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COMBATTING TERRORISM: BUILDING  
SECURITY AND DEFENDING  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

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REPORT

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***“They who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety”***  
**Benjamin Franklin**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The rise of the so-called ‘Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham’ (ISIS), also known as Daesh, has once again propelled the threat of terrorism to the top of the global agenda. In some form, the phenomenon of terrorism has always been a part of the world’s history, but the degree of alertness among the international community has been fluctuating greatly. Following the 9/11 attack against the United States – as well as subsequent bombings in Istanbul, London and Madrid – for the first time, a non-state entity was declared a direct war adversary. A military campaign has been launched against al-Qaeda and its sponsors in Afghanistan. A vast array of measures has been introduced on national, regional and global levels both to bolster our defences and to hunt down the terrorist leaders wherever they were. The effectiveness of these efforts culminated in the death of Osama Bin Laden and may have lulled some in the democratic world into complacency and a false sense of security.

2. Counter-terrorism measures as well as new developments such as the ‘Arab Spring’ prompted profound changes in the nature of the terrorism threat. The threat is evolving and adapting to new circumstances. The “9/11” al-Qaeda is gone. Al-Qaeda has never been truly centralised to begin with and its main success was to offer its brand name to various local and regional extremist organisations. But by now, even that rudimentary level of centralisation has diminished. Al-Qaeda’s name is now used by a number of splinter organisations that mushroomed in the region spanning from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to Western Africa. The agendas of these organisations are mostly local and sectarian; they are seen as lacking motivation and/or resources to stage serious terrorist attacks against “the West”. Nevertheless, they – especially groups like the ISIS and al-Qaeda in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – pose security threats to the Euro-Atlantic community: they operate in the vicinity of the latter and some of them are capable of seriously destabilising weaker countries, which could create a safe haven to an “old” al-Qaeda-type organisation with the ability to project force into our territories.

3. In addition to that, the threat of “home-grown” terrorism, often manifested in “Lone Wolf” acts, is becoming increasingly acute. The radicalisation of some Euro-Atlantic citizens is a serious concern and, as the case of Anders Breivik shows, it is not limited to violent jihadist ideology. The Rapporteur also wants to underscore the fact that violent jihadists are a clear minority among the world’s Muslim population: terrorist acts are incompatible with Islamic values and are condemned in strongest possible terms by mainstream Muslim organisations.<sup>1</sup>

4. The complex nature of the terrorist threat and the abovementioned new trends require the Euro-Atlantic community to revisit and adjust its strategies and instruments. It is a difficult task not least because it needs to become more efficient without jeopardising human rights and liberties. It is crucial to find the right balance between both security needs and budgetary constraints, as well as between security and the protection of human rights and individual freedom. For example, freedom of trade is affected when detectors are installed at departure or entry ports and slow down the free flow of trade. Privacy is also reduced when technology such as video-surveillance or biometrics are used for counter-terrorism purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in September 2014, France’s Muslim community leaders made a statement on brutality of extremists in Syria and Iraq, stressing that they “unequivocally denounce the terrorist acts that constitute crimes against humanity, and solemnly declare that Islam does not advocate such groups, their supporters and their recruits. These actions from another age, calling for Jihad and reckless campaigns indoctrinating the youth are not true to the teachings of Islam”.

5. This report will discuss the multi-faceted and changing nature of terrorism. The Rapporteur will argue that the perceived decline of the direct terrorist threat against Euro-Atlantic societies is likely to be temporary as terrorists are regrouping and exploring new tactics and technologies. The Rapporteur will also argue in favour of supplementing law enforcement methods with long-term strategies designed to tackle the spread of extremist ideologies. Last but not least, the Rapporteur will underscore the importance of additional safeguards to ensure that anti-terrorist and de-radicalisation policies do not infringe fundamental rights and liberties.

## II. AFTER BIN LADEN: THE CHANGING FACE OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

6. Observers increasingly agree that decentralisation of Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism presents a strategic test, comparable to that of the disappearance of the bipolar world (Gallo & Helfstein, 2011). While Bin Laden's personal qualities and financial resources provided the organisation with ideological direction and operational leadership, the 'new' al-Qaeda is characterised by a much flatter hierarchy. Its new ideological "Clausewitz" Abu Musab al-Suri ("The Syrian"), engineer by training who lived in France and Spain and whose current whereabouts are unknown, highlights quantity over quality. In his 1,600-page Internet manifesto, he champions the strategy of creating numerous self-generating cells and encouraging "Lone Wolf" terrorism. Al-Suri's ideas have been widely used by another influential terrorist guru Yemeni-American imam Anwar al-Awlaki (killed by a drone strike in 2011) (Hirsh, 2013). As the Chairman of the US House of Representative Committee on Intelligence Mike Rogers put it, al-Qaeda has been 'metastasizing' into smaller groups that pose a serious challenge to global security.

### A. THE 'METASTASIZING' OF AL-QAEDA

7. Unstable political environments and weak governments in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia allow space for violent extremism and terrorist organisations to gain strong footholds.<sup>2</sup> Al-Qaeda Central, led by Ayman al Zawahiri, retains influence in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), although its role has been diminished by the numerous successes of counterterrorism efforts led by the United States against al-Qaeda leadership. The centre of gravity has been shifting to al-Qaeda's regional affiliates of which the most notable groups include:

- al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) – based in Yemen, AQAP is often identified as the strongest, most lethal al-Qaeda franchise;
- AQIM, originally based in Algeria primarily dedicated to replacing the Algerian government with a fundamentalist Islamic regime, but it has also established footholds in the Sahel region;
- al-Shabaab, based in Somalia, it suffered heavy blows from anti-terrorism forces, and its leader Ahmed Abdi Godane was killed in a US air strike in September 2014, but is still capable of carrying out well-organised attacks in Somalia and Kenya that have boosted the al-Shabaab brand considerably;
- Jabhat al-Nusra, also known as al-Nusra Front – a key affiliate fighting in the Syrian civil war.

8. Several other notable organisations often operate alongside with al-Qaeda, without being formally affiliated with it. These include:

- the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham<sup>3</sup> (ISIS) – formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq, primarily active and controls territory in western Iraq and eastern Syria and is competing with al-Nusra Front;

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<sup>2</sup> The following groups do not represent a comprehensive list of organisations engaging in terrorist and/or insurgent activity in the region discussed in this report. Rather, they are some of the most significant organisations in operation to date. It also does include organisations operating in the Palestinian Territories, however, the complex Palestinian issue is beyond the scope of this report.

<sup>3</sup> "Al Sham" refers to Syria and its surrounding area.

- the Taliban in Afghanistan, an extremist group that ruled in Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001 and has since engaged in insurgent activity directed against coalition forces and state institutions in Afghanistan;
- the Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, TTP) – operating out of “FATA”, it is unlikely that they give up their stronghold in the foreseeable future, despite the strikes of Pakistan’s military that followed the breakdown of peace talks between the government and TTP in February 2014;
- the Haqqani network (HQN) – a powerful, autonomous subgroup of the Taliban, recently officially designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the U.S. government, that controls large swaths of territory in North Waziristan and in Afghanistan’s south-eastern provinces;
- Boko Haram – a Nigeria-based violent extremist group “that seeks to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and replace it with a regime based on Islamic law” (NCTC, 2014), but in recent years it expanded its activity into neighbouring countries;
- the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) – a militant organisation operating out of North Waziristan, initially aiming to overthrow the Uzbek government, but now shifting its focus from strictly Uzbek targets to attacking US and coalition forces in Afghanistan and US diplomatic facilities in Central Asia (START, 2008).

9. All these groups share with al-Qaeda affiliates an overarching purpose to unite Muslims to “overthrow ‘un-Islamic regimes’ that they believe oppress their Muslim citizens and replace them with genuine Islamic governments,” and to expel Western influence. However, not all of the extremist militant groups operating in Asia and Africa are Islamist: most notably, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), based in Uganda and operating in the border region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, adheres to a radical form of Christianity and seeks to overthrow the Ugandan government. Led by Joseph Kony, the group is responsible for violently attacking civilian populations and kidnapping children to fill the LRA’s ranks (Eichstaedt, 2014). Cooperation between the Ugandan army, the African Union forces, and the US Special Forces has diminished the strength of the LRA but Kony remains at large (Biryabarema & Gridneff, 2013).

## **B. AN EXAGGERATED THREAT?**

10. The killing of Bin Laden and decimation of the ‘old’ al-Qaeda leadership has led many to conclude that the terrorist threat against the Western societies has decreased and become manageable. Indeed, between the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and before the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013, sixteen people were killed in the United States by jihadist terrorists, compared with some 72 in a similar period in the 1970s (Mueller, 2014). The Defense News Leadership Poll that surveyed 352 senior employees within the White House, Pentagon, Congress, and the US defence industry in November 2013 found that the majority of them consider cyber attacks to be by far a greater threat to US national security than terrorism (Carney, 2014).

11. For the time being, the terrorist organisations operating in this region of the world are focusing on ‘the near enemy’ and not ‘the far enemy’ (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2012). In other words, attacks are targeted within a state or are limited to a small region; international, Western targets are not forgotten but they are not the primary focus of these groups’ agendas at present (The Economist, 2013). This is in no small part due to the degradation of force projection capabilities of groups like al-Qaeda Central by persistent counterterrorism efforts. The focus on local sectarian and ideological conflicts is reaffirmed by the findings of the 2012 Global Terrorism Index, which indicate that countries in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia make up the majority of countries most affected by terrorism over the previous decade. Three countries – Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan – suffered 58% of all fatalities caused by terrorist worldwide in 2012. The next five countries most hit by terrorist attacks are India, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen and Thailand. According to a US-based National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism

and Responses to Terrorism, “while terrorist attacks have in large part moved away from Western Europe and North America to Asia, the Middle East and Africa, worldwide terrorism is reaching new levels of destructiveness” (Pavgi, 2013).

12. Moreover, the more heterogeneous and dispersed nature of the terrorist network has already led to some internal infighting and varying degrees of radicalism among affiliates, which has the potential to damage al-Qaeda’s influence upon local populations and thus its ability to recruit and operate effectively. Most notably, there is an open feud between al-Nusra Front and ISIS. While ISIS also used to claim affiliation with al-Qaeda, Bin Laden’s successor Ayman al Zawahiri has sided with al-Nusra Front in public messages, calling for ISIS to leave Syria entirely. Al-Nusra Front is seen as less radical than ISIS due to attempts to “win the hearts and minds of the Syrian population, providing parts of the country with humanitarian assistance and basic civil services.” (NCTC, 2013). ISIS, on the other hand, faces opposition from other rebel and extremist groups in Syria because of its increasingly radical and violent behaviour (The Economist, 2014).<sup>4</sup> The proclamation of the “Islamic caliphate” by ISIS in June 2014 has been regarded as a direct challenge by the core al-Qaeda and some other terrorist groups. Boko Haram, however, has reportedly welcomed the “caliphate”. Disagreements occur not only between al Zawahiri and affiliate groups, but within these groups as well: a notable case was the disobedience of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, leader of one of AQIM brigades, who sent his men into Libya in direct defiance of AQIM’s emir (McCants, 2013).

13. Taking these trends into account, back in January 2014, President Barack Obama suggested stopping using of the term ‘war on terror’. According to him, there is a “distinction between the capacity and reach of [an Osama] bin Laden and a network that is actively planning major terrorist plots against the homeland versus jihadists who are engaged in various local power struggles and disputes, often sectarian.” (Remnick, 2014)

### **C. NEW RISKS AND CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

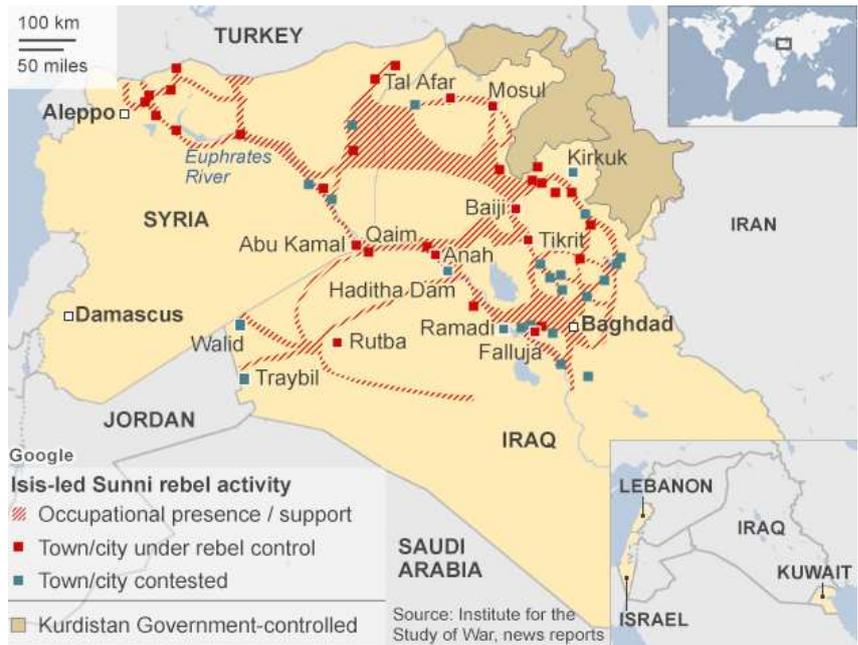
14. That said, a growing number of observers note that it would be a grave mistake to disparage the international terrorist threat. In fact, the Financial Times reported in January 2014 that al-Qaeda “and its affiliates have never controlled more land, had as many recruits in their ranks or been as well financially resourced as now” (Jones, Daragahi, & Kerr, 2014). ISIS territorial advances later in the year have further aggravated the situation and caused an alarm among the international community. The militant organisations are also exchanging best practices: some techniques are migrating from Afghanistan into northern Africa, such as the use of improvised explosive devices in Mali and Nigeria (Tan, 2013). There are three main reasons for the Euro-Atlantic community to be directly concerned.

15. First, some of these organisations still retain some capabilities and ambitions to attack targets in the democratic world. For instance, TTP claimed responsibility for the attempt to bomb the Times Square in New York in May 2010. AQIM also declared its intention to attack Western targets (it announced that Spain and France are its primary “far enemies”) and is also suspected of having been involved in the assassination of the US Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens in Benghazi in September 2012, although definitive evidence of it has not been presented (Laub & Masters, 2014). Observers note that, in the context of the Arab uprisings, a new anti-Western narrative is being born where Western countries are blamed for abandoning Syrians to be slaughtered by Bashar al-Assad and for allegedly supporting the Egyptian generals who ousted the Islamist President Mohamed Morsi (Hirsh, 2013).

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<sup>4</sup> Zawahiri’s preference for less brutal methods has its limits, of course. For instance, his decision to include Somalia’s al-Shabaab under his umbrella has damaged al-Qaeda’s reputation among the Islamic population due to al-Shabaab’s brutal and indiscriminate use of force.

16. Second, terrorist organisations in these regions capitalise on political instability and weak governments in order to gain territorial control and potentially create safe havens for organisations with a global reach. A particularly disquieting development is the advancement of ISIS in eastern Syria and northern Iraq, followed by unspeakable atrocities against opponents. In January 2014 it seized control of parts of Sunni-dominated Anbar province, including the city of Fallujah. In June, it continued its advance and captured the important cities of Mosul, Tikrit and Tal Afar. In this territory, ISIS has proclaimed



the creation of “Islamic Caliphate” with ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (“Specially Designated Global Terrorist” by the US State department) as ‘caliph’. According to the most radical estimates, the ‘caliphate’, with its *de facto* capital is the Syrian town of Raqqa, controls the swaths of land amounting to some 80-90,000 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. the size of Austria or Portugal. ISIS stated that it does not intend to entrench and limit itself within these borders: they called on further removal of “Sykes-Picot”<sup>5</sup> borders within the Mediterranean-Middle East region. Furthermore, ISIS leaders called on Muslims around the world to pledge their allegiance to the ‘caliphate’, thus implying a claim to global domination. ISIS rule over captured territories was marked by disturbingly cruel acts, such as the videotaped beheading of two American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and a British citizen David Haines, crucifixion of anti-ISIS rebels in Syria as well as murdering, mutilating, torturing or raping of thousands of innocent people, including women and children, particularly Christians, Shia Muslims, Kurds and other ethnic minorities. According to the UN, due to violence in northern Iraq, more than 800,000 people were forced to flee from their homes in August 2014 alone. The influence of ISIS also spreads beyond Iraq and Syria: an ISIS affiliate North African terrorist group calling itself Jund al-Khilafah – Soldiers of the Caliphate – released a video depicting the beheading of a French citizen Hervé Gourdel in Algeria.

17. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, expressed his disgust with ISIS tactics, and said that these “barbarians... want to attack the very foundations of human civilization.” In his notable 11 September 2014 speech, President Obama identified the emergence of the ‘caliphate’ as “a threat to the people of Iraq and Syria, and the broader Middle East -- including American citizens, personnel and facilities. If left unchecked, these terrorists could pose a growing threat beyond that region -- including to the United States. While we have not yet detected specific plotting against our homeland, ISIL leaders have threatened America and our allies.” A broad international coalition has been launched – including 10 European NATO Allies as well as Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar – to strike ISIS targets. At a milestone Paris Conference on Iraq in September 2014, French officials urged the coalition to learn from mistakes of past interventions and consider further steps beyond military action, namely to prepare a political plan for the region.

18. One counter-terrorism expert that this Sub-Committee met in Germany said that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has the ambition to become the next Bin Laden of the violent jihadist

<sup>5</sup> In the secret 1916 “Sykes-Picot” agreement, France and the United Kingdom established spheres of influence over the territories of the Ottoman Empire were it defeated in World War I.

movement. This ambition is particularly dangerous for Western societies because, in order to cement his status as the new global jihadist leader, the head of ISIS would need to stage “his own 9/11”. ISIS also stands out among ‘traditional’ terrorist organisations due to its ability to raise money it needs to finance its wars, mainly from taxation and extortion, and oil and gas sales and smuggling.

19. The similar concerns about al-Qaeda and the Taliban presence in Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas and their alleged intentions to regain lost territory in Afghanistan after the ISAF drawdown in 2014 are a constant theme on the international agenda and are explored on a regular basis within this NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

20. In the recent past, there was a widespread apprehension that Yemen was on the way to become a “new Afghanistan” for al-Qaeda. However, in 2012, Yemeni military offensives and US drone strikes were “successful in reducing the physical territory that AQAP had previously gained in Yemen as the result of political turmoil” (US Department of State, 2013). In spite of this loss of territory, AQAP remains active throughout Yemen and poses a direct threat to neighbours. In addition, many of the gains of the 2012 offensive against AQAP have been undone over the last two years as the Yemeni government were not able to maintain pressure on AQAP.

21. The possibility of an emergence of a terrorist safe haven in the Sahel and even Sub-Saharan Africa poses a particular concern in recent years. The 2011 revolution in Libya resulted in a security vacuum that provided greater opportunity for terrorists to operate and further contributed to regional insecurity as weapons were smuggled out of the country. In 2012, the Tuareg rebellion and subsequent coup d’état in Mali allowed terrorists to gain a foothold in the northern half of the country. In 2013, French troops sent to Mali in response to the political upheavals retook Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal, pushing AQIM militants northwards into the mountains. Meanwhile, Boko Haram is increasing its activities within Nigeria, threatening also Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Niger, believed by some observers to be the “next Mali”, is in a particularly precarious situation, given its poverty, environmental threats, weakness of its institutions and the discontent of minorities such as Tuareg clans. Niger is exposed to the influence of AQIM, its offshoot Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa as well as Boko Haram. The Niger’s government embarked on some necessary reforms, increased security spending and reportedly agreed to host a US drone base (Lebovich, 2013), but the risk of country’s implosion has not disappeared. The Central African Republic has also been in a state of chaos and violent clashes among Muslim and Christian communities since a coup in March 2013, which led to death of more than 5,000 people. Currently, a UN-led mission consisting of predominantly African forces as well as about 2,000 French troops are helping to ensure public order in the Republic.

22. And third, the Euro-Atlantic nations’ security can be affected by the participation of their own radicalised citizens in conflicts such as the Syrian war, especially if they subsequently return home. This is a so-called “blowback” problem. The challenge of “blowback” is a representation of one of the key new trends in international terrorism, i.e., the violent jihadist movement has become less ethnically homogeneous – its members are no longer almost exclusively Arabs. Extremist groups increasingly recruit people of other ethnicities, such as Chechens, Kazakhs, Iranians or Kurds. The number of women among terrorists is also growing. It is estimated that more than 1,200 volunteers from various European countries – mostly from the United Kingdom, France and Germany – joined the extremist groups fighting in Syria. There could be as many as 2,000 people from Europe fighting for ISIS. The person who apparently filmed the beheading of an American journalist by ISIS has reportedly spoken with a distinctive London accent. Around 100 people from the United Kingdom and the United States alone are believed to have joined al-Shabaab (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2013). The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) also recruits members from across Central Asia to join the insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Central Asian countries fear that these people might one day come back and cause trouble. UK Prime Minister David Cameron has described the possibility of terrorist attacks launched by radicalized returnees

from the Syrian civil war as “the most serious threat to Britain’s security that there is today”, while French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has characterized this challenge as “the greatest danger that we must face in the coming years”.

23. The concerns of European statesmen were magnified after Mehdi Nemmouche, a French citizen who had returned from the Syrian conflict, launched an attack at the Jewish Museum of Brussels on 24 May 2014, killing four people. The perpetrator of March 2012 Toulouse killings, French-born extremist Mohamed Merah has also reportedly spent some time in Afghanistan and Pakistan. On 24 September, the UN Security Council passed a resolution designed to thwart the flow of radicalised people to join the ranks of ISIS and other terrorist groups. The resolution commits member states to preventing and suppressing the recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of potential extremist militants as well as imposing effective border controls and controls on identity papers.

24. So far the blowback rates are very low because many of them do not intend to return and expect a martyr’s death, but experts are concerned that as these regional conflicts drag on, the absolute number of blowback attacks might be substantial (Gardner, 2013). Over-reacting on this issue, for instance, excessively applying preventive detention of returnees also poses risks: returnees who would otherwise not pose a threat to Western societies might radicalize in prison. According to the Mehdi Nemmouche enquiry, Nemmouche himself had been radicalized sometime during his long prison career before joining the Syrian war.

#### **D. THE CHALLENGE OF HOME-GROWN TERRORISM**

25. As noted, a key element of contemporary terrorism strategy, advocated by al-Suri and others, is a greater emphasis on "home-grown" terrorism, which involves actions by radicalised citizens of Western countries. These actions as well as motives behind them are difficult to anticipate. Home-grown terrorism is ideologically heterogeneous and involves not only violent Islamists, but also far-right, far-left and separatist extremists. The root causes of radicalisation can often be traced to high unemployment and poverty of certain communities, particularly in some suburbs of major European cities.

26. There is no consensus in the policy-making or analysts community on the scope of the home-grown terrorist threat. Statistically, the threat is low: for an average American, a chance to become a victim of a terrorist attack is 1 in 3.5 million a year, compared to a 1 in 8,000 chance of perishing in an auto accident (Mueller, 2014). In the United Kingdom, as many people die from bee stings kill as from the hands of terrorist (about 5 people a year) (Beckford, 2012). It is argued that home-grown terrorists, especially the lone wolves, lack the resources and competence to stage a large-scale attack. The Boston Marathon bombing by Tsarnaev brothers is the most illustrious recent example of a home-grown terrorist attack, but it also shows the limitations of this tactics (Maher & Batrawi, 2013). Greater reliance on home-grown terrorists is an expression of desperation rather than deliberate tactics, as it is now much harder to sustain, conceal and protect terrorist training camps.

27. However, it is worth recalling that the primary objective of terrorism is not to inflict as many casualties as possible but to cause mass fear and panic and to capture worldwide media attention. In that sense, the Boston bombings, the massacre in Norway by a far-right fanatic Anders Breivik and the killing of seven people in the French cities of Toulouse and Montauban in 2012 by a French-Algerian extremist Mohammed Merah reaffirmed the acuteness of the home-grown terrorism challenge. Weakened and preoccupied with local fights, al-Qaeda affiliates and similar organisations increasingly rely on radicalised citizens to stage the attacks in Western countries. For instance, the infamous North African terrorist commander Belmokhtar, linked with an attack on the Algerian gas facility in January 2013, has reportedly addressed radicalised communities in France saying “you are already in France do what you can. Do the jihad by yourselves. Fight

France by all means you can find.’ (Corera, 2013) US Attorney General Eric Holder has said that attacks by radicalised citizens are the most serious terrorist threat to the United States (Perez & Caldwell, 2013), while former FBI Director Robert Mueller warned that home-grown terrorists “understand our culture, our security protocols, and our vulnerabilities. They use the Internet, social media, and marketing skills to influence like-minded individuals/” (Friedman, 2012).

28. Ideological radicalisation and recruitment of individuals by terrorists as well as communication, operational guidance and weapon-making instructions are greatly facilitated by the use of the Internet as well as other electronic tools, such as computer games simulating combat situations (Breivik admitted playing Modern Warfare game intensively while preparing for the attack in Oslo and Utoeya island in July 2011 that left 77 people dead). American Neo-Nazi Keith Luke, who committed a killing spree of Cape Verdean immigrants in 2009, told police that he was inspired by white supremacists web sites where he read about “the demise of the white race” (Bjelopera, 2013).

29. The influential violent jihadist ideologist Anwar al-Awlaki, sometimes called the “Bin Laden of the Internet”, widely used online tools such as Internet magazine Inspire, social media and video sharing sites to spread his online lectures and sermons. Being an American citizen, al-Awlaki was quite efficient in radicalising some American Muslims and recruiting them for al-Qaeda (Madhani, 2011), before he was killed by a drone in Yemen in 2011. It is believed that al-Awlaki’s propaganda may have inspired some ‘lone wolf’ terrorist plots such as the attempt to blow up Northwest/Delta Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Day 2009 (Theohary & Rollins, 2011). According to the Muslim Public Affairs Council, of 28 plots in the United States between 2009 and 2012, al-Awlaki played an inspirational and/or operational role in 18 of them. ISIS has also developed a skilful online activity, using Twitter, Facebook and other social media to spread their messages and recruit new fighters. ISIS has even been to commission a full-length propaganda movie, available online. Apart from posting brutal images such as decapitation of hostages, ISIS also produces “peaceful” images, depicting, for instance, allegedly thriving agricultural activity in territories under their control. That said, the online instructions on how to produce weapons, explosives or poison are often very unreliable. Besides, the authorities frequently monitor these sites, or even create false ones, in order to mislead or identify potential terrorists (Friedman, 2012). A RAND Corporation study shows that the Internet enhances opportunities to become radicalised, but it serves more like an ‘echo chamber’ to confirm already existing extremist beliefs (RAND Europe, 2013).

### **III. RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING THREAT**

30. The global anti-terrorism strategies have evolved significantly over the last several years. The G.W. Bush Administration and several US allies have been favouring military interventions to disrupt terrorist networks in countries that harbour them. While the “intervention fatigue” has been growing in the United States as well as Europe, direct military action remains in the international community’s toolbox. The most recent examples are the French-led multinational intervention in Mali in 2013 and the UN-led military and police mission in Central African Republic.

31. However, as the threat evolves, the anti-terrorism focus is clearly shifting towards methods other than direct intervention. As President Obama has put it, we should not be “using a pliers where we need a hammer, or we’re not using a battalion when what we should be doing is partnering with the local government to train their police force more effectively, improve their intelligence capacities” (Remnick, 2014). In the context of ISIS advancements in Syria and Iraq, the US President sanctioned selective air strikes against ISIS targets as well as further military and diplomatic support for the Iraqi government and moderate Syrian opposition, but the option of deploying American troops on the ground to fight the terrorists has been ruled out. The US counter-terrorism strategy increasingly rests upon 1) partnership with other nations; 2) targeted ad

hoc use of special operation forces against terrorist groups and their leaders, and 3) drone strikes against terrorists. The European allies are also increasing their partnering activities with African, Middle Eastern and Asian countries. The North American and European countries are also undertaking serious steps to address home-grown terrorism, including developing more intensive intelligence cooperation, technological solutions to identify terrorists and programmes designed to de-radicalise certain communities and individuals. The following sections of this chapter will briefly discuss these efforts.

## A. COUNTER-TERRORISM PARTNERSHIPS

32. While partnerships came to the fore of the global counter-terrorism agenda, partnering has also become more difficult by the turmoil in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. Previous regimes such as Mubarak's in Egypt or Ben Ali's in Tunisia have enjoyed substantial support from western countries and the United States in particular in their efforts to curb radical militant movements. Even al-Assad's Syria helped the United States track Sunni Islamist extremists (Hirsh, 2013). The Arab Awakening forced the West to revisit this cooperation.

33. There is uncertainty as to the extent that the new governments, many of them associated with Islamist movements, are determined or capable to confront groups and individuals that employ radical rhetoric and even resort to violence. There is a risk that assistance might end up in the "wrong hands". For instance, the United States policy-makers were reportedly entertaining an idea of engaging the Salafi coalition of the Syrian opposition – the so-called Islamic Front, which opposed the radical and violent ISIS. The Front, however, includes a group Ahrar al-Sham, which reportedly has ties with al-Qaeda. Although Ahrar al-Sham's leaders never endorsed the radical interpretation of jihad, supporting it nevertheless poses a dilemma for the democratic world (Doran, McCants, & Watts, 2014). Also, some of the assistance could be redirected to other sectors – for instance, former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf admitted in 2009 to having redirected some of the US assistance to enhancing defense against India. Furthermore, long-term assistance agreements might paradoxically discourage the recipient governments to eradicate terrorist groups as that would mean the end of assistance. It is suspected that for this reason the former Yemeni President Saleh has avoided truly effective action against AQAP (Gallo & Helfstein, 2011). Finally, according to the US laws, co-operation should cease if a partner country's government is removed in an illegitimate way – since 2008, assistance was suspended with regard to Mali, Mauritania and Niger (Laub & Masters, 2014).

34. With these reservations in mind, there is nevertheless no alternative to developing regional counter-terrorism partnerships and enabling the local governments to tackle local terrorist threats. The United States' two primary counterterrorism partnerships in Africa are the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism (PREACT). The former, established in 2005, strives to "enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the pan-Sahel [...] to confront the challenge posed by terrorist organisations in the trans-Sahara, and to facilitate cooperation between those countries and US partners in the Maghreb". PREACT, established in 2009 serves a similar function and "uses law enforcement, military, and development resources to achieve its strategic objectives, including reducing the operational capacity of terrorist networks, expanding border security, enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security organisations, improving democratic governance, and discrediting terrorist ideology" (US Department of State, 2013).

35. The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) also co-operates regionally with interagency, international, and African partners. AFRICOM's operations, exercises, and security assistance programs build military-to-military relationships between the United States and African countries through assistance, training, and capacity building. Operation *Observant Compass*, for example, is an advice and assist mission specific to counterterrorism that is designed to better enable African militaries of the region to counter the Lord's Resistance Army. Other examples

include providing combat lifesaver training to Rwandan Defense Forces, counter-IED training to Burundi National Defense Forces, Raven UAV training with Kenya Defense Forces, and 60mm mortar training with defense forces from 12 African nations (Tan, 2013).

36. The 29-nation Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), which was initiated by Turkey and the United States in 2011, serves a very important function in the fight against terrorism. The GCTF, which acts as a platform to share unique experiences and channel national contributions into joint civilian-led counter-terrorism efforts, contributes to the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Its five working groups seek to identify relevant civilian counter-terrorism challenges and capacity gaps and mobilise political will, financial resources and expertise to address these challenges. The GCTF has contributed significantly to raising the Sahel and the Horn of Africa on the international counter-terrorism agenda.

37. For historical reasons, France is the most active European country when it comes to forging strategic partnerships with African nations. France actively supports counter-terrorism capacity building in Africa, understanding that “governments must be rebuilt and local armies trained to the point at which they can maintain security” autonomously (The Washington Post, 2014).

38. The European Union (EU), through the European External Action Service (EEAS), is widely engaged in military and civilian partnerships with counterterrorism benefits throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In Africa, the EU has a military training mission in Mali and Somalia, a border assistance mission in Libya, a capacity building mission in the Sahel, and an anti-piracy mission based in Somalia, among other operations enhancing national capabilities and regional stability. In Afghanistan, the EU is engaged in a police mission (EUPOL) providing qualified civilian policing expertise and rule of law expertise. Lastly, the EU is co-operating on the counterterrorism related issues of border management and drug trafficking with the states in Central Asia. EU partnerships in these regions largely focus on conflict prevention and peace building rather than on terrorism as a singular issue.

39. The United States and its allies’ assistance to building Afghan National Security Forces has been widely discussed in the NATO PA Defence and Security Committee reports. It is worth noting, however, that these efforts are complemented by renewal of US-Pakistan anti-terrorism cooperation in recent months. This cooperation has been problematic since 2011 due to Islamabad’s dissatisfaction over the US operations in Pakistan such as an operation against bin Laden as well as US drone strikes against targets in Pakistan. Also, Pakistan is frequently facing accusations that elements within its military and security service maintain links and even support some al-Qaeda-related groups such as the Haqqani Network. On a positive note, Pakistan is working on a new legal framework that would relieve an overwhelmed criminal justice system by establishing new federal courts qualified to handle terrorism cases (Laub, 2013).

40. There is a widespread agreement that regional problems need regional solutions. International assistance was critical for the success of missions such as the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). In July 2013, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) took over the primary responsibility for security in Mali from the French forces and AFISMA. AFISMA is a product of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), an important regional player that has the ambition of leading the stabilisation efforts in its own backyard. However, ECOWAS’ efforts to police the region in the past were hampered by mistrust and disunity among the military leadership as well as the lack of resources and weapons (Elischer, 2013). The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is another regional peacekeeping mission tasked with stabilising Somalia and supporting security forces in combat operations against al-Shabaab. AMISOM receives logistical support and voluntary donations through the United Nations and resources for the payment of troop allowances from the EU. AMISOM has been successful in its efforts against al-Shabaab, driving the terrorist organisation from its strongholds in Mogadishu and Kismaayo. Regional sub-state actors, such as

Kurdish anti-ISIS fighters, can significantly contribute in a positive manner to regional security. The position of Turkey in this regard, including Ankara's preparedness to allow these fighters to cross the Syrian border to fight ISIS militants in Kobane, is of critical importance.

## **B. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

41. The growing role of the special forces as a counter-terrorism tool is evident from the fact that the US special operations budget has increased from USD 2.3 billion in 2001 to 10.5 billion in 2012. Other NATO nations lag behind the United States significantly in that regard, not least because state-of-the-art special forces equipment and platforms are very expensive (Robinson, 2012). The 2011 Navy SEALs raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad is perhaps the most famous example of the use of special forces in counterterrorism. The United States successfully carried out the operation. US special forces have also been used to fight extremist groups in Yemen and Somalia. Ultimately, special forces are useful for targeting individual terrorist and insurgent leaders for death or capture, especially in countries that are unable or unwilling to bring terrorists to justice themselves. Having readily available special forces is also important to be able to react swiftly to attacks against diplomatic missions in volatile regions. The United States has assets such as the East Africa Response Force in Djibouti. It has to cover a very wide geographic area, however. Therefore the United States is looking at enhancing its contingency response capacity through working with the Marine Corps and other partners (Tan, 2013).

42. Like the use of drone strikes, special forces raids (the so-called "direct approach") are a short-rather than long-term counterterrorism strategy because it lacks an important nation- or capacity-building component. However, this may change as US special forces begin to rely on a more balanced mix of tactics and engage in "developing partner forces" (Robinson, 2013). In other words, the focus is shifting towards an "indirect approach", i.e. providing training and mentoring of local special forces and even engaging in medical or agricultural assistance to civilians. According to Admiral William McRaven, head of the US Special Operations Command, "the direct approach alone is not the solution to the challenges our nation faces today as it ultimately only buys time and space for the indirect approach [...] that will prove decisive in the global security arena." (Robinson, 2012)

## **C. DRONES**

43. While seen as controversial by some, drone strikes continue to be a central counterterrorism tool utilised by the United States (the European approach on drones focuses on systems that do not carry weapons and mostly perform reconnaissance and surveillance functions). The strikes are primarily carried out against al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Pakistan and Yemen. Additionally, drones are increasingly used against al-Shabaab targets in Somalia. Drone strikes are appealing because they offer a low-risk alternative compared to more conventional means of targeting terrorist operatives like air strikes or the deployment of special operations forces. Tactically speaking, drone strikes are successful. They eliminate both high and low-level operatives, causing inexperienced leaders to rise in terrorist organisations while depleting groups' available ranks.

44. However, the long-term effectiveness of drone strikes is uncertain. The disadvantages of drones—civilian casualties, for example—are primarily political and diplomatic and, critics argue, can lead to popular resentment against the United States and even fuel terrorist recruitment (Robinson, 2013). There are concerns that frequent use of drones might pose a threat of blowback against the United States. At least in the Afghan war theatre, drone strikes may begin to decline in 2014: President Obama suggested in a May 2013 speech that the drone strikes will be reduced as coalition forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan and the need for force protection wanes (The New York Times, 2013).

45. The United States has also taken important steps to address some of the concerns and introduced additional safeguards. President Obama signed a document codifying guidelines for the use of drone strikes, arguing that “to say a military tactic is legal, or even effective, is not to say it is wise or moral in every instance.” According to the guidelines, drone strikes can only be used to prevent imminent attacks and when the capture of a suspect is not feasible and if there is a “near certainty” that civilians will not be killed (Collinson, 2013). Looking ahead, drones are an effective counterterrorism tool and although they may not form the basis of a long-term counterterrorism strategy, they will continue to be an important capability in either a direct or indirect role. This year’s NATO PA Defence and Security Committee report provides a more comprehensive in-depth analysis of the drone question.

#### **D. HOMELAND SECURITY MEASURES**

46. Since 9/11 attacks, North American and European nations have considerably stepped up their homeland defence mechanisms to protect their own territories and populations from terrorist threats. The United States has created a Department of Homeland Security and, among many measures, beefed up border protection by creating Transportation Security Administration (TSA). TSA is responsible for protecting more than 450 commercial airports, but also railways, transit systems, highways and even pipelines. In 2013, the TSA’s budget was almost USD 8 billion and it had 62,000 employees (Bandow, 2014). TSA takes at least part of the credit for preventing another major terrorist plot on the US territory, but some aspects of its performance have been criticised by the US Congressional auditors (Halsey, 2013). Another important initiative to protect the US borders is the Container Security Initiative (CSI), which allows US authorities, working with partner governments worldwide, to examine high-risk maritime containerised cargo at foreign seaports, before they are loaded on board vessels destined for the United States.

47. At the European level, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) was set up in 2004 to reinforce and streamline cooperation between national border authorities. Frontex’s mandate includes rapid response capability as well as joint training and risk analysis. The EU has also established close cooperation with the United States in areas such as air cargo security partnership, Passenger Name Record (PNR) system and the abovementioned CSI.

48. Preventing or responding to home-grown terrorist attacks remains the responsibility of national law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI in the United States. In cooperation with other federal and local agencies across the United States, FBI has created local Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) in each of the FBI’s 56 field offices and in more than 100 US cities (Fishman & Lebovich, 2011). The law enforcement agencies continue to rely on information from informants or undercover agents: reportedly, they were used in 20 out of 43 measured cases of home-grown terrorism plots in the United States since 9/11. Police also uses methods such as community policing, where officers establish firm relationships with local groups, including criminals, to generate tips that might lead to terrorists (Friedman, 2012).

49. The signal/electronic intelligence is an anti-terrorism tool of growing importance whose application has been in the spotlight of global attention due to potential privacy and other human rights implications. The allegations of the former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden about the scope of NSA electronic surveillance prompted a debate in democratic societies about the nexus between security and privacy. It also highlighted some differences in the US and European approaches on the issue. Given that the US and the EU have already struggled finding common approach in cooperation areas such as sharing of banking (SWIFT) data as well as passenger and other personal data, it seems likely that the future US and EU negotiations on extension of agreements in this area will be difficult. Europe’s partners across the Atlantic are also concerned about the European Commission’s new proposed package of legislation on data protection, which aims to strengthen online data protection rights by introducing, among other

things, a right to be forgotten, a requirement of explicit consent for processing one's data, and sanctions for non-complying companies up to 5% of their annual worldwide turnover. On the positive side, however, the past experience shows that both sides of the Atlantic are capable of making compromises and overcoming their differences. Regardless of the questions raised about the compatibility of the use by the U.S. of personal information for counter-terrorism and EU data privacy laws, the allies share similar views on the nature of the threat of transnational terrorism. Europol and the FBI have developed comprehensive cooperation over the year, including the exchange of liaison officers.

50. The changing nature of the terrorist threat has featured prominently in the debate over the NSA activity. Intelligence community representatives argue that collection of content and communications is becoming increasingly important. According to the former NSA director Michael Hayden, "future attacks against the homeland will be less sophisticated and less lethal, but there's just going to be more of them", and therefore keeping "whole haystack" of phone and email data could be essential to find the needle of an al-Suri-style plot (Hirsh, 2013).

51. That said, many US policymakers agree that additional safeguards are necessary to ensure that NSA and other intelligence agencies does not cross certain lines. President Obama, while essentially supporting the intelligence community's approach, has announced reforms that would ensure greater oversight of NSA activities. Stricter time limits on storing "bulk data" as well as the need to acquire court orders for respective officials will also be introduced. The President also promised to ban surveillance of foreign leaders, unless there was a serious national security reason (Dyer, 2014). Some human rights organisations and the libertarian wing of the Republican Party are not convinced, however, that the reforms are comprehensive enough (McGregor, 2014). There has also been a debate in the United Kingdom on the safeguards applied to the work of the GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) service. However, robust safeguards already exist in the case of GCHQ, including the requirement for its officers to receive a cabinet-level warrant before intercepting communications in the United Kingdom (Dyer, 2014). The British parliament's investigation showed GCHQ works in accordance with a strict legal and policy framework, and that their actions are lawful, authorised, necessary and proportionate.

52. In addition to electronic surveillance, a wide array of important technological solutions has been developed recent years to help identify terrorists. For instance, Cassidian, the defense and security division of EADS, has developed new simulation software to anti-terrorism agencies in the United Kingdom. This technology will identify behavioural traits of terrorists which could help uncover plots such as placing improvised explosive devices in a major transport hub. The sophistication of gaming technology such as this provides new opportunities for law enforcement agencies in the strategic planning of prevention of and response to major incidents (Dron, 2012).

53. Another notable example is STANDEX – a new €4.8 million bomb-detection technology project jointly developed by NATO and several member and partner nations (Britain, France, Italy, Russia, Turkey and the United States). STANDEX has already been tested in major European cities. Using multiple sensors and microwave-scanning technology, the system can immediately detect explosives by identifying anomalies in the molecular composition of the objects or people in big crowds. STANDEX has an enormous practical application potential, for instance uses to identify terrorists in public transportation or other big gathering of people. It could help prevent terrorist attacks such as those carried in London and Madrid (France-Press, 2013)

## **E. DE-RADICALISATION**

54. There is no consensus in the democratic societies whether and to what extent the 'de-radicalisation' or the fight against radical ideologies should be a part of counter-terrorism policies. In the United States, for example, the prevailing approach is to focus on unlawful deeds of individuals rather than ideologies behind. The political culture in the United States is strongly

averse to any attempts to limit the freedom of exchanging ideas and views, even if these are sometimes extreme. Having no direct experience of dictatorship, the United States (and to some extent United Kingdom) policy-makers are positive that their democracy can handle the impact of extremist ideologies. This approach explains why the United States does not have a comprehensive de-radicalisation policy (the 2007 Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act passed the US House of Representatives but was not endorsed by the Senate) as well as why the U.S. authorities are more inclined to seek contacts with and support of non-violent groups such as 'quietist' Salafists in their fight with al-Qaeda (Neumann, 2013). On a local, level, however, some de-radicalisation efforts are conducted even in the United States – for instance, the NYPD has an overt community outreach initiative to engage Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities on a wide range of issues, trying to address the grievances that might lead some members of these communities to criminal or terrorist activities (Fishman & Lebovich, 2011).

55. Many European countries have a somewhat different approach. Due to Europe's painful experience with revolutions and dictatorships, these countries do not take their democratic stability for granted. They see a direct connection between radical ideologies and the acts of violence. Confronting these extremist beliefs is therefore a goal in itself. This approach is indeed sound in a European context, although it poses two challenges that need to be addressed: 1) it is difficult to assess the efficiency of projects designed to mitigate radical beliefs, hence the speculations about inefficient use of anti-terrorism funds and resources; 2) safeguards need to be in place to prevent de-radicalisation mechanisms from being used to suppress the freedom of speech and political opponents (Neumann, 2013).

56. Many European countries have adopted counter-radicalisation programmes. The UK, for instance, launched a 'Prevent' programme in 2007 as a part of its wider counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. 'Prevent' addresses 'the ideological challenge' of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it. It protects vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and ensures they are given appropriate support. It also works with a wide range of sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that need to be addressed (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) The original 'Prevent' strategy was flawed, it failed to confront the extremist ideology at the heart of the threat the UK faces, it confused the delivery of Government policy to promote integration with Government policy to prevent terrorism; and in trying to reach those at risk of radicalisation, funding sometimes reached the very extremist organisations that 'Prevent' should have been confronting. In 2011, the 'Prevent' strategy was reviewed in order to address these critical points.

57. The Netherlands have also developed an efficient counter-radicalisation programme, prompted by an assassination of a prominent Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004. The Dutch approach is based on both restrictive measures such as deporting radical preachers and shutting down extremist websites and promoting alternative narrative to individuals, especially young people who seek answers on issues of identity and religion. The Dutch authorities also pay a particular attention to socio-economic factors and conduct projects to improve access to the job market or ameliorate living conditions in poor neighbourhoods. The Netherlands flagship counter-radicalisation project is Municipal Information House on Radicalization (IHH) in Amsterdam. IHH collects information from frontline workers about specific individuals that are displaying signs of radicalisation and devise an appropriate form of intervention aimed at de-radicalizing the individual, for instance, by providing them with guidance in their professional lives, education, or housing options. When material methods are insufficient, IHH assigns a mentor (for instance, a relative or a Muslim scholar) whose goal is to instil doubt in the mind of the radicalizing individual (Vidino & Brandon, 2012).

58. Partly due to the traumatizing March 2012 Toulouse killings perpetrated by French-born terrorist Mohamed Merah, France has been at the frontline of combatting extremism, mostly by law enforcement means. The fight against terrorism in France is truly an inter-agency responsibility

and includes institutions such as Directorate for the Protection and Security of Defense under the Ministry of Defence (with specific responsibility for the safety of personnel, information, equipment in sensitive installations), Directorate General of Internal Security under the Ministry of Interior (in charge of collecting intelligence affecting the national security); General Directorate of External Security (foreign intelligence service of France), also under the authority of the Ministry of Defence, and Office of the Anti-Terrorist (BLAT) (with responsibility to coordinate, at the national level, actions by police services involved in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism or attacks on the security of the State). All these services are coordinated by the Anti-Terrorism Coordination Unit.

59. In July 2014, French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve presented a new anti-terrorist bill, which is currently debated in the Senate. The bill focuses on preventing "lone wolves", radicalized via the Internet and/or a stay in terrorist training camps abroad. The bill's flagship proposed measures include renewable six-month travel bans imposed by administrative decision to stop French citizens from traveling to fight alongside Islamist militants.

60. The implementation of the plan poses a challenge, however, since according to lawyer of those charged with plotting terrorism Pierre de Combles de Nayves, "in France all [the defendants] have done is purchase a ticket", while "it is impossible to foresee who will leave for the purpose of carrying out terrorism" (Rubin, 2014). According to President François Hollande, the number of terrorist fighters that have come from his country are about 1,000; their numbers have grown by 50% since the beginning of 2014. Following the brutal murder of the French citizen Hervé Gourdel, France has stepped up preventive security measures against the risk of terrorism at public sites and on transport. French leaders have also offered to assist any state that requests its help in combating terrorism.

61. France has launched less extensive de-radicalization initiatives than the UK and the Netherlands, while it has emphasized police and intelligence operations to counter Islamist terrorism. France also has a strict anti-terrorist legal system and is able to try suspected terrorists at special non-jury trials for terrorist offenses that are more broadly defined than in Britain. Political scientist Frank Foley attributes this disparity to the French tradition of treating the security of the Republic above other considerations (Foley, 2013). Nevertheless, among other measures aiming to counter the problem of radicalization, France's new proposed anti-terrorist bill seeks to enable the authorities to block internet sites promoting terrorism by administrative decision. Furthermore, the French authorities are creating a website to inform relatives about the signs of radicalization, and have set up phone numbers that can be used to consult social workers and psychologists or alert border authorities to a relative's radicalization.

62. During its visit to Germany in June 2014, NATO PA Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security has collected valuable information on Germany's approach to radicalism. The German government is pursuing a pro-active policy designed to promote democracy and tolerance in the society, particularly among the young. This policy focuses on a sub-national level and projects and action plans are tailor-made for specific regions, for instance former East Germany. These projects include concerts, school events, open discussions and meetings with historians. The key challenge is how to eradicate routine racism and intolerance in communities – especially in rural areas – that are not interested in discussing politics or history. German institutions are therefore trying to recruit and train local influential figures such as sports trainers or heads of fire-fighters' squads and to enable them to mitigate intolerance and xenophobia among their teams. In addition to the Federal level, there are 16 regional counselling networks across the country, designed to help victims of racism and xenophobia and to work with problematic children. In their endeavour to reduce intolerance in Germany, relevant German institutions rely heavily on civil society initiatives and civic associations. German counter-extremist policies largely succeeded in minimising the significance of far-right and far-left movements. However, the number of violent acts by individual radicals or small underground groups has increased in recent years. The uncovering of deadly and

brutal deeds of the so-called “National Socialist Underground” cell shocked the country and highlighted the problem.

63. Lessons of the totalitarian past have also led Germany to adopt an institutional framework to prevent abuses of human rights and liberties in the future. For instance, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz – BfV), responsible for domestic intelligence, is an analytical and intelligence collection body and does not have the authority to arrest or prosecute specific individuals – this is the function of police. The democratic oversight mechanism is comprehensive and includes parliamentary control, Federal Audit Office, special Commissioners, Ministry of Interior, courts as well as media and even individual citizens who have the right to send questions to BfV officials and turn to courts if the response was not satisfactory.

64. The EU on its part has also devised tools to counter extremism. In 2011, the EU created a Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), designed to pool expertise and facilitates the exchange of ideas on de-radicalisation topics. In January 2014 Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström said that “the risk of radicalisation leading to violent extremism in the EU is growing” and announced a creation of a European “Knowledge Hub” designed to help national and local authorities in their work and co-ordinate research in this field. The Commission earmarked some €20 million between 2014-2017 for the “Knowledge Hub” and other activities of the RAN. (BBC, 2014) A field of particular focus for RAN is countering terrorist propaganda, in the framework of which RAN piloted an online counter-narrative campaign entitled “Abdullah-X” that was deemed to be successful in terms of attracting online visitors and audience engagement.

65. De-radicalisation programmes are also conducted by some Muslim countries. During its visit to Morocco earlier this year, this Sub-Committee was briefed about Morocco’s programmes to educate, instruct and support hundreds of imams who would spread the moderate interpretation of Islam (based on the Maliki rite) in Mali and other countries in the Sahel region.

#### **IV. NATO AND THE EU COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES**

66. NATO’s current approach to combating terrorism is rooted in the 2010 Strategic Concept adopted at the Lisbon Summit. Terrorism is identified as a threat to NATO’s essential mission insofar as it threatens the security of citizens of NATO countries and “international stability and prosperity more broadly”. The 2010 Strategic Concept commits the Alliance, among other things, to “enhance the capacity to detect and defend against international terrorism, including through enhanced analysis of the threat, more consultations with [...] partners, and the development of appropriate military capabilities, including to help train local forces to fight terrorism themselves”.

67. The 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago endorsed NATO’s Policy Guidelines on Counterterrorism. The Guidelines establish three areas of focus—awareness, capabilities, and engagement. Awareness emphasises “enhanced sharing of intelligence” and “continuous strategic analysis” while capabilities refers to “preventing, protecting against, and responding to terrorist threats” and, lastly, engagement stresses the importance of involving “partner countries and other international actors in countering terrorism”. NATO recognises that, “most counter terrorism tools remain primarily with national civilian and judicial authorities” and thus seeks to implement its counterterrorism policies “through contributing to national and international efforts while avoiding unnecessary duplication”. Thus, the vast majority of NATO counterterrorism activities are in support of Allies and NATO partners and not stand-alone programmes or operations.

68. At the Summit in Wales, NATO leaders have underlined ISIS “poses a grave threat to the Iraqi people, to the Syrian people, to the wider region, and to our nations.” The Alliance announced that if the security of any Ally is threatened by this terrorist organisation, the collective defence clause will be invoked. The Allies also pledged to provide additional security and humanitarian

assistance to Iraq on a bilateral basis. NATO and its Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre are charged with the task of coordinating this assistance.

69. Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) is currently NATO's only counter-terrorism operation. OAE is a maritime operation in which NATO ships patrol the Mediterranean and monitor shipping to help deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorist activity. The operation was initiated in support of the United States immediately after the September 11 terrorist attacks; due to its success, its mandate is regularly extended.

70. Other key NATO counterterrorism programmes include the Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work (DAT POW), the Cooperative Airspace Initiative, and the abovementioned STANDEX programme. Each programme is focused on developing and employing cutting-edge technologies to build Allies' and Partners' capabilities to prevent, protect, and respond to terrorist attacks. DAT POW projects range from those with missions to protect critical infrastructure to detecting chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. The Cooperative Airspace Initiative facilitates air traffic information sharing between NATO-Russia Council nations, for example in the case of a suspected hijacking of a civilian aircraft.

71. In 2006, NATO has also established a Centre of Excellence – Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) in Ankara, Turkey. COE-DAT courses and workshops provide defence against terrorism training and education for NATO and relevant member states' officials.

72. Ultimately, NATO's counterterrorism strategy is one that is defensive and reactive, not offensive. The Alliance recognises that NATO "must be prepared to take on offensive missions if required" and NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan certainly demonstrates a willingness and capability to do so. However, the bulk of NATO counterterrorism programs are defensive in nature and place NATO in a supporting role rather than in the lead.

73. The European Union's contemporary strategy to fight terrorism emerged in the wake of the terrorist attacks directed against New York in 2001, Madrid in 2004, and London in 2005. The Council of the European Union in 2005 released two documents that continue to serve as the foundation of the EU's counterterrorism strategy: The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy and The European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism. In concert, these two documents define the EU's counterterrorism strategy as one that processes terrorism through the criminal justice system while seeking to discover and eliminate the root causes of radicalization and extremism at home and abroad.

74. In practice, the lion's share of responsibility for implementing the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and combating radicalisation falls to the Member States. Gilles de Kerchove, EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator since 2007, stated in a March 2014 interview that, "the European Union is there to help the member states, to make them more effective but we're not there to replace the member states" (Deutsche Welle, 2014). Externally, the EU supports multinational counterterrorism strategies through international organizations like the United Nations and cooperates with states active in counterterrorism like the United States in order to build the international consensus and promote international standards for countering terrorism.

75. Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, is the EU institution most consistently and actively engaged in counterterrorism activities. It is instrumental in coordinating investigations and supporting law enforcement authorities through the exchange and analysis of criminal intelligence. Europol also publishes annually an EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report. Where Europol coordinates and supports the law enforcement side of counterterrorism in the EU, Eurojust, the European Union's judicial cooperation unit, is engaged in the judicial coordination of terrorism investigations and prosecutions.

76. The fact that the Schengen Agreement has led to the creation of borderless area on the continent has important security implications. To facilitate information exchanges among border guards as well as by police, customs, visa and judicial authorities throughout the Schengen Area, the Schengen Information System (SIS) was established by relevant member states and subsequently integrated into the EU framework. It holds information on persons who may have been involved in a serious crime or may not have the right to enter the EU. On 9 April 2013, the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) entered into operation. SIS II has enhanced functionalities, such as the possibility to use biometrics. It also ensures stronger data protection.

77. In conjunction with its internal counterterrorism efforts, the European Union actively partners with third countries at a variety of levels. The EU and the United States, for example, set up the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) shortly after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks. The program is “an EU-US Agreement on the exchange of financial information” that generates significant intelligence useful to both the U.S. and EU Member States in the fight against terrorism. The EEAS is also engaged in civilian and military operations that work with third countries to dismantle terrorist infrastructures and build necessary local and regional capacities.

78. The 2005 EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy is unlikely to be significantly overhauled in the near future because Member States largely see it as an effective strategy that continues to fit the threat environment. Most criticisms of the Strategy argue for improved use of existing counterterrorism resources: “more efforts are needed to connect the existing dots and ensure that available information is actually delivered and acted upon by the appropriate authorities at the appropriate moment” (EU Council, 2012). However, in the absence of another large-scale terrorist attack against an EU Member State since 2005, the political will to expand counterterrorism activities or coordination, especially outside of the EU, does not seem to be strong.

79. NATO-EU cooperation in the field of counterterrorism is formalized in NATO’s Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism (hereafter “PAP-T”), set up in 2002. In particular, the aim of the partnership is to coordinate counterterrorism strategies, build measures of mutual trust, exchange information, consultation and implement programs. Aside from the PAP-T, NATO also works together with EUROCONTROL in developing civil-military air traffic procedures. Nevertheless, counterterrorism cooperation between the Alliance and the EU is still lacking today. Indeed, even though the EU has set up many counterterrorism partnerships with the UN, it is hesitant to engage with NATO, not least because the EU officials consider that the interior and justice (rather than foreign and defence) ministries should take the lead on counter-terrorism.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

80. The key purpose of this report is to contribute to raising awareness of the fact that the nature of the terrorism threat is changing. The centralised al-Qaeda that was behind the 9/11 attacks is adapting to the counter-terrorism strategy employed by the United States and reinventing itself as a decentralised association of affiliate organisations, relying increasingly on home-grown radicalised individuals to carry out attacks on Western democracies.

81. The understanding of this trend does not necessarily require a major overhaul of our anti-terrorism strategies. Many elements of current strategies remain valid. For instance, the role of NATO in counter-terrorism, especially when it comes to home-grown terrorism, is mainly complementary: given a list of other priorities on the Alliance’s agenda, it is hardly feasible to expect a major revision of this role. Yet, while NATO’s counterterrorism policy is more limited than those of international organisations like the European Union, the support and forum for cooperation it offers to Allies and partners is undeniably valuable. Besides, NATO-led technology projects such as STANDEX have a very tangible practical value.

82. That said, certain corrections will need to be made to adjust to the new realities:

- Additional efforts are necessary to support nations in northern Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, that bear the brunt of the fight against al-Qaeda affiliates and related groups. Their indigenous military, law enforcement and intelligence capabilities need to be augmented, but it is also important to continue support in areas such as institution-building, anti-corruption and economic development; indigenous de-radicalisation programmes such as training of imams to promote moderate interpretation of Islam are to be supported as well;
- To be efficient, partnerships and aid programmes must include 1) oversight mechanisms of how aid is spent by partners, as well as 2) clauses that would link aid with real progress on and domestic political and economic reforms;
- Partnership network should extend not only to respective governments, but also to sub-national and civil society entities that are critical for enhancing resilience to insurgency and terrorism;
- While recognizing existing ideological differences between the Euro-Atlantic community on the one hand and Russia and Iran on the other, it would be wise to explore how these countries could play a more constructive role in addressing terrorism threats in the Middle East;
- Current efforts to clarify the procedures involving the use of special forces and drones need to be continued;
- Better co-ordination between NATO and the EU is advisable: due to the complex and multifaceted nature of the contemporary terrorist threat, both organizations need to explore potential synergies between them;
- Smaller European countries, especially those with a large number of volunteers returning from the Syrian war, require additional assistance from their larger Allies – especially France, the United Kingdom and Germany – with substantial intelligence, law enforcement and military capabilities to address the changing terrorist threat;
- The Euro-Atlantic community should share the best practices of their national and sub-national counter-radicalisation programmes; a careful balance needs to be found to ensure that fighting extremist ideologies does not infringe the freedom of speech and other democratic rights;
- While punitive measures should be applied against hardened violent extremists determined to wage an attack at home, Western governments should not underestimate the importance of preventing participation in terrorist activities through messaging such as exposing ISIS use of foreign fighters as “cannon fodder”;
- Funding for technological counter-terrorism solutions needs to remain adequate and focused; the issue of railway transport security deserves particular attention;
- Safeguards and democratic oversight measures of security services to prevent the potential abuse of electronic information and other personal data must be further developed;
- The governments of the Euro-Atlantic community’s rhetoric must be carefully crafted in order not to alienate entire communities, such as the Muslim community, and not to create an impression that the Euro-Atlantic community is taking sides in inter-ethnic or sectarian conflicts; public communication strategies also have to take into account the fact that al-Qaeda and its affiliates such as al-Nusra Front are also adapting their rhetoric and increasingly trying to win hearts and minds of local populations;
- Blocking violent extremist websites as well as websites that provide instructions on weapon manufacturing is a legitimate measure, but it must be used prudently – not least because monitoring these websites (or creating decoys) may provide useful information to security services;
- Additional efforts are necessary to tackle transnational and cross-border criminal networks and their financing schemes, given the fact that many terrorist groups depend on revenues

from human and drug trafficking, kidnapping for ransom as well as, in case of ISIS, from oil smuggling.

83. The role of parliaments is of particular importance in enhancing anti-terrorist cooperation and getting the balance right between security and freedom. Through the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue, members of the European Parliament and the US Congress are discussing a wide range of issues, including those of common response to terrorism threats. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly also provides an important platform for these debates and it should continue engaging parliamentarians, experts and civil servants in the field of counter-terrorism.

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