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Islamic State, Is It a Downfall or Spread?: Focused on TERRORIST Attacks in Western Europe

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Abstract

It is analyzed that the followers of the IS have abandoned their base as the bases that the IS built in Syria and Iraq is about to collapse. As a result, there is a growing possibility of so-called "homegrown terrorism" in the country of origin, where the number of IS members entering Europe is increasing.

It is also expected that the "transition effect" of the IS supporters and followers are scattered around the world and terrorist attacks may appear when the allied attack threatens to collapse the Middle East base.

The IS, which has lost its influence in Iraq and Syria, is scattered all over the world in order to demonstrate its presence and is trying to encourage local 'lone wolves' to conduct terrorist attacks. Also, it is reported that the IS members from Western Europe who had participated the organization in Syria, Iraq or Libya returned to their country and conducted terrorist attacks, which made terrorist activities more proliferate. It is estimated that nearly 5,000 European Union citizens are participating in the extremist militant groups including the IS.

Recently in Europe, there has been a new kind of terrorism called 'Truck Terror' or 'Rush Terror.' In addition to this, traditional terrorist attacks of using small arms and bombs are still in use.

Britain, which is experiencing more frequent terrorism in recent years, is in shock. The country did not concern about the terrorist attacks by the jihadists or the IS so far because the British government had taken a variety of communication policies for Muslims and Mr. Sadiq Khan has been elected a mayor of the City of London. Because London was a friendly city for Islam and Muslims, the impact of recent terrorism is even greater.

As seen in recent terrorist attacks, fear of terrorism is getting bigger as terrorism occurs in places where tourist attractions, theaters, markets, restaurants and other soft targets are gathering in daily life.

It seems to be very challenging to prevent and control the terrorist attacks in spite of the counterterrorism policies and activities by Europol and its member States.

What Koreans are concerned about is that Koreans may get damaged from terrorist attacks in Western Europe and other countries. Yet it is an assumption, the matter will be more serious if the terrorist attacks target citizens and facilities in Korea. Thus, it is time to minimize damage through international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Parliament, and the sharing and cooperation of information with foreign governments.

[Keywords] *Islamic State, Jihadist, Homegrown Terror, Lone Wolf, ECTC*

1. Introduction

In the past few years, large or small terrorist attacks have occurred in Europe, including France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Russia. In addition, the IS have conducted terrorist attacks from Western Europe to Iran and the Philippines. What is more, terrorist attacks by nationalism, separatist extremism, and violent radicalization and extremism including the IS are widespread in the Euro zone. Britain is not an exception. Three terrorist attacks targeted civilians have occurred in 2017, which has brought tremendous level of fear of terrorist

attacks and growing concerns on security. France has experienced terrorist attacks with small arms and lethal weapons in February and April, respectively. Unfortunately, it seems that this kind of so-called new terrorist attacks will continue as signs of terrorism are witnessed around European countries.

Recent terrorist attacks in Europe are characterized by the features that they are soft-targeted, homegrown, and lone wolf terrorism. As the IS has been losing its base in the Middle East, the IS seems to prioritize the terrorist attacks toward western Europe so as to convince its power to its supporters. As one of its strategies, the IS has focused on its attacks toward NATO, which has participated in the military operation against the IS, therefore, Western Europe has been targeted in attacks. In 2014 military operation to repulse the IS in Iraq and Syria, seven countries participated in the operation led by France. What is remarkable is the fact that there has been a series of terrorist attacks in France since 2015.

In this context, the IS, which feels threatened by the destruction of its base, is likely to strategically expand its territory to secure new bases and to show the strength of its forces. Also, constant increase both in new IS followers and terrorists should be noted. Central Asia is emerging as a new source of recruiting terrorists, and the attention to the terrorist activities of the Philippine Muslim extremist group called ‘Maute’ that declared its support for the IS should be paid in this context.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Islamism and emergence of the IS

There is a claim that the collapse of socialist realism in Eastern Europe and the Western's indifference to the region have provided new impetus to terrorism. It is also argued that the primary goal of political violence is not the Western countries themselves, but pro-Islamic Muslim governments and Muslim nations[1].

The IS is a group called Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad which started in 1999 and was founded by Abu Musab al-Zarkawi, the leader of the organization, in 2004 when al-Zarkawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden of al-Qaida. And he changed its name to Al Qaeda in Iraq. After the death of al-Zarqawi, the leader of the group changed to Abu Ayyub al-Masri, and Abu Omar al-Bagdadi took over the organization's power as the organization was renamed the Islamic nation in 2006.

The IS declared Baqubah to be the capital city of the Islamic State, gaining total control of the regions like Baghdad Governorate and Al Anbar Governorate where the Sunni live. However, its influence on the regions has shrunk since the U.S. troops in Iraq increased, which resulted in some of leading members including Abu Omar al - Baghdadi were shot dead during the operations. In 2010, Abu Bakr al-Bagdadi was nominated as a new leader and attempted to form a new Islamic community, including a battle for the reclamation of central Iraq and intervention in Syrian civil war. In 2014, al-Raqqa, the northeastern province of Syria, was declared as a capital city, and nine regional and seven Iraqi regional committees were set up to form a militant group of "sub-national forms aimed at building an Islamic state".

The IS has been strengthening its power and influence aiming to establish a divine nation (dawla Islamiyya, Islamic State) presented in Islamism. The IS has been conducting genocide against religiously minorities and Christians from Alepp, Syria to all over Iraq to establish Islamic nations since 2014. The massacre is still going on against innocent civilians[2].

The violence against its opposing forces and minorities in Islam is indiscriminately brutal, and it is getting more fanatical than before to spread and stabilize its influence[3].

2.2. Strategies of the IS: establishment of the Islamic state and extremism

The Syrian outbreak in 2011 created an opportunity for IS to grow. While Jasmine Revolution, a pro-democracy movement in Tunisia in 2010, spread all over the Middle East, pro-democracy protests started in March, 2011,

resulting in civil war because of the bloody suppression[4].

To make the matter worse, al-Assad granted an amnesty for Islamic extremists and the freed extremists joined the IS, which made the Syrian civil war the battles between the government forces and the IS.

Al-Bagdadi sent Abu Mohammad al-Golani and eight IS militants to Syria, and they established the "Jabhat al-Nusrah front" in Syria by organizing the freed extremists. On the other hand, the front implemented a strategy of securing the support from the local people, who were not the Sunni, by providing social services for Syrians and by not excluding Christians[4].

This strategy became the driving force of expanding its influence, making foreign Jihadists join the IS[5].

In May 2014, they dominated the Raqqa, the home base of the al-Nusrah front. After the occupation of Raqqa, the brutal nature of extremism began to be revealed. The Shi'ites and Christians were asked to convert, and if they did not respond, they were imposed pagan taxes or executed. The ideological philosophy of the IS is Salafy Jihadism, which adheres to Al Qaeda's hard-line Islamic extremism principle. The IS has established an organization of forming a State and promoted its activities through a variety of media. In this context, it was possible to stabilize the organization by securing funds. The IS secured the funds by the support from the Sunni, illegal economic activities such as trafficking in illegal arms and oil, and even by the hostage negotiations.

It is claimed that the line of the IS is different from that of al Qaeda. While al Qaeda uses global terrorism against the world, the IS prioritizes the establishment of theocratic state and aims to conquer the foreign countries by degrees[6].

In the case of al Qaeda, the establishment of an Islamic state after the 'Jihad' was the basis for its operations[7].

There are few cases in which Islamic extremists or extremist groups declared the establishment of a State and pursued a strategy similar to establishing the State. Politically separatist movements in specific regions like Khawariji movement in the seventh century were attempted at times[8].

The IS has used extreme cruelty and fear far beyond the adherence to religious norm as a means of governance. Civilians who were nonresistant have been beheaded and nailed to a cross in public places frequently. The IS used this kind of brutality as a propaganda to draw attention from the international community and promote itself as hostile representatives from the Islamic community as well[7].

3. Terrorist Attacks in Western Europe and Response by the Europol

3.1. Terrorist activities in Western Europe, 2017

According to Europol, it is reported that the total number of terrorist attacks across the EU in 2016 was 142 cases including attempted or failed terrorist activities, and the attacks occurred in eight member States in EU. Britain takes up most of the attacks(76 cases) followed by France(23), Italy(17), Spain(10), Greece(6), Germany(5), Belgium(4) and the Netherlands(1) in order of frequency. 142 victims were killed and 379 victims were injured from the attacks[9]. Even though not every terrorist attack was driven by the Jihad, terrorist attacks conducted by the Jihadists have been the most deadly ones[8].

In the analysis of terrorism in Europe, it is noted that terrorist attacks by the nationalist and separatist extremists were the most common. Attacks by left-wing violently radicalized ones have increased since 2014, and the number of jihad terrorist attacks has declined slightly from 17 in 2015 to 13 in 2016, six of which are related to the IS. In Western Europe, 135 were killed in 13 attacks, including five in France, four in Belgium and four in Germany in 2016.

With the exception of terrorist attacks by jihadists, nationalists, and the left radicalized, violent attacks by the far-right extremist indi-

viduals and groups have increased throughout Europe, especially for the last two years. Asylum seekers and ethnic minorities were selected as the target of the attacks, which brought attention by Europe. In addition, terrorist attacks

In 2017, terrorist activities which were considered to be conducted by the IS or its supporters are consistently occurred. At a Louvre museum in Paris, France, on February 3, a man wielded a weapon against a soldier who was on the guard and was seriously wounded by other soldiers. On April 7, four people were killed and fifteen injured when a truck rushed for passengers at the street of Drottningggatan, Stockholm, Sweden. On April 20, a police officer was killed and two officers were injured in a shooting accident between a man armed with an automatic rifle and the police in the center of the Champs-Elysees street, which is the biggest shopping street in Paris. The offender was shot dead by the police at the scene.

In Britain, a series of terrorist attacks occurred. On March 22, a car driven by a man rushed to the Westminster Bridge near the Capitol, damaging a large number of passengers at the scene. The car stopped at the fence outside the Captiol, and the driver took off with a weapon trying to enter the Capitol. He was shot dead by the police while trying to enter the Capitol with a weapon. Five people were killed and fifty people were injured from the attack.

On May 22, dozens of audience who were enjoying the concert at the Manchester Arena in northern England were killed or injured from the suicide bombing attack at the entrance of the stadium. The terrorist attack resulted in killing 22 people, including children, and injuring 50 people. On June 3, terrorist attacks using vehicles and weapons occurred at the London Bridge and Borough market in London nearly at the same time, respectively. The attacks resulted in killing seven people and injuring more than fifty people. All of three suspects were killed at the scene[10].

3.2. Establishment of ECTC and its response to terrorism

Europol established the European Counter Terrorism Center (ECTC) in January 2016 to combat terrorism and deal with related issues. The ECTC serves as a counter-terrorism operation center and a professional technology hub to reflect the need for strengthening response to terrorism. More specifically, ECTC is committed to sharing information and expertise on terrorist financing, countering online terrorist propaganda and extremism, responding to trafficking in illegal arms, and building international cooperation with governments to counter terrorism[11].

ECTC conducted support for counter-terrorism operations to the countries after the terrorist attacks in Paris, Nice and Brussels and cross-checked Europol's existing data and real-time operational data.

After the Paris attack, Europol founded Taskforce Fraternité and appointed up to 60 officers to support the investigation in France and Belgium. With the help of Europol, two countries were able to identify 800 cases of suspicious financial transactions and 1,600 cases of suspicious financial information, by the early 2016[11].

ECTC is working closely with Europol's other operations centers, such as the European Cyber Crime Center (EC3) and the European Migrants' Smuggling Center (EMSC).

In 2016, the number of arrested terrorists was 1002 in partnership with Europol. The majority of arrested terrorists were Jihad terrorists who were closely related to IS. 395 terrorists were arrested in 2014, 687 in 2015, and 718 in 2016[11].

Despite the response of Europol and its member states, the lonely wolf terrorism has not lost its influence yet. The IS is still encouraging and motivating its supporters and followers living in Europe to conduct terrorist activities.

4. Conclusion

A total number of 718 people were arrested for alleged crimes related to jihadist terrorism in 2016. In France, the number increased from 188 in 2014 to 377 in 2015 and

to 429 in 2016. The number in the Netherlands also increased from 20 in 2015 to 36 in 2016. Comparing to two countries, the number of arrested tended to be at about the same level or slightly declining in other EU member States. According to an analysis of the terrorists, it reported that one-third of the arrested terrorists were under 25 years of age and that women's participation increased, reaching 26% in 2016 compared to 18% in 2015.

The United Nations Counterterrorism Office warned that "40-50% of the foreign fighters who have participated in the IS have left the regions dominated by the IS and, thus, Europe will be in a more dangerous situation if they return to Europe."

It is estimated that nearly 5,000 European Union citizens are currently participating in the extremist organizations or militant groups, including the IS[12].

In Europe, the 'lone wolf terrorists' who follow and support the IS conduct the low-intensity terrorist attacks, aiming to spread the fear of daily life. It is argued that the IS is looking for a new survival strategy with different terrorist modes in different regions.

In general, homegrown terrorism refers to indigenous terrorism. Homegrown was originally meant to eat local food grown in my home garden, but it was also used as a term for criminal activity because of 7/7 terrorism in London, 2005. The 7/7 terrorism brought some changes in the UK. The number of Muslim is 4.6 percent. The UK government has implemented a "communication policy" to harmonize them, and has opened 300 cultural communication offices nationwide, and the school has educated students to understand Islamic culture. In addition, the UK's National Intelligence Service (MI5) is known to have worked to prevent "homegrown terrorist attacks" by preemptively intervening in 500 to 600 cases linked to terrorism[13].

Terrorism has been on the rise for eight years since 7/7 terrorism, but terrorist attacks are occurring more frequently this year than ever.

It is known that European terrorist groups raised 40% of their funds through crime, especially drug trafficking, theft, robbery, counterfeit sales, and loan fraud. Video and social networks are used as the major means for recruiting and propaganda of the IS. As producing of video materials peaked in mid-2015 and then declined, the IS launched a social media campaign to promote its followers and encourage terrorist attacks and violent extremism. The joint efforts of Europol's Internet Referral Unit (IRU) and the private sector have reduced the IS's social media activities, but the IS is still using it as a major propaganda medium.

According to Cho, Yong-Man, terrorism is characterized by first generation 'anarchist terrorism', second generation 'anti-colonial terrorism', third generation 'New Left Terrorism', fourth generation 'religious terrorism' Is classified as the fifth generation of terrorism[14].

The characteristics of the 5th generation group are internal violence, the use of force to stand up against internal dissensions, the uncompensable use of violence, the use of violent violence, dictatorship, the revelatory campaign of violence, and the chiliastic utopia of human creation. The current IS is a 5th generation group features by these characteristics.

About 40% of the main means of terrorist attacks were the use of explosive devices. It is reported that terrorists use a variety of weapons that are readily available, but explosive devices, such as home-made explosives, have shown a high preference for them. 'Low Tech Terrorism' refers to terrorism using weapons or explosive devices that do not require special skills. Because explosive devices manufactured by military-related companies are likely to be caught in transit, terrorists are made to make home-made bombs at shelters not far from the targeted place[15].

The most common explosive device used in recent IS terrorist attacks is the Home-made Explosives (HME), which in most cases is tri-acetone triperoxide (TATP). Learning to make explosives was done through the Internet websites, social networks and Darknet.

And most of the terrorist attacks in Europe are characterized by low-tech terrorism in soft target terrorism, which is mostly aimed at an unspecified number of people. This approach is becoming more fearful in the sense that it may be virtually impossible for the terrorist authorities to prevent them in advance.

IS terror is no longer a problem only in Europe and the Middle East. IS terrorism began in the Middle East and spreads to the US, Europe and Southeast Asia, and global cooperation is needed to prevent IS terrorism.

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