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POLICY PAPER

Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Asia and Europe[1]

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Terrorism attacks the foundations of societies. It produces mistrust and prejudices, destroys trust in governments, targets basic values as well as basic rights, disrupts and divides societies.

Countering violent extremism and terrorism has been a top priority of governments in Asia and Europe for many years. Terrorist cells posed a severe threat to home security, even before the emergence of Daesh. Thus, many countries have long-standing and diverse experiences in combating terrorism and have developed innovative responses to counter violent extremism. The creation of Daesh established a new dimension due to the sheer scale of the threat and the deep transregional links of the various threat landscapes. As a consequence of Asian and European citizens joining Daesh, terrorists have been able to establish close ties and networks among fighters from both regions. Since terrorists are cooperating across borders and traveling between countries, it has become imperative that governments enhance their collaboration and coordination in all dimensions of counter-terrorism efforts. Asia and Europe offer the best opportunity for such cooperation and constant exchanges. The two continents need to find common lines in strategies and policies, thus promoting an enhanced partnership.

Changing Threat Landscape

In the past, extremists often adopted a domestic or even very local agenda. They fought for political power, various degrees of autonomy or sovereignty and tried to impact the respective communities they operated within. This does not mean that they had no international connections though. The Red Army Faction in Germany had close ties to groups in Palestine and many of the terrorist groups in Southeast Asia belonging to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) were radicalized and gained fighting experience in the Soviet-Afghan War. Although Al-Qaeda established connections between Europe and Asia, the current threat created by Daesh reflects a new form of these ties.

Daesh combines elements of both a territorial approach and a deterritorialization of terrorism. The boundaries between the two dimensions are often blurred. While Daesh started as a territorial-based organization with

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[1] This policy brief includes information gathered from talks at the "Asia-Europe Counter-Terrorism Dialogue 2016" and the "Australia-Europe Counter-Terrorism Dialogue 2016".

fast territorial gains which contributed greatly to the group's attractiveness and establishment of a myth, it has changed its strategy to include infiltrating societies and conducting mass-casualty attacks. Despite being under military pressure, Daesh's heartland in Syria is still intact and the group has established provinces in other parts of the world, such as in Libya, Egypt and Afghanistan[2]. Daesh could also make use of other conflicts to promote its cause, like the war in Yemen or the intensified discrimination against Muslim minorities such as the Rohingyas in Myanmar. Through the extensive use of the internet and the creation of a radical ideology, Daesh has achieved a certain independence from its territorial base. Sympathizers can either plot attacks or support the terrorist organization without traveling to Syria. The likelihood of such attacks outside of Syria could certainly increase further as countries see a drop in the number of fighters leaving for Syria due to stronger border controls in both Turkey and the country they are supposed to depart from plus intensified investigations at home. These Daesh-inspired, -linked or –directed attacks in European and Asian countries pose a severe security challenge and will likely continue to do so despite the current military pushbacks against Daesh in Syria and Iraq, the loss of territory there and the potential military defeat. They might even increase the risk as such deterritorialized attacks are more difficult to predict and the terrorists are less detectable. Loss of territory can also result in a major exodus of foreign fighters who will thereafter spread to various locations without any natural territory. The group has created a vast network of likeminded individuals and cells which will continue the fight. These persons and groups are linked via social media, encrypted online messaging services or the dark web – a command and control infrastructure which is likely to persist even if Raqqa should fall. This allows them to coordinate attacks, share information and facilitate travel whenever necessary. In contrast to Al-Qaeda, Daesh has been able to draw support from foreign fighters from both Europe and Asia in large numbers. These ties and networks will also persist and enable Daesh to maintain its threat potential.

Although Daesh is no longer achieving the rapid military victories of its founding days, the number of attacks has not decreased. We can, rather, observe a change of its modus operandi from the initial attacks which were concentrated on Syria and Iraq, and included barbaric killings publicized on social media in order to attract foreign fighters, to attacks in other countries. While the new cells abroad are deterritorialized in their structure and organization, they create a very concrete and local impact by attacking soft targets in not only major urban areas but also smaller towns. The attacks can take the form of mass-casualty attacks, like those in Paris and Brussels, or small-scale terror plots such as those in Ansbach, Saint-Étienne-Du-Rouvray or Charleroi. Many of the recent attacks (e.g. in Berlin, Istanbul, Nice, Dhaka and Jakarta) are low in costs but high in casualties and impact. Another repeating pattern of larger recent attacks is that terrorists, in a first phase, kill as many people as possible without taking hostages before the first responders arrive and then, in a second phase, try to sustain for as long as possible to show that

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[2] cp. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/isis-goes-global.

their ideology enables them to withstand the 'enemy' and to use the attack for propaganda purposes through live broadcasting on social media. Through these geographically widespread attacks, different scales and diverse tactics, the terrorists have achieved a deterritorialization of the threat, which makes it much more challenging for government agencies to predict as well as prevent. Another new dimension of the threat is the infiltration of societies. While individual fighters had joined terrorist groups prior to Daesh's existence, the large number of foreign terrorist fighters that have joined Daesh makes it nearly impossible to monitor all of them. This becomes particularly challenging if these fighters return to their home countries or are sent to other countries through unofficial channels. This tactic has never been practiced this intensely before by any other group. Besides the home-grown terrorists and self-radicalized individuals, this group of returnees fosters the deterritorialization of the threat landscape and increases the challenge of predicting attacks further. This presumed unpredictability shall fulfill a second purpose by instigating an omnipresent fear among citizens that attacks can happen anywhere, at any given time, thereby fuelling prejudices against certain groups, like Muslims or refugees, as well as supporting the feeling among foreigners of being discriminated against. Through this, Daesh hopes to delegitimize support among Muslims for governmental counter-extremism actions, disrupt societies, increase support for populist and discriminatory parties in the host society and thus ultimately, recruit more fighters or gain at least moral support for its cause. The fear will be further disseminated by citizens of the attacked society who share postings on the attacks in social media and attribute every minor incident to Daesh, demanding more repressive measures targeting the minorities.

Despite these new threat dimensions, governments must not forget that old threats still exist. Given the current focus on Daesh, Al-Qaeda has the opportunity to consolidate internally and might emerge even stronger.

Recruitment and Motivation

Besides the threat itself, another common aspect faced by countries in Europe and Asia is the diverse profiles and backgrounds of the recruits. While there are some minor similarities among them and certain groups seem to be more likely to join and conduct attacks – young males and, in Western countries, those with a history of criminal records – more and more women, highly educated people, members of the middle and upper class, the mentally ill, teenagers as well as people with no strong religious belief are joining Daesh. In this context, prevention and awareness programs are much more difficult to be designed and certain individuals may not be identified as potential threats. Due to the diverse profiles, law enforcement units have a more challenging task in detection and interference. Therefore, a clear understanding of the recruitment and radicalization process is irreplaceable, especially since the recruitment processes in both regions show certain similarities.

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The majority of fighters are motivated by a certain belief promoted by the extremist group and its influential leaders. This identity and narrative is rooted in a strong ideology which abuses the religion to legitimize its own purpose and to serve the personal goals of the leadership. It is thus crucial for governments to show that the radical ideology has no connection to religion or ethnicity and to also recognize that a specific religion is currently being misused – just like other religions have been misused in the past – to attain political and economic power. The motives of the recruits have some similar features especially in the Western societies compared to Asia where radical Islamism has a longer history with structural elements. Many seek a greater sense of purpose in life and have experienced personal setbacks. Daesh has developed a strong narrative, which fosters a sense of belonging in a time of lack of identity, for which people are willing to make big sacrifices. This is particularly appealing in the context of the identity crisis which many young people are confronted with. In particular, people with a migration background are stuck between two groups – the society of their ancestors and the society of the country in which they grew up – both of which do not acknowledge them. This sense of belonging is also provided through the internet which creates a 'digital ummah'. This adds another sphere which is difficult to observe. Besides the physical realm in which governments are already faced with challenges to identify radical extremists, the online world can provide individuals with a feeling of belonging without any direct contact or interaction.

While the online world is important for self-radicalization and propaganda, real person-to-person contacts remain the decisive factor in the recruitment process, especially when it concerns a decision to travel to a conflict zone. In this context mosques are of particular importance as they provide an interpretation of the Holy Scripture. Radical extremists can easily use this as a tool to influence a large number of people seeking guidance and advice from God. At the same time, mosques are vital partners in the fight against extremism. Madrasas and universities are also places which have been used as recruitment facilities. In these environments the educators – similar to the cases of the few imams who preach a radical ideology in mosques – are in a central position of higher authority and can reach many people. Educational institutions are a great point of access to young people, who are a powerful source of extremists as they are comparatively easy to influence and then highly determined to follow the cause. Extremists have thus used Quran classes to influence fellow students. A third space of recruitment in real life is prisons. Many detainees already have a criminal record and thus little hope for a bright future. At the same time, they have contacts with people who can provide weapons or money and possess networks that can help in hiding them from authorities.

Specific Terrorism Patterns in Asia and Europe

Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, various Islamist extremist groups have pledged allegiance to Daesh and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Countries in the region have seen an increase in attacks and terrorist activities, but also the foiling of terrorist plots by law enforcement agencies. Most attacks were carried out by small cells and single-perpetrator attacks appear less likely compared to other regions. In particular, countries with a long tradition of extremist groups have seen such links to Daesh – for instance, 16 groups in the Philippines and 32 in Indonesia have pledged loyalty. Fund transfers have been tracked from Daesh central to some of these cells. Daesh has yet to accept several of the pledges. While some cells have indicated that they would act on behalf of Daesh central, the group has claimed only some attacks. Thus, it remains unclear as to how many of the groups in Southeast Asia have really established ties to Daesh central and how many are merely acting as free riders on the branding.

Many groups in Southeast Asia have been involved in local insurgency movements and have roots which reach back to the time of de-colonialization, such as in Indonesia. In Thailand and the Philippines, the groups are active in regions where there are Muslim minorities within the overwhelmingly Buddhist and Catholic society respectively. Despite these domestic groups, some of them have established transnational networks, of which Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is the most sophisticated. The turning point in Southeast Asia was the Bali Bombing of 2002 as it directly targeted foreigners and resulted in stronger counter-terrorism cooperation among various regional countries, leading to the dismantling of much of JI's infrastructure.

After almost a decade of relative calm and only minor attacks in the heartlands of the respective insurgencies, these groups and fighters gained momentum through the activities of Daesh. This reflects a shift from an Al-Qaeda-centric structure to a Daesh-centric approach. Hundreds of fighters traveled to Syria to join the group, and the old transnational JI network, which has existed for decades, seems to have been re-activated. This re-emergence of the old groups has not been acknowledged as a threat by some countries. It can be observed that fighters are traveling between various Southeast Asian countries – mainly Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines – and specialists from one country train fighters in another country. Additionally, fighters from other regions have joined the groups in Southeast Asia. In the meantime, Daesh has created a Bahasa-speaking combat unit (Katibah Nusantara), which underlines the significance the group gives to this region. Today, the region already functions as a transit hub for fighters who attempt to cover their tracks when traveling to Syria, for instance via Myanmar and Thailand, or from the conflict zone to other countries, such as those in Europe. If Daesh suffers further military setbacks, resulting in an even stronger exodus of fighters from Syria, Southeast Asia is one potential hiding space due to these linkages. The strength of governments in the region is that they have experience with Islamist terrorism and especially returning fighters from conflict zones as many

members of the JI leadership fought in the Soviet-Afghan War before returning to Southeast Asia.

South Asia

Countries in South Asia like Pakistan or Afghanistan are located in the direct area of contestation and experience frequent attacks from terrorist groups using both countries as safe havens. In January 2015, Daesh formally declared the Wilayat Khorasan (Khorasan Province) in the Afghan-Pakistan region. Daesh views the border region as a stronghold and a gateway for the expansion of its ideology. Besides attacks from Daesh-linked groups, the fight between extremists becomes obvious in this area. Some groups have switched allegiance to Daesh, while others remained loyal to Al-Qaeda. Thus, the region has turned into a battleground for predominance in the Islamist world – a cynical and cruel competition between Al-Qaeda and Daesh. Small and large-scale attacks by Daesh-linked groups have targeted mainly Shiites or government forces, but also the Taliban as both sides try to recruit the same people. The cells receive funding from Daesh, but also have control over revenue streams such as opium and the extractive industry, making this another area of contestation with the Taliban. These facts make the threat different from that in Europe and Southeast Asia. It is not only Afghanistan and Pakistan that provide a fertile ground for extremism, Bangladesh, India and the Maldives have also seen an increase in activities by small cells and single perpetrators at home and people joining Daesh in Syria. This is due to the existing development gaps, political turmoil, isolation of segments of the society, lack of access to infrastructure and social problems. In addition to these domestic terrorist activities, South Asia has developed into a transit route for fighters from Central and East Asia.

The West – Europe and Australia

European countries have had experiences with various extremist groups from the far-right and far-left political spectrum. Most of these groups followed a strictly domestic agenda, targeted individual political elites and did not misuse religion to justify their cause. Only states with former colonies in Muslim-majority countries were confronted with certain forms of Islamist extremism but even then, the cause was directed mainly at the colonial power structures or had connections to political developments in the former colonies. Although radical Islamist leaders have existed in Europe in the past and extremists have fought in Bosnia and other places, the current threat, which attempts to justify extremism through the means of religion, attacks soft targets and harms as many civilians as possible, is certainly new to Europe. The number of terrorists is unprecedented – 8,000 people in Europe have links to Daesh and if the community around those individuals are included in the calculation, the threat network numbers more than 40,000 persons. The same applies to Australia, which, due to its similarities despite differences and shared value-base, will be

grouped together as Western countries here. Australia has seen individual terror attacks before, but it has been in the focus of extremists since it joined the global fight against terrorism. Alerts and incidents have been particularly high since the establishment of Daesh. Several radicalized extremists have been detained before leaving the country or when planning attacks. Western countries have experienced a number of Daesh-claimed attacks in recent years. The Sydney siege of 2014 was one of the most severe terrorist attacks on the continent. The most recent attacks in Berlin in December 2016, Brussels and Nice in 2016 and Paris in 2015 also represented some of the most violent attacks in these countries.

The group of actors is highly diverse and ranges from self-radicalized individuals to single perpetrators and small cells to large operational cells. Some of the terrorists are inspired by Daesh whilst others are directly controlled. The complexities of the cells vary greatly, ranging from basic cells to sophisticated groups with a proper command structure and security personnel. Lastly, the cells can be locally formed or imported by Daesh. In particular, single perpetrators with no direct connection to Daesh are difficult to intercept. Besides these cells, another risk dimension is returning fighters and those who have been infiltrated into societies. For a long time, Western countries were confronted only with home-grown terrorists, but now foreign terrorist fighters form a transnational threat. This is different from Asia where countries have had experiences with these persons before.

Domestic State Responses

While calls for tighter security measures have become stronger, it is necessary to contain violent extremism through comprehensive and holistic actions by all stakeholders, including the Muslim communities, whose religion is being abused by the extremists. The responses have to be as manifold as the strategies of the extremists. Some of the steps taken by governments in Europe and Asia should be summarized at this point. Broadly, measures taken by countries so far can be divided into a hard and a soft pillar. In this context, 'soft' refers to integrative instruments involving non-state actors, while hard measures are both repressive and conducted by the state.

Hard Responses

Hard responses include increased surveillance and monitoring measures in public spaces, but also of digital communication. Several governments have created national task forces specialized in collecting information and creating common databases. These task forces have connections to focal points in various locations of the country. This has improved the sharing of intelligence and information, including the names of suspected terrorist fighters. Governments have taken steps to ensure policy coherence between different policy areas and established coordinating bodies, aiming at streamlining activities and policies. This inter-agency collaboration is implemented

horizontally among ministries and agencies, but also vertically between different governance levels. Initiatives to stop terrorism financing were implemented. These steps help to prevent attacks, but are complemented by repressive measures. Politicians have stepped up law enforcement by employing more personnel, pledging more funds and allocating far-reaching rights to these units. In particular, the new modus operandi of the terrorists impacts the work and requires law enforcement units to engage in intense scenario planning. They must also cooperate closely with first responders who in turn must be able to intervene as soon as possible during an attack since Special Forces will take too long to arrive on the scene. The old anti-terrorism model, which was established after the Munich attacks in 1972, worked well, but in light of the new model of terrorism, European countries are developing a new response practice. This underlines the fact that terrorism is a learning system, thus placing a demand on states to foresee developments and learn constantly. The challenge for states is that they have to be successful each time while terrorists have to be successful only once to fulfill their cause and instigate fear.

In order for these executive instruments to function well, legislative changes were necessary. Examples of such legal amendments include, but are not limited to, making terrorism a crime which has no connection to any specific religion or ethnic group, allowing detention based on terrorism recruitment and threat potential without any particular terrorist activity, limiting opportunities to obtain firearms, reforming criminal justice systems, making funding terrorism a crime, requiring people by law to report suspicious behavior, and declaring traveling for terrorism purposes a crime. In order to prevent fighters from leaving their home country, governments have cancelled passports, issued special identification cards to vulnerable people and enhanced border controls. If the departure cannot be prevented, states have implemented close-observation tools for fighters while abroad and also once they return. This is highly important as attacks seldom happen right upon the fighters' return but on average occur five years after.

Soft Responses

However, the aim of a state's actions cannot be the prevention of attacks only. In order to not be one step behind the terrorists and purely reactive, the measures need to prevent radicalization. This is where the soft pillar becomes crucial. Instead of states developing a counter-narrative, governments need to form a society and identity which would have to be counter-narrated by the terrorists if they want to recruit individuals. Governments are usually the first to educate and socialize children through state authorities. But as a result of a more laissez-faire integration approach, they allowed this power to slip out of their hands and created a vacuum which enabled other forces to influence young people and promote radical ideas. These forces were often financed and supported by extremist groups from abroad. It is necessary to develop a pro-active, inclusive narrative and combine this with strong counter-extremist

narratives online as well as offline. When addressing Islamist violent extremism, universities and mosques are key partners for the state as they can be used as recruitment facilities. A code of ethics should be developed for religious preachers, counter-radicalization messages should be part of the curriculum and future imams speaking the language of the respective country have to be educated to promote the value system of the society. The role of imams speaking the national language is not to be underestimated as many young Muslims and converts do not speak Arabic and will source for information online, where extremists present their ideas in the respective languages if mosques do not provide them. While these narratives will not fully prevent extremism, as the recent cases of second- or third-generation terrorists with migration backgrounds who grew up in Europe show, it will certainly decrease the number of vulnerable people and foster a more resilient society.

In this context it is important to understand radicalization as a process of a person being integrated into an extremist group. There are mainly three types of challenges that can lead to a person's radicalization towards extremism. A political deficit means that they do not feel represented and see few participatory opportunities. An economic deficit means that there is no personal progress for the individual although the general economic situation is improving. A third challenge is demographic pressure, which results in more competition, be it with the person's own peers or newly arriving persons. Therefore, the root causes for these deficits, such as poverty, inequality and social injustice, need to be addressed. This underlines that radicalization is the product of one's own society's failure to integrate these people. The radicalized persons are looking for a sense of belonging and easy answers, and often have little pre-knowledge of Islam. Secondly, it is important to note that extremism will always exist; people will turn to it if they do not feel included. Thus, every government has to develop a counter-extremism strategy that takes into account the country-specific circumstances. Violent extremism is of much greater concern compared to extremism itself and needs to be prevented as it reflects a higher level of escalation and crosses a threshold. This understanding of radicalization enables governments to fight terrorism through an integrative whole-of-society approach that complements the above-mentioned hard instruments. As part of this approach, discrimination and exclusion, which provide fertile grounds for extremism, have to be fought through integration, cohesion and community resilience policies.

In order for these measures to be successful, governments have to be trusted. Currently, a lot of governments and political systems face a decrease in trust from two angles – the minorities, due to prevailing discriminations, and at the same time nationalists, who feel politicians give in too much to minorities and have lost touch with their own citizens, who feel neglected and wish for fewer changes in a fast-evolving world. This populist, nationalist extremism is just as dangerous as the ideology of the Islamist terrorists and needs to be contained. In order to regain this trust, governments need to share what they can share, involve the local communities actively – especially in counter-violent extremism activities as people from the community are often more trusted than outsiders – implement laws as well as punish those who break them, and provide

security while upholding the rule of law, human rights and data privacy. In particular, the civil society and different communities must be involved and must reject radical ideas from terrorists as well as nationalists. The state must, however, select its partners in the communities carefully as some groups are supported from abroad by radical groups that might have a different agenda from the government. If people feel integrated, they are less likely to get radicalized – or, following the above definition, be integrated into an extremist group – and if trust between governments and citizens as well as residents is established, people are more likely to report radicalized persons. Thus every single member of the society becomes an anti-terrorist fighter as they themselves do not want individuals to disrupt the harmony or discredit specific groups. These soft prevention measures are especially promising if they start at a young age as countering any radical idea will be much more difficult once it has been planted.

Besides prevention programs, states have also introduced inter-faith dialogues, as well as de-radicalization and rehabilitation projects to re-integrate people into the society. The receptiveness of members of the society to re-integrate these people depends largely on the establishment of a resilient society which attributes radicalization to an individual and does not hold prejudices against a whole group. Public and civic education and counselling centers for both rehabilitated terrorists and the receiving society also pay important roles in re-integration efforts.

Combined Approaches

Some other measures are in between the hard and soft approaches as they are implemented by the state, have repressive characteristics, but require close cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders. These include cooperation efforts with the private sector, such as banks to stop financing and revenue streams; airports, aviation and telecommunication industries to track as well as prevent movements of terrorist fighters, especially since much of the border infrastructure has been privatized in recent years; and social media companies to tackle the online propaganda of terrorist groups. A second aspect where the lines are blurred is community policing. In many countries, the police involve the local community as the fight against violent extremism necessitates local access. People within the community sense changes at an early stage and can thus be part of an early warning system, which in turn gives them ownership. In addition, the communities encounter less skepticism than police forces or outside authorities.

The inclusion of soft approaches should, however, not replace or undermine the hard pillar. They should and must complement each other. In cases where there are breaches of the law, both local citizens and migrants or refugees must face the full potency of the state's laws, including detention and, for foreigners ultimately, denial of resident or asylum status including expulsion.

Recommendations for Enhanced Asia-Europe Cooperation

While domestic counter-terrorism (CT) and counter-violent extremism (CVE) efforts are essential, international cooperation is needed to complement them. Since terrorists do not respect borders, establish transnational networks and have a functioning communication system among themselves, it has become crucial that governments enhance their international collaboration and coordination. As a result of their diverse experiences and important lessons learnt from previous terror threats, Asian and European countries have developed innovative models, making them natural partners. Countries need to find common lines in strategies and policies, and develop tools and joint initiatives which will ultimately result in the promotion of enhanced cooperation between Asia and Europe to counter this global threat.

Bi- and Multilateral Opportunities

On the bi- and multilateral level, countries from both regions should enhance their cooperation on border security to prevent the departure of fighters in the first instance as this will enable the home country to manage the threat domestically. Border security management will also disrupt the travel of fighters and returning fighters can be identified before reaching their home country. Such information on returning fighters and possible defectors from Daesh to Al-Qaeda will help the home country to prepare measures to capture, interrogate and observe them. Concrete instruments to improve collaboration in border security include screening measures, identity measures and information sharing. Practical areas related to cross-border collaboration also include law enforcement, investigation, prosecution and judicial cooperation. If terrorists cross borders, this should not hinder any of these criminal justice procedures. Since investigations and prosecution by a foreign power is often perceived as an unacceptable interference in domestic affairs, it is necessary to ensure that the national agencies of the respective countries take on the tasks. Therefore, stronger inter-agency collaboration is required not only domestically, but also internationally. Countries in Asia can learn here from the experience at the European Union level and through Europol. A condition for ensuring smooth cooperation is that capacities are comparable. Thus, European and Asian agencies should enhance joint training, and capacity- and capability-building.

In addition to practical cooperation among agencies, it is necessary to share information and intelligence among countries and their agencies. In order to do this, countries need to first establish trust that the data will be protected and not misused. Since the sharing of intelligence data is highly sensitive, countries should start by exchanging Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and Social Media Intelligence (SOCMINT). Given the observed terrorism-crime nexus, countries could also look into sharing criminal records.

Besides trust, governments must ensure long-term political commitment, acknowledge the threat and understand it accurately. This can be done through joint analyses of the threats and developments combined with constant

dialogues between various CT/CVE stakeholders. These dialogues should offer an exchange of experiences, expertise, information, and best and worst practices. This will help governments to learn from each other and develop context- as well as individual-specific programs, avoiding duplication of mistakes and unintended side-effects. As there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and strategies against violent extremism and terrorism – not only Daesh but in general – need to reflect the country-specific circumstances, such dialogues will be highly beneficial. It is important that these dialogues are not a one-way street. Asian and European countries have different experiences and can learn from each other. Besides the above-mentioned inter-agency collaboration, Europe can share its approach in police enforcement and cooperation with non-state actors. Asia, on the other hand, has expertise with returning fighters, rehabilitation and inter-faith initiatives. While each country should have a terrorist rehabilitation program, it could develop joint rehabilitation programs with other countries for cases where a terrorist who is a citizen of country A is caught in country B. Inter-faith dialogues to decouple violent extremism from religious connotations should certainly be implemented at home, but also in cooperation with other countries as this will increase cultural awareness and help to provide a consistent counter-narrative to the terrorists' ideology. Another topic for dialogue is updates on recent developments in terrorist cells. There is always the possibility that previously dismantled groups might re-emerge either in the same country or another. A case in point is Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia. Regular updates could help to detect such occurrences at an early stage. States could then also observe terrorist networks and infrastructure jointly. The government-to-government exchange should be complemented by dialogues with and among civil-society actors, think tanks and especially, youth. Youth are the target of most recruitment, but are at the same time the hope for the future.

Asia and Europe should also jointly cooperate with countries which are sources of extremism and most affected by terrorism, especially in the Middle East and South Asia. First, they have to assist them in defeating the terrorists militarily and then they need to provide aid in the liberated areas. Activities should include, among others, removal of explosives, establishment of administrative structures, provision of basic services, reconciliation among the population, training and capacity-building. It is important to cooperate with the local population on this in order to ensure a bottom-up process with local ownership. Close cooperation is also needed with regard to foreign terrorist fighters. The repatriation of foreign terrorists from the country of detention to the country of origin alone will not resolve the problem as this is merely a relocation of the threat. Often, the country of origin does not have the means to fight violent extremism and if all the terrorists are relocated to these vulnerable countries and societies without proper CVE/CT policies, it could very well make the terrorists even stronger and further aggravate the situation in the country of origin. The countries of origin require assistance with the detention, observation, rehabilitation and re-integration of terrorists. European and Asian countries should thus incorporate CVE measures in their development aid and work with the civil society. Such activities should also address the root causes

of extremism in these countries, particularly during active and post-conflict situations. Besides working on the above issues, they should provide funding for CVE/CT activities to countries with fewer resources.

Cooperation in the Framework of International Institutions

It is, however, important to be realistic and acknowledge the limitations of states as expectations will otherwise become overwhelming. It is clear that not all states will be able to achieve the same level of protection and success. Therefore, the second component of institutional collaboration is as important as state-to-state initiatives. This becomes apparent in Southeast Asia. While countries in the region have strong informal and personal networks, the formal and institutional level is missing, making collaboration efforts less sustainable and limiting the number of possible multipliers. It is important to enhance this cooperation within ASEAN and lift it to the governmental level. The positive examples of bi- and trilateral anti-piracy initiatives and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) show that, in contrast to experiences from the past, such cooperation among law enforcement agencies is possible and does not necessarily clash with the so-called 'ASEAN Way'. The European Union can assist the ASEAN Secretariat in building up its capacities and establishing national points of contact. This will then also enable more effective region-to-region cooperation through the institutions. A stronger CVE/CT mandate for ASEAN will help to integrate the organization more into the international community. It could, for instance, become part of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), which is a helpful tool in international cooperation. The GCTF offers the opportunity for collaboration between Asia and Europe as a number of countries from both regions as well as the European Union are part of it. The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), on the other hand, can serve for political coordination, but lacks the practical component. Other institutional partners on the multilateral track in which European and Asian countries are present include the United Nations with its various bodies and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE). Asia and Europe should strengthen existing institutions like Interpol or the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 and comply with their procedures. The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) can also provide funding to civil society organizations. By working with these groups, European and Asian countries can support a range of comprehensive measures.

As shown in this policy paper, the new threat landscape arising from violent extremism and terrorism affects countries in Asia and Europe strongly. It does not respect man-made borders and impacts both domestic and international security. Despite certain differences between the two regions, close Asia-Europe collaboration compromising of political dialogues and practical cooperation could prove to be an effective way to counter violent extremism and terrorism globally.