Developing an appropriate "counternarrative" will undermine the VEO's narrative.

129; 180; 181; 130; 131; 105; 106

General Description of the Literature:

Researchers in the fields of politics, strategy, and international conflict have analyzed the influence of developing counternarratives to undermine extremist narratives. Casebeer and Russell (2005) and Kilcullen (2005) address the need to understand extremist operations in order to design successful counternarratives. Killcullen also proposes that as extremists are often connected at a local level, counterinsurgency efforts must be directed at this local level. In a quantitative analysis, Burgoon (2006) notes that this counter effort can be aided with well-designed social welfare policies aimed at reducing the injustice in societies especially vulnerable to breeding extremist ideologies. Research by Speckhard (2007) and Knopf (2010) supports delegitimizing these extremist ideologies as a viable deterrent strategy. Although background literature was found discussing delegitimizing through religious debates, reframing the outgroup to reduce extremist violence, and reducing VEO activity through reaffirming esteem, no empirical results were found that supported these hypotheses.

Detailed Analyses

129: *Developing an appropriate "counternarrative" will undermine the VEOs narrative.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: In an analysis of existing and creating narratives and counternarratives regarding terrorism, Casebeer and Russell (2005) note that it is very difficult to identify and describe these narratives due to the dispersed nature of terrorism. Despite this difficulty, however, the authors note that understanding the narrative of such extremist organizations as Al Qaeda is vital to successfully countering their narratives and possible attacks. Thus, according to Casebeer and Russell, in order to create a successful counternarrative that will undermine these extremist narratives, it is important to understand the group dynamics and operational capabilities of the extremist organization being studied. Kilcullen (2005) addresses this need to understand the operations of extremist organizations in his analysis of counterinsurgency strategies. Kilcullen notes that extremist groups involved in global jihad are often linked in a type of universal fight in which they thrive on each other's conflicts and grievances while sharing a similar ideology. However, if the groups were to be "de-linked" or isolated in such a way that they were no longer focused on global jihad but upon more localized conflicts, and the shared ideology was discredited, this could serve as a successful counterinsurgency strategy (Kilcullen, 2005). Knopf (2010) notes that caution should be used when attempting to develop counternarratives as outside interference from foreign entities could provoke a backlash effect.

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A.

Applicability Score: Not Applicable – There is no empirical support in any context

180: *Localizing anti-VEO efforts (tailoring efforts to local values, etc.) will reduce VEO activities.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Kilcullen (2005) notes that extremist groups are often linked by similar ideologies in a global jihad which incites them to further violence. Furthermore, Kilcullen asserts that upon examination of the nature of jihad, it becomes clear that it is really a grassroots effort driven by relationships and grievances that are established at local levels. Therefore, if we address the global jihad as an insurgency and design counterinsurgency programs to address the grievances and relationships driving these campaigns at a local level, this should aid in reducing extremist organization activities (Kilcullen, 2005).

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A

Applicability Score: Not Applicable – There is no empirical support in any context.

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181: *States' influence efforts will be more successful if they refrain from providing symbols of injustice that feed into the VEO narrative.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: In a quantitative analysis of state efforts to reduce terrorism through efforts such as social welfare policies, Burgoon (2006) described how factors such as poverty, inequality, economic insecurity, and religious extremism can often serve as impetuses for extremist activity. However, social welfare policies aimed at addressing these issues and decreasing injustice in society are proposed to reduce extremist activities by addressing the issues that underlie extremist narratives. Burgoon's empirical study found support for this hypothesis.

Empirical Support Score: 7 = Single, high-quality quantitative analysis supporting the hypothesis.

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: Burgoon's empirical analysis directly related towards addressing the injustice underlying extremist narratives through social policies directed towards reducing the factors causing the injustice.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

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130: *Delegitimizing VEOs' religious or political messages will reduce the likelihood of an attack because their organization will be reduced to a common criminal organization without political or ideological influence.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Research on extremism and countering extremism has noted the importance of addressing extremist ideologies to the success of countermeasures (Casebeer and Russell, 2005; Kilcullen, 2005; Speckhard, 2007). In her analysis on delegitimizing terrorism, Speckhard (2007) describes the multifaceted threat of terrorism at various levels including organizational, societal, individual, and ideological. Speckhard further recommends that through methods such as counter education, debranding, and promoting social resiliency, countermeasures can delegitimize extremist ideologies. Furthermore, local citizens who may support extremist violence may come to view it as detrimental to their livelihoods. Knopf (2010) also supports delegitimization as a deterrent strategy, noting that strategic communication through discourse is thought to be more effective than military action.

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A

Applicability Score: Not Applicable – There is no empirical support in any context.

131: *Manipulating religious debates in ways that delegitimize interpretations that condone terrorism can help inform broader deterrent strategies.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Knopf (2010) has supported delegitimizing extremist justifications for violence, noting that this is a viable deterrent strategy. There are many deradicalization programs around the world which aim to reinterpret the Koran in order to delegitimize the (seeming) religious condoning of jihad. These programs can be found in Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Indonesia. Further, Dr. Kruglanski's group at START is conducting a systematic and longitudinal investigation into the efficacy of deradicalization programs in Singapore and the Philippines; data collection and analysis are currently being performed.

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A

Applicability Score: Not Applicable – There is no empirical support in any context.

105: *Providing evidence for (or reframing to sound like) the outgroup is not threatening the beliefs of the VEO's constituency may reduce VEO activity.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Kinder and Sears (1981), in a study of voting patterns in a mayoral race found that symbolic racism (i.e. viewing Blacks as a threat to White's values) was a stronger predictor of candidate preference than was realistic threat. Other research has shown that threats to important values can increase intergroup bias. For example, Biernat, Vescio,and Theno (1996) found that the majority of Whites perceived Blacks as not supporting their values and these Whites had relatively more negative evaluations of Blacks than those Whites who perceived Blacks as supporting their values. Additionally, threats to values have also been shown to influence attitudes toward social policies aimed at helping minorities (Sawires & Peacock, 2000) and in other intergroup settings as well, including body-type and sexual orientation groups (Crandall, 1994; L. M. Jackson & Esses, 1997; Nicholas & Durrheim, 1995; Zanna; 1994). Multiple studies have illustrated that perceived threats to the ingroup's values by foreigners are related to increases in negative attitudes toward immigrants (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna,1993; Esses, Hodson, & Dovidio, 2003). However, none of these studies test the idea that reframing the values or beliefs of a group may reduce the perceived threat to one's own group values. Therefore, there is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis but the theory suggests that the hypothesis should be supported.

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A

Applicability Score: Not Applicable – There is no empirical support in any context.

106: *Reaffirming the esteem or prestige of the group may reduce VEO creation and activity.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Belonging to positively valued groups is important for a member's self-image and when the actions of an outgroup potentially decrease an ingroup's esteem a threat is posed that may instigate intergroup bias (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Support for the relationship between group esteem threat and intergroup bias has been found across a number of experimental studies. For example, Branscombe and Wann (1994) found that when highly identified American participants viewed a film in which an American boxer was beaten by a Russian boxer it led to decreases in their collective self-esteem, which in turn increased the likelihood of derogating Russians. Similarly,

Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, and Doosje (2002) threatened the prestige of a group by informing participants that members of another group had negatively evaluated them (i.e. threatening their group's esteem) which led to lower perceptions of public collective self-esteem and fewer rewards allocated to the threatening outgroup. Identification with the ingroup moderates the relationship between group esteem threats and intergroup bias. The stronger the identification with the ingroup, the stronger the reactions to group esteem threats (Branscombe et al., 1999). However, none of these studies test the idea that reaffirming the esteem or prestige of the group may reduce intergroup conflict (i.e. VEO activity). Therefore, there is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis but the theory suggests that the hypothesis should be supported.

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A

Applicability Score: Not Applicable – There is no empirical support in any context.

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