



**Promoting Security and Stability through Good Governance**  
**20<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

- Peter Knoope, Director, ICCT – The Hague  
Prague 12 -14 September 2012

[www.icct.nl](http://www.icct.nl) | [info@icct.nl](mailto:info@icct.nl)



**Countering VERLT (Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Leads to Terrorism)**

How do -:

- Poor governance
- Lack of economic opportunities
- Corruption

Relate to terrorism?

- How do these factors relate to each other?
- How can understanding these relationships enable us to contribute to policy recommendations and solutions?

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### The OSCE approach VERLT (Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Leads to Terrorism)

- OSCE Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism (Dec. 2001)
  - one of the first international documents to recognize the necessity of a *broad, comprehensive* approach to counter-terrorism:
  - “there are various social, economic, political and other factors, including violent separatism and extremism, which engender conditions in which terrorist organizations are able to recruit and win support” MC(9).DEC/14, Annex #9.
  - “Addressing negative socio-economic factors: Participating States/Secretariat: Will aim to identify economic and environmental issues that undermine security, such as poor governance; corruption; illegal economic activity; high unemployment; widespread poverty and large disparities; demographic factors; and unsustainable use of natural resources; and will seek to counter such factors.” MC(9).DEC/14, Annex # 13.

### Understanding the process of VERLT (Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Leads to Terrorism)

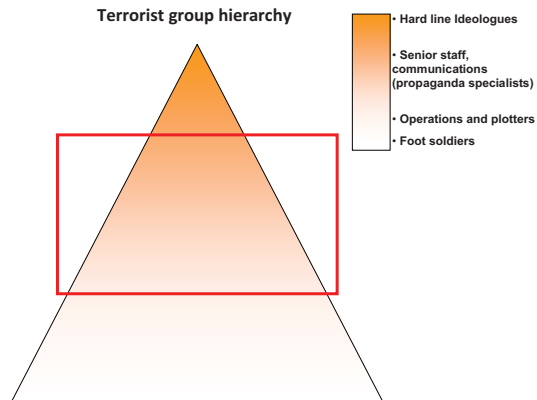
- Complex; not easily understood, requires deep understanding of societal dynamics and political realities;
- Environment specific; in different environments there are variety of processes and dynamics that require a country- or even local specific analyses;
- Even individual specific and sometimes personality driven;
- Often actively induced; depending on the geographic area;
- Ranging from actively induced and recruited to “copy/paste”, “lone wolf” types, it hardly ever happens “by itself”. The process is often encouraged through social contacts and peer or group pressure:
- Once “in” it is hard to get “out” and desert again.

### Who is recruiting?

- The middle of the pyramid - not the top leaders

### How are they recruiting?

- Using language and manipulating narratives to entice people
  - Careful process, deliberate, targeted, well organised
  - Identification of vulnerable individuals



### What do the compelling “narratives” look like?

- Grievances and lack of future prospects - related to bad governance
  - Corruption
  - Poor socio-economic prospects
  - Lack of accountability
  - Selectivity
  - Mistreatment
- Societal divisions/ exclusion
- Inclusion into new groups
  - Stories and narratives often create new sense of belonging;
  - The “re-socialisation” of the newcomers into a terrorist environment offers comradeship, protection and status;
  - Where the talk of common enemies creates unity and where:
    - “Othering”
    - Us. Vs. Them

### Where are they recruiting?

- Increasingly new, under-governed spaces: Universities, places of worship, the internet
- The encounter can be actively sought, (off or online) by both parties
- Sometimes the recruited will actively seek material which further propels the changing mindset – and vice versa
- The recruiters will take advantage and exaggerate realities, by selectively highlighting grievances



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### Policy Responses

- 1. Reduction of operating space for ideologues and recruiters**
  - But not just through increased policing and financial sanctions
- 2. Increase resilience, cohesion and participation**
  - Education
  - Improve economic prospects
  - Set positive examples that contradict narratives of collective exclusion
- 3. Address the narratives**
  - Address divisions in society, organise debate, create bridges
  - Fight forms of discrimination/exclusion
  - Increase space for civil society, ensure civil society equally adheres to good governance standards: AML/CFT regulation (FATF SR8)
- 4. Build bridges between the government and the citizen/ improve governance**
  - Police and law enforcement are crucial
  - The benefit of inclusive and participatory approach to (local) government
  - Perceptions of justice
  - Prevent ill treatment by gov officials
  - Fight corruption
  - Provide people with improved socio-economic prospects

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### Deconstructing the narratives

- But! Many of these elements are not just “imagined”: some are legitimate grievances.
  - So this must be taken into account when attempting to “deconstruct” the narratives
  - You cannot deconstruct reality
- (Counter) terrorism as a football match:
  - It is relevant to report (research)/tackle the topic from all sides e.g. researching what one side did is only half the story
  - In (counter) terrorism what are both sides doing? E.g. all actors
- Corruption
  - Poor socio-economic prospects
  - Lack of accountability
  - Selectivity
  - Mistreatment
- Societal divisions/ exclusion
- Inclusion into new groups
  - Stories and narratives: sense of belonging;
  - The “re-socialisation”
  - Common enemies creates unity and where:
    - “Othering”
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