TERRORISTS' USE OF THE INTERNET:
THE CASE OF DAESH

BY

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my mother, father, sister, brother and aunt, thank you for all the support and unconditional love rendered to me and thank you for taking care of my son when I could not.

I would also like to thank my in-laws for their patience and for accepting me as part of their loving family.

Lastly, to my doting husband, Kaisan, and my beautiful son, Armaan. Words cannot describe the joy and happiness you both have brought into my life. Thank you for the affections and understanding. I am truly blessed.

FOREWORD

Daesh has managed to spread fear and its influence far beyond any other terrorist groups in the past. Since 2015, attacks in the name of Daesh have taken place around the world including in countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, United States and Yemen. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia have also been targets of these attacks. An attempted attack on Singapore by a Daesh-linked group was also recorded. In the Philippines, terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Ansar Khalifah Sarangani (AKS) and Khilafa Islamiyah Mindanao (KIM) have either pledged their support or allegiance to Daesh. In addition, Daesh has also welcomed tens of thousands of followers worldwide, to be part of the so-called Islamic State. Daesh's exploitation of the Internet, particularly through its extensive use of social media and online communication platforms, has garnered the appeal and support of an unprecedented number of individuals on a global scale.

As such, the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, through its Research and Publications Division had embarked on a research titled "Terrorists' Use of the Internet: The Case of Daesh". This study attempts to identify the various Internet usages by Daesh which includes spreading propaganda, radicalisation and recruitment, communication and networking, funding, training, planning and coordination as well as data mining. It also looks at the various social media and communication platforms that Daesh are exploiting to conduct its terrorism-related activities. It will finally conclude by proposing several recommendations to thwart Daesh's use of the Internet and limit its online presence.

Hence, on behalf of SEARCCT, I sincerely hope that this monograph will offer its readers a further understanding on this pertinent issue. I am also hopeful that this monograph will contribute to the existing efforts in countering the threat of Daesh and its increasing use of the Internet to conduct terrorist-related activities and garner support on a global scale. Indeed, as Edward de Bono remarked, "there's a danger in the internet and social media. The notion that information is enough, that more and more information is enough, that you don't have to think, you just have to get more information - gets very dangerous".

DATIN PADUKA RASHIDAH RAMLI
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BIF	Benevolence International Foundation
CCA	Caliphate Cyber Army
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
Daesh	*al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham*
DoS	Denial of Service
DeCM	Destructive Cyber Militancy
DOT	Digital Outreach Team
DiCM	Disruptive Cyber Militancy
ECM	Enabling Cyber Militancy
FTFs	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
RAF	Red Army Faction
IBT	International Business Times
IBTimes UK	International Business Times UK
IP	Internet Protocol
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
KTN	Kalacnikov.TN
KFR	Kidnappings-for-Ransom
KMM	*Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia*
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam
SOSMA	Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012
MIT	Mujahideen Indonesia Timor
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama
NSC's	National Security Council's

PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
RSIS	Rajaratnam School of International Studies
RBSS	Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently'
RT	re-tweet
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia
RMP	Royal Malaysian Police
SCA	Sons Caliphate Army
SEARCCT	Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
CSCC	Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications
TV	Television
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
TOR	The Onion Router
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCC	United Cyber Caliphate
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
CENTCOM	US military Central Command
UGC	user-generated content

INTRODUCTION:
THE BORDERLESS WORLD

Technological advancement has made an impact on our lives through the globalisation of technology, services and ideas. Retrospectively, the usage of telegrams and typewriters have been replaced by sophisticated operating and communication systems. While the advancement of technology gave birth to the Internet, the invention of the Internet has created a borderless world that is able to cut across cultures and language barriers. As of July 1, 2016, it was estimated that about 46.1 per cent of the world's population have access to the Internet at home, while 43.4 per cent was recorded in 2015 and 40.7 per cent in 2014.[1] This shows the rate of individuals accessing the Internet is rising on a yearly basis.

The 21st century has led to an inevitable dependence on the Internet as a means for communication. The Internet has accelerated the growth of technology in terms of connecting people around the world, increasing business opportunities through e-commerce as well as creating space for a wealth of information to be accessed by people, regardless of where they are in the world. The Internet is a vital tool for communication on past and current issues and events, to communicate with colleagues, friends and family members amongst others. This technology has also invited individuals with ulterior intentions to promote violent ideologies, create havoc and spread fear amongst the general public.

One such example is *al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham* (Daesh), a terrorist group currently operating not only in Syria and Iraq, but also

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1 Internet Live Stats, "Internet Users", http://www.internetl ivestats.com/internet-users/#definitions (accessed July 22, 2016).

globally through the use of the Internet. Against this backdrop, this study attempts to discuss Daesh's exploitation of the Internet which is able to transcend boundaries, time and space. This research seeks to identify the various purposes that Daesh is using the Internet for and how they are using it in the effort to achieve their goals. This study would be of interest to policy makers, academicians, and other readers interested in the area of counter-terrorism.

This study will mainly focus on the term 'terrorist's use of the Internet' as it is more suitable to denote the current state of terrorists and their use of the Internet. It will also set out to propose several uses of the Internet by terrorists that includes propaganda, radicalisation and recruitment, communication and networking, funding, training, planning and coordination of attacks, as well as data mining. This timely study would analyse Daesh's ability to adapt and change according to technological advancement. This study was conducted between 2015 to mid-2016 from a pure sociological perspective.

The second part of this analysis will provide insights on Daesh's use of the Internet and its accompanying Web 2.0 ability to disseminate information and spread its radical ideologies. Handheld devices assisted the creation of group cells via real-time messaging apps that further facilitated the identification and radicalisation processes. It will also seek to emphasise on Daesh's extensive use of social media platforms and the various communication sites. It will then provide several observations based on the findings of the study, and followed by recommendations proposed to counter Daesh's propaganda and presence online. These includes the virtual mobilisation of religious movements and projecting the dire images of Syria and Iraq on social media. To reinforce these efforts, dissemination of counter-messages through active online platforms and enhancement of capabilities and technical know-how of the counter-messengers are essential. In addition, in support of all these approaches are the proliferation of counter-messages, strengthening offline measures to combat Daesh's presence online and the need for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to boost the quality of the counter efforts against Daesh's propaganda and its presence online.

CONCEPTUALISING TERRORISTS' USE OF THE INTERNET

The Internet has been an important tool for terrorist groups, particularly Daesh, to maintain its relevance, spread its ideologies and strike fear in the hearts of its perceived enemies - through targeting the masses. Fundamentally, the emergence of new media and social networking sites have been prevalent in this. In the effort to understand the use of the Internet by terrorists, some of the following concepts are useful.

Defining Terrorism

Multinational organisations such as the United Nations (UN) have attempted to define terrorism but has yet to arrive at a universally accepted description. Nonetheless, many nations have provided their own definition. For example, the United States Department of Defense describes terrorism as:

> "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological."[2]

In addition, the Malaysian Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA) (Act 747) defines terrorism as "to cause, or to cause a substantial number of citizens to fear, organised violence against

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2 The United States Department of Defense in "What is Terrorism", *Terrorism Research*, http://www.terrorism-research.com/ (accessed August 1, 2016).

persons or property"; to excite disaffection against the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*"; and "an act which is prejudicial to public order in, or the security of, the Federation or any part thereof".[3] Furthermore, the Malaysian National Security Council's (NSC's) Directive 18 states that terrorism is;

> "The unlawful use of threat or the use of force or terror or any other attack by a person, group or state regardless of objective or justification aimed at another state, its citizens or their properties and its vital services with the intention of creating fear[…]".[4]

Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, Daesh is deemed as a terrorist organisation based on its designation by the United Nations Resolution 2249 (2015).[5] To further understand the notion of terrorists' use of the Internet, a look at what constitutes cyberterrorism and terrorists' use of the Internet is needed.

Cyberterrorism vs. Terrorists' Use of the Internet

It is vital that we demarcate between the concept of cyberterrorism and the notion of terrorists' use of the Internet which will be used for the purpose of this study. For an instance, Jonalan Brickey, in his attempt to define cyberterrorism, provided logical clusters of cyberterrorism that includes Enabling Cyber Militancy (ECM), Disruptive Cyber Militancy (DiCM) and Destructive Cyber Militancy (DeCM).[6] In this regard, ECM would entail online activities targeting cognitive and

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3 Ivanpal Singh Grewal, "Defining Terrorism", April 1, 2016, *The Star*, http://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/online-exclusive/making-progress/2015/04/01/pota-terrorism/ (accessed August 1, 2016).
4 Ibid.
5 Resolution 2249 (2015), November 20, 2015, United Nations Security Council, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2249.pdf (accessed August 1, 2016).
6 Jonalan Brickey, "Defining Cyberterrorism: Capturing a Broad Range of Activities in Cyberspace", Combating Terrorism Centre 5, no. 8. (2012), https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CTCSentinel-Vol5Iss81.pdf (accessed October 1, 2014).

virtual domains such as recruiting, inciting, radicalising, financing, training, planning and communicating.[7] The DiCM is "[...] described as jihadist hacking designed to take down websites and disrupt the normal (cyber dependent) lifestyle of westerners, which relies on critical infrastructure supporting medical, utility, transportation, and especially financial system".[8] On the other hand, the goal of DeCM is "[...] to manipulate and corrupt information system functions to damage or destroy virtual and physical assets".[9] In other words, DeCM is described as "pure cyberterrorism" in which terrorist activities are carried out entirely in the cyber realm.[10]

It is important to note here, that, unlike DiCM and DeCM or any other definitions of cyberterrorism with primary focus on virtual attacks against critical infrastructures that have yet to take place, ECM effectively depicts the current situation where terrorists are utilising the Internet to conduct various terrorism activities to complement attacks in the physical world.

For that very reason, this research will focus extensively on terrorism activities outlined in the ECM model as well as other activities identified through qualitative research. However, the term ECM will not be used for clarity purposes and to avoid confusion of sorts. Instead, the term 'Terrorists' Use of the Internet' will be adopted throughout the rest of this monograph. Apart from that, it is also useful to understand the concept of new media as Daesh has been known to utilise it for various terrorist purposes.

New Media

New media has seen its fair share of attempts in defining it. Some scholars have considered to look at its various outcomes[11] in order

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Manovich, Lev. "New media from Borges to HTML." *The new media reader* 1 (2003): 13-25.

to define it and some have simply noted the channels in which new media can be represented (CD-ROM, HTML, and web applications among others)[12]. Nonetheless, in the context of this study, it is suffice to denote new media as the use of technologically advanced tools that have the ability to enable us to communicate, transcending boundaries, time and space.[13] Taking this into account, another important aspect of new media is its level of interactivity.[14] The interactivity provided by new media can clearly be explained through the concept of Web 2.0.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is defined as:

> "A catch-all term used to describe a variety of developments on the Web and a perceived shift in the way it is used. This shift can be characterised as the evolution of Web use from passive consumption of content to more active participation, creation and sharing".[15]

Based on the definition above and for the purpose of this study, Web 2.0 is referred to as the development on the web content from merely reading what is written on the web page to a more interactive one where users can posts questions, thoughts, and external links, as well as create ideas amongst others. One important feature of Web 2.0 that is relevant to this study is its focus on user-generated content (UGC).

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12 "What does 'New Media' mean?", Iowa State University Studio for New Media, http://newmedia.engl.iastate.edu/about/what_is_new_media, (accessed August 1, 2016).
13 Fernandez, Kevin. "The two waves of cyberpolitics in Malaysia: what does the by-elections barometer tell us?." *Department of Political Science Central European University* 27, no. 1 (2010): 597.
14 "What does 'New Media' mean?", Iowa State University Studio for New Media.
15 Joshua Stern, "Introduction to Web 2.0 Technologies", http://www.wlac.edu/online/documents/Web_2.0%20v.02.pdf (accessed August 1, 2016).

User-Generated Content (UGC)

UGC is also referred to as user-created content (UCC). There is no commonly accepted definition of UGC but it nonetheless comprises of "[...] various forms of media and creative works (written, audio, visual, and combined) created by Internet and technology users".[16] Some of the examples of UGC are images, infographic, videos, blogs, and comments.[17] In addition, social networking sites or social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter also operate on UGC.

Social Media Platforms

Although there are differences between social media and social networking, people have been using these two terms interchangeably.[18] In this regard, social media is defined as "forms of electronic communication [...] through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content [...]."[19] On the other hand, social networking is defined as "the creation and maintenance of personal and business relationships especially online".[20] While there are differences in framing social media and social networking, both utilises the same web-based platforms which includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr among others. In this regard, this study will use the term social media platforms to refer to these sites. However, as will be demonstrated, Daesh is not only using web-based

16 "Participative Web: User Created Content", April 12, 2007, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), http://www.oecd.org/sti/38393115.pdf (accessed August 1, 2016).

17 "User-Generated Content (UGC)", *Techopedia*, https://www.techopedia.com/definition/3138/user-generated-content-ugc (accessed August 1, 2016).

18 Fauzia Bruke, "Social Media vs. Social Networking", December 2, 2013, *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/fauzia-burke/social-media-vs-social-ne_b_4017305.html (accessed August 1, 2016).

19 Pete Schauer, "5 Biggest Differences between Social Media and Social Networking", June 28, 2016, *Social Media Today*,

20 Ibid.

platforms to communicate and conduct other terrorist-related activities, they are also using mobile messaging apps.

Mobile Messaging Apps

Mobile messaging apps includes instant messaging applications that are accessible through hand-held devices such as iPhones, androids, iPad, tabs and the likes. Some of the mobile messaging apps are Telegram, WhatsApp, Wickr and SureSpot. However, it is important to note that some of these applications are also accessible through the web but are commonly used on hand-held devices.

Nonetheless, the emergence of new media and Web 2.0 as well as the utilisation of both web-based social media platforms and mobile messaging apps have dramatically changed the landscape of how people communicate and conduct their daily businesses. In fact, such easily accessible technological advancement has led to greater immediacy and remarkably reducing the digital divide. These advantages have also benefited Daesh in their quest to spread their propaganda, recruit and radicalise, communicate and network, fund their terrorist-related activities, train potential recruits, plan as well as coordinate attacks. Hacking activities are also found to be among Daesh's activities.

It is important that we understand why terrorist groups are adopting the internet as a tool to proliferate their ideas while simultaneously placing themselves in a vulnerable situation by exposing themselves to multilateral and state-control intelligence gathering agencies. Before delving further into the possible uses of the Internet by terrorists, the following section will look into some of the reasons the Internet appeals to terrorists.

TERRORISM AND THE INTERNET: THE FATAL ATTRACTION

The Internet serves as a space for terrorist sympathisers and followers to gather and exchange views while reinforcing their worldviews. This is particularly appealing to terrorists as it provides them anonymity and freedom to conduct various terrorism activities to a certain extent. Kathy Crilley of the Internet Studies Research Group, City University, asserted that amongst the many reasons why terrorists are utilising the internet include anonymity of communication, easy access to the Internet where little technical knowledge is needed in building a website, links to like-minded individuals that leads to the building of large networking, source of revenue where donations can be obtained through terrorist websites as well as the ease of bypassing national laws with the Internet being owned by no one.[21]

The ease of bypassing the national laws was echoed by Professor Bilveer Singh of the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. In a workshop organised by the RSIS, Professor Bilveer Singh stated that terrorists take advantage of a weak legal system.[22] Such is the case of Indonesia in which the country's legal system is deemed relatively weak to deal with cyber radicalisation and this has led to the terrorists taking advantage of the limitation.[23]

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21 Kathy Crilley, "Information warfare: new battlefields Terrorists, propaganda and the Internet", in *Cyberterrorism*, ed. Alan O'Day, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 69.
22 Bilveer Singh, "Countering Online Extremism – A Perspective on the Indonesian Case", lecture given at the Workshop on Extremism and Terrorism Online: A Multidisciplinary Examination of Current Trends and Challenges, 14 October 2014, Singapore.
23 Ibid.

Additionally, Dr. Anne Aly, Professor at Edith Cowan University, Australia, argued that individuals with inclination towards terrorist ideology would go online to gain information, strengthen personal identity as well as for social interaction and entertainment.[24] Regarding the use of the Internet for information purposes, she cautioned that terrorists seek only information that reinforces their worldview and disregard ones that are not in line with their thinking. This leads to the purpose of building personal identity where the Internet is used to strengthen their credibility and support that bolsters their confidence and view of the world.[25] The Internet is also used for strengthening social contact where propaganda can reach a wider range of people as well as for entertainment with the need to escape and release tension.[26] She further argued that one of the appealing factors of the Internet is its user-friendly nature given the practicality of various social media platforms.

Thomas K. Samuel of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, had also given his views on the appeal of the Internet for terrorists. Dubbed as *'Terrorists' Show and Tell'*, he maintained that the use of the Internet, particularly social media, makes it easier for terrorists to view what other terrorists are doing and subsequently replicate and duplicate successful tactics.[27] Furthermore, in an interestingly framed *'The 6th Sense Effect: 'I See Dead People',* he continued to argue that the online media has the ability to keep alive prominent terrorist figures that are deceased such as Anwar Al-Awlaki, where his sermons have known to have radicalised a number of people. He also suggested that the World Wide Web is the best place for terrorists to hide.[28]

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24 Anne Aly, "Focusing Attention on Terrorists' Audience: A Framework for Developing the Understanding of Extremism and Terrorism Online", lecture given at the Workshop on Extremism and Terrorism Online: A Multidisciplinary Examination of Current Trends and Challenges, 13 October 2014, Singapore.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Thomas K. Samuel, "The Perfect Storm: The Terrorist Message and the Online Media", lecture given at the Workshop on Extremism and Terrorism Online: A Multidisciplinary Examination of Current Trends and Challenges, 13 October 2014, Singapore.
28 Ibid.

Moreover, the Internet is also useful for terrorists as it provides the much needed speed in facilitating online activities. This includes gathering information on potential targets and recruits as well as to disseminate propaganda, news, videos of supposed battlefields in a much faster way than conventional newspapers and in real-time.

The cost of conducting terrorist related activities online is much more economical and far more lucrative than to conduct activities in the physical world. For example, conducting credit card fraud online would be much easier than to conduct a bank heist given the need for weapons, gadgets, getaway cars and not to mention the risk of getting caught. Moreover, by doing such activities online, terrorists could also gain more from credit card fraud activities as it could be done in a much larger scale than robbing a bank as well as the ability to evade capture.

In this section, we have established that some of the appealing factors of the Internet included a wider audience reach, security, easy access to network, speed and learning materials as well as weak legal system that allows terrorists to roam almost freely in the cyber realm. However, the various usages of the Internet have yet to be ascertained. Therefore, the next section would seek to identify the various purposes of Internet usage by the terrorists before going into a detailed look into each of the purposes.

TERRORISTS' USE OF THE INTERNET: AN OVERVIEW

Terrorism and the Internet has gained the attention of experts from various fields. For example, James A. Lewis of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), argued that the Internet is being used by the terrorists as a "[...] tool for intra-group communications, fund-raising and public relations" as well as to "[...] steal credit card numbers or valuable data to provide financial support for their operations". [29]

Fred Cohen states that in the past, cyberspace has been used by the terrorists for the purposes of planning terrorist attacks, funding terrorist activities, coordinating and monitoring of ongoing operations, to gain attention and political actions by providing websites that promoted the holding of protests as well as propaganda activities where information and narratives were disseminated.[30]

Another useful read when identifying the use of the Internet by terrorists was by Barbara Mantel who maintained that experts in the field have argued that the terrorists use the Internet for five particular purposes; (i) to research on potential targets and communicate among each other, (ii) to provide training manuals such as bomb making, (iii) to raise funds, (iv) to conduct media operations by disseminating videos and messages to justify violent actions, (v) as well as to radicalise and recruit members.[31]

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29 James A. Lewis, "Assessing the Risks of Cyber Terrorism, Cyber War and Other Cyber Threats", Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), December, 2002, http://www.enhyper.com/content/0211_lewis.pdf (accessed 17 May 2014).
30 Fred Cohen, "Terrorism and Cyberspace" in Cyberterrorism, ed. Alan O'Day, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 150
31 Barbara Mantel, "Terrorism and the Internet: Should Web Sites that Promote

Theohary and Rollins have also suggested that terrorists are exploiting the Internet to create awareness of their struggle, to spread propaganda through media arms such as Al-Qaeda's As-Shahab Institute for Media Production, to recruit and radicalise as well as to train terrorists by publishing bomb-making manuals.[32] In addition, Madeleine Gruen also commented that the Internet can certainly be used for indoctrination, fundraising, recruiting, inciting violence and terrorise.[33]

Additionally, Zahri Yunos ascertained that the terrorists' use the Internet to promote cyber terrorism activities such as videos relating to their cause through dissemination of manifestos, propaganda statements, materials for explosives, attacks, bombing and hostage-taking as well as for inter-group communication and inter-networked grouping, coordinate missions, meetings and to recruit new members.[34] Gabriel Weimann added that terrorists are using the cyber network to "distribute their propaganda, to communicate with their supporters, to foster public awareness of and sympathy of their causes, and even to execute operations."[35]

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) had produced a report based on an Online Expert forum on terrorists' Use of the Internet. In the report, it stated that some of the uses of social networking tools by terrorists include recruitment and incitement, planning/strategic communication as well as public outreach and glorification of violence and some perceived successes.[36]

Terrorism be Shut Down?", November 2009, CQ Global Researcher, vol. 3, No. 11
32 Catherine Theohary and John Rollins, "Terrorists Use of the Internet: Information Operations in Cyberspace".
33 Madeleine Gruen, "Innovative Recruitment and Indoctrination Tactics Extremists: Video Games, Hip Hop, and the World Wide Web", in The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes, ed. James J.F. Forest (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006).
34 Zahri Yunos , "Putting Cyber Terrorism Into Context", STAR In-Tech, February 24, 2009.
35 Gabriel Weimann, "How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet", Security Affairs, 2005, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr116.pdf (accessed November 3, 2014.
36 The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), "OSCE Online Expert Forum Series on Terrorist Use of the Internet: Treats, Responses and Potential Future Endeavours", 2013, http://www.osce.org/atu/102266?download=true (accessed October 15, 2014).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the studies to identify terrorists' use of the Internet. But the general purposes of the use of the Internet by terrorists can be derived. There are many purposes identified by various experts and practitioners in the field. Nonetheless, there are essentially nine general purposes for the use of the Internet by terrorists. The figure below illustrates the various usages of the Internet by terrorists in the effort to further their cause.

Figure 1: Terrorists' Use of the Internet

Propaganda

Data Mining

Radicalisation

Coordination of Attacks

Recruitment

Terrorists' Use of the Internet

Planning

Communication / Networking

Training

Funding
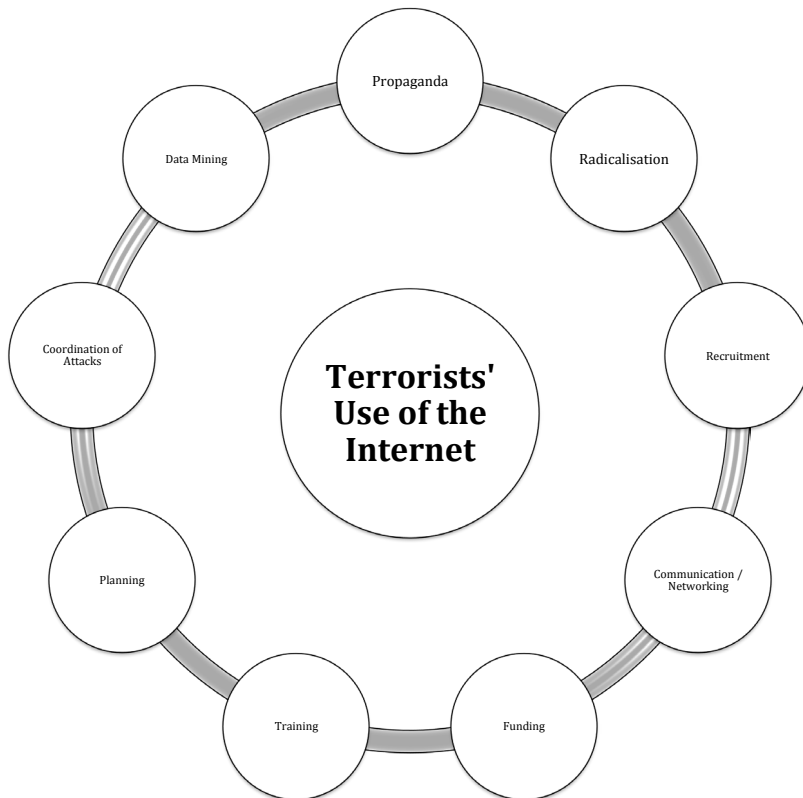
As can be seen in Figure 1, there are essentially nine purposes for terrorists' use of the Internet. These includes dissemination of propaganda through terrorist websites, chat rooms, forums and various social media platforms; radicalisation of potential individuals as sympathisers/supporters and recruitment of new members;

networking and communication among members of a terrorist group or between terrorist groups; funding gained via the Internet to support terrorists related activities; training for the purpose of equipping terrorists with the necessary skills to conduct attacks; coordination of physical attacks via the Internet; and mining data for potential targets to attack or individuals to radicalise and recruit.

Several of these elements can also be grouped together, for example, planning and coordination of attacks. It should be noted that all of the above Internet uses by terrorists falls under the category of ECM. These uses are online activities that essentially help to facilitate, in other words, enables, terrorist attacks in the physical world and also to achieve a terrorist group's larger objectives. The following part will focus on Daesh's use of the Internet.

DAESH AND THE INTERNET

4

THE EMERGENCE OF DAESH

Terrorism has gone through many waves. The earliest of acts that could be deemed as terrorism began with the Sicarii or the Zealots of Judea in the first Century, followed by the Assassins or the Nizari Ismalis, a Shia Sect in the 11th Century.[37] Particularly with these two groups, the overarching method chosen to spread their discontent was to assassinate their enemies. Modern terrorism however has seen the rise of a more sophisticated, ideologically based attacks against their perceived enemies. This includes the likes of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC), Peru's Shining Path, Japan's Aum Shirinkyo, Germany's Red Army Faction (RAF), the al-Qaeda and its splinter groups such as the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) as well as Somalia's al-Shaabab, the Philippines' Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). These groups have been known to adopt tactics such as bombings, Kidnappings-for-Ransom (KFR) and attacks using chemical gas among other things. At present however, there exist a much more gruesome and influential force known as the *al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham* (Daesh), also referred to as the Islamic State (IS).

Daesh grew out of an al-Qaeda faction known as the al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The AQI was established in 2004 by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi[38] for two main reasons. The first was to rid Iraq of foreign

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37 "Early History of Terrorism", *Terrorism Research,* http://www.terrorism-research. com/history/early.php (accessed March 1, 2015).
38 Al-Zarqawi had met Osama bin Laden earlier in 1999. Their encounter did not go well as bin Laden was offended by al-Zarqawi's arrogance and "rigid views". In this regard, the animosity between the two had already began in late '90s. More on this

occupying forces, namely the United States (US) and its allies, while the second reason was to replace the Iraqi government, which was dominated by the Shi'a sect, with a Sunni led government.[39]

Given that the AQI was led and dominated by mainly non-Iraqi citizens, another organisation was created to include Iraqis for the purpose of strengthening AQI's image and standing as a legitimate force fighting to liberate Iraq.[40] This organisation was called the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) and was led by an Iraqi known as Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. The ISI was allegedly established with the merger of a council called *Majlis Shura Mujahideen fil-Iraq*, formed by the AQI, and three other minor groups.[41] The following chart shows the members of the council and the three minor Iraqi groups that formed the ISI.

Table 1: The Creation of ISI

Majlis Shura Mujahideen fil-Iraq
Jaish al-Taifa al-Mansura
Saraya Ansar al-Tawhid
Saraya al-Jihad al-Islami
Saraya al-Ghuraba
Kataib al-Ahwal
Jaish Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa

Three minor Iraqi Groups
Jund al-Sahaba
Kataib Ansar al-Tawhid wa al-Sunna
Jaish al-Fatahin

ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ (ISI)
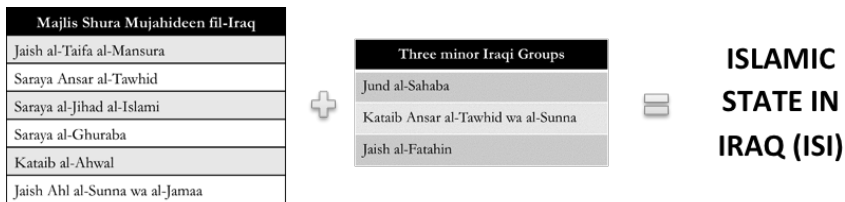
Later in 2013, the ISI was renamed as the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) or Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and subsequently the Islamic State (IS) in 2014. However, governments around the world, including Australia, France and Malaysia, officially refers to the IS as *al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham* or Daesh[42] to degrade its status as an Islamic State.

account could be found in Michael Weiss and Hassan, "*ISIS: Inside the army of terror*". Regan Arts, 2015.

39   IHS Jane's, "Islamic State", December 11, 2014 *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism,* pg. 4-5

40 Ibid, pg. 7.

41 Ibid, pg. 7.

42 Daesh is preferred as it sounds like the Arabic words Daes which means "one who crushes something underfoot" and Dahes which refers to "one who sows discord". For added information on this, read "Islamic State, Daesh or Isis: the dilemma of naming

The atrocities of the group quickly grew and became one of the most notorious terrorist group in recent times. They were able to gain support from various parts of the world including the Americas, Europe and Asia. Their large force, coupled with their military capabilities and skills, led them to successfully take control of a number of cities in Iraq and Syria. Their methods of executions include publicly torching their enemies, as can be witnessed by the burning of a Jordanian pilot, Muath al-Kasasbeh,[43] throwing of homosexuals to their death from rooftops,[44] the rape of children and women of Yazidis,[45] and beheadings of several of their perceived enemies and parading their severed heads to the public.[46] Such acts had led the al-Qaeda to condemn Daesh. In a statement made by Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2014, the al-Qaeda decided to cut ties with the organisation and denounced the group's violent actions.[47] Although the al-Qaeda had denounced Daesh, there are several other terrorist groups that had pledged their allegiance and support to Daesh.

According to a statement made by Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, 34 militant groups have pledged their allegiance to Daesh as of December 2015.[48] These include groups such as al-

the extremists", *The Week*, December 2, 2015, http://www.theweek.co.uk/isis/62422/islamic-state-daesh-or-isis-the-dilemma-of-naming-the-militants (accessed October 10, 2016).

43 "Jordanian pilot's "obscene" burning death by ISIS sparks outrage in Mideast", February 4, 2015, *CBSNews*, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/jordanian-pilots-obscene-burning-death-by-isis-sparks-outrage-in-mideast/ (accessed July 20, 2016).

44 "Inside look at ISIS' brutal persecution of gays", December 2, 2015, *CBSNews*, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-persecution-gay-men-murder-lgbt-muslim-society/ (accessed July 20, 2016).

45 Gianluca Mezzofiore, "Iraq: Yazidi girls 'raped in public' and sold to Isis fighters before release", April 9, 2015, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-yazidi-girls-raped-public-sold-isis-fighters-before-release-1495594 (accessed July 20, 2016).

46 Jake Burman, "Evil ISIS fighters yelling Allahu Akbar parade SEVERED HEADS from pick-up truck", January 18, 2016, *Express*, http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/635560/ISIS-Islamic-State-Libya-Bin-Jawad-Severed-Heads-Parade-Terror-Oil-Ras-Lanuf-Sidra (accessed July 21, 2016).

47 The Telegraph, "Al-Qaeda cuts links with Syrian group too extreme even for them", February 3, 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10614037/Al-Qaeda-cuts-links-with-Syrian-group-too-extreme-even-for-them.html (accessed March 1, 2015).

48 "UN chief: 34 militant groups allied to Daesh worldwide", February 6, 2016, *The Gulf News*, http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/iraq/un-chief-34-militant-groups-allied-

Ghurabaa in Algeria, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Pakistan/Uzbekistan, Tehreek-e-Khilafat in Pakistan, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Jund al-Khilafah in Tunisia among others.[49]

In Southeast Asia, this includes Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)[50] and the ASG (who pledged their allegiance for the second time in 2016 - previously in 2014 - and named Isnilon Hapilon as the leader)[51] in the Philippines amongst others. Furthermore, it was also reported that the spiritual leader of JI, Abu Bakar Bashir, had also voiced his support for Daesh.[52] In another development, a new terrorist group called Jahba East Africa in Somalia had also pledged their allegiance to Daesh in April 2016. In addition, a Brazilian-based terrorist group had also pledged allegiance to Daesh, making it the first group in South America to have done so.[53] Known as "Ansar al-Khilafah Brazil", the group had pledged their allegiance on July 17, 2016, just before the Olympic Games scheduled in August 2016.[54]

Another factor that contributed to the rise of Daesh was the influx of disillusioned individuals to Syria and Iraq, who have been radicalised by the idea of an Islamic state and the existence of a Khilafah in this

to-daesh-worldwide-1.1667028 (accessed July 21, 2016).

49   "Islamic State's 43 Global Affiliates Interactive World Map", December 2015, *IntelCentre*, http://scl.io/JGXPdMa7#gs.MVwntZM (accessed July 21, 2016).

50   "BIFF, Abu Sayyaf pledge allegiance to Islamic State jihadists", August 16, 2014, GMA News, http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/375074/news/nation/biff-abu-sayyaf-pledge-allegiance-to-islamic-state-jihadists#sthash.fVNkSVuo.dpuf (accessed July 21, 2016).

51 "Abu Sayyaf rebels pledge allegiance to ISIS", January 11, 2016, *The Manila Times*, http://www.manilatimes.net/breaking_news/abu-sayyaf-rebels-pledge-allegiance-to-isis/ (accessed July 21, 2016).

52 The Jakarta Post, "Sons, top aides abandon Ba'asyir over ISIL, form new jihadist group", August 13, 2014, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/13/sons-top-aides-abandon-ba-asyir-over-isil-form-new-jihadist-group.html#sthash.JfnIdNqk.dpuf (accessed March 5, 2015).

53 Elsa Vulliamy, "Brazilian Jihadist group becomes first in South America to pledge allegiance to Isis", July 19, 2016, Independent, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/isis-brazil-rio-olympics-2016-jihadist-group-ansar-al-khilafah-terrorism-a7143116.html (accessed July 21, 2016).

54   Lisa Daftari, "Brazil Terror Sect aligns with ISIS as Olympics approach", July 19, 2016, *Fox News*, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/07/19/brazil-terror-sect-aligns-with-isis-as-olympics-approach.html (accessed July 21, 2016).

day and age. Many have travelled to these war zones from all over the world including from countries in Western Europe, former Soviet Republics, North America, the Balkans, the Maghreb, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.[55] Termed as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), the number of such individuals now in Syria and Iraq was estimated to be around 30,000 as of December 2015 with the most coming from Tunisia, followed by Saudi Arabia and Russia.[56]

Another concerning development out of this influx is the travelling of women and girls as young as 14 years old into these war zones who are mesmerised by the 'romantic idea of Jihad'. Determined to help in the war, women, including girls, have travelled to Syria and Iraq to offer themselves as brides of the so-called "heroes" of Jihad. On 17 February 2015, three British girls, Kadiza Sultana, 14, Shamima Begum, 15, and Amira Abase, 15, travelled to Syria via Turkey. Earlier in December 2014, Sharmeena Begum, sister of Shamima, had travelled to Syria. In mid-March 2015, another British woman was arrested in Ankara, Turkey for planning to go to Syria. The news came after the arrests of three other British males, two 17 year-old boys and a 19 year-old man, in Turkey while enroute to Syria to join Daesh.[57]

The development of militants fighting in a foreign land is not an unprecedented event. In fact, the world had seen a similar event unfolded during the Cold War era. As a result of the Afghan-Soviet War (1979 – 1989), many individuals from all over the world including Southeast Asia had gone to Afghanistan to lend their hands in fighting against the Soviet forces. The end of the Cold War saw the return of these former Afghan fighters, known as the 'Afghan Alumni', to their home countries and they subsequently started their own militant activities and organisations such as JI, *Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)* and *Rabitatul Mujahidin*.

55 "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq", December 2015, *The Soufan Group*, http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf (accessed July 21, 2016)
56 Ibid.
57 The Guardian, "British woman held in Turkey on suspicion of trying to travel to Syria", March 17, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/17/british-woman-held-turkey-suspicion-travel-syria (accessed March 19, 2015).

Based on this experience, many countries in the world, including Malaysia and Indonesia, are concerned with the returning fighters from Syria and Iraq. Embedded with violent ideology and agenda, as well as the expertise and experience in guerrilla warfare, the fear is that they are capable of initiating terrorist-related activities in their own country. This concern is not without basis as can be witnessed in the case of an attack on the Brussels Museum in Belgium on 24 May 2014. The perpetrator, Mehdi Nemmouche, was believed to have travelled to Syria in 2013 to join a terrorist group in the country.[58]

In relation to the influx of foreigners into Syria and Iraq to join Daesh and other militant groups operating in the areas, another major and probably the leading factor that led to the rise of Daesh is the group's own well thought-out media strategy. While the battle for the land of Syria and Iraq is very much in the physical world, their media strategy however lies very much in the virtual world, through the use of the Internet.

The Internet is being utilised by Daesh for various terrorist purposes. These include networking, planning, funding, training, data mining and coordination of attacks. However, as like most other terrorist groups, Daesh's main usage of the Internet is to spread their propaganda to radicalise and lure potential recruits into joining their ranks. In this regard, the following section will focus on the use of the Internet for propaganda purposes, including the various platforms used to disseminate pro-Daesh materials. It will then be followed by Daesh's other usages of the Internet including radicalisation and recruitment, communication and networking, online funding, training, planning and coordination of attacks, as well as data mining.

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58 Mark Tran, "Brussels shooting raises fears over European fighters returning from Syria", June 1, 2014, *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jun/01/brussels-shooting-raises-fears-around-fighters-returning-from-syria (accessed July 21, 2016).

5

PROPAGANDA

"Behind this mask there is more than just flesh.

Beneath this mask there is an idea... and ideas are bulletproof."

- *Alan Moore, V for Vendetta*

Prior to the emergence of Daesh, many terrorist groups have resorted to using the Internet to promote their cause and gage support from the rest of the world. For example, terrorist groups such as Aum Shinrikyo, the Japanese Red Army, the Shinning Path, the ETA and the FARC amongst others had created websites for the purpose of publicising their causes.[59] The IRA, in the effort to form a united Ireland, also created a website to promote their agenda.[60]

Nonetheless, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) is believed to be among the first to use the Internet to spread the group's propaganda.[61] The civil war fought between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government had led to a large Tamil diaspora around the world, particularly in

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59 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on "Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes, May 2011, http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/ctitf/pdfs/ctitf_interagency_wg_compendium_legal_technical_aspects_web.pdf (accessed 20 January 2015).
60 Lorraine Bowman-Grieve and Maura Conway, "Exploring the Form and Function of Dissident Irish Republican Online Discourses", 2012, http://www.google.com.my/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0CD8QFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdoras.dcu.ie%2F17637%2F1%2FIrish_Republican_Online_Discourses_FINAL_NOT_PROOF.pdf&ei=-wH9VLeMIM2eugTr-4L4DA&usg=AFQjCNGiJUP3lNl9cxzFnHABxU3R-IHKGA&bvm=bv.87611401,d.c2E (accessed December 14, 2014).
61 Janaka Perera, "LTTE a trend setter in cyber terrorism", *Asian Tribune*, October 27, 2007, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/8018 (accessed on June 27, 2016).

Canada, United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Australia and France.[62] In this regard, the Internet was useful for the LTTE supporters within the diaspora as it allowed them to stay informed of the situation at home while simultaneously spreading the group's propaganda.

The al-Qaeda is also known for their use of the Internet to promote armed jihad in achieving their goal of an Islamic caliphate. In ensuring the success of their propaganda, al-Qaeda formed a media arm known as As-Sahab. The purpose of the media arm was to spread their propaganda and ideology through videos and statements of their leaders.[63] Online magazines including *Inspire* and *Resurgence* were also published to reinforce their propaganda.

As with the al-Qaeda, Daesh too is using the Internet to promote its propaganda. Nonetheless, unlike its predecessors, Daesh was able to manipulate the Internet to an even greater height by creating a massive media legion. According to Charlie Winter's *'Documenting the Virtual 'Caliphate''*, Daesh has about seven media agencies under its central media command, including al-Himma Foundation, al-Furqan Foundation, al-I'tisam Foundation, al-Hayat Media Centre, Ajnad Foundation, al-Bayan Radio and A'maq News Agency.[64] In addition to that, the central media command has 37 other media offices operating in different provinces including Aleppo, Damascus, Jazira, Fallujah, Nineveh, Baghdad, Khurasan, and Sinai among others,[65] while simultaneously spread the group's propaganda. The need for such massive media movement is not surprising as Daesh aims to stringently control outgoing information from within its territories.[66]

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62 Peter Chalk, 'The Tigers Abroad: How the LTTE Diaspora Supports the Conflict in Sri Lanka', 2008, http://journal.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/9.2-Chalk.pdf, (accessed 7 March 2014)
63 "As-Sahab: Al Qaeda's Nebulous Media Branch", *Stratfor*, September 8, 2006, https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/sahab-al-qaedas-nebulous-media-branch (accessed June 29. 2006
64 Charlie Winter, "Documenting the Virtual 'Caliphate'", *Quilliam Foundation*, October 2015, https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FINAL-documenting-the-virtual-caliphate.pdf (accessed June 27, 2016).
65 Ibid.
66 Mah-Rukh Ali, "ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women", *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2015, https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/

This is to ensure that no unwanted information are being released to the international audiences, but those in line with the group's propaganda.[67]

This demonstrates that Daesh recognised the importance of the media and the Internet in spreading their propaganda as well as to garner support from the international community. Daesh has been diligent in promoting their cause on the Internet via various social media platforms including by producing Hollywood-style videos and high resolution online magazines such as *Dabiq* and *IS Report*. Though these publications are mainly published in the English language, it is also being translated into various other languages including German, French, Arabic and Indonesian[68].

Daesh's Online Publications

Dabiq, now in its 15th issue, is Daesh's leading online magazine. *Dabiq* magazines are useful in understanding the group's motives and their propaganda themes. It is also helpful in the examination of how Islam is being manipulated by Daesh to promote and justify the group's establishment and acts of terror. For example, even the name of the magazine, 'Dabiq', is in reference to an Islamic hadith (Sahih Muslim 2897). In the hadith, the name *Dabiq* is referred to as a place in the Northern countryside of Halab or Aleppo, where alleged events leading up to the end of time would take place (near Dabiq).[69] Furthermore, Daesh ensured that the hadiths quoted in the publication were from amongst the most trusted sources such as the '*sahihain'* to justify its establishment and al-Baghdadi's appointment as its Khilafah.[70] Hence, the use of such authentic collections of the Prophet's Sunnah is likely

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default/files/Isis%20and%20Propaganda-%20How%20Isis%20Exploits%20Women. pdf (accessed June 3, 2015).

67 Ibid.

68 Translated issues of Dabiq in Indonesian language can be downloaded at https:// baaqiyah.wordpress.com/category/artikel/ (accessed July 11, 2016).

69 "The Return of the Khilafah" June-July 2014, Issue 1, pg. 2-3 Al-Hayat Media Centre.

70 Harleen K. Gambhir, "Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State", *Institute for the Study of War (ISW)*, August 15, 2014, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/ default/files/Dabiq%20Backgrounder_Harleen%20Final.pdf (accessed March 1, 2015).

to attract disillusioned readers as it can be seen as providing legitimacy to Daesh and the lands they claim to be controlling.

Apart from that, *Dabiq* also aims to call upon all Muslims to support Daesh and emigrate, along with their family, to the land they call the Islamic State.[71] According to *Dabiq's* second issue, titled *The Flood,* "the first priority is to perform hijrah from wherever you are to the Islamic State, from darul-kufur to darul-Islam".[72] Furthermore, it went on to suggest that if one was unable to immigrate to the Islamic state, one should organise a *bay'at* or pledge of allegiance to the Khilafah and publicise it.[73] Additionally, *Dabiq* is also a source for Daesh to reveal their alleged enemies including specific individuals as well as countries whom they regard as *taghut*[74]. In the 14ᵗʰ issue of *Dabiq*, under the article titled '*The Murtadd Brotherhood',* Afghanistan, Iraq, Algeria, the Philippines, Tunisia, Libya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia and Egypt were among the countries Daesh labelled as *taghut*.[75] In its 15ᵗʰ issue *Break the Cross,* Daesh reiterated their justifications for regarding Christianity and secular states as their enemies.[76]

The impact of such call was staggering as many terrorist groups around the world had pledged their support or allegiance to Daesh. These include Boko Haram in Nigeria, Jund al-Khilafah in Tunisia, al-Ansar Battalion in Algeria, IMU in Pakistan/Uzbekistan, ASG in the Philippines, BIFF in the Philippines, and Mujahideen Indonesia Timor (MIT) in Indonesia amongst others.[77] In addition, attacks in the name of Daesh have been recorded in Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Turkey and the US amongst others.[78] Malaysia too

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71 Harleen K. Gambhir, "Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State", *Institute for the Study of War (ISW)*,
72   Dabiq, "The Flood", 2nd Edition, June-July 2014.
73 Ibid.
74 *Taghut* refers to worshipping of anything except Allah.
75   "The Murtadd Brotherhood", *Al-Hayyat Media Centre*, April 13, 2016, pg. 28.
76   *Break the Cross*, July 2016, al-Furqan, http://jihadology.net/2016/07/31/new-issue-of-the-islamic-states-magazine-dabiq-15/ (accessed September 2016).
77 "Islamic State's 43 Global Affiliates Interactive World Map", *IntelCentre*, December 15, 2015, http://scl.io/JGXPdMa7#gs.VWFCxW8 (accessed June 11, 2016)
78 "A timeline of Daesh attacks worldwide", *Gulf News*, July 3, 2016, http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/iraq/a-timeline-of-daesh-attacks-worldwide-1.1856495   (accessed

was not spared from attacks by Daesh. On 28 June 2016, the Movida nightclub in Puchong, Selangor, was attacked by supporters of local Daesh militants.[79] Following years of no attacks, this was the first successful Daesh-related attacks on Malaysian soil. It is believed that the perpetrators had received orders from a Malaysian Daesh fighter in Syria, Mohammad Wanndy Mohamed Jedi.[80] As a result of the attack, two suspects as well as 13 other Daesh-linked individuals were arrested in a series of operations around Malaysia.[81] In addition, in a statement made by the Malaysian Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar, those who were arrested had been recruited and given instructions through social media.[82]

The Islamic State (IS) Report is another online publication by Daesh. In its effort to portray Daesh as not only an organisation but a state with a strong governing structure, the IS Report offers an insight into Daesh including events that unfolded in Syria, Iraq and the region as well as interviews with Daesh's "prominent" figures. For example, the first issue of the report, published in June 2014, looked into how Daesh prepared its Imams and Khateeb through education.[83] In an article covered in this issue was an interview with Daesh's Head of Consumer Complaints Division, who spoke of how his team went on the ground to inspect restaurants, shopping centres, wholesale outlets and slaughterhouses to ensure that these premises and business conducts were in line with Shari'a.[84] Such publicity stunt and media strategy may mislead many to believe that Daesh is legitimate, and that it is an obligation for all Muslims to travel to Syria and Iraq to join in the struggle.

July 11, 2016).

79 "Puchong Blast Work of Daesh Militants, says IGP", *Bernama*, July 4, 2016, http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1261026 (accessed   July   11, 2016).

80 Ibid.

81   Farik Zolkepli, M. Kumar and Michelle Tam, "IGP confirms IS behind grenade blast in Puchong", The Star, July 5, 2016, http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/07/05/it-was-a-terrorist-attack-igp-confirms-is-behind-grenade-blast-in-puchong/ (accessed July 11, 2016).

82 Ibid.

83   Islamic State (IS) Report, "Propagating the Correct Manhaj", June 2014, *Issue 1*, Al-Hayat Media Centre.

84 Ibid.

Apart from publishing online magazines which would be translated into several other languages, Daesh also releases magazines for specific languages such as *Dar-al-Islam*, a French-language online magazine, *Konstantiniyye,* a Turkish-language online magazine and Al-Fatihin, a Malay-language online newspaper produced by Daesh-linked Furat Media.[85] Another publication by Daesh worth monitoring is Rumiyah which was first published in September 2016, and bears resemblance to *Dabiq*.

Nevertheless, it must not be overlooked that Daesh and its core operatives are not the main sources for spreading the group's propaganda and radicalising individuals. In fact, unaffiliated sympathisers are the ones actively spreading Daesh-type propaganda. This represents Jared Cohen's third type of Daesh's digital fighters. According to Cohen, this type of digital fighters "...do not belong to [Daesh's] official army, take direct orders from its leadership, or reside in Iraq or Syria...they spend their time helping the group disseminate its radical message and convert people to its cause.[86] This type of propaganda dissemination could be far and wide and the rise of social media platforms have helped to facilitate this. Social networking sites such as JustPaste.it, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr among others are being used by Daesh and its supporters to spread the group's propaganda. The following are examples of the social media platforms used to spread Daesh's propaganda.

Social Media Platforms and Daesh's Propaganda

 JustPaste.It

JustPaste.it allows its users to easily share images and texts by providing their friends the link to the texts or images. In addition, these texts

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85 Lim Yan Liang, "Government bans newspaper published by ISIS", July 22, 2016, *The Straits Times*, http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/government-bans-newspaper-published-by-isis (accessed October 10, 2016).
86 Jared Cohen, "Digital Counterinsurgency: How to Marginalise the Islamic State Online", Council of Foreign Relations, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/digital-counterinsurgency (accessed 5 November 2015).

and images could also be protected by a password which in return will enhance the security of the links.[87] A handler by the name Islamic State Dawah, with a Twitter ID @ISD313, had posted his/her JustPaste.it link on his/her Twitter account.[88] The link was a six-page text calling for the absolute belief in Islam and the emancipation from what is worldly and to perform Jihad.[89]

Twitter

Twitter is an important social media platform used by Daesh and its supporters to spread the group's propaganda. A large number of Daesh's operatives and supporters have Twitter accounts in which they share verses of the Quran, hadiths, or spiritual messages made popular by those whom they deemed as clerics or religious teachers. In addition to these, Twitter is also used to post images of the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq, deliberate on current political and counter measures against Daesh as well as to strengthen their worldview and to connect to one another. For example, handler Islamic State Dawah (@ISD313) tweeted "*Ya Mujahideen of IS, Syria belong to you only so flush out all the enemies of Allah swt from Syria*".[90] In addition, another Twitter user by the name Muhajirah Aisha (@muhajirahaisha) posted a tweet on 14 May 2016, stating "*In darul kufr, I remember the music of the kuffar always blaring & keeping me up at night. In sham, the call to prayer soothes me*".[91] Such comments could attract disillusioned individuals to find out more about the life in Syria in Iraq and may later be urged to travel to the war-torn areas to be part of Daesh.

Efforts to counter the use of Twitter by Daesh is challenging. Despite counter-efforts by relevant authorities, suspended pro-Daesh Twitter accounts will be up and running once again albeit using different but similar handlers. For example, in another of Daesh's publication, called *'Hijrah to the Islamic State',* the publication referred to one of

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87 JustPaste.it Official Website at https://justpaste.it/
88 Linked to the JustPaste.it text was found on @ISD313 Twitter account (accessed in March 2015). The account has since been suspended.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Muhajirah Aisha's Twitter account (accessed May 24, 2016).

its member's Twitter account, Abdul_Aliy_4, and stated that if this account was to be suspended, another account would be created with the name Abdul_Aliy_6, and subsequently, Abdul_Aliy_7 and so on.[92] The purpose of this is to ensure that the account's followers were still able to get in touch with the user even though his or her account had been suspended.

Instagram

Though Twitter is one of Daesh's most preferred social media platform, Instagram is also use to post videos and pictures to project the images of Daesh's brutality, successes as well as the comfortable lives that the so-called Islamic State could offer. Supporters of Daesh would often posts pro-Daesh images and videos on Instagram.[93] Based on this research, a simple search by typing #islamicstate on Instagram would yield tens of thousands of posts mostly showing images of the so-called Islamic State and Daesh banners. While some of the posts were news-related and memes degrading Daesh, amongst it were also supporters and aspiring "fighters" that espouses ideologies championed by Daesh. For example, one supporter from Indonesia (User A) was seen with a t-shirt with Daesh logo printed on it as a morale boost to bring him to the so-called Islamic State.[94] The same user also posted several pages of the *Dabiq* magazine from several issues.[95]

Apart from that, supporters of Daesh using Instagram also posted images of the ongoing battle in Syria and Iraq. For example, during Daesh's take down of the city of Ramadi in Iraq in 2015, a body-cam footage from a first-person view was uploaded and posted on Instagram.[96]

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92 "Hijrah to the Islamic State", published online by the Islamic State (website address can no longer be found).

93 Ashley Carman, "Filtered extremism: how ISIS supporters use Instagram", *The Verge,* December 9, 2015, http://www.theverge.com/2015/12/9/9879308/isis-instagram-islamic-state-social-media (accessed May 25, 2016).

94 User A's Instagram account (accessed on May 25, 2016).

95 Ibid.

96 Sam Webb, "ISIS use Instagram to post sickening bodycam footage of murderous assault on civilians in Iraqi city", *Mirror,* May 15, 2015, http://www.theverge.com/2015/12/9/9879308/isis-instagram-islamic-state-social-media (accessed   May 25, 2016).

The footage showed Daesh's attack on the city using rocket-propelled grenades and ak-47s.[97] It was also reported that during the attack, armoured bulldozer was used to ram down blast walls.[98] Such videos could project Daesh's military might and its capability in expanding their territorial control, further giving portrayals of the expansion of the "Islamic State" while falsely legitimising the power of Daesh.

Additionally, Instagram users who are in Syria as well as supporters of Daesh elsewhere are also posting images of the supposed comfortable lives in the war-torn areas. Pictures of fish markets and grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables and beautiful landscapes are being posted regularly. One user (User B) who appears to be taking a tour in an area under the control of Daesh posted pictures of the markets where food, including fruits, vegetables and meats are available in abundance, as well as landscape with blooming flowers while Daesh's flag was visible in the background.[99] In this instance, users of Instagram in Syria utilises the platform to "...project a semblance of normal life under..." Daesh rule.[100]

Such images being portrayed could certainly be an 'eye-opener' for those already inclined to the ideas advocated by Daesh. It could serve to tell the sympathisers that life in the so-called Islamic State is not only as comfortable as being at home but even better given that the supposed cause of being there is to perform jihad.

Tumblr
Another important social media platform is Tumblr. According to Doug Ammoth from TIME Tech, this online media platform is part microblogging and part social networking.[101] Founded in February 2007, Tumblr has about 296.8 million blogs with

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97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 User B's Instagram account (accessed May 25, 2016).
100 Ashley Carman, "Filtered extremism: how ISIS supporters use Instagram", *The Verge,* December 9, 2015.
101 Doug Ammoth, "What is Tumblr", *Time Tech*, May 19, 2013, http://techland.time.com/2013/05/19/what-is-tumblr/ (accessed May 26, 2016).

up to 134.4 billion posts.[102] Amongst these blogs and posts are fighters and sympathisers of Daesh, sharing their experiences in Syria and Iraq to promote Daesh's propaganda. Like Instagram, Tumblr does not need one to sign up to be able to browse the blogs on the site, unless one wishes to comment or follow blogs. As such, a typical search of the word 'Daulah' would lead to a drop-down options of the available blogs which uses 'Daulah' as the title of their blogs.[103] The same applies to other words depicting Daesh in one way or another such as 'umm' or '*muhajirah*' (terms referring to women within Daesh).

Such search terms would also lead to one of the most talked about Tumblr blog, *'Diary of a Muhajirah'*. Suspected to belong to a Malaysian female doctor, posts on the blog touched on various issues, from a post that talked about missing a friend who, according to her, had attain martyrdom, to the issue of suicide and martyrdom, to jihad, to refuting scholars who are against Daesh, to family and marriage. It is also interesting to note that in most of her posts, justifications for her thoughts on those issues were supported by ideologues who espoused the notion of armed jihad and through distorted interpretations of the Quran and a wide range of hadiths. This has managed to make her arguments appear to be strong and well-founded, should one choose to accept it without conducting further research. For example, in one of her post dated February 20, 2016 titled '*Who are you to mock the Mujahidin*', she stated:

> "*Abu Dhar narrated that the Prophet said three times, "Indeed, there is something I fear for my Ummah more than the Dajjal." Abu Dhar asked him,*
>
> "*What is this that you fear for your Ummah more than the Dajjal?" He responded "The misleading scholars*."[104]

102 Tumblr, "Press Information", https://www.tumblr.com/press (accessed May 26, 2016).
103 Findings based on the current research.
104 Diary of Muhajirah Tumblr Blog, "Who are you to mock the Mujahidin", February 20, 2016, http://diaryofmuhajirah.tumblr.com/ (accessed May 26, 2016).

She went on to quote stories from *Thawābit 'ala darb al Jihad - Constants on The Path of Jihad,* a book written by Shaykh Yusuf al 'Uyayree[105].

In another blog titled *'I Only Roll with the Real',* the blogger posted a picture of a group of dead children with a caption blaming the French airstrike on public areas in Syria.[106] The blogger continued by stating that France should therefore understand the reason for Muslims' retaliation against the country.[107] The same user also spoke on other issues including a message to the moderate Muslims and apostates.[108]

Another use of Tumblr by users who are within Daesh is to answer questions posted by intrigued individuals. In a well-known case of a Dutch Daesh fighter, Israfil Yilmaz - who had been documenting his life in the so-called Islamic State - was taking questions from those interested in Daesh and his experience with the group. The purpose of the Question and Answer Session was not only to let other users gain a little insight into the situation in the so called caliphate, but also to denounce any negative images being portrayed by the mainstream media on the group. For example, one user had asked him the reason for Daesh wanting to destroy the Ka'aba.[109] He replied by asking who had said this and asked if it was the Shia or CNN.[110]

In another Tumblr blog titled *'Eva Mujahirah'*, (presumably a female blogger), the user posted a picture of two women admiring a view.[111]

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105 Former bodyguard to Osama bin Laden, a trainer in al-Faroq military camp during the Soviet occupation of Afghanisatan. For a full biography of Shaykh Yusuf al 'Uyayree, listen to podcast on "Who is Shaykh, Imaam Yusuf Al-Uyayree" at https://archive.org/details/WhoIsShaykhImaamYusufAl-uyayree (accessed May 27, 2016).
106 I Only Roll with The Real Tumblr Blog, November 16, 2015, http://sorrows-of-tauheed.tumblr.com/post/133337777337/to-those-who-have-sense-how-many-children-can-you (accessed May 27, 2016).
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Israfil Yilmaz Tumblr Blog. Blog no longer available on Tumblr but the inactive blog could be accessed via https://web.archive.org/web/20151019005614/http://chechclear.tumblr.com/ (accessed May 27, 2016).
110 Ibid.
111 Eva Muhajirah Tumblr Blog, http://noussaybahafsa.tumblr.com/ (accessed May 27, 2016).

The picture was accompanied by a narration in French of her experience during the first few days she arrived in Syria. A simple cut and paste technique on Google Translate would allow non-French speaking readers to learn of her experience and sentiment being under constant airstrikes and the courage to endure all those in the name of religion.

VK (Vkontakte)

Testament to the far reaching Daesh supporters, the group is also using the Russian based social networking site called VK (previously known as Vkontakte). Much like Facebook, this platform is popular in Europe, and in particular, Russia. Founded in 2006, VK has been utilised by Russian-speaking supporters and members of Daesh. For example, in the aftermath of the first and the second Paris attacks in 2015, a pro-Daesh VK account warned that more attacks could be expected against countries involved in the US-led coalition in Iraq and Syria.[112]

In addition to disseminating Daesh's propaganda materials via VK by Daesh's known media arms such as Al-Itisam and Al-Hayat groups,[113] it was also reported that a guide to make the *hijrah* or migration to the so-called Islamic State was published on VK.[114] This was a detailed guide for aspiring fighters to gain the much needed information regarding the preparation to migrate and the necessary equipment and baggage to bring along once one decides to make the "migration".[115]

In another VK account titled *'Jihad Poetry'*, poems regarding Jihad

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112   Joanna Paraszczuk, "IS Supporters Praise Paris Attacks On Social Media", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty,* November 15, 2015, http://www.rferl.org/content/is-supporters-praise-paris-attacks-on-social-media/27365116.html (accessed May 27, 2016).

113 Apparat Report in "The ISIS Internet army has found a safe haven on Russian social networks — for now", Tetyana Lokot, *Public Radio International (PRI)*, September 12, 2014,   http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-09-12/isis-internet-army-has-found-safe-haven-russian-social-networks-now (accessed May 27, 2016).

114   Felicity Capon, "New Islamic State Propaganda Targets Russian Recruits", *Newsweek*,   March   27,   2016,   http://www.newsweek.com/new-islamic-state-propaganda-targets-russian-recruits-317282 (accessed May 27, 2016).

115 Ibid.

in the Russian language were posted and had up to about 1000 followers.[116] Additionally, the same account user also posted a story of an aspiring fighter who wanted to go Syria but failed to do so as he was captured by authorities. It then went on to state that the fighter was beaten by the police and requested for readers to provide money for his treatment.[117] This post suggests that VK may also be used by Daesh's supporters to collect fund.

Facebook

Another leading social networking site that Daesh is utilising is Facebook. Facebook, with 1090 million[118] daily users is certainly an attractive target for Daesh supporters to spread the group's propaganda as well as to facilitate recruitment among others. One of the main usage of Facebook by Daesh and its supporters is to spread the group's propaganda materials. One case in point is Hassan Munir from Bradford in the United Kingdom, who posted Daesh's propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, on his Facebook page.[119] He had also posted a guide on how to make bombs and in April 2015, he was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.[120] In another similar case, a man from Sydney was investigated for posting the *Dabiq* magazine along with a picture of an ak-47.[121] Go by the name of Abu Zakariyah, the man also called for the killing of infidels on his Facebook page.[122] In a more recent case in Malaysia, two of the 14 individuals arrested in a counter-terrorism

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116 Olga Khrustaleva, "Russia's burgeoning ISIL problem", *AlJazeera*, December 10, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/12/russia-burgeoning-isil-problem-20141297415936963.html (accessed 27 May 2016).
117 Ibid.
118 Socialbakers, "Facebook Statistic Directory", http://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/ (accessed May 27, 2016).
119 Kashmira Gander, "Isis: Bradford man jailed for sharing extremist group's Dabiq propaganda magazine on his Facebook page", *The Independent*, April 24, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/isis-bradford-man-jailed-for-sharing-extremist-groups-dabiq-propaganda-magazine-on-facebook-10202642.html (accessed May 31, 2016).
120 Ibid.
121 NineMSN, "Sydney man investigated for 'supporting murder of infidel", *Nine News.co.au*, April 28, 2016,
http://www.9news.com.au/national/2016/04/28/05/41/sydney-man-investigated-for-supporting-murder-of-infidels#HTvDWcfkkYfomrxD.99 (accessed May 31, 2016)
122 Ibid.

operation conducted by the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), were alleged to have used their Facebook accounts to promote Daesh.[123]

Facebook is also used by supporters of Daesh to demonstrate support for the terror group. In the case of the Danish-born Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, the gunman in the Copenhagen shootouts on 14 and 15 February 2015 had reportedly pledged his allegiance to the leader of Daesh, Abu Bakr al-Bahgdadi, on his Facebook page.[124] According to the report, his Facebook post purportedly stated "…allegiance to Abu Bakr in full obedience in the good and bad things. And I won't dispute with him unless it is an outrageous disbelief."[125]

Apart from that, there have also been reports suggesting that Facebook accounts of captured individuals were being used by Daesh operatives to deceive their friends found in their accounts. For example, the Facebook page of a murdered journalist working for an organisation against Daesh in Syria, Ruqia Hassan Mohammed[126], was used to trap her friends on Facebook.[127] Under the pretence that Ruqia was alive, Daesh hijacked her Facebook account which allowed them to gain an insight into her life and circle of friends who shared her aversion towards the terrorist group.[128] Should this be a persistent technique used by Daesh, an increase in threats against individuals who have opinions against them could be expected.

123 "Another 14 Individuals Nabbed, Suspected Of Links To Daesh Militants – Police", *Bernama,* May 21, 2016, http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/sp/newssports.php?id=1247986 (accessed June 1, 2016).

124 Laura Smith-Spark and Nic Robertson, "Who was Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein?", CNN, February 27, 2015, http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/17/europe/denmark-copenhagen-gunman/ (accessed June 1, 2016).

125 Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein Facebook post in Laura Smith-Spark and Nic Robertson, "Who was Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein?", February 27, 2016, CNN.

126 Ruqia was captured and silently executed by Daesh between October and December 2015.

127 Hannah Farrell, "Islamic State poses as dead journalist to entrap Facebook friends", *News.com.au*, January 10, 2016, http://www.news.com.au/technology/online/islamic-state-poses-as-dead-journalist-to-entrap-facebook-friends/news-story/75d4b8ef1e02d1047d88014482ca25df (accessed June 1, 2016).

128 Ibid.

Daesh's reliance on such platforms indicates that Daesh understands the power that the Internet provides in spreading their idea of an Islamic caliphate. As Charlie Winter poignantly pointed out in his article in the Atlantic, "…the media is the arena within which the war of ideas is waged, where the group's relevance – and ultimately, its ideational longevity – can best be preserved…" even in the face of losing their territorial strongholds.[129] The quote by Medgar Evers, "you can kill a man, but you can't kill and idea" [130] seems to ring true. Hence, it is no surprise that the use of social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, to spread Daesh's propaganda, have led to the radicalisation of individuals and facilitation of recruitment. The following section will look into some of the examples of Daesh's radicalisation and recruitment online.

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129 Charlie Winter, "ISIS Is Using the Media Against Itself", the Atlantic, March 23, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/03/isis-propaganda-brussels/475002/ (accessed June 23, 2016).
130 Medgar Evers. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2016. http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/medgarever101375.html (accessed July 11, 2016).

RADICALISATION AND RECRUITMENT

Daesh, through its propaganda, is utilising the Internet to radicalise and subsequently facilitate the recruitment of individuals from all over the world. In fact, with its successful propaganda campaigns, Daesh need not do much to recruit but rely most of their efforts on posting images and videos of the suffering of the Syrian and Iraqi people amongst others. These images and videos would further be justified by appearing to use legitimate hadiths as well as verses from the Quran.

One of the leading Islamic concept manipulated by Daesh in bid to lure susceptible individuals to join their ranks is *hijrah* or migration. Evident in the first publication of Dabiq, the concept was used to call upon Muslims from all over the world to travel to the so-called Islamic State.[131] This concept was then strengthened with the perceived obligation for Muslims to take up armed *Jihad* or struggle against those believed to be oppressing Muslim communities and the promise of heaven in the hereafter. As a result of such manipulations, tens of thousands of individuals,[132] both men and women as well as children, have gone to Syria and Iraq to be part of the so-called Islamic State.

However, religious-based propaganda is not the only contributing factor in radicalising and recruiting Daesh supporters. Other aspects such as social, political and economic factors have also led to individuals being

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131 "From Hijrah to Khilafah", in Dabiq: The Return of the Khilafah, June-July 2014, Issue 1, Al-Hayat Media Centre, pg 34.
132 "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into and Iraq", December 2015, *The Soufan Group.*

radicalised and recruited in the ranks of Daesh. For example, Aqsa Mahmood from Britain who left to join Daesh in 2013 had boasted about the advantages of being in the so-called Islamic State. She stated that those who are dedicated to Daesh will benefit from them "*a house with free electricity and water provided…and no rent included*".[133] She also added that basic necessities such as soap and shampoo are easily obtainable.[134]

Apart from that, its appearance of a solid governing structure has also led some to be assured of Daesh's ability to manage a state. Such example is in the case of Abu Tareq, who had left his home country in Denmark to travel to Syria to join Daesh. He stated that he was attracted to Daesh as they had established departments to oversee state matters such as education, humanitarian aid as well as electricity and roads.[135] Nonetheless, he stated that the humanitarian aspect that Daesh appeared to be supporting was the leading motivating factor for his travel to Syria.[136] In this regard, appearing to have a strong governing-like structure serves as an advantage for Daesh to attract supporters to join their fights in Syria and Iraq.

In addition, it is also important to take into account Daesh's targeted audience for radicalisation and recruitment. For example, in Europe where Muslims are a minority or migrants, the sentiment of belonging to a country with foreign language, culture and religion, have known to be played up by Daesh. In this aspect, Daesh is manipulating individuals who are facing identity crisis for being in a foreign land and also those who are subjected to Islamophobic slurs.[137] In Southeast Asia however, such sentiments may be ill-fitting as many of the countries have a significant population of Muslims. As a result, other factors,

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133 CNN, "What is ISIS' appeal for young people", February 25, 2015, http://edition. cnn.com/2015/02/25/middleeast/isis-kids-propaganda/ (accessed March 1. 2015).
134 Ibid.
135 Louise Stigsgaard Nisse, "Inside ISIS: The Making of a Radical", *Narratively,* http:// narrative.ly/stories/inside-isis-the-making-of-a-radical/ (accessed March 1, 2015).
136 Ibid.
137 Christina Schori Liang, Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda", February 2015, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), www.gcsp.ch/ download/2763/72138 (accessed October 7, 2016).

particularly political, religious and personal reasons have formed the bases for individuals from these areas to travel to Syria and Iraq.[138]

In essence, religious, political, social and economic aspects have been apparent in Daesh's propaganda to radicalise and subsequently recruit individuals in some cases. Nonetheless, it is also imperative to understand that Daesh's propaganda is moulded to fit different targeted groups, based on their background including cultural aspects. But other important aspects of Daesh and its use of the Internet are its ability to communicate and network with its existing supporters while simultaneously forging new ones.

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138 Ahmad el-Muhammady, Lecture at The Content Creators Workshop on Countering the Narrative of Violent Extremism on 19 May 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.

COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

Daesh utilises the Internet for communication purposes that includes networking with other members of the group, to interact with individuals of interests including potential recruits and supporters. Like its social media strategy for disseminating propaganda, Daesh also uses similar platforms for communication such as Twitter and Facebook. However, as these sites are mainly to share thoughts, events, political and religious issues, other platforms used for a more direct and private communications include applications such as Kik, SureSpot, Telegram, Wickr, as well as Ask.fm, and WhatsApp. As such direct communication would include detailed covert discussions that may reveal the identities of the individuals, applications with encryption are preferred.

Ask.fm

This particular platform has gone through a series of controversial issues which involves cyber-bullying amongst children and teenagers that led some of its young users resort to suicides. This social media platform has also been used by Daesh to communicate with its members and potential recruits as well as supporters. For example, the case of the three teenage girls from Denver who were planning to travel to Syria had allegedly used this platform to communicate with militants operating in Syria.[139] In addition, a user of Ask.fm had used the social media site to offer advice on how to get to Iraq and answered questions with regard to what kind of weapons one could be expected to receive upon arrival in the country.[140]

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139 The Washington Post, "Inside the battle for Ask.fm, the site where Islamic State recruited three American teens", December 12, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost. com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/12/12/inside-the-battle-for-ask-fm-the-site-where-islamic-state-recruited-three-american-teens/ (accessed March 5, 2015).
140 BBC, "Can Iraqi militants be kept off social media sites?" June 25, 2014, http://

Kik

Kik is an instant encryption messaging system app that could be downloaded on any android-operating mobile system through GooglePlay Store. Daesh has been known to use Kik to conduct a more private conversation with members or even individuals who are serious about joining Daesh. Due to crack downs by social media companies, such as Twitter, on users that could bring security implications, militants conversing with individuals would often re-direct their conversations to Kik messaging for increased security.[141] Furthermore, the publication by Daesh, 'Hijrah to the Islamic State', also advised its readers to download apps such as Kik, as many of its members would often share their Kik and SureSpot accounts to individuals seeking them.[142]

SureSpot

Another interesting messaging system being utilised by Daesh, is SureSpot. SureSpot is an encrypted messaging system which allows users to have multiple identities on just a single device and is not linked to any of the users' phone numbers or e-mail accounts. It was reported that a teenage South Korean boy who travelled to Turkey enroute to Syria on 10 January 2015 had used SureSpot to communicate with a member of a militant group operating in Syria on how to get to the war-torn country.[143]

Telegram

Telegram is a social networking platform that has been used by Daesh militants to communicate their propaganda as well as to conduct a more personal connection with supporters and aspiring fighters from around the world. According to its website, Telegram can be used on any device with internet access including desktops, laptops, androids, iPhones, and iPads.[144] Additionally, Telegram also

www.bbc.com/news/technology-28016834 (accessed March 5, 2015).

141 Ibid.

142 "Hijrah to the Islamic State", published online by the Islamic State

143 Korean JoonANg Daily, "ISIS reaches Korea", January 21, 2015, http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=2999929 (accessed March 5, 2015).

144 Telegram website, https://telegram.org/ (accessed June 1, 2016).

offers several interesting features that could be of value to terrorist groups such as Daesh. These includes a feature that could coordinate groups of up to 5,000 members, encrypt messages, unlimited media sharing, as well as the ability to destroy messages within a period of time set by the user.[145] These features, coupled with ongoing crackdowns on pro-Daesh Twitter accounts,[146] has made Telegram a preferred communication platform for Daesh and its supporters. According to a report by International Business Times, Daesh had set up an official Telegram channel which managed to garner about 9,000 followers within a week.[147] Twitter is also used to promote users' Telegram channels. For Example, in one of pro-Daesh twitter accounts found on the network, the owner had provided a link on his account to his Telegram channel.[148]

Daesh also uses Telegram for several other purposes. These include for the purpose of funding by selling prisoners as well for planning and training by providing instructions as well as disseminating materials essential for combat skills. These purposes will be discussed, through examples of such activities, separately in the following sections.

Wickr

Wickr is another encrypted messaging app that Daesh has reportedly been using. Wickr protects users' messages and identity through a multi-layered peer-to-peer encryption system.[149] Similar to Telegram, its features also include sharing encrypted files to other Wickr users with expiration dates.[150] As such, Wickr has been used by Daesh to

145 Ibid.
146 "DAESH tells followers to use Telegram messaging app instead of Twitter", *Daily Sabah World*, November 18, 2015, http://www.dailysabah.com/world/2015/11/18/daesh-tells-followers-to-use-telegram-messaging-app-instead-of-twitter (accessed June 1, 2016).
147 Mary-Ann Russon, "Alrawi: Isis has built secure Android messaging app to replace Telegram, says Anonymous affiliate GhostSec", *International Business Times*, January 14, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/alrawi-isis-builds-secure-android-messaging-app-replace-telegram-says-anonymous-affiliate-ghostsec-1537948 (accessed June 1, 2016).
148 Twitter account of user, (accessed May 24, 2016).
149 Wickr website, https://www.wickr.com/personal (accessed June 1, 2016).
150 Ibid.

communicate with supporters and aspiring fighters. For example, a Twitter account allegedly belong to a Daesh fighter had encouraged aspiring fighters to contact him via his Wickr account "[...] *as a means to circumvent state security at home and in Turkey*".[151]

WhatsApp

WhatsApp messenger is one of the leading instant mobile messaging application. It utilises end-to-end encryption and is available for free for all androids, iPhone and BlackBerry users. As it allows for a secure communication to take place, Daesh operatives and its supporters have been known to utilise the communication platform to conduct its activities.

One example of Daesh activity using WhatsApp is its trading activities for slaves. WhatsApp has been reportedly used by Daesh to advertise captured Yazidi women and girls for sale.[152] WhatsApp, as well as Telegram, is also reportedly used to provide databases with pictures of these captured women and girls[153]. The purpose of the database is to make them easily identifiable at checkpoints should they decide to run away.[154] Apart from that, WhatsApp is also used to spread Daesh's propaganda. In the case of Zafreen Khadam, dubbed as 'Jihadi Princess', used her WhatsApp to send pro-Daesh videos and documents to her contacts.[155] She had also sent videos of al-Baghdadi justifying terrorism as well as the killing of the Jordanian pilot by Daesh via WhatsApp.[156]

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151 Armando Cordoba, "A secret app called Wickr has become ISIS's number one recruitment device", News.com.au, April 14, 2015, http://www.news.com.au/national/a-secret-app-called-wickr-has-become-isiss-number-one-recruitment-device/news-story/07857ae05909639df75df65dff960137 (accessed Oktober 7, 2016).
152 Harriet Agerholm, "Isis using Whatsapp and Telegram to sell sex slaves", July 8, 2016, *Independent,* http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-using-whatsapp-telegram-sell-sex-slaves-iraq-facebook-a7125551.html (accessed August 8, 2016).
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
155 Abigail O'Leary, "'Jihadi Princess' jailed after using WhatsApp and Twitter to share sickening ISIS propaganda", May 18, 2016, *Mirror*, http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/jihadi-princess-jailed-after-using-7998203 (accessed August 2, 2016).
156 Ibid.

In addition, WhatsApp is also used to directly communicate with Daesh operatives and its supporters. Communications between Daesh members and supporters outside Syria and Iraq have also taken place to plan meet-up points for further discussions as well as to plan physical attacks.[157]

The example of Daesh's use of mobile messaging apps showcases that the advancement in online networking, particularly through encrypted communication platforms, has served Daesh well in their quest to communicate directly and securely. This will lead to a much greater impact in reaching out to their supporters. Nonetheless, the Internet is also used to fund Daesh's terrorist activities. The subsequent section will look at Daesh's online funding.

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157 Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Official, interview with author on July 26, 2016, Kuala Lumpur.

8

| ONLINE FUNDING |

While terrorist groups such as real-IRA, al-Qaeda and JI had used the Internet to collect funds, particularly through online donations and charity organisations,[158] Daesh has taken online funding to another level. This is being done by a number of ways including retailing of prisoners, donations through social media platforms including blogs and Facebook, as well as through the use of Bitcoin.

Retailing of Prisoners

In Daesh's 11th publication of *Dabiq*, the group had offered the public an opportunity to purchase two of Daesh's prisoners namely, Ole Johan Grimsgaard-Ofstad from Norway and Fan Jinghui from China. In their professionally crafted advertisements, the group had quipped the relevant governments for their failure to secure the release of these prisoners. It stated:

> *"To whom it may concern of the pagans, crusaders and their allies, as well as what are referred to as human "rights" organizations: This Chinese [or Norwegian] prisoner was abandoned by his government which did not do its utmost to purchase his freedom".[159] It then went on to provide a Telegram number for the facilitation of the purchase for anyone who is interested.*

158 Maura Conway, "Terrorism and the Internet": New Media – New Threat?", http://doras.dcu.ie/515/1/parliamentary_affairs_59_2.pdf (accessed 25 January 2015).
159 Dabiq, Issue 11, August – September 2015, pg. 64-65.

In another case, a Facebook account allegedly belonging to a Daesh fighter in Syria, Abu Assad Almani from Germany, posted two images of women who were being sold for $8,000 each, on 20 May 2016.[160] Facebook later deleted the images and since then, photos of such nature have yet to emerge.[161]

According to a report published by the Washington Post, the postings had garnered the interest of several Facebook users who commented on the photos. The comments ranged from asking further details of the women to condemning the postings that showed images of women without veils.[162] It is unclear whether the purchases for the prisoners and the women ever took place but given that Daesh is known to have captured many women throughout their reign of terror, particularly Yazidi women who were taken as sex slaves, more of such advertisements could be expected.

A possible increase in advertisements of such nature could also be due to the likelihood that Daesh is currently facing losses and shortages of basic necessities such as food and medical supplies amongst others.[163] While Daesh is thought to be one of the richest terrorist group in history, with funding procured from gaining strategic locations with oil fields,[164] constant military operations against them has also crippled their monetary capabilities to a certain extent. As a result of such operations, Daesh has lost several strategic strongholds such as Fallujah in which Iraqi security forces managed to take over in May 2016.[165]

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160   Joby Warrick, "ISIS Fighters seem to be trying to sell sex slaves online", *The Washington Post*, May 28, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/isis-fighters-appear-to-be-trying-to-sell-their-sex-slaves-on-the-internet/2016/05/28/b3d1edea-24fe-11e6-9e7f-57890b612299_story.html (accessed June 2, 2016).
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
164 Janine Di Giovanni, Leah McGarth Goodman and Damien S harcov, "How Does ISIS Fund Its Reign of Terror?", *Newsweek*, November 6, 2014, http://www.newsweek.com/2014/11/14/how-does-isis-fund-its-reign-terror-282607.html (accessed June 2, 2016).
165 Kareem Shaheen, "Iraqi troops seize control of districts of Falluja from Isis", *The*

Donations through Social Media Platforms

Funding through donations for terrorist-related activities is not exclusive to Daesh. In fact, terrorist groups in the past had even created front organisations or charities to request for donations. One example would be the case of Benevolence International Foundation (BIF). BIF is a Chicago-based foundation with links to supporting terrorist activities in Chechnya. It was reported that "between January and April 2000, BIF wire-transferred nearly $700,000 to Chechen separatist-linked bank accounts in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Latvia" through donations from supporters.

However, in the current state of Daesh, donations are being requested by individuals rather than front organisations.[166] In this instance, Daesh and its supporters would use blogs or Facebook to appeal for donations to be transferred via an online payment system.[167] This so-called donation would then be transferred to terrorists whether locally or abroad such as in Syria or Iraq.[168] The utilisation of the social media platform enables the access to a much larger pool of sympathisers, thus soliciting more funds.[169] Such tactic could be witnessed in a Facebook post by Abu Britani, a British Daesh fighter who had offered to facilitate donations contributed by interested individuals.[170] The post read;

"Anyone who is willing to donate some money to a trusted person living in the [Islamic] state then you can contact me and *bi'ithnillah*

Guardian, May 30, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/30/iraqi-forces-enter-fallujah-in-attempt-to-drive-out-islamic-state (accessed June 2, 2016).

166   Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Official, interview with author on July 26, 2016, Kuala Lumpur.

167   RMP official, Presentation at the Terrorism Financing Investigations Workshop, 2015, organised by SEARCCT, Kuala Lumpur.

168   Ibid.

169   Brooke Satti Charles, "Funding Terrorists: The Rise of ISIS", October 10, 2014, Security Intelligence, https://securityintelligence.com/funding-terrorists-the-rise-of-isis/ (accessed May 23, 2016).

170   "British ISIS Fighter, Recruiter, Fundraiser Shares Experiences In Islamic State On Facebook", May 24, 2016, Memri JTTM, http://cjlab.memri.org/lab-projects/tracking-jihadi-terrorist-use-of-social-media/british-isis-fighter-recruiter-fundraiser-shares-experiences-in-islamic-state-on-facebook/ (accessed July 27, 2016).

if anyone has special distribution request I am at your service. Please share and spread."[171]

Nonetheless, openly requesting for donations puts the requester at high risks of detection. As such, Daesh has found another way to conduct its fund raising activities in a more secure manner. This is done through the use of a crypto-currency called Bitcoin.

Bitcoin

According to CoinDesk, "Bitcoin is a form of digital currency, created and held electronically. No one controls it. Bitcoins aren't printed, like dollars or euros – they're produced by people, and increasingly businesses [...]".[172] It is used to conduct purchases electronically and its most appealing feature is that it is decentralised, as no particular institution produces or controls it.[173]

Such features, coupled with its ability to avoid detection, have led Daesh to acquire Bitcoins to fund its terrorist-related activities. For example, one of Daesh's main sources of revenue, *sadaqa* or private donations, are believed to have been facilitated through the use of crypto-currencies by transferring Bitcoins to Daesh owned accounts.[174] The use of Bitcoin by Daesh was further strengthened by the release of a document entitled 'Bitcoin wa Sadaqat al-Jihad' (Bitcoin and the Charity of Violent Physical Struggle).[175]The document promotes the use of Bitcoin and Dark Wallet to provide total anonymity and thus, avoid detection from authorities.[176] The document also aims to serve as a

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171 Ibid.
172   "What is Bitcoin?", March 20, 2015, *CoinDesk*, http://www.coindesk.com/information/what-is-bitcoin/ (accessed August 2, 2016).
173 Ibid.
174 Beatrice Berton, "The dark side of the web: ISIL's one-stop shop?", June 26, 2015, Alert No. 30, *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*, http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/the-dark-side-of-the-web-isils-one-stop-shop/ (accessed August 2, 2016).
175   Taqi'ulDeen al-Munthir, "Bitcoin wa' Sadaqat al-Jihad", https://alkhilafaharidat.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/btcedit-21.pdf (accessed July 28, 2016).
176 Ibid.

guideline for the management and utilisation of Bitcoin. This is done in the effort to set up untraceable donation system "[...] that could send millions of dollars' worth of Bitcoin instantly from the United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Ghana, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, or wherever else right to the pockets of the mujahideen [...]'.[177]

Bitcoin has also been used for extortions. Such example was in the case of the bombings at Mall Alam Sutera in Serpong, Indonesia on July 9 and October 28, 2015.[178] The perpetrator, known as Leopard Wisnu Kumala, was also responsible for placing two other bombs on July 6 and October 21, 2015 at the same mall but the bombs did not explode.[179] His modus operandi was to place these bombs at the mall and later contact the management's mall via e-mail to demand for bitcoins.[180] It was reported that he had demanded for 100 bitcoins but only received a small fraction of it following the first bomb attack.[181] He was then captured on October 28, 2015, following the attack on the same day. Although he was deemed to be acting alone, it was revealed that he often watches videos of Daesh,[182] prompting that the perpetrator may be a supporter of Daesh.

Nonetheless, the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, as well as the usage of Bitcoin to collect funds in support of Daesh have changed the landscape of funding for terrorist-related activities. Most importantly, the impact of such approach has led to the decentralisation of both the requester as well as the funder, and not to mention the far reaching effect of the call to donate in the name of religion.

177 Ibid.
178 Mei Amelia R, "Ini Alasan Leopard 'Lone Wolf' Bomber Mal Alam Sutera Minta Bitcoin", October 29, 2015, *Detik News*, http://news.detik.com/berita/3057156/ini-alasan-leopard-lone-wolf-bomber-mal-alam-sutera-minta-bitcoin (accessed August 2, 2016).
179 Rinaldo, "Video Detik-Detik Leopard Menaruh Bom di Mall Alam Sutera", October 29, 2015, *Liputan 6*, http://news.liputan6.com/read/2352798/video-detik-detik-leopard-menaruh-bom-di-mall-alam-sutera (accessed August 2, 2016).
180 Mei Amelia R, "Ini Alasan Leopard 'Lone Wolf' Bomber Mal Alam Sutera Minta Bitcoin", October 29, 2015, *Detik News*.
181 Ibid.
182 "Tersangka Bom Alam Sutera Kerap Tonton Video ISIS", October 30, 2015, *CNN Indonesia*,http://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20151030230011-12-88541/tersangka-bom-alam-sutera-kerap-tonton-video-isis/ (accessed July 27, 2016).

9

TRAINING

Before the rise of Daesh, al-Qaeda had also utilised the internet to disseminate training materials. A stark example of this was the case of the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing in which the two brothers involved learned to make bombs by reading al-Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine article entitled "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom".[183] Additionally, another manual prepared by al-Qaeda known as the *Encyclopaedia of Jihad* distributed via the Internet "provides detailed instructions on how to establish an underground organisation and execute terror attacks".[184] Apart from that, Al Qaeda also published a monthly e-magazine called *Al-Battar*. In a number of its editions, the magazine outlined "detailed instructions on physical fitness training, the use of firearms, how to plot an assassination, wilderness survival skills and how to organise and manage terrorist cells".[185] Also on the Internet are documents such as "Mujahideen Poisons Handbook" that contains various "recipes" for homemade poisons and poisonous gases".[186]

Like the al-Qaeda, Daesh also uses the Internet to provide training materials, particularly for aspiring Daesh fighters. According to a report by Mary-Ann Russon and Jason Murdock of the *International Business Times UK* (IBTimes UK) who infiltrated Daesh's communications,

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183 "Al Qaeda magazine on pressure cookers: 'Make a bomb in the kitchen of your mom'", April 16, 2013, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/apr/16/al-qaeda-magazine-pressure-cookers-make-bomb-kitch/ (accessed 20 August 2015).
184 Maura Conway, "Terrorism and the Internet": New Media – New Threat?".
185 "Dot-Com Terrorism," *The New Atlantis*, Number 5, Spring 2004, pp. 91-93.
186 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on "Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes, May 2011.

Daesh has been using the social networking platform Telegram, to plan hacking operations, provide weapon instructions and trade tactics.[187] According to the same source, Daesh has a lot of channels and chatrooms on Telegram for the purpose of disseminating such materials. For example, on how to make 'home-made' bombs and poisons, as well as on how to use missile launchers, armoured vehicles and launching attacks on "…enemies' fighter jets from the ground".[188]

Such online materials could be dangerous as it could be easily accessed by home-based Daesh supporters to acquire skills to make bombs and conduct attacks in their home countries. In a counter-terrorism operation conducted by the RMP in May 2015, 12 suspected militants related to Daesh were arrested while they were mixing chemicals to make a bomb.[189] One of the arrested individuals had admitted that he learnt to make the bomb, with a potential 500 meter blast radius, via the Internet.[190] In another case, a 14 year-old boy from Austria was charged in 2015 after admitting to downloading bomb-making instructions on to his PlayStation console.[191]

Additionally, a Daesh-affiliated Telegram account responded to a declaration of war by Anonymous against Daesh, following the Paris terror attacks in November 2015. This was done by alerting their supporters of the cyber attack threatened by Anonymous and gave detailed instructions on how to prevent supporters from getting hacked by Anonymous.[192] The instructions included "don't open links unless

187 Mary-Ann Russon and Jason Murdock, "Welcom to the bizare and frightening world of Islamic State Channels on Telegram", International Business Times UK, May 23, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/welcome-bizarre-frightening-world-islamic-state-channels-telegram-1561186 (accessed June 2, 2016).
188 Ibid.
189 Farik Zolkepli, "Suspected militants nabbed while they were making bombs", The Star, April 27, 2015, http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2015/04/27/cops-foil-terror-attack-plans-suspected-militants-nabbed-while-they-were-making-bombs/ (accessed June 2, 2016).
190 Ibid.
191 Shadia Nasralla, "Teenager in Austrian 'Playstation' terrorism case gets 2 years", Reuters, May 26, 2015, http://in.reuters.com/article/mideast-crisis-austria-idINKBN0OB1J320150526 (accessed June 2, 2016).
192 Pamela Engel, "'Idiots': ISIS responds to Anonymous threatening its 'biggest operation ever' against them", Business Insider Malaysia, November 17, 2015, http://

sure of the source", change Internet Protocol (IP) constantly, and "do not talk to people [you] don't know on Telegram" or through Twitter direct messaging".[193] In relation to information on hacking, Telegram channels associated with Daesh's cyber communities also posted books regarding hacking techniques.[194] This showcases the ability of Daesh to counter possible threats, in any form, against them. Apart from that, it also highlights the reality that Daesh is adamant in fighting their enemies both in the physical world as well as in the virtual realm.

www.businessinsider.my/isis-anonymous-response-paris-attacks-2015-11/?r=US&IR=T#xTvZKfuKWSO4Tb5v.97 (accessed June 1, 2016).
193 Ibid.
194 Mary-Ann Russon and Jason Murdock, "Welcom to the bizare and frightening world of Islamic State Channels on Telegram", International Business Times UK, May 23, 2016.

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PLANNING AND COORDINATION OF ATTACKS

There have been several instances of the use of the Internet particularly social media platforms, by Daesh to plan and conduct terrorism-related activities. For instance, in a report by *Newsweek*, it was highlighted that arrangements for the delivery of donations gained through bogus humanitarian aid were coordinated via social media platforms such as Kik and WhatsApp.[195] In this regard, WhatsApp was used as it contained features such as 'Location' whereby a user can send his or her exact location to the person who will deliver the donation.[196] Kik was used as it allows users to create an account without having to provide his or her phone number, hence, able to maintain anonymity and avoid detection.[197]

In another example, Daesh attempted to 'attack' Facebook and Twitter by respectively liking pro-Daesh postings and hijacking hashtags with pro-Daesh content.[198] This operation was reportedly planned through a pro-Daesh Telegram channel that encouraged supporters to conduct the attacks to "…dominate the post and make some serious da'wah" (teaching of Islam).[199] Nonetheless, it was reported that the plan to attack both Facebook and Twitter were futile as there were insignificant number of participations.[200]

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195 Janine Di Giovanni, Leah McGarth Goodman and Damien Sharcov, "How Does ISIS Fund Its Reign of Terror?", *Newsweek*, November 6, 2014.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
198 Jason Murdock, "Isis tried to launch a social media propaganda 'attack and it was a shambles", International Business Times UK, April 8, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-tried-launch-social-media-propaganda-attack-it-was-shambles-1553879 (accessed June 2, 2016).
199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.

Planning and clear examples of coordinating attacks via the Internet by Daesh is found to be relatively limited. This may largely be due to the fact that Daesh is in a 'hot war' or direct combat with designated physical territories, against its enemies. Therefore, the majority of the attacks taking place in Daesh-controlled areas may be coordinated in the physical world rather than virtually. This however, may not be applicable to those who have or will answer the call by Daesh to strike in their own respective countries. This is also evident in Southeast Asia where Telegram and WhatsApp have been used to plan attacks by Daesh supporters and facilitate movements to southern Philippines for terrorist training purposes.[201] Furthermore, with increasing reports suggesting that Daesh is planning to orchestrate coordinated attacks across Europe,[202] more online communication for the purpose of planning and coordinating attacks may take place in the near future.

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201 Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Official, interview with author on July 26, 2016, Kuala Lumpur.
202 Emily Smith, "ISIS planning 'special forces-style' attacks in Europe, report says", *CNN*, January 26, 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/26/world/isis-attacks-europe/ (accessed June 6, 2016)

11

DATA MINING

Terrorist groups are also utilising the Internet for data mining purposes. Data mining in this regard refers to collection of information of particular places and individuals as potential targets for attacks as well as recruitment. For example, in the case of the September 11 attacks, the al-Qaeda operatives involved in the attacks used the Internet to collect information such as flight times and to share information and coordinate their attacks.[203]

In this regard, Daesh too has been utilising social media platforms for the purpose of data mining and gathering of information. This is particularly evident in the process of selecting individuals for radicalising or recruitment purposes. Based on a research conducted by Dr. Robyn Torok, Rebecca Turner of the ABC news agency reported that "recruiters identify potential targets by monitoring Facebook conversation threads.[204] By looking at the amount and frequency of Facebook posts a subject had posted, the recruiter will then engage the subject to speak about more personal matters such as their hobbies and interests.[205] The process will go on until she or he is invited to join a private group for a more in depth discussion on issues relevant to Daesh's propaganda.

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203 United States Institute of Peach (USIP), "Terror on the Internet: Questions and Answers", http://www.usip.org/publications-tools/terror-internet/terror-internet-questions-and-answers (accessed 20 July 2015).
204 Rebecca Turner, "Islamic State recruiters create complex network of Facebook accounts to entice Australian teens", ABC, December 24, 2015, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-30/islamic-state-using-facebook-to-gather-new-recruits/6968890 (accessed June 2, 2016).
205 Ibid.

Furthermore, according to an interview with an RMP officer, Daesh recruiters will often vet potential targets through their Facebook profiles to observe on how frequent these potential targets comment on Syria and Iraq to assess whether they are genuine sympathisers or supporters of Daesh.[206] They will then conduct further examination by adding them as friends and will only engage in private communication only after they are certain of the individuals' faithfulness.[207]

The use of social media to prey on potential targets and radicalise vulnerable teenagers and individuals is evident and should be taken seriously. This is expected as the pool of available data, or in other words, access to potential recruits that these terrorist elements could attain from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are in abundance and easily accessible.

Therefore, it is only necessary that nations and the international community take concerted steps to halt, or at the very least, limit the reach of Daesh around the world. Hence, a compressive approach to this must be developed. Nonetheless, before presenting several possible recommendations looking at both offline and online approaches, several observations can be made.

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206 Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Official, interview with author on July 26, 2016, Kuala Lumpur.
207 Ibid.

12

OBSERVATIONS

B ased on the previous examples and discussions, a number of key observations can be made. Amongst the observations identified include Daesh's use of the Dark Web, the use of the Internet to prepare and facilitate the movements of radicalised individuals to Daesh-controlled areas, increase in hacking activities, intensive usage of social media, and the challenges that counter operatives face when dealing with Daesh's use of social media platforms.

Daesh and the Use of Dark Web

As a result of rigorous counter actions against Daesh and their use of the internet, some Daesh operatives and its supporters have relocated to the Dark Web for increased security. Dark Web is defined as the "portion of the Deep Web that can only be accessed through specialized browsers".[208] It is important however to note the difference between Dark Web and Deep Web where the former is the deepest layer of the latter.[209] In this regard, Dark Web provides the users with ultimate anonymity and it is "[…] inaccessible to most but navigable for the initiated few […]".[210] As such, in the effort to access websites operating under Dark Web, special softwares such as The Onion Router (TOR) or the I2P (Invincible Internet Project) is needed.[211] TOR allows "[…] users

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208 Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist Migration to the Dark Web", June 2016, Vol. 10, Issue 3, *Perspectives on Terrorism,* http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/513/1013 (accessed August 2, 2016).
209 Ibid.
210 Beatrice Berton, "The dark side of the web: ISIL's one-stop shop?", June 26, 2015, Alert No. 30, *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*.
211 Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist Migration to the Dark Web", June 2016, Vol. 10, Issue

to hide their Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and activity through a world-wide network of computers and different layers of encryption (like the layers of an onion), which guarantee their anonymity".[212]

There have been indications that Daesh is utilising this platform to conduct its terrorist-related activities, from spreading its propaganda, to communicating, to purchasing weapons, and to conduct its attacks. Following the shutdown of Daesh-related websites and accounts by the group Anonymous, it was reported that the Dark Web was used to spread Deash's propaganda in order to conceal the identities of its supporters and its content from hacktivists.[213] Furthermore, following the November 2015 Paris attacks, Daesh announced the operation of a website in the Dark Web that stores terrorist propaganda materials online.[214] In addition, there is also the likelihood that weapons are being purchased through the Dark Web by Daesh. For example, the guns used in the Paris attacks were thought to be bought from a Dark Web vendor called DW Guns.[215]

The use of Bitcoin by Daesh operatives and supporters as mentioned previously, is also an indication that Daesh may be conducting more activities on the Dark Web. Bitcoin can be used to conduct purchases of illegal goods on the Dark Web, extortion or money laundering.[216] One example of this is a site called "Fund the Islamic Struggle without Leaving a Trace". This site, available on the Deep Web, "[...] invites donations for Jihad through transactions to a particular Bitcoin address".[217] More illegal goods can also be obtained through the Dark Web that may benefit Daesh in their planning and coordination of attacks. For example, documents such as "fake passports, driver's

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3, *Perspectives on Terrorism.*
212 Beatrice Berton, "The dark side of the web: ISIL's one-stop shop?", June 26, 2015, Alert No. 30, *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).*
213 Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist Migration to the Dark Web", June 2016, Vol. 10, Issue 3, *Perspectives on Terrorism.*
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
216 Beatrice Berton, "The dark side of the web: ISIL's one-stop shop?", June 26, 2015, Alert No. 30, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).
217 Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist Migration to the Dark Web", June 2016, Vol. 10, Issue 3, *Perspectives on Terrorism.*

license, ID cards and other products for use in the UK and US, Australia and Belgium among other countries"[218] can also be purchased via the Dark Web.

In essence, the Dark Web has created an environment where illegal activities can be invisibly conducted. Such an environment is conducive for terrorists to carry out their terrorist activities. With the increase in counter operations on online terrorist-related activities conducted through conventional search engines such as Google and Internet Explorer, a drastic shift in the use of Dark Web can be expected. While access to it is intricate, it is not impossible. TOR browsers can be downloaded or purchased via the Internet easily. In fact, there have also been suggestions that certain captured Daesh terrorists operating in Southeast Asia have had TOR installed in their computers.[219]

Preparation and Facilitation of "Migration"

In addition to the usage of the Internet to spread propaganda, communicate, radicalise and facilitate recruitment, one interesting use of the Internet by Daesh that sets the organisation apart from other known terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, is its ability to prime aspiring mujahideens and to facilitate their movements to perform "migration" to the so-called Islamic State. This is done through the publication of guidelines and manuals, which can be obtained via websites and forums as well as dissemination by supporters from their own social media accounts. One particular publication that touched extensively on the preparation needed to make the migration to Syria and Iraq was *'Hijrah to the Islamic State'*,[220] published in 2015.

In this publication, Daesh focused on explaining a step-by-step procedure on how to travel to Syria and the preparation needed to

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218 Beatrice Berton, "The dark side of the web: ISIL's one-stop shop?", June 26, 2015, Alert No. 30, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).
219 Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Official, interview with author on July 26, 2016, Kuala Lumpur
220 "Hijrah to the Islamic State", published online by the Islamic State (site retrieved no longer accessible).

make that so-called migration to the "Islamic State".[221] This publication also provided would be travellers with practical advice such as what to do when they arrive in Turkey, which hotel to go to, which cell phone service provider should be bought (it was advised that Turkcell should be purchased), and what to say if you were detained by the police in Turkey. Included in this publication too is a guide for women to make their *hijrah*. At the end of the publication, a list of new Twitter accounts were provided with an additional hadith on *hijrah*.

Hacking Activities

While several terrorist groups in the past have deliberated over the use of the Internet to conduct hacking activities, Daesh has made it into one of their modus operandi. For example, in January 2015, a pro-Daesh group had managed to hack into the US military Central Command (CENTCOM) Twitter and YouTube accounts. During the attack, it was reported that CENTCOM's Twitter account's icon had been replaced with an image of a masked man along with the words "Cyber Caliphate" and "I Love You ISIS" whereas CENTCOM's YouTube page had posted two pro-Daesh videos.[222] While CENTCOM, the body that is responsible for coordinating the coalition against Daesh in the Middle East,[223] may be a strategic target, the impact of the so-called attack was however minimal.

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221 The document argued that three, and only three bags; a satchel, a backpack and a suitcase; are needed for the travel to Syria. It went on to advice on what should contain in each of the bags. For example, the satchel should include vital belongings such as passport, plane tickets (in which one was advised to purchase a return ticket so as to not arouse suspicion), mobile phone, wet wipes, tissue paper, pen and paper among other things. As for the backpack, it was advised that one should have at least one change of clean clothing, a jacket, footwear and other electronic items such as laptop, tablet, portable Wi-Fi modem, plug adapters, etc. As with the suitcase, the listed items to be included are sleeping bag, long-johns, toiletries, camping plate and sewing kits.

222 Spencer Ackerman, "US Central Command Twitter account hacked to read 'I love you Isis'", The Guardian, January 12, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jan/12/us-central-command-twitter-account-hacked-isis-cyber-attack (accessed June 3, 2016).

223 Adam Hoffman, and Yoram Schweitzer, "Cyber Jihad in the Service of the Islamic State (ISIS)", *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 18 No. 1, April 2015 http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/adkan18_1ENG%20%285%29_Hoffman-Schweitzer.pdf (accessed June 3, 2016).

It was also reported that about 19,000 websites in France had been hacked by groups claiming to be affiliated to Daesh following the Charlie Hebdo attacks.[224] The attacks, which resulted in a Denial of Service (DoS), targeted various websites from tourism pages to military websites.[225] Additionally, in another attack by a pro-Daesh group,[226] Facebook and Twitter accounts of the RMP were hacked in July 2015. The group replaced RMP's avatar with the word 'Khilafah' or caliphate.

According to Mary-Ann Russon and Jason Murdock, two journalists who had infiltrated Daesh's Telegram network, there were at least three known pro-Daesh hacking groups; Kalachnikv E-Security, 'Online Dawah Operations' and 'Muslim Safety Tips'.[227] These groups had reportedly been engaging in discussion regarding "…privacy, hacking tips, malware and data breaches…".[228] In addition, there have also been reports that another three of pro-Daesh hacking groups namely, Caliphate Cyber Army (CCA), Sons Caliphate Army (SCA) and Kalacnikov. TN (KTN), were merging to form a new group called United Cyber Caliphate (UCC).[229] The merger was announced on April 4, 2016 on Telegram.[230] Though the merger may indicate that pro-Daesh hacking groups were focusing on strengthening their position in the cyber world, no major cyber-attacks have been reported in the last couple of months following the merger.

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224 Paula Mejia, "19,000 French Websites (and Counting) Hacked Since Charlie Hebdo Attack", *Newsweek*, January 15, 2015, http://www.newsweek.com/19000-french-websites-and-counting-hacked-charlie-hebdo-attack-299675 (accessed Jun 3, 3016).
225 Ibid.
226 "PDRM's Facebook, Twitter accounts hacked", *Malay Mail Online*, July 13, 2015, http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/pdrms-facebook-account-hacked (accessed June 3, 2016).
227 Mary-Ann Russon and Jason Murdock, "Welcome to the bizare and frightening world of Islamic State Channels on Telegram", International Business Times UK, May 23, 2016.
228 Ibid.
229 Mary-Ann Russon, "ISIS cyber army grows in strength as caliphate hacking groups merge on Telegram", *International Business Times* UK, April 5, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-cyber-army-grows-strength-caliphate-hacking-groups-merge-telegram-1553326 (accessed June 3, 2016).
230 Ibid.

These developments clearly represent continued threats by Daesh and its supporters to the peace and stability of the international community through cyber-attacks. It also shows their determination in making their presence felt across the globe.

Intensive Use of Social Media Platforms

Based on this research, much of Daesh's presence online is via the exhaustive use of social media platforms particularly Facebook, Twitter and Telegram. Such vigorous use of social network has not only led Daesh to gain more supporters but has also been used as a tool to conduct psychological warfare, as well as to target specific groups particularly for the purpose of spreading propaganda, radicalisation, and the recruitment of individuals.

Wider Reach

Compared to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and JI, Daesh has managed to exploit various social media platforms more extensively. This has enabled Daesh to expand its reach across various continents while at the same time attracting tens of thousands of supporters. The phenomenon of foreigners flocking to war-torn areas is not exclusive to Daesh as can be witnessed during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan during the Cold War. Nonetheless, the number of FTFs journeying to Syria and Iraq to join Daesh is significantly larger and occurring at a quicker pace. This could be a trend largely due to the savvy use of the Internet and social media platforms by Daesh and its advocates.

Psychological Warfare

The extensive use of social media has also led Daesh to have the upper hand in the physical war in Iraq and Syria as well as in the virtual world. In other words, the ability of Daesh to appear bigger, better and more violent than what it actually is reflects the successful psychological warfare tactic adopted by the group. A significant example of this was

observed during Daesh's successful operation to take over Mosul, Iraq in June 2015. During this operation, about 1500 of Daesh fighters were up against thousands of Iraqi soldiers but Daesh was still able to take over the city despite being outnumbered.[231] According to an interview of Commander Barzani of the Kurdish Peshmerga Forces by Jillian Kay Melchior, Commander Barzani explained that the attack against Mosul began through social media, before the actual physical action took place.[232] In the report, Commander Barzani stated that:

"They started this almost one year ago, [using] all the media — social media, Facebook, the Internet — [to show] how they are killing the people, how they are taking their kids, how they are killing children, how they are taking the women, females, so it's really psychological war, and I can say that they are succeeding..."[233]

Echoing this, Qu Tianlu, Chia Jeng Yang and Beatrice Chan in their article "Terrorism of the Islamic State: Social Media Strategies", stated that Daesh was also using "Twitter as a psychological weapon to confront and intimidate Westerners by projecting the image that they reside in various Western countries".[234] Furthermore, according to Mah-Rukh Ali, Daesh believed the tactic of "overwhelming the enemy with fear and terror" and went on to state that Daesh even justified this tactic through hadiths.[235]

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231 "Terror's New Headquarters", *The Economist*, June 14, 2014 in Adam Hoffman, and Yoram Schweitzer, "Cyber Jihad in the Service of the Islamic State (ISIS)", *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 18 No. 1, April 2015

232 Jillian Kay Melchior, "peshmerga commander says Iraq needs ground troops to fully defeat ISIS", National Review, September 21, 2014, http://www.nationalreview.com/article/388505/those-who-face-death-jillian-kay-melchior (accessed June 3, 2016).

233 Ibid.

234 Qu Tianlu, Chia Jeng Yang and Beatrice Chan, "Terrorism of the Islamic State: Social Media Strategies", The Wilberforce Society, February 2016, http://thewilberforcesociety.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Wilberforce-Society-Social-Media-IS-Paper.pdf (accessed June 3, 2016).

235 Mah-Rukh Ali, "ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women", *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2015, https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Isis%20and%20Propaganda-%20How%20Isis%20Exploits%20Women.pdf (accessed June 3, 2015).

The ability of Daesh to transform social media network into a form of psychological warfare is certainly chilling. While efforts to limit the online reach of Daesh are ongoing, actions to circumvent the use of social media as a psychological weapon is greatly needed to ensure that successful counter operations against Daesh could take place.

The Expanded Role of Women

Even before the emergence of Daesh, women have always played a considerable role in terrorism activities. Their roles include being mothers, recruiters, logisticians, martyrs as well as to courier money and weapons.[236] Besides having an all-female Daesh police squad, Daesh has been very successful in attracting more women to travel to the so-called Islamic State and has managed to alleviate their role, particularly as successful recruiters of potential fighters. This is largely due to the usage of social media platforms as a means to directly communicate and network openly with supporters and potential recruits.

For example, in the case of JI, the style of recruitment used then was more selective and mostly confined within family members of a terrorist.[237] Now, in the reign of Daesh, women are openly preaching and urging female sympathisers via Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr among others, to make their way to Daesh-controlled areas. What is even more daunting is the fact that these women have been very successful in their bid to lure females to join Daesh.

Aside from the case of the female Malaysian doctor who has been enticing women to join Daesh, another significant example of a woman recruiter is Umm Ubaydah. Her posts on social media sites such as Twitter include advising others on what to bring during the so-called migration and what to expect upon making the journey to informing

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236 R. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly, *Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs,* 2009, Praeger Security International Reviewed by Kennimrod Sariburaja, *SEARCCT's Selection of Articles*, Volume 2, 2011, (SEARCCT: Kuala Lumpur), pg. 125.
237 Kennimrod Sariburaja, *al-Jemaah al-Islamiyah*, 2013, (SEARCCT: Kuala Lumpur).

potential female recruits of their future roles.[238] She reminded her followers that the role for women in Daesh-controlled areas does not include going to the battlefield but instead, to remain at home as wives of the fighters, to bring up their children as well as to reach out to other women online.[239] Umm Ubaydah and "Diary of a Muhajirah" / "Bird of Jannah" are two of the many examples of women recruiters. Another example is Umm Layth. Suspected to be Aqsa Mahmood, Umm Layth is thought to have links to the disappearance of three British teenagers namely, Kadiza Sultana, Shamima Begum and Amira Abase, who were believed to have fled to Syria in February 2015.[240]

Terrorist Narratives for Everyone

One interesting observation that can be made from Daesh's extensive use of social media is their ability to tailor the narratives to fit the characteristics of potential recruits regardless if they were from the West or East, male or female, young or old, and second generation migrant or native. Undoubtedly, Daesh's utilisation of social networking platforms has greatly contributed to the success of reaching out to the targeted individuals with the right kind of narratives.

Adam Hoffman and Yoram Schweitzer's article on "Cyber Jihad in the Service of the Islamic State (ISIS)",[241] painted a clear picture on the different techniques adopted by Daesh in approaching potential male and female recruits. For example, in capturing the attention of a potential male sympathiser, Daesh uses images of epic battles and glory on the battlefields, while in attracting women, softer images such as kittens and messages of female empowerment often appear.[242]

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238   Katie Zafadski, "Meet the Female Recruiters of ISIS", NyMag, September 4, 2014, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/09/meet-the-female-recruiters-of-isis.html (accessed June 4, 2016)
239 Ibid.
240 Kimiko De Freytas-Tamura, "Teenage Girl Leaves for ISIS, and Others Follow", *The New York Times*, February 24, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/world/from-studious-teenager-to-isis-recruiter.html?_r=0 (accessed June 5, 2006).
241 Adam Hoffman, and Yoram Schweitzer, "Cyber Jihad in the Service of the Islamic State (ISIS)", *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 18 No. 1, April 2015.
242 Ibid.

Nonetheless, in recruiting individuals from the West, particularly second-generation migrants, Daesh often plays upon their feelings of isolation and the difficulty in fitting in with Western culture. According to Christina Schori Liang, in this Western part of the world, Daesh often targets those with identity crises and individuals who have been victims of Islamophobic sentiments.[243] On the other hand, in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, which have large Muslim populations, their strategies may be slightly different. Aside from the duty of Muslims to conduct jihad, Daesh's narrative in this region involves labelling local governments as un-Islamic and reinforcing the idea that Muslims should be living in a place where shari'a is the supreme law guiding both political and social aspects of life. For example, a video made by Indonesian fighters, believed to be in Syria or Iraq, had encouraged their fellow citizens to join in their so-called jihad and specifically mentioned that the Indonesian police and military forces should repent as well as refute the state ideology of Pancasila which they regard as a pagan ideal.[244]

Daesh's ability to tailor their propaganda materials and narratives to lure potential fighters from all over the world by utilising social media platforms must be dealt with effectively. Using these platforms to expand the role of women as well as psychological warfare also makes the fight against Daesh even more complex and intricate.

Challenges to Countering Daesh's Use of Social Media

Apart from identifying narratives that could specifically counter the tailor-made propaganda by Daesh for individuals around the world, another observation that challenges the effort to counter Daesh is their flexibility in adapting to counter measures. Relevant authorities have long been attempting to counter the threat posed by Daesh,

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243 Christina Schori Liang, "Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda", *Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)*, February 2015, www.gcsp.ch/download/2763/72138 (accessed June 5, 2016).
244 Vita A.D. Busyra, "ISIS-Trained Indonesians Ring Alarm Bells", Jakarta Globe, June 20, 2014, http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/news/isis-trained-indonesians-ring-alarm-bells/ (accessed June 5, 2016).

particularly in their use of the Internet to spread propaganda, radicalise and communicate. This is done by blocking and censoring their sites and accounts as well as the ones belonging to their supporters among other efforts. For example, blocking the access to one Twitter account will result in another account being created by the blocked user. What is even more concerning is the fact that this same user, albeit with a new account, is still able to have his or her followers from previous account. This is made possible by his or her followers re-tweeting his new account.

For example, in the case of a Twitter account with the handler Yusuf (YusufAl-Britani), he tweeted to his available followers to re-tweet (RT) his posts to try and reconnect to his former followers. Upon his return after being suspended, he tweeted "Please follow and RT, trying to get back to all our Brothers after suspension, *jazakallah*".[245] This approach is effective given that by re-tweeting, Yusuf will be able to gain his initial followers and maybe additional ones too.

Apart from that, Daesh is also concentrating its effort on challenging the counter narratives put forth by various nations. In an online publication by *Ansar Al-Khilafah* titled, "The Media War Upon the Islamic State: The Media Technique of Misleading the Masses", Daesh explained the techniques adopted by the rest of the world to refute the legitimacy of the group.[246] It went on to explain the foundation behind nations' efforts in countering Daesh, which involves media deviation, propaganda and psychological warfare. They claimed that these include distorting events, casting doubt upon the strength of the fighters, exaggerating Western strength, blaming the fighters, particularly for the West's ill treatment of women and children and "promoting hypocrites" whereby they claim that the West uses organisations and groups that appear to be like Daesh fighters but are actually for government's agenda.[247] Furthermore, following

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245 YusufAlBritani personal Twitter account, accessed May 24, 2016.
246 "The Media War Upon the Islamic State: The Media Techniques of Misleading the Masses", Ansar Al-Khilafah Publication, December 2, 2015 (20 Safar 1437), https://archive.org/details/the-media-war-upon-the-islamic-state1 (accessed June 5, 2016).
247 Ibid.

Anonymous' pledge to attack Daesh via cyberspace, a tech savvy group within Daesh reportedly sent out a message via Telegram instructing Daesh followers on how to avoid potential hacks.[248]

These are but some of the examples of Daesh forming their own version of counter-messaging efforts as well their techniques in overcoming threats by the so-called un-believers. Two observations stood out from these developments. Firstly, how effective is censoring and blocking access to social media accounts of suspected supporters and terrorists? It is established that by blocking access to Twitter accounts belonging to Daesh or its supporters, another account, with a different handler, would appear. The second observation is that the terrorists too are monitoring the moves of authorities, governments, civil society, organisations and scholars who are working against them. As a result, they too are constantly designing new propaganda and counter-messages to maintain their legitimacy and pool of potential recruits. This would certainly complicate efforts to counter the group. Nevertheless, the following section will attempt to provide some possible recommendations that can be utilised to limit Daesh's reach around the globe.

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248 Anna Dubuis, "Anonymous: ISIS has issued these instructions to followers on avoiding being hacked", Mirror, November 17, 2015, http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/anonymous-isis-issued-instructions-followers-6845219 (accessed June 5, 2016).

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Daesh's skilful use and the ability to maximise the potential of the cyberspace has given the group leverage and is now one of the most forceful terrorist organisation in the world. In response, relevant nations have been in full gear in the battle against the group and an international coalition led by the US was created. Known as the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, the cooperation involves over 60 countries including Australia Canada, Egypt, Germany, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates and the UK amongst others. The coalition's approaches against Daesh are in various forms including military assistance to capacity building and countering the narratives of Daesh.

In relation to the efforts made to counter the narratives of Daesh, particularly via the Internet, many countries have taken the necessary steps to combat Daesh's propaganda online. For example in the US, the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) was formally established in 2011 to "systemise U.S strategic communications to counter the appeal of violent extremist ideologies among foreign populations, particularly as related to Al-Qaida and its global affiliates".[249] Within the CSCC, is a team known as Digital Outreach Team (DOT) that is responsible for countering extremist propaganda online through direct engagement via social media.[250] TThe CSCC was also responsible in the establishment of the "Think Again Turn Away" campaign that espoused to criticise Daesh through YouTube, Twitter and Facebook among others.

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249   "Centre for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC)", *Counter Extremism.org*, 2013, https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/404/center-for-strategic-counterterrorism-communications-cscc (accessed June 17, 2016).
250 Ibid.

Meanwhile in the UK, the country's government created the "UK Against Daesh" Twitter account in 2015. The purpose of this was however not to counter the narratives of Daesh but to inform the public of the UK's effort in combating Daesh. For example, its latest tweets dated June 17, 2016, were mainly informing the audience of strikes destroying Daesh bunkers near Al-Baghdadi, and another spoke of the arrests and prosecutions of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) in several countries.[251] Nonetheless, focussing more on countering the narratives of Daesh is Quilliam Foundation's campaign called #NotAnotherBrother. Forming part of the campaign was a film released in August 2015 aimed potential supporters.[252]

In Saudi Arabia, a strategic communications centre to battle Daesh's propaganda online was launched on 8 July 2016. Known as the Sawab Centre, the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based Centre was established in collaboration with the US and forms part of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL effort. The Centre utilises "direct online engagement to counter terrorist propaganda... including messages used to recruit foreign fighters, fundraise for illicit activities, and intimidate and terrorize local populations".[253] The Sawab Centre uses platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in efforts to counter Daesh's propaganda online. One of its recent campaign was the #Deludedfollowers campaign on Tweeter and Instagram to expose Daesh's recruitment methods online.[254]

In Southeast Asia, members of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), one of Indonesia's leading Muslim organisation, is taking up the role of 'cyber warriors' in the attempt to challenge Daesh's propaganda campaigns. Apart from tweeting, the group also hosts several websites as well as an Android app and web-based Television (TV) channels to promote its

251 UK Against Daesh Twitter Account, (accessed June 17, 2016).
252 The video of the film could be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqO79tlWkmk (accessed October 7, 2016).
253 "Launch of the Sawab Centre", *US Department of State*, July 8, 2015, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/07/244709.htm (accessed 17 June, 2016).
254 "Sawab Center Launches /#DeludedFollowers/ Campaign to Expose Daesh's Methods of Recruiting Foreign Fighters" WAM, January 10, 2016, https://www.wam.ae/en/news/emirates/1395290133434.html (accessed June 17, 2016).

brand of Islam called *'Islam Nusantara'*.[255] In Malaysia, the country's authorities and relevant agencies are also gearing up in the effort to combat Daesh's propaganda online. The setting up of a digital counter-messaging centre to combat Daesh's appeal online is well on its way and is expected to operate from mid-2016.

The effectiveness of these initiatives however, is yet to be ascertained. In fact, there have been comments that several attempts to combat Daesh's propaganda online previously have not been particularly successful.[256] Nonetheless, it is still important that countries and civil societies alike continue with their efforts to at least limit Daesh's reach online. Even more imperative is that these efforts are continuously enhanced and strengthened to meet the changing nature of Daesh's online modus operandi, particularly its propaganda, radicalisation and recruitment agendas.

Against this backdrop, several recommendations can be of use to nations and relevant agencies in their bid to enrich endeavours in opposing Daesh's presence online. The first of which is the need for the virtual mobilisation of religious movements to counter Daesh's manipulation of religious scriptures. Secondly is the need to "bring the real Syria and Iraq" to the cyber realm to counter the economic, social and political aspects of Daesh's propaganda. To reinforce these efforts, utilising active online platforms and enhancing technical know-how are imperative. Following these are the proliferation of counter-messages, strengthening offline measures in combating Daesh's online presence and finally, the need for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to create more compelling and concerted efforts in combating the threat of Daesh online.

255 "Indonesia's Muslim cyber warriors take on IS", *The Star*, May 8, 2016, http://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2016/05/08/indonesia-muslim-cyber-warriors-take-on-islamic-state/ (accessed June 17, 2016).
256 Alberto M. Fernandez, "Here to stay and growing: Combating ISIS propaganda networks", Islamic World Centre for Middle East Policy at Brookings, October 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/10/combating-isis-propaganda-fernandez/is-propaganda_web_english.pdf (accessed June 16, 2016).

Virtual Mobilisation of Religious Movements

"This is what hurts ISIS the most. It is Muslims speaking out."[257]

- Mubin Shaikh

The role of religion in Daesh-led propaganda is foremost. Daesh legitimises their acts of terrorism while at the same time gain thousands of followers from all over the world by distorting the meanings of terms that are sacred to the adherents of the religion. Islamic texts such as the Quran and hadiths are constantly applied to reason with the masses and to justify that Daesh and its supporters are the 'defenders' of Islam. In essence, the manipulation of religion has become a powerful 'tool' for Daesh to appear legitimate and righteous. How then should nations overcome such a powerful driving force? One possible way is to mobilise religious movements in the cyber realm where many of Daesh operatives function.

In this regard, such a movement should be created, particularly at the national level. This is important as movement(s) at the national level could tackle religious concepts or issues specific only to the country, thus targeting supporters and potential recruits at the local level. A similar approach is observed in the example of chat videos called "ISIS and ice cream". "ISIS and ice cream" is a series of monthly video chats conducted by Imam Suhaib Webb who is based in Washington.[258] These video chats, broadcasted from ice cream parlours, aims to "refute the religious claims…" of Daesh.[259] As a result of his effort, members of Daesh have threatened to kill him, and branded him anpostate.[260]

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257 Mubin Shaikh in Laurie Goodstein, "Muslim Leaders Wage Theological Battle, Stoking ISIS' Anger", May 8, 2016, *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/09/us/isis-threatens-muslim-preachers-who-are-waging-theological-battle-online.html?_r=0 (accessed June 9, 2016). Mubin Shaikh is a Canadian former member of an extremist Islamist group who is now working on countering radicalisation.
258 Ibid.
259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.

These threats show that Daesh is affected by the online chat videos, demonstrating - to a certain degree - its impact on refuting Daesh's religious-based propaganda. Hence, the need for the virtual mobilisation of religious movements. Nonetheless, in establishing such a movement, careful considerations in selecting the right individuals, identifying as well as crafting religious counter-messages to be disseminated are of utmost importance. The following are possible guidelines to be considered when creating a virtual religious movement.

Selecting Suitable Individuals

First and foremost is the selection of the most suitable individuals to be the voices behind these movements. In order to achieve this, a careful look into these individuals' background is needed. Hence, it is important that these individuals be selected from the available pool of local religious scholars or imams. It is also beneficial for these individuals to be fluent in the Arabic language. Selecting individuals readily armed with the necessary knowledge to combat Daesh's religious-based propaganda would be less time-consuming than having to train, for example, terrorism experts in theological doctrines. Furthermore, selecting Arabic-speaking religious scholars or imams would also allow them to converse with Arabic-speaking supporters and Daesh fighters – whether local or foreign - hence, enhancing their credibility among the targeted groups.

Additionally, choosing religious scholars or imams with established rapport within their communities or nation is also imperative. This criterion would further strengthen the credibility of the counter-messages being conveyed. Moreover, selecting well-regarded religious scholars or imams with sizeable followers could also attract non-targeted groups to grasp and spread the counter-messages whether through online means or via physical communications. This would allow for the messages to travel farther and reaching a much wider audience, including those with limited access to the Internet or even older generations who are less Internet savvy.

In terms of the individuals' characteristics, charisma is an important criterion to possess. Such a characteristic is essential in attracting the targeted audience to take notice of the 'messenger' and thus after, the counter-messages. Another possible characteristic is versatility. In this instance, choosing individuals that are versatile in their delivery methods may have a better chance with the Daesh supporters whether local or international, who come from various backgrounds. For example, the method of delivery may differ for someone with an established religious background as compared to someone whose knowledge of the religion is rather perfunctory.

Identifying and Developing Religious Counter-Messages

Secondly, based on this research, a number of religious-based narratives propagated by Daesh have been identified which include Jihad, Hijrah (migration), the End-of-Time Prophecy, battle between good and evil and the need to urgently act against apostates and oppressors of Muslims. Other narratives also include the use of religion to justify acts of terrorism such as the killings of innocent lives and persecution of religious minorities among others. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it nonetheless provides an idea of Daesh's religious narratives to take into consideration when attempting to craft reasonable counter-messages.

Hence, a more detailed examination of Daesh's religious-based propaganda should be conducted in order to create more in-depth and robust counter-messages. This future study should also include analyses of Daesh's religious-based propaganda in the national context. For example, what are the specific religious elements proposed by Daesh that attracts Malaysians or Indonesians to join the group? What are the most profound Daesh-type religious narratives in Germany or Turkey? Answers to these questions may result in creations of more effective targeted counter-messages.

Nonetheless, in developing religious-based counter-messages, it is important that the Quran and legitimate hadiths are applied to directly and strongly refute Daesh's religious-based propaganda. This is also to ensure that these counter-messages are reliable and credible. Quran verses and hadiths that advocate for the peaceful co-existence between the many faiths and cultures, the rejection of violence and killings of women and children, obligation to parents and family, protections of religious minorities or non-Muslims, safeguarding crops and cattle from destruction, as well as other related verses and hadiths could be the foundation for developing strong religious-based counter-messages.

For example, the establishment of the so-called Islamic State, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, through indiscriminate killings and persecution of religious minorities and non-Muslims, could be challenged by developing counter-messages based on several verses of the Quran. These include Surah Al-Baqarah (2: 204-206) which states;

> "*There is the type of man whose speech about this world's life may dazzle thee, and he calls Allah to witness about what is in his heart; yet is he the most contentious of enemies. When he turns his back, his aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth and destroy crops and cattle. But Allah loveth not mischief. When it is said to him, "Fear Allah", he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. Enough for him is Hell-an evil bed indeed (to lie on)!*"[261]

In addition, the following verses from Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60:8-9) could form the basis to counter Daesh's religious-based propaganda or narratives in relation to aggression towards the so-called enemies of Islam. The verses states;

> "*Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing*

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[261] Al-Baqarah (2:204-206). Translation obtained from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, 2005, (Islamic Book Trust: Kuala Lumpur), pg. 74.

kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just. Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for your (Faith), and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong."[262]

These are but some of the Quranic verses that can be used in response to Daesh's manipulation of the religion. Nonetheless, individuals' interpretations of verses could vary and based on the current findings, Daesh has the ability to dispute efforts against them, including the religious-based counter-messages. Hence, the utilisation of religious scholars and imams is necessary to allow for theological debates to take place between the former and the supporters of Daesh, with the aim of persuading them otherwise.

By adopting this strategy, these movements would be able to create a strong religious force on the Internet with profound credibility. Additionally, mobilising religious movements online would also be able to refute the supposed well-read Daesh recruiters and supporters. In essence, the main intention here is to target and engage directly and forcefully with Daesh and its supporters in countering their religious-based propaganda and narratives. Apart from enabling direct engagement with Daesh and their supporters, such a strategy will also enable counter-terrorism agencies to get a better understanding of their thought-process and reasoning to allow for better constructions of counter-messages.

However, careful considerations must also be taken when communicating with terrorist elements so as not to be seen as creating a space for terrorists to speak their mind and make their stance.[263]

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262 Al-Mumtahanah (60:8-9). Translation obtained from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, 2005, (Islamic Book Trust: Kuala Lumpur), pg. 1219.

263 Bibi T. van Ginkel, "Responding to Cyber Jihad: Towards an Effective Counter Narrative", March 2015, International Centre for Counter-terrorism (ICCT), http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-van-Ginkel-Responding-To-Cyber-Jihad-Towards-An-

Apart from that, mobilising such movements should only target Daesh's religious-based propaganda but not their political, social, or economic-based propaganda. Therefore, non-religious based counter-messages must also be crafted to target the latter aspects of their propaganda and likewise, be disseminated online. One possible way is to showcase the dire events taking place in Daesh-controlled areas in Syria and Iraq in response to their projected images of the good and secure life in these conflict areas.

"Bringing" the Real Syria and Iraq to Social Media

Based on the findings of this research, Daesh and its legion of recruiters would often project images of the fictional happiness and comfortable lives of people living under Daesh-controlled areas - where food and basic necessities are available in abundance and could be obtained easily. Apart from that, the image that Daesh has a strong governing structure, with departments and enforcement bodies for the day-to-day running of the so-called Islamic state, further makes it interesting and convincing for deluded individuals.

As such, counter-messages could be crafted in ways that features the reality behind those images. For example, counter-messages could highlight women and children being killed, innocent lives who have lost their family members, their houses where they grew up, as well as the thousands of civilians fleeing their homelands. The idea here, is that while terrorists can win the hearts and minds of individuals to join their ranks - through showcasing the oppressions against Syrian and Iraqi Sunnis and so on, counter-messages should also emulate such images to develop the very same sentiments. The only difference is that the focus is on the perpetrators that resulted in the killings, fleeing, abasement and abusing of civilians including women, children and the elderly. Unlike Daesh who blames the Syrian and Iraqi governments, the West and its allies, and apostate leaders and governments, the counter-messages would be focusing on Daesh as the perpetrators responsible for these acts.

Effective-Counter-Narrative-March2015.pdf (accessed July 14, 2016).

Additionally, counter-messages could also be developed surrounding Daesh's weaknesses and failings in terms of its governing structure and military capabilities. Moreover, as of July 2016, Daesh has lost several of its strongholds and military strength. These include the cities of Fallujah[264] and Ramadi[265] while battles between the group and the security forces are taking place in Raqqa[266] and Mosul[267]. TThe aim here is to showcase the images of Daesh's weakening governing structure and military might. Simultaneously, it is also intended to prompt the audiences to question whether it is possible for a so-called Islamic State to falter. Hence, this will cast doubts in the minds of the audiences, of the legitimacy and capability of Daesh in the establishment of the "Islamic State" that was to return "Muslims' [their] dignity, might, rights and leadership" as stated by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,[268] aand what more to expand its territorial controls as projected in the End-of-Time prophecy.

The drawback however, is obtaining images, reports and current happenings in Daesh-controlled areas in Syria and Iraq. This is because, coupled with the tight control of outgoing information, any individuals and journalists who they deemed to be against them have been severely punished. In this regard, obtaining crucial information, images and reporting of Daesh's brutality can be rather difficult.

One possible way to overcome this setback is by engaging with relevant groups and individuals who have access, whether directly or

264 "Iraq takes full control of Fallujah from Daesh", *Iran Daily*, June 27, 2016, http://www.iran-daily.com/News/154004.html?catid=3&title=Iraq-takes-full-control-of-Fallujah-from-Daesh (accessed July 15, 2016).
265 David Sim, "Iraq: The battle against Isis goes on in 'liberated' Ramadi, a city reduced to rubble", The *International Business Times (IBT),* January 20, 2016, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-battle-against-isis-goes-liberated-ramadi-city-reduced-rubble-1539005 (accessed July 15, 2016).
266 "Daesh regains areas lost to Syrian government", *Gulf News*, June 21, 2016, http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/syria/daesh-regains-areas-lost-to-syrian-government-1.1850089 (accessed July 15, 2016).
267 "Daesh lost quarter of its Iraq, Syria territory in 18 months", *Gulf News*, July 10, 2016, http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/iraq/daesh-lost-quarter-of-its-iraq-syria-territory-in-18-months-1.1859950 (accessed July 15, 2016).
268 "Khilafah Declared" in Dabiq: The Return of the Khilafah, June-July 2014, Issue 1, Al-Hayat Media Centre, pg 7.

indirectly, to these areas. For example, agencies involved in crafting the counter-messages could get in touch with associations and individuals who are managing refugee camps related to these areas. In this way, the agencies would have access to individuals (the refugees) who have witnessed the atrocities committed by Daesh. This would be valuable in developing counter-messages as they are also victims of Daesh's actions. Another example would include engagements with organisations working within Syria and Iraq to combat Daesh. One such organisation would be the 'Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently' (RBSS). RBSS was formed in April 2014 by local activists in Raqqa following Daesh's takeover of the city.[269] Working anonymously, it is believed to be one the few sources of reliable journalistic information left in Raqqa.[270]

Another source of information could be through engaging with Daesh FTFs who have repented and returned to their home country. Stories of their experiences and why they chose to turn their backs on Daesh could be converted into short video clips and posted on social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook as well as sharing links to these videos on Twitter and other platforms. In addition, these stories could also be converted into narrations to be posted on platforms such as JustPaste.it. Utilising former FTFs is crucial in developing effective counter-messages as they offer "credible voices of change".[271]

Apart from that, getting in touch with the immigrants who have fled their countries could also be beneficial as they would have access to family members or friends who are still in Syria or Iraq. One such example could be seen in the reporting of the International Business Times (IBT) on the supposed killings of Daesh fighters by Daesh for losing the city of Ramadi.[272] The report quoted a source who was an

269   "Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, Syria", Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ),https://cpj.org/awards/2015/raqqa-is-being-slaughtered-silently-syria.php (accessed July 15, 2016).
270   Ibid.
271   Bibi T. van Ginkel, "Responding to Cyber Jihad: Towards an Effective Counter Narrative", March 2015.
272   Agamoni Ghosh, "Isis reportedly burns Daesh fighters alive in Mosul for losing battle for Ramadi", *International Business Times (IBT),* January 13, 2016, http://www.

Iraqi resident now living in the US, but remains in contact with his family in Iraq.[273]

It is hoped that by developing online counter-messages that projects the images of the "real" Syria and Iraq under Daesh's control, and leveraging their sentiments as well as critical thinking, the political, social and economic aspects of Daesh's propaganda could be countered. Nonetheless, to truly win the hearts and minds of the people of Syria and Iraq as well as potential Daesh recruits around the world, governments must play their roles in securing the lives of its people and in rebuilding cities destroyed in the battles. This is because part of Daesh's propaganda is also about the supposed plights of the people of Syria and Iraq. Therefore, the governments must show their commitment in enhancing the lives of its people. Only then could Daesh's narrative, particularly on the plight of Sunnis in Syria and Iraq, be weakened if not subdued.

Dissemination of Counter-Messages through Active Online Platforms

Apart from mobilising religious movements and projecting the images of the real Syria and Iraq, dissemination of counter-messages through utilising active online platforms and enhancing capabilities and technical know-how could further reinforce the fight against Daesh's propaganda and presence online.

It is important to note that the counter-messages can take multiple forms such as videos, discussions, debates, microblogs or vlogs which can be broadcasted on the Internet. Given the extensive use of social media platforms by Daesh in spreading their propaganda and radicalising individuals, it is only logical that the dissemination of the counter-messages should use the very same platforms. These would include social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Tumblr among others. It is also important that the

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ibtimes.co.uk/isis-burns-daesh-fighters-alive-mosul-losing-battle-ramadi-1537604 (accessed July 15, 2016).
273 Ibid.

dissemination of counter-messages use communication platforms such as Kik and Telegram to target specific chatrooms or channels used by Daesh to communicate amongst each other or with their supporters. This would also be practical for more direct communications to take place.

Optimising Active Online Platforms

The method in which counter-messages are delivered plays a significant role in attracting the intended audiences. Hence, if a counter-message is in the form of an audio-visual, then an interactive video would be of significant value. In this case, YouTube is one of many excellent examples for the creation of interactive videos. By using its annotations tool, viewers can click on any items with annotations to view the next course of action or take them to another related video link and so on. For example, a counter-message video could post a question like "what is Jihad?" or "under what circumstances are armed Jihad permissible?" in which viewers can click on. Creators of the videos could also suggest several answers in which viewers can select, which would then lead them to another action or video that explains or answers the questions.[274] This would be of great benefit to the viewers as it is more engaging and an interesting way to create awareness on the subject matter.

Similarly, if a message is in the form of comments, short posts or blogging, it is useful for the virtual religious movements to ensure that the engagement between the creators of the counter-messages and the reader exists. An example of such engagements could be to enable readers to post questions in which the author(s) of the post could respond in a timely manner. This would allow for a more direct and immediate interaction between the disseminator of the counter-messages and the potential Daesh supporter.

274 For more information and examples of YouTube videos with Annotation, refer to Georgia Rooney, "Creating interactive video with Annotation", October 21, 2015, MWP Digital Media, https://mwpdigitalmedia.com/blog/creating-interactive-video-with-annotations/ (accessed July 14, 2016). Another interesting video with annotations is "Slap Jamie Oliver and Subscribe", available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usPV2cXhxp0&feature=youtu.be (accessed July 14, 2016).

Enhancing Capabilities and Technical Know-How

Another important element, particularly in countering Daesh's presence on the Internet, is ensuring the effectiveness of such efforts. In this regard, it is crucial for the movements to enhance its capabilities as well as its technical knowledge to monitor Daesh's propaganda online and its online activities in general, to target the right audiences to spread the counter-messages as well as to monitor the effectiveness of the disseminated messages. Such enhancements are crucial given the digital environment that they are expected to operate in and the ever-changing nature of technology.

Therefore, utilising online monitoring and analytic tools are of utmost importance in examining the effectiveness of the counter-messages. Such monitoring and analytic tools are beneficial as it could "pinpoint who to target, where to find them online, who they are connected to, their trusted sources of information and the keywords they are searching for".[275] On top of that, these monitoring and analytic tools, particularly those that analyses social media platforms, could also "identify if the messages are reaching the right targeted audiences as well as how receptive these audiences are towards the messages".[276] The following table shows several of the available, and easily accessible tools to monitor the various social media platforms.

275 Rachel Briggs and Ross Frenett, "Policy Briefing: Foreign Fighters, the Challenge of Counter-Narratives", *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2014.
276 Jasmine Jawhar, "Bringing the Battle against Daesh Online", The Journal of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, vol. 15, Number 2, December 2015, (Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR): Kuala Lumpur).

Table 1: Easily Accessible Monitoring and Analytic Tools[277]

No.	TOOL	PURPOSE	NATURE	COST
1.	**Google Alerts**	Notify users via e-mail of new content on the Internet (blogs, websites and social media platforms) based on users' keywords.	Monitoring	None
2.	**Google Analytics**	Able to measure how audience are interacting to users' website contents, and track downloads and video plays among others on the page.[278]	Analytic	None
3.	**Google Trends**	Able to analyse search terms on Google based on interest over time and regional interest where it could provide data on which region and country searched most for the term, as well as related searches that people may search for. For example, if one was to type 'how to make a bomb?' the tool would be able to show the amount of times, by years, that people have searched for it. It could also let the user know in which country and region these terms were most searched for.	Analytic	None

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277 Ibid.
278 Google Analytics, "Features", https://www.google.com/analytics/standard/features/ (accessed November 15 2015)

4.	**Boardreader**	This is a tool suitable for monitoring content and keywords on forums.	Monitoring	None
5.	**Omgili**	Similar to Boardreader, this tool serves as a monitoring tool for forums, message boards and discussion threads.	Monitoring	None
6.	**Social Mention**	This tool both monitors and analyses various social media platforms including Twitter. This tool is able to analyse data as well as influence based on four elements: strength, sentiment (positive, neutral, negative), passion and reach.[279]	Monitoring / Analytic	None
7.	**Twazzup**	This easy-to-use tool is able to track the name or term on Twitter that is of interest and immediately get real-time updates, most active influencers, top retweeted photos and links and the top ten keywords related to the names or term searched for.[280]	Monitoring	None

279 Brandwatch, "Marketing: Top 15 Free Social Media Monitoring Tools", August 2015, https://www.brandwatch.com/2013/08/top-10-free-social-media-monitoring-tools/
280 Ibid.

8.	**HootSuite**	This tool allows you to schedule messages for future publishing, as well as analyse how well user's "… social media efforts are being received", amongst others.[281]	Analytic	Yes
9.	**Klout**	This tool measures the influence or impact of users' links, and recommendations as well as how people interact with user's content across various social media platforms.[282]	Analytic	None
10.	**Monitter**	This tool allows users to key in up to three keywords and monitor what is being said on Twitter in real-time.[283]	Monitoring	None

Nonetheless, other aspects that can support the countering of Daesh's propaganda and their presence online should also be considered. In this regard, aspects such as the proliferation of counter-messages, strengthening offline measures as well as the need for Public-Private Partnerships are all essential elements in aiding counter-messaging against Daesh's propaganda and the group's presence online as a whole.

281 HootSuite,"HootSuite lets you do more with Social Media" https://hootsuite.com/ (accessed 15 November 2015).
282 Procommunicator, "Free Social Media Monitoring Tools", http://www.procommunicator.com/free-monitoring-tools/ (accessed 14 November 2015).
283 Ibid.

Proliferation of Counter-Messages

An important element to bear in mind when developing and disseminating counter-messages online is the fact that pro-Daesh tweets or posts appear on a daily basis. It was estimated that around 90,000 tweets and social media responses appear each day in support of the so-called caliphate.[284] In this instance, counter-messages to Daesh's online propaganda, should also emulate their speed and consistency. However, to produce thousands of counter-messages and let alone to target each of their narratives would be daunting and near impossible. It is therefore imperative that the few counter-messages being put forth daily should at least be substantial to refute the major themes that Daesh uses in their propaganda.

Apart from that, bureaucratic procedures must also be limited as producing fast and forthright counter propaganda materials is of utmost urgency. This is essential as Daesh's supporters do not need to go through various levels of approval before a tweet could be posted. Hence, these are able to produce narratives very quickly and effectively. Those involved in spreading Daesh's propaganda will probably compose their tweets, Tumblr blogs and Facebook postings in the comfort of their own home, writing about what seems to be closest to their hearts. A case in point is the Diary of a Muhajirah in which she would post on her Tumblr about her thoughts and day-to-day experiences under the Daesh-controlled city of Raqqa.[285] In this regard, the feelings of sincerity and relatability from the posts enabled Daesh to have a stronger hold over their readers.

Another equally important element is that these counter-messages must be in line with the targeted audience's culture and background. For example, applying jargons used by youngsters in Britain to design counter-messages may not relate well to those living in Southeast Asia.

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284 Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Intensifies Effort to Blunt ISIS' Message", February 6, 2015, The New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/middleeast/us-intensifies-effort-to-blunt-isis-message.html?_r=0 (accessed June 3, 2016).
285 Diary of Muhajirah Tumblr Blog, available at "http://diaryofmuhajirah.tumblr.com/ (accessed May 26, 2016).

This would mean that counter-messages, like Daesh's propaganda, must also be tailor-made to fit the intended group's cultural and religious backgrounds.

In this regard, by proliferating counter-messages - and taking into account limiting bureaucratic procedures, as well as cultural and religious backgrounds of the intended audiences - counter-messages could be distributed more effectively and timely. Hence, it could also yield a bigger impact due to its much wider reach and influence.

Strengthening Offline Measures in Combating Daesh's Online Presence

Apart from taking the battle against Daesh in the cyber domain, reinforcing efforts in the physical world would greatly benefit in the combat against Daesh online. These would include strengthening national laws regarding the monitoring of social media, empowering local communities, parents and teachers including religious tutors, as well as enhancing engagements between enforcement agencies and local communities for information sharing and intelligence gathering.

Strengthening National Laws to Monitor Social Media

Regulating the monitoring of social media platforms may prove to be an intricate process. Issues regarding freedom of speech and privacy would surface and pose challenges to securing communications that utilises the various available social media platforms. Nonetheless, monitoring these platforms is crucial in order to detect, respond and deter any possible spreading of terrorist propaganda, radicalisation, recruitment, communications between individuals and known terrorist elements, activities of data mining for the purpose of planning terrorist attacks or recruitment of individuals as well as other terrorists-related Internet usages. Hence, it is necessary for countries to develop laws specifically for regulating the use of the Internet by terrorists to

conduct terrorist-related activities.[286] Furthermore, it is crucial that the law be expanded to include monitoring terrorist activities on the Dark Web.[287]

The move by the RMP to make the monitoring of social media the focus of 2016 is both vital and timely.[288] However, it is necessary for nations to conduct such monitoring with veracity and reliability. This is important so as to not open up any avenues for the public to question the authenticity of its findings and thus, the response to it. In other words, monitoring should be done with utmost care and integrity to target those who only poses threat to the national security, with particular focus on terrorism-related offences.

Empowering Parents, Teachers and Local Communities

Parents, teachers and local communities are the gatekeepers to the individuals of interest as they are the closest and have direct access to these individuals' lives. For example, in assessing changes in behaviour and speech, how much time they are spending on the Internet, their circle of online as well as offline friends and so on. As such, empowering these groups should also be on the agenda in the effort to combat Daesh's presence online.

In some of the cases, it was found that parents of the individuals who have conducted terrorist activities or those who have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join Daesh, had no idea or inclination towards their children's radicalised state. In the case of Aqsa Mahmood, it was reported that her parents "were totally unaware of her radicalised mind-set" and described her as intelligent and sweet.[289] Therefore

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286 Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Official, interview with author on July 26, 2016, Kuala Lumpur.
287 Ibid.
288 Ida Lim, "IGP confirms IS linked to Movida nightclub blast", *The Star*, July 4, 2016, http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/igp-confirms-is-linked-to-movida-nightclub-blast (accessed July 19, 2016).
289 Mah-Rukh Ali, "ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women", Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2015.

empowering parents to detect any changes in behaviour – tailoring towards radicalisation – would be useful as a first-line of defence.

Therefore, in detecting such behaviour, the monitoring of the environment outside of their homes where they are likely to spend part of their time, such as schools, mosques and local squares, is also important. Hence, empowering teachers including Imams and religious tutors, as well as the local communities are invaluable when detecting any potential individuals with any inclination towards being radicalised.

Enhancing Engagement between Authorities and Local Communities

In ensuring the effectiveness in empowering parents, teachers and local communities, it is important that communication channels between these societal groups and authorities be enhanced. This would include authorities' engagements with schools and local communities to build upon the element of trust and to open up platforms for more direct communications. The trust gained and established platforms would ultimately be useful for relevant information – acquired at the grass-root level – to be delivered more effectively. Such engagements would also allow for the information to be disseminated more promptly and through appropriate channels.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Engagements between the public sector and relevant private entities are equally important in supporting counter efforts against Daesh's online presence. To enhance this effort, governments, security forces and other relevant government agencies could engage with communication companies such as the Internet-services provider Google, social-media platform providers such as Facebook and Twitter as well as cyber security companies for the said purpose. This is to strengthen their approaches in countering Daesh's online presence to fight the group's propaganda, radicalisation and recruitment processes as well as other Internet usages.
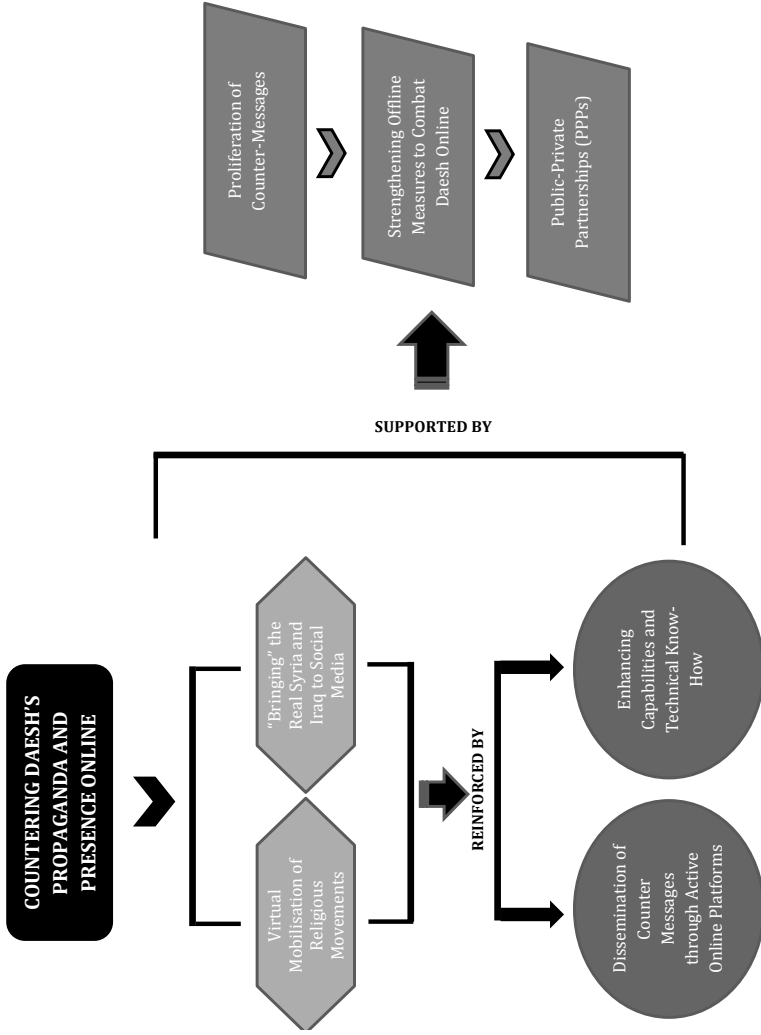
In other words, PPPs could serve to fill the gaps in both knowledge and skills relating to securing the cyber space.290 For instance, companies such as Google or other private cyber security companies could conduct capacity building programmes on utilising available online tools to combat Daesh's presence on the Internet. This would include conducting training on online monitoring analytic programmes as well as on how to make counter-messaging videos more attractive and relevant. As such, lab sessions, seminars, workshops and forums could be jointly conducted between relevant government agencies and the private sector to share information, knowledge and skills.

In addition, government agencies could also give mandates to private security companies to conduct counter-propaganda activities in a bid to heighten the sense of credibility. Nonetheless, it is also important for such partnerships to be formed with care hence, the creation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is needed to ensure that any relevant information or intelligence of possible radicalised individuals or attacks be relayed in a secure and efficient manner.

Essentially, to at least limit Daesh's propaganda and its presence on the Internet, both online and offline measures are required. On top of that, it is also fundamental that the government, society and relevant private sectors take concerted efforts in combating the threat of Daesh online. The following chart is an attempt to put the proposed recommendations into perspective.

290 Elina Noor, Senior Analyst at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia, interview with Author on June 30, 2014, Kuala Lumpur.

Figure 2: Recommendations for Countering Daesh's Propaganda and Presence Online

COUNTERING DAESH'S PROPAGANDA AND PRESENCE ONLINE

"Bringing" the Real Syria and Iraq to Social Media

Virtual Mobilisation of Religious Movements

REINFORCED BY

Enhancing Capabilities and Technical Know-How

Dissemination of Counter Messages through Active Online Platforms

SUPPORTED BY

Proliferation of Counter-Messages

Strengthening Offline Measures to Combat Daesh Online

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

CONCLUSION

With the emergence of various social media platforms today, Daesh's messages and its presence online have managed to reach and impacted a much wider audience as compared to its predecessors. In other words, with the use of social media platforms, Daesh has managed to create a force unseen during the pre-Daesh times with the ability to recruit thousands of foreign fighters from all over the world in a short span of time. It is interesting to witness that even individuals with no direct links to Daesh are able to create a massive wave of support for the group.

Daesh utilises the Internet for various purposes. This includes facilitating recruitment, communication, funding, training, planning and data mining. Additionally, increasing use of the Internet for hacking purposes is also evident in the case of Daesh. Most concerning however is their use of the Internet for spreading propaganda which has proven to be successful in facilitating recruitment and radicalising. The ability of Daesh to turn killings of civilians and raping of women and children into something noble and virtuous is alarming. Hence, it is of utmost urgency that such a force created by Daesh be halted or at the very least limited.

Furthermore, the exploitation of religion in this case is apparent. The continuous distortion of versus from the Quran and hadiths further gives credibility to their actions and the creation of the so-called caliphate. It is against this background that the online mobilisation of religious entities is paramount. Designing a counter force that could quash their beliefs, in their own style and language, would benefit immensely in the effort to counter the threat of Daesh.

The mobilisation of religious movements however would only focus on the religious-based propaganda of Daesh. Therefore, in response to the political, economic and social aspects of Daesh propaganda, it is useful to project the images of the critical situation in Syria and Iraq as a result of Daesh's control as well as Daesh's current weakening state. The images, in the form of counter-messages, would be able to play up the emotions of the readers/viewers on the sufferings of Daesh's victims and to cast doubts in the minds of the readers and viewers of the legitimacy of Daesh.

In reinforcing the effort to counter Daesh's propaganda and presence online, two elements have been proposed. The first is to disseminate the counter messages through active online platforms. Active communication is required in achieving goals that online counter operations set out to do. This would allow for better communications between the disseminator and the recipient, limiting the ability of Daesh to intercept with their own counter messages. In this regard, using active and interactive social media platforms would also require a certain degree of technical know-how.

Therefore, the second reinforcing component involves enhancing capabilities and technical knowledge of the counter-messages' disseminators. This element is crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of the counter-messages. Factors such as whether the counter-messages are reaching the right targeted audiences - whether it is yielding the intended impact or if it is being accepted positively or otherwise - could be analysed through various online monitoring and analytic tools.

Apart from that, it is important to bear in mind that Daesh supporters are active in producing and disseminating Daesh's propaganda. In this aspect, to support the efforts in countering Daesh's presence online, the counter force should also seek to proliferate counter-messages and match the volume produced by the former. One way to achieve this is through limiting bureaucratic procedures in the process of producing counter-messages. Consequently, another important aspect is to design counter-messages that are versatile and based on the culture of the targeted audience. This element is important as effective

counter-messages should resonate well among its recipients. Elements of sincerity and honesty in the messages would also be of added value in the effort to draw the recipients' attention.

Another important element in support of the counter-efforts is strengthening offline measures in combating Daesh's presence online. In this regard, some of the online measures that could be strengthened includes fortifying national laws in order to monitor social media platforms, empower parents, teachers and local communities as well as enhance engagement between authorities and the local communities. These approaches would function as preventive methods as it serves to detect, respond and deter any potential terrorist-related activities whether online or offline.

The third and final element in supporting the efforts against Daesh online is the forging of Public-Private Partnerships. Acknowledging the limitations that governments may face, particularly in terms of credibility and technical knowledge, PPPs could result in producing finer and more effective outputs. In this instance, private companies and NGOs could also play relevant roles in combating the threat of Daesh online, whether through training the government officials or by conducting counter-propaganda activities themselves.

Essentially, fighting the force of Daesh, whether online or offline requires a concerted effort at the international level and from various segments of a nation; from the security forces, to the civil entities, NGOs, CSOs and academicians. However, further research is needed to close the gap in knowledge currently present in the fight against Daesh. Creative ways in dealing with the threat must also be formulated and last but not least, the drive to ensure its success is also crucial.

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