

4.1 Assumption: One can recognize a terrorist

Hi there. Last week we discussed five assumptions on terrorism, and we compared them with empirical evidence and scholarly literature. This week we will look into five assumptions on counter-terrorism. Five assumptions we consider interesting, again, either because they're challenged or the opposite, they're considered very much true and constitute the basis of much policy making. Well, I already mentioned several times That terrorism is a constantly changing phenomenon, which means you have to update, revise, evaluate not only your policies, but also theories and assumptions.

Well, we're going to look into five of them, five assumptions on counter-terrorism. And they are the following. First we will investigate the idea that one can recognize a terrorist. Then, deradicalisation of terrorists, is it possible or not? And then the third assumption is decapitation of terrorist groups works. And then terrorism cannot be defeated, a statement heard quite often. And then finally, terrorism can best be Managed by a so-called holistic or wide approach.

One of the key problems when researching terrorism is the secretive nature of terrorists and terrorism, they work in the dark, underground, it's very difficult to study them. Well, this challenge is also a challenge to policymakers. They would like to know who they're dealing with, and they would like to discover terrorists before they strike. And a phrase that is connected to that need and challenge is the following, looking for the needle in the haystack. Well that sounds like a mission impossible, you can't find a needle in a haystack. But fortunately, there have been quite a Few cases of terrorists that have been caught before they managed to strike and some have been caught afterwards based on certain clues or signs. So apparently it's not impossible to find them. And perhaps they are recognizable. Perhaps it is possible to make a distinction between terrorists on the one hand and non-terrorists on the other, and to find terrorists out of a larger population of non-terrorists.

Well the process or tool to do so is called profiling. How does it work? Profiling goes under different names, Including its original, criminal or offender profiling. And there are different types of profiling. The main distinction is that between a focus on the individual characteristics of a person, versus a focus on their behavior. So personality profiling versus behavioral profiling. And the most prevalent method of attempting to achieve a distinction between an offender, either a criminal or a terrorist, and a non-offender is to establish a set of psychological, socio-economic, physical, behavioral, and or ethnic attributes based on prior experiences. Well, in other words, indicators that tell us what a terrorist might look like, what are its behavioral or personality traits, and in what circumstances do they live and work, all together making up the terrorist profile. And oftentimes, this is followed by data mining or data searching, using various sources for what is called secondary security screening of the group of individuals with the largest number of indicators.

So it's two steps. First, you look at the population as a whole, then you have a group that have quite a number of indicators, and then you're, you are going to do some data mining, data searching, trying to and hopefully getting out of it, a number of people that might be terrorists or, ideally, that are the terrorists. Well, if it works. In an ideal situation, it might offer the counter-terrorism agencies a perfect tool to discover terrorists without much prior information about this individual or group, purely based on past experiences, past experience with other groups or individuals. Obviously there's a demand for a tool that could really do this. Terrorist attacks cost a lot of casualties and property damage, and counter-terrorism measures have an impact on the lives of many and also cost a lot.

Well here's a, a statement that is a good example of the demand for a tool, a mechanism to make a distinction between terrorists and non-terrorists. And it's a statement from a, a newspaper in Germany that was published in December 2010, and it said airports demand racial profiling to fight terror. And it reads, the incoming head of Germany's main airport lobby group is Demanding the nation's transit authorities use racial profiling to weed out terrorists at security checks. Well, the idea is that it does not only make travelling safer but it also reduce costs. If you use your resources to try to scan and assess everyone you're wasting a lot of money a lot of time as well that could also be used on other precautionary measures. So, any tool that could help us to speed up that process or

limit the time that we're waiting at airports would, of course, be very helpful. Well on top of that, most of these measures at airports that take a lot of time that you and I might find annoying, also gives us the idea that terrorism is a big threat. And that's actually what terrorists want, they want us to believe that they pose a big threat.

So there's a lot to say for any tool that could help us to reduce time, reduce cost, and also make us make it less feasible that we have to take all kinds of measures to prevent terrorism. And the example also illustrates some of the difficulties. It's talking about racial profiling, so it's discriminatory, making distinction between people with certain faces and features, and that's against the law in most countries, and for good reasons. But, what about security? What if it really works? The benefits are many. Still, even if it works, is it proportional? Is it ethical? Well these are important, difficult and Sensitive questions which we will look at later on. First, let's go back to and have a closer look at profiling. Where does it come from, and how has it been applied in the past?

I guess the basic idea behind profiling is the perception among many that criminals and terrorists are different from us. Well, last week, we argued that there's no empirical evidence that suggests that terrorists are crazy. But they could have other personal or behavioral characteristics that sets them apart from non-terrorists. Well, whether true or not, it is an important explanation for the idea that it might be possible to recognize a terrorist.

I would like to add that terrorists, themselves, probably think that profiling is possible. Because from the early days on terrorists have tried their best not to look suspicious, act normally, make sure that you, you're not noticed by the police or the secret services. And Jihadists or Islamist terrorists, for instance, they have used women or Caucasian or white converts or simply tried to change their appearances, their haircut, their clothes, the way they walk, all in order to not look suspicious, not fit any profile.

Besides these human aspects, there is a technological side to the idea that it's possible to recognize a terrorist. In recent years the revived interest in Profiling is partly explained by the possibility today to gather, store and analyze enormous amounts of data thanks to developments in information technology and the Internet. Profiling however is far from new and there are quite a number of examples from the past, for instance, in the late 19th century the authorities wanted to know the true identity of a person who was responsible for the killing of a number of women in London. Well that person was called in the media Jack the Ripper. I'm sure that many of you have heard of Jack the Ripper, well the investigation into that case was considered by many as the starting point of criminal profiling.

Another famous historical case is that of the so called Mad Bomber. In November 1940 the workers of the Consolidated Edison building in New York found a homemade pipe bomb, and attached to it was a note and it said, Con Edison crooks, this is for you. Well more than 30 small bombs in public areas, theaters, phone booths would follow in the years between 1940 and 1956. And the Mad Bomber escaped the authorities, he alluded the investigators for 16 years.

And in 1956 the investigators went to a psychiatrist called James Brussell, and they asked him to draw up a profile of the suspect, and they gave him all kinds of clues and information of their investigation. And James Brussell came up with a profiling, a profile which had many elements that were simply common sense, but he also added some psychological ideas. For instance, he said that because paranoia tends to peak at around 35, and now we're 16 years later, so he said that the suspect is probably in his early 50s. Well, his profile proved dead on, and in January 1957, the police knocked at the door of a person called George Metesky, who was arrested and confessed immediately. What do we learn from this case? Was it just a lucky shot, or is it really Possible to discover criminals and terrorists, preferably before they plant any bomb. What about more recent success in profiling?

Well in the, one of the early examples of both profiling and data screening is the example or the efforts of the German Federal Criminal Police Office or Bundeskriminalamt, and especially its president, Horst Herold, who in the late 1970s tried to, tried to find the terrorists of the far left terrorist group called Rote Armee Fraktion, Red Army Faction. Well, they had found out that these terrorists, they rented their apartments using a false name and in order to protect their identity they

paid their energy bills in cash. So what did the authorities do, they asked For the data of the power companies to find out what person did pay their bills in cash. And then in a second phase they looked for they compared this data with the data of the registry office and other agencies to single out innocent people. And for all the others they knocked on the door of these apartments, and in the end they found this way a, one apartment, one Rote Armee Fraktion apartment and arrested one of its members.

Well, I'm not sure if you want to call this success, as the efforts were huge. And looking for other examples in academic literature I soon found out that there are no clear-cut examples of successful profiling in counter-terrorism. In fact, virtually all important studies By academics say that personal profiling is impossible. And it's clear now from the academic world, it's linked to many studies that show that there is no terrorist personality.

So terrorists are not only not crazy, but they're also not very different from us, at least not different enough to make profiling possible. And even if they were very different, we would still be confronted by, well fortunately, by the fact that there are relatively few terrorists. So that makes it impossible to create enormous databases with data on individuals. Well, what about this attempt by the Bundeskriminalamt? That didn't focus on persons and personal characteristics, it fo, it focused on their behavior. What about this so-called behavioral profiling? Well again, most academics are highly skeptical as there are many obstacles to this kind of effort as well as many risks.

One of the biggest risks is the possibility that incorrect information from profiling can lead to so-called false positives or false negatives. And both can have serious consequences. For instance, a false positive can lead to a situation in which a suspect who appears to fit an incorrect profile is investigated or even arrested. And the consequences could be that it blocks investigating other leads, other clues. Or it can even lead to the escape of the person or persons who are responsible for an attack. And the opposite of a false positive is a false negative. And in that case the profile might provide information that leads investigators to rule out certain groups while focusing on the wrong ones. Efforts to profile terrorists in the West in recent years have often proved to be examples of racial profiling, monitoring Muslims. And we know that not all terrorists are Muslims, as we discussed last week. Racial profiling has also resulted in false positives and false negatives, but it also has had considerable ramifications for the individual liberties of the population being monitored. Creating and fostering stereotypes and the notion of a clash of civilization, or a, a struggle between Islam and Christianity.

Well profiling on the base of nationality, ethnicity, race, age, gender also have negative consequences for certain groups, or relationships between countries and communities. As a result profiling can be labeled disproportional, as the enormous efforts have yield few results. There are many negative side-effects, including risks for counter-terrorism. Adding all up it seems that today profiling is regarded an impossible endeavor and it is likely to remain so in light of current research. Therefore, we label the assumption that one can recognize a terrorist by means of profiling false. More research is needed.

In sum, there is a demand for a tool to make a distinction between terrorists and non-terrorists. And there is a long history in attempts to profile criminals and terrorists. But there are no clear cut successes. And according to scholars it's, it's almost impossible to to do individual profiling, personal profiling and they even see a lot of obstacles for behavioral profiling, as there are many negative side effects as well as risks for counter-terrorism. Therefore we label the assumption that one can recognize a terrorist as false. In the next video we will explore and Analyze the idea that one can de-radicalize terrorists.

4.2 Assumption: Deredecolisation is possible

In the previous video, we investigated the idea that we could recognize a terrorist by way of profiling. In this video we will explore and analyze the assumption that terrorists can be deradicalized. In other words, we look into the idea that individuals change their attitudes and behavior and leave terrorism behind. Is that indeed possible, or just wishful thinking? What can we learn from past experience? And what have scholars and experts to say about this?

Before we will address these questions, we first have to define the term. What is deradicalization? What is meant by this term? Well, deradicalization, like most concepts, can have different meanings to different people. And I will use the definition by John Horgan, who did a lot of research into this field, into radicalization and deradicalization. And he regards it as a social and Psychological process whereby an individual's commitment to, and involvement in violent radicalization is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity. The deradicalization can also be understood as a policy or program.

So not only a process, an individual process or group process but also as a government or civil society program. And that program seeks to reverse the Radicalization process for those already are particularly radicalized or help them to disengage from radical or extreme groups they are involved in of which they are members. And it's important to say that deradicalization is not radicalization in reverse. These are two very distinct processes. Who has said that it is possible to deradicalize a terrorist? According to Angel Rabasa and his colleagues at RAND Washington, this is a simple fact that can be observed. And in a report in 2013, they stated just as there are processes through which an individual becomes an extremist, there are also processes through which an extremist comes to renounce violence, leaves a group or movement, or even rejects a radical worldview.

Well, the last part is contested. Do people really give up their radical worldviews? Is that possible? And is it possible to actively deradicalize persons and, if so, how? Well, these are of course very important questions for those who fight terrorism, who deal with terrorism. The first proof that it is possible are individuals who left terrorism behind and who are now involved in counter radicalization and deradicalization projects. They turn from terrorists into experts that try to help people to prevent them from joining terrorist organizations.

Now, within the field of terrorism studies there are a number of them that are quite well known. Here, you have three examples of them. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, who worked for a Wahhabi charity that proved to be an al-Qaeda financier, and who is now director of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, which is based in Washington, and he's a scholar in the field of terrorism and counterterrorism studies. I'm also proud to say that he's a former guest researcher at the ICCT Den Haag, just a few offices away from this office. And then Norman Benotman, who was a leading figure of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group active in Afghanistan. And who is now a senior analyst at the British Quilliam Foundation. and he, for instance, wrote an open letter to Bin Laden in 2010 recommending him to hold your violence and reconsider your aims and strategy.

And then an example from Northern Ireland, Henry Robinson, who joined the Official Irish Republican Army in 1979. And who left it, and in 1990 was the co-founder of the foundation Families Against Intimidation and Terror. Besides these individuals who left terrorism behind, also known as formers or former terrorists, there are deradicalization programs. Well, in general these deradicalization programs are of two types. The first category focuses on individual ideological deradicalization using psychological or religious counseling. To produce a change of mind, a change of attitude, and in the end, also change of behavior. And the second category aims for collective deradicalization, using for instance, political negotiations to obtain a type of change of behavior. And it includes measures such as ceasefires or the decommissioning of arms.

In Europe there are many examples of deradicalization programs that are aimed at right wing extremists, especially in the Nordic countries, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, as well as in Germany and the Netherlands. For instance in Norway an exit model was developed based on research conducted by [FOREIGN] And this model was also used in Sweden, Where it consists of five phases, from

motivation and disengagement to being re, well, making sure that these people are part of society again with settlement, reflection, and stabilization.

And on the other side of the globe in Indonesia, there are quite a number of deradicalization programs that mainly are aimed at prisoners. And, some of them, and prisoners were, that were involved in Jihadi terrorism. And some of them are now closely cooperating with the police. And in Saudi Arabia such programs also aim mainly at prisoners focus on rehabilitation through religious re-education and psychological counseling. And then in Colombia, they tried to disengage not only prisoners, but also active members of the FARC. And the Colombian judiciary tries to facilitate this by suspending the militant's trial in an attempt to encourage and sustain, their demobilization.

There the keyword is demobilization, and not deradicalization. But the same idea is the basic idea is to make sure that they leave terrorism behind, and perhaps also change their attitudes and behavior. Well, in other words, many examples from around the world. Each with a different size and scope, methods and goals. What do experts and academics have to say about deradicalization and deradicalization programs?

Well, about five years ago, quite a few of them pointed at a lack of attention, expertise, and research into this field. But in recent years there has been an increase in the amount of studies and the amount of programs that has helped us to gain more insight into the challenges and possibilities of deradicalization in general and that of programs in particular. It also raises new questions. And an important one is whether or not one can speak of deradicalization, as defined by John Horgan. When a person leaves a terrorist group behind, but not his or her radical ideas. Is that deradicalization, or should we just, call that, call that differently? For instance, label it disengagement and nothing more.

Well the prevailing opinion today is that leaving terrorism behind does not necessarily mean that the person is also deradicalized. He or she can still have very radical ideas and they often have. And many deradicalization programs are in fact primarily aiming for this idea of leaving terrorism behind there aiming for disengagement and also much deradicalization. And I guess that that is more cost effective and also from a point of view from society it should be given more priority as change behavior matters more than changed ideas. What about the success of these programs? Do they work, and are they proof of the assumption that it is possible to deradicalize a terrorist?

John Horgan is skeptical about certain types of programs especially the ones that aim for demobilization, defection deescalation and rehabilitation. And in his eyes this is not the same as deradicalization. Demobilization is not the same as deradicalization. Well I guess he's right and he seems to suggest that many of the person that goes through these programs might still pose a risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity in the future. And there are indeed quite a few examples of graduates of these programs that return to violence, that return to terrorism after they were released, especially in the case of Saudi Arabia. But it should be noted that the programs in this particular country were enormous. They processed more than 4000 detainees but there have been a number of people who after that ended up in the ranks of terrorist organizations. So, successful or not, well here's an example or study that indicates that there has been some success.

A survey of deradicalization programs conducted by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue based on 30 brief case studies from around the world show that, under certain conditions, programs can be effective. And they also listed a number of very interesting recommendations and important lessons from these cases and one of them is that programs are effective and this is very important when they are voluntary and that personal commitment is vital. It makes sense, but also the studies show that that is an very important element. For a copy of this very interesting report well, see the list of recommended readings. All in all, it's clear that deradicalization is indeed possible. Many people leave terrorism behind. Some thanks to deradicalization programs And some also leave behind their radical ideas.

In sum, we define the term and notice a difference between deradicalization and disengagement. We've seen an increase in both the number Of programs, and the number of studies into this field. Most of the deradicalization programs primarily aim at disengagement rather than deradicalization. There are successes of individual and group deradicalization Therefore, we regard

the assumption that deradicalization is possible to be true. In the next video, we will investigate the idea that decapitation of terrorist organizations and terrorist groups work.

4.3 Assumption: Decapitation of terrorist organisations works

In the last video, we discussed whether or not it's possible to deradicalise a terrorist. In this video, we will look into a harder, tougher and often violent type of counter terrorism measure, which is the decapitation of terrorist organizations. So we're not going to look into the beheading of individuals. We're going to look into the arrest and sometimes killing. Of top leaders of terrorist organizations.

Well, here are a few examples of groups that have been confronted with this particular counter-terrorism measures. The groups include the left-wing, rebellious terrorist organization, FARC, from Colombia. And one of their leaders was killed in 2011, Alfonso Cano. And then there are quite a number of examples from France, Spain, with regard to demilitant leaders, the terrorist leaders of the Basque separatist organization ETA. Many leaders were arrested in 2012 including Izaskun Lesaka, I'm not sure if I pronounced it well, but one of the top leaders of the ETA.

And then of course, you all are aware of that, you all have seen it probably the killing of Al Qaeda's Osama Bin Laden, in Pakistan in operation Neptune Spear which was carried out by Navy SEALs of the United States in Abbottabad, Pakistan, early May in Pakistan 2011. But a decapitation strategy or Counterterrorism measure is as old as countering terrorism. Some historical examples include the arrest of the entire first wave of leaders of the Rote Armee Fraktion in Germany in 1972 and the arrest of Guzman, the leader of Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path. A leftist terrorist organization in Peru in 1992, or the arrest of the leader of the Kurdish Workers Party, the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan who was arrested in Kenya in 1999. There's several scholars, practitioners, politicians. That have claimed that decapitation of terrorist organization works.

One prominent scholar that looked into this particular instrument is Brian Price. Who, in 2012, wrote the following. He wrote, decapitation tactics which are designed to kill or capture the key leader or leaders. Of a terrorist group feature prominently in counterterrorism strategies of many states, including Israel and United States. It's a widely practiced counterterrorism measure that's been used around the globe. And after successful arrests or killing of key leaders it's a very often that politicians claim this success, they state now the terrorist organization has been dealt a big blow. Here are a number of examples.

The first is from Spain from the then Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, who in 2008 reacted after the arrest of the operational chief of the ETA, the Basque separatists terrorist organization. And he said that with this arrest, ETA has suffered a severe blow in its organization and capability. And he also said, today, ETA is weaker. An example from South America. The Colombian president, Juan Manuel Santos, after the killing of the FARC leader Alfonso Cano in 2011. He said that the killing of Cano is the hardest blow to this organization in its entire history. And then finally, the reaction after the killing of Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda.

Well here is the reaction of by Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York who was the mayor of that city in 2001. And after the killing of Osama Bin Laden he said the following. He said he was a symbol more than anything else right now, but symbols are important. In the long run this will be very helpful to us in defeating Islamic terrorism. In the long run, this is a much bigger step than people realize. Why do many influential people think that decapitation works? Well those who regard it as an effective strategy assume that the successive terrorist organization highly depends on effective leadership. So when you kill the leader, you will weaken the organization.

Well, this might be the case when a leadership struggle occurs after the death of a leader. An organization might need to devote a lot of time and energy to choose a new leader and at the same time they're not able to carry out a tax. Or it's possible that they cannot find a new leader because others don't have the right capabilities or the right amount of experience to do so. And it could also be related to ideas and theories about Charismatic Leadership. Some leaders, especially those of religiously inspired groups, play a crucial role on explaining and safeguarding the groups ideology. Leaders like Osama Bin Laden or the leader of the Japanese Aum Sect.

for instance, being perceived as highly charismatic and a hero to some. Many people therefore think that it is very effective to eliminate those leaders because it will destabilize the organization, but it will also weaken its appeal. Why is it important to investigate whether or not

decapitation of terrorist organizations works? I mentioned that many influential people say it does and must be practiced around the globe, but there are serious legal and ethical sides to it, especially when it, it, it concerns the killing of individuals. That's why we need to evaluate the effectiveness. Are terrorist organizations indeed weakened because of the arrest or killing of some of its leaders? Or do they simply continue to exist, or even grow stronger? And what about human rights?

Let us look into these questions with the help of empirical evidence And academic literature. Let me present a study by Jenna Jordan from 2009. It has the interesting title, *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation*. In this study she investigated 300 cases of leadership decapitation between 1945 and 2004. And she coded decapitation as a success, when the terrorist organization was inactive for two years following that event. And she says that the key elements in assessing the effectiveness of that act are age of the group, size of the group and the type of the group. And she found that the younger and smaller the groups the more often they are destabilized and that older and larger groups face less consequences. Religiously inspired terrorist organizations seem to be more or less resilient to decapitation according to Jordan. Separatist groups remained active in Almost 90% of decapitation cases where only a third of ideologically ideological organizations such as left wing and right wing organizations. Are damaged by it. And then, in general, in 17% of the cases. So 7% of the cases, decapitation led to the collapse of an organization. Well, that sounds interesting. But when comparing this figure with data of non-decapitated groups She finds out that decapitated groups do not have a particular higher decline rate. So she therefore concludes that Decapitation is not an effective counter-terrorism measure. And she also lists a number of side effects such as the strengthening of the group's resolve. They grow stronger because of it. results in retaliation, they are very angry because of it and increased public, increase of public sympathy for the organization.

Well let's now have a look at a more recent study, the one by Brian Price. In 2012, he said the following. In *Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism*, he said that the measure has a prominent place in many counterterrorism strategies and he shows why this is actually a good thing. Price starts with the literature review on decapitation and he shows that most. Academics say that is not effective or even counter-productive. And he also argues that its mainly caused by the focus of the study, the relatively short-term effects, like Jordan's study, a time arising of two years. He says that is too short, to really measure and appreciate the impact of decapitation. The theoretical argument is that decapitation of terrorist groups could be successful, because terrorist organizations are different from other organizations. They are violent, clandestine and values-based. Simply put, leader of these types of these organizations, compared to nonviolent, profit based organizations, businesses, etc... are more important. They need to be friends as charismatic and succession is more difficult, because of the clandestine nature and the fact that personal characteristics, and personal ideology cannot easily be replaced.

He then tested this theoretical argument to see the effects of leadership decapitation on the mortality of terrorist organizations. And this led to six conclusions of which the following four are the most striking ones. Price observes that in the long run decapitated groups have a significantly higher mortality rate than non decapitated groups and it says that although only 30% of the decapitated groups ended. Within two years, which was the time horizon of Jenna Jordan, he says that Indians, they have a significantly higher mortality rate. And the earlier the leadership decapitation occurs in the life cycle of that group, the more effective it will be. And he also says that the size of the group, doesn't have any impact on its duration.

And then finally, he says that religious terrorist groups were less resilient and easier to destroy than nationalist groups, which is very much in line with his observation about the importance of leaders of these groups. the leaders of these groups play an important role in framing and in interpreting the organizational goals and strategies.

And this leads to the following conclusion. Price says that, states, that are willing to employ leadership decapitation. As part of their counter terrorism strategy. Should target terrorist group leaders as early as possible. These are just two important examples of studies that look into the effectiveness of decapitation. The authors arrive at different conclusions. Jordan says it's not

effective, while Price says it is. But both point at the importance to look at the features of the organizations, the differences. Between the organizations as it might have, or it's important for potential effectiveness of certain CT measures, in this case decapitation. this might be the most important lesson we can draw from these two studies.

The success of decapitation, like many other measures, depends on the context. It's context-dependent. It might work in one case, it might backfire in another. And there's certainly not one size fits all solution. Successful examples are the arrest of the leaders of Aum Sect in Japan and that of the leader of the Shining Path in Peru and that of the Real Irish Republican Army. But almost or entirely cease their Terrorist activities after their leaders were killed or captured. But we also have unsuccessful examples and that includes the decapitation attempts, for instance, by Israel of Hamas and that of the Rote Armee Fraktion in Germany. And then there are still one important aspect of this assumption that has not been addressed so far and that's the human rights dimension. This is particularly important dimension with regards to the drone attacks that are frequently used by the United States to in its war on terror. To decapitate organizations like the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and Al Qaeda related organizations.

Many high ranking leaders have been killed in these strikes. Is it a success or not? Can we just now simply measure what the effect is of the organization? Will it seize, will it destabilize or not? These drone strikes are not without controversy, as civilians have been killed. for instance, according to a highly critical report by Stanford University and New York University and this report also states that publicly available evidence that the strikes have made United States safer overall is ambiguous at best.

It seems when determining the effectiveness of decapitation, either by drones or whatever type of instrument, we also need to know more about the short-term and long-term negative side effects, and we should not only look at simply at, will it destabilize an organization or not? There's more to that. The side effects are important.

To sum up. There is a variety of reasons to doubt the effectiveness of decapitation of terrorist organizations. The success depends on the type of organizations that are attacked, and the modus operandi that are used. Are we talking about the arrests of leaders or the killing of persons by way of drone attacks? And of course it depends on how you measure success. But I guess in some cases. Decapitation of terrorist organizations does work. And that's why we label this as assumption as partly true. But again, more research is needed. In the next video, we will investigate the idea that, terrorism cannot be defeated.

4.4 Assumption: Terrorism cannot be defeated

In the last video we discussed whether or not decapitation of terrorist organizations is a successful counter-terrorism measure. In this video we will explore the assumption that terrorism cannot be defeated. It is related to the assumption we discussed last week about the success of terrorism but in this case we look at the effectiveness of counter terrorism measures. And defeated we have defined in a classical way, as having been beaten in a battle or other contest. This means that some other party has to be actively and intentionally involved. And in this case we're talking about defeat by counter-terrorism measures or counter-terrorism actors. But who or what is exactly defeated? Are we talking about the phenomenon of terrorism or about individual terrorist groups? Well actually we will look at both.

First we will focus on the possibility of defeating terrorist groups and after that we will come back and see whether or not the phenomenon of terrorism as a whole can be defeated. Who has said terrorism cannot be defeated? Well, actually quite a few experts and important politicians and public figures. For instance, general Sir David Richards, Chief of the Defense Staff of the British Armed Forces. In 2010 regarding defeating Al Qaeda and Islamist militancy he said first of all you have to ask do we need to defeat it in the sense of a clear cut victory and I would argue that it is unnecessary and would never be achieved.

For that last part is, of course, not very hopeful. Especially not when stated by a top general. And then former US President George Bush. In 2004 he was asked can we win the war on terror? And he replied I don't think you can win it but I think you can create conditions so that those who use terror as a tool are less acceptable in parts of the world. So there's no winning of the war on terror. Even by, said by US President George W. Bush, who was, in many ways, the architect of that whole concept. And then King Abdullah the second of Jordan. Also in 2010 he said we're never going to be able to get rid of terrorism because there is always going to be evil in the world. Well, is he right? Is he wrong? That's what we're going to find out in this video. Why is it important to investigate this idea, this assumption?

Well, if you believe that terrorism cannot be defeated this could lead to defeatism and strengthen the idea that terrorism poses a big threat which we can do very little. That scares us and that's what terrorists want. And then in terms of CT measures if terrorism indeed cannot be defeated this implies that we should primarily focus on prevention. Make sure terrorist groups don't emerge. Or especially focus on managing the impact of terrorism. Com, if it's there you cannot stop it so make sure that if it hits us the impact is as little as possible. I mentioned that aim to stop terrorists, or terrorist organization, is not very useful if this assumption is really true. How can we measure defeat? To determine whether or not a terrorist organization has been defeated in a battle or contest we have to determine whether or not this was caused by counter-terrorism measures. For instance, by disruption, decapitation nor by mobilizing communities that said no to this particular group or network. And if that terrorist organization has ceased to exist because of other reasons we cannot say it's been defeated. And we know that individual terrorist groups and even waves of terrorism can fade out because of many other reasons.

Well one scholar who has observed this is David Rapoport. And he distinguished, we discussed that earlier, four waves of terrorism. And he concluded that these waves after a few decades gradually peter out. But he also gives an example of a defeated type of terrorism. He said that revolutionary terrorists were defeated in one country after another. So a very famous scholar actually referring to defeat not only of one group but of a whole type of terrorism. And he referred to the third or new left wave of terrorism. But how did he measure this? How can he be sure that the ending of these terrorist groups, or even this wave, was the result of counter-terrorism measures? And can we consider that a defeat, a defeat of terrorism?

One study that systematically analyzed how terrorism ends is the study by Seth Jones and Martin Libicki of the Rand Corporation. They investigated 648 terrorist groups that were active in the period 1968 2006 and they looked at the way they ended. And in their report, published in 2008, they distinguished four major reasons for the ending of these groups. They were reasons why they

ceased to exist. The first reason is because of local police and intelligence services. And the second reason is because of military force. A third reason is that terrorists joined the political process. They joined, for instance, negotiations or something else. We'll come back to that later.

Then the fourth reason is because terrorist groups were victorious. They manage to achieve their stated political goals. And Jones and Libicki also touched upon a Fifth minor reason and that is the splintering of terrorist organizations. It means that a certain group ends but it doesn't signal the end of terrorism by its members and it's therefore excluded from further analysis. Well, let us have a closer look at these four major explanations. Do they provide reasons to challenge the assumption that terrorism cannot be defeated? Have the groups, investigated by Jones and Libicki, ended because of successful counter-terrorism measures? In other words, have they been defeated or not?

The first major reason why terrorist groups end, according to the Rand report, is because of the work of local police and intelligence services. Their counter-terrorism measures include disruption, the collection of information on terrorist groups, penetrating cells and arresting key leaders. And developing anti-terrorism legislation and criminalization of certain activities is also part of this major explanation for the end of terrorist groups. And decapitation of, of terrorist Organizations which we mentioned in the previous video in the form of arrests of leaders is also part of it.

Well the Rand report concludes that a wide variety of measures that can be labeled policing contributes indeed contributes to the end of terrorist organizations. In fact, it says that 40% of the cases in which terrorism groups end were because of policing. What about the second major reason why terrorism ends? The use of military force. Well this particular counter-terrorism measure or approach of course, involves the use of military forces to kill or capture terrorist members or to fight against states that support terrorism. Well according to the Rand Report, sometimes the threat of the use of force or constant surveillance can already be enough to make sure that terrorist organizations are always on the run.

However, this age old way of fighting terrorism is not particularly effective. According to the report only 7% of the terrorist groups that have ended since 1968 did so because of military force. Only 7% of the cases. But this limited success is related to the fact that terrorists are, of course, not armies and they are very small and they don't employ like conventional forces. Unless they fight an insurgency. Report also shows that the use of massive, massive military power could alienate a local population and therefore be counterproductive. The third major reason why terrorism ends is because terrorist organizations join a political process. Or the possibility for them to enter such a process depends on the goals of these organizations. And according to Rand, the narrower the goals the more difficult it is for terrorists to achieve them and the more likely terrorist groups may be willing to seek nonviolent means.

Well the decision to join a political process is the result of a cost benefit analysis and the conclusion of that analysis that pursuing the goals through politics has greater benefits and lower cost than using violent means. So it's a smarter way, a more cost efficient way to achieve goals. Well, such a step happens more often than many people assume I guess. Of all the analyzed endings of terrorist Organizations 43% of the cases were caused by the fact that they joined a political process. 43% of the cases according to the Rand report that looked into 648 cases.

Well does that mean they are defeated? We're interested in that question as our assumption is ca, terrorists cannot be defeated. Is this an example of a defeat or not? Well I'm not sure about it. Defeat implies that there is a winner and a loser. A move into politics as such cannot be called a defeat. Not a defeat for a terrorist organization but it could be argued that it is a defeat for terrorism as an instrument because they realize that they can reach their goals in a better way by using non-violent means. So maybe you can call it a defeat of the tool of terrorism.

On the other hand, there are also cases in which terrorist organizations were invited to join a political process actually because of the use of violence. And in these cases one could argue that use of violence was rewarded and therefore successful. The fourth, and last, major reason for the ending of terrorist groups is that they are victorious. Well, according to Rand, in 10% of the cases terrorist

organizations were successful in reaching their stated political goals and ceased their activities afterwards.

Obviously, this type of ending does not challenge the idea that terrorism cannot be defeated. On the contrary. It strengthens the idea that terrorism can be successful. However, the figures are relatively low. 10%. I would say it's 10% too many but it also shows that the overwhelming majority of terrorist groups do not achieve their political goals. They are not successful. So according to the Rand report there are four major reasons why terrorist organizations end. Policing, military force, politics, and victory. Well of all the terrorist groups that ended 40% did so because of policing and 7% because of military force. I think that these two figures clearly support the argument that terrorism can be defeated. Together they explain almost half of the cases in which terrorist groups ended. And the process of joining politics proves that terrorist organizations can move from to non-violent means to pursue their goals. And this could be partly the effect of Certain counter terrorism measures but you cannot call it a defeat. Not in all cases. This depends but there are a number of cases where governments more or less forced these organizations to join a political process.

And there are examples where these terrorists actually forced the government to allow them to have a seat at the negotiation table. If we look at this data the assumption that terrorism, meaning terrorist organizations, cannot be defeated is clearly false and I think you could even label it a myth. Fortunately, these actors can be defeated By counter terrorism measures ranging from policing and the use of military force to forcing them or talking them into joining a political process.

However, if you look at the phenomenon of terrorism as a whole we must conclude that it cannot be defeated. For instance, David Rapoport shows that there are successive waves of terrorism and that it takes a long time for each wave to fade out. And he also shows that even then they do not die out completely. Even today you still have a few anarchists around. But if we, but we can speed up these processes by defeating individual groups and networks. And I believe it's important to stress this.

Especially against a background of much pessimism and defeatism about the possibilities to force large organizations like Al Qaeda or the FARC in Columbia, to force them to end their activities. It will not be easy but it is not impossible. As, for instance, the study of Rand has shown. Well depending on your interpretation of the assumption that terrorism cannot be defeated we can label it a myth or partly true. It's a myth when looking at many cases in which terrorist organizations were in fact defeated. It can be labelled partly true if one looks at the phenomenon as a whole. Unfortunately the idea of a world without terrorism is quite a utopian one. But again, individual terrorist organizations can be defeated.

To summarize, we looked at statements that support the idea that terrorism cannot be defeated. But both the article by Rapoport and The Rand Report show that at one point in time, terrorist groups ceased to exist and that they can be defeated. The phenomenon of terrorism as a whole, however, cannot be defeated. So, depending on your interpretation of the assumption, you can either label it a myth or partly true. In the next video we will investigate the assumption that terrorism can best be dealt with by way of a holistic or comprehensive approach.

4.5 Assumption: Terrorism can best be managed by a holistic approach

In the last video, we discussed the assumption that terrorism cannot be defeated. This video focuses on the attempts to deal with terrorism. And many have said that this is best done Or best dealt with by way of a holistic or comprehensive approach. Well, let us compare that assumption with empirical evidence and expert and scholarly literature.

Let me first explain what is meant with a holistic approach in counter terrorism. Which is also often referred to as a Comprehensive approach, or a wide approach, or a grand strategy. Well, the latter term has been defined by Martha Crenshaw as a more inclusive conception that explains how a state's full range of resources can be adapted to achieve national security. So a full range of resources to achieve national security. Well in general, descriptions of a holistic or comprehensive approach to terrorism or any other complex societal problem often includes is, includes the phrase involving a wide range of instruments or involving a wide range of actors. And with regard to terrorism, it often includes the words preventive and repressive measures or soft and hard measures or soft and hard approaches.

Well, in addition, it frequently refers to the need to deal with the complexity and multidimensional nature of both terrorism and counterterrorism. And most descriptions of the approach list a range of concrete policy areas from the procurement of intelligence to the prosecution of perpetrators of terrorist attacks. And the question remains, whether or not such a wide approach is the best way to deal with terrorism. Well, there are quite a number of Important politicians and well known public figures, that have stressed the importance or stressed the need for a holistic approach or a comprehensive approach to deal with terrorism.

One of them is the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. In remarks delivered to the United Nations security councils open debate on combating terrorism in Africa. He said that the success in the combat Against groups such as the Nigeria based Boko Haram or Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Somalia based Al Shabaab would require greater and more holistic efforts. And he said, and here's a quote, military advances, important as they are, will not themselves bring an end to terrorism in Africa. This struggle must go forward on many fronts, including addressing the conditions that are conducive to the spread of terrorism. And Mr Ban Ki-moon added that the lack of development and the absence of the rule of law allowed terrorists to recruit across the communities and build their ranks. Also Pakistan's prime minister stressed the importance of a holistic approach to deal with terrorism.

At the ceremony at the National Police Academy in Islamabad in February 2013 Raja Pervez Ashraf said amongst others, we have to adopt a holistic approach to combat the menace. I urge police to maintain close relationships with the local community. Interaction with the community would not only provide police information about anti-national and anti-social elements, but also deny criminals refuge. This is only possible if they, and he means the police, are not feared but respected. And the plea of Ban Ki-moon, and the Pakistan prime minister for comprehensive approach, are very much in line with the counter terrorism approach of the United Nations as formulated in 2006. In September of that year, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the United Nations Global Counterterrorism strategy. Well, this strategy is the first ever comprehensive, collective, and internationally approved framework to tackle the problem of terrorism, and it consists of four parts, or four pillars. Well, the first pillar is addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

And the second pillar says, preventing and combating terrorism. And then, it also strengthens the need for building states capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, and strengthen the United Nations systems role in this regard.

And, then finally, it says, insuring respect for human rights, and the rule of law, our fundamental are the fundamental bases of the fight against terrorism. Well with these pillars, the strategy anchors the United Nation's counter terrorism work in to the broader agenda of this organization. That is active on many fronts, many areas and in many countries. And it also says the four pillars approach, according to the United Nations itself. Also encourages member states who

take Similarly integrated approaches to counterterrorism on the national level. In other words, with this document, the United Nations suggest that other countries, or countries in general, should also take a holistic approach when dealing with terrorism. What about counterterrorism approaches at national levels. Let us have a look at the Indonesian example, the Indonesian, the Indonesian white or holistic approach.

An approach that has been studied very much by scholars both in Indonesia and outside Indonesia but here you have the opinion of an Indonesia scholar, Noorhaidi Hasan. And he said that Indonesia, in recent years, has developed a model for responding to Islamist radicalization and terrorism that carefully combines hard and soft measures. And the main approach shifted from one Base on maintaining security with an important role for the military to one base on law enforcement in which the police is the lead agency.

Nevertheless, the hard approach is still very important and not without controversy. Indonesia special forces counter terrorism squad, in 2010 alone, arrested 100 people and killed 16. And the latter of course raised questions By human rights organizations, both at home and abroad. But notwithstanding these concerns Indonesia today is less prone to serious terrorist attacks than it was in the early 2000s, and that's partly thanks to the hard approach. However, the police also achieved a degree of success with soft measures such as their deradicalization programs for detainees. I already mentioned them in an earlier video.

Well these programs have led to leading militants working with the police and other authorities. And as part of their holistic approach, the Indonesian authorities also, very much welcomed, the role of civil society. That has been working with grass-roots level to strengthen people's awareness to and resilience a, against the threats posed by radicals and terrorists that seek to, infect local populations with violent ideologies. And according to Noorhaidi Hasan, the Indonesian experience is not only very interesting but also valuable to other countries. But how do we know the approach by the Indonesians, or the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism strategy works? Or in other words how to test the assumption that terrorism can best be dealt with by way of a holistic or comprehensive approach. How to measure that?

Well, let us first have a look what experts and scholars have to say about this. For instance, Bruce Hoffman, one of the leading scholars in the field of terrorism and counterterrorism studies, in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security of the United States House of Representatives, that took place Two weeks after 9/11 stated that only a comprehensive or holistic approach will work. And he said the articulation and development of a comprehensive, fully coordinated national strategy is not simply an intellectual exercise. But must be at the foundation of any effective counterterrorism policy. But failure to do so he said to this US House of Representatives has undermined the counterterrorism effort of other democratic nations. And referring to the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks Hoffman said, what is now therefore clearly needed is a comprehensive effort that seeks to knit together more tightly, and provide greater organizational guidance and focus to the formidable array of capabilities and instruments the U.S. can bring together. Or can, can bring to bear in the struggle against terrorism. I guess the key words here are cooperation, coordination, as well as focus.

Also in my home country, the Netherlands, both authorities and many scholars seem to agree on a need for holistic, or comprehensive approach. And the Netherlands national counter terrorism strategy. I got a copy of it here. The National Counterterrorism Strategy 2011, 2015 of the national coordinator for counter terrorism is clearly based on the assumption that terrorism can best be dealt with by way of a comprehensive approach. Well, it's main point of departure is that an effective approach to terrorism can only succeed if not only the acts of violence themselves are tackled, but also the process that preceded these acts.

And of course, different responses of a more repressive nature are required for those who have already taken steps towards being prepared to commit violence and of course especially for those who are on the point of doing so. Thus, this strategy combines both preventive and repressive measures as part of a Dutch comprehensive approach. It sounds good, but does it really work? Some

experts and scholars are not so sure Terrorism is best dealt with by way of a holistic approach. And the following arguments have been put forward by various authors.

The first is the problem of a comprehensive strategy is that it does not prioritize a finite amount of resources and attention. Nor does it provide an assessment of what is most likely to be effective or what not. And then second, it also tends to overlook the enormous pressure on governments and agencies to do something here and now. While a comprehensive approach is needed to prevent terrorism in the long run, traditional and ad hoc security measures that detect, deter, and disrupt terrorist operations still remain a critical component in the fight against terrorism.

And finally, and perhaps the most important criticism is that it's easier said than done. I mentioned it before. It sounds good but does it work? A comprehensive approach, a wide approach, a holistic approach. Well, more often than not such comprehensive approaches leave very important questions unanswered like who is responsible and who takes the lead. Who has the financial and political means? Or how to make all these various actors and instruments to cooperate etcetera. Again, this also seems to make sense, so who is right Ban Ki-moon and others who support the idea of a comprehensive approach or those that have a more skeptical take on this. How to measure the effectiveness of holistic approaches to counterterrorism. And how to compare these approaches with others more one dimensional approaches.

Well, that brings us to one of the most striking and more serious flaws in both counterterrorism and the study of counterterrorism. And that is the lack of evaluation studies. Well, in 2006 three authors, Lum, Kennedy and Sherley published an often quoted article in which they were looking for evaluation research. And they found out that there's almost a Complete absence of high quality, scientific evaluation evidence on counterterrorism strategies. Academia has produced very little to evaluate strategies, measures, etcetera. This is an article for 2006, but it still holds today.

Unfortunately, this is also the case with regard to governmental studies and reports. Despite the fact that governments have spent millions, billions on counterterrorism many resources, few of them have looked into the effectiveness of their policies and approaches. And it should be mentioned of course that effectiveness of counterterrorism measures is hard to assess. Even when focusing on an individual measure. And the idea of assessing a country's holistic or comprehensive approach with all its instruments and all its actors is of course, very difficult.

Where does that lead us when trying to answer the question, whether or not terrorism can best be dealt with by way of a holistic or comprehensive approach. Well, there is relatively little empirical evidence. But most scholars seem to agree that terrorism requires a wide, holistic, or comprehensive approach, or grand strategies. And against that background, I guess, we should label the assumption as partly true. But let me immediately add that, more research is needed, especially evaluation studies. What did we learn?

First we described the notion of a holistic approach to counterterrorism which goes under different names. We also observed that many politicians and scholars. I believe there is a need for a wide or holistic approach to deal with terrorism, but we also saw that there are few evaluation studies and that there is not much empirical evidence that clearly shows that such a comprehensive or holistic approach is indeed the most effective approach. Nonetheless, we labeled the assumption partly true.

Next week we will discuss the implications of what we've learned this week and the previous ones, for dealing with terrorism. How can we apply those insights? And what can we learn from past experience and the academic literature in order to decrease the threat of terrorism, and to limit its impacts on politics and society.