Note: These remarks draw on results from my research in three INSCT-related projects: Muslim Majority State Armed Conflict & Compliance Dataset; 2015-17 UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), examining UN Member States’ implementation of CVE law and policy strategies in compliance with UN Security Resolution 2178 for managing the foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) phenomenon; and 2017 DHS-CVE academic partnership research.

Radical Islam and National Security Strategy: Toward a Better Definition of Contemporary Terrorism

Corri Zoli, Ph.D., Director of Research
Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism
Syracuse University

Century Club, Syracuse NY
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Chapters

1. Three Research premises
2. Definitional challenges
3. Data-driven research
4. Law, politics, policy
5. Security strategy and long-term solutions
Radicalization: Three Research Premises

1. Impacts all of us—global issue—not exclusively a regional Mideast/South Asian or so-called ‘Muslim’ problem.

2. Distinctions & definitions are critical to success.

3. Misunderstanding or silencing debate (due to sensitivities of identity or religion) fuels bad CVE policy at home; sectarianism abroad. Both undercut needed civic engagement with groups who defend political violence against civilians.
Radical Islam: Definitions & Distinctions

✓ Islam vs. Islamism: Islam, the religion with all the attendant limitations of any faith, is not Islamism, the desire to impose a particular narrow and extreme political version of Islam over society.

✓ Islamism/political Islam/radical Islam is a political ideology promoting theocratic extremism.

✓ Islamism is not only a discourse of violence but a discourse of exclusive, repressive, governance, etc.
Radical Islam: Definitions & Distinctions

Bassam Tibi (2012): Islamism is about political order of a repressive kind, not faith.

✓ Not mere politics—but “religionized politics”—the appeal to higher-order powers/divine to more effectively gain political and social control

✓ Political ideology and practice distinct from the religion of Islam—its beliefs and diverse practice.

✓ Not a revival of medieval/glory age of Islam—but the invention of a tradition (Hobsbawm)
Radical Islam: Definitions & Distinctions

- **Jihadism**: use of force to spread Islamism
- **Jihadist Terrorism**: is the use of force targeting civilians to spread Islamism.
- **Conservative Muslims (KSA)** are not Islamists: religiously conservative Muslims simply adopt like many religious branches of established communities (conservative Catholics, communities in the Bible-belt American South, Amish, born again Christians) religiously conservative values, which do pose social cohesion and social liberalism challenges, especially on inclusivity, equality, gender, etc. But these do not pose a political threat to state or to civilians—but do pose a community integration challenge, human rights challenges, etc.
Radical Islam: Definitions & Distinctions

- Islamists who are not violent: Islamists may not be religious or they may be religious fundamentalists—they are simply political theocrats, but may not be violent. They are still, however, a political challenge—anyone who believes in theocracy believes in a repressive, exclusive form of government. The non-violent Islamist is not breaking the law—but needs civic engagement, just as we challenge racists: they may not be violent, but the community needs to work to challenge such views.

- Violent Islamists and jihadists—the law can deal with these types through a tiered-engagement given authorities’ point of entry:
  - In prison—certain type of deradicalization process.
  - In society—all of us are responsible for challenging bigotry (one doesn’t have to be a Muslim to challenge theocracy, African-American to challenge racism, gay to challenge homophobia).
  - There is a role for military-CT solutions here too—but not the only policy.
Diversity in Islam: Religion & Law
<table>
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<th>OIC Member</th>
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**Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):**

- Muslim-majority or identify as Muslim (56 States)
- 2nd largest IGO after UN on 4 continents
- “[C]ollective voice of the Muslim world”
- “[S]afeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in promoting international peace and harmony among peoples”
Why Is Radical Islam a Global Issue?

1. It has been historically so.
2. The data on terrorism is stark.
3. They are organized groups with committed actors (e.g. “Foreign Terrorist Fighters”)—but many are from non-Muslim majority nations.
4. Gray zone/asymmetric/irregular warfare is costly (blood, treasure) and brutal (atrocities) with adversaries bent on eroding norms (lawfare, laws of war, sectarianism, postconflict reconstruction).
5. Islamic extremism remains a destabilizing security threat today, in domestic & transnational contexts.
Data on Terrorism: 1970-2015 Terrorist Attacks (Global Implications)
Global Terrorism Database (GTD): 1970-2013 Total Incidents

Terrorism is on the rise: Before 2001, there was a 80s/90s spike ...
Terrorist Incidents Worldwide
Terrorist Incidents Worldwide

Global deaths from terrorism

'000

- Iraq
- Nigeria
- Syria, Afghanistan & Pakistan
- Western countries
- Rest of the world

Source: START, IEP
GTD: Terrorism in Regions/Intensity 2015
A Rise in “Small Wars”:
Armed Conflict by Type, 1946–2014 (ACD-PRIO 2015)

Bucking the trend:
International wars decreasing; civil wars & terrorism increasing
Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Foreign Fighter Flows to the Levant (ICSR-Soufan 2014)

UNSCR 2178 provides: “Nationals who travel or attempt to travel to territories other than own for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training.”
Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Global FTF Surge Over Time 2011-2015 (High-Output States)
Where Syria & Iraq's Foreign Fighters Come From
Estimated number of foreign fighters in Iraq/Syria from selected countries in 2015

- United Kingdom: 700
- France: 1,550
- Morocco: 1,400
- Germany: 700
- Turkey: 1,400
- Jordan: 2,000
- Tunisia: 5,000
- Lebanon: 900
- Saudi Arabia: 2,275
- Russia: 1,700

Source: Homeland Security Committee
Unexpected Contributions: European High-Output States (Soufan 2015)
ISIS Global Presence

- Countries where ISIS holds territory
- Countries where local groups have pledged allegiance to ISIS
- Countries from where large numbers of ISIS supporters have been arrested

Note: "Presence" is defined as ISIS holding territory; local groups having either pledged allegiance or actively cooperated with ISIS; or large numbers of ISIS supporters having been arrested.

Sources: Heritage Foundation research and various media reports.
Global ISIS: 90 attacks in 21 countries have killed nearly 1,400 people (CNN, April 2016)
... And it’s not only ISIS we must be concerned about ...
The GTD maintains an **LONG** list of radical groups ...
Instability: “Global Black Spots” Are Ungoverned and Semi-Governed Areas

Source: Verisk Maplecroft
Countering FTF: Which Countries Are Taking Action?

Surveyed Countries Taking/Considering Measures on Foreign Fighters

- **Measures taken or considered in 2014**
- **No measures taken or considered in 2014**
Anti-ISIS Coalition Nations 2014 (Reuters)

Organizations supporting the coalition
* Arab League
* European Union
* NATO

Note:
Contributions to the coalition include support, stopping the flow of foreign fighters to the zone, countering ISIS' financing and fundin, addressing humanitarian crisis in the region and/or de-legitimizing ISIS ideology.

- **Netherlands**: Would deploy six F-16 jets as well as 120 pilots, support staff and C-130 cargo planes.
- **Belgium**: Set to offer six F-16 jets, as well as 120 pilots, support staff and C-130 cargo planes.
- **Australia**: Will send eight F-18 fighter jets as well as special forces troops to act as advisers.
INSCT’s Muslim State Armed Conflict & Compliance Dataset: Analyzing Conflict Dynamics in Muslim-Majority Nations

MSACC Total Conflicts and Violations of IHL Over Time

- Conflicts
- Violations
MSACC Total Number of IHL Violations by Region

- **Africa**: 140 (NIAC), 40 (IAC), 20 (IAC MM)
- **Americas**: 0 (NIAC), 0 (IAC), 0 (IAC MM)
- **Asia**: 40 (NIAC), 20 (IAC), 10 (IAC MM)
- **Europe**: 0 (NIAC), 5 (IAC), 5 (IAC MM)
- **Middle East**: 50 (NIAC), 100 (IAC), 30 (IAC MM)
"Gray Zone" Conflict Has Become a Norm for the US

- Traditional war is the paradigm
- Gray zone conflict is the norm
In 2014 religious hostilities reached an all-time high (Pew)
Some counter-measures have sought to restrict religions ...

**Government Restrictions on Religion, by Region**

Median scores on the Government Restrictions Index

- **Middle East-North Africa**: 6.2
- **Asia-Pacific**: 4.7
- **Europe**: 3.2
- **Sub-Saharan Africa**: 2.6
- **Americas**: 1.6

*Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year High,” January 2014*

**Number of Countries Where Religious Groups Were Harassed, Across All Years**

*Any time between June 2006 and December 2012*

- **Christians**: 151
- **Muslims**: 135
- **Jews**: 95
- **Others***: 77
- **Folk religionists**: 52
- **Hindus**: 33
- **Buddhists**: 28
- **Any of the above**: 185

*Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism, members of newer faiths such as Baha’i, other religious groups and atheists.

**Includes followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

This measure does not assess the severity of the harassment. Numbers do not add to totals because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country.

*Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year High,” January 2014*
Where does this leave us in security strategy & long-term solutions?

1. We should respond to the real problem (data-driven)—not a sanitized version of it.
2. We should use ALL instruments of national power (law, policy, civic engagement, borders) with a firm eye on “national interests”.
3. We should develop de-radicalization programs ...
Deradicalization programs presume we understand how radicalization works (3 steps)

1. Cognitive opening that shakes certitude in previously accepted beliefs—consciousness raising, part of a movement, religious seeking, etc.

2. Decentralized authority in Islam/Islamic law makes for a problem of authority—seeker needs Islamic authorities to confer legitimacy & authenticity of interpretation.

3. Socialization and enculturation (tight organizational integration) to engage in risky activism.