

STRIVING FOR SECURITY IN AN INSECURE WORLD

Amichai Magen

Not long ago, the sensible Berliner travelling to work on the U-Bahn line U1 could reasonably assume she was generally immune from the kind of security threats faced regularly by her friend living in Jerusalem. German civilians had not been killed by terrorists on home soil since 1996, when the now extinct Red Army Faction felled its last murderous blow. Palestinian nationalists, who attacked twice in Munich in the early 1970's, last struck in Germany in 1982. Even al-Qaeda's infamous Hamburg cell had the Pentagon in its sights, not the Hardthöhe.

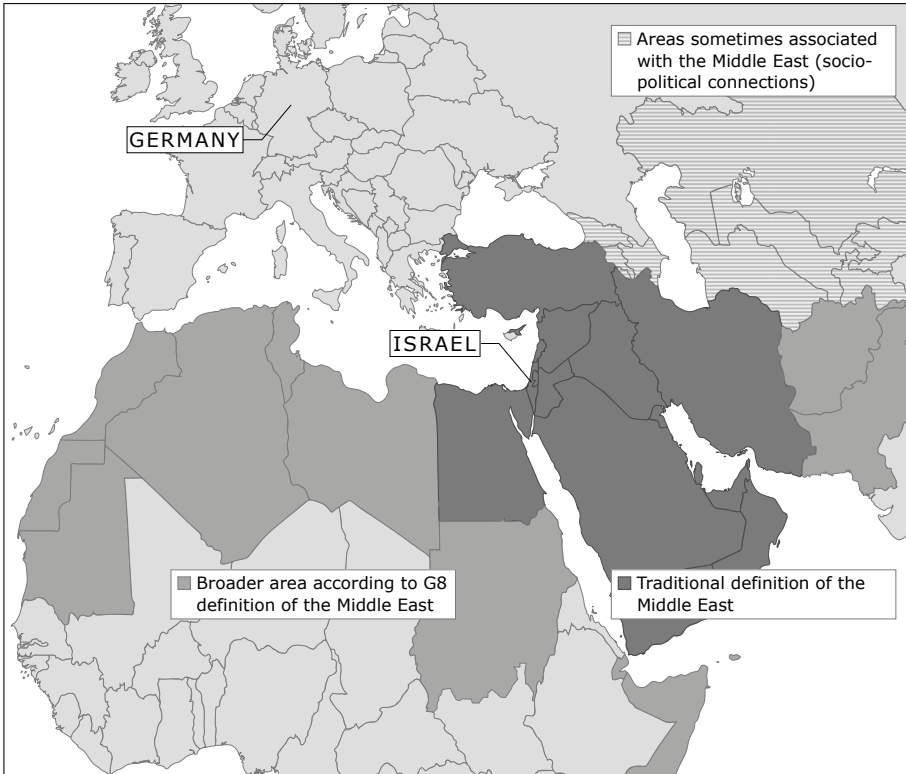
By the beginning of 2015, the security ecosystem affecting Israelis and Germans (indeed Europeans more broadly) had converged dramatically and negatively. Early harbingers of trouble appeared already in 2006 when two German youths, Youssef Mohamad El-Hajdib and Jihad Hamad, came within a hair's breadth of killing hundreds of passengers on two regional trains near Hamm and Koblenz, as well as with the discovery of the Sauerland-Gruppe car-bomb plot in September 2007.

Sadly, both the sources and severity of the threat have grown ominously since the turn of the decade and are unlikely to diminish any time soon. In the coming years, possibly decades, making sure that the sensible Berliner travelling to work on the U-Bahn line U1 remains safe will necessitate a concerted effort to understand the ideology and modus operandi of jihadist terrorism, to contain and ultimately reduce the capacity and motivation of terrorists to attack, and to strengthen German societal resilience. Indeed, the counter-terrorism posture required to protect the Berliner and Jerusalemite, while not identical, will depend on the intelligent and determined application of common guiding principles and so will greatly benefit from intimate German-Israeli dialogue, cooperation, and learning.



Dr. Amichai Magen is Senior Lecturer at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy. He is also Head of the Governance & Political Violence Program at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) and Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, and a Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Fig. 1
The Greater Middle East



Source: Illustration © racken.

THE NEW SECURITY ECOSYSTEM

In approaching the new security ecosystem it is important to distinguish between three ideological movements animating contemporary jihadist activity – Salafist, Shi’a, and Muslim Brotherhood led – as well as between three concentric circles of jihadist threats: local, European, and (broadly) Middle Eastern. Each ideological stream and concentric circle impacts both German and Israeli security, albeit to different degrees at this time.

The first ideological movement is Salafist jihadism which can be understood as a modern revolutionary political ideology mandating the use of violence to promote a very narrow, fundamentalist vision of Sunni Islamic identity. Salafist jihadism – to which al-Qaeda, its affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, and Daesh (the self-styled

“Islamic State”) all subscribe – is a compound ideology: it mixes a highly puritanical reading of Sunni Islam – one that strives to emulate the “pious ancestors” (*Salaf*) by rejecting apostate (*Kufr*) regimes and seeking to establish a Sharia-based Caliphate – with a virulent interpretation of the concept of jihad – one that downplays the non-violent, spiritual reading of the notion in favor of a proclaimed duty of every Muslim to fight for the realisation of the Caliphate.



A threat to liberal society: The modern society with its core values of freedom and the rule of law suffers particularly under the attacks of Salafist jihadism. | Source: Thomas, Valley Forge National Park, flickr ©©©.

This violent utopianism inspires Salafist jihadism’s vision of conflict, society, and politics. To their mind, the *Ummah* (or “community of believers”) is in a state of total war with the West, “the Jews”, and other non-believers, including apostate Arab regimes and Shi’a Muslims. This war not only justifies acts of extreme violence against those who have conspired to “suppress the true faith” – beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions and rape – but involves the rejection of all forms of man-made law, democracy, and the Westphalian international system. Indeed, Salafist jihadism is contesting the essential values and institutions of modern liberal societies in a manner not experienced by the West since the defeat of Nazism.

Salafist jihadism represents the most serious and immediate terrorist threat to Germany (and Europe more broadly), and is fast rising in the hierarchy of threats to Israel. With the disintegration

of Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and large parts of the Sahel region (Mali, Niger, northern Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan) the geographical epicenter of global jihad has quite literally shifted away from Afghanistan-Pakistan towards the Levant and North Africa. The most active sources of Salafist jihadism are now on Israel's borders and at Europe's gates. Moreover, Europe is increasingly in the cross-hairs of Salafist jihadist organisations. In late January 2015, for example, a spokesman for al-Qaeda in Yemen – the group claiming to be behind the *Charlie Hebdo* terror attack in Paris – stated that with the “weakening” of the U.S. in recent years, France has surpassed America to become the “main enemy of Islam”.¹



Targeting public infrastructure: Unlike the people in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv (the photo above shows a terrorist attack from 21 November 2012), Berliners have not yet encountered terror attacks on public transport. Plans of this kind can be prevented if bilateral intelligence work is intensified. | Sources: © Gideo Markowicz, picture alliance / epa (t.); © racken (d.).

1 | Cf. “Al-Qaeda in Yemen says France top enemy”, *AFP*, 30 Jan 2015, http://news.yahoo.com/qaeda-yemen-chief-says-france-top-enemy-163015975.html?soc_src=copy (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

According to a study published in January 2015 by the counter-terrorism coordinator of the state Ministry of Interior in Bremen, Daniel Heinke, and journalist Jan Raudszus, the estimated 600 German Muslims and converts who have traveled to fight in Syria and Iraq since 2011 are “almost exclusively followers of the Salafist brand of Islam”². German fighters in Syria and Iraq have reportedly formed their own brigade within the Islamic State – what Israel and Arab states refer to by the Arabic acronym, Daesh, in order to avoid legitimizing the organization by refusing to call it a “state” of any kind – and Daesh propaganda outlets have repeatedly published German language leaflets and videos.



Europe is increasingly in the cross hairs of jihadist organisations. France in particular has become a new target of Islamist violence. After the *Charlie Hebdo* attack on 7 January 2015 Parisians made a case for the values of their republic. | Source: Laurent Tine, flickr ©①②③.

The seriousness of the Salafist jihadi threat to Germany is compounded by the movement’s presence in each of the three concentric circles – the local, European, and Middle Eastern – and by the interconnectedness between the three. Austria, Belgium France and the Netherlands have all supplied higher per capita numbers of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq, but the estimated 600 German fighters are, jointly with the United Kingdom, the highest

2 | Daniel H. Heinke/Jan Raudszus, “German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan 2015, p. 20, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sentinel-January-2015-vol-8-issue-122.pdf> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

absolute number in Europe.³ Of these, nearly two-thirds were born and raised in Germany. Around 180 German foreign fighters are known to have already returned to Germany, approximately half of them remain active in extremist circles.⁴ This is an extraordinarily high rate, suggesting existing German methods to contain and de-radicalise returnees are inadequate.

As the campaign of the international coalition against Daesh puts growing pressure on the organisation in Syria and Iraq, the number of German returnees is likely to grow, raising the probability of both “Lone Wolf” attacks – typically involving stabbings, shootings, car-rampage attacks, or Boston-Marathon style bombings – as well as more organised strikes by sleeper-cells.



Export of terror: The assassins of the attack on the Boston Marathon in April 2013 were of Chechen origin. The crisis regions on Europe’s edges provide fertile ground for terrorism. | Source: Vjeran Pavić, flickr ©©©.

The local, German Salafist scene is also connected to a broader European one. The Millatu Ibrahim group, banned in Germany in 2012, for example, is known to have not only recruited German jihadists but also served to connect them to extremist networks in Austria, Belgium, and France. Similarly, the 16 January 2015

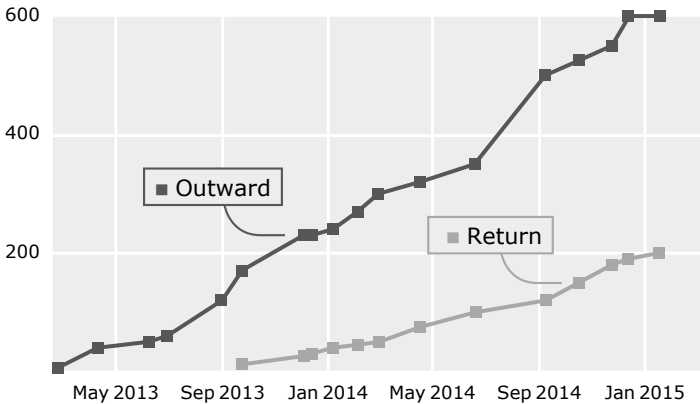
3 | For current figures of European foreign fighters see: Peter Neumann, “Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghan conflict in the 1980s”, *ICSR Insight*, 26 Jan 2015, <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

4 | Cf. Heinke/Raudszus, n. 2.

Berlin police raid on eleven addresses and arrest of two men suspected of recruiting fighters, arms and finance for Daesh, came a day after the thwarting of a terrorist plot in Belgium and appears to have been part of a wider effort to disrupt a European network of Salafi extremists.

Fig. 2

Combatants traveled from Germany to Syria and Iraq and repatriates



Source: Own illustration with data (estimates) of the German authorities for the protection of the constitution from Christian Elmer/Bertolt Hunger/Maximilian Schäfer, "Wie die deutschen Islamisten vernetzt sind", *Spiegel Online*, 21 Jan 2015, <http://spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/a-996534.html> (accessed 16 Mar 2015).

Israel too is experiencing a foreign-fighters problem, although a remarkably smaller one than Germany's. Some 40 Israeli Arab citizens have traveled to Syria to fight or have attempted to do so.⁵ The social-media outlets of Salafist jihadi groups invest a considerable amount of their energy inciting Israeli Arabs and Palestinians to carry out acts of "spontaneous jihad" against soft (civilian) targets in Israel and Jewish communities in Europe, but so far with mercifully little success. In the medium to long-run, the highest threat to Israel emanating from Salafist jihadism comes from the Islamist group which constitutes al-Qaeda's "official franchise" in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra and, to a lesser extent, the Sinai-based Ansar Bait al-Maqdis. Daesh and its gruesome activities further east continue to dominate western media attention, yet in north-western Syria, in Lebanon and on the immediate

5 | A further 80 fighters are estimated to have traveled to Syria from areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA).

border with Israel in the northern Golan, it is Jabhat al-Nusra that has become the main Sunni jihadi force on the ground.

Table 1

Foreign fighters from Western Europe in total in Syria and Iraq in the second half of 2014

Country	Estimate	Ratio per 1 million inhabitants
Austria	100-150	17
Belgium	440	40
Denmark	100-150	27
Finland	50-70	13
France	1,200	18
Germany	500-600	7.5
Ireland	30	7
Italy	80	1.5
Netherlands	200-250	14.5
Norway	60	12
Spain	50-100	2
Sweden	150-180	19
Switzerland	40	5
United Kingdom	500-600	9.5

Note: The estimated worldwide total is 20,730. | Source: Peter Neumann, "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghan conflict in the 1980s", *ICSR Insight*, 26 Jan 2015, <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s> (accessed 18 Mar 2015).

While al-Nusra is guided by an uncompromising jihadi ideology, its leader Abu Mohammed Al Jolani has so far demonstrated impressive tactical legerdemain; focusing on winning hearts and minds among Sunni Arabs in Syria and Lebanon, rather than terrorising them into submission, and preserving his gains by avoiding targeting westerners or provoking Israel. Still, as Jonathan Spyer observes, Jabhat al-Nusra appears determined to emerge as a kind of Sunni mirror-image of the Shi'a Hezbollah – establishing

an al-Qaeda shadow-state in Syria and Lebanon with which to attack Israel and the West.⁶

The second and third main ideological streams driving contemporary global jihadist activity are Iranian-led Shi'a militancy and the more radical, activist branches of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially the Palestinian Hamas. Iran, which until the 1979 Islamic Revolution was a close ally of Israel and the West more broadly is, since the early 1980s, fighting an escalating proxy-war against the Jewish State and is now, for all intents and purposes, sitting on Israel's northern borders. Successive Iranian religious and political leaders – including Iran's supposedly "moderate" current president, Hassan Rouhani – have repeatedly called for Israel's annihilation. Iranian official statements regularly practice Holocaust denial, virulent anti-Semitism, and incitement to genocide against Israel.⁷



Patrolling the Golan: In Israel's hierarchy of threats, Salafi jihadism moved up rapidly. Particularly the situation in war struck Syria is of concern, which is monitored from the Golan by Israeli border patrols. | Source: Matan Portnoy, Israel Defense Forces, flickr ©①📷.

Ideologically, Iran's Shi'a proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah, is cut from the same cloth as its masters in Tehran. In its 1985 manifesto, Hezbollah defines itself in Islamist, messianic terms, as "the sons of the Ummah, the party of God (Hizb Allah) the vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran" and states that it is part and

6 | Jonathan Spyer, "Jabhat al-Nusra: The Sunni Hezbollah?", Global Research in International Affairs Center (GLORIA), 7 Nov 2014.

7 | Cf. Joshua Teitelbaum/Michael Segall, "The Iranian Leadership's Continuing Intent to Destroy Israel: 2009-2012", <http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/IransIntent2012b.pdf> (accessed 20 Feb 2015).

parcel of a global jihad inspired and led by Iran.⁸ Regarding Israel, the manifesto explicitly states that holy war is the “cure to the ills and oppression inflicted on Lebanon and the region by Israel” and proclaims that: “our struggle will end only when this entity [Israel] is obliterated. We recognise no treaty with it, no cease fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.”⁹

Iran has been the primary beneficiary of the Syrian civil war, as well as the disintegration of Iraq and Yemen. The hegemon-by-proxy in Lebanon for decades, Iran is now methodically enlarging and deepening its influence across the region by simultaneously agitating Shi’a-Sunni conflict, portraying itself as protector and benefactor of the Shi’a populations in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, and ruthlessly exploiting power vacuums wherever it finds them. By February 2015, for example, the Iran-backed Houthis rebel group completed a takeover of the Yemen capital, establishing a de facto Iranian protectorate in a key geopolitical spot in the Arabian Peninsula.



The Israel-Lebanese border: Rocket attacks by Hezbollah from Lebanon or Syria threaten Israel’s security. Renewed military conflicts cannot be ruled out and would extend over a wider front than in 2006. | Source: Ashley Hoff, flickr ©©©©.

8 | The text of the 1985 manifesto (or “open letter”) is published by the Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/open-letter-hizballah-program/p30967> (accessed 20 Feb 2015).

9 | Ibid.

In the face of the Assad regime's total dependence on Iran and Hezbollah, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah forces are now actively pursuing the establishment of missile bases within Syrian territory with which to strike Israel, while minimising the risk of an all-out Israeli retaliation against Hezbollah in Lebanon. When Israel and Hezbollah next go to war – and it is a question of when rather than if – the battlefield will likely extend to Lebanon, the Golan, and Syria, and will almost certainly involve Iranian soldiers as well as Hezbollah militiamen.

Trained, supplied and financed by Iran, Hezbollah today poses the most serious and immediate danger to Israeli national security, but is also a rising threat to Europe. Hezbollah is now the world's largest, wealthiest, most militarily capable terrorist organisation, with operations spanning Europe, Africa, the Americas and parts of Asia. Hezbollah has also become an archetype and model for other jihadist groups, Shi'a and Sunni alike, ready to share its tactical knowledge with groups like Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Gaza.

Currently bogged down in fighting for Assad's survival in Syria and hesitant to open a full second-front against Israel, Hezbollah has, in the last three years, opted to strike at Israeli and Jewish targets in India, Georgia, Cyprus, and Bulgaria – where in July 2012 a Hezbollah bomber killed five Israeli tourists and wounded 32 in the seaside resort of Burgas. As tensions between the West and Iran rise around the 24 March 2015 deadline for the conclusion of nuclear talks, and as Israel seeks to prevent Hezbollah attacks on its northern border or the transfer of sophisticated weaponry to the hands of the Shi'a militia, the risk of Hezbollah strikes on European soil grows. Indeed, an Iranian/Hezbollah attack on a Jewish or Israeli target in London, Paris or Berlin – one mirroring perhaps the 1994 bombing of a Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires – would come as no surprise to most security analysts observing Iran and Hezbollah.

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The logic whereby thwarting terrorist activity in the Middle East may increase the risk of its eruption in Europe also extends to Muslim Brotherhood-led organisations, especially Hamas, Jamaat-e-Islami, the latter having a strong presence especially in the UK. The Muslim Brotherhood has been entrenched in Germany for

many decades.¹⁰ Like Hezbollah, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas – which has fought three rounds of major hostilities with Israel in the past five years from its stronghold in the Gaza Strip – depends on perpetuating violent struggle against Israel for its legitimacy and funding, yet is currently reluctant to provoke the Israeli Army into a further round of armed confrontation in the Middle East itself. Having emulated Hezbollah’s military organisation, infrastructure build-up (notably the construction of underground bunkers and terror-tunnels), and combat doctrine, it is not inconceivable Hamas will seek to mimic Hezbollah and Salafists by striking soft targets on European soil, where it has an extensive fund-raising network, as well as a limited recruitment operation. The terror-traffic between Europe and the Middle East goes both ways in fact.¹¹



Hatred as a method: In Gaza, thousands of children are indoctrinated with anti-Western and anti-Semitic ideologies by Islamist groups such as Hamas or the Islamic Jihad. | Source: © Mohammed Saber, picture alliance/dpa.

In the longer term, Hamas’ deeper danger lies in its continued control of Gaza and ambitions for taking over the West Bank and destabilising Jordan. As long as Gaza’s 1.8 million civilians live

10 | Cf. Ian Johnson, *A Mosque in Munich. Nazis, the CIA, and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, New York, 2010; Matthew Kaminski, “The German Connection: How the Muslim Brotherhood found a haven in Europe”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 6 May 2010, <http://wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703961104575226372646226094> (accessed 4 Mar 2015).

11 | In April 2003, for instance, Hamas claimed responsibility for the recruitment and activation of two British Muslims who carried out a suicide-bombing attack on the *Mike’s Place* bar in Tel Aviv, killing three civilians and wounding 50.

under Hamas' rule, Gaza's numerous children will continue to be systematically indoctrinated into a radical Islamist, anti-Western and anti-Semitic ideology – raising successive generations of jihadists and undermining any prospect of future Palestinian-Israeli co-existence. Although nominally in a unity government with Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party, Hamas remains committed to expanding its rule beyond Gaza, to the West Bank, and eventually Israel. Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar stated explicitly in October 2014 that: "[Some] have said Hamas wants to create an Islamic emirate in Gaza. We won't do that, but we will build an Islamic state in Palestine, the whole of Palestine establishing an Islamic state."¹² During the June to July 2014 Israel-Hamas war, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) foiled an extensive Hamas plan to ferment a third Intifada against Israel and promote the overthrow of the PA in the West Bank, a repeat of Hamas' 2007 violent coup against Fatah in Gaza.



Missile attacks from Gaza remain a threat to Israel. In the summer of 2014, the situation escalated again. Although about half of the projectiles could be intercepted, there were many impacts as in this school in Rishon LeZion. | Source: Haim Zach, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, flickr ©©©.

For the foreseeable future, should Israel be forced to withdraw its security presence from the West Bank, Hamas is poised to challenge the rule of the weak and corrupt PA in Ramallah, spark an

12 | Steven Emerson, "Hamas Envisions West Bank Takeover, Destruction of Israel", *The Algemeiner*, 6 Oct 2014, <http://algemeiner.com/2014/10/08/hamas-envisions-west-bank-takeover-destruction-of-israel> (accessed 20 Feb 2015).

intra-Palestinian civil war, boost the Islamist threat to the survival of the Jordanian monarchy, and turn the West Bank into a missile launching pad against Israel's largest and most densely populated civilian centers. Avoiding this nightmarish "Gaza II scenario" is at the heart of Israeli security concerns. It must also be the top priority of anyone concerned to preserve stability in Jordan and keep alive the prospect of Israeli-Palestinian peace. Indeed, a less than careful pursuit of a two-state solution risks producing a two-failed-states "solution" endangering the lives of Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians alike.



Hope for peace? The EU pleads for the two-state solution and seeks dialogue with both sides, here PA President Mahmoud Abbas with the foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. | Source: Georges Boulougouris, European External Action Service, flickr ©©©©.

Striving for Security, Together

Against the background of this complex, rapidly evolving, and rather ominous security ecosystem, it is easy to feel overwhelmed or conclude that the search for a coherent counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation strategy is a fool's errand. Succumbing to such a conclusion is highly dangerous and, thankfully, unnecessary. Terrorists only win when they manage to paralyze targeted societies into submission or get them to grossly overreact and

therefore stoke the fires of insurgency or civil war. Otherwise they always lose. The only question is at what cost?

No functioning democratic state has ever been overrun by a terrorist organisation and that record will not change as long as Western societies pursue determined and sensible counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation policies in a level-headed manner. There are no magic-bullet solutions to the scourge of terrorism, however. An effective strategy is necessarily multi-layered, grounded in sound values that protect the sanctity of human life, based on broad international cooperation, and temporally open-ended. All brands of Islamic radicalism – Salafist, Shi'a, and Muslim Brotherhood-led – think in terms of grand historical processes lasting decades or more.¹³ Containing, countering, and eventually defeating their malicious ideas require that Western democracies are normatively and institutionally prepared for a long struggle.

Ending Denial, Building Knowledge, Avoiding Overreaction

Overcoming denial, building responsible societal awareness, and pursuing evidence-based understanding of jihadi extremism in a rational and systematic way, is the most important – and perhaps most psychologically and culturally difficult – first step towards effective management of the present challenge. Whether it is because of misplaced “political correctness”, fear that it will be the messenger who is shot, or concern that acknowledging the existence of a problem will actually exacerbate it – many European leaders and publics still invest considerable time and energy in self-deception; ignoring the severity, even existence, of jihadist threats, or dismissing the topic as illegitimate “Islamophobia”.

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As in other areas of human life, denying the existence of a real problem rarely leads to a happy ending. Denial perpetuates ignorance, and ignorance borne of denial tends to breed paralysis, suspicion, conspiracy theories, xenophobia, or just plain bad policy. Where denial and ignorance persist, the shock of a major terrorist attack, when it comes, almost inevitably propels public opinion and elected politicians toward knee-jerk reactions that are typically ill-informed and can be enormously costly (think

13 | See Martin Rudner, “Al-Qaeda’s Twenty-Year Strategic Plan: The current phase of global terror”, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 36, No. 12, 2013, pp. 953-980.

invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the U.S. "Patriot Act"). Even without such an overt shock, lack of informed understanding of the sources and nature of the threat is pernicious. It undermines healthy prevention, harms efforts to build responsible social resilience to political violence, and plays into the hands of Islamist and far-right extremists alike.

To avoid the "denial-overreaction trap", Germany, as state and society, must be free to conduct an open, honest, and clear-headed public discussion about the nature, causes, and dangers of Islamist extremism – Salafi, Shi'a, and Muslim Brotherhood-led. Then it can work diligently to ensure Germany, and Europe more broadly, possess the knowledge, institutions, technologies, and policies necessary to look these threats straight in the eye; to reliably assess their trends and relative danger over time; to decide on the level of risk it is prepared to tolerate in managing them; to debate the democratic, legal, and economic dilemmas involved in the fight against terrorism and radicalisation; and to maximise the national, European, and international resources available to tackle them. In each of these realms, Israel's hard-gained experience – its failures as well as successes – is of profound value, as are those of other like-minded nations, such as Australia, Canada, France, India, and the United States.

Reducing Terrorist Motivation and Capacity

Acts of terrorism, as Boaz Ganor aptly observes, result from the convergence of two variables: motivation and operational capacity.¹⁴ Terrorist attacks can be limited or prevented entirely by reducing the perpetrators' motivation to attack, lessening the organisation or individual attacker's capabilities, or both. Reducing one of the variables to zero would essentially prevent terrorist attacks entirely, but in real terms the effectiveness of a counter-terrorism strategy ought to be measured in terms of its ability to dampen both motivation and capacity as far as possible.

In a globalised world – where travel, weapon smuggling and even bomb construction know-how are readily available – reducing terrorist capabilities is first and foremost about intelligence. Collecting, analyzing and operationalising information about terrorist

14 | Boaz Ganor, "Are counterterrorism frameworks based on suppression and military force effective in responding to terrorism?", in: Richard Jackson/Samuel Justin Sinclair (eds.), *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism*, London et al., 2012, pp. 137-143.

organisations and terrorism-enabling activities – radicalisation, money laundering, procurement, training – ought to be a key focus of European-Israeli cooperation, not only at the level of clandestine security organisations (where it is already quite developed) but in other relevant fora where it is currently weaker: between banks, aviation authorities, and in open-source intelligence for example. Similarly, Israel’s expertise operational defensive and offensive systems – particularly the detailed know-how of its specialised counter-terrorism, police, and border-control units – represents a treasure trove of hard-earned experience that ought to be closely studied to save European lives.



Hamas is eager to increase its influence in the West Bank. It could challenge the Ramallah-based PA, which is regarded as weak, and provoke a violent confrontation like in 2007 after the seizure of power in Gaza. | Source: tgraham, flickr ©①②.

Reducing terrorist motivation involves both short-term deployment of carrot-and-stick incentives, as well as deeper, societal counter-radicalisation efforts. Although their values and conduct are abhorrent, terrorists are rarely psychopaths. Like the vast majority of human beings the vast majority of terrorists calculate their action based on the dual logics of consequentialism and appropriateness. Accordingly, the motivation of would-be perpetrators of politically motivated violence against civilians can be greatly reduced where excellent intelligence makes the likelihood of early detection by the authorities high, the chances of escaping the scene of an attack is low, legal sanctions against involvement

in terrorist activity (including incitement, recruitment, financing, procurement of weapons, training and fighting abroad) are tough and, at the same time, the benefits of lawful citizenship and integration into society are visible and attractive.

The best way to deal with a terrorist threat is to prevent its emergence or spread. Understanding processes of radicalisation and developing effective de-radicalisation policies ought therefore to be at the heart of European-Israeli dialogue about prevention of Islamist political violence. De-radicalisation involves the process of turning a radical group or individual away from use of violent methods to achieve political goals, the “peeling off” of existing members from a violent group, or the dissuasion of potential members from joining such a group in the first place.

Contrary to popular myths about spontaneous internet-based radicalisation, the process of radicalisation is almost always an intensely social one.

Studies of Islamic groups in Europe are somewhat encouraging in this area, finding that although young Muslim men in many European communities often harbor feelings of frustration and humiliation they have to be actively radicalised by others to cross the line into either “Lone Wolf” or organised terrorist activity.¹⁵ Contrary to popular myths about spontaneous internet-based radicalisation of lonely and unhinged individuals, the process of radicalisation is almost always an intensely social one. Peer-pressure, systematic indoctrination, separation from general society and repetitive training – which can more readily occur in prisons, secluded religious centers, remote training camps, or in fighting abroad – are typically preconditions for getting vulnerable would-be recruits to cross the line into terrorist activity.

These barriers provide state and civil society organisations with real opportunities for preventing and reversing radicalisation. As Omar Ashour’s extensive study of successful de-radicalisation programs demonstrates,¹⁶ combining determined state repression of Islamist radicalisation agents with the nurturing of alternative, moderate religious leadership, breaking up insular-group indoctrination, and utilising economic and social incentives to draw would-be recruits towards positive, non-violent activities, can substantially reduce terrorist motivation and help shrink the pool of potential recruits.

15 | See Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, Philadelphia, 2008.

16 | See Omar Ashour, *The Deradicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, London et al., 2009.

Contain, Protect, and Counter

Deterring and de-radicalising existing and would-be terrorists, while a top priority and challenge for Western democracies, constitutes only a limited, shallow response to the immediate symptoms of the jihadist malaise. Tackling the root causes of radical Islam's assault on rational modernity, democracy, and the Wilsonian international order will require a far deeper strategic alignment in the West and, eventually, liberal transformations in Iran, Turkey, and the Arab world. We are today in the midst of a profound historic struggle not only between the free world and radical Islam, but within Islam itself – between those who wish to reconcile Islamic faith and civilisation with life-affirming values, and those who hijack Islam and torn Muslim countries (like Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen) to the cause of life-destroying barbarism. Ensuring that liberal progressivism triumphs over fundamentalist malevolence necessitates both the reinvigoration of the West (not least NATO) and the formation of new ties with those in the Muslim world – and they are many – who wish to be part of the liberal international order, not to replace it with a Caliphate.

In thinking about this grand struggle over the nature of political order in the 21st century, Europeans and Israelis can begin to stem the tide of extremism and enhance regional security and peace. First, we must remain united around, and loyal to the central liberal truth about the foundations of true peace and security in the international system. To paraphrase the European Security Strategy, adopted by all members of the EU in December 2003: The quality of international society depends on the quality of states and governments that are its foundation. The best protection for our own security is a world of well-governed states that can provide for their own citizens and behave responsibly in the international system. This is as true for Lebanon and the Palestinians as it is for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine.

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Second, Western democracies, and Germany among them, must resist the tendency to compartmentalise violent eruptions in the Middle East and elect to see them as self-contained. It is essential to connect the dots and address the animating agents of violence in the region. Most importantly, it is vital to understand Iran's methodical guiding hand across the region – from Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, to Yemen and Gaza – and to develop an integrated

regional strategy to counter Tehran's hegemonic ambitions. In particular, reaching a nuclear and sanctions-relief deal with Iran must also address its ongoing support for global terror, especially Hezbollah and PIJ.

Third, we must work together to contain and begin to roll back those areas of chaos in North Africa and the Middle East that have come under the lead of Salafi jihadism, Iranian-backed Shi'a militancy, and radical Muslim Brotherhood groups. If Islamist Non-State Armed Governors (INSAGs) such as Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusra in Iraq and Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Ansar Bait al-Maqdis in Sinai, Hamas and PIJ in Gaza, and Boko Haram in Nigeria are permitted to continue their territorial gains and entrenchment among the local populations, they will indoctrinate literally millions of children, gradually acquire state-like military and financial assets, and increasingly challenge the existing international order. A "contain and counter" strategy will necessarily involve kinetic action, but of equal importance in the long run will be civilian capacity building, economic development, and governance improvement. Here, Germany can learn from Israel's hard-power expertise while Israel learns from Germany's soft-power capabilities.

Finally, it is essential to safeguard those states in North Africa and the Middle East that are either fledgling democracies (Tunisia) or islands of relative stability interested in maintaining the state-based order and prepared to work with western partners to increase security, prosperity and peace. In particular, Israel and Europe should do more to nurture the development of an axis of stability to contain and counter armed groups and Iranian encroachment. Such an axis of stability should ideally also involve Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and perhaps even Saudi Arabia and relatively moderate Gulf monarchies.

Israel itself is living proof that a human society can survive, indeed thrive, in the face of near constant security threats. In the years and possibly decades to come providing security to our respective populations will require that we communicate, cooperate, and learn from each other as never before.