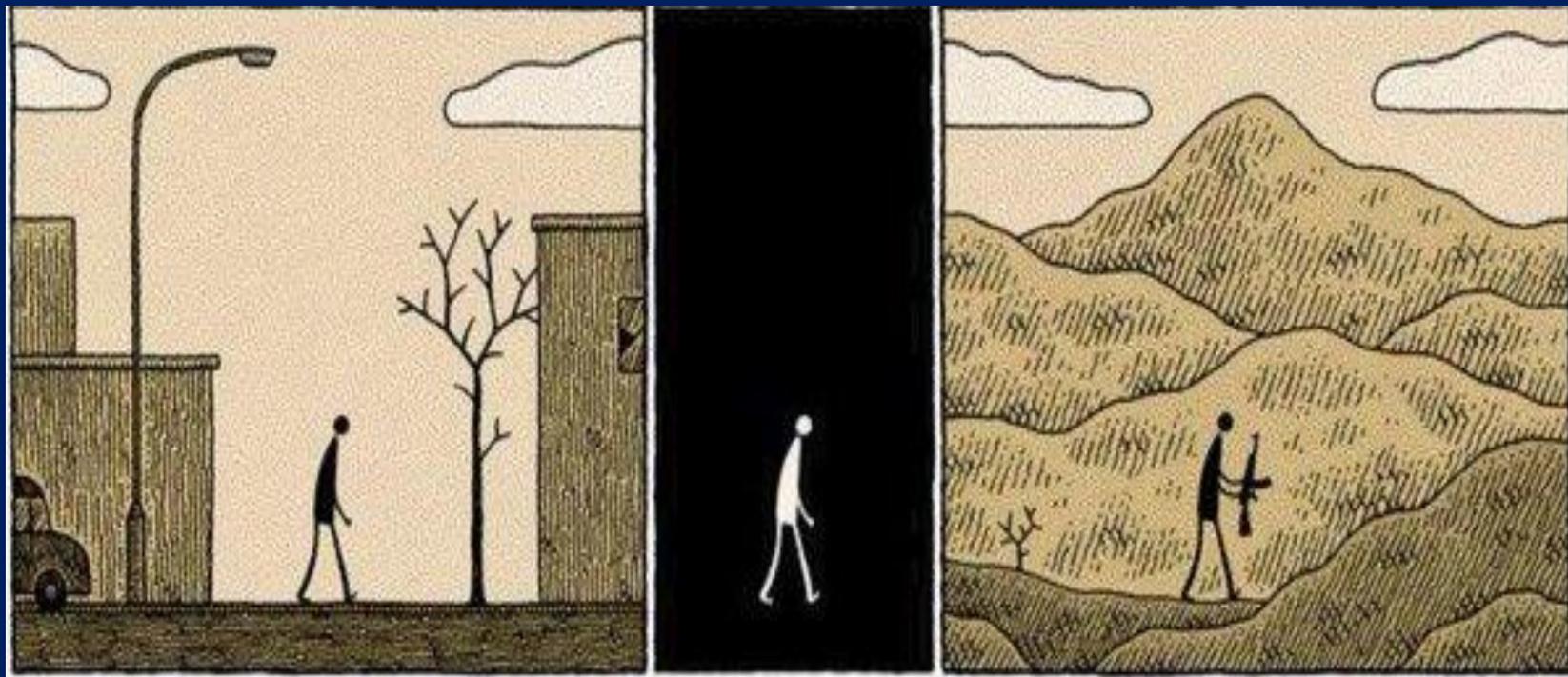


Countering Violent Extremism: Why and How Do People Radicalize?

Dr. Jennifer Hesterman
Colonel, US Air Force (ret)

Agenda

- What is ideology?
- What is extremism?
- Violent and nonviolent extremism
- How extremism feeds terror
- Lone Actor Terror (LAT)
- Final thoughts



Credit: Tom Gauld for the New York Times

Ideology Defined

Ideology is *Visionary Theorizing*

- A systematic body of concepts about human life or culture
- A manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture
- The integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program

Source: Merriam-Webster

Ideology in Theory

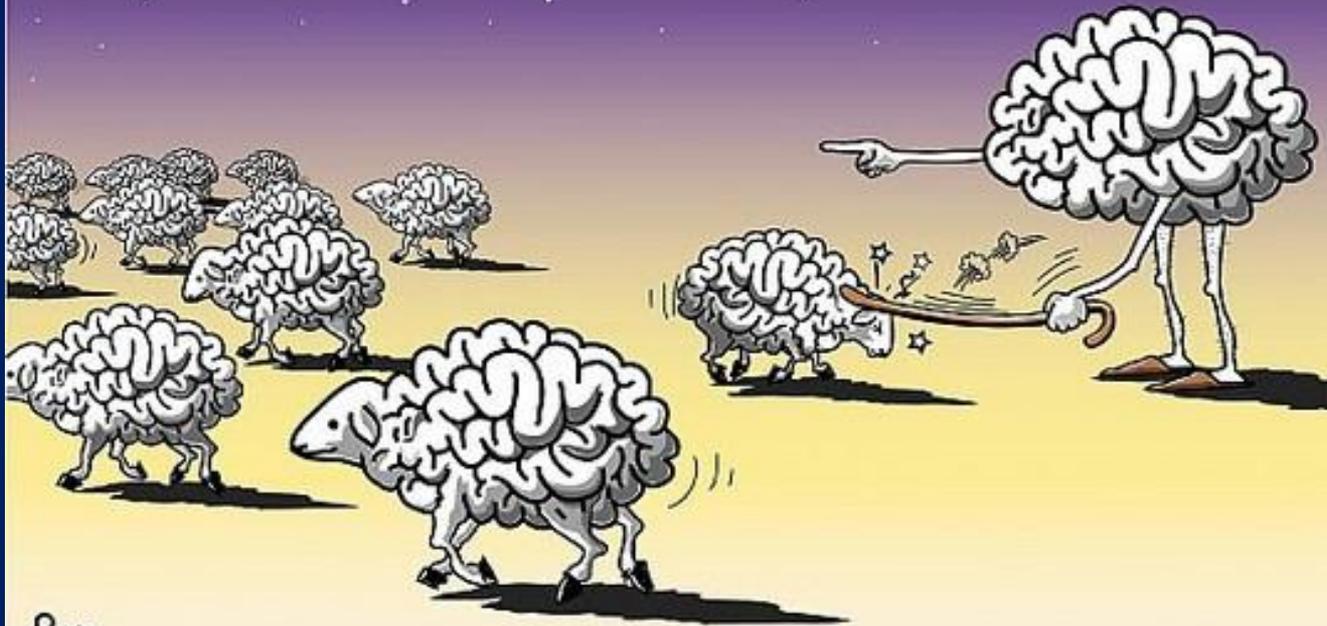
“They do not know it, but they are doing it.” ~ Karl Marx

“Something absolutely vast and powerful...
beyond all perception and objective intelligibility”

Ideology - “in you more than yourself”

Source: Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 1989 (London: Verso)

تفكير القطيع



ربيع

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Credit: Rabea for alRiyadh.com, 2009

Ideology Theory

What drives a rational person towards radical ideologies/groups?

- *Instinct theory*: behavior is a function of a person's instinct rather than activities that are conscious, purposeful and rational
- *Reinforcement theory*: person's current behavior strongly affected by knowledge of consequences or rewards for *past* behaviors
- *Cognitive theory* – behavior is not as much a function of consequences, as it is a person's *future* belief and expectations

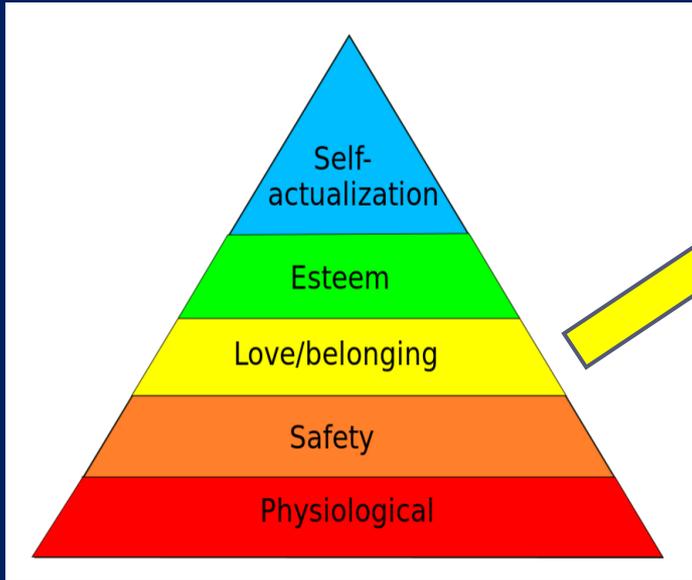
Power of Ideology

- A powerful force that can quickly change society
- Shifts the cognitive center of gravity
- Can be political, economic, single issue or religious
- Hard to dislodge: *Battle of Ideas*

A deconstructed ideology, whether political or religious, must be replaced with something else...

Herein lies the dilemma.

Need for Affiliation



A person's need to feel a sense of involvement and "belonging" within a social group

Anxiety and stress feeds need for affiliation

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Modern Organizations

Perhaps organizations are really socially constructed realities that rest as much in the heads and minds of the members as they do in concrete sets of rules and relations.

~ Gareth Morgan

Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (Sage Publications, 2006)

Group Theory

- Radical groups do **not** have a unique culture
- Force at play? Collectivism: group has priority over individuals
- Group gives members an identity and demands (or subtly elicits) loyalty for the sense of security imparted = collectivism
- Individual is beholden to the group, and knowingly can be used and exploited for group goals

Group Culture

Ideology closely tied to group culture

- **Values.** What is the value system of the group?
- **Norms.** Acceptable behaviors? Group norms strong enough to override individual behavior or externally imposed norms.
- **Artifacts.** Culture is ethos created/sustained by rituals, important places, buildings, dates, symbols, colors, dress
- **Environment.** Who controls? Closed system or open?

Group Culture

“Militancy is about more than bombs and doctrines. It is also about rituals, customs and dress codes. It is about music, films and storytelling. It is about sports, jokes, and food.”

“Many jihadists see themselves as historical heroes, knights in shining armor.”

Thomas Hegghammer

Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists

Extremism Defined

Extremism is advocacy of extreme measures or views,
radicalism.

Radicalism is favoring extreme changes in existing views,
habits, conditions, or institutions.

Source: Merriam-Webster

Types of Extremism

Nonviolent (pen/tongue) extremism

Violent (gun/bullet) extremism

Nonviolent Extremism

- Radical preaching, writing, think tanks
- Peaceful in orientation, maybe seen as a “vent”- BUT views do not further peace, harmony in society
- Inspiring, inciting, recruiting, boosting morale, fundraising

Read: Dr. Alex Schmid, *Violent and Non-Violent Extremism: Two Sides of the Same Coin?* (2014)

Violent Extremism

- Beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve radical ideological goals (FBI)
- Have distorted, divergent interpretations, beliefs, values
- Often think their beliefs or way of life are under attack

Visit this website: Don't Be a Puppet: Pull Back the Curtain on
Violent Extremism <https://cve.fbi.gov/>

Violent Extremism in the U.S.

Right Wing - racial supremacy, antigovernment, antiregulatory beliefs

Left Wing – espouse a revolutionary socialist doctrine, “protectors of the people” from capitalism

Single Interest - Influence specific issues - animals, environment, climate

Religious – Most dangerous, apocalyptic, martyrs

Religious Extremism

A religion becomes an ideology when followers cannot tolerate the existence of those who have different views or beliefs, and when they understand their religious text literally and refuse to accept any other interpretation – even from respected religious leaders.

Complicating Factors

- Maybe the violent actor has only a superficial attachment to ideology but uses it as an excuse to act violently
- Or is coerced, paid, manipulated, or shamed into participating
- Violent extremism may even become a career

Violent Extremism Fuels Terror

Challenges:

- Definition of a *terrorist* still in debate
- Definition of a *terrorist act* still in debate

What is terrorism?

Terror: From the Latin word *terrorem*, “great fear”

A *terrorist* uses violence (or threat of violence) to kill, cause fear, intimidate, coerce

A *terrorist act* translates intentions to action

WAR ON TERROR

YOU ARE
HERE



Primary Challenges

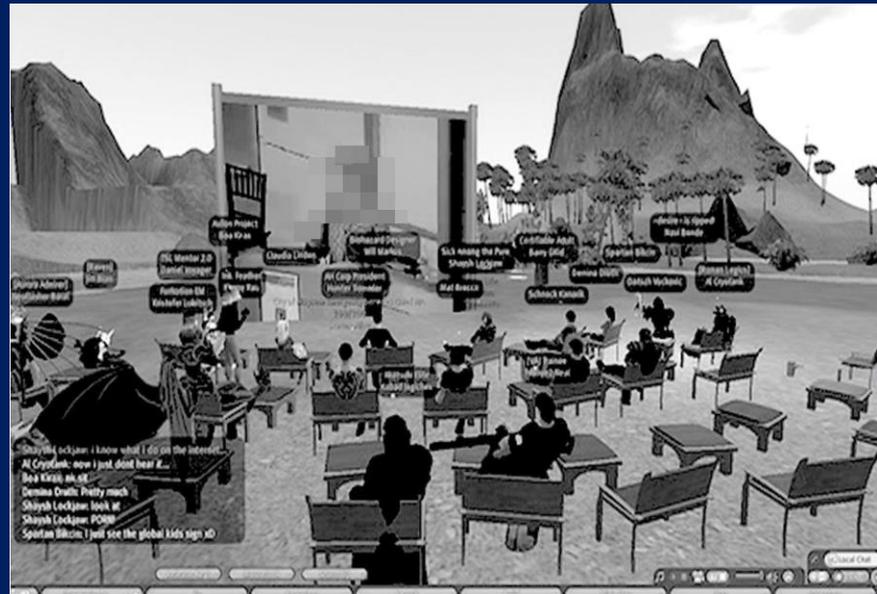
The “digital caliphate”



ISIS Online Recruitment Strategy



Inspiring Terror



Bashir Maxamed Caydid

Wall Info Photos Boxes

Write something...

Attach [Icons] Share

Send Bashir a Message
Poke Bashir
Subscribe via SMS

Information

Networks:
Minnesota Alum
Somalia

Birthdays:
August 6, 1986

April 15 at 8:45pm · Comment · Like

Bashir Maxamed Caydid ALLAH will never change the situation of a people unless they change themselves...take a sec and think about ur situation deeply what change do u need to make

April 15 at 1:30pm · Comment · Like

I agree with your brother ./, Change is not words... but require a true actions with right approach.

mostafa ahmedi

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3 Georgian tanks eliminated by landmines: HELMAND, Sep. 20 – Landmines planted by Mujahideen blew apart 2 tanks ... bit.ly/7T09ny Expand

mostafa ahmedi @alemarahweb 17h
7 NATO-puppet troops killed, 3 tanks destroyed as joint enemy trapped in ambush: PAKTIA, Sept. 19 – At least ... bit.ly/S7sFB8 Expand

Indoctrination

Apps



English

for the ISLAMIC STATE



BOOK FOUR

First Course

عدد الحصص
3

العدد 10

مثال

10 = 1 + 9

وتقرأ عشرة

10

10

تدريب

1 حوِّط العناصر الآتية عشرة عشرة



2 ضع علامة ✓ تحت المجموعة التي عدد عناصرها عشرة

10

10

10

8

6 اكتب العدد المناسب في الفراغ كما في المثال

3 عشرات = 30

عشرة = 10

7 عشرات = 70

4 عشرات = 40

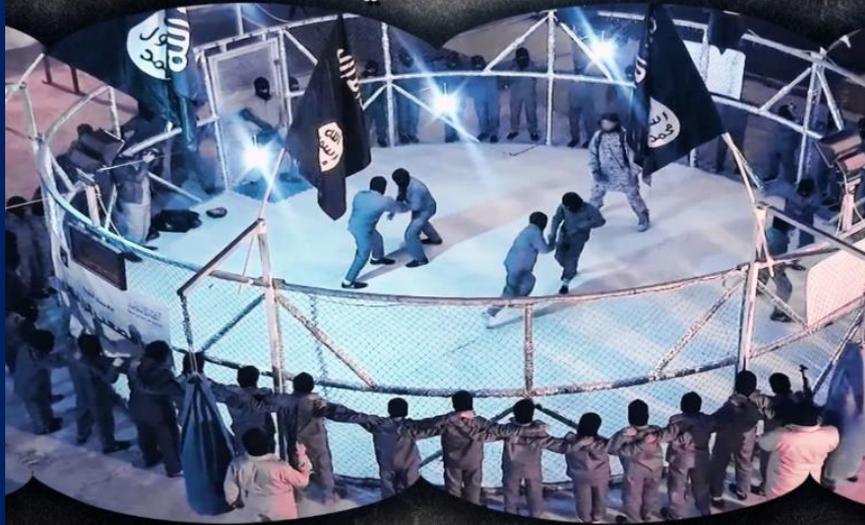
9 عشرات = 90

14

دليل المعلم

الإعداد البدائي

المستوى الأول
(للمرحلة الابتدائية)
الفصل الدراسي الأول



طبعة ابتدائية

1437 هـ



دليل المعلم | الإصدار الجديد
#كتاب | المستوى الأول - المرحلة الابتدائية
الفصل الدراسي الأول

لتحميل: <http://uo.4top.net/downloadf-398k0to1-odf.html>

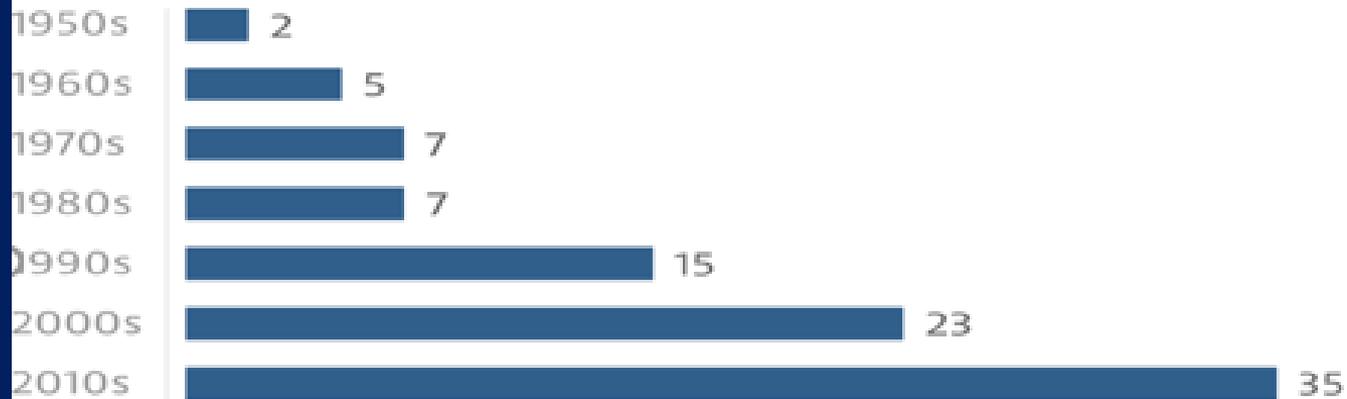
Lone Actor Terror (LAT)

- Terror undertaken by individuals who prepare for and execute violence without external assistance
- Draw ideological inspiration from formal terrorist organizations, but operate on fringes of movements
- Despite ad hoc nature and limited resources, can mount high-profile, extremely destructive attacks

Lone Actor Terror (LAT)

- Everyone angry about something, easily triggered, increasing propensity for people to violently act out
- Size of attack doesn't matter - fear is sown by an unknown actor moving about society, acting at will
- Soft targets increasingly attractive, vulnerable and abound

Lone Wolf Attackers



*Includes Orlando and Dallas attackers

The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism, 2017 Ramon Spaaij and Mark Hamm
Columbia University Press

Inspired Lone Actors

- “Virtual Entrepreneur”
- Engages online, draws inspiration
- Views material, videos, reads, studies, queries
- Secure funding, gather materials, learn tactics, copycat successful attacks

Inspired Lone Actors

Two types :

- Well adapted to society, mentally fit – makes a tactical choice to engage in lone operation; *leaves society*
- Not well adapted, suffering mental health issues or in psychological distress; *society leaves them*

International Center for Counter Terrorism ongoing project:
<https://icct.nl/project/countering-lone-actor-terrorism/>

Inspired Lone Actors

- Not a truly alone
- Internet engagement = leakage, footprint
- If we can detect, track, may divert and off road
- Possibly “disarm”
- At least we have a chance to disrupt

Challenges

- Staying power - extremist ideology persists
- Grassroots/lone actor/inspired attacks can be devastating
- Not sophisticated, or overly ambitious missions
- Soft targets vulnerable and abound

Death by a thousand cuts.

Final Thoughts

- Large body of academic thought on violent extremism and lone actor terror now exists
- Soft sciences may hold the key
- Complex challenge requires a complex response
- Many asymmetric solution sets, we're not helpless!

We are part of the environment and the problem; introspection and humility powerful tools in this fight.

Contact info

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