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Assessing the effectiveness of deradicalization programs for Islamist extremists

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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
DERADICALIZATION PROGRAMS
ON ISLAMIST EXTREMISTS**

by

Amanda K. Johnston

December 2009

Thesis Advisor:	Mohammad Hafez
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13. ABSTRACT

In recent counterterrorism efforts, several states have embarked on a new approach to the problem of countering radicalization of imprisoned extremists. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore have all implemented ideological-based deradicalization programs that attempt to change the ideologies held by these extremists and eventually allow for their release from prison and reintegration into normal society. Many factors seen in the deradicalization process are similar to those found in disengagement from a variety of other anti-social behaviors, including joining gangs, cults, and racist groups. They include engaging in ideological discussions, offering avenues for reintegration, and using family and peers as alternative networks of support to replace the radical milieu of extremism. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Indonesia have each utilized some of these deradicalization techniques with varying degrees of success. Additionally, each country has approached the deradicalization process in a different way. Six general lessons emerge from these cases: success depends on the availability of: (1) adequate funding, (2) reform within the prison structure, (3) use of knowledgeable and well-respected Islamic clerics, (4) incorporation of cultural norms, (5) provision of monetary support to families of detainees, and (6) follow through with after-care programs.

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**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DERADICALIZATION
PROGRAMS FOR ISLAMIST EXTREMISTS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

In recent counterterrorism efforts, several states have embarked on a new approach to the problem of countering radicalization of imprisoned extremists. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore have all implemented ideological-based deradicalization programs that attempt to change the ideologies held by these extremists and eventually allow for their release from prison and reintegration into normal society. Many factors seen in the deradicalization process are similar to those found in disengagement from a variety of other anti-social behaviors, including joining gangs, cults, and racist groups. They include engaging in ideological discussions, offering avenues for reintegration, and using family and peers as alternative networks of support to replace the radical milieu of extremism. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Indonesia have each utilized some of these deradicalization techniques with varying degrees of success. Additionally, each country has approached the deradicalization process in a different way. Six general lessons emerge from these cases: success depends on the availability of: (1) adequate funding, (2) reform within the prison structure, (3) use of knowledgeable and well-respected Islamic clerics, (4) incorporation of cultural norms, (5) provision of monetary support to families of detainees, and (6) follow through with after-care programs.

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I dedicate this thesis to my father and mother whose constant support and encouragement have made all of my successes possible. I would also like to thank Dr. Mohammed Hafez and Prof. James Russell for their guidance and support in writing this thesis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The past decade has witnessed several terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists who have either targeted Western interests or sought to overthrow secular regimes in the Muslim world. These radical Muslims share a similar ideology that justifies the use of violence against non-Muslims or governments considered un-Islamic. The radicalization of these Muslims has become a main concern in the counterterrorism efforts of governments throughout the world. As a result of significant counterterrorism efforts, several countries have captured and imprisoned large numbers of radical Muslim extremists. The challenge for these governments is what to do with these extremist prison populations and how best to rehabilitate them to avoid a return to violent militancy.

Several countries have now taken a softer approach in their counterterrorism efforts in part due to the recognition that the war against extremism requires an ideological dimension.[1] A potential answer to this challenge is to counter the extremist ideology and find a way for captured militants to cohabitate peacefully with normal society. This new approach consists of a rehabilitation-focused deradicalization program that targets imprisoned extremists. The core assumption of this approach is that extremists have been led astray by their recruiters and, consequently, harbor incorrect understanding of Islam. Rehabilitation is a possible solution to the problem of housing security prisoners for an indeterminate amount of time. Also, prisons are ideal locations for deradicalization programs due to the measures of control that can be implemented in a prison setting.

Deradicalization programs are comprised of a variety of approaches aimed at extremists. One approach is to change the extremists' interpretation concerning the meaning of jihad and the concept of *takfir*. Another approach is to distance the individual from extremist groups. A third approach is to help reintegrate the individual back into normal society. These deradicalization programs target the extremist ideologies held by

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[1] Anthony H. Cordesman, "Winning the 'War on Terrorism': A Fundamentally Different Strategy," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 101.

the individuals and many of the programs attempt to provide economic incentives and social assistance to program participants. The current efforts examined in this thesis are prison-based rehabilitation programs focusing on the individual extremist. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia and Singapore have received much publicity about their recent programs aimed towards deradicalizing and rehabilitating individual militants.

Deradicalization programs may be a potential answer to the problem of what to do with imprisoned religious extremists but the effectiveness of these programs is not known. Are these deradicalization programs an effective solution to dealing with the large numbers of imprisoned extremists? What are the key components of deradicalization programs for religious extremists and how do they compare with the factors seen in disengagement from other types of anti-social groups, including terrorists, gangs, cults, and racist groups? What are the similarities and differences among the current programs? Are there specific practices that have met with success or failure? Are the existing programs unique to their context and culture within each state or can they be applied in different settings?

A.   IMPORTANCE

In Iraq alone, the U.S. and allies have captured and imprisoned approximately 160,000 suspected insurgents since the start of the war.[2] In other areas of the world, such as Europe, North Africa and South Asia, the numbers of Islamist extremists detained are estimated at around 5,000 individuals.[3] Although some security prisoners can be jailed indefinitely, most eventually have to be released. There may not be enough evidence to detain them indefinitely or the charges do not merit long-term sentences. Upon release, many militants will likely rejoin militant networks if no steps are taken to intervene.

A study of global jihadist prison sentences reflected that approximately 15% of these jihadists receive death sentences or life imprisonment, while many others receive

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[2] James B. Brown, Erik W. Goepner, and James M. Clark, "Detention Operations, Behavior Modification, and Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* 89, no. 3 (May/June 2009): 40.

[3] Dennis A. Pluchinsky, "Global Jihadist Recidivism: A Red Flag," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 3 (2008): 183.

either 20 years or less or 10 years or less.[4] The majority of these jihadists are often released even earlier through special pardons.[5] Recidivism rates are disproportionately high among released extremists according to one scholar.[6] An examination of radicals released from Moroccan, Yemeni, Algerian, and Egyptian prisons found that many former prisoners conducted terrorist attacks and suicide bombings after their release.[7]

Prisons offer an ideal breeding ground for extremism. Prisons give extremists a chance to regroup, preach their radical ideologies and recruit new members. Many prisoners who were not radical prior to imprisonment become radicalized through the prison environment. A further stimulus for radicalization is the harsh interrogation techniques and torture that many prisoners are subjected to in some countries. Therefore, how does a state deal with imprisoned extremists? The debate on the closure of Guantanamo Bay prison is fueled by questions about what to do with the prisoners. Rehabilitation is a possible solution to the problem of housing security prisoners for an indeterminate amount of time. Much of the success of the programs will be dependent on the methods used and the availability of adequate funding.

Deradicalization programs have been used in the past in places, such as Algeria and Egypt but these targeted the extremist groups rather than the individual. In addition, a major component of these programs was the use of severe repression rather than any attempts to change ideologies. Deradicalization through rehabilitation is a relatively new concept for dealing with imprisoned extremists. Currently, little information is available to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the programs. The process of deradicalization attempts more than just disengagement from a terrorist group. While there is abundant research available on the causes of radicalization, few studies have been done on what factors cause an individual to deradicalize. However, numerous studies have been done on disengagement from other anti-social organizations, such as street gangs, right-wing

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[4] Pluchinsky, "Global Jihadist Recidivism: A Red Flag," 183.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., 184.

[7] Ibid.

extremist groups, and other terrorist groups. This thesis examines the components within the selected deradicalization programs and compares them to the factors commonly seen within the disengagement process.

Deradicalization programs have been implemented in a number of countries with religious extremist prison populations. While these programs share some of the same characteristics, they also differ tremendously due to the resources available within each country. Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia and Singapore have utilized deradicalization programs for the past five years and have claimed varying degrees of success within their programs. Additionally, each country has approached the deradicalization process in a different way.

This thesis examines deradicalization programs targeting radical Islamists in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, and Singapore. Each of these programs offers a unique approach in its attempts to deradicalize Islamist extremists. Three of the programs studied occur in predominately Islamic countries, while the fourth has been implemented in a country with a Muslim minority. Each state has been able to provide varying resources to their respective programs. While some of the programs have shown some success, others appear to have failed to impact their target audience adequately. The programs are compared by evaluating their approach to deradicalization, assessing the inclusion of any disengagement factors within the programs, and assessing whether they commit or avoid the mistakes of previous deradicalization programs.

B.   FINDINGS

The author's findings show that a successful deradicalization program should, at a minimum, include the following: countering radical ideologies using knowledgeable and well-respected moderates, incorporation of cultural norms of the target community, involvement of families and communities in the deradicalization process, and structured after-care programs to prevent recidivism.

The author uses an evaluative, comparative approach towards examining the effectiveness of the deradicalization programs. The initial approach consists of a review of disengagement studies to identify common factors found in disengagement from a

variety of anti-social organizations. The main anti-social groups examined are other terrorist groups from the past, street gangs, right-wing extremist groups, and religious cults. In addition, previous deradicalization processes for Islamist extremists in states, such as Egypt and Algeria are studied to identify what factors were present and what similarities they show with programs aimed at individuals.

Also examined and compared are the deradicalization programs aimed at individuals,, such as those seen in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, and Singapore. What are the similarities and differences in the methods used by each country and what results have the different programs produced? Do these programs create the same factors seen in the disengagement process? Also, what can be learned from these previous experiences?

The relatively newness of these programs prevents a comprehensive study of their effectiveness. Additionally, it is hard to evaluate recidivism rates in these various deradicalization programs, as records are often not publically disclosed. For the programs to be effective, states must dedicate a large number of resources to address detainee issues both within the prison system and after the detainee is released. Many developing countries do not have the resources to address the needs of the participant adequately. Recent media coverage has highlighted the problem of recidivism for deradicalization program participants particularly within Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In short, rather than evaluate the ongoing deradicalization programs in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, and Singapore by looking at their recidivism rates, instead their potential effectiveness is assessed by looking at how closely they follow earlier models of disengagement applied in other countries and deemed successful by experts. This approach has its limits because previous attempts at deradicalization may have been influenced by different economic and political contexts, as well as different cultures. Therefore, the findings of this study should be seen as preliminary, not conclusive. The ultimate test of effectiveness depends on abundant and reliable data on recidivism rates in these countries.

C.   THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is concerned with rehabilitation-based programs that also attempt to change the ideologies of the individual extremist. The process of deradicalization varies

with each individual. Current deradicalization programs also vary in their approach. The methods of each program depend upon many factors to include the cultural mores within each country and the resources available for the program. To evaluate these individual-based deradicalization programs, the author first identifies common factors seen in the disengagement process. Next, group-focused deradicalization programs are examined to identify factors, which led to success or failure. Four case studies on deradicalization programs targeting individuals are presented. The conclusion summarizes the common elements needed to implement a successful deradicalization program.

Chapter II begins with an explanation of the two different concepts of deradicalization and disengagement. There are two levels of analysis in both disengagement and deradicalization with one targeting groups while the other targets the individual. Chapter II highlights disengagement theories and the scholarly consensus on why individuals disengage from other anti-social groups, such as street gangs, Neo-Nazi groups, secular terrorist groups and religious cults. Chapter II also examines the factors seen in the disengagement of Islamist extremists in Egypt and Algeria. Algeria's approach did not engage in any ideological or rehabilitative-based strategy, while the deradicalization efforts in Egypt came from within the extremist group and was not initially facilitated by the state.

Chapter III examines the deradicalization efforts in Yemen. Yemen was one of the first countries to undertake deradicalization efforts aimed at individual extremists. Initial deradicalization efforts had limited success and the program was shelved for some time due to high rates of recidivism. In addition, the program lacked several of the factors necessary for the deradicalization process. The program has since resurfaced although it still suffers from a lack of adequate resources and funding.

Chapter IV is a case study of Saudi Arabia. This chapter examines the deradicalization efforts in Saudi Arabia. It has one of the most well-funded and comprehensive deradicalization programs in existence. The program has some similar factors to those seen in other programs, such as Yemen's; however, the Saudis have addressed many of the failures seen in previous attempts. Initial reviews of the Saudi

program show a high rate of success as compared to other programs. The Saudi program also enjoys more intensive scrutiny as other states seek to implement their own programs, based upon the current success of the Saudi program.

Chapter V provides a case study of deradicalization efforts in Indonesia. Indonesia's program contains some similar factors to those seen in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Indonesia has also incorporated different methods than other programs due not only to cultural differences but also to the limited resources that Indonesia has in place to implement its program. Despite its lack of resources, Indonesia's program has resulted in significant success in the deradicalization of some extremist leaders.

Chapter VI provides an overview of the deradicalization program in Singapore. Unlike the previous three case studies, Singapore's deradicalization program has been implemented in a non-Muslim majority state. Singapore's imprisoned extremists comprise a much smaller percentage of the overall prison population. Singapore also is able to dedicate significant resources to the implementation of its program.

Chapter VII provides a conclusion of the research on the effectiveness of deradicalization programs targeting Islamist extremists. This chapter assesses the current theories and realities of disengagement and deradicalization. It provides conclusions on how the current programs fit with the theories. It also discusses what factors need to be present for a deradicalization program to be successful.

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II. THEORIES OF DISENGAGEMENT AND DERADICALIZATION

A. INTRODUCTION

There are key distinctions between the concepts of disengagement and deradicalization. Disengagement occurs when an individual or a group no longer engages in violence or the individual no longer participates in the violent activities of the group. Deradicalization occurs when a group or an individual no longer believes in a violent ideology.

Deradicalization programs aimed at imprisoned extremists attempt to change the ideologies held by these extremists and eventually allow for release from prison and return of the rehabilitated extremist back into normal society. While deradicalization programs are a relatively new phenomenon, individuals have been disengaging from anti-social groups for a long time. The key difference between deradicalization and disengagement from a terrorist organization is that disengagement means that the individual has left the group but has not necessarily changed his or her ideology.

Horgan described disengagement as a process in which the individual's role within an organization changes from violent participation to a less active role.[8] Horgan found that disengagement alone does not necessarily bring about deradicalization nor is deradicalization a "necessary accompaniment to disengagement."[9] Horgan also found the process of disengagement to be different for each individual.[10] However, the factors seen in disengagement may provide the tools to build a strategy towards deradicalization.

Factors seen in the disengagement process consist of both physical and psychological factors. Psychological factors may include negative influences from the

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[8] John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 152.

[9] John Horgan, "Individual Disengagement, A Psychological Analysis," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 28.

[10] John Horgan, "Deradicalization or Disengagement?: A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2, no. 4 (February 2008): 5.

organization, development of negative sentiments towards the group, changing priorities for the individual, or disillusionment with the political aims and actions of the organization.[11] Physical factors in disengagement can consist of apprehension and imprisonment by security services, being kicked out of the organization, or even a change of the individual's role within the organization.[12]

There are numerous studies on disengagement from both mainstream organizations and anti-social groups. Ebaugh examined the processes of role exit in individuals leaving both mainstream and non-typical roles. The initial stage of role exit begins when an individual begins to doubt his/her commitment to an organization.[13] These doubts are often brought about by sudden changes within the organization or a traumatic event.[14] Individuals often express these doubts by exhibiting cueing behaviors, which question their commitment. Significant others, such as family and close friends can be influential in whether the individual continues to exhibit doubts and to seek alternative roles.[15] Subsequent specific events often described as "the straw that broke the camel's back" tend to be the catalyst for an individual to break with a group or organization formally.[16]

A study on deprogramming and disengagement from cults found that more individuals left the cults due to a change in their ideological beliefs about the cults rather than due to forced participation in deprogramming.[17] However, disengagement from the religious cult and deradicalization were more likely to occur together when members were forcibly removed from the cult.[18] Another study found four major triggering factors

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[11] John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 149.

[12] Ibid., 150.

[13] Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, *Becoming an EX, The Process of Role Exit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 41.

[14] Ibid., 65.

[15] Ibid., 75.

[16] Ibid., 128.

[17] Anson D. Shupe, Jr. and David G. Bromley, "The Moonies and the Anti-Cultists: Movement and Countermovement in Conflict," *Sociological Analysis* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1979): 332.

[18] Marc Galanter, *Cults: Faith, Healing and Coercion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 175.

in the likelihood for an individual to disengage from a cult. One factor was the degree of insulation from larger society. A cult member who interacted with society outside of the cult was more likely to defect from the cult.[19] A second factor involved the degree of personal relationships outside of the cult. Intimacy to another person outside of the cult weakened an individual's obligation to the cult and increased the likelihood of defection.[20] The third factor involved the perceived "urgency of the mission."[21] If the cult member did not perceive the demands of the cult to be necessary and urgent to the mission, the member was more likely to defect.[22] A fourth factor in defection was the ability of the cult to fulfill the emotional needs of the individual. If the individual did not experience strong cohesion within the cult, the individual would be more likely to defect.[23] This study also found that defectors often left the cult after "a major disillusionment or crisis" occurred and that family ties were influential in the decision to leave.[24]

Some of the factors seen in disengagement from religious cults can also be seen in disengagement from underground, violent, political groups. In a study of terrorists and underground political groups in Italy, della Porta found that the higher the intensity of support to a group, the more difficult it is for an individual to leave the group.[25] Defections were also caused by internal conflicts within the group over ideologies and tactics.[26] Family and career commitments were other factors in an individual's

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[19] Stuart A. Wright, *Leaving Cults: The Dynamics of Defection* (Washington, D.C.: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1987), 25.

[20] Ibid., 31.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 44.

[24] Ibid., 53–57.

[25] Donatella della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations, A Sociological Analysis of the Italian Case," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 75.

[26] Ibid., 77.

disengagement from the political group.[27] Another factor causing individuals to disengage from the group was "burn-out," which resulted from stresses of a commitment that was too demanding of an individual's time or emotional capabilities.[28]

Studies of ex-gang members have shown that the majority leave the gang due to the level of violence experienced by them or by their families and friends.[29] Gang members also disengaged as they became older due to the increasing involvement and responsibilities associated with starting a family and involvement in legitimate employment.[30] Decker and Lauritsen's findings suggest that intervention appears to be more successful when it takes place immediately following acts of violence.[31]

Bjorgo offers a number of factors on why many individuals disengage from right-wing extremist groups. He makes a distinction between push factors, which consist of negative social forces and pull factors, which offer a more rewarding alternative.[32] Push factors may consist of a loss of faith in the ideology of the group or the feelings that the violence went too far or even the loss of confidence in the group.[33] Push factors are often the result of disillusion with either the activities or the ideologies of the group. The loss of standing or reputation within the group can push the individual to exit the group. The negative societal pressures due to involvement with a group can also cause an individual to leave.

Some of the pull factors consist of a "longing for the freedoms of a 'normal' life" or the feelings that the individuals are too old to continue engaging in the anti-social

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[27] della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations, A Sociological Analysis of the Italian Case," 79.

[28] Ibid., 80.

[29] Scott Decker and Janet Lauritsen, "Breaking the Bonds of Membership, Leaving the Gang," in *Gangs in America*, ed. C. Ronald Huff (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 110.

[30] Ibid., 111.

[31] Ibid., 121.

[32] Tore Bjorgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right," in *Leaving Terrorism behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 36.

[33] Ibid., 38.

activities of the group.[34] Bjorgo found that the establishment of intimate relationships outside of the group,, such as with a spouse or a child, was the strongest pull factor for an individual to leave a militant racist or nationalist group.[35]

Bjorgo continues with an examination of the methods used by individuals to disengage. These include making a public break from the organization, breaking with the group while still maintaining the ideology, and a gradual withdrawal from the group.[36] Of interest, Bjorgo also offered factors, which inhibit individuals from disengaging from anti-social groups. If the group provides positive characteristics, such as friendship and social support, the individual often remains loyal to the group even when not agreeing with the ideology.[37] Individuals may also resist leaving an anti-social group due to the lack of social bonds available outside of the group or lack of employment opportunities as a result of their group membership.[38] Fear of reprisal from the group may also inhibit an individual from leaving. Individuals who leave groups are often threatened with death or are subject to harassment from other members. Leaving a group also involves losing the protection of that group against potential enemies.[39] Individuals who leave are also exposed to negative sanctions from security services that may target the individual in hopes of obtaining information on the group.[40]

A number of scholars have also studied disengagement factors of groups. Cronin found seven explanations for the decline or ending of a terrorist group. The elements include; the capture or killing of the terrorist group leader, the failure of a goal or cause to transition to the next generation, achievement of the cause, transition to legitimate political participation, loss of popular support, repression by the state, or transition to

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[34] Bjorgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right," 39.

[35] Ibid., 40.

[36] Ibid., 42–43.

[37] Ibid., 41.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

other violence.[41] The recognition of these elements can provide opportunity for a state to exploit these conditions and potentially lead to the demise of the terrorist organization.

Both Egypt and Algeria initiated programs geared towards disengaging Islamist extremist groups. Egypt's and Algeria's programs are different from rehabilitation-based deradicalization programs as the predominant method used is repression. Additionally, the programs do not include much effort in reintegrating the released prisoner back into normal society. In his research on extremist Islamist groups in Egypt and Algeria, Ashour argued that a specific combination of factors could lead to disengagement from violence. Ashour found that state repression and selective inducements by the government combined with an extremist group's charismatic leadership and social interaction between individuals within and outside the group can move the group towards disengagement.[42]

These factors can clearly be seen in the Algerian case particularly with the militant groups who accepted an amnesty offer from the Algerian government after intense repression. Some of these Islamist militant groups were already in unofficial dialogue with the regime prior to the amnesties and had already declared ceasefires with the government. The amnesty simply served to formalize and continue this arrangement. Also, these groups had leaderships that were able to control and/or influence a significant number within the groups.

Algeria's approach to extremism attempted to deradicalize groups using harsh state repression in addition to offering selective incentives to those willing to disarm.[43] Algeria's harsh repression tactics consisted largely of "imprisonment, torture, extra-judicial killings and media smear campaigns."[44] An Algerian government committee disclosed that approximately 500,000 terrorism suspects were detained during the

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[41] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Terrorist Campaigns End," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 55.

[42] Omar Ashour, *The De-radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 15.

[43] Omar Ashour, "Islamist De-Radicalization in Algeria: Successes and Failures," *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief*, no. 21 (November 2008): 2.

[44] Ibid., 8.

1990s.[45] In addition, the committee placed the number of "disappeared persons" to be more than 10,000.[46] Algeria's approach was unique in that it lacked an ideological/theological component, which could have been used to delegitimize the use of violence.[47]

Group disengagement factors identified by both Cronin and Ashour, can also be found in the case of Egypt. Egypt's al-Jihad al-Islami and Gama'a al-Islamiya were the two main groups operating in the country for a number of years. Both were responsible for almost all of the terrorism within Egypt from the 1970s to the 1990s.[48] In July 1997, leaders from both groups issued a public declaration to no longer conduct violent operations.[49] Gama'a al-Islamiya had a strong, established leadership with broad authority over group members.[50] The level of respect held by these leaders allowed them successfully to persuade group members to revise their ideologies. The Egyptian government aided in the deradicalization process by facilitating meetings between the reformed leadership and imprisoned group members.[51]

A major contributor to this ideological revision was the effective use of state repression against the groups. Egypt's use of force against the groups decimated much of the membership and crushed their capabilities for combat. Numerous group members were either killed in clashes against government forces or were captured and imprisoned for long lengths of time. Both Gama'a al-Islamiya and al-Jihad had also lost crucial public support in their struggles against the state. They alienated the Egyptian population

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[45] Ashour, "Islamist De-Radicalization in Algeria: Successes and Failures," 2.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Diaa Rashwan, "The Renunciation of Violence by Egyptian Jihadi Organizations," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 113.

[49] Ibid., 121.

[50] Ibid., 129.

[51] Ibid., 124.

through their violent actions against both Egyptians and foreign tourists. The loss of public support resulted in an inability for the Islamist groups to continue to confront the state.[52]

B.   CONCLUSION

Studies on individual disengagement from a variety of anti-social groups highlight many similar factors. One main factor is the disillusion with the ideologies or actions of the group. Another factor is a change in the individual's commitment to the group, which can be brought on by sudden changes within the group or the occurrence of a traumatic event. A major factor that influenced the disengagement from a group was the influence of family and close friends outside the group. Commitment to a family or the establishment of an intimate relationship outside the group was another primary factor in the disengagement of individuals from a number of different organizations. Individuals who had social bonds outside the group were less dependent upon the group and more able to disengage. Apprehension or imprisonment also became prominent factors in disengagement.

Studies on extremist group disengagement show a number of similar factors also. State repression has proven a major factor in the demise of a terrorist organization. The capture or killing of the extremist group leader can be a factor in the decline of the group. On the other side, strong leadership within a group has also proven highly effective in influencing and controlling the other group members. Government incentives can also positively influence disengagement of the group. The loss of public support also tends to lead to a decline in an organization. Another factor that has proven influential is the social interactions between individuals within the group and between group members and the outside world.

These studies suggest that both disengagement and deradicalization are possible. More importantly, they provide the elements necessary for promoting disengagement and deradicalization. These elements are the effective use of state repression,, such as

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[52] Fawaz Gerges, "The End of the Islamist Insurgency in Egypt? Costs and Prospects," *The Middle East Journal* 54, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 594.

imprisonment, effective use of government incentives to the individual, inclusion of family in the deradicalization process, strengthening of social bonds outside the extremist group, increased interaction of the individual with larger society, promotion of a change to the individual's ideology, and the building of a moderate social or support network for the individual after disengagement from the group.

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III. CASE STUDY: YEMEN'S DERADICALIZATION INITIATIVES

A. INTRODUCTION

The Yemeni government has had a complex and changing relationship with Islamist jihadists. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, thousands of Yemenis were believed to have traveled to Afghanistan to participate in the fight against the Soviets.[53] Arab-Afghan fighters from Yemen and other Arab states were allowed to return and resettle within Yemen by the Yemeni government. Their expertise was subsequently used by the regime in containing various internal conflicts within Yemen. The return of jihadists to Yemen also caused problems for the regime. These jihadists brought with them an ideology calling for the establishment of an Islamic state within Yemen. Recent years have been marked with increased conflict in Yemen between the government and these groups. A number of al-Qaeda members are believed to originate from Yemen.

In the past decade, Yemen has experienced a significant number of terrorist attacks on its soil targeting both western interests and Yemen's economic and tourism sectors. There have been numerous attacks to include bombings of hotels, killings of western tourists, killings of U.S. citizens working in a Yemeni hospital and attacks targeting the U.S. embassy in Yemen. Maritime terrorism in Yemen has included the bombings of a U.S. warship in 2000 and a French commercial ship in 2002. These attacks, coupled with the 9/11 attacks in the United States, brought increased international pressure for the Yemeni government to take action against radical extremists inside Yemen. As a result, Yemeni security services arrested and imprisoned large numbers of both active and suspected extremists throughout Yemen.

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[53] Christopher Boucek, Shazadi Beg and John Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 182.

Yemen was one of the first countries to initiate a program designed to deradicalize jihadists using religious dialogue. The foundation of this approach was that extremists held ideologies that fueled terrorism and these ideologies could be successfully debated and moderated to reduce terrorist activities. The basis of the program was to convert imprisoned jihadists' ideologies from "a radical, militant understanding of Islam to a moderate and peaceful understanding."[54]

Yemen's deradicalization approach through ideological debate has been implemented in a number of other countries. Although Yemen's initial approach was only partially effective, Yemen's program provides an example of what factors may allow for success and what may lead to failure in a deradicalization program. This chapter provides an overview of the key components of Yemen's deradicalization program. It also compares these components with disengagement factors. Many criticisms of the program are also highlighted.

B.   OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh decided to establish a committee to engage in dialogue with extremists in hopes of changing their "dangerous beliefs which could translate into violent extremism."[55] In September 2002, the Yemeni government appointed Judge Hamoud al-Hitar to lead the Committee for Religious Dialogue. The Dialogue Committee consisted of Judge al-Hitar and five other religious experts.[56] The aim of the committee initially was to bring about dialogue with returning fighters from

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[54] Ane Skov Birk, "Incredible Dialogues: Religious Dialogue as a Means of Counter-Terrorism in Yemen," *Developments in Radicalisation and Political Violence* (June 2009), http://www.icsr.info.

[55] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 184.

[56] Peter Willems, "Unusual Tactics," *Middle East* (2004): 66.

Afghanistan and other people who held ideological views outside of the norm.[57] This committee focused on security detainees suspected of being involved with Islamic extremism and the program relied on voluntary participation.[58]

The main issues debated within the dialogue were the legitimacy of the Yemeni government, the permissibility of killing non-Muslims, and the appropriate utilization of jihad. The dialogue between the committee and jihadists was based on the Qur'an and sunna and the purpose of the dialogue was to convince the jihadists to recognize the Yemeni government's authority, respect the rights of non-Muslims, and refrain from violence within Yemen.[59]

Judge al-Hitar based his dialogue program on the idea of mutual respect between the clerics and the detainees.[60] Actual debates on beliefs did not occur until after the clerics had won the respect and trust of the detainees.[61] At the initial meeting between the committee and the detainees, Judge al-Hitar addressed the criticisms of the detainees who questioned the legitimacy of the clerics and the role of the state in the dialogue process.[62] Upon gaining agreement of the detainees to participate in the dialogue, Hitar and the detainees agreed to an agenda and specific guidelines to follow for the dialogue.[63]

Dialogue sessions usually occurred between the cleric and a group of three to seven detainees. Sessions lasted for several hours.[64] Some reports indicate the sessions occurred outside the prison in a neutral setting.[65] Other reports state the dialogue sessions

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[57] Eric Watkins, "Yemen's Innovative Approach to the War on Terror," *Terrorism Monitor* 3, no. 4, (2005).

[58] Gregory D. Johnsen, "Yemen's Passive Role in the War on Terrorism," *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 4 (2006): 2.

[59] Ibid.

[60] James Brandon, "Koranic Duels Ease Terror," *Christian Science Monitor* (February 4, 2005): 1.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 185.

[63] Ibid., 186.

[64] Robert F. Worth, "Yemen's Deals with Jihadists Unsettle the U.S.," *New York Times*, January 28, 2008, A1.

[65] Ibid.

occurred within the prison.[66] A neutral setting is important in putting the detainees on equal footing with the clerics and is more conductive to building mutual trust and respect.[67] Each group was also told of positive outcomes and successes of other groups.[68]

Clerics challenged the detainees by stating if the detainees could provide a convincing argument on the legitimacy of their jihad, then the clerics would join them but if they could not, then they must renounce their view.[69] Judge al-Hitar and the other religious clerics asked detainees to use the Qur'an to justify the killing of innocent civilians and when they were unable to do so, the clerics would then show the detainees numerous passages within the Qur'an advocating nonviolence.[70] According to Judge al-Hitar, most of the detainees had memorized the Qur'an and were familiar with Islamic rules, yet they misused the rules.[71] Clerics found that the hardcore detainees who had spent significant time in Afghanistan were more difficult to engage with in open dialogue.[72]

Prisoners were told upfront that if they agreed to renounce violence that they would be released through an amnesty program.[73] However, this amnesty did not extend to prisoners who had already killed people in terrorist attacks.[74] Participants were also required to sign a pledge not to conduct terrorist attacks within Yemen.[75] Some effort was made to find employment for the former detainees and some participants were given jobs within the Yemeni security services.[76]

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[66] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 190.

[67] Nabil Sultan, "Yemen: Non-Violent Clerics Open Quranic Debate with Jihadists," *Global Information Network* (May 24, 2004): 1.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Michael Taarnby, "Yemen's Committee for Dialogue: Can Jihadists Return to Society?" *Terrorism Monitor* 3, no. 14 (2005).

[70] Brandon, "Koranic Duels Ease Terror," 1.

[71] Sultan, "Yemen: Non-Violent Clerics Open Quranic Debate with Jihadists," 1.

[72] Taarby, "Yemen's Committee for Dialogue: Can Jihadists Return to Society?" 1.

[73] Johnsen, "Yemen's Passive Role in the War on Terrorism," 2.

[74] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 188.

[75] Worth, "Yemen's Deals with Jihadists Unsettle the U.S.," 1.

[76] Willems, "Unusual Tactics," 66.

As of June 2005, Yemeni officials declared that Yemen was 90% free of terrorists and advised they had released 364 rehabilitated detainees.[77] Yemen supported the success of the program by indicating that some of the former detainees had cooperated with the Yemeni government by providing information leading to the capture of both hidden weapons caches, and also other radical Islamists. One example was the killing of a top Al-Qaeda commander in Yemen after a tip-off from a former detainee.[78] Some reformed extremists have become government informants and others have become mediators between the government and the at-large extremists.[79]

C.   INDIVIDUAL DISENGAGEMENT FACTORS

An obvious disengagement factor seen in the Yemeni program was the physical factor of imprisonment. The Yemeni government targeted not only those who had fought in Afghanistan but other Islamists who were deemed to hold "dangerous beliefs."[80] However, one problem with this method is the potential for radicalization. Many program participants were arrested and detained without charges, which led to increased resentment towards the government.

A major disengagement factor seen in the Yemen program was the changing of ideologies among many of the participants. The dialogue sessions also brought about an internal conflict within the group over ideologies and tactics. Some of the released detainees who had participated in the program began to speak and debate with others in an attempt to change their ideologies supporting violence and terrorism.

The dialogue sessions with the committee changed the degree of insulation from larger society for many of the detainees. At the initial meeting, many of the detainees questioned the legitimacy of the ulema and of the Yemeni regime. Judge al-Hitar's approach towards dialogue and his willingness to engage in frank debate did much to

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[77] Johnsen, "Yemen's Passive Role in the War on Terrorism," 2.

[78] Brandon, "Koranic Duels Ease Terror," 1.

[79] Worth, "Yemen's Deals with Jihadists Unsettle the U.S.," 1.

[80] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 186.

establish legitimacy for the clerics involved in the program. Detainees also objected to certain government laws, policies and treaties. Judge al-Hitar provided copies of disputed documents and opened them up for debate.

D.   CRITICISMS OF PROGRAM

One major criticism of the program is that many of the participants had been arrested and imprisoned due to suspicions of their involvement with extremists and many had not committed any crimes in Yemen or been charged with any offenses.[81] A number of participants felt they had been imprisoned unjustly and forced to participate in dialogue to obtain their freedom.[82]

A former participant in Yemen's program disclosed that all the prisoners knew that Judge al-Hitar could secure their release, and therefore, they curried favor with him.[83] Some of the released participants advised no real dialogue or exchange of ideas ever took place.[84] Other former participants advised the program was not so much of a re-interpretation of Islamic ideology but more of a bargain between the extremists and the Yemeni government. As one former detainee advised, as long as the extremist did not conduct attacks within Yemen, they would be left alone.[85]

Little effort was made in attempting to reintegrate released detainees back into society. The Yemen government did not provide social support to detainees and made minimal efforts to support detainees eventually released. Some participants were promised employment or other assistance upon release but then received nothing.[86] The government also did not maintain any adequate surveillance of former prisoners' activities. Prisoner passports were not confiscated and no provisions were made to

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[81] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 189.

[82] Ibid., 190.

[83] Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Ellie B. Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," *International Peace Institute* (2008): 13.

[84] Birk, "Incredible Dialogues: Religious Dialogue as a Means of Counter-Terrorism in Yemen," 4.

[85] Worth, "Yemen's Deals with Jihadists Unsettle the U.S.," 1.

[86] Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen's Committee for Dialogue," 190.

prevent them from traveling abroad.[87] Yemen did not track recidivism rates among the released detainees and the government closely guarded the identities of released program participants.[88]

Judge al-Hitar, the head of the dialogue committee, was also the focus of a number of criticisms. Although the Yemeni government claimed the committee was comprised of a number of "respected Islamic scholars," Judge al-Hitar appeared to be the sole public representative of the committee and some allege that no other cleric took an active role in the dialogues due to differences of opinion with Judge al-Hitar.[89]

Another criticism of Judge al-Hitar was his declaration that Yemeni participation in jihad within Iraq was legitimate.[90] Judge al-Hitar, along with several other judges and clerics in Yemen, believe that according to sharia, jihad is permissible against occupiers of Muslim lands. A further controversy was his possible link to Al Qaeda. In February 2006, twenty-three Al-Qaeda jihadists escaped from a Yemeni prison. The escape was made via a tunnel that went from the prison to the women's section of a local mosque from which Judge al-Hitar preached. There was also evidence of assistance provided from the Political Security Office, Yemen's internal security service.

E.   CONCLUSIONS

In December 2005, Yemen's deradicalization program was deemed a failure due to high recidivism rates and the committee was shut down. Sources within the Yemeni government stated that the government felt the program was a failure due to the number of former detainees who returned to violence after their release.[91] At least eight of the released prisoners left Yemen to fight in Iraq and a few have been implicated in suicide attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq.[92] However, the presence of Yemeni fighters in Iraq

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[87] Johnsen, "Yemen's Passive Role," 3.

[88] Andrew McGregor, "Yemen and the U.S.: Different Approaches to the War on Terrorism," *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 4 (2006).

[89] Birk, "Incredible Dialogues: Religious Dialogue as a Means of Counter-Terrorism in Yemen," 9.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Johnsen, "Yemen's Passive Role," 3.

[92] Ibid.

does not necessarily prove a failure of ideological-based deradicalization in Yemen. Judge al-Hitar and other Yemeni clerics did not dispute the legitimacy of jihad in Iraq. Yet, the reoccurring terrorist attacks within Yemen reflect its continued problem with Islamist extremists.

Yemen was one of the first states to implement a program of debate and dialogue to change ideologies of imprisoned Islamist extremists. Although Yemen's deradicalization program achieved limited success, Yemen's program provided a significant change to the counter-terrorism efforts in many states. A number of other states have built on Yemen's individual-focused approach and formed their own programs to counter extremism. Yemen recently re-implemented its deradicalization initiatives in mid-2008. However, the likelihood of its success is doubtful if the shortcomings of the previous program are not addressed.

IV.   CASE STUDY: SAUDI ARABIA'S DERADICALIZATION PROGRAMS

A.   INTRODUCTION

In 2003, when al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (QAP) began conducting a campaign of bombings targeting Western companies within the Kingdom, Saudi's security apparatus started an aggressive campaign to identify and arrest extremists in the Kingdom. These extremists eventually began targeting Saudi Arabia's security apparatus in retaliation for their crackdown. Between 2003 and 2004, there were 61 violent confrontations between Saudi security forces and extremists.[93] However, Saudi security forces have been successful in disrupting the terrorist organization as evidenced by the absence of any successful attacks since 2006.[94]

There are a number of causes attributed to the rise of extremism and the incidents of terrorist attacks within Saudi Arabia. The QAP attacks in the Kingdom are often seen as the result of sentiments of "extreme anti-westernism."[95] Extremism is also attributed to negative attitudes towards the Al-Saud regime, their policies, and also towards political repression. "Close ties to the United States, perceived corruption on the part of the ruling family, and an exclusionary political system make Saudi Arabia vulnerable to recurring patterns of radicalization."[96] Another factor contributing to extremism was the return of large numbers of radicalized Saudi jihadists from Afghanistan in 2002.[97] A common thread among the radicals is their interpretation of Islam and their justifications for the use of violence against foreigners and the Saudi establishment.

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[93] Mohammed Hafez, "Radicalization in the Persian Gulf: Assessing the Potential of Islamist Militancy in Saudi Arabia and Yemen," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* (2008): 7.

[94] Hafez, "Radicalization in the Persian Gulf," 9.

[95] Thomas Hegghammer, "Islamist Violence and Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia," *International Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2008): 714.

[96] Hafez, "Radicalization in the Persian Gulf," 13.

[97] Ibid.

To deal with these problems, the Saudi government has taken a multi-pronged approach to deradicalization. The approach currently being used within the prison system is to change the jihadist prisoners' interpretations concerning the meaning of jihad and the concept of *takfir*, or declaring a person an infidel. In addition to the rehabilitation program aimed at imprisoned extremists, Saudi has instituted other programs to deal with radicalization within the Kingdom. Another approach being implemented is to counter the ideologies of extremists via the Internet. A third approach is to help reintegrate released prisoners back into normal society.

B.   OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

The main approach to counter imprisoned extremists in the Kingdom consisted of a deradicalization-counseling program aimed at countering the religious ideologies held by the extremists. Saudi's approach is similar to the recent approaches by a number of other countries in dealing with deradicalization of imprisoned extremists. However, the Saudi program is the most comprehensive and well-funded program of all the current deradicalization programs in existence.[98] The program consists of religious re-education, psychological counseling for the participant and a reintegration process after release from prison.

The Saudi program works on the presumption that extremist views are the result of a mistake in the interpretation of Islam.[99] The program views the prisoner as having been led away from true Islam by extremists.[100] Rather than punishing the prisoner, the Saudi program treats the prisoner as a misguided victim who can be redeemed through re-education. The Saudi program also utilizes Saudi culture and traditions by using familial hierarchies and community ties to take responsibility for the program participant.[101]

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[98] Christopher Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," *Carnegie Papers*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, no. 97 (2008): 23.

[99] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 6.

[100] Christopher Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 215.

[101] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 7.

The Saudi government does not utilize the program for all security prisoners. About 10% of Saudi's security prisoners are deemed hardcore extremists.[102] Many of these hardcore extremists refuse to participate in the program. The religious re-education program is targeted towards security prisoners who have not taken part in any violent acts against the Saudi government. Those who have committed terrorist acts can also take part in the program but are not eligible for release.[103] Also, all Saudis repatriated from Guantanamo prison are required to participate in the program.[104] The main objective of the program's ideological approach is to counter the extremist ideology of *takfir* through intensive religious dialogue and psychological counseling.[105]

A group within the Saudi Ministry of Interior known as the Advisory Committee is responsible for administrating the deradicalization program. The Advisory Committee is composed of four smaller sub-committees: the Religious Subcommittee, the Psychological and Social Subcommittee, the Security Subcommittee and the Media Subcommittee.[106] Each subcommittee plays an integral role in the deradicalization and rehabilitation of security prisoners.

The Religious Subcommittee provides counseling through approximately 150 clerics and scholars who engage in dialogue and debate with prisoners.[107] The program is able to draw on the large number of religious experts within Saudi Arabia to find clerics

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[102] Abdullah F. Ansary, "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach," *Middle East Policy* 15, no. 2, (2008): 119.

[103] Ibid., 120.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Christopher Boucek, "The Saudi Process of Repatriating and Reintegrating Guantanamo Returnees," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 1, (2007): 11.

[106] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 217.

[107] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 11.

able to use the most appropriate methods to facilitate communication with the prisoners.[108] A primary factor in selecting clerics is based on their communication ability and whether it is conducive to dialogue.[109]

The Psychological and Social Subcommittee is also involved in the counseling process. This subcommittee is comprised of approximately 50 mental health specialists and social scientists responsible for assessing and diagnosing prisoner psychological problems and behavior.[110] Another function of this group is to evaluate whether the participant is sincere in his desire for rehabilitation. This group also evaluates prisoners' families to determine what support they need.[111]

The Security Subcommittee evaluates potential security risks among the participants and makes recommendations on their release.[112] This subcommittee also monitors participants after their release. Released participants are required to check in with the Security Subcommittee on a regular basis.[113]

The fourth component, the Media Subcommittee, produces the educational materials used in the counseling sessions and religious classes for prisoners. This subcommittee also produces other materials to be used in Saudi schools and mosques.[114] The Media Subcommittee also functions as an outreach and education program targeting young Saudi males who may be exposed to radical viewpoints.[115] The main purpose of this subcommittee is to generate and reinforce the message against terrorism and extremist thought.

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[108] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 12.

[109] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 218.

[110] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 12.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 219.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 220.

[115] Ibid.

The counseling process begins with initial one-on-one meetings between the prisoner and an Advisory Committee cleric. In the initial meeting between the prisoner and the Advisory Committee cleric, the cleric clarifies that he is "an independent and righteous scholar" and not an employee of the Saudi security forces.[116] The main objective of the first meeting is for the cleric to engage the prisoner in conversation about the prisoner's actions that brought him to prison and what his religious justifications were.[117] This initial conversation opens the door for further dialogue on religion and the prisoner's understandings of Islam. The cleric explains to the prisoner why his justifications were wrong and then teaches the state-approved religious interpretation of his actions.[118]

Radical ideologies can only successfully be countered by someone who not only is knowledgeable about Islam but can also garner the respect of the extremist. The opinions of the ulema, or recognized Islamic scholars, carry more weight and can be successful in countering extremist ideologies. "Muslims…are more comfortable with theological and juristic interpretations of religious questions."[119] A benefit of Saudi Arabia is that it has a vast number of Islamic scholars who can be utilized in the program.

After individual sessions, the program runs a series of short dialogue sessions lasting one to two hours that take place in both formal classroom sessions, and also in more informal settings.[120] After short sessions, the program has longer dialogue sessions consisting of six-week courses in which specific topics, such as *takfir*, jihad and terrorism are discussed.[121] After each course, an examination is given. The prisoner must pass the exam or retake the course.

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[116] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia."

[117] Ibid., 221.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Muhammad Haniff bin Hassan, "Key Considerations in Counterideological Work against Terrorist Ideology," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 6 (September 2006): 537.

[120] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 221.

[121] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 17.

After completion of the counseling and dialogue sessions, the prisoner is evaluated for release. If approved, the prisoner is released from prison and put into the next phase of the rehabilitation program. After release from prison, the returnees are housed at a halfway house, the Care Rehabilitation Center in a Riyadh suburb for further counseling and reintegration back into society.

Released prisoners typically spend 8 to 12 weeks in the halfway house and are restricted to the facility unless they are in the custody of their families. The Guantanamo returnees are given more psychological counseling than other residents are and the focus of their treatment is to help them adjust to freedom and reintegration back into society.[122] Participants are monitored after release and are required to check in regularly with the program officials.

The ability to segregate extremists from the general population is important in preventing radicalization. Saudi Arabia has addressed prison concerns by building five new prisons specifically to support their deradicalization programs. Each prison is designed to accommodate the program needs. Each prison also can hold approximately 1,200 prisoners.

Unlike typical Saudi prisons where large groups of individuals are housed together in large cells, the new prisons allow for segregation of individuals. Saudi officials are careful not to house common criminals in the same locations as extremists to prevent radicalization of the former.[123] The new prisons contain individual self-contained cells equipped with televisions, which can be used to transmit selected programs and lectures.[124] The cells are constructed to minimize contact between the prisoners and the

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[122] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 19.

[123] Christopher Boucek, "Jailing Jihadis: Saudi Arabia's Special Terrorist Prisons," *Terrorism Monitor* 6, no. 2 (2008): 4.

[124] Ibid., 5.

guards, and also to prevent communication among the individual prisoners.[125] All cells and interrogation rooms are equipped with cameras, which serve the purpose of preventing abuse against prisoners.[126]

The new Saudi prison design is also accommodating for prisoner families. Family participation is a vital part of the rehabilitation process. The new prisons include designated locations to allow for visitation with family members. Married prisoners are also allowed conjugal visits with their spouses in rooms set aside for the purpose.[127]

C.   RADICALIZATION VIA THE INTERNET

Saudi officials have also targeted Internet Web sites, which advocate extremist ideologies. The Internet has been "one of the most important resources used by Al Qaeda and other extremist groups to spread deviant ideologies like the *takfir* and jihad doctrines to Saudi youth."[128] In addition, Internet-based technology enables jihadists to "share their skills and training much more easily" with other jihadists.[129]

The Al-Sakinah Campaign is an attempt by the Saudi government to counter religious extremist ideologies online by using volunteer members of the Saudi ulema to start an online dialogue with Islamists on extremist Web sites. The al-Sakinah Campaign consists of more than 66 volunteers comprised of academics, religious scholars, psychiatrists and sociologists who use the Internet to contact radicals.[130] According to a July 2005 interview with the director of the campaign, the group found 130 active Web sites that spread the *takfir* ideology.[131] The clerics infiltrated these Web sites and began dialogues with others on the Web sites. The clerics target Saudis online who support

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[125] Boucek, "Jailing Jihadis: Saudi Arabia's Special Terrorist Prisons," 4.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 5.

[128] Ansary, "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach," 115.

[129] Mohammed Hafez, "Jihad after Iraq: Lessons from the Arab Afghans," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 2 (February 2009): 88.

[130] Ansary, "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach," 121.

[131] Ibid.

violent ideologies but have not participated in any terrorist acts.[132] A January 2006 report indicated that ulama had conducted dialogue with 972 individuals for a total of 53,760 hours to get them to renounce their extremist beliefs.[133] Although it is difficult to measure success rates of this campaign, Saudi newspapers reported that several high-ranking Al-Qaeda members renounced their extremist views after dialogue with the clerics.[134] Also of interest is that Al-Qaeda has issued several statements warning its followers against engaging in dialogue with the Sakinah members, and has also made numerous attempts to hack into and attack the Sakinah's computer systems.[135]

D.   DISENGAGEMENT FACTORS

The multi-pronged approach to deradicalization seen in Saudi Arabia contains a significant number of factors that assist in the disengagement and potential deradicalization of extremists. Physical factors include apprehension, detainment and, most important, segregation of extremists in facilities designed to accommodate the rehabilitation process. The approach of the Saudi program is fair and positive towards the prisoners.

One key factor involved in moving from violence to peace was the personal relationships of the extremist in which their behavior changed after influence of a mentor or friend who supports peaceful behavior.[136] For this reason, program clerics and doctors continue to be available to released prisoners and are frequently utilized by them after

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[132] Y. Yehoshua, "Reeducation of Extremists in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Media Research Institute Inquiry and Analysis Series*, no. 260 (2006).

[133] Ibid.

[134] Yehoshua, "Reeducation of Extremists in Saudi Arabia."

[135] Ansary, "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach," 123.

[136] Horgan, "Deradicalization or Disengagement?: A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation," 4.

release.[137] According to Saudi government officials, the recidivism rates of released security prisoners are only 1–2% or 35 people of approximately 1,400 prisoners who have been released after participation in the program.[138]

The inclusion of family members in the rehabilitation of each participant serves not only to strengthen ties with normal society but also solidifies social bonds, which provide external support to the participant. The Saudi program is significant in that it works within Saudi culture by recognizing and utilizing the importance of family in its approach to deradicalization and rehabilitation. The family of the prisoner is actively involved in the deradicalization process. In addition, by providing significant support to a prisoner's family, the Saudi government creates an atmosphere of goodwill and creates a sense of commitment from the recipient to the government.

The Saudi program is significant in that the rehabilitation effort extensively involves the prisoners' families and this involvement is critical to the success of the rehabilitation and reintegration process.[139] The Saudi program realizes that by increasing an individual's commitment to his family, the commitment to the extremist group is lessened. Saudi's rehabilitation and reintegration includes programs to facilitate marriages, education and training programs, and financial support to families for necessities.[140] Upon completion of the program, former jihadists must sign a pledge renouncing extremist views. The head of the family must also sign. After completion, former prisoners are also given assistance in finding jobs, housing and planning marriage. Saudi authorities feel that marriage offers a stabilizing future for former jihadists who would be less likely to engage in subversive activities if they have a wife and children at home. Financial assistance to the families is crucial in that it deters potential

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[137] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 13.

[138] Ibid., 21.

[139] Ibid., 11.

[140] Ibid., 7.

radicalization of these members due to financial hardships suffered when the breadwinner is detained.[141] The Saudi government is also very clear that it will hold the extended family responsible for any recidivism of the released detainee.

The Saudi program also addresses the prisoner's social needs by including families in its efforts and providing monetary support, which encourages goodwill towards the government, and also prevents radical groups from stepping in to influence families.[142] Monetary support is often provided in the way of stipends to support the family while the breadwinner is incarcerated.[143] The government also provides for education and healthcare needs of the families. Research has shown that spouses and families can often be a significant factor in the disengagement of violent activism.[144] However, a major criticism of the Saudi program is that the extremists' views have not been changed but they have renounced them not due to an actual change in beliefs but due to the financial incentives given to their families.

E.   CRITICISMS

An examination of deradicalization programs in Saudi Arabia shows that there has been some success with the use of certain methods. The examination also highlights some of the detriments to success of the programs. The basis of the deradicalization program is that Islamist extremists do not have a proper understanding of Islam. However, an examination of Saudi's education system shows the prevalence of religious curricula throughout all phases of education. This suggests that current religious curricula may be a significant contributor towards this "misunderstanding." Reform of the educational curricula may help to counter radical ideologies.

The recidivism rates within the program, although relatively low, indicate a possible need to address the current monitoring of participants after their release. Saudi

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[141] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 5.

[142] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 216.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 10.

authorities claim an 80 to 90% success rate with their program.[145] However, the relative newness of the program makes it difficult to track recidivism rates and the Saudi government often does not release data on re-offenders. Saudi officials did advise that approximately 11 Saudis who went through the rehabilitation program after their release from Guantanamo have returned to terrorism.[146] One former participant, Said Ali al-Shihri, is suspected of involvement in the 2008 terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a, Yemen.[147] Another former participant, Abu Hareth Muhammad al-Awfi, also rejoined a terrorist group in Yemen but then returned to Saudi Arabia and turned himself in to authorities.

F.   CONCLUSIONS

Saudi Arabia with its multi-pronged and comprehensive approach shows the most promise of all the deradicalization programs. If Saudi Arabia is able to succeed with its program, these methods can be incorporated into numerous other countries' programs and possibly alleviate the growing threat from Muslim extremists. Saudi Arabia's programs have many advantages due to the amount of resources that Saudi is able to dedicate to the program. Mainly, Saudi Arabia has access to a significant amount of rentier income and is able to dedicate a large amount of money to the success of the program. In addition, Saudi clerics hold an authority enhanced by Saudi Arabia's claim to guardianship of the two holy cities in Islam. Saudi's vast resources, both monetary and religious, allow for program components that are difficult to replicate in other locations.

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[145] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 222.

[146] Robert F. Worth, "Saudis Issue List of 85 Terrorism Suspects," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2009.

[147] Worth, "Saudis Issue List of 85 Terrorism Suspects."

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V.   CASE STUDY: INDONESIA'S DERADICALIZATION PROGRAM

A.   INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is Southeast Asia's largest nation and the world's largest Muslim country with a population of approximately 237.5 million. Approximately 90% of Indonesia's population is Muslim although Islamic practices in the nation vary throughout.[148] Indonesia's political landscape and constitution are based on a pluralistic and secular foundation although moderate Islamist groups have achieved political representation.[149] In recent years, there has been an outgrowth of Islamic orthodoxy due to the prevalence of Salafi-based religious schools.[150] Since the mid-1990s, a number of radicalized and violent groups have emerged within Indonesia.

In late 2001, Singapore and Malaysia arrested a number of terrorists from an extremist group called Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Both countries pointed out that JI had a much larger network within Indonesia. However, Indonesian authorities did not begin to target JI members until JI began conducting attacks within Indonesia against Westerners. In 2002, JI members executed bombings in the popular tourist areas in Bali killing 202 people. JI was suspected of being responsible for the 2003 bombing of the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta and the 2004 bombing outside of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. In 2005, JI was again suspected of suicide bombings in Bali, which took place near popular tourist locations and killed 20 people. These attacks had a significant impact on Indonesia's economy and greatly damaged the tourism industry.

Indonesia has been slow to recognize the problem of radicalized Islamists. The view of many or most Indonesians is that the global war on terror is really a war against

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[148] Anthony L. Smith, "The Politics of Negotiating the Terrorist Problem in Indonesia," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, (2005): 34.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Smith, "The Politics of Negotiating the Terrorist Problem in Indonesia," 35.

Muslims and many Indonesians do not see Islamist extremists as a threat.[151] In addition, the Indonesian government has been guarded about confronting radicalized Islamic groups due to concerns of alienating the mainstream Muslims who often view these groups as just another part of the greater Islamic community.[152]

Indonesia has captured more than 300 militants since the Bali bombings in 2002.[153] After these arrests, Indonesia changed tactics in how they handle militants. Indonesia has taken a two-pronged approach to countering radical jihadists. One approach has been to identify and imprison jihadists responsible for terrorist attacks aggressively. The second approach involves changing jihadist attitudes through deradicalization programs, and also by locating and replacing Islamist preachers and teachers with professionals possessing more moderate views.[154]

Indonesia's attempt at deradicalization consists of a makeshift program geared towards changing the ideologies of captured jihadists. The program is run by different individuals and organizations all relying upon limited resources. Yet, despite the program being understaffed and underfinanced, Indonesia has claimed some degree of success. This chapter examines Indonesia's deradicalization program to see how effective their approach has been. What are the key components of Indonesia's deradicalization program and how do they compare with disengagement factors?

B.   OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

Indonesia's government initially began attempts to counter Islamist radicalism through Islamic scholars in 2005. The Indonesian Vice-President brought together a

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[151] Smith, "The Politics of Negotiating the Terrorist Problem in Indonesia," 37.

[152] Ibid., 38.

[153] Zachary Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind, Individual and Collective Disengagement*, ed. John Horgan and Tore Bjorgo (New York: Routledge, 2009), 198.

[154] Nick O'Brien, "Interview with a Former Terrorist: Nasir Abbas' Deradicalization Work in Indonesia," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 12 (2008): 21.

group of Muslim scholars to counter jihadist teachings.[155] However, the effort failed due to many in the group not seeing the necessity of the project and other members of the group having no knowledge of what the jihadist teachings covered.[156]

In 2005, Indonesian police decided to implement their own program in their counterterrorism efforts against JI. The police began an ad hoc deradicalization program aimed at imprisoned terrorists. The program was initially started with the aim of identifying and targeting prisoners who could be persuaded to provide intelligence information against other jihadists.[157] Police also attempted to recruit those jihadists opposed to using violence against civilians to use them to influence the violent jihadists. Nick O'Brien, a British counterterrorism expert, stated the Indonesian program is able to exploit Jemaah Islamiyah based on the internal split within the group of those that have adopted violent tactics against Western targets and others who oppose this tactic.[158]

Many jihadists have a distrust of police due to violent retribution from previous rebellions.[159] Indonesia's new approach is to provide humane treatment and show respect for the detainee's Islamic practices.[160] The approach is helped by the fact that most of the police are Muslim. Maintaining Islamic values has enhanced the reputation of the police who manage the rehabilitation program. In addition, former jihadists who assist with the rehabilitation program often spend up to a week with new detainees before police interrogators are given access to them.[161] Most of Indonesia's police counterterrorism unit leaders are devout Muslims who will stop interrogation sessions to pray.[162] These demonstrations of piety do much to curb distrust.

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[155] International Crisis Group, "'Deradicalization' and Indonesian Prisons," *Asia Report*, no. 142, (2007): 11.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid., 12.

[158] Shaun Waterman, "Indonesia Tries Deradicalization," *Middle East Times* (July 22, 2008).

[159] Kirsten E. Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 8, (2008): 8.

[160] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 198.

[161] Ibid., 199.

[162] Ibid., 200.

The Indonesia program approaches each terrorist on an individual level. In addition to counseling, the Indonesia program provides educational opportunities to the detained terrorist and provides financial support to the families of imprisoned terrorists.[163] Police provide financial assistance to jihadist families to pay for food, clothing and education requirements. Families are also given more opportunities to visit with the imprisoned jihadist.

The program has two main assumptions: that jihadists only listen to other jihadists and that jihadist perception of police can be changed through kind treatment.[164] Indonesia does not utilize religious scholars to counsel detainees, as they believe the detainees do not find the scholars to be credible. The program instead relies on reformed jihadists to talk to prisoners in a belief that radicals are able to relate to these former radicals.[165] Of significance, the reformed jihadists used in the program were senior leaders in JI, which is helpful in the Indonesian hierarchical culture that tends to be deferential to authority figures.[166]

Nasir Abbas and Ali Imron are two Indonesian jihadists who took part in the Afghanistan fight against Russian occupation. Both are former JI leaders who participate in the deradicalization program by approaching JI prisoners and challenging their beliefs.[167] The key differences between these two jihadists are that Abbas never took part in any attacks targeting civilians whereas Imron was a participant in a number of terrorist attacks to include the 2002 Bali bombings. The two main issues that Abbas focuses on are the targeting of civilians and the need for creating an Islamic state.[168] In contrast, Imron agrees with the bombers' interpretation of jihad but disagrees with the timing of "waging war without adequate preparation."[169]

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[163] Greg Sheridan, "Jakarta's Terrorist Rehab," *The Australian* (May 31, 2008).

[164] Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 8.

[165] Waterman, "Indonesia Tries Deradicalization," 1.

[166] Abuza, "Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees," 199.

[167] Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 9.

[168] Ibid.

[169] International Crisis Group, "Deradicalization and Indonesia's Prisons," 12.

C.   DISENGAGEMENT FACTORS

How have Indonesian police succeeded in getting jihadists to disengage from their group? In the case of Imron and Abbas, a number of factors laid the foundation for both jihadists to disengage and deradicalize. Factors include the removal of both from the influence of JI, the immediate "intervention" upon being detained, the positive treatment received from police, and the ideological differences between both men and other JI leaders.

The most obvious disengagement factors seen within Indonesia's deradicalization program are the physical factors of apprehension and imprisonment by Indonesian security forces. Upon apprehension, the extremist is cut off from JI. Imprisoned JI leaders are often kept at police headquarters to prevent contact with other JI prisoners.[170] In addition, these prisoners receive fair treatment from police, which negates the JI argument that government forces are abusive towards Muslims.[171]

A psychological factor often seen in disengagement is that of disillusion or ideological conflict. Disillusion can have a large influence on an individual's role change in an organization from an active participant to a less active role.[172] A loss of faith in the ideology of a group or the feelings that the violence has escalated too far can be a negative social force causing an individual to disengage.[173] Abbas, a former JI leader, stated an ideological debate within JI emerged in 1998 with some members wanting to "take the war to the civilians" and others disagreeing with the targeting of civilians."[174] This disagreement in ideology has brought about the disengagement of a number of extremists who feel that the terrorist attacks targeting civilians has brought more harm than good to the Muslim community.[175] Prior to beginning interrogations, police often

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[170] Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 9.

[171] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 200.

[172] Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 152.

[173] Tore Bjorgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right," 38.

[174] Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 9.

[175] International Crisis Group, "Deradicalization and Indonesia's Prisons," 13.

allow the reformed extremists to spend several days with the detainees debating ideologies. Police found interrogations to be easier after ideological arguments were resolved.[176]

One strong point within the Indonesian program has been the ability of the police to identify and obtain the cooperation of senior JI leaders. Nasir Abbas was a high profile senior JI leader who set up the organization of JI in Philippines and had also trained and fought in Afghanistan.[177] Ali Imron, who had also fought in Afghanistan, had a strong religious background and "could hold his own on points of Islamic law with JI's best scholars."[178] As seen in both Egypt and Algeria, leaders of terrorist groups can have a significant influence on encouraging others within the group to disengage and deradicalize. Indonesian police have realized this and target JI leaders in the hope that "if a leader changed his mind, others would follow."[179]

D.   CRITICISMS OF PROGRAM

There are some weaknesses in the tactics and methodology of the Indonesian deradicalization program. Although former jihadists may be able to appear credible to imprisoned terrorists, they are quickly discredited by their cooperation with police. Imron's public sightings in the company of police officials and his comfortable lifestyle has been highlighted by the Indonesian media and contributed to his loss of credibility among many JI members.[180]

Another criticism is that the Indonesian prison system undermines the rehabilitation efforts. Indonesia prisons are rife with corruption and overcrowding. Prison populations have their own hierarchy and cell leaders routinely extort money from other prisoners in the cell.[181] Prisoners must pay for basic necessities,, such as food, housing

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[176] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 199.

[177] International Crisis Group, "Deradicalization and Indonesia's Prisons," 12.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid., 13.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid., 3.

and visiting privileges. Indonesia's prisons are rife with gangs and imprisoned jihadists often band together to protect themselves from these gangs. Attempts are made to segregate jihadists from the rest of the prison population; however, no attempts are made to separate the hardcore extremists from the jihadists that are more likely to be influenced by the deradicalization program.[182] Indonesia's deradicalization program is often undermined as soon as the jihadist enters prison. Schulze points out that Indonesian police are aware of this, and therefore, try to keep many prisoners at police headquarters rather than place them in the prison system.[183]

The program is only targeted towards some jihadists in custody and there is no structured rehabilitation program for them once they are released from police custody.[184] Also, after release, many "rehabilitated" jihadists are placed right back in their pre-incarceration environments, which make them more likely to fall back in with other jihadists.

Although the Indonesian police attempt to address jihadists' needs, the aid is not evenly distributed among the prisoners; some receive much more benefits than others do.[185] One senior police official stressed that he felt the socio-economic approach was more effective in rehabilitating jihadists than an ideological approach.[186] Yet, only some imprisoned jihadists receive any economic assistance while others are ignored.

As a whole, Indonesian police see the deradicalization program as successful and base this assumption on the decrease in bombings since 2005. The program has also led to increased intelligence information, which has allowed them to apprehend high-level JI members.[187] The perceived success of the program was recognized by the Indonesian parliament in February 2007 when they decided to back the program officially.[188] Yet,

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[182] International Crisis Group, "Deradicalization and Indonesia's Prisons," 7.

[183] Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 9.

[184] Ibid.

[185] International Crisis Group, "Deradicalization and Indonesia's Prisons," 13.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 199.

the program is still "woefully under resourced."[189] A further issue is that prison sentences are relatively short in Indonesia, so there is little incentive to participate in the program.[190] Without adequate funding and resources, the program is likely to continue to have limited success only.

E.   CONCLUSIONS

An examination of the deradicalization program in Indonesia shows that there has been some success with the use of certain methods. The examination also highlights some of the detriments to success of the program. For Indonesia's deradicalization program to be viable, it must address certain elements: reform within the prison structure, institutional support to the program, social support to detainees' families, and implementation of aftercare programs.

As the numbers of jihadist prisoners increases, the available resources to deal with them in the prison environment are strained.[191] The ability to segregate extremists from the general population is important in preventing radicalization. Further, corruption within the prison system can derail any attempts at deradicalization. The deradicalization program in Indonesia will likely not be viable unless a broader program of prison reform is instituted.

Official support by government is vital to the success of a program. While Indonesia's parliament has recently begun public support of the deradicalization program, the program is still woefully underfunded and understaffed. Without more government support, Indonesia's deradicalization program is likely only to have limited success.

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[189] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 199.

[190] Ibid., 200.

[191] Greg Hannah, Lindsay Clutterbuck, and Jennifer Rubin, "Radicalization or Rehabilitation; Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners," *RAND Corporation Technical Report*, (2008): 33.

Research has shown that spouses and families can often be a significant factor in the disengagement of violent activism.[192] In 2007, of the 400 jihadists and family members offered counseling in disengagement, only 20 participated.[193] Although Indonesia has slowly begun to focus on the families of imprisoned jihadists, JI provides much of the support to these families.[194]

Prisoners need to be re-integrated into normal society. Monitoring prisoners after their release is crucial to prevent recidivism. Indonesia has no parole system and lacks resources to monitor former prisoners adequately. It is difficult to ensure completely that the program participant is actually reformed or whether he is simply practicing the jihad principle of *takeyya* in which disinformation and deception are justified if their well-being or Islam is threatened.[195] In addition, JI prisoners are often released early through general amnesties.

Indonesia has been able to initiate a somewhat successful deradicalization program despite lack of funding, overcrowded prisons, and lack of other resources. This success is evidenced most strongly by the public recantations and rejection of violence by a number of JI leaders. In addition, the growing support given to the program by Indonesia's government is helpful in strengthening the program.

Indonesia's deradicalization program may not be viable in the long run due to a number of weaknesses within the program. Unless Indonesia is prepared to formulate reforms within the prison system, it is likely that the deradicalization program only is able to be implemented towards a small minority of incarcerated extremists. Currently, a number of extremists are released from prison without any attempts being made to deradicalize them. In addition, Indonesia lacks any formal after-care programs, which increase the likelihood of recidivism.

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[192] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 10.

[193] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 200.

[194] Ibid., 211.

[195] Pluchinsky, "Global Jihadist Recidivism: A Red Flag," 187.

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VI. CASE STUDY: SINGAPORE'S DERADICALIZATION EFFORTS

A. INTRODUCTION

Singapore is another country, which has developed a comprehensive deradicalization program for imprisoned extremists. Singapore's deradicalization program is significant in that it is one of the first programs to target Islamist extremists in a country with a minority Muslim population. The results of Singapore's program could prove a model in the development of Islamist deradicalization programs in other non-Muslim majority countries.

To date, Singapore has not suffered any major acts of terrorism like those seen in Europe, the United States and Indonesia. However, Singapore has foiled several plans for terrorism within its borders. In late 2001, Singapore security services disrupted a terrorist plot by members of Jemaah Islamiya (JI) who were targeting several locations throughout Singapore. JI membership in Singapore was estimated to be between 60 and 80 members.[196] Singapore authorities were unaware of the existence of JI inside Singapore until they received information from a member of the Muslim community about the suspected involvement of a Singaporean national with al-Qaeda. Singapore maintains a strong counterterrorism stance. Under Singapore's Internal Security Act, preventative detention is authorized for anyone suspected of being a threat to the national security of Singapore.[197] Beginning in 2002, 73 individuals have been detained for involvement with

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[196] Muhammad Haniff bin Hassan and Kenneth George Pereire, "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism—The Singapore Perspective," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17, no. 4 (December 2006): 460.

[197] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 202.

terrorism.[198] Since September 2008, only 23 detainees remain imprisoned and 41 have been released under some type of supervision.[199] A few others have been released without conditions.

The imprisonment of a number of JI members led Singapore to implement a rehabilitation ideological-based program to attempt to deradicalize these detainees. Singapore based its program after the Yemen initiatives. The core function of Singapore's program is also to counter the extremist ideologies held by imprisoned terrorists. Singapore uses moderate Islamic scholars to engage in debate and counseling with prisoners. The Singapore government also works with Muslim organizations in the community to provide monetary assistance to prisoners' families.[200] In addition, the Singapore government has taken several steps to prevent alienation of the Muslim community in Singapore by keeping Muslim community leaders informed of the arrests and criminal investigations on Muslim extremists.[201] Singapore has also taken additional efforts to counter radical ideologies within Singapore's Muslim communities by obtaining the support of its Muslim community, licensing Islamic teachers, and promoting moderate Islam within the state.

B.   OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

In 2002, the Singapore security service invited two local well-respected Islamic leaders to speak with the detainees. The two Muslim leaders became concerned with the radical ideologies espoused by the detainees. As a result, the government formed the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) to provide religious counseling to detainees. The RRG consists of three sub-groups. The first group, Secretariat Group, was composed of six volunteers from various Islamic groups who handled administrative duties for RRG

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[198] Kumar Ramakrishna, "A Holistic Critique of Singapore's Counter-Ideological Program," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 1 (January 2009): 10.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Counter-Ideological Work, Singapore Experience," in *The Ideological War on Terror, World-wide Strategies for Counter-Terrorism*, ed. Anne Aldis and Graeme P. Herd (New York: Routledge, 2007): 150.

[201] Ibid., 150.

and prepared materials to counter the radical ideologies of the JI detainees.[202] The second group was the Resource Panel, which was comprised of a judge, a government Islamic scholar, and three independent Islamic scholars whose duties were to evaluate the materials prepared by the Secretariat Group.[203] The third group, the Rehabilitation Counselors Panel, consisted of approximately 20 volunteer religious counselors who provided counseling to detainees, former detainees and detainee families.[204]

The RRG was composed of volunteer Islamic scholars and teachers to provide counseling to and engage in debate with the detainees to counter their ideologies. Volunteers consisted of both males and females of varying ages but all had experience in teaching Islam and many had graduated from prominent Islamic universities in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.[205] Each volunteer focused solely on religious counseling although each did collaborate with a security case officer and a government psychologist for each detainee undergoing counseling.[206] The program started with 20 religious volunteers but has since doubled in size.[207]

The RRG also made efforts to standardize the methods of counseling. All volunteer counselors attended briefings and training sessions with government psychologists.[208] Most took part in a formal training program in "Counseling

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[202] Hassan and Pereire, "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism—The Singapore Perspective," 462.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Mohamed Feisal bin Mohamed Hassan, "The Roles of Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore," Religious Rehabilitation Group, http://www.rrg.sg/edisi/data/The_roles_of_RRG.pdf.

[206] Ramakrishna, "A Holistic Critique of Singapore's Counter-Ideological Program," 9.

[207] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 202.

[208] Hassan, "The Roles of Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore."

Psychology."[209] In addition, the RRG trained each counselor in the use of the RRG-written deradicalization manual.[210] RRG has also held retreats for the volunteers for them to share experiences and collaboration on the rehabilitation process.[211]

RRG counselors found that the majority of the detainees were not very knowledgeable in the fundamental beliefs and jurisprudence of Islam.[212] Most had encountered JI members through their efforts to learn more about Islam and seek out religious teachers. This often led to their radicalization due to the exposure to the teachings of Singapore JI leaders. The main Islamic concepts leading to their radicalization were the beliefs that jihad must be conducted to restore the Islamic Caliphate and that jihad was a compulsory duty for all Muslims.[213]

Re-education is conducted in four phases. In the first phase of the program, the counselor identifies the detainee's ideologies and misunderstanding of certain Islamic concepts.[214] The second phase begins with the counselor refuting any incorrect beliefs.[215] Third, the counselor replaces any misunderstandings with a correct interpretation of the concept.[216] Lastly, the counselor teaches the detainee the correct Islamic knowledge.[217]

RRG focuses on five specific areas: aspects of extremism, misinterpretation of certain Islamic concepts, the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, concepts of jihad and sharia, and the anti-Western viewpoints of the detainees.[218] In 2003, the RRG also embarked on a project to write a deradicalization manual. They utilized

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[209] Hassan, "The Roles of Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore."

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ramakrishna, "A Holistic Critique of Singapore's Counter-Ideological Program," 9.

[213] Hassan, "The Roles of Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore."

[214] Ibid.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 202.

information gleaned from investigations by the Ministry of Home Affairs, as well as information from interviews between religious counselors and detainees.[219] In addition, a former JI detainee also provided feedback on the material gathered.[220]

From 2004 to 2006, RRG counselors conducted more than 500 counseling sessions with the JI detainees.[221] Dialogue sessions with JI leaders were not productive; however, sessions with the average members were relatively fruitful. Most of the detainees had not engaged in actual terrorism and had been in support roles within JI.[222] The average age of the detainees was 39 and most were employed and married with families.[223] Singapore releases extremists believed to be rehabilitated but imposes a number of restrictions upon them while continuing close monitoring of their activities.

Singapore officials also focused on support to the families of detainees. In 2005, the Singapore government formed an organization to aid detainees' families. This organization, Interagency-After Care Group (ACG), provided financial assistance to families, assisted family members with finding employment, and provided opportunities for the education of detainees' children. Female counselors were sent to interact with female family members of the detainees. Most of the families had relied exclusively on the detainee spouse for financial support.

The initial arrests of a number of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members in Singapore led many within the minority Muslim community to suspect a possible conspiracy against Muslims by the government. The Singapore government was aware of the potential problems that could arise from this and made significant effort to maintain and improve ties between the government and Muslim community leaders. The government kept

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[219] Hassan, "The Roles of Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore."

[220] Ibid.

[221] Ramakrishna, "A Holistic Critique of Singapore's Counter-Ideological Program," 10.

[222] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 203.

[223] Ibid.

community leaders informed of any significant developments with the terrorism investigations. For example, the government briefed community leaders of arrests before they were disclosed to the public.[224]

The Singapore government has also worked to improve ties between Muslims and non-Muslims in Singaporean society. The Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) collaborated with community Muslim associations to certify and register religious teachers within Singapore to ensure that moderate, balanced instruction occurred. MUIS also established the Harmony Centre, a type of museum for Islamic civilization. The aim of the centre is to promote understandings of the major religions to counter prejudices between Muslim and non-Muslim Singaporeans.[225]

The Muslim communities within Singapore have also played an active role in combating extremism. Pergas, an association of Islamic scholars in Singapore, took a number of initiatives to counter extremist ideologies. In 2003, Pergas organized a convention of Islamic scholars to discuss extremism and advance moderate viewpoints.[226] In addition, Pergas published a book countering specific ideologies employed by al-Qaeda and JI.

The Singapore government and the Muslim community groups also recognize the problem of radicalization through the Internet. To address this problem, a number of organizations and individuals have developed their own Web sites to counter extremism and promote moderation. The RRG maintains a comprehensive Web site that provides information on countering extremist ideologies, and also provides information on its deradicalization program. A number of individuals also maintain blogs to counter extremist ideologies.

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[224] Hassan and Pereire, "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism—The Singapore Perspective," 463.

[225] Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Singapore's Muslim Community-Based Initiatives against JI," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 1, no. 5 (2007).

[226] Hassan, "Singapore's Muslim Community-Based Initiatives against JI,"

C.   INDIVIDUAL DISENGAGEMENT FACTORS

A major disengagement factor for Singaporean extremists has been disengagement through arrest and imprisonment. Singapore's robust security services coupled with Singapore's Internal Security Act have allowed the detainment of anyone suspected of terrorism. This has enabled Singapore authorities to disrupt any operational capabilities of JI and weaken the group as a whole. Arrest and imprisonment can also serve as a mechanism to cause an individual to break from the group.

The Singapore government made several efforts to prevent radicalization within the Muslim communities inside Singapore. The government kept lines of communication open with Muslim community leaders. The leaders were kept informed of arrests of JI members.[227] In addition, the government held meetings with non-Muslim communities to encourage them to "maintain social harmony."[228] The government and Muslim community leaders made it clear to the public that a "fringe group" who were not representative of the Muslim community within Singapore planned the terrorist plots.[229]

Of significance is that most of the detainees had not been actively involved in acts of terrorism but had been in support roles instead.[230] This decreased degree of involvement can serve to lessen commitment to the group. Most of the detainees were older than average and had established families. These factors alone provided alternate and likely competing commitments against loyalty to the group.

The support provided to the families of detainees appears to be another important factor in the deradicalization process. This support highlighted the benevolence of the Singaporean government, and also prevented the likelihood of further radicalization due

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[227] Hassan and Pereire, "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism—The Singapore Perspective," 463.

[228] Ibid., 464.

[229] Ibid., 463.

[230] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 203.

to deprivations suffered from the loss of the family patriarch. Like other states, Singapore has realized the importance of family in the disengagement and deradicalization processes, and therefore, provides support to these family members.

D. CRITICISMS OF THE PROGRAM

One major criticism of Singapore's program is on the legitimacy of the Islamic scholars in the deradicalization program. A major perception is that the Islamic scholars involved in the program are overwhelmingly Sufi and that the program is shaped by the context of Sufism. This perception was strengthened after an interview with one participant scholar was published and the scholar criticized Salafism and Wahabism as having radical viewpoints.[231] In addition, the RRG Islamic scholars' close involvement with the non-Muslim government has led some to argue that they are co-opted by an apostate regime.[232]

In addition, unlike similar programs in other states, Singapore does not make use of reformed detainees to provide any counseling to detainees. Former group members, particularly former leaders, can be influential in changing the ideologies of other members. States, such as Indonesia and Egypt have utilized former detainees and found much success with this. It is not known how successful the RRG has been in changing the ideologies of the detainees. Released detainees may have been deterred due to ongoing surveillance by security services or the thought of further imprisonment.[233]

E. CONCLUSIONS

Singapore appears to have been successful in the rehabilitation or deradicalization of several of its extremist detainees. Approximately 60 percent of the detainees have been

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[231] Hassan and Pereire, "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism—The Singapore Perspective," 471.

[232] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 205.

[233] Ibid., 203.

released from prison although some of them are under conditional or supervised release.[234] However, the lack of recidivism could also be due to the close monitoring of former detainees by security services.

Another advantage for the Singapore program is the ability of the government to draw on vast financial resources to implement program objectives. Unlike Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Singapore has only a small number of imprisoned extremists, and is therefore, more able to segregate these individuals within prisons, and also provide various counseling to detainees and provide extensive support to families of detainees.

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[234] Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in Southeast Asia: A Preliminary Assessment," 203.

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VII.   CONCLUSIONS

Horgan proposed that any approach used to promote disengagement must be "tailor-made to not only the specific movement in question, but also perhaps to the specific role or individual being targeted by the security services."[235] The deradicalization programs in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Indonesia are all targeted towards individuals who have taken part in terrorist organizations that espouse an extremist religious ideology. Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Singapore and Indonesia have all embarked on a multipronged approach to countering radical extremists. One approach has been to aggressively identify and imprison jihadists responsible for terrorist attacks. The second approach involves changing jihadist attitudes using Islamists and religious scholars possessing more moderate views.[236] All four programs approach each terrorist on an individual level. The programs are also similar in that the participants have already physically disengaged from the extremist organizations due to imprisonment by security services. The programs vary in a number of ways also. Each country has a vastly different pool of resources to use towards the program. Each country also differs in the treatment of former participants upon their release from prison.

Each program reflects a number of similar disengagement factors. All programs are prison-based so the participants have been physically disengaged from the extremist groups. Each program changes the degree of insulation of each individual to society by having the individual engage in dialogue with an outsider. The establishment of intimate bonds outside the extremist group can lead many extremists to disengage from the group. The Saudi program takes advantage of this in their approach through their inclusion of family and community in the deradicalization process. Some of the other programs also try to strengthen bonds between the participant and his family. Many of the programs provide positive features, such as monetary support to families. This serves to build a bond between the individual and the state rather than the extremist group.

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[235] John Horgan, "Individual Disengagement, A Psychological Analysis," 28.

[236] O'Brien, "Interview with a Former Terrorist: Nasir Abbas' Deradicalization Work in Indonesia," 21.

Yemen's program consisted mainly of ideological debate between clerics and detainees. The main goals of the dialogue appear to be proving the legitimacy of the Yemeni regime and discouraging violence within Yemen. This seems to have met with limited success. Yemen's program suffers from limited resources. Families of prisoners are in a marginal role. Not much effort is based on any after-care for released participants.

The Indonesia program provides religious counseling and debate led by former members of the terrorist organization, Jama'ah al Islamiyyah. In addition to counseling, the Indonesia program provides educational opportunities to the detained terrorist and provides financial support to the families of imprisoned terrorists.[237] Police provide financial assistance to jihadist families to pay for food, clothing and education requirements. Families are also given more opportunities to visit with the imprisoned jihadist.

The core function of Singapore's program is also to counter the extremist ideologies held by imprisoned terrorists. Singapore uses moderate Islamic scholars to engage in debate and counseling with prisoners. The Singapore government also works with Muslim organizations in the community to provide monetary assistance to prisoners' families.[238] In addition, the Singapore government has taken several steps to prevent alienation of the Muslim community in Singapore by keeping Muslim community leaders informed of the arrests and criminal investigations on Muslim extremists.[239]

The Saudi program is the most comprehensive and well-funded program of all the current deradicalization programs in existence.[240] The program consists of religious re-education, psychological counseling for the participant and a reintegration process after release from prison. The Saudi program also utilizes Saudi culture and traditions by using familial hierarchies and community ties to take responsibility also for the program

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[237] Sheridan, "Jakarta's Terrorist Rehab."

[238] Hassan, "Counter-Ideological Work, Singapore Experience," 150.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," 23.

participant.[241] The main objective of the program's ideological approach is to counter the extremist ideology of *takfir* through intensive religious dialogue and psychological counseling.[242]

Each of the four countries takes a different approach in their release of rehabilitated jihadists. Singapore releases extremists believed to be rehabilitated but imposes a number of restrictions upon them while continuing close monitoring of their activities. In Indonesia, the program is only targeted towards jihadists in custody and there is no structured rehabilitation program for them once they are released from police custody.[243] In addition, many "rehabilitated" jihadists are placed right back in their pre-incarceration environments, which make them more likely to fall back in with other jihadists. Yemen also does not have any structured after-care program for released detainees. Some former detainees were given employment or financial assistance while others were not. In Saudi Arabia, former jihadist prisoners are housed at a halfway house, the Care Rehabilitation Center in a Riyadh suburb, for further counseling and reintegration back into society. Participants are monitored after release and are required to check in regularly with the program officials.

A. SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

A comparison of deradicalization programs in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Singapore shows that each have had some success with the use of certain methods. The examination also highlights some of the detriments to success of the programs. For a deradicalization program to be viable, it must address certain elements:

- **Reform within the prison structure:** As the numbers of jihadist prisoners increases, the available resources to deal with them in the prison environment are strained.[244] The ability to segregate extremists from the general population is important in preventing radicalization. The prison

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[241] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 7.

[242] Boucek, "The Saudi Process of Repatriating and Reintegrating Guantanamo Returnees," 11.

[243]. Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 9.

[244] Hannah, Clutterbuck, and Rubin, "Radicalization or Rehabilitation; Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners," 33.

structure in many countries and the large numbers of incarcerated individuals can make this impossible. Further, corruption within the prison system can derail any attempts at deradicalization. This is clear in the Yemen prison escapes and the Indonesian prison environment. The deradicalization program in Indonesia will likely not be viable unless a broader program of prison reform is instituted.[245] Saudi Arabia has addresses prison concerns by building five new prisons specifically to support their deradicalization programs. Unfortunately, most countries do not have adequate budgets to address this problem.

- **The use of knowledgeable and well-respected Islamic clerics:** Radical ideologies can only successfully be countered by someone who not only is knowledgeable about Islam but can also garner the respect of the extremist. Indonesia has found success with the use of reformed extremists to counter ideologies. It is difficult for Western and non-Muslim governments to create programs to address ideologies unless they have active support within the religious communities.[246] Singapore has been able to elicit significant support within its Muslim communities; however, some have questioned the legitimacy of the Islamic scholars involved in its program. A difficulty experienced by many Western countries is the lack of access to Muslim scholars who the radicals perceive as credible. A benefit of Saudi Arabia is that it has a vast number of Islamic scholars that can be utilized in the program.

- **Incorporation of cultural norms:** The use of cultural values and norms is key to the success of a program. Southeast Asian cultures are hierarchical in nature. Indonesia takes advantage of this in their use of former senior leaders within JI as program counselors. A possible reason for the initial success of the Saudi program is the way the Saudi program utilizes common cultural responses. The Saudi program uses the families and communities of the detainees to influence and control detainee behavior.

- **Monetary support to families of detainees:** Singapore has recognized the importance of providing support to families of detainees to prevent marginalization of the family or further radicalization. The Saudi program also addresses the prisoner's social needs by including families in its efforts and providing monetary support, which encourages goodwill towards the government, and also prevents radical groups from stepping in to influence families.[247] Research has shown that spouses and families can often be a significant factor in the disengagement of violent activism.[248]

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[245] International Crisis Group, "Deradicalization and Indonesia's Prisons," 1.

[246] Hannah, Clutterbuck, and Rubin, "Radicalization or Rehabilitation; Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners," 37.

[247] Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," 3.

[248] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 10.

However, a major criticism of the Saudi program is that the extremists' views have not been changed but they have renounced them not due to an actual change in beliefs but due to the financial incentives given to their families.

- **After-care programs:** Prisoners need to be re-integrated into normal society. The Saudi program addresses this need. The Saudi program participants also continue with counseling and are encouraged to continue studying with their program clerics after release. Monitoring prisoners after their release is crucial to prevent recidivism. It is difficult to ensure that the program participant is actually completely reformed or whether he is simply practicing the jihad principle of *takeyya* in which disinformation and deception are justified if their well-being or Islam is threatened.[249] Saudi Arabia recognizes this problem and its counselors make efforts to weed out any insincerity among participants.

B.   CONCLUSIONS

Terrorist events all over the world have shown that traditional hard security measures alone are not effective in preventing terrorism. Deradicalization programs may be a possible answer to combating terrorism. With the large numbers of detainees imprisoned for security violations and terrorism throughout the world, positive changes in their ideologies may alleviate future dangers. "The potential cost of inaction…may exceed the high cost of program implementation and the long-term damage of violent extremism."[250]

It is hard to evaluate recidivism rates in these various deradicalization programs, as records are often not publically disclosed. Some programs are less comprehensive than others are. The initial program in Yemen was discontinued in 2005 due to the high rates of recidivism. To address recidivism problems, states must dedicate a large number of resources to address detainee issues both within the prison system and after the detainee is released. Many developing countries do not have the resources to address the needs of the participant adequately. Saudi Arabia's programs have many advantages over other

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[249] Pluchinsky, "Global Jihadist Recidivism: A Red Flag," 187.

[250] Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," 11.

programs. This is due to the amount of resources that Saudi is able to dedicate to the program. Mainly, Saudi Arabia has access to a significant amount of rentier income and is able to dedicate a large amount of money to the success of the program.

Deradicalization programs may be the answer to the question of what to do with the large numbers of radical extremists currently incarcerated throughout the world. Much of the success of the programs will be dependent on the methods used and the availability of adequate funding. The relatively newness of these programs prevents a comprehensive study of recidivism rates. Saudi Arabia, with its multi-pronged and comprehensive approach, shows the most promise of all the deradicalization programs. If a deradicalization program proves successful over time, the methods can be incorporated into numerous other countries' programs and possibly alleviate the growing threat from Muslim extremists.

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