

Forming Partnerships to Tackle Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Insights and Experiences from Australia

JASON HARTLEY AND ADRIAN CHERNEY

Rehabilitating Terrorists: The Chinese Approach

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Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Engagement

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Singapore.

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THE rise in terrorist attacks worldwide and the transnational threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) is a pressing national security concerns for most countries. Against this backdrop, governments are exploring “softer” approaches to countering the threat of militant Islamic extremism and terrorism. This issue looks at the nature and extent of community engagement and terrorist rehabilitation efforts in Australia, China and Nigeria.

In this issue, **Jason Hartley** and Adrian Cherney share insights into Australia’s community engagement efforts with the Muslim communities in countering religious extremism. The authors note that key challenges encountered by the Australian police (AFP) include a lack of trust felt by the local Muslim communities towards the local authorities and ensuring sustainable partnerships with the local communities in the long-term. To overcome these challenges, they recommend learning from past experiences and drawing upon the successful case studies of community engagement efforts implemented in other parts of the world.

Zunyou Zhou examines the Chinese model of rehabilitating terrorists in light of the country’s newly passed Counter-Terrorism Law. He notes that the legal basis for initiating a rehabilitation programme will set the tone for more sustained and comprehensive approaches to thwart further attacks by terrorists.

Jennifer Ogbogu Chidinma provides an overview of Nigeria’s past and present experiences in de-radicalising and rehabilitating the country’s militants. This includes those whose grievances stem from material factors and those who are increasingly inspired by the militant Islamic extremist ideologies of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

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Forming Partnerships to Tackle Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Insights and Experiences from Australia

Jason Hartley and Adrian Cherney

Across the globe, a key priority of counter-terrorism policing is the building of partnerships with Muslim communities. However, the task of engaging the Muslim community to tackle extremism and terrorism is a challenging one. The paper discusses the three key challenges Australian police agencies face in their engagement efforts with the Muslim community which include: (1) building partnerships in an environment of distrust (2) managing the interface between intelligence gathering and community engagement and (3) taking into account cultural considerations.

Introduction

Australia has not remained immune from the threat of global terrorism motivated by religious extremism, particularly since 9/11 and the advent of the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS). According to estimates by the Australian Government, as of April 2016, it is estimated that 110 Australians are fighting for terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq (ABC 2016).

Scholars widely agree that a key aim of terrorism is not only to inflict death and generate fear but also to win legitimacy for terrorist causes (Crenshaw 1983). Various groups have adopted different strategies in order to legitimise their beliefs and actions. ISIS, for instance, has utilised social media as a means to legitimise its cause and persuade Muslims that the struggle to restore their self-styled 'caliphate' is a religious duty (Shane and Hubbard 2014). To do so, ISIS has employed Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in an attempt to intimidate enemies (e.g. by streaming videos of brutal executions), win friends and popularise the group's 'struggle' (e.g. by portraying their actions as defending Islam) (Farwell 2014). The implication is that terrorists

need support from the broader Muslim diaspora. Therefore, disconnecting them from that support within communities is a highly important strategy (Soufan Group 2015). To do this though, authorities such as police have to become skilled practitioners in building partnerships that go well beyond 'the traditional meet and greet' of liaison meetings into the 'hearts and minds' of community members.

The unavoidable outcome is that work in the field of community-based counter-terrorism will be fraught with tension given partnership work is highly challenging and can be laden with conflict. One reason is that authorities and communities may not always agree on how best to solve problems like radicalisation and extremism. The ability of authorities and Muslim communities to manage these issues will determine the effectiveness and sustainability of future partnerships against terrorism.

In this article the authors draw from the experiences and efforts by police to engage Muslim communities in Australia. The primary aim is to outline some key challenges that police here in Australia have faced when engaging the Muslim community. Three central challenges are explored: (1) building partnerships in an environment of distrust between the Muslim community and police (2) managing the interface between intelligence gathering and community engagement and (3) taking account of Muslim community's cultural considerations.

Building partnerships in an environment of distrust

Effective community engagement is built on a foundation of trust. For trust to grow, community groups need to believe that authorities have their best interests at heart.

However, in the context of Australia, trust between police and Muslim communities has been difficult to generate. This can be attributed to the anti-terror tactics used by the authorities, including police surveillance of Mosques, police raids and searches of Muslim homes, the cancelling of passports, informal questioning of Muslims by police and political rhetoric surrounding national security. As such, Muslims in Australia view themselves as a community 'under siege', which has generated an environment of hostility towards the police (Cherney and Murphy 2015). Not surprisingly, there is a growing perception among Muslim

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communities that they have been unfairly singled out by the discourse and practice of counter-terrorism (Murphy, Cherney and Barkworth 2015). This sentiment is further exacerbated by public displays of anti-Muslim sentiment such as resistance to the building of Mosques and perpetuation of the myth that money from halal certification funds terrorism (ABC 2014). The consequence is a climate of high emotionality, resentment and distrust that can be highly counterintuitive to generating and sustaining relationships of trust.

One key consideration we think that the police often fail to grasp is that when a Muslim leader invites followers to work with authorities, he or she is in effect saying: 'trust in me, by trusting in my judgement that this is the best course of action'. In doing so, that leader is also placing their credibility at risk of being damaged if police act in a manner that is perceived as detrimental to the wellbeing of the Muslim community. Moreover, for Muslim leaders the risks of being labelled as "sell outs" or government "lackeys" by their own community can arise when they attempt to work with authorities. This is a concern that a number of Muslim leaders and Imams - who are sincerely concerned about the radicalisation of Muslim youth - have expressed to both authors. Yet law enforcement agencies can often undermine credible and committed Muslim leadership by acting in a way that weakens community support for police.

Thus it makes it hard for Muslim leaders to argue that Muslim community members should trust police. This can often occur when police become strategically distracted through becoming overly focused on managing risk, which can blind them to the broader consequences of their actions, such as when heavy-handed police tactics can alienate community members. A case of such strategic distraction and its potential impact on community trust emerged during the Martin Place siege at the Lindt Cafe, in Sydney 2014.

The Martin Place siege involved an individual named Man Haron Monis who took 18 people hostage at the Lindt Cafe in Martin Place, Sydney. During the siege Monis made a range of demands including making demands for an ISIS flag in exchange for the release of a hostage. A female Muslim community leader was subsequently contacted by police in an effort to acquire an ISIS flag. The community leader, in her effort to help the police, managed to contact some people who might possess the ISIS flag. She had to convince her contacts that she was not setting them up, and that there was no ill motive on the part of police. Nevertheless, the police ended up sourcing a flag from elsewhere. The cafe was subsequently raided by New South Wales (NSW) police following Monis' discharge of his firearm, which led to the death of two hostages, one at the hands of Monis and another killed by a police bullet from the exchange with Monis (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2015).

However the following day it was reported that both the NSW police and the Australian Federal Police raided the homes of individuals who had been contacted by that female community leader. The community leader subsequently reported a sense of betrayal in the actions undertaken by state and federal police (Feneley 2015). Police here became strategically distracted by raiding after an attempt to reach-out to the Muslim community for help. That is the police failed to realise the implications of such actions due to seeing Muslims who were willing to help them as possibly posing a security risk. The result was that it left Muslim community members outraged through a sense of betrayal.

Managing the interface between intelligence gathering and community engagement

Muslims can often perceive partnerships in counter-terrorism and counter-extremism as a

“ Muslims can often perceive partnerships in counter-terrorism and counter-extremism as a facade for intelligence gathering, and hence can become wary of police community engagement efforts. ”

facade for intelligence gathering, and hence can become wary of police community engagement efforts. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has recognised this as a significant challenge. The AFP investigates a range of commonwealth offences in Australia (e.g. sex trafficking) and takes a national lead role in counter-terrorism investigations and operations. A part of the AFP counter-terrorism efforts includes community outreach and engagement. Such tasks are undertaken by its community liaison team. The community liaison team is a small unit that falls under the AFP's counter-terrorism structure, with team members located in Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. These AFP teams have existed since 2007, first established in Sydney and Melbourne, with other capital cities following suit, such as Brisbane who appointed a designated liaison officer in 2013. There exists limited research on police counter-terrorism liaison efforts in Australia (see Cherney and Murphy forthcoming; Pickering, McCulloch & Wright-Neville 2008).

In 2015, the second author interviewed members of the AFP community liaison team. At the time of writing there were a total of 8 members in the unit, all of whom were interviewed face-to-face in July and August 2015. The sample comprised of four men and four women. Interviews focused on how AFP liaison team members engage the Muslim community in their respective jurisdictions and the challenges in doing so, with interviews lasting from one to two hours.

Activities undertaken by the AFP liaison team include attending Muslim festivals, such as *Eid*, and providing funding to community groups and Mosques for their local community projects. What is particularly important about the work of the community liaison team is that members never actively seek to elicit information and intelligence from Muslims about terrorism or suspected radicalised individuals. Doing so is actually seen as risking their engagement work. Intelligence gathering and community engagement are seen as distinct tasks. While counter-terrorism investigators and intelligence officers will seek advice from liaison team members about particular leads, the community liaison team never seeks to verify these leads through their community contacts. Rather their role is about relationship building. It is here that helping Muslim community groups access government funds for community initiatives, undertaking post-operational community consultations following major counter-terrorism operations and helping Muslim organisations and youth access government decision-makers is seen as particularly important to fulfilling this aim.

Of course it needs to be recognised that the necessity of law enforcement is to gather intelligence, which is essential to combating terrorism. However, understandably, Muslim communities will want to know how their wellbeing features in the greater scheme of police priorities around counter-terrorism. In this respect this is where community liaison roles, such as those undertaken by the AFP are important because their primary focus is not law enforcement per se, but rather they are about relationship building and community welfare.

Cultural considerations relevant to engagement

It needs to be appreciated that Australian Muslim communities largely originate from collectivist cultures where family and group affiliations and needs are placed above individual needs and desires. These include such countries as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Albania, Lebanon, and Turkey (Akbarzadeh and Smith 2005). Furthermore, collectivism is a key aspect of Islamic Mosques where the power base of decision-making strategically lies with the collective membership to ensure leaders can be held accountable by group members (Beekun, 2007; Jabnoun, 1994).

“Activities undertaken by the AFP liaison team include attending Muslim festivals, such as Eid, and providing funding to community groups and Mosques for their local community projects.”

Hence collectivist cultures stress collective identity, emotional interdependence, group solidarity, sharing, duties and obligations, stable friendships and group decision-making (Kim et al., 1994).

An ignorance of such cultural considerations of collectivism can become problematic in the context of community engagement by authorities. Presently, there is an attempt to form partnerships with Muslim communities through an individualist paradigm that targets Muslim leaders, who invariably will have high levels of interdependence with members of their community. The result is that when authorities dictate terms of community engagement by initiating a meeting with a single Muslim leader in private (e.g. an Imam), that particular engagement effort may be perceived as a violation of cultural expectations by community members. This can also lead to accusations of collusion and distrust against the Imam.

For example, the first author was surprised to hear a Muslim community member accuse a local Imam as having betrayed his community by meeting with police, selling out his community behind closed doors. This was surprising given that this Imam had been observed in numerous forums with police as only ever putting the needs of his community first. Some Muslim leaders in Australia have refused to meet with police in one-on-one situations and say they will only meet with authorities in an open forum where

members of the mosque can be included in a transparent exchange. If this cannot be done then they would prefer to not meet with authorities at all. In context of police forming counter-terrorism partnerships with Muslim community leaders, ignorance of cultural norms and expectations has the potential to not only erode a relationship of trust, but can further damage the relationship that Muslim leaders have with their own communities.

Conclusion

There are many issues and challenges that police need to manage and consider in their efforts to reach-out to and form partnerships with Muslim communities. This article only canvasses a few of these. It needs to be recognised that the Muslim community in Australia or elsewhere is not homogenous. The lack of a clear hierarchy of authority can make it difficult for police to identify and engage groups and leaders who adequately represent the Muslim community and its various needs and concerns. While our discussion has focused on experience in Australia we think it provides possible lessons for police efforts to partner with Muslim populations in other countries. Engagement and partnership work to counter violent extremism is a universal concern for authorities in many non-western countries, such as Singapore and Indonesia (Gunaratna, Jerard and Nasir 2013). Looking at how other countries have managed the tensions inherent to forming community-based partnerships against terrorism can provide useful insights into how they can be improved and sustained.

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Rehabilitating Terrorists: The Chinese Approach

Zunyou Zhou

China's newly adopted Counter-Terrorism Law establishes not only a lead governmental organ for counter-terrorism actions but also proposes a de-radicalisation strategy with three components, namely prevention, custodial rehabilitation, and aftercare. Both in law and in practice, Chinese de-radicalisation measures rely heavily on the participation and engagement of the communities. This counter-terrorism law has provided a legal basis for initiating rehabilitation programmes, but concrete implementation rules incorporating the religious, educational, occupational, and other aspects of rehabilitation remain to be introduced.

Introduction

Since the 9/11 attacks, rehabilitation programmes have been tested in around 20 countries, including Saudi Arabia and Singapore (Gunaratna 2015). Since such programmes aim to boost dialogue, tolerance, and understanding among different religions, cultures, and peoples, they are also a reaction to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that underscores the importance of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. It was against this backdrop that China introduced a legal basis for rehabilitation programs through its first-ever comprehensive law on counter-terrorism.

After many years of hesitation, China published in November 2014 its much-anticipated counter-terrorism draft law in order to solicit suggestions (Zhou 2015). The draft law was sharply criticised by human rights groups due to its potential human rights violations. The U.S. also protested against the potential for U.S. technology companies to be subjected to surveillance (Denyer 2015; Wong 2015). Partly in response to international criticisms, China made quite a number of changes to the most controversial provisions in the draft. The Counter-Terrorism Law was finally passed on 27 December 2015 and took effect on the first day of 2016 (Zhou 2016). The law greatly boosts China's counter-terrorism capabilities, due to its far-reaching measures. Such measures grant security authorities greater investigative and surveillance powers by imposing tough restrictions on civil liberties. Nonetheless, China's

counter-terrorism law generally represents a positive step by the Chinese authorities to combat terrorism in a more effective – albeit more repressive – manner (Kor 2015).

The newly enacted counter-terrorism law establishes a lead governmental organ for counter-terrorism actions that includes efforts to de-radicalise persons. The law also proposes a three-component strategy for de-radicalisation, which includes prevention, custodial rehabilitation, and aftercare of radicalised individuals.

Strategy for Rehabilitation

Regardless of how hard the Chinese government has fought terrorism, the terrorist threat in China continues to be on the rise. Hence, a shift in the approach to counter-terrorism is necessary. Judging by the recently passed counter-terrorism law, China has realised that “hard” actions such as killing and capturing are no solution to the problem, whereas “soft” actions such as prevention and rehabilitation may produce a better, long-lasting effect. This requires a long-term, comprehensive strategy characterised by a multi-pronged approach and inter-agency collaboration.

As noted below, there are three components to the Chinese strategy for rehabilitation: prevention, custodial rehabilitation, and aftercare. This is mirrored in the three groups of persons targeted by the law: (1) those who have engaged in terrorism or extremism but do not qualify for criminal punishment; (2) those who are imprisoned on charges of terrorism or extremism; and (3) those who have been released from prison.

With regards to custodial rehabilitation and aftercare for de-radicalisation purposes, China has so far not had introduced concrete laws to implement the newly enacted counter-terrorism law that provides the legal basis for such programmes. Chinese media report that some prisons in Xinjiang have adopted internal rules in this regard (Sui 2016), but details on such rules are not open to the public. Compared with custodial rehabilitation, aftercare seems to be the more urgent concern because China is currently facing a threat by those persons who remain radicalised even after they have undergone custodial rehabilitation. By means of continued monitoring and counselling, the aftercare aims at facilitating the social reintegration of former

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terrorists so as to prevent relapse.

In terms of prevention, China has taken numerous measures to de-radicalise people for quite some time already. Typically, these measures rely heavily on the participation and engagement of the communities to which these radicalised people belong. One recent measure shall serve as an example.

National Counter-Terrorism Agency

Article 7 of the new law stipulates that the State must establish a leading counter-terrorism agency in order to unify the leadership and command of the nationwide efforts against terrorism. Such an agency was established as early as August 2013, in the form of the “National Counter-Terrorism Leading Group.” The Group was established on the basis of the “Decision on Issues Related to Strengthening Anti-Terrorism Work”, a short legislative document, adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) in 2011, which was replaced by the current counter-terrorism law. At present, the Leading Group is housed in the Ministry of Public Security, which is China’s highest police authority. Under Article 7, such “leading groups” have also been set up at three other levels of government, i.e., at the provincial, the prefecture, and the county level.

The state organs involved in counter-terrorism efforts include the public security authorities (police forces), the state security agencies (intelligence forces), the People’s Liberation Army (military forces), the People’s Armed Police Forces (paramilitary forces), the prosecution offices (prosecutors), the courts (judges), and the

judicial administrative organs (correctional officers).

In accordance with Article 5 that emphasizes the importance of “combining the work of specialised forces with the support of the general public,” China deploys the strategy of “people’s counter-terrorism war”. In legal terms, the idea of this strategy is for authorities to establish joint coordination mechanisms to mobilise grassroots organisations such as villagers’ or citizens’ committees, companies, public institutions, and social organisations (Article 8), to set up formal forces or volunteer groups in the communities (Article 74), and for all organisations and individuals to be required to assist and cooperate with the authorities (Article 9).

Specific Provisions on Rehabilitation

Specific provisions on terrorist rehabilitation are included in Articles 29-30. While Article 29 is a general rule on rehabilitation, Article 30 focuses especially on rehabilitating those who have been released from prison.

The first paragraph of Article 29 covers community rehabilitation. For those who have engaged in terrorism or extremism but their actions do not qualify for criminal punishment, police authorities must organise the involvement of villagers’ or citizens’ committees to which these persons belong, the places where they are employed, the schools where they study, their family members and legal guardians to educate and correct them. It is noteworthy that not every person in connection with terrorism or extremism is criminally punishable (for example, by a prison term). Some of these people, if not to be prosecuted, may be fined accordingly or/and subjected to “administrative detention”, through police agencies, usually up to 15 days without the participation of prosecutors or judges.

The second paragraph of Article 29 regulates custodial rehabilitation. Prisons, detention centres and community correctional facilities are duty-bound to supervise, educate and correct persons imprisoned on terrorism or extremism charges. Moreover, prisons and detention centres may incarcerate such inmates either together with other regular inmates or confine them separately, depending on the “need of implementing education and rehabilitation and maintaining prison order”. Thus, the authorities are empowered with great discretion in this regard.

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The four paragraphs of Article 30 address occupational and educational rehabilitation. Before any inmate is released, prisons and detention centres are required to assess the inmate’s dangerousness. To this end, the assessors should consult with grassroots organisations as well as with anyone involved in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating the case. If the inmate is deemed to be dangerous, correctional facilities should submit to the intermediate court with a recommendation for a “placement and education” (安置教育) programme (paragraph 1). It is up to the court to decide whether such a programme is necessary. If those subject to the programme object to the decision, they may apply for re-consideration to the court at the next higher level (paragraph 2). Such programmes are administered by the provincial government and implemented by facilities under its jurisdiction. Persons attending the programme are to be assessed annually by the relevant facility. If they are found to be genuinely repentant and do not pose any threat to society, the facility is obliged to promptly issue a recommendation to the court to relieve these persons of the duty to attend the programme (paragraph 3). The prosecution office supervises the making of the court decision and the implementation of the programme (paragraph 4).

The concept of “placement and education” as first used in the counter-terrorism law appears to be synonymous with the term “placement, help and education” (安置帮教), which is frequently used in a series of Chinese administrative laws. According to an administrative regulation jointly issued by Central Commission for Comprehensive Management of Public Security,

Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Justice and other two ministries in 1994, the “placement, help and education” refers to a non-coercive measure targeting recently released prisoners, particularly those released less than three years prior, who lack the means to lead a normal life, and exhibit signs of recidivism.

The counter-terrorism law provides a legal basis for rehabilitation programmes. In fact, since 2014, the government of Xinjiang has been conducting a grand de-radicalisation campaign by mobilising public officials, religious clerics, teachers, scholars, grassroots organisations and ordinary people to join hands with the government in these efforts. According to the most recent New Year speech by Zhang Chunxian, party chief of Xinjiang, on 31 December 2015, this campaign has “significantly weakened the atmosphere of religious extremism” (Zhang 2016).

Community Engagement

When it comes to community engagement, there is a need to talk of a three-year, three-phase special programme started by the government of Xinjiang in March 2014. This programme is designed to send a total of 200,000 cadres to the rural, underdeveloped areas of Xinjiang with the aim of “investigating the conditions of the people, serving the interests of the people, and winning the hearts of the people”, officially abbreviated to “fang, hui and ju” (访惠聚), namely “investigating, serving and winning”. In the first phase of this programme, 70,000 cadres from government agencies, public institutions, and state-owned companies were assigned to one-year posts in over 8,000 villages, over 700 branches of state farms, and over 900 communities (Ayi and Liu 2014; Xinhua 2015).

In January 2015, Zhang Chunxian spoke highly of the achievements in the first phase of the programme and made arrangements for the second phase. According to Zhang, in 2015 the programme had six objectives: (1) transforming working styles of local cadres; (2) enhancing ethnic solidarity; (3) promoting religious harmony; (4) improving the people’s life; (5) maintaining social stability; and (6) strengthening local authorities. In working towards these objectives, the cadres involved in the programme were required to focus on three key areas – (1) meeting the needs of the people; (2)

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strengthening grassroots organisations; and (3) facilitating de-radicalisation.

The said objectives are carried out in an attempt to win the hearts of the people and form a solid foundation for long-term stability and peace in Xinjiang. In the area of “de-radicalisation,” specific measures include: (1) enhancing the campaign of “Ruling Xinjiang According to Law”; (2) making use of modern culture to guide the people and reduce the opportunities for religious extremism; (3) intensifying the efforts of educating the people; (4) combining the hard aspect of “suppression” with the soft aspect of “education and guidance”; and (5) sparing no efforts to cope with key problem townships so as to sever the channels of extremist ideology (Li and Zhang 2015).

In terms of the above-noted campaign of “Ruling Xinjiang According to Law”, this refers to Xinjiang’s efforts to implement the 18th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee’s Fourth Plenum resolution in October 2014 on “ruling the country according to law” (the CCP’s interpretation of “the rule of law”). The emphasis over law suggests the determination of Xinjiang authorities to change their previous practices of breaking laws in their de-radicalisation actions. The dispatched cadres under the “investigating, serving and winning” programme are heavily reliant on local communities such as villagers’ committees, on grass-roots organisations such as women’s congresses, and on key individuals such as so-called “four categories of old

people” (Hu and Wang 2016; Jiang, Song and Hanzao 2015).

China is ruled by means of a two-track system consisting of the CCP and the state structures, which are intertwined at all five levels of government, i.e., central, provincial, prefecture, county, and township (Zhou 2014). The same system also applies to the villagers’ committee, the primary organisation for self-government, in which the villagers manage their own affairs, educate themselves and take care of their own needs. Under the CCP Constitution, there is always a CCP organisation that operates as the de facto leading organ in governing the village in parallel with the villagers’ committee. The “women’s congress,” a grassroots organisation in the village, carries out its activities under the leadership of the villagers’ committee and the village CCP organisation. In urban areas, the local community equivalent to villagers’ committee is “citizens’ committee”. The “four categories of old people” refer to “old cadres,” “old CCP members,” “old role models,” and “old military people,” who are more than 60 years old, politically reliable, and earn monthly allowances for their role in stabilising the communities.

Conclusion

Rehabilitating terrorists or extremists is an integral part of China’s counter-terrorism efforts. The newly adopted counter-terrorism legislation provides a legal basis for initiating rehabilitation programmes, but concrete legal rules to implement the law have yet to be introduced.

The rehabilitation efforts in Xinjiang show that China has embraced the idea of terrorist rehabilitation. Although Xinjiang authorities have claimed success in reducing “the atmosphere of religious extremism”, it remains to be seen whether such reduction of “atmosphere” is a reliable indicator of changed minds or instead a false appearance that portends a backlash.

In measuring effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes, the primary factor should be the recidivism rate. No rehabilitation programme can guarantee that a person’s mind-set is changed and that they will never return to terrorism (Gunaratna 2009). However, a programme that achieves a little lower recidivism rate by spending disproportionately large resources, whether human or financial, cannot be deemed worthwhile.

“The newly adopted counter-terrorism legislation provides a legal basis for initiating rehabilitation programmes, but concrete legal rules to implement the law have yet to be introduced.”

China does not lack the political will to combat terrorism nor the human and financial resources for rehabilitation programmes. Still, the greatest challenge is to create effective programmes that incorporate the religious, educational, occupational, and other aspects of rehabilitation best suited to China’s unique situation.

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Nigeria's Approach to Terrorist Rehabilitation

Jennifer Chidinma Ogbogu

Nigeria has a long history of religious conflicts. Some of the most virulent conflicts have been between the Christians and the Muslims in the northern part of the country. Consequently, the radicalisation of many Muslims in the north coincides with an increasing number of attacks by violent extremist groups in the country, particularly by terrorist groups like Boko Haram. The Nigerian military has put up stiff resistance to the terrorist group, setting up a rehabilitation programme for terrorist detainees.

Amnesty for the Niger Delta Militants

Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes have been seen as vital in counter terrorism strategies. In the case of Nigeria, the first attempt at rehabilitation and reintegration was the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme set up by the Federal government of Nigeria at the end of the Biafran civil war to reintegrate ex combatants into the society (Audu 2013). With the end of the civil war, one of the most immediate demands on President Yakubu Gowon was one of providing relief for the suffering masses in war affected areas (Audu 2013). Around this time, the Federal Military Government adopted the policy of Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (3Rs) a comprehensive policy which extended beyond disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants (Audu 2013).

The '3Rs', was intended to provide immediate relief to all who suffered, as a result of the conflict, and to enable them restart and rebuild their lives. The government provided the funds and material to rebuild some of the destroyed or damaged infrastructure. Nigeria received the support from other nations and international organisations, such as the UNDP, WHO UNICEF and UNESCO, ADB, IBRD, and the Red Cross (Audu 2013).

During the war, there were occasions when the Federal Government created safe corridors, which enabled food and medicine to get through to the civilian population within secessionist enclaves. The amnesty programme for militants in the Niger delta region was initiated by President Umaru Yar'Adua in June 2009, following regular outbreaks of violence by Niger Delta militants. This programme was the Nigerian Government's next attempt at rehabilitation (Uguru 2010). Niger Delta militants are an indigenous minority in Nigeria's Delta region (comprising oil rich states, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Edo). The militant groups emerged in the early 2000s following the deterioration of the living conditions of people living in oil-rich areas due to the increase of oil-related activities by foreign oil corporations (Ludovica 2015).

Tensions between foreign oil corporations in the region and local communities arose as some ethnic groups felt they were being exploited and could not benefit by the presence of oil in the area. The repeated oil spills that considerably damaged the environment and affected people's health contributed to further deepen the communities' frustration (Ludovica 2015). This sense of discrimination fuelled their anger against the state, resulting in acts of violence like kidnapping of foreign oil workers, hijacking of ships and pipeline vandalism (Uguru 2010). However, under the presidential amnesty, militants were given a 60-day ultimatum (6 August 2009 – 4 October 2009) to surrender unconditionally. By the end of the amnesty period, about 20,192 ex-militants (and non-militants) had surrendered around 2,760 arms of different classes and calibre, 287,445 ammunitions, 3,155 magazines, 1,090 dynamite caps, 763 explosives and sticks of dynamite, and 18 gun boats to the Presidential Amnesty Committee.

With the closure of the amnesty window, other ex-militants who were reluctant to participate in the amnesty programme but later realised the benefits accruing to those who disarmed, joined the programme. This increased the total number by 6,166 (Oluwaniyi 2011). The surrendered militants also signed up for skills-training courses to pursue a job after successfully completing their training. They also received counselling and a monthly allowance of U.S. \$439 prior to being reintegrated into society (Uguru 2010).

“ Militant groups [in Niger Delta] emerged in the early 2000s following the deterioration of the living conditions of people living in oil-rich areas due to the increase of oil-related activities by foreign oil companies. ”

At the same time, Nigerian authorities implemented policies to redistribute oil wealth to the community. Although crimes against the oil industry persist, with the abduction of foreign nationals working for oil firms, vandalism to pipelines and hijacking of oil ships, large-scale violence declined in the Niger Delta since the amnesty started. About 1,019 ex-militants have travelled overseas for academic and skill acquisition training. These training courses vary between six months to five years. Currently, ex-Niger Delta militants undergo training in the U.S., South Africa, Malaysia, Moscow, Poland, India, Ghana, and the Philippines, among other countries. Moreover, 3,112 militants also underwent skills acquisition training at different centres across the country (Ehigiator 2011).

The government channelled a greater proportion of state funding into local community development. In April 2010, Delta State authorities passed their budget of U.S. \$2.2 billion. Sixty-three percent of this amount was earmarked for building up infrastructure in areas affected by violence between the military and the Niger Delta militants.

This includes rebuilding Gbaramatu kingdom, an area made up of several villages in Delta State after it was destroyed in the fighting between government troops and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in May 2009 (Uguru 2010). In Bayelsa State, a \$1.28 billion budget was earmarked for rebuilding access roads in the creeks, supporting youth centres and rehabilitating health centres. The amnesty programme has been successful in the area of disarmament and demobilisation.

However, it has fallen short in achieving rehabilitation and reintegration of the detainees into mainstream society as militants still operate in Nigeria's waterways (Uguru 2010). The failure to rehabilitate and reintegrate detainees resulted in continued violence in the Niger Delta region. Although the Niger Delta conflict seems more of revolt driven by material grievances as compared to that of Boko Haram which is chiefly the fight for an Islamic Caliphate, the two scenarios, have posed grave security challenges to the country and requires a holistic approach to completely restore peace and sanity to Nigeria.

Operation Safe Corridor

To effectively defeat terrorism and violent extremism, there is the need for a robust community engagement and rehabilitation programme as this will ensure that captured/surrendered terrorists do not pose a security threat when they are released from custody. The successes of Nigerian military in the fight against violent extremism and the increasing number of terrorists that have voluntarily surrendered to the Nigerian military has allowed the military to set up a rehabilitation camp.

Operation Safe Corridor is a rehabilitation camp aimed at repatriating captured/surrendered Boko Haram fighters, and encourages others to abandon the insurgency (Ohikere 2016). Established in April 2016, the camp will take the captured/surrendered terrorists through various vocational training sessions as part of the process of reintegrating them into mainstream society (Ohikere 2016).

With the gradual weakening of the Boko Haram Terrorists (BHT), the Northeast insurgency has reached a turning point. However, the accomplishments have also resulted in large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the combat zones. Therefore, Operation Safe Corridor serves to profile, screen, administer and

“ Operation Safe Corridor is a rehabilitation camp aimed at repatriating captured/surrendered Boko Haram fighters, and encourages others to abandon the insurgency. ”

move the IDPs from the combat zones to secured camps separate from that of captured/surrendered terrorists.

The rehabilitation programme serves to mobilise national resources both within and outside the armed forces in a coordinated framework. The aim is to develop counter narratives, provide vocational training as well as paid jobs in support of the counter-terrorism operations. There are plans to engage key local and international religious leaders/organisations opposed to Boko Haram, who will assist in propagating moderation. The Nigerian Inter-Religious Council members will also be incorporated into the rehabilitation programme.

Moreover, the North-eastern part of Nigeria comprises of diverse ethnic groups that speak different dialects and languages. As such, experts in indigenous languages like Kanuri, Hausa and Fulfude will be deployed to ensure effective communication with domestic terror detainees. Efficient mode of communication is necessary for a successful rehabilitation programme. On the other hand, experts in the French and English language will be utilised for terror detainees from contiguous countries. Additionally, traditional media outlets, including television, radios, newspapers and periodicals, will be used for propagation of key themes and messages to counter terrorist ideologies as well as preach moderation.

The social media platform will also be exploited as terrorist organisations like the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) have used social media outlets like Twitter for dissemination of their propaganda. For example, 15-year-old Yusra Hussein was allegedly groomed through a Twitter account called Jihad Matchmaker, which promises to “link up those seeking marriage in Syria”. The Twitter account used religious language as a smokescreen as well as promises of strict religious ceremonies (Saul 2015). Establishing a rehabilitation programme is highly capital intensive. Therefore, there is a need for collaboration with international partners in the area of funding and logistics. There is also a need to partner with the private sector and civil society organisations which include trade unions, professional associations, faith-based groups, media organisations, community-based groups and other forms of non-governmental organisations in the rehabilitation and reintegration programme.

Way Forward

Nigeria faces series of security challenges. The fall in oil prices, caused by the continuing unwillingness of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to intervene in stabilising markets that are widely viewed as oversupplied (Omonisa 2016), has contributed to rising cases of unemployment. This is an underlying cause of youth involvement in terrorism. Foreign investors are gradually withdrawing their investment from Nigeria. The case of JPMorgan Chase highlights this dismal situation. JPMorgan Chase has excluded Nigeria from its local-currency emerging-market bond indices, citing harsh steps taken by the Central Bank of Nigeria to curb imports to support the value of the naira, which fell by about 20 percent against the U.S. dollar (Campbell 2015). Therefore, there is a need to seek alternative means of revenue generation which will translate to provision of employment opportunities that will keep the rehabilitees busy and ensure that they are reintegrated into the mainstream society and they do not pose a security threat to the country.

Presently, Nigeria's rehabilitation programme is at its early stages. To ensure the success of the rehabilitation programme, the Federal Government of Nigeria may need to consult with countries that have feasible and successful rehabilitation and re-integration programmes in place. The Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore is a rehabilitation model which can

“ ...the Nigerian government needs to draw vital lessons from the post-civil war rehabilitation programme as well as the Amnesty programme for the Niger Delta militants to ensure that the rehabilitation programme for the surrendered terrorists is successful. ”

be adapted by the Nigerian government within the context of the country to achieve long term success. The government also ought to establish a resource centre comparable to Singapore's RRG which combines both print media and technology based resource material and applications as part of its counter terrorism efforts to help counter terrorist ideology which has been used to radicalise the rehabilitees (RRG 2014). The Nigerian Rehabilitation programme could also be designed to expand beyond the North East to the rest of the country. A special Ministry or government agency could be established, similar to Sri Lanka's Bureau of the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation which was designed to safeguard the rights of rehabilitees, contribute towards sustainable peace, reconciliation, psychological, economic and social cohesion, increasing the employability of the rehabilitees and creating opportunities for economic revitalisation (RSIL 2014).

Also, the Nigerian government needs to draw vital lessons from the post-civil war rehabilitation programme as well as the Amnesty programme for the Niger Delta militants to ensure that the rehabilitation programme for the surrendered terrorists is successful. The rehabilitation program post-civil war and that for the Niger Delta militants have been grossly marred by the inability of the government to follow through with the whole process. There are still cases of militancy in the Delta region as well as recent agitations from the civil war affected areas, majorly the Igbo community in Nigeria. Finally, to ensure that counter terrorism efforts are successful, there is the need for the federal Government of Nigeria to address the lack of basic amenities for the North East region, one of the underlying causes for the grievances and mobilising factors for terrorism and extremism in the country. Education should be made the top priority for Nigerian youth as well as the provision of employment opportunities to adequately engage the youth who are recruited by terrorist groups, like Boko Haram. The judicial system and processes could be reviewed to meet global best practices.

Conclusion

To ensure a holistic counter-terrorism strategy, an effective rehabilitation and community engagement programme is required. Several countries, like Singapore and Sri Lanka have yielded successful outcomes in their own rehabilitation programme model. Nigeria's approach to rehabilitation, though at its early stages, is a step in the right direction at ensuring that captured/surrendered terrorists are reintegrated into mainstream society.

However, to ensure the sustainability of the programme, much more needs to be done in areas of funding and logistics as well as manpower requirement. The Nigerian government therefore must study and adopt effective rehabilitation programme models from countries that have recorded successful outcomes, while modifying these models to suit the Nigerian situation.

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EPILOGUE:

The foundation for the Nigerian rehabilitation programme was developed by Fatima Akilu, the Director Behavioural Analysis and Strategic Communication, who led a specialist team from the Office of the National Security Advisor of Nigeria. Of all the programmes she studied worldwide, Ms. Akilu explained that the Singaporean programme was influential in shaping the strategic direction of the Nigerian rehabilitation program. Explaining the genesis of the Nigerian rehabilitation programme, Ms. Akilu said:

"In 2012, Mr. Richard Barratt at the time a senior official with the United Nations arranged for us to visit Singapore where we met with government officials as well as visited the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) and the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR). Our trip took us to Australia where we visited their de-radicalisation prisons and spent a day with Victoria Police studying their work with communities and families of terrorists. I returned and visited Indonesia who at the time were working on putting together a comprehensive programme, additionally spent some time in Algeria and sent a team to Saudi Arabia to study their programmes. We also studied the UK's prevent programme and visited the state departments centre for strategic communication in Washington D.C.

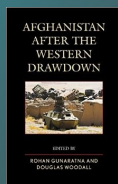
We spent some months studying literature on the programme in Sri Lanka, Morocco, Bangladesh, Columbia, how the IRA were dealt with before designing our multi-pronged programme, that had de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation, strategic communication and trauma support across government at three levels, federal, state and local government and horizontally across intra and intra faith platforms. We formed the very first security sector and civil society network called PAVE (People Against Violent Extremism), and were the first in Nigeria to push for a reintroduction of critical thinking and logical reasoning across the education curriculum as a buffer to radicalisation."

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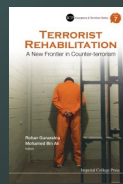


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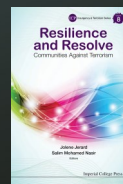
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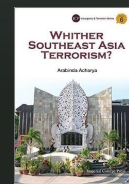
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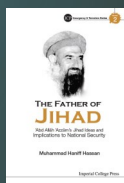
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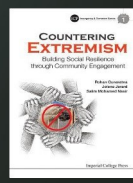
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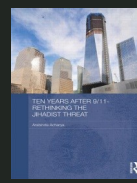
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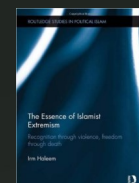
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