

ACHILLES' HEEL OF DAESH PROPAGANDA

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General Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

ACHILLES' HEEL OF DAESH PROPAGANDA, by MAJ Aidar Tainov, 120 pages.

In this master's thesis, the researcher, representing the Kazakhstan Armed Forces at CGSC, offers a set of recommendations to the military decision makers with possible solutions to counter the radical religious propaganda of Daesh. By exploring the relevance and importance of propaganda for this terrorist group strategy.

This research states the problem and analyzes solutions using the Applied Professional Case Study Model with embedded Army Design Methodology, SCAME (Propaganda Analysis) Technique by determining the Operational Approach, the Stakeholder Analysis as well as Short and Middle-Term Plan. Additionally, the research analyzes Daesh's information campaign as a case study built on information collected from unclassified documents and interviews of a subject matter expert.

This research also pursues an understanding about Daesh propaganda apparatus, mastered platforms, and examines Daesh propaganda products using the SCAME Technique, an analytical tool widely practiced in the U.S. Army.

Finally, this research used primarily CARL resources as well as available open-source data. Unclassified collected data includes recent studies conducted in the Institute for the Study of War, the NATO Strategic Communication Center of Excellence, and other think tank organizations providing in-depth multidisciplinary analysis of Daesh propaganda. This operational approach is based on newly developed Theory of the Maneuver in the Narrative Space.

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ACRONYMS

ADM	Army Design Methodology
APCSM	Applied Professional Case Study Method
CGSC	Command and General Staff College (United States Army)
COE	Center of Excellence
DAESH	ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī ‘l-‘Irāq wa-sh-Shām
MMAS	Master of Military Art and Science
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
IS	Islamic State
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
ISW	Institute for the Study of War
SCAME	source, content, audience, media, and effects
StratCom	Strategic Communication

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The speed in which Daesh seized territory in northern Iraq territory in June 2014 is only comparable with the speed of its propaganda campaign on social media. The brutality, despite in what was the professional products of Daesh's propaganda was not comparable with other terrorist organizations. A nuanced and sophisticated Daesh propaganda capability leveraged multiple platforms used to shape the operational. The use of social media aided in communicating directly with desired audiences. To communicate messages of cruelty to its enemies and evidence of success to supporters and potential recruits Daesh uses different software on various media. Daesh mastered the employment of the modern means of the internet, such as Twitter and Facebook that enabled it to compete with other recruiters like al-Nusra.¹

Propaganda spread through social media became critical for terrorist organizations. Terrorists leverage social media in an attempt to influence the attitudes and behaviors of target audiences in support of their objectives.² More than 2,000 years ago, Sun Tzu wrote that the highest form of military leadership comes from breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. Terrorist organizations' targets are, primarily,

¹ TRADOC G-2 ACE Threat Integration, *Threat Tactics Report Compendium: ISIL, North Korea, Russia, and China* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, September 2015), 17.

² Roger A. Bates and Mara Mooney, "Psychological Operations and Terrorism: The Digital Domain," *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology* 6, no. 1 (February 2016): 1.

vulnerable facilities the striking of which creates negative psychological and economic effects on civilians.³ The internet is well suited to spreading ideological propaganda to a global audience. The internet provides a perfect platform for domestic and international terrorist groups because it: provides easy access and is minimally regulated and censored, provides anonymity of communication, enables a terrorist organization to reach an audience quickly, at low cost, and is a multimedia environment which combines text, graphics, audio, and video. Most importantly, it provides the ability to shape coverage in the regular mass media.⁴ However, the Daesh propaganda apparatus could also be its Achilles' Heel at which countries can strike to defeat this terrorist group.

The Nature of Daesh

“Daesh,” also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). It is designated a terrorist organization by many countries, including the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States of America.⁵ Daesh has seized control of territory in both Iraq and Syria. Daesh affiliates have committed terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Yemen, and other countries. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Abdulla Ibrahim as-Samarai), the leader of this terrorist group declared Daesh as the “worldwide

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” accessed December 25, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>; Serikzhan Ziyadanovich Kanaev, Y. F. Trofimov, and K. S. Lakbayev, *Religious Extremism* (Taraz, Kazakhstan: Senim Press, 2015), 140.

caliphate” on June 29, 2014.⁶ There are some significant characteristics of Daesh, which makes it different from other non-state actors: it is simultaneously a terrorist group, a “state,” and a revolutionary movement; characteristics not seen before in the same non-state actor.⁷

As a terrorist group, Daesh is a threat to the homeland security of many countries. it has the capability to conduct not only indirect, but also direct terrorist attacks-- marshalling not only stand-alone terrorists against innocent people, but also organized groups for more complex, multiple, simultaneous attacks. Daesh has thousands of sympathizers that can use their status of citizenship and taking advantage of their Visa Waiver Program to travel all around the world to conduct terrorist activities in any world megalopolis such as Paris, Brussels, or anywhere else.⁸

The Daesh leadership located in Syria conceived, planned, and directed a terrorist attack that killed 130 people in Paris in November 2015. It was the largest terrorist attack in Western Europe since the Madrid bombing in 2004. This attack was the first direct terrorist attack conducted by Daesh in the Western world.⁹

Just a month later, a couple through to be Daesh sympathizers conducted an act of terrorism in San Bernardino, California that killed fourteen people. In terms of fatalities,

⁶ Michael J. Morell, *The great war of our time: the CIA's fight against terrorism—from al Qaeda to ISIS* (New York, NY: Twelve, 2016), viii.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., vii.

the San Bernardino shooting was the largest terrorist attack since 9/11.¹⁰ In March 2016, Daesh struck Europe again killing thirty-two people in the Brussels airport and subway station, which showed that Daesh could conduct attacks at a much faster pace than al-Qaeda.¹¹ Daesh will probably continue its attacks in Europe. The head of UK's domestic security agency warned about Daesh planning mass-casualty attacks in Britain. Daesh intends to conduct more attacks in the U.S. as well. As Daesh continues to be attrited militarily, it will likely increase its reliance on terror attacks—both inside and outside of Syria and Iraq. In 2017, Daesh will likely conduct large-scale indirect and direct attacks in the name of Daesh involving lone attackers as well as small groups.¹²

Daesh declared itself a “state”, but no countries have recognized it. In addition, Daesh declared that it has an executive “organization”, “army”, and “police force”. It has a set of “laws” and a “judiciary”. Daesh propagates that it provides social services, takes care of the poor, and levies taxes. Daesh still controls territory in Syria and Iraq deeply rooted in those areas. Daesh has destabilized the region that has a third of the world's oil supply.¹³ According to Forbes Magazine, the self-proclaimed “caliph,” al-Baghdadi, who

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Soufan Group, “TSG IntelBrief: The Islamic State in 2017,” January 5, 2017, accessed January 7, 2017, <http://soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-the-islamic-state-in-2017/?catid=3>.

¹³ Morell, ix.

is seeking to establish a radical empire through a global terrorist network, ranked 57th on the list of The World's Most Powerful People of 2016.¹⁴



Figure 1. Daesh's "Global Caliphate" Map

Source: Jake Burman, "ISIS Warning: World in Final Stages of radical Islam masterplan to Take over the West," *The Daily Express Newspaper*, December 21, 2015, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/597254/ISIS-Map-Europe-Terror-Organisation-Andrew-Hosken-Caliphate-Abu-Musab-al-Zarqawi>.

Daesh is also a revolutionary political movement which has gained affiliates among the extremist groups in different regions of the world. Affiliates follow Daesh hoping to realize the ultimate goal of a "Global Caliphate" governed by extreme religious

¹⁴ David M. Ewalt, "The World's Most Powerful People 2016," December 14, 2016, accessed January 7, 2017, <http://www.forbes.com/powerful-people/list/2/#tab:overall>.

views.¹⁵ Daesh plans to invade historical areas of former Muslim states in Europe, Asia, and Africa—from Spain to western China (Figure 1). This terrorist group started its fight in the Iraq and Levant, and its cells in countries finance and recruit new foreign fighters from more than one hundred countries. For more information about the historical background of Daesh, see Appendix A.

Daesh has gained affiliates much faster than al-Qaeda and it has many more followers than al-Qaeda ever had. In just two years, Daesh has militant groups that have sworn allegiance to its cause in nearly twenty-five countries. By joining Daesh, these affiliates evolve from focusing on local issues to focusing on transnational issue and establishing themselves as an extension of the “caliphate”. They start targeting not only local players, but also international players.

For example, in October 2015, the Egyptian affiliate of Daesh killed all 224 passengers and crew on board a Russian charter plane in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula by placing an explosive device in the baggage compartment. Historically, it was only the third time a bomb was used to bring down a plane during the last 25 years. This attack represented the largest loss of life due to the downing of an airliner since Pan Am 103 in 1988.¹⁶

In Kazakhstan, the Antiterrorism Center, which is the primary lead combating terrorism efforts in the country, recently released an annual report emphasizing the importance of the problem of Daesh sympathizer. During the last year, 12 potential

¹⁵ Morell, x.

¹⁶ Ibid., iiv.

terrorist attacks were prevented; unfortunately, two attacks occurred in the cities of Aqtobe and Almaty conducted by Salafi-Jihadi terrorists. More than 90 people from the Salafi community in Kazakhstan were intercepted with the intent to fight for international terrorist organizations, including Daesh in Syria. In addition, it identified counterpropaganda against religious extremism in Kazakhstan as the center's most neglected line of effort, which requires more attention to be successful.¹⁷

Daesh's Ultimate Goal

Based on this terrorist group's long-term plan, Kazakhstan as well as other Central Asian countries are considered to part of the future "Khurasan Province" of the "Islamic Caliphate", as shown in figure 1.¹⁸ Some major terrorist organizations operating in Central Asian countries, like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, have joined Daesh by swearing an oath of allegiance to Daesh leaders in support of the fight for a "caliphate".¹⁹ Hundreds of people from Central Asia have fought with Daesh, and they are going back to their countries which is very problematic. In August 2014, the black flag of Daesh was hung from a bridge in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. It is a

¹⁷ Aisultan Kulshmanov, "КНБ: Динамика вовлечения казахстанцев в деструктивные религиозные течения не снижается," *TengriNews News Portal Home Page*, April 4, 2017, accessed April 4, 2017 https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/knb-dinamika-vovlecheniya-kazahstantsev-destruktivnyie-315392/.

¹⁸ Jake Burman, "ISIS Warning: World in Final Stages of radical Islam masterplan to Take Over the West," *The Daily Express Newspaper*, December 21, 2015, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/597254/ISIS-Map-Europe-Terror-Organisation-Andrew-Hosken-Caliphate-Abu-Musab-al-Zarqawi>.

¹⁹ Merhat Sharipzhan, "IMU Declares It Is Now Part of the Islamic State," August 6, 2015, accessed January 7, 2017, <http://www.rferl.org/a/imu-islamic-state/27174567.html>.

sign of Daesh’s presence in the region aiming at public resonance and dissemination of their “terrorist idea”.²⁰

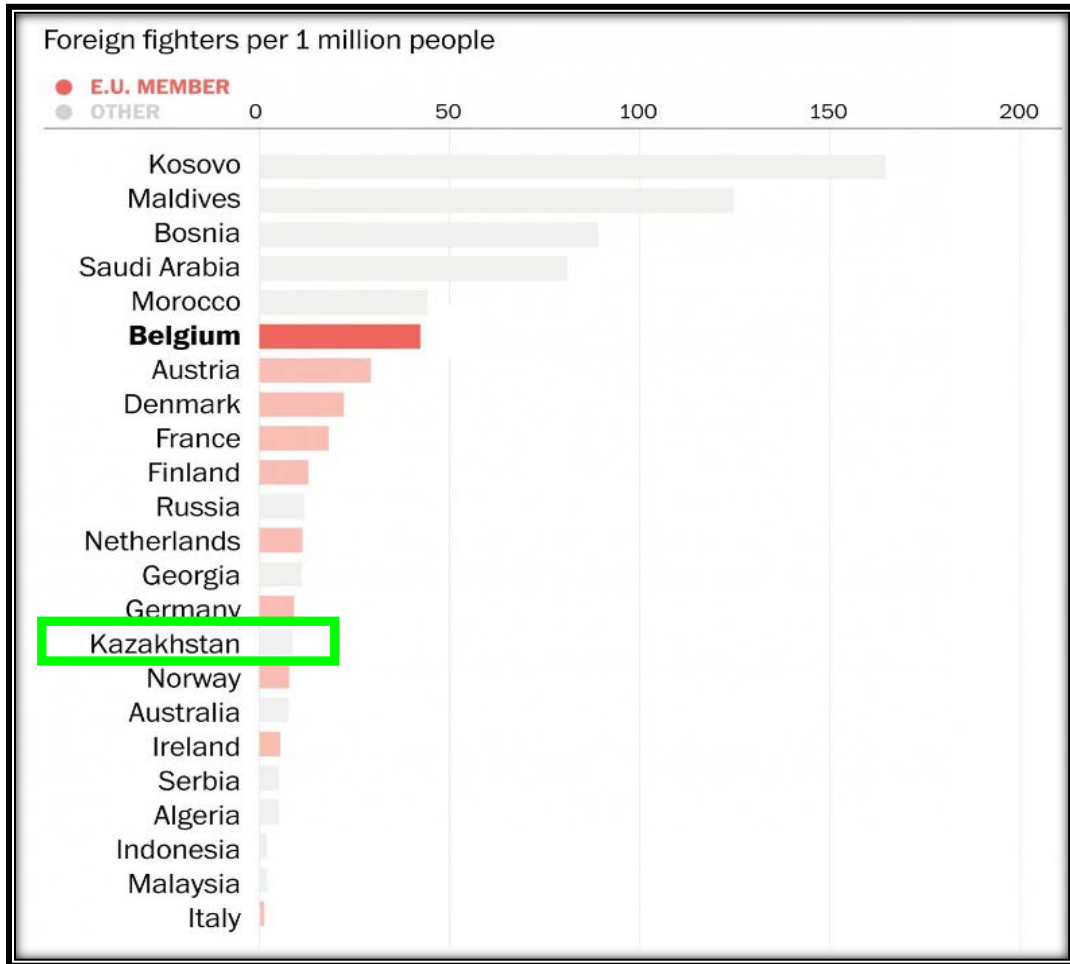


Figure 2. Where ISIS Foreign Fighters Come From

Source: Matt Zapotosky and Adam Goldman, “How vulnerable is the United States to a Brussels-like attack,” *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2016, accessed December 6, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-vulnerable-is-the-united-states-to-a-brussels-like-attack/2016/03/22/3a848992-f03e-11e5-a61f-e9c95c06edca_story.html?utm_term=.3d7cb5fc7899.

²⁰ Catherine, Putz, “Is ISIS Behind Threats in Uzbekistan?” May 5, 2015, accessed January 7, 2017, www.thediplomat.com/2015/05/is-ISIS-behind-threats-in-uzbekistan/.

In Kazakhstan, an incident involving Daesh has not taken place, but the high number of Daesh foreign fighters from Kazakhstan is a serious concern. According to the one of the latest estimates, as shown in Figure 2, Kazakhstan ranks 15th among countries from where Daesh foreign fighters come.²¹ Over 300 citizens who left Kazakhstan were found fighting among Daesh terrorists in the occupied Syrian territory.²²

What will happen if they decide to come back to Kazakhstan? Is there any guarantee that after experiencing combat with Daesh terrorists they will stay passive? Will they come back to recruit more terrorist supporters, or even new Daesh “fighters”? There are many possibilities and grave risks regarding these “foreign fighters”, and they are a threat to Kazakh society. For more information about Kazakhstan and the chronology of events related to terrorism in Kazakhstan, see Appendix B.

Statement of the Problem

One of the most significant factors of this condition is the Daesh “propaganda machine,” which inspired twenty thousand young men and women from roughly ninety countries to travel to Syria and Iraq to the fight. The spread of Daesh propaganda

²¹ Matt Zaposky and Adam Goldman, “How vulnerable is the United States to a Brussels-like attack,” *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2016, accessed December 6, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-vulnerable-is-the-united-states-to-a-brussels-like-attack/2016/03/22/3a848992-f03e-11e5-a61f-e9c95c06edca_story.html?utm_term=.3d7cb5fc7899.

²² The Soufan Group, “Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq,” December 7, 2015, accessed January 7, 2017, http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf, 8.

radicalized many young people around the globe and convinced them to conduct complex attacks at the direction of Daesh leadership.²³

Purpose of the Study

The researcher chose to pursue this endeavor because he has a keen interest in the success of Kazakhstan's security services on the battlefield of tomorrow. The researcher will describe the rich and deep context of a setting associated with a complex operational environment and inform policy makers about possible options to counter Daesh propaganda. The recommendations of this research will consist of a set of actions to improve the situation against Daesh propaganda within the interagency efforts, particularly the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Furthermore, Kazakhstan's Armed Forces require proper information operations capabilities to respond to contemporary challenges and threats. Military information support operations, civil-military operations, and cyberspace operations play a special role and need to be maximized to counter Daesh's propaganda.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following primary research question: How can Kazakhstan more effectively counteract Daesh's information warfare activities? The secondary questions are following:

1. Is propaganda the center of gravity for Daesh?
2. What are the most significant vulnerabilities of Daesh propaganda?

²³ Morell, 307.

3. How can Daesh propaganda be defeated in Kazakhstan?
4. What additional measures must Kazakhstan, as a Central Asian country, take in the short- and middle-term time period against Daesh information warfare activities to effectively fight against it?

Definition of Terms

In this research “Daesh” is used as the name of this Takfiri and Salafi-Jihadi group, instead of “Islamic State”, or its abbreviations such IS, ISIL, ISIS. “Daesh” is an acronym of ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī ‘l-‘Irāq wa-sh-Shām, which means “Islamic State of Iraq and Sham.” Because the acronym of “Daesh” sounds like an Arabic word that can have multiple shades of meaning from “to trample down and crush” to “bigot who imposes his view on the others.” Furthermore, this group hates to be identified with this name.²⁴ Additionally, by using ISIS, ISIL or IS, the global community appears to legitimize them and aids in spreading their extremist narrative.

Although the researcher used the term “propaganda,” as in the context of “Daesh propaganda,” the term includes all information warfare activities of Daesh.

Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

The most significant limits for this study are time and the classification level of references. CGSC allows international students one academic year, or ten-month period, to complete their Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) Degree Program. For such

²⁴ NATO StratCom COE, “DAESH Information Campaign and its Influence: Results of the Study,” January 8, 2015, accessed 1 November 2016, <http://stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/3461>, 10.

a study at the master's level thesis, this is an important limitation, especially as a full-time student and additional international officer obligations occurring simultaneously. It did not allow this research to be closely conducted with other programs and organizations. While working on the last chapters, the researcher intended to reach other researchers with similar topic and events related to the investigation, but he did not have enough time.

Recent publically released publications such as *Media Jihad: The Islamic State's Doctrine for Information Warfare* by Charlie Winter was not fully covered in this research because of the time constraints. This material introduces Daesh so-called "media" operations and *Media Operative, You Are a Mujahid, Too* by Daesh propagandists. It is directly related to this topic, although was not completely investigated for this research.

This research is based on open source documents. A process of research requires a wider range of analysis especially when it is related to counterpropaganda tactics, techniques, procedures, and best practices.

The scope of this study is limited because it only covers Daesh's propaganda campaign. The results of this case study are research related to this specific propaganda campaign. This research will not assess Kazakhstan's overall counterterrorist efforts or other actors' effectiveness fighting terrorism. It is restricted to counterpropaganda.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The information campaign of Daesh is one of the key aspects of its strategy.²⁵ This terrorist group spreads its messages through modern platforms to connect with its fighters, garner support from sympathizers, receive financial support around the globe, and influence its opponents. This research seeks to understand and reassess the vulnerabilities of Daesh propaganda and develop measures against the rising indirect threat, particularly for the Kazakhstan security services.

This chapter includes the description of primary and additional sources used for this study.

Primary Sources

Alberto M. Fernandez, the U.S. State Department's Coordinator for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, stated in May 2015 that there was not enough research and analysis on Daesh propaganda to fight against it effectively.²⁶ The phenomenon of Daesh is new, and analyzing its propaganda efforts takes time. In 2014,

²⁵ Jennifer Cafarella, Harleen Gambhir, and Katherine Zimmerman, "U.S. Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda, Report Three," ISW. Washington, DC, February 2016, accessed January 23, 2017, <http://post.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/PLANEX%20Report%203%20FINAL.pdf>, 12.

²⁶ Greg Miller, "In a propaganda war against ISIS, the U.S. tried to play by the enemy's rules," May 8, 2015, *The Washington Post*, accessed February 30, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/in-a-propaganda-war-us-tried-to-play-by-the-enemys-rules/2015/05/08/6eb6b732-e52f-11e4-81ea-0649268f729e_story.html?utm_term=.6fac3c5796d1.

Daesh maximized its information campaign and it has not been significantly decreased until now. Fortunately, since 2015 researchers at the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and NATO StratCom COE, as well as some other organizations published results of their studies which were focused specifically on Daesh's information campaign. Additionally, the researcher met LTC Brain Steed who developed *The Theory of Maneuver in the Narrative Space* which stated that the decisive operation against Daesh must be non-lethal and ideological in nature, and physical or lethal aspects need to be shaping operations.

The most recent analysis on the topic of Daesh propaganda was published in December 2016 conducted by Harleen Gambhir and entitled "The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS's Information Warfare." This was the result of her two-year research at the ISW in Washington, D.C. Gambhir is one of the most influential authors whose works are used in this research. She used military methodologies to frame the problem and enforced arguments with evidence from the ongoing events in Iraq, Syria and other places.

In "The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS's Information Warfare," Gambhir presents the Daesh's narrative, its strategy, and objectives in the frame of information operations. She explains the Daesh strategic narrative from the speech of Abu Muhammad al-Adnani which is crucial from the Daesh strategic communication perspective. This brings deep understanding of the Daesh perceptions, their thoughts, and ultimate goals. Gambhir proposes a possible Daesh operational approach and its lines of effort. Each line of effort contains certain information operation objectives supported by evidence as examples.

Illustrated evidence from recent events related to Daesh propaganda are significant and show the deep analysis on which her work is based. This work was conducted during the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program at ISW, which is well known

for its studies on Daesh grand strategy, as well as situation reports from Syria and Iraq with updated maps.²⁷ ISW is an organization with an advanced understanding of military affairs through various research and analysis.²⁸

Gambhir presents Daesh ends, ways and means that it employs in its propaganda campaign using U.S. military joint publication terms. She frames the operational environment in military terms. For an explanation of Daesh's ways of propaganda, she compares and correlates to information-related capabilities from the U.S. joint publications. To explain the Daesh information campaign, she presents the structure of media organizations of Daesh as well as online platforms and applications. As a conclusion, Gambhir defends significance of her point of view about a new phenomenon of the "Virtual Caliphate."

In addition to Garbhir's work, the results of the study on "Daesh Information Campaign and Its Influence" by NATO StratCom COE is the second significant source used in this study. NATO StratCom COE approached the problem of Daesh propaganda with various methods. Six techniques were employed to conduct this study. The methodology of NATO StratCom CoE study was not limited by the traditional military propaganda analysis technique of SCAME. To analyze the root of the problem from different perspectives related to strategic communication and information operations, disciplines such as, social psychology, communication, and social media analysis brought

²⁷ ISW, "Biography of Harleen Gambhir," accessed February 28, 2017 <http://www.understandingwar.org/press-media/staff-bios/harleen-gambhir>.

²⁸ ISW, "Mission Statement," accessed February 28, 2017 <http://understandingwar.org/mission-statement>.

five additional techniques: brainstorming in syndicates, visual framing, eye tracking, applied persuasive technique, and social network media analysis.²⁹

As a result, the study provided a broad explanation of historical information about the name of Daesh, and the road to conflict. Approaching from macro to micro analysis, the study states core themes and messages as well as target audiences influenced by Daesh propaganda. In the conclusion of this study, NATO StratCom COE emphasized that Daesh used commonly known Cialdini's principles of influence for its propaganda.

Additional Sources

TRADOC G2's *Threat Tactic Reports*, FMSO's *Watch OE*, as well as *Religious Extremism* by Kanaev S.Z. were used for specific information on the historical background regarding Daesh-related events in Kazakhstan, major stakeholders in the region, and the current approach of the Kazakhstan government against Daesh. Analyzing the state through the stakeholder framework enables an in understanding of the depth of situation analysis and visualizing the future desired condition.

All findings from these sources are crucial for understanding the current operational environment. Nevertheless, to visualize the future or desired end state and develop an operational approach requires more thought regarding the problem.

During the research, additional significant sources referring to the recommendations on countering Daesh propaganda shaped the desired end state and operational approach. Insightful recommendations developed in the U.S. Naval War

²⁹ NATO StratCom COE, 7.

College as well as the theory on fighting Daesh using a similar method developed at CGSC.

LCDR Nathan K. Schneider wrote “ISIS and Social Media: The Combatant Commander’s Guide to Countering ISIS’s Social Media Campaign” during his master’s program of study at the U.S. Naval War College. Schneider recommended taking more offensive actions against Daesh propaganda. To broadly understand the environment in social media, in which Daesh considered as winning the information battles, the author suggests the development of information collections in social media through open-source intelligence branch, the so-called social media intelligence (SOCMINT).³⁰

Additionally to taken defensive measures against Daesh propaganda, LCDR Schneider recommends combatant commanders initiate information campaigns to defeat Daesh in social media.³¹ To maximize effectiveness, he suggest cooperating with other agencies, such as the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Center of Strategic Counterterrorist Communication and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations. He also proposes using offensive cyberspace capabilities in destroying and degrading Daesh propaganda.

³⁰ Nathan K. Schneider, “ISIS and Social Media: The Combatant Commander’s Guide to Countering ISIS’s Social Media Campaign” (Paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, June 7, 2015), accessed January 22, 2017, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA621060>, 20.

³¹ Ibid., 26.

Interview

Interviews are one of the most common ways of data collection.³² An individual interview aims at attainment of rich and personalized information from the source.³³ The researcher interviewed LTC Brian L. Steed, an instructor in the Department of Military History at CGSC, an author of several books on Daesh and developer of the “Theory of Maneuver in the Narrative Space.” According to his theory the decisive operation of U.S. efforts against Daesh on the Middle Eastern battlefield is in the Narrative Space.

LTC Steed participated in a strategic multilayer assessment of the problem of Daesh, led by the U.S. Joint Staff J-39 in support of the U.S. Special Operation Command Central. In the results of this work titled, “Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper: Maneuver and Engagement in the Narrative Space” published in January 2016, it is stated that “the U.S. and its allies could respond to ISIL with a multinational, long-term engagement strategy in which the main effort would be to maneuver and engage the human domain in the narrative space.”³⁴ It is suggested using Network Engagement Pillars as well as the Cognitive Intelligence Preparation of Battlefield in place of the physical Intelligence Preparation of Battlefield.

³² Dawson R. Hancock, *Doing case study research: a practical guide for beginning researchers* (New York, NY, Teachers College Press, 2006), 39.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ BG Charles L. Moore Jr., Deputy Director, Global Operations (J-39); LTC Brian Steed, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; MSG Sohail Shaikh, U.S. Army Asymmetric Warfare Group, “Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper: Maneuver and Engagement in the Narrative Space,” January 2016, accessed January 22, 2017, <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/ProjectGray/Maneuver%20in%20the%20Narrative%20Space.pdf>, 7.

Data collected from the interview and other sources will be integrated into the framing of the operational environment using the Army Design Methodology (ADM).

U.S. Army publications and ADM as the Models for Analysis

The Daesh case study will be framed using the ADM. According to the Army doctrine, “ADM is a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe unfamiliar problems and approaches to solving them.”³⁵ “Army design methodology entails framing an operational environment, framing a problem, and developing an operational approach to solve the problem.”³⁶

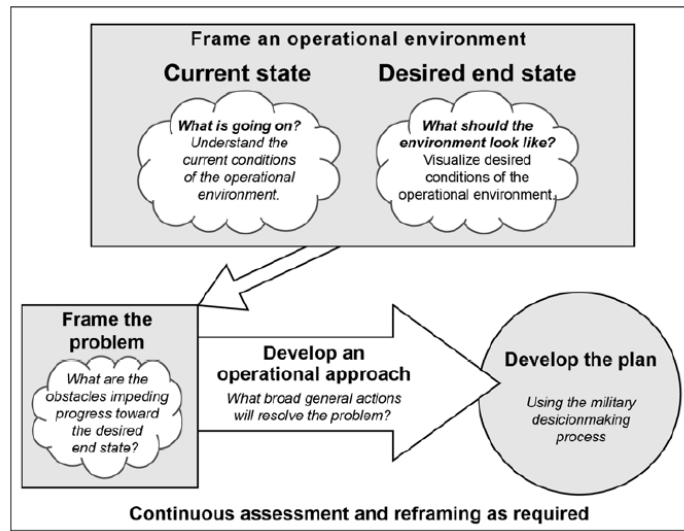


Figure 3. Army Design Methodology

Source: Department of Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-8.

³⁵ Department of Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 10.

³⁶ Department of Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-6.

ADM, as shown in figure 3, is used for conceptual thinking about complex problems, such as Daesh propaganda spreading worldwide. ADM allows a greater understanding of the current operational environment and aids in visualizing an appropriate operational approach. An improved understanding may lead Kazakhstan's military decision makers to modify their operational approach or develop an entirely new approach. The results and estimates from ADM can be developed to counter terrorism in Kazakhstan.

Description of Framing an Operational Environment

The first step of the ADM process is framing the operational environment in order to establish a context for describing the problem and developing an operational approach. Framing provides a perspective of understanding and acting on a problem.³⁷ Framing the operational environment covers selecting, organizing, interpreting, and making sense of interrelated variables and important actors.

Description of the Current State of an Operational Environment

In framing a current operational environment, the researcher will first provide general information and a historical background of this case study. Secondly, the researcher will focus on defining, analyzing, and synthesizing the characteristics of different variables through the SCAME (Source, Content, Audience, Media and Effects)

³⁷ Ibid.

Technique of Analysis which is one of the most common techniques used in the U.S. Army to analyze details of an opponent's propaganda.³⁸

Source analysis reveals various actors involved in the design, development, and dissemination of a propaganda campaign.³⁹ "Source is a person, thing, or activity from which information is obtained".⁴⁰ An identification of these sources, or means, enables considering enemy's capabilities and intent.⁴¹ In this section, the researcher will analyze Daesh media structures as well as key individuals involved in its propaganda.

Content analysis covers what the propaganda campaign says and what enemy is trying to persuade to the selected target audience.⁴² In this section, the researcher covers Daesh propaganda campaign's core message and narrative themes. "Message is a narrowly focused communication directed at a specific audience to support a specific theme".⁴³ Narrative is a story which makes sense of a particular case to individuals,

³⁸ Department of Army, FM 3-05.301, *Psychological Operations Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 6-29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-10.

⁴⁰ Department of Defense, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 217.

⁴¹ Department of Army, FM 3-05.301, 11-10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11-11.

⁴³ Department of Defense, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 152.

objects, and events.⁴⁴ Individuals, groups, organizations, and countries all have their narrative with various elements that reflect and reveal their understanding.⁴⁵

Audience analysis attempts to understand which target audience the enemy selected and is attempting to reach. By definition, “target audience is an individual or group selected for influence”.⁴⁶ By considering the enemy’s target audience, the propaganda themes and symbols can be analyzed for effective counterpropaganda programs.⁴⁷ This section consists of Daesh target audiences structured by lines of effort of its propaganda campaign. A line of effort is “a line that links multiple tasks using the logic of purpose rather than geographical reference to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions”.⁴⁸

Media analysis determines why the enemy selected particular media, what capabilities the enemy used, and how consistently the propaganda took place.⁴⁹ The researcher analyzes distribution platforms used by Daesh as well as its method of dissemination.

⁴⁴ Department of Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, *Army Design Methodology* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1-9.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, *Joint Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), GL-4.

⁴⁷ Department of Army, FM 3-05.301, 6-29.

⁴⁸ Department of Army, ATP 5-0.1, 5-6.

⁴⁹ Department of Army, FM 3-05.301, 11-13.

The most important step of this technique is effect analysis. The ultimate measurement of effectiveness of an enemy's propaganda is the change in the target audience behaviors and attitudes.⁵⁰ This section provides the elements of success of the Daesh propaganda campaign and its long-term effects.

Description of Desired End State of an Operational Environment

“A desired end state consists of those desired conditions that, if achieved, meet the objectives of policy, orders, guidance, and directives issued by higher authorities. A condition is a reflection of the existing state of the operational environment. Thus, a desired condition is a sought-after future state of the operational environment”.⁵¹ This research will provide a diagram of the desired end state for the Kazakhstan security forces and develop a narrative clarifying it.

A narrative will explain events or phenomenon by proposing a question that relate to the artifacts themselves.⁵² Possible questions for development of a narrative are the following:

1. What do I see, and what does it mean?
2. Where does the situation begin and end?
3. What has happened, and what is still going on? What are the reasons of this situation?
4. What kind of information must be missing?

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11-14.

⁵¹ Department of Army, ADRP 5-0, 2-8.

⁵² Department of Army, ATP 5-0.1, 1-9.

Description of Framing the Problem

According to ADRP 5-0, a problem is an issue or obstacle, which creates a barrier to reaching the desired state or accomplish the objective. In the context of the operational problem, it is the set of issues that prevents from achieving desired end state. Problem framing includes identification and understanding of those issues that prevent progress toward the desired end state.⁵³ The researcher will provide the problem statement for the case study in accordance with statements from previous sections.

Description of an Operational Approach Development

“An operational approach is a description of the broad actions the force must take to transform current conditions into those desired at end state”.⁵⁴ The operational approach is based on analysis of the operational environment and the stated problem.⁵⁵ The researcher will provide the operational approach for this case study similar to the one shown in Figure 4.

⁵³ Ibid., 2-9.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Glossary-5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 2-10.

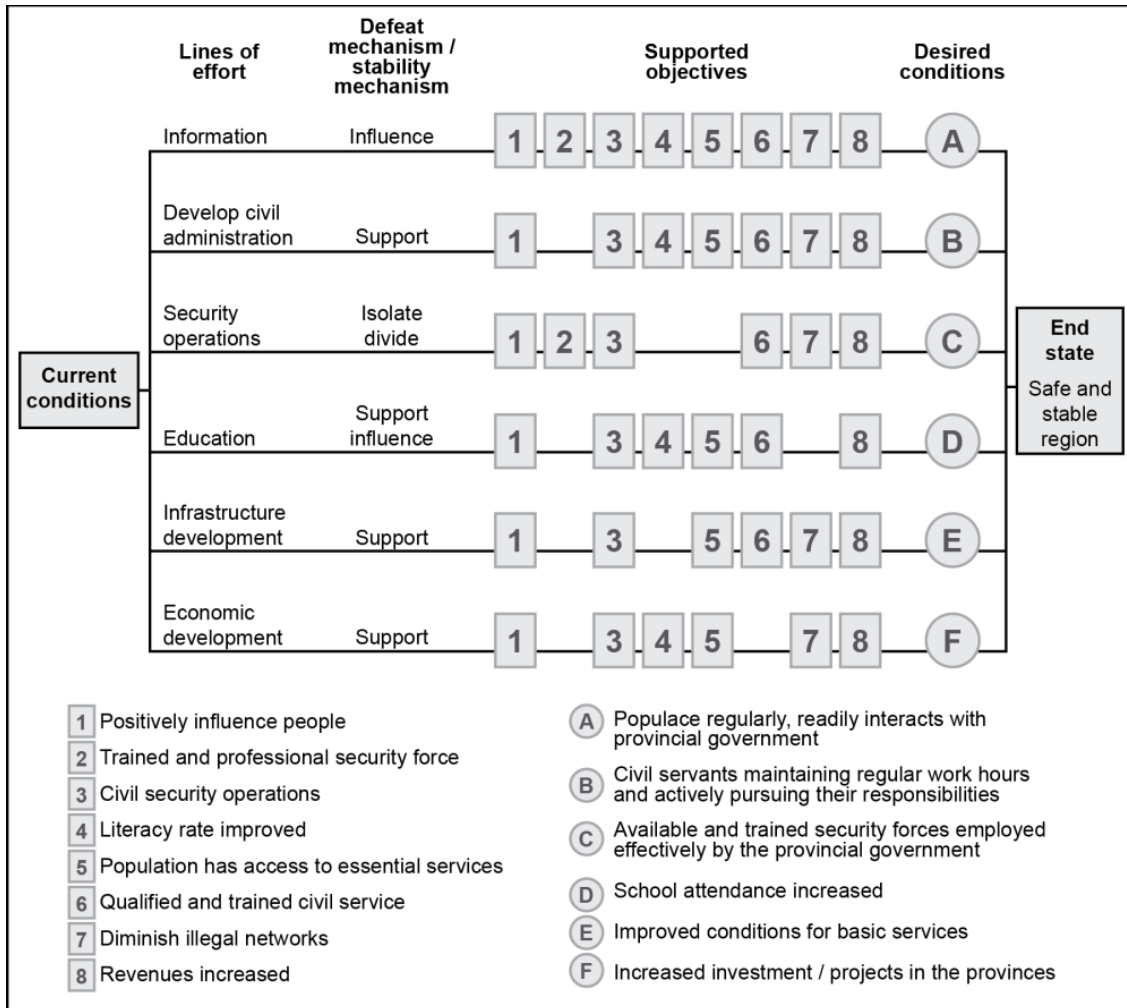


Figure 4. Sample operational approach

Source: Department of Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, *Army Design Methodology* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 5-9.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview about the main sources on Daesh propaganda, as well as the additional literature, the source for interview and models used for data analysis in this research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

The researcher will use Dr. Kenneth Long's Applied Professional Case Study Method (APCSM). By definition, a qualitative case study research method is used to conduct a practical investigation of a current phenomenon and the research problem within its natural context using several sources of evidence.⁵⁶ The qualitative approach allows a broader view during the research and flexibility by using different sources of evidence. In addition, it permits a holistic, broad, multi-sourced view of a complex environment.

This research is qualitative because it is case study focused on Daesh propaganda with multiple sources of data, from recent analytical documents and an interview regarding Daesh.

Description of Campaign Under Study

The case under consideration is Daesh's continuing propaganda campaign in several regions, including Central Asia, specifically in Kazakhstan. What makes Daesh different from other terrorist groups is its mastery of propaganda. The world has not seen such a massive volume of sophisticated messaging from a relatively small group. It has influenced the international community through the news cycle of developed countries. It helps this terrorist group maintain communication with affiliates from Pakistan to Nigeria

⁵⁶ Hancock, 15.

by directing decisive terrorist attacks and supporting operations in Turkey, Europe and North America. Twitter is one of the main means of communication Daesh uses, but not the only one. Through #hashtags the group has the ability to get its messages out within a matter of minutes to the majority of the world. Its videos with subtitles followed by instrumental music and chanting spread all over the internet using different platforms.⁵⁷

Sources of Information

Daesh has run its propaganda campaign for several years. The gathered data comes from the literature sources in chapter two. Two study results are primary sources and additional sources, including an interview with LTC Brian L. Steed, a subject matter expert on Daesh, will be used for data. All qualitative data collected is sorted and analyzed using models and concepts consistent with the APCSM.

Description of Applied Professional Case Study Method

The APCSM is a framework for conducting case study research through the lens of a profession's accepted body of knowledge. Through this method, Daesh propaganda campaign will be investigated. APCSM was developed through the applied research efforts of officers and research committees examining important and complex problem areas for several years at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College within the Military Masters of Art and Science Program.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Brian L. Steed, *ISIS: An Introduction and Guide to the Islamic State* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC), 63.

⁵⁸ Kenneth E. Long, "Case Studies in Action: A Practical Method for Gaining Useful Insights in the Military Masters of Arts and Sciences program" (lecture, *Forty-*

APCSM provides an effective approach for making critical decisions by conducting research to either inform or persuade selected leadership. By effectively using this model, master's degree level research became a systematic, consistent, and aligned argument for research design. The approach emphasizes a research design driven by answering questions of professional interest to decision-makers and stakeholders in the problem area's environment.

Key Elements of APCSM

Purpose of the Research, Intended Audience and Initial Recommendation

APCSM requires the researcher to identify the intended decision maker for whom the case study is prepared. Also, it requires choosing either to inform or persuade the selected decision maker. Additionally, the researcher needs to state the initial personal recommendation for the problem.⁵⁹

As stated in the chapter one, the purpose of the research is to inform policy makers of the rich and deep context of the operational environment. This research is for Kazakhstani decision makers at the country's interagency Antiterrorism Center. The initial personal recommendation of the researcher is to enhance the information operations capabilities of Kazakhstan's security services through military information support operations, civil-military operations, and cyberspace operations.

Third Annual Conference of the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, New Orleans, LA, March 24, 2016).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Context-Appropriate Models

To understand the broad context of the setting the researcher will employ two analytical models used by the U.S. Army—the Army Design Methodology (ADM) and the SCAME propaganda analysis technique. The researcher will use ADM to develop an operational approach for Kazakhstan’s security services. It will review the broader context for the analysis to format the situation boundaries. To analyze specific propaganda details, the researcher applies the SCAME analysis technique. Both models were described in chapter two.

Conduct Stakeholder Analysis

According to APCSM, this stage of the research will identify stakeholders in the environment in terms of their level of interest and capacity to shape the environment. The Stakeholder Analysis is a conceptual model that makes sense of the case study recommendations. It will enable an assessment of the initial recommendations as well as the operational approach generated from the ADM. In this research, the Chief Decision Maker is identified as the head of the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The two key stakeholders are identified as the Chief of Staff of the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan’s General Prosecutor. These are appropriate choices due to their role in Kazakhstan’s counterterrorism efforts.

The researcher presented initial “good recommendations” in the introduction—chapter one and updated “better recommendations” in the analysis—chapter four. Finally,

the researcher will reassess previous recommendations and state improved, or the “best recommendations” in chapter five.⁶⁰

In the analysis (chapter four), the researcher will use Stakeholder Analysis. “Stakeholders are people and organizations who are affected by a particular issue, or who can influence the issue. For the purposes of the analysis, stakeholders can be individual people and organizations, or they can be groups or categories of people and organizations who share a broadly common position and interest on the issue.”⁶¹

The Stakeholder Analysis will be appropriate for the information gathered using the following steps:

1. Identification of the stakeholders;
2. Analysis of the stakeholders;
3. Sort the results of the analysis;
4. Selection of key individuals and influencing approach.⁶²

The researcher will provide recommendations based on short- and middle-term time periods, defined as one to two years for short-term actions, and three to five years for long-term actions. These time frames are consistent with typical military decision timeframes at the national level. The recommendations will be prioritized into three

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ian Chandler, *Mini Guide #4: Stakeholder Analysis* (Wales, UK: The Pressure Group, December 2014), accessed March 11, 2017, <http://thepressuregroup.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Mini-Guide-4-Stakeholder-Analysis.pdf>, 1.

⁶² Ibid.

groups: I-Must be done, II-Should be done, and III-Should be done if resources are unconstrained.⁶³

Final recommendations must meet the three decision criteria of “Suitable,” “Feasible” and “Acceptable.” Suitable is defined as accomplishes the mission or meets the requirement. Feasible is defined as affordable within reasonable resource constraints given the chief decision maker’s current fiscal environment. Acceptable is defined as reasonably certain to be supported by key stakeholders.⁶⁴

The description of APCSM with lecture notes and slides is shown in Appendices D and E.

⁶³ Long.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

Kazakhstan has continued to struggle with the indirect threat of religious extremist groups, including Daesh. Daesh attempts to win the hearts and minds of the vulnerable social classes of Kazakhstan society. Daesh employs robust amounts of sophisticated propaganda using social media platforms in the local common languages. In order to counter Daesh propaganda, Kazakhstan needs to study best practices.

This chapter includes an analysis of the research on Daesh propaganda in accordance with the methodology described in chapter three.

Operational Environment

Current State of the Operational Environment

General Information

Daesh has destabilized the overall situation in the Middle East, specifically Iraq and Syria. It poses a threat to international peace and security. Daesh continues to commit massive and systematic violations through indiscriminate killing and deliberate targeting of civilians, mass executions and extrajudicial killings, persecution of individuals and entire communities on the basis of their identity, kidnapping of civilians, forced displacement of Shia communities and minority groups, killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and numerous other atrocities. Daesh is a global

terrorist threat that recruits thousands of terrorists to fight in Iraq and Syria. It also uses technology to spread its violent extremist ideology and incite terrorist acts.⁶⁵

According to United Nations estimates, Daesh killed more than 18,800 civilians in Iraq between 2014 and October 2015.⁶⁶ In Syria, Daesh is believed responsible for the death of at least 4000 Syrians between June 2014 and January 2016.⁶⁷

In an attempt to deter Daesh influence, the U.S. began airstrikes on Iraqi provinces occupied by Daesh. On September 10, 2014, the U.S. announced the formation of an international coalition against Daesh.⁶⁸ By March 22, 2017, the U.S.-led international coalition consisted of 68 countries.⁶⁹ Over 9,000 troops from 23 countries deployed to Iraq supporting the military efforts to defeat Daesh.⁷⁰ Coalition forces conducted more than 19,000 airstrikes on Daesh targets and removed tens of thousands of foreign fighters, including 180 senior to mid-level Daesh leaders. Russia began conducting separate airstrikes in 2015, targeting Daesh as well as several other terrorist

⁶⁵ Department of State, “The Global Coalition to Counter ISIS,” accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/s/seci/>.

⁶⁶ Alastair Jamieson, “ISIS Death Toll: 18,800 Killed in Iraq in 2 Years, U.N. Says,” *NBC News*, January 19, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-death-toll-18-800-killed-iraq-2-years-u-n499426>.

⁶⁷ Lizzie Dearden, “ISIS executes more than 4,000 people in less than two years,” *The Independence*, April 30, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-has-executed-more-than-4000-people-in-under-two-years-of-the-islamic-state-in-syria-a7007876.html>.

⁶⁸ Department of State, “The Global Coalition - Working to Defeat ISIS,” March 22, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/268609.htm>.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

groups such as Al-Nusra. The U.S. Central Command and the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command conduct operations, which have lines of effort against propaganda, particularly in Voice Operations and Counter-External Operations (Ex-Ops).⁷¹

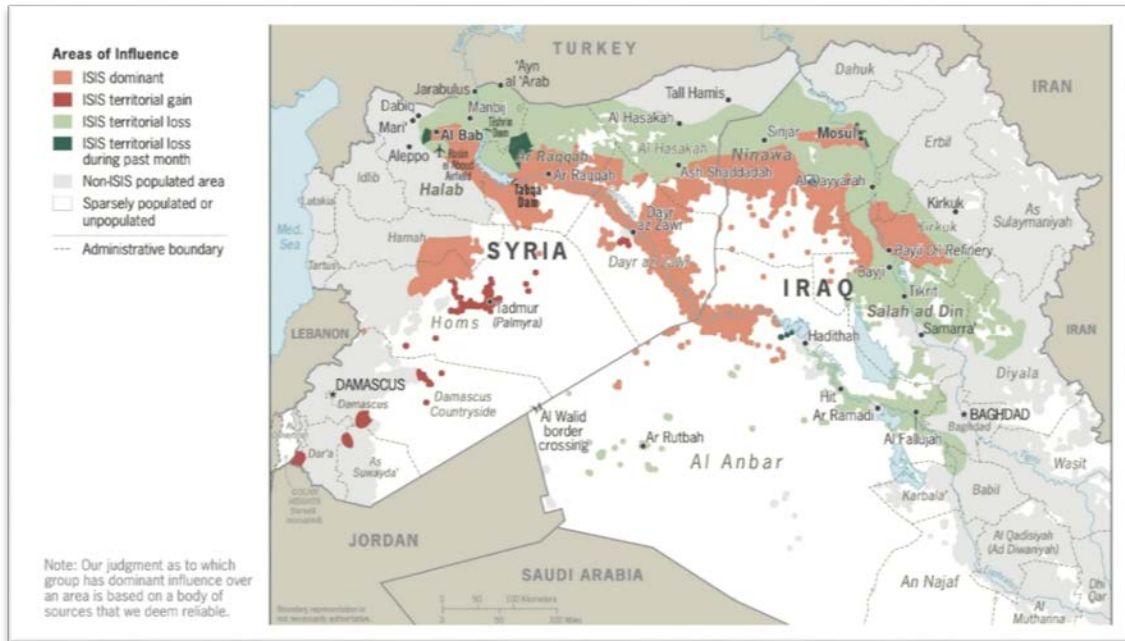


Figure 5. Daesh Areas of Influence – January 2017 Update

Source: The Global Coalition, “Daesh Areas of Influence – January 2017 Update,” accessed April 3, 2017, http://theglobalcoalition.org/en/maps_and_stats/daesh-areas-of-influence-january-2017-update/.

⁷¹ Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Dan Lamothe “Obama administration expands elite military unit’s powers to hunt foreign fighters globally,” *The Washington Post*, November 25, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/11/25/obama-administration-expands-elite-military-units-powers-to-hunt-foreign-fighters-globally/?utm_term=.5e65017c26dc; GEN James N. Mattis, U.S. Marine Corps, Commander U.S. Central Command, “Statement before the Senate Armed Services’ Committee on the Posture of U.S. Central Command,” March 1, 2011, accessed March 23, 2017, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Mattis%2003-01-11.pdf>, 39-40.

Along multiple lines of effort, U.S.-led coalition forces are building resistance to extremist propaganda. To counter Daesh propaganda, the coalition created a working group led by the UAE, UK, and U.S. The Global Counter-ISIS Coalition Communication Working Group supports a multinational effort against violent extremist messaging, which is led by the Counter-ISIS Communications Cell in London and the Sawab Center in Abu Dhabi.⁷²

Daesh has started to lose territory in Iraq and Syria. By January 2017, it had lost, 35,000 to 36,000 square kilometers or 62 percent of the territory it controlled in Iraq in August 2014, and 13,000 to 14,000 square kilometers or 30 percent in Syria.⁷³ Figure 5 shows the map depicting ISIS areas of influence.

According to Gambhir, the phenomenon of a “Virtual Caliphate” bred by Daesh's robust propaganda increasingly became a new challenge for the international community. It will likely drive sympathizers and affiliates much longer than Daesh's physical “caliphate.”⁷⁴ Daesh efforts in social media may become uncontrollable through an online fundamentalist community that propagates the global Salafi-jihadi movement and has an ability to exist without the direct support of Daesh.⁷⁵ This terrorist group's information campaigns transformed a local ground war into a global phenomenon. Daesh

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Harleen Gambhir, “The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS’s Information Warfare,” *ISW*, December 2016, accessed January 22, 2017, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20The%20Virtual%20Caliphate%20Gambhir%202016.pdf>, 7.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

will probably maintain its ability to align military efforts and information campaigns in the coming years. Therefore, it poses an evolving threat to the U.S., its allies, and their broader interests.

Daesh is a potential threat for many countries and has the capability to conduct indirect and direct terrorist attacks by activating its “stand-alone” or “lone wolves” terrorists in different countries. It can organize complex, multiple, and simultaneous terrorist attacks around the world.

Daesh Strategic Objectives

The objectives of Daesh strategy are to retain and expand the “Islamic Caliphate” to all countries with Muslim majorities and win an apocalyptic war with the West.⁷⁶

Daesh expects to reach its strategic objectives through the employment of the following operational approach:

1. Breaking current countries with Muslim majorities;
2. Seizing territories in those countries as opportunities arise;
3. Incorporating Salafi-jihadi networks in those countries;
4. Conducting attacks to destabilize countries and polarize the Western world.⁷⁷

Through its strategy, Daesh desires to create a condition for attracting new followers and spreading fear within vulnerable populations.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Daesh Center of Gravity

Table 1. ISIS capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities (February 2016)		
Center of Gravity: Control of terrain to serve as a physical “caliphate”		
Capabilities:	Requirements:	Vulnerabilities:
<p>Control terrain. Govern. Claim religious authority based on the declaration of the “caliphate”. Maintain offensive and defensive military forces. Project a globally resonant message.</p>	<p>Ability to force submission, intimidation, locally-directed terrorism, brutal policing, preaching, and other forms of social control. Defense against opposing military forces. Resilient military leadership that can replace losses rapidly. Leadership that can claim religious and ruling legitimacy and interacts with supporting and competing for religious views. The ability to indoctrinate the population, particularly children, in the Caliphate’s ideology. Ability to pay for basic functions of governance. An educated elite to provide essential services (doctors, engineers, etc.). Continuing to hold territory Daesh can claim to be governing. Ability to recruit, train, equip, and pay. Ability to provide housing, medical care, and death benefits to families. Ability to maintain lines of communication within and across theaters. Advanced capabilities to produce and distribute high-quality media in several languages. A robust social media network to disseminate and amplify the group’s message. Success on the ground to form the basis of a resonant message</p>	<p>Holding terrain. Providing basic functions of local governance that meet local expectations. Maintaining popular acquiescence. Managing friction between central leadership and regional affiliates. Controlling fighters.</p>

Source: Jennifer Cafarella, Harleen Gambhir, and Katherine Zimmerman, *U.S. Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda, Report Three* (Washington, DC: ISW, February 2016), 15.

According to the estimates of ISW, the center of gravity of Daesh is the control of terrain which serves as a physical “caliphate” because it provides legitimacy, military capacity, the ability to impose governance, and a global message.⁷⁹ Daesh designed its military operations based on the framework shown in Table 1.

On the other hand, Gambhir states that this terrorist group has multiple centers of gravity with the emerging phenomenon of the “Virtual Caliphate” became its center of gravity in late 2016.⁸⁰ This virtual movement catalyzes its efforts while losing the territories in Syria and Iraq.

Daesh Strategic Narrative

The strategic narrative of Daesh is stated as the following: “That there is no place on the face of the Earth where the Shari’a of Allah is implemented and the rule is entirely for Allah except for the lands of the Islamic State.”⁸¹ Even though Daesh slightly changed its narrative in May 2016 from one of real military victory, it generally continues to emphasize the necessity of control over seized territory and retaining its claim to a physical “caliphate”. The Daesh spokesman Adnani, who later was killed, stated this narrative in his speech in June 2016.⁸²

Additional information about previous activities of this terrorist group is given in Appendix A. The chronology of events related to prior terrorist involvement and Daesh

⁷⁹ Cafarella, Gambhir, and Zimmerman, 12.

⁸⁰ Gambhir, 9.

⁸¹ Ibid., 10.

⁸² Ibid., 9.

efforts in Kazakhstan is shown in Appendix B. A generic understanding of the problem in Kazakhstan and national narrative as well as position stated by country's leadership in long-term strategic guidance is in Appendix C.

Daesh Information Campaign

Daesh launched a massive information campaign right after seizing Mosul in June 2014 proclaiming the formation of the new "Islamic caliphate" or "Islamic State." Daesh constantly uses propaganda, but at that point, there was a significant increase. This was a decision point for their overall operation. Through propaganda, they openly recruit and radicalized potential fighters. Daesh made a call for terrorists from around the world to take part in their war. They started by spreading information about the effectiveness of the group and showing what the newly declared "state" could do in the future.⁸³

Daesh's deep understanding of information warfare is based on fifteen years of insurgency experience in Iraq. It also relies on a pool of propaganda experts coming from foreign fighters and Saddam Hussein's former soldiers.⁸⁴

According to Gambhir, Daesh directly adopted information operations doctrine and implemented it based on the available assets, personnel, organizational structure, etc. All of the key concepts outlined in Joint Publication 3-13, *Joint Information Operations*, are used in Daesh information warfare, including public affairs, military deception, key leader engagements, civil-military operation, combat camera, military information support operations, cyberspace operations. It is the range of information-related

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ NATO StratCom COE, 6.

capabilities that Daesh selects target audiences through the employment of global communication means.⁸⁵

Propaganda Analysis

Source Analysis

The media structure of Daesh is centralized and embedded in Daesh command and control structure. The effectiveness of Daesh global propaganda stemmed from a single centralized command. Daesh leadership directly manages propaganda efforts which are well known for its speed and discipline. Daesh must have a well-trained and professionally equipped media apparatus in the single chain of command.⁸⁶

Daesh Media Council. In the overall Daesh structure of different councils and departments, the Media Council or Central Media Diwan, is responsible for mass communication, as shown in Figure 6. It controls traditional media as well as the internet media.⁸⁷

The Media Council is considered as a well-organized structure that coordinates the information activities.⁸⁸ Under a single command, their global information activities are aligned synergistically with Daesh religious and military elements.⁸⁹ Daesh was able to align its military and propaganda particularly well because of its centralized structure.

⁸⁵ Gambhir, 11.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ NATO StratCom COE, 23.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Gambhir, 20.

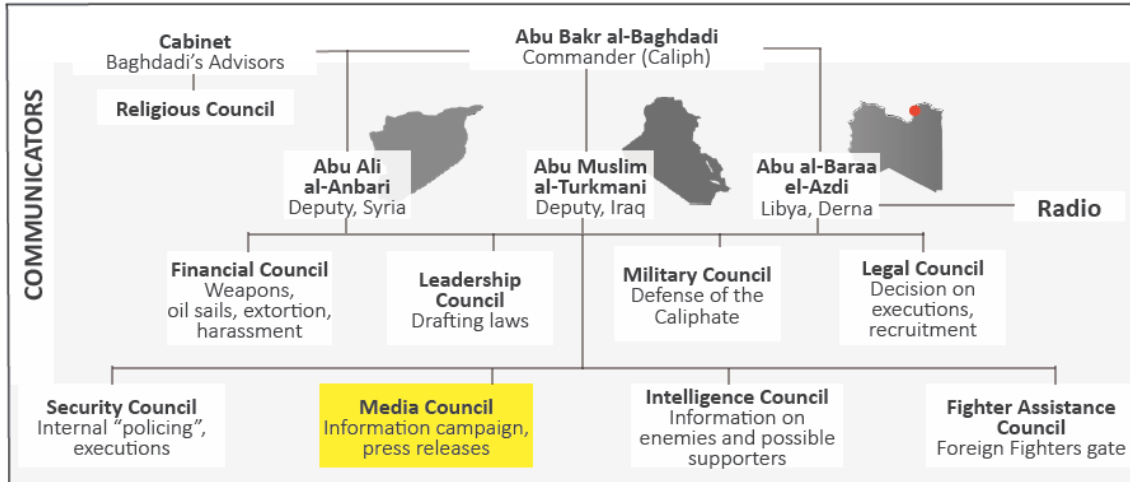


Figure 6. Daesh global structure

Source: NATO StratCom COE, "DAESH Information Campaign and its Influence: Results of the Study," January 8, 2015, accessed 1 November 2016, <http://stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/3461>, 23.

The Media Council of Daesh must work closely with other councils, especially with the Intelligence Council, which supported it with information about adversaries, potential target audiences, and the information environment.

ISIS Base Media Foundation

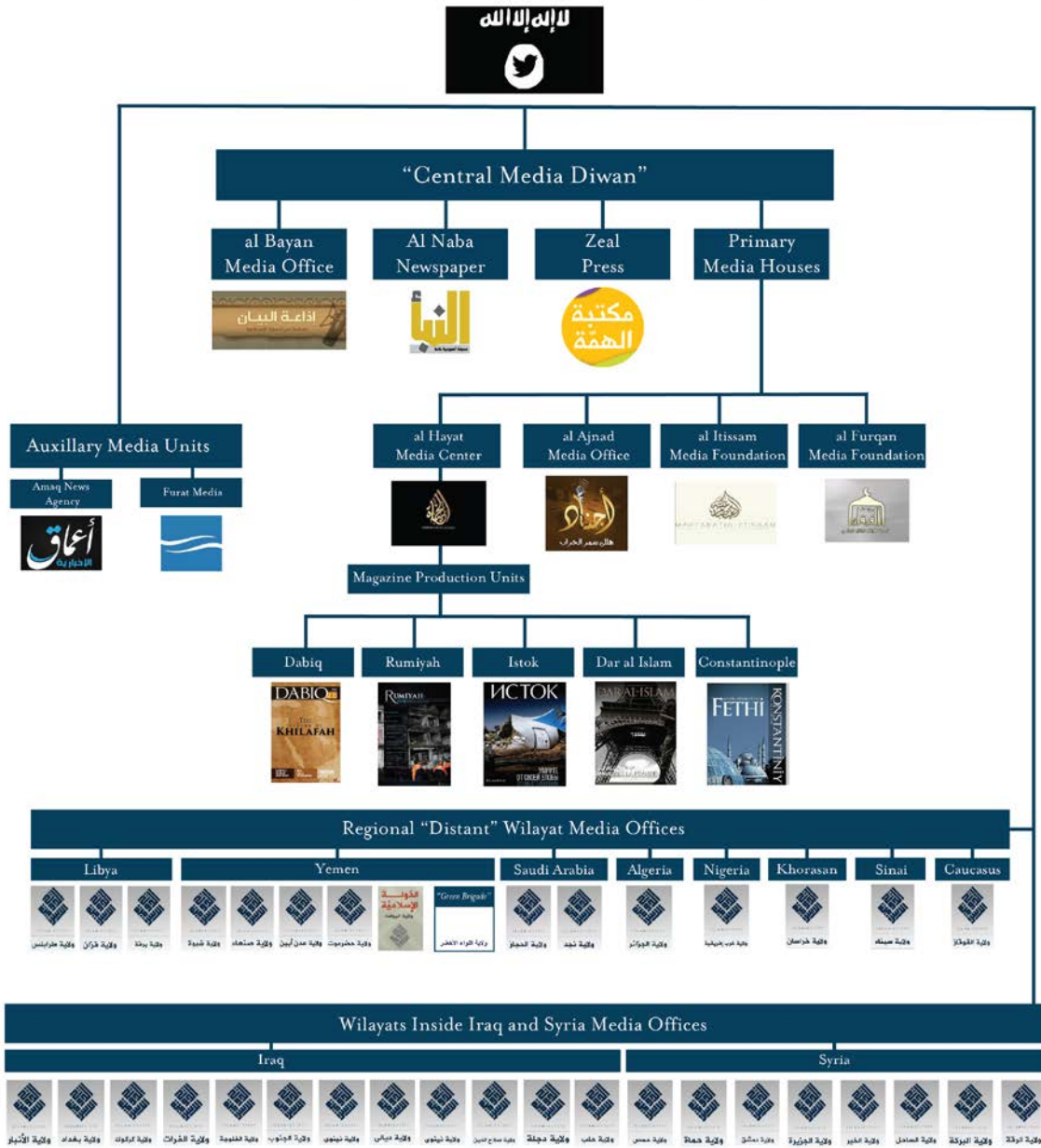


Figure 7. ISIS Media Apparatus

Source: Harleen Gambhir, *The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS's Information Warfare* (Washington, DC: ISW, December 2016), 21.

Al-Bayan Media Office. This Media Office is responsible for radio broadcasts and is operates mainly in Iraq.⁹⁰ Daesh broadcasted *Al-Bayan* in major cities under its control including Raqqa, Mosul, and Sirte until July 2016 when Libyan and coalition forces took back territory and destroyed most Daesh fighters.⁹¹ It offered listeners a variety of programs including music (anashid), language lessons, interviews with discussions, and field reports from its correspondents located in controlled territory.⁹²

Al-Naba Newspaper. *Al-Naba* is a Daesh weekly newspaper in the Arabic language. It recounts battlefield “successes” of Daesh fighters and is known with various infographics.⁹³ Some highly rated *Al-Naba* articles are released in Daesh *Rumiyah Magazine*.

Zeal Press. Zeal Press, also known as *Maktabat al-Himma*, publishes primarily religious doctrinal studies. *Zeal Press* developed and released an application for children to learn the Arabic alphabet using examples from life under Daesh control.⁹⁴

Al-Furqan Media Foundation. The oldest Daesh media foundation was established in 2006 when Daesh was a part of Al-Qaeda.⁹⁵ This media outlet released videos of

⁹⁰ NATO StratCom COE, 22.

⁹¹ Gambhir, 22.

⁹² NATO StratCom COE, 22.

⁹³ Gambhir, 22.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ NATO StratCom COE, 22.

religious sermons and speeches from the group's leadership.⁹⁶ *The Al-Firqan Media Foundation* created the video of the sermon in the mosque in Mosul when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared himself as a "caliphate." It publishes various types of media, especially print and internet-based propaganda products.⁹⁷

Al-Hayat Media Center. The second primary media house of Daesh is *Al-Hayat Media Center*. One of two most important strategic communication assets of Daesh is *Al-Hayat*. It is a relatively new organization which targets global audiences with videos and long-form magazines. *Al-Hayat* produces and disseminates Daesh highly professional video clips.⁹⁸

It also publishes online magazines in various languages. *Dabiq*, *ICTOK*, *Konstantinnyye*, *the Islamic State News*, *the Islamic State Report* and *Dar al-Islam* are the well-known Daesh magazines.⁹⁹

Dabiq is the most commonly known Daesh magazine and is regularly published full color, complete with feature articles and photos translated into multiple languages. It is the flagship magazine for Daesh and it is the main means of communication to the West—both to enemies and to possible recruits.¹⁰⁰ This magazine is regularly 60 to 80 pages in length and promotes extremist ideology, and contains editorial pieces about

⁹⁶ Gambhir, 22.

⁹⁷ NATO StratCom COE, 22.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Gambhir, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Steed, *ISIS: An Introduction and Guide to the Islamic State*, 99.

current events. The publication is full of images of dead bodies and brutality intended to shock and intimidate the reader. Editors of this magazine pay close attention to the U.S. and UK politics. It addresses the UK and U.S. as well as all Western military and civilians as “crusaders.” Articles encourage “true Muslims” to support Daesh and murder the “crusader.” Articles are also full of hate against Muslims who shy away from or are ideologically different from Daesh. *Dabiq* motivates “lone wolves” to strike against the “enemy.”¹⁰¹

ICTOK is a Daesh magazine published in Russian. The publication started in May 2015 and it targets Daesh militants as well as supporters from former Soviet countries. The content of this magazine is not as advanced as *Dabiq*'s, but is very similar and adapted to target former Soviet country-jihadists, including those from Kazakhstan. According to estimates, Daesh has a significant number of sympathizers and supporters from the several tens of millions of Russian-language-speaking Muslims.¹⁰²

Konstantinnye is the Daesh magazine in Turkish. The newest magazine of this group is *Rummiyah*, which was first released in late 2016. Daesh publishes it in numerous

¹⁰¹ James Scott and Drew Spaniel, *The Analogy of Cyber-Jihad* (Washington DC: Institute of Critical Infrastructure Technology), June 29, 2016, accessed January 23, 2017 <https://krypt3ia.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/icit-brief-the-anatomy-of-cyber-jihad1.pdf>, 17-18.

¹⁰² Umberto Bacchi, “ISIS targets jihadists in former Soviet nations with Russian-language propaganda magazine ISTOK,” June 3, 2015, accessed April 23, 2017 <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-targets-jihadists-former-soviet-nations-russian-language-propaganda-magazine-istok-1504238>.

languages. After the latest events in Iraq, *Rummiyah* likely supplanted other internationally-oriented publications.¹⁰³ Magazines are all available on the internet.

Al-Ajnar Media Office. The third primary media house of Daesh is *Al-Ajnar Media Office*. It publishes *anashid*, musical compositions praising Islam and its defenders, along with Quranic recitations.¹⁰⁴ This music is widely used in Daesh video clips as well.

Al-Itissam Media Foundation. In 2015, *Al-Itissam* became dormant, until it started to produce various videos targeting recruits in neighboring Muslim-majority countries.¹⁰⁵ *Al-Itissam* had specialized in broadcasting jihadi songs and Islamic vocal music as well.¹⁰⁶ This media foundation released a song called “Dawlat al-Islam Qamat,” which gained popularity and later became Daesh “anthem.”

Media Offices of “wilayats.” In addition to central media assets, Daesh has 35 media offices in so-called “wilayats” (regions).¹⁰⁷ To complement its global engagement efforts Daesh uses local media support and controls it through the Media Council.¹⁰⁸ These “wilayat” media offices also coordinate with military, security, and administrative

¹⁰³ Gambhir, 22.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ NATO StratCom COE, 22.

¹⁰⁷ Gambhir, 22.

¹⁰⁸ NATO StratCom COE, 23.

officials in each governorate.¹⁰⁹ The content is related to what is happening with military operations, service provisions, and day-to-day life in the area. They have a significant role in the dissemination of propaganda in social media as well as in the printing and distribution of hard copies of Daesh products. The “wilayat” media offices support larger efforts to intimidate and recruit among the local population. Al-Hayat Media Center uses the “Top 10” video roll-ups from provincial media offices for its production.¹¹⁰

Auxiliary Media Units. The Media Council controls auxiliary media, such as *Amaq News Agency* and *Furat Media*. *Amaq News Agency* regularly releases online reports on Daesh operations hours or sometimes days earlier than Daesh official media claims them. It is likely provided to reporters on the ground in Iraq and Syria, as well as in the “wilayats”. In late 2016, *Amaq News Agency’s* role increased with a series of propaganda based on historical stories on the battles. Large amounts of illustrated pictures, campaign maps, and video products were disseminated on the platform of Telegram. It released long-form event descriptions with pictures, campaign maps, and videos.¹¹¹

Key Individuals. The most significant individual from the propaganda perspective was Abu Muhammad al-Adnani. Al-Adnani was a Daesh senior leader, the chief

¹⁰⁹ Gambhir, 22.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

propagandist, and strategist.¹¹² He was widely known as the spokesman of Daesh leadership. Al-Adnani was killed by a U.S. airstrike in August 2016. He was one of the most wanted targets on the terrorism list responsible for operations in the territory under Daesh control and outside.¹¹³ His real name was Taha Sobhi Falaha, and he was allegedly known as the first foreign fighter to target the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq. Al-Adnani was believed to have had a hand in multiple terror attacks which influenced “lone wolves” through social media, including the San Bernardino shootings, the Orlando nightclub attack, and the Nice terror attack.¹¹⁴

Another key individual was Abu Hussain Al-Britani. He was a British hacker, also known online as “TriCk.” The Cyber Caliphate was formed under Hussain. He is the developer of the Daesh social media strategy as well its cyberspace operations strategy. As a part of Daesh propaganda, he published a “target lists” for “lone wolves.” In August 2015, with Hussain’s help, Daesh released the personal information of over 1,500 U.S. government civilian and military personnel from within the U.S. Air Force and Marines, U.S. embassies, NASA, USAID, and New York Port authorities. Their names, email addresses, passwords, positions, location data, telephone numbers, credit card information, and screenshots of private Facebook messages were published and publicly available on the internet. He initiated a variety of online forums, communication

¹¹² Robin Wright, “Abu-Muhammad-al-Adnani: the voice of ISIS is dead,” *The New Yorker Magazine*, August 30, 2016, accessed January 23, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/abu-muhammad-al-adnani-the-voice-of-isis-is-dead>.

¹¹³ Gambhir, 22.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

channels, and appropriate cyber-defensive instructional materials, including “ISIS Help Desk.” He likely was involved in the design of the *Dabiq* and *Kybernetiq* magazines.¹¹⁵

From the operational point of view, one of the most important Daesh publications was *Kybernetiq Magazine*. This publication instructs Daesh militants on information security and operation security tactics, techniques and procedures. It was first published in December 2015 in the German language. The author of *Kybernetiq Magazine* is known as “iMujahid.” It is an introductory course for Daesh online fighters and propagandists, and covers instructions on encryption systems and algorithms, such as Open PGP, etc.¹¹⁶

Content Analysis

Daesh has created a propaganda campaign with an exclusive value proposition, unifying the Muslim world to have a better way of life as a part of the “ummah.” By articulating the benefits of the life in the newly declared so-called “Islamic State,” Daesh has been able to capture the attention and interest of their target audiences. At the same time, Daesh reported their strategic achievements with a declaration of support from other terrorist groups and operational actions taken during their invasion. Daesh used the following core message and three themes for the development of a series of propaganda products.¹¹⁷

Core Message. The core message of Daesh is the proclamation of a new state or “caliphate” that was announced in a speech by Al-Baghdadi in June 2014. The chosen

¹¹⁵ Scott and Spaniel, 14-15.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹¹⁷ NATO StratCom COE, 29.

name “al-Dawla al-Islamiya”, which means “Islamic State,” is simultaneously their brand and an assertion of their goal and identity.¹¹⁸

It is crucial to not spread their core message by calling themselves “Islamic State.” The best option is to use “Daesh,” which is the Arabic abbreviation of “ISIS.” This guards against any misunderstanding and dissemination of their propaganda core message.¹¹⁹

Narrative Themes. Daesh themes emphasize strength and the success of the so-called “caliphate,” which supports its international recruitment and claims to govern seized territory as a political and religious authority and develop social services.¹²⁰ The group’s narratives are disseminated using three main themes, as shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Daesh Narrative Categorized into Three Main Themes.

Source: NATO StratCom COE, “DAESH Information Campaign and its Influence: Results of the Study,” January 8, 2015, accessed 1 November 2016, <http://stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/3461>, 30.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁰ Gambhir, 23.

The first theme is Daesh political ambitions. The self-proclaimed “caliph” Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is the founder of the “State of the Caliphate” and “Muhammad’s successor.” He is the “messenger of the Prophet,” and only he knows what is true for the “Caliphate” where “real Muslims” can live in harmony as members of their “ummah” (the historical name of the Muslim community). In their narrative, Western powers have been planning to dominate Muslims for centuries. They have destroyed local order and established borders as they wanted. Only Daesh “has an ability to stabilize” the situation in the region. The “Islamic Caliphate” is the ultimate goal and a global state that unites Muslims around the world in the war to end Jahiliyya or ignorance, a war that, according to prophecy, the “Islamic State” will inevitably win. To further shape the perception target audiences have about “the Islamic State,” the Daesh “flag,” “emblem,” and “an anthem,” are used extensively.¹²¹

Propaganda pictures are evidence that the “Islamic State” is well managed by representing sights of prosperity, services provided for the community, and the security forces that protect the “ummah.” This group uses pictures explaining their successes on the battlefield which could be considered to belong to the political narrative, since they support the assertion that the “state” is expanding. NATO StratCom COE’s research shows that political messaging is 48 percent of all of the Daesh visual propaganda published during the year of their research.¹²²

¹²¹ NATO StratCom COE, 31-32.

¹²² Ibid.

The second narrative theme deals with religious issues and jihad. Daesh accepts jihad differently from the regular Muslim understanding. By definition, the word “jihad” means to strive or to struggle. Jihad is the religious duty of all Muslims; consequently, jihad is what Muslims must do to sustain faith. Almost all Muslim scholars explain that the meaning of jihad should be perceived as an inner spiritual struggle and that Islam is a religion of peace. But not according to the Salafi-Jihadi Daesh.¹²³

For Daesh, Islam is the religion of the “sword.” Salafi-Jihadi Daesh disagrees that the word “Islam” comes from the word “salām,” or peace, but rather from words that mean submission. They share the same root. They believe that peace will only come when all “adversaries of Islam” have been destroyed. Since there is no clear definition of jihad, the word can be used by pro-violence organizations, such as Daesh. They believe that global military engagement is required to defend “true Islam.” They see that the “Islamic State” will soon destroy everybody who fights the “Caliphate,” achieving the prophecy as it is written in the Qur’an. Jihad is a way of life for Daesh members. If you feel the call of the “Caliphate,” and want to enjoy the “life of peace” and community that it represents, then you must also be willing to involve in jihad, as it is required to sustain the purity of the faith, in other words, life without jihad is a waste of life. In 2014 and 2015, 38 percent of Daesh visual products used the following messages: Daesh “following” the path of Allah and his Messenger; Daesh fighting to “defend” Islam;

¹²³ Ibid., 32-33.

Muslims “supporting” Daesh; Christians converting to the light of Islam; and non-believers dying.¹²⁴

The third narrative theme is about social issues. Daesh understands that the promise of a better life in the newly created “state” can have a big impact on young people who feel neglected or unappreciated in their home countries. The group uses social issues in its propaganda because it provides an attractive opportunity for young people who feel abandoned in his or her countries and have neither personal nor financial visions.¹²⁵

It propagates that their members are regular people who have feelings, love poetry, and are sensitive to beauty. This group is portrayed as a place for like-minded individuals who have problems because of the lack of support in their countries of origin. The social narratives are intended to inspire audiences to believe that they can play a role in something important, that joining Daesh could help them to identify themselves and to fully express their beliefs through a certain way of life. Images of family life and children playing or attending school are used to emphasize the “ordinary” Daesh way of life.¹²⁶

Social themes accounted for only 14 percent of the images used in *the Dabiq Magazine*; nevertheless, if social media platforms were included the percentage would be much higher.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 33-34.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 34.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Social media has proven to be a very effective channel for capturing the interest of those who are not radicalized, young people who prefer to have a life of adventure but are blind to the reality of what Daesh is actually doing.

Audience Analysis

The audience which Daesh targets is broad. For this group, it is important to attract a global audience, so most of their propaganda products are published in different languages using subtitles.¹²⁸ This group is trying to maintain a wide range of target audiences for its propaganda, as it shown in Table 2. Its propaganda is split into four lines of effort that are determined and supported by the core message and subsequent strategic narratives.

First, Daesh is trying to get support, both personnel (fighters, announcements of support, etc.) and financial. Secondly, the group intends to unite all Sunni Muslims in their information strategy and engagement on the battlefield. Third, Daesh is trying to frighten its enemies, both internal and external, and fourth, they want to inform a broad range of target audiences of the effectiveness of the “Islamic State,” its successes and direct accomplishments.¹²⁹

In Kazakhstan, Daesh primarily targets youth from the Salafi community.¹³⁰ For example, in June 2016, a group of self-radicalized Salafi Kazakhs under the influence of propaganda conducted a shocking terrorist attack and killed eight people in the city of

¹²⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 32

¹³⁰ Kulshmanov.

Aqtobe. For more details, see Appendix B. Mainly all terrorist attacks which previously occurred in Kazakhstan were conducted by Salafi groups related to “emirs” from Pakistan and India.¹³¹ According to the recent estimates, there are 15,000 followers of this ultra-conservative form of Islam in Kazakhstan.¹³² Daesh recruiter presence in different regions of Kazakhstan is helping citizens to become a foreign fighter and be a member of Daesh in Syria or Iraq.¹³³

Line of Effort	Target Audience
Support	Westerners, Muslims from countries other than Iraq and Syria, disengaged and disenfranchised youth populations, radicalized Muslims, children of radicalized parents, young people in close contacts with radicalism, children under fifteen, children of the ethnic and religious minorities, gamers, prisoners, virtual recruiters, girls aged 16-24 (possible future recruiters and/or wives), wives of foreign fighters, internet users of dating sites, Middle Eastern refugees
Unite	Muslim youth from western countries, regional Sunni Muslims, Sunni Muslims in other countries, wives of foreign fighters, Middle Eastern refugees
Frighten	Western society, political dissidents from other countries, parents, Shi Muslim and other religious minorities, other terrorist organizations operating in Syria and Iraq, anti-Daesh coalition countries, Shia militias, Iraqi Government Forces, anti-Daesh Sunni tribesmen
Inform	Supporters, fighters (domestic and foreign), western society, terrorist organization leaders, Sunni Muslim, religious minorities, Middle Eastern refugees

Source: NATO StratCom COE, “DAESH Information Campaign and its Influence: Results of the Study,” January 8, 2015, accessed 1 November 2016, <http://stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/3461,35>.

¹³¹ Kanaev, Trofimov and Lakbayev, 32, 38.

¹³² Alex Melikishvili, “Kazakhstan battles rising youth radicalization” *Jane's Intelligence Review: Scenario Modelling*, June 24, 2016, accessed April 25, 2017 <http://janes.ihs.com/MilitarySecurityAssessments/Display/1772666>

¹³³ Kanaev, Trofimov, and Lakbayev, 39.

Media Analysis

This group employs new technologies for distribution of its propaganda products much better than others in the information environment do. For dissemination of multimedia products, it created a massive and decentralized community of supporters working through social media and a smartphone application. The group does not use an official website or social media page, like other terrorist groups. Instead, it organizationally has structured its informational resources, as shown in Figure 9, and posted photos, videos, digital magazines, audio records on forums and file sharing websites, disseminating them through a global network rapidly, reposts and downloads of Daesh multilingual content.¹³⁴

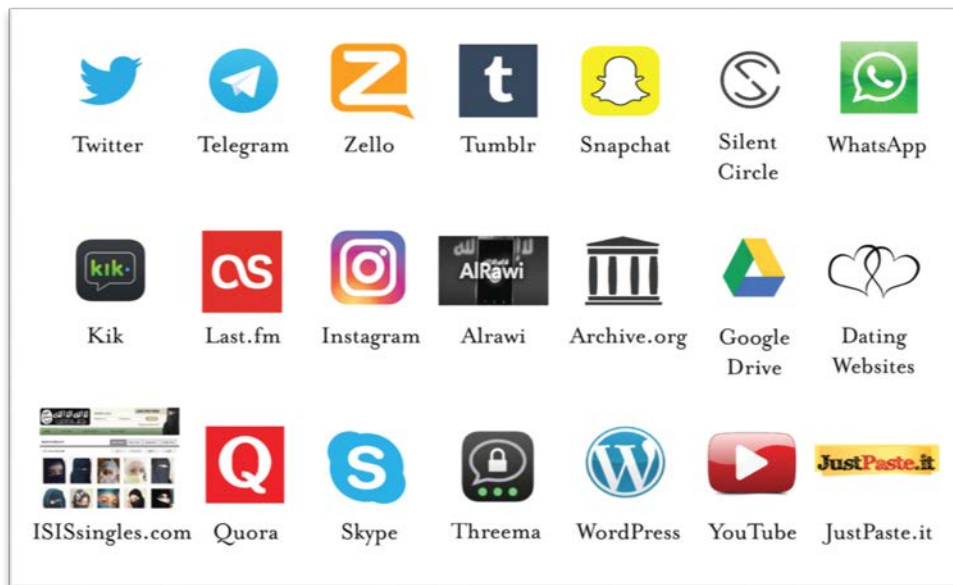


Figure 9. Online Platforms Used by ISIS Supporters

Source: Harleen Gambhir, *The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS's Information Warfare* (Washington DC: ISW, December 2016), 25.

¹³⁴ Gambhir, 20-24.

Effects Analysis

Two Long-Term Effects. A long-term effect that could have a significant impact is the adaptation of the group special warfare techniques by other terrorist organizations. Daesh information activities have drawn the attention of not only state actors, but also non-state actors especially Salafi-Jihadi groups such as al-Qaeda. These groups learn Daesh propaganda methods as well as other techniques, particularly mobilization of global support through the social media.¹³⁵

This fact creates a secondary effect—the phenomenon of the so-called “Virtual Caliphate.” The covert mobilization of Salafi-Jihadi supporters organized by the group’s information campaign in the social media will encourage global radicalization and enable Daesh to build a larger online community that may outlast Daesh’s current iteration as a force that controls and governs terrain in Iraq and Syria. This online-created echo amplifies and repeats the Daesh strategic narrative to create the phenomenon of “Virtual Caliphate.” It is aggregated by the global Salafi-Jihadi movement and will not be controllable by any Daesh leader. It will last much longer than the Daesh terrorist group, and evolve into a global challenge. No country alone can eliminate this online community of Salafi-Jihadi supporters.¹³⁶

Elements of Daesh Success in its Information Campaign. Gambhir states that the following are three the main factors for the effectiveness of Daesh information activities:

¹³⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 7.

1. Thought leadership. Daesh leadership was considerably creative in rapidly sending quality messages directly to the target audience through organized multimedia platforms. Daesh has shown its agility in the strategic communication with timely messaging to the point that could support its military operations that are in progress. It also tries to grab headlines continually as an aspect of its information campaign. Daesh provided a continuity of arguments and took the risk of using misinformation and disinformation.¹³⁷

2. Control of message. The control of the message was an important part of their projection of the image of a “legitimate state.” Daesh controlled its messages through a unified format and centralized structure. Almost every Daesh media message used standardized logos and formats across print and digital mediums to promote a unified brand. It was typical for Daesh to claim a sophisticated attack in its media outlets and inflate casualty counts. Daesh continuously published attack reports in image format rather than text statements. An image format of the report was much easier to re-post and control without changes. The Daesh-controlled online community was aware and stayed skeptical with checking the origin of any report before its dissemination. Daesh limited the access to the internet in controlled areas and filtrated the circulation of information. It required the registration of any independent journalists living in the controlled territories and publication of only approved content.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

3. Adaptability. Daesh was highly adaptive in the information environment and was able to find new platforms to share content and a new type of encryption when needed. The information campaign was dynamic and responsive to the upcoming challenges. Its propaganda design followed various global trends. This group creatively planned and conducted battles in the information environment. It also has solved the problem of reaching its supporters, including the usage of encryption systems and exploitation of protected platforms. Daesh developed a structure to optimally communicate to its subordinate media assets. As mentioned, it shifted the text posts to image files for better dissemination of its claims online and to eliminate the change of the meaning of message. This group created an online presence that became the second source of strength for the group as it started to lose terrain in Iraq and Syria in 2016.¹³⁹

Desired End State of the Operational Environment

The desired end state is composed of three parts. First, Daesh will not be able to propagate ideas of terrorism and religious extremism. Second, their narrative will not be attractive to and influential with their target audiences. Third, the Salafi Muslims living in Kazakhstan will not sympathize and support Daesh by travelling to Syria or Iraq to fight for Daesh and there will not be any Daesh “lone wolf” attacks conducted.

The desired end state is shown in the Analytical Diagram of Key Actors in Figure 10. In this diagram, key actors are categorized by the three parts above in accordance with their level of power in the current state. From left to right, the first part of adversarial actors consists of Daesh significant structures and individuals in its

¹³⁹ Ibid., 27.

information campaign. The second part consists of external actors, which are associated with Daesh or its propaganda efforts. Finally, the third part consists of actors of Kazakhstan origin. Arrows indicate the desired change in their power to achieve the desired end state.

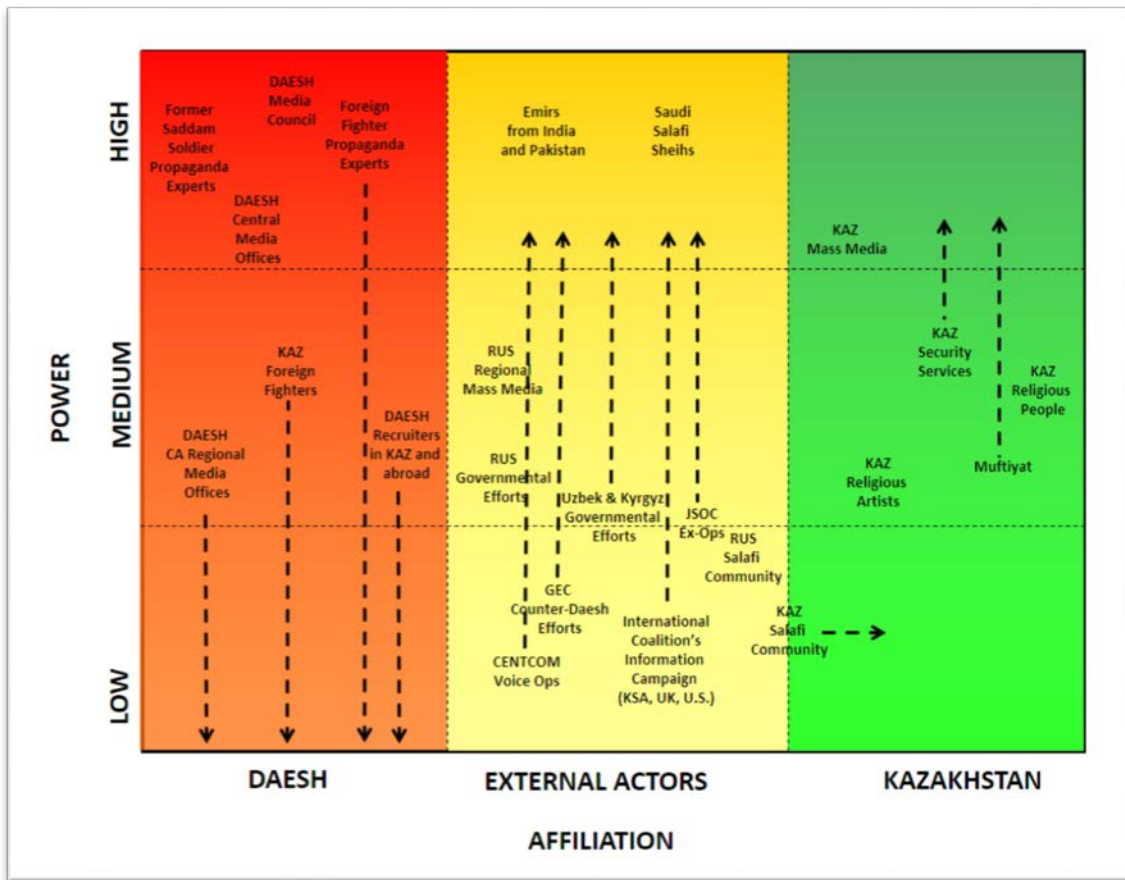


Figure 10. Analytical Diagram of Key Actors in the Narrative Space

Source: Created by author.

Statement of the Problem

The results of this analysis shows that the problem is primarily a significant increase in religious extremism and terrorism among the growing Salafi Muslims or those who attempt to become a Salafi Muslim. The challenge is how to decrease of the impact of Daesh propaganda which uses the aid of social media in order to terrorize, mobilize, and polarize Salafi Muslims in Kazakhstan.

The group's so-called "media operations" are a strategic capability under command of its top leadership who are simultaneously responsible for the most important capabilities, such as external covert actions. This terrorist group created its brand using its global propaganda supported by its brutal terrorist attacks around the world and violent crimes in Iraq and Syria. Moreover, the use of propaganda as an essential means of communication has not been seen before.¹⁴⁰ Their way of strategic communication allows the group to conduct a show of force and a show of presence in different regions. This Salafi-Jihadi-Takfiri group advertises its religious extremist narrative through different social media platforms. Its intent is to radicalize Salafi Muslims from different regions around the world to support it directly or indirectly.

Operational Approach

"Ideologies are not defeated with guns; they're defeated by better ideas – a more attractive and more compelling vision."

--Barack Obama

¹⁴⁰ LTC Steed, *ISIS: An Introduction and Guide to the Islamic State*, 63.

The key to success in countering Daesh propaganda is an effort at every level and a whole-of-society approach.¹⁴¹ The hearts and minds of the Salafi Muslims in Kazakhstan and those who attempt to convert to a Salafi Muslim need to be won through the creation of a positive image of their current and future life. To achieve this takes more than a whole-of government approach. Consequently, maximum involvement from various institutions in the country is required. Existing laws of Kazakhstan regarding counterterrorism and the State Program on Combating Religious Extremism and Terrorism for 2013-2017 provide good platforms for ongoing improvements. Moreover, from the national security and military operations perspective, Daesh must be engaged primarily in the narrative space or cognitive dimension of the information environment.¹⁴²

LTC Steed classified the current countering of Daesh as a competition of narratives. This type of conflict is not a classical completion based on violence. Consequently, the decisive operations against Daesh must be in the narrative space. Daesh can only be defeated through long-term, non-lethal engagement or influencing in the narrative space. Given this, all maneuvers in the physical and cyberspace domains

¹⁴¹ Sarah Sewall, "Preventing the Next ISIL: An Evolving Global Approach to Terrorism," October 9, 2015, Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University, Boston, MA, accessed April 23, 2017 Remarks <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=787941>, 2.

¹⁴² LTC Brain L. Steed, U.S. Army, Military History instructor, U.S. Army CGSC, interview by author, Fort Leavenworth, KS, April 18, 2017.

other dimensions of the information environment and other four domains) will be shaping operations in this conflict.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ LTC Brain L. Steed, U.S. Army, Military History instructor, U.S. Army CGSC, “Changing the Conversation: Conceptualizing the Fight against Non-State and Post-State Actors,” May 1, 2015, accessed April 18, 2017, http://www.narrativespace.net/support-files/changing_the_conversation.pdf, 1.

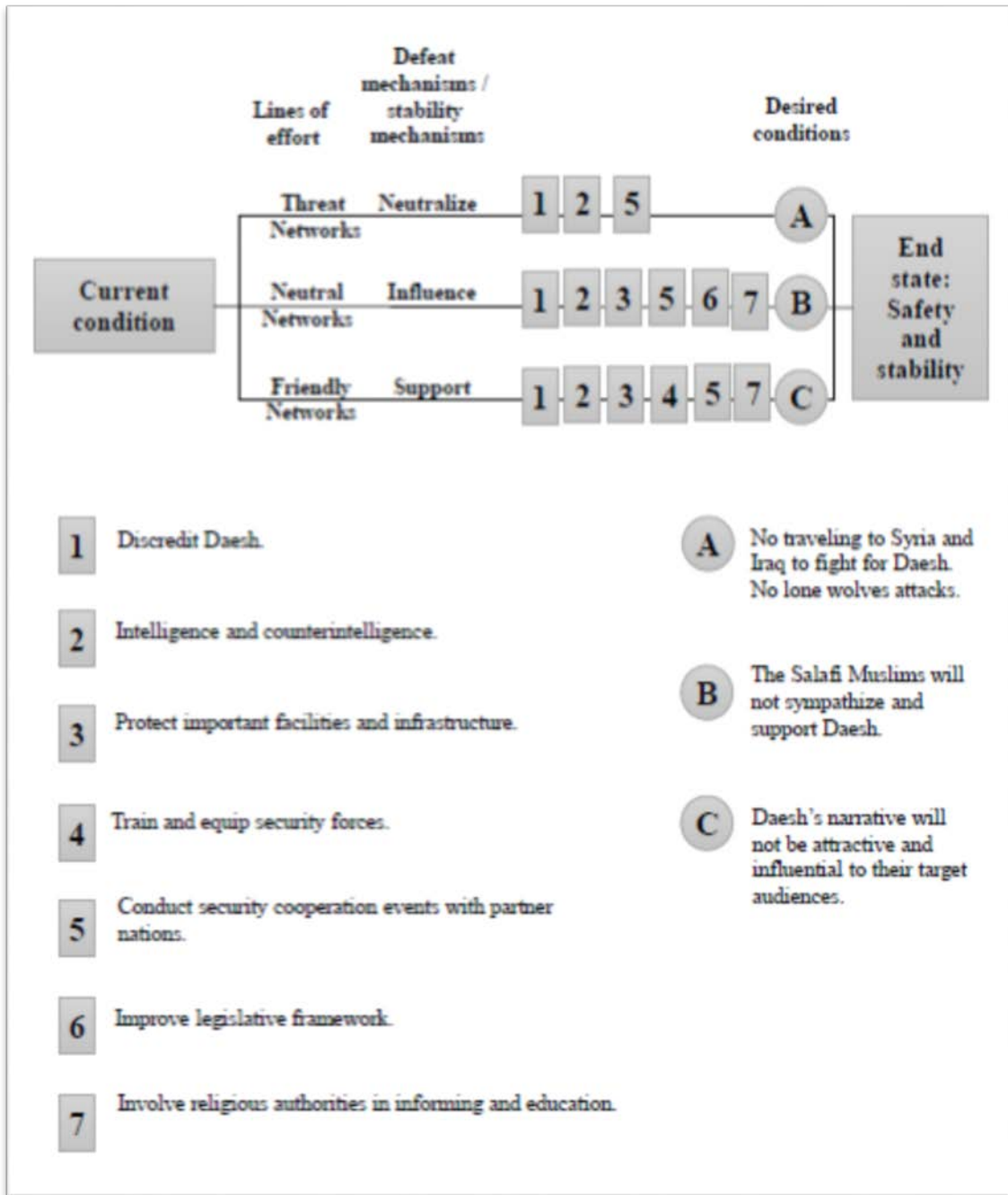


Figure 11. Counter-Strategic Communication Operational Approach

Source: Created by author.

In accordance with the experts' recommendations, the researcher proposes to use three lines of efforts as shown in Figure 11 based on "Network Engagement" and *Countering Network Threat* techniques.¹⁴⁴ The first line of effort is in the Threat Networks which addresses the key actors in the Daesh structure (left part of Figure 10) using the mechanism neutralization. The second line of effort is the Neutral Networks which addresses the key external actors (middle part of Figure 10) using the proposed stability mechanism of influence. The third line of effort is the Friendly Networks which addresses key actors in Kazakhstan (right part of Figure 10) using the stability mechanism of support.

To accomplish the desired conditions for each line of effort, there are seven objectives that incorporate a whole-of-society approach.

1. Daesh propaganda can be discredited and resistance to it can be built using, public information on the threat of religious extremism, and education of the home audience.

2. It is required to understand how Daesh is structured and maneuvers in the narrative space.¹⁴⁵ If Daesh maneuvers in any dead zones that we do not cover in the narrative space, it will cause a lack of situational awareness.¹⁴⁶ For example, Darknet is an example of dead zone that needs to be considered.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, intelligence

¹⁴⁴ Moore, Steed, Shaikh, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Steed, interview.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

collection, including in the social media, is crucial to understand Daesh maneuvers in the narrative space.¹⁴⁸ Intelligence gathering must support and be integrated within each line of effort.

3. Kazakhstan security services constantly conduct exercises which focus on the protection of critical facilities which help to deny Daesh targets of opportunity for their propaganda. This activity must be assessed and further improved.

4. In the fight against an adaptive adversary, Kazakhstan needs to train and equip its security services to be ready for any sudden developments of the situation and improve their capabilities through the acquisition and mastering of new technologies and systematic training.

5. Regional and international security cooperation for the Kazakhstan Antiterrorism Center is very important. It already cooperates with various countries as well as contributes to regular events combating terrorism. Kazakhstan should increase cooperation by taking new regional initiatives, specifically on counterpropaganda.

6. In the development of the capabilities, the improvement of a legislative framework is crucial. Kazakhstan's political leaders understand the importance of this problem and provide the required support for involved agencies as well as the Antiterrorism Center to maintain a high level of readiness.

7. It is essential to encourage religious authorities and community leaders to support the events related to counter-Daesh religious extremism efforts and the correct

¹⁴⁸ Schneider, 26.

interpretations of traditional Islamic rules.¹⁴⁹ Kazakhstan needs to involve more religious key actors, such as theologians from religious Kazakh communities and religious artists.

By engaging in a whole-of-society in operational approach, the power of Daesh and its propaganda in the Narrative Space can be diminished, if not defeated in Kazakhstan and result in the desired end state of safety and stability. This operational approach is the updated “better recommendation” per APCSM than initially proposed in chapter one.

Stakeholder Analysis

Identification of the stakeholders

As stated in chapter three, the Chief Decision Maker for this research is the head of the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The two key stakeholders are the Chief of Staff of the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan’s General Prosecutor.

Analysis of the Stakeholders

The Government of Kazakhstan created an effective structure for counterterrorism with secular and religious elements.¹⁵⁰ The Antiterrorism Center is the key structure for initiation of the proposed short- and middle-term action plan against Daesh propaganda based on the results of this study. This center integrates and coordinates the government’s efforts on combating terrorism and religious extremism.

¹⁴⁹ Sewall, 1.

¹⁵⁰ Irina Chernykh, “Countering Terrorist Narratives,” *UNIPATH Magazine*, accessed April 7, 2017, <http://unipath-magazine.com/countering-terrorist-narratives/>

Sort the Results of the Analysis

The proposed action plan against Daesh propaganda likely will be accepted by the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan or at least will be taken for consideration. Yerlan Karin, one of the well-known Kazakh counterterrorism experts, publically stated that the threat of terrorism in Kazakhstan will increase in 2017.¹⁵¹ Kazakhstan society respects Karin and listens to his opinion. Additionally, on April 4, 2017, the Antiterrorism Center released an annual report identifying counterpropaganda against religious extremism in Kazakhstan as the center's most neglected line of effort, which requires more attention to be successful.¹⁵² It was mentioned in charter one as well.

Selection of Key Individuals and Influencing Approach

Representatives of the Ministry of Defense of Antiterrorism Center working groups and liaison officers are key to delivering the developed plan. The Antiterrorism Center has working groups, including members of the Ministry of Defense as well as some permanent members of interagency staff (liaison officers) from the Ministry of Defense. It is possible to initiate the results of this research and the proposed action plan through the representatives of the Ministry of Defense of these working groups and liaison officers.

¹⁵¹ Serik Sabekov, "Е.Карин: В 2017 году актуализируется угроза возврата террористов в Центральную Азию," *Zakon.kz News Portal Home Page*. January 9, 2017, accessed January 10, 2017, <http://www.zakon.kz/4838223-e.karin-v-2017-godu-aktualiziruetsja.html>

¹⁵² Kulshmanov.

Summary

This chapter covered the analysis of the case study. The researcher attempted to investigate the following primary research question: How can Kazakhstan more effectively counteract Daesh information warfare activities? In the process of analysis, the researcher developed an operational approach using the SCAME propaganda analysis technique and ADM model which serves as the updated “better recommendations,” or solutions to the problem. Chapter five will present the improved “best recommendations.”

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the research, the answers for primary and secondary research questions are detailed below.

1. How can Kazakhstan more effectively counteract Daesh information warfare activities?

First, the Kazakhstan government needs to involve the whole society in fighting against Daesh propaganda and emerging phenomenon of the “Virtual Caliphate.”

Kazakhstan’s Security Services have already developed some efforts and they need to be optimized.

The cohesion of the society, or concentration of power is the center of gravity of secular states against whom Daesh fights. It tries to concentrate its efforts in the “peripheries of the big cities.”¹⁵³ To defeat the aims of this international terrorist group, Kazakhstan needs to use long-term countermeasures, including a whole-of society approach. However, for the short- and middle-term, it is crucial to take actions described in the next section’s Table 3.

Secondly, the Kazakhstan society needs to protect itself against the spreading Salafist Movement. Daesh, as a Jihadi-Salafi-Takfiri terrorist group, which uses Salafi

¹⁵³ Abu Bakr Naji, *Management of Savagery*, Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, 2004, accessed April 12, 2017, http://www.narrativespace.net/support-files/management_of_savagery.pdf, 18.

movements and Salafi communities around the globe as a background.¹⁵⁴ Salafi Muslim communities are vulnerable to Daesh propaganda and one of the most significant target audiences. Daesh radicalizes and recruits fighters from these communities.¹⁵⁵ Daesh's seemingly uncontrollable propaganda efforts in the social media creates the global phenomenon of the "Virtual Caliphate."¹⁵⁶

Salafism is a non-traditional denomination of Islam in Kazakhstan and, generally, the traditional Kazakhs denomination is Hanafi Sunni. Consequently, Kazakhstan security services need to continue working closely with Salafi community in Kazakhstan and increase their level of involvement in the phenomenon of "Virtual Caliphate" in the Narrative Space.

Thirdly, the capability of Kazakhstan's security services to maneuver in the Narrative Space is crucial for success in the counterpropaganda campaign against Daesh. In the Narrative Space, there could be dead zones which are invisible to the Kazakhstan security services. Therefore, it is important to develop capabilities to maneuver and engage in the Narrative Space without focusing on technical and organizational details because it can increase bureaucratic barriers. On the other hand, Daesh is very adaptive and uses various new ways and means in its information campaigns.

2. Is propaganda the center of gravity for Daesh?

The researcher was not be able to answer this second research question.

¹⁵⁴ Steed, *ISIS: An Introduction and Guide to the Islamic State*, 10.

¹⁵⁵ NATO StratCom COE, 12.

¹⁵⁶ Gambhir, 30.

According to the estimates of experts from ISW, the center of gravity for this group is the control of terrain to serve as a physical “caliphate.”¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, Gambhir states that Daesh has multiple centers of gravity and the emerging phenomenon of the “Virtual Caliphate” started to be a second center of gravity for this group in late 2016.¹⁵⁸ This virtual movement catalyzes its efforts while it loses territories in Syria and Iraq.

3. What are the most significant vulnerabilities of Daesh propaganda?

The Achilles’ Heel of Daesh propaganda is decentralized dissemination of messages.¹⁵⁹ Based mainly on social media, this method allows online supporters to constantly share streaming content and instantly shape it through their judgement. The ability to post a comment and perspective can be exploited through misinformation, disinformation, and influence in the network of this group. It may be possible to not just destroy a key node in the terrorist network, but to create a new one or perhaps exploit and instantly use of it can allow to effectively maneuver in the Narrative Space. This vulnerability emphasizes the importance of the combination of psychological operations, cyberspace operations, and intelligence operations in a counterpropaganda campaign against a terrorist group.

4. How can Daesh propaganda be defeated in Kazakhstan?

¹⁵⁷ Cafarella, Gambhir, and Zimmerman, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Gambhir, 9.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 25

Daesh propaganda can be defeated decisively through Maneuver in the Narrative Space. The researcher considers the Images of Key Subjects in messaging are important elements of the Narrative Space. Consequently, systematic inform and influence activities cause Maneuver in the Narrative Space and change the positions of key narratives.

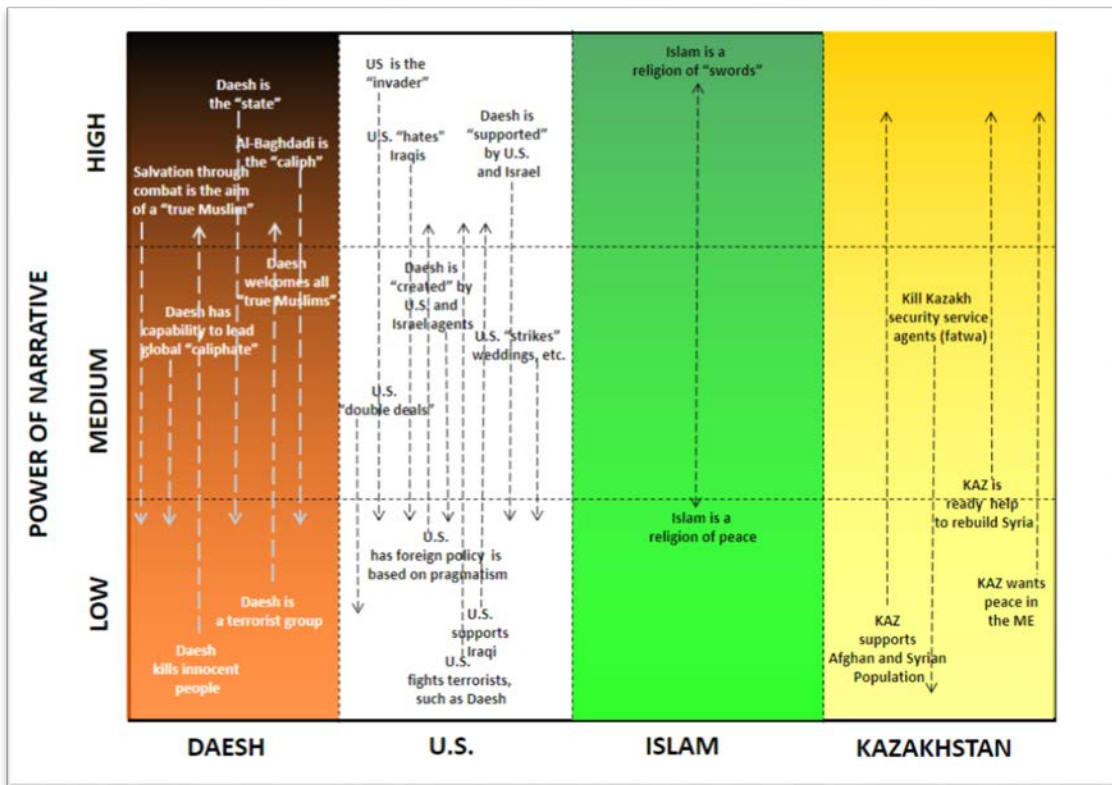


Figure 12. Analytical Diagram of Key Narratives: Desired Shift in Key Images in Minds of a Regular or Potential Supporter of Daesh

Source: Created by author.

The desired shift in the messages and Images of four Key Subjects is presented in the analytical diagram shown in Figure 12. These Images are in the minds of the typical

supporters of this Salafi-Jihadi-Takfiri terrorist group, and its recruits. In the boxes from the top to the bottom, narratives are depicted from powerful to less powerful.

Three of these images are directly related to the prosing action plan for the Antiterrorism Centers in Table 3. Additionally, the researcher stated a possible narrative regarding the U.S. image as well.

The first block from the left is the image of Daesh and how it must be perceived in order to not get recruited, become a future foreign fighter or “lone wolf” terrorist. In Kazakhstan, the primary target audience of this group are Salafi communities whom propaganda influences continuously. Stated narratives are based on expert estimates and the level of their influence (position in boxes of diagram) is adjustable because of constant dynamics.¹⁶⁰

The second block is the image of the U.S. government in the mind of a typical or potential Daesh supporter. The narratives continuously change their position.¹⁶¹

The third block from the left includes the image of Islam in the mind of a typical or potential supporter, such as Salafi Muslims, including Salafi communities in Kazakhstan. Stated narratives are based on expert estimates.¹⁶²

Finally, the fourth block shows the image of Kazakhstan and how Daesh and its supporters primarily know about Kazakhstan from the jihadi point of view. The

¹⁶⁰ Alex P. Schmid, “Challenging the Narrative of the Islamic State,” *International Center for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague Research Paper*, June 2015, accessed April 23, 2017, <https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ICCT-Schmid-Challenging-the-Narrative-of-the-Islamic-State-June2015.pdf>, 7-13.

¹⁶¹ LTC Steed, interview by author.

¹⁶² Schmid, 5.

government of Kazakhstan has already launched various programs and international initiatives assisting and supporting Muslim countries, such as Afghanistan and Syria, which is significant from the point of view of the Maneuver in the Narrative Space.

Overall, Maneuver in the Narrative Space can contain changes of positions of different narratives through the propagating of alternate strong messages. In the Narrative Space, changes of perception or the movement of narratives in the image through neutralization, influence, and support is shown with arrows in Figure 12.

5. What additional measures must Kazakhstan, as a Central Asian country, take in the short- and middle-term time period against Daesh information warfare activities to effectively fight against it?

The researcher will address the answer to this question in the next section and Table 3.

Recommendations

Proposing Action Plan

Understanding the problem is the key to its solution. Albert Einstein stated, “If I had one hour to save the world, I’d spend 55 minutes defining the problem and five minutes solving it.” Maneuvers of this Salafi-Jihadi-Takfiri group in the Narrative Space and its vulnerabilities should be constantly researched by the national academies and using regional cases studies.

International security cooperation is very important in order to catalyze the fight against terrorism and acquire the best practices to combating national security threats and global challenges. It enables learning different perspectives through information exchange events and implementing new tactics, techniques and procedures for numerous

services and branches involved in counterterrorism efforts. In the fight against an adaptive enemy, like Daesh, it is important to be skeptical about traditional approaches in the fight, especially in the information environment.

Table 3. Proposing Short- and Middle-Term Actions Against Daesh Propaganda		
Categories of proposed actions	Short-term actions (the nearest two years)	Middle-term actions (from three to five years)
I-Must be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase monitoring of the social media and constant analysis of maneuvers in the narrative space. 2. Increase the number of face-to-face engagement groups working with Salafi communities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate an information campaign against Daesh propaganda exploiting its vulnerabilities. 2. Continue cooperation plans with partner nations to exchange experience as well as to acquire new knowledge and skills.
II Should be done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Continue training events regarding the protection of vulnerable facilities for terrorist attacks. 4. Launch deradicalization programs based on best practices. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Increase the quality and quantity of education standards and training evens for local imams. 4. Reassessment of effectiveness of protection mechanism against religious extremism.
III-Should be done, if resources are available	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Initiate regional partnership programs on counterpropaganda against Daesh. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Study the problem of religious terrorism and the best practice to fight against it. 6. Increase information operation capabilities of the Armed Forces.

Source: Created by author.

Close coordination between religious leaders and stakeholders will catalyze the counterpropaganda efforts of the Kazakhstan security services against this terrorist group. It is important to continue to solve problems with local imams.

The development of capabilities to maneuver in the Narrative Space and engage Daesh propaganda is also significant for Kazakhstan's security services. In the detailed planning process, the researcher recommends the use of tactics, techniques and procedures of Network Engagement, particularly Joint Publication 3-25, *Countering Network Threats*.¹⁶³ It is also significant to have plans and programs to develop preventive mechanisms, which enhance awareness through the collection of intelligence at critical time.

Additional Key Findings

1. The so-called "media operations" of this terrorist group are its strategical level capability, as well as worldwide terrorist attacks and external covert actions. Therefore, "media operations" through populated social media is one of Daesh's lines of effort.

2. Daesh "media operatives" or propagandists widely use the modern persuasion techniques used in the marketing industry, especially the well-known Cialdini's "Principle of Influence."¹⁶⁴

3. This case study on Daesh shows the existence of some key jihadi publications, which are not official, but are widely used by its leaders and members. The strategic guidance of this terrorist group is *Management of Savagery* by Abu Bakr Naji. The conceptual document are writings of Al-Suri. A pocket-sized booklet titled "*Media Operative, You Are a Mujahid, Too*" serves as the "field manual" for the terrorist groups propagandists.

¹⁶³ Moore, Steed, Shaikh, 7.

¹⁶⁴ NATO StratCom COE, 41.

4. *Management of Savagery* covers critical statements about jihadi understandings. In it, we can find how jihadi terrorist groups see the operational environment and the jihadi ways of fighting. According to this book, their adversaries mainly use military power and the “deceptive media halo” against them. They consider these to be the critical capabilities of secular countries. These Jihadi groups uses various historical models that would be recognized by Mao, Che Guevara, or General Giap.

They see that all of the efforts in the information environment used against them are used as a whole system, starting with information agencies, public diplomacy, public affairs, cyberspace operations, military information support operations, military deception, civil affairs, etc. The narrative against them is composed of fear and love, with ideas of freedom, justice, equality among people of international community, etc. Daesh sees the center of gravity of its adversaries--the two superpowers of U.S. and Russia--as the “cohesion of society” or “concentration of centralized power”. Consequently, it tried to split the centralized power. Simultaneously, it intends to terrorize, mobilize and polarize the two superpowers and their concentrations of power. It works to be present in the peripheries of biggest cities among the crowd people. Therefore, Daesh also concentrates its efforts in the social media, which they view as a critical vulnerability of the super powers.¹⁶⁵

5. The Fatwa’s of religious leaders are crucial in the fight with jihadi groups. After the release of a fatwa in September 2011 requiring attacks against Kazakhstan law

¹⁶⁵ Naji, 4, 10, 17-18, 38.

enforcement forces jihadi groups started their attack in Kazakhstan. Mainly, all terrorist attacks and attempts were conducted in the same way.



Figure 13. Terrorism in Kazakhstan

Source: Jane's Intelligence Review.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ George Voloshin, “Kazakhstan vows to crack down on terrorism,” *Jane's Intelligence Review*, March 2, 2015, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1737444>.

6. Dr. Long's APCSM used methodology for the research was an effective method for the MMAS Program research. The APCSM enabled the researcher to conduct extensive outreach with technical experts in the community of practice surrounding the research topic during all phases of the project. It enabled advanced analytical discussions between the researcher and the members of the Thesis committee, especially in defense of the final chapters on April 28, 2017 at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

It is not unusual, in fact, it is almost inevitable, that ideas for the next rounds of research are surfaced which go beyond the scope of the current cycle of inquiry. This is almost identical to the experience of those using the action research method, and it is a high payoff feature of this method that it generates a stream of interesting new ideas that can serve as a starting point for other members of the profession to pursue. With that in mind, here is a brief summary of three big ideas that are well suited for new research projects that should be a priority for the profession to pursue.

A. Virtual, dynamic values and interests mapping and modelling. There was a natural collaboration and synergy that emerged during the conduct of this research between the social network analyses demonstrated by Richey of Mercyhurst University's program for Applied Intelligence. This coincides with the value-mapping methodology described by MAJ Farmer at the 2017 Leadership Ethics Symposium at Fort Leavenworth, KS in April 2017 in his paper "The Moral Dimension of Projecting American National Power". Physical network mapping software like, AnyLogic, offers an additional collaborative opportunity by which means the physical characteristics of an operational environment could be included for a deeper understand of the campaign space. Although each of these initiatives and resources address a different aspect of

strategic communication and network analysis, it is becoming clear that the ability to create an environmental frame in a dynamic network display to visualize and analyze the location of individuals and interest groups in a virtual values space has the potential of developing deep knowledge that could be beneficial in both analysis and operational environments. A research project to investigate various methods by which virtual, social and physical network maps might be integrated for a holistic view of an operational environment is a high payoff target.

B. Examining the research space through the lens of combatting infectious disease, an idea emerged for establishing a multi-component, combined Center for Disease Control-like operational headquarters serving a whole of government approach to rapidly detect, contain and combat propaganda efforts. Richard Dawkins describes ideas as "Viruses of the Mind" and coined the term "Meme" to describe the propagation, growth and dissemination of ideas through a population that behaved in a manner very similar to that of the spread of infectious disease. By exploring that analogy, it became apparent that such an organization could be a very powerful way to link and leverage the various skill sets of a variety of multinational partners with a common interest in defeating Daesh propaganda. Such an organization could offset some of the traditional challenges associated with stove-piped bureaucracies, which by their very nature, can create safe spaces for hybrid threats to thrive in the boundaries between entities. Investigating the creation of this type organization has implications across all the DOTMLPF-P domains and should be made a high priority research topic.

C. Examining the topic of propaganda through the lens of modern digital marketing suggested a high priority research topic of exploring the utility of a digital

messaging campaign designed on the principles of digital marketing in the style of Amazon.com. Amazon and other digital marketers rapidly build market share by conducting massive and continuous experiments into many different styles and forms of communication intended to persuade consumers to buy their products. This is analogous to information campaigns designed to persuade populations to commit to one side or another in the battle for creating compelling narrative. Rather than adopting a strategy of central planning, it would be useful to explore the possibility of a broad based experiment of rapidly evolving messaging in which many different modes, mediums and messages could be offered to target populations with data collection and analysis used to find significance in response rates among the various samples. By rapidly adjusting to the feedback, it may be possible to scale an information campaign on the basis of evidence of what is actually working. If the message-result-analysis-adapt cycle is faster than that of the opposition, it may be possible to generate momentum for continuous improvement in our messaging strategies. When combined with the previous two concepts, a blueprint for a dynamic operational campaign headquarters and tools begins to take shape.

To summarize this section, it is normal for APCSM to discover many interesting topics for additional research as part of the continuous engagement of the researcher with the Thesis committee and with external members of the community of practice. By disciplined focus on the problem scope and research questions, this cycle of research can be completed to satisfaction, but it also becomes necessary and important to describe what seem to be promising new lines of investigation suggested by the findings of this research.

Unanswered Questions and Suggestions for Future Research

For future studies, the researcher would recommend to answer following questions:

1. What are the main reasons and motives of foreign fighters who fight in Iraq and Syria?
2. Who are the religious leaders and key threat networks in the Central Asian countries that can be engaged in counterpropaganda and combating terrorism? And who called fatwa against Kazakhstan law enforcement forces?
3. Why Daesh never offend some countries in its propaganda? Is there any agreement between Daesh and these countries?
4. Who are the critical individuals in Daesh “media operations” using Cialdini’s “Principles of Influence” and Kazakh children in its propaganda video?

Additionally, the researcher recommends to conduct research closely with more resources from the other institutions and meet them during the study. The researcher of this thesis would interview and collect data from organizations, such as U.S. Central Command J-39, Tampa, FL; U.S. Army War College; Combating Terrorism Center at West Point; Applied Intelligence Program events at the Mercyhurst University.

APPENDIX A
GENESIS OF DAESH

Originally, Daesh was created as Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in 1999, and later in 2004, it pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. The first leader of this group was a Jordanian criminal named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. This group contributed to an insurgency in Iraq which followed on the heels of the coalition's military engagement in March 2003. In Iraq, Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad started to explore the art of information warfare and different techniques in fighting against coalition forces.¹⁶⁷

In January 2006, Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad and other insurgent groups decided to join and form the Mujahideen Shura Council. Later in October 2006, they declared the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq. During the Iraq War, this terrorist organization studied how their adversaries conducted information warfare and they learned how to organize its propaganda efforts.¹⁶⁸

As a result of the Arab Spring and the civil war in Syria in 2011, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the new leader of the organization, decided to use the situation in Syria and send fighters to establish an observable presence in provinces where Sunni were the majority. They were interested in the Raqqa, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo provinces. In 2013, the group expanded into Syria and renamed the organization the "Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham." By adopting different names, which is commonly abbreviated in

¹⁶⁷ NATO StratCom COE, 13.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 14.

English as ISIL or ISIS, this terrorist group drew attention to their effectiveness in the Middle East and highlighted further expansion.¹⁶⁹

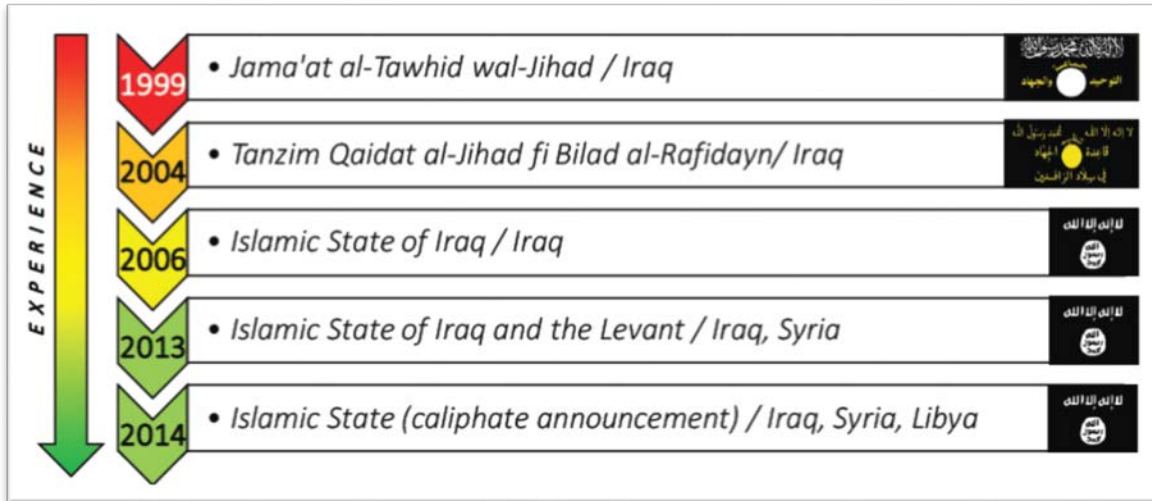


Figure 14. The Emergence of the “Islamic State” over time.

Source: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. *Daesh Information Campaign and its Influence: Results of the Study* (Riga, Latvia, January 8, 2016), 13.

On June 27, 2014, during a Ramadan prayer service, the current leader of Daesh, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, made a speech in Mosul’s Great Mosque. He claimed to be the messenger of the Prophet Mohammad and stated himself to be “the leader who presides over you.” Al-Baghdadi called all “faithful Muslims” to join the “caliphate” and pledge their allegiance to Daesh.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 15.

At first glance, the idea of the Islamic Caliphate bears no special meaning for those not from the Middle East, but it has important meaning for religious locals in the Middle East. According to Salafi clerics, their “caliph” is the main ruler who controls the territory, heads the judicial system, and spiritually leads the local population spiritually. Later they successfully invaded Mosul and large areas of Iraq and Syria fell under their control.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 14.

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN KAZAKHSTAN AND COUNTERTERRORISM

1999

July 13 The first law on combating terrorism signed in Kazakhstan.¹⁷²

2003

December 29 The Kazakhstan government created the Antiterrorism Center.¹⁷³

2004

October 15 The Kazakhstan Supreme Court approved the first list of terrorist and extremist organizations in Kazakhstan, including Al-Qaeda, East Turkistan Islamic Movement, Uzbekistan Islamic Movement, etc.¹⁷⁴

October 18-19 The Antiterrorism Center conducted the first countrywide national counterterrorism training exercises at the operational and tactical levels.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Antiterrorism Center, “The History of the Antiterrorism Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan,” *Antiterrorism Center Home Page*, accessed April 23, 2017 <https://atc.gov.kz/ru/o-tsentre/istoriya/khroniki>.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

2005

October 15 The list of terrorist and extremist organizations in Kazakhstan were updated and included the Muslim Brotherhood, Taliban, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, etc.¹⁷⁶

2006

June 17 The first international antiterrorism exercise was conducted by the Antiterrorism Center and its Chinese counterparts in the border provinces of Kazakhstan and China.¹⁷⁷

January-December The Kazakhstan Government approved the State Program against Terrorism, Extremism and Separatism for FY2007-2009.¹⁷⁸

2010

September A fatwa on jihad was released against the agents of Kazakhstan security services.¹⁷⁹

2011

January-December The Antiterrorism Center launched a new wide ranging information campaign. More than 230 websites negatively

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Yakov Trofimov, "Yakov Trofimov: Manifestations of Islam radicalization in Kazakhstan," *Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting*, March 20, 2015, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://cabar.asia/en/yakovtrofimov-manifestations-of-islam-radicalization-in-kazakhstan/>.

- influencing terrorist and extremist were blocked in Kazakhstan. 965 counterpropaganda events conducted.¹⁸⁰
- May 17 A suicide bomber struck the building of the National Security Committee in the city of Aqtobe, northwestern Kazakhstan. The terrorist killed himself and wounding three others. Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate) claimed responsible for this act.¹⁸¹
- July 11 Jund al-Khilafah claimed a rocket attack targeting a U.S. military base in Khowst province, Afghanistan.¹⁸²
- October 31 A terrorist attack to the Governor's office and Prosecutor's office in the city of Atyrau, northern Kazakhstan were blown up by an IED after an eight-day protest of new laws on religion. Jund al-Khilafah claimed responsible for this act.¹⁸³
- November 12 A self-styled jihadist gunman Maksat Kariyev's went on a shooting rampage in the southern city of Taraz in Kazakhstan. Five police

¹⁸⁰ Antiterrorism Center.

¹⁸¹ Voloshin.

¹⁸² Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Jund al-Khilafah (JaK)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism Home Page*, January 10, 2013, accessed April 23, 2017, <http://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1320958>.

¹⁸³ Kanaev, Trofimov, and Lakbayev, 24.

officers and two civilians were killed. Jund al-Khilafah claimed responsible for this act.¹⁸⁴

2012

- February In the Atyrau region, nine terrorists arrested in development of attacks to policemen.¹⁸⁵
- July 11 The explosion of the private house in a small village where eight people and weapon, different parts of homemade explosive devices, propaganda literature, and police uniform.¹⁸⁶
- June-September Series of investigations in different regions of Kazakhstan resulted with the arrest of dozens of terrorists.¹⁸⁷
- August 17 Elimination of 13 terrorists in the peripheries of Almaty.¹⁸⁸
- September 5 Explosion of an apartment in the city of Kulsary, western Kazakhstan, where other three explosive devices were found.¹⁸⁹
- September 12 Elimination of five terrorists and the arrest of one wounded in the city of Atyrau, western Kazakhstan.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Melikishvili.

¹⁸⁵ Kanaev, Trofimov, and Lakbayev, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

December 15	Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy announced stating Kazakhstan’s long-term antiterrorism strategic guidance. ¹⁹¹
2013	
February	Arrest of nine terrorists who had planned to conduct a terrorist attack in the city of Atyrau, western Kazakhstan. ¹⁹²
August	Arrest of a Jihadi group which had been propagating terrorism in the city of Kyzylorda. ¹⁹³
September 12	Arrest of Jihadi group leader disseminating propaganda products in the city of Atyrau. ¹⁹⁴
October	Kazakhstan approved the National Counter-Terrorism and Extremist Strategy until 2018. ¹⁹⁵
2014	
November	Daesh started a series of shocking video clips depicting children from Kazakhstan training in camps and executing “spies.” ¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Voloshin.

¹⁹² Kanaev, Trofimov, and Lakbayev, 25.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Voloshin.

¹⁹⁶ Tom Wyke, Darren Boyle, “ISIS release shocking new video of child soldiers from Kazakhstan being trained with AK47s” *Daily Mail*, November 22, 2014, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2845531/ISIS-release-shocking-new-video-child-soldiers-Kazakhstan-trained-AK47s.html>.

2016

June 5 Terrorist attack of a self-radicalized Salafi group killed eight people in the city of Aqtobe.¹⁹⁷

2017

April 20 Four Daesh “media operation” cells with a total of 11 people were captured by Kazakhstan security services in Southern and Aqtobe regions.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ A group of 25-27 militants raided two gun stores to seize weapons, before attacking the National Guard base No 6655 in the city of Aqtobe, northwestern Kazakhstan. The assault on the military base was aimed at securing more advanced weapons and ammunition for subsequent attacks against state institutions and penitentiary facilities in Aktobe. The militants killed eight people, including three members of the National Guard and five civilians, and wounded 40, including seven guardsmen and 12 police officers. After the attack on the military base was repelled, operations by the security forces resulted in 18-suspected terrorists being killed and 9 captured.

¹⁹⁸ Zakon.kz News Portal “КНБ РК нейтрализовал деятельность 4 радикальных группировок,” April 20, 2017, accessed April 20, 2017, https://www.zakon.kz/4855026-knb-rk-nejjtralizoval-dejatelnost-4.html?utm_source=web&utm_medium=chrome&utm_campaign=notification.

APPENDIX C

EXCERPT FROM NAZARBAEV'S SPEECH¹⁹⁹

Religion in Kazakhstan of 21st century

“Today the pressing issue for Kazakhstan in the religious arena is religions that have not been traditionally practiced in our country. We have also seen an influx of people claiming to represent a non-recognized faith or belief. Some of the young people unconsciously accept these views due to a lack of immunity on the part of our society against pseudo-religious influence.

It is a fact that our Constitution guarantees freedom of faith. However, as you might know this is not unrestricted freedom as this would produce chaos. Everything should be a subject to the constitution and our laws. Everyone enjoys a freedom of choice. It is necessary to be very responsible in choosing religious preferences: lifestyle, households and, often whole lives depends on this choice.

In this internet age with many new technologies and incredible volumes of information flows, people should apply a filter to what they see and hear. Your Internal “filter” must ask questions: do we need our mothers, sisters and daughters to wear the clothes of foreign nationals? Do they need to be wrapped in headscarves? To not sit at the same table with us? To not allowed drive cars? These all are matured traditions of other

¹⁹⁹ Nursultan Nazarbayev “Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Leader of the Nation, N.A.Nazarbayev” *Strategy Kazakhstan-2050: New Political Course of the Established State*, December 15, 2012, accessed April 23, 2017, <http://primeminister.kz/enpage/article-101>.

nations. They are our brothers and we respect them, but those customs have never existed in our Steppe.

Read the classical literature, watch the movies. Our women have national pride, own traditional style of clothes, but it is covered by a modesty, that we, men, often abuse.

We are proud of being a part of the Muslim Ummah. It belongs to our traditions. However we should not forget that we also have secular traditions, and that Kazakhstan is a secular state. We should create a religious conscience relevant to the traditions and cultural norms of our country. We should use the best models of behavior. The strategy I am announcing prepares our people to live in the 21st century, not in the middle ages.

The State and citizens should come forward against forms and types of radicalism, extremism and terrorism as a united team. A particular concern is caused by a threat of so-called religious extremism. This concern is also shared by the spiritual hierarchy. We cannot allow the true faith in God to be replaced by aggressive and destructive fanaticism. This blind fanaticism is absolutely alien to the psychology and mentality of our peaceful people. It contradicts the Hanafi denomination, held to by believers of Kazakhstan. Extremism and terrorism in Kazakhstan has not an ideological but criminal foundation. The pseudo-religious rhetoric hides criminal activities that undermine basis of the society.

It is an assault to the peace and stability of our country. It is a durability test of our statehood and civil maturity.

1. We should improve our legislation in order to neutralize the signs of religious radicalism and extremism. We should improve counter-terrorism legislation. The State should stop extremism and radicalism, wherever it comes from.

2. We should establish new reliable mechanisms to overcome the social, ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts. It is necessary to firmly stop the activities of non-traditional sects and doubtful pseudo-religious flows.

3. We should strengthen preventive measures against religious extremism in society, especially among the youth.

4. It is also necessary use the advantages, provided by the Forum of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. On the basis of this dialogue we should create a new platform for resolving conflicts on religious grounds.

5. We should be ready to mediate in the hot spots of the region in particular the Middle East and larger global level to resolve religious and ethnic conflicts.

The secular nature of our State is an important condition of the successful development of Kazakhstan. This should be clearly understood by current and future Kazakhstan officials and all Kazakhstan citizens.

I task the Government in conjunction with my Administration to continue to develop a State program on the fight against religious extremism and terrorism.

At the same time, I would like to warn the nation. The fight against extremism should not be used as a witch hunt or to be used to fight religion.

Whenever we contemplate religion we must adopt a thoughtful approach and proceed with extreme caution. It is not the States' role to intervene on the internal affairs of religious communities. We remain steadfastly committed to the freedom of conscience, tolerance of traditions and principles.”

APPENDIX D

NOTES FROM THE DR LONG'S LECTURE ON APCSM²⁰⁰

Case studies are a useful method for conducting qualitative research for problem areas that are human-centric, dynamic, volatile, and contain a mix of stakeholders, interests, variables and information concepts that demand a deep understanding of context in order to produce informed policy choices.²⁰¹

Case studies are appropriate and useful when the goal of the research is to inform or persuade policymakers about the rich and deep context of a setting associated with complex human issues where the goal is to take informed action to improve the situation. They make an explicit trade-off in favor of making informed policy choices in a strictly defined setting over the purpose of generating broad theoretical knowledge that has a wide applicability beyond the boundaries of the chosen setting. Case study designs look at how different types of knowledge and the associated methods of gathering, analyzing

²⁰⁰ Kenneth E. Long, "Case Studies in Action: A Practical Method for Gaining Useful Insights in the Military Masters of Arts and Sciences program" (lecture, *Forty-Third Annual Conference of the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning*, New Orleans, LA, March 24, 2016).

²⁰¹ J. Creswell, 2009. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.; Creswell, J. 2013. *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.; Creswell, J. 2014, *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.; Yin, R. 2014. *Case study research: Design and methods*, 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

and making sense of information can be mixed to create a rich and deep understanding of the research area.²⁰²

Long described the practical application of the case study method within the MMAS program over a five-year period. He provided a set of critical decisions that can guide a case study design to satisfy the purpose of either informing or persuading policy decision makers. By addressing each of the key points of that design model, the MMAS case study can make a systematic, consistent, and aligned argument for their research design.

Key elements of the Long's *Case Study Research Design* are:

1. Decide on purpose: to inform or to persuade.
2. Describe the intended audience/Chief Decision Maker (CDM) that the case study will inform.
3. What are the CDM's key concerns?
4. Describe the range of policy decisions the case study will inform.
5. Summarize the broader context for the analysis to establish the setting boundaries.
6. Describe the conceptual models of the stakeholders that will be used to evaluate the case study content (for case studies that inform).
7. Identify decision process models that will be used to make sense of the case study recommendations (for case studies that persuade).

²⁰² D.R.Hancock and Algozzine, *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*, 2nd ed., (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011); Y. Gagnon, *The case study as research method: A practical handbook* (Quebec, CA: Presses de l'Universite du Quebec, 2010).

8. Identify the stakeholders in the environment in terms of level of interest and capacity to shape the environment.

9. Describe the analytical approach that will be persuasive to the CDM and stakeholders and which will be appropriate to the information gathered.

10. Describe the range and sample of sources that will be sufficient and convincing to the CDM and stakeholders (due diligence).

11. Describe the necessary and sufficient assumptions, limitations and delimitations that must be made in order to proceed. Revise and adjust as needed.

12. Describe the evaluation criteria the stakeholders and CDM will use to assess your recommendations if your purpose is to persuade.

13. How might sociology and politicization influence the message/content of your argument? How will you account for it or address it?

Examples of the context-appropriate concepts, models, processes and evaluation criteria from the MMAS setting includes following:

1. The structured staff study from FM 6-0, Chapter five as a persuasive professional process geared to persuade a CDM, based on Army problem solving methodology from FM 6-0, Chapter four.

2. The Capability Based Analysis (CBA) model for analyzing opportunities, requirements and gaps in the development of military capability.

3. The criteria of suitable, feasible, acceptable for evaluating policy recommendations or courses of action.

4. The Sustainment Preparation of the Operational Environment (SPOE) for developing a sustainment options for campaign plans.

5. The ADDIE model, Bloom's taxonomy, and the U.S. Army Accountable Instruction System (AIS) for framing and analyzing education program options within a professional military curriculum.

6. Army Design Methodology (ADM) for developing problem finding and framing hypothesis for unstructured or wicked problems.

Each of these examples will ground the researcher firmly in the professional context of military policy decision makers and stakeholders and allow them to concentrate on content and argumentation because of the use of professionally accepted models and processes that have stood the test of time for practicality and utility. Using a reasonable professional standard, the researcher can proceed to engage the CDM within the context of an acceptable model for purposes of making progress within the tightly scoped problem/opportunity space of the case study, and leave to other researchers the inquiry into improving, validating, or critiquing the professional standards of practice being employed.

APPENDIX E

DR LONG'S BRIEFING SLIDES ON THE APPLIED PROFESSIONAL CASE

STUDY RESEARCH

Emerging Method:

Applied Professional Case Study Research

- **Research:**
 - Designed, systematic, disciplined, multi-perspective, critical, documented...
 - 2 purposes: solve a problem & incorporate a research perspective
- **Case study: 2 purposes**
 - Inform decision making by providing a rich description
 - Recommend a policy by persuasion, reason, and evidence
- **Professional**
 - Chief decision maker.....Army Chief of Staff
 - Processes.....Capabilities Based Assessment
 - Models.....DOTMLPF domains
 - Criteria.....Suitable, feasible, acceptable
 - Stakeholder.....Army level staff, field commanders
- **Applied vs Theoretical**

Mapping the method to the 5 chapter format

Ch 1: Introduction (so what, who cares, why bother?)

1. R1: Initial personal recommendation

Ch 2: Literature review

1. Persuasive professional relevant sources
2. CDM, stakeholders, processes, models....PBOK

Ch 3: Methodology

1. The applied professional case study
2. 15 questions answered

Ch 4: Findings

1. DOTMLPF analysis,
2. R2: the updated individual recommendation
3. Stakeholder analysis
4. R3: improved by stakeholder insights

Ch 5: Recommendations

1. CDM recommendation, time frame, priorities, phases
2. Ideas for future researcher
3. Personal lessons learned (reflective learning)

**Key elements of Applied Professional Case Study Research design
(Professional craft knowledge used as planning and design guidance)**

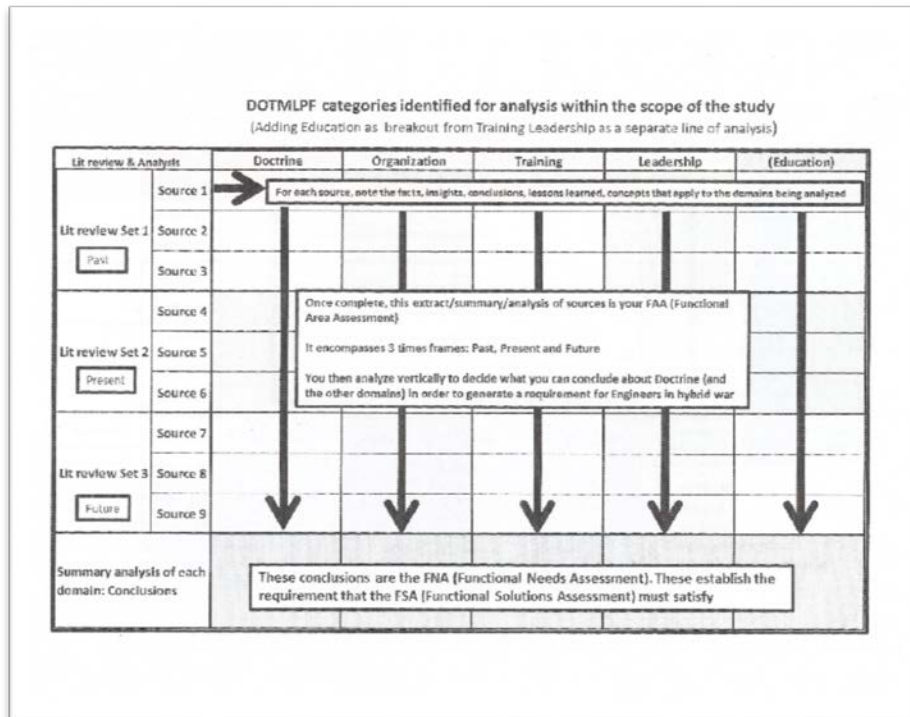
1. Decide on purpose: to inform or to persuade
2. Describe the intended audience/Chief Decision Maker (CDM) that the case study will inform
3. What are the CDM's key concerns?
4. Describe the range of policy decisions the case study will inform
5. Summarize the broader context for the analysis to establish the setting boundaries
6. Describe the conceptual models of the stakeholders that will be used to evaluate the case study content (for case studies that inform)
7. Identify decision process models that will be used to make sense of the case study recommendations (for case studies that persuade)
8. Identify the stakeholders in the environment in terms of level of interest and capacity to shape the environment
9. Describe the analytical approach that will be persuasive to the CDM and stakeholders and which will be appropriate to the information gathered
10. Describe the range and sample of sources that will be sufficient and convincing to the CDM and stakeholders (due diligence)
11. Describe the necessary and sufficient assumptions, limitations and delimitations that must be made in order to proceed. Revise and adjust as needed
12. Describe the evaluation criteria the stakeholders and CDM will use to assess your recommendations if your purpose is to persuade.
13. How might sociology and politicization influence the message/content of your argument? How will you account for it or address it?

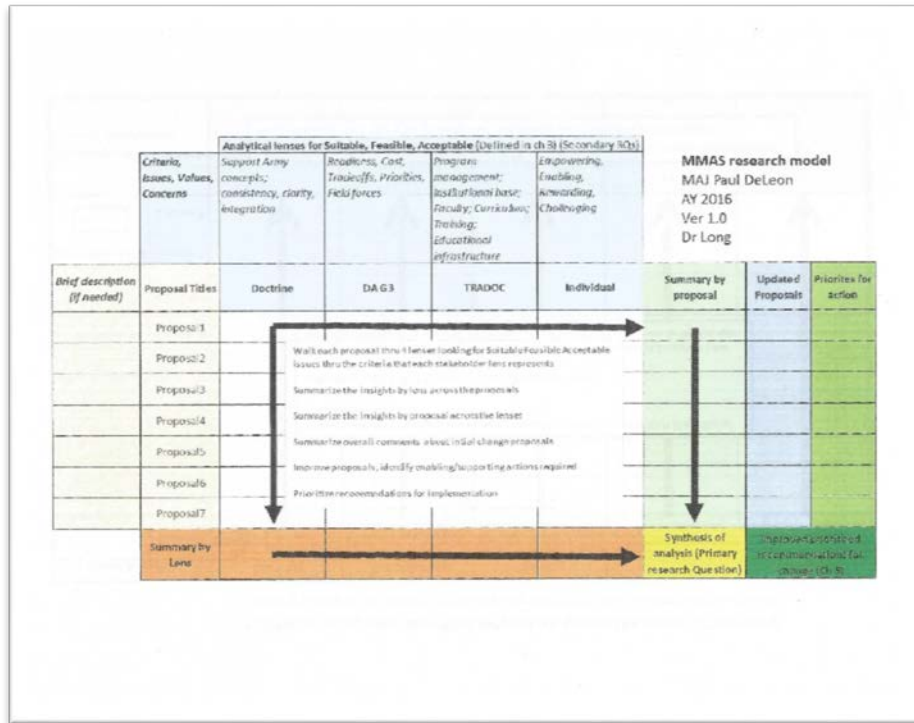
Examples of PBOK concepts, models, processes and criteria

1. The **structured staff study, Army doctrine** to persuade a CDM.
2. The **Capability Based Assessment (CBA) model** for analyzing opportunities, requirements and gaps in the development of military capability
3. The **criteria of suitable, feasible, acceptable** for evaluating policy recommendations or courses of action.
4. The **VUCA model** (volatility, uncertainty, chaos, ambivalence)
5. The **Sustainment Preparation of the Operational Environment (SPOE)** for developing a sustainment options for campaign plans
6. The **ADDIE model, Bloom's taxonomy, and the US Army Accountable Instruction System (AIS)** for education programs
7. **Army Design Methodology (ADM)** for developing problem finding and framing hypothesis for unstructured or wicked problems.

Emerging Method: Applied Professional Case Study Research

- The APCSM is appropriate for this case study because it allows the research to use his expertise and judgment within reasonable limits while preserving the transparency and critical thinking of traditional research. Long (2016) described it in the following way:
- *“By explicitly describing the initial position of the researcher prior to conducting the research, the APCSM ensures that the research design can account for the strengths and limitations of the researcher’s judgment, which has been formed from a combination of experience, education and reflection. APCSM recognizes that professions must resolve the dilemma of having experienced staff officers who approach research with established opinions and perspectives informed by their experience, education and reflection, and who must both leverage those insights while protecting the research from narrow, single perspective preconceived notions. It would be foolish to discount the insights of a seasoned professional, and it would be equally foolish to discount the fresh and critical insights that properly designed research can offer to complex problems. The APCSM aims to resolve this dilemma in an explicit, transparent, iterative process that can serve as the basis for continuous and evolving professional discourse. By using models, concepts and processes accepted within the professional body of knowledge (PBOK), the APCSM ensures that research is relevant and useful to the profession in engaging its most pressing problems in a meaningful way.”*





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