

ICSR Update

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2008

ICSR is a unique partnership in which King's College London, the University of Pennsylvania, the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, and the Regional Center on Conflict Prevention Amman are equal stakeholders.

Our joint mission is to bring together knowledge and leadership to counter the growth of radicalisation and political violence.

Dear Friend,

Let me first of all thank you for all the encouragement and positive feedback we received following the publication of our first newsletter nearly two months ago.

As you will see from this – the second – edition of *ICSR Update*, much has happened in the meantime. In June, we co-hosted the annual *International Terrorism and Intelligence* conference in London, which brought together leading figures from the worlds of law enforcement, intelligence, academia and civil society from Europe and North America. Organised by Eden Intelligence, the event produced the kind of systematic, outcome-driven dialogue between experts and policymakers that is at the heart of ICSR's mission.

Even in the quiet days of August, ICSR is busy as ever with a wide range of events and activities. Next week, we will start a major research project that compares pathways into radicalisation in North America and Europe. A little later, in the run-up to the seventh anniversary of September 11, we will be launching a paper on 'Al Qaeda's Strengths and Vulnerabilities' – a highly informed assessment by Richard Barrett, the head of the UN's Al Qaeda/Taleban Monitoring Team, written in his personal capacity.

If you have any questions or ideas, please do not hesitate to get in touch. In any case, I hope you will enjoy your summer break!

Dr. Peter Neumann
Director, ICSR

First Two Atkin Fellows Named

The first two Atkin Fellows are Amal Abusrour from the Palestinian Territories and Sefi Kedmi from Israel.

Abusrour, a civil servant from Ramallah, and Kedmi, a peace activist from Azor, will be joining ICSR in London for a period of four months from October. They will work on papers dealing with key obstacles to peace in the Middle East. During their stay, they will also be meeting with a wide range of experts and policymakers, as well as organize a series of events exploring the current situation in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Thanks to the generosity of the Atkin Foundation, ICSR is offering young leaders from Israel and the Arab world the opportunity to come to London to develop their ideas on how to further understanding in the Middle East through research, debate and dialogue.

News from Our Partners

Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya: The International Institute for Counterterrorism will hold its 8th International Conference from 8-11 September 2008. For more information, see below – or go to www.ict.org.il.

University of Pennsylvania: Prof. Harvey Rubin will launch the first issue of the ICSR paper series *Developments in Radicalisation and Political Violence* in November. Papers will be written by leading researchers and provide the latest insight and analysis.

Regional Center on Conflict Prevention Amman: Together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, RCCP organized a workshop in July, which brought together Jordanian NGOs and provided them with practical knowledge about conflict prevention.

King's College London: Prof. Sir Lawrence Freedman launched his latest book *A Choice of Enemies*, which examines America's strategic predicament in the Middle East. See www.orionbooks.co.uk/HB-41194/A-Choice-Of-Enemies.htm.

What Others Say about ICSR

"When I saw something that is organized by four prominent institutions from the United States, Jordan, Israel and the UK, I thought this is a very good idea that they do such work"

Mustafa Cerić, Grand Mufti of Bosnia Herzegovina

"There is absolutely no question in my mind that the world needed this. The greater understanding that we have of the reasons a person chooses to travel down the dark road, from political activism to setting a bomb off somewhere, the better we will be able to design strategies to effectively counter it, and the more effective will be our efforts as we focus on root causes rather than the symptoms"

Francisco Santos, Vice-President of Colombia

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Radicalisation in Europe and North America: Parallels and Divergence

In order to counter radicalisation more effectively, the processes that lead people to embrace violent extremism need to be better understood. What are the key factors that drive groups and individuals towards extreme types of activism? Are these processes uniform, or do they differ over time and space?

Our second major research project will focus on Muslim communities in Europe and the United States, comparing and evaluating their attitudes and experiences. We will collect detailed information about radicalized actors and construct case studies that will help us to assess the universality and variability of radicalisation processes.

A related strand of the project will involve surveys of Muslim communities in Europe and the United States that are designed to measure levels of support for terrorism as well as connections between beliefs and actions, both legal and illegal.

The project will provide a better understanding of the process of violent radicalisation and make more effective counter-radicalisation efforts possible. In addition, it will produce extensive data on Muslim communities in Europe and North America, allowing experts and commentators to develop a better idea of what Muslim communities in the West share and how they differ.

The project is a long-term foundation project that will be carried out over a period of two years and involve institutional partnerships with the Swedish National Defence College in Stockholm and the START Centre at the University of Maryland.

Events

(Unless stated otherwise, events take place at ICSR in London)

Atomic Terrorism – Assessing the Likelihood. On 19 June, Prof. John Mueller of the University of Ohio spoke on the issue of nuclear terrorism and whether its threat has been exaggerated.

Terror and Consent. On 24 July, Prof. Philip Bobbitt of Columbia University addressed questions about the evolving nature of terrorism and war, whether 'Wars on Terror' can be won, and how future threats need to be dealt with.

FORTHCOMING: Pakistan – Pathways into Jihad. On 26 August, ICSR Associate Fellow Laila Bokhari will speak about her latest fieldwork in Pakistan during which she conducted interviews with more than one hundred members of extremist organizations.

FORTHCOMING: Radicalisation and Political Violence in the Arab-Israeli Conflict. On 7 September, Dr. Boaz Ganor of ICT Herzliya and Yasar Qataneh of the Regional Centre for Conflict Prevention Amman will be speaking at an ICSR dinner in Afeka, Tel Aviv.

FORTHCOMING: Iran's Role in the Middle East – Continuity and Change. On 16 September, Haim Koren, Director of Policy Planning at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, looks at Iran's regional interests from an Israeli perspective.

Future Projects and Initiatives

Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in Prisons: Lessons from 12 Countries. Across the world, instances in which extremists have radicalised and recruited in prisons have become more frequent. Some countries have developed innovative and apparently successful programmes through which radical prisoners are de-radicalised. Others are just about to begin to tackle the problem.

The proposed ICSR study will compare and evaluate government policies on terrorist and extremist prisoners as well as the various programmes that have been aimed at rehabilitating them. It will produce the first systematic overview of best practice by drawing on the experiences from twelve countries. Our study will allow governments, the media and experts to learn from a wide range of case studies. Most importantly, it will help governments to avoid costly mistakes in addressing a new challenge.

If you would like to contribute to this project – or know of someone who might – please contact Dr. Peter Neumann at peter.neumann@icsr.info.