

# Counterterrorism, Rules of Engagement and International Order in a UN Context

Conference Proceedings from  
the Fourth Joint AMS-RDDC Conference  
at the Academy of Military Science, Beijing,  
with participation from the Danish Foreign Policy Society  
and held in Beijing 19 June 2018



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## **Counterterrorism, Rules of Engagement and International Order in a UN Context**

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# Preface

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**Liselotte Odgaard**

Associate Professor, Royal Danish Defence College

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This collection of papers was presented at the 4th joint conference between the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) and the Academy of Military Science (AMS) held at AMS in Beijing 19 June 2018 and co-hosted by the Danish Foreign Policy Society. The papers offer unique insights into Chinese and Danish views on counterterrorist operations, pariah states and international order and the extent to which the UN will provide platforms for common action in these areas in future.

Is the UN and its multilateral set-up able to contribute to managing the challenges that stem from terrorist threats, from fundamental differences of interest and from different views on world order between significant state and non-state actors in the international system? Four officers and one civilian from Danish Defence and four officers from China's Academy of Military Science in Beijing discuss these questions in the papers. The Chinese papers focus on how these challenges look from the perspective of the Chinese military, and the Danish papers focus on how these challenges look from the perspective of the Danish military and NATO.

Major Martin Walldén Jespersen examines UN counterterrorism. He argues that if the UN is to be at the centre of international counterterrorist operations, enhanced acceptance of risk, increased focus on objectives rather than revenue, and greater flexibility in the interpretation of traditional UN principles such as consent of the parties and the non-use of force except in self-defence is necessary among the contributing countries and in the UN system. Senior Colonel Ni Tianyou analyzes international cooperation on counterterrorism, arguing that such efforts must be enhanced due to the continued centrality of the terrorist threat and they must encompass the Islamic world. Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard discusses NATO's role in counterterrorism. He argues that NATO's contribution is to increase awareness of the terrorist threat among allies and partners, to develop adequate capabilities to respond to these threats, and to engage with partner countries and organizations to enhance their ability to combat terrorism at local level. Commander Sune Lund and Associate Professor Liselotte Odgaard investigate the North Korean nuclear standoff with the United

States, addressing the wider question if pariahs who openly breach fundamental principles of the international community can be deterred in ways that recommit them to the international community and to promoting peace and stability. They argue that US policy on the Korean peninsula from 2016 to 2018 has been characterized by deterrence without reassurance of regime survival and with little concern for the core values and interests of US strategic opponents, making it extremely difficult to persuade North Korea to denuclearize. Senior Colonel Yan Wenhui examines terrorism in China's neighbourhood. He finds that terrorism is expanding, engendering fragmentation in fragile states in Central and Southeast Asia. He argues that strengthened international coordination through regional counterterrorist mechanisms and buffer zones in cyber space will help address terrorist issues. Major Casper Emil Holland discusses counterterrorism in Central Sahel in Africa. He argues that numerous peacekeeping and *ad hoc* forces work towards the same objective to address the security problems in a region marked by threats posed by non-state armed groups engaged in jihadist terror and by immigration to Europe. Senior Colonel Luo Xinqin analyzes Chinese counterterrorism internally, focusing on Xinjiang province in Northwestern China. She argues that China's experience has shown that comprehensive measures to prevent religious extremism and to facilitate economic development and the rule of law are necessary to counter terrorism in the long run. The Chinese counter terrorism efforts in the Xinjiang province have recently been the subject of debates in international media. Colonel Liu Silong examines the terrorist threat against China and how China has countered this threat. He points out that Chinese counterterrorism has focused on updating and standardizing Chinese counterterrorist laws, on prevention, on fighting a people's war against terrorism, and on multilateral cooperation. Although these policies have improved China's counterterrorist activities, cooperation, economic resources and political attention to the terrorist threat still need to be enhanced to effectively combat terrorism.

The Academy of Military Science is China's primary military strategic institution. AMS advises China's Central Military Commission, chaired by President Xi Jinping, about the role of the Chinese military in implementing China's defence, security and foreign policy. AMS plays a main role in the publication of China's defence white papers.

The Royal Danish Defence College develops the future leaders of Danish defence. It offers research-based education, and the research is used widely within and outside Danish defence for the benefit of Danish society and our allies and partners.

# Opening Remarks

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**Major General Wang Weixing**

Deputy Political Commissar, Academy of Military Science

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Respected Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, dear guests and friends, on behalf of the President of AMS, Lt. General Yang Xuejun and the Political Commissar, Fang Xiang, I would like to extend my warm welcome to you all, and my sincere thanks for your participation in the 4th AMS-RDDC joint conference.

The world is now entering an era of major development, transformation and adjustment with increasingly diversified and multi-polarized geopolitics. Countries are becoming more and more interdependent; but uncertainty and instability has also increased. The threat of terrorism is one of the most important factors. Terrorism spreads violence, extremism, and arms technology, helped by globalization and informationalization, posing a serious challenge for the international community. Terrorism not only threatens national security, social stability and property safety; it also challenges world peace and the rights and freedoms of all human beings. Recently, positive results have been achieved by international counter-terrorism on the basis of enhanced global consensus on how to deal with terrorism. International cooperation on counter-terrorism has become a key issue of global management and international diplomacy. The Qingdao Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit held in Qingdao last week is the first summit of its kind to have eight Asian and EU countries as major member states and 18 other countries as participants. The Qingdao Declaration agreed upon by the participating leaders strongly condemns terrorism in any form. It points out that efforts must be made to put the UN in a central coordinating role on the basis of international law instead of producing an environment in which counter-terrorism becomes a politicized global battlefield marked by double-standards.

But we should also be aware of the fact that terrorism emerges out of significant and complicated social backgrounds, material conditions, history, and ideology. This is a consequence of multiple and acute contradictions in economy, politics, ethics, religions and cultures domestically and internationally. Counter-terrorism is a long-term mission for the international community which calls for the joint efforts of each government and the wisdom of every think tank.

Today's discussions and exchanges on counter-terrorism in a UN context between over a dozen experts and scholars from the leading military think tanks in China and Denmark reflect not only the institutional cooperation and exchange between the two militaries, but also the demand of our times for new counter-terrorism approaches in our two militaries. We will work with RDDC for the goal of shared security through candid exchanges, shared wisdom and real actions. Let us write a new chapter of our counter-terrorism approaches and make contributions to world peace and the security of human beings. I hope that the 4th AMS-RDDC joint conference becomes a great success. Thanks!

# Opening Remarks

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**Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg**

Commander, Royal Danish Defence College

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends:

I would like to thank Major General Wang Weixing for his kind invitation. I am very pleased to head a Danish delegation to visit China and hold this 4th joint conference with the Academy of Military Science. I am very touched by the warmth and friendliness with which our Chinese hosts have welcomed us.

During the past year, numerous analysts and decision-makers have started to talk about the reoccurrence of a Cold War-style arms race and a higher risk of major interstate war. Another worrying development is that easy access to technology, along with the global nature of cyberspace, facilitates the expansion of terrorist networks armed with high-tech weapons. Yet these gloomy developments do not exclusively produce enhanced conflict. Fortunately, security issues are also used as stepping stones to define common interests across international dividing lines and conflicts of interests. In this way, international cooperation is established which addresses threats of war and terrorism.

On 25 October 2018, Denmark and China celebrate the 10th anniversary of their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement. During the past decade, numerous exchanges and visits have taken place across a wide range of political, military, diplomatic and economic sectors for the purposes of learning from each other and establishing cooperation in areas where common interests are identified. The annual joint conference between the Academy of Military Science and the Royal Danish Defence College is a good example of a successful



exchange of opinions with a focus on constructive mutual engagement and cooperation. The joint conferences have produced dialogue and proposals on how to cooperate in areas such as development aid, counterterrorism, as well as mechanisms to avoid the use of force in hotspots. These outcomes are not merely academic exercises. They are suggestions for how to cooperate on making a positive difference on the ground in areas where there is conflict and disagreement.

At a time of rising tension levels and sable-rattling in numerous hotspots across the world, it is even more important to sustain dialogue between the militaries of Denmark and China. Continual dialogue keeps a lid on disagreements by enhancing understanding of why different nations may see security issues from different perspectives. In addition, it helps to identify opportunities for ameliorating conflict and preserving peace and stability. At this conference, we discuss topics such as counterterrorism, the role of the UN in security management, and the lessons to be learned from the North Korean nuclear crisis, so that we can take these issues forward constructively. As a welcome development, the Danish military representative to NATO and the EU, Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, will speak about NATO's views on counterterrorism. Like Denmark and China, NATO and China need continual mutual dialogue to handle the challenges of a fast-changing security landscape and to ensure that their relations remain cordial. I am sure that this conference will contribute to keeping China's relations with Denmark and NATO on a positive and constructive footing.

# NATO and counter-terrorism: An evolving endeavour for a more secure world

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**Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard**

Danish Military Representative to NATO and the EU

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## **What is ‘counter-terror’?**

When thinking of ‘counter-terror’ most people might envision the killing of Osama Bin Laden during the strike against the Abbottabad compound in 2011; the killing of Islamic State’s leader Abu Bakr Baghdadi in Iraq in 2017; or the ongoing combat operations against ISIS on the ground in Iraq and Syria. Obviously, shooting down the ‘bad guys’ in these spectacular strikes and operations is the aspect of counter-terror that attracts the most media coverage. However, such operations are only one aspect of the fight against terrorism.

The fight against terrorism does not start with killing terrorists; nor does it end there. It is a complex endeavour that requires a holistic and long-term approach by the international community. Here, NATO is playing its part within the broader UN-led international effort to combat terrorism. Knocking down doors in the middle of the night to kill terrorists is a job often carried out by highly trained Special Forces under national command – not a job for the Alliance. Instead, NATO’s efforts are about boosting security at home within Allied countries and engaging with partner countries to help them build their own terrorism-fighting capabilities.

## **NATO's evolving role in countering terrorism**

NATO has been involved in the fight against terrorism since at least 2001, when terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, killing thousands of innocent men and women. In the wake of the deadly 9/11 terrorist attacks, NATO Allied nations (19 of them at the time) invoked, for the very first time, the collective defence provision of NATO's founding treaty (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty), whereby an armed attack against one Ally is considered an attack against them all. "All for one and one for all."

In practice, this translated into NATO sending seven NATO AWACS radar aircraft are sent to help patrol the skies over the United States and rapidly sending its Airborne Warning and Control Surveillance aircrafts (AWACS) to patrol the skies over the United States. Soon thereafter, the Alliance also decided to launch its first ever Article 5 military operation, Operation Active Endeavour, to patrol the Eastern Mediterranean and monitor shipping to detect and deter terrorist activity, including illegal trafficking. Three years later, in 2004, this operation was extended to cover the whole Mediterranean Sea.

NATO's response to the 9/11 attacks and support for its US ally culminated in 2004, when NATO took over the command of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. By doing so, NATO embarked on a long-term mission to ensure that Afghanistan would never again be a safe haven for terrorists. To this day, the Alliance's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan provides training, advice, and assistance to build the capacity of Afghan security and defence institutions; thereby increasing Afghanistan's national capacity to prevent and respond to terrorism.

Since 2001, NATO Allies have repeatedly acknowledged the danger posed by terrorism and have responded with solidarity against this growing global threat. Riga Summit, NATO leaders recognise that "terrorism, increasingly global in scope and lethal in results, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction are likely to be the principal threats to the Alliance over the next 10 to 15 years". At their Summit in Riga in 2006, NATO leaders recognised that "terrorism, increasingly global in scope and lethal in results, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction are likely to be the principal threats to the Alliance over the next 10 to 15 years." Four years later, in 2010, NATO's leaders adopted a new Strategic Concept, which recognises that "terrorism poses a direct threat

to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly.” Riga Summit, NATO leaders recognise that “terrorism, increasingly global in scope and lethal in results, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction are likely to be the principal threats to the Alliance over the next 10 to 15 years”.

Notwithstanding the gravity and extent of the threat, it took some years to define and reach agreement on the nature and scope of NATO’s role in countering terrorism. It was in 2012 that NATO leaders endorsed a set of counter-terrorism policy guidelines to provide direction to NATO’s counter-terrorism activities and identify key areas in which the Alliance would focus its efforts. These areas are: to improve the awareness of the threat; to develop capabilities to prepare and respond to it; and to enhance engagement with partner countries and other international actors. In short, NATO’s counter-terrorism role is about awareness, capabilities, and engagement.

#### 2017 – A turning point for NATO

Although NATO’s involvement in counter-terrorism goes back about 17 years, it was in 2017 that the topic was given a more prominent position on the Alliance’s political agenda. Against the backdrop of mounting terrorist threats posed primarily by ISIS – not only in the Alliance’s close vicinity but also in its own territory – and reinforced by President Trump’s strong focus on counter-terror and his views on NATO’s shortcomings in this area, NATO leaders decided, at their meeting in Brussels in May 2017, to enhance NATO’s role in fighting terrorism. In NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg’s words: the Alliance “can, and must, do more in the global fight against terrorism.” To put words into action, NATO leaders endorsed an ambitious 38-point action plan for NATO to step up its efforts in the fight against terrorism.

As a result, NATO became a full member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and has since played a role with Coalition members in de-conflicting the defence capacity building and training activities provided in Iraq. Also, a dedicated “terrorism intelligence cell” was established at NATO Headquarters to improve the sharing of information among Allies, including information on the threat of foreign fighters. In addition, the Alliance committed itself to enhancing its counter-terrorism training and advisory support to partner countries, particularly those in NATO’s southern neighbourhood who face an active terrorist threat.

These are just some of the actions that were, or are being, implemented from the May 2017 action plan. There are many more, pertaining for instance to increasing NATO's awareness of the current terrorist threat; strengthening Allies' capabilities to effectively respond to the threat; enhancing their preparedness to face the threat through targeted counter-terrorism training, education and exercises; and building or reinforcing relations with other international actors engaged in the fight against terrorism, notably the European Union.

NATO's efforts and actions in the fight against terrorism should not be viewed in isolation and nor should their impact be measured individually. Instead, they are part of a package aimed, more broadly, at stabilising the Alliance's neighbourhood and securing its own populations and territory. Taken together, these efforts demonstrate NATO Allies' resolve to actively address the terrorist threat and contribute to making the world safer and more secure.

## **NATO's added value**

It is clear that most counter-terrorism tools remain primarily with national civilian and judicial authorities. That said, NATO has a role to play and can provide unique assets and capabilities to the international community in the fight against terrorism. NATO's added value in this area comes from the three aspects of its current counter-terrorism policy, focused on increasing the shared awareness of the terrorist threat among Allies and partners, developing adequate capabilities to respond to these threats, and engaging with partner countries and organisations to enhance their ability to combat terrorism at a local level.

### *Awareness*

Sharing awareness of terrorist threats and defensive vulnerabilities, first and foremost among the 29 Allies, but also with partners, enables Allied nations and partners to prepare effectively and take mitigating action to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks.

NATO provides a forum for its Allies to consult and exchange information and intelligence in relation to the fight against terrorism. The Alliance has a dedicated team within its headquarters in Brussels whose job it is to analyse and assess the terrorist threat to NATO. This team can uniquely compile intelligence provided by both the civilian and the military domestic intelligence services from Allied countries. Another entity, known as the “Hub for the South”, based in NATO’s Joint Force Command in Naples, Italy, provides a focal point to collect, analyse, and assess the challenges stemming from the Middle Eastern and North African region.

In addition to providing a consultation and decision-making forum for Allies, NATO also offers a unique platform for Allies to come together with partners from around the world to brief each other on, and share analyses of, security issues of common concern – including terrorism. Where it is present operationally, such as in Afghanistan, in the Western Balkans, and at sea in the Mediterranean, NATO is well-positioned to understand the security environment and the potential terrorist threat. In other countries and regions of the world, NATO can certainly benefit from partners’ knowledge of the security threats and challenges in their own neighbourhood.

### *Capabilities*

The Alliance strives to ensure that it has adequate capabilities to prevent, protect against, and respond to terrorist threats. Against this backdrop, NATO established in 2004 the Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work. The programme, which supports the Alliance’s counter-terrorism capability development, is aimed at developing new or adapted technologies for Allied armed forces to detect, disrupt, and defeat terrorists.

Among the capabilities developed, there is a focus on capabilities to counter improvised explosive devices; to detect, protect against, and defeat chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons; to dispose of explosive ordnance; and to protect harbours and ports against seaborne threats.

## *Engagement*

NATO has an impressive network of cooperative relationships with many partners: some in NATO's close vicinity, along the southern and eastern Mediterranean coast, in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and South Asia; others in geographically more distant regions of the world, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Columbia. Partners also include other organisations, notably the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and to an increasing degree the African Union and others. Given the complex nature of terrorism and the mounting threat it represents to the world, tackling it efficiently requires the support and contribution of the wider international community. In this respect, strengthening the outreach to and cooperation with partners is at the core of NATO's counter-terrorism efforts. This engagement with partners is "demand-driven" and triggered upon the request of partners themselves. to strengthen outreach to and cooperation with partner countries and international actors.

NATO engages with partners on counter-terrorism in a variety of ways, including through political dialogue and practical cooperation such as training, courses, and exercises. Here, Allies place particular emphasis on shared awareness, capacity building, civil emergency planning, and crisis management to enable partners to identify and protect vulnerabilities and to prepare to fight terrorism in their own country and neighbourhood more effectively. Allies place particular emphasis on shared awareness, capacity building, civil emergency planning and crisis management to enable partners to identify and protect vulnerabilities and to prepare to fight terrorism more effectively. In other words, the focus is on training partners and building their capacity to fight terrorism themselves, rather than engaging NATO forces in combat operations. Afghanistan is a case in point where, in recent years, NATO has transitioned from a large military operation to a smaller mission aimed at training, assisting, and advising the Afghan defence and security forces.

## **The evolving terrorist threat: a global challenge**

Terrorism as we know it today is not the same as it was even just a decade ago. And the responses to terrorism from NATO and the international community have evolved over time. Terrorist groups have proliferated world-wide, the number of foreign terrorist fighters has grown, lone wolf attacks have multiplied, and terrorist techniques and tactics have evolved. It was as recently as 2014 that ISIS, unheard of before, emerged as the new virulent and deadly terrorist organisation. ISIS propagated more rapidly than most people anticipated, in Iraq and Syria first and foremost, but also in many other countries and regions around the world, most notably in Africa, Central Asia, and South East Asia. The terrorist threat and how it will evolve remains an unpredictable and global challenge.

What is quite certain, however, is that terrorist groups are using – or rather misusing – new technologies including drones, commercial electronics, and chemical precursors to a greater extent. They are adapting traditional military technologies to plan, prepare, and execute deadly attacks. Without needing to acquire sophisticated military capabilities, terrorists have spread terror and insecurity by using easily accessible and cheap technologies that were developed for peaceful purposes. This is a mode of operating which will most likely continue. Notably, there has been a demonstrated uptick in terrorist interest in using drones as weapons to attack their targets. A wide range of non-state groups have used drones in the past, but it is only recently that ISIS has demonstrated its ability to use weaponised drones to kill. It is a worrying trend which must be expected to increase.

States alone or an alliance like NATO cannot effectively address these new and evolving challenges without broad cooperation across the globe. For the international community to keep up to speed with the growing terrorist misuse of modern, accessible, commercial technology and the ever-changing tactics and techniques used by terrorist groups, a wide range of actors must work together. That includes governments, military and civilian organisations, and not least those involved in developing the technologies used by the terrorist adversary. These include both states and private sector industries.



From a NATO point of view, this is of immense importance and one reason why NATO spends a lot of energy and resources on partnerships. NATO already has a broad cooperation programme, but in response to the modern threat from global terror the Alliance will continuously adapt, develop already existing partnerships, and establish new partnerships when they are deemed beneficial for both NATO and the partners.

## **Conclusion**

The May 2017 meeting provided impetus to NATO's engagement in fighting terrorism. At present, the key task is to sustain and consolidate this engagement – and potentially enhance it further.

To this day, the terrorist threat remains intense, unrelenting, and multi-dimensional. Due to the military pressure of the Coalition forces, Islamic State has lost most of its territory in its heartland in Syria and Iraq, but their movement is still alive and has taken root in some other countries where areas of low governance allow it room to grow. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda has entrenched itself successfully in local contexts, positioning itself relatively strongly. Thus, it has become more difficult to eradicate. Al-Qaeda and its branches in Syria, Yemen, the Sahel, and Somalia continue to pose a significant threat to the security and stability of the countries and regions in which they operate; and the threat extends beyond these areas, into NATO territory, and into other parts of the world such as the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, increasingly accessible technology broadens the terrorists' possibilities of spreading their terror and hitting their targets more effectively and unexpectedly.

Against this background, clearly much work remains to be done by the international community as a whole. Moreover, there is ample room for cooperation across a range of actors who all share one common interest: making the world safer and populations more secure from terrorist threats.

# Failed Deterrence? The North Korean Nuclear Stand-off and How to Create Reassurance

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**Commander Sune Lund**, Danish Defence Command &

**Associate Professor Liselotte Odgaard**, Royal Danish Defence College

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## Introduction

This paper investigates the US-DPRK nuclear stand-off which ran from 2016 to February 2018. The exchange is studied as one of several cases which represent US-led attempts at ideologically based deterrence against international pariah actors. We situate this issue amid a broader, contextual question about whether pariahs who openly breach fundamental principles of the international community can be deterred in ways that recommit them to the international community and promote peace and stability. In the post-Cold War era, the West's belief that market economies and democratic political institutions are superior has generated a category of pariah regimes and international actors characterized by authoritarian political leadership demonstrating a disrespect for Western values. Yet despite being marginalized, post-Cold War pariah regimes occupy a visible position in international politics due to their overt breach of fundamental rules of world order, at least in the eyes of a majority of UN Security Council members. In the Cold War's aftermath, support for terrorism or for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction seems to be a precondition for pariah status.

Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya became one of these pariahs by openly sponsoring international terrorism and standing in opposition to Western economic and political values. Another example was Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. The secular authoritarian Ba'th regime defied Western democratic political values and basic international principles of absolute sovereignty by invading neighbouring Kuwait. Elsewhere in the region, Iran's Islamic Republic

opposes the secular political ideals of world order; and its nuclear weapons program has at times posed a direct challenge to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on weapons of mass destruction. International militant groups such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are based on an Islamism that challenges the existing states system. They use violent means against regimes and entities that are considered infidels and representatives of Western values. Their religiously-based challenge to world order makes them pariahs in line with pariah regimes. North Korea also qualifies as a pariah state with its nationalist ideology of “juche” or self-reliance which entails tight state control of society and the economy. Moreover, North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT in 2003 and Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program are a direct affront to the principle of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Designating a regime as a pariah makes deterrence difficult because the concept is founded in value-based beliefs rather than statecraft. A foreign policy based on beliefs involves promoting one set of values at the expense of other value systems. In creating pariahs, this takes the extreme form of attempting to change or eradicate the values on which the pariahs base their political system and philosophy. This raises the question of whether it is possible for Western states to avoid elevating tension levels and instability, and instead deter pariahs in ways that promote peace and stability. The track record here seems to be mixed if it is assessed on the basis of pariah regime deterrence. In this paper, we will first explore the concept of deterrence in the context of value-based conflicts of interest between pariah regimes and international society. We will then examine the case of North Korea as well as other Western-designated pariahs to gauge the extent to which there has been respect for the key deterrence principles that we argue must be upheld if deterrence is to prevail. Our concluding section will discuss the lessons of post-Cold War instances of attempted pariah deterrence, applying them to the case of the North Korean nuclear stand-off.

## **Deterrence and pariah regimes**

The central task in deterrence is to make an opponent expect negative consequences grave enough to erode the motivation behind their current behaviour. Whether these efforts succeed depends on what is demanded of the opponent and on their level of disinclination. The outcome is extremely sensitive, and it hinges on each side’s relative motivation and their evaluation of the stakes. Unless you have a very formidable deterrent force, it may be difficult to change your opponent’s behaviour solely by relying on deterrence.

Positive inducement and reassurance offered to an opponent will succeed only if credible, just as the deterrent capability and the willingness to use it must be credible.<sup>1</sup>

Pariah state deterrence is challenging since the very concept implies that these states are not easily deterred. Pariahs are international actors that have overtly broken fundamental principles of behaviour, domestically and/or internationally, thereby directly challenging fundamental international norms. In the post-1980 period, the US political establishment has identified such states using the criteria of sponsorship of terrorism and the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).<sup>2</sup> Once they are deterred from what is perceived as “inappropriate behaviour” they are no longer pariah states.<sup>3</sup> And if the pariahs cannot be deterred, an alternative course of action has been pre-emption to change the regime. This is what US-led coalitions ended up doing in the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, concluding that deterrence would not work. An alternative to pre-emption is to combine deterrence with reassurance since it is an exception rather than a rule that pariahs cannot be deterred. Most revisionist actors, such as the former Soviet Union and North Korea, have been deterrable (even if deterrence has at times been very difficult) for the simple reason that these actors placed a higher value on things other than conquest. For example, the US could deter the Soviets from aggression against areas that Washington valued, such as Western Europe, the Middle East, and Japan.<sup>4</sup>

Employing deterrence with reassurance involves presenting a regime with a stark choice between the tangible benefits of behavioural change and the penalties of non-compliance. Implementing a strategy of deterrence and reassurance requires effective policy coordination. Attempts to integrate force and diplomacy face no greater challenge than managing the tensions between deterrence and reassurance. Overplaying the military component can undercut the message of political reassurance and thereby provide the target state with an incentive to maintain or even accelerate its nuclear program. The North Korean

<sup>1</sup> Alexander L. George, “Coercive Diplomacy”, reprinted in Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 7th ed., 2009, pp. 72-78.

<sup>2</sup> Robert S. Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> Amir Lupovici, “The Emerging Fourth Wave of Deterrence Theory – Toward a New Research Agenda”, *International Studies Quarterly*, no. 54, 2010, p. 719.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, “The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 25:4, Autumn 2002, pp. 9-10.

nuclear stand-off from 2016 is an example of the imbalance between deterrence and reassurance.<sup>5</sup> Further complicating deterrence and reassurance is the fact that more than two actors may be involved, allowing the target state for instance to realign with another great power. In addition, numerous courses of action are available to the actors. A deterring state could combine a variety of diplomatic efforts with different military efforts, such as partially mobilizing troops, fully mobilizing, embarking on a show of force, launching airstrikes, or initiating a full invasion.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the pariah has more options than merely cooperating, reneging, conceding, or defying. Likewise, the deterring state has more choices than a mere binary question of whether to attack or not.

Critical to successful deterrence is to know whether the opponent is an aggressive, revisionist state that cannot be deterred, a defensive, status quo-oriented state that cannot be provoked, or a conditional or potentially revisionist state or actor that can both be deterred and provoked. International militant groups such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and ISIL violently oppose Western values and seek to revise the international realm into a system based on their religious beliefs. Such groups fit into the first category because they are in opposition to the state system, which offers them no protection and therefore provides them with no incentives to change behaviour. They cannot be deterred and are therefore not included in this paper. Most opponents fall into the last category. Especially in the case of potential revisionists, reassurance must be built into deterrence threats so that the target will not fear being deprived of its core values if it complies with the deterring state's demands.<sup>7</sup> From the literature on deterrence, we have derived four principles which have been important to ensuring compliance when dealing with pariahs.

First, pariahs are not always alone in facing the deterring state. Studies of deterrence involving multiple players reveal that pariahs may have a protector state which is involved in a complex relationship with the deterring state as well as the pariah. If multiple actors influence the deterrent effort and the response

<sup>5</sup> Robert S. Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, p. 121.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen L. Quackenbush, "Deterrence theory: where do we stand?", *Review of International Studies*, 37:2, April 2011, p. 759.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Detering a Taiwan Conflict", *The Washington Quarterly*, 25:4, Autumn 2002, p. 10.

of the pariah, the deterring state must take these actors' preferences and inter-relations into account. For example, if the pariah is protected by a great power, the protector may have red lines regarding both the behaviour of the deterrent state and the pariah that may affect the success of a strategy of deterrence and reassurance and therefore should be considered. Indeed, the danger of miscalculation is greatly enhanced by misreading the red lines of opponents, including protecting powers. It can be difficult to identify these red lines which means that enhanced transparency between the powers is helpful.<sup>8</sup> For example, the Soviet Union had a red line concerning the US invading Cuba during the Cuban missile crisis, which meant that the Soviet Union signalled its readiness to escalate the conflict if such a situation occurred. That red line was highly influential in defining the extent of US deterrence and reassurance.

Second, it must be possible for pariahs to change behaviour and shed their pariah status. A fundamental lesson from the deterrence literature, pointed out by Thomas Christensen, is that most actors can be deterred, and this is also the case with pariahs.<sup>9</sup> An ideological stance that pariahs cannot be deterred is thus detrimental to devising a strategy that effectively deals with pariahs. An example of deterrence of a pariah state that has worked is the return of South Africa back into international society following the end of Apartheid, which occurred as a result of voluntary and peaceful regime change. Reassurance cannot be effective if it is impossible to return to the status of legitimacy once behaviour is changed.

Third, the deterring state must walk the talk if its deterrence and reassurance efforts are to seem credible to the opponent. Such behaviour is called reinforcement by O'Hanlon and Steinberg.<sup>10</sup> This principle means that the political practice of the deterrent state must demonstrate respect for an interpretation of right and wrong conduct which the pariah is then also required to respect. Thereby, the deterrent state shows that its political practice is based on its core values and, as such, the core values define the red lines of the deterrent state. Christensen notes that in US policy towards Taiwan and the

<sup>8</sup> James Steinberg and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict", *The Washington Quarterly*, 25:4, Autumn 2002, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> James Steinberg and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, pp. 8-9.

People's Republic of China (PRC), this involves avoiding adopting a policy of unconditional commitment to Taiwan's independence because this would mean discarding the reassurance aspect that allows stability in the Taiwan Strait. Avoiding unconditional commitment allows the US to reassure the PRC that Beijing will not be punished later if its leaders comply with US demands, including demands for the non-use of force. However, according to Christensen the US might benefit from demonstrating that it has long-term security as well as value-based interests in supporting Taiwan as a Chinese democracy by continuing its military support for Taiwan, while clarifying that it is against Taiwanese independence. In this way, the US would demonstrate support for democracy but also for the PRC's red line of avoiding support for Taiwanese independence.<sup>11</sup>

Fourth, the deterring power must combine resolve with restraint.<sup>12</sup> The ability to demonstrate resolve and restraint builds a power's reputation and influences its ability to apply deterrence successfully. A reputation for honesty depends on whether the deterring state has carried through on threats to defend against a challenger if the challenger violates red lines of the deterring state. Honesty enhances the credibility of threats and thereby increases the likelihood of successful deterrence.<sup>13</sup> This principle means that PRC threats towards Taiwan's democracy must be met with proportionate responses unless provoked by Taiwan. By contrast, unilateral moves towards independence should not lead to US actions to defend Taiwan. Restraint entails not reacting to minor missteps. For example, when the PRC opened disputed air routes over Taiwan without informing Taiwanese authorities, affirming that there was no need for Taiwan's approval of new routes, contravening what Taipei said was a 2015 deal to first discuss such flight paths, this did not result in US interference. Washington merely expressed concern about the PRC's declaration and urged the parties to resolve the issue through dialogue. Eventually, the PRC refrained from using the routes.

In the following section, we investigate whether the US has applied these principles of deterrence and reassurance towards conditional revisionists in the post-Cold War era, including North Korea, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict", *The Washington Quarterly*, 25:4, Autumn 2002, pp. 18-19.

<sup>12</sup> James Steinberg and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, pp. 6-12.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen L. Quackenbush, "Deterrence theory: where do we stand?", *Review of International Studies*, 37:2, April 2011, p. 761.

## Red lines of third parties

As noted, the clear signalling of red lines by all actors is important to prevent unnecessary escalation. Except in the case of North Korea, the pariah states analysed in this paper have not enjoyed great power protection after the Cold War. However, China has continued to push for the primacy of the principles of absolute sovereignty and non-intervention. In 2011, China stressed that peaceful means were necessary to solve the crisis in Libya. Despite drawing a red line concerning the use of UN mandates to pursue regime change, Beijing refrained from blocking resolution 1973 concerning the establishment of a no-fly zone in Libya. China took the view that intervention should have been limited to putting a halt to violence that threatened to derail peace and stability in the Arab world, arguing that NATO abused the UNSC mandate for the purposes of regime change. China chose to abstain from blocking the resolution because it attached great importance to the requests of the Arab League and the African Union (AU) for endorsing military intervention.<sup>14</sup> China does not endorse a breach of the fundamental status of absolute sovereignty but nor will it block measures founded in the principles of the UN Charter that regional organizations have endorsed as necessary to preserve regional peace and security.

In the run up to the Iraqi war, the US and its allies failed to present convincing evidence showing Iraqi support for international terrorism and violations of the non-proliferation treaty and the UN-endorsed sanctions. Instead, China was one of the states that insisted on a peaceful solution within the context of UNSC resolution 1141, which was aimed at restricting Iraq from acquiring nuclear weapons. Facing the unilateral decision by the US to invade on the pretext of the Iraqi breach of the non-proliferation treaty (when in reality the US was motivated by regime change) China expressed serious concerns regarding the undermining of the UN system and the breach of its red lines: the principles of absolute sovereignty and non-intervention.<sup>15</sup> China, together with numerous other nations, thereby signalled that they would not support a UN mandate that endorsed using military intervention to spread Western political values.

<sup>14</sup> UNSC Meeting 6498, SC/10200.

<sup>15</sup> Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, "Statement of CPPCC Foreign Affairs Committee on US Military Actions Against Iraq", 21 March 2003, <http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/regionalhotspots/mideast/ylk/t537117.htm>



In 2015, the Iranian nuclear weapons program was temporarily halted with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCOA) between Iran, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Germany, and the European Union. Due to US withdrawal from the agreement, its viability is uncertain. However, at present, the remaining signatory states have confirmed that they remain committed to the UN-endorsed agreement. As stated by Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov: "We will obstruct attempts to sabotage these agreements which were enshrined in a U.N. Security Council resolution."<sup>16</sup> This constitutes a red line and echoes Chinese and European views that the US have breached fundamental international norms by withdrawing from the JCOA and unilaterally reinstating sanctions without proven Iranian violations of the agreement. Thereby, the US violates the fundamental principle of sanctity of agreements.

In North Korea, China has consistently signalled that it will not accept reunification on South Korean terms, meaning North Korea's integration into the democratic Republic of Korea (ROK). Furthermore, China has signalled that the use of military force against North Korea to ensure compliance is not an option. Such a scenario would most likely escalate into war on the peninsula and destabilize the region. The US decision to deploy ballistic missile defence (BMD) technology on the peninsula and to upgrade Japan's missile defence offset the balance of power, both on the peninsula and between the US and China. China saw this decision as US disregard for China's red lines of maintaining a second-strike nuclear capability against the US, because the radar on the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea can be used to detect the use of Chinese ballistic missiles, as can Japan's missile defence. Beijing had to counter this move by adopting sanctions against South Korea and by redeploying their armed forces, preparing to intervene in North Korea in the event of a US strike on North Korea.<sup>17</sup> A frank discussion of the red lines of each side is needed to identify areas where compromise is possible so as to avoid unwanted escalations.

<sup>16</sup> Reuters, "Lavrov: Russia and China to obstruct U.S. "sabotage" of Iran nuclear deal", *The Jerusalem Post*, 23 April 2018. <https://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Report-Russia-China-to-obstruct-US-sabotage-of-Iran-nuclear-deal-552497>

<sup>17</sup> Tat Yan Kong, "China's engagement-oriented strategy towards North Korea: achievements and limitations", *The Pacific Review*, 2017. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tat\\_Yan\\_Kong/publication/316530623\\_China%27s\\_engagement-oriented\\_strategy\\_towards\\_North\\_Korea\\_achievements\\_and\\_limitations/links/59d352320f7e9b4fd7ff8332/Chinas-engagement-oriented-strategy-towards-North-Korea-achievements-and-limitations.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tat_Yan_Kong/publication/316530623_China%27s_engagement-oriented_strategy_towards_North_Korea_achievements_and_limitations/links/59d352320f7e9b4fd7ff8332/Chinas-engagement-oriented-strategy-towards-North-Korea-achievements-and-limitations.pdf)

## Reforming the pariahs

In order for deterrence to work, it is essential that both pariahs and deterring states believe that it is possible for pariahs to reform and become acceptable states that are seen to uphold the fundamental principles of the international community. Based on the findings following the invasion of Iraq, which revealed that Saddam Hussein's regime did not possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the UN-based sanctions and coercive diplomacy used to deter Saddam Hussein from acquiring WMD-capabilities worked. It remains unclear why he did not allow the inspectors access, since they prevented the 2003 invasion. However, reports show that Saddam Hussein believed that the risk of WMD prevented the US from marching on Baghdad in 1991,<sup>18</sup> indicating a lack of belief in his ability to be reintegrated into the international community.

Ironically, the fall of Saddam Hussein was followed by the 2004 reintegration of Muammar Gaddafi's Libya into the international community. In 2003, Libya accepted a number of agreements compensating the victims of its state sponsored terrorism in the 1980s, and in 2004 it agreed to hand over its nuclear program to the US. Although certain sanctions remained in place, Libya was welcomed back into the international community. While this indicates the plausibility of regaining status as a normal state, Libya's successful return was jeopardized in 2011. The Gaddafi regime's excessive use of force against the Libyan people prompted the UNSC to mandate a no-fly zone in Libya, which was used by NATO to undertake an air campaign against the regime. Eventually, the intervention led to the downfall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime and to his personal demise.

In Iran, the JPCOA allowed for the reintegration of the Iranian economy into the international economy. It also ushered in Iran's gradual integration into the international community, as indicated by the reopening of the British Embassy in Tehran in 2015. The 2018 US withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear agreement makes it uncertain how far this reintegration will go. One possible lesson derived from the US withdrawal is that the US does not accept a pariah state's compliance with punitive measures endorsed by the international community as a sufficient reason for removing the pariah status, in effect condemning it to punitive measures permanently.

<sup>18</sup> Julian Borger, "There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq", *The Guardian*, October 7 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/07/usa.iraq1>

In the light of the Iran nuclear agreement, and of US policy on the Korean peninsula, the prospects of North Korea shedding its pariah status by entering into a denuclearization agreement must seem slim from Pyongyang. For as long as Washington maintains a policy of reunification, it retains a de facto policy of regime change in North Korea with a view to spreading Western-style democracy on the Korean peninsula. US reunification policy cannot be reconciled with a credible reassurance policy.

## **Walk the talk**

To signal credible commitment to deterrence and reassurance efforts, it is important to take steps that demonstrate that these policies are implemented in practice. This is important vis-a-vis the pariah state as well as toward great power protectors of the pariah. During the Gulf War in 1990-91, the US-led coalition had the military forces available to continue the intervention beyond the UN mandate of protecting Kuwait from Iraqi aggression, and it could have proceeded to conquer the capital of Baghdad, overthrowing Saddam Hussein and his regime. However, President George H.W. Bush adhered to the UN mandate, which politically limited the use of force to liberating Kuwait. The president thereby reinforced the values he saw as fundamental to the evolving world order following the end of the Cold War, reassuring Saddam Hussein and the international community as a whole that the US could be trusted to use force against aggression against allies and partners, but not with the principal objective of instigating regime change.<sup>19</sup>

Arguably, Washington took the opposite action in Libya in 2011. The UN Security Council mandated an intervention in Libya with the aim of protecting the Libyan population. Both Russia and China criticized the Western coalition of forces for abusing the UN resolution, using it as a pretext for bringing about regime change in Libya. However, NATO's execution of an air campaign was supported by UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon, who argued that regime change was the result of the efforts of the Libyan people – not the West.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Mary Ellen O'Connell, "Enforcing the Prohibition on the Use of Force: The U.N.'s Response to Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait" (1991). Scholarly Works. Paper 317.

<sup>20</sup> Louis Charbonneau, "U.N. chief defends NATO from critics of Libya war", Reuters.com, December 14 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-nato-un-idUSTRE7BD20C20111214>

Whether or not the mandate was violated is a matter of perception. But those who perceive it as a violation, such as Russia and China, are inclined to see it as a stark disregard for the norms of the international system of non-intervention in the domestic politics of a sovereign state. As a result, subsequently they have been inclined to veto UN resolutions that might have been used to justify regime change in states such as Syria and Myanmar.

In the Persian Gulf, US naval vessels patrolling the waters have shown restraint when facing aggressive Iranian behaviour, thereby reinforcing the US policy of freedom of navigation. Despite provocations from Iran such as low overflights by fighters and demonstrations of swarm tactics on the sea, US units have not allowed such incidents to escalate and portray the US as an aggressor. In contrast to interaction at sea, the situation surrounding the Iranian JPCOA is quite different. Here, Washington has chosen to withdraw from an agreement instigated by the US and worked out in cooperation with its European allies as well as Russia and China; one in which independent organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have verified that Iran was fulfilling its part of the agreement. Instead of reinforcing US values of an order-based international society, such a decision risks undermining Washington's position as an honest broker.

The Iranian experience is likely to affect the North Korean regime's willingness to engage in nuclear negotiations with Washington. The positive dimension of reinforcement on the peninsula is largely absent, with few if any efforts focusing on reinforcing efforts to reassure North Korea. The Geneva Agreed Framework of 1994, in which North Korea agreed to abandon its nuclear ambition in exchange for light nuclear energy reactors and oil shipments from the United States,<sup>21</sup> collapsed in 2002, following allegations that North Korea pursued a nuclear weapons programme, and that the US had failed to follow through on providing the much-needed nuclear energy reactors. A more earnest American effort to live up to its part of the deal could have reinforced its seriousness about reaching a workable solution.

To facilitate a workable compromise on the peninsula, Washington needs to reassess and understand the essential interests at stake on both sides. For example, the survival and continued prosperity of South Korea on the

<sup>21</sup> BBC News, "Timeline: North Korea Nuclear Standoff", 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11811861>

basis of Western democratic values should take primacy over the pursuit of reunification. The US would then create a wider scope for compromise in which China's core interest of avoiding a Western democracy on its border and North Korea's core interest of survival could be accommodated. Furthermore, the US needs to be willing to reinforce deterrence measures supporting American and Korean interests, such as reacting with resolve against any threats towards South Korean territorial integrity. At the same time, the US needs to reinforce reassurance measures whenever possible in situations where North Korean and Chinese interests are at stake, for example by avoiding policies aimed at actively undermining the North Korean regime such as proposing to adopt the Libya model, which implies the continued US desire for regime change.

## **Resolve and restraint**

To effectively deter, it is essential to signal what you are willing to fight for and show the needed resolve if these interests are at stake. Following the invasion of Kuwait, the US-led coalition launched operation Desert Shield, thereby signalling that infringements on Saudi soil were unacceptable. Simultaneously, preparations for operation Desert Storm and the liberation of Kuwait were launched, while the international community called for an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. None of these actions compelled Saddam Hussein to give up Kuwait, but they showed that the aggressive invasion of another country was unacceptable. The US-led coalition's military success in pushing the Iraqi forces out emphasized this point.

Arguably, the resolve shown in Iraq by the US-led coalition in the second Gulf War of 2003 had a major effect on Libya's Muammar Gaddafi. His decision to abolish the regime's WMD program and reach financial settlements with countries that had fallen victim to Libyan state sponsored terrorism in the 1980s demonstrated this effect. The Libyan concessions would most likely not have occurred without the swift defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces justified by US arguments that Iraq breached international sanctions concerning alleged Iraqi WMD capabilities.

In the Persian Gulf, Iran has frequently threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, thereby seeking to deny the US and its allies their freedom of navigation in the area. Facing a threat towards one of its core values – freedom of navigation – the US and its partners have demonstrated resolve by sending multi-lateral carrier

task groups through the strait during periods where Iran has threatened its closure. At the same time, Washington and its partners have showed restraint in the face of Iranian provocations by refraining from using force against Tehran on these occasions.

On the Korean peninsula, the US has attempted to show resolve by strengthening Japan's missile defence in the face of North Korean provocations such as conducting missile tests over Japanese territory, risking casualties due to debris from the missiles. On the other hand, the US has not taken military action against North Korea as a response to the missile tests over Japan, thereby showing restraint in the face of provocations.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has analysed the extent to which combining deterrence with reassurance can successfully deter pariah states from challenging key values of the US and its partners. Using cases of US-led deterrence in Iraq, Libya, Iran and North Korea, we have discussed the importance of four principles that are necessary to ensure compliance from pariahs. We have scrutinised: red lines of third parties, reforming the pariahs, walk the talk, and resolve and restraint. Our findings will now be applied to a discussion of what the US can do to apply effective deterrence on the Korean peninsula.

The first principle – identifying the red lines of great power protectors of pariah states – is particularly important when core values of great powers are at stake, as is the case on the Korean peninsula. It is not feasible to reach a workable agreement resolving a conflict if the agreement disregards core values of great powers involved. On the Korean peninsula, this principle entails US respect for China's priorities of a China-friendly regime in Pyongyang and of stability. One Chinese red line following from these priorities is non-acceptance of US military intervention on the Korean peninsula. China has clarified that a US military intervention would result in a Chinese intervention in North Korea to protect its two core values. This red line should have led the US to redefine its priorities away from denuclearization toward the protection of its allies from the use of force, drawing a red line by commitment to defend South Korea and Japan in the event of attack.

The second principle – allowing pariah states to reform and shed their status as pariahs – is key to effective deterrence. If there is no hope that a regime can join the club of legitimate regimes in the international community, it is left with no other option but to effectively deter its great power opponent from attacking it. In the case of North Korea, US reunification policy signals to Pyongyang that Washington retains the objective of regime change even if North Korea should decide to comply with international demands. As a result, North Korea has focused on military capabilities enabling it to target not only US allies and US forces in East Asia, but also the US mainland, by acquiring intercontinental ballistic missiles. North Korea as well as the other states involved in the crisis are convinced that in the event of a US military strike, the regime in Pyongyang will fall, and therefore North Korea's threat of massive retaliation is credible.

The third principle – walking the talk – is essential to demonstrating that the US intends to implement its red lines as well as its reassurance policies. This principle ensures that US policies are credible. For example, questioning US alliance commitments to South Korea is a recipe for failure. Instead, Washington should reinforce its commitment to South Korea in the face of a heavily armed North Korea by sending additional capabilities to reinforce the territorial integrity of its allies without threatening North Korea's great power sponsor China. At the same time, the US should reinforce reassurance measures by supporting South Korean efforts to reinvigorate economic and cultural cooperation with North Korea. It should demonstrate a willingness to lift sanctions, provided steps are taken to initiate cooperation, and retain its military capability on the Korean peninsula. This allows for the building of mutual trust between North Korea and the US, recognizing that the most important factor for lowering tension levels is to improve political relations, allowing the regime in Pyongyang to reform rather than start out in the face of immediate demands to reduce North Korea's military capabilities.

The fourth principle – resolve and restraint – concerns the importance of taking retaliatory action in the event of aggression against core values, and of demonstrating restraint by not taking measures that will unnecessarily increase tension levels. On the Korean peninsula, the US has done well by strengthening Japan's missile defence to demonstrate protection of its allies at a time when Pyongyang conducted missile tests over Japan. However, in 2016 the US should have shown restraint and followed Seoul's recommendations: it should have refrained from installing THAAD in South Korea which entailed an undue

provocation of China's red line of not affecting its second-strike capability and spurred on North Korea's determination to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korea's nuclear capability is too negligible to raise tension levels by altering the balance of power with its great power opponent, signalling the doom of the regime in Pyongyang. Instead, military reinforcements calibrated to signal resolve, while not breaching Chinese red lines, should be pursued in close cooperation with South Korea.

In conclusion, the US policy on the Korean peninsula from 2016 to February 2018 was an exercise in deterrence with minimal reassurance and with little concern for the core values and interests of its strategic opponents. Subsequently, the 24th Winter Olympics hosted by South Korea throughout February 2018 provided an opportunity for the United States to follow the recommendation of China and Russia that the US temporarily bring a halt to military exercises on the Korean peninsula in return for North Korea's temporary cessation of missile and nuclear tests. This pause in mutual deterrence allowed the US to explore possibilities for reaching an agreement with North Korea that would put an end to the elevated tension levels and mutual threats of military action, replacing them with stability and, if possible, cooperation. The negotiation process and these objectives were supported by South Korea, China, and Russia. Intensive shuttle diplomacy from February to June 2018 and two inter-Korean summits on 27 April and 26 May culminated in a summit held in Singapore on 12 June between US President Trump and North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un. The joint statement committed the United States and North Korea to establishing relations for peace and prosperity, to joining efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean peninsula, to recovering the remains of Americans that died during the Korean War, and to having North Korea work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. While this constitutes a very broad framework agreement, it might be able to keep North Korea and the US from mutually threatening behaviour, provided that North Korea continues cessation of missile and nuclear tests and the US continues to put a freeze on military exercises on the Korean peninsula. Given that Washington had backed itself into a corner by using deterrence without reassurance, a solution that provides stability, but which may allow North Korea to keep its nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future, may be the best the US can achieve. The advantage of this solution is that if stability and inter-Korean cooperation is produced, then the Korean issue stops drawing enormous attention and resources from other issues prioritized by the US such as trade, Taiwan, and the South China Sea. Moreover, it halts North Korea's development of a reliable intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying



out a nuclear strike on the US mainland. In addition, this solution is supported by South Korea, China, and Russia. The only state with vested interests in the Korean issue that is not happy with this outcome is Japan. As a consequence, Tokyo may end up reinterpreting Japan's constitution so as to allow Tokyo to obtain offensive weapons within a few years. Washington's decision to largely ignore Japanese demands on the Korean peninsula may also undermine the US alliance system in Asia where Japan is the primary alliance partner and regional counterbalance to China.

# The Current International Counter-terrorism Situation and Suggestions for Countermeasures

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Since the beginning of the new century, counter-terrorism has been one of the international community's major concerns. Great efforts have been made, and very considerable resources have been devoted to this task. What is the current state of international counter-terrorism? How is it likely to evolve in future? What can be done to make counter-terrorist efforts more effective? These are the issues that I will address in the remainder of this paper.

## **Current International Counter-terrorist Efforts**

First, international counter-terrorism operations have achieved major victories in the Middle East. In the second half of 2015, the international community increased its counter-terrorism investment: notably the Russian military-launched aerial assault on the Islamic State (IS), and the Iraqi and Syrian forces' encirclement and suppression on the ground. Not only did these operations succeed in eliminating IS personnel and equipment on a large scale, the intervening forces also seized most IS strongholds and eliminated the territorial state *in spe* which IS had established. On this occasion, the international community achieved a major counter-terrorism victory.

Second, regional international organizations have intensified counter-terrorism efforts. In South Asia, Africa, Southeast Asia, and in other regions, the international community has made use of existing alliances and established a new cooperative mechanism to jointly undertake the task of counter-terrorism to effectively defeat terrorist forces. In January 2018, in Southeast Asia, six

member states of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed an agreement on intelligence cooperation, effectively countering the threat posed by returning IS militants. In South Asia, the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism on Counter-Terrorism has been established by Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. Efforts mainly involve the armed forces of these countries. The four nations study counter-terrorism, share counter-terrorism intelligence, and cooperate on how to fight terrorism.

Third, some countries such as the United States and Russia no longer regard international counter-terrorism as a major (or primary) concern. At present, the international situation is undergoing profound changes. After taking office as President of the United States, Donald Trump paid more attention to solving his country's domestic problems, promoting conservatism and unilateralism and engaging in a trade war with other countries. This has led to conflict and disruption in the international community and reduced the level of concern for international counter-terrorism. The United States no longer regards counter-terrorism as a primary focus in its national security strategy. Instead, China and Russia are regarded as main challengers who give rise to security concerns. This is detrimental to world peace and not helpful in strengthening international counter-terrorism efforts. To some extent, the withdrawal of Russia's counter-terrorism forces in Syria has weakened the counter-terrorism operations in the Middle East. At the same time, France, Britain, Australia, and other countries have increased their focus on domestic counter-terrorism which has weakened their contributions to international counter-terrorism.

## **The Development Trend of International Counter-terrorism**

First, although international terrorism has been weakened (at least temporarily) it still poses a threat in many areas. Major terrorist organizations such as IS will not dominate again, at least not in the short-term. This is mainly due to the international community's vigilance against terrorism. When a terrorist organization has grown strong, the United States, Russia, and other countries have organized various coalition forces to attack such organizations. It is difficult for terrorist organizations to establish bases comparable to those possessed by IS. Moreover, it is a challenge for them to get competent personnel and financial resources and to attract experienced leaders and commanders. Nevertheless, many terrorist organizations still exist, and after the defeat of IS in the Middle East, large numbers of terrorists fled to other parts of the world.

Wars and chaos in countries such as Myanmar and Tajikistan has also provided them with a place of residence. In addition, terrorist organizations have very extreme ideas and their followers often have considerable combat experience. These characteristics invariably lead to more terrorists, meaning that terrorist activities will continue to increase. There will also be changes in the tactics employed by terrorists. One major pattern is that the process of planning and organizing terrorist activities will continue to shift from openness to underground activities. Instead of concentrated operations we will see sporadic attacks; rather than organized multi-point serial attacks we will witness “lone wolf” attacks; and instead of approaches based around a simple attack we will encounter a hi-tech approach.

Second, in the mid-term and long-term, international terrorism will show an overall downward trend. The general strengthening of counter-terrorism in all countries of the world will undermine the development of terrorist activities. All countries (and especially those who are immediately endangered by terrorism such as Russia, England, and France) will increase their counter-terrorism forces and improve counter-terrorism measures. This will make it difficult for international terrorism to grow and develop. Moreover, economic growth usually reduces the occurrence of terrorist activities. Poverty is an important factor in the development of terrorism and other “social cancers.” Economic development will help eradicate terrorist activities.

Third, counter-terrorism will remain an important security task for all countries: terrorist ideology remains a force for evil; terrorism will continue to attract followers due to differences and imbalances in the economic, ideological, and cultural development of members of international society; the beliefs of some religions are traditional and are exploitable for terrorist recruitment; religious factions are numerous which sometimes leads to protracted conflicts that involve terrorist activities with many religious believers sympathizing with and sometimes supporting terrorism; a small number of countries have weak governance capabilities which attracts terrorist organizations looking for safe havens. All these factors provide conditions for the continued presence of terrorism and they make terrorism a threat to all countries. Combating terrorism requires joint efforts from all countries. However, the misbehavior of the United States around the world also enhances international terrorism. To protect its interests, the United States has traditionally stirred conflicts among other countries and actors, waging wars around the world. Although the United States claims that its actions promote democracy, freedom, and equality, and are unrelated to terrorism, they actually provide an opportunity for terrorism to breed and develop.

## Suggestions for Countermeasures

First, all countries need to enhance their counter-terrorism efforts. In order to reduce terrorist activities and their human and material costs, all countries should increase their investments in counter-terrorism efforts, strengthen their counter-terrorism forces, and enrich and improve counter-terrorism measures. This should especially be done by adopting new technologies, strengthening the identification and control of extremists and terrorists, and by comprehensively enhancing early warning, rapid response, and effective strike capabilities against terrorist incidents.

Second, it is necessary to enhance international cooperation on counter-terrorism. Such efforts include strengthening communication and liaison between countries, improving personnel training, as well as intelligence cooperation and technical exchanges. It is particularly necessary to help countries that suffer from terrorism, strengthening their anti-terrorist capabilities and organizing multilateral operations to jointly fight terrorist organizations in these countries.

Third, it is necessary to prevent the United States from taking actions that strengthen international terrorism. Confronted with fewer wars, wealthier societies, and relative social stability, terrorists and terrorist incidents will decrease. Therefore, the international community must prevent the United States from starting wars and contributing to riots and color revolutions in other countries if we wish to avoid contributing to the spread of terrorist organizations.

Fourth, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation with the Islamic world. We should focus on the role of religious leaders, asking them to interpret religious scriptures in ways that counter rather than encourage terrorism. They must guide a majority of believers to oppose terrorism. We should invite religious leaders to contribute to the fight against extremists and terrorists to make the struggle more focused and more effective. Equally, we should encourage Islamic factions to unite in fighting terrorism rather than persist in fighting each other, and we should persuade religious leaders to preach in line with the counter-terrorist efforts of international society.

# The development and influence of terrorism in the neighborhood of China

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China's security and social stability is directly affected by the rampant activities of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. In recent years, many societies have been influenced and infiltrated by international terrorist forces such as "Islamic State" which has led to an escalation of violent terrorist activities in regions around China such as Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia. This makes the Asian region another arc of instability, comparable to the Middle East and North Africa, and it impacts severely on Asian security and stability, creating stern challenges.

## **Terrorist groups in China's region**

Afghanistan is the largest center for terrorist and extremist expansion. The country hosts more than 100 extremist groups, such as "Islamic State", "Al-Qaeda", the Taliban, and the "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan" (IMU). The Taliban is particularly strong, controlling 30 percent of Afghan territory. It is the strongest and most dangerous group and has nearly 50,000 militants. Hundreds of extremist organizations can be found in South Asia, and over 40 of them are active. These include: "Al-Qaeda"; the "Taliban"; "Lashkar-e-Toiba" (LeT) and the "Haqqani Network" in Pakistan; "Naxalites militants" and "United Liberation Front of Asom" in India; "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" (LTTE) in Sri Lanka; and "Hizb-ut Tahrir" and "Islamic Unity of Mujahedin" in Bangladesh. These groups may differ in political appeal but they are all violent and advocate secession under an ethnic and religious cloak. Today, more than 100 extremist organizations exist in Central Asia. In this region, the most

influential groups are “IMU”, “Islamic Unity of Mujahedin”, “Hizb ut-Tahrir”, “Jund al-Khilafah”, and the “Al-Salafiyyah Movement”. Though these groups have been quiet for some time due to Central Asian governmental crack-downs, they are now becoming active again, encouraged by “Islamic State”. They are particularly in the Fergana region. The Fergana region borders Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine. There are dozens of extremist organizations in Southeast Asia. Among the most active are: “Jemaah Islamiyah” and “Eastern Indonesia Mujahideen” in Indonesia; the Islamist militant group “Abu Sayyaf” and “Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters” in the Philippines; and “Gerakan Fajar Nusantara” in Malaysia. It is a region characterized by many islands, loose border management, and visa exemption agreements for Muslims travelling to Indonesia and Malaysia, with scant procedures for customs clearance. Hence, this region has gradually become the transit point for terrorists to move from west to east. In addition, the East Turkistan Islamists (violent terrorist groups led by the “Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement”) are seeking support from international terrorist groups for funds, training, and protection. So there is a growing presence around China based on an expanding network: Southeast Asia has become a transit point for the smuggling activities of the movement, and East Asia has become a bridgehead for penetration of societies beyond Southeast Asia. All these terrorist groups are an increasing threat to China.

## **Main features of the terrorist activities threatening China**

Terrorist groups have the capacity to merge and spread more rapidly, while terrorist activities are increasingly violent. Terrorists who are more violent than their peers wield more influence, which means “Islamic State” (IS) is now the most influential terrorist group.

Constrained by international anti-terrorism efforts, IS is swiftly moving eastwards. It has opened a second “battlefield” in China’s neighborhood and has been trying to reorganize local terrorist groups to become a major force pushing for coordination and joint operations in Asia. In Afghanistan, IS has spent 70 million dollars building a subdivision called “Maverannahr” in Helmand province which includes 14 terrorist groups. Among these are the “radical” Taliban from Afghanistan. IS has also set up divisions in 25 provinces in Afghanistan where membership has surged from 100 to 10,000, meaning it is able to stand up to the Taliban. In Central Asia, IS has chosen four routes which it plans to use to penetrate Central Asia and has set up a base for activities

in Fergana in an effort to exercise influence throughout Central Asia. This is seen as the “biggest terrorist threat” by local countries. In South Asia, IS has claimed that it has built a “Khorasan Province” covering major countries in South Asia, including Pakistan and Afghanistan and Xinjiang Province in China. IS has announced that it enjoys administrative rights in these areas as a part of its strategy in South Asia. In Southeast Asia, its subdivision Mindanao in the Philippines has reorganized terrorists who once fought in Iraq and Syria to form the “Malay islands Unit”. Dozens of terrorist groups have sworn allegiance to IS, including “Jemaah Islamiyah”, “the Islamist militant group Abu Sayyaf”, “Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters”, and “Thai South Islamic militants”.

Expanding terrorist organizations have increased their use of violence, and their ability to carry out systematic violent operations is growing. The tactics of unexpected attack, ambush, coordination, and cover have been used in new terrorist activities that involve more firearms than in the past.

Political independence is what these terrorists are pursuing, as they are trying to become a legitimate political party or obtain statehood. Terrorist organizations are becoming streamlined, network-based, leaner, and decentralized. This is a sign of flexibility, mobility, and invisibility. The groups increasingly rely on intelligence. Branching out from attacks with firearms of the cold weapon era, terrorists are working hard to launch hi-tech attacks, including cyber-attacks and biochemical attacks. According to reports from the international media, since 2016 IS has carried out frequent biochemical attacks in Iraq and Syria, and in at least 8 cases has used mustard gas and chlorine attacks. These attacks have caused over 600 deaths. Government forces have also discovered plans to “spread pestilence” in a computer captured from IS. US, German, and Australian intelligence agencies disclosed that the IS-built research center for nuclear and biochemical weapons harbors plans to transfer the technology to the European Union (EU) and to the so-called second battlefield in Asia.

Cross-regional movements are becoming more prominent. First, frequent border crossings are helped by insufficient border controls and by the presence of numerous ethnic groups in Central and South Asia which travel in a complex pattern. Second, the “holy war” effect plays a role in Syria where terrorists fighting in the Syrian civil war have returned to their home countries looking for new causes to fight. As unrest grows in the Arab region, international terrorists in West Asia have been recruiting personnel from all over the world to commit violence in Syria. These terrorists have returned to countries in China’s



neighborhood such as Russia, Central Asian countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Terrorism in China's neighborhood is growing. Violent terrorist activities are expanding, they change form, and they become more destructive. The South Asia region has been suffering from terrorism for quite some time. This threat shows no sign of retreating, which complicates counter-terrorist efforts in the region. Extremist ideology is sweeping across Central Asia, threatening regimes and societies. Southeast Asia has experienced the problems of terrorist fighters returning home. IS and the "Taliban" have been competing in China's neighborhood, which results in more terrorist attacks, infiltration into the military and the police of target countries, civilian casualties, and more violent confrontations. Now it seems IS is taking over from the "Taliban" as the new flag bearer.

## **Terrorism's development in China's neighborhood and its consequences**

Islamic extremism is deepening its infiltration into political, economic, and social sectors. The Islamic elite group is becoming increasingly conservative. The social foundation on which extremism relies remains strong.

The long-term existence of terrorism impacts regional patterns and speeds up fragmentation processes in Central Asia and even in Southeast Asia. Terrorism may cause secession in relevant states, destroy regional economies, slow the recovery of the global economy from crises, and cause frequent local wars and armed conflicts. Thus, some countries are more likely to be marginalized as poor and fragile and lacking in influence.

The arc of religious extremism and terrorism from Southeast Asia over South Asia to Central Asia and Xinjiang province in China is becoming increasingly pronounced. The regions neighboring China are experiencing peaks in terrorism and extremism. The threat posed by terrorism and drugs in combination is swiftly growing. Social contradictions in some countries may lead to increasing mass incidents of riots involving violence. These issues are complicated by increasing overseas support for civil organizations to exercise political influence; meanwhile religious extremist ideology intensifies social contradictions. Border conflicts are more likely.

Terrorist organizations in China's neighborhood are developing into a multi-center system where IS is the brain, local terrorists the bone, and alienated extremists the fist.

It cannot be ruled out that IS and the "Taliban" reunite at some future date. The coordination among extremists in South Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia makes this potential development even more likely. Terrorists are active in many areas neighboring China. From countries such as Chechnya, Afghanistan, Australia, and Indonesia, indigenous terrorists are positioned to carry out terrorist attacks. In August 2015, October 2014, September 2013, August 2012, and August 2011, terrorist attacks took place in Chechnya in Russia. These local active terrorists are well-integrated into the local environment which makes it easy for them to hide. They remain a long-term threat because they have tremendous capabilities for terrorist activities. They know when to act and they commit terrorist acts without hesitation. As international terrorist forces are moving eastward, China's neighborhood will experience these developments as well.

So-called supporters of "color revolutions" try to take advantage of extremist forces, and this is supported by the US and by western countries. These countries' policies represent a paradox because they simultaneously support and suppress extremism and terrorism internationally. In addition, the risk of terrorists using biochemical weapons is growing which may mean a much higher number of casualties resulting from terrorist attacks in future. Extremism in China's neighborhood has enormous negative implications for China, making it easier for Islamists in China to support anti-Chinese and anti-secularist forces and give rise to extremism that threatens national unity, social stability and national stability.

Leading figures among international terrorist forces have made every effort to expand their organizations and networks by recruiting personnel and sending new people into China to spread extremist ideology, undermine international anti-terrorist efforts and the international security environment, and even replicate the large-scale violent patterns from the Syrian civil war in regions in China's neighborhood. This last phenomenon is called "state terrorism". If they succeed, the security environment around China will be seriously distorted and changed, meaning that China's neighboring countries will be forced to shift their core attention to anti-terrorist issues instead of a development and construction agenda. On the other hand, the "East Turkistan" terrorist forces will find more space for activities around China and will have more strongholds from which to infiltrate into China.

## **The main causes for rampant terrorism in China's neighborhood**

The spread of extremist ideology is the root cause of rampant violent terrorist activities in China's neighborhood. Factors contributing to these threats in China's neighborhood include the geographical environment, the organization of ethnic groups, religious beliefs, and the social background of terrorists. A growing number of Muslims in neighboring countries is another major factor. The Muslim population in Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia is close to 1 billion people, accounting for more than 60 percent of the world's total. Muslims in Indonesia, Pakistan and India alone now make up 580 million people, which is 120 million more than those living in the Middle East and in North Africa. This has created a solid social basis for spreading extremist ideology. Large numbers of mosques add to the spread of extremism. There are 15,000 mosques located in Afghanistan alone. In sum, these are developments which have facilitated the spread of extremist ideology.

Weak governments are another main cause of rampant terrorist activities in China's neighborhood. Most of the countries in China's neighborhood are still undergoing social transformation. Muslim countries in particular suffer from inefficient governments, even in countries where democratic structures have been introduced.

Pronounced social contradictions also give rise to rampant terrorist activities. Throughout the world, growing problems related to ethnic groups, religion, society, and people's livelihood, are leading to more serious threats in the form of terrorist activities.

The situation in West Asia and North Africa has an enormous influence on the rise in terrorism. Moreover, inefficient anti-terrorist cooperation is an important reason for rampant violence and terrorist activities in adjacent regions. Interventions carried out by great powers are the driving force leading to rampant violence and terrorism in these areas.

## **Counter-Measures and Suggestions**

It is necessary to strengthen coordination and to establish a regional mechanism for anti-terrorist cooperation. Joint efforts should be made to address the problem of inefficient counter-terrorist cooperation between China and other countries. Only by strengthening inter-state communication and cooperation, especially among the great powers, is it possible to avoid the application of “double standards” when carrying out anti-terrorist operations. Avoiding such errors would make it much more difficult for terrorist groups to operate. It is necessary for the international community of states to launch anti-terrorist initiatives at regional conferences, to agree on a counter-terrorist agenda, and to strengthen consensus on how to combat terrorism. Through the media, states must expose and disclose the practices of IS and the threat it poses, thereby obtaining public support for anti-terrorist operations. Popular support will enable the international community to undertake collective anti-terrorist actions.

It is also necessary to enhance intelligence exchange and multi-national counter-terrorist operations. All countries must increase information exchange on terrorist activities, establish mechanisms for intelligence cooperation, strengthen intelligence sharing, and explore an increasing number of intelligence sources so that accurate information can be obtained on terrorist movements, terrorist targets, and terrorist operations. This will facilitate a higher success rate for anti-terrorist efforts. All countries should work together to construct a regional anti-terrorist enforcement system under the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to enable effective joint anti-terrorist operations.

### **It is necessary to build a buffer zone in cyber space to combat terrorism**

In recent years, the Internet has been used by terrorists to manipulate the thinking of potential supporters and to educate them in how to conduct acts of terrorism. The number of people exposed to extremist ideology and processes of self-radicalization has been rising. Instant online communication makes coordination easy for pro-IS groups. Due to these developments, Southeast Asian countries closely survey IS Facebook and Twitter accounts.

They intervene to stop the spread of IS newspapers and brochures published in Southeast Asia and shut down discussion forums of terrorist organizations, thereby curbing terrorist influences on popular opinion. Elite training and new technology is needed for command and intelligence operations that support anti-terrorist operations. More should be done to prevent and curb terrorist propaganda and recruitment in cyberspace.

It is necessary to properly address the problems of regional ethnic groups and religions to stop religious extremism from spreading. The growth in terrorism and the increasingly advanced methods of terrorists are closely linked to long-term regional problems of race and religion. An environment conducive to religious extremism is to blame for the growth and development of IS in regions adjacent to China. Countries need to continue to be engaged in efforts to facilitate the influence of moderate Muslims, spreading their religious ideas to all Muslim communities. In particular, potentially radical Muslim youth must be targeted for education by moderate Muslims. Terrorists that have been caught must be enrolled in governmental programs allowing us to obtain information on why these people have chosen to become terrorists. They should also be targeted with educational efforts to make them understand that terrorism is detrimental to peace and development, and when they have been re-socialized, these former terrorists should be involved in efforts to reeducate other potential terrorists to curb popular support for terrorism.

# Counterterrorism in the Central Sahel: Common Challenges and Different Responses

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*Counterterrorism conducted in a UN context is evolving in the Central Sahel. There is a notable security traffic jam between the institutional peacekeeping and the ad hoc forces waging counterinsurgency and/or counterterrorism campaigns. Rule-based security in the Central Sahel states is key to any success<sup>22</sup> in stabilizing and setting conditions for development of the Sahel region. Seen from the perspective of the international community, the most imminent threats from this region are the spread of non-state armed groups with a mode of operation based on jihadist terror, as well as immigration towards the European continent. These common challenges are being met using different responses. In this paper, I will discuss how the strategies used by the international community are contributing to solving the security puzzle in the Central Sahel and how this is affected by cooperation with non-state armed groups in countering terrorism within the framework of the UN global strategy.*

Counter Terrorism (CT) operations play a key role in shaping the dynamics in the Central Sahel region in Africa.<sup>23</sup> France is the leading external actor in the Central Sahel with its 4000-strong Operation Barkhane which is a direct counterterrorist operation that receives operational support from the US.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Global Counter terrorism Strategy, annex II. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism, adopted 2006 <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

<sup>23</sup> The Central Sahel is defined here as Mauretania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad (also referred to as the G5 states).

Recently, it has become clear that France not only cooperates with the security forces of the Central Sahelian states, but also with Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)<sup>24</sup> on a case-by-case basis. Most armed conflicts today involve NSAGs who may be fighting government forces or other NSAGs. The groups can be part of insurgencies, militias, vigilante groups, local guards protecting their community, and/or local criminal gangs. Common to the groups is that they exercise a degree of control in parts of the population. Their legitimacy rests on their ability to supply provisions and provide services such as security to the population in areas outside state control. The role of the NSAGs in armed conflicts has received more attention from the international community recently.<sup>25</sup>

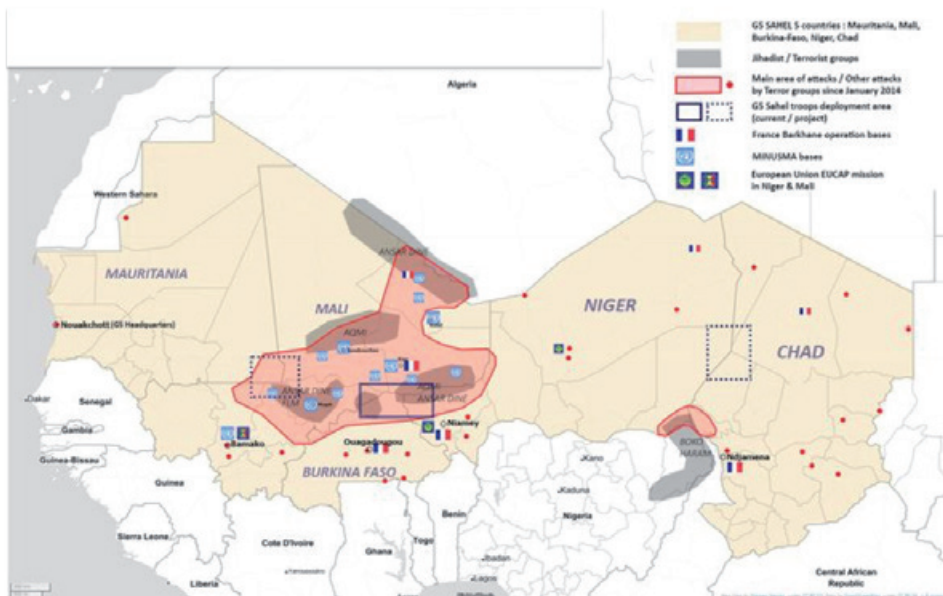
In 2015, an independent United Nations (UN) High-level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) issued a report which concluded that despite having the authority to engage in the earliest phase of a conflict, the Security Council (SC) had a tendency to react only once a conflict or emergence had evolved. This context has made the question of engaging NSAGs more prominent. However, UN member states fear that engaging with NSAGs will legitimize and recognize these actors and potentially undermine state sovereignty. There are also concerns that the NSAGs may use international actors and organizations to achieve recognition.

Recently, debate has continued concerning NSAGs and UN humanitarian efforts. I view this discussion as relevant for security and counterterrorist issues. The policies directing the counterterrorism strategies of the international community have not made cooperation with NSAGs likely. The listing of terrorist organizations has contributed to this by labeling certain NSAGs illegitimate from the perspective of the international community. It is a delicate balancing act for international actors and states to secure and stabilize regions where NSAGs can variously be regarded as terrorists, insurgents, community security militias, and political parties. In recent years, a comprehensive approach has been adopted as the strategy for providing governance, security and development on the basis of UN resolutions in sovereign states.

<sup>24</sup> Non-State Armed Groups are defined as: “organizations that are party to an armed conflict, but do not answer to, and are not commanded by, one or more states”. (Brian McQuinn and Fabio Oliva, preliminary scoping report: “Analyzing and engaging Non-State Armed Groups in the field”, United Nations System Staff College, 2014, pp. 1).

<sup>25</sup> Jairo Munive and Finn Stepputat, “væbnede grupper er kommet for at blive”, policy brief from Danish Institute of International Studies, Copenhagen 2018, pp. 1-4.

The approach has been used in Mali between the multidimensional peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the European training mission (EUTM), and the French counterterrorism operation (Barkhane). In Mali, an abundance of NSAGs exist. Some are involved as signatories to the 2015 agreement on peace and reconciliation in Mali while others are excluded from the formal political conflict resolution process. NSAGs have incentives to be armed in order to protect their communities or to be included in the formal political process. However, the armed groups who have chosen to align with international terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda and Islamic State, are formally excluded from the political process.



The map<sup>26</sup> shows the Central Sahelian states: Mauretania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, displaying the primary zones of contention and the UN, EU, Barkhane and FC-G5S deployments.

<sup>26</sup> The Maghreb and Orient Courier, <https://lecourrierdumaghrebetdelorient.info/focus/arab-world-maps-le-g5-sahel-une-force-antiterroriste-en-construction/>, December 2017.



The Malian conflict is set within a wider security complex of the Central Sahel, which is influenced from different directions by various challenges. The Libyan conflict of 2011 continues to influence the security landscape of the Sahel; political power struggles between Algeria and Morocco affect the negotiations concerning control in Northern Mali; and the conflict around lake Chad has a severe impact on the Central Sahelian states' ability to exercise physical control within their borders. The Central Sahel has seen a rapid spread and proliferation of terrorist groups with militant jihadist agendas and grievances toward the state as a concept<sup>27</sup> and toward the international rule-based order. In the border area between Mali, Mauritania and Algeria, Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – which established a partnership with the Malian based Ansar Dine, Al-Murabitounne and the Macina Liberation Front – has merged into the JNIM.<sup>28</sup> In another border zone, the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has emerged. Initially a self-defense group (but now a jihadist insurgency with relations to JNIM) the ISGS is active in the border zone between the Tillabery region of Niger, the Sahel region of Burkina Faso, and in the Gao region of Mali. The changing web of armed groups adopting allegiance to either Al Qaeda or Islamic State will probably continue to evolve within the vast Central Sahel. In addition, around Lake Chad, links are possible between the armed groups and the jihadist terror group Boko Haram.

At the same time, the current migration crisis around the Mediterranean and the Central Sahel has captured Europe's attention. France is the main European state taking action. The US has also been increasing its footprint.<sup>29</sup> Counterterrorism in the Sahel has long been on the agenda of both states. They have several programs: such as the US Trans Sahel Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) which combines the use of armed drones with training programs for the Sahelian Security forces. France conducts Operation Barkhane and Taskforce Sabre which directly target terrorists in the Sahel in partnership with the hosting states. The US has traditionally preferred bilateral CT cooperation with the Central Sahelian states. Washington's appetite for engagement in multilateral organizations addressing counterterrorist issues is low. France has adopted a strategy of creating a regional African Counterterrorism/Counterinsurgency

<sup>27</sup> Rasmus A. Boserup and Luis Martinez, *Europe and the Sahel-Magreb crisis*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2018, pp. 4.

<sup>28</sup> "Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen" translated as "Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims" (JNIM).

<sup>29</sup> New York Times, "Deep in the Desert, a Murky U.S. War Ramps Up", the New York edition April 22, 2018, pp. A1

force based on the G5 States. A point of contention here has been funding and support from the SC. Although this has eventually been approved, the G5 Sahel joint force (FC-G5S) still seems to obtain most of its funding and support from France and the European Union.<sup>30</sup> Denmark has also contributed to the funding of the force.<sup>31</sup> The FC-G5S has carried out its initial operations and has set up headquarters in Sevare, Mali.<sup>32</sup> The development of this force is situated in the wider evolution of a new generation of military responses in a global context from actors that are increasingly skeptical of both the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping doctrine and its suitability to asymmetrical conflicts and terrorism. Recently, France's Operation Barkhane has broadened its partnership agreements to include troop contributions from the United Kingdom (UK) and Estonia.<sup>33</sup>

The African states involved seem to have lost faith in the ability of their own regional and continental organizations to guarantee their security. Instead, they engage in new collective security mechanisms, known as *ad hoc* forces. Operation Barkhane and the FC-G5S are bespoke or *ad hoc* forces initiated on the basis of UN resolutions to combat terrorism. The forces operate alongside and in coordination with the peacekeeping mission in Mali. This means that currently we have two approaches to the problem of rule-based security provision in the Sahel: the UN peacekeeping mission with its comprehensive approach and non-counterterrorism mandate; and the *ad hoc* forces with a direct counterterrorism mandate based on international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international conventions and protocols (in particular, human rights law, refugee law, and international humanitarian law).

This has opened the field for more integration of troop contributions from Europe, whereas the main infantry battalions from the troop-contributing countries to both the MINUSMA mission and the FC-G5S are the same states:

<sup>30</sup> United Nations, "Security Council Outlines Modes of Support, Reimbursement for Joint Anti-Terrorism Force in Sahel, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2391", 2017 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13112.doc.htm>

<sup>31</sup> Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Denmark strengthens efforts against migration and terrorism in the Sahel", 2017 <http://um.dk/en/news/newsdisplaypage/?newsid=d4f8a15a-cbbb-43c1-b4e6-2f8c9c960c65>

<sup>32</sup> International Crisis Group, "Finding the Right Role for the G5 Sahel Joint Force", Crisis Group Africa Report N°258, 12 December 2017, pp 4.

<sup>33</sup> Estonian Public Broadcasting, "Estonian government approves sending 50 troops to French-led Mali mission", 2018 <https://news.err.ee/691357/estonian-government-approves-sending-50-troops-to-french-led-mali-mission>

Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger. These states face a dilemma in allocating their sparse resources; but in a situation where the number of terrorist attacks in the region is increasing, and the geographically confined peacekeeping missions cannot address the transnational basis of the terrorist groups, the flexible *ad hoc* forces seem better adapted to combat terrorism. Importantly, efforts to address the root causes and the broader political and humanitarian aspects of terrorism may be negatively affected by a narrow military-based counterterrorism strategy. If they are to achieve success, the two approaches will have to be operationalized in ways which coordinate on the ground. This calls for the international community to step in where there is a vacuum and where it may have a coordinating role to play.

China has increased the number of troops it contributes to peacekeeping missions. By the end of 2017, China had dispatched fourteen groups of peacekeeping forces to Africa, and Chinese peacekeepers currently operate in seven African countries, including Mali, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Moreover, China contributes to anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden.<sup>34</sup> Chinese involvement should be seen in relation to the Belt and Road initiative of China's President Xi Jinping, which links security, trade infrastructure, and networks. Given its increased presence in Africa and in the Central Sahel (where China contributes with 395 peacekeepers in Mali)<sup>35</sup> there is an increased risk of exposure to terrorist attacks. China has shown an interest in understanding CT operations in a UN context, but has so far kept a low profile by not being very involved in local communities through building relationships with the local population. China does not provide leadership or major input to the UN's CT agenda. It also seems that China's approach to international terrorism is becoming more militarized.<sup>36</sup> In Mali and the broader Western African region, China is especially focused on protecting Chinese civilians and contributing to regional stability as the best way of protecting China's economic interests. This is in line with China's focus on strengthening the African Union and on supporting African States in finding solutions to their own problems.

<sup>34</sup> Zhang Ying, "China's Diplomacy in Africa: Ideas and Practices", *China International Studies*, March/April 2018, pp. 38.

<sup>35</sup> Xinhua News, "China to send 395 peacekeepers to Mali", Xinhua Beijing, April, 2018 [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-04/19/c\\_137120762.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-04/19/c_137120762.htm)

<sup>36</sup> Mathieu Duchâtel, "Terror overseas: Understanding China's evolving Counter-Terror Strategy", *European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief*, October, 2016, pp. 1-14.

A recent statement from General Guibert, Commander of France's Operation Barkhane, evoked further discussion of cooperation with NSAGs in CT operations when he confirmed collaboration with some armed groups. He stated that the collaboration is on case-by-case basis, and that action is based on shared intelligence derived from the local setting. He elaborated that the criteria for working with the armed groups include loyalty to the Malian state and a willingness to work with the Malian army.<sup>37</sup> From 22 to 25 February 2018, Barkhane and the Malian armed group GATIA<sup>38</sup> performed a joint operation in the border zone between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso against the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). This presents a case of an armed group who has signed the peace agreement for Northern Mali carrying out cross-border CT operations.<sup>39</sup> The GATIA militia is led by General El Hadj Gamou from Mali.<sup>40</sup> He has been used multiple times by the Malian state to fight separatist armed groups amid calls for the coordination of groups in Mali. The Malian state does not officially accept responsibility for, or involvement in, GATIA and its operations. However, several reports do indicate that GATIA combatants may include former personnel from General Gamou's Delta militia and from *Groupe technique inter armés* (GTIA) that received training from the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Koulikoro. While the Malian state has always been suspected of providing logistical and financial support to GATIA, this has consistently been difficult to prove.<sup>41</sup>

In many ways, the CT collaboration between Barkhane and GATIA can be viewed as the continuation of a *modus operandi* in the Malian theater. However, it poses questions about the implications arising from CT collaboration with NSAGs. In this case, no wrongdoing concerning IHL and the UN mandate of the forces has been identified; but the impact on the political process in Mali and the example set for other NSAGs should not be under-estimated. One second-order effect is change in the relative power balance between the NSAGs.

<sup>37</sup> Gal Bruno Guibert, Commandant de la Force Barkhane, "Il n'y a plus de sanctuaire terroriste au Mali", *Journal du Mali*, 22 March, 2018 <http://www.journaldumali.com/2018/03/22/general-bruno-guibert-commandant-de-force-barkhane-ny-a-plus-de-sanctuaire-terroriste-mali/>

<sup>38</sup> Groupe d'Auto-défense Touareg Imghad et Alliés (GATIA).

<sup>39</sup> RFI, "Mali: la force Barkhane annonce avoir neutralisé 60 jihadistes en un mois", RFI Afrique, 15 March, 2018 <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20180315-mali-barkhane-annonce-avoir-neutralise-60-jihadistes-mois>

<sup>40</sup> Sahelien.com, "le général Gamou s'affiche officiellement comme chef du Gatia", 25 septembre, 2017 <http://sahelien.com/mali-le-general-gamou-saffiche-officiellement-comme-chef-du-gatia/>

<sup>41</sup> Based on interviews and the author's own experience from within the UN MINUSMA mission in Mali.

The relative elevation in power and status of some armed groups at the expense of others will be affected by this kind of collaboration and will create ripples in local communities and in conflict resolution negotiations. Carefully choosing the right partners whose actions can be relied on to comply with IHL is of crucial importance to maintaining legitimacy and support for the missions. The risk that NSAGs or other local partners in CT operations commit violence on civilians to maintain or increase their power is present and will reflect on those collaborating with them. Another implication is the creation of incentives for other civilian groups to take up arms and participate in collaboration with NSAGs. This may affect political factionalism and change alliance patterns among the NSAGs. It is not possible to consider the armed groups outside the regional and local context from which they emerged. The NSAGs form part of the problem and the solution at the same time. In the case of GATIA, the group is partly state-sponsored and has partly emerged from local ethnic communities. Thus, the group is part of the political dialogue, while at the same time being a CT force. This dual role provides an armed group with influence which can be used for purposes that are detrimental to finding a viable political solution to peace and reconciliation.

Fighting terrorism in the Central Sahel now has an increasing complex trajectory with the augmentation of security actors and the multiplication of terrorist groups and other NSAGs. If strengthening the African states and organizations is the long-term aim, a short-term requirement is to address the two immediate challenges in the Sahel: militant jihadism and organized migration. European states have been supporting the *ad hoc* approach to CT operations in the Sahel, while maintaining a commitment to work with the Sahelian states and the African Union. The evolution of multilateral *ad hoc* forces has the potential to work in synergy with institutional approaches to security challenges. In this way, we can speak of a global strategy towards countering terrorism in a UN context. If this two-pronged approach is to achieve success, it remains vital that the troop-contributing states can accept in their respective political spheres the potential risk of violence towards civilians when cooperating with NSAGs in the Central Sahel.

Further operationalization of the UN counterterrorism strategy in the Central Sahel will potentially be required and needs to include both peacekeeping and *ad hoc* forces. Assessing the situation and learning from recent Central Sahel cases can be useful in shaping future CT strategies. Denmark and China are involved in the Central Sahel. China is involved in the institutional framework of the peacekeeping mission in Mali, while Denmark has scaled down its

presence in the UN mission in Mali and shifted focus towards the *ad hoc* forces. France has been seeking new partners for Barkhane, and Denmark supported the initial stages of France's intervention in Mali via Operation Serval by deploying a C-130 transport aircraft. In future, if Denmark decides to participate in operation Barkhane, Danish participation may be similar to the UK contribution.<sup>42</sup> China is not likely to change its focus to the *ad hoc* forces. So far, China's approach to CT is limited to the institutional approach. These different strategies for addressing the problem of terrorism in the Central Sahel may be mutually supportive. However, for such mutual support to work, an in-depth knowledge of the security dynamics in the Sahel at the local level is essential to understanding how to successfully coordinate the strategies. The sharing of knowledge and arguments for supporting the specific strategies should be encouraged between China and Denmark.

Counterterrorism strategies in the Central Sahel have evolved to include both the institutional and the *ad hoc* approaches. This paper has shown that – at the operational level – the challenge is to identify conflicts between the *ad hoc* force and the peacekeeping mission with a view to avoiding working at cross-purposes. The two-pronged approach must avoid the trap of going one step forward in countering terrorism but two steps backward regarding the political solution to the security dilemma in the Sahel. Yet this approach to addressing such complex conflicts, which incorporate a high number of actors ranging from the local to the international setting, encounters a potentially unmanageable amount of coordination required by the security puzzle in the Sahel. The open coalition structure of Operation Barkhane may be useful, especially for allowing European states to engage in counterterrorist and counter-migration efforts. It is important to commit resources to ensure that the partners of *ad hoc* forces do not create further insurgencies from local conflicts that will continue to undermine counterterrorism efforts. International actors must not overlook the importance of strengthening African armies and African political institutions as a means of establishing conditions for a viable solution within the framework of the UN counterterrorism strategy. Since cooperation with NSAGs is likely to be explored further by international actors in the Central Sahel, this paper recommends conducting counterterrorism operations in a manner which avoids compromising political and institutional support for the international community's security operations, and in a way which does not increase the risk of generating violence towards civilians.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-step-up-french-operations-in-africa-as-pm-and-president-macron-meet-for-uk-france-summit>

# United Nations Counter-Terrorism. A Paper Tiger?

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**Major Martin Walldén Jespersen**

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*“... we often hear it said that the United Nations has succeeded here, or has failed there. What do we mean? Do we refer to the purposes of the Charter? They are expressions of universally shared ideals, which cannot fail us, though we, alas, often fail them. Or do we think of the institutions of the United Nations? They are our tools. We fashioned them. We use them. It is our responsibility to remedy any flaws there may be in them. It is our responsibility to correct any failures in our use of them.”*

*Dag Hammarskjöld, New York, May 1956*

## **Introduction**

The United Nations’ relevance to the process of maintaining international peace and security is currently challenged by the many conflicts worldwide involving non-state actors. The problems range from the UN Security Council having an anachronistic, Cold War era institutional framework, to the heavy bureaucracy associated with the UN. Unresolved practical difficulties are glaringly obvious: simply agreeing at an international level about what defines terrorism or a terrorist; reaching agreements on which parts of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) apply in which contexts; and progressing in efforts to build actionable, concrete and effective rules of engagement (ROE) for the troops. This paper examines the challenges the UN is facing in its quest to build a global and effective counter-terrorism organization.

## UNSC Counter Terrorism Resolutions and International Law

In the wake of the September 11 attacks in 2001, UN resolution 1373 (and later 1540) were adopted, thereby giving birth to the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), the first UN framework established to combat terrorism. Resolution 1373 itself was focused on “enhance[ing the state’s] legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home, in their regions and around the world”<sup>43</sup> by criminalizing the financing of terrorism and encouraging cooperation between governments in sharing information and in the investigation and prosecution of terrorists. While resolution 1373 represented a first step towards having “an organ of an intergovernmental organization creating what amounts to proactive legislation applicable to all Member States”<sup>44</sup> it seems clear that the use of UN troops for direct action against terrorist groups at that time was well beyond the scope of the UN Counter-Terrorism capability. However, such a need rapidly emerged after US President George W. Bush declared a global war on terror (GWOt). By declaring war on a concept and not a country, President Bush effectively negated the application of large parts of the UN charter and the conventions on which the UN was founded, given that the UN originally was set up to resolve inter-state conflicts with state actors, who can end a conflict by signing a treaty. President Bush also created a narrative (the Global War on Terror) designed to legitimize the use of force and the suspension of IHL and human rights in the quest for victory against terrorism.<sup>45</sup>

President Bush was not an advocate for international law when it was against the interests of the United States. This was communicated rather bluntly on December 12th 2003 when Bush sarcastically replied to a reporter: “International law? I better call my lawyer. He didn’t bring that up to me.”<sup>46</sup> However, the Bush administration did actively participate in the drafting of the UNSC resolutions following the September 11 attacks, and “U.S. officials mobilized the United Nations Security Council to require all U.N. member states to enact their own domestic versions of the Patriot Act”<sup>47</sup>, the Patriot Act being an act of the US

<sup>43</sup> UN Counter Terrorism Committee, <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/about-us/>

<sup>44</sup> Grodin, E. (2011). “Making the World Safe for Democracy: UN Security Council Resolution 1373, the International Imposition of Counterterrorism Policies, and the ‘Arenas of Power’ Model”, *Cornell Policy Review* Vol. 2 no 1.

<sup>45</sup> President Bush has on several occasions stated that IHL does not apply to Al Qaeda and the Taliban. See for instance: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=79402>

<sup>46</sup> Newsweek. (2003). *I BETTER CALL MY LAWYER*. <http://www.newsweek.com/i-better-call-my-lawyer-131673>

<sup>47</sup> Scheppele, K. L. (29. 8. 2011). *The American Prospect*. <http://prospect.org/article/global-patriot-act>



Congress which, among other things, expanded the mandates of the intelligence and investigation organizations within the United States.

The US was successful in moving “terrorism near the top of the UN’s agenda.”<sup>48</sup> The fact that Resolutions 1373 and 1540 were general and abstract, and that “the Security Council left it to the Member States to translate Resolution 1373’s desired policy outcomes into domestic legislation”<sup>49</sup>, opened the door for far-reaching national legislation in member states whose actions might now be legitimized by a UN resolution. The resolution required states to:

take ‘the necessary steps to prevent terrorism.’ A wild card dealt to dictatorships and democracies alike, this general exhortation has pushed states to launch ambitious new anti-terrorism programs while allowing them to say that international law made them do it.<sup>50</sup>

It can be concluded that the UNSC resolutions have had far-reaching implications and that intentions have been thwarted when it comes to laying the foundation for a UN-led (or UN-sponsored) counter-terrorism organization which could be operationally as well as legislatively effective while simultaneously subscribing to the core values of the UN. Instead, nations implemented their own anti-terrorism legislation of varying scope and established *ad hoc* coalitions of the willing to combat terrorists on the battlefield.

## **The UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Organization**

The need for a global, UN-led counter-terrorism framework was obvious. There was also an urgent need to reach a global definition of terrorism so that the international community could harness the actions of individual states against non-state actors using the GwOT narrative and the UNSC resolutions as legitimization for the use of force. The UN continued to pursue this concept, and five years later the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy was adopted.

<sup>48</sup> Einsiedel, S. v. (2016). *Assessing the UN’s Efforts to Counter Terrorism*. United Nations Centre for Policy Research. p.2.

<sup>49</sup> Scheppele, K. L. (29. 8. 2011). *The American Prospect*. <http://prospect.org/article/global-patriot-act>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

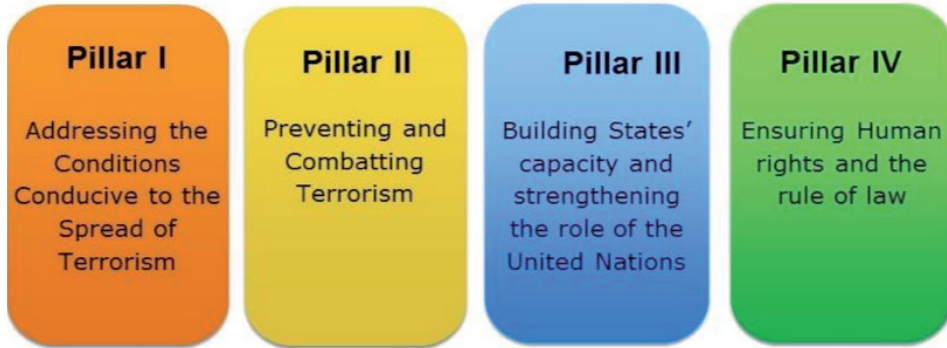


Figure 1: The UN Counter Terrorism Strategy

It is basically divided into four pillars (see fig. 1), and was said to provide a “common strategic and operational approach to fighting terrorism, not only sending a clear message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and manifestations, but also resolving to take practical steps individually and collectively to prevent and combat it”<sup>51</sup>.

Just prior to the adoption of the strategy, the UN Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UNCTITF) was established, comprised of 38 international entities working to implement the strategy.

In 2017, sixteen years after the implementation of Resolution 1373, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism was established to “provide leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General from across the United Nations system.”<sup>52</sup> The Office was part of an effort to reorganize UN Counter-Terrorism responsibilities into a more transparent and simple structure, replacing the existing “hydra-headed complex of UN bodies and entities tasked with counter-terrorism related issues.”<sup>53</sup> This reorganization was driven by member states which had become “frustrated by the current state of counter-terrorism work at the UN and confused by its tentacular structure and multiplicity of bodies”<sup>54</sup> and the associated overlapping

<sup>51</sup> United Nations. (2018). *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

<sup>52</sup> United Nations. (2018). *UN Office of Counter-Terrorism*. <https://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/>

<sup>53</sup> FIDH (2017). *The United Nations Counter Terrorism Complex*. New York: International Federation for Human Rights.

programs and activities of subsidiary organs of the various UN Counter-Terrorism bodies.

The CTC, along with the other counter-terrorism bodies in the UN, never managed to take the lead regarding the mandate given in Resolutions 1373 and 1540. The Obama administration concluded that “while the Resolution [1540 ed.] had provided a useful normative framework, the UN was operationally too slow and bureaucratic.”<sup>55</sup> Instead, the US created the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum: “an action-oriented platform outside the UN framework to foster effective multilateral cooperation in counter-terrorism, in particular with respect to capacity-building.”<sup>56</sup> This development was met positively by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who established more task forces and redrafted the strategy. However, the fact remains that:

it is debatable whether either the strategy or the task force produced concrete achievements on the ground, other than generating a cottage industry of meetings and expert workshops in New York and elsewhere.<sup>57</sup>

Though it has spanned more than 16 years, this effort to establish a comprehensive, global UN-led framework for combating terrorism seems to have foundered. The UN does engage in some counter-terrorism operations. However, many of these operations are still undertaken by nation states individually or by coalitions of the willing. In the words of Richard Barret, former head of the UN expert panel monitoring implementation of sanctions against al-Qaeda and the Taliban:

the U.N. is too political, too uncoordinated, too focused on process rather than outcomes and follow-up, and too far removed from the people who actually deal with the problems of terrorism on the ground to make much of an impact, or even to appear relevant.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>55</sup> Einsiedel, S. v. (2016). *Assessing the UN's Efforts to Counter Terrorism*. United Nations Centre for Policy Research. p.3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p.4.

<sup>58</sup> Sengupta, S. (19. 9. 2017). “Examining the UN's Record on Urgent Global Challenges”. Accessed at *The New York Times*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/20/world/united-nations-refugeespeacekeeping>

## The UN on the Battlefield

The message in the strategy was clear, but the “practical steps [...] to [...] combat it”<sup>59</sup> were not – at least not in ways that translated directly into deploying effective troops on the battlefield. The UN had conducted peacekeeping and stabilization operations since 1948 with reasonable success, but the challenge of emerging cross-border globalized terrorist groups who would not enter negotiations or commit to treaties, proved to be a challenge for a UN system that was orientated toward:

maintaining a secure environment, to deter the resumption of violence and to provide a secure space for the advancement of the political process, in addition to their role in protecting civilians. These efforts have historically been undertaken in support of a political commitment to a peace agreement or ceasefire.<sup>60</sup>

It is important to understand the context and heritage on which the UN counter-terrorism strategy and efforts were based. Peacekeeping operations traditionally follow the principles of consent of the parties, the non-use of force except in self-defense, or defense of the mandate and impartiality. There is a significant gap between these concepts and today’s war on terror battlefield, where simply distinguishing the enemy from civilians is one of the problems. Further problems include: the willingness to accept risk, the composition of typical UN forces, and the motivation of these forces. Paul Collier notes in his 2007 book *The Bottom Billion* that the deployment of UN troops is often motivated by money:

Governments that send soldiers to serve as UN peacekeepers are paid \$1,000 per individual per month. For some countries this is not a bad way of getting some income from their armies. The imperative is then that soldiers should not get themselves killed [...] Even if troops are sent to dangerous places, they often play it safe.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> United Nations. (2018). *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

<sup>60</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace - Politics, Partnership and People*. New York: United Nations Panel on Peace Operations p. 28.

<sup>61</sup> Collier, P. (2007). *The Bottom Billion*. New York: Oxford University Press p. 127.

Although this was written ten years ago, the economic incentive still seems to play a role. The major contributors to UN forces remain developing countries which benefit financially according to the number of soldiers they deploy to UN operations.

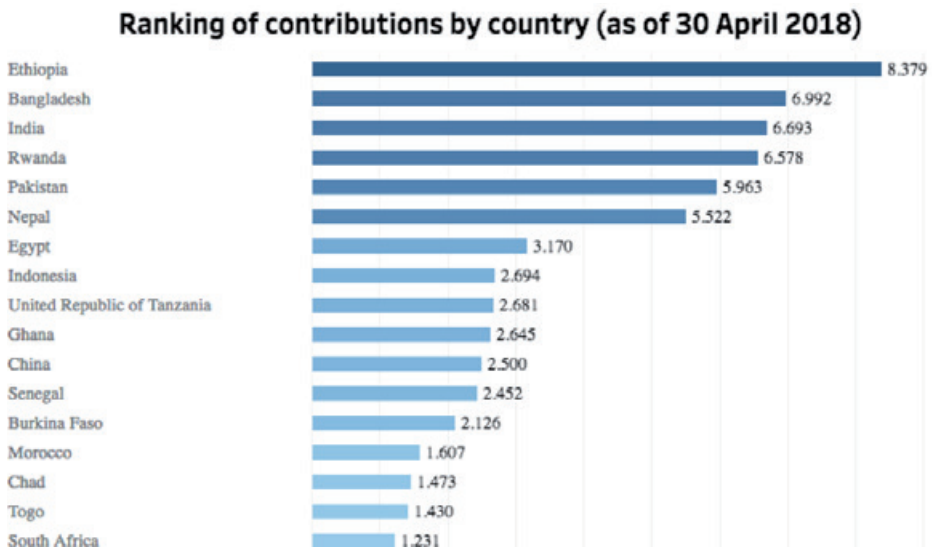


Figure 2: Contributions to UN peace keeping and police missions  
(Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>)

Based on this experience, a report from 2015 entitled *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace - Politics, Partnership and People*, issued by The United Nations Panel on Peace Operations, concluded that “UN peacekeeping missions, due to their composition and character, are not suited to engage in military counter-terrorism operations.”<sup>62</sup> The report advocates that the UN should not be given enforcement roles under such circumstances: “Such operations should be undertaken by the host government or by a capable regional force or an *ad hoc* coalition authorized by the Security Council.”<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace - Politics, Partnership and People*. New York: United Nations Panel on Peace Operations p. 31.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

## The Definition of Terrorism

At the very core of any counter-terrorism organization is the definition of terrorism. The UN (like countless think tanks around the world) has been unable to produce a coherent, broadly-accepted definition of terrorism and terrorists during its 16 years of building counter-terrorism organizations and writing strategies. The fact that core terms are not broadly agreed upon interferes greatly with the UN's ability to actually lead *effective* counter-terrorism operations with boots on the ground and planes in the air. Because UN troops are most likely constrained by very restrictive Rules of Engagements (ROE) determined by the consensus-driven *modus operandi* of UN-sponsored operations, it is difficult to eliminate identifiable terrorist threats from the battlefield. Moreover, the absence of a globally accepted definition of terrorism "allows some governments to justify their prosecution of legitimate political dissent as combating terrorism mandated in far-reaching Security Council mandates."<sup>64</sup>

The definition of terrorism is in the hands of the individual states, resulting in very different understandings, ranging from:

Russia's definition of terrorism as 'an ideology of violence' to Vietnam, which says that terrorism is anything that disrupts the people's order, definitions of terrorism reflect the political programs of the individual states. Ethiopia labels crimes as terrorist when they are carried out 'for the purposes of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.' France created a crime of 'pimping for terrorism', which applies to a person possessing large amounts of unexplained cash when the government believes the person's friends are terrorists. Not only are these definitions dangerously broad but many also blur the distinction between legitimate activity and serious threats.<sup>65</sup>

The situation in Turkey serves as a recent illustrative example of how political opponents, independent journalists, teachers, and civilians in general, have been incarcerated, often without trial, while being labeled as terrorists by the Erdogan regime.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Einsiedel, S. v. (2016). *Assessing the UN's Efforts to Counter Terrorism*. United Nations Centre for Policy Research p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Scheppele, K. L. (29. 8 2011). *The American Prospect*. <http://prospect.org/article/global-patriot-act>

<sup>66</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of the use of terrorist identity as legitimizing means to an end refer to the article "Identities and the Legitimization of the Use of Force", *Counterterrorism, Rules of Engagement and International Order in a UN Context*, p. 42-57.

## Conclusion

It seems unachievable for the UN as a peacekeeping, consensus-driven organization to produce operationally effective UN-led counter-terrorism initiatives. So, what is the future of such operations? With the implementation of counter-terrorism resolutions, the UN has “redirected it [international law] from the protection of human rights to the promotion of international security”<sup>67</sup>, largely at the initiative of the United States. To some extent this change has succeeded in providing a normative framework for the prevention of terrorism (for instance by issuing global legislation regarding the financing and support of terrorism). Nevertheless, the UN’s norm development “has proven too weak to offset the negative effects of counterproductive counter-terrorism policies by Member States that ultimately exacerbate the terrorist threat”<sup>68</sup>, thus threatening the cohesion of the organization.

In the future, it is also doubtful whether the UN will be the primary organizer of counter-terrorism operations that might involve combat. The UN’s “operational counter-terrorism activities have faced severe shortfalls and limitations”<sup>69</sup> and if the UN is to master this role, a paradigm shift must occur regarding risk-acceptance. Paradigms for flexibility must also shift: not only in the UN organization, but also more broadly in the major contributing member states. It is also imperative that member states are focused on producing results rather than revenue.

Alternatively, the UN could re-focus its counter-terrorism efforts on the main themes of the UN Charter, focusing on friendly relations between nations based on the respect for equal rights and international law, which would probably result in less operational action of both a legislative and military kind.

As Hammerskjöld stated in 1957: “It is our responsibility to remedy any flaws there might be in [the institutions]”, and this task rests with the world community.

<sup>67</sup> Scheppelle, K. L. (29. 8 2011). *The American Prospect*. <http://prospect.org/article/global-patriot-act>

<sup>68</sup> Einsiedel, S. v. (2016). *Assessing the UN’s Efforts to Counter Terrorism*. United Nations Centre for Policy Research p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

# Eliminating the ideological roots of terrorism and extremism: The practice and experience of China

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Terrorism is a strain of thought with ideological roots in extremism. Extremism distorts religious doctrines, encourages religious fanaticism, advocates holy war, and convinces followers that they can become martyrs in heaven, engendering lone wolf terrorist attacks which are difficult to prevent.

In this paper, I will discuss China's practical experience in combating extremism and how to eliminate the root causes of terrorism and extremism.

## **Cultural factors and how to counter the ideological attractions of extremism**

China is a multi-ethnic country with a total of 56 ethnic groups. In Xinjiang alone, 47 ethnic groups exist. Different ethnic groups believe in different religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam. In recent years, some extremist forces have exploited the religious feelings of poorly-educated believers, distorted religious doctrines, and encouraged hatred in followers. They have demanded that women wear black burqas and that young men grow large beards; they have banned singing and dancing at weddings and crying at funerals; and they have encouraged religious people to "kill pagans before



going to heaven.” Many people have no knowledge of correct Islamic teachings and are easily led astray. Of the people who have been deceived, 80 percent are inactive adherents, 15 percent are supporters and followers, and only 5 percent are die-hard believers. Therefore, the key to eradicating the origins of terrorism is to win over the 80 percent who are inactive adherents.

Modern culture is scientific, open, and inclusive. It is the most powerful weapon to curb irrational, exclusive, and confusing religious extremism. In recent years, in order to promote multi-ethnic harmony and multi-cultural coexistence the Chinese government has carried out a lot of modern culture promotion work and achieved very good results. For example, to disseminate modern culture, the government has set up 923 comprehensive cultural stations, 8084 farmhouse bookstores, and held a lot of “Villagers’ Civilization Lectures” to explain the differences between legal religions and illegal religions. To protect and pass on the religious beliefs and traditions of different ethnic groups, the government launched the “Beautiful Project” in minority-inhabited areas of the west of china and encouraged everyone to wear traditional national costumes. Some villages have also held peasant paintings and handicrafts competitions, sports competitions and other activities to enrich people’s cultural life. These initiatives have inspired people’s desire for a better life and they have imperceptibly changed the local atmosphere. A growing number of celebrations take place which include music and women wearing wedding dresses rather than burqas at weddings. Some women in veiled burqas have changed and put on beautiful and stylish national dresses, and the conservative religious atmosphere has been diluted. This demonstrates that efforts have resulted in fewer people supporting religious extremism. This offers cause for optimism. Practice has proved that promoting mutual understanding and inclusiveness among different ethnic groups and religions is the most powerful weapon against extremism.

### **Education and transformation: Is it better to kill terrorists or to reduce the occurrence of terrorism?**

An official who has engaged in anti-terrorism work for many years notes that: “some people who launched terrorist attacks were originally not terrorists. Why are they brainwashed by others? If such people are taught to be critical of extremism through education they will not be attracted to terrorist groups, and as a consequence fewer terror attacks will take place.”

The Chinese government has done a great deal of effective educational work, facilitating the ideological transformation of relevant personnel.

For ordinary believers, education and guidance are the main means of fighting extremism. The Islamic Association of Xinjiang has launched the Xinjiang Muslim Website, which includes “Islamic Basic Knowledge”, “Hajj Affairs”, “Culture and Arts”, “Policies, Laws and Regulations”, and other topics. It provides Muslims with the right knowledge about Islam and Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every adult Muslim is supposed to make at least once in his or her lifetime); it helps to guide religious people in resisting and opposing extremism; and it encourages mutual respect between different nationalities and religions. For children, various kinds of educational policies have been implemented encouraging them to learn modern scientific and cultural knowledge. The government implements 12 years of compulsory education and promotes bilingual (Chinese and Uyghur language) education. Through the patient persuasion of government and community staff, many children studying at illegal religious institutions have returned to school. The government also arranges for large numbers of minority students in economically developing areas to study in high schools and colleges each year so that they can come into contact with modern culture. For young people influenced by radicalization, the government has set up various technical schools to help them master the skills of livelihood so that they can find employment when they have given up their extremist views. For women affected by radicalization, the government also helps them integrate into modern society and provides them with free employment training in crafts such as hand embroidery, garment processing, ethnic handicraft production, and cooking. They are encouraged to venture out of their homes and into the community to pursue careers. After educational training, many women have bravely taken off their black burqa and begun working. Some of them have successfully started their own business and realized their dreams.

There are two main categories that can be targeted with instruments to eradicate extremism. One category is the violent terrorists who serve prison sentences. In this case, it is essential to prevent the spread of extreme religious ideas in prisons. Most of the violent terrorists serving prison sentences are members of terrorist organizations such as the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Hizb ut-Tahrir. These types of extremists are stubborn in their thinking, and most of them do not admit guilt when confronted with their terrorist acts. They do not identify with the state and its laws, but only with extreme interpretations of Islamic teachings. In order to eradicate their extremist line of

thinking, religious staff have visited prisons to discuss religious issues with the extremist terrorists. The religious staff have interacted with them and spoken to their humanity. At first, the prisoners were repellent and their behavior towards religious staff members was hateful, for example threatening to kill them. However, the religious staff kept talking to the terrorist extremists, patiently and on an equal footing. First, the religious staff addressed the extremist ideas in the prisoners' minds, convincing them instead that living peacefully is in line with religious doctrine. They then told them how to be a good Muslim, how to behave as a good religious citizen, and how to make contributions to society, explaining that only by following these principles would they be able to enter heaven. These efforts have achieved very good results. After one year's efforts in Xinjiang's prisons, 63 per cent of the terrorist extremists' thoughts have changed for the better. These figures include some ETIM and Hizb ut-Tahrir terrorist leaders. Convicts who had threatened to kill the religious staff were also convinced that their mindset needed to change. After successful religious re-education, some of the former terrorists participated in re-educating other imprisoned religious extremists. The second category targeted with religious re-education is people who are influenced by extreme religious thoughts but who have not committed acts of violent terrorism. The government has established social correction centers to re-educate these people. Some minority public officials and people undergoing religious re-education are placed face-to-face in order for them to communicate freely and equally with no police officers and no other enforcement measures threatening the extremist thinkers. Some of them were full of hatred when they first arrived. However, over the course of more than 20 days of ideological exchanges, psychological guidance, and education warning them of the negative consequences of extremism, some of them were greatly touched, and some cried on the spot and said: "I didn't expect that extreme ideas would have brought us to this point!" After these people were re-educated, they disclosed some terrorist organizations and the terrorist activities they were planning. Others, with help from their relatives, informed us that they had been deceived by violent terrorists and they warned villagers not to be exploited by extremists.

In practice, re-education is very effective in preventing violence and terror. Violent and terrorist attacks in Xinjiang have decreased significantly in the past two years. An increasing number of Muslims denounce violence, terror, and religious extremism.

## **Economic development prevents people from turning to extremism due to poverty and despair**

Seen from a global perspective, areas with rampant terrorist activities are often relatively poor and backward. Eradicating poverty and promoting economic development are important ways to eliminate terrorism. Since ancient times, Xinjiang has been an important transportation hub and business center of the Eurasian continent. Since the “Belt and Road” initiative strategy was put forward, Xinjiang has become China’s gateway to the west with its unique geographical advantages. In recent years, Xinjiang has continually increased cooperation with Russia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and other countries along the “Belt and Road.” This enhanced cooperation includes sectors such as economics and trade, culture, science and technology, education, and medicine. Xinjiang holds annual International Asia-European Expo exhibitions, International and National Dance Festivals, as well as Chinese and Foreign Culture Weeks. A number of cross-border tourism routes have been established, and train lines across Central Asia linking China and the European Union have been opened.

In China, 19 provinces and cities offer partner assistance to Xinjiang in areas including sources, technology, management, and loans. This provides strong support for Xinjiang’s economic development. During the “12th Five-Year Plan” period, a total of 5,161 aid projects were implemented, more than RMB 58 billion was invested, more than 5 million people had their housing conditions improved, 222 new schools were established, 2 million people were newly employed, and 11 million people from the rural surplus labor force were transferred to Xinjiang and employed there.

An open economic and social environment has not only brought economic prosperity and improved people’s lives, but also helped all ethnic groups to communicate with each other inside and outside of their homes, enabling them to become more open, inclusive and modern by means of cultural exchanges.

## **Strengthening of the rule of law: all religious activities must be carried out according to national law**

The most difficult issue when curbing extremism is how to distinguish ordinary customs and religious activities from illegal religious activities and extreme behavior. Religious extremists, in the name of religion, often mix religious extremism with ethnic and religious customs and habits, encouraging men to

have beards, women to wear masked gowns etc., and then call these practices religious obligations. Some religious extremists look down upon secularized, fashionably-dressed people, ruining their clothes by cutting them with knives. Previously, prohibiting women from wearing masked burqas and young people from having beards were considered violations of personal freedom rights. When the government cracked down on illegal religious practices, extremists spread the rumor that the government interfered with religious freedom rights, and many people were persuaded by their arguments.

In order to solve this problem, in recent years the government has introduced a series of laws and regulations, such as Regulations on the De-extremalization of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Regulations on Religious Affairs of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Village Regulations, and Citizens Conventions. These laws and regulations stipulate that China adheres to the principle of divorcing religion from government and that religious beliefs are personal matters. Religious believers are citizens of the country and laws are binding on all citizens. Religious groups, places, and activities involve public interests, and therefore they should be regulated by law. It is not permitted for religion to interfere with administration, justice, education, marriage, etc. Moreover, it is not permissible to use religion to hinder social order and work. Also, religion must not be used in a way that makes people's appearance extreme in religious terms, and religion must not coerce or force people to wear religiously extreme costumes and symbols. In recent years, reports that young people in Europe and the United States have been enthralled by extremist religious ideas, convincing them to join terrorist organizations such as ISIS, have become commonplace. Curbing the spread of extremist religious ideas has become a common problem faced by all countries in the world. The practice of the Chinese government in recent years shows that taking comprehensive measures to prevent religious extremism, such as educating people in modern culture and in non-extremist religion, and pursuing economic development and the rule of law, are effective ways to counter terrorism in the long run. China's practice when it comes to eradicating extremism has provided a useful reference for the international community's counter-terrorism efforts.

# Terrorist Threats and China's Counterterrorism: Features and Practice

**Colonel Liu Silong**

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Since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed an increase in terrorism threats. Major countries such as the United States, Russia, Britain and France have all suffered serious terrorist attacks more than once. The loss has extended beyond people's lives and properties: there has also been a disruption of the normal social order. Terrorism threats in the Asia-Pacific region have undergone complex and profound changes. *China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, a White Paper issued in January 2017, points out that: "The region faces severe security and stability challenges posed by violent and extremist ideologies spreading at an ever-faster pace, more active terrorist and extremist forces, rising threats from cyber terrorism, and frequent violent terrorist activities, in particular the infiltration of international terrorist organizations and the inflow of foreign terrorist fighters."<sup>70</sup> China also faces a terrorist threat to a certain degree, and has suffered terrorist attacks, but "generally speaking, in recent years, with the progression of China's counterterrorism efforts, we have basically maintained the overall social stability."<sup>71</sup> However, we should not be complacent in the fight against terrorism. According to *Global Terrorism Index 2017*, published by the Institute for Economics and Peace, China ranks No. 31 on the list, facing a level of terrorist threat on a par with Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and Germany as "countries with no active conflict within their own borders but with high levels of terrorism."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> China's State Council Information Office, *China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, released on 11 January 2017, available at [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-01/11/c\\_135973695\\_4.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-01/11/c_135973695_4.htm)

<sup>71</sup> Qin Tian, "The Counter-terrorism situation in the early 21st Century and the Construction of Counter-Terrorism military Force in China" *The Journal of Military Science of China*, 2017 Vol. 1, p.52.

<sup>72</sup> <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2017.pdf>

## **Terrorist threats faced by China: the current situation**

In January 2002, China's State Council Information Office published the article "East Turkistan terrorist forces are to be blamed" and delineated major terrorist threats faced by China. In December 2003, China's Ministry of Public Security officially designated four "Eastern Turkistan" terrorist organizations and 11 terrorists. Currently, major terrorist threats to China are: terrorist and violent organizations such as "East Turkistan" in China; threats of international terrorism against China's overseas interests; as well as terrorism in Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia with the potential to infiltrate China. Over the years, terrorist threats to China have undergone the changes enumerated below.

**(1) Temporally:** From 1949 to 1990, terrorism was not considered a major threat in China. In the 1990s, terrorist organizations such as "East Turkistan Movement" began to emerge. Terrorist organizations guided by extreme ideology such as "East Turkistan Islamic Movement", "East Turkestan Liberation Organization", "The World Uyghur Youth Congress", and "East Turkistan News Information Center" conducted terrorist activities which aimed to divide the country. They posed the most direct and immediate threat to China. Since the beginning of the new century, the overall terrorist threat in the Asia-Pacific region has increased. According to *Global Terrorism Index 2017*: "Since 2002 the region has seen an increase in terrorist activity with an increase in both the number of attacks and fatalities resulting from these attacks. Over the last fifteen years, there has been a 720 per cent increase in the number of terrorist attacks from 106 in 2002 to 870 in 2016. In 2002, there were 350 fatalities related to terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region. This figure increased to 744 deaths in 2014 but declined to 469 deaths in 2016. The Philippines, China, and Thailand have suffered the highest numbers of fatalities from terrorism since 2002 accounting for 85 per cent of the total deaths in the region."<sup>73</sup>

**(2) Spatially:** Terrorist activities in China are spreading from the border areas to large and medium-sized cities, while international terrorism also poses an increasing threat to China's overseas interests. In terms of severity and frequency, Xinjiang suffers most. Yet after initiatives to invest a greater volume of counter-terrorism resources in Xinjiang, terrorist groups have begun to seek

<sup>73</sup> *Global Terrorism Index 2017*, p. 47.

opportunities in other places. The incident on October 28 2013 in Tiananmen in Beijing; the incident at Kunming railway station on March 1 2014; and the incident in Shenyang on July 13 2015 are typical cases of Uyghur terrorism. Terrorist threats to China's overseas interests are also on the rise. In March 1997, foreign "East Turkistan" terrorists fired on and attacked the Chinese Embassy in Turkey. On March 5 1998, "East Turkistan" carried out a terrorist attack on the Chinese Consulate General in Istanbul. On August 30 2016, the "East Turkistan" forces, in collaboration with Al Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), attacked the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan. With the advancement of the "One Belt & One Road" initiative and the increasing exchanges between China and countries who have signed up to the Belt and Road, more and more Chinese are going abroad, and they face growing terrorist threats. On August 17 2015, seven Chinese citizens were killed in an explosion near Erawan Shrine in Bangkok, Thailand. In November 2015, ISIL killed Chinese citizen Fan Jinghui. In a recent terrorist knife attack near a Paris opera house on May 12 2018, one person was killed and four injured. Among the four casualties was one Chinese citizen.

**(3) Targets:** Terrorist attacks are increasingly indiscriminate. In the past, violent and terrorist attacks in China mainly targeted police stations, township governments and other government agencies, as well as government officials. For example, the terrorist attack in Kashgar on August 4 2008 was aimed at the armed police border force. The target of the terrorist attack that took place at Hetian on July 18 2011 was the Tax Bureau and Police Station, and the violent terrorist attack in Sharche County on December 30 2013 targeted the public security bureau. There are more cases similar to these in their targeting of state agencies. However, in recent years terrorist attacks have increasingly been aimed at innocent people at train stations and other public places, such as the attack on April 30 at the South Railway Station of Urumqi, the Kunming Railway Station attacks carried out on March 1, and the Tiananmen Jinshui Bridge attacks on October 28.<sup>74</sup>

## **Main features of terrorist threats**

The terrorist attacks against China in the past three decades share the following characteristics.

<sup>74</sup> WANG Lin, "Perceptions on People's Counter-Terrorism Strategy", *The Academic Journal of Beijing Police Academy*, May 2015 Vol 3. Available at <http://cati.nwupl.edu.cn/Item/25461.aspx>



**(1) Political purposes:** Major terrorist organizations such as “ETIM” are pursuing secession under an ethnic and religious cloak. Violent terrorism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism – three evil forces – are colluding. Terrorist forces act as the violent tool of separatist forces and religious extremists working for secession. The timing and location chosen for attacks also indicates clear political intent. For example, the serial bus bombings in Urumqi on February 25 1997 happened during the days of national mourning over Deng Xiaoping’s death. The explosions caused not only heavy casualties, but also extreme psychological panic in society. Even half a year after the incident, many people were still afraid of taking buses. The incident in Beijing on October 28 2013 happened shortly after the National Day holiday. The incident at Kunming railway station on March 1 2014 coincided with the Spring Festival travel rush.

**(2) People recruited tend to be younger:** Since young people’s world view is still developing, they are susceptible to extreme modes of thinking. For example, “East Turkistan” forces and “Tibetan Separatist” forces have been recruiting members among teenagers, especially college students. In the 1990s, they recruited children aged between 8 and 15, training and indoctrinating them with extreme religious beliefs, turning innocent children into terrorist assassins. The suspect aboard the China southern airlines flight from Urumqi to Beijing in March 2018, who intended to blow up the plane, was only 18 years old. According to the data obtained by relevant authorities, more than 300 college students from more than 10 universities in Xinjiang have joined the “East Turkistan” organizations.<sup>75</sup>

**(3) Use of primitive means:** Domestic terrorists have repeatedly tried to smuggle weapons from abroad and have also tried to learn how to use guns or make explosive devices there. These attempts have been repeatedly foiled by the central government. As it becomes increasingly difficult for terrorists to obtain guns, relatively easily-obtainable knives and gasoline become the first choice of terrorists.<sup>76</sup> Currently, most of the terrorist attacks plotted and carried out in China are carried out with primitive tools such as machetes, crude bombs, and cars; but the effects are more brutal.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Wang Liang, “Features of Terrorist Activities Home and Abroad in Recent Years and Counter Measures”, *Journal of Research on Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping Theory*, No. 5, 2010, p.75.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, pp.75-76.

<sup>77</sup> Wu Shaozhong, “Features of Terrorist Attacks in China and Countermeasures”, *The National Security Blue Book: The Research Report on the National Security of China*, 2014, edited by Liu Hui, Social Sciences Academic Press, May 2014, pp.92-102.

**(4) Collusion of domestic and overseas forces:** In an effort to avoid crackdowns by the central government, the operation and command of “East Turkistan” mostly takes place abroad. They send key personnel into China to carry out terrorist activities only when necessary. For example, leaders of “East Turkistan” forces had frequent contact with Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and other terrorist organizations. They not only had their personnel trained by these terrorist organizations, they also received money and material assistance from them. The “East Turkestan” forces also strengthened their collaboration with each other, meeting at international conferences and plotting joint operations. With the progression of counter-terrorism efforts in the Middle East, some “East Turkistan” terrorists went to Iraq and Syria, joined ISIL, and received training. Some of those foreign terrorist fighters might come back to China illegally at any time.<sup>78</sup>

**(5) The internet is being exploited extensively:** Terrorist organizations are using the internet extensively to spread extreme ideas, to recruit young people, to teach terrorist measures, and to purchase terrorist equipment. In the incident on July 5 2009, Rebiya Kadeer used the internet to send various kinds of information and encourage relevant personnel to engage in terrorist activities. In the terrorist incident of March 1 2014 at Kunming railway station, the clothes worn by terrorists were purchased through the internet.<sup>79</sup>

## Features of China’s counter-terrorism efforts

The White Paper *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* states that: “The Chinese government opposes terrorism in all forms and calls on the international community to cooperate in fighting terrorism on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other universally recognized norms governing international relations. China believes that dialogue among different civilizations should be enhanced and a holistic approach taken to eliminate the breeding grounds of terrorism by addressing both its symptoms and root causes by political, economic and diplomatic means. At the same time, there should be no double standard in fighting terrorism. Terrorism should not be associated with any particular country,

<sup>78</sup> Li Benxian, Ling Yunxiang and Mei Jiangming, “To build an Anti-Terrorism Mechanism under the leadership of the National Security Council in China”, *International Outlook*, July 2015.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

ethnicity or religion.”<sup>80</sup> The following paragraphs summarize the Chinese government’s principles and position on combating terrorism. The features of China’s counter-terrorism are outlined below.

**(1) Criminal justice model:** Counter-terrorism is usually divided into two models – criminal justice and war.<sup>81</sup> The criminal justice model, which treats terrorists as criminals, emphasizes the use of police and judicial power to defeat terrorism. The war model, which sees terrorism as a threat to the state, emphasizes a military response. China’s anti-terrorism focuses on the criminal justice model, which is embodied in the fact that the public security department leads the counter-terrorism work and the government actively builds a legal counter-terrorism system.<sup>82</sup> In 2002, a counter-terrorism bureau was set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Security, which is responsible for researching, planning, guiding, coordinating and promoting counter-terrorism work across the country. The office of National Counter-terrorism Coordination Group was also set up in the Counter-terrorism bureau of the Ministry of Public Security to undertake the daily work of the coordination group. On the basis of the relevant counter-terrorism laws, in August 2015 the Amendment to the Criminal Law (ix) was adopted, which comprehensively revised and supplemented a series of counter-terrorism criminal codes. On January 1 2016, the Counter-terrorism Law was formally enforced. This law comprehensively and systematically standardizes the matters related to national counter-terrorism, thus completing the legal system of counter-terrorism, marking that China’s counter-terrorism policy entered a new era.<sup>83</sup>

**(2) Prevention as a priority:** According to traditional Chinese thinking, “the best way to fight terrorism is to prevent it from happening.”<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-01/11/c\\_135973695\\_4.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-01/11/c_135973695_4.htm)

<sup>81</sup> Geraint Hughes, “Terrorism and Insurgency”, *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, edited by Randall D. Law, Routledge, 2015, p.389.

<sup>82</sup> In March 2018, for example, Prime Minister Li Keqiang pointed out in *Report on the Work of the Government* that violent terrorism is comparable to other criminal offences. “To advance the Peaceful China Initiative, we should take strict preventive measures against violent and terrorist activities and see them firmly stamped out, and launch a campaign to crack down on organized crime and local mafia in accordance with law, we should punish theft, robbery, fraud, pornography, gambling, drug-related crime, and other illegal and criminal behavior, and address salient problems such as telecommunications and internet fraud, the abuse of personal information, and pyramid schemes. With these steps we will safeguard national and public security.” Available at <http://www.gov.cn/zhuanti/2018lh/2018zfgzbg/zfgzbg.htm>

<sup>83</sup> Jia Yu, “The Milestone of Anti-terrorism by Rule of Law in China, Comments on Anti-Terrorism Law”, in *The People’s Legal System*, Aug 5, 2016, Vol 8. Available at <http://cati.nwupl.edu.cn/Item/25423.aspx>

<sup>84</sup> Xinhua News, “China’s anti-terrorism forces: Ready to assemble at the first call and capable of fighting and winning.” Nov 17, 2015. Available at [http://www.xinhuanet.com/legal/ttgg/2015-11/17/c\\_128434406.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/legal/ttgg/2015-11/17/c_128434406.htm)

Since terrorists are not especially active in China, our counter-terrorism mission focuses on prevention.<sup>85</sup> The Counter-terrorism Law stipulates clearly that “counter-terrorism work should be conducted under the principle of combining specialized tasks relying on the masses, giving priority to prevention, integrating punishment and prevention, anticipating the enemy and maintaining an active posture.” Chapter 3, “Security Protection”, demands in detail that all levels of government and the press, radio, television, culture, religion, and network-related agencies should provide counterterrorism information and education.

**(3) To fight a “people’s war” against terrorism:** Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out that efforts should be made to fight a “people’s war” against terrorism.<sup>86</sup> Relying on the masses is one of the important weapons for the Communist Party of China to defeat the terrorists. To prevent violent terrorist activities, especially in the face of secret and unpredictable terrorist threats, governments at all levels should rely on the masses taking action. On the one hand, they should publicize the dangers of terrorism to enhance the people’s counter-terrorism consciousness. On the other hand, the masses should also be mobilized to join the fight against the terrorists.<sup>87</sup> Under the leadership of public security organs, tens of thousands of people in Moyu County and Pishan County respectively joined the police in its search for terrorists. These are excellent examples of mass participation.<sup>88</sup>

## **China’s international counter-terrorism cooperation**

China always attaches great importance to international counter-terrorism cooperation; supports the counter-terrorism initiatives of the United Nations and other international organizations; and actively participates in international cooperation focusing on multilateral and bilateral counter-terrorism exchanges.

**(1) Counter-terrorism cooperation at the United Nations level:** China advocates that the United Nations should play a leading role in all issues related to international security. After the November 2015 terrorist attacks in

<sup>85</sup> “Prevention is top priority in Anti-terrorism in China. The terrorist incident in Jordan will not affect China’s policy toward Middle East”, in *The First Financial Daily*, Nov 16, 2016. Available at <http://money.163.com/05/1116/03/22LA4QBP00251IMR.html>

<sup>86</sup> “To build a more beautiful Xinjiang”, *People’s Daily*, May 4, 2014, front page. Available at <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2014/0504/c1024-24968469.html#>

<sup>87</sup> Guo Yongliang, “On the People’s War against Terrorism”, *Journal of China’s Military Science*, 2017, Vol 1.

<sup>88</sup> Wang Lin, 2017

Paris, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called for a “united front” led by the United Nations to fight terrorism at the G20 summit. This stance runs through all statements made by China’s top leaders. In practice, China’s contribution to the UN’s counter-terrorism efforts is mainly made through three channels: the Security Council, the Sanctions Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). China is an active participant in all three channels and works to conduct high-level diplomacy through the UNSC, to investigate and monitor specific individuals and groups through the Sanctions Committee, and to help other countries to build their capacity through the CTC.

**(2) Multi-lateral counter-terrorism cooperation:** Counter-terrorism cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) framework has been fruitful. The SCO was established in Shanghai on June 15 2001 on the same day the *Shanghai Convention against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism* was signed. In 2004, the SCO Regional Anti-terrorism Structure (RATS) was officially launched in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The *SCO Convention against Terrorism* was signed in Russia in June 2009. On March 30 2017, the *SCO Convention against Extremism* (draft) was passed, which supported competent authorities of the SCO countries making joint efforts against religious extremism. The SCO RATS Executive Committee Director Mr. Evgeny S. Sysoev, pointed out that it is still one of the fundamental tasks of the SCO to fight against the “three forces” (terrorism, separatism and extremism). Since 2016, the SCO has made significant achievements in the fight against the “three forces”.<sup>89</sup> In June 2018, the SCO Summit in Qingdao passed the *Outline for Counter-terrorism Cooperation among SCO Member Countries against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism: 2019-2021*, which will further promote pragmatic cooperation among the SCO members in countering terrorism.

Counter-terrorism cooperation between China and the Association for South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has also developed considerably in recent years. Due to the spread of terrorism based on religious extremism in the Middle East, some extremists from Xinjiang travelled via ASEAN countries to the Middle East. Some of these people stopped in Southeast Asia and carried out terrorist activities there. These two forms of extremity are related. In the face of the common terrorist threat, China has taken an active part in ASEAN’s regional

<sup>89</sup> “Exclusive Interview: Cracking down on the ‘Three Forces’ remains one of the fundamental tasks of the SCO --- Interview with Sysoev, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-terrorism Structure.” Available at [http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-07/11/c\\_1121300295.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-07/11/c_1121300295.htm)

counter-terrorism forum and conferences on combating transnational crime. China participated in 2013 and 2016 in the joint anti-terrorism exercise under the framework of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM+).

**(3) Bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation:** At the bilateral level, China has conducted counter-terrorism cooperation with many countries in various fields. For example, soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, China and the United States started their counter-terrorism consultations, which have been upgraded to vice-minister level. Relevant departments of the two countries have also cooperated on counter-terrorism intelligence exchanges and on counterterrorist efforts related to the financial sector. However, meaningful counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries has been constrained by the lack of real mutual trust at the strategic level, the “double standards” of the United States on counter-terrorism, and the differences in priorities between the two countries.<sup>90</sup> In the context of China-ASEAN cooperation, bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation between China and relevant countries in Southeast Asia has been developing continually. For example, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia have established counter-terrorism cooperation mechanisms. China has held joint counter-terrorism training with both Indonesia and Thailand. China has also established counter-terrorism dialogues at different levels with France, Germany, and the UK.

**(4) Further cooperation:** The Chinese military has conducted counter-terrorism cooperation with the militaries of other countries and played a prominent role in diplomacy against terrorism. Examples include military counter-terrorism cooperation within the framework of the SCO and the ADMM+. Since the first military exercise with Kyrgyzstan in 2002, counter-terrorism actions have become an important part of the international joint exercise and training of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The Chinese military has regular counter-terrorism exchanges with the Thai and Indonesian militaries. In August 2016, a counter-terrorism cooperation coordination mechanism between China, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan was officially established. In August 2017, the second coordination meeting among senior leaders of the four nations was held. China also actively supports the construction of other countries' anti-terrorism capability by means of military assistance and arms transfers. For example, when the Philippines was facing a stalemate in the fight against terrorists in 2017 in Malawi, China provided the Philippines with counter-terrorism equipment, significantly promoting their counter-terrorism capability.

<sup>90</sup> Jia Chunyang, “Sino-US cooperation on Anti-terrorism: Realistic Dilemma and the Way Out”, *American Studies*, 2017, Vol 1.

## **Difficulties in international counter-terrorism cooperation**

In general, traditional security issues attract more attention than counter-terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, in November 2015, China hosted the sixth Xiangshan Forum and “regional terrorism” was one of the topics of a plenary session. However, during and after the forum, most of the reports at home and abroad concerned South China Sea issues. At the Shangri-la Dialogue held in Singapore, the importance of terrorism was also downplayed. “Terrorism” was the topic of one plenary session in the 2018 Shangri-la Dialogue, but the hottest topics of media coverage remained traditional security issues such as the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue. Different national interests, power struggles, territorial disputes, and disputes over maritime jurisdiction all affect regional countries’ willingness to invest in counter-terrorism cooperation. Human rights issues also pose problems. Although some Southeast Asian countries have been positive towards strengthening cooperation with China on counter-terrorism, they rejected China’s request for terrorist repatriation. For example, in April 2016, Indonesia refused to repatriate four detained Chinese terrorists to China on the pretext that it had no extradition treaty with China.

In short, China has been actively promoting international cooperation on counter-terrorism and positive progress has been made at different levels. However, cooperation is still circumscribed by many constraining factors, so there is still a long way to go.

# Author biographies

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## **Casper Emil Holland**

Major

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Major Casper Emil Holland holds a Master of Arts (MA) in African Studies from the University of Copenhagen. He is currently studying at the French War College in Paris to obtain the title “expert in management, command and strategy.” He has completed the masters-level courses in Military Operations at the Royal Danish Defence College.

While serving as an operations officer at battalion and brigade level, he commenced African Studies and focused on International Security Cooperation. In 2013, he was deployed to Mali as part of the All Source Intelligence Fusion Unit (ASIFU) to assist the UN mission (MINUSMA) leadership in assessing the conflict. In 2015, he was appointed as aide de camp to General Michael Lollesgaard, who served as Force Commander MINUSMA from 2015–2017.

Topics of particular interest include norm change, peacekeeping, peace building, as well as state and security in Sub-Saharan Africa. He has been deployed on missions to Mali, Afghanistan and Kosovo.

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## **Jespersen, Martin Walldén**

Major

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Major Martin Walldén Jespersen is currently the commanding officer of the 727 Fighter Squadron in the Royal Danish Air Force. In 2016, he was the detachment commander of the Danish Air Force’s F-16 Operation Inherent Resolve. From 2015 to 2016, he was second in command of the Danish Air Force’s 730 fighter squadron. From 2011 to 2015, Major Jespersen was head of the team concerning standardization and evaluation of the F-16 fighter aircraft in the Danish Air Force and he was a subject matter expert for the New Fighter Program in the Ministry of Defence. In 2011, he was operations commander in the Libya Force of the Danish Air Force. From 2009 to 2011, he was director of operations for



the 730 Fighter Squadron in Denmark. In 2010 and in 2012, he served as an instructor at the European F-16 Weapons School. Major Jespersen has a Master of Military Studies from the Royal Danish Defence College, which he completed in 2016. He graduated from the Fighter Weapons School in 2008. He has served as an F-16 pilot since 2001, and has served in more than 100 F-16 combat missions in Libya, Iraq and Syria. He is also the author of the monograph “I forreste række” [At the Front] about the author’s experiences in the Libya war. The monograph was published by Lindhardt & Ringhof in 2012.

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**Liu, Silong**  
(Colonel)

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Colonel Silong Liu is a PhD student at the School of International Studies at Peking University in China. He was a student at the International Studies University of the People’s Liberation Army of China from September 1995 to March 2002 and obtained his bachelor degree in 1999 and his Master’s degree in English Language and Literature in 2002. Since March 2002, he has worked at the Academy of Military Sciences of the People’s Liberation Army as assistant researcher, staff officer and director of the Foreign Affairs Office. From January to December 2003, he served as a deputy company leader at a People’s Liberation Army infantry unit. From 2007 to 2008, he studied at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom and obtained a Master’s degree in strategic studies. He was promoted to the rank of colonel in 2014. Silong Liu enrolled in the PhD program in international security and strategic studies at Peking University in September 2017. His research interests include terrorism and counter-terrorism and China-US military relations.

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**Lollesgaard, Michael**  
(Lieutenant General)

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Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard is currently the Danish Military Representative to NATO and the EU. Prior to this, in 2015-16, he commanded the 11000-strong force in the UN mission MINUSMA. Throughout his career he

has mainly focused on operations, training, and education. He has commanded at all levels from company to division. When commanding the Danish Division in 2013-2014, he was also responsible for training the three Baltic Brigade staffs and he was the tactical inspector of the Danish Army. From 2010-2013, when commanding 1 Danish Brigade, he trained all Danish battlegroups rotating into Afghanistan, gaining extensive knowledge on how to operate in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism environments. From 2007-2009, he ran the Peace Support Operations Training Centre in Sarajevo which included conducting an extensive training program of the Bosnian brigades and developing regional cooperation within the area of peace support training in the Western Balkans. In 2005-2006, he was the Director of the Army General Staff Course at the Danish Defence College. In this capacity, he was responsible for the development of Danish Army Doctrine. His deployments to serve in peace operations include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iraq.

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**Lund, Sune**  
(Commander)

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Commander Sune Lund currently works at the Joint Operations Staff, focusing on maritime operations, NATO and EU non-military operations. His operational background has included sea duty in the High North, Southern territorial waters, and on the High Seas, with jobs ranging from commanding officer on a patrol boat to operations officer on board the frigate NIELS JUEL. In 2014, he was deployed off the coast of Syria during the Danish-led Operation Removal of Chemical Weapons from Syria. Commander Lund's policy experience stems from a period working in the Office for Security Policy and Planning at the Danish Ministry of Defence. Commander Lund holds a Master of International Relations from the American Military University.

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**Luo, Xinqin**  
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Senior Colonel Luo Xinqin is Director of the political work at the Informationization Research Office of the Academy of Military Science. She is an associate

researcher. She graduated from the Dalian Naval Academy and majored in military psychology. She served in the Air Force when she was assigned to her first position in the People's Liberation Army. At present, her main research field is military political work on informationalization and counter-terrorism.

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**Ni, Tianyou**

(Senior Colonel)

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Senior Colonel Ni Tianyou is a researcher who is Deputy Director of the Basic Theories Office of the Joint Operation Agency of the Institute of War Studies at the Academy of Military Science. Most of his theoretical research has been carried out in the fields of joint emergency operations, as well as non-war military operations and military command. He is an expert on non-war military operations. He has worked in the air force in Nanjing Military Command and headquarters, and he is an expert in national counter-terrorism exercises. He has experience from the Great Wall military drills and from People's Liberation Army headquarters exercises, and from exercises with forces. He has participated in compiling several military laws and regulations and has contributed to more than 10 military works, including the Guide on Informationized Command Systems, Yearbook of World Non-war Military Operations, the Science of Command in Joint Battle, the Outline of Strategic Command, and Famous Generals and Wars. He has delivered over 50 research reports and more than 30 articles and has won many awards.

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**Odgaard, Liselotte**

(Associate Professor)

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Liselotte Odgaard is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Military History and War Studies at the Royal Danish Defence College. Her recent work includes *China and Coexistence: Beijing's National Security Strategy for the 21st Century* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); "Beijing's Quest for Stability in Its Neighborhood: China's Relations with Russia in Central Asia," *Asian Security* 13, no. 1 (2017): 41-58; and *Strategy in NATO*:

Preparing for an Imperfect World (Edited, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014). She has been a visiting scholar at institutions such as Harvard University, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Norwegian Nobel Institute. She is a regular participant at the Xiangshan Forum, which is the People's Liberation Army's annual dialogue with other countries. She also organizes annual joint conferences between the Academy of Military Science and the Royal Danish Defence College.

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**Pedersen, Charlotte Flindt**

(Director at the Danish Foreign Policy Society)

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Charlotte Flindt Pedersen is the director of the Danish Foreign Policy Society. She holds an MA in East European studies and political science, as well as a diploma in strategic management. In the period from 1996 to 2015, she was employed in several long-term positions for the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR). Her final role here was as deputy director in charge of the organisation's international work, which covered countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and Asia (including China and Central Asia). As director of international operations at DIHR she oversaw DIHR's portfolio concerning human rights development. This involved cooperating with justice and police authorities, Ombuds institutions, national human rights institutions, business corporations, and key civil society organisations, helping these entities to strengthen their strategic capacity to comply with, promote, and protect human rights. She is a board member of Ebbe Muncks Mindefond, International Media Support, the Folmer Wisti Foundation for Intercultural Understanding, and the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute.

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**Ryberg, Henrik**

(Rear Admiral)

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Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg is currently Commandant of the Royal Danish Defence College. Previously, he was Deputy Director of the Danish Ministry of Defence Personnel Agency, having held multiple positions at this agency. His service history includes positions as commanding officer, operations officer, and second in

command. He has also been deployed to Sarajevo as chief of a contingent. He has received military education in Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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**Wang, Weixing**

(Major General)

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Major General Wang Weixing is Deputy Political Commissar of the Academy of Military Sciences, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). He also acts as Chairman of the International Military Branch and the China Association for Military Science. He joined the PLA Army in February 1978. He graduated from the Xi'an Political Academy of the PLA, and attended courses run by the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the PLA National Defense University. He successively served in a regional command, group army, division, regiment, field army, and military institution. He was engaged in the Defensive Counter-attack War against Vietnam in 1979. He was assigned as an assistant researcher at the PLA Academy of Military Science in 1996, and was later promoted to office leader, deputy department director and department director. His recent publications include *China's Military Art*, *China's Art of War in Vernacular*, and *Essence of Chinese Ancient Strategic Theories*.

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**Yan, Wenhui**

(Senior Colonel)

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Senior Colonel Yan Wenhui is an Associate Researcher in the Institute of War Studies in the Academy of Military Science. He earned his PhD in history and completed a post-doctorate degree in national security strategy. He has long been engaged in research fields such as national security strategy, military strategy, national religion and national security, counter-terrorism, non-governmental organizations, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Belt and Road Initiative. He has participated in more than 60 studies, including *Outline of National Security Strategy*, *A Study on Globalization*, *The Social Ideological Trends of the Middle East*, *Major Issues in the Middle East*, *China's Foreign Policy*, and *China's Defense White Paper*. He has written more than 30 advisory reports and published more than 100 articles in Chinese.





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