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STO TECHNICAL REPORT

TR-HFM-278

Preventing and Countering Radicalisation to Violence

(Prévention et lutte contre la radicalisation
menant à la violence)

Final Report of the NATO Human Factors and Medicine – 278
Research Task Group.



Published August 2020

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The NATO Science and Technology Organization

Science & Technology (S&T) in the NATO context is defined as the selective and rigorous generation and application of state-of-the-art, validated knowledge for defence and security purposes. S&T activities embrace scientific research, technology development, transition, application and field-testing, experimentation and a range of related scientific activities that include systems engineering, operational research and analysis, synthesis, integration and validation of knowledge derived through the scientific method.

In NATO, S&T is addressed using different business models, namely a collaborative business model where NATO provides a forum where NATO Nations and partner Nations elect to use their national resources to define, conduct and promote cooperative research and information exchange, and secondly an in-house delivery business model where S&T activities are conducted in a NATO dedicated executive body, having its own personnel, capabilities and infrastructure.

The mission of the NATO Science & Technology Organization (STO) is to help position the Nations' and NATO's S&T investments as a strategic enabler of the knowledge and technology advantage for the defence and security posture of NATO Nations and partner Nations, by conducting and promoting S&T activities that augment and leverage the capabilities and programmes of the Alliance, of the NATO Nations and the partner Nations, in support of NATO's objectives, and contributing to NATO's ability to enable and influence security and defence related capability development and threat mitigation in NATO Nations and partner Nations, in accordance with NATO policies.

The total spectrum of this collaborative effort is addressed by six Technical Panels who manage a wide range of scientific research activities, a Group specialising in modelling and simulation, plus a Committee dedicated to supporting the information management needs of the organization.

- AVT Applied Vehicle Technology Panel
- HFM Human Factors and Medicine Panel
- IST Information Systems Technology Panel
- NMSG NATO Modelling and Simulation Group
- SAS System Analysis and Studies Panel
- SCI Systems Concepts and Integration Panel
- SET Sensors and Electronics Technology Panel

These Panels and Group are the power-house of the collaborative model and are made up of national representatives as well as recognised world-class scientists, engineers and information specialists. In addition to providing critical technical oversight, they also provide a communication link to military users and other NATO bodies.

The scientific and technological work is carried out by Technical Teams, created under one or more of these eight bodies, for specific research activities which have a defined duration. These research activities can take a variety of forms, including Task Groups, Workshops, Symposia, Specialists' Meetings, Lecture Series and Technical Courses.

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Preventing and Countering Radicalisation to Violence

(STO-TR-HFM-278)

Executive Summary

In 2015, a United Kingdom (GBR) representative from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) submitted a proposal to the NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO), Human Factors and Medicine (HFM) Panel. The proposal was entitled “Radicalisation, Social Media and Responses to the Current Extremist Threat” and was considered at the October 2015 HFM Panel Business Meeting. As well as GBR as the proposer, four other countries – Bulgaria, Canada, Slovenia, Sweden (BUL, CAN, SLO, SWE) indicated an interest in collaborating to investigate this topic, and an Exploratory Team (ET) was approved by the HFM Panel (HFM ET-147). Following this, an initial HFM ET-147 meeting was held in Sofia (BUL) in March 2016, attended by representatives from the five countries named above and Chaired by GBR. The goals were to:

- Present, share and discuss existing understanding and expertise related to radicalisation, social media and responses to the current extremist threat;
- Identify (a) knowledge gaps and issues regarding radicalisation, social media and responses to the current extremist threat, and (b) possible solutions to address these gaps and issues;
- Develop an agreed Programme of Work, to include goals to be achieved and the study methodology; and
- Identify and share national experiences and opportunities for cooperation.

Based on the proceedings of the meeting, the ET developed a Technical Activity Proposal (TAP) that included a Programme of Work and Terms of Reference. The TAP was entitled ‘Preventing and Countering Radicalisation to Violence’, and was endorsed by the HFM Panel and approved by the STO Steering Board (STB) in July 2016. Interested parties included Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Great Britain, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, United States of America (BEL, BUL, CAN, GBR, NOR, ROU, SLO, SWE and USA) and representatives from each of these countries formed a NATO Research Task Group (HFM-278 RTG) that first met in January 2017. Members are all experts on terrorism and extremism and represent government departments, intelligence communities, practitioners and academic researchers.

Presented in this NATO STO Technical Report is a summary of the work conducted by HFM-278 RTG between January 2017 and March 2020. Provided is an overview of this project, in terms of the background, rationale and methodologies applied to achieve the aims and objectives set by the RTG. The project was focused on assisting those responsible for addressing Defence and Security (D&S) challenges relating to:

- Radicalisation to violence (referred to forthwith as ‘mobilisation’) in home countries, which can lead to support for and involvement in activities and operations by foreign terrorist groups;
- How to prevent and counter mobilisation; and
- The role of the Internet (including social media) as a tool for mobilisation, as well as how the Internet might be used to counter and prevent this.

The RTG was most interested in how to prevent or counter those travelling abroad to fight, how to manage returnees, how to prevent and counter individuals and groups planning attacks on domestic soil, and others who directly or indirectly facilitate violence in the name of overseas terrorist organisations. These may include Islamist extremists but also those inspired by other ideologies (e.g., the extreme right wing) and other factors. Topics in scope included how extremist organisations use the Internet and other methods to appeal to and recruit potential foreign fighters, and evidence-based approaches that may be effective in preventing and/or countering mobilisation. The goal was to develop a tool that can facilitate and ensure that Counter Terrorism (CT) and Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (CPVE) efforts are informed by high quality, evidence-based resources.

The aims of the RTG were to:

- 1) Develop an Information Repository that captures materials and resources related to the topics of interest; and
- 2) Summarise activities, findings and recommendations in a short technical report (the current STO Technical Report) and a separate annotated briefing that can be used to promote and disseminate project findings.

The objectives of the RTG were to:

- 1) Collaborate to identify, gather, collate and capture existing high quality work (based on scientific principles and methods) on the topics of interest; and
- 2) Hold a NATO science for peace advanced research workshop (ARW) in order to access practitioner and expert requirements and opinions on this topic.

These activities informed and facilitated the design and development of the Information Repository and ensured that the literature and resources included are of high quality and based on sound, scientific methods.

Over three years, members of HFM-278 RTG collaboratively designed and developed the Information Repository, using the ‘Zotero’ referencing software as a database for a custom designed tool. The repository is a prototype¹ that has various search features and comprises 60+ resources (e.g., academic papers, government reports, databases²) that were each identified and reviewed by RTG members. Every resource is presented with an accompanying expert overview written by an RTG member, which explains how, when and why information in the document can be used and applied to specific real-world D&S problems. That is, the repository provides access to high quality resources together with a short overview (of how each can be translated to practice) that has been written by an expert on the topic. NATO and the RTG are now exploring options for the repository to be further developed by an appropriate academic institution (to be confirmed) who host and maintain it on their website, as a free, open source resource available to all. It is anticipated that this will be a useful and usable tool for, for example, government policy makers, CT and CPVE practitioners and academic researchers.³

¹ The product is ready to use ‘as is’, but there is also opportunity for further development and population with additional articles.

² The database section was included late in the project as an area to develop in the future. As such, it currently exists as a ‘placeholder’ in the repository but requires population.

³ The Dstl reference for this report is DSTL/TR121985.

Prévention et lutte contre la radicalisation menant à la violence (STO-TR-HFM-278)

Synthèse

En 2015, un représentant de Grande-Bretagne (GBR) issu du Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) a présenté une proposition à la Commission sur les facteurs humains et la médecine (HFM) de l'Organisation pour la science et la technologie (STO) de l'OTAN. Cette proposition, intitulée « radicalisation, médias sociaux et réponses à la menace extrémiste actuelle », a été étudiée lors de la réunion de travail de la Commission HFM en octobre 2015. En plus du pays ayant émis cette proposition, quatre autres, Bulgarie, Canada, Slovénie, Suède (BUL, CAN, SLO, SWE) ont fait part de leur intérêt à collaborer à l'examen de ce sujet et la Commission HFM a approuvé la création d'une équipe exploratoire (ET) (ET-147 HFM). Suite à cela, une réunion initiale de l'ET-147 HFM s'est tenue à Sofia (BUL) en mars 2016, en présence des représentants des cinq pays mentionnés ci-dessus, sous la présidence de la GBR. Les objectifs étaient les suivants :

- Présenter, partager et discuter de la compréhension et de l'expertise liées à la radicalisation, aux médias sociaux et aux réponses à la menace extrémiste actuelle ;
- Identifier (a) les lacunes et les questions concernant la radicalisation, les médias sociaux et les réponses à la menace extrémiste actuelle et (b) les solutions possibles pour y apporter des réponses ;
- S'accorder sur un programme des travaux incluant les objectifs à atteindre et la méthodologie de l'étude ; et
- Identifier et partager les expériences nationales et les occasions de coopération.

Sur la base des actes de la réunion, l'ET a établi une proposition d'activité technique (TAP) qui comprenait un programme des travaux et un mandat. La TAP s'intitulait « Prévention et lutte contre la radicalisation menant à la violence » et a été avalisée par la Commission HFM et approuvée par le comité directeur (STB) de la STO en juillet 2016. Les parties intéressées étaient Belgique, Bulgarie, Canada, Grande-Bretagne, Norvège, Roumanie, Slovénie, Suède, États-Unis d'Amérique (BEL, BUL, CAN, GBR, NOR, ROU, SLO, SWE et USA) et les représentants de chacun de ces pays ont constitué un groupe de recherche OTAN (RTG HFM-278), qui s'est réuni pour la première fois en janvier 2017. Les membres, tous experts du terrorisme et de l'extrémisme, représentent des ministères, la communauté du renseignement, les praticiens et les chercheurs universitaires.

Ce rapport technique de la STO de l'OTAN présente un résumé des travaux menés par le RTG HFM-278 entre janvier 2017 et mars 2020. La présentation générale de ce projet indique le contexte, la motivation et les méthodologies appliquées pour atteindre les objectifs établis par le RTG. Le projet visait à aider les responsables confrontés aux défis de défense et de sûreté (D&S) liés à :

- La radicalisation menant à la violence (ci-après appelée « mobilisation ») dans les pays d'origine, qui peut entraîner le soutien et l'implication dans des activités et opérations réalisées par des groupes extrémistes étrangers ;
- La manière de prévenir et contrer la mobilisation ; et

- Le rôle d'Internet (y compris les médias sociaux) comme outil de mobilisation et comme outil pour empêcher et contrer la mobilisation.

Le RTG était très intéressé par la prévention ou la lutte contre l'engagement au combat des personnes voyageant à l'étranger, la gestion des rapatriés, la prévention et la lutte contre les personnes et les groupes planifiant des attaques sur le territoire national et ceux qui facilitent directement ou indirectement la violence au nom d'organisations terroristes étrangères. Cela peut inclure des extrémistes islamistes, mais également ceux inspirés par d'autres idéologies (par exemple, l'extrême droite) et d'autres facteurs. Les sujets étudiés incluaient la façon dont les organisations extrémistes utilisent Internet et d'autres méthodes pour séduire et recruter des combattants étrangers potentiels, ainsi que les démarches basées sur des éléments tangibles susceptibles d'être efficaces dans la prévention et/ou la lutte contre la mobilisation. Le but était de mettre au point un outil pouvant faciliter et garantir que les actions de contre-terrorisme (CT) et de lutte et prévention de l'extrémisme violent (CPVE) soient éclairées par des ressources factuelles de qualité supérieure.

Les objectifs du RTG étaient les suivants :

- 1) élaborer un référentiel d'informations contenant les éléments et ressources liés aux sujets en question et
- 2) résumer les activités, conclusions et recommandations dans un bref rapport technique (le présent rapport technique de la STO) et un exposé annoté distinct, qui puisse être utilisé pour mettre en valeur et diffuser les conclusions du projet.

Les axes de travail du RTG étaient les suivants :

- 1) collaborer en vue de l'identification, du recueil, de la collation et de l'enregistrement des travaux de qualité supérieure existants (basés sur des principes et méthodes scientifiques) concernant les sujets en question et
- 2) organiser un séminaire de recherche avancée (ARW) afin d'accéder aux exigences et opinions des praticiens et spécialistes en la matière.

Ces activités ont éclairé et facilité la conception et la mise au point du référentiel d'informations et garanti que la littérature et les ressources incluses étaient de qualité élevée et reposaient sur des méthodes scientifiques saines.

Pendant trois ans, les membres du RTG HFM-278 ont conçu et mis au point le référentiel d'informations en collaboration, à l'aide du logiciel de gestion des références bibliographiques « Zotero » comme base de données d'outil personnalisé. Le référentiel est un prototype⁴ ayant diverses fonctionnalités de recherche. Il comprend plus de 60 ressources (par exemple, des articles scientifiques, des rapports gouvernementaux, des bases de données⁵) qui ont toutes été identifiées et examinées par les membres du RTG. Chaque ressource s'accompagne d'une présentation générale par un spécialiste, membre du RTG, qui explique comment, quand et pourquoi les informations du document peuvent être employées et appliquées à des problèmes spécifiques de D&S du monde réel. Autrement dit, le référentiel donne accès à des ressources de qualité élevée et à un aperçu (de ce que chacune d'elles peut apporter en pratique) rédigé par un expert en la matière. L'OTAN et le RTG étudient actuellement les options de développement ultérieur du référentiel par un établissement universitaire approprié (à confirmer) qui l'hébergerait et le tiendrait à la disposition de tous sur son site Internet, en tant que ressource gratuite et open source. Cet outil devrait être utile et pouvoir être utilisé, par exemple, par des responsables du gouvernement, des praticiens et des chercheurs universitaires dans le domaine du CT et de la CPVE.⁶

⁴ Le produit est prêt à l'emploi « tel quel », mais il est également possible de le développer et de l'alimenter avec d'autres articles.

⁵ La partie base de données a été incluse tardivement dans le projet, comme domaine à développer à l'avenir. En l'état, il s'agit d'un « paramètre fictif » dans le référentiel, qui doit être alimenté.

⁶ La référence du Dstl pour ce rapport est DSTL/TR121985.

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING RADICALISATION TO VIOLENCE

1.0 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In recent years, terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda (AQ) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also referred to as ISIS or Daesh) have been notably successful in recruiting young Western citizens, male and female, in order to support their cause; whether by providing funds, Information Technology (IT) and other expertise from afar, by travelling abroad to assist with logistics, attack planning and so on, or even to fight in conflicts against the West, local authorities and populations, and occupying territories. The latter are referred to here as ‘Western Foreign Terrorist Fighters’ (WTFs), and recently, WTFs have been involved in planning, facilitating, engineering, and/or conducting terrorist attacks across Europe, as well as in Canada, the US and Australia. Some of these WTFs have strong links with cells overseas in countries such as Iraq and Syria, and some have visited these places to receive training and fight alongside others; then returning to the West to conduct acts of extreme violence in the name of Jihad. Other WTFs have left their home countries and remain in conflict zones, adding to the armies of Jihadists who are seeking to achieve their own agenda via violence against legitimate forces and local citizens.

It is apparent that whilst some WFTF recruits have become disillusioned and come to regret their involvement with these organisations, others present a serious ongoing threat to the NATO alliance and Western democracies. For example, returnees may be recruited to conduct acts of violence, some of whom have been directed to return for that purpose. As such, a better understanding is needed of what can be done to prevent and counter the appeal of terrorist organisations to potential WTFs and mitigate the risks that these individuals pose to their home countries and to armed forces overseas. Individuals and groups of interest include Islamist extremists but also those inspired by other ideologies (e.g., the extreme right wing) and other factors. Also, of interest are sympathisers who are inspired by terrorist organisations overseas to conduct terrorist acts in their own country (referred to here as ‘home-grown terrorists’).

A related and very current issue is that extremist organisations such as ISIS have mastered the use of social media, in an often sophisticated manner, to provoke emotions, grievances, a hatred for the West, and a perceived sense of allegiance with alienated others (and those who perceive themselves to be alienated). Understanding how extremist organisations are using the Internet to appeal to and recruit young Westerners can help us to determine how these efforts might be prevented and countered. Any strategy that relies on reducing the availability of the content on the Internet alone has been found to be expensive and generally counterproductive, because radicalisation is largely a real-world phenomenon that cannot be dealt with simply by ‘pulling the plug’ on internet activity. In order to counter the influence and impact of terrorist organisations, negative measures like removing, filtering or hiding online content are simply not enough. Counter-terrorism policy makers and practitioners need to understand how social media and other online activities are appealing to potential and actual WTFs and home-grown terrorists, and how this can be countered.

1.1 Justification (Relevance for NATO)

There is a massive body of literature that has explored and identified a wide range and number of factors that underlie radicalisation, extremism and terrorism; however, this can be difficult to make sense of because of the sheer amount of information available. Also, much of this literature is problematic because it lacks empirical basis and scientific rigour and is often highly conceptual with little or no obvious real-world value. With some exceptions, many are ‘think-pieces’, models and theories developed from a small number of cases or based on anecdotal evidence. Furthermore, often these fail to distinguish between violent and non-violent extremism, implying an assumption that if an individual expresses extremist views then they will be willing to participate in violent action – which is not substantiated by evidence. The available literature

needs to be carefully examined to understand what it can tell us about different types of extremists. For example, why are some individuals more likely to become fighters whilst others will take non-violent roles (e.g., IT specialists and doctors), and why others provide only remote support (e.g., fund raising)? How can we identify those individuals returning home who might facilitate counter-extremism efforts by openly sharing negative experiences and disillusionment, compared to war-hardened individuals who intend to plan, prepare and execute extremist-related acts of violence in the West? How can we reconcile, rehabilitate and integrate these different types of individuals in order to reduce the risk that they will later re-engage? What do we know about home-grown terrorists? And how can we identify those individuals operating alone who pose a different kind of threat and are often harder to detect compared to group extremists?

In sum, easily accessible evidence is needed to inform preventive and counter measures that can effectively deal with:

- a) The migration of WFTF recruits to join extremist organisations;
- b) Those who support terrorist operations from afar;
- c) The increasing influx of returning fighters who might seek to continue their support by conducting acts of violence within their home countries, and
- d) Home-grown terrorists.

Also needed is a shared understanding of the role and appeal of social media and other online activities, what tools are available to examine this issue, what we know already from the literature, and what gaps need to be addressed.

1.2 Aims and Objective(s) of the RTG

Specific objectives of the HFM-278 RTG were to:

- 1) Collaborate to identify, collate, share and provide a critical review of existing literature on the topics discussed here and set out in Section 1.3. Documents may include academic reviews, cross national policies and practices, case studies of successful interventions, and approaches that facilitate reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration into society for those who return to their home country from overseas insurgencies.
- 2) Hold a NATO Science for Peace Advanced Research Workshop (ARW) in order to access expert opinions of this activity and capture practitioner requirements to inform this project. Findings were to be used to inform and facilitate the development of an Information Repository.

The aims were to:

- 1) Develop an Information Repository that captures information referred to above; and
- 2) Summarise activities, findings and recommendations in a short technical report, and provide an annotated briefing to be used to summarise and disseminate findings.

The Repository will be made accessible to representatives of those organisations seeking to defeat the very serious risk that radicalised individuals pose to the security of armed forces and local citizens, in their homeland and overseas. The focus will be on mobilisation in terms of those travelling abroad to fight, returnees, those mounting attacks on domestic soil, as well as those who support and facilitate violence (lone actors, collective, and networks). RTG members will collaborate to identify, gather and collate available relevant literature, to be captured in a repository that can be accessed by representatives of those organisations responsible for countering and preventing violent extremism. A short expert evaluation for each document will be included in the tool, to extract key information and describe how this can be applied to real-world, specific D&S challenges. That is, the Information Repository will provide access to high

quality resources together with a short overview of how each can be translated to practice, which has been written by an expert on the topic.

1.3 Topics to be Covered by the RTG

Subject areas covered in this project comprise: (a) mobilisation in home countries that lead to support for activities and operations by foreign terrorist groups; (b) how to prevent and counter mobilisation; and (c) the role of the Internet as a tool by extremist groups to recruit, radicalise and mobilise new members, as well as how it can be used to prevent and counter recruitment, radicalisation and mobilisation. Included will be scientific knowledge regarding those travelling abroad to fight, returnees, those mounting attacks on domestic soil, as well those who facilitate violence (lone actors, collective and networks).

Specific topics to be investigated include:

- How extremist organisations use social media and other methods to appeal to and recruit potential WFTFs and to achieve terror goals;
- Sympathisers who engage in terrorist acts in their own countries (referred to here as ‘home-grown terrorists’);
- Evidence-based approaches that may be effective in preventing and/or countering the threat posed by WFTFs and home-grown terrorists, to include the role of the Internet; and
- Approaches to improve social resilience to radicalisation that include cross-cultural sensitivity training / awareness to avoid and overcome stigmatisation of specific groups (e.g., for prevention of anti-Muslim attitudes).

2.0 HFM-278 RTG MEETINGS

The RTG met biannually over a period of three years (2017 – 2020). At all meetings, RTG members and guest speakers from the host country were invited to present on specific areas of their work relating to extremism and terrorism. As part of the agenda, actions and goals were identified for members to complete before the next meeting, as well as agreeing on where the next meeting would be held. Full meeting Minutes are available on the STO Science Direct website. This section provides a brief summary of each meeting including attendees, location and goals set and achieved.

2.1 Meeting 1: Paris, 31 January – 2 February 2017

The first HFM-278 RTG meeting was held in, Paris, France. Attendees were:

Laurie FENSTERMACHER (USA);
Sarah KNIGHT (Chair, GBR);
Dejan KRAJLAH (SLO);
Therese SANDRUP (NOR);
Simona VERGA (Co-Chair, CAN); and
Jon WILSON (Guest, GBR).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Plamen PETKOV (BUL);
Didier LEROY (BEL);

Magnus RANSTORP (SWE); and
Yantsislav YANAKIEV (BUL).

The main goal of this meeting were for the group to meet, share expertise and knowledge, to clarify the aims and objectives of the RTG, to agree a plan of action, goals and deadlines for the next 6 months (until the next meeting), and to make longer term plans (for this three year project).

2.2 Meeting 2: Romania, 26 – 27 October 2017

This second HFM-278 RTG meeting was held in Bucharest, Romania. Attendees were:

Laurie FENSTERMACHER (USA);
Radu HERTZOG (ROU);
Sarah KNIGHT (Chair, GBR);
Dejan KRAJLAH (SLO);
Didier LEROY (BEL);
Catherine PETTINGER (GBR);
Catalin PLOAE (ROU); and
Therese SANDRUP (NOR).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Rita Augestad KNUDSEN (NOR);
Magnus RANSTORP (SWE);
Simona VERGA (CAN); and
Jon WILSON (new member, GBR).

The goals of this second meeting were to discuss and agree definitions, inclusion/exclusion criteria for materials to include in the Information Repository, and to discuss the design and development of the Information Repository (mainly, to identify themes, topics, experts, academic institutions, as well as objectives, deadlines and options regarding the structure and format of repository).

2.3 Meeting 3: Italy, 13 – 15 June 2018

The third meeting was held in Rome, Italy. It was attended by:

Laurie FENSTERMACHER (USA);
Sarah KNIGHT (Chair, GBR);
Dejan KRAJLAH (SLO);
Didier LEROY (BEL);
Catherine PETTINGER (GBR);
Simona VERGA (CAN); and
Jon WILSON (GBR).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Rita Augestad KNUDSEN (NOR);
Radu HERTZOG (ROU);
Catalin PLOAE (ROU);
Magnus RANSTORP (SWE); and
Therese SANDRUP (NOR).

This meeting focused on the Information Repository and options regarding what kind of tool the RTG could design and develop, and existing tools that might provide examples were examined and discussed. The RTG also worked together to examine materials that had been identified to include in the Information Repository and methods for evaluating these were agreed upon to ensure consistency between individual members in terms of how they assessed each document.

2.4 Meeting 4: United States of America, 7 – 9 November 2018

This meeting was held in Norfolk, Virginia (USA). Attendees were:

Laurie FENSTERMACHER (USA);
Michael JENSEN (Guest, USA);
Sarah KNIGHT (Chair, GBR);
Dejan KRAJLAH (SLO);
Didier LEROY (BEL);
Catherine PETTINGER (GBR);
Therese SANDRUP (NOR);
Simona VERGA (CAN); and
Jon WILSON (GBR).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Radu HERTZOG (ROU);
Rita Augestad KNUDSEN (NOR);
Catalin PLOAE (ROU); and
Magnus RANSTORP (SWE).

This meeting focused on RTG members sharing and discussing their progress regarding assessment of materials to include in the Information Repository. Options for developing the prototype tool were also a key part of discussions and were strongly driven by input and advice from Michael Jensen (University of Maryland, The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism – START), who attended as a guest and consequently joined the RTG as a full member. START have significant experience and expertise on developing databases and knowledge management tools¹ and therefore Michael Jensen was able to contribute to and facilitate the HFM-278 RTG Information Repository design discussions. The meeting also led to a formal ‘Stakeholder Engagement Plan’ for individual members to plan and record engagement activities related to the RTG.

¹ For example, they host the Global Terrorism Database, which is a highly regarded resource by experts in this field.

2.5 Meeting 5: Norway, 17 – 19 June 2019

This meeting was held in Oslo, Norway. It was attended by:

Laurie FENSTERMACHER (ACTING CHAIR, USA);
Brogan GOBLE (Guest, GBR²);
Radu HERTZOG (ROM);
Mike JENSEN (Guest, USA);
Dejan KRAJLAH (SLO);
Didier LEROY (BEL);
Catherine PETTINGER (GBR);
Catalin PLOAE (ROM);
Therese SANDRUP (NOR); and
Simona VERGA (CAN).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sarah KNIGHT (Chair, GBR);
Rita Augestad KNUDSEN (NOR);
Magnus RANSTORP (SWE); and
Jon WILSON (GBR).

The focus for this meeting was on a potential collaboration between the RTG and START, as a result of START indicating an interest in taking on the Information Repository at the end of the RTG project. The group also worked together on the development of the repository, with the guidance of Brogan Goble (guest) who was brought from the UK to assist. Brogan had been assisting GBR RTG members to design and develop the Information Repository, using a knowledge management tool called 'Zotero'. The Graphical User Interface (GUI) was demonstrated to the RTG and members were shown how to make entries into Zotero.

2.6 Meeting 6: United States of America, 6 – 8 November 2019

The final RTG meeting was held in Maryland, USA. Attendees were:

Laurie FENSTERMACHER (USA);
Brogan GOBLE (Guest, GBR);
Mike JENSEN (Guest, USA);
Sarah KNIGHT (Chair, GBR);
Dejan KRAJLAH (SLO);
Didier LEROY (BEL);
Catherine PETTINGER (GBR);
Therese SANDRUP (NOR);

² A Dstl software developer who took responsibility for the physical design and build of the repository.

Simona VERGA (CAN); and
Jon WILSON (GBR).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Radu HERTZOG (ROU);
Catalin PLOAE (ROU); and
Magnus RANSTORP (SWE).

This meeting was hosted by and held at the main START office. Topics covered included RTG – START collaboration, progress on the development of the Information Repository and a group activity to further populate the tool with materials and text to guide the user, promotion of the information Repository, stakeholder engagement, user feedback and actions to maximise the exploitation of the tool (to include potential ‘launch’ events in BEL, the UK, and USA).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Summary

3.1.1 Overarching Approach

The outputs of this RTG are a result of collaboration between members over the three year period. The approach taken was as follows:

- The activity was led by the GBR (Chair and Deputy) and supported by an apprentice in software development (from Dstl), who led the design and development of the Information Repository itself.
- The group met twice a year for 2.5 days, when they discussed, agreed and updated the aims and objectives of the RTG, shared expertise, explored problems and challenges regarding the development of the repository, set goals and worked together face-to-face to achieve these goals.
- The members worked independently between these meetings to progress the work forward and ensure that aims and objectives were met.
- RTG members collaborated to identify and select materials to be included in the repository, developed an evaluation method to be used by all, and applied this to critically evaluate each of the documents included.
- RTG members wrote an expert evaluation of each document included in the repository.
- A representative from the University of Maryland’s START provided input and advice to help overcome many of the problems and challenges encountered regarding the development of the Information Repository.

3.1.2 Understanding the Field and Practitioner Requirements

In order to identify and gather user requirements, a 2-day NATO Science for Peace Advanced Research Workshop (ARW) was held in London in November 2017. This was attended by 40+ (national and international) attendees, which included Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), practitioners and other stakeholders from a range of D&S communities (e.g., military, intelligence, security, police, academia and industry). The aim of the ARW was to provide attendees with an opportunity to inform and influence the design and build of the Information Repository.

The workshop was structured to stimulate thinking and generate discussion and knowledge exchange with general insights (which were captured by a number of note takers). For specific user requirements, experts

gave presentations arranged by theme, which were followed by a requirements capture session. Based on Social Science principles, the design of the workshop was optimised to elicit information from stakeholders, in order to understand:

- Their current ways of working;
- How they currently search for information;
- Knowledge gaps, questions, comments and issues; and
- The type of toolkit that would be of most benefit to their role.

General feedback was also sought in order to ensure that data collected was both useful and usable. Qualitative analysis of the data informed the build and design of the Information Repository. Based on the findings from this and advice from a Dstl software developer, a prototype Information Repository was built as a website based interface both to maximise compatibility for users and for ease of use, since this approach does not require the end user to download or install software to access the site.

3.1.3 Identifying and Reviewing Contents of the Repository

The Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) is a systematic and rigorous method that ensures all those involved in the review adopt the same approach and apply inclusion and exclusion criteria consistently. A large pool of literature is first identified (see below for search terms and inclusion criteria), following which researchers use an Evidence Extraction Template (EET) to extract the same information for each document, addressing key questions which will determine how relevant each is to the project and the scientific quality of the document. This information is used to categorise each document as of ‘high’, ‘medium’ or ‘low’ relevance and only those rated ‘high’ or ‘medium’ are fully reviewed.

The REA approach was applied by the RTG and an EET for each document was completed, which focused on providing a high level summary and critical evaluation of the material and highlighting key points. These were included in the repository alongside the primary document, and an expert overview to help explain how this might be applied to support specific D&S questions and challenges.

See Annex A for an example EET.

3.1.4 Information Repository Design and Development

The Information Repository was designed to provide fast access to relevant scientific studies that include practical implications for countering and preventing violent extremism. Each item in the repository has been reviewed and coded by a Subject Matter Expert into a synopsis. This provides a shortcut to the practical insights derived from each document or material. The user can choose between reading the abstract, synopsis and/or full article (if open access).

Based on the analytical output of the ARW and advice from the Dstl software developer, the Information Repository was built as a web-based interface to both maximise compatibility for users and for ease of use, as this approach does not require the end user to download or install software to access the site.

3.1.4.1 Database

Zotero was chosen as it is a free and open-source web-based referencing management software which contains a database for storage and serving of the resources to the user. Notable features include storage, automatically populating most of the metadata relating to a resource such as authors, dates and ISBN/DOI numbers and working on group projects³.

³ For more information see Zotero website <https://www.zotero.org/>.

3.1.4.2 *Development Environment*

The tool is written in Django, a Python-based web development framework, as it allows for rapid development and is largely scalable. Another contributing factor is the PyZotero library, a Python wrapper for the Zotero API, which simplifies the processing of information.

3.1.4.3 *Platform Dependencies*

Ubuntu was selected as the platform for developing the Information Repository. The dependencies on this are Python3, Django 2.2 and PyZotero, both of which are PIP installable and django-crispy-forms and fuzzywuzzymit.

3.1.4.4 *Tool Design*

The tool is presented as a web application to the user who can interrogate the Zotero Database to get the information they are looking for efficiently. A number of features and functions are built into the tool to facilitate intuitive navigation and rapid interrogation of the database through, for example, searching using common search terms.

The methods for interrogating the database include:

- Text based search by:
 - Title of resource;
 - Author;
 - Date of publication;
 - Tags. Tag search is through a curated list of commonly used search terms. The tag dictionary was voted on and agreed by members of the RTG. See Annex B for full tag dictionary.
- Intuitive tag browsing; and
- Interactive map for geographic filtering.

The database is categorised into four themes or ‘buckets’ which can also be used to explore the database (see below for a description of each theme):

- 1) Mobilisation and Radicalisation;
- 2) Internet;
- 3) Countering and Preventing; and
- 4) Data and Tools (placeholder).

3.1.4.4.1 *Mobilisation and Radicalisation*

Radicalisation pathways are numerous. There are no ‘typical’ routes as such but there is commonality in terms of risk factors that include vulnerabilities, grievances and influences. The timeframe for radicalisation can vary immensely. A minority of those who are radicalised progress to violent action, however, non-violent extremists can still contribute to the cause through facilitation and encouragement.

3.1.4.4.2 *Internet*

Twenty first century networked technologies have significantly impacted radicalisation and violent extremism. Areas of focus for this section notably includes recruitment, communication and propaganda, and attack planning.

3.1.4.4.3 *Countering and Preventing*

The C/PVE landscape is characterised by numerous and different ways of responding to evolving threats. This section highlights prominent approaches, studies and best practices underpinned by sound scientific principles.

3.1.4.4.4 *Data and Tools*

This section encapsulates datasets, analytic methods and tools used in the curated set of research efforts in this Information Repository. In addition, there is mention of other data sets, analytic methods and exemplar tools that can support further research and/or analysis. This provides pointers to support future analytic efforts.

Other properties enabled include exporting and saving materials that already have open access permissions set. See Annex C for a collection of screenshots of the prototype Information Repository and Annex D for the User Guide for uploading material to Zotero.

4.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND EXPLOITATION

Throughout the project, the HFM-278 RTG actively sought to maximise the exploitation of this work by actively seeking engagement with SMEs and stakeholders. The project was presented at a range of meetings, seminars and conferences (across government and academia), including the following formal events:

- The NATO Science for Peace ARW (described earlier in the Methodology section).
- A GBR member of the RTG was chosen to present the work as an ‘Early Career Scientist’ at a NATO Science and Technology Organisation Board Meeting, in Bucharest, Romania in September 2019. This led to positive feedback from senior officials from NATO.
- The RTG Chair and Deputy presented the work at the ‘Countering Violent Extremism’ annual conference at the UK’s Defence Academy in November 2019. This led to positive feedback, from, for example, the current Independent Reviewer for the ‘Prevent’ strand of the UK’s CT strategy (CONTEST) who indicated a strong appetite for the Information Repository.

Near the end of the project the RTG also explored options to promote the Information Repository, and to conduct stakeholder engagement, user feedback and other actions that can maximise the exploitation of the tool (to include potential ‘launch’ events in BEL, the UK, and USA).

5.0 CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The RTG encountered a number of problems and challenges throughout the project. These are outlined below, followed by the solutions that were identified and implemented.

5.1 Challenges Facing the RTG Activity

- 1) There is a massive body of literature that has explored and identified a wide range and number of factors that underlie radicalisation, extremism and terrorism; however, this can be difficult to make sense of because of the sheer amount of information available.
- 2) Much of this literature is problematic because it lacks empirical basis and scientific rigour. With some exceptions, many are ‘think-pieces’, models and theories developed from a small number of cases or based on anecdotal evidence.
- 3) Often research fails to distinguish between violent and non-violent extremism, implying an assumption that if an individual expresses extremist views then they will be willing to participate in violent action – which is not always the case.

- 4) The wealth of literature from a range of disciplines required a systematic method to ensure consistency between RTG members independently evaluating the content of materials, extracting key information and translating this to practice.
- 5) An Information Repository requires technical support to develop and maintain it (e.g., to regularly populate it), to ensure that it is easy to use and that its contents are current and relevant.

5.2 Solutions Identified and Implemented by the RTG

- 1) Design and develop an Information Repository that can a) serve as a ‘one-stop shop’ for a range of stakeholders to easily access high quality resources (e.g., reports, articles, databases, and materials) that can inform CT and C/PVE efforts, and b) guide the user to relevant topics quickly and easily without having to spend time reading through literature which might be irrelevant or of limited use.
- 2) Use experts to critically identify and select resources to be included in a repository.
- 3) Use experts to critically evaluate materials, extract key information and describe how the resource can be translated to inform specific D&S questions and challenges.
- 4) All RTG members to use the REA methodology (that included the use of an EET that was tailored to the requirements of the work), to ensure consistency across reviews conducted by different members of each of the materials to be included.
- 5) The Information Repository will be hosted by an academic institution with expertise in terrorism and violent extremism, and the responsibility for maintaining and populating it will lay with the institution.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

The main output from this RTG project is the Information Repository. At the time of writing, the number of EET reviews is sixty. Increasing the number of reviews of quality publications would increase the repository’s usefulness to users. Also, the EETs themselves could be modified to include cross-referencing. As highlighted throughout this report, this is currently only a prototype and therefore the tool requires further population to include more resources to ensure that the repository is representative of the literature and remains current. Other options for future work recommended by the RTG are to consider including:

- A reference list of recommended reading materials and resources not included in the repository (because, for example, they did not reach our inclusion criteria), which are relevant to the topic of terrorism and violent extremism in general. Also, links to other recommended resources including lists (e.g., of CT research departments, Centres of Excellence), websites (e.g., START, RAN), materials (e.g., government policies, risk assessment tools) and databases (e.g., the Global Terrorist Database).
- Video recorded interviews with experts in the field, discussing issues related to those covered by the repository; Short presentations on related subjects that include existing presentations selected by the repository developers, or produced by RTG members themselves; and links to online lectures featuring academics who research topics covered by the repository, and other existing online videos⁴.
- An additional section within the repository comprising a selection of key basic texts and guidance materials⁵. Also, a selection of Case Studies to exemplify problems and solutions (e.g., of investigations, operations, subjects, groups and interventions). Case Studies on Lone Actors

⁴ For example, the International Centre Violent Extremism has produced high quality videos of interviews with ISIS escapees and former Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), which are designed to be used to counter narratives and dissuade potential recruits from becoming FTFs.

⁵ There are a number of excellent guides that could be included with the repository. For example, the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) has produced several high quality publications which include a guide on Mental Health Issues and one on Salafi Jihadi Doctrine. RAN is an umbrella network connecting people involved in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism throughout Europe.

would show commonalities in terms of Mental Health / Personality Disorders and behaviours and routes to radicalisation, and those on Violent Extremist groups could show what opportunities have been taken or could have been taken to disrupt plots.

- Details on how to get in touch to contribute (e.g., write an expert commentary on a particular topic, a current affair, or to comment on an article). Also, details on how to get in touch to report issues, make suggestions for improvements and to ask questions. An email address could be created for feedback , etc.
- Information on the background to the repository (e.g., an introduction to the RTG, how the repository was designed, developed and populated, how quality is assured, how the contents are maintained and are kept current and relevant).
- A video version of the Information Repository user guide manual, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- The Zotero-based back end could be replaced with a custom one, which would allow for a lot more flexibility with search options, and no reliance on an external provider⁶. This would also allow for direct EET uploading.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Those responsible for addressing D&S challenges require high quality resources (based on scientific principles and methods) that can be easily accessed to develop solutions. This will ensure that CT and C/PVE efforts are evidence-based. The HFM-278 RTG sought to design and develop an Information Repository that will:

- a) Identify and provide access to available literature that includes academic reviews, government initiatives and approaches, education and training materials, tools for best practice, and other relevant documents on terrorism and violent extremism, how this is facilitated online, and counter-terrorism efforts; and
- b) Provide a critical assessment of the literature in order to indicate its strengths and weaknesses, in order to provide practitioners with a central resource to turn to if they needed to understand and access information on this topic.

This understanding is key for practitioners and policy makers responsible for counter-extremism and counter-terrorism efforts, who are faced with complex threats that are intensified and facilitated by WFTFs overseas and by home-grown terrorists. The HFM-278 RTG designed and developed an Information Repository that provides a ‘one-stop shop’ to relevant resources. A short expert evaluation for each document is also included in the tool, to extract key information and describe how this can be applied to real-world, specific D&S challenges. This tool can be used to inform those interested in and responsible for CT and C/PVE efforts, and as such, this activity makes a unique contribution to address both Defence (military) and Security (homeland) requirements. The Repository is a unique resource; however, the addition of other resources useful to researchers and practitioners would complement the Repository function and make it more attractive to users. It is proposed that any future development should include other suitable material and that work is conducted to identify such material.

⁶ Currently, if Zotero ‘goes down’ then so does the repository.

Annex A – EXAMPLE EET

Assessor Ref: Theme – Mobilisation and Radicalisation		
<p>Research Questions: The things to consider with this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it about radicalisation to violence, preventing/ countering R2V and/or the role of social media? • Is it scientific, empirical, rigorous? • Does it have obvious application for practitioners? • Which audience/ practitioner is it most applicable to? • Other key questions (to be suggested by RTG members?) 		
1. Study Demographics:		Notes and Comments:
<p>Title: Radicalization to Extremism and Mobilization to Violence: What Have We Learned and What Can We Do About It?</p>		
<p>Author: Stern, Jessica</p>		
<p>Date of Publication: 2016</p>		
<p>Publication: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 668(1):102-117</p>		
<p>Country of Publication:</p>		
2. Purpose of the Study:	Quality Assurance:	
<p>What key questions were addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are individuals mobilized to join terrorist groups? • How can the U.S. government make use of what scholars have learned about the process of mobilization to develop better policy responses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA – peer-reviewed journal so quality can be inferred as high. • Stern is a recognised and respected researcher in this field. 	<p>Key words: radicalization; mobilization to violence; risk factors; terrorism</p> <p>The article covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic of individual mobilization, plus a review of societal conditions that correlate with terrorism.
3. Relevance to Research Questions – Does It Study:		
Those travelling abroad to fight.	Yes	
Returnees.	Yes	
Those inspired to attack on home soil.	Yes	
Facilitators.	Yes	

Assessor Ref: Theme – Mobilisation and Radicalisation	
4. Design of the Study:	
<p>Approach (e.g. empirical/ theoretical/ case study/ anecdotal/ non-scientific)? Semi-empirical: This paper summarises findings from a collection of empirical studies plus other literature. Building on a decade-long community-based research program focused on understanding and supporting the mental health of young Somali refugees. To assess individual factors associated with resistance to or support for radicalization, they developed a survey instrument by working together with community partners. The Activism and Radicalism Intention Scales (ARIS) was used (adapted in response to the input provided by community partners).</p>	
<p>(If applicable) Number of participants? In one study the questionnaire was administered to more than four hundred ethnic Somalis. Another surveyed two hundred Muslim immigrants in the United States.</p>	
<p>Where (e.g. The West, UK, Europe, US)? United States and Canada.</p>	
<p>Type of ‘Participant’ (e.g. Islamic terrorism, lone actor, ISIS defector, returnee from Syria):</p> <p>See above.</p>	
5. Topic (e.g. understanding mobilisation to fight abroad, mobilisation to conduct attacks on home soil, to facilitate others to do one or both of these)?	
<p>The article explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual mobilization to radicalism from the perspective of a researcher and analyst, exploring what we know about the psychological and social factors that motivate young people to join extremist groups and how that knowledge relates to the recruitment of individuals into ISIS. • The recruitment of Westerners to radicalism, because Western recruits are the most significant threat to U.S. security. • Specific ways for governments to respond, noting the limits of what government can do and arguing that mobilization to extremism must be addressed with broad, multi-institutional social strategies. 	

Assessor Ref: Theme – Mobilisation and Radicalisation	
6. What are the Key Findings of the Study?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the rarity of terrorist mobilization – even in societies where the terrorists’ stated grievances are broadly shared – it stands to reason that there must be individual risk factors that explain why some members of an aggrieved group join terrorist groups while most do not. Individuals are influenced and radicalized at several different levels. Risk factors for radicalization and mobilization start with a grievance, more or less widely shared, often about some form of social injustice. But not every person, living in difficult social conditions, is willing to take up arms to aim at non-combatants. Individual traits are important, significantly complicating the study of mobilization. • The author has been interviewing violent extremists for many years, finding that individuals are mobilized to join terrorist organizations as they would any other organization: They concur with the group’s mission; or they are persuaded to join by friends or family members; or they are attracted by the spiritual, emotional, or material benefits of belonging. Individuals are influenced at several different levels – personal psychology or history, group dynamics, and social conditions. • Some participants who held attitudes that were supportive of violent activism also were highly civically and politically engaged; others were not. A third group was moderately supportive of violent activism and also likely to be involved in gangs and other types of delinquency. • Despite these differences, some common predictors of both prosocial and antisocial forms of activism have emerged. Moderate levels of trauma exposure and discrimination tend to be associated with support for both nonviolent and violent activism. • There is a correlation between support for violent activism and social marginalization. • Time on the Internet is another risk factor. • Strong social bonds, and in particular a sense of attachment to the United States or Canada, are protective factors. Those who identify with neither their heritage culture nor American culture are most prone to feeling marginalized and insignificant. • ISIS seduces personnel with a promise of protection and redemption. 	

7. What Are the Key Recommendations of the Study?	
<p>Recommendations for responding to ISIS’s propaganda and mobilization of youth include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplify the stories of the real wives of ISIS and other defectors. • Take on ISIS’s version of Islam in a way that appeals to potential ISIS recruits. • Highlight ISIS’s hypocrisy. • Publicize ISIS’s atrocities against Sunnis. • Aggressively suspend ISIS social media accounts. <p>The nations fighting ISIS need a counter-narrative campaign. The campaign should be led by individuals who know how to access at-risk youth. A commission needs to study how ISIS and related groups market themselves and develop a plan for competing directly in those markets, while at the same time developing a strategy for expanding into other markets.</p> <p>Author proposes a model that is helping experts access at-risk youth directly is called P2P: Challenging Extremism. This ongoing initiative provides an opportunity for university students from the United States, Canada, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Australia, and Asia to create online communities whose goal is to counter the extremist narrative by becoming educated influencers.</p>	

Annex B – TAG DICTIONARY

Below is a tag dictionary of commonly used search terms that users can search the database against. The final list was voted on and agreed by members of the RTG HFM-278. Searching by tag(s) is a built-in feature of the Information Repository and offers an alternative way of interrogating the information.

ID	Tag
1	Cogniti*
2	Behavio*
3	Risk
4	Flags indicators warnings cue
6	Vulnerab*
7	Grievance trauma
9	Psycho*
10	Social
11	Political
13	Mental
14	Identity
15	Crim* nexus
16	Emotion*
17	Ideolog* belief
18	Right wing far right
20	Left wing
21	Network*
22	Lone
23	Financ*
24	Security
26	Religio*
27	Jihad* Islam*
29	Al Qaeda AQ
31	ISIS ISIL IS Islamic State Daesh
32	Christian*
33	Prison
34	Influence
35	Mobilis*

ID	Tag
36	Facilitat*
37	Conver* Rever*
39	Weapon acquisition
40	Safe haven spaces
41	Train* camp
42	Plan*
43	Recruit*
44	Recon*/recce
45	Surveillance
46	Target*
47	Online internet digital
48	Cyber
49	Platform social media
51	Learn* copycat
52	Communicat* propaganda messaging
53	Narrative
56	WhatsApp
57	Twitter
58	Telegram
59	Facebook FB
60	VK VKontakte
62	Intervention
63	Prevent*
64	Disengage* desist* de-radicalis*
66	Rehabilitat* reintegrat*
68	Best practice
69	Bio-indicators
70	Tactics tool techniques procedures TTPs
71	Evaluat*
72	Data
73	Database dataset
75	Tool
78	Foreign fighter

ID	Tag
79	Immigration refugee* migrant
80	Gender
81	Age
82	Domestic homeland homegrown
84	Empirical
85	Literature review
86	Case study
87	Law enforcement police
88	Policy
89	Military defence
90	Intelligence services community
91	Community
92	Counter



Annex C – CVE INFORMATION REPOSITORY SCREENSHOTS (PROTOTYPE)

CVE Information Repository

Type your search here

Search

Use the above to search by Title, Author, or Year

Go to tag/keyword search

Click above to search by keyword

Introduction

There is an overwhelming amount of information and literature on the subject of violent extremism and terrorism. From the casual observer to the professional researcher/analyst/practitioner, it can be challenging to find, understand and apply rigorous research that meets practitioners needs. The purpose of this repository – designed and built by experts and practitioners* – is to identify, curate and provide fast access to relevant scientific studies that include practical implications for countering and preventing violent extremism. The repository does not aim to cover every aspect of the topic in great detail; but provides a comprehensive introduction and signposts to other related areas. Each item has been reviewed and coded by a Subject Matter Expert into a synopsis . This provides a shortcut to the practical insights derived from each document or material. The user can choose between reading the abstract, synopsis and /or full article (if open access).

The Information Repository has been designed to allow rapid searching using common search terms. The database is categorized into four themes:

1. Mobilization to violence (including radicalisation)
2. Role of the internet
3. Preventing and countering violent extremism
4. Datasets, methods and tools (placeholder)

*This product is the outcome of a NATO Research Task Group (RTG) 278 representing nine countries: United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Belgium, Slovenia, Norway, Romania, Bulgaria and Sweden. The group considered issues across all NATO countries and sought to incorporate best practice and approaches from these. The design and build of the Information Repository was informed by a representation of countries wider than the NATO RTG membership.

Browse Tags

Make your selection from the tags below by clicking on the relevant tags

Click here to search by selection

Figure C-1: Information Repository Landing Page and Introduction.

CVE Information Repository

Type your search here

Search

Use the above to search by Title, Author, or Year

Go to tag/keyword search

Click above to search by keyword

Introduction

Browse Tags

Make your selection from the tags below by clicking on the relevant tags

Click here to search by selection

Mobilisation & Radicalisation
Internet
Countering & Preventing
Data & Tools
Country Select

Figure C-2: Information Repository Main Page Where the Majority of the Interrogation of the Database is Done. Browse by search terms (top search box), tag search (second search box), by themes (Mobilisation and Radicalisation, Internet, Countering and Preventing, Data and Tools) or filtering by country(ies) of interest (Country Select – see Figure C-4).

Introduction

Browse Tags

Make your selection from the tags below by clicking on the relevant tags

[Click here to search by selection](#)

Mobilisation & Radicalisation Internet

Twenty first century networked technologies have significantly impacted radicalisation and violent extremism. Areas of focus for this section notably includes recruitment, communication and propaganda, and attack planning.

Communication

Platform / Social media

Cyber

Telegram

Facebook

Twitter

Learning / Copycat

VK VKontakte

Narrative

WhatsApp

Online / Internet / Digital

Countering & Preventing Data & Tools Country Select

Figure C-3: Search by Dropdown Tag List within a Themed 'Bucket', For Example Through the Internet Theme.



Figure C-4: Interactive Map Allowing for Geographic Filtering by Country(ies) of Interest.

Daesh Information Campaign and its Influence	Rafal Zgryziewicz	2015
Daesh Recruitment. How the Group Attracts Supporters	Rafal Zgryziewicz	November 2016
Electronic Jihad: The Internet as Al Qaeda's Catalyst for Global Terror	Martin Rudner	2017,
Fishermen or Swarm Dynamics? Should we Understand Jihadist Online-Radicalization as a Top-Down or Bottom-Up Process?	Till Baaken	Winter 2017
Network of Terror: How Daesh Uses Adaptive Social Networks to Spread its Message	JOSEPH SHAHEEN	Nov 2015
New Trends in Social Media	Beata Bialy	December 2016
Online-Radicalisation: Myth or Reality?	Linda Schlegel	September 2018
Penser la radicalisation	Xavier Crettiez	2016-11-21

Figure C-5: Illustrative Results from an Example of a Search Query.

Zntero Information Repository Tool

(TEST) Approaches and challenges in evaluating measures taken against right-wing extremism

EET: Right-wing extremism has reemerged on the political agenda in Switzerland over the last decade, much as in other European states. Most of the time, right-wing extremism remains latent. However, as soon as a constituency is confronted with manifest right-wing incidents (right-wing extremist group meetings, racist assaults or violence against individuals and groups), the issue reappears in the political sphere. The countermeasures available to governments frequently remain unclear: empirically based evidence on the effectiveness of specific measures is often simply lacking. In this article we argue that this inadequacy is mostly due to the specific characteristics of the particular conditions of conflict and violence that are associated with the phenomenon of 'right-wing extremism'. These conditions include an often only insufficiently clarified understanding of the phenomenon of 'right-wing extremism' as well as a highly sensitive political, social and legal context for countermeasures. Furthermore, the effectiveness of countermeasures is typically strongly dependent on the actors involved as well as their actions and interactions. Implementation is therefore often unique and, as a consequence, difficult to replicate. We will address these specific challenges for evaluation under such conditions in seven case studies. Each case study includes an evaluation of a measure that has been taken against phenomena of right-wing extremism in Switzerland on the federal, state or community level. The case studies show that certain challenges for evaluation can be met by adopting an adequate evaluation design. Other aspects require further investigation and may not be adequately addressed through the evaluation of countermeasures.

Print / Save [Print](#)

Language: Not specified

ISSN: 0149-7189

DOI: 10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2010.11.003

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Publication Date: February 1, 2012

Authors: Christian Hirschi; Thomas Widmer;

Tags: [Counter](#) [Evaluation](#) [Right-wing](#) [Switzerland](#) [Search tags](#)

Introduction

Browse Tags

Make your selection from the tags below by clicking on the relevant tags

[Click here to search by selection](#)

Figure C-6: Select a New Set of Tags from an Article and Begin a New Search (Selected Tags Shown in Blue).

Daesh Information Campaign and its Influence

Abstract The NATO StratCom COE was asked to conduct research into Daesh information strategy in order to gain a better understanding of how the Daesh information campaign is managed, and to propose practical solutions concerning the situation in the Middle East. The methodology for analysing Daesh information strategy included examining the issue from a number of aspects related to strategic communications such as social psychology, communication, and social media analysis. The work was done in collaboration with experts and advisors from NATO member states in order to achieve the best result. StratCom COE research into Daesh information strategy shows that the spectrum of the problem is much greater than only recruitment and radicalization alone.

EET:

Assessor Ref: Internet		
Research Questions: The things to consider with this are:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it about radicalisation to violence, preventing/ countering R2V and/or the role of social media? • Is it scientific, empirical, rigorous? • Does it have obvious application for practitioners? <u>Not directly</u> • Which audience/ practitioner is it most applicable to? <u>Decision makers</u> • Other key questions (to be suggested by RTG members?) 		
Quality Assurance - questions	Quality Assurance - responses	Notes
1. Study demographics:		
Title	DAESH INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AND ITS INFLUENCE	
Author	Rafal Zgryziewicz and others	
Date of Publication	2015	
Journal / Publisher	NATO StratCom, Riga	
Country of publication	NATO (LATVIA)	
2. Purpose of the study:		
What key questions were addressed? (i.e. regarding aims of the RTG/ IR)	Daesh information strategy	The NATO StratCom COE was asked to conduct research into Daesh information strategy in order to gain a better understanding of how the Daesh information campaign is managed, and to propose practical solutions concerning the situation in the Middle East.
Relevance to research questions - does it study:		
<small>Those travelling abroad to fight</small>		
<small>Vae</small>		

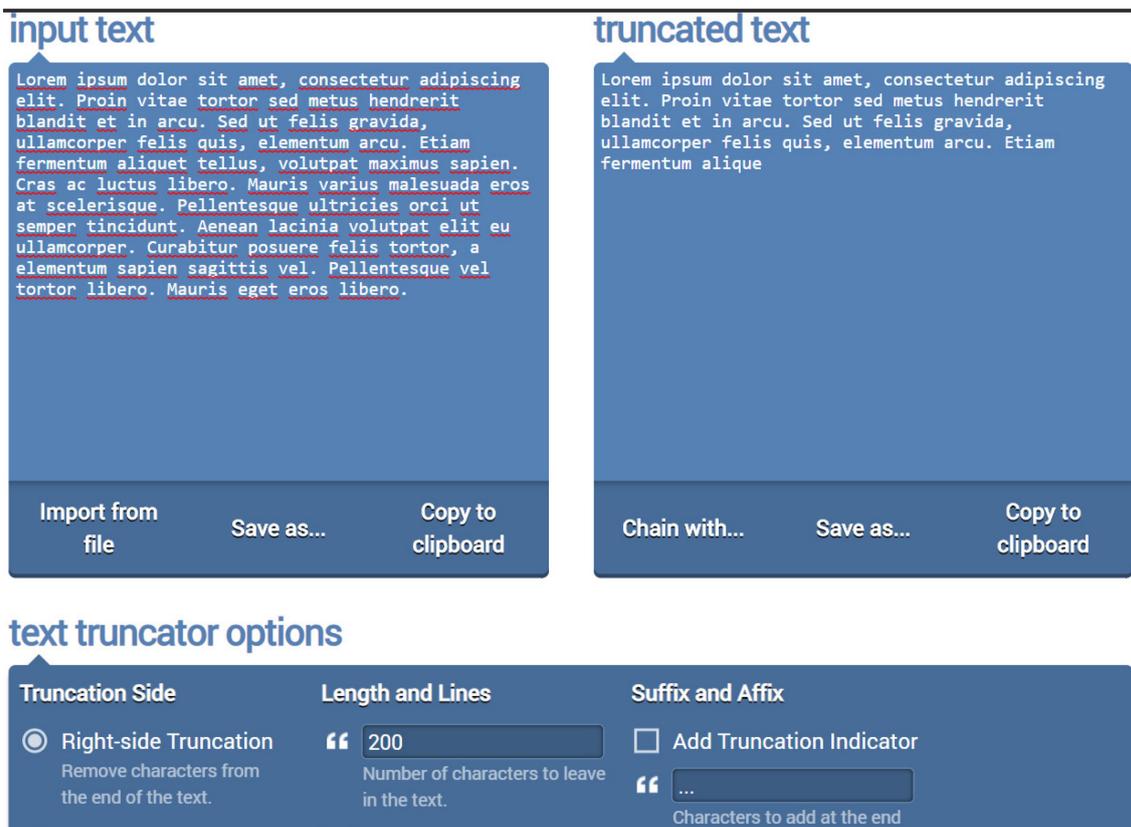
Figure C-7: A Snapshot of the Users' View of the EET (see Annex A for a Fully Populated EET).

Annex D – USER GUIDE FOR UPLOADING MATERIALS TO ZOTERO

Below is the ‘Users Guide’ for adding the article Abstracts as ‘tags’ and adding the EETs to Zotero.

STORING THE ABSTRACT AS A TAG AND ADDING EETS TO ZOTERO

Paste the abstract of your article at <https://onlinetexttools.com/truncate-text> using the settings pictured below.

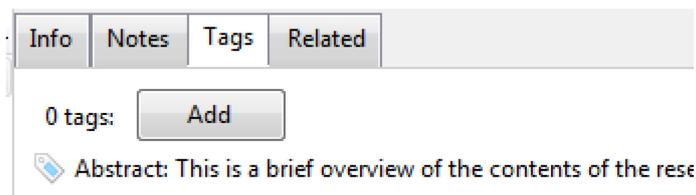


The screenshot shows the 'truncate-text' website interface. It is divided into three main sections:

- input text:** A text area containing a Lorem Ipsum paragraph. Below it are buttons for 'Import from file', 'Save as...', and 'Copy to clipboard'.
- truncated text:** A text area showing the same Lorem Ipsum paragraph but truncated to 200 characters. Below it are buttons for 'Chain with...', 'Save as...', and 'Copy to clipboard'.
- text truncator options:** A settings panel with three tabs:
 - Truncation Side:** A radio button is selected for 'Right-side Truncation' (Remove characters from the end of the text).
 - Length and Lines:** A text input field contains '200' (Number of characters to leave in the text).
 - Suffix and Affix:** An unchecked checkbox for 'Add Truncation Indicator' and a text input field containing '...' (Characters to add at the end).

Copy the truncated text, Place “1Abstract: “without the quotes at the start, then add to zotero as a tag.

NOTE: It is important to have a space between: and the text being added e.g., 1Abstract: Content. Not 1Abstract:Content.



Now go back to the truncate website, remove the first 200 chars from the left (what’s on the right) and copy the next 200 chars as “2Abstract: “, repeat up to “5abstract” as needed.

“2Abstract:”

input text

tellus, volutpat maximus sapien. Cras ac luctus libero. Mauris varius malesuada eros at scelerisque. Pellentesque ultricies orci ut semper tincidunt. Aenean lacinia volutpat elit eu ullamcorper. Curabitur posuere felis tortor, a elementum sapien sagittis vel. Pellentesque vel tortor libero. Mauris eget eros libero.

Import from
file

Save as...

Copy to
clipboard

truncated text

tellus, volutpat maximus sapien. Cras ac luctus libero. Mauris varius malesuada eros at scelerisque. Pellentesque ultricies orci ut semper tincidunt. Aenean lacinia volutpat elit eu ullamcorper. Curab

Chain with...

Save as...

Copy to
clipboard

“3Abstract:”

input text

itur posuere felis tortor, a elementum sapien sagittis vel. Pellentesque vel tortor libero. Mauris eget eros libero.

Import from
file

Save as...

Copy to
clipboard

truncated text

itur posuere felis tortor, a elementum sapien sagittis vel. Pellentesque vel tortor libero. Mauris eget eros libero.

Chain with...

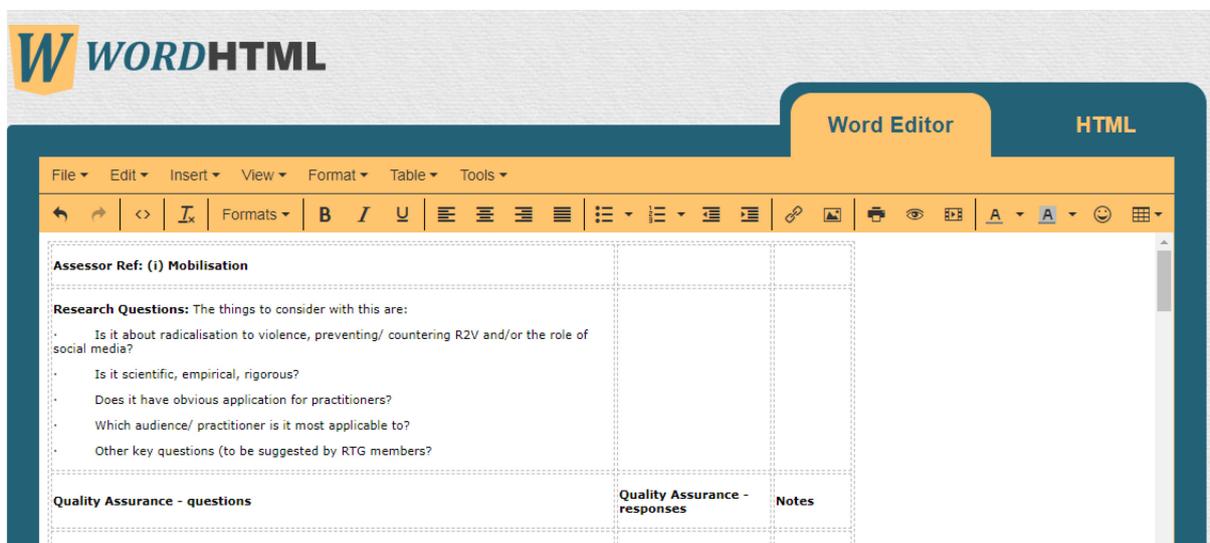
Save as...

Copy to
clipboard

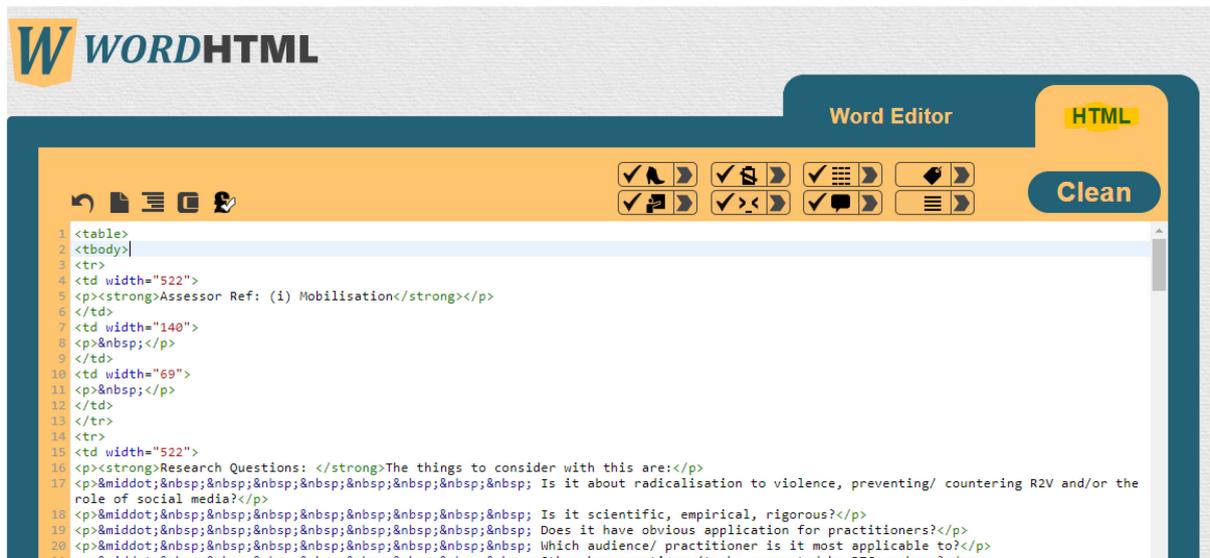
Highlight and copy the completed EET (keyboard shortcuts Ctrl+ a to select all and Ctrl+c to copy).

Assessor Ref: (i) Mobilisation		
Research Questions: The things to consider with this are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it about radicalisation to violence, preventing/ countering R2V and/or the role of social media? • Is it scientific, empirical, rigorous? • Does it have obvious application for practitioners? • Which audience/ practitioner is it most applicable to? • Other key questions (to be suggested by RTG members?) 		
Quality Assurance - questions	Quality Assurance - responses	Notes
1. Study demographics:		
Title		
Author		
Date of Publication		
Journal / Publisher		
Country of publication		
2. Purpose of the study:		
What key questions were addressed? (i.e. regarding aims of the RTG/ IR)		

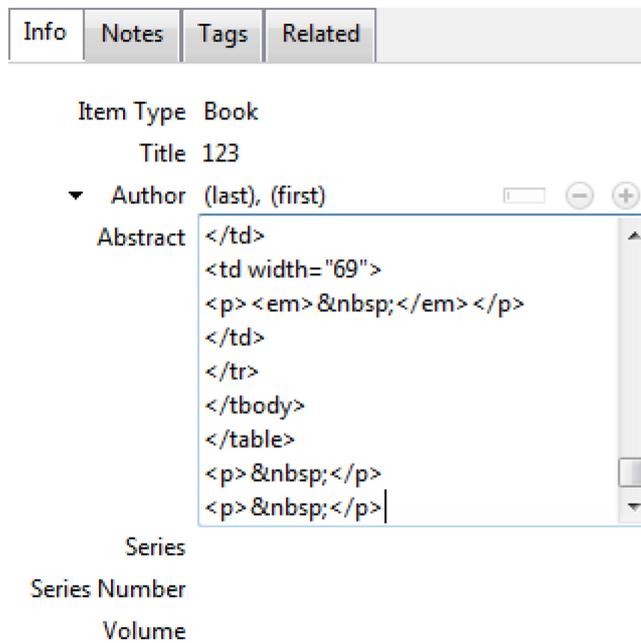
Navigate to wordhtml.com and paste in the EET.



Click HTML(highlighted) then copy the contents generated.



Paste into abstract field in Zotero.



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14. Abstract	<p>NATO 'Research Task Group' (HFM-278 RTG) comprises 11 representatives from 9 countries (BEL, BUL, CAN, NOR, ROU, SLO, SWE, GBR, USA), all Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism experts/practitioners from various backgrounds (including government, academia, police, intelligence). The HFM-278 RTG designed a prototype Information Repository of resources on preventing and countering violent extremism, to assist different end users (including policy makers, frontline practitioners, and researchers) to easily access empirical, scientific, evidence-based materials to inform and aid their work. The tool has a range of search features and each document included is accompanied by an expert overview that explains how, when and why information in the document can be used and applied to real-world problems. Throughout this project, the RTG engaged with a variety of stakeholders and end users within Defence and Security communities at relevant meetings, seminars and conferences. Feedback demonstrated a clear need and appetite for the Information Repository. A prototype has been developed into a working system, to be developed further and hosted online (website TBC). At the time of writing, there are ongoing discussions regarding NATO and other government bodies supporting the ongoing maintenance of the repository to ensure it continues to be updated, useful and relevant. This NATO activity makes a unique contribution to address both Defence and Security requirements.</p>		





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