter-ethnic relations, the SFCG also uses comics. For example, they sponsored development of a comic series, *GEBORA*. In *GEBORA*, five teenagers of various ethnicities meet as part of a village soccer competition and discover that despite their differences, it is possible to have exciting adventures and find strength in their diversity. A second comic, entitled *Perjalanan Mencari Sahabat*, focuses specifically on the sectarian conflict in Poso, Indonesia between Muslims and Christians, where Jemaah Islamiyah uses the conflict to radicalize and recruit members. Using a similar theme, this 6-part series focuses on youth from different ethnic groups who are able to overcome their differences and get through the challenges they face by working together as a group.⁷⁹ Both series of comics try to create a positive image of all ethnicities, and seek to change the perceptions and attitudes that can lead youth to radicalization and violence.

Al-Qaeda and Affiliated Groups⁸⁰

As a diverse network, al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups employ a wide range of tactics and messages to encourage recruitment and radicalization of young persons. These approaches vary depending on the location and target audience. Below, approaches utilized by al-Qaeda and affiliated groups in the United Kingdom and in the conflict zones of Afghanistan/Pakistan and Iraq are discussed.

⁷⁷ Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Singapore's Muslim Community-Based Initiatives against JI," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 1, Issue 5, (2007).

⁷⁸ Search for Common Ground, "Pesantren-Based Peace Education: Madura," www.sfcg.org/programmes/children/indonesia_community.html

⁷⁹ Search for Common Ground, "Comics for Conflict Transformation," www.sfcg.org/programmes/indonesia/indonesia_comics.html

⁸⁰ For simplicity, this case study will use the term Al-Qaeda or Al-Qaeda affiliates to refer to this developing nexus of Islamist terrorist groups. This by no means seeks to belittle the significant differences between these groups in terms of stated ideologies, goals, tactics, and trainings. Groups such as the Taliban, Al-Qaeda in Yemen, Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, Al-Qaeda Central, Laskar-e-Toiba, al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda in Iraq are some examples of the groups comprising this nexus. The naming generalization is for simplicity only, and further group distinctions fall outside the purview of this case study.

Background

Al-Qaeda (meaning “The Base”) is a terrorist network widely recognized as having conducted and inspired terrorist attacks around the world. There are numerous examples of the al-Qaeda network using school-aged youth to conduct terrorist operations, although the extent seems to be dependent on situational factors. The al-Qaeda terrorist network does not appear to be a cohesive organization with command and control functions being the sole responsibility of a central leadership hierarchy. Instead, it has devolved into a diverse nexus of franchises and affiliate groups. According to some experts, there are more than 40 such ‘franchises’ spread around the globe that have claimed allegiance to al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.⁸¹



United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, al-Qaeda and affiliates take advantage of personal conflict and political grievances – especially among the young immigrant populations – to encourage young persons to support their actions. Jonathan Evans, the Director General of MI5, has released several statements stating that al-Qaeda poses the primary security threat to the United Kingdom, and is “methodically and intentionally targeting young people and children in this [U.K.] country. They are radicalizing, indoctrinating, and grooming young, vulnerable people to carry out acts of terrorism.”⁸² Within the U.K., individuals as young as fifteen have been implicated for terrorist-related activity and hundreds of other young persons have been identified as vulnerable to radicalization. Due to concerns about the prevalence of young extremists, local communities, along with the education system, within the U.K. have taken steps to identify and address students (at the elementary, secondary, and university levels) at risk of radicalizing.

Appeal – United Kingdom

Al-Qaeda’s leader, Osama bin Laden, espouses an ideology that seeks to unite the global Muslim community and wage a terrorism campaign against Western countries and Middle Eastern regimes they view as apostate and sympathetic to Western interests. This narrative is consistently used to drive radicalization and recruitment and its appeal has been attributed to three key factors:

- Al-Qaeda propagates a simple popular message encompassing deeply held grievances in the Muslim world against the West

⁸¹ Michael Jacobson, Matthew Levitt, “‘Franchises’ of Al-Qaida Pose a Great Threat,” *Camden Courier-Post*, (7 September 2008); Also see: Hassan Mneimneh, “Seven Years Later: The Jihadist International”, *Middle Eastern Outlook*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No.6 (September 2008).

⁸² Jonathan Evans, “Intelligence, counter-terrorism and trust,” Address to the Society of Editors by the Director General of the Security Service, (5 November 2007), www.mi5.gov.uk/output/intelligence-counter-terrorism-and-trust.html.

- Al-Qaeda has created a powerful and captivating image of itself as the world's most feared terrorist organization
- Al-Qaeda's global character means membership is open to all people, irrespective of ethnicity and nationality as long as one is willing to accept its extremist ideology.⁸³

Even school-aged youth understand al-Qaeda's narrative and feel empowered by it. Terrorism experts have found that some European youth see waging jihad as 'cool,' and as a way to express dissatisfaction with the power elites. These radical youth are expressing their dissatisfaction through violent means, and see an appeal in the narrative that allows them to avenge wrongs "visited on the weak by the strong."⁸⁴

Why Youth – United Kingdom

Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups see Western youth as valuable assets. According to several sources, including former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Michael Hayden, al-Qaeda is seeking recruits among Western youth because of their familiarity with language, culture, and appearance. Recruits who "may not elicit any notice whatsoever from you if they were standing next to you in the airport line" could be attractive to al-Qaeda for potential operations against the West.⁸⁵

Approach – United Kingdom

A growing body of literature on radicalization in the United Kingdom and Western Europe focuses on a connection between domestic social discontent and negative views of foreign policies conducted by Western governments. Recruitment into the al-Qaeda terrorist franchise appears to be a self-selection process where individuals are often radicalized independent of the formal organization. While numerous experts have characterized radicalized youths as being angry, disaffected, disillusioned, disengaged, suffering from identity crises, and alienated, it is impossible to provide a common "profile" that describes all young persons that have been susceptible to radicalization.⁸⁶ In general, many young persons are looking to establish an identity for themselves and a cause to associate with. These radicalized youth have most commonly been second and third generation immigrants, Muslims who do not feel comfortable associating with their traditional religion, nor with the Western culture of their place of birth. Through the al-Qaeda franchise, some U.K. youth are able to focus on a single message, the narrative, which provides a sense of meaning and purpose.

Authorities in the United Kingdom consider university settings to be a particular concern. A researcher analyzing the issue of extremism and radicalization on campus identified 'extremist and/or terrorist

⁸³ Brynjar Lia, "Al-Qaida's Appeal: Understanding its Unique Selling Points," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. II, Issue 8, (May 2008).

⁸⁴ Stern, "Jihad – a global fad."

⁸⁵ Michael Hayden, Director Central Intelligence Agency, "Transcript of Remarks," (Presented at the Atlantic Council, New York City, 13 November 2008), available from: www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/directors-remarks-at-the-atlantic-council.html.

⁸⁶ Brian Michael Jenkins, "Building an Army of Believers: Jihadist Radicalization and Recruitment," *RAND Corporation Report* (April 2007); See also: Brendan O'Duffy, "Radical Atmosphere: Explaining Jihadist Radicalization in the U.K.," (Queen Mary: University of London, January 2008), www.apsanet.org; Patrick Sawyer, "Young Muslims 'are turning to extremism,'" *Telegraph.co.uk* (22 June 2008), www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2171300/Young-Muslims-

groups' on nearly 30 universities in the United Kingdom.⁸⁷ The study found that two prominent Islamist groups that are supportive of terrorism, Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun, often conceal their identities on campuses, calling themselves an "international politics society" or some variation.⁸⁸ However, these reports have been criticized by academics and student groups who claim British campuses are not prevalent radicalization centers. Other researchers assert that Muslim university students are secure with their British identity and that, "the portrayal of a disproportionate threat from the Islamic community does not reflect informed opinion about how most young British Muslims – and university students in particular – live their lives."⁸⁹ While the debate about the extent of Muslim radicalization on British campuses continues, the U.K. government is clearly seeing extremism as a significant threat. Higher Education Minister Bill Rammell has said "There is evidence of serious, but not widespread, Islamist extremist activity in higher education institutions."⁹⁰

Radicalization and recruitment can also occur through social networks, as was the case with the perpetrators of the London bombings in July 2005. These groups can form out of social settings where radicalized individuals feel empathy and a shared bond with each other. It appears these "alienated and displaced individuals come together in social networks based around criminal networks, schools, universities, social clubs, and/or worship at local mosques."⁹¹

Counter-Initiatives – United Kingdom

Several government agencies in the United Kingdom work together on counter-radicalization initiatives. These include, but are not limited to: the Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Children, Schools and Family, and the Department of University, Innovation and Skills.⁹²

Focusing specifically on preventing or countering radicalization within the elementary and secondary school settings, the British government in 2008 published a toolkit on preventing violent extremism as guidance for school leaders. Specifically tailored to the education system, this tool kit seeks to:

- Raise awareness amongst school personnel to the threat posed by violent extremism
- Provide information about the causes of violent extremism
- Help schools understand the positive role they can play in making youths more resilient to violent extremism
- Provide advice on managing the risks that might have an impact on the school community

⁸⁷ Jamie Doward, "Radical Islam gains ground in campuses," *The Observer* (27 July 2008), www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/27/islam.highereducation/print.

⁸⁸ Anthony Glees, "Beacons of truth or crucibles of terror?" *Times Higher Education* (23 September 2005).

⁸⁹ June Edmonds, "Look elsewhere for the enemy within," *www.guardian.co.uk* (3 December 2008).

⁹⁰ Doward, "Radical Islam gains ground in campuses."

⁹¹ O'Duffy, "Radical Atmosphere: Explaining Jihadist Radicalization in the U.K."

⁹² The Homeland Security Institute, "Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism (CIST) Action Plan," (Arlington, VA: Analytic Services, Inc. 23 May 2008).

The toolkit emphasizes the importance of the schools' efforts to understand and stay current with specific local issues affecting their community. Along with encouraging cooperation with the local community, the toolkit informs schools about national and local government programs aimed at countering violent extremism. The toolkit also provides general information on factors that may cause youth to be susceptible to exploitation by terrorists. These have been discussed previously and include identity crisis, personal crises, personal circumstances, un- or under-employment, and criminality. Information on how to prevent violent extremism is provided. There also is guidance on how to develop curriculum that is adaptable to local needs, how to challenge extremist narratives, how to use external programs or groups for support, and teaching and learning strategies for educators to explore controversial issues in a way that promotes critical analysis. The toolkit also includes sections on pupil support and risk management.⁹³

The British government has also issued guidance aimed at educators at the university level. The Department of University, Innovation, and Skills prepared a report for providers of higher education that addresses what violent extremism is and how to recognize its presence among students. Higher education providers also are given several scenarios of possible radicalization on campus, and recommendations on how to handle these scenarios. Importantly, this report emphasizes that higher education providers need to have a clearly stated, highly transparent, and fair system in place in which concerns about possible radicalization on campus, communicated by students or University staff, can be addressed.⁹⁴

Community initiatives to counter school aged youth radicalization are also prevalent in the United Kingdom. Several Muslim community groups are playing important roles to counter the violent ideology espoused by al-Qaeda. The Muslim Council of Britain has released statements urging Muslim organizations and institutions "to exercise their Islamic duty to correct and dispel misinterpretations" of the faith and "give the fullest support and cooperation to the police in helping to prevent acts of terror."⁹⁵ The Department of Communities and Local Government has helped fund community engagement programs. One such program is the Scholars Roadshow, where British Muslim organizations facilitate discussions between British youth and moderate Muslim scholars about the un-Islamic nature of extremism and terrorism.⁹⁶ The Quilliam Foundation, a Muslim organization founded by former Islamist radicals, also tries to provide moderate Islamic voices to the British Muslim community. The Foundation has interfaith understanding training programs for school officials and community members, and has produced several reports condemning extremism and highlighting interfaith community initiatives.⁹⁷

A series of community-based intervention programs have been implemented in locations throughout the United Kingdom that have been identified as potential breeding grounds for violent extremism. The Channel Project, initiated in 2008 by the Association of Chief Police Officers, asks teachers, parents, and

⁹³ Department for Children, Schools, and Families, "Learning together to be safe: A toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism," (London, U.K.: 2008), www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications.

⁹⁴ Department for Innovations, Education, and Skills, "Promoting Good Campus Relations: Working with Staff and Students to Build Community Cohesion and Tackle Violent Extremism in the Name of Islam at Universities and Colleges," (London, U.K.: 2006).

⁹⁵ David Smock and Qamar-ul Huda, "Islamic Peacemaking Since 9/11," United States Institute of Peace, *Special Report 218* (January 2009).

⁹⁶ "Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy", Presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Command of Her Majesty, (2006).

⁹⁷ The Quilliam Foundation, www.quilliamfoundation.org.

community figures to be vigilant for signs that "may indicate an attraction to extreme views or susceptibility of being 'groomed' by radicalisers."⁹⁸ Community members are encouraged to identify and intervene in instances where young persons have shown an interest in extremist materials, to include those found online. Interventions are tailored to the young person and generally involve discussions with the youth and his/her family, outreach workers, or a local religious leader: "With the help of these communities we can identify the kids who are vulnerable to the message and influenced by the message. The challenge is to intervene and offer guidance, not necessarily prosecute them, but to address their grievance, their growing sense of hate and potential to do something violent in the name of some misinterpretation of a faith."⁹⁹ Since the program was initiated there have been at least 200 interventions conducted with schoolchildren as young as thirteen. Actual interventions by the police are much less frequent.

Conflict Zones – Afghanistan/Pakistan & Iraq

In current conflict zones such as Afghanistan/Pakistan and Iraq, al-Qaeda and affiliates also exploit situational factors such as personal grievances and poverty. They utilize forced recruitment and kidnapping to gain recruits. In some cases, young persons have been forced or tricked into carrying out suicide bombings

Appeal – Conflict Zones

In conflict zones such as Afghanistan/Pakistan, the al-Qaeda narrative may not be as important of a factor in the recruitment of school-aged youth as in the U.K. and Europe. In conflict areas, al-Qaeda's appeal is driven by situational factors, including financial incentives and personal grievances. Reports suggest that youth are recruited from refugee camps and join al-Qaeda and affiliate groups to earn money for their family or to exact revenge, and do not always agree with the radical philosophies espoused. For example, many youth join to avenge the death of relatives who have been killed as a result of ongoing military operations by Western and Pakistani military forces.¹⁰⁰

The use of school-aged youth by al-Qaeda in Iraq can also be attributed to situational factors, which could lead young persons to view membership in the group as advantageous. Similar to Afghanistan/Pakistan, these situational factors arise from the current conflict in the country and the general weakness of the state to provide basic services: "Ongoing violence has destroyed the social fabric that once provided a safety net, and created a generation of undereducated, unemployed, traumatized, and vengeful boys and girls receptive to appeals of militias and insurgent or terrorist groups."¹⁰¹ Lack of access to effective educational institutions, a population living in relative poverty, feelings of revenge, and marginalization have resulted in young persons being vulnerable to radicalization, recruitment, and indoctrination into al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. A representative to the U.N. envoy to Iraq has said that children in Iraq, who are being exploited for their poverty and who no longer go to school, "lack access to the most basic

⁹⁸ Mark Hughes, "Police Identify 200 Children as Potential Terrorists."

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Aamir Latif, "Taliban Find Fertile Recruiting Ground in Pakistan's Tribal Refugee Camps," (February 9, 2009), www.usnews.com/articles/news/world/2009/02/09/taliban-finds-fertile-recruiting-ground.

¹⁰¹ Kathleen Meilahn, "The Strategic Landscape: Avoiding Future Generations of Violent Extremists," *Strategic Insights*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, (July 2008). Also see, Christian Caryl, "The Next Jihadists: Iraq's Lost Children," *Newsweek*, (22 January 2007).

services and manifest a wide range of psychological symptoms from the violence in their everyday lives.”¹⁰²

Why Youth – Conflict Zones

Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups have referred to children as the “new generation of Mujahidin.”¹⁰³ Numerous press reports, militant media videos, and official government statements depict young persons participating in terrorist activities on behalf of the groups. Al-Qaeda uses these school-aged youth to conduct suicide attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan/Pakistan because of their ability to circumvent security forces. Some experts believe that the security forces, including police and military personnel, will not immediately suspect a young child of being a suicide bomber threat. Young suicide bombers might be able to enhance the lethality of the violence because of their ability to circumvent security measures.¹⁰⁴

Approach – Conflict Zones

According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) monitoring Afghanistan/Pakistan, there is a “disturbing” use of children as combatants, specifically as suicide bombers. These children are being recruited from a variety of locations and for several reasons. A United Nations report released in 2008 notes that al-Qaeda and affiliated groups are recruiting youth from areas with high concentrations of internally displaced persons (IDP’s).¹⁰⁵ Recruiting youths from IDP and refugee camps in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, among others, has picked up recently as a result of military engagements in the region. One example is that of a six-year old boy from a village in Ghazni Province who was tricked by the Taliban into thinking the suicide vest he was wearing would “spray out flowers if he pressed a button.”¹⁰⁶

Along with tricking and coercing youths into becoming suicide bombers, al-Qaeda-linked groups have been accused of kidnapping, forcing, and paying young persons for carrying out attacks. According to Multi-National Force - Iraq, publicly released captured video tapes show al-Qaeda in Iraq training and indoctrinating a group of young boys, approximately aged 8-14 years old. The tapes also show al-Qaeda members boasting about turning children into suicide bombers along with statements from young boys promoting slaughter and declaring their allegiance to al-Qaeda.¹⁰⁷ Videos showing youth training and

¹⁰² BBC News, “Militias ‘recruit child bombers’,” *BBC News* (25 April 2008) http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/7367920.stm

¹⁰³ Rear Adm. Gregory Smith and Major General Mohammed al-Askari, Press Conference, (5 February 2008).

¹⁰⁴ Merle Kellerhals, “Using Children as Suicide Attackers Increases Sense of Barbarity,” *America.gov* (23 October 2007).

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan,” (10 November 2008).

¹⁰⁶ UNICEF, “Afghanistan: Martin Bell Reports on Children Caught in War,” *UNICEF*, No.5 (October 2007).

This example is also cited in an *America.gov* article: Merle Kellerhals, “Using Children as Suicide Attackers Increases Sense of Barbarity.”

¹⁰⁷ Rear Adm. Gregory Smith and Major General Mohammed al-Askari, Press Conference, (5 February 2008).

conducting terrorist operations are thought to be effective propaganda tools, possibly encouraging other youth to wage jihad.¹⁰⁸

Some madrassas in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region are also used by al-Qaeda and affiliated groups to radicalize and recruit young persons. According to the International Crisis Group, more than one-and-a-half million children (generally between the ages of 5 and 18) attend madrassas in Pakistan. A Pakistan government report issued in 1995 found the existence of 746 extremist madrassas in Punjab province alone; it is currently unclear how many madrassas in the region would be considered radical.¹⁰⁹ There appears to be significant anecdotal evidence to suggest that the presence of a radical madrassa constitutes a security risk to the region in which it is located. UNICEF notes that the Taliban currently uses madrassas outside of Afghanistan as training schools for volunteers.¹¹⁰ For example, in 2009, at least two young persons (aged 12 and 14) have been detained while attempting to carry out suicide attacks on behalf of the Taliban.¹¹¹ The fourteen-year old indicated he had been sent to a madrassa by his parents, who were unaware it was being run by radicals. Upon completion of his religious studies (e.g., reciting the Quaran), he was told to go to Afghanistan to conduct a suicide attack.¹¹² A Taliban leader in Pakistan indicated he recruits youth as young as five to carry out attacks, stating: “Children are tools to achieve God’s will. And whatever comes your way, you sacrifice it.”¹¹³

However, it is important to note that not all madrassas promote radical teachings or are supportive of terrorism or terrorist groups, and that not all students who attend madrassas become terrorists.

Counter-Initiatives – Conflict Zones

Counter-radicalization and recruitment initiatives are difficult to institute and measure in the conflict zones of Afghanistan/Pakistan and Iraq. In some instances, initiatives are being undertaken by military forces as part of counter-insurgency operations. Some governments, non-governmental organizations, and international aid agencies have also instituted programs.

The Afghanistan government, aware of the use of madrassas as radicalization and recruitment centers within the country, has sought to counter this process by creating 34 new madrassas in the country under its direct supervision. According to UNICEF, 40 percent of the curriculum will be dedicated to religious studies, 40 percent to general education studies, and the remaining 20 percent to English language and computer skills.¹¹⁴ This initiative seeks to give students a quality alternative to the radical madrassas, as

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ International Crisis Group, “Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military,” *Asia Report* No. 36, (29 July 2002).

¹¹⁰ UNICEF, “Afghanistan: Martin Bell Reports on Children Caught in War.”

¹¹¹ Jim Lehrer News Hours, “U.S. Military Works to Bring Stability to Remote Afghan Areas,” (Aired 16 March 2009), http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/jan-june09/afghanistan_03-16.html.

¹¹² Atia Abawi, “Teen Trained to be Suicide Bomber Feels Tricked,” (2 January 2009), <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/01/02/afghan.suicide.recruit/index.html>.

¹¹³ Frontline, “Children of the Taliban,” *PBS Broadcasting* (14 April 2009). http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html

¹¹⁴ UNICEF, “Afghanistan: Martin Bell Reports on Children Caught in War.”

well as provide students with the necessary education skills to contribute to the rebuilding of Afghan society.

The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) also has a program targeting madrassas in Afghanistan and Pakistan. USIP's Religion and Peacemaking Program is working with school administrators and teachers to provide alternative teaching materials focusing on "interfaith tolerance, pluralism, and peacemaking."¹¹⁵ USIP has also partnered with Pakistani scholars to create a peace education textbook based upon Islamic traditions for use in religious schools. In Afghanistan, USIP has training programs for teachers that seek to develop peace education and critical-thinking skills that can be passed on to students.¹¹⁶

Also in Afghanistan, senior United Nations officials have called for greater efforts to improve the situation of young persons and to stop the use and recruitment of youth by armed groups.¹¹⁷ The UN issued a report in late 2008 that highlights the trends and patterns of violence against children in Afghanistan that occurred between July 2007 and August 2008. As discussed within this study, the report points to the alarming increase of young persons being recruited as suicide bombers. Among the recommendations in the report is the suggestion that the Afghan government introduce legislation to criminalize the recruitment of children.¹¹⁸ It remains to be seen if any such legislation is developed or enforced.

In Iraq, the Young Ambassadors Program is a joint venture between U.S.-based War Kids Relief and Iraqi-based Darstan Group, two non-governmental organizations. The Young Ambassadors Program seeks to create cross-cultural understanding between Iraqi and U.S. middle school children through cultural exchanges, promoting tolerance, the principles of human rights, and educational initiatives that allow U.S. students to understand how they can help their Iraqi peers.¹¹⁹

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

In 2007, the Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat (GSPC) appears to have affiliated itself with al-Qaeda – thereby creating Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – in an attempt to maintain relevance and halt dwindling membership. As such, AQIM has established a broad approach to recruitment and radicalization, with evidence suggesting the group not only reaches out for supporters within the Maghreb region, but also in Europe among its diaspora communities. The situational factors affecting young persons in parts of the Maghreb (including few job prospects and poor education systems) are important to understanding how some have been vulnerable to being radicalized or recruited. AQIM has also exploited political grievances, convincing numerous fighters to go to Iraq to fight against Coalition forces. Schools do not appear to play a significant role in radicalization and recruitment of youth. Instead, the group appears to focus its recruitment efforts in mosques and on the Internet.

¹¹⁵ Smock and Huda, "Islamic Peacemaking Since 9/11."

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

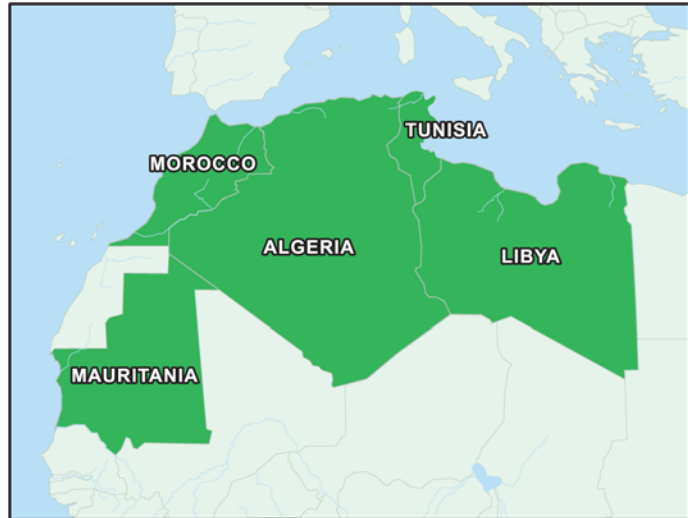
¹¹⁷ United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan."

¹¹⁸ United Nations, "Senior UN Officials Urge Greater Protection for Afghan Children's Rights," *UN News Service*, (15 December 2008).

¹¹⁹ War Kids Relief, <http://www.childrencultureconnection.com/WarKidsRelief.html>

Background

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is an Islamist extremist group that is based predominantly in the Maghreb Region of North Africa, which consists of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia.¹²⁰ GSPC is likely to have affiliated itself with al-Qaeda (forming AQIM) because they were losing relevance and momentum as an organization. According to a researcher that has studied the group's transition, "the GSPC courted al-Qaeda because of the need to maintain relevancy and to have a certain number of visible successes to shore up declining recruitment."¹²¹ The extent to which the group benefited, or will benefit, from its new affiliation has yet to be determined. However, in the two years since its reorganization, it is evident that young persons have been recruited by AQIM for a variety of purposes, including carrying out suicide attacks.¹²²



Appeal

AQIM tries to reach youth both locally (in the Maghreb), as well as globally (to include parts of Europe). Within these areas, AQIM appeals to youth by capitalizing on past or current personal and political grievances. Young recruits that have been drawn to AQIM include those who are disgruntled with their governments, as well as those who appear to feel disenfranchised, marginalized, or excluded. In some cases, it appears that young members were looking for a cause or want to "do something that matters."¹²³ According to the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, radical elements find support in young persons in the Maghreb region because they are "among the most disenfranchised and frustrated members of this population."¹²⁴

Why Youth?

A combination of demand and regional demographics appear to have led AQIM to focus some of its recruitment efforts on youth. After years of civil war, much of the adult population is weary of conflict

¹²⁰ Libya is included in this list on occasion.

¹²¹ Lianne Kennedy-Boudali, "The GSPC: Newest Franchise in Al Qaeda's Global Jihad," The United States' Military Academy's Counter Terrorism Center, The North Africa Project, (April 2007), 6, <http://ctc.usma.edu>.

¹²² U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/08/103392.htm>.

¹²³ Amel Boubekeur, "Salafism and Radical Politics in Postconflict Algeria," *Carnegie Papers*, no. 11, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2008).

¹²⁴ Nouredine Jebnoun, "Is the Maghreb the 'Next Afghanistan?': Mapping the Radicalization of the Algerian Salafi Jihadist Movement," *Center for Contemporary Arab Studies*. Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. Georgetown University, (16 November 2007).

and many are reluctant to engage in or support violent activities.¹²⁵ While there is an apparent shortage of unwilling adults, at the same time there are a large number of young persons within the North African region. Combined, these factors likely contribute to AQIM's attempts to reach out to the next generation.

Beyond the wide availability of youth in the region, AQIM also appears to have found young persons to be more impressionable and willing to follow its mission, something that likely makes their recruitment more appealing. According to a researcher at the Institute for Security Studies in Africa, the group is believed to be targeting youth aged 16 to 20 because they are "more idealistic and can be easily manipulated."¹²⁶

Approach

While it is evident that AQIM utilizes school-aged young persons, the process(es) by which youth are recruited and/or radicalized are not clear. Recruitment approaches appear to vary by region and community. AQIM targets young persons within the local Maghreb region as well as through diaspora communities. The group uses direct recruiting techniques (e.g., members reaching out to young persons in a variety of venues) in addition to utilizing the Internet and other forms of propaganda aimed at encouraging self-radicalization. The group's propaganda often perpetuates an "Us vs. Them" mentality and plays upon grievances, geopolitics or conflicts (e.g., Iraq).

Direct Recruiting

AQIM has reportedly made use of cyber cafes, mosques and bookstores to make contact with young unemployed men and students.¹²⁷ Mosques have been a prime area for recruitment of youth because they not only act as a place of worship, but also as place for large numbers of people to gather. The use of mosques extends beyond the Maghreb as well. For example, the Dutch Internal Security Agency found that AQIM had "recruited young Muslim immigrants at mosques in the Netherlands and has been encouraging young Muslims to join the jihadi movement in conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Kashmir."¹²⁸ Family connections are also used for recruiting purposes, using the influence these connections have to pressure young people into joining, glorifying the lifestyle of the prospective group, or at least providing acceptance for radical activities.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ From 1992-1999, Algeria was engaged in a civil war between the Islamists and those associated with the Algerian government. Over 100,000 people died in the conflict; Kennedy-Boudali, "The GSPC: Newest Franchise in Al Qa'ida's Global Jihad," 9.

¹²⁶ Anneli Botha, "Terrorism in the Maghreb: The transnationalisation of domestic terror," *Institute for Security Studies* Monograph 144, (June 2008) 58.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹²⁸ Blake Mobley and Eric Rosenbach, "GSPC Dossier," *Center for Policing Terrorism*, (1 June 2005).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Propaganda

AQIM places a good deal of emphasis on propagating its messages globally, which is likely intended to help sensitize potential recruits to the group's Salafist ideology.¹³⁰ An important aspect of a group's propaganda includes rhetoric by its leadership. Statements from leadership are significant because they are often specifically designed to rally the base and excite potential fighters. This is likely intended to serve as a catalyst for self-radicalization.¹³¹ For example, one of the group's former leaders, Abdelmalik Dourkdal, referenced the Iraq War in a communiqué to *Al-Faath* magazine in 2004, specifically mentioning the critical role of young Muslim men: "...the defeat that America is suffering now along with other Western nations...has played a critical role in awakening young Muslim men around the world, including Algeria."¹³²

Videos are also used to incite the group's diaspora community. Recruitment videos have been shown at mosques, in a community center-style setting, timed specifically for students and school children to be in attendance.¹³³ The group has reportedly also used an especially gruesome video titled "Algeria" that was shown to young persons at the Finsbury Park Mosque in London.¹³⁴

Manipulating of Circumstances/Grievances

AQIM manipulates circumstances and grievances with the intention of encouraging supporters to take action. The group has taken advantage of opposition to the conflict in Iraq to recruit young people and to encourage them to join the fight. For example, in a move to draw more recruits from Algeria, AQIM embarked upon what has been referred to as an "Iraq-ization" of Algeria, using the conflict in Iraq as a "new magnet to draw Maghrebi youths into an insurgency pipeline..."¹³⁵

The group has also played upon quality of life factors (e.g., lack of resources and opportunities) to attract young recruits. Young persons in the Maghreb face problems of unemployment. According to one source, "Algeria's young men leave school because there is no longer any connection between education and employment...The schools raise them to be religious but do not teach them the skills needed to get a job."¹³⁶ At one of AQIM's training camps, young recruits were paid 2000-3000 Algerian dinars

¹³⁰ Canadian Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, "ITAC Presents, 'Militant Jihadism: Radicalization, Conversion, Recruitment,'" *Trends in Terrorism Series*, vol. 2006-4, ITAC & Canadian Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, (2006), 15.

¹³¹ Emily Hunt, "Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A 'Thorn in the Neck' of the United States?" The Washington Institute of Near East Policy, Policy Focus #65, (February 2007), 3.

¹³² Evan Kohlmann, "Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: the GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaida," The NEFA Foundation, (September 2008), 16.

¹³³ Blake and Rosenbach.

¹³⁴ Jason Burke, "You have to kill in the name of Allah until you are killed," *The Observer*, (27 January 2002), www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/jan/27/september11.terrorism/print.

¹³⁵ Nouredine Jebnoun, "What is Behind the December 11th Bomb Attacks in Algiers?" Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, (12 December 2007).

¹³⁶ Michael Slackman, "In Algeria, A Tug of War for Young Minds," *The New York Times*, (23 June 2008).

(approximately 28-42 U.S. dollars) per week.¹³⁷ High poverty and a lack of job opportunities make such recruitment tactics effective.

Counter Initiatives

The governments in the Maghreb region recognize that action is required to counter recruitment and radicalization by AQIM and have implemented measures to address the problem. However, the approaches taken by the governments vary. While most of the governments in the Maghreb use law enforcement and intelligence tactics to address terrorism and radicalization, some also partner with non-profit groups and NGOs, to sponsor initiatives aimed at preventing violence.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) works with local partners in many countries to find culturally appropriate means of strengthening the capacity of societies to deal with conflicts constructively.¹³⁸ The organization sponsors programs that address conflict through the use of media (radio, TV, film and print), mediation and facilitation, training, community organizing, sports, drama and music. In Morocco, SFCG has initiated several projects aimed at addressing the socio-economic conditions that may lead to radicalization or violence and are trying to address what it terms the “growing identity crisis” affecting some youth in the country.¹³⁹

SFCG has partnered with various youth NGOs, governmental institutions, and foreign embassies to develop youth community mediation centers. These programs provide training necessary for young leaders to be able to resolve conflicts within their communities, to facilitate dialogue, and to foster stability. The youth leaders use these skills to work in schools, among other locations, where they offer coaching and training to marginalized youth. As part of this program, four youth community mediation centers have been established.

Utilizing the popularity of television, SFCG has also developed a prime-time television series called *The Team* that is a fictionalized story of a Moroccan football team and its players.¹⁴⁰ The show addresses themes such as moderation, mutual understanding, and non-violent communication and tolerance. While the program will initially be shown in Morocco, the group hopes to expand into other parts of the Maghreb region, chiefly Algeria and Tunisia.

The SFCG, U.K. Foreign Commonwealth Office/British Embassy in Rabat, and the Moroccan National Prison Administration are also working together on a de-radicalization program aimed at at-risk youth and prisoners in Maghreb prisons. The initiative was established to address concerns that prisons in the region were becoming a breeding ground for radicalization. The program is designed to reduce prisoners’ potential for becoming radicalized while incarcerated by providing training that promotes constructive

¹³⁷ Botha, 144.

¹³⁸ Search for Common Ground, "Children Programs," http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/children/programmes_children.html

¹³⁹ Steve Utterwulge and Abou El Mahassine Fassi-Fihri, “Empower Moroccan Youth,” Common Ground News Service, (28 May 2007), <http://www.commongroundnews.org>.

¹⁴⁰ Search for Common Ground, "Morocco: Program Overview," http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/children/programmes_children.html

dialogue, capacity-building, and conflict management skills.¹⁴¹ The program also encourages positive civic participation upon re-entry to society.

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) has evolved as a terrorist organization. Once relatively selective about membership when it was primarily a Basque Separatist movement, the group appears to be shifting to violent tactics and taking on new members from a broader, younger demographic. ETA's emphasis on encouraging street violence is a huge draw for disaffected youth and the opportunity to engage in violence is proving to be a successful recruiting tool. The education system in Spain does not appear to play a role in the radicalization and recruitment process. However, it does appear that supporters of ETA can be found in school settings. Current members appear to be less ideologically bound to Basque nationalism compared to past generations. Counter-initiatives in Spain and France appear to have focused on law enforcement and intelligence operations resulting in arrests of members. There does not appear to be many initiatives aimed at prevention or that directly address youth.

Background

Established in 1959, ETA (meaning "Basque Homeland and Freedom") is a Basque Nationalist group that was formed as a reaction to the repression of Basque culture by the Franco regime.¹⁴² ETA was not initially inclined towards violent acts. Its tactics first consisted of graffiti, displaying Basque Flags, and destroying Francoist symbols.¹⁴³ The group's shift to violent tactics began as it took on new members from a broader demographic, who argued that ETA's strategy should include more violent actions. ETA committed its first planned assassination in 1968, killing a police commissioner. As the group has evolved over the years, it has split into subgroups (e.g. ETA-PM, ETA-M) several times, mostly due to disagreements among its members about strategy and tactics. Ultimately, the subgroup that advocated a violent nationalist approach survived, shedding members who had other ideological viewpoints.¹⁴⁴



From the start ETA was a young, diverse organization comprised of members from around the Basque Region. The founding members primarily were middle class, educated young nationalists who were politically left-leaning and drew from a rural demographic. Over the first few years they began drawing new support and recruits from young adults in the labor sector, many of whom may not necessarily have

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Franco regime was from 1939-1975.

¹⁴³ Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca, "The Persistence of Nationalist Terrorism: the Case of ETA," (March 2008), 5-7.

¹⁴⁴ Ludger Mees, *Nationalism, Violence and Democracy: The Basque Clash of Identities* (London, U.K.: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 30.

been nationalists but believed in the self-determination of the Basque region.¹⁴⁵ More recently new recruits tend to be Spanish immigrants to the region that do not have as strong a tie to the Basque ethnic identity as their earlier counterparts. It can be said that current ETA members have begun to fit a profile similar to neo-Nazi supporters in other European countries that are characterized as middle-class, juvenile, urban, and radical.

While ETA has traditionally been a youthful organization overall, there appears to have been a shift towards recruiting even younger members. The percentage of the organization that is under 20 years-of-age went from less than 9 percent during years of Franco's rule (1970's), to around 60 percent by 2005. Of those under twenty, 10-11 percent are under the age of eighteen. Additionally, the percentage of school-aged recruits went from 5 percent during Franco's rule, to approximately 30 percent by the mid-1990s. These school-aged youths, primarily secondary school students, account for the largest single group that has joined ETA in recent years.¹⁴⁶

Currently, ETA is not the same organization it was in its formative years. While the group has been active for over four decades, it has had to regenerate in order to remain relevant. As a result, ETA no longer is viewed as a major threat to stability as it was during the 1980s, but rather is seen as more of a "protracted violent phenomenon that systematically violates fundamental rights."¹⁴⁷ ETA still maintains a core of violent nationalists, albeit hailing from a completely different demographic than its original members. For the time being, ETA relies on protracted street violence and the efforts of its youth group to remain relevant.

Appeal

For many years ETA held a significant popular support base within the Basque Region. This was the case particularly during the 1970s, where almost half of Basque adults perceived the *Ettarras* (ETA members or commandos) as being patriots or idealists, and less than 10 percent viewed them as criminals.¹⁴⁸ This perception continued into the 1980s when the new democratic government continued to utilize many of Franco's repressive tactics to combat ETA. These tactics caused anger and frustration on the part of a broad group of people who supported the group's goals and motivated many to become recruits. During this period, being a member of ETA also carried some social prestige that helped to encourage persons to become members.¹⁴⁹

However, in the mid-1980s the strategy of the group shifted toward less discriminating tactics (e.g. bombs in public places), which produced higher numbers of casualties and alienated some of their supporters and

¹⁴⁵ Fernando Reinares, "Who are the Terrorists? Analyzing Changes in Sociological Profile among Members of ETA," in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27:465-488 (2005), 474.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 474.

¹⁴⁷ Rogelio Alonso and Fernando Reinares, "Terrorism, Human Rights, and Law Enforcement in Spain," in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17:1 (2005), 265.

¹⁴⁸ Assia Alexieva, "Targeting the Roots and Goals of ETA: A Counter-Terrorist Strategy to Consider?" *Journal of IPS*, ed. Meagan Donahue, (Spring 2006), 58.

¹⁴⁹ Rogelio Alonso, "Individual Motivations for Joining Terrorist Organizations: A Comparative Qualitative Study on Members of ETA and IRA," in *Tangled Roots: Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism*, ed. J. Victoroff (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2006), 195.

original members.¹⁵⁰ This loss of support was furthered by the fact that the Spanish government began to repeal many of its harsh tactics. In recent years ETA's support base is estimated to have dwindled down to approximately 10 percent of the Basque population.¹⁵¹

Today, ETA provides a means for young people to channel their anger and frustration by applying it to their cause.¹⁵² The perceived lack of opportunities for young persons in the Basque cities has helped to push some to join ETA, particularly for those students who neither desire to pursue their formal education nor are prepared to enter the workforce. One former member recounts: "There were those who didn't want to finish their studies, only they didn't want to go out and get a job either. So then, it was like this automatic thing. If you didn't get involved in something political, you turned into a druggie."¹⁵³ Through extensive studies of the group, Fernando Reinares (a Professor and Terrorism analyst in Madrid, Spain) found this sentiment to be common among young members, many of whom are discontent or feel marginalized. Joining ETA appears to be viewed by some as an acceptable option, especially among youth who are raised in a culture of violence, where targets are dehumanized and violence is seen as an acceptable tool.¹⁵⁴ This view, in combination with ETA's stated goal, appears to make membership in the group an appealing option to a portion of the youth population.

Why Youth?

In spite of the various shifts and changes the organization has undergone, ETA has always relied on young recruits to sustain and replenish its ranks. The group utilizes its own youth organization, currently called *Jarrai-Haika-Segi* or *Segi* (described in detail below), to assist in recruitment and to carry out non-violent actions, namely extortion of local businesses for small amounts of money (often referred to as the "Revolutionary Tax").¹⁵⁵

ETA's ability to regenerate itself over the years is due in large part to its youth organization, *Segi*, that helps the group directly socialize ETA's message, gather support from the younger population, and identify future recruits.¹⁵⁶ As ETA's strategy shifted in recent years, the role of its youth group has expanded to include participation in protests, riots, and street violence, referred to as *kale borroka*.¹⁵⁷ Though the young persons perpetrating the riots would deny direct involvement with ETA, *kale borroka* is organized by ETA and carried out by its *Segi* youth group.

Kale borroka, its literal translation meaning "street struggle," is a part of ETA's strategy of conveying a message of an "impromptu youth movement [that] is unhappy with the political situation in the Basque

¹⁵⁰ Sanchez-Cuenca, 16.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 15.

¹⁵² Assia Alexieva, 58.

¹⁵³ Reinares, "Who are the Terrorists? Analyzing Changes in Sociological Profile among Members of ETA," 485.

¹⁵⁴ Alonso, 197.

¹⁵⁵ Yonah Alexander, Michael Swetnam, Herbert Levine, *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group* (Ardsey, NY: Transnational Publishers Inc, 2001), 22.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵⁷ Jan Mansvelt-Beck and Jan D. Markusse, "Basque Violence: a Reappraisal of Culturalist Explanations," *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49 (2008), 114.

Country.”¹⁵⁸ Kale borroka entails youths approximately 16-25 years of age, who carry out attacks on people and property.¹⁵⁹ Beyond the small group of youths carrying out specific attacks during kale borroka, often other young people will join in the violence. These people frequently are described as drunk, on drugs or already associated with other gangs.¹⁶⁰ While high-impact attacks claimed by ETA have decreased, incidents involving kale borroka have increased. Members of the youth group that participate in kale borroka carried out approximately 5000 acts of vandalism, between 1996 and 2000.¹⁶¹

Once young recruits become part of the formal ETA structure there does not appear to be evidence that distinguishes the roles or responsibilities provided to them. Though little information was identified that specifically delineates responsibilities by age it appears that, until the practice of kidnapping for extortion stopped in the mid-1990s, younger members would be placed in charge of guarding hostages.¹⁶² One place where clear discrepancies were addressed was in the role of male and female members in the organization. Women who did join were held to a different standard within the organization. They had more difficulty rising in the ranks and were given less direct responsibility for the violence.¹⁶³

Approach

Overall, ETA has never been a large organization and maintains a group of several-hundred core members. Traditionally, ETA relied primarily on self-recruitment or recruitment through “gateway organizations.” Those wishing to join took the steps themselves to become a potential recruit for the organization, such as participating in kale borroka or joining or supporting the Segi youth group.

During the 1970s and 1980s ETA could count on broad mobilization and was able to be more selective of its recruits.¹⁶⁴ Exposure to and socialization of the group during those years would occur through family and social networks, youth clubs and political activism, and schools—specifically small, private, Basque schools called *ikastolas*. Some debate has existed over the role the *ikastolas* specifically had in exposing youth to violent nationalism. Though the schools promoted Basque culture and nationalism, it is difficult to show a direct correlation between attendance in *ikastolas* and participation or support for violent nationalism. Some connection has been drawn, however, to *ikastolas* and Basque nationalism in general. This connection was clearer during the years of Franco's rule, as *ikastolas* were the only schools teaching *Euskara* (Basque language) and Basque culture.¹⁶⁵

No research, articles or general literature reviewed for this study or interviews conducted for this study found ETA to be currently recruiting directly from schools in the region. However, at least one university-

¹⁵⁸ Alexander, 31.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶¹ Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, "From Revolutionary Dreams to Organizational Fragmentation: disputes over Violence with ETA and Sendero Luminoso," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2002), 84.

¹⁶² William Douglass and Joesba Zulaika, "On the Interpretation of Terrorist Violence: ETA and the Basque Political Process," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol 32, no. 2 (Cambridge University Press: April 1990), 253.

¹⁶³ Reinares, 471.

¹⁶⁴ Reinares, 476.

¹⁶⁵ Mansvelt-Beck and Markusse, 114.

level professor indicated that support for the group by some students has been apparent in the school setting. Students have openly worn clothing to school that supports ETA, as well as shown other signs of their support. Additionally, professors and other public figures in the region who have spoken out against ETA have faced death threats.¹⁶⁶

Today, young people are socialized to ETA through friends, ETA-sympathetic media, exposure to a culture of violence, and reinforcement of the value of its approach through its Segi youth group. As a testament to the importance of the social-network of members, the average ETA member has a relative or a friend within the organization.¹⁶⁷ In addition to family and social networks encouraging young people to engage in acts of violent nationalism, participation in *kale borroka* is used as a mechanism to identify potential recruits. Those participating in the street violence prove themselves to be dedicated to the cause by throwing Molotov cocktails, destroying businesses who failed to pay the “Revolutionary Tax,” and attacking opponents of ETA—including moderate-nationalists, schoolteachers, journalists, or anyone who speaks out against ETA’s tactics.

ETA also coordinates support, funding, propaganda and recruitment through an umbrella organization called the Basque National Liberation Movement (MLNV).¹⁶⁸ By coordinating with the MLNV, ETA has been able to tap into their network of supporters from political, labor, media, and youth spheres. The extent to which ETA coordinates activities through these specialized groups, businesses, and organizations were revealed in a Spanish judicial investigation initiated in 1998 by the Spanish High Court. The investigation found that for years some of these groups acted as a legal and open front for ETA.¹⁶⁹

In recent years, ETA has begun to use some new recruitment approaches that seem to reflect active, top-down approaches to gain new members. For example, the group released a recruitment video (accessible online) during the summer of 2007 that appears to be intended to socialize ETA’s cause and attract new supporters.¹⁷⁰ Dissemination of the video, a tactic that had not been used previously, is likely in response to difficulties the group may be experiencing in finding new members and generating a support base.

Counter-initiatives

Counter-measures by the Spanish government have, for the most part, consisted of police and military crackdowns on ETA members, leading to infiltration of the organization and arrests of its members and leadership. During the years of Franco's rule and continuing into the 1980s this frequently included

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Dr. Jan Mansvelt-Beck, February, 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Sanchez-Cuenca, 15.

¹⁶⁸ The MLNV is a network of groups that provides ETA a support base and connection in many facets of Basque culture and demographics. The MLNV is a more generic term for the KAS (Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista or Patriotic Social Coordination), which has been in existence since 1978. The network includes a number of groups, many of which are legal, some including: a political party (Herri Batasuna), a young group, a women’s organization, newspapers and media, a labor union, and various other groups. Ibid, 10.

¹⁶⁹ Javier Tajadura, “The Closing of the Newspaper EGIN: The newspaper EGIN, the “fourth front” of the terrorist organization ETA,” pub. Fundacion par la Libertad (2008), http://www.paralalibertad.org/descargas/InformeLaberinto/J_Tajadura_Ingles.pdf.

¹⁷⁰ Europol, TE-SAT 2008: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2008, (Netherlands, Europol Police Office: 2008), 31.

actions that violated basic civil rights (e.g. detention without cause, no notification of the attorney or loved ones, beatings, torture), and often had a counter-productive effect. It was not until the mid-1990s that Spain began to focus on passing policy to restrict ETA's support base by declaring organizations that supported the terrorist organization to be illegal. This led to the closing of sympathetic newspapers, media, and most importantly, in 2001, the banning of *Herri Batsuna*, ETA's political party, from the political process. Attempts have also been made to dismantle ETA's funding and support networks, exemplified by the expansion of terrorism-related information sharing between Spain and France in the early 1990s.

Currently in Spain, the regional Basque government, or Basque Autonomous County (BAC), has primary control over all local government issues such as taxation, education, and cultural affairs. In addition to actions taken by the Spanish government to counter ETA, the regional government has begun to pass its own initiatives. Though little information was found on the existence of BAC counter-initiatives that specifically address ETA, some information alludes to programs in place to counter support for terrorism and to boost the region's knowledge on Human Rights.

The BAC government recently published a plan designed to promote the teaching of human rights in the Basque region. Within this plan, titled Basque Education Plan for Peace and Human Rights 2008-2011 (*Plan vasco de educacion, para la paz y los, Derechos humanos*), the government specifies improvements needed within the education system, including changes to curriculum that address human rights issues.¹⁷¹ This plan also notes that schools within some areas of the region have insufficient curriculum on human rights, and the Basque conflict is seldom taught in schools, with approximately 22 percent of public institutions and 9 percent of private schools addressing the issue. Along with calling for additional instruction on human rights in schools, the plan also recommends approaches for increasing social awareness of the issue. While not the focus of the document, ETA is noted in reference to infractions on human rights. Currently, there is no indication that the plan is being implemented and some scholars have expressed concerns that it is too ambitious and runs the risk of never being put into practice.

Some NGOs and private groups have gotten involved in countering support for ETA. Some of these groups coordinate very closely with the local government and receive some funding, but others are strictly private. The Gernika Gogoratuz Foundation is a research center that has been funded in part by the BAC government to conduct research and community engagement activities aimed at promoting peace.¹⁷² Lokarri is a privately funded social organization that sponsors initiatives to promote the self-determination of the Basque people, similar to ETA, but does not use violence as a tool to reach their goals.¹⁷³ The group actively promotes opening dialogues among those in the Basque region. Finally, Gesto por la Paz (Gesture for Peace) is a movement established in 1986 to raise awareness against ETA's violence and to provide a voice against ETA.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Departamento de Justicia, Empleo Y Seguridad Social (DJESS), Plan vasco de educacion, para la paz y los, Derechos humanos, 2008-2011, The Basque Autonomous County Government: DJESS, (December 2007).

¹⁷² Gogoratuz Gernika, Peace Research Center, (2009), <http://www.gernikagogoratuz.org/en/presentation.php>.

¹⁷³ Lokarri, <http://www.lokarri.org/>.

¹⁷⁴ The Association for Peace in the Basque Country, http://www.gesto.org/engl/i_index.htm#.

Youth Radicalization in the Netherlands

There is no particular terrorist group that is recruiting school-aged youth in the Netherlands. It appears that terrorist group recruitment and radicalization in the Netherlands has occurred primarily among the immigrant population, with young second- and third-generation Muslim immigrants of Moroccan descent among those most frequently involved. The primary venues identified as contributing to youth involvement include a small number of radical mosques, some Islamic schools, and the Internet. Since 2004, virtually every Dutch government ministry and department has been involved in counter-radicalization programs, creating a holistic approach to dealing with the growing problem of radicalization among Dutch youth.

Background

Dutch officials now believe that, beginning in 1997, the Imams in control of four Salafist mosque organizations in the Netherlands began allowing individuals known or suspected of involvement in international terrorism to frequent their mosques and use them to recruit parishioners for jihad.¹⁷⁵ While these former militants appear to have played a significant role in radicalizing and recruiting youth, they may be less of a factor currently. The advent of the Internet and international jihadist propaganda now appears to be a key factor in youth radicalization in the Netherlands. Many of the Dutch Muslim youths who have been arrested for plotting terrorist attacks admit they became radicalized through reading materials posted on Salafi websites.¹⁷⁶



Appeal to Youth

Over the past twenty years, the rapid and accelerating pace of immigration to the Netherlands has changed the character and composition of the once homogenous Dutch nation. It is these immigrant communities, including their school-aged youth, that Dutch authorities believe exhibit the greatest vulnerability to radicalization and recruitment by violent terrorist groups.

Dutch officials admit that certain radical Salafi organizations have, since the late 1980s, quietly garnered a small but significant following among Dutch Muslims, especially among Muslim youth. This is because of their hard-line and uncompromising message that promotes a militant and ultra-orthodox version of

¹⁷⁵ Interviews with senior Dutch security and counterterrorism officials, 2008. See also National Security Service (BVD), *De Politieke Islam in Nederland* [Political Islam in the Netherlands] (The Hague: BVD, May 1998); National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTb), *Salafism in the Netherlands* (The Hague: NCTb, May 2008), 50.

¹⁷⁶ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), *Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden Tussen Salafitische Missie, Radicaliseringsprocessen en Islamitisch Terrorisme* [Saudi Influences in the Netherlands. Links Between the Salafist Mission, Radicalization Processes and Islamic Terrorism] (The Hague: AIVD, June 2004), 8.

Islam. The danger posed by Salafism is that its simple message clearly resonates with angry and disenfranchised Muslim youth living in the Netherlands who are searching for their identity. According to a report by the Dutch National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism (NCTb), “There is a large group of Muslims, mostly young people, in non-Muslim western countries, who feel isolated within the societies in which they live... they are looking for their own identity and for a position to adopt in Western society.”¹⁷⁷ In a search for identity, these youth may become radicalized through contact with extremists or extremist media on the Internet.

Approach

There are a few key venues through which radicalization and recruitment is known to have taken place in the Netherlands, to include radical religious institutions, some independent Islamic schools, and the Internet.

Radical Islamic Religious Institutions

In interviews conducted for this study, a number of Dutch intelligence, security, and counterterrorism officials indicated that the genesis of the spread of extremism in the Netherlands can be attributed to the opening of the first of four militant Islamic religious institutions, which occurred in 1986. The four mosques are known to have preached xenophobic messages to their parishioners and have served as a recruiting venue by radicals.

For example, the Saudi-backed El Tawheed Mosque in Amsterdam distributed flyers to its parishioners before Christmas warning them not to join in the Yuletide festivities, telling them: “How can you join the festivities of the enemy just as if it were your own?” The mosque’s website posted a message about how to deal with non-Muslim Dutch, indicating “It is advised not to live amongst them” and “We must never make friends with them.”¹⁷⁸ A number of these Dutch mosques also sought to promulgate their radical vision of Islam through a series of conferences and seminars, which catered to thousands of young Muslim men from across Europe.¹⁷⁹

Dutch officials believe that beginning in 1997 the Imams heading the four Salafist mosque organizations in the Netherlands began allowing individuals known or suspected of involvement in international terrorism to frequent their mosques and use them to recruit parishioners for jihad, including youth.¹⁸⁰ Dutch security officials strongly believe that the Imams of these four Salafist mosques allowed these recruiters, almost all of whom were foreigners who were well known to the congregants as being radical militants, to regularly attend services at the mosque in order to identify Muslim youths who might make suitable recruits. According to a report by the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD): “For a long time the leaders and imams of these and other mosques adopted a certain degree of indifference and

¹⁷⁷ National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTb), *Jihadis and the Internet* (The Hague: NCTb, May 2008), 91.

¹⁷⁸ Transcript, “Islamic Educational Books Encourage Hate Against Non-Believers,” *NOVA TV*, by Peter ter Horst and Siem Eikelenboom, producers, (December 21, 2001).

¹⁷⁹ Desmond Butler, “Sept. 11 Plotter Reportedly Sent Terror Funds Flowing Through Dutch Town,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2002; Ian Johnson and David Crawford, “A Saudi Group Spreads Extremism in ‘Law’ Seminars, Taught in Dutch,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 15, 2003, A1.

¹⁸⁰ Interviews with senior Dutch security and counterterrorism officials, 2008. See also National Security Service (BVD), *De Politieke Islam in Nederland* [Political Islam in the Netherlands]; National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTb), *Salafism in the Netherlands*, 50.

ambivalence (from feelings of ideological affinity) towards recruiters within or in the margins of the mosque community.”¹⁸¹

Independent Islamic Schools

The first Muslim primary schools opened in the Dutch cities of Rotterdam, The Hague, Eindhoven and Amsterdam in 1988. In the 15 years that followed, the number of so-called “Islamic Schools” in the Netherlands grew dramatically, reflecting the rise in the number of Muslims immigrating to Holland during this timeframe. Islamic schools were treated as being outside the Dutch school system until 2002, which meant the government did not regulate the curriculum taught or the textbooks used. The organization responsible for regulating the curriculum taught at these schools is the Islamic School Boards Organization (ISBO).¹⁸² There is considerable evidence that the ISBO did not perform credibly during the 1990s in terms of actively and aggressively regulating the subjects taught at Islamic schools in the Netherlands.

The Dutch National Security Service (BVD) eventually became concerned that the strictly religious curriculum taught at some of these schools, especially at a small number of primary schools funded by the Saudi-backed al-Waqf al-Islami Foundation in Eindhoven, bordered on being seditious because of the overtly anti-integration and anti-democratic ideals being espoused by the teachers.¹⁸³ In 2001 and 2002, the Dutch television news magazine *Nova* broadcast lengthy investigative reports about the controversial content of some of the Arabic-language textbooks that the al-Waqf Foundation in Eindhoven was distributing to the Muslim primary schools it subsidized throughout the Netherlands.

Many of the textbooks were found to contain hate-filled rhetoric directed at Christians, Jews, women, and homosexuals. For example, one textbook used in Islamic schools educating children between the ages of four and twelve years old contained the phrase: “The prophet said: I have the people’s mandate to fight, to wage war against the people until they confess that Allah is the only and true god and the Mohammed is his prophet.”¹⁸⁴ Unlike the majority of the Islamic schools in the Netherlands, these Islamic primary schools banned television, music, whistling, as well as literature that the schools deemed ran contrary to Islam. Women were also required to dress according to Islamic rules, and were sent home if they were not dressed accordingly. Corporal punishment was also widely used in direct contravention of Dutch law.¹⁸⁵

Through these schools, it appears that the lack of proper oversight and regulation by the Dutch government and the ISBO allowed radical extremists to operate schools that sought to radicalize their students. School culture, textbooks, and curricula all reinforced extremist principals and a disdain for Western ideals and values.

¹⁸¹ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), *Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden Tussen Salafitische Missie, Radicaliseringsprocessen en Islamitisch Terrorisme* [Saudi Influences in the Netherlands. Links Between the Salafist Mission, Radicalization Processes and Islamic Terrorism], 7.

¹⁸² ISBO has been an influential voice within the Dutch Muslim community since its creation. Its former director, Ra_it Bal, since 2004, has been a senior official with one of the two official bodies to serve as a liaison between the Muslim community and the Dutch government, the Contact Body for Government and Muslims (CMO)

¹⁸³ National Security Service (BVD), *De Politieke Islam in Nederland* [Political Islam in the Netherlands], 11.

¹⁸⁴ Transcript, “Islam op de Basisschool,” [Islam at Primary School], *NOVA TV*, by Peter ter Horst and Siem Eikelenboom, producers, February 18, 2002.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

The Internet as a Tool for Spreading Jihad

Dutch security authorities have been able to confirm that the Internet is used by extremists as a means to spread violent jihadist propaganda and that it is influencing youth towards radicalization. By 2004, based on interrogations of arrested Dutch militants, the Dutch security service knew that the Internet had become one of the principal means of radicalizing Dutch Muslim youths and making them susceptible to recruitment by terrorists.¹⁸⁶

According to the Dutch security service, many of the Dutch Muslim youths who had been arrested for plotting terrorist attacks had admitted that they had become radicalized through reading materials posted on various Salafi websites. According to a report prepared by the Dutch security service: “[Dutch] youngsters have found their way to the websites of more or less radical Salafist mullahs. Rather disconcerting in this respect is that some of these mullahs in Saudi Arabia render advice to young Dutch Muslims via the Internet on subjects such as the jihad and martyrdom.”¹⁸⁷

Dutch home-grown terrorists have also used the Internet as a weapon. In September 2004, an 18 year-old Muslim boy of Moroccan parentage named “Yahya K” was arrested for sending threatening e-mail messages to a member of the Dutch parliament and to the Dutch security service. When police searched the teenager’s home, they found home made explosives made with chemical fertilizers that the boy had assembled with the help of bomb-making instructions he found on the Internet.¹⁸⁸

Conflict with Other Youth Populations

One factor that could have the potential to impact the radicalization of Muslim youths in the Netherlands is the role of militant, right-wing Dutch youth who have routinely engaged in open combat with Muslim youth for years. Commonly known as the Lonsdale Youth, this movement is dominated by extreme nationalism and xenophobia that takes the form of hatred and violence directed at all immigrants, especially the Dutch Muslim population. A report from 2005 cites a “worrisome increase” in violent conflict between gangs of Lonsdale Youth and Muslim youth of Moroccan descent.¹⁸⁹

Counter Initiatives

Since 2004, virtually every Dutch government ministry and department has been involved in counter-radicalization programs, creating a holistic approach to dealing with the problem. Government institutions, private sector groups, and the general public all play key roles in counter-radicalization initiatives. In August 2007, the government announced that it was dedicating \$38mil (U.S.) over four years on programs aimed at preventing the growth of Islamist extremism, placing emphasis on programs

¹⁸⁶ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), *Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland. Verbanden Tussen Salafitische Missie, Radicaliseringsprocessen en Islamitisch Terrorisme* [Saudi Influences in the Netherlands. Links Between the Salafist Mission, Radicalization Processes and Islamic Terrorism], 8.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸⁸ Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, *De Gewelddadige Jihad in Nederland* [Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat] (The Hague: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, March 2006), 49.

¹⁸⁹ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), *Lonsdale-Jongeren in Nederland: Feiten en Fictie van een Vermeende Rechts-Extremistische Subcultuur* [Lonsdale Youth in the Netherlands: Fact and Fiction of an Alleged Right-Extremist Subculture] (The Hague: AIVD, May 2005).

at the community and school levels that target “the growing problem” of radicalization among Dutch youth.¹⁹⁰

School-Based Initiatives

In the Netherlands, youth between the ages of 5 and 16 are required to go to school. As such, the school system has been used as a location where young persons can be exposed to counter-radicalization initiatives. In schools, curriculum has been developed to address radicalization as well as the factors that are believed to lead to radicalization. For example, as part of a nationwide campaign called "Netherlands Against Terrorism," materials were developed and provided to teachers to facilitate classroom discussions on the topic of radicalization. Teachers have also been educated about extremism and potential indicators of radicalization.

Local schools in the Amsterdam area have adopted a program of teaching a wide range of subjects designed specifically for the children of Muslim immigrants. Starting at kindergarten, schools in Amsterdam have started teaching basic lessons on the privileges and benefits of democracy.¹⁹¹ Since 2006, all primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands have been legally required to build citizenship education and social integration into their curricula.¹⁹²

The Ministry of Education and the Education Inspectorate also participate in government-wide efforts to measure the prevalence or potential occurrences of radicalization in the country. In order to gauge or detect emerging problems among youth, the Ministry of Education compiles detailed statistical reports of inter- and intra-ethnic incidents based on daily, weekly, and monthly reports received from universities, technical colleges, and grade schools throughout the Netherlands. The Education Inspectorate also keeps close tabs on attendance and dropout rates among Muslim youths attending grade schools throughout the country. These statistics are compiled with those provided by other agencies to paint a picture of the current situation.¹⁹³

Other Initiatives

Community-based initiatives and utilization of non-traditional partners are key components of the Netherlands counter-radicalization efforts. The Institute for Multicultural Development (FORUM), the largest non-governmental actor in the field of integration policy in the Netherlands, focuses on developments and issues relating to the Dutch multicultural society in general and to the integration of ethnic minorities in particular. FORUM has sponsored several programs and campaigns aimed at

¹⁹⁰ Associated Press “Netherlands Sets Plan on Extremism,” *New York Times*, 27 August 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/28/world/europe/28dutch.html?r=1&fta=y&pagewanted>.

¹⁹¹ From December 2007 interview conducted by HSI researchers with the Mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, and his staff.

¹⁹² UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, “Inventory of Member State Programs and Initiatives Aimed at Countering Radicalization and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism,” (2008), <http://www.un.org/terrorism/pdfs/radicalization.pdf>. For information on the civic education program administered by the U.S. Department of Education, see Appendix I.

¹⁹³ Based on communications held in January 2008 between the research team, a senior official with the NCTb, and with Dr. Bob De Graaf of the University of Leiden, who was one of the senior academics who helped develop the ‘success or failure measurements systems’ used by the NCTb to measure the Dutch government’s progress in identifying and combating extremism

stemming the spread of radicalization by promoting citizen awareness and identity programs for youth. One such example is a FORUM initiative called "Intergenerational Discussion Nights," which brings together Muslim youth and their parents to watch a movie about the differences between generations and discusses the content.¹⁹⁴

Some counter-radicalization initiatives reach out to youth where those youth feel engaged and entertained, in an effort to promote integration and acceptance. For example, the MaroquiStars Foundation, established in 2003 by a professional Muslim soccer player, attempts to increase the social and cultural participation of Moroccan youth in Dutch society and to improve the image of Moroccans in the Netherlands.¹⁹⁵ Volunteers for the foundation, who are often successful Moroccan professionals, serve as positive role models for young persons by working with them on a variety of social projects, primarily revolving around sports. The group also visits schools and organizes an annual soccer match between Moroccan players and a Dutch team. MaroquiStars seeks to promote dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation between persons with different backgrounds and beliefs.¹⁹⁶

The Internet as a Terrorist Tool to Recruit and Radicalize Youth

All of the terrorist organizations researched for this study have utilized the Internet to varying degrees as a tool for reaching out to their followers or potential supporters. In recent years, the use of the Internet by terrorist groups has proliferated rapidly: in 1998 there were twelve active terrorist-related websites; by 2003, the number of sites had increased to over 2600; as of early 2009, there are estimated to be nearly 7000 active terrorist-related websites.¹⁹⁷

Whereas terrorists' indoctrination, recruitment, and training used to rely primarily on physical meetings between recruits and recruiters (which often required time, coordination, and travel), the Internet can now provide these connections quickly, easily, remotely, and anonymously. Terrorist groups are using this to their advantage and are employing a wide array of online platforms to disseminate a variety of content.

As terrorist's use of the Internet has flourished, so too has young persons' use of this medium. Youth increasingly use the Internet to stay in constant contact via e-mail and instant messaging, social networking sites, as well as for entertainment, including routinely sharing online media such as video clips.¹⁹⁸

Some terrorist groups are now tailoring their online platforms specifically to attract youth audiences. These groups are specifically targeting messages to young persons that promote radical ideology and

¹⁹⁴ The Institute for Multicultural Development Forum, <http://www.onderzoekinformatie.nl/en/oi/nod/organisatie/ORG1236730/print>

¹⁹⁵ Maroquistars Website, <http://www.maroquistars.nl/index.php?id=1&categorie=Home>.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Dr. Gabriel Weimann, "The Internet as a Terrorist Tool to Recruit Youth" (presentation given at the Youth Recruitment & Radicalization Roundtable, Arlington, Virginia, March 19, 2009).

¹⁹⁸ Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions and MTV Networks, "Circuits of Cool: Key Themes and Findings," (July 2007), 3, 5, 7. http://advertising.microsoft.com/europe/WWDocs/User/Europe/ResearchLibrary/ResearchReport/Circuits_of_Cool_Booklet_FINAL.PDF

violence through colorful cartoons, games, and videos that are posted online. To date, terrorist groups appear to have been successful in reaching and radicalizing some young persons by way of the Internet.

Narrowcasting to Youth Audiences

Some terrorist groups have adopted the marketing strategy of “narrowcasting” their content to specific audiences.¹⁹⁹ With youth, they target different age groups and change the platforms, content, messaging, and appeal depending on age. For example:

- The Palestinian group Hamas specifically targets young children with its youth website, al-Fateh (meaning “The Conqueror”), which features cartoons, Disney-like cartoon characters, and colorful children’s stories. These characters are used to perpetuate messages of violence, promote hatred of Israel, and praise jihad and martyrdom.²⁰⁰
- Some groups have released videogames that are appealing to kids and adolescents. Hizballah developed a series of games called *Special Force* and *Special Force 2*, which are first-person-shooter games that simulate military missions against Israeli soldiers. According to one Hizballah member: “In this game you can be a partner in the victory. Fight, resist and destroy your enemy's Merkava tank in the game of force and victory...*Special Force 2* also offers mental and personal training for those who play.”²⁰¹ *Special Force 2* is available in Arabic, Farsi, and English. Another online game is *Night of Bush Capturing*, which was released by the Global Islamic Media Front in 2006. The goal of the game is for players to hunt and kill former President George W. Bush.²⁰² An advertisement for the game indicated it was being distributed for “terrorist children.”²⁰³
- Web forums and chat rooms appear to be used to reach older teens. These mediums are where peer-to-peer interactions take place and where youth can move from passively gathering radical information to actively participating in discussion of radical topics.
- Special attention appears to focus on reaching out to young women over the Internet. For example, young Muslim women may face traditional restrictions that can be overcome online. They may communicate anonymously with other Muslim women, and even men, via the Internet in ways that may not be socially acceptable in person. Dutch Muslim women have been recruited as translators, developers of Dutch language jihadi literature and developers of Dutch jihadi websites and software.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Gabriel Weimann, “Online Terrorists Prey on the Vulnerable,” *YaleGlobal Online* (5 March 2008).

²⁰⁰ Ibid. See: <http://www.al-fateh.net/>

²⁰¹ Matt Peckham, “War by Proxy? Hezbollah’s Anti-Israel Game...” *PC World* (16 August 2007).

²⁰² United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Home Grown Terrorist Threat Majority & Minority Staff Report 109th Cong.*, (8 May 2008), 9.

²⁰³ Gamepolitics.com, “Islamic Radicals Release ‘Night of Bush Capturing’ Game,” *Gamepolitics.com* (18 September 2006), <http://www.gamepolitics.com/2006/09/18/islamic-radicals-release-night-of-bush-capturing-game>

²⁰⁴ National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTb), *Jihadis and the Internet*, 65-66.

The various platforms and messages used by terrorist groups online are intended to incite negative sentiment toward enemies (or perceived enemies) to immunize young persons to violence, glorify martyrs, and create bonds.

The Internet as a ‘Radicalization Accelerant’

The United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs noted the Internet “becomes a virtual ‘echo chamber’ – acting as a radicalization accelerant.”²⁰⁵ Youth are generally drawn into radical Internet websites for three main reasons: they may run across radical content while exploring the Internet for entertainment (such as video sites); they may be curiously seeking information on ideologies, traditions, or heritage-related matter associated with the radical group; or, they may be looking for a community with which they can identify.²⁰⁶

The Internet plays a vital role in creating social bonds that are necessary for radicalization and recruitment, as well as providing a venue for perpetuating radicalization among groups of recruits. If youth have begun to explore these areas and have formed bonds with other like-minded individuals, (whether they are peers in similar situations or recruiters, online or offline), their radicalization may then progress inside these groups. Researchers have commented that the Internet “can intensify a sense of identity” through the phenomenon of “group polarization,” in which members of a radicalizing group perpetuate their radicalization through continued discussion, perhaps with the facilitation of a terrorist recruiter.²⁰⁷

Self-Radicalization

There have been instances of young persons utilizing the Internet to self-radicalize into terrorist group supporters or members. A notable example of self-radicalization is that of Aabid Hussein Khan, a 22-year-old British Muslim who, with two others, founded a terrorist cell in the U.K.. “In 1997, at only 12 years old, Khan quickly became an avid fan of anything he could find on the Internet relating to jihad and the mujahideen...and he began to ‘use newsgroups and discussion forums to join with people in discussing these issues...’²⁰⁸ Even at such a young age, and in the public Internet’s early years, Khan fervently pursued an “e-war” strategy over the Internet and managed to create an underground, online network of supporters in Europe, Canada, and the United States. “These young men and women – most of whom had never met each other in person – evolved into a tightly-knit circle who shared a common, all-

²⁰⁵ United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Home Grown Terrorist Threat Majority & Minority Staff Report 109th Cong.*, (8 May 2008), 11.

²⁰⁶ Katharina Von Knop, “Countering Web-based Islamist Narratives: Conceptualizing an Information War and a Counter-propaganda Campaign,” in *Hypermedia Seduction for Terrorist Recruiting*, ed. B. Ganor et al., (2007), 246. This curiosity is very broad, and could range from simple intrigue with a particular group or ideology, to doing research on one’s own religious or ethnic heritage in order to have a better concept of self-identity. See also: Frank Cilluffo, et al., “NETworked Radicalization: A Counter-Strategy,” Special Report by The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute and The University of Virginia Critical Incident Analysis Group, 9.

²⁰⁷ Christina L. Madden, “Typing TERROR in a Crowded Chat,” *Policy Innovations* (5 February 2008).

²⁰⁸ Evan Kohlmann, “Anatomy of a Modern Homegrown Terror Cell: Aabid Khan et al,” *The NEFA Foundation* (September 2008), 2.

consuming interest in computers and global mujahideen movements.”²⁰⁹ Their cell was broken up by British officials in June 2006.

Implications

Terrorist groups are using the Internet to reach a much larger and more global audience than was possible just a decade ago. Some groups have rather sophisticated online presences, employing complex structures and hosting mechanisms, an array of multi-media platforms, and the use of logos and branding. Some groups are adapting (albeit slowly in some cases) to the Web 2.0 evolution, by utilizing online platforms that are more interactive.

Online Characteristics and Structures

Terrorist’s usage of the Internet tends to reflect the organizational structures, sizes, and capabilities of various groups. These groups fall into two general categories: highly-organized, hierarchical groups with centralized websites, and diffusely-structured networks that distribute their content to a multitude of small, private websites and forums through third-party distribution entities. Centralized websites may feature various subsections relating to current events, leadership profiles, statements about the groups’ ideologies and doctrines, propaganda, and contact information, and may also provide links to other group websites that are dedicated to more specific topics or content. The most advanced terrorist websites can track and capture information about the visitors browsing their websites, much like commercial sites.²¹⁰

For example, Lebanese Hizballah condensed over 50 smaller group-related websites of varying subject matter into approximately seven organized, topical categories on one centralized website.²¹¹ Hizballah’s website offers information on leadership figures and updates on the party’s parliamentary, ministerial, and political activities. It also provides texts of speeches and interviews, gives information on current and past military conflicts, disseminates anti-Israeli propaganda, offers a regularly-updated news page featuring current events stories, and provides a large online multimedia library that features audio, video, and photo archives.²¹²

The Sri Lankan terrorist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) benefit from a network of several official websites that connect them to the global Tamil diaspora (most of whom resides in Canada).²¹³ This wide network serves two main purposes: to provide Sri Lankan Tamils abroad with a Tamil news source; and, to leverage this sympathetic diaspora into providing funds back to the LTTE. These sites are a significant source of the LTTE’s fundraising.²¹⁴

In contrast to structured websites of hierarchical groups, jihadist groups such as the al-Qaeda network represent websites used by diffusely structured organizations. Their online presence reflects this

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 2-3.

²¹⁰ Gabriel Weimann, “Terrorists and Their Tools – Part II,” *YaleGlobal Online* (26 April 2004).

²¹¹ Gabriel Weimann, “Hezbollah Dot Com: Hezbollah’s Online Campaign,” 11-13.
<http://cmsprod.bgu.ac.il/NR/rdonlyres/34396BDB-6C0E-4931-A077-697451885123/34393/Weimannedited.pdf>

²¹² See <http://www.hizbollah.tv/> (Arabic) or <http://english.hizbollah.tv/index.php> (English).

²¹³ Shyam Tekwani, “The LTTE’s Online Network and Its Implications for Regional Security,” *Working Paper No. 104*, (Singapore: Institute for Defense and Strategic Studies, January 2006), 14.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 14. See www.tamilcanadian.com for one of the largest sites.

configuration in the makeup of their sites: an array of decentralized, mostly-unofficial, privately-owned web pages, blogs, web forums, and online bulletin boards that post and re-post terrorists' content such as videos, statements, or religious doctrines. Despite the nebulous structure of these groups, there is a common mode of media distribution among them. Because diffuse jihadist groups do not have the organizational structures or technological capacities to create, produce, distribute, and maintain online content on their own, they rely on "virtual media production and distribution entities" (MPDEs) to assist the dissemination of their content.²¹⁵

The process of utilizing MPDEs occurs in three general stages: First, jihadist groups (or in some cases, jihadist scholars) create content – usually texts or videos – and either post them to a "mother" site, or transmit them via e-mail. The recipients are trusted production and distribution websites – media groups or small publishing houses that maintain online catalogues of publications on similar topics.²¹⁶ These groups collect and organize material and then help redistribute it to masses of third-party recipients, such as personal websites, blogs, or online discussion forums. The intent of redistribution is to spread the content as prolifically as possible, so that many recipients will duplicate the content. This makes eliminating the terrorists' content more difficult for governments; if one site is shut down, there will likely be many more mirror sites to fill its place.

Online Mediums and Content

Terrorist groups use several different kinds of mediums online to incite negative sentiment towards their enemies or to inspire listeners. Videos distributed over the Internet are a versatile and effective means of reaching audiences. While well-structured groups may have the capacity to create and host videos on their own websites, YouTube enables anyone with Internet access the ability to upload videos, watch them, and pass them on to others. Many of the online videos appear to be designed to either directly target youth audiences or to be attractive to young persons. One such example is a jihadist rap video *Dirty Kuffar*, designed to appeal to youth through their music.²¹⁷ As mentioned above, some groups have also produced video games that promote their violent ideology by allowing young persons to play the role of the terrorist. Explicit photo galleries, recorded audio speeches, and text statements are also commonly used mediums.

Other interactive Internet mediums used by terrorist groups include online web forums, chat rooms, and even private e-mails. Web forums and chat rooms are places where curious youth may go to explore and ask questions about political or religious issues, and where more opinionated forum members express volatile views, redistribute content, and provoke each other. Forums also allow for participants to remain anonymous, and many offer a degree of security through encrypted password-protection.²¹⁸ Private online forums and e-mails are used by terrorist recruiters to vet potential members. This is particularly the case with jihadist recruiters who are looking for fighters to join the Iraqi insurgency. Recruits may be filtered

²¹⁵ Daniel Kimmage, "The Al-Qaeda Media Nexus: The Virtual Network Behind the Global Message," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (March 2008), 4.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹⁷ See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeflYcKF_00 for the video.

²¹⁸ Hanna Rogan, "Dynamics of the Jihadi Online Media Campaign" (presentation given at the conference "*The Jihadist Phenomenon: A Social Sciences Perspective*" in Menton, France, 26-28 October 2007), 10.

based on their knowledge of the Arabic language and Islamic tenets, in order to sift out possible imposters.²¹⁹ Those who are considered for recruitment may then be contacted via e-mail.

Finally, social networking websites are an emerging medium where terrorist groups are attempting to gain a foothold in order to disseminate their messages and connect with potential sympathizers and recruits. If terrorists manage to succeed in exploiting these platforms, they stand to reap a multitude of benefits. In a single online location, they can connect with millions of users in pre-existing networks and user interest groups, use these networks to disseminate text, photo, and video propaganda, search and view user information, cull potential recruits, and contact potential recruits through private messages. In late 2008 ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Hakim, a Syrian member of the radical Islamic web forum al-Faloja, published a manual titled “Raiding Facebook: Theory and Practice” as part of an online *al-Nusr’a* (meaning "invasion") campaign.²²⁰ His Facebook campaign went so far as to designate seven online brigade commanders, responsible for administering various content on the social networking site including doctrine, training materials, and martyrdom videos.

Branding

Terrorist groups also use branding strategies to make their message easily recognizable and authentic to their audiences. Hierarchical groups have been successful at branding their content. Now, more diffuse militant groups are learning from them and beginning to adopt this method to establish authenticity. It is easier for large, hierarchical organizations (like Hizballah and the LTTE) to brand their messages because they possess name recognition, recognizable logos, have recognizable figureheads, and post their content to their own official websites. It is more difficult for smaller, diffuse jihadist groups with fluctuating online presences to establish this notoriety because it is harder to credibly discern what material originated from which group. Diffuse groups remedy this by consistently using the same media production and distribution entities to distribute their content. As media production distribution entities become associated with specific jihadist groups, they become authenticators for the content of the group as they distribute it to third parties. Additionally, many groups now attach specific logos, markers, or other signatures to statements or videos before they are distributed, thus adding visual authentication to the content.²²¹

Evolving Towards Web 2.0

Internet mediums have, in the past three to four years, undergone significant changes in how they relate to their audiences. Internet usage has evolved from a passive, individually directed information-seeking process, Web 1.0, to an active, socially-connected, user-involved environment where users are compelled to interact, discuss, create, and distribute content, often referred to as Web 2.0.

Terrorist groups are adapting to this trend. Their strengths still predominantly lie in Web 1.0 mediums that are still useful to them in the form of informative propaganda sites. Nevertheless, terrorist groups are attempting to adopt 2.0 qualities in areas of the Internet that are safe to them. Chat rooms, bulletin boards and web forums are the most used mediums. Terrorist groups attempt to appeal to users through constant

²¹⁹ Gabriel Weimann, “www.terror.net: How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet,” *United States Institute of Peace Special Report 116*, (March 2004), 8.

²²⁰ Will McCants, “Invading Facebook: Theory and Practice,” (17 December 2008).
<http://www.jihadica.com/invading-facebook-theory-and-practice/>.

²²¹ Kimmage, “The Al-Qaeda Media Nexus: The Virtual Network Behind the Global Message,” 9.

connectivity and are bridging the way to more user-driven radical content. Additionally, self-radicalization is becoming a more prevalent by-product of radical content “going 2.0.” As youth’s exploration of radical content becomes more self-driven, there is more potential for them to draw their own conclusions and take their own actions.

Countering Terrorists Online

Initiatives that have been implemented to counter terrorist use of the Internet have been focused primarily on two areas: monitoring or shutting down the sites, and countering radical online propaganda.

Monitoring and Disruption

Initiatives are in place to monitor and shut down terrorist websites. The goal is to undermine the abilities of terrorists’ to broadcast their agendas online. These measures are generally undertaken by a law enforcement and intelligence services. For example, Belgian Federal Police, Intelligence Services, and Counter-Terrorist Joint Unit administer an Internet Open Source Platform that encourages people to report websites hosting radical or illegal material. The government then investigates these websites. The European Commission proposed a Europe-wide version of the Belgian program in 2007, called “Check the Web.”²²²

Counter-Message

Counter-message measures attempt to confront and discredit radical propaganda and opinions. This strategy entails de-legitimizing the core of extremist arguments, and focuses on reducing the impact of radical messages on audiences. Counter-message initiatives often integrate government and private entities to help construct and deliver the chosen narratives. Examples of these initiatives are evident in Singapore, where the state has partnered with organizations and individuals to undertake several online counter-message initiatives, including the government-funded website of the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG). The RRG website features responses to misinterpretations of Islam, articles about radicalism and moderate Islam, and a multimedia section.²²³

Singapore’s Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) has developed websites for youth, to include a site that responds to religious queries and a site devoted to rebutting extremist ideologies. MUIS also hosts a web portal where moderate religious officials develop content for youth audiences.²²⁴ Some community members in Indonesia have started online counter-radicalization interest groups and blogs. For example, “Singaporean Muslims Against Terrorism,” is a multimedia counter-ideology blog that features entries on countering radical ideologies, along with photos, videos, and music.²²⁵

²²² Tim Stevens and Peter R. Neumann, “First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes,” Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ISCR), (London, U.K., January 2009), 16.

²²³ See: <http://www.rrg.sg/>.

²²⁴ See: <http://counterideology.multiply.com> and <http://2jay.wordpress.com/avata/>. Also see: Hassan, “Singapore’s Muslim Community-Based Initiatives Against Ji.”

²²⁵ Ibid.

The U.K. government partially funds the grassroots Radical Middle Way movement, an initiative that disseminates moderate, mainstream Islam to young British Muslims through engaging online mediums.²²⁶ The Saudi government supports an online "Tranquility Campaign" that incorporates religious scholars, psychologists, and sociologists who regularly visit websites and web forums to engage in dialogue with radical participants.²²⁷

²²⁶ Cilluffo, 11. For the site itself, see: <http://www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk/>.

²²⁷ Ibid., 13.

SECTION III. SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS

Terrorist groups are adaptive adversaries who use a variety of tools and tactics to reach potential recruits and supporters, which too often include young persons. Groups systematically prey upon the vulnerabilities of youth in various contexts, offering a range of incentives that are intended to make membership in the group attractive. In some cases, young persons have also been forcibly recruited or deceived into participating in terrorist activities.

Terrorist organizations have used schools as a recruitment venue in many locations throughout the world, utilizing the education system to transmit group ideologies as well as provide mental and physical training and indoctrination. However, the full extent of how schools are being used for recruitment and radicalization of youth globally is not well understood. It is important for educators and others that work with school-aged youth – including those in public and private K-12 institutions, charter schools, religious schools, colleges and universities, and trade schools – to be aware that some young persons may be vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization.

The Internet has also become a resource for disseminating terrorist propaganda and instructions to young persons that might not otherwise have direct contact with group recruiters or supporters. Some terrorist groups have established websites that are youth-oriented, with colorful comics, games, and links to videos. These sites, many of which are available in English, help to get the groups' propaganda and messages out to a worldwide audience. It is necessary to promote awareness that any young person with an Internet connection can access websites that promote terrorist groups or provide graphic depictions of acts of terrorism that are commonly portrayed as acts of heroism. While there are discreet examples of young persons who have become radicalized online, the magnitude to which this is occurring is not known.

Although it appears that youth recruitment and radicalization is not occurring domestically to the extent that it has happened elsewhere, the degree to which it may or may not be happening within the U.S. is unknown. Similarly, it is not clear how the radicalization that is occurring in other countries might impact us domestically. As has been shown by the situation in Europe, many of the young persons that are perceived as being most vulnerable to radicalization or recruitment (based on incidents that have already occurred) have been second- and third-generation immigrants. It is believed that these young persons often struggle with identity problems, fail to integrate, and may feel excluded or marginalized – vulnerabilities that have been utilized by terrorists to gain their support.

It is important to gain a better understanding of our own immigrant populations and diaspora communities, including those coming from areas affected by terrorism and conflict. It may be the case that there are young persons coming into this country that have been exposed to radical groups or information, and we don't have a grasp of if – or how – that might translate into dangerous behaviors. Furthermore, it is necessary to determine if young immigrants or members of diaspora communities within the U.S. might be experiencing some of the same pressures or prejudices that have been associated with susceptibility to radicalization. Communities and educators would likely benefit from this knowledge, enabling them to better address the needs of these young persons as well as identify and prevent potential problems.

Implications

While this study has led to a better understanding of how some terrorist groups are recruiting, radicalizing, and utilizing school-aged youth, there is still a great deal of research and learning required to further inform our understanding of this dynamic issue. It is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of youth radicalization, to identify practical implications, and to inform preventive measures.

There likely are existing internal and external resources that could be utilized to help enhance our knowledge of what makes some young persons susceptible to radicalization, as well as assist in identifying approaches for countering potential threats. For example:

- Although known cases of U.S.-based young persons that have radicalized or been recruited into terrorist groups is limited, there are some examples that could be explored further to get a better understanding of the context in which radicalization has occurred domestically. Recent events in Minnesota, in which a number of young persons of Somali descent have left the U.S. allegedly to train or fight alongside an al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group, al-Shabaab, could provide insight into the type of situational variables that make some persons or communities vulnerable. Similarly, there are other examples (e.g., Adam Gadahn, John Walker Lindh) that could be explored further to identify possible differences between susceptible individuals or communities across the U.S.
- There have been programs in place domestically for decades that address youth participation in other types of violent groups, including gangs. It is possible that information from other tangentially related areas could help inform understanding of youth vulnerabilities, or could provide a framework for addressing this issue. It would also be beneficial to determine if initiatives that have been implemented to counter youth violence in general (e.g., anti-gang programs) can be utilized or adapted to help prevent violent extremism.
- It might be useful to look to the research and initiatives that have been carried out by some of our closest allies that have had to address growing populations of radicalized youth. The United Kingdom and the Netherlands have both implemented a variety of measures aimed at stemming radicalization and tackling the underlying causes. Initiatives in both countries have utilized the education system and enlisted a variety of community members who come in contact with young persons on a regular basis (e.g., teachers, parents, religious leaders) to help identify and address youth that might be susceptible to radical influences. These and other countries are likely to be able to provide valuable lessons learned and best practices based on their experiences.

Just as terrorist organizations exploit situational factors and grievances and specifically tailor their messages to appeal to youth, any initiatives that are developed to counter youth recruitment and radicalization should also address underlying causes and contextual factors that make some young persons and communities more susceptible. Initiatives should be locally tailored and should engage members from across the community who are in a position to address specific underlying factors or identify potential radicalization indicators. Counter-recruitment and radicalization initiatives must also evolve with the young audiences they are intended to reach, adapt along with the adversaries, incorporate new developments in technologies, and address changes within environments where young persons are susceptible.

Given the apparent increase in youth involvement in terrorist organizations, and the changing demographics of those involved or implicated, it is necessary to promote awareness that young persons

are susceptible to terrorist recruitment and radicalization. It is also imperative that we make it unacceptable for terrorist organizations to consider utilizing young persons to further their violent goals.

APPENDIX A. YOUTH RECRUITMENT & RADICALIZATION ROUNDTABLE – 19 MARCH 2009

The Homeland Security Institute and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS) hosted a one-day "Youth Recruitment and Radicalization Roundtable" on 19 March, 2009. The purpose of this session was to bring a select group of people together to discuss lessons learned from youth recruitment and radicalization abroad; to discuss potential implications for the U.S.; and to determine what role, if any, the education system can play in countering youth recruitment and radicalization or in promoting resilience among youth.

Additionally, this session provided a forum for HSI and OSDFS to discuss its preliminary research findings with a diverse audience of experts and stakeholders. Attendees included representatives from across the U.S. government (including the Department of Justice, the National Counter Terrorism Center, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Education); school chiefs of police and Safe School Center Directors from across the U.S.; and subject matter experts from academia and the private sector (a list of participants follows).

The session consisted of a series of five presentations (each followed by question and answer sessions) and an end-of-day discussion in which the attendees identified lessons learned and potential implications. In addition to HSI's presentation of preliminary research observations contained in this report, four subject matter experts provided briefings that addressed various aspects of youth recruitment and radicalization. The presentations included:

- Children at War: Understanding the Global Trend of Children Being Pulled into Conflict and Violence—Dr. Peter Singer
- The Internet as a Terrorist Tool to Recruit Youth—Dr. Gabriel Weimann
- Understanding Radicalization: Trajectories, Vulnerabilities, Prevention, Detection & Counter Initiatives—Dr. Anne Speckhard
- Gang Recruitment and Utilization of Youth—Dr. Phelan Wyrick

Key points and recommendations from each of the presentations are highlighted below.

Children at War: Understanding the Global Trend of Children Being Pulled into Conflict and Violence – Dr. Peter Singer

Dr. Peter Singer is the director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative and a senior fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institute. He recently published a book, *Children at War*, where he discusses the nature and evolution of youth's role in conflicts.

Key points from Dr. Singer's presentation include:

- The extent to which child soldiers (e.g., those under the age of 18) are currently being utilized to participate in conflicts has never been seen before. More than 300,000 children (boys and girls) are presently serving as combatants and are fighting in almost 75% of the world's conflicts. Approximately 80% of conflicts involve children under the age of 15, with an average age of approximately 12 years old. This increase is linked to three trends:

- “Lost generation”: Many children within conflict areas are living in poverty. Some groups provide social services that the state does not offer thereby becoming an attractive alternative to impoverished youth.
- Demographical imbalances: When demographics are out of balance and there is a disproportionate sized young male population, conflict is more likely. Extended conflict causes weakened social structures and psychological maladies, which steer children to conflict.
- The rise of post-modern war: With conflicts affecting many areas, many youth are growing up into “cultures of violence.” Within these conflict zones the concept of “conflict entrepreneurs,” or those who are taking advantage of the circumstances and creating armies or stimulating violence (i.e. Charles Taylor in Liberia, using orphanages and boarding schools), is becoming common. Also, proliferation and increase in weapon technology that is easily usable by children contributes to the problem.
- The integration of youth into conflict can create a cycle of violence in society. Youth who are not reintegrated into society after serving as soldiers may not have any other skills but violence and war, which contributes to an easy path back into violence.
- There are two primary methods by which young persons are recruited: forcibly and voluntarily:
 - Forcible recruitment often is carried out through abduction raids. Those most at risk are youth who are disconnected from their society/families such as street kids, refugees, and orphans.
 - Voluntary recruits come from the same pool as forcible recruits but the organization will offer potential recruits goods and payment, enticement through indoctrination, persuasion by the proliferation of propaganda materials, and/or peer pressure.

Dr. Singer offered the following recommendations for countering the utilization or targeting of youth to participate in conflict:

- Prevent and deter the recruitment of youth by “naming and shaming” persons and groups willing to use youth for violence and conflict
- Make it harder to access the weapons that are technologically “easy” for young persons to use, to include going after “wartime entrepreneurs” who spread these weapons to conflict zones
- Develop and enforce legal measures (recognized globally) stipulating that those who utilize child soldiers will be liable for facing war crime charges. This should include the group leaders as well as those who enable the leaders
- Ultimately, the cycle of violence must be broken in order to reverse this trend. To accomplish this, it is necessary to create social programs and support systems, to provide economic assistance, and to help reintegrate the children into society. All support programs must include the community, helping children feel accepted back into society. This ultimately provides the children with more options so they are less likely to fall back into violent behavior.

The Internet as a Terrorist Tool to Recruit and Radicalize Youth – Dr. Gabriel Weimann

Dr. Gabriel Weimann has performed research into the areas of media effects, political campaigns, persuasion and influence, media and public opinion, and modern terrorism and the mass media. As a

Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), in Washington, DC, he conducted a multi-year study aimed at gaining a better understanding of how terrorist organizations and their supporters are utilizing the Internet to target an array of messages to diverse audiences. His research included monitoring the activity of terrorist organizations on the Internet in order to identify trends. Dr. Weimann's research is summarized in his book entitled "Terror in the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges."

Key points from Dr. Weimann's presentation include:

- The Internet has become an important tool for the modern terrorist, becoming as essential as the weapons they carry. Today, most terrorist organizations today are on-line in some fashion or another.
- Increased portability of Internet-accessible technology has, in part, helped increase the access that many of these groups' have to online communities.
- In addition to the expansion of terrorist organization's activity online, there has been an increased diffusion of Internet usage in developing nations. While current usage in developing countries is still relatively low overall, the growth rate has been rapid particularly among young people. Youth tend to access the Internet via public access points, such as libraries and Internet cafes.
- Some sites are very complex and are posted in multiple languages, while others are static sites for disseminating messages. Multiple language sites currently are dominated by jihadist groups.
- As Internet usage has expanded, both by terrorists and potential supporters, tactics and forms have also become more diverse and sophisticated. Terrorist organizations have begun to create targeted messages to specific age and demographic groups. This process is referred to "narrowcasting." For example, they target children on the Internet with colorful, picture-laden sites, or women by showing images of mothers proudly sending their children off to be martyrs. In the past, terrorists used one website to target all audiences.
- Terrorist groups do not necessarily recruit on-line, but use the Internet as a forum to begin the initial stages of the ideological, radicalization process. Youth are enticed to participate as terrorist organizations offer social bonds and outlets, creating virtual communities.
- Online activities of terrorist organizations have exhibited a number of trends, to include:
 - Adopting new technologies, such as multi-media sites (e.g. You Tube or Aqsa Tube) in addition to traditional web-pages.
 - E-Marketing their message specifically to children: Often this form of Internet marketing, or propaganda, will play a large part in psychological training and socialization of children to violence and suicide attacks. Specific methods in which they market themselves online to children include: using comics, videos, video games and quizzes. Other tactics include using interactive sites where children can be guided and instructed online via chat rooms or other forums. This enables the group to reach out to youth outside of their immediate proximity. Many of these chat rooms are hosted on U.S. websites (including Yahoo!).
 - Developing sites that celebrate martyrs after their death: Beyond use as a general propaganda technique, this tactic assists with recruitment by showing the reward of service to the group.
 - Providing online training, or a resource for training material: Groups post how-to sites, where they provide a multitude of manuals or standard operating procedures for would-be attackers. A number of sites will also act as resource sites, providing lists of websites.

Dr. Weimann offered the following comments and recommendations for countering terrorist websites:

- It is not feasible to simply block websites because new sites will be created in their place.
- Recommended tactics include monitoring websites, appealing to targeted populations, and creating other websites (which serve as “noise”) aimed at providing alternatives.

Understanding Radicalization: Trajectories, Vulnerabilities, Prevention, Detection & Counter Initiatives—Dr. Anne Speckhard

Dr. Speckhard served as co-director of the NATO sponsored Advanced Research Workshop on “Ideologies of Terrorism: Understanding and Countering the Social, Psychological and Political Underpinnings of Terrorism,” and serves on the NATO-Russia Counterterrorism Task Force and the NATO Human Factors and Medicine Panel Exploratory Team on “Psychosocial, Organisational and Cultural Aspects of Terrorism.” She has conducted a significant amount of research on radicalization and how terrorist groups recruit members. She has interviewed over 350 would-be suicide bombers, incarcerated militants, family members and close associates of terrorists, and others involved in terrorist organizations. Her research has focused on gaining a better understanding of how various terrorist groups recruit, indoctrinate, radicalize, and utilize members. She has also researched approaches for countering terrorist group recruitment and for getting members to disengage.

Key points from Dr. Speckhard’s presentation include:

- While it is hard to assess the likelihood of radicalization in the U.S. as compared to Europe, it does occur in the U.S.
- The economic status and social outlook of immigrant populations in Europe is different than those in America. For example, immigrant populations in Europe are frequently isolated and negative sentiments (e.g., that immigrants do not have the same advantages of native citizens) are pervasive.
- Muslim immigrants are targeted by terrorist groups because they are perceived to not be integrated into their new society and they may still have close ties with their country of origin. More specifically, alienated or marginalized Muslim youth in Europe are prime targets because they are frequently highly educated and highly disenfranchised.
- Terrorist groups may prey on individual grievances, offering a sense of identity, belonging, and adventure.
- Though instances of radicalization of the domestic population do not appear to be widespread, there should be some concern about how the radicalization of European citizens could impact the United States domestically. As a part of the visa waiver program, European citizens face lesser travel restrictions, which could potentially enable relatively easy access for radicalized individuals to enter the U.S.

Dr. Speckhard offered the following recommendations for countering radicalization:

- A key aspect to any counter-initiative program is raising awareness of the problem. It is important for communities to be made aware of the fact that radical ideology is spreading.

- The government should work towards understanding and de-legitimizing the militant jihadist ideology.
- Social networking sites should be monitored for signs of radical content.
- A protocol should be developed for detecting and intervening when students begin to exhibit radical or violent behavior (i.e. through their clothing, actions, statements, writings, etc.) and put in place a reporting system for teachers, students, and family members to alert the authorities.

Gang Recruitment and Utilization of Youth—Dr. Phelan Wyrick

Dr. Phelan Wyrick is a Senior Policy Advisor to the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at the U.S. Department of Justice. For over a decade he has held senior positions in OJP bureaus including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Institute of Justice. Dr. Wyrick developed and oversaw federal research, evaluation, and demonstration programs on topics including street gangs, delinquency prevention, and criminal justice technology. Since 2006, Dr. Wyrick has been a regular instructor on gang prevention at the International Law Enforcement Academy in El Salvador.

Key points from Dr. Wyrick’s presentation include:

- While there are interesting parallels that can be drawn between why young persons become involved with terrorist organizations, and why they get involved with gangs, it is important to emphasize that the processes involved are not the same.
- Youth normally are thought to voluntarily join gangs as opposed to being recruited.
- One of the biggest challenges to creating a model to deal with gangs is to first understand what factors are universal. Many factors leading to the proliferation of gangs are either local issues or personal grievances. Once the universal factors are identified, local officials can tailor the counter-initiatives to meet their specific needs.
- There are both push and pull factors that are associated with the reasons people join gangs.
 - Pull factors are generally environmental factors that make gang-life seem attractive. Just because someone is influenced by push factors does not mean they are destined to become a gang member. For example, in the worst communities in the U.S., most people are not gang members. The factors are viewed to have more of a cumulative effect on someone. If communities can intervene and get rid of a few of the risk factors, some youth will be far less likely to join a gang.
 - Pull factors are more focused on the aspects of the gang that youth perceive as positive or fulfilling. These factors generally relate to an individual, who may have unfulfilled needs. Frequently, the gang will provide different things for different individuals but generally include: respect (status/identity), fun/excitement (parties, drugs, alcohol, weapon use); sense of family; and protection/money.
 - Ultimately, distilling what the pushes and pulls mean for individuals who join gangs is that they really offer a mastery and command of violence. Youth look at gangs as a solution to their problems, not as the problem itself. They reinforce that logic with the view that, “we’re family, we’re strong, and you’re out there, weak and alone.”

- Tactics used by gangs to appeal to youth include: throwing skip parties (where youth skip school together and partake in various activities); peer pressure (e.g., where gang members use their bond with the young person to encourage participation); generational membership; and online advertising.

Dr. Wyrick offered the following recommendations for countering youth participation in gangs:

- Approaches consisting entirely of law enforcement and response are not sufficient to produce long-term change. Gangs must be viewed as a community problem versus solely a law enforcement problem
- A comprehensive understanding of the issues is necessary in order to address the problem. It is necessary to develop an initial understanding of the community dynamics by collecting detailed information on the community
- Strategies should be comprehensive and should integrate a variety of community members into the solution. Successful programs require strong and distributed leadership, access to data to assess performance, experience with partnerships, and knowledge of the community.

List of Youth Recruitment & Radicalization Roundtable Attendees*

Analyst, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of Democracy and Governance
Analyst, National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC)
Analyst, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Homeland Infrastructure Threat and Risk Analysis Center (HITRAC)
Analyst, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Homeland Infrastructure Threat and Risk Analysis Center (HITRAC), Risk Integration and Analysis Branch (RIAB)
Analyst, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Government Facilities Sector, Federal Protective Service
Executive Agent, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Science & Technology Directorate
Social Science Analyst, National Institute of Justice
Social Science Analyst, National Institute of Justice
Project Manager, National Institute of Justice
Senior Social Science Analyst, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, National Institute of Justice
Acting Deputy Director for Research and Evaluation, National Institute of Justice
Senior Vice President, Hillard Heintz
Deputy Chief, Los Angeles Unified School District Police Department, California
Officer, Safety and Security, Chicago Public Schools, Illinois
Director, Office of Safety and Security, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia
Director, Safety and Security, Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland
Officer, Sunnyside School District, Washington
Police Captain, Miami-Dade Public Schools Police Department
Director, Public Safety, Minnesota School Safety Center
Gang and Prevention Program Coordinator, Office of the Attorney General of Florida

* This list does not include representatives that attended from the U.S. Department of Education or the Homeland Security Institute.

APPENDIX B. COOPERATIVE CIVIC EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM GRANT: INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN CIVIC EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools provides support for international partnerships and exchange programs with emerging democracies in civic education and economic education under the Cooperative Civic Education and Economic Education Exchange Program. The program is authorized under Title II, Subpart 3, Section 2345 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C 6711-6716. This subpart of the legislation also may be cited as the "Education for Democracy Act." The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools works in coordination with the U.S. Department of State to support the program. The program was established in 1995.

The purpose of this program is to provide participants from the United States and eligible countries (emerging democracies) with exemplary curriculum and teacher professional development programs in civic and government education and economic education; assist in the adaptation, implementation and institutionalization of the programs; create and implement programs for students that draw upon the experiences of the participating countries; and provide support for independent research and evaluation to determine the effects of educational programs on students' development of knowledge, skills, and traits of character essential for the preservation and improvement of constitutional democracy, and on the effective participation in and the preservation and improvement of an efficient market economy.

Organizations in the United States, with experience in the development of curricula and programs in civic education and economic education for students in elementary and secondary schools in countries other than the United States, are required to carry out the legislative mandates of this program. The following organizations are currently funded by the program: Center for Civic Education, Calabasas, CA (Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program); Sage Colleges, Council on Citizenship Education, Troy, NY (Civics Mosaic II); Constitutional Rights Foundation, Chicago, Illinois (Deliberating in a Democracy); National Council on Economic Education, New York, NY (Economic International).

There are approximately seventy-five countries currently participating as partners with the numerous projects funded to carry out the program objectives. Some of the partner countries involved in the projects include: Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Costa Rica, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, Egypt, Hungary, Poland, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Macedonia, Mexico, Morocco, Senegal, Panama, Poland, Romania, Russia (Kaluga, Kalingrad, Petersburg), Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Ukraine, Venezuela, West Bank.

Several of the partnerships have acknowledged ongoing activities to recruit and or radicalize youth in their countries or the participation of youth in conflict and post-conflict issues. The activities are taking place through networks (family, social, religious) and schools, media and Internet, or gangs and youth organizations. However, many of the partners emphasized the value of innovative, student centered, active learning strategies in education and through civic education programs in the prevention of conflicts or violent agendas.

The following are examples of the program activities used in the funded projects:

Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program

- **We the People: Project Citizen** - a curriculum and teacher training program to promote an understanding of the institutions of our constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded; to develop the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens; and to develop an understanding of how to use the democratic processes when participating in making decisions and managing conflict. The program attempts to help students see the relationship of their experiences to the larger arena of social and political engagement. The curriculum is focused on upper elementary and middle levels.
- **Elements of Democracy or Foundations of Democracy** - a curriculum that explores the fundamental terminology and processes surrounding the theory and practice of democracy (i.e., civil society, human rights, popular sovereignty, common good, representation, civic participation, etc).

Civic Mosaic

- **Civic Mosaic** - a program for teachers who seek to introduce a comparative political perspective into their classrooms through a series of international teacher exchanges, research projects, seminars and conferences. A textbook of comparative lessons has been developed and will be published in 2008.

Deliberating in a Democracy

- **Deliberating in a Democracy** – project designed to improve teaching and learning of democratic principles and the skills of civic deliberation related to democratic principles as applied in each participating country. The emphasis is on direct person-to-person exchange of ideas and experiences to give people a picture of democracy in action.

Economics International

- **Economics International** – focuses on assisting emerging democracies in the development of free market economies to sustain their democratic societies.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Groups

Al-Qaeda (AQ) – *the Base*

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) – *Basque Homeland and Freedom*

Hamas – *Islamic Resistance Movement*

Hizballah – *Party of God*

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) – *Islamic Congregation*

*Terms**

Basque Autonomous Country - is an autonomous community in northern Spain; the capital is Vitoria-Gasteiz (Vitoria is the name in Spanish, Gasteiz in Basque) and Bilbao its largest city

Branding - a form of identification; making a message easily recognizable and authentic to its audiences

Caliphate - the era of Islam's ascendancy from the death of Mohammed until the 13th century

Chat Room - an online discussion site to share information via text with a group of other users

Counter-capacity Measures - initiatives to hamper and disrupt terrorists' online capabilities, and focus on monitoring and shutting down terrorist websites

Counter-message Measures - initiatives that attempt to confront and discredit radical beliefs and opinions; focuses on marginalizing radical messages' impact on audiences

Curriculum - all the courses of study offered by an educational institution

Diaspora - A dispersion of a people from their original homeland; the community formed by such a people

Domestic Terrorist Group - terrorism involving groups based in, and operating entirely within a given nation state without foreign direction

Fatwa - a legal opinion or ruling issued by an Islamic scholar

Halaqah – informal study group

Imam - the title for a Muslim religious leader or chief

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) - a bomb constructed and deployed in ways other than in conventional military action; they may be partially comprised of conventional military explosives, such as an artillery round, attached to a detonating mechanism

* The definitions provided are those most relevant to the focus of this study.

International Terrorist Group - include those designated by the Secretary of State as “Foreign Terrorist Organizations” (FTOs)

Intifada - is an Arabic word which literally means ‘shaking off’, though it is usually translated into English as ‘rebellion’ or ‘uprising’

Islamist - an orthodox Muslim; often characterized by moral conservatism, literalism, and the attempt to implement Islamic values in all spheres of life

Jemaah – religious community

Jihad - a religious war against infidels or Mohammedan heretics; also, any bitter war or crusade for a principle or belief

Kale Borroka - organized street violence and protest; its literal translation means “street struggle”, and refers to violent attacks on people and property

Madrassa - a building or group of buildings used for teaching Islamic theology and religious law, typically including a mosque

Maghreb – a region of North Africa, which consists of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia

Martyr - a person who is put to death or endures great suffering on behalf of any belief, principle, or cause

Mosque - a Muslim house of worship

Mujahideen – plural term for Mujahid, or ‘struggler’; refers to an individual involved in jihad

Narrowcasting - dissemination of information to a narrow audience, not to the general public; aiming media messages at specific segments of the public defined by values, preferences, or demographic attributes

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) - a term that has become widely accepted for referring to a legally constituted, non-business organization created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government

Pesantren - an Islamic boarding school located in Southeast Asia

Propaganda - information that is spread for the purpose of promoting some cause

Radicalization - the process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect societal change

Recruitment - the act of getting recruits or enlisting people for an army or a cause

School-aged Youth - include students ranging from kindergarten through college, which generally include young persons between the ages of five and twenty-two

Shariah Law - the code of law derived from the Koran and from the teachings and example of Mohammed

Social Networking Sites - online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others; most provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services; examples include: Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter

Terrorism - the unlawful use of force against persons or property to intimidate a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives

Ustadz – an Arabic word for ‘teacher’

Virtual Media Production and Distribution Entity (MPDE) - these groups collect and organize radical Islamist material, and then help redistribute it to masses of third-party recipients, such as personal websites, blogs, or online discussion forums

Wahhabism - a conservative form of Islam founded by Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792), known for its strict observance of the Quran

Web 1.0 - passive, individually-directed information-seeking online environments

Web 2.0 - active, socially-connected, user-involved environments where users are compelled to interact, discuss, create, and pass on content

Web Forum - a discussion site online

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