

POSSIBLE EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO THE ISLAMIC STATE'S THREAT

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ABSTRACT

POSSIBLE EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO THE ISLAMIC STATE'S THREAT by Major Peter Toth, 97 pages.

The purpose of this study is to identify the possible changes in the Islamic State's (IS) strategy after the collapse of its strongholds in the Middle East, and to explore possible countermeasures that European countries might implement to mitigate the future threat. This study discusses new security challenges posed by the IS within Europe. This study describes the IS's most likely course of action in Europe after the loss of its main territory in the Middle East using Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment, develops a possible operational approach through Army Design Methodology, and recommends countermeasures to mitigate the threat. It is expected that the IS will increase its use of foreign fighters for conducting attacks and recruitment, and that the EU can mitigate those actions through legislative, institutional and infrastructural countermeasures. Effective counter-terrorism in Europe depends on the offensive development and coordinated implementation of legislative, institutional, and infrastructure development focused countermeasures to achieve a long-term solution.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	ix
ILLUSTRATIONS	x
TABLES	xi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	1
Research Questions.....	2
Assumptions.....	2
Definitions	2
Limitations	3
Scope.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	4
Summary and Conclusion.....	5
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Introduction.....	6
The Islamic State’s Strategy in the European Union.....	7
The Islamic Radicalization in the European Union	7
The Ecological Approach	7
The Socio-Economic Approach.....	8
The Hub Factor	11
General Characteristics of Non-State Actor Hybrid Warfare	12
Jihadist Attacks in the EU.....	14
Types of the Attacks	14
Foreign Fighters	15
Lone-Wolf Attackers	17
Trend of Jihadist Related Terrorism in the European Union.....	19
The Organized Crime – Terrorism Link	21
Information Operations.....	23
The European Union Recent Counter-Terrorism Strategy	24
European Union’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy.....	24
Counter-Terrorism Measures Implemented by the Member States	25

Assessment.....	28
Summary and Conclusions	29
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
Introduction.....	33
The Research Method	34
Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment.....	34
Army Design Methodology	35
Synthesis	36
Validation Criteria	37
Summary and Conclusions	37
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS	39
Introduction.....	39
Joint Intelligent Preparation of the Operational Environment.....	39
JIPOE Step One: Defining the Operational Environment	39
Joint Operational Area	39
Area of Interest	42
Area of Influence	43
JIPOE STEP 2: Describe Impacts of the Operational Environment.....	44
Overview – Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions Analysis	44
Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions at the Political Domain.....	45
Relations, Actors, Functions and Tensions at the Terrorism-Criminal Domain...46	
Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions at the Social Domain	47
Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions at the Information Domain	48
JIPOE Step 3: Evaluating the Islamic State and Other Relevant Actors	49
IS Model.....	49
Political	49
Military	50
Economic	51
Social	51
Information	52
Infrastructure.....	52
The Islamic State’s Operational Center of Gravity in Europe.....	52
EU Model.....	55
Political	55
Military	55
Economic and Infrastructure.....	56
Social	56
Information	56
EU Operational Center of Gravity	57
JIPOE Step 4: The Most Likely Islamic State Course of Action in Europe	59
Army Design Methodology	61
Overview	61

Framing the Operational Environment	61
Current Situation.....	61
Desired End State.....	62
Problem Statement	62
The Operational Approach.....	63
The European Union`s Possible Objectives.....	63
Line of Operation and Lines of Effort	63
Line of Operation: Defeat	63
Line of Effort 1: Information	64
Line of Effort 2: Integration.....	64
The European Union`s Possible Countermeasures	65
Summary and Conclusion.....	66
 CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 71
Introduction.....	71
Summary of the Results of Chapter 4.....	71
Synthesis of Secondary Research Questions	73
Recommended Countermeasures.....	75
Interpretation of the Results.....	77
Conclusion	79
Recommendations for Future Research	79
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 81

ACRONYMS

ADM	Army Design Methodology
CC	Critical capability
COA	Course of Action
CoG	Center of Gravity
CR	Critical Requirement
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
CTS	Counter-Terrorism Strategy
CV	Critical Vulnerability
DIME	Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy
DP	Decisive Point
EU	European Union
EUROJUST	European Judicial Cooperation Unit
EUROPOL	European Police
IO	Information Operations
IS	Islamic State
IRU	Internet Referral Unit
JIPOE	Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment
LOE	Line of Effort
LOO	Line of Operation
PMES-II	Political, Military, Economic, Social – Information and Infrastructure
RAFT	Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions
RAN	Radicalization Awareness Network

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Vertical and Horizontal Escalation of the Hybrid Warfare	13
Figure 2. Completed Jihadist Attacks and Their Lethality.....	19
Figure 3. The Structure of the Research.....	36
Figure 4. The Countries of the European Union	40
Figure 5. Estimated Rate of Muslim Population in Europe in 2016	41
Figure 6. Area of Interest of the European Union	43
Figure 7. RAFT – Relations, Actors, Functions and Tensions.....	48
Figure 8. The Islamic State`s Operational Center of Gravity in Europe.....	53
Figure 9. The European Union`s Operational Center of Gravity	57
Figure 10. The Islamic State`s Most Likely Course of Action in Europe.....	60
Figure 11. Proposed EU Operational Approach.....	65
Figure 12. Interpretation of the Result	78

TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Estimated Number of Foreign Fighters in Eight Focus Countries.....	16
Table 2. Measures Implemented by the Focus Countries	27

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The purpose of this study is to identify the possible changes in the Islamic State's (IS) strategy in Europe after the collapse of its strongholds in the Iraq and Syria and to explore possible countermeasures that European countries might implement to mitigate the future threat.

After seizing Mosul from the Iraqi Army on 29 June 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the extremist group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, proclaimed the caliphate of the IS. At the same time, the IS started a hybrid war in the Middle East that eventually spread to Europe. Europe, however, has not seen the conventional and guerilla warfare common with the IS in the Middle East. Instead, Europe has become a center of terrorist activity for extremists wanting to cause harm outside of the Middle East.

If the IS loses its main strongholds in Iraq and Syria in the near future, it is likely that the IS will change its broader strategy. The IS will have to refine the ends, ways, and means in its strategy that will define its potentially expanded role in Europe. European countries that are affected by this new IS strategy will have to identify the new threats and develop countermeasures against them as soon as possible. The main security problem is determining how European countries can react effectively to the changing threat of terrorism in the next couple of years.

Research Questions

Primary Question: What countermeasures should the European countries take in response to likely changes in IS strategy?

Secondary Question #1: How is the IS likely to alter its strategy of hybrid warfare in Europe in the wake of a territorial collapse in the Middle East?

Secondary Question #2: What are the options for European countries to mitigate emerging threats from the Islamic State?

Assumptions

1. This study uses the following assumptions:
2. The territorial strongholds of the IS will collapse in Iraq and Syria soon.
3. The IS strategy and doctrine in Europe will adjust to the changing operational environment.
4. The IS is an adaptable organization capable of taking a new strategic direction.
5. The majority of ISIS foreign fighters who are European citizens will return to Europe upon the collapse of the caliphate in the Middle East.

Definitions

To understand this study, it is necessary to define the following key terms.

Jihadism: a transnational militant Islamic movement of Sunni Muslims to conduct war against the West identified as the force of evil.¹

Terrorism: “Terrorism is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a

government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”²

International terrorism: Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored).³

Information operation (IO): “The integrated employment, during military operations, of information-related capabilities in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own.”⁴

Operational Environment (OE): “A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.”⁵ It includes the Joint Operational Area, the Area of Influence and the Area of Interest.

Joint Operational Area: “An area of land, sea, and airspace, defined by a geographic combatant commander or subordinate unified commander, in which a joint force commander (normally a joint task force commander) conducts military operations to accomplish a specific mission.”⁶

Area of Influence: “A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander’s command or control.”⁷

Area of Interest: “That area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory.”⁸

Limitations

The main limitations that influence this study and analysis are:

1. This study can only use unclassified information.
2. The foundation of the analysis on the IS attacks in Europe is based on limited published information about prevented or thwarted attacks.
3. Not all member states of the European Union (EU) provide sufficient data, which could cause deficiency in the analysis.
4. Due to the limited time available for research, this paper proposes a “most likely” strategy for IS, and does not propose a “most dangerous” strategy.

Scope

This study depicts the IS’s most likely course of action (COA) in Europe after the loss of its main territory in the Middle East. It demonstrates only one possible future option for the IS and recommends counter-measures within the territory of the EU. The timeframe for this research is June 2014 to June 2017 with a focus on the IS strategy, and the EU response to it. The challenge of this study is to conduct reliable analysis with limited access to information.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to discuss new security challenges posed by the IS within Europe, and to demonstrate the importance of a quick response to the changing operational environment by affected European nations. The effective European counter-terrorism depends on a unity of effort between the European countries and the fast development and coordinated implementation of countermeasures.

Summary and Conclusion

The research seeks to answer the question of countermeasures European countries should take in response to likely changes in ISIS strategy focusing on one possible IS COA. To understand the problem, the next chapter describes the recent terrorist threat related to the IS in Europe and the countermeasures that European countries have taken.

¹ Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein, eds., *New Religious Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 263-264.

² Legal Information Institute, “Code of Federal Regulations (28 C.F.R. Section 0.85),” accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/28/0.85>.

³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Terrorism,” accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism>.

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC, November 27, 2012), GL-3.

⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: January 17, 2017), GL-13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, GL-11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, GL-6.

⁸ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The territory of the EU, especially the western European countries, has become the theater of operations for jihadist terrorism launched by the IS. As the IS continues to lose more and more territory in Syria and Iraq, the strategy of the IS will likely change, including the terrorist activity they conduct in Europe. However, as the EU and its member states implement counter-measures, it is important to identify the changes and the new challenges in the terrorist threat and develop up-to-date solutions to counter them.

Chapter 2 has two major divisions aligning with the two secondary research questions. In the first part, the paper discusses the IS's strategy in six subparts. First, it provides an overview of the characteristics of Islamic radicalism in the EU by explaining the ecological and socio-economic approaches, as well as the hub factor. Second, it explains the main characteristics of non-state actor hybrid warfare. Next, the paper discusses the IS-related jihadist terrorism threat in the EU by describing the types of terrorist attacks linked to the IS, as well as the presence of foreign fighters and lone-wolf attackers. The paper also reviews the trends of the jihadist-related terrorist acts in the EU from the declaration of the caliphate of the IS on June 29, 2014, until June 1, 2017. Next, the paper describes the connection between criminal and terrorist organizations. Lastly, the paper discusses the connection between information operations (IO) and propaganda campaign that the IS carried out between 2014 and 2017.

In the second part of the literature review, the research reviews the EU's recent Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CTS) both on common and member states' levels. The basis of Chapter 2 is the research of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) – The Hague and the 2015-2017 European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend (TESAT) reports from the European Police (EUROPOL).

The Islamic State's Strategy in the European Union

The Islamic Radicalization in the European Union

The Ecological Approach

Research of the ICCT describes the homegrown jihadist radicalization process adopting an ecological approach. This approach assumes that only one single social factor cannot radicalize individuals or groups. It emphasizes that radicalization is the result of the interaction between individuals or groups within their environment. Lorne Dawson constructed an ecological model of the homegrown radicalization process that covers the macro (or societal), meso (or group), and micro (or individual) level social and psychological factors. The ecological model of the radicalization focuses on the young males in their twenties that are the most targeted group in non-Muslim countries. These young are usually first or second-generation immigrants. According to the model, there are five niches of the homegrown terrorist radicalization: the late modernity, the immigrant experience, the youthful rebellion, the ideology, and the group dynamics. In the next section, the paper discusses the five niches.¹

The first niche is the late modernity, also known as risk society or liquid modernity. The model states that the radicalization is a result of the new social conditions caused by the globalization process. The second factor is the immigrant experience. The

Internet and social media enable immigrants to stay in contact with their home countries and spread extremist ideology more easily. Furthermore, the young second-generation immigrants feel an intense pressure because of the different demands of the home countries' and their parents' cultural traditions. The next consideration is the youthful rebellion. This psychological factor includes the seeking of an identity that may be the result of compensations of earlier humiliations, the moral dilemma to do the right thing, and a strong orientation to act. The examined young people often find their social identity in joining the Muslim community. The fourth niche is the ideology that offers an explanation and a solution for their frustrations by showing them a target and a way to channel it. The last factor is the group dynamic, and it can work in two different ways. The first is the cyberspace, which enables the targeted group to watch and read extremist ideology, and discuss it with each other. The second way is the engagement in person with radicalized friends and family members.

This study shows the complex interrelation between the different social factors that radicalize the Western European Muslim individuals, and the compounding effect they can have when more than one are present in a young Muslim's life. This study does not evaluate other social factors that may also be present.

The Socio-Economic Approach

Syed Mansoob Murshed and Sara Pavan describe a more comprehensive explanation of the homegrown terrorist radicalization process.² They state that the socio-economic disadvantages, including political and historical grievances, are the main radicalization factors, but the factors differ between countries with a significant Muslim

minority. The study argues the cases of France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, and the Netherlands.

France has the largest Muslim population in the EU. The six million Muslims make up ten percent of the French citizens, but only two million of those Muslims have French citizenship. The under-education and unemployment rates of the Muslim population are over the French average. Muslims make up sixty percent of the French prison populations and many others suffer from residential discrimination. Those issues, coupled with the rise of the right wing, anti-immigrant party, known as the Front National, mean the socio-economic, cultural, and political factors are ripe for jihadist radicalization in the country.³

The Muslim community in Germany, including the most significant Turkish Diaspora, is around 3.2-3.4 million. That is about four percent of the total population. Muslims in Germany face socio-economic inequalities in education, employment, and housing. In politics, the traditional Islamic customs that the Turkish community follows leads right-wing politicians to demand language courses and a loyalty test from the Muslims to prove their democratic credentials.⁴

British society and politics are more accepting towards Muslims than other European countries, even after the 2005 London bombing. Despite more acceptance, Muslims still face a significant amount of inequality within the society. The education level of Muslims is much lower than the average level of the total population, which leads to a significantly higher unemployment rate among them. In addition, Muslims and other minorities are underrepresented in the political system, which gives them less of a voice on national issues.⁵

In Spain, the law permits Muslims to learn Islam in public schools and build mosques, but there is more opposition from Spanish society after the 2004 train bombing in Madrid. The 1.6 million Muslims in Spain face discrimination in schools and the job market, and suffer from residential segregation in the suburbs of bigger cities such as Madrid and Barcelona.⁶

The one million Muslims in the Netherlands is 5.8 percent of the total Dutch population. They are from Turkey and Morocco, but 40 percent are second-generation immigrants. Although the Dutch society is traditionally multicultural, it strongly opposes the Muslim community. The murders of Pim Fortuyn, a Dutch politician in 2002, and Theo van Gogh, a filmmaker, by Muslims generated tension between the Muslim and native Dutch populations. The tension resulted in violent acts against Muslim individuals and an arson attack against a Muslim public school. At the same time, the support of the right wing, anti-Muslim party significantly increased. Thus, the Muslim population in the Netherlands suffers disadvantages in different dimensions. The majority of Muslims have only primary education, and the performance of the Muslim students in the primary schools is significantly below average. A significant population of Muslims have unskilled jobs, and the unemployment rate is very high. The residential segregation is manifested in the concentration of low-cost housing areas with significant poverty and criminal activity.⁷

In conclusion, next to the ecological concerns, the socio-economic disadvantages and political and historical grievances have a significant role in the homegrown jihadist radicalization process. According to the studies, all of these issues and their complex interaction are the preconditions for homegrown terrorist radicalization.

The Hub Factor

The radicalization pattern across the EU is very distributed. There are places with partial Muslim populations where the number or the ratio of the radicalized and mobilized Islamists is exceptionally high, while there are also places where it is very low. There is not necessarily a correlation between the welfare of the population and the ratio of radicalization. The study highlights areas with deplorable economic and social conditions where the population is highly radicalized, but also points out that Norway also has a high rate of jihadist mobilization even though it is the best country in Europe to live according to the United Nation`s human development index. In the research “Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West” Lorenzo Vidino, Francesco Marone and Eva Entenmann describe the most significant element in the potential mobilization of the European jihadist is the radicalization hubs.⁸

The research shows that there are two different conditions for a Muslim populated area to become a radicalization hub. The first condition is the presence of a militant Salafist organization, such as the Deutch-Islamischer Kulturverein (DIK) in Hildesheim, Germany, the Prophet`s Ummah in Norway, and the Sharia4 network in the United Kingdom, which also includes the franchise organizations Sharia4Belgium and Sharia4Holland. The radicalization agents of these groups or charismatic leaders mobilize supporters in well-organized structures, mostly mosques or other religious venues.⁹ The other condition is bottom-up hubs. In these hubs, the members of informal support groups or groups of friends influence each other, thus a couple of individuals can have the power to radicalize the majority. Good examples of bottom-up organized hubs are the French

town of Lunel, which has poor socio-economic conditions, and in contrast, Ravegna, Italy, which has better than average economic conditions.¹⁰

Summarizing the characteristics of radicalization patterns in Europe, the ICCT study “Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West” by Vidino, Marone and Entenmann states that militant Salafist networks have a more significant role in the radicalization process than the poor socio-economic conditions and the lack of the integration.

General Characteristics of Non-State Actor Hybrid Warfare

The research of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs describes the non-state actors’ use of hybrid warfare as the combination of conventional and non-conventional military operations with other non-military instruments. The new and unfamiliar way of handling this combination challenges the Western strategic thinking and military practice. The military elements of the hybrid threat are the conventional and asymmetric warfare, while the non-military means are the terrorism, the organized crime, and the IO.¹¹

The study describes the model of the hybrid war. It explains how the non-state actors use their instruments of power, including Military, Political, Economical, Civilian and Informational (MPECI), against the opponent’s Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational and Infrastructure (PMES-II) vulnerabilities to achieve its desired end state.¹²

There are three characteristics of non-state actor hybrid warfare: the vertical and horizontal escalation, the difficulty of phasing, and the escalation of the battlefield. The vertical escalation or de-escalation is the increased or decreased intensity of the

implementation of the instruments of power, while the horizontal escalation or de-escalation is the synchronization level thereof. However, the horizontal escalation can achieve the same effect as the vertical one. The actors can use the two types of escalation simultaneously, but that requires a high-level of command and control and strategic coordination (see figure 1.).¹³

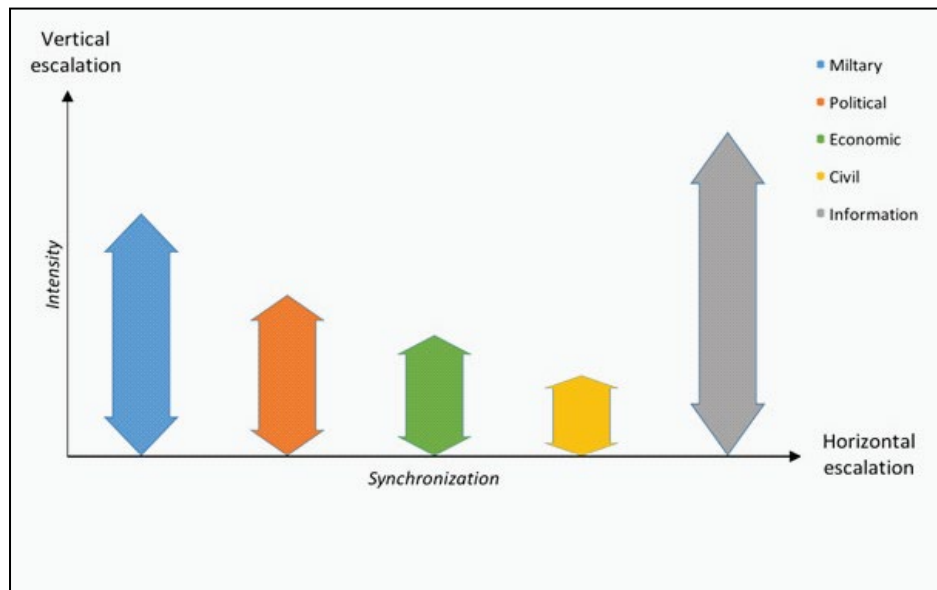


Figure 1. Vertical and Horizontal Escalation of the Hybrid Warfare

Source: Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud and Patrick Cullen, *What is Hybrid Warfare?* Norwegian Institute of International Affairs Policy Brief, January 2016, accessed January 29, 2018, https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2380867/NUPI_Policy_Brief_1_Reichborn_Kjennerud_Cullen.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

In a hybrid war, it is complicated to define the phases of the conflict. First, it is hard to determine the beginning and even the end of the hostilities. Second, the use of multiple means during hostilities blurs the lines between phases even more. Thus, it is difficult to determine which phase the conflict is currently in.¹⁴

The last characteristic of the hybrid war is the escalation of the battlefield that comes from its multimodality. The non-state hybrid actors operate not just in the physical domains (land, sea, air, and space), but they also use the social and human-made fields of politics, economy, culture, infrastructure, and cyberspace across the all PMES-II systems. The non-state hybrid actors use their sources of power in a simultaneous and synchronized way in both the traditional and novel domains to target opposing decision makers by attacking the population rather than the enemy's actual military capability.¹⁵

Jihadist Attacks in the EU

Types of the Attacks

The study "Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West" by Vidino, Marione and Entenmann defines three types of jihadist terrorist attacks in Europe. The first is the externally directed attack conducted by attackers under the direct order of the IS leadership. The second type of attack is when the attackers are not directly connected to the IS, but are inspired by the IS propaganda to commit the attack. The third type of attack is a hybrid of the first two, where the perpetrators have a connection to the IS, but act independently.¹⁶

Implementing the externally directed attacks, IS adapted the model that the al-Qaida used in the 1990s and 2000s. The IS uses individuals with preexisting connections to Europe, mainly European citizens or legal residents, to carry out the terrorist attacks. The Emni, the intelligence agency of the IS, provides attackers a list of the potential targets and logistical support to execute the attacks, but the attackers have a broad operational freedom to act. Two examples of this kind of attack are the three

simultaneous attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, and the series of coordinated attacks in the Brussels airport and subway on March 22, 2016.¹⁷

In the second type of terrorist attack, the perpetrators, also known as “lone wolves,” have only an ideological connection to the IS and do not receive operational support from the extremist organization. Their motivation could be ideological or tied to a personal reason or psychological issue, but in most cases, it was the combination of several factors. An example of a “lone-wolf” attack with a combination of ideology and personal reasons is when Yassin Salhi killed and decapitated his boss, wrapped the head in two IS flags, and hung it.¹⁸

The third kind of terrorist attack is the combination of the first two types. In this case, although the attacker has no physical connection with the IS, he or she gets direct operational support to conduct the attack. The Emni’s “virtual planners” support the perpetrators through social media and encrypted online messaging platforms. Using the second and third types of attacks, the IS has been able to successfully extend its operational reach.¹⁹

In conclusion, through the use of multiple types of terrorist attacks against European targets, the IS presents its intent and capability to undermine European security.

Foreign Fighters

Other ICCT research estimates that about 4,000-5,000 foreign fighters have traveled to Syria or Iraq. The majority are from large metropolitan areas or outer suburbs in France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Germany. An additional characteristic is that most of the foreign fighters from each country are from the same neighborhood.

Although 14 percent of foreign fighters are confirmed dead, an estimated 30 percent have returned to the EU. Table 1. presents the estimated number of the foreign fighters in eight focus countries.²⁰

Table 1. Estimated Number of Foreign Fighters in Eight Focus Countries				
	Total foreign fighters	Remaining abroad	Confirmed dead	Returned
Austria	230-300	130	34	>70
Belgium	420-516	180-260	60-70	55-130
Denmark	125	31	27	62
France	>900	570	137	246
Germany	720-760	>238	100	250
The Netherlands	220	140	42	40
Spain	120-139	No data.	No data.	25
United Kingdom	700-760	315	70	>350

Source: Bibi Van Ginkel, Bérénice Boutin, Grégory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed, and Sofia Zavagli, *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the EU. Profiles, Threats & Policies*, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies, 2016, doi:10.19165/2016.1.02.

In August 2014, the European Council announced that Islamic terrorism is a direct threat to the EU. This threat has four general aspects connected to foreign fighters. The first threat is the travel of persons to Syria or Iraq to fight for the IS. The second is the return of foreign fighters to their countries of residence. The third one is the impact of the foreign fighters and the related terrorism on social cohesion within the EU. The final threat is that of the lone-wolf terrorist inspired by returning foreign fighters. The first

threat means that traveling to the conflict zone contributes to the radicalization of the foreign fighters and provides them the opportunity to gain the skills necessary to conduct terrorist activity within the EU. In addition, travel to the conflict zone is a potential factor in the prolongation of the conflict that is ultimately a general threat to European security. The second threat is tied to the return of the foreign fighters. They pose a risk for not only conducting terrorist attacks, but also providing logistical and financial support to the terrorist cells and conducting recruiting activities. Regarding the third threat, terrorist attacks executed by European citizens have a divisive impact on European society. Those attacks can lead to the emergence of violent anti-Muslim right-wing movements, such as the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident in Germany or the Soldiers of Odin in Finland. Those attacks can also result in sectarian violence between the European Muslim communities. The last threat is related to the second one. The foreign fighters can be an inspiration to the would-be jihadists who are otherwise not capable of traveling to the conflict zone. The returning foreign fighters can encourage others to conduct lone-wolf attacks within the EU.²¹

Lone-Wolf Attackers

In a further ICCT paper, Edwin Bakker and Beatrice de Graaf examine the phenomenon of terrorist activity conducted by individuals - the lone-wolf attack. They state that al-Qaida first used the lone-wolf tactics. They describe the profile of the lone-wolf attackers and the advantages and disadvantages of lone-wolf terrorism.

Al-Qaida was the first to use lone-wolf tactics as far back as the early 2000s. In 2006, a paper by Abu Jihad al-Masri entitled “How to Fight Alone” circulated among al-Qaida sympathizers. In addition, the Salafist writer Abu Musab al-Suri encouraged

individuals and small groups of supporters to carry out terrorist acts independently while keeping the organizational link at the absolute minimum level.²²

The exact profile of the lone-wolf attacker is not definable due to the very different social, psychological, and personal backgrounds, as well as the tactics used by them. However, Bakker and de Graaf identified three common characteristics among them. The first is that most lone-wolf attackers have difficulty with personal interaction and cooperating with other people. The next characteristic is that they often communicate their ideology and manifest to the world, sometimes before the attack. Lastly, despite the fact that a majority of lone-wolf attackers do not suffer from psychological difficulties, the rate of mental and social disabilities is significantly higher among them compared to other terrorists.²³

Because the lone-wolf attackers are the part of the targeted society with an unidentified profile and act independently without control of any organization, it is challenging to identify them and predict their actions. Additionally, it is also difficult to differentiate between the people with serious intent to conduct a terrorist act and the people with merely radical beliefs. On the other hand, most lone-wolf attackers lack the necessary skills and operational support to be efficient. Terrorist manuals and online tutorials describing how to make homemade bombs cannot replace professional skills and experience. Furthermore, without any executive support, they have to implement all elements of the terrorist attack cycle by themselves. This shortcoming makes them vulnerable during the planning phase, especially during the surveillance stage of the operation.²⁴

Trend of Jihadist Related Terrorism in the European Union

The yearly EUROPOL reports on terrorism depict the primary trend of the jihadist-related terrorist activity in the EU from 2014 until 2016. In 2014, two completed jihadist attacks occurred killing four people in France.²⁵ In the next year, the number of attacks increased to 17 with 150 victims.²⁶ In 2016, the number of attacks decreased to 10, with 135 individuals killed. Figure 2 represents the trend of the attacks.²⁷

While the number of attacks decreased in 2016, the number of the jihadist terrorism-related arrests continuously increased in the evaluated period from 395 in 2014,²⁸ to 687 in 2015,²⁹ and finally 718 in 2016. The vast majority of the arrests happened in France, Belgium, and Spain.³⁰

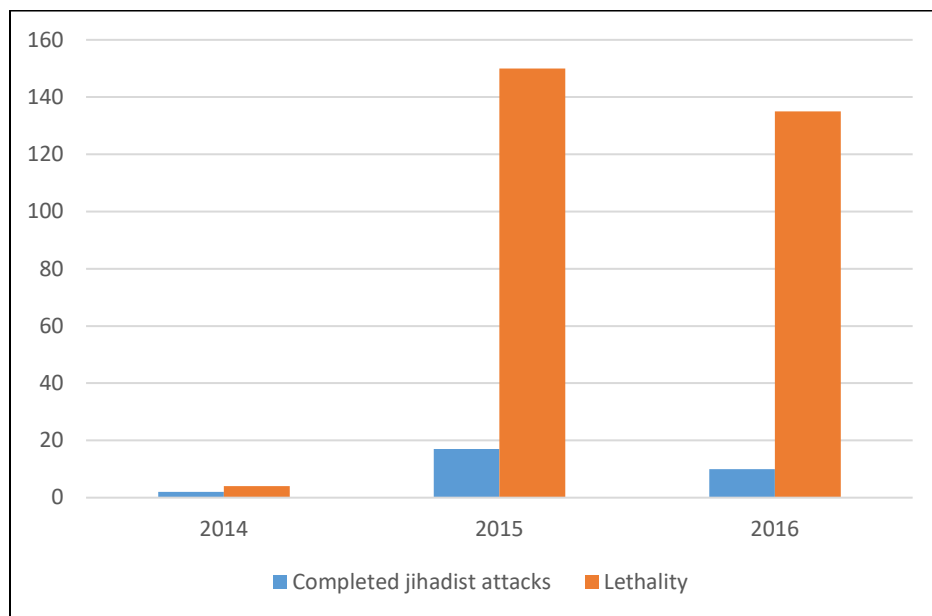


Figure 2. Completed Jihadist Attacks and Their Lethality

Source: European Police Office, “EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Report,” accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report#fndtn-tabs-0-bottom-2>.

According to estimations, the number of the European foreign fighters was between 3,000 and 5,000 in 2014.³¹ That number increased to over 5,000 in 2015 due to the proclamation of the caliphate.³² In 2016, however, the number of the foreign fighters decreased due to coalition force operations in the Middle East. Despite the overall decrease in foreign fighters, the ratio of female foreign fighters significantly increased, especially that of the Dutch Muslims, which increased 40 percent.³³

Even though there has been a decrease in foreign fighters, the IS still has domestic or locally based operations cells within the EU. The TESAT 2016 report estimated that dozens of returning foreign fighters operate in the EU providing a useful external operational capability for the IS. In addition, the returning foreign fighters have a crucial role in facilitation, fundraising, recruitment, and radicalization activities. The reports do not provide the total number of the returning jihadist fighters, so it is difficult to analyze exactly how much involvement they have.³⁴

The ICCT research “Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West” by Vidino, Marone and Entenmann also examined the IS related terrorist activity in Europe and North America between June 29, 2014, and June 01, 2017. Sixty-five attackers carried out terrorist 51 attacks in eight countries in the reported period. The vast majority of the attacks occurred in large urban areas, 14 of them in European capital cities. The reasons for these successful attacks were the higher level of accessibility and freedom of movement, better opportunity to maximize the lethality level and the material damages, and the higher symbolical and political value targets.³⁵

The attacks killed 395 people and injured 1,549 others. Three hundred fifty-seven of the 395 victims died in the seven most significant strikes - Paris (130), Nice (86),

Orlando (49), Brussels (32), Manchester (22), San Bernardino (14) and Berlin (12).

Twenty-nine attacks did not cause casualties. The average lethality level was 7.7 deaths per attack. Forty-three attackers died during or after the action (killed or committed suicide during the attack), 21 were arrested, and only one is at large.³⁶

The average age of the attackers was 27.3 years, and 97 percent of them were male. Only three percent of the attackers were female. Thirty-seven perpetrators (57 percent) had a criminal background when they conducted the attacks. The vast majority were imprisoned for drug-related crimes, possessing weapons, and physical violence including murder and robbery. Thirty-three of 65 attackers had a connection to a local jihadist network through means other than the Internet. Seventy-three percent of attackers were citizens of the country where the attack occurred, 14 percent were legal residents or legitimate visitors, five percent were from neighboring countries, six percent were illegal residents, and two percent were unknown. Twelve (18 percent) of the 65 attackers were returned foreign fighters. Those foreign fighters carried out a total of five attacks and killed 135 people, which equates to a lethality level of 35 per attack compared to the 7.7 average level.³⁷

The Organized Crime – Terrorism Link

Research of The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence “Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus,” by Rajan Basra, Peter R. Neumann and Claudia Brunner describes the crime-terror nexus and explains why and how terrorist groups engage in organized crime throughout Europe as a means to achieve their strategic goals. Although organized crime activities such as drug trading, smuggling, etc. are highly efficient means for terrorist

groups, such as the IRA, ETA, and Hezbollah, to finance their activity abroad, the IS tends to keep the costs of its operations in Europe at the low level. This approach helps recruits to join IS easily and allows the well-trained, experienced fighters to conduct covert operations.³⁸

In addition, the criminal organizations enable the IS to extend its operational reach and freedom of action through two ways. First, the IS utilizes the skill transfer because the individuals with criminal pasts have three valuable skills for IS. The first is their easy access to the criminal network using their underground connections to obtain illegal weapons, forged documents, money, and safe houses.³⁹ The second skill is that they are used to operating “under the radar” to avoid engagement with law enforcement. Finally, their familiarity and experience with violence decreases their psychological threshold to be involved in terrorist activity. Furthermore, terrorist organizations can outsource the activities that they do not have the potential to conduct, but which are needed to operate in Western countries, such as the forgery of documents.⁴⁰

The study depicts a new crime-terror nexus as well. It explains that both criminal and jihadist organizations recruit people from the same social network, environment, or milieu. This creates synergy and overlap between these different types of organizations. The crime-terror nexus has three levels: the cooperation, the convergence, and the transition. The cooperation is a transaction-based alliance between the criminal and terrorist organizations. The convergence is the adaption of skills which one group possesses and the other group does not; and the transition is the identification of the character with the shift in motivation.⁴¹

In conclusion, this new crime-terror approach denies the claim of the traditional studies. It opposes that the majority of the criminals joining terrorist groups come from the middle class and are well educated.

Information Operations

The European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Reports present that the IS's propaganda campaign started after the coalition forces launched their attack on IS in Syria and Iraq in 2014. The messages were solidarity among the Muslims, showing an extreme brutality by executing western hostages to deter the coalition countries from the military operations, and encouraging possible supporters to join the IS or commit lone-wolf attacks in their home countries. To spread its propaganda, the IS established the al-Hayat media, which is capable of reaching sympathizers in many languages, including Arabic, English, French, and German.⁴²

In 2015, the IS conducted a successful propaganda strategy tailored to different audiences. The propaganda focused on the tension between the believers and infidels, promised a utopian society to the believers, and encouraged males and females to join the IS.⁴³

Because many successful measures prevented recruits from reaching the IS-controlled areas and the increased military pressure in Syria and Iraq in 2016, the IS's propaganda message shifted to incite sympathizers to carry out lone-wolf attacks in their home countries within Europe. In addition, the propaganda started heavily targeting females. Supporting this effort, the IS's propaganda media, the A'maq Agency, showed the pledged allegiance of the lone-wolf perpetrators after their successful attacks in Europe.⁴⁴

In the examined period, many jihadist recruiters traveled as Muslim preachers and imams, and continuously targeted people with social, economic, or personal problems. They focused their targeting in Muslim cultural centers and places of worship. Prisons and the Sharia⁴ movement also had significant roles in the radicalization of possible supporters.

The European Union Recent Counter-Terrorism Strategy

European Union`s Counter-Terrorism Strategy

The ICCT research “The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union - Profiles, Threats & Policies” describes the EU institutional architecture on counter-terrorism, the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy (CTS), and the policy development on the primary threat.

Although the member states are responsible for combating terrorism within their own countries, the EU has several bodies to form, coordinate, and monitor the common counter-terrorism policy. The Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (CTC) is responsible for recommending priorities and particular areas to the European Council and managing the coordination with third countries. Within the European Commission, the Directorate General Home Affairs implements the counter-terrorism policy, including the exchange of information, support to victims, and managing the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Agreement. Two EU agencies support the member states in combating terrorism: the European Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST), which provides mutual legal assistance, and the EUROPOL, which offers them intelligence support and exchange.⁴⁵

The European Council adopted the EU CTS in 2005, which has four main pillars: prevent, protect, pursue, and respond. First, as a prevention of the terrorism, the strategy

focuses on preventing radicalization and recruitment. Second, to protect the citizens and infrastructure, the strategy aims to reduce of the possibility of attacks and mitigate their impact. Third, the objective of the pursue pillar is to disrupt terrorist activity, including planning, financing, recruiting, and networking. The fourth pillar is respond, which includes the response mechanism, assisting victims, and protecting EU citizens and military or civilian assets in third countries.⁴⁶

The EU identified foreign fighters as the primary threat of terrorism and developed a policy to engage that threat.⁴⁷ The first step was the creation of the CTC and improvements to the EU CTS in 2005. In 2011, the EU established the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) within the Directorate General Home Affairs. The Justice and Home Affairs Council issued a 22-point proposal dealing with foreign fighters. In 2015, the European Council adopted a broad vision to fight against terrorism based on three pillars: ensuring the security of the European citizens; preventing radicalization and safeguarding values; and cooperating with international partners. In the same year, the EU issued the Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020, the EUROPOL set up the Internet Referral Unit (IRU), and EU officials established the RAN – Center of Excellence. The member states' ministers of home affairs, in cooperation with the European Parliament (EP), approved the Passenger Name Record (PNR) data directive. Lastly, the EUROPOL established the European Counter-Terrorism Center in The Hague in January 2016.⁴⁸

Counter-Terrorism Measures Implemented by the Member States

Because counter-terrorism is the responsibility of each individual country, all EU member states implement their own counter-terrorism measures. The common point is that all of them focus on security, as well as legislative and preventive measures. In

general, the security measures are in place to prevent potential foreign fighters from traveling to the conflict zone, and if they do, depriving them of the citizenship residency permit if they are not native citizens. The legislative measures provide the legal background to carry out the security measure of criminalizing terrorist-related activities, such as membership of terrorist groups, support of a terrorist organization, incitation to commit a terrorist act, and travel to the conflict zone. The preventive measures concentrated on the prevention of radicalization, the reintegration of formerly radicalized individuals, and support to the families of radicalized persons. Table 2 shows the detailed actions taken by eight focus countries.⁴⁹

Table 2. Measures Implemented by the Focus Countries			
	Security measures	Legislative measures	Preventive measures
Austria	<p>Withdrawal the dual nationals' Austrian citizenship.</p> <p>Prohibition of issuing, altering and extending passports.</p>	<p>Broaden the Criminal Code relating to violent extremism.</p> <p>Government Bill aiming the national law enforcement agency to investigate among foreign fighters.</p>	<p>Emphasizing inter-cultural and inter-religious dialog</p> <p>Engagement the Islamic community</p> <p>Establishing Extremism Information Centre</p>
Belgium	<p>Withdrawal the Belgian citizenship.</p> <p>Prohibition of issuing, altering and extending passports.</p> <p>Temporary withdrawal of identity card.</p>	<p>Criminalization of joining or supporting of terrorist groups; public incitement, recruitment, providing and following training to commit terrorist crime; and travelling abroad to with terrorist purpose.</p>	<p>Revision of the Plan Radicalism, focusing on radical websites, extremist imams and prisons.</p> <p>Community Policing Preventing Radicalization and Terrorism project.</p>
Denmark	<p>Prohibition of issuing, altering and extending passports.</p> <p>Repealing residence permit and right of residence.</p> <p>Withdrawal of Danish citizenship.</p>	<p>Incrimination of committing a terrorist act, financing terrorism and participation in illegal military organizations.</p>	<p>Implementation of Action Plan on Prevention of Radicalization and Extremism to prevent people joining extremist groups and support those who want to leave them.</p>
Germany	<p>Prohibition of issuing, altering and extending passports.</p> <p>Deprive individuals of national identity card.</p> <p>Withdrawal of residence permit.</p> <p>Prevent personals entering the country.</p>	<p>Incrimination of incitement; offenses related to support, recruitment and membership of terrorist organization; travelling abroad to receive terrorist training.</p>	<p>National Action Plan to Counter Racism.</p> <p>Rehabilitation program for returnees.</p> <p>De-radicalization program in prisons.</p> <p>Support and advise the families of radicalized individuals.</p>
Spain	<p>No information.</p>	<p>Criminalization of financing, membership, recruitment and training for terrorist organization; and travelling abroad to join terrorist group or to carry out terrorist act.</p>	<p>New prevention program since 2015.</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Prohibition of issuing, altering and extending travel documents.</p> <p>Police officer can temporarily retain travel documents of suspicious individuals at ports to prevent their travel.</p>	<p>Criminalization of financing participation in incitement, and travel to join terrorist organization, and pay ransom for terrorist organizations.</p>	<p>Multi-agency voluntary program focusing on vulnerable people.</p> <p>Establishing Police non-emergency number to report suspicious behavior.</p>

Sources: Bibi Van Ginkel, Bérénice Boutin, Grégory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed, and Sofia Zavagli, *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies*, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies, 2016, 23-49. doi:10.19165/2016.1.02.

Assessment

In the EU, the IS conducts hybrid warfare using non-military means such as terrorism, organized crime, and IO. To conduct sophisticated terrorist attacks, the IS uses foreign fighters with the probable support of criminal organizations, lone-wolf attackers inspired by the propaganda campaign, and a combination of those two. It is not clear which type of attack achieves the more significant effect on the EU states. However, the well-trained foreign fighters with considerable combat experience cause higher lethality rate. This type of attack needs sophisticated operational process in planning, preparation, execution, and access. In contrast, the lone-wolf attackers generally cause fewer casualties and damages, but they do not need any investment or assistance from the IS, and the risk of being discovered before the action is negligible.

The radicalization process of the European Muslims is also confusing. The three different approaches independently cannot answer all related questions. Although it seems that the combination of all approaches could describe the phenomenon of the Muslim radicalization in Europe, it is likely that the three approaches have a different level of importance in the specific places and communities.

The EU and its member states make parallel effort to prevent and combat terrorism. Despite the EU established agencies against the terrorism, these organizations have the authority only to support the states' individual efforts, not to direct, coordinate and synchronize them. This low-level centralization procures low-level unity of effort and unity of command.

Summary and Conclusions

The first part of this chapter described the phenomenon of the Islamic radicalization in Europe, the characteristics of the non-state actors' hybrid warfare, and the non-military instruments of the hybrid war on the continent including the Jihadist attacks, the link between the organized crime and the terrorism, and the IS's IO. The second part of Chapter 2 reviewed the recent counter-measures that the EU and its member states implemented. Since the middle of 2014, fighters and sympathizers radicalized for many complex reasons conducted coordinated and individual terrorist attacks against European citizens and infrastructure within the western EU member countries. The EU and its member states initiated counter-terrorism measures to fight the terrorism and other non-state actor hybrid threats with a fair amount of success. The incidents of the last three years shows that continuous development of the EU CTS is essential to mitigate the risk and the impact of the future attacks due to the possible changing IS strategy. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology that the study uses to answer the Research Question.

¹ Lorne Dawson, Sketch of a Social Ecology Model for Explaining Homegrown Terrorist Radicalisation, *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, 2017, doi:10.19165/2017.1.01., 6-9.

² Syed Mansoob Murshed, and Sara Pavan, "Identity and Islamic Radicalization in Western Europe," *Civil Wars* 13, no. 3 (2011), 259-268.

³ Ibid., 268-269.

⁴ Ibid., 269-270.

⁵ Ibid., 270-271.

⁶ Ibid., 272.

⁷ Ibid., 272-274.

⁸ Lorenzo Vidino, Francesco Marone, and Eva Entenmann, *Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West*, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague. ISPI. The George Washington University, June 2017, 77-82, doi: 10.14672/67056194.

⁹ Ibid., 82-92.

¹⁰ Ibid., 93-99.

¹¹ Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud, and Patrick Cullen, *What is Hybrid Warfare?* Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, January 2016, accessed January 29, 2018 https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2380867/NUPI_Policy_Brief_1_Reichborn_Kjennerud_Cullen.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Vidino, Marone, and Entenmann, 63.

¹⁷ Ibid., 63-66.

¹⁸ Ibid., 67-72.

¹⁹ Ibid., 73-76.

²⁰ Bibi Van Ginkel, Bérénice Boutin, Grégory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed, and Sofia Zavagli, *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies*, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies, 2016, 3. doi:10.19165/2016.1.02.

²¹ Ibid., 13-15.

²² Edwin Bakker, and Beatrice De Graaf, “Lone Wolves: How to Prevent this Phenomenon?” *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies* (2010): 3. doi:10.19165/2010.1.02.

²³ Ibid., 2-3.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

²⁵ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2015*, 2015, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2015>.

²⁶ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016*, 2016, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2016>.

²⁷ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017*, 2017, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2017>.

²⁸ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2015*.

²⁹ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016*.

³⁰ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017*.

³¹ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2015*.

³² European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016*.

³³ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017*.

³⁴ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016*.

³⁵ Vidino, Marone, and Entenmann, 44-48.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-62.

³⁸ Rajan Basra, Peter R. Neumann, and Claudia Brunner, "Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 6 (2016): 11, accessed November 2, 2017, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/554/html>.

³⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁴¹ Ibid., 12.

⁴² European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2015*.

⁴³ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016*.

⁴⁴ European Police Office, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017*.

⁴⁵ Ginkel et al., 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 11-12.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 15-18.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23-42.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Assuming that the IS is a learning and adaptable organization capable of taking a new strategic direction, it is highly likely that its territorial loss in Iraq and Syria will force the group to conduct a radical change in its strategy, including in the European operational environment. European countries should not just follow past trend lines, because the IS could surprise them with their ingenuity.

Since the IS is entirely different from other terrorist groups and organizations that conduct hybrid warfare (e.g., Hezbollah) to achieve their goals, the compare and contrast method is not a suitable technique to find the answers to the research questions. This research limits itself to unclassified databases and secondary sources, such as previous studies and analysis. Therefore, utilizing the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) and the Army Design Methodology (ADM) is a more effective way to conduct data analysis vital to the research.

Because the study examines the threat of the IS in the context of the non-state actors' hybrid war, it uses the military methodology to answer the Research Question. The complexity of the operational environment requires the implementation of the JIPOE and the ADM for the analysis, and the use of the U.S. Army's course of action screening criteria to validate the results. In Chapter 3, first the paper explains the research method used to answer the Secondary Research Question #1 using the JIPOE. Second, it describes the process to answers the Secondary Research Question #2 based on the ADM. Then it describes the process to answers the Primary Research Question through the

synthesis of the results of the JIPOE and ADM* analyses and incorporates the recent EU recent counter-terrorism efforts. Finally, it describes the primary sources of the methodology and validation criteria used during the research process.

The Research Method

Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment

To evaluate the threat at the strategic and operational level and, in this case, to answer Secondary Research Question #1, the best way is to utilize the four-step Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) process described in Joint Publication 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (JP 2-01.3).¹ The first step is defining the operational environment (OE), and the second step is the describing the impact of that. The third step is evaluating the adversary and other relevant actors, and the fourth step is determining the threat and other related actors' courses of action (COA).

In the first step of the JIPOE, the research paper first defines the European Joint Operational Area and the Area of Interest from the perspective of the EU. It identifies where the IS conduct conventional and asymmetric military operations, terrorist and organized crime activity, and IO focusing on the European Also called Joint Operational Area. Next, it determines the primary Political, Terrorism, Counter-terrorism, Criminal, Social, and Informational characteristics of the European Joint Operational Area.

In the next step, first the paper develops the systems perspective of the OE, focusing on the European Joint Operational Area by analyzing the Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions (RAFT) at the different domains of the Political, Terror-Crime,

Social, and Informational characteristics. This analysis describes the impact of the OE on the IS and European countries.

The third step includes two stages. First, the research develops the IS, and the relevant actors' updated models and the situation. Next, it identifies the IS and the EU Centers of Gravity (CoG) and decisive points.

In the last step of the JIPOE, the paper develops the IS expected strategic operational approach identifying its likely objectives, desired end state, and the Line of Operation (LOO) and Lines of Effort (LOE). Then the research develops the threat the most likely COA in Europe based on the developed strategic operational approach. The description of the IS Most Likely COA in Europe ultimately answers the Secondary Research Question #1.

Army Design Methodology

The research uses the Army Design Methodology (ADM) described in Army Doctrine Reference Publication 5-0, The Operations Process (ADRP 5-0),² and Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, Operations (ADRP 3).³ to answer the Secondary Research Question #2. In this process, it first describes the current situation using the result of the JIPOE and determine the EU's possible desired end state. Next, it states the problem by identifying the obstacles and opportunities to achieving the desired end state, as well as describes the IS objectives based on the JIPOE. Finally, it develops an operational approach, which answers the Secondary Research Question #2. In this process, the paper identifies the EU's possible objectives, including the LOE employing the instruments of national power, such as Diplomacy, Information, Military and

Economic (DIME). It also discusses the likely effects on the IS and the decisive points inside the LOEs.

Synthesis

To answer the Primary Research Question in Chapter 5, the study synthesizes the EU current counter measures described in Chapter 2 and the results of the Secondary Research Questions in Chapter 4. The study describes the particular ways and means with the risks to achieving the ends and develops specific recommendations for the EU to mitigate the risk.

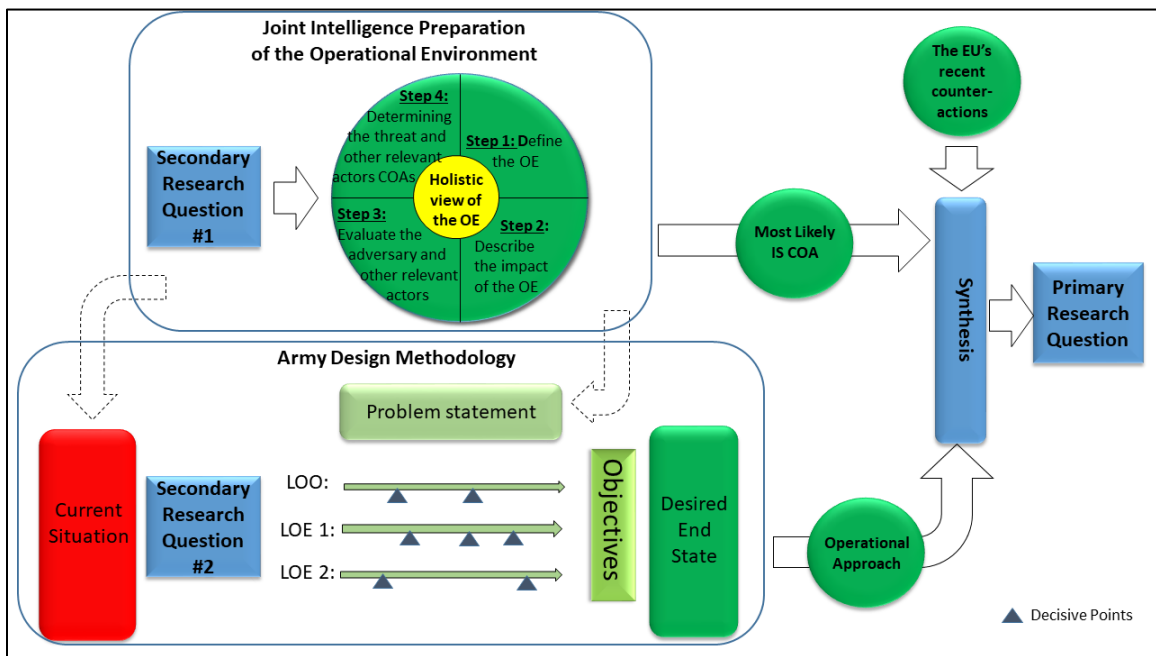


Figure 3. The Structure of the Research

Source: Created by author.

Validation Criteria

During the research, the paper uses four of the five COA validation criteria determined in Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Planning* (JP 5-0)⁴ in consideration of both the IS and EU possible operational approaches: feasibility, acceptability, and completeness. Feasibility means that the COAs can accomplish the mission within the time, space, and resources available. The COAs also must balance the cost and risk with the advantage gained, which is the acceptability portion. The COAs must be complete as well, answering the questions of who, what, where, when, how, and why in relation to accomplishing the mission. Finally, it must be adequate through meeting the guidance of the IS leadership and the EU's political decision boards.

The last COA validation criteria, that it is distinguishable, is not applicable because the research develops only one COA/operational approach both for the IS and the EU.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, the paper discussed how it uses the JIPOE based on the JP 2-01.3 to answer the Secondary Research Question 1, and ADM based on ADRP 5-0 and ADRP 3-0 to answer the Secondary Research Question 2, which enable answering the Primary Research Question through the synthesis of the results. During the research process, the paper uses the validation criteria described in JP 5-0. The chapter also described the validation criteria used during the research process to ensure validity of the resulting COA. In the next chapter, the research follows the methodology described above to present the results of the analysis.

¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 21, 2014), I-1 – V-14.

² Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Doctrine Reference Publication 5-0 (ADRP), *The Operational Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 17, 2012), 2-1 – 2-24.

³ Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 2016), 2-1 – 2-10.

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 16, 2017), V-28 – V-29.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The changing operational environment in the Middle East will likely change the IS's operational approach in Europe as well. Due to the IS conducting hybrid warfare, IS is a current and significant threat to Europe, so it is necessary to define its Most Likely COA in the territory of the EU to develop effective countermeasures against it.

In Chapter 4, the research develops the IS's Most Likely Course of Action in the EU to identify that how is the IS likely to alter its strategy of hybrid warfare in Europe in the wake of a territorial collapse in the Middle East to answer the Secondary Research Question 1. Next, it develops an operational approach to identify the options for European countries to mitigate emerging threats from the IS to answer the Secondary Research Question 2.

Joint Intelligent Preparation of the Operational Environment

JIPOE Step One: Defining the Operational Environment

Joint Operational Area

Because the topic of the research examines the IS's operations within the EU, the paper defines the EU member countries as the Joint Operational Area. The current members of the EU are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia,

Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Map 1 presents the 28 member countries that make up the EU.¹

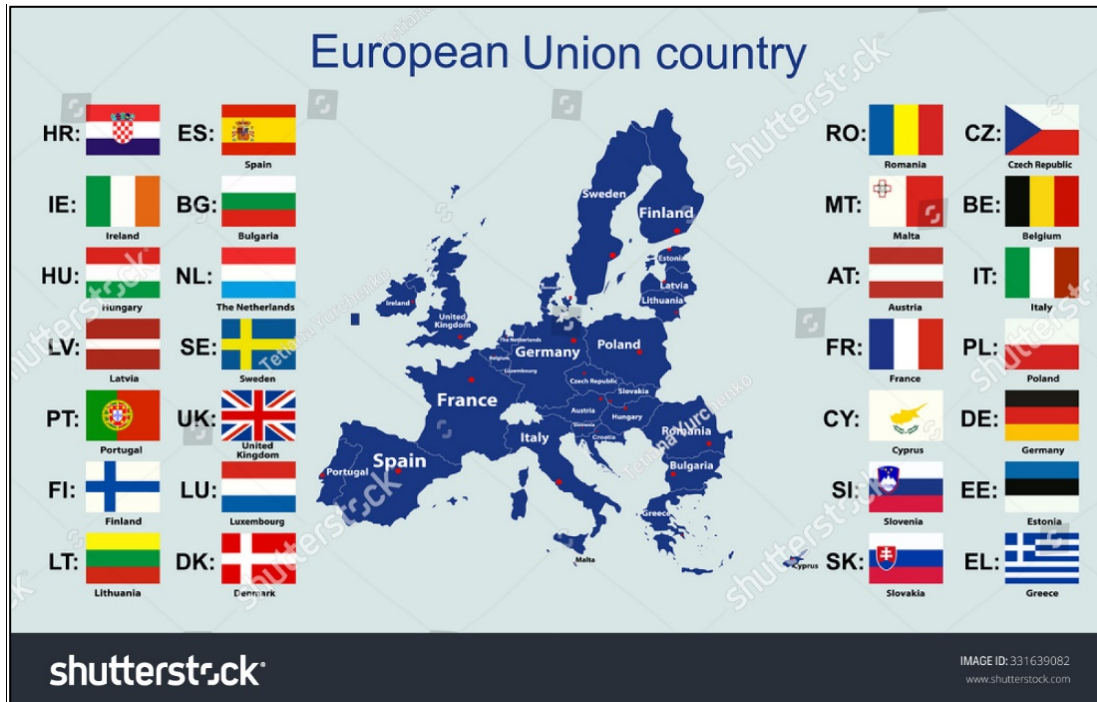


Figure 4. The Countries of the European Union

Source: Shutterstock, “European Union country,” accessed, March 31, 2018, https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/european-union-map-all-countries-flags-331639082?src=os3TCFKVrF6URjU1DTy_Uw-1-17.

The population of the EU is 511,522,671 as of January 1, 2017.² Muslims made up 4 percent of the population of the EU with Norway and Switzerland. The EU countries with the Muslim population percentage estimated over 5 percent are Bulgaria, France, Sweden, Belgium, The Netherlands, Austria, United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, and Greece³ (See Figure 4.)

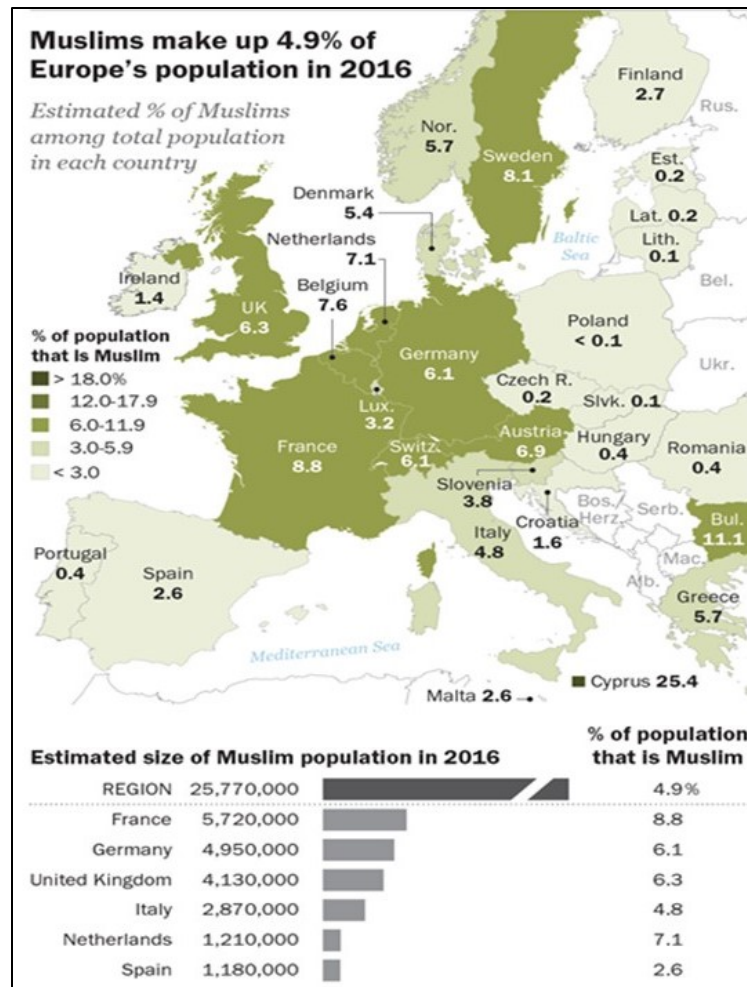


Figure 5. Estimated Rate of Muslim Population in Europe in 2016

Source: Pew Research Center, "Europe's Growing Muslim Population," accessed February 18, 2018, http://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/pf_11-29-17_muslims-update-20/.

The overall percentage and distribution of the Muslim persons show that the majority of attacks occurred in Western European countries with high rate of Muslim population. On the other hand, North and Central European countries having major Muslim population such as, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and have not significant terrorism threat. It shows that the high rate of Muslim population is a necessary but not sufficient

condition to the high jihadist terrorism threat. In addition, however, the countries suffering from the major IS related terrorism threat are usually former colonial countries (the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherland) with Muslim population originating from the territory where the IS has recently dominated, Germany has mainly Turkish originated Muslim population.

Area of Interest

This paper defines the EU's AI as the countries where the IS controls areas or directly threatens through conventional or asymmetric military operations or terrorism (conducted or inspired). The changes in the IS's strategy, operational approach, and tactics are indicators that helps to identify and analyze the expectable changes in the IS's activity in Europe as well.

The countries within the EU's AI are Canada and the United States in North America; Russia in Europe; Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Algeria, Israel, and Kuwait in the Middle East and North Africa; Somalia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria in Africa; Georgia and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia; the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand in Southeast Asia; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in South Asia; and Australia.⁴ (See Figure 5)

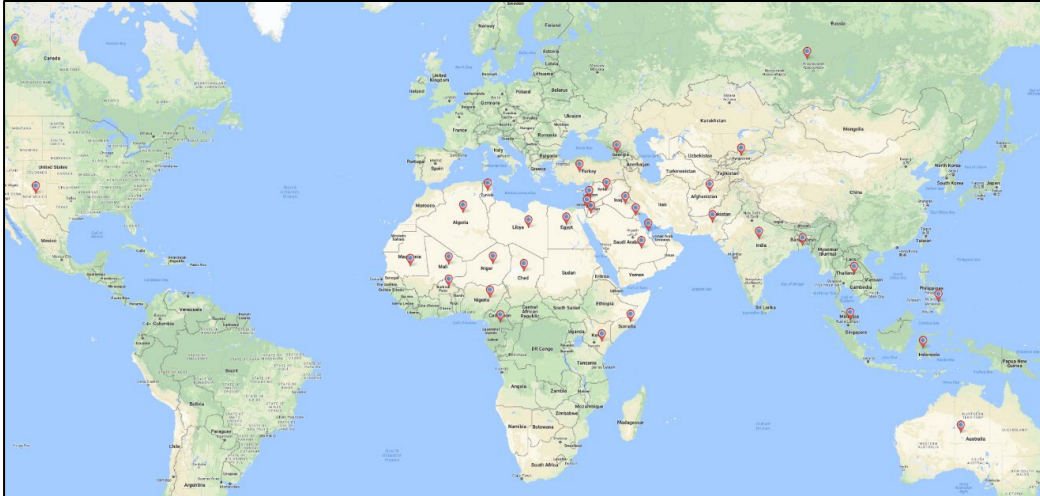


Figure 6. Area of Interest of the European Union

Source: Created by author.

Area of Influence

The paper identifies the AoI as the countries effected by IS activity in which the EU currently has influence and can cause effects by implementing countermeasures through its civilian and military missions.

In the Middle East and North Africa, the EU runs the EU Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq)⁵, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM)⁶, and the EU Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED) Operation Sophia⁷ naval mission. The EUAM Iraq assists the Iraqi government to implement the civilian aspect of the security strategy. The EUBAM supports the Libyan authorities at the strategic and operational level in developing land, sea, and air border management and security. The mandate of the EU NAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is to identify, capture, and dispose of vessels taking of part in human smuggling or trafficking in the Mediterranean Sea.

In Africa, the EU has missions in Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, and Somalia. The EU conducts military training missions to support the military forces in Mali, Somalia, and the Central African Republic through the EU Training Mission Mali (EUTM Mali)⁸, the EU Training Mission Somalia (EUTM Somalia)⁹, and the EU Training Mission Central African Republic (EUTM RCA)¹⁰. The EU also supports the building of military and security forces through EU Capacity Building Mission Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali)¹¹, EU Capacity Building Mission Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger)¹², and EU Capacity Building Mission Somalia (EUCAP Somalia)¹³. The EU Naval Mission in Somalia (EUNAVFOR Somalia)¹⁴ also helps to counter piracy off the coast of the country.

In Central Asia, the EU implements the civilian EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) to observe the execution of the EU-mediated Six Point Agreement along with the Administrative Boundary Lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.¹⁵

JIPOE STEP 2: Describe Impacts of the Operational Environment

Overview – Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions Analysis

The second step of the JIPOE describes the actors and their functions within the different domains along with the relations and tensions between them. The paper uses a modified version of the sources of the national power (DIME) as domains to analyze the relationship and tensions between the actors. The paper modified the Military source to the Terrorism-Crime source because the IS has terrorist and criminal potential in Europe instead of military one. The paper groups the actors into three groups: the IS related, the EU related, and the neutral groups that are the objects of the other actors or can influence them.

Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions at the Political Domain

In the political domain on the adversary side, there are the IS political leadership and the militant Salafist Organizations; on the EU side are the European Council, the Directorate General Home Affairs, and the CTC. For this research, the right-wing parties and the anti-Muslim movements are categorized as neutrals.

The paper assesses the IS leadership to direct all organizations providing command and control over its military, intelligence, terrorist, recruiting, and propaganda, etc. sub-organizations. It also offers ideological and likely financial support to the European Salafist organizations such as Sharia4 network in the United Kingdom, Belgium and The Netherland, the DIK in Germany, and the Prophet's Ummah in Norway. These organizations spread the extremist Salafi ideology within the Muslim communities in Europe.

On the EU side, there are governments of the member countries that are responsible for the development and implementation of their national counter-terrorism strategy and that direct the national counter-terrorism and counterintelligence agencies and law enforcement organizations in the terror-crime domain. The European Council is the EU's top political decision-making organization that includes the heads of the states: presidents or the prime ministers of member countries. It develops the EU's CTS and has control over the different organizations that support the counter-terrorism effort on the other domains. The Directorate General Home Affairs supports the European Council through the implementation of the counter-terrorism policy, including the exchange of information, support to victims, and managing the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking

Agreement. The CTC is responsible for recommending priorities and particular areas to the European Council and overseeing the coordination with third countries.¹⁶

However, the right-wing parties, possibly in cooperation with the anti-Muslim movements, are neutral actors; they likely have a significant role in the political domain because they influence the interim politics of the European countries and the Muslim communities.

The tensions are complex on this level. The IS and the militant Salafist organizations' intents are to disrupt the European system's stability; while Europe makes an effort to defeat the IS, at least in the territory of the EU, while restraining the extremist right-wing parties and terminating the violent anti-Muslim movements. The right-wing parties and the anti-Muslim movements are ideologically opposing the IS and the Muslims, and try to gain political advantage.

Relations, Actors, Functions and Tensions at the Terrorism-Criminal Domain

In the terrorism-criminal domain, the research identified only two groups, the IS group, and the European one. The IS group has four actors: the Emni, the IS operation cells, the returned foreign fighters, the lonely wolf attackers. The criminal organizations are neutral. On the EU side, contrary, there are the member countries' counter-terrorism, counter-intelligence agencies and law enforcement organizations, the EUROPOL, the EUROJUST, and the European Counter-Terrorism Center.

The Emni is the organization of the IS that is responsible for planning, preparation and execution of the intelligence, direct actions, and terror attacks inside and outside of the IS territory. It provides command and control and multiple support (financial, weapons, safe houses, transportation, etc.) through the covert operations cells to the

foreign fighters that conduct high lethality, sophisticated attacks in Europe.¹⁷ The lone wolf attacker inspired by the IS ideology conduct separate but less efficient attacks against European targets. However, they can have a connection only with the IS propaganda agents; they can receive small support from the operations cells.¹⁸ The criminal organizations collaborated with the IS operation cells and returned foreign fighter on the three level of the crime-terror nexus: the cooperation, the convergence, and the transition.¹⁹

On the European side, only the national counter-terrorism, counter-intelligence agencies, and law enforcement organizations take actions directly to defeat the above-described adversaries in the terror-crime domain. The EU's organizations cooperate with and provide support to the national organization listed above directly and/or the member states' governments. The EUROPOL²⁰ executes intelligence support and exchange between the member states through the European Counter-Terrorism Center. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) assists the EU and countries to manage their border security and facilitates cooperation between their border security agencies.²¹ The EUROJUST provides mutual legal assistance for the member states.²²

Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions at the Social Domain

In the social domain, the IS has the radicalization agents, the EU has the RAN, and the neutrals are the Muslim communities and the prisons. The radicalization agents can be online propaganda agents, radical mullahs, and friends or relatives who can engage the targeted groups and individuals in the Muslim communities and the prisons.²³ The paper assesses them to connect to the IS propaganda agencies and the militant Salafist organizations. The RAN, as a sub-organization of the EU Directorate General

Home Affairs, provides support to Muslim communities to identify the radicalized individuals and helps with the reintegration.²⁴

Relations, Actors, Functions, and Tensions at the Information Domain

The IS propaganda machine has two major elements in the information domain to spread Islamist propaganda and recruit new members for the IS among the Muslim communities: the Al Hayat Media and the A`maq Agency.²⁵ In opposition, the role of the EUROPOL's IRU is to explore, identify and monitor the Islamist violent online contents.²⁶

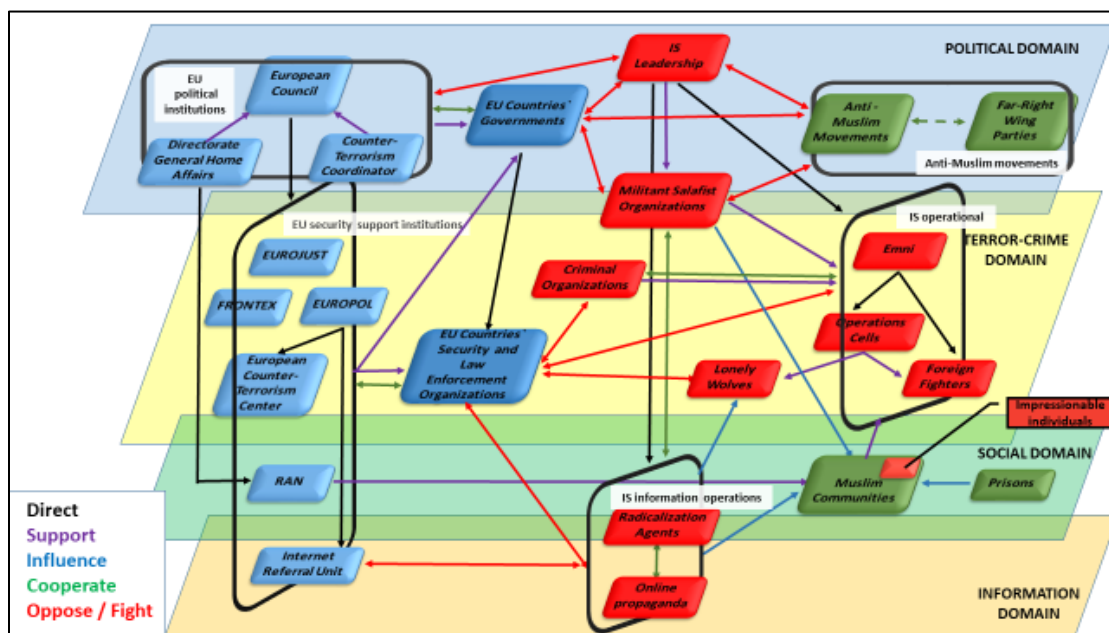


Figure 7. RAFT – Relations, Actors, Functions and Tensions

Source: Created by author.

JIPOE Step 3: Evaluating the Islamic State and Other Relevant Actors

IS Model

Political

On June 29, 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (also known as Abu Du`a) proclaimed the caliphate of the IS in Mosul, Iraq. As a Sunni caliphate, the IS gains its legitimacy from the Holy Koran and person of the caliphate who is al-Baghdadi. Thus, the political, religious, and the social systems of the state are not dividable. Baghdadi has the supreme power over the politics and the religion within the IS territory; furthermore, as a caliph, he is the self-proclaimed religious leader of all Sunni Muslims.²⁷

The highest level of the IS` s leadership includes the Baghdadi, the caliph, his cabinet as an advisor team, the Shura (or Leadership) Council responsible for the IS law and policies and theoretically, has the right to depose Baghdadi, and his two deputies responsible for the operations in Iraq and Syria. Both of them has the authority over 12 provinces with 12 governors each.²⁸

Similar to a presidential political system, the IS has seven other councils as secretaries. The Financial Council controls the IS treasury, the oil sales, and the other income. The Military Council directs the conventional and irregular military operations. The Legal Council makes decisions on executions and recruitment, and deals with religious misdemeanor and family disputes. The Fighter Assistance Council provides aid and housing for the foreign fighters and supports their movement in and out of the IS territory. The Security Council has control over the police, deals with security issues within the IS` s territory, and conducts executions. The Intelligence Council directs the intelligence collection, and the Media Council manages the media strategy.²⁹

The bases of the IS's administration were the provinces. There were 12 provinces in Iraq and 12 in Syria, each led by governors, their deputies, and Sharia officials. All governors led their provinces through offices called diwan. The diwans are the Diwan of Education, the Diwan for Public Morality Enforcement (Hishba), the Diwan of Soldierly, the Diwan of Health, the Diwan of Treasury, the Diwan of Tax (Zakat), the Diwan of Agriculture, the Diwan of Proselytizing and Mosques, the Diwan of Services, the Diwan of Resources, and the Diwan of War Spoils (Fay' and Ghana'im).³⁰

Military

After the proclamation of the caliphate in 2014, the IS shifted its effort from targeting the governments and the opposition groups to conducting major military operations. The IS's major military operations were incredibly successful, and they quickly occupied vast territories in Syria and Iraq. Later, U.S. and coalition forces air strikes forced the organization to change its doctrine and start to use smaller units and establish sleeper cells in targeted towns rather than assault the targets in larger groups. After the loss of Mosul in 2017, the IS adapted to the new situation and turned to an insurgency in Syria and Iraq.³¹

Foreign fighters played a significant role in IS military operations from the beginning. A majority of the foreign fighters were from Muslim countries (Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Jordan) and the Northern Caucasus region of Russia. Fighters from European countries had essential roles as well. The estimated number of foreign fighters with EU citizenship that participated in military operations in Syria or Iraq was estimated to be about 4,000. Most of those foreign fighters came from France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Belgium (See Table 1 on page 16.)

Although, the Emni serves as an internal police and a counter intelligence office, it is also the external operations unit with the purpose of exporting terror abroad. The group is responsible for deploying operatives back to Europe to connect with local IS sympathizers and conducts domestic attacks.³²

Economic

The IS has income from five different sources. Those sources are becoming more limited, however, due to territorial losses. The first IS income is the illicit proceeds resulting from their occupation of territory in Iraq and Syria. That source has seven sub-sources: bank looting, extortion, and human trafficking; control of oil and gas reservoirs; extorting agriculture; other resource extraction and production facilities; trading cultural artefacts; illicit taxation of goods and cash that transit territory where IS operates; and salary payments to Iraqi government employees. The second source of income is ransoms from kidnappings. The third source is donations, including by or through non-profit organizations. The next source is the material support, to include foreign fighters. The last income source comes from fundraising by and through modern communication networks.³³

Social

The IS introduced an extreme religious governance in its occupied territories. They used the fundamentalist Salafist interpretation of Sharia Law that covers all the areas of people's lives. The high-level of violence used to control the population and the exploitation of women as sex slaves led to a massive escape of civilians from the IS-

controlled territories. The mass exodus of civilians caused a significant refugee crisis in Iraq.³⁴

Information

The IS uses sophisticated online videos and social media to spread its propaganda, recruit new fighters, and influence lone wolf attackers. They also publish an online magazine called Dabiq in multiple languages. The magazine contains articles about battlefield events, administrative information, and articles about religious issues. The videos posted online showing brutal executions are part of the psychological warfare meant to intimidate adversaries and its populations.³⁵

Infrastructure

The IS service-oriented offices manage basic infrastructure such as electricity, water service, food, and humanitarian aid distribution, all of which requires less resources. After the consolidation of the military gains, the organization is capable of conducting more considerable industrial investments. At its high point, the IS was capable of providing and maintaining the state functions concerning the infrastructure.³⁶

The Islamic State's Operational Center of Gravity in Europe

There is no change to the goal of the IS - the establishment of a long-lasting and expanding caliphate³⁷ which includes Europe. The IS's Operational Center of Gravity in Europe is the impressionable Muslim population that possesses the ability to directly generate political, economic and social instability on the continent as its Critical Capability. The Critical Requirements are the foreign fighters, the sleeper cells, the

criminal organizations, and the IO. The Critical Vulnerabilities are the disillusioned and remorseful foreign fighters, the online activity, and the recruiters.

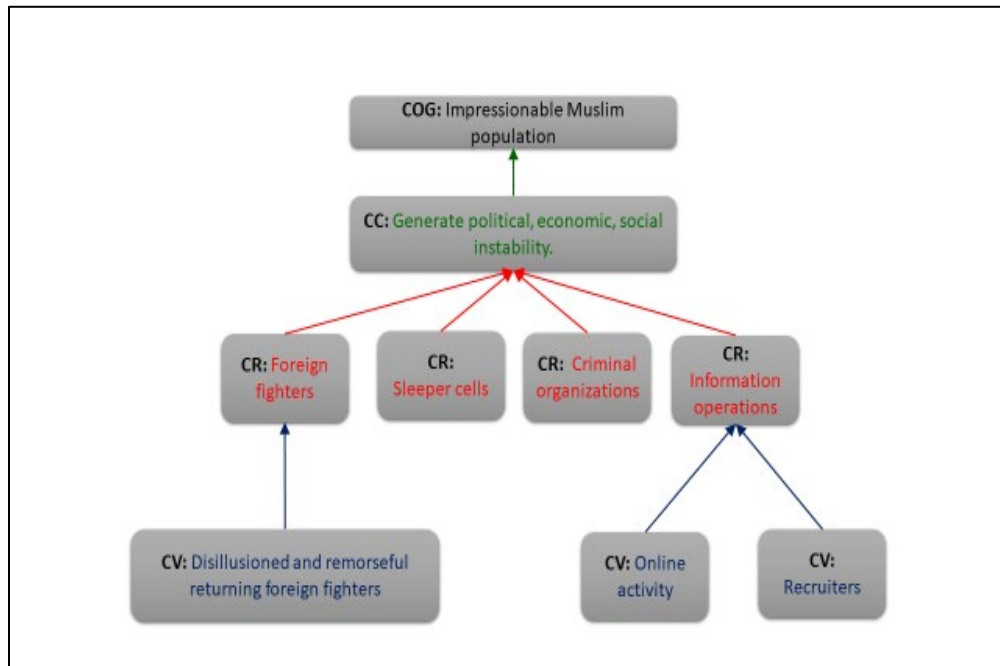


Figure 8. The Islamic State's Operational Center of Gravity in Europe

Source: Created by author.

The impressionable Muslim population is the Center of Gravity for the IS in Europe because it has moral or physical strength, freedom of action and the will to act to generate instability in Europe. First, it has the necessary physical strength to be the Center of Gravity because it is the pool for the foreign fighters, sleeper cells, and criminal organizations due to their young age, criminal background,³⁸ and underprivileged social economic circumstances³⁹. Next, they have the freedom of action, because, as European

citizens, can freely move within the EU and use their criminal skills and connections. Finally, the radicalization provides them the will to act.

The Critical Capability is the ability to generate political, economic, and social instability in Europe. The IS general strategy⁴⁰ follows the three stages of asymmetric warfare in which the incipient stage is the creation of instability in the area of operation.⁴¹ This strategy shows that generating instability in Europe is the Critical Capability to expand on the continent.

The foreign fighters, the sleeper cells, the criminal organizations, and the IO are the Critical Requirements that support the Critical Capability. The foreign fighters plan, prepare and execute highly lethal, externally directed coordinated attacks and are likely capable of attacking independently due to their skills, criminal connections and combat experience. The sleeper cells support the Critical Capability by providing intelligence, logistics, and financial support⁴² to the attackers. The criminal organizations support the Critical Capability through logistics support in the cooperation or convergence stage, and can conduct attacks in the transition stage of the terror-crime nexus.⁴³ The IO that the IS executes radicalizes the European Muslim population, recruits jihadists and intimidates the European civilian population.

The study assesses the disillusioned and remorseful foreign fighters, the online activity and the recruiters as the Critical Vulnerabilities for the IS in Europe. The disillusioned and remorseful foreign fighters can be good intelligence sources for the counter-terrorism organizations and can be a useful tool for an anti-IS propaganda campaign to prevent radicalization. While the first Critical Vulnerability relates to the foreign fighters, the second and third ones connect to IO. The online activity is vulnerable

to the EU member states cyber-attacks; and the security services can relatively easily identify, track and arrest the recruiters, such as radical imams or other agents in the Muslim community or prisons.

EU Model

Political

The EU has a confederative political system and structure. The EU has four main political bodies that make decisions primarily with consensus. The first is the European Parliament, which is the EU's law-making body with legislative, supervisory, and budgetary responsibilities.⁴⁴ The second body is the European Council, which includes the member states' leaders (presidents or prime ministers.) The European Council sets the political strategy of the community and presents the highest level of political cooperation.⁴⁵ The third organization is the Council of the European Union, which is where the government ministers adopt and discuss the common laws and policies.⁴⁶ The last political organization is the European Commission, which is a politically independent executive branch that implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Each member state has a representative in the commission. The commission is also responsible for the budget.⁴⁷

Military

Although there are common European security organizations, such as the EUROPOL or the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX)⁴⁸, there are no common European armed forces. Furthermore, the common organizations do not direct the security effort; they just support it.

The Common Security and Defense Policy determines the security issues of the EU. The common military defense is based on the partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴⁹

Economic and Infrastructure

The EU is a global economic power⁵⁰; therefore, the general welfare of citizens and the security of the infrastructure are very important to the member states. The economic power enables the greater European community to financially support the counter terrorism effort within and outside its territory.

Social

The EU has a historically Christian society; however, some countries have significant Muslim communities. These communities originate from two major places: from the former colonies of western European countries (mainly French and British colonies) and from Turkey. Generally, the European population is aging, but overall the population is growing due to the net migration.⁵¹ The fact that the migration originates from Muslim territories predicts a significantly increasing Muslim population rate throughout the western European countries.

Information

The IRU within the EUROPOL supports the defense against the IS's online IO campaign, however, the EU has no joint anti-propaganda machine to effectively balance the IS propaganda in Europe (similar to the military and the security area).⁵²

EU Operational Center of Gravity

The study defines the establishment of a safe and secure environment within the EU territory as the goal of the EU. For the EU, the member states are the Center of Gravity that possess the Critical Capability to maintain the democratic order and establish internal security. The Critical Requirements are the political institutions of the EU, the member states' security and law enforcement organizations, and the other European institutions that support the counter-terrorism. The Critical Vulnerabilities are the unity of effort, the unity of command, and the protection of civilians.

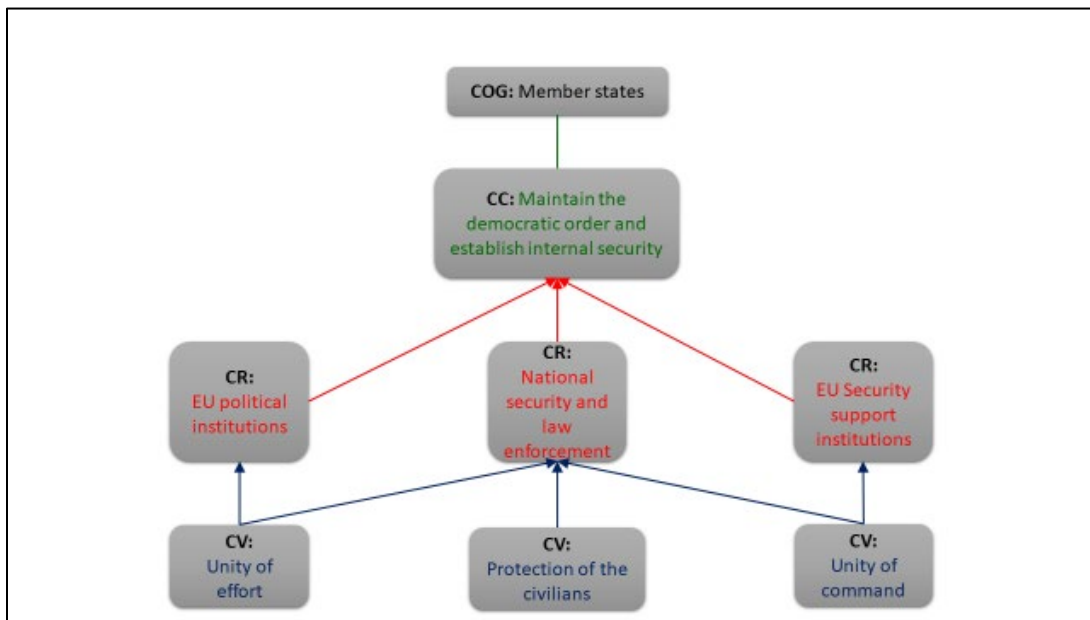


Figure 9. The European Union's Operational Center of Gravity

Source: Created by author.

The member states are the Center of Gravity because they possess the moral and physical strength, freedom of action and will to act to maintain the democratic order and

establish internal security. While the solid democratic legitimacy provides the moral compass, the security agencies, the law enforcement organizations, the legislative system and the necessary infrastructure provide the physical strength to the member states. Furthermore, the traditional legislative, executive, and judicial powers enable the freedom of action for them. Finally, the natural interest to protect their citizens and maintain their independence against the expanding IS provide the will to act.

The Critical Capability of the Center of Gravity is to maintain the democratic order and establish internal security utilizing its inherent capabilities explained in the previous paragraph.

There are three Critical Requirements necessary to support the Critical Capability. The EU strategic political institutions, such as the European Council, the CTC, and the Directorate General Home Affairs define the strategic directives for the member states and coordinate between them. The national security and law enforcement organizations make the direct effect on the IS' Center of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities. The European institutions that support the security on the EU level, such as the EUROPOL and the FRONTEX,⁵³ coordinate and share information between the national security and law enforcement organizations, and provide intelligence analysis support for them. The study identifies three Critical Vulnerabilities. The first is the unity of effort between the EU strategic political institutions. The CTC and the Directorate General Home Affairs don't have the power to implement policy for the member states; they are allowed to give only recommendations. The lack of a unity of effort is also evident between the national security and law enforcement organizations because of their decentralized planning. The second Critical Vulnerability is the unity of command between those same

organizations. There is significant decentralized execution between the national security and law enforcement organizations, and the EU strategic political institutions do not have the authority to give tasks to the governmental agencies and to act without the permission of the member states.⁵⁴

JIPOE Step 4: The Most Likely Islamic State Course of Action in Europe

The IS most likely will generate a continuous terrorist threat in short, mid and long term through increased and coordinated terrorist, criminal and propaganda activity in order to cause political, economic and social instability in the European states.

In the short-term, as a shaping phase, the IS will likely send the European foreign fighters (IS CR) home. The IS can accomplish this by utilizing the foreign fighters' European citizenship, the ongoing migration from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe, the existing human smuggling networks, and support from criminal organizations (IS CR) to set conditions for the future attacks.

In the mid-term, as a seize the initiative phase, the returned European foreign fighters (IS CR) will most likely execute an increased number of sophisticated attacks. They will likely join existing terrorist networks (IS CR) to carry out attacks independently against civilian targets (EU CV) utilizing their criminal skills and connections in Western Europe to weaken the member states' (EU CoG) governments by generating a wide scale sense of fear. At the same time, the returned European foreign fighters (IS CR) and their families will likely increase radicalization and recruitment efforts in Europe using their personal cogency within the Muslim communities targeting the jihadist sympathizers (IS CoG) in order to grow a new generation of Jihadists. The IS will likely alter its messaging on online and social media platforms to increase

recruitment in Europe among the impressionable Muslims (IS CoG) and intimidate the civilian population (EU CV). The IS will also likely shift financial resources to support the Muslim communities (IS CoG) in Europe to gain more political power within the EU, and directly support and indirectly sponsor attacks and radicalization in Europe.

In the long-term, as a dominate phase, the new generation Jihadists (IS CoG), including members of terrorist networks (IS CR) and lone-wolf attackers, will likely maintain a continuous terror threat by increasing the number of terrorist attacks against civilian (EU CV) and governmental targets to cause political, economic, and social instability in Europe.

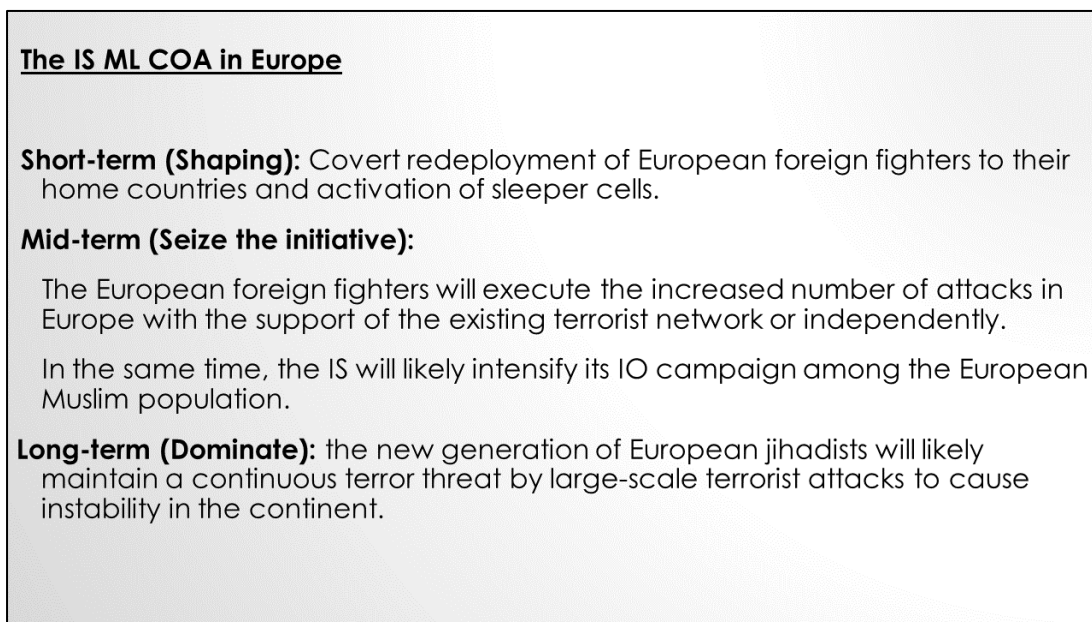


Figure 10. The Islamic State's Most Likely Course of Action in Europe

Source: Created by author.

Army Design Methodology

Overview

This sub-chapter develops a broad conceptual plan using the ADM that the EU could implement to defeat the terrorist threat in Europe. First, it frames the operational environment, including a description of the current situation and the desired end state based on the previous analysis, then frames the problem, and finally develops an operational approach.

Framing the Operational Environment

Current Situation

Based on the RAFT analysis, the CoG analysis, and the IS Most Probably COA in Europe, the paper assesses that the most effective means in the hands of the IS are the numerous returning foreign fighters having European citizenship. The estimated number of the European foreign fighters that have already returned home is about 1,500, and another 3,500 will probably return to Europe in a short time.⁵⁵ According to estimates, 1 in 9 fighters poses a high risk for European homeland security. These estimated 500-550 high-risk individuals get intelligence, operational, and logistics support from the existing terrorist networks, and cooperate and converge with the criminal organizations. They attack European targets and take part in the radicalization of the European Muslims through IS online propaganda that encourages individuals to join the IS or commit lone wolf attacks.

The EU political leadership, the European Council, supported by the CTC and the Directorate General Home Affairs, defines the common CTS for the elements of the member states' governments that direct national security and law enforcement

organizations. These national security organizations have to combat the terrorist threat, which is a national responsibility. Monitoring the returned foreigners is complicated, because 24/7 surveillance of the high-risk returnees requires approximately 30 intelligence and security personnel.⁵⁶ The EUROPOL, with its sub-organizations like the European Counter-Terrorism Center, the RAN, and the IRU, support the national security organizations with intelligence and helps them to cooperate amongst one another. The EUROJUST provides legal assistance for the member states concerning counter-terrorism issues.

Desired End State

Taking into account the RAFT analysis, the CoG analysis, and the IS Most Likely COA in Europe, the paper defines the desired end state in four areas. These desired conditions are an increase in the identification and arrest of the high-risk foreign fighters and terrorist network; the neutralization of criminal organizations; a decrease in the radicalization of the Muslim population; and the unity of command within the different EU organization conducting counter-terrorism.

Problem Statement

How can the EU increase its unity of command and defeat the high-risk foreign fighters and terrorist networks within the territory of Europe while decreasing the radicalization among the growing Muslim population?

The Operational Approach

The European Union's Possible Objectives

The defined problem statement indicates two primary objectives for the EU: defeat the terrorist threat and eliminate the radicalization of Muslim individuals. Defeating the terrorist threat is essential to deny the destruction of European society through a continuous terrorist threat. The elimination of the radicalization process among young Muslim individuals can decrease the number of terrorist supporters and attacks in the short term, and prevent the growth of a new jihadist generation within the EU in the long term.

Line of Operation and Lines of Effort

Line of Operation: Defeat

In the LOO, the research determined five decision points (DP) to achieve the first primary objective, which is to defeat the terrorist threat. The first is the identification and the arrest of the high-risk foreign fighters to destroy the IS operational CoG (DP1.) The second one is the defeat terrorist network to isolate foreign fighters from resources and support and to disintegrate the IS command and control network in the EU (DP2.) The third one is the neutralization of the criminal organizations to isolate the high-risk foreign fighters from other support (DP3.) The next one is the development of strict common law against terrorism to increase the EU's unity of effort and command, and to dissuade possible jihadists (DP4.) The last objective is enabling the EUROPOL to not only support, but to have the right to act in the member states directly in order to increase the EU's unity of command and defeat the IS terrorist capability in Europe (DP5.)

Line of Effort 1: Information

The recommended LOE 1 focuses on the second primary objective: eliminate the radicalization of Muslim individuals. The paper first suggests the development and synchronization of a comprehensive IO campaign to influence the Muslim population to accept and support their integration into the European social and cultural system (DP6.) Next, the research proposes the need to monitor radical media contents and Neutralize radical Salafist imams in order to isolate IS propaganda and radicalization agents from its targeted groups (DP7.) Lastly, the research suggests an open dialog with moderate imams to influence the Muslim population not cooperate with extremists (DP8.)

Line of Effort 2: Integration

The proposed LOE 2 also focuses on the second primary objective. The first recommendation is to develop more educational opportunities for young Muslims (positive discrimination) to positively influence their integration into European society (DP9.) The second suggestion is the reintegration of non-high-risk foreign fighters (DP10) in order to control, influence, and support them. The third recommendation is to improve infrastructure within the poor Muslim populated areas (DP11) to help improve Muslim communities in general. The last recommendation is to establish job opportunities in poor Muslim populated areas to provide positive outlets within Muslim communities (DP12.)

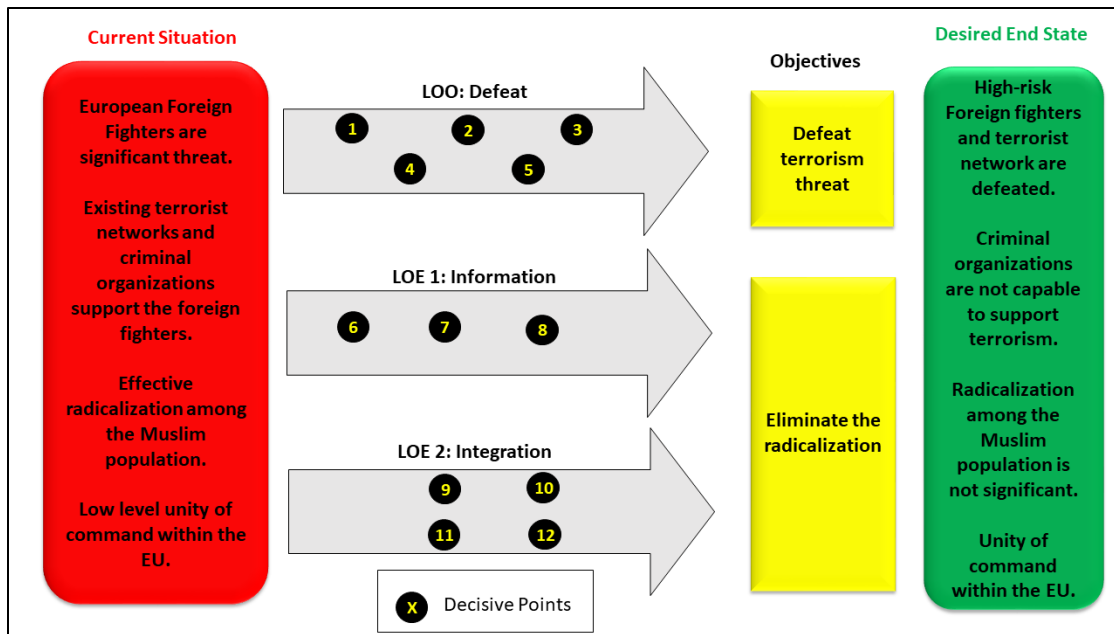


Figure 11. Proposed EU Operational Approach

Source: Created by author.

The European Union's Possible Countermeasures

The recommended operational approach answers Secondary Research Question 2 by targeting the IS's operational CoG using both a direct and indirect approach while decreasing the EU's Critical Vulnerability. Targeting the impressionable Muslim population engages the IS's operational CoG, which is the direct approach. The indirect approach targets the Critical Vulnerabilities such as the disillusioned foreign fighters, the online propaganda, and the recruiters. The operational approach also engages the Critical Requirements such as foreign fighters, sleeper cells, and criminal organizations. At the same time, the proposed operational approach decreases the EU's Critical Vulnerability that are the unity of effort and the unity of command and through the development of

strict common laws against terrorism and enabling EUROPOL to act in the member states.

The researcher identified four possible options to increase the European counter-terrorism's efficiency and mitigate the threat of jihadist terrorism. The first possibility is to increase the unity of effort and the unity of command of between the security organizations. The second one is to conduct an offensive IO campaign with centralized them but tailored messages to the specific targeted groups. The third one is to execute a centralized and offensive cyber operation against the IS. The last possibility is to consolidate the gains of the integration of the increasing Muslim population and reintegration of the returning foreign fighters and their families in long-term.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter first identified the IS's Most Likely COA that answers Secondary Research Question 1 by using JIPOE: How is the IS likely to alter its strategy of hybrid warfare in Europe in the wake of a territorial collapse in the Middle East? The study expects that the IS will increase its terrorist and IO activity in Europe. After the covert redeployment to their home countries (shaping), the European foreign fighters will execute increased number of attacks in Europe with the support of the existing terrorist network or independently. In the same time the IS will likely intensify its IO campaign among the European Muslim population (seize the initiative.) Finally, the new generation of European jihadists will likely maintain a continuous terror threat by large-scale terrorist attacks to cause instability in the continent.

Next, it developed an operational approach for the EU using ADM to answer Secondary Research Question 2: What are the options for European countries to mitigate

emerging threats from the Islamic State? The study identified four options: the increase of the unity of effort and command within the EU, launching an offensive IO campaign targeting the European Muslim population, executing an offensive cyber operation against the IS and consolidate the gains in long-term.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify the possible changes in the Islamic State's (IS) strategy in Europe after the collapse of its strongholds in the Iraq and Syria and to explore possible countermeasures that European countries might implement to mitigate the future threat. The research developed proposals through the development of the IS's Most Likely COA, an operational design, and the synthesis of those concerning the EU's recent internal security strategy.

Chapter 5 first summarizes the findings from Chapter 4, then synthesizes the results of the JIPOE and ADM and the EU's recent countermeasures. Next, it proposes specific countermeasures to answer the Primary Research Question: What countermeasures should the European countries take in response to likely changes in IS strategy? Furthermore, the chapter describes the interpretation of the results; and finally, it gives recommendations for further studies to answer the unanswered questions.

Summary of the Results of Chapter 4

The research identified the extreme Salafist ideology as the IS strategic level CoG and the economy as its Critical Vulnerability. At the operational level in Europe, the paper determined the foreign fighters as the CoG for the IS and the weakening Emni operational and financial support as its Critical Vulnerability. Concerning the EU, Chapter 4 found that its CoG is the member states' counter-terrorism and law enforcement organizations, while its Critical Vulnerability is unity of command.

The IS's Most Probable COA in the shaping phase is deploying European foreign fighters back to Western European countries to set conditions for future attacks. During the initiative phase, the returning European foreign fighters will likely execute an increased number of sophisticated attacks by joining existing terrorist networks and carrying out attacks independently. The returning European foreign fighters and their families will likely increase radicalization and recruitment in Europe while the IS will likely change its information message on online and social media platforms to improve recruitment in Europe. The IS will likely shift financial resources to support the Muslim communities in Europe in order to gain more political power within the EU. In addition, those financial resources will also be used to directly support and indirectly sponsor attacks and radicalization in Europe. In the dominating phase, the new generation Jihadist will probably maintain a continuous terror threat by increasing the number of terrorist attacks to cause political, economic, and social instability in Europe.

The research results produced a design with a broad approach to engage the terrorist threat in Europe using the combination of direct and indirect approaches to combat returning foreign fighters (IS operational CoG). The LOO directly combats the foreign fighters, the terrorist networks, and the criminal organizations in Europe with defeat mechanisms. The Information and Integration Lines of Effort indirectly target the IS's operational CoG through stability mechanisms.

Synthesis of JIPOE and ADM produced options for specific legislative, institutional, and developmental recommendations that support the direct approach and foster the EU's Critical Vulnerability, the unity of command. Recommended legislative proposals are the acceptance of a unified common European law against terrorism and

providing legal authority to the EUROPOL to act independently. This paper next recommends an institutional proposal, which is the creation of an Information Operations (IO) center and a cyber-command to lead, coordinate, and synchronize the information and cyber efforts of the member states. Finally, the paper recommends infrastructure improvement and job development within the European Muslim communities to enable a positive long-term effect on the integration of these communities into their respective EU member nations.

Synthesis of Secondary Research Questions

This sub-chapter identifies the differences and the possible challenges for the EU, along with the LOO and LOEs, through a synthesis of the IS's Most Likely COA and the proposed operational approach.

The EU identified foreign fighters as a priority threat related to terrorism.¹ The CTC issued a 22-point proposal² endorsed by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in June 2013. That proposal developed a broad concept to engage the identified threat of the foreign fighters. Furthermore, the other priority of the EU is the prevention of the radicalization of Muslims. The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs issued the "Report on Prevention of Radicalisation and Recruitment of European Citizens by Terrorist Organisations,"³ which was based on the EU Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020. These documents identify and determine objectives that are in parity with the operational approach defined by this paper, however, there are significant differences among the LOO and the LOEs. This paragraph compares and contrasts these parties between the existing EU strategy and the developed operational approach.

Although the current EU strategy emphasizes the importance of defeating the terrorist networks and criminal organizations in Europe, the paper identifies a possible severe vulnerability in this approach. The strategy puts responsibility for counter-terrorism into the hands of the member states and makes the assumption that the member states can identify and arrest high-risk foreign fighters. It does not take into account that the national security organizations likely have limited capacity to identify, surveil, and defeat (arrest) high-risk foreign fighters returning in mass. The paper estimates, however, that the member states are the EU's identified CoG, the EU has to increase the unity of effort and command.

The EU established the Internet Referral Unit (IRU) to identify and remove violent contents from the Internet and suggested that the member states form similar organizations. This unit is very effective in protecting individuals, but it lacks an offensive capability. The paper assesses that in order to gain the initiative in the cyber and information domains, it will be necessary to build a centralized offensive cyber activity.

However, the prevention of the further radicalization including the dialogue with the religious (Muslim) organizations is an essential area for the EU's strategy; the research recommends targeting the radicalization agents including extremist Salafist imams directly.

The EU has a comprehensive plan to reintegrate the returning foreign fighters and their families, which was developed by the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) Center of Excellence. This paper does not assess the need for improvement or timeline for completion of that plan.

Although the EU emphasizes the importance of education to prevent radicalization as well, this paper identified a need to complete this objective with the development of the necessary infrastructure and job opportunities to achieve long-term success. The research assesses that the education of the young Muslim individuals without providing them a long-term alternative includes the risk of developing well-educated potential jihadists and jihadist leaders in the mid- and long-term.

This sub-chapter further identifies differences concerning high-risk foreign fighters, the information and cyber counter-measures, and prevention of radicalization in the mid- and long-term. The identified challenges of the EU are the basis for proposing specific solutions to answer the primary research question: What countermeasures should the European countries take in response to likely changes in ISIS strategy?

Recommended Countermeasures

A previous sub-chapter synthesized the JIPOE and the ADM, then identified the specific challenges for the EU through comparing and contrasting the results of the synthesis and the EU's recent counter-terrorism strategy. Based on the JIPOE and the developed operational approach, the paper proposed measures and counter-measures in three major areas: the implementation of legislative changes, the establishment of new institutions, and the overall conduct of ongoing projects.

The EU needs legislative reform to enable the EU, the member states, and security organizations to act with more efficiency. However, as EU member states implement legislative counter-measures to deter terrorist activity, recruiting, and support to terrorist organizations (See Table 2 on page 26), they are not the same the same across the board or as strict as necessary. To prevent the jihadists, recruiters, and supporters

from simply moving to another member state where the regulations are less strict, the EU should unify this type of counter-measure through the development of common law. This common law adopted by each individual national laws could deter the possible jihadist from joining the IS and eliminate the radicalization agents. Based on the confederative political nature, the EUROPOL has no executive power or the authority to conduct criminal investigations and make arrests without the approval of the member states. The expected return of foreign fighters in mass will likely create challenges and limitations for national security organizations and require more support from the EUROPOL. The EUROPOL cannot provide more support to them without executive power. Thus, this paper proposes to give legal authority to the EUROPOL, so that it may act independently from the member states.

This paper recommends establishing new EU-level institutions to make the union more efficient in the information and cyber domains. The first proposed organization is an IO center. This center could develop and execute a comprehensive information operations campaign to prevent radicalization and target the IS. The campaigns could use unified themes, but tailor messages to engage specific groups in the different member states. The next organization recommended for establishment is a cyber-command, similar to the IRU. This organization could execute not only the monitoring and filtering the violent Internet content, but execute offensive cyber operations against the IS and its terrorist networks. It could also lead, coordinate, and synchronize the national cyber operations to economize the cyber forces and increase efficiency. The cyber unit could work in close cooperation with the IO center to enable mutual support.

In support of the EU strategy that proposes the education of young Muslims, this paper recommends executing additional projects to develop the infrastructure and establish new jobs within Muslim communities. These projects, funded by the EU budget, could consolidate gains and have a profound impact on the endangered groups' education in the long term.

This sub-chapter describes the proposed measures and counter-measures for the EU to mitigate the risk of jihadist terrorism. The paper recommends legislative changes to unify the legal sanctions and improve the EUROPOL authority, institutional measures through the establishment of an IO center and a cyber-command to enable effective information and cyber operations against the IS, and EU-funded projects to consolidate the mid-term gains that the counter-measures achieve against radicalization.

Interpretation of the Results

Because this study and the EU CTS identified the returning foreign fighters as the CoG for the IS in Europe and the most significant threat, the recommended operational approach is similar to the EU's recent strategy. In spite of the similarities, the research identifies three vulnerabilities in the EU's current strategy based on the similarities and differences between the recent EU strategy and the proposed operational approach. The first weakness relates to the foreign fighters. The member states' security organizations will likely have limited capacity to identify, surveillance, and defeat the high-risk foreign fighters returning Europe in mass, and EUROPOL has no authority to conduct direct actions without the permission of the member states. The second weakness is that the information and cyber efforts are decentralized and lack offensive capability. Finally, the integration and the prevention of radicalization have no long-term approach to

consolidate gains. The study recommends specific legislative, institutional, and infrastructure and job development solutions described in Chapter 4 to eliminate these vulnerabilities.

	Feasibility	Effect
Unified common law against terrorism	Short-term	Short-term
More authority for The EUROPOL	Not feasible due to the MS's supporting the confederative (political system) EU.	
IO center	Short-term	Medium-term
Cyber command	Short-term	Short-term
Infrastructure developments	Short/Medium-term	Long-term

Figure 12. Interpretation of the Result

Source: Created by author.

The recommendations differ in feasibility and effects (see Figure 12 above.) The proposed unified common law to combat terrorism is realizable in the short-term with the short-term effects being the deterrence of possible jihadists to join the IS and defeat of radicalization agents. Because of the confederative political structure of the EU, the paper assesses that giving legal authority to EUROPOL to conduct direct investigations and arrests without the permission of the member states is not feasible. There is no real chance that the countries supporting the confederative EU will accept this law, as they likely feel that it would decrease their independence within the EU. The EU could create an IO center and a cyber-command center in the short-term, which would certainly strengthen the coordination and synchronization of the nations' IO and cyber activity. This would also improve the unity of effort and the unity of command in short and mid-term. The development of the Muslim community's infrastructure and the creation of

jobs for young Muslims needs a mid-term approach, which would create the long-term effect of integrating Muslim individuals into the European society and preventing radicalization.

Conclusion

The study developed the IS's Most Probable COA to answer how the IS is likely to alter its strategy of hybrid warfare in Europe in the wake of a territorial collapse in the Middle East. Then, it developed an operational design to develop options for European countries to mitigate emerging threats from the IS. Through synthesis of these Secondary Research Question results, the research provided a comprehensive set of options to answer the Primary Research Question: "What countermeasures should the European countries take in response to likely changes in IS strategy?"

In light of the evidence available and previous research conducted, the study recommended a comprehensive approach and implementation of specific solutions to mitigate the terrorist threat in Europe.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends further studies in two areas to address unanticipated questions that could not be addressed with this research design. The first relates to the limitations of this study. Further research is needed to develop the IS's Most Dangerous COA as well, and identify the necessary changes in the proposed operational approach and specific recommendations related to the most dangerous scenario. The second recommendation relates to the scope of the study. This paper suggests solutions for the threat only through counter-measures conducted within the EU's territory. To develop a

more effective mitigation of the threat of the jihadist danger in Europe, it is most likely necessary to make external diplomatic, military, IO, and economic actions, in the EU Area of Influence, beyond the EU's physical boundaries (See Figure 6 on page 38.) A study that identifies specific actions or efforts in the EU Area of Interest is likely to prove valuable to the EU and its citizens.

¹ Van Ginkel et al., 11.

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³ Rachida Dati, *Draft report on prevention of radicalisation and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organisations (2015/2063(INI))*, European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, June 1, 2018, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-551.967+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

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