

PANELISTS DEBATE

Justin Vaïsse, Director of the policy planning staff, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Before going to the room, I would like to ask a few quick questions of our panellists.

Mr. Khan, it would be really interesting if you could tell us a bit more about the Centre and the Task Force, how they are interacting and working with governments, and give us a more precise view of the work they are doing so that the audience might become more familiar with it.

Professor Wang Jisi, I would like to push you just a bit further on Pakistan. Recently China blocked the inscription of an affiliate from Hizb ut-Tahrir to the UN Terrorism List, so this poses a question about cooperation in fighting terrorism. What do you see as the future of Chinese-Pakistan relations as it relates precisely to that question of terrorism?

Jamal Khashoggi, I would like to ask you about one thing that Saudi Arabia is doing, which is de-radicalisation, which is the Grail of many governments around the world. Does terrorism prevention exist as something Ban Ki-moon insists that we need to do? De-radicalisation is intervening ex-post, after someone has been radicalised, and it seems to be a challenge that has not been properly managed by anyone. Could you enlighten us on this?

Mr. Narayanan, I really appreciated your point about the need to defeat these really religious pernicious ideologies and philosophies, so the fight is not just about security and cooperation but also ideology. Can you elaborate a bit further on what exactly that means, or rather what paths we could follow in the direction of defeating these philosophies? Defeating ideas is a pretty arduous task, and if you had other ideas it would be really interesting.

Last but not least, Sergey, I would like to push you a bit on the Russian intervention in Syria. You talked about the need to stop foreign interventions, and it seems that Russia is doing just that, intervening. More precisely, on the question of Aleppo, Staffan de Mistura estimated the number of Al-Nusra fighters in east Aleppo as being 400 at most out of 4,000 to 5,000 fighters, that is 5% to less than 10% at most. Therefore, it seems that the fierce fighting against the rebels in Aleppo is not really about fighting Al-Nusra but the other aim that you mentioned, that is to say, supporting existing government. You called it legitimate government, and I am not sure that that government of Bashar Al-Assad, especially with what is happening right now, can be considered legitimate. Do you really think a minority government that is hated by a majority in Syria is a long-term solution, or is it more part of the problem, as Jamal Khashoggi was suggesting?

Sergey Karaganov, Honorary Chairman of the Presidium of the non-governmental Council on Foreign and Defense Policy of Russia, Founder and former Deputy Director of the Institute of Europe of the Academy of Sciences of USSR/Russia

Thank you for the question. First of all, I do not know the figures, and with all due respect, I do not trust anybody, including my own press, because we are living in the fog of war, but it is quite possible that he is right. What we are doing is defeating terrorism and defending legitimate government, and we are stopping the practice, which has been imposed on the world during the last 15 years, of regime change. I hope that, with that lesson, others will stop that process. It started in 1999 with the criminal, indiscriminate bombing of Yugoslavia. We are deterring those kinds of practices, so that nobody in the world could ever think that they could be repeated.

Regarding the legitimacy of the government, the government is there. It is recognised by the international community, and Syrians should decide the future of their government, when and if we impose some kind of order, if that is possible of course. Therefore, we are not there for Mr. Assad. We are not saying that Assad should stay. We are there for principles and for interests, including one very important principle, which has been grossly violated over the last 17 or 18 years, and that is a respect for sovereignty. Never repeat such acts as the attack on Belgrade; it was worse than Guernica.

Justin Vaïsse, Director of the policy planning staff, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Narayanan, have you some thoughts on defeating ideologies?

Mayankote Kelath Narayanan, Former Governor of West Bengal, The Raj Bhavan, Former Senior Advisor and National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India

The question is perhaps the most difficult to answer, because if we had the answer we would not be in this position today. I just want to make the point that there are many different varieties of terrorism, and the world has seen this, and Sergey and others know this only too well. There is ethnic terrorism, nationalistic terrorism, linguistic terrorism, and so on, and I concentrated on one in particular, because most of the others were limited in scope, confined to particular areas, states, etc. There are the Chechen rebels, and we have problems in India, for instance, people who feel they are not getting their due and their own self-preservation is at stake.

I spoke of something which goes across countries and territories, and is winning people over by appealing to what I would call a concept, where a new world is being built. Almost every minute, probably a few hundred thousand children are being carried away by a Holy Grail, something that is completely different, and where the means are of no consequence. That is why I concentrated on just this one particular point of terrorism, because others have been dealt with by states for better or worse, with some continuing and some not, concessions being made and so on. However, this one is really an idea – an idea is floating, saying that we are producing a fundamentally different world from what you have seen, so you should join us, and for that you can kill and do what happened in Belgium, what happened in France or what is happening in different parts of the world.

It is a little more than what Mr. Khashoggi said about problems in a particular region. This is going across regions. It is happening not only in west Asia, but right across the world, so it is really a question of how you meet this idea that people have. It is dangerous, because it goes on at this point, so we need to come up with a way to do it. That is not being attended to – the best brains and the best minds really need to work on this, because you can monitor the Internet, and children are sitting in their rooms at the age of 13 or 14 and listening to this silent song. Therefore, we need to look at it from that point of view. I think it is the general sense here that mere military might not win the war. We may win a battle here and there, we may get Mosul back, but ISIS 2.0 will come to every other part of the world, and we still have the problem with us.

Therefore, the question is how we marshal our forces to think of meeting the idea, because they have the vehicle and they are using it. The vehicle is the Internet, and we need to use similar vehicles to defeat it.

Jamal Khashoggi, General Manager, Editor in Chief Of AlArab News Channel

The de-radicalisation programme does not apply to violent activists who have been tried and sentenced to severe sanctions or even to death after they carried out a violent attack. It applies to young activists, radicals, who attempted to cross the border from Turkey to Syria, who were caught by the Turkish border guards and handed over to Saudi Arabia. There is a law in Saudi Arabia that prevents joining a war outside the country, so they have violated the law



and will regardless be sentenced to a few years in prison. It will be a three-, four- or five-year sentence, and eventually they will be released from prison. They will go through a course of de-radicalisation at that time. The Government knows that they will eventually come out and that they are a potential hazard to society.

Some succeed and some fail. This varies – most recently I saw in a local newspaper that the programme had a 15% failure rate and a success rate of 85% with detainees. Another segment of those who undergo this programme are those who support terrorism and radicalism, who were caught tweeting or writing in support of Al-Qaeda on social media. They were not caught supporting the Al-Qaeda organisation and are not part of Al-Qaeda or ISIS. These will also be arrested and go through the programme. Briefly, radicals sometimes grow out of radicalism – it is not something you go through all your life.

Wang Jisi, President of the Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Peking University, and professor of the School of International Studies, Peking University

I am not in a position to discuss specific cases, but in our relationship with Pakistan, the principle is that it is probably the most important and closest friend we have in the Islamic world as a whole. Pakistan gives China valuable support in many international settings, and in return China has strengthened its cooperation with Pakistan in military, economic and political terms. Therefore, we have to discuss many specific cases, some sensitive, with the Pakistani Government, although we also understand that sometimes there are different opinions within Pakistan itself. We also have sporadic activities in Pakistan, for instance some anti-China demonstrations in parts of Pakistan related to China's commercial activities. Therefore, there is a very close consultation between the two governments that also takes into consideration China's relationship with India and with Afghanistan. This is the principle.

Jehangir Khan, Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) in the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in the UN Secretariat

I will not bore you with the details of the day-to-day work of our Centre, but I will explain the context. The context is that today there is a great deficit in international cooperation linked to the growing transnational threat of terrorism. What do I mean by that? The nature of terrorism, as I explained, is increasingly across borders, and as we see the bombing taking place in Syria and Iraq, we see terrorists moving across borders. Sometimes they move across four or five borders very quickly and they look for new opportunities. When you have terrorists coming from more than 100 countries, that in itself is evidence of that.

What is the relevance of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre? Our main effort is to strengthen international collaboration in a practical way, and it is based on a very concrete mandate that comes from the UN General Assembly. You know that until today there is no international agreed definition of terrorism. The legal committee at the UN has been debating the definition of terrorism for years, and we know the reason why there is no definition of terrorism – it is because one man's terrorist has been another man's or woman's liberation fighter and vice versa. Notwithstanding the fact that there is no agreed international or UN definition of terrorism, the General Assembly of the UN, all the member states of the UN, still managed to adopt a global consensus document called the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

That was adopted 10 years ago, and our job as the UN, the Counter-Terrorism Task Force that coordinates 38 UN agencies, is to support member governments in implementing the global counter-terrorism strategy at the global, regional and national levels. That is now being complemented by the new UN plan to prevent violent extremism. One last point in this context is that the first pillar of the UN global counter-terrorism strategy is called 'conditions conducive'. The reason it is called this is that member states could not even agree to call it 'root causes'. That in itself was politicised at the UN because some countries were not comfortable with the term 'root causes', and they had to adopt the terminology 'conditions conducive'. That first pillar remained moribund during 10 years until member states finally



responded to the Secretary-General's call to look at *root causes* by addressing the drivers of violent extremism, and that is why the plan of action to prevent violent extremism is meant to give content to that first pillar of the UN global counter-terrorism strategy.

The UN Counter-Terrorism Centre is now working across the world, including here in the State of Qatar, where I have come to sign an agreement on strengthening our collaboration and stepping up our efforts to support governments around the world in preventing violent extremism.