

Al-Qaeda Online Radicalization and the Creation of Children Terrorists

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SUMMARY

Modern terrorism is continuously transforming, with the aim of adjusting the terrorist organizations to global war on terror and current counter-terrorism strategies. Such transformations include not only organizational changes, but also new operational strategies searching for the ways to increase the effectiveness of terrorist attacks. In this paper we will analyze new trends in terrorism led by al Qaeda with its newly presented concept of “leaderless jihad” and the creation of the new generation of children-terrorists. Through the ways the terrorist organizations misuse media, we will show how children could become victims of radical fundamentalist ideologies. Even though children are used more often for conducting the terrorist attacks, in this paper we will demonstrate how the misuse of media for indoctrination of children from their earliest age becomes a part of the al Qaeda’s new carefully planned educational strategy for the creation of the “children in the martyrdom culture”, with the aim of their ideological preparation for conducting terrorist attacks in the future. For the realization of such a strategy, al Qaeda uses different media contents, fully adjusted to children of different ages, and distributes them through the Internet and social networks, making them a powerful tool for conducting such goals. New al Qaeda media strategy and its efficiently developed self-recruitment models through the Internet have contributed to that significantly, enabling creation of virtual communities for education, mutual introductions, communication and the planning of mutual activities. Such new forms of online radicalization unfold new challenges for security services and call for a creation of new methods for the prevention of misuse of media for terrorist propaganda.

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Introduction

The Internet has significantly changed the way of people's life and businesses. It revolutionized the way how people communicate, gather and exchange information. According to the EUROSTAT (2013), more than 60 per cent of individuals in the EU28 use the Internet daily, 79 per cent of whom access it from home. The Internet offers terrorists and violent extremists the same opportunity and capability that it does for the rest of society: to communicate, collaborate and convince (Von Behr et al, 2013). There are already significant quantities of radical materials available online, and this volume is growing daily. The growth of the use of the Internet, with its ability to reach wide community, including children, to connect people and to make easier the dissemination of materials, has had a significant impact on the accessibility and flow of radical ideas. Over the last few years there has also been a substantial increase in Internet usage by children from the youngest age. Children enjoy a variety of online activities, such as watching videos, playing games, searching for information, doing their homework and socialising within children's virtual worlds (Holloway et al, 2013). More recent surveys from individual EU countries indicate that Internet take up by children under nine is continuing to rise, and that children are accessing the Internet at younger and younger ages. For example, in the UK the Internet use a third of 3-4 years old and 87 per cent of 5-7 years old (Ofcom, 2012); in Germany 21 per cent of 6-7 years old and 48 per cent of 8-9 years old (Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest, 2012:33); in Finland 64 per cent of 7 years old (Pääjärvi, 2011), in Belgium 70 per cent of 3-4 years old onwards (Tuewen et al, 2012:1); in Austria half of 3-6 years old (Jungwirth, 2013), and statistics are similar for other EU countries.

In parallel with these trends, terrorism continuously evolves trying to survive and to strengthen its potential. Reports on terrorist actions and analysis of ways in which they organize and conduct their attacks indicate new trends and changes of their existing strategies. This is the result of a wide range of global and domestic counter-terrorism measures that forced terrorist organizations to adopt both their organizational structure and strategies to act in the new security environment. Al Qaeda successfully uses all types of modern technologies and new media to improve its capabilities for planning and conducting terrorist activities. In this paper we will analyze how two new elements in al Qaeda's new Grand Strategy (Michael, 2012), the concept of „leaderless jihad“ and the new media strategy, improve the develop-

ment of online radicalization and self-recruitment models for children on the Internet. Internet tools and social networks enable creation of virtual communities for education, operations planning and communication between sympathizers and would-be terrorists of different ages. Such strategy enabled transformation of al Qaeda into the organization of “leaderless resistance” on one side, and on the other made al Qaeda’s strategists more focused on children as a new target audience for future activities. With media strategy to promote terrorist ideas and goals, fully adjusted to children of different ages, al Qaeda is planning to radicalize children and to promote martyrdom culture that could enable creation of a base of future terrorists and suicide-bombers.

This paper begins with hypothesis that al Qaeda has to be seen as a forefront of a new trends in modern terrorism that uses new media for the development of online self-radicalization and self-recruitment models focused on children as the new target audience for terrorist organizations. To confirm this hypothesis we will analyze in which way the new media and its wide accessibility creates more opportunities for individuals to become radicalised, accelerates the process of radicalisation and increases opportunities for self-radicalisation. In the long-term, it is expected that this new trend would ease the conduct of terrorist operations in the future, as well as the creation of the new generation of terrorists.

Results presented in this paper are based on the analysis of the academic literature and media contents, already conducted researches on the use of the Internet, as well as researches on children involvement in armed conflicts and terrorist activities, with the aim to highlight new forms of terrorists’ misuse of media and the Internet for its goals. Our further interest was to consider how the policy community is responding to the role of the Internet in online radicalisation and recruitment, and to evaluate counter online radicalization and recruitment measures.

Al Qaeda’s leaderless jihad

We consider *radicalisation* as „the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism“ (Prevent strategy, Home Office, 2011), whilst *online radicalisation* is „a process whereby individuals through their online interactions and exposures to various types of Internet context, come to view violence as a legitimate method of solving social and political conflicts“ (Birmingham, 2009). According to Sageman (2008), the role of the Internet is crucial for the evolution of modern terrorism. Internet enables terrorists to initiate and coordinate global activities. It represents a platform for recruitment of new mem-

bers, raising funds and organising virtual training and propaganda, with minimal expenses and risks for their operatives and sympathizers.

Further transformation of terrorism, with changes in organizational structure and the way how global terrorist activities are planned and conducted, has initiated the development of a new models and instruments of acting. In such circumstances the Internet has got new roles and functions. Internet enables individuals to prepare and plan activities without formal instructions from any terrorist organization. This is how the Internet undermines traditional hierarchical structure of terrorist organizations and forced the development of new strategy in modern terrorism, known as “leaderless jihad”. The term “leaderless jihad” come out of the term „leaderless resistance“, introduced by Louis Beam in 1983 as a substitute for traditional hierarchical organizational structure, considered as untenable under contemporary conditions. “Leaderless jihad” includes operations in which individuals or small groups plan and conduct terrorist activities without support or initiatives from other movements, leaders or networks. To be effective, „leaderless jihad“ requires from individuals or small groups to share common ideology and are willing to contribute to global jihad.

In the second step of terrorism transformation, the advantages of Internet are extended towards children as a new target audience. Online radicalization of children is considered as a part of a new al Qaeda strategy for spreading radical ideas, with the aim of their familiarization with radical and violent ideas and actions. This is how the basis for recruiting individuals that would be willing to conduct terrorist attacks in the future could be created. Once ideologically indoctrinated, they will only need short military training to be ready for conducting a concrete attack. In the phase of long-term creation of a new generation of terrorist, the Internet has a very important role. Such security challenges require multidisciplinary response of different institutions and experts, from national security to education, and the society as a whole.

Children as potential terrorists

The number of children involved in armed or terrorist operations constantly growing. As one of the most deplorable developments in recent years, UNICEF highlights the increasing use of young children as soldiers. According to UNICEF report of 2013, in 25 countries thousands of children under the age of 16 have fought in wars. One reason for this is the proliferation of light weapons that are very simple to use. Children have other advantages as soldiers: they are easier to intimidate and they do as they are told, they are less likely than adults to run away and they do not demand precise salaries. Military unit or terrorist organization could also serve as a kind of surrogate family or the only way for children to survive and to secure food. Additionally, chil-

dren may want to fight for their religious beliefs or cultural identity, or they may also be seeking revenge for the deaths of their family members. According to UNICEF, armed groups will often aim their propaganda specifically at young people. For example, in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been particularly active in the school system, indoctrinating children. In the more developed countries, the media and Internet have more significant function in that process.

Besides of presented involvement of children in armed conflicts in crisis zones, terrorist organizations more often use children for conducting specific terrorist attacks. For example, terrorist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan are increasingly turning to children as operatives. There are more and more cases in Afghanistan that Taliban instructs children, both boys and girls, how to wear an explosive vest and detonate it when Afghan security forces or foreign troops pass by (Smith, 2014). There is also an increased number of information about camps in which five-year olds are trained to fight: in the border areas of Pakistan, Syria, Iraq and Somalia (Webb, 2012). It is estimated that nearly ninety per cent of the estimated 5,000 suicide bombers trained in Pakistan are under age of 16 (Crimi, 2012). Several al Qaeda camps has been found near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border with the children as young as five who are being trained to become soldiers for al Qaeda (Webb, 2012). They are being brainwashed into waging Jihad on the West and becoming suicide bombers. Pakistani authorities accused 11 children, the boys aged 10-16, of terrorism (Horgan, 2013). Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is supposed to be the most active in the recruitment of children. It recruits children younger than 14 years old to conduct suicide attacks, crating with them the new generation of mujahedeen (CBS News, 2008). AQI uses “Birds of Paradise” (also known as “Youth of Heaven” and “Paradise Boys”) as a name for a special unit of suicide bombers age 10 to 16 (Flade, 2010). In 2008 and 2009 Iraqi and American forces had discovered several safe houses used by al Qaeda to brainwash and train young teenage boys to attack coalition forces, including suicide attacks. According to Horgan (2013), terrorist groups in Syria and Somalia have also claimed to be coaching children. Similar reports are regularly coming from other areas with a strong presence of al Qaeda or its affiliates. In abovementioned cases, recruitment of children is made on traditional way, from voluntary, with or without their parent’s consent, to kidnapping and forced recruitment.

Additionally, there are more and more examples of the attempts of children indoctrination on the West. In this process Internet also has one of the most important roles as a tool to reach children as specific target audience. Also, we have more indicators of the effectiveness of this strategy. For example, British police in 2008 had introduced the “Channel project” with the aim of identifying youngsters who are “vulnerable” to Islamic radicalization and to prevent school pupils as young as 13 falling into extrem-

ism. Within the project, two hundred schoolchildren in Great Britain have been identified as potential terrorists. Although this programme was considered as too drastic, the runners believe that it helped teachers, parents and other community figures to recognize the signs that may indicate an attraction to extreme views or susceptibility to being “groomed” by radicalisers. After such signs is being recognized, it is hoped that teachers might intervene, speak to the child’s family, psychiatrists or local imams to find a way how to protect children of going deeper into radicalization. Additional step involves officers working alongside Muslim communities to identify children who have shown an interest in extremist materials on the Internet or in books. Once identified the children are subject to a “programme of intervention tailored to the needs of the individual” (Huges, 2009). The aim is not to prosecute them, but to address their grievance, their growing sense of hate and potential to do something violent in the name of some misinterpretation of a faith. Such approach requires teachers in school, who are already trained to identify pupils who might be experimenting with drugs, to recognise such kind of interests and to recommend additional measures to protect and help those children. Taking into consideration the importance of the Internet and the level of the use of it, it is expected that this type of terrorist strategy will be govern more aggressively in the future.

The misuse of Internet for online radicalisation and recruitment

As we already highlighted, people today increasingly relies on the Internet for socializing, conducting businesses, gathering information and exchanging contents, for entertainment, learning, communication etc. At the same time, people are faced with the full range of online threats. One of these is online radicalization to violence. Terrorist organizations recognize the Internet as one of the most important tools for the access to new audiences and for identification and grooming of potential recruits. Lemack and Hall (2013) consider the Internet as a tool for radicalization and recruitment of home-grown terrorists, as the single-most important and dangerous innovation since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Mass use of social networks and Internet tools for terrorist purposes influences the development of al Qaeda new strategy. Al Qaeda initiated the new phase of transformation in which one of the new strategic goals is to recruit children of different ages. To reach this new target audience, al Qaeda introduced its new media strategy in which the Internet and social networks have got more important role than before. Children are being recruited for both short and long-term goals. Short-term goals have operational advantages as this population easier pass through security controls and are not listed in the security services databases. Moreover, younger popula-

tion is more computer literate than the older ones. That means that they will much easier reach messages and materials delivered through the Internet, as well as use Internet tools and new media to organize online and offline operations.

Internet is already considered as a new arena for Jihad (Weimann, 2006). Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri once said that “more than half” of their struggle to gain supporters relied on the media (Herrigel, 2014). Al Qaeda clearly sees the powerful role social media can play. There are already several thousand of jihadist websites, and that number constantly grows. Today we talk about e-jihad (Lia, 2006), as a result of free and anonymous access to web storage and file sharing. Jihadists use Internet as interactive forum for discussions, exchange of experience, transferring of knowledge, exchange of advises etc. Internet makes accessible information necessary for research, planning and conducting all types of terrorist attack. Also, it is more talked about the trend of self-radicalization on the Internet that allows people to visit terrorist’s web sites and to communicate with same-minded via e-mails, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, chat rooms and other social networks. It is also expected that terrorist groups will use all these tools to recognize individuals who could be recruited, trained and send to conduct concrete action in the short time. Also, they are more and more focused on users form the West (Moss and Mekhennet, 2007), trying to motivate them to join jihad.

The role of the Internet in the recruitment process is invaluable. Ability to publish promo video-clips, online forums in which you can discuss certain topics or create group of fellow-thinkers, as well as social networks, enable creation of virtual communities that are very hard to detect and control. Such new interactive process of radicalization allows self-radicalization of individuals who are interested to follow this ideology and ideas. Self-radicalization is considered the first preliminary step of the recruitment by terrorist organization or self-recruitment for lone-wolf actions. This trend is more concerning with children included in such processes.

New generation of terrorists – children in a martyrdom culture

Children today spend more time on the Internet without parent’s supervision. This makes them easy target for presenting radical ideas and materials. To access children of the earliest age, terrorists’ strategists use different media contents. When we talk about motives that attract children towards terrorist promotional materials, we can stress three of them (Peresin, 2014). Firstly, children that got introduced to these materials with the parent’s consent, as they share the same fundamentalist believe system and wish to raise their children in the same spirit. Secondly, important factor is children’s curiosity and urge for adventures regardless of the fact they do

not fully understand the meaning of what they see and that they are not aware of the consequences they can cause themselves and the others. And the third important factor is also money and financing of activities involving children.

Although we already have many examples of using children to conduct concrete terrorist acts, the main goal of their indoctrination is the long-term creation of terrorist base. Children, who have adopted terrorist ideas since their youth, will be mentally prepared to conduct any terrorist act when they grow up. With additional military training in the short period of time they will be ready for their missions.

Al Qaeda has already developed a special media strategy to radicalize and recruit children from their earliest age (Peresin, 2014). This strategy is imagined as a part of children's entertainment with cartoon, games, musicals and plays with incorporated terrorist ideas and promo materials. They represent the new form of jihadist indoctrination of the minors as they are fully adjusted to children, from toddlers to teenagers. One of the examples of such forms is the production house "Birds of Paradise". The term "Birds of Paradise" refers to the Islamic belief that a child that dies prior to reaching the age of puberty, will enter paradise as a martyr straight away and turn into a bird of heaven singing for the adult martyrs (Flade, 2010). This organization is considered as one of the most popular children's groups in the Arab world and a promoter of jihadist material for children. Their jihadist children's programming is more professional, better edited, and presented in a much more kid-friendly style than ever before. In video materials children are transformed into killers of enemies' soldiers and fighters for jihadist goals. Children absorb what they hear and it becomes part of their characters. In time, this information builds up into their belief systems and principles, something that is expected of them, normal to them and what Allah wills of them. Psychologists warn that in such way the culture of martyrdom children is created. In it, children act as robots incapable of expressing their emotions or to show any form of vulnerability. Such media content stimulates children to "use weapons, kill, use explosive devices, as well as to conduct other activities symbolizing terrorism" (IPT News, 2009). "Birds of Paradise" publications are also spreading outside of Arab territories, especially towards Canada and Great Britain.

Messages from videos are entailed for children of all ages and the effectiveness of such tactic lays in the fact that during this stage of life children form lifelong attitudes and beliefs. Educational materials children remember as mental facts. In this way, they are being taught that peace is only achievable by destruction of infidels and that violence is not only acceptable, but recommended method of self-expression. A psychological effect of such enticement is effective even among the population that does not fully understand complexity of the messages they receive.

Psychologists agree (Peresin, 2014) that children in the martyrdom culture become emotionally crippled, unable to express their true emotions because if they do this, they would be shamed and punished. On the other side, if they fulfil expectations and satisfy ideological standards, they would be appreciated and loved. These are just some of the consequences that spring when children are raised in hatred. Additionally, psychologists warn that every attempt to change the attitudes of such children in later phases of their lives would be very difficult as hate is linked to each one of their earliest memories.

Video productions directed by “Birds of Paradise” are not isolated cases, but part of the new strategy to entice violence and create new terrorists. On *YouTube* it is possible to find numerous video materials in which children are being shown to conduct terrorist attacks. Underlying message in them is that for such action they would be rewarded by Allah as the only way to achieve happiness and peace. Recruitment of the future suicide bombers became part of children entertainment production spread through the new media, mostly Internet and tools that enable easy availability of such materials.

How to counter child online radicalization

A trend of a more frequent and more sophisticated use of the Internet for online radicalization of different target audiences, especially children, requires faster and more efficient response of both the security community and the society. Contemporary society depends on Internet for conducting the whole spectrum of business and private activities. For younger generation and children Internet becomes the main tool for playing, entertainment and learning. Such trend has been recognised by violent extremists and terrorists, who have developed different efficient methods to reach the target audience on the Internet and social networks, with the aim of their recruitment for the future violent activities. However, each restriction on the access to the subjects on the Internet could limit or disable a whole range of everyday activities. On the other hand, tracking or monitoring of online activities could definitely harm users’ privacy and their human rights. Thus, the approaches aimed at restricting freedom of speech and the removal of Internet content is considered as one of the least desirable and effective strategies to counter online radicalization. Instead, reducing both supply of and demand for radical messages is suggested as the most promising way for reducing the presence of extremists’ online propaganda (Lemack and Hall, 2013).

To efficiently counter online radicalization, it is necessary to invest more in the development of security awareness programs to show the ways how terrorists mis-

use Internet and how to efficiently recognize, protect from and respond on such attempts. It would also be useful to expand national counter-terrorism strategies with provisions on measures to counter online radicalization. In parallel with the development of new strategies, security services should expand their cooperation with different sectors, such as IT and technology industry to develop measures for promoting Internet safety; schools and academic community to enable appropriate awareness for staying safe online through the all phases of education; media for the dissemination of education materials and advices to citizens, and local community in charge with the organization of social activities and gathering.

Following this, the Bipartisan Policy Center experts recommended following measures (Lemack and Hall, 2013): (1) government should clarify online law enforcement authorities, and communicate with Internet companies on the nature of radical threats, propaganda and communication; (2) government should accelerate the establishment of informal partnerships to assist large Internet companies in understanding national security threats as well as trends and patterns in terrorist communications so companies become more conscious of emerging threats, key individuals and organization, and find it easier to align their takedown efforts with national security priorities; (3) the government should work to reduce the demand for radical messages by encouraging civic challenges to extremist narratives through counter-messaging efforts by community groups to promote youth awareness and education; (4) counter-extremism education for youth should be expanded, along with partnerships to educate parents, teachers and communities on the signs and risks of extremism. For example, government should encourage school authorities to review and update their curricula on media literacy, consider violent extremism as part of their instruction on child-safety issues and develop relevant training resources for teachers, (5) the government should identify up-front what resources will be committed to outreach and education programs, as well as the metrics that will be used to measure success.

To conduct abovementioned measures, it is also necessary to establish organizational framework for planning and coordinate activities, and measure their effectiveness. With the aim of that, the U.S. has already made formal step with the establishment of an *Interagency Working Group to counter Online Radicalization to Violence*, chaired by the National Security Staff at the White House and involving counter-extremism experts, Internet safety specialists, and civil liberties and privacy activists (Wiktorowicz, 2013). Additionally, we assume that such working group should also have experts on education and child psychology to assure proper coordination of all sectors and their activities in the fight against these threats. Such working group should be responsible for the following issues: development of Internet safety plans, coordination of government activities and its collaboration with

other abovementioned sectors, raising awareness about Internet safety, sharing information how violent extremists are misusing the Internet, sharing best practices how to protect Internet users, work closely with local organizations how to successfully communicate to citizens about this issue, assess the progress of such activities and plan additional ones, etc. The aim is to reach multiple audiences with critical information about the threat of online violent extremism and online recruitment. It is expected that well-informed Internet users, with a good knowledge how to stay safe online, are crucial to protect the whole community from a wide range of online threats. Additionally, it is important that parents are aware of these threats and advised how to protect their children. Schools and academic community should be encouraged to incorporate received information into their programs and initiatives, especially through the media literacy curricula and organization of awareness programs for children and their parents. Workshops and conferences for sharing experience in addressing online threats are also recommended and considered as useful.

Countering online radicalization requires both proactive measures to reduce the likelihood that violent extremists affect their target audiences as well as ensuring that national laws are precise and rigorously enforced. Additionally, law enforcement and intelligence agencies need to better take advantage of the Internet to gather intelligence about terrorists' intentions and activities, and to collect evidence that can be used in prosecutions (Lemack and Hall, 2013). Extremist forums and social networking sites are essential for identifying violent extremists who could be members of some terrorist groups or just lone-wolf terrorists. Many of them use online forums, blogs and social networks for posting messages or announce planned activities. Each sudden change in behaviour or announcement of specific actions should be timely recognised and immediately reported with the aim of preventing possible violent actions.

Precise and effective strategy against online radicalization should include both proactive (to reduce the demand for radicalization and promotion of terrorist activities on the Internet) and reactive components (to exploit the online communications of terrorists in order to gain intelligence and gather evidence for their prosecution). It is also important to highlight that during the process of planning and implementation of all abovementioned measures it is necessary to assure that they are used with no harm to privacy and civil liberties of individual Internet users.

Conclusion

In this paper we talk about carefully planned media strategy for children indoctrination and their familiarization with radical ideas that are created to prepare the youth to accept terrorist ideology. New al Qaeda strategy aims to reach a significant

number of children through the model of self-radicalization and self-recruitment by using new advances in information technology, primarily new media and social networks. In long-term, that would ease the creation of basis for the recruitment of would-be terrorists in the future.

Our research supports the hypothesis that Internet is widely evident in the radicalization process of violent extremists and terrorists and that expands opportunities for radicalization, as a result of being available to many people, including children, and enabling connection with like-minded individuals from across the world 24/7. It could be said that in the age of Internet violent extremists became more dangerous as the required communication, training and operation materials are available online at any time. Also, we have shown Internet's role in the development of new terrorist strategies and policies.

On the example of successful al Qaeda transformation and its adjustment to acting in new security environment, this paper has shown the development of the new strategy of action with the aim to create new premises for self-radicalization and self-recruitment, and targeting children as a new target audience. There is no doubt that the success of this transformation can be contributed to skilful use of Internet and social networks to reach this population. Planning the future of al Qaeda, al Qaeda strategists introduced new models of acting within the frame of „leaderless jihad“ and “e-jihad”. Both models require attraction of as many children as possible in order to conduct both their short-term and long-term goals. In the short-term it has operational advantages as this population passes more easily through security controls and is not registered in the security services data bases. In the long-term, they are building up a new generation of terrorist who, already indoctrinated, will be ready to pass short military training and to conduct concrete terrorist act. By accepting terrorist contents from their earliest youth, children build up violent extremist and radical belief system that is in line with al Qaeda ideology. They are shaped through well taught media strategy of children's entertainment, as a brand new form of children indoctrination with media content fully adjusted to children of different ages. This is how children “in the martyrdom culture“, ready to become would-be suicide bombers, are created. Internet and social networks primarily enable easy access to children entertainment materials, necessary to support this project.

In a long-term we can expect that this al Qaeda strategy will ease its future operations and raise the number of sympathizers and members. Having in mind presented trends, availability of Internet and carefully planned media strategy, governments will have to develop new strategies and answers to counter online radicalization

and recruitment. Next to the traditional military, intelligence and law enforcement activities, this answer requires multidisciplinary approach and their cooperation with other sectors, especially IT industry, media experts, child psychologists and education community.

Results presented in this paper outline relevant implications and recommendations for further research on online radicalisation. It also includes some potential recommendations for the policy community and reflections on how to use the Internet to counter radicalisation based on the results of this study.

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Radikalizacija Al-Qaeda na internetu i stvaranje dječjih terorista

Anita Perešin

SAŽETAK

Suvremeni terorizam kontinuirano se transformira, prilagođavajući se djelovanju u uvjetima aktivnog rata protiv terorizma i aktualnih protuterorističkih strategija. Takva transformacija obuhvaća ne samo promjene organizacijske strukture, već i strategije djelovanja koje traže načine da se poveća učinkovitost terorističkih napada. U ovom radu dajemo analizu novih trendova u terorizmu koje predvodi Al-Qaida novim konceptom „džihada bez vodstva“ i stvaranjem nove generacije djece-terorista. Kroz načine na koje terorističke organizacije zloupotrebljavaju medije, pokazat ćemo kako djeca mogu postati žrtve radikalnih fundamentalističkih ideologija. Iako se djeca sve češće koriste za izvođenje samih terorističkih napada, u ovom ćemo radu pokazati kako je zlouporaba medija za indoktrinaciju djece od najranije dobi dio pomno planirane Al-Qa'idine strategije edukacije „djece samoubilačke kulture“, s ciljem njihove ideološke pripreme za izvođenje terorističkih napada u budućnosti. Za realizaciju navedene strategije Al-Qa'ida koristi različite medijske sadržaje, prilagođene djeci različitih uzrasta, koje distribuira putem interneta i društvenih mreža, pretvarajući ih u moćan alat za ostvarenje navedenih ciljeva. Tomu je značajno pridonijela i nova medijska strategija Al-Qaide kojoj je cilj razvoj modela samo-regrutacije putem interneta, kroz stvaranje virtualnih zajednica za edukaciju, upoznavanje, međusobnu komunikaciju i planiranje zajedničkog djelovanja. Takvi oblici e-radikalizacije otvaraju nove izazove za sigurnosne službe te zahtijevaju pronalaženje novih modela za onemogućavanje zlouporabe medija u terorističke svrhe.

Ključne riječi: Al Qaida, online radikalizacija, djeca teroristi, online regrutiranje, zlouporaba medija