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THE DERADICALISATION OF TERRORISTS

Jason-Leigh Striegher[†]

Governments today tend to grapple with the development and implementation of deradicalisation programs; and as such, the results of such programs have led to varying degrees of success. The programs of three nation states—Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have been selected for discussion due to the diversity of programs used in these Islamic states. This study focuses on the distinction between disengagement and deradicalisation; and identifying and understanding the affects that push and pull factors potentially have to extricate identified terrorists from violent extremism. It also highlights Jack Roche as an example of someone that in general deradicalised himself as a result of push and pull factors.

“If the development of terrorism is a product of its own time and place, it follows that issues of disengagement (and all that that implies) will also be context-specific and necessarily nuanced . . . in terms of how the programmes are constructed, implemented, and promoted . . .” (Horgan, 2008a: 7).

Keywords: deradicalisation, disengagement, terrorism, counterterrorism, violent extremism

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to provide an insight into how those who are fundamentally and ideologically driven can be potentially diverted from their radical paths. This will be done by discussing the various terminologies related to deradicalisation; examining and evaluating the distinct demarcation between terms such as disengagement and deradicalisation; by highlighting a range of motivating factors that either support or moderate individuals and organisations to either continue on, or abandon their ideologies of extreme violent action; and, by analysing the processes and programs initiated to disengage and/or deradicalise violent extremists. This will further entail the examination of the inherent

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successes and failures of a number of deradicalisation programs; and what may constitute an effective and reliable program.

The majority of the literature available on this topic predominantly examines deradicalisation programs that have occurred within prison systems and/or post-prisoner incarceration. Through an analysis of these various deradicalisation programs, this study examines the notion that such programs must attempt to address the problems of violent extremism prior to individuals—or groups of individuals—being imprisoned for violent action; not solely after they have “committed the crime.” Additionally, and for the purpose of this paper, the term radicalisation will primarily convey what Bartlett, Birdwell, & King (2010: 8) describe as “radicalization that leads to violence,” not “radicalization that [does] not lead to violence.”

DEFINING DISENGAGEMENT AND DERADICALISATION

It is evident that theories and research pertaining to the purposes and processes of radicalisation far outweigh those theories and research that discuss disengagement and deradicalisation (Noricks, 2009: 299; Ashour, 2009: 3; Gvineria, 2009: 257). Gvineria (2009: 278) and Horgan (2009: 153) outline this further by stating that although research into ending terrorism capitulates a number of insights and ascribes to a number of theoretical structures of disengagement and deradicalisation, it is still a maturing social science that is deficient in its rigidity; and as such will require further analysis, investigation and research to enhance the government’s (community) deradicalisation capabilities.

To begin—and similar to other terminologies used within the context of terrorism—there is not one universally accepted definition of deradicalisation; nor is there a definite process adopted to deradicalise radical extremists. As elucidated by a number of deradicalisation specialists, the many processes and methodologies of deradicalisation programs are inconsistent, and are often dependant on issues far more complex than suggested (Noricks, 2009: 299; Porges & Stern, 2010). “There are many pathways out of terrorism; some leading opposite directions, while others provide alternative routes to strengthen democracy and reduce violence” (Wilkinson, 2006: 196, para. 5). There should not solely be attempts to change the religious beliefs of radicals; but that attempts to change their strategic use of violence to achieve their objectives must also be pursued (Ashour, 2009: 6). So where deradicalisation attempts to

disengage individuals from their path to radicalisation—which may or may not lead to violence — the term disengagement as stipulated by Horgan (2009: 152) refers to “the process whereby an individual experiences a change in role or function that is usually associated with a reduction of violent participation.”

It is important to note that though disengagement would initially be ideal, it does not signify that an individual who remains radical in their views—not necessarily actions—will not re-engage in violent action. Horgan (2009) maintains that in disengaging an individual, it is equally important to “root the concept of de-radicalisation” to ensure that they are not at risk of re-pursuing violence as a means to an end. Specifically, Ashour (2009: 5–6) best defines deradicalisation as the process “in which a radical group reverses its ideology and de-legitimizes [sic] the use of violent methods to achieve political goals, while also moving towards an acceptance of gradual, political and economic changes within a pluralist context.”

Noricks (2009: 300) quotes Horgan (2008) who specifies the need to distinguish between disengagement (behavioural modification) and deradicalisation (attitudinal modification). From an anti-terrorist perspective, disengagement can be viewed as more important than deradicalisation as the individual’s behaviour could be altered to reject violence as a means to achieving their objectives. However if deradicalisation processes are not pursued, there is no guarantee that the ideological beliefs of radical individuals will not be re-interpreted as a justification for re-engaging in violent action. Although the individual may either leave or remain within an extremist organisation, their radical views may remain somewhat intact (Aly & Striegher, 2012). It is herein worth mentioning that the deradicalisation process is not simply a reversal of the radicalisation process (Noricks, 2009: 299) as represented by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 2006: 4), or by any means an indication that an individual has returned to their state prior to becoming radicalised (Horgan, 2009: 153).

As an overview, the FBI stated that there are four distinct stages in the process of radicalisation; pre-radicalisation, identification, indoctrination and action stages (FBI, 2006: 4). Silber & Bhatt (2007: 6-7) also share the view that there are four phases of radicalisation consisting of the pre-radicalisation phase, self-identification phase, indoctrination phase and the jihadisation phase. In establishing the place of deradicalisation in this process, Horgan’s (2009: 151-153) model shows the evolutionary sequence—from pre-radicalisation to de-

radicalisation—of the pathway into, through, and out of terrorism as illustrated in figure 1.

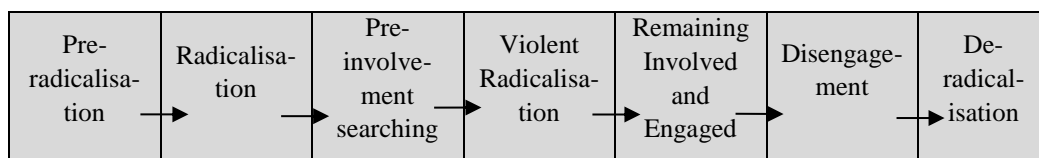


Figure 1—Progression of pre-radicalisation through to deradicalisation

Arguably, and in understanding Horgan’s process, it is the view of the author that specialists should attempt to disengage individuals as soon as they are identified, as opposed to merely considering disengagement programs and processes after they have participated in unlawful or violent action. By disengaging individuals earlier in the process there is a higher likelihood that such preventative measures may keep them from radicalising to a point where they view violence as the only means to voice their political views and/or ideologies. It can thus be surmised that deradicalisation of violent extremists cannot occur at any stage prior to disengaging individuals from their violent paths (Horgan, 2009).

MITIGATING FACTORS FOR REMAINING OR DISENGAGING

In attempting to develop realistic programs designed to disengage and/or deradicalise individuals, it is vital to clearly understand the underlying reasons why individuals enter a path to radicalisation in the first place (Horgan, 2005: 72). The FBI (2006) stated that a number of extrinsic motivations can contribute to an individual becoming radicalised, and that these include “economic, racial, legal, political, religious, familial, or social deprivation” (FBI, 2006: 6). In identifying such potential root causes, Law Enforcement and Intelligence Agencies (LEIA), and government and non-government organisations should work together to design and implement successful programs that prevent individuals from continuing on a path of radicalisation that leads to violence—being mindful of the inherent difficulties in detecting individuals on that path (Striegher, 2013). With law enforcement and community collaboration, there are potentially more opportunities to identify the issues faced by such “troubled” individuals, and there is a higher likelihood of identifying intervention strategies that could prevent them from seeking violence as a means for potential retribution.

Unfortunately government bodies behave as though they are hamstrung by political agendas, allegiances, funding, media and fundamental lack of knowledge of motivating factors. As a result they are constantly in a race to prevent extreme violent action, as opposed to addressing the root causes behind these actions. Once individuals — or groups of individuals — are identified as potential candidates for radicalisation, this is when LEIA and governments are in the best position to interject and attempt to prevent continuation of the radicalisation process that leads to violence (Striegher, 2013). With this, it is vitally important to identify the “push and pull” factors that motivate individuals to disengage from their radical paths (Horgan, 2009; Morris, Eberhard, Rivera, & Watsula, 2010; Björgo, 2005: 9; Noricks, 2009; Fink & Hearne, 2008: 3) in order to be successful in developing effective disengagement and deradicalisation programs.

Push Factors

Gvineria (2009: 280) suggests that the reasons individuals (violent radicals) remain in terrorist organisations are often not necessarily the same reasons in which they were attracted to those organisations in the first place. As previously mentioned, there are a number of reasons why individuals are initially drawn into radicalisation, however over time the fundamental belief systems and religious ideologies shared are often blurred by a group’s collective frustrations and anger, where terrorist acts may become either a natural progression of that anger (and hate), and/or are conceived as a part of their extreme religious ideologies, or a means of practicing that ideology.

When organisations directly (or indirectly) elicit the adoption of such extremist views that lead to terrorism, it would not be unrealistic that some individuals would consider withdrawing from such organisations, however are often conflicted by “the internal pressures to stay competing with the external pressures to go” (Noricks, 2009: 303 quoting Taylor, 1988). What then exacerbates this internal conflict is the “spiralling of commitment” that ensues once individuals deepen their involvement in a terrorist organisation (Björgo, 2005: 9; Noricks, 2009; Roche, personal communication, n.d.). The inconsistencies realised between their belief systems and the organisation’s calculated actions may eventually deter them from the group.

It is important herein to differentiate between individuals who seek to join such groups because of religious ideologies—who are then coerced and manipulated into taking part in terrorist activities—and those individuals who coerce and manipulate them. Often those who see themselves as honourable Mujahidin (freedom fighters) are attracted to the struggle to defend the rights of those who they believe are treated with injustice and unfairness; and as such feel the need to do something to support those who are unable to help themselves (Horgan, 2009: 66-71; Horgan, 2008b: 85).

Noricks (2009), Björgo (2005) and Morris et al. (2010: 4) however explain push factors as those “negative circumstances or social forces that make it unattractive to continue membership in a particular organisation” (Noricks, 2009: 301-302). Upon realising that the recruiters of organisations they have joined have lied, coerced and manipulated them into taking part in unwarranted violence (i.e. against innocent civilians), they may begin to feel disillusionment from the group’s aims and activities, and begin losing confidence in the organisation’s ideologies and political movement—all motivational push factors (Björgo, 2005: 9-10; Noricks, 2009: 303; Fink & Hearne, 2008).

A familiar Australian example of an individual who disengaged from violent Jihad is the story of Jack Roche — Australia’s first convicted terrorist—who effectively “removed” himself from Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) when he was asked to attack Israeli interests that would in no doubt injure and potentially kill innocent civilians within Australia (Roche, personal communication, n.d.). Though Roche joined JI in an effort to fight alongside his Muslim Brothers overseas (with the Taliban and/or Palestinians), he was discomforted by the group’s gratuitous (and violent) activities, and lost faith in their violent ideologies and internal politics (McGeown, 2004, para. 20; Roche, personal communication, n.d.).

Such push factors, as well as criminal prosecution; parental or social disapproval; counter-violence from oppositional groups; ejection from the group; exhaustion from tension or uncertainty as a member of a targeted group; and increased activity in a competing role are potential reasons why individuals may be deterred from taking part in violent action, or are subsequently encouraged to *push* away from the group as a whole (Noricks, 2009: 301; Björgo, 2005: 10-11). In identifying the motivational push factors that may potentially deter individuals from joining or remaining within radicalised terrorist groups, government organisations can be better positioned to identify and provoke individuals at-

risk—those who are fundamentally and ideologically driven to commit a violent act—into reflecting on such factors and compelling them into reconciling their ideologies with other options.

Pull Factors

Where there are internal factors that often *push* individuals away from radicalised terror groups, individuals can also be enticed to leave an organisation because of external factors that could be “opportunities or social forces that attract an individual to a more promising alternative” (Noricks, 2009: 302). Some individuals who join radical groups are not often fully aware of the implications of their actions, and can often be misled into participating in violent action that eventually disagrees with their fundamental ideologies—as was the case with Jack Roche (Aly & Striegher, 2012). Though the high level of investment in a group, the sense of community established, the pressure to continue the struggle, the fears of leaving and/or the concerns of mistrust and uncertainty from within may discourage them from leaving (Björgo, 2005: 12–14; Wilkinson, 2006: 199), there are indeed stronger motivational factors that can pull individuals away from the group.

It is also important not to disregard what Ashour (2009: 1) describes as organisational disengagement where the executives and/or leadership within an organisation decide to change direction. Though changes may be induced by various push factors, pull factors can be equally as effective. This is exemplified in a case outlined by Hoffman (2001) who reports on the complete disengagement of one of the most feared terrorist organisations of the 1970s, the Black September Organisation—the military wing of Yasser Arafat’s Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). A senior general of al-Fatah described Black September as:

The most elite unit we had. The members were suicidal—not in the sense of religious terrorists who surrender their lives . . . but in the sense that we could send them anywhere to do anything and they were prepared . . . to do it. No questions. No hesitation. They were absolutely dedicated and absolutely ruthless (Hoffman, 2001, para. 5).

Though the atrocious acts committed by the Black September Organisation put the PLO movement onto the world stage; by 1974, the terrorist group had outlived its purpose when Arafat and the PLO were invited to shift their political

direction. With their violent history, Black September was then considered a potential liability to the newfound agenda of the PLO and something had to be done to disengage its members. After much deliberation, Arafat and his most trusted deputy Abu Iyad had found a way to switch-off the most “dedicated, competent, and implacable fighters in the entire PLO.” The PLO would give them a reason to live, as opposed to a reason to die—they would marry them off (Hoffman, 2001, paras. 9–10).

In an extraordinary account, Hoffman (2001) describes how the PLO leadership provided the Black September fighters with a number of pull factors as stipulated by Noricks (2009: 303) to ensure they were disengaged permanently. Though organisational disengagement (from the top and throughout) has a far greater effect on the ability of individuals to move on (Neumann, 2010: 40), an individual’s desire for a normal life, to establish a family, find new employment or educational opportunities, new role models or social groups, new and more compelling social/religious ideologies and belief structures, as well as other changing priorities are all motivational factors that compel individuals to *pull away* and abandon their radical paths (Björgo, 2005: 12; Noricks, 2009: 303).

In the case of the Black Septembers, individuals were introduced to the most beautiful women from the Palestinian communities around the Middle East; were paid \$3,000 to marry; another \$5,000 if they had children; were provided with full housing in Lebanon—with all necessary amenities; and were further employed in non-violent roles within the PLO had they remained disengaged (Hoffman, 2001). The PLO would further test ex-Black September members to ensure they would not re-engage in violent activities again. Though an interesting concept, it would seem the program was a great success. All Black September members accepted the propositions made to them, and it would appear that each would remain permanently disengaged (Hoffman, 2001, paras. 10–12).

DISENGAGEMENT AND DERADICALISATION

“Deprogramming a bomb or a missile is possible—but can you deprogram a terrorist”? (Mohammad, 2009, para. 3) An optimistic answer to this question would certainly demand optimistic responses to many contributing factors. With this, it is also worth considering answers to other questions such as what kind of terrorist is the individual; what kind of environment do they come from; are they

intrinsically or extrinsically motivated; do they function independently or as a part of a larger organisation; are they active or dormant; or are there any foreseeable push and pull factors that exist, that may repel them from their groups?

In dealing with individuals who have been intensively indoctrinated; have been influenced to hate; who are meticulously trained and taught to maintain the highest of vigilance in dealing with their enemies, and who believe that the only important thing in the world is the furtherance of their cause (Wilkinson, 2006: 199), it comes as no surprise that deradicalisation and disengagement efforts become difficult to achieve. This does not take into consideration the bonds that are formed with other members within the organisation, and the aforementioned fears that come with leaving the group and/or “the apparently insuperable difficulties of rehabilitating themselves [back] into normal society” (Wilkinson, 2006: 200).

There are a large number of states that have officially devised and developed ambitious deradicalisation programs that have resulted in varying degrees of success and failure (Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez, & Boucek, 2010). Yemen is cited as one of the first countries to implement deradicalisation programs; followed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Iraq, Libya, Jordan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Great Britain, Tajikistan and the Netherlands (Ashour, 2010; Mohammad, 2009; Neumann, 2010: 11; Noricks, 2009: 306; Rabasa et al., 2010; Wagner, 2010). Neumann (2010: 11) further identifies France, Spain, The United States of America, The Philippines, Algeria, Israel, Pakistan and Afghanistan who have also endeavoured to implement such programs.

The majority of the deradicalisation programs developed throughout these countries have an ideological foundation that endeavours to de-legitimise “the use of violence against the state, the society and the ‘other’” (Noricks, 2009: 306 quotes Ashour (2008); Rabasa et al., 2010). Further to this, most deradicalisation programs also provide psychological components alongside the ideological components. These include the participation in psychological counselling, religious dialogue with interlocutors—or government appointed religious clerics (Neumann, 2010: 52; Noricks, 2009: 307; Rabasa et al., 2010), and after-care services that attempt to monitor and support the rehabilitation of newly disengaged members (Neumann, 2010: 54-55; Rabasa et al., 2010).

With all these countries, Neumann (2010) further highlights the importance of understanding the effect the environment has over the success and/or failure of deradicalisation and disengagement efforts. One's environment does not only determine if an individual is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, but can also influence the degree to which an individual may be actively involved in terrorist activities. With this, it could be argued that attempting to disengage individuals who live in hostile and troubled areas, would be vastly different from trying to disengage someone in a democratic society such as in Australia or Great Britain.

In a country such as Afghanistan, individuals are constantly surrounded by trauma and are continually bombarded with the harsh realities of living in that country. This would make it difficult to implement and maintain the "after-care" required for those being rehabilitated, and deradicalisation and disengagement programs would simply fail as a result of re-exposure to radicalising influences (Neumann, 2010: 55).

It would also be of relevance to the design of disengagement programs to understand what motivating influences encourage individuals to join terrorist groups in the first place. Horgan (2008b: 84-85) outlines some of these factors which include initial emotional vulnerability; identification with suffering victims and their plight; belief that engaging in violence against certain states is not inherently immoral; the sense of reward that may be achieved in death more than in life; as well as the development of kinships and other social ties. Understanding the motivating factors of individuals and/or groups—whether intrinsic or extrinsic—can essentially provide a foundation for how best to design disengagement programs, and what push and pull factors would be appropriate to introduce to encourage an individual to change direction.

Finally and as previously examined, it is also important to identify if disengagement programs are aimed at extracting a given individual from a terrorist group, or if the group is collectively being disengaged and deradicalised. For obvious reasons, and as exemplified by the Black September organisation and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (Ashour, 2009; Hoffman, 2001), the latter tends to have much greater success. With the disengagement of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, "the decision to abandon violence [was] taken by the leadership and ... [was] adhered to by the organisation as a whole" (Neumann, 2010: 40) with the support of the government. Such circumstances are rare because very few terrorist groups exist with such strong and authoritative leaders

in hierarchical command that look to disengage from violence (Neumann, 2010). In saying this, in aiming programs at individuals, governments must be exceedingly vigilant in understanding and processing all contributing factors on a case-by-case basis.

DISENGAGEMENT AND DERADICALISATION PROGRAMS

As aforementioned, many states have attempted to implement programs that have been designed to disengage and deradicalise violent extremists captured and held in various prisons around the world. These programs have resulted in varying degrees of success; partial success and abject failure (Rabasa et al., 2010). Successful programs were able to release a greater number of individuals who were successfully re-integrated into society with little or no concern; partially successful programs yielded results where individuals showed neither proper re-integration nor a return to violent extremism; and failed programs produced a number of individuals who have continued to retaliate violently against society—not affected by deradicalisation efforts at all. This does not suggest that either the programs as a whole were ineffective or that some individuals were damaged beyond repair; but that circumstances were highly dependent on how all factors mutually agreed with one another (Neumann, 2010: 56; Rabasa et al., 2010).

Literature regarding the successes and/or failures of deradicalisation programs is limited, and very few evidence-based and independent evaluations are available (Ashour, 2010; Rabasa et al., 2010). Neumann (2010: 48-49) asserts that measuring the success of programs and their effectiveness is not straightforward as results are highly dependent on a number of issues. “Recidivism rates “may not be the best metric with which to measure [relative] success” (Neumann, 2010 quotes Boucek, n.d.), especially when many programs have started only very recently, and many years may be needed to gauge whether or not an individual has been fully ‘rehabilitated’” (Neumann, 2010: 49). Further to this, results may be skewed in favour of programs that may be excluding hard-core militants, in comparison to those programs open to and accepting all categories of militants.

Yemen

Apart from the 1974 account of the disengagement of the Black September Organisation, Yemen is credited as one of the first countries to begin implementing formal disengagement programs (Horgan, 2008a; Porges, 2010a;

Rabasa et al., 2010). The first documented disengagement program entitled “Committee for Dialogue” which began in 2002 was one of those programs that did not yield to success. The sole focus of its initiative was to change behaviour through ideological interventions and the softening of views intended to foster an acceptance by former Jihadists that their pursuit of their objectives (through the use of terrorism) was illegitimate, immoral and unjustified (Horgan, 2008a: 6-7). Though similar strategies would be later adopted into programs devised by other countries around the world, the program’s lack of a holistic approach resulted in failure; and as such was discontinued in 2005 (Porges, 2010a: 28).

Porges (2010a: 28) describes a distinct lack of evidence that suggested that the participants of the Yemeni intervention were at all affected ideologically or behaviourally. She further explains the account of a former al-Qaeda detainee who stated that the program essentially consisted of “short meetings during which prisoners were encouraged to sign a form pledging obedience to [the Yemeni] President . . . as a precondition for release” (Porges, 2010a). Interestingly enough, the pledge did not preclude acts of terrorism outside of Yemen, nor did the program provide any after-care once prisoners were released. Even with the best of intentions, with such an ad hoc approach and in conjunction with its lack of credibility, relevance and support; many of the program’s graduates returned to violent jihad after release (Horgan, 2008a; Porges, 2010a; Rabasa et al., 2010).

Saudi Arabia

Unlike the Yemeni program—which only claimed to manage rehabilitating 30 to 40 percent of its detainees, the Saudi Arabian program was largely the work of a single individual, and was not sanctioned nor institutionalised by the government (Porges, 2010a). Saudi Arabia’s deradicalisation programs began in 2004 and remain a work in progress (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Porges, 2010b; Wagner, 2010). They are well-financed and use an amalgam of strategies to ensure more successful results (Gendron, 2010: 496-499; McDowell, 2010; Rabasa et al., 2010). These include but are not limited to “a combination of education, vocational training, religious dialogue, and post-release programs that help detainees reintegrate into society” (Porges & Stern, 2010, para. 3; Maclean, 2010; Mullins, 2010; Wagner, 2010). Additionally, the Saudi programs provide support and aide to detainees’ family members in the process, which is strategically dependant on the particular

detainee, and/or their cultural norms (Horgan & Braddock, 2010: 278; Johnston, 2009; Leary, 2009: 115; Mohammad, 2009; Noricks, 2009: 307; Wagner, 2010).

Another critical element in Saudi Arabia's process of deradicalisation was the creation of strong relationships between the prisoners and the program officials—psychologists, guards and teachers (Porges, 2010a: 30; Porges & Stern, 2010; Rabasa et al., 2010). These one-on-one relationships greatly increased the likelihood that detainees were discouraged from re-engaging in violent action and increased the likelihood of successful re-integration back into society. In contrast to the Yemeni program, the Saudi program did not focus the majority of its efforts on ideological rehabilitation—more it identified the importance of focusing on change in behaviour, not necessarily a change in the individual's commitment to their belief systems (Porges & Stern, 2010, para. 4). Although the program as delivered by the Saudi's is amongst the most popular and meritorious in its efforts, the system is not without its flaws (Rabasa et al., 2010).

Early accounts of the program officially declared a 100 per cent success rate in reintegration; later (in 2009) Saudi authorities would come to admit that approximately 10 to 20 per cent of detainees re-engaged in violent activities post-release (Horgan & Braddock, 2010: 278; Porges, 2010b. para. 6; Seifert, 2010). According to Laessing (2010; Stern, 2010, para. 18), this did not necessarily mean that the Saudi program was entirely to blame. He establishes that tough U.S. tactics such as torture used on Guantanamo Bay detainees, accounted for a huge 20 per cent in former Guantanamo detainees relapsing into militancy in comparison to the program's average of 9.5 per cent. With this, the life skills and funding given to “graduate” detainees more often than not ensures they are able to successfully reintegrate into society—yielding high success rates for the program (Mohammad, 2009; Rabasa et al., 2010).

Indonesia

Unlike other deradicalisation programs and initiatives, Indonesia's deradicalisation program was a “police-centred disengagement initiative in response” to continuous terrorism along the Indonesian archipelago (Horgan & Braddock, 2010: 273). Its first full program, which ran between 2005 and 2007, did not pay particular attention to religious re-education; more, they used ex-terrorists as interlocutors as opposed to religious clerics (Coates, 2010; Horgan & Braddock, 2010: 273; Istiqomah, 2011; Neumann, 2010: 51; Rabasa et al.,

2010) to persuade their detainees to stop terrorism. The focus was thus on the disengagement from “the strategic utility of armed force”, and did not focus on the ideological beliefs, principles or religious legitimacy (Neumann, 2010: 51; Rabasa et al., 2010) of their actions.

Similar to the programs in Saudi Arabia, the Indonesian program boasted its use of logistical and financial (including educational) support to elicit cooperation from its prisoners; as well as promoting family involvement (Dunn, 2010; Horgan & Braddock, 2010: 274; Mullins, 2010; Rabasa et al., 210). Kurlantzick (2009) stated that Indonesia has “a cutting-edge ‘deradicalisation’ [sic] policy to stem the growth of militancy.” He further explains how former terrorists are broadcasted on national television describing the “brutality of their crimes and express[ing] remorse for killing fellow Indonesians.” Furthermore, ex-militants are invited to visit convicted terrorists in prison to converse with them on religious issues with compassion; and try to use other softer tactics to dissuade them from the use of terrorism and to cooperate with police (Kurlantzick, 2009; Rabasa et al., 2010).

Though Indonesian officials claim their program is a success due to their use of ex-militants in their program (Horgan & Braddock, 2010: 273; Rabasa et al., 2010), there are those who have bluntly criticised their initiatives (Johnston, 2009). The Indonesian Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Patrialis Akbar stated, “We have to say that generally the program has failed, . . . successes are few compared to those who remain unreformed” (Rayda, 2010). Christanto (2010) further quotes an ex-member of the Jihad command—Umar Abduh, who stated that the government was not employing individuals that were respected by captured terrorists and that that could play a fundamental role in dissuading them from the use of terrorism.

One example of this was an individual who was considered the “poster-child” for Indonesia’s deradicalisation efforts. Abdullah Sunata who was highly cooperative in gaol, and was financially rewarded as part of the Indonesian program for his assistance with renouncing terrorism—immediately re-engaged in violent action upon his release, “catapulting [him] to the top of the country’s most-wanted list” (“Indonesia’s Deradicalisation Programme,” 2010). Christanto (2010; “Indonesia’s Deradicalisation Programme,” 2010) stated that out of approximately 600 terror suspects arrested, only about 20 can be considered reformed; and work legitimately with the Indonesian police.

Though Rabasa et al. (2010: 115) state that “despite the ad hoc nature of the Indonesian effort and lack of incentives to induce cooperation, the program has achieved some degree of success,” Horgan and Braddock (2010: 274) quote Abuza (2009) who stated that Indonesia’s program was not properly financed, properly staffed or properly institutionalised. McDowell (2010) further describes Indonesia’s program as insufficient for its lack in eliciting ideological re-interpretations to its detainees. This deficiency provides foreground for those who remain radical in their religious tenets, to re-engage in violent action upon release (Istiqomah, 2011; & McDowell, 2010); thus raising the question whether someone can disengage without an element of deradicalisation taking place. Both Istiqomah (2011) and Woods (2010) suggests, the change in radical behaviour is primarily due to monetary incentives as opposed to ideological shifts, thus militants often leave prison with their extremist views intact or unchanged.

Though these examples are only a snapshot of programs that have seen partial success and failure, it is still unknown whether a focus on ideological change, or on up-skilling and financial reward is more effective as a deradicalisation strategy. The majority of the literature suggests that the success or failure of a program often depends on factors including the target audience; adequate funding; incorporation of cultural norms; monetary support for families; and aftercare support (Johnston, 2009; Neumann, 2010; Rabasa et al., 2010; Wagner, 2010).

Neumann (2010: 57) stated that effective strategies and programs cannot be “copied-and-pasted” on all candidates and that they must cater for the type of prisoner population, the nature and ideologies of the groups, the society from which they originate, and the dynamics of the conflict with other external influences. He further recommends that programs must use an amalgam of strategies, which mix both ideological re-training with vocational preparation; that the use of credible interlocutors is vital; that prisoner transition into mainstream society is critical; and that discouraging extremists through agreements and commitments towards their families are significant means to dissuade and change the behaviour and ideological direction of violent extremists (Neumann, 2010: 56–57).

“As with radicalisation, leaving a terrorist or extremist group is an incremental process and can take place over a significant period of time” (Fink & Hearne, 2008: 3). It is important however for LEIA to identify the potential push

and pull factors when looking to infiltrate terrorist organisations to disengage its members. Individuals within an organisation are each affected differently by their conditions; and there is no one single path to compelling individuals to change course. It can be surmised from this that identifying and then presenting the right combination of push and pull factors can help provoke individuals into re-evaluating their position within an extremist group. It can also be argued that disengagement attempts would be far more successful if an organisation's leadership were party to the disengagement efforts (Neumann, 2010: 40).

As previously demonstrated, disengagement and deradicalisation programs are traditionally designed for and implemented post-incarceration, and explicitly deal with those who have already committed an act of terror—as evidenced in the aforementioned programs. These types of programs are designed to attempt a reversal of the radicalisation process and reduce the risk of recidivism (Noricks, 2009), but do not generally deal with intervening prior to an act of terror. By actively engaging with at-risk individuals, LEIA and communities are in a position to better identify opportunities to intervene prior to individuals getting radicalised to the point of committing a violent act (Choudhury, n.d.; Cronin, 2009; Goerzig, 2010; Government of Canada, 2013; Spalek, 2012). While being mindful of the civil liberties of individuals who have not committed a crime, push and pull factors when better understood can be used to exploit enticements to abandon the path to violent extremism as well as any weakened links to terrorist organisations (Striegher, 2013).

CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted the various ways in which counter terrorist officials may seek to disengage and deradicalise terrorists. It has placed importance on understanding the difference between physical disengagement and psychological disengagement; as well as evidencing the disparity between individual decline and organisational decline—stressing the benefits in addressing the individual as well as whole organisations. Further to this, if LEIA, government and non-government organisations use their knowledge of push and pull factors to assist in extricating individuals from the midst of their radical paths, they may be able to prevent individuals from reaching such violent ends.

As initially proposed in this paper, if efforts focused more on identifying individuals who are pursuing a radical path to violence, than on those individuals who have already committed (or aided in the commitment of) terrorist acts; then

it is probable that such complexities faced with deradicalisation programs (post-incarceration) would be minimised. From the various deradicalisation programs discussed—including the 1974 Black September Organisation’s disengagement—it is clear that creative lateral thinking can sometimes accomplish unimaginable results. Though counterterrorist officials often focus their attention on eliminating terrorist organisations, Hoffman (2001) stated that we should attempt to concentrate on weaning individuals from violence. “It could hardly be any less effective than many of the countermeasures that have long been applied to terrorism—with ephemeral, if not nugatory, results” (Hoffman, 2001).

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