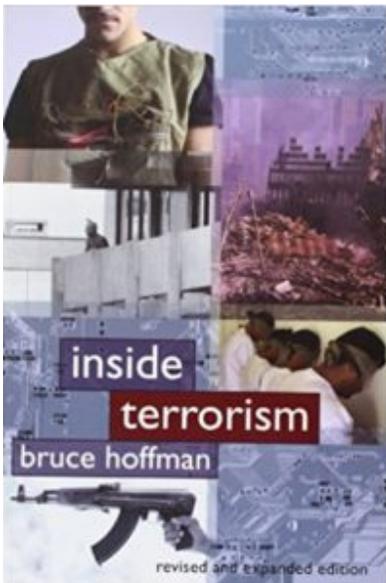


DEMOCRACY DIGEST

Countering violent extremism: learning from other democracies



How does terrorism end? Is it effective as a means of securing political power? [Robin Wright asks in The New Yorker](#):

Sinn Féin—the I.R.A.’s political wing—is the most popular party in Northern Ireland, Bruce Hoffman, the author of “Inside Terrorism,” noted. “The leaders of the moderate Catholic party—the Social Democratic and Labor Party—won a Nobel Peace Prize, but it’s Sinn Féin that is being [elected](#) now.”.....Hezbollah emerged from the underground to run for Parliament, build a network of social services, and greatly expand its support base. Today it has seats in Parliament, Cabinet positions, an alliance with Lebanon’s President, and the largest military force outside the army, as well as hospitals, schools, and welfare agencies.

“Hezbollah doesn’t rule Lebanon, but it controls it. The message is that terrorism pays. It is translated into power,” [said Georgetown University’s Hoffman](#).

This [Monday’s 16th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001](#), might be less mournful if we could say that the threat of jihadist terrorism had receded or disappeared, [Hoffman writes for the Wall Street Journal](#).

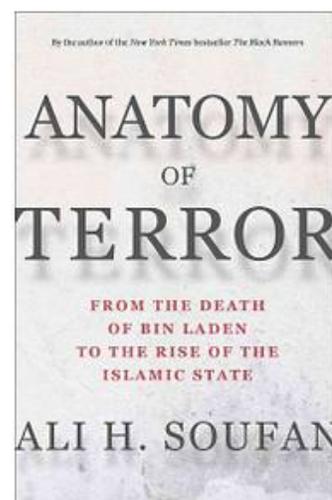
“But that is far from the case. Al Qaeda has been quietly rebuilding, after ceding the spotlight for several years to Islamic State (which was al Qaeda’s Iraqi affiliate until being expelled from the network in 2014),” he adds. “Taken together, these two groups—with their expanding capabilities and multiple branches across the globe—pose a security challenge for the U.S. and its allies every bit as perilous as what they faced immediately after 9/11.”

When it comes to [countering violent extremism](#), there are a number of lessons that the United States could learn from other democracies like Canada and Australia, notes Eric Rosand, a nonresident senior fellow in the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at Brookings and director of “[The Prevention Project: Organizing against Violent Extremism](#)” in Washington, D.C.:



The Prevention Project
Organizing Against Violent Extremism

- *The first involves the importance of investing in and empowering community-led efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, which in some, but not all, cases should involve the police. Locally-led CVE efforts require long-term funding support, including from the federal government, and a willingness to experiment in a field in which it continues to be difficult to measure effectiveness..*
- *The second is that the nature of the public discourse around violent extremism and CVE is critical to building support from the local partners. For example, shortly after taking office in 2015, Prime Minister Turnbull [sought](#) to reach out to and publicly change the discourse with Australian Muslim communities “in an effort to rehabilitate relationships and recognize these communities as partners in CVE.”*
- *A third is that framing and terminology matters when it comes to building trust with civil society and other local actors who are on the frontlines of most efforts to prevent violent extremism from taking root in communities. In developing its new national center, Canada has eschewed the acronym “CVE” and related jargon that can alienate these communities, gravitating to language that is more likely to appeal to relevant communities, i.e., “community engagement” and “violence prevention.” In Australia, terms like “social cohesion” and “resilience building”—vice “CVE”—are used to frame local grants programs that support community-led efforts to reduce the risk of violent extremism.*
- *A fourth is the importance of involving non-security agencies and actors in all levels of CVE work. This includes those in fields of education, social work, and public health. State and local health officials—for example, in [Los Angeles](#) and [Boston](#)—are becoming involved in community efforts to prevent violence, including violent extremism, but this work is not labeled as or exclusively focused on CVE. ...*
- *A fifth is the need to invest resources and mobilize expertise to develop individually focused intervention programs, which can “de-radicalize” or “off-ramp” individuals before they turn to violence. As has been [pointed out](#) recently,*



CVE efforts in the United States have focused more on broader counter-messaging or community-focused initiatives.....

- *A sixth is the importance of investing in national practitioner’s networks to facilitate the sharing of expertise and lessons learned among the small but growing community of practitioners, professionals, and community-based organizations, across a variety of disciplines, involved in a range of efforts related to countering violent extremism and, more broadly, violence prevention. Both [Canberra](#) and [Ottawa](#) have invested in directories for their respective countries and Washington would be wise to follow suit.*
- *Finally, and perhaps most basically, is the need to pursue a truly federalized approach to the challenge of violent extremism.*



The jihadist recruiters of today are not just the most tech savvy ever of their kind; they are also deploying recruiting techniques that would be very familiar to any intelligence agency case officer. In this way, they greatly broaden their prospective recruiting pool and evade detection more easily, according to [Dounia Bouzar](#), a former head of the French Ministry of Justice Youth Protection Directorate of laïcité (secularism) and [Carol Rollie Flynn](#), a Senior Fellow in the Program on National Security at the Foreign Policy Research Institute:

The creation of the physical territory of the Islamic State in 2014 made for a compelling attraction for waves of young Europeans, not all of whom were raised in Muslim families. This was especially the case in France. [Research communities](#) in Europe all agree that there is no one single profile of a jihadist.^[1] Any of the individual factors taken in isolation, such as rootlessness, problems of identity, a sense of isolation or marginalization, or personal connections to jihadists, are insufficient by themselves to predict that a given individual will radicalize.^[2] The only consensus that exists relates to the typical age range of the recruits, this being 15-25 years of age.

“Jihadist recruiters have begun to study the profiles of their prey so as to better adapt the [jihadist ideology](#) to their different emotional, social, and political aspirations,” they add. “Interviews with the radicalized individuals demonstrate that jihadist recruiters leverage relational, emotional, and ideological dimensions in their recruiting. This strategy is ideally tailored for the young age demographic as people at this age typically

search for an ideal, a group to which to belong, and the experiencing of strong emotions.
[RTWT](#)

A leading Indonesian Muslim advocate contends that “[Terrorism and Islam are Intimately Connected.](#)” [TIME magazine highlights](#) Nahdlatul Ulama General Secretary KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf’s [July 2017 address](#) to the European Union Council TWP (Terrorism Working Party) in which he stated that “jihadists’ goals, doctrines and strategy can be traced to specific elements of orthodox, authoritative Islam and its historic practice”:

Claiming a membership of 50 million, the “[militant moderates](#)” from the Nahdlatul Ulama are dedicated to supporting Indonesia’s national unity and multi-religious character while combating conservative Islamic organizations, which have recently become a more vocal force in Indonesian politics and culture.

He warned Europeans that “[lasting peace](#) cannot be attained without addressing those elements of orthodox Islam that underlie and animate jihadist movements and constitute their center of gravity.... This threat is global in nature, and [we] need a [global consolidation of powers](#) to defeat it.”



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