A Comparative Analysis of Jordanian and United States Counterterrorism
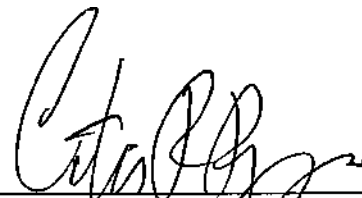

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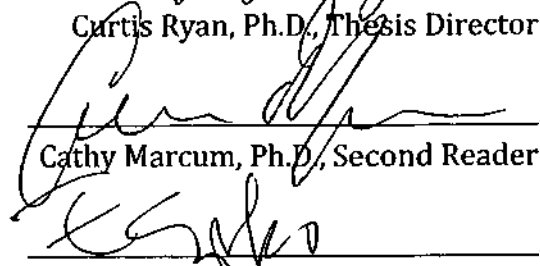in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
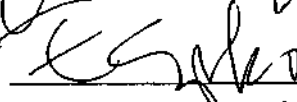
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Abstract

This thesis will provide a thorough examination of counterterrorism in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United States. A multifaceted analysis of Jordan's counterterrorism (the socio-economic and political drivers of terrorism, historical efforts of counterterrorism, and its contemporary successes and failures) will be complimented by a generalized report of U.S. counterterrorism. The successes of Jordanian counterterrorism were analyzed to reveal whether or not certain practices could be implemented in America. While considering the political, social, and cultural differences between the two countries, it was clear that the two allies understandably operate on a similar agenda when it comes to fighting the war on terror. However, Jordan has a unique approach to easing the threat of violent extremism that could potentially benefit the United States.

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges facing the modern world is the phenomenon of terrorism. A global epidemic, terrorism has rapidly and drastically changed the way states view national security. As nations combat this style of unconventional warfare in a globalized era, we see relationships strengthen between states that previously had little in common. Two countries, Jordan and the United States, are prime examples of how terrorism can take two vastly different nations and turn them into strong, cohesive allies.

In order to understand how these two states keep up with the changing nature of terrorism, we must examine both their counterterrorism practices as well as their relationship with one another. Maintaining the importance of the systemic causes of terrorism such as poverty, unemployment, and political discontent, we will analyze how Jordan and the United States factor contemporary dynamics such as social media, global discourse, and regional politics into their counterterrorism strategy.

Through a comparative analysis, we can assess the strengths and weaknesses of one state's counterterrorism and compare them to the other. By analyzing the differences, we can then decide whether tactics that work in Jordan could be successful in America. Because Jordan's case will be examined in greater detail, we will first explore counterterrorism in the United States.

United States Counterterrorism

Considered by many to be the face of Western power, the United States has been a central target for terror attacks carried out by radical Islamic fundamentalists. However, America's relationship with terrorism dates back far before the international rise of

religious extremism in the 1970s. From the birth of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1860s, the assassination of President McKinley in 1901, to the September 11th attacks in 2001, the U.S. has seen its history spotted with both domestic and international terror attacks. The constant prevalence of terrorism in the United States has brought counter-terrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts to the forefront of American politics. With this has emerged a sophisticated and encompassing conglomerate of intelligence bureaus, law enforcement agencies, and other organizations that form the U.S. counterterrorism force. Not only have the resources used by these agencies evolved over time, but the way they go about combatting violent extremism has changed as well.

One of the first tactics used by the American government to combat terrorism was the implementation of new legislation. Still lacking a concise definition, the term "terrorism" was being used in congressional bills as early as 1989, with the submission of the Biological Weapons Anti-terrorism Act (Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989). As the 1990s and 2000s brought more terror attacks against the West, counter-terrorism legislation began to roll through Congress in a retroactive manner.

The most significant piece of CT legislation passed to date, the USA PATRIOT Act, brought to light many of the contentious avenues used to combat terror at home. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2001), an acronym for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism, the USA PATRIOT Act is an omnibus tool designed to ramp up America's defense. The act expanded the many resources/tactics previously used to combat organized crime to now include terrorism. It also promoted coherent information sharing among government agencies and increased punishments for those involved in the

planning or carrying out of terror attacks (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). Although some have accused the USA PATRIOT Act of impeding the privacy of American citizens, I would argue that its implementation has strengthened America's ability to quickly and effectively prevent attacks.

Not only does Congress pass legislation concerning home defense, but it also takes action in an attempt to diminish the threat of terror from overseas. Senate bill 1595 and H.R. 2712 are prospective bills dealing with attacking the financial means of Hizbullah and groups that support Palestinian terrorism, respectively (GovTrack(a), GovTrack(b), 2017). Other pieces of legislation, such as H.R. 4564, focuses on conducting a threat assessment of foreign fighter activity abroad, which will in turn help guide national security officials in prioritizing countries at risk of disseminating extremists (Congress.gov).

As the nature of terrorism fluctuates, so does the government's response to it. It is clear that modern technology and social media have become key components of recruitment and radicalization efforts by extremist groups. The U.S. government is desperately trying to stay ahead of the learning curve to thwart attacks derived from some new medium of influence. In 2015, Rep. Michael McCaul introduced the CVE Act—a bill intended to revitalize America's CT abilities (Congressional Documents and Publications, 2015). This act proposed reorganization within the Department of Homeland Security to specifically include an Office for Countering Violent Extremism. This office would be charged with erecting a CVE program to, among other things, carry out counter-propaganda campaigns against extremist organizations. Although it was

never enacted into law, this bill shows the shifting strategy of America's CVE efforts

(Congressional Documents and Publications, 2015).

Along with legislative action, efforts within local communities to combat

extremism led the way for the U.S. CVE initiative. When it comes to the issue of Islamic

jihad, language and cultural barriers can often isolate Muslim communities from the rest

of the country. Because the United States is not a homogenous mix of ethnicities,

languages, and religions, cultural divides can create misunderstandings and impede

justice. However, the American government is aiming to bridge these gaps in hopes of

minimizing extremist attacks through information sharing. According to Bjelopera

(2014), the concept of community policing and cross-cultural engagement is absolutely

necessary to fight Islamic extremism within the United States. Professor Deborah

Ramirez elaborates, pointing out that "Embedded within these communities…are the

linguistic skills, information, and cultural insights necessary to assist law enforcement in

its efforts to identify suspicious behavior (Bjelopera, 2014, p. 5)." In order to eliminate

the fear of surveillance during these community engagements, the government has

specifically acknowledged that information gathering and investigations will be kept

separate from constructive dialogue (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.).

The digital age has brought on a new set of issues when it comes to combatting

terrorist organizations. Not only has this provided another medium for radicals to

exchange information and plot attacks, but it has also elevated recruitment efforts to an

unprecedented level. Through the Internet, extremists can now reach vulnerable

audiences that were previously inaccessible; pitching their message to young people

thousands of miles away instead of those in a nearby village.

In 2015, Rashad Hussain unveiled the goal of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) at a CVE Summit in Sydney, Australia (Hussain, 2015). Through certain propaganda strategies, this American initiative is designed to discredit the brand of groups like the Islamic State, while promoting healthy ways for at-risk youth to overcome hardships. Hussain goes on to explain exactly how this inter-agency program would attempt to holistically shut down the media appeal of terrorist organizations. When targeting the Islamic State, for example, the CSCC would disseminate stories of "poor living conditions under ISIL, ISIL battlefield losses and internal divisions, ISIL atrocities, particularly against Muslims" through the words of ISIL defectors. The statements of "credible voices in the Muslim world" would be used to discredit the radical ideology used to back the actions of these groups. The CSCC calls for a more active ant-ISIS dialogue to sweep social media, instead of merely ignoring the extremist message. The program also promotes the stories of Muslim youth that become successful in the modern world; examples that will hopefully reach dejected young people whose dreams of a better life seem dismal (Hussain, 2015).

Government-led programs aren't the only actors in the fight against extremist propaganda. According to Chang (2017), "Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft, and YouTube recently formed the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, which aims to bring the four web giants together to swap data and technology and to develop a set of best practices for countering extremism on their platforms." These corporations are employing their own type of CT tactics, such as offering ad credits to anti-extremist groups, removing content from known terrorist organizations, and compiling and sharing flagged users/content with other tech companies and law enforcement agencies (Chang, 2017).

Aside from government intervention via intelligence and law enforcement, the civilian sector has taken on counter-terrorism roles through forming watchdog groups. Many of these organizations in America are aimed to combat far-right extremists, which usually fall under the classifications of being anti-Semitic, white supremacist, and/or adhere to a hard-liner view of Christianity. According to Michael (2001), The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) are two major watchdog groups in the United States. Their tactics vary when it comes to keeping right-wing extremists in check. They will often keep tabs on the leaders of such groups, collecting any information that could lead to their removal. Both the ADL and the SPLC work closely with law-enforcement agencies, and the ADL has a powerful lobbying wing in Washington, D.C. (p. 283). In its efforts to bring down hate groups, the SPLC has brought forth several civil suits against members, often times bankrupting the organization tasked with defending its member (p. 285). Using hate crime statutes as their main weapon, the SPLC has been able to successfully keep in check many right-wing radicals in the United States.

In addition to employing its own counter-terrorism campaign, the U.S. has facilitated several international CT initiatives and used its diplomatic ties to reinforce the efforts of other nations. Through effective cooperation, the United State's diplomatic wing has proven to be as successful as its military might.

In 2016, representatives from the United States Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the State Department met with members from the U.N.'s Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and Interpol to discuss methods of improving information sharing (Asia News Monitor, 2016). The leaders of these

departments highlighted existing databases that could be better utilized in the fight against terror. According to Asia News Monitor, senior DHS officials advocated for the use of the Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record information sharing, which could be a vital tool in streamlining the identification process of suspected terrorists. In addition to this, Interpol also debriefed department leaders on the usefulness of its Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Database; another crucial mechanism that could be used to disrupt FTF travel (Asia News Monitor, 2016). Biometric and biographic information of suspected terrorists is also transmitted between governments, according to the National Strategy for Information sharing (U.S. Director of National Intelligence, 2007, p. 25)

Combining the aforementioned practices of international information sharing and opposing propaganda, the United States launched a two-week project in 2015 called "Countering Radical Ideologies", according to the Asia News Monitor (2015). This exchange program encouraged interaction between government officials, private sector branding experts, and community activists in hopes of sharing effective methods to counter and defeat the Islamic State's message (Asia News Monitor, 2015).

In addition to building on its own CVE strategy, the United States has been a worldwide leader in assisting governments and civilian organizations in creating their own CVE programs.

According to the Asia News Monitor (2016), Kenya and Djibouti are leading the charge in establishing an effective CVE system in East Africa; a region tormented by terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab. Kenya hosted a CVE summit in 2015 and commissioned a senior-level diplomat to head its CVE program. Within Nairobi and

Mombasa, members of the local community are doing their part to open dialogues and work with law enforcement to stunt the spread of extremism. In an effort to assist community-level activists that may not have the framework to combat a threat such as extremism, the United States has in place organizations such as the Strong Cities Network and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund to provide much needed funding and resources. Similarly in the north, Djibouti established the East Africa CVE Center of Excellence and Counter-messaging hub, which is aimed at gathering and sharing the best CVE practices that have proved effective in East African nations (Asia News Monitor, 2016).

In Pakistan, the United States has invested over $30 billion in CT efforts since the September 11th attacks (Gall, 2011), yet several terrorist groups still remain active within the country. Until 2011, this included al-Qaeda's late leader Osama Bin Laden, who was found in a compound less than a mile away from Pakistan's Military Academy. A report from the New York Times in 2011 states that the Pakistan's main intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), works closely with militant extremist groups. According to a former militant commander, the Pakistani government still employs a "policy of supporting the militant groups as tools in Pakistan's dispute with India over the border territory of Kashmir and in Afghanistan to drive out American and NATO forces" (Gall, 2011).

This nebulous relationship of trust that has developed between the United States and Pakistan has led the U.S. to focus more on implementing CVE programs within the civilian sector of Pakistan (Gall, 2011). Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have taken the lead in challenging extremist groups like Pakistan's version of the Taliban. An

impressive array of counter-terror initiatives have been implemented by the people of Pakistan at all different levels of society. When it comes to countering the extremist narrative, community leaders have organized public rallies against the Taliban, radio stations have broadcasted counter-radical messages, and youth activists such as Syed Ali Abbas Zaidi have painted peaceful statements on rickshaws. Civilian activists also target the youth in their CVE efforts, promoting peaceful conflict resolution and encouraging cultural and religious acceptance between Hindus and Muslims (Gall, 2011).

The third and probably most well known branch of U.S. counter-terrorism is the use of its military. According to the Watson Institute of International & Public Affairs (2017), the United States is involved in 39% of the world's nations, operating in some mode of counterterrorism. It has carried out air and drone strikes in seven countries, has combat troops in fifteen countries, military bases in 44 countries, and is providing some sort of counterterrorism training or support to 58 countries (Watson Institute of International & Public Affairs, 2017). Since the September 11th attacks, the United States has taken a hard-line approach of intervening in other nations to root out sources of terror. Beginning in 2001, the United States initiated its "Global War on Terror", which was the justification it gave for invading Iraq in 2003. Since then, American military forces have been involved in fighting Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, and in North and East Africa. The United States has been battling the Taliban in Afghanistan since it was ousted from power in 2001, which seems to be a conflict with no end in sight. Continued airstrikes against the Islamic State has aided in the campaign that has nearly crushed the terrorist organization, territorially speaking.

Keeping in mind the history and current strategy of counterterrorism in the United States, we will now take a look at counterterrorism in Jordan. Although it faces a similar enemy, Jordan's economic, political, and social environment is much different than that of the United States, and thus affects its approach to counterterrorism.

Jordanian Counterterrorism

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is often noted as a "beacon of stability," given the regional turmoil that has plagued the Middle East. While it borders nations that have undergone violent regime change (Iraq), bloody civil war (Syria) and perpetual ethnic conflict (Israel/Palestine), Jordan has managed to not only maintain political and civil order, but also strive for economic advancement. Liberalized markets, combined with simplified licensing procedures and a booming industrial complex (AIIE) is a hopeful start to a nation currently facing an uneasy economic situation (Prisma Reports, 2017).

There are a multitude of factors playing in to the contentious atmosphere that confronts the Hashemite Kingdom today. At the epicenter of the people's frustration is unemployment and poverty. Trading Economics (2018) states that Jordan is facing the highest unemployment rate the country has seen in 10 years. With an 18% national average in the second quarter of 2017, this trend is a cause is cause for concern. Although the male unemployment rate has only gone up .4% in the past year (13% to 13.4%), the amount of women without a job has skyrocketed from 22.8% to 33.9% (Trading Economics, 2018).

Dr. Fahed Fanek, a Jordanian economist and financial consultant, believes the cause for the recent unemployment spike is foreign labor. He claims that Syrian refugees will work longer hours and for less pay than Jordanian citizens, and that some European nations will not trade with Jordanian industries unless the company's workforce is at least 15% Syrian refugees. The goal of this mandate is to permanently install Syrian refugees in Jordan so they will not migrate to Europe (Fanek, 2017). Other non-Jordanians make up about 8% of the workforce (Assad, 2012). With so many employers hiring foreign workers, it has become difficult for natives to find and maintain a job. In particular, the unemployment rate of young adults is extremely worrisome to Jordanian officials. Fifty-eight percent of Jordan's population is under the age of 25. The unemployment rate between the ages of 15-24 is 27.2%, but only 25% of this age group was economically active in 2014 (Chin, Gharaibeh, Woodham, & Deeb, 2016). Considering the fact that extremist recruiters target younger individuals, having 75% of the youth population (approximately 2.8 million people) with no job and growing animosity is a nightmare when it comes to curbing the extremist appeal.

The Syrian refugee crisis has exacerbated the hardships already facing the Jordanian people. Beginning in 2011 with the start of the Syrian civil war, a massive flow of civilians fleeing armed conflict and government-led attacks poured across the border into Jordan. In 2013, almost 3,500 refugees entered the country every day (El-Khatib, Scales, Vearey, & Forsberg, 2013). By March of 2017, 657,000 Syrian refugees had been documented in Jordan, but over 1.3 million were living in the country (Ghazal, 2017). Only 21% of refugees were living in camps by the beginning of 2018, which means hundreds of thousands of Syrians have inundated communities in northern governorates

such as Amman, Mafraq, and Irbid (The UN Refugee Agency, 2018). Already struggling to make a living, many Jordanians are having to compete with Syrian refugees for scarce resources, employment opportunities, healthcare, shelter, and education (Francis, 2015).

The goal of housing such a large number of refugees is to increase stability in the region, but to also take the burden off of European countries in return for increased foreign aid. Known as the Jordan Compact, this agreement between the EU and Jordan will provide the Hashemite Kingdom with new corporate investments, increased economic aid, and support for host communities struggling to successfully assimilate refugees (Government of Jordan, 2016). Two major problems lie with this policy: with so many refugees receiving education and healthcare instead of Jordanian citizens, the people's anger with the government increases. According to Francis (2015), this could be dangerous for the government because "public perceptions of a government's inability to deliver adequate services can undermine political legitimacy" (p. 8). Terrorist agitators will use the people's disdain for the refugees, and the national government's response, to enrage and radicalize marginalized citizens. The second issue with this plan of housing refugees in exchange for foreign aid is that it increases the dependency on foreign aid to help sustain the kingdom. This unstable and dangerous reliance on Western aid could very easily decimate the Jordanian economy were it to be cut off. An economic crash of this sort would undoubtedly lead to an increase in extremism due to resentment of the national government and Western nations.

The Kingdom's lack of self-sufficiency has caused unrest and anger within Jordan. In 2016, Jordan's imports ($19.2B) doubled its exports ($7.5) (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2017). The United States alone contributed $1.3 billion in foreign aid to

the Hashemite Kingdom in 2017 (The Jordan Times, 2017). It is no secret that with foreign assistance come foreign interests, and many of those interests often conflict with those of the Jordanian populace. The United States has non-coincidentally increased its economic and military aid to Jordan as the Islamic State has grown to be a major threat. America has used Jordan as a strategic vantage point to launch operations as a part of the international anti-ISIS coalition. Although the majority of Jordanian citizens support a coalition against the Islamic State, many think Jordan should not be involved. In a survey given in 2016, 64% of Jordanian respondents said they support an international coalition against ISIS "to a large degree", but only 47% agreed with the same level of support that Jordan should be involved. The majority (38%) of respondents who opposed an international coalition did so because they believe it is a "conspiracy targeting Muslims and Islam" (Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2016). This could be a dangerous foothold for extremist propaganda. With the largest portion of foreign aid coming from a Western country, it would be easy for terrorist recruiters to fan the flames of an alleged anti-Muslim conspiracy motivating the U.S.-led coalition.

The Jordanian government would probably still take action against ISIS if it did not receive any financial support from foreign nations, especially after the brutal murder of a Jordanian pilot in 2015. However, the fact that it is at the mercy of the United States and other Western countries because of their monetary contributions may leave the Jordanian people feeling caught up in unnecessary international affairs. The more influence that Western nations appear to have on the Jordanian government, the more ammunition terrorist recruiters have to slander the decisions of the King; potentially de-stabilizing the government.

Politically, the structure of government in Jordan has been relatively unchanged since the country's inception in 1946. The kingdom has shown signs of liberalization in recent years, seen through the legalization of political parties in the early 1990s (Government and Society, 2018). Much of the power held by the Jordanian government resides with the monarch. With the ability to appoint the prime minister, the cabinet, and members of the Senate, the king has a huge influence on the laws and policies passed. The king may also dissolve and replace parliament, which has been done multiple times since the Jordanian Constitution was implemented in 1952 (Government and Society, 2018). With all of this control, the king is often solely commended or criticized for decisions made by the national government. Tensions between the populous and the crown have increased over recent decades, threatening to send Jordan into chaos like its neighbors to the north and east.

There is a cyclical paradox that terrorists could potentially implement to de-stabilize Jordan and achieve their objectives. All of the pivotal arguments used by extremist recruiters revolve around the aforementioned issues: unemployment, poverty, influxes of Syrian refugees, and a lack of national self-sufficiency. Terrorists will use these platforms to persuade vulnerable targets and eventually utilize these recruits to cause harm to Jordan and surrounding areas. However, according to a poll conducted by the Center for Insights in Survey Research, the majority of respondents that believe economic conditions are "good" do so because "safety and security positively impacted [the] economy" (Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2016). If extremists in Jordan are successful in recruiting and carrying out attacks, they will in turn damage the public's faith in Jordan's security and stability. This would undermine the economy, de-legitimize

the government, and propel terrorist organizations to the forefront while they continue to feed on the public's growing anxiety.

Jordan's track record of counterterrorism dates back to the late 1960s after the Arab-Israeli Six Day War. Since then, Jordan's modus operandi has fluctuated when it comes to dealing with terrorism. The Kingdom used a more militaristic approach when it came to dealing with PLO organizers plotting insurrection in Jordan in 1970, as is evident in the Black September violence (Yom & Sammour, 2017). During the period known as "Black September", the Jordanian government participated in a particularly gruesome counter-terrorism campaign against the PLO. This was in response to violence and talks of insurgency by the Palestinian group.

However, according to Jarrar (2009), Jordan began to transition from a military-led counterterrorism strategy to a combination of policing and conciliatory techniques during the 1990s. The "policing" efforts were very heavy handed, which often utilized the Special Forces in raid operations. This has since given the perception of a newly militarized police force, one that may not bode well for civilian-government relations. The conciliatory techniques have produced mixed results. Government amnesties became very prevalent in the 1990s as an attempt to alleviate grievances and prevent agitators from carrying out violent attacks. While in some instances this practice succeeded in reeling in political and Islamist radicals, royal amnesties sometimes backfired, as in the case of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi (Jarrar, 2009, p. 17).

Along with the *supra* policy implementations, Jarrar (2009) states that Jordan has revised its penal code to include more counterterrorism measures. The Hashemite Kingdom saw the main expansions in their statutory fight against terror come after the

9/11 attacks in the United States and the November 9, 2005 Amman bombings. However, before 9/11, Jordan already had laws against terrorism in place, including related liability crimes such as attempt, conspiracy, and aiding/abetting. Strict punishments including the death penalty existed for these offenses as well. Jordan upped their counterterrorism laws post-9/11 mainly to show support for America's "war on terror", but the real reform came after 60 people were killed and 115 were injured in the Amman hotel bombings in 2005. In the aftermath of the largest terror attack carried out on Jordanian soil, the Kingdom responded with two major changes to its system of terrorism prosecutions (Jarrar, 2009).

The first change was that collective punishment, or the punishing of anyone remotely involved in a terror plot, increased drastically (Jarrar, 2009). Although criminal deterrence has little impact on the core radicals of a group, it definitely resonates more with third parties who help finance and facilitate terrorist operations. The second change was the vast increase of trials being carried out in Jordan's State Security Court. This court processes a mix of civilian and military defendants that have committed crimes against the state; providing defendants with fewer due process rights and harsher punishments. Although the increased use of the State Security Court has drawn criticism and resembles the martial law-era that ended in 1990, multiple sources see collective punishment as absolutely vital to the objective of deterrence (Jarrar, 2009 p. 29).

In 2006, Jordan put into place two laws in an attempt to minimize the amount of recruitment and radicalization that occurs in certain mosques (Jarrar, 2009). The government has long been monitoring imams and what they preach. Even in mosques that are not funded and ran by the state, Jordanian intelligence officials still maintain

surveillance in order to spot radical discourse. Imams who preach sermons of political

opposition or religious radical ideals are subject to be banned indefinitely (Jarrar, 2009, p.

48).

In addition to direct supervision of religious gatherings, Jarrar (2009) found that

the Jordanian government is attempting to control radical influence in the community

through managing collective action. Many large charitable organizations have embedded

themselves within Jordanian neighborhoods and have built up quite the political backing.

A few of these major organizations are Islamist in nature. Some groups, such as the

Muslim Brotherhood, exist only as a political rival to the monarch, and are as old as the

kingdom itself. However, the more recent surge of Salafist and jihadist thinkers are what

is concerning government officials. Although some of these groups have not posed an

extremist threat, the government has begun to regulate their finances in order to quash the

possibility of political opposition. The Kingdom has broadened the state's ability to

inspect the financial records of these organizations, for profit and non-profit, in order to

make sure there are no illegal activities being funded. The state is free to eliminate an

organization or change its leadership as the government feels necessary; ultimately in

hopes of stopping a radical movement before it gets going (Jarrar, 2009, p. 59).

In 2009, the United States helped establish the Jordan Border Security Program.

Operating in full effect beginning in 2016, the Jordanian Border Guard combines national

intelligence with American-led training, equipment, and weaponry to prevent the flow of

terrorists from Syria into Jordan (Lang, Wechsler, & Awadallah, 2017). Just this year, the

U.S. State Department dedicated a counterterrorism training center in Jordan that features

"a state-of-the-art shoot house, three multi-purpose firing ranges, a simulated urban

environment, and upgraded student barracks, among other improvements" (U.S. Department of State, 2018). Considering that Jordan has had over 2,500 of it's citizens join ISIS in the Syrian civil war, there is a grave concern that many of these foreign fighters will return home with their newfound radical ideologies (Diez, 2016).

When it comes to the military wing of Jordan's fight against terror, there is a sort of no-holds-barred mentality. With hundreds of millions of dollars being funneled into its defense sector, Jordan has drastically improved its ground training and equipment, as well as its air force capabilities. Along with its increased technology and manpower, Jordan has also used effective intelligence tactics in previous campaigns against terrorism. Rothe (2015) states that in the early 2000s, Jordan's main intelligence bureau, the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), utilized its connections with Sunni tribal leaders to oust Al-Qaeda from southwestern Iraq. The success of this operation (known as the "Anbar Awakening") has encouraged Jordanian officials to take the same approach in its fight against AQI's restructured progeny, the Islamic State. The GID is also planning on supplying weapons and training to Sunni tribes to help bolster the Islamic State's expulsion from southwestern Iraq. If they are successful in this, a huge security burden will have been lifted from the Border Guard on the Kingdom's north and west boundaries. Considering that many crucial trade routes between Iraq and Jordan have been under ISIS control, a reduction in their presence would cause a boost in economic activity for both countries (Rothe, 2015, p. 30).

Despite these advances in technology and training by the Jordanian armed forces, violent clashes between extremists and police still occur. Luck (2016) reports that in December of 2016, police responded to a call concerning a house fire. Upon arrival, they

discovered an ISIS sleeper cell. Four militants fired on the police officers and fled to the nearby city of Karak. They took hostages in the historic Karak Castle, where a shootout between the militants and police ensued. Just a few months earlier in March, police were engaged in a firefight with Islamic State fighters outside in the city of Irbid. These events are a stark reminder of the audacity the Islamic State possesses within its fighters (Luck, 2016).

When it comes to community intervention, Jordan has established multiple avenues of combatting religious extremism. The Directorate for Combatting Extremism and the Community Peace Centre (CPC) are a few programs that the government has established to divert radicalization within the community. According to Chin, Gharaibeh, Woodham, & Deeb, (2016), the CPC "focuses on replacing radical thought with moderate interpretations of Islam." Along with promoting moderate discourse, the CPC is responsible for the de-radicalization of extremists that have been detained in Jordan. Although countries like Singapore have successful track records of reforming incarcerated extremists, there is no information available on whether or not the Jordanian program has been effective (Chin et al., 2016).

According to Rothe (2015) General Aref Al-Zaben, commander of the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center in Amman, suggests using a tactic that worked in combatting the message of the Taliban. While in Afghanistan, General Al-Zaben would bring a moderate Imam with him to villages that were most likely to be susceptible to radicalization (Rothe, 2015, p. 33). This idea of countering dialogue with dialogue is one of the Kingdom's best weapons in curbing the appeal of groups like the Islamic State.

Another example of Jordan fighting this war of words can be seen with what is known as the Amman Message, or simply "The Message" (The Amman Message, 2018). This historical statement given by King Abdullah II in November 2004 was in response to religious terror groups using Islam as a basis to justify their actions. The purpose of the Amman Message was "to clarify to the modern world the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam". To solidify the statement's religious credibility, King Abdullah II sent three questions to 24 of the top religious schools around the world, where all schools and sects of Islam were represented. The questions were: Who is a Muslim? Is it permissible to declare someone an apostate (takfir)? Who has the right to undertake the issuing of fatwas (legal rulings)? Not only did these questions receive a concise response, but the Amman Message sparked the international adoption of what came to be known as "The Three Questions"; leading to the Ummah (nation) of Islam agreeing on a pluralistic, mutual agreement for the first time in over a thousand years (The Amman Message, 2018).

Many of the failures of Jordan's counter-terrorism approach do not come from lapses in intelligence or a lack of proactive and retroactive action. Although some departments may be permeated with corruption or inept personnel, overall Jordan's counter-terrorism system is well trained, well funded, and rivals that of many developed western nations.

So what are the Hashemite Kingdom's shortcomings when combatting terrorism? The major problems facing Jordan come from the fact that the country has traits that still resemble an authoritarian regime. This heavy hand of government will often alienate the populace and leave an uncomfortable divide between the state and the people. The state is

struggling to find a healthy balance between eliminating extremist discourse and imposing its political will on imams (Rothe, 2015, p. 34). Not only have the structured sermons been a cause for frustration, but the constant surveillance and limitations on what can be said has aggravated a large portion of parishioners.

People feel the government often over-steps its boundaries in its fight against terrorism. This can be seen explicitly in the lack of culpability for human rights violations that take place in the State Security Court (Jarrar, 2009, p. 23). The severity of the new counter-terrorism legislation, along with the processing of those that violate it, has caused an outcry not only from human rights groups like Amnesty International, but also from Islamist political groups such as the Islamic Action Front (Jarrar, 2009, p. 36). These groups worry that the strict nature of these laws will suppress the people's voice and cause a "retreat from democratization" (Jarrar, 2009, p. 22).

The media is often a target of government scrutiny, as the state regularly shuts downs any political dissent that threatens stability. On one hand, striking down extremist propaganda is a vital technique used to combat terrorism. In fact, according to delegates from the Arab League that met with the Jordanian national news agency Petra, "using traditional and social media to counter terrorist groups' campaigns and propaganda was as important to fighting terrorism as using military means" (Ghazal, 2015). However, the state should not overly-interfere with media outlets that post opposing political views. Too much regulation within the media can delegitimize a denunciation of terrorist acts, making it difficult for the public to distinguish what is political opposition and what is extremist propaganda. Terrorist groups will claim that it is all government propaganda, citing the state's heavy-handed media control for support. While many of these actions

are rooted in good intentions, some see this fight against terror as a way for the government to reinforce its control over the people.

On the tactical side, Jordan needs to focus more on the root causes of extremism inside its borders. The country has done a tremendous job countering attacks through its intelligence, policing, and community efforts. However, these are more reactionary approaches to counter-terrorism. In order to stunt the rate of radicalization, Jordan must cater to problems that spawn animosity and drive those to commit terrorist acts. According to Yom & Sammour (2017), high unemployment and poverty are known "push" factors that make violent extremism more appealing than an ordinary life. Issues in the education system do not provide the Jordanian youth with the necessary critical thinking skills to expand their potential, and often leave them susceptible to terrorist recruitment (Yom & Sammour, 2017). Overcrowding and a lack of infrastructure in urban areas that house refugees provide a hotbed for radicalization. This environment can breed contempt and promote a sense that the government has failed in its attempt to support equally both refugees and Jordanian citizens.

Foregoing Jordan's flaws in counterterrorism, the state has come up with an unconventional approach to mollify radicals and hopefully reduce the number of terror attacks. When it comes to fighting the Islamic State and other terrorist groups, the Hashemite Kingdom does more than implement an aggressive military campaign. While battling Al-Qaeda and now ISIS, Jordan has found that no matter how much damage is dealt to the enemy, jihadists still pop up within the Kingdom's borders, ready to spread their ideology and cause harm. Instead of a strategy focused solely on eradication of extremists, Jordan has adopted a policy of containment and control.

This concept is a peculiar one; success hinders on finding a balance of appeasing jihadists with a government-permitted presence, while also keeping their actions and dialogue under control. According to Olidort (2017), having these extremist groups where the government can openly monitor them is a huge advantage for Jordan's national security interests. On the other hand, some may view this as the state harboring violent jihadists. Without the utmost supervision, the public presence of certain extremist groups could enable the spread of radical ideology and increase the likelihood of an attack. Olidort stresses that the delicate contingencies of location and the process by which this is done can directly determine the success of this approach.

According to Olidort (2017), a prime example of the success of this method is found with Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani. A world-renowned Salafist ideologue, Albani was banned from Saudi Arabia and Syria due to fears that his discourse would cause instability. However, in the 1980s and 1990s during his final years in Jordan, Albani vehemently opposed violence and political activism. Many of his followers, who left groups like the Muslim Brotherhood to join Albani, continued to publically speak out against violent jihad (Olidort, 2017). Jordan hopes that through a conditional tolerance with jihadist groups, extremists will become less radical, channeling their frustrations through civil action rather than violence.

Cross-examination

The greatest advantage to counterterrorism is the ability to cooperate with other nations to identify what has been successful and what has not. Jordan and the United States are two of the closest allies when it comes to the war on terror, and information

sharing between the two countries has been extensive to say the least. The objective of this thesis is to figure out whether techniques used by Jordan in their fight against terror could also be utilized by the United States.

Three questions will be used to filter Jordan's successes to see whether they will benefit the United States: **1) Does this CT method/tool target a relatable issue?** Although both countries are at war with violent extremism, the political, social, and cultural environments are very different in the United States and Jordan, and thus some issues are applicable only to Jordan. **2) Has the United States already implemented this strategy?** Given that the two nations are such close allies, many things that are successful for one state have already been replicated in the other. **3) If not, would it be feasible/worthwhile to implement said strategy?** The war on terror is protracted and strenuous on human and financial resources. Often times when a new initiative is implemented, it may take time, manpower, and funding away from another. For this reason, CT experts must determine the potential effectiveness of applying new approaches.

However, before analyzing methods that have worked for the Kingdom of Jordan and may possibly work for the United States, it is imperative that we look at the political structure of the two nations, and thus the effect it has on the enactment CT policy.

Being a constitutional monarchy, Jordan's CT force benefits from having more control over public life. This streamlined system of government allows for easier and expedited passage of legislation. Although laws must pass through a bicameral legislature and be approved by the king, the monarch can use his power of dissolving parliament to threaten the legislature and speed things up. The king can also completely bypass

parliament by issuing a royal decree. With fewer government restrictions on the people's right to privacy, Jordan is capable of getting away with more intensive surveillance and apprehensions of suspected terrorists. The kingdom also frequently shuts down publications or radical speakers that it finds threatening. Jordan's justification is that possible destabilization could occur, where as in the U.S., no such reasoning would suffice. All of these aspects of the Jordanian system of government make it less restrictive for officials to act on suspected extremists.

However, the encroachment of the government on private life has been the cause of much civil dissent in Jordan. The constant regulation of mosques, media outlets, and other modes of expression has angered many citizens. This divide between the government and the people can ultimately end up backfiring on the state, as terrorist recruiters will use the ill will of the people to fuel its insurgency.

The United States holds some of the strongest beliefs in "rule of law" and the power of democracy. With the multiple checks placed on the government by other branches (as well as the voters), a natural balancing effect occurs when it comes to passing legislation. Very rarely does invasive legislation pass and remain law without the support of the people. When it comes to passing CT laws, the populace generally backs the government; as such legislation is normally seen as protecting the people rather than furthering government interests.

America's investment in due process and its weariness of encroaching government has provided its citizens with steadfast constitutional rights. However, these due process rights often slow the procedure of capturing and convicting suspected terrorists. Requiring such a high burden of proof to convict someone on a charge as

serious as terrorism, the judicial process may take years and the defendant could be released for many reasons. In some cases, such as the Orlando nightclub shooter, the lack of sufficient evidence restrained law enforcement officials from taking any further action. The constitutional rights that protect the rights of citizens can also become a quasi-safeguard for terrorists to meander under.

In reviewing counterterrorism policies and practices implemented by both Jordan and the United States, it is clear that these two nations are very similar in their approaches. This idea makes sense; both countries are strong allies and have aligned views when it comes to combatting extremism. They share resources, information, personnel, and most importantly, their strategies that have proven successful. Jordan and the United States have similar enemies, such as jihadist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda, but also have different political, social, and cultural atmospheres. For this reason, CT experts in America must analyze the environment in Jordan where these practices are being put into place. What works there might not be successful in the West, and vice versa.

One method in particular that is used by Jordan has the potential to be effective in the United States. Covered earlier in this thesis, the idea of containment and control of extremist groups has proved effective for Jordanian CT. To see if the United States should adopt this practice, we must run it through the three questions.

Does this target a relatable issue? Yes. Jordan has permitted the controlled existence of radical Islamist ideologues and jihadist operatives alike. These two groups are the most prevalent form of extremism within the country. However, in the U.S., jihadists aren't the only extremist threat. Radical far-right and far-left groups that have

hardline views on religion, race, and government also threaten the safety and security of Americans. White supremacist groups like the KKK and the Aryan nation, anarchic groups like Antifa, and several religious organizations such as the Jewish Defense League and the Army of God have engaged in violence. The government can use these activists' rights to expression and assembly as an incentive to keep their agenda above ground. Although the presence of these groups in the sphere of public life will generate disapproving backlashes from the American people, the ability to easily monitor the actions and account for the membership of these organizations will greatly enhance public safety.

Has the United States already implemented this strategy? No. Although the Constitution allows for these groups to openly speak, assemble, and protest, many local and state governments understandably try to limit the presence of these undesirable crowds.

Would this method of control and containment of extremist organizations be worthwhile? Yes. Allowing for the monitored yet mostly unhindered operation of these groups can allow easier supervision by law enforcement and an increased likelihood of stopping attacks before they happen. The ability to operate and voice their opinions freely may also open avenues of dialogue that communities can use to engage these groups and hopefully lessen the radical nature of some members.

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