

متى القوي

ALLIED: MONTHLY BULLETIN ISSUED BY IMCTC

CHIEF-OF-STAFF OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES VISITS IMCTC



His Excellency Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates, Lieutenant-General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaithi, paid a visit to IMCTC in Riyadh, August 4, 2021, and was well received by His Excellency Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Fayadh Hamed Al-Ruwaili and Secretary-General of IMCTC Major-General Mohammed Saeed Al Moghedi.

Lieutenant-General Al Rumaithi discussed avenues of joint cooperation between IMCTC and the United Arab Emirates in counterterrorism issues. Major-General Al-Moghedi highlighted the counterterrorism efforts made by the UAE across various areas, and the UAE stances that reject violence and extremism, while supporting the principles of tolerance and coexistence through many regional and international organizations. 🌸

LOOKING FORWARD TO COOPERATING WITH IMCTC UNCCT DIRECTOR



Secretary-General of IMCTC, Major-General Mohammed Saeed Al-Moghedi, received at the IMCTC headquarters in Riyadh Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center (UNCCT), Dr. Jehangir Khan, and his accompanying delegation, on Tuesday, August 2, 2021.

Dr. Khan was briefed on the IMCTC counterterrorism efforts across the four key domains (ideology, media, combating terrorist financing, and military), and the close coordination and unremitting support for the IMCTC member countries.

Major-General Al-Moghedi spelled out that IMCTC is an integrated ecosystem that seeks to enhance cooperation among the IMCTC member countries, and is based on the values of legitimacy, independence, coordination, engagement, and harmonization with international regulations, norms and laws. Major-General Al-Moghedi welcomed the promising cooperation with the United Nations and its associated counterterrorism agencies, particularly the UNCCT, through joint initiatives and programmes. 🌸

HOW CAN IDEOLOGY OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM BE PURGED?

MULTI-APPROACH STRATEGIES



Eradicating the ideology of violent extremism warrants identifying the associated characteristics of change and transformation to better develop feasible strategies that address the purification of extremist ideology, methods and tools. To this effect, IMCTC in Riyadh held a keynote lecture, featuring: PURIFICATION STRATEGY FOR IDEOLOGY OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM, presented by Dr. Mansour Saeed Al-Qarni, Director of Department of Ideology at IMCTC, August 9, 2021.

Extremism Can Be Changeable

Dr. Al-Qarni emphasized that purging ideology of violent extremism is the primary goal of rehabilitation and reintegration programs; this keynote lecture is part of a broader initiative of IMCTC concerned with rehabilitation and reintegration. Extremism is subject to the law of change, affected by social change, and develops in harmony with society.

Violent extremists slipped into the influence of extremist messages, which changed their thought, and pushed them towards extremism and rebellion against themselves, and then against their families and communities.

If those who send such messages have been able to bring about this radical change in the thoughts and minds of youth and push them to adopt ideological convictions contrary to the convictions of society, then any change or purification in their thought, removing them from the ideology of extremism to moderation is possible and certain.

Dr. Al-Qarni described the lives of extremists as transformations and different interactions, as the ideologies of many extremists are through an ideological throttling stage for many ideologies, and when rehabilitation programs flag up such symptoms, they can make a significant contribution to renewing

ideological convictions and have a profound effect in directing them in the right path.

It is unfair to look at extremist ideology in a stereotypical method that makes it reluctantly unchangeable, refusing transformation and development. We believe that extremists are resistant to ideological change. It stands to reason that change is a divine law. Therefore, we can penetrate the ideology of violent extremism by specialized individuals concerned with purging such ideologies, liberating the minds of youth and releasing them from the captivity and ideological guardianship of the leaders and ideologues of extremism. This method of penetration is one of the most important means of ideological purification, given that this it is the focus of the rehabilitation and reintegration process.

Typology of Ideological Purification

Dr. Al-Qarni reviewed the types of ideological purification. One type is ideological alteration, by placing one thought in the place of another, i.e., a process of reversing the existing thought. The ideological transformation is manifested in the complete obliteration of the old thought, sinking into oblivion. Ideological compensation or replacement with another thought comes into play.

Another type is ideological change, by bringing back a given extremist youth to the previous correct and moderate thought, through the strategies of ideological purification, and changing their old ideas with new ones based on correct evidence; this modification is often partial. One more type is ideological transformation, which means the transition from an extremist thought to a corresponding extremist one.

Change Strategies

The first change strategy is the effective relationship building strategy, which is the first step that religious scholars and spe-

cialists in the humanities should take in the process of changing ideologies. This is done by building a relationship based on trust with the target group: extremists.

Trust builds bridges between the two parties and facilitates the common language of mutual understanding. The success of this step depends on change specialists, who should have the necessary scientific and professional tools.

Various skills contribute to building trust with the targets, including greeting and welcoming skills, appropriate word-choice, praise, and encouragement, addressing the topics from the easiest to the most difficult.

The second strategy is demolition and skepticism; the ideologies of violent extremism are disintegrated, according to informed plans, based on the principles of violent extremism ideology in terms of motives and causes, and targeting all the myths deeply entrenched in ideology, undermining the nexuses, and refuting, laying bare, and debunking their unfounded allegations, while learning the ins and outs of their everyday lives.

If extremist ideologies are destroyed according to the previous strategy, and the ideology of the targets becomes clean, the strategy of replacement or construction will come into play, in which it becomes possible to build the correct ideology to replace the old one. This depends on cultural, social, cognitive and educational backgrounds. These are important construction methods, inter alia, at this stage:

- ▶ Drawing on the Quranic scriptures and the Sunnah of the Prophet, which explain the facts according to the correct and tolerant Islamic approach.
- ▶ Seeking accuracy and clarity in the use of word-choice, while staying away from vague words, or that connote ambiguous words and misunderstandings.
- ▶ Steering clear of falling into the trap of being lured by the targets, when discussing some issues of belief.
- ▶ Provoking the feelings and emotions of the targets by modifying what their religion, country and people expect of them from positive and constructive attitudes.

Methods of Extremist Ideology Purification

The first method is to understand the contexts that produced such ideology, and the driving factors, whether related to the extremist himself and the circumstances that made him violent or related to the factors of violent extremism that arise as a result of pairing psychological responses with societal influences, or related to the ideological formation of violent extremism, or to the context of the ideological premises of the nature of violent extremism ideology, assumptions and fatwas, the issues adopted by terrorist organizations, goals, and awareness of the context of the references of the terrorist mind, on which violent extremist organizations rely to give the alleged legitimacy of the violence they practice against societies and countries.

the awareness of the context of polarizing methods means the methods of persuasion used to persuade youth to adopt violent extremism and influence them into recruitment.

Among the important contexts within the methods of extremist ideology purification addressed by Dr. Al-Qarni is the understanding of the secret commandments of violent extremist organizations.

Whoever analyzes the discourses and documents of terrorist organizations can monitor many contexts, including:

- ▶ The context of the jihad resettlement strategy: targeting Arab and Muslim countries with their terrorist acts and viewing them as infidels.
- ▶ The context of social chaos: readiness to seize every possible opportunity (management of savagery).
- ▶ The context of the near enemy and the distant enemy: Al-Qaeda always adopts the concept of distant enemy; the infidel countries, then the strategy of ISIS turned to the statement: near enemy takes precedence over the distant enemy.
- ▶ The disguise context of the elements of violent extremism: when groups or cells are formed, they are trained to practice what is secretly entrusted to them.

The second method is active communication; the person concerned with modifying such ideology has a solid knowledge of the skills of active communication, including:

- Clarity and brevity.
- Healthy listening and sound understanding.
- Emotional intelligence.
- Self-efficacy.
- Respect for the (extremist) target.
- Choosing appropriate communication methods.
- Interacting with the other party.
- Self-control and composure.

The modification methods are applied in the **third method** of purifying extremist ideology:

Method One: ideological modification through individual meetings by modification specialists, preferably more than one person from religious scholars well versed and well-grounded in Sharia and other specializations.

Method Two: ideological modification through group meetings inside or outside prisons.

Method Three: ideological modification via the Internet, or the traditional and new media.

Stages of Extremist Ideology Purification

Dr. Al-Qarni re-highlighted the stages of extremist ideology purification. The psychologist stage comes first because the youth joining violent extremism groups depends on two pillars: psychological motives and social causes. Psychology comes into play along with investigation and rehabilitation, given the reality of extremism and the fundamental role of psychological drives, whether pathological (neurological) or not.

The second stage is the social specialist, as required by the reality of the targets or as deemed appropriate by those involved in the implementation, or according to the surrounding social conditions. Some targets always suffer from social problems resulting from the outputs of the surrounding environment and social conditions.

The third stage is the religious specialist. Religious ideological modification is the most important pillar in purifying violent extremism ideology. This is not because the factors of violent extremism are confined to religious ideology, as some researchers claim, but because it is the umbrella under which violent extremism behaves. 🌟

PROXY WAR

FOURTH GENERATION WARS ENERVATE COUNTRIES



IMCTC held a keynote lecture, featuring Proxy War: Fourth Generation Wars by Brigadier-General Raed Salim Al-Marashda, Delegate of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to IMCTC, at the IMCTC Headquarters, Riyadh, August 12, 2021.

Brigadier-General Al-Marashda explained the definition and the typology of war generations, and provided an in-depth analyses of proxy war, purpose, means and tools. The most important features of proxy war, and government strategies developed to use and prevent proxy war were also highlighted.

Enervating Plans

In his brief introduction, Mr. Sultan Al-Ghamdi, spelled out that proxy war is a strategy developed to enervate and undermine states. Such a strategy is put into action in a cold-blooded fashion. It erodes and whittles away at the target countries from within until they become devastated and helpless, reducing ultimately a given country to show much subservience and docility to a hegemonic country. Proxy war is notoriously lethal as it subjugates any country in the world to another in such a fashion as to tailor the interests of a target country to please a dominant country.

Brigadier-General Al-Marashda spelled out that proxy war is a new type of war in which the source countries do not send their military forces and machines to the target countries; rather, they finance armed groups and training fighters within

the territories of such target countries that the source countries seek to control their capabilities, hence to instrumentalize such groups to impose their sovereignty over the reign and administration, achieving their goal of imposing subordination on such target countries with the least material and human efforts.

Brigadier-General Al-Marashda reviewed the typology of wars according to their different sections. In terms of scope, full-scale wars have certain objective and weapons, such as the First and Second World Wars; while in limited wars, one party to the war uses some armed forces and financial resources. In a similar vein, in war of attrition, the capabilities of the enemy are depleted and exhausted, while despicable material and human losses are suffered.

In terms of time-bound development, wars fall into generations: first-generation wars were prevalent in the past; second-generation wars began with the First World War; third-generation wars rose to prominence by Germany, characterized by high speed, maneuverability and surprise. Some military analysts defined such wars as preventive or preemptive wars. Fourth-generation wars show different feature, and the most dangerous is that the civil and military lines become too much overlapping, and political action and military conflict also become too much blurred.

In fourth-generation wars, countries can no longer decide to wage wars; armed

organizations and groups, instead, launch wars against target countries! Of note, fourth-generation wars are asymmetric, as is the case in the war waged by the United States of America on terrorism; the US military found itself fighting an irregular ghost-like force as if chasing a mirage.

Proxy War: Goals & Tools

Brigadier-General Al-Marashda stated that proxy war has come into play when major powers were reluctant to be engaged in belligerency in the arenas of conflict. Instead, they arm local followers to fight by proxy in a protracted war. In the Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, proxy warfare tactics were used; relatively poor forces successfully inflicted considerable losses on a larger force.

The goal of proxy wars is to disintegrate the institutions of a target country, such as armed forces, internal security services, judiciary, undermining security and economy, while driving a wedge into society and imposing a new reality to serve the interests of a source hegemonic enemy and achieving the goals of traditional wars at a lower material and human cost.

To realize the previous goals, various means and tools are used in proxy wars, such as terrorism, guerrilla wars, insurgency, psychological warfare, political, economic, social, military and financial pressures, discouraging construction and production projects, inciting religious,

sectarian and ethnic tensions, encouraging minorities to mount and stage sit-ins, strikes, and insurgencies, using civil society organizations and opposition, dissemination of defeatist ideologies, theories and tendencies, and sowing seeds of disintegration.

Characteristics of Proxy War

Brigadier-General Al Marashda explained that proxy wars are not typical wars and take longer times. Proxy wars depend on guerrilla warfare methods, use modern technologies, such as drones and hacking target websites. They also depend on a small network of communications and financial support and small fighting groups operating within the target countries and are difficult to detect.

Strategies are developed in proxy wars to force the target countries to adopt a certain political behavior towards their citizens. In proxy wars, the lines between warfare and politics are blurred. One of the most important social features of proxy wars is that the entire country becomes riddled with deterioration, fragility, and vulnerability, hence reducing such target countries to failures. The most important strategies of countries for the use of proxy wars include the following:

- ◆ Controlling the new media (the internet and social networks), as all software programs, digital applications, and smart phone operators, such as Apple, Android, and Windows are owned by specific countries; they have no new competitors in the short or long term.
- ◆ Controlling the largest traditional media organizations and major international news agencies in the world, which dominate the public opinion across the entire globe.
- ◆ Promoting globalization according to new standards, norms and laws to

make it the legislative authority of the world, forcing the major international organizations bound to such laws.

- ◆ Employing international relations, alliances and political influence to besiege and weaken a given state economically, politically and culturally.
- ◆ Using high-quality intelligence operations to strike specific targets and eliminate any potential threats.
- ◆ Mobilizing some civil society organizations, which were established in accordance with the set goals to target the state at the right time.

Prevention of Proxy Wars

Brigadier-General Al Marashda presented several methods and measures to prevent proxy wars. Socially, proxy wars can be prevented by developing and promoting peoples' love and compassion and a human connection to one's homeland, as an identity and a source of glory and pride, achieving social justice, fighting corruption, and providing decent life standards and welfare.

Economically, all internal and external resources should be employed to build an economic force as a source of development for a given country at all levels and across all areas. Economic power controls other strengths, and it contributes greatly to achieving greater stability.

Politically, proxy wars can be prevented by building a coherent political system that controls the administration of the government through a solid internal policy and strong regional and international relations through a resilient and balanced foreign policy compatible with the public interests.

On the security side, one prevention method is to build a strong security system that protects the national borders from any external threat, through highly-qualified armed forces, and an internal security

system to maintain domestic security, prevent crime, achieve domestic stability, and national security.

Streamlining IMCTC Prevention Methods

Brigadier-General Al Marashda explained how the four key domains at IMCTC (ideology, media, combating terrorist financing, and military) are dovetailed to better streamline prevention methods against proxy wars. In ideology, he sounded a clarion call for the IMCTC member countries to take the necessary measures to better protect against extremist ideological attacks that use modern technologies to sneak into the mindset society. This Also requires that institutions, such as families, clans, schools, universities, and cultures should be optimized to nourish moderation, balance and benefit for the public interest.

In the mass media, given the ubiquitous communications revolution around the world, countries have to build and promote trust between and with citizens through professional and reliable media channels in the public and private sectors. With this put into action, the government becomes the main source for receiving and filtering information, while keeping away everything that could break up harmony in society.

In combating terrorist financing, it has become also imperative all financial institutions be tightly controlled and monitored; regulatory legislation should be put in place to ensure the safety of financial flows and avoid financing any operations against the national security and safety.

In the military domain, it has become imperative to achieve integration between the armed forces and the security system to ensure the national security of the borders from any penetration and nip in the bud any subversive activity within the borders. 🌟



CYBERTERRORISM & PREVENTION METHODS



Cyberterrorism has become an insidious threat to the entire world, not only because of the great damage it can cause, but also for the ease of carrying out horrendous crimes. With the click of a button, terrorist groups can destroy the information infrastructure and bring about more destructive effects than those used in conventional weapons. For instance, a terrorist attack can be launched to close vital sites, paralyze command, control and communications systems, and shut down banking, communications, and power lines. Against a backdrop of such imminent threats, cyberterrorism is terrorism of the future, given its chameleon-like manifestations, different methods, and the many targets that can be attacked by means of communications and information technology. Given the key importance of this topic, IMCTC held a keynote lecture in Riyadh to address the imminent threat of cyberterrorism, by Brigadier-General Nawaf Nasser Al-Jutaili, Delegate of the State of Kuwait to IMCTC, on August 25 of 2021. The keynote lecture featuring CYBERTERRORISM AND PREVENTION METHODS addressed the definition of cyberterrorism, root causes, manifestations, methods, threats, and prevention methods.

Transnational Crime

Brigadier-General Al-Jutaili warned that the world today is completely dependent on digital networks for communication and interaction, in addition to military and commercial uses. The threat of cyberterrorism is increasingly growing as it is a terrorist, transnational, and transcontinental crime. In the same vein, Ban Ki-Moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, spells out that the internet is a good example to show how terrorists can conduct their activities in a cross-border manner. To take countermeasures, countries should think and act across borders, as well. Substantial financial assets that make up billions, or even trillions of dollars are being traded, stored, or funneled via the internet, which fuels the threat of cyberterrorism that can target all such activities.

COVID-19 pandemic has increased the world's dependence on digital interaction and remote work, and the use of social media has also increased, which has become the first choice for those who prefer to stay connected with their social surroundings when at home. A report issued by the American Business Today Maga-

zine revealed that 75% of social media users spend a lot of their time on websites and applications, such as: Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Snapchat after putting into action measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Causes of Cyberterrorism

The political causes of cyberattacks are manifested by what happened between the United States and Cuba, between China and the United States, between Iran and Israel, between Iran and the United States, and between Russia and the United States. Of course, the responsibility for most cyberattacks are not claimed.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, criminal behavior is a social phenomenon. Such a behavior is driven by several factors, including family, friends, work, and society. Each factor has significant effects in pushing a given individual towards committing different crimes, including cyberterrorism, especially if such a criminal has a notorious experience, criminal mentality, and favorable funding to commit such crimes.

Economic causes play a pivotal role in determining the patterns of interactions and the of centers of power. Influencing and threatening centers of power has a devastating effect. Driving society to complain about the distribution of wealth and associated impact on individuals generates sympathy among members of society with such organizations.

Legal causes include the legislative vacuum and the poor supervisory authority on information networks; the difficulty of proving cybercrime except through competent authorities (and it is difficult to make such competent authorities available to everyone) and the ability to work anonymously or conceal identity; the low cost of the Internet for societies and the ease of use (the Internet has become ubiquitous across the world); the poor structure of information networks and vulnerability to penetration; the poor self-censorship and the privacy of social culture.

Using the Internet for Terrorist Purposes

Brigadier-General Al-Jutaili highlighted the methods of using the Internet for terrorist purposes, including but not limited to the following: The most important use of the Internet by terrorists is drumming up for their propaganda; terrorists use the Internet

to spread propaganda and justify their ideologies and actions; recruitment and financing; launching cyberterrorist attacks against anyone who opposes or disagrees with them; incitement to violence and extremism; training, coordination and implementation of operations; leadership and direction.

Terrorists also use the Internet to solicit and funnel funding, by learning about kind-hearted and lenient people, begging them to pay financial donations to legal bodies that are a decoy for such terrorists, in a shrewd and deceptive manner that does not arouse any doubts about the donor.

Given the tough restrictions clamped down on terrorist organizations and their pursuit on the ground, some terrorist organizations resorted to using the Internet for the purposes of education and training on terrorist acts instead of face-to-face terrorist training camps that can be discovered and destroyed; they used the Internet as a vast field for training. Some terrorist groups have produced guides for terrorist operations that have been published through the network to reach terrorists in various parts of the world.

More so, they also used the Internet for the purposes of planning, coordinating, and executing operations; the Internet allows them the freedom to launch specific terrorist attacks, after collecting information on the targets, which makes it easier for them to orchestrate clandestine attacks.

Dangerous Cyberattacks

Brigadier-General Al-Jutaili discussed the typology of cyberattacks. Cyber terrorism is associated with direct attacks on the victim's cyber infrastructure, such as computers and networks, and the information stored. Such cyberattacks are carried out to achieve various goals, such as disrupting the functionality of information systems, damaging virtual and physical assets, blocking websites and disrupting daily life by targeting infrastructure operated by computer devices, such as those related to medical facilities, stock exchanges, transportation, financial systems, etc.

In 2010, a group affiliated with the American Cyber Security, in cooperation with Israel, sabotaged the Iranian nuclear program by implanting a malware virus (Stuxnet) that disrupted the program for more than two years to date. Interestingly, Iran has developed Stuxnet and has attacked American targets.

Aramco had previously suffered the largest cyberattack in August 2012; the Shamoon Virus Attack damaged around 30,000 computers and was aimed at stopping oil and gas production in the Kingdom.

In 2018, Russian hackers successfully penetrated and hacked the cyber defense lines in several power plants in the United States,

gaining control over the entire entities, according to a report published by the Wall Street Journal. The newspaper quoted US officials as confirming that Russian hackers could have shut down electricity supplies to some states and caused power outages. They pointed out that the hackers used computers not directly connected to the international network of the Internet.

Cyberterrorism Prevention

Brigadier-General Al-Jutaili presented the most important recommendations for cyberterrorism prevention methods, including:

- Establishing Electronic Units within organizations, or cyber-security councils that would carry out defensive tasks by protecting information and infrastructure, and possibly implementing cyberattacks against threat sources.
- Providing technological support to countries that lack technology to establish infrastructure and sharing best experiences and practices in cyberterrorism prevention methods.
- Fostering community awareness and sensitizing society members to the threats of cyberterrorism.
- Reporting any threats faced by individuals, companies or institutions to such threats.

Brigadier-General Al-Jutaili presented the five basic principles that must be followed to ensure the required levels of cyber security:

1. **Grant Minimum Privileges:** If you trust all the employees in your workplace, that doesn't mean the receptionist needs the same levels of access that your CEO does.
2. **Use Micro-Segmentation:** By dividing your network into self-contained levels and layers, you can protect your entire system and ensure that access points are not vulnerable to cyberattacks.
3. **Encryption:** Take data encryption as the last weapon in your arsenal against hackers and intruders.
4. **Authentication and Acknowledgement:** This includes thumbprint recognition and facial recognition.
5. **Debugging:** Systems must always be updated periodically for some reason. Every time, malware software programs mushroom; your service providers respond by making new updates to the system and the software in use.

In the discussions that followed the keynote lecture, Dr. Farhat Al-Harshani, Adviser to the Secretary-General of IMCTC, stressed the importance of addressing the legislative and legal vacuum that hinders countering cyberterrorism, and called on IMCTC to develop a draft agreement between the IMCTC member countries on the judicial side to counter cyberterrorism. 🌸



VIDEO GAMES

MOST DETRIMENTAL MEANS OF TERRORISTS IN RECRUITING CHILDREN AND YOUTHS



■ Mahmoud Bin Abdullah

Video games have become one of the most detrimental means that terrorist organizations instrumentalize to recruit children and youths. Many video games are entertainment-driven, making violence an enjoyable practice to assault others, destroying their property, and claiming their lives. Video games inculcate criminality and violence, reducing cyberspace into a breeding ground that allures and implicates young people into terrorist operations.

Importance of Video Games

ISIS realized the importance of video games in spreading extremist ideology and deceiving youth towards their destructive ideologies. Therefore, it sought to break into this industry, make changes, and re-design some parts to drum up for its ideologies, and the recruitment of new youth members. For instance, ISIS modified ARMA 3 to allow youth to launch virtual attacks on Syrian and Iraqi soldiers or Peshmerga. In 2006, Al-Qaeda produced SEARCH FOR BUSH, in which the player kills American soldiers and arrests and kills former American President George Bush, which is a response to the game SEARCH FOR SADDAM; the game includes songs chanting jihad. Phased themes include American Hell, Growth of Jihad, and Day in Desert.

Extremists seek to connect with teens through such video games and influence them to facilitate their recruitment and inclusion in their organizations, taking advantage of the difficulty of monitoring the conversations that take place in such video games in the virtual world. Hezbollah, a notoriously terrorist organization, used video games as media outlets to spread its extremist ideology,

■ Researcher in counterterrorism, Jordan.

promote false beliefs, and show its combat prowess, including QURAYSH GAME, Under Siege, and Holy Defense, which embody a series of battles. They seek to fuel spiritual mobilization and stimulate jihadism among the target audience.

Malicious Strategies

While the abuse of video games and communication platforms by extremists receives great attention by security agencies, sociologists and various media pundits, the problem is still poorly understood. Extremists display agile behavior in using video games, often switching between different platforms to avoid detection and tracking; they communicate in subtle manners. Such organizations exploited the grassroots culture of countries in the modifications to such video games.

Terrorist organizations realize that video games are an attractive environment for the public, especially children and youth. It is difficult to monitor extremist behavior; there is often a high degree of anonymity in video game, the communication platforms, which depends on the use of a multi- approach strategy, targeting friends and enemies simultaneously to enhance the scope of missions, achieve alignment between word and action, and maximize the required strategic and operational implications.

Extremist groups target young people in video games, as they are more attracted to violent games, and use emotional appeals to male teens when shooting while playing, which strengthens the unbridled desire to experiment with fantasies of power and fame, and to explore exciting and realistic environments.

Terrorist Environment

Many research studies have proven a close relationship between the violent behavior of teens and the practice of video games; the higher video games, the more violence increases. Frequent practice of violent video games desensitizes emotional reactions to criminal acts, and reduce feelings of guilt in crimes bloody, taking the lives of innocent people in cold blood and ruthlessly, which makes such video games a breeding ground for the ubiquity of terrorism.

For instance, investigations of the terrorist incident in New Zealand in March 2019, in which 51 Muslims were killed while performing prayers inside the Al-Noor mosques and Lynod Islamic Center in Christchurch, showed that the armed attacker was named Brenton Tarrant, aged 28. He was passionate about video games; he spent most of his time playing violent videogames, as he himself admitted, and his family confirmed.

In a similar vein, in June 2015, a white extremist named Dylan Roof shot a group of worshipers during a bible study class at Emmanuel Church for Africans, killing 9 blacks. Investigations revealed that Roof addicted in his childhood to playing violent video games for long times.

The terrorist incident in 2011, when Anrich Breivik brutally murdered more than 69 young people and school students, while they were attending a summer camp in Norway. It was found later that the gunman had taken video games as a training platform before carrying out his act of mass murder.

Negative Impact

A recent research study revealed that video games, especially violent ones, negatively affect youth, and sometimes push them to engage in violence. Therefore, ISIS resorted to producing several combat games to influence players and provide them with the factors driving violence for their recruitment into the organization, hence being dehumanized and instrumentalized as crime tools.

It should be noted that video games and the detrimental messages they are couched in pose a great danger to end users. They create physical, mental, and emotional addiction that makes players

ready to receive the messages and act accordingly. These video games have been made handy and available on smart phones, which have become over the course of time a disconcerting everyday habit.

Therefore, the efforts of the family, society, and the government, with its various institutions, must work in tandem to educate and sensitize youth about the threats of video games and prevention method to nip in the bud any potential terrorist cells, and help our children from falling into the clutches of such notorious organizations and their criminal schemes.

Roles of Terrorists

Many children and youth prefer to take on the role of terrorist characters while engaged in video games as they are excitingly full of fun, suspense, adventure, and swashbuckling heroism. Some video games have become a real challenge to player skills, especially violent games, such as attacking military checkpoints, killing soldiers, and destroying armoured vehicles. Some games dehumanize victims; players feel the ecstasy of victory over their destruction and killing.

Terrorist organizations use subject-matter experts and programmers to design such video games, which depend on violence, battles, and warfare to increase the influence on morals and behaviors. Such games control the minds of video gamers, who become executive channels to communicate terrorist and extremist messages anywhere and anytime as long as fund is made available and cutting-edge technology is handy.

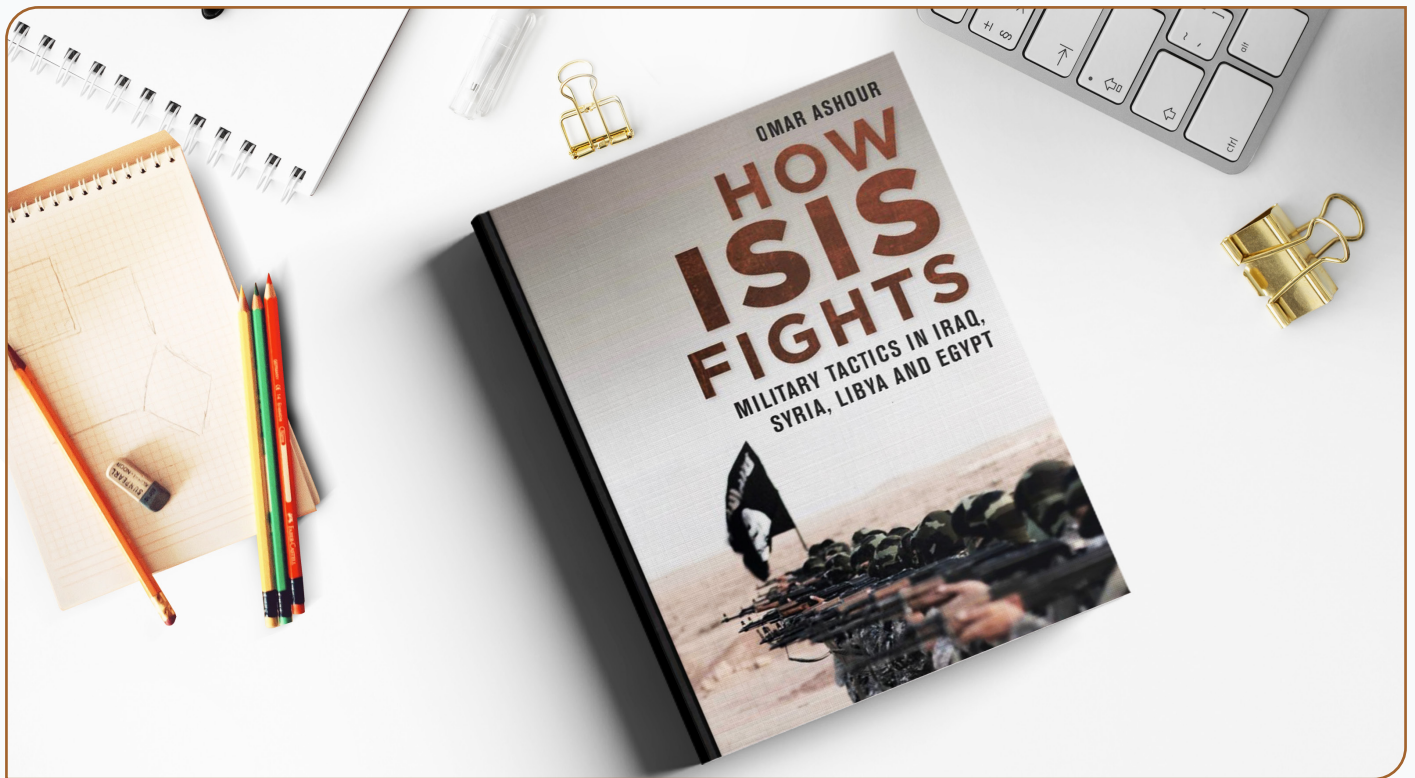
Conclusion

Terrorist organizations recruited fiendishly children and take advantage of their innocence to carry out criminal acts through such video games. Unfortunately, there is a huge demand for such video games, unbearably impacting reality! This requires families to be prepared to protect their children. Governments must assume their responsibilities in protecting youth from the threats of video games, exposing these scams, drying up the sources of such gaming community, and develop fun alternative video games that prove religious, moral and national values, and combat extremist ideology. 🌀



HOW ISIS FIGHTS?

REVOLTING DOCTRINE, EFFECTIVE METHODS, AND RISIBLE PLANS



Several questions have been raised about how ISIS controlled large swaths of Syria and Iraq, where a population of about ten million people live. Researchers and subject-matter experts sought to investigate how ISIS fought for more than a thousand days without the support of any country or local people. In the same vein, *HOW ISIS FIGHTS: MILITARY TACTICS IN IRAQ, SYRIA, LIBYA, AND EGYPT* by Omar Ashour, published by The University of Edinburgh in Scotland, provides compelling answers to such questions in a detailed and in-depth research study of the counterterrorism methods against ISIS, which fought the forces of countries that were far superior in quantity and quality for several years given the invention of qualitative fighting methods. The grave blunders committed by some leaders of the military forces have also come into play.

The author provides field work (58 personal interviews) and an in-depth analysis of the primary sources of ISIS (analysis of 228 publications and bulletins), in which he well investigated the activities of ISIS ever since its inception until March 2020, over a period of nearly 17 years. A great attention is focused on ISIS combat performance in 17 battles, including the battles of Fallujah, Mosul, Ramadi, Raqqa, Sheikh Zuwaid, and others.

Repetitive Modalities

The Book explains how ISIS fights; no sooner is ISIS defeated in one territory than it mushrooms and balloons into another. With this in mind, understanding the ISIS methods contributes to completely eliminating it, especially since it depends on the application of such methods constantly in various areas.

The author analyzed fifteen military methods applied by ISIS in

Iraqi towns and cities, and replicated in other regions, such as defeating armed groups that oppose ISIS through assassinations, or through assimilation or making alliances if they are close to the ISIS ideology, recruiting youth, looting the weapons of the state army and stores of other armed groups, use of improvised explosive devices, tunnels, drones, sniping, suicide operations, and transferring knowledge of military, combat and procedural skills to other war arenas.

Despite the defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and the liberation of the territory ISIS once controlled, ISIS still poses a major terrorist threat in different regions of the world. Three weeks after former US President Donald Trump announced the elimination of ISIS on October 7, 2019, Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashemi Al-Quraishi, who succeeded Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi as Leader of ISIS, announced in October 2019 that his organization controls 14 provinces in conflict areas, stretching from the Congo to Afghanistan, passing through Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and Yemen, where ISIS branches continue to use methods developed by the parent organization in Iraq and Syria.

In 2010, ISI, predecessor of DAESH, was destroyed and 36 of its 42 senior leaders were killed or captured. Leon Panetta, former Head of the Central Intelligence Agency CIA, told members of Congress that the organization had fewer than a thousand fighters. Only four years later, ISIS captured Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq. A battalion of the terrorist organization attacked Mosul, and two divisions were facing it: a division of the Iraqi Police, and another from the Iraqi army. This was not unique. It was repeated in Ramadi, Raqqa, Derna, Sirte, and Sheikh Zuwaid, where the

terrorist organization had a variety of methods of confrontation, but there was no success in strategic planning; none of these could survive or be controlled.

Seeking Explanation

The author sought to provide explanations to: How did such an abominable terrorist organization widely fought successfully occupy many cities, towns and villages, from Marawi in the southern Philippines to Sabratha in western Libya? How did ISIS continue to fight and survive for so many years, facing an international coalition, including many countries, organizations and more than 150-armed non-state actors?

The traditional explanations do not sound plausible and compelling. ISIS has no grassroots, governmental, or external support; ISIS does not have a solid strategy in many rugged geographic areas, such as mountains and forests. Most of the ISIS terrorist operations were conducted in flat territories, and sometimes in vast deserts, urban and suburban territories. ISIS has managed to create an umbrella for the rebel groups, unprecedentedly extremist violent, challenging the status quo with weapons, and therefore traditional explanations for the survival of the insurgency are not convincingly telling. Taken together, the author presented a sequence of the operational level of the implementation of the ISIS methods, allowing the reader to understand the stylistic procedures, the methods of operation, and the link between the tactical and operational levels and the combat effectiveness of ISIS, and to learn about the associated patterns and links in the conflict areas used as a case study.

Revoting Doctrine and Influential Methods

What explains the progress of ISIS in some battles, albeit temporary, is the type of methods used, the methods of war adopted, and the transformations in the operations carried out. However, the ISIS ideology was a burden on its military methods, which undermined its efforts. It is repulsive and extremist, which attracts

recruits only from specific margins and parties, and it is a doctrine that creates many enemies; ISIS cannot bear and tolerate any difference, albeit infinitesimal. For instance, the war between ISIS and Al-Qaeda is still dragging on everywhere they meet, despite the fact that the ideological differences between the two terrorist organizations are very small.

Guerrilla Warfare Redux

The ideological obsession reduced ISIS blind to learning about the threats ISIS is hemmed in. As such, the self-generated ignorance contributed to destroying its traditional capabilities. Since terrorist organizations rarely controlled territory, Al-Qaeda spells out that if you fight against a state, without air force, without air defense, and with very limited resources, you are likely to lose territory. However, ISIS stakes out opposite positions about this issue, hoping to acquire more resources, and more ability to recruit, its control over the territory that made it vulnerable to many fatal threats, such as air bombardment and ground attacks by the major forces, which happened impressively between 2017-2019, causing the demise of the so-called statehood.

ISIS turned into guerrilla warfare; rather, it returned to guerrilla warfare, so it controlled towns, villages, or neighborhoods for a short period of time, looting all weapons that it could obtain from local police stations, or from any army checkpoints, and resources, money and gold, assassinating those who collaborate in cahoots with the regular security forces, flexing its belligerent muscles, documenting its operations to use them for propaganda and recruitment purposes, then withdrawing to avoid losses.

The combat methods of ISIS combined traditional military methods, guerrilla methods, and violent terrorism methods, which achieved quick and sometimes confusing results for their opponents. However, the results were also short-lived and ephemeral; ISIS does not have a clear strategy that would enable it to achieve its goals. ❁



IMCTC AND IDEOLOGICAL WARFARE CENTER SIGN MOC



IMCTC represented by His Excellency Major-General Mohammed Saeed Al-Moghedi, and the Ideological Warfare Center of the Ministry of Defence signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC), at the IMCTC headquarters in Riyadh, August 11, 2021.

Major-General Al-Moghedi stressed that the MOC, inter alia, streamlines and strengthens the framework the strategic partnership and the leading roles performed by the two said parties in combating violent extremism and enhancing the common counterterrorism vision, driven by their substantial contributions to immunizing societies from terrorist threat with preventive and remedial initiatives and programmes.

Major-General Al-Moghedi spelled out that IMCTC represents a moderate Islamic environment to confront the constant threats of terrorist organizations, combat violent extremism, and support peace and stability in the Muslim world and around the world. 🌸

AMBASSADOR OF UGANDA TO KSA VISITS IMCTC



Secretary-General of IMCTC Major-General Mohammed Saeed Al-Moghedi received H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Uganda to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Isaac Biruma Sebulime, along with the Ugandan delegation, on his visit to IMCTC, August 24, 2021. Both parties discussed avenues of mutual cooperation to further enhance the areas of counterterrorism. The Ugandan delegation was officially briefed on the IMCTC efforts and initiatives, and in turn paid tribute to such commendable efforts. 🌸

IMCTC MARKS NATIONAL DAYS OF FOUR IMCTC MEMBER COUNTRIES



Delegates of four IMCTC member countries held celebrations of their national days at the IMCTC headquarters in Riyadh, in the presence of Secretary-General of IMCTC, delegates of the IMCTC member countries, and the IMCTC staff members.

The four national days were celebrated by the delegates of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Republic of Gabon: (75th) Anniversary for Pakistan, and (61st) for the rest of the countries. 🌸