Global Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Engagement Programmes: The State-of-the-Art

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Global Approaches

1. **Counterterrorism Operations**
   “Fighting fire with fire”
   Although effective, will not by itself produce the desired outcome

2. **Rehabilitation and Reintegration**
   Winning “hearts and minds” to transform beneficiaries through multi-faceted activities

3. **Community Engagement**
   To “inoculate” vulnerable segments of the community against radicalisation
Global Approaches:  
(1) Counterterrorism Operations

- Coordinated intelligence measures
- “Hard” approaches:
  - Disrupt
  - Capture
  - Kill

Global Approaches:  
(2) Rehabilitation and Reintegration

**Why rehabilitate?**

1. **Security Threat:** Unless terrorists in custody transform, when released they will continue to pose an enduring threat to public safety and security

2. **Regeneration:** Terrorists will contaminate society and increase the pool of supporters and sympathisers

3. **Terrorist Iconography:** Terrorists will earn the status of heroes worthy of respect and emulation by the next generation of terrorist recruits
Global Approaches: (2) Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- Dedicated specialist government body working with community partners and private sector
- Creating specialised units of *ulama* and *asatizah* with strategy and action plan
- Re-engineering prisons from “pesantren jihad” to become “pesantren salam” (peace)
- Robust reintegration strategy and aftercare plan

Components of Rehabilitation

- Prison standards
- Training and education
- Intelligence gathering
- Psychological counselling
- Religious counselling
- Aftercare
Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: North Africa

- **Egypt** DEFUNCT
  - De-radicalisation of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group of Egypt
  - State and civil society facilitated processes led threat groups to renounce violence and produce a corpus of ideological literature renouncing Al Qaeda

- **Algeria** DEFUNCT
  - De-radicalisation of the Islamic Salvation Army began with the leadership
  - Selective inducements led to de-radicalisation

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Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: North Africa

- **Libya** DEFUNCT

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Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: Southeast Asia

- **Singapore** ACTIVE
  - Best known programme in the region
  - A model for others

- **Malaysia** ACTIVE
  - Extensive programme under the Police
  - Well-supported by government, law enforcement, religious authorities and civil society

- **Indonesia** ACTIVE
  - Responsibility entrusted to the National Counterterrorism Agency: BNPT
  - Geared towards prison assistance, reintegration, and post-release livelihood programmes

Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: Middle East

- **Saudi Arabia** ACTIVE
  - Most comprehensive of existing programmes
  - Best-funded, longest-running effort with the most graduates

- **Yemen** DEFUNCT
  - Due to a lack of political support, the programme collapsed

- **Iraq** ACTIVE
  - The largest programme; drew on Saudi and Singaporean experiences
Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: Saudi Arabia

Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: Yemen
Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: Iraq

Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: South Asia

- **Sri Lanka** **ACTIVE**
  - Focused on Tamil Tigers surrendees since 19th May 2009
  - Comprehensive programme by the army run with the support of the civil society and private sector
  - Of 12,000 beneficiaries, only around 400 beneficiaries are left to complete the programme
  - Dedicated Bureau of the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation
Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: Sri Lanka

Global Rehabilitation Initiatives: South Asia

- **Pakistan ACTIVE**
  - 2155 adults and children rehabilitated so far
  - Functioning programmes in Mishal (Swat), Sabaoon (Swat), Heila (Tank) and Khar (Bajaur)
Global Rehabilitation Initiatives:
South America and Europe

- Colombia **ACTIVE**
  - Former members of both left-wing (FARC) and right-wing (AUC) groups are rehabilitated

- Spain **ACTIVE**
  - Focus on prevention and cultural integration
  - Long-running amnesty programme with ETA prisoners in Spanish prisons
  - Intentions to create a similar programme for Muslim radicals

Global Approaches:
(3) Community Engagement

- Political reform
- Media sensitivity
- Economic empowerment
- Religious guidance
- Education
Community Engagement Initiatives

• Two dozen programs: mostly unstructured, few structured
• United Kingdom
  • Muslim Contact Unit
  • Focus on counter-radicalisation
  • Intelligence gathering
  • Partnership with community organisations
  • Increasing capability and resilience
  • Providing training and support to operational staff
  • Offender management and interventions
  • Strategic management and capacity

Community Engagement Initiatives

• United States
  • Focus on deterrence
  • No public policy on de-radicalisation

• Netherlands
  • Separate terrorist detention unit
  • Counter-radicalisation programme in partnership with the community
New Initiatives

- UNICRI
  - Rehabilitation and reintegration initiative to offer assistance to countries interested in addressing any or all of the full range of issues relating to violent radicalisation in their prisons

- EU Workshop on Effective Programming for Countering Violent Extremism
  - How the EU can support other countries in their efforts to address violent extremism and recruitment
  - Assist the European Commission with future CVE actions under the Instrument for Stability (IFS) as well as traditional development instruments including rehabilitation and community engagement

Challenges

- No “one size fits all” approach: Every programme is unique
- Rehabilitation programmes must be tailored to individual country conditions and cultures
- Reintegration determines rehabilitation success
- Identify and empower rightful speakers of faith
- Create legal framework, systems and infrastructure to reconcile communities
- Build resilience: minimizing sympathy and support to violent and radical ideologies
- Political will, a must
The Future

- Sustain structured programs
- Support ad-hoc Programs
- Develop a working model for rehabilitation
- Psychometrics: quantifying success
- Repenting and rejecting violence is inadequate, must embrace and champion the cause of peace
- Threat has shifted to cyberspace: build websites to counter-ideology and promote moderation
- Bring the West - EU and US - on board

Conclusion

- Rehabilitation and community engagement are long-term processes
- Success can be determined overtime
- Government partnership with private sector and civil society is paramount
- In the battle against current wave of extremism and violence, engage all communities
- Emerging as a standard toolkit: Rehabilitation and community engagement are global imperatives
“He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster”

Friedrich Nietzsche,
_Beyond Good and Evil_, 1886.

Thank You

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