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Research Paper on
Extremism and
Terrorism

Islamic State is dead, long live…

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Research Paper on Terrorism and Extremism. New Series No. 1

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At a recent Europol press conference end of November 2019 we are told:

„In a major blow to terrorist radicalization efforts, European law enforcement agencies have stripped Islamic State propaganda from popular online services such as Google and Twitter.
Over 26,000 items, which included videos, publications, social media accounts and communication channels, were flagged by authorities as being terrorist propaganda. Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, sent those items to several online service providers for removal.
"For the time being, for as far as we know, IS is not present on the internet anymore and we will see how fast, if ever, they will regain service," Belgian Federal Prosecutor Eric Van Der Sypt said at a press conference Monday.
Authorities said that services such as Google, Twitter, Instagram and Telegram cooperated with the European-wide efforts to disrupt terrorist activities. Telegram, an online messaging platform used by about 200 million users, contained the most offending material, which resulted in a "significant portion of key actors within the IS network" being removed from the service
Unfortunately IS is not aware of this bold statement of Europol and continues its operations on-line. We may feel reassured by experts who will join in to support the statement of Europol – contrary to evidence research.
To those who are doing research for more than a few years, it may be a feeling of *déja vu*. A few years ago experts declared that IS online activity collapsed. The reason was quite simple the loss of a small number of Twitter accounts of IS members and followers known to terrorism experts went offline – and migrated to *telegram* to feed again, e. g., Twitter accounts.

Thus, nobody who knows Arabic and can follow the real online activity of IS in virtual space – that is not the expertosphere – will be surprised by IS subcultures turning to other Internet platforms and still active on those used before.

Case Study

As a case study, we may look at a channel at *Hoop Messenger* called in Arabic *Haqībat al-dhiʻāb al-munfarida*, roughly translated as „the travel bag of lone wolves". This channel was established on December 8, 2019, and started operating on December 9, not far from the final victory call reminding us of the result of other „missions accomplished". The first one did not work...

Usually technical, military aspects of Jihadi communication are ignored by terrorism experts, but Jihadis tend to spend some time on producing and disseminating information every decent terrorist and Jihadi should know – according to their view.[1] These information is framed in a Jihadi framework. Thus, inseparable from a Jihadi, i. e., IS theology of violence.[2]

The first section of the publications on this channel covers security (*amn*) issues.

1) The first text of this section is a ‚classical' text of Jihadi military literature by Abu Musʻab al-Suri[3] republished with the date of 2015. The 47-pages text is called *Compendium of Security of Movement and Communication* (*al-Mukhtasar fi amn al-haraka waʻl-ittisalat*). It was written for the Arabic volunteers to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The chapters of this text discuss (after a religious framing) collective and individual security, methods used by enemies, security when moving

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[1] Recent studies are Lohlker 2020, 2019a, 2019b.

[2] For this concept see Lohlker 2016 and 2015.

[3] For him see Lia 2014.

or staying in one place, securing an unsuspicious appearance of the place a Mujahid stays in, security of documents, cars, motorcycles and other vehicles of transportation, using public transport in cities, long-distance transport, computer security, meetings of persons, hiding persons in houses, buying and transport of weapons, using mobile phones or landline phones at home or work, using public telephones, using e-mail, etc.

2) The second text, also religiously framed, is published by IS and author by a prolific writer calling himself *al-tiqani* (the technician). The text describes programs like *Orfox, Device ID Changer*, *Fake GPS*, etc., used for concealing identities.

3) The third text written by an author called Sayf al-'Adl and originally published on the as-ansar-Forum covers all aspects of security and intelligence gathering.

4) The fourth text in this section explains what is needed to establish and run a safe house (*bayt amin*) for Jihadis. The text is written by an author called Abu 'Ubayda 'Abdallah al-'Adam as part of a series of publications called „The Art of Terror" (*sina'at al-irhab*). The text is well framed in religious terms.

5) The fifth text is an article from the IS weekly *al-Naba'* about electronic warfare and the methods of surveillance.

6) The sixth text is an article from another journal, *al-Wa'd al-akhir,* again a religious term, on mobile phones and electronic surveillance.

7) The seventh text provides precise recommendations how to prepare the migration to regions under Jihadi control. The text is characterized by religious terminology. The author is called *al-Gharib al-Muhajir,* the stranger who migrated to Jihadi territory, an alias deeply imbued with religious meanings.

8) The eighth text, an extract from the IS weekly *al-Naba',* provides detailed information about security in communication. The usual Jihadi Islamic framing is followed.

9) The ninth text – focussing much more religious aspects – gives more general recommendations for security. The text is written by Sayf al-Din al-Ansari, also referring to theological frames like the

ansar of the prophet Muhammad doubling it with IS speech calling the followers of IS *ansar* reaffirming the linkage to early Islamic history.

10) The tenth text speaks in general terms about the specificities of using a mobile phone. The religious frame is restricted to the formula of the *basmala*.

11) The eleventh text – going back to the now offline homepage *Minbar al-tawhid wa'l-jihad*[4] – discusses diverse problems that may affect the security of Jihadis, including techniques of interrogation used by the enemy.

12) The twelfth text discusses forensic investigations and the need for Jihadis not to leave any forensic evidence.

13) The thirteenth text, another article of *al-Naba'* analyzes the problems arising from the use of mobile phones.

14) The fourteenth text is borrowed from the Palestinian Hamas, borrowing from other organizations is a well-known practice of Jihadis and does not indicate being close to each other.

15) The fifteenth text has over 100 pages and gives recommendations on how to hide things at home, etc.

16) The sixteenth text is again taken from al-Naba'. It shows the advantage of using numbers/statistics as a tool for giving as much information as possible in a secure way. This may be regarded as a theoretical concept for the infographics presented by IS in several formats.[5]

17) The seventeenth text – again taken from al-Naba' - analyzes the use of surveillance cameras and how to evade them.

Having described the content of the first section, we will turn to a summarized overview of the other section of the *haqiba*-channel. A detailed overview is beyond the scope of this paper. Some of the files are not produced in an Arabo-Jihadi context, but in a Palestinian or Pakistani context.

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[4] For a study of this homepage see Lohlker 2009.

[5] See on these infographics Abu-Hamdeh 2019.

The *second* section of this channel covers many aspects of using poisons (*sumum*), gas and chemical agents. The files cover:

1) DMSO, dimethylsulfoxide, a solvent,

2) botolinum toxin,

3) chlorine gas,

4) poisoning a knife with ricin (taken from the journal *al-Anfal*),

5) mustard gas,

6) a short remark on potassium cyanide,

7) a short remark on phosgene gas,

8) chloroform,

9) a longer text on the use of poisons and gas,

10) a long presentation on toxic substances, e. g., ricin or nicotine, about growing castor plants for ricin (taken from *Al-Qaeda Airlines*[6], a former publication by al-Qaʻida),

11) cyanide,

12) methods of producing gas,

13) botolinum toxin,

14) producing botolinum toxin,

15) poison from plants like ricin, strychnine, and many more,

16) ricin (from *al-Markaz Ibn Taymiyya liʻl-iʻlam*),

17) phosphene gas,

18) hydrogen sulfide,

19) chemical warfare (a presentation from *Al-Qaeda Airlines*),

20) nicotine.

21) a video not working (two links),

22) a video with instructions on how to produce ricin (from *al-Markaz Ibn Taymiyya liʻl-iʻlam*; esp., for lone wolves),

23) video on chlorines gas grenades,

24) three volumes of an encyclopedia on poisons.

The *third* section on biological warfare has 2 videofiles.

The *fourth* section on remote ignition of explosives has 22 text files and 5 video files.

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[6] See Lohlker 2013.

The *fifth* section on wired ignition or remote detonating has 8 video files.

The *sixth* section presents everything related to weaponry. It has 17 text files. Some special files are in this section: 1 text file is on constructing drones, 1 text file on construction espionage devices from an old mobile phone (although it is regarded as Islamically forbidden), 1 text file on disabling surveillance cameras, 1 file on lock picking, 1 file on digging trenches and 1 file on disguise.

The *seventh* section on constructing silencers has 4 text files.

The *eighth* section is on sniping. It has 6 text files.

The *ninth* section on anti-tank weapons has 3 text files.

The *tenth* section on guerrilla warfare and individual Jihad has 23 text files.

The *eleventh* section on first aid has 10 text files.

The *twelfth* section is on individual and small groups Jihad or lone wolves. It has 15 text files.

The *thirteenth* section on bombs of different kinds has 6 video files.

In the end, it is promised that this encyclopedia of Jihadi warfare will continue. These preliminary findings do not appear as the last cry of a subculture disappearing in the fog.

Summarizing this case study of one IS channel: IS is „not present on the internet anymore" - believe it. If you do, believe in another truth: The earth is flat!

To take a more philosophical look at the phenomenon studied in this paper we may turn to Reza Negarestani:

„A *Takfiri* engages as shadow terrorist in *White War* […] In this war, the cover of camouflage can never be penetrated or disrupted, and the defensive employment of camouflage […] is replaced by a wholly novel, highly offensive deployment, the space of hypercamouflage. The *Takfiri's* favoured mode of warfare is to program a new type of tactical line which totally blends with the enemy's lines in such a

configuration that it introduces radical instability into the system from within."[7]

The prospect of „radical instability" may not be promising, but realistic than looking for missions that are not accomplished.

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[7] Negarestani 2012, p.55.

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