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The GCC Media and Combating Terrorism

(The Cases of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia)⁽¹⁾

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ABSTRACT

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are being affected by the rise of terrorism, which in turn has been driven by the creation of ISIS in Iraq and Syria in mid-2014. The group's presence in Iraq and Syria is inciting many Gulf civilians to travel to Syria to act as local fundraisers for the organization. After a while, the Gulf fighters moved back to their home countries or to other conflict zones to commit atrocities. Both politicians and media people attempt to combat terrorism; particularly in Saudi Arabia and in Kuwait.

This paper examines how the media in the GCC countries are countering the threats posed by ISIS to their national security by focusing on the counter-ISIS media policies as developed on the national level. The paper also examines the role of the media in Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait in combating terrorism. It also examines the policies adopted at the national level in these two GCC members to curb ISIS' influence and appeal, and identifies the main challenges encountered by these countries in countering ISIS.

Keywords: the GCC Countries, ISIS, Foreign Fighters, Radicalization, Counter- Terrorism Policies, and Role of the Media.

ملخص

تتأثر دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي بتصاعد الإرهاب الذي كان مدفوعاً بدوره بإنشاء داعش في العراق وسوريا في منتصف عام 2014. إن وجود الجماعة في العراق وسوريا يحرض العديد من المدنيين الخليجين على السفر إلى سوريا للعمل كجهات محلية لجمع التبرعات للتنظيم. بعد فترة، عاد المقاتلون الخليجيون إلى بلدانهم الأصلية أو إلى مناطق صراع أخرى لارتكاب الجرائم. يحاول كل من السياسيين والإعلاميين مكافحة الإرهاب. خاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية والكويت.

تبحث هذه الورقة في كيفية مواجهة وسائل الإعلام في دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي للتهديدات التي يشكلها تنظيم الدولة الإسلامية لأمنها القومي من خلال التركيز على سياسات وسائل الإعلام المناهضة لداعش كما تم تطويرها على المستوى الوطني. كما تتناول الورقة دور الإعلام في السعودية والكويت في مكافحة الإرهاب. كما يدرس السياسات المعتمدة على المستوى الوطني في هذين العضوين الخليجين لكبح نفوذ داعش وجاذبيتها، ويحدد التحديات الرئيسية التي تواجهها هذه الدول في مواجهة داعش.

الكلمات المفتاحية : دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي، داعش، المقاتلون الأجانب، التطرف، سياسات مكافحة الإرهاب، ودور الإعلام

The mainstream western media projects Islam as inimical to civilized values. The demonizing of Islam fits in well with the western geo-political interests in arms and oil. Today, after the demise of communist states, when Islam is being seen as a security threat to the west, the media in the Muslim world needs to devise ways and means to reduce the dependency on western news sources (Thussu 1997: 26).

Introduction: This paper focuses on the role of the GCC media in combating terrorism and the lessons to be drawn from their efforts.

1- Research Problem: Democracy is precious, and Journalism should be free to report on vital issues in society including terroristic activities; provided that they should stand away from being manipulated by terrorists. This study is designed to identify the problems and challenges of democracy and free press in the two Gulf states (Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) and their solutions as they attempt to combat international terrorism.

2-Methodology: The paper proceeds by assessing the political scene and economic policies, before briefly going to overview the media's role in combating terrorism in the two selected countries (the Saudi and Kuwaiti governments in the Gulf area). The pivotal issue of human rights is central in this paper in the discourse of the actors. The paper is based on theoretic academic writings and on field work via academic observation. The work confronted a difficulty with balance between the omnipresence of governmental rules and restrictions in the area of media; namely with relation to the issues of democracy in two of the GCC states (Kuwait and Saudi Arabia). There are inherent problems and contradictions in the nature of the domestic and the international political economy of the Gulf States, which may significantly undermine democratic stability in the area. Laying the base of the work with the introduction (statement of the problems, objectives of the study, scope and limitation, significance of the study and the theoretical framework), this paper attempts to illustrate the meaning of both journalism and democracy, their problems, and their proper necessary solutions.

3- Objectives: The objectives of study are as follows: **a-** to identify the problems and challenges faced by journalists in their reporting on terrorism;

b- to assess the level of the problems and challenges; and **c-** to identify the challenges that face these Gulf states.

4- Scope: The study is meant to explore media's role in the chosen two Gulf states with specific interest in identifying the role of journalists in combating terrorism.

5- Significance: This study will help provide information on the problems & challenges of fighting terrorism in the two chosen Gulf States. This study may also serve as a reference for another academic research.

6- Theoretical Framework: Our Theoretical framework includes:

a- The Communication Theory: which postulates that the amount of transmitted information between source and receiver in terms of the conditional probabilities between events that occur, or might have occurred, at these two places. And that as long as what occurs at the source generates information (as long, that is, as the condition existing at a source is a *contingent* state of affairs (a state of affairs for which there are possible alternatives) there will always be a set of events (the totality of events that might have occurred there) over which these probabilities are defined.

b- Democratic Peace Theory: which necessitates that adherence to democracy requires that the GCC countries fight terrorism, and that the media should play a role in that. Those who dispute the theory do so on grounds that it confuses correlation with causation, and that the academic definitions of 'democracy' and 'war on terrorism' can be manipulated so as to manufacture an artificial trend. The war on terrorism is no exception as far as the GCC media and journalism are concerned.

c- The Informational Address Analysis: which lays great significance and importance to what is said by a particular source (media or terrorists) and on how it is received and interpreted by the target end.

7- literature Review: More than thirty years have passed since the publication of two landmark scholarly books on terrorism: Walter Laqueur's *Terrorism*, and Paul Wilkinson's, *Terrorism, and the Liberal State*. The literature on this subject has experienced phenomenal growth during the ensuing decade, and is now extensive, as well as being varied in quality and

value. I have relied on a selective short survey of relevant literature which does include print media accounts for the realization of this paper.

The phenomenon of terrorism allows a variety of explanations and thus an equal number of lines of scholarly inquiry. No review can be exhaustive, and this does reflect the different methodologies and schools of thought. It is undoubtedly a reflection of the very current, *newsworthy*, controversial, and policy-oriented interest in terrorism that the social sciences have come to dominate recent writing about the subject. Indeed, if there is a significant negative feature that stands out it is the relative paucity of historical studies, particularly comprehensive general histories of terrorism. Laqueur's volume, recently revised, stands virtually alone in setting the current problem of terrorism within a broad historical context.

Laqueur devotes considerable attention to the "philosophers of the bomb," whose writings still provide much of the intellectual foundation, often unacknowledged, for modern practitioners. He also analyzes the social and organizational aspects of terrorist groups, contemporary terrorist groups and their motivations, and surveys, in comparative fashion, the major schools of thought on the subject. As this paper is merely an **excerpt** of my PhD Dissertation, it would be a hyperbole to mention here the entire list I reviewed.

I- Media Appeal

It is customary that the media are attracted, everywhere, by extreme terrorist acts not only because it is their duty to report on any major event but also because the dramatic and spectacular aspects of terrorism fascinate the general public. Today's terrorists exploit this and act in a way that attracts maximum attention of the general public around the world. This has been true for Western and GCC media. While terrorism should not impinge on freedom of expression and information in the media as one of the essential foundations of democracy, the work of the media people, everywhere, is beset with risks and dangers; sometimes to the lives of journalists themselves. The freedom of expression and information in a democracy carries with it the right of the public to be informed on matters of public concern, including terrorist acts and threats, as well as the response by the state and international organizations to them. The fight against terrorism should not be used as an excuse by states to restrict or curb the freedom of the press. As far as journalists are concerned,

they should avoid playing into the hands of the terrorists by restricting the dissemination of graphic photos and over-sensational information.

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon, but the permanent presence of acts of terrorism on the media in daily life and their global reach have increased the need for re-thinking the role of media regarding terrorism. The most severe, brutal, and shocking terrorist attack of recent history, is, categorically, the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City by kidnapped civilian airplanes on 11 September 2001. These attacks were transmitted live on television and thus reached a new dimension of media impact on society. Information was available via the Internet to all homes throughout the world.

There are many international documents (such as the Council of Europe's standards, in particular Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights) that constitute a basic legal set on freedom of expression and information in Europe. Many journalists focus their attention on some specific problems of journalists and freedom of expression in conflict areas. This led to the present focus on terrorism and the debates about the safety of journalists. In fact, modern terrorism could be considered media terrorism in the first place due to the salient role of the media in dealing with it.

II- The Dynamics & Nature of Modern Terrorism:

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. But the regular displaying of acts of terrorism on the media does have an impact on the audience everywhere. This calls for reconsidering the role of the media in the coverage of terrorism in GCC countries. Modern terrorism has been portrayed as media terrorism in the first place due to the prominent role of the media in handling this phenomenon. The daily portrayal of terrorism attracts large audiences. Today's terrorists have picked up this dynamic and have taken actions not only to make their victims suffer but also to "create the highest attention worldwide" (Coll: 2009, p.12). Terrorists themselves have become 'media competent' by knowing and applying the principles of manipulating the media; thereby getting their attention with a view to prompting them to cover most of their brutal, assiduous, and atrocious activities. Not only do they own the necessary technical equipment such as video cameras and Internet facilities, but they also usually know how to create and propagate those images which can guarantee maximum impact through the media. It follows

that a major option for the prevention of terrorism would be not to allow journalists and the media to report on terrorist activities or events or, at least, to inhibit coverage as much as possible. Several countries and indeed all GCC countries have chosen this option and it is difficult in these countries to have easy access to information or events that are related to terrorist activities.

Modern democracy is usually characterized by its freedom of expression and the possibility to access relevant political or societal information. As soon as information related to terrorism is blocked by governments or other political or societal institutions, terrorists may have gained one of their goals; namely to compromise the values of modern democracy. **Thus**, political institutions and the media, are faced with the crucial dilemma that, on the one hand, media coverage may be used by terrorists in order to get maximum attention while, on the other hand, if such information is inhibited, the basic principle and value of freedom of expression and information is "under threat" (Chenoweth: 2013, p.9).

In fact, almost all countries in the Middle East Region are going in the wrong direction; especially the Gulf states (the region's only bright spot). Continuing conflicts and absence of political and economic reform threaten poverty and dependence on foreign assistance (CRS: May 13th, 2020, p.4). This has led elites fascinated with democracy to call on the state to sincerely democratize. With oil prices oscillating back and forth and fluctuating, most GCC governments attempt to restrict the degree of freedom accorded the media (Rennack: 2020, p.12). Meanwhile, social media has provided new tools for publics to voice frustration. Conservative religious groups (including the Muslim Brotherhood affiliates and the Shiite movements) and ethnically based entities like those centered on Kurdish identity are on the edge of becoming primary alternatives to ineffective governments in the region (Marthoz:2017, p.5). Such groups sometimes provide social services better than the state and their politics attracts the conservative publics who are generally "more religious than the region's political and economic elites" ((Finn: 2016, p.126).

There is a mindset among GCC parliamentarians, politicians, journalists, and experts that the national GCC political systems are strong enough to tolerate the sharing of information related to terrorism. It has been argued that it would mean a real victory for the terrorists if political institutions were to cut the basic values of freedom, including the flow of

expression and information, in order to prevent any terrorist activity (Finn:2016, p.127). Although this major conclusion may be easily accepted, many details need to be studied when addressing the relationship between media and terrorism.

One of the major issues in dealing with terrorism is its *definition*. Two schools compete here⁽²⁾. **The First** defines terrorism in terms of the actors of terrorist attacks; and **the second** defines it in terms of the actual attacks. For a long time, this issue has always been central to studying terrorism by scholars and experts (Dumitriu: 2018, p.586). Media people are usually concerned with just determining the *motives* of terrorists. This enables them to deal with individual events and, if necessary, to describe the actors involved as criminals. Not everyone who may be sympathetic with terrorism, but has not been involved himself, is a terrorist. Terrorists usually involve extreme violence against individuals, or larger groups, where mostly innocent people are hurt or killed (Kennedy:2006, p.24). Aside from "normal" wars which include extreme violence and may be motivated by whatever ideological political goals, not all violent actions may be called terrorism; especially in countries with an emerging or already established democracy (Grozdanova: 2014, p.306). For the GCC countries, the idea, which has been used in some debates, that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" probably doesn't apply (Higgins:1997, p.28). Yet, in a few cases, terrorist activities may have increased the success of non-violent but same goal-oriented groups in other parts of the world. There is a preference among journalists and GCC politicians to limit the word "terrorism" to events and

⁽²⁾ For a long period of time, only acts of terrorism targeting States were discussed at the international level. Acts of terrorism of States were not part of the debate. See Draft Article 11(4: b) of the Draft Code of against the Peace & Security of Mankind (1986), which addresses only terrorist acts targeting States or international organizations: "The following constitute terrorist acts: **(i)** any act causing death or grievous bodily harm or loss of freedom to a head of State, persons exercising the prerogatives of the head of State, the hereditary or designated successors to a head of State, the spouses of such persons, or persons charged with public functions or holding public positions when the acts directed against them in their public capacity; **(ii)** acts calculated to destroy or damage public property or property devoted to a public purpose; **(iii)** any act calculated to endanger the lives of members of the public through fear of a common danger, in particular the seizure of aircraft, the taking of hostages and any other form of violence directed against persons who enjoy international protection or diplomatic immunity; **and (iv)** the manufacture, obtaining, possession or supplying of arms, ammunition, explosives or harmful substances with a view to the commission of terrorist acts".

not to apply it to a whole, e. g. ethnic or religious group or even to a major part of a certain group which has not directly been involved in violent attacks against society and its citizens (Gearty: 1997, p.55).

Focusing on the terrorist events themselves and not on the motives when reporting on terrorism may, of course, limit the number of people who may be called terrorists. Journalists can cover any aspect of political violence including supporters and groups which may be sympathetic with terrorist goals. But it can be dangerous to "extend" the label "terrorists" to include a larger number of people who may be drawn deeper into terrorist affinities just because they are labeled as such. In fact, political integration into the democratic system with convincing means of trust and education may be a more efficient way of preventing a terrorist "periphery" from growing into violence newcomers or new "enemies" by classifying every member of a certain grouping as terrorist without discerning between actual attackers and others who are only "loosely-linked" to these attackers (Goldstone: 2005, pp.157–168).

Terrorism may also be supported by the fact that "normal" criminal activities when labeled "terrorism" receive a certain, and negative praise and attraction for those who appreciate being (anti-) heroes. Many so-called terrorist activities are more based on normal criminal behavior than on political motives. That does not make them better or worse for the victims or the political system, but it may create a different context or overtone for them in the media and limit the probability that their actions are perceived as being rewarding for a higher, ideological goal. Many, if not most, attacks in the context of "terrorism" serve goals other than to reach or realize political objectives. They are about money, attention, status, other advantages, or just about keeping a group alive and intact. A study on German terrorism had demonstrated that most terrorist events occurred when the group cohesion and group structure of the violent gangs was threatened to collapse and disintegrate. "Planning and realizing an assault strengthened the group and put it back into a stable, and usually a clandestine, structure" (Friedrich: 2006, pp.69-71).

III- The Role of Journalists:

Journalists play major roles in the phenomenon of terrorism. And this paper makes a distinction between two dealings with acts of terrorism in both

politics and the media. A careful use of the term "terrorism" may not exclude the necessity to report about any major violent attack in society, but it contributes to a distinction between politically motivated tendencies and extreme criminal behavior. Terrorism is a method used by a group and it is not a description of a whole group. Of course, terrorist activities do not only involve the media as instruments of distribution, but also journalists themselves are directly affected by those activities. They become victims as hostages; are/or may be even killed; are used for negotiations, or beyond merely reporting the facts, they interpret and comment on the attacks (Greenwood: 2002, p.301). **Thus**, journalists play a variety of roles and take an active part of the violent events.

Recently, the threat of harm to reporters has been of increasing concern in the GCC countries as well as across the world. As representatives of the free flow of information (and, therefore, as a very important group for the realization of democracy) journalists deserve the special protection of the whole society and its political and other institutions. Any violent attack against journalists should be considered as an attack against the whole society and its values. Without conceding their independence, there should be cooperation between public and political institutions on the one hand, and the media on the other regarding the protection of journalists against any harmful attacks. Journalists not only deserve the normal support of the political system as any citizen in danger, but, as a special *risk group*, they should enjoy the full protection of society.

The freedom of expression becomes at stake if the political executives and media people do not enjoy the full protection of the entire society with a view to safeguarding and protecting the democratic system. Rather than regarding themselves as conflict partners with politicians, media people share at least the one common interest that their own lives and that of any citizen are the most valuable and the basis for any democratic development (German et.al.:2014, p.372). However, even if the common interests of public institutions and professional journalists may be eminent, scholars have seen additional developments outside the traditional setting of media and journalism.

In the GCC countries, pressures emanating from the market have also become a major factor in outlining the successful role of the media (television, radio, and the press). Previously, a certain ethical code would prevent the

coverage of an event and, therefore, would (because of self-responsibility) avoid showing the most extreme scenes (particularly violent ones). This is nowadays being challenged for, if one channel does not show such scenes, another will do it to obtain a greater share of the audience (i.e., of the market). **Thus**, with increased competition between media players or individual journalists, the chance has been increasing that the common code of ethics is no longer automatically valid. Besides, terrorist activities are often followed by "lay-journalism" or "yellow journalism" which means that non-professional observers of terrorist acts record the events with digital webcams and are able to distribute images via informal channels, i.e., via the Internet (Picard & Adams 1998, p.112).

In his study, Nacos examines closely "mass-mediated" terrorism and political violence and shows how terrorists exploit global media networks to carry news of violence. Trying to provide a better understanding of mass media's role(s) in countering terrorism, he sought to solve a dilemma, over the basic disagreements over the definition of terrorism; by suggesting a language that links the acts of terrorism to their perpetrators' deliberate goal, (to acquire publicity through media's coverage. (Nacos:2002, p.13). Also, people involved in terrorist activities have themselves started applying media; by using the necessary technical means such as video cameras, digital equipment, or the Internet. Hardly does any event take place when there is no message distributed globally addressing directly the public and the political institutions. It is the professional journalists who control, filter, and interpret the events and the images of terrorism⁽³⁾.

The images reach the audience often outside traditional media channels or institutions. In turn, professional journalists have to consider this development and so pick up those images of terrorism which they have not themselves produced or personally obtained. This yields two results: **First**, there is more access to a global audience than ever before including the possibility for terrorists to reach any group. **And second**, it has become more difficult to establish professional and ethical codes to be applied along all communication channels (Chomsky: 1999, p.9). This means that new roles

⁽³⁾ In chapter 4, Nacos explores how the new means of communication offer groups and individuals with violent agendas and messages of hate unlimited, unchecked, and inexpensive opportunities to reach audiences worldwide. He weighs the positive and negative sides of the basic links between the media, terrorism, and counterterrorism.

exist between potentially "harmful" and "pro-social" reporting. While normal journalism needs to describe events, including violent attacks, in a neutral way, the production of images by the terrorists themselves is directly aimed at public relations and public terror to serve their own goals. Several journalists on the other hand, suggested that sometimes (as in cases of kidnappings) the amateur videos recorded by the terrorists were 'positive instruments' for negotiations with governments to get them free (Jenkins:1994, p.55). It is true that journalism can hardly stay neutral even if that is the purpose of media reporting. Both aspects, the negative and the positive, apply if increasingly more images and information are available outside traditional journalism: The more that images about terrorist acts are distributed worldwide, the more any audience gets the impression that terrorism is indeed a defining factor of modern life (Apuzzo:2016, p.23). In this way, "terrorism would have reached its goal to irritate and threaten the majority of citizens" (Hight & Smyth: 2021, p.6). At the same time, any video recorded by violent actors may also be a means for negotiation. If the receivers of this information are willing and able to read the messages and signals, they may obtain a strategic or tactical advantage.

Several kidnapped journalists reported that reaction to the videos received saved their lives. "Sometimes, government representatives take the messages seriously and find ways to offer the kidnappers chances in exchange for the hostages' lives" (Baran:2018, p.33). This, of course, remains risky in the long run, even if in the actual situation the production and distribution of videos may have supported the negotiations and their outcome (Oliveira:2018, p.52). This means that the kidnappers are rewarded and without such chances the kidnappings might never have taken place (Palmer: 2003, p.17). The example shows that it is the balance which counts. The part played by images and the media has to be considered, they cannot be ignored even if that might well be the political preference (Bilgen: 2012, p.13). **So**, one has to accept the possibilities (i.e., to take advantage of their existence and not the reverse).

The ongoing debate among parliamentarians and experts demonstrates at the same time the continuing "cultural" differences in dealing with the media when it comes to covering the crime of terrorism. Most European countries prefer a liberal approach to the freedom of expression and information and regard the freedom of journalists as higher than the potential

risk that media reporting might cause to individual citizens; including risks to themselves (Ellger:2001, p.174). They admit that by limiting freedom of expression, terrorists would have indirectly realized a major goal of their own, i.e., to change the political system and make it more oppressive. However, some countries (GCC states for example) still subscribe to a more restrictive policy to the role of journalists and media people in general: They want to avoid any risk of promotion of terrorist activities through media reporting by blocking journalists' access to sites where violent attacks take place (Zaagman:2003: p.204). Yet, the examples have demonstrated that it is nearly impossible to interfere completely with media reporting in the context of political or other violence. Nearly all images find their way, anyway, to the public through all kinds of channels (Bonner: 1992, p.171). It is better, therefore, to reach a consensus between the media and political institutions based on an acceptance of neutrality that if in doubt information should be distributed. An accepted norm is that if live reporting would instantly include the risk to lose lives through informing kidnappers of the activities outside a hostage location, then this would, of course, have to be avoided by means of self-limitations. Even if one needs to accept these cultural differences in dealing with terrorism and the media, efficiency is probably the most convincing factor in the protection of freedom of expression and information (Mees.2001: p.798). Limiting freedom of expression hardly prevents terrorists from striking. On the contrary, if certain events are not reported on a lower or medium attention-grabbing level, the terrorist dynamics demand them to create such a big and spectacular event that automatically reporting cannot be avoided anyway (Jackson:1994, p.507). Therefore, trying to block and/or inhibit free reporting is either technically impossible or may, at worse, lead to even more extreme violence that would need to be covered anyway.

When dealing with media coverage of terrorism it is also important to consider the different effects which that coverage has. It has already been mentioned that the terrorists themselves aim at maximum attention for their own wicked purposes and disreputable and notorious objectives. But it is also true, of course, that politics and potential supporters are affected by the violent events. Terrorist attacks can be seen as following the principles of symbolic negotiation and even games. Politicians are in dire public need to react in public, otherwise they are perceived as being too weak and being not able to cope with the violence (Pressman & Flockton: 2012, p.237).

Therefore, it is part of the terrorists' strategy (and the strategy of political institutions at the same time) to force the respective conflict partner to express weakness publicly.

It is clear in media reporting and communication that the events (and the reactions to events) usually follow a dramatization of the issues that lead to potentially increasing escalation. Politicians and negotiators are under public observation (and pressure) and cannot necessarily choose for the best strategy; for example, to free hostages in a kidnapping situation. They need rather to demonstrate strength and power to convince the public of their resolve. Therefore, it would also be up to the media not only to reward, and pay attention to, those who are applying the most extreme measures of fighting terrorism but to also feature those which are the cleverest even if they do not necessarily appear to be the most radical and strong (Taillon: 2012, p.127). It is understood that many terrorist activities are designed to empower their own followers and to enhance their own group structures. Here again, journalists (and the media in general) need to be aware of this strenuous, tiring, and arduous fact. It is not always the larger audience that is addressed (by such terrorist actions) but also their own followers are, in many cases, the target of their infamous activities (Janeczko: 2014, p.4).

It was, therefore, relatively risky to broadcast the first Bin-Laden videos after 9-11 as they may have included hidden messages for the supporters of Bin Laden in the US or in any other parts of the world (*Abrahms: 2018, p.86–89*). Therefore, responsible journalism must take account of this effect and should be very careful in the broadcasting and distribution of material related to terrorism. Naturally it is very difficult to apply a generally accepted approach to these political and professional challenges.

IV- GCC Journalists' Coverage of Terrorist Activities:

Generally speaking, Journalists employ four rhetorical traditions (information, sensationalism, feature story, and the educational approach) in conveying news; these approaches affect the meaning of the message received by the various audiences (Williams: 2018, p.16). Journalists amplify, arbitrate, and create their own rhetoric about terrorist acts:

- As rhetorical amplifiers, journalists gain the attention of their audiences and convey messages about political violence by providing the platform and amplification system by which this can be accomplished.
- As arbitrators of rhetoric, they may have limited success. Evidence of arbitration is seen in comparisons between how media personnel describe terrorist events and their perpetrators and how governmental officials make similar descriptions.
- And as creators of rhetoric, they serve as such whenever they report on terrorist events. The rhetorical tradition employed always determines the nature of that rhetoric (Whittle: 2002, p.3).

The role of formats they use to convey information and determine its significance, are important. The effects of these roles are beginning to receive appropriate scrutiny from experts and from academia as well. Journalists must be made 'sensitive' to the power of what they report when dealing with the volatile area of reporting on terrorism; and they must be especially sensitive and careful about what and how they report for personal dangers and risks are there all the time awaiting them.

The GCC journalists play a variety of roles in this persuasive environment and are deeply involved in the construction of rhetorical visions about terrorism and its perpetrators. For example, Qatar's refusal to capture and convict suspected terrorist financiers is not due to lack of institutional capacity, but due to lack of political will and to the work of journalists. Or, as Malburnot put it, "these problems reflect Western connivance to turn a blind eye towards Qatar's negligence ... and the culprit is always the Qatari media (Al-Jazeera in particular) which through constantly reiterating the importance of respecting the Qatari people and Qatari sovereignty, the West refrained from ever urging Qatar to investigate and strengthen its pledge to counter terrorism. And, if there is no change in this behavior, the Qatar National Vision 2030 a program made to shape Qatar's role in the world over the following years will not be one of destabilization, rather it will be a role of peace. For the benefit and well-being of all citizens concerned, we recommend that Qatar and the Gulf States quickly and respectfully work to resolve this diplomatic dispute and prevent any further escalation" (Malburnot & Chesnot: 2020, p.4). The data available so far does not indicate any spark of hope for an imminent solution to the rift between the GCC states. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt severed

travel and trade ties with Qatar back in 2017, alleging it was aiding Iran and supporting terrorism. Qatar denied this and said the boycott was an attempt to "impinge on its sovereignty and curb its support for reform". The dispute has evaded mediation attempts by Kuwait and by Washington, which has strong ties with both sides. Bahrain accused Qatar of prolonging the crisis by taking its case to Western allies, instead of dealing with it inside the GCC. And Saudi and UAE officials insisted that Doha must meet the 13 demands made by the four states: including closing the state-funded Al-Jazeera television station and reducing ties to Iran. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs affirmed that Qatar had not dealt wisely with those demands: "Perhaps the passing of a long time of the boycott will produce a new thought and a wiser approach from Doha". On the other hand, Al-Jazeera championed the rebuttal to such claims ⁽⁴⁾.

V- The Power of Images:

It is a common understanding in the media field that an image is as good as one thousand words. It is almost a fixed law in journalism that "images attract attention of (and create deepest impressions on) the audiences" (Whittle: 2002, p.4). Journalists know that "violence creates powerful images and attracts attention more than any peaceful negotiations could hope to achieve.

The standards and norms of how to deal with terrorism in the media differs from one country to another and from one culture to another. And so are the use and interpretation of individual images which have one thing in common: strong (single icons and visual impressions that increasingly determine the public debate probably more than detailed analyses and background information). The struggle for power is often a struggle for the most powerful images. Violence attracts attention much more than the best peaceful and most eloquent negotiators could ever hope to accomplish (Freedberg: 2021, p.3). This makes terrorist attacks more efficient for media coverage than most other means; particularly among small groups (Latour & Weibel: 2020, p.23).

⁽⁴⁾ On June 5, 2017, severe sanctions were levied on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt. This has acquired international attention. The rationale behind this was (accusations of supporting terrorism, propagation of **biased news coverage** & maintaining ties with Iran, etc. Diplomatic Solutions was finally found to the rift.

To be sure, violent images and market competition may, even unintentionally, result in a mutual spiral of interest. Even with, or especially without, political control of the media, it is important for journalists to be aware of the fact that they carry a high responsibility for the effects of spreading terrorist images. This responsibility needs to focus on avoiding:

- a- Promoting terrorist aims through spreading bleak and dreary images.
 - b- separating an individual attack from the historical and societal context; and
 - c- Hurting the privacy and human dignity particularly of the victims.
- There can hardly be a global set of how to use the images of violence and terrorism in the media.

But journalists need to be aware of the professional, political, and ethical implications of their distribution. Pohanka (a journalist who had himself been hostage in Iraq) put it very clearly: "the frequency of violent images of the conflict inhibits the likelihood that images of 'normal' life are also widely distributed. yet one has to also show the brutality of terrorism". (Pohanka: 2021, p.24). Another journalist made it also clear that "the oppression of any violent image would only increase the probability of an attack so extreme that coverage just could not be avoided anymore". (Novikova: 2020, p. 550). And when images are integrated into a context, whether it is an additional piece of background information about the event itself, a description of the groups involved, or a picture of the whole situation and cultural environment, this may be" characterized as violence or violent intentions". (Ibid. p.551).

The danger of an isolated use of specific terrorism-images is not only that these images may help promote violent political goals, but that they also create a wrong representation of a whole region or even a whole group and culture, such as that of Al- Islam (*Mahoney: 2016, p.3*). It is for this reason that GCC Journalists and media people in general always attempt to distance themselves from adding 'gasoline into the fire' that already exists with regard to Al-Islam being depicted as promoting terrorism. In a study on global terrorism conducted by US State Department in 2014, all GCC countries have been praised for "their strong regional and international counterterrorism cooperation". The study found that "Qatar and Kuwait had not done enough to curb private terrorist financing", and that the UAE was able to cut off illegal

flows of money to extremist groups. The department singled out Kuwait and Qatar did not enforce new terrorist financing laws, and that "the two countries were major sources of funding for Sunni extremist groups in Syria". Kuwait was praised for drafting a new antiterrorism funding law in consultation with the IMF that forces banks to report suspicious transactions and allows the government to freeze assets and prosecute fund-raisers. All GCC states were praised for "strengthening regional and international counterterrorism cooperation, and for closely working with their US counterparts. "These partnerships are vital to the success of our counterterrorism efforts. Regional assistance from the Gulf Cooperation Council states, as well as strong bilateral assistance by the United States, have been essential in helping the government of Yemen in its efforts to roll back Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula", said the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism. The study highlights the strong counterterrorism relationship of the US and the Gulf states "By publicly recognizing positive push in US-Gulf counterterrorism cooperation, the US Department of State is seeking to "promote enhanced efforts to address threats in and emanating from the Gulf" (Wasser: 2016, p.12).

Terrorist threats in the region grew significantly according to data in the report due to Syria's internal war, growing violence and destabilization in Iraq and continuing insurgency in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The most dangerous attacks in 2016 were carried out by the Afghan Taliban, followed by the Islamic State of Iraq. Iran is seen as "a major state sponsor of terrorism; it provides since 1984, assistance to a number of extremist organizations, most prominently Hizbollah". The study said that 2016 saw a "resurgence" of terrorist activity by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, and Hizbollah.⁽⁵⁾ Such GCC successes were reflected in the GCC media as journalists' works in all member states. However, an emphasis on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia seems to be sufficient for the required generalization. As we shall see soon, the media and journalists in these two GCC members spared no efforts in countering terrorism.

⁽⁵⁾Annual Report, **The US State Department** 5/2016 at: [thenationalnews.com/world/us-report-praises-gcc-for-progress-in-counterterrorism](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/us-report-praises-gcc-for-progress-in-counterterrorism), accessed: Nov. 15th, 2022.

1- Kuwait Politics and Media:

Kuwait is a Sunni-majority constitutional emirate. The country has seen almost no violence between its Sunni and Shiite components, which constitute approximately 70 and 30 percent of the Muslim population, respectively. Yet, Kuwait has been vulnerable to extremist ideology promulgated by its domestic Muslim Brotherhood arm, and to terrorist attacks committed by nationalist Palestinian, Shiite, and Sunni fundamentalists; including: Hezbollah, al-Qaeda, and ISIS. The country experienced the worst terrorist attacks in its history on June 26, 2015, when an ISIS suicide bomber killed 27 worshippers in a Shiite Mosque in Kuwait City (U.S. Annual Report on Terrorism, 2016, p.6).

Since mid-2011, individuals and groups in Kuwait have worked to raise funds to terrorist organizations fighting Al-Assad's regime in Syria, including the Nusra Front and ISIS. In March 2014, David Cohen warned that Kuwait was "the hub of fundraising for terrorist groups in Syria" (Cohen: 2014, p.2). Separately, a network of Kuwait-based operatives was believed to help smuggle jihadists from various Gulf countries to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region to join extremist groups there. Kuwaiti citizens have also left the country to fight in jihadist conflicts abroad. As of January 2015, approximately 70 Kuwaitis have left the country to join ISIS, the Nusra Front, and other jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq. (US Report on Terrorism, 2016, p.4). Recently, in order to reduce the threat from terrorist activity within the country, the Kuwaiti government has passed legislation that: criminalizes the online fundraising and propagandizing for terrorist organizations; requires citizens to surrender unlicensed weapons and explosives; and compels Kuwaiti business owners to install surveillance devices. Most notably, following the June 26, 2015, ISIS attack, the Kuwaiti government passed a law requiring all Kuwaiti citizens, foreign residents, and tourists to provide DNA samples to a database controlled by the Interior Ministry. In addition to relevant legislation, the Kuwaiti government runs a number of domestic programs to counter violent extremism, including an ongoing **television and radio** campaign offering alternative messaging to extremist ideology. The government also monitors the country's prominent religious leaders for extremist or incendiary sermons (Al Bayan: 2018, p.3).

Internationally, Kuwait participates in several intergovernmental organizations related to counterterrorism including the Global

Counterterrorism Forum; the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Kuwait is also a member of the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, as well as Saudi Arabia's "Islamic Military Alliance", which the kingdom formed in December 2015. According to polling conducted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in 2015, 3% of Kuwaitis view ISIS positively, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas receive positive ratings from 31 and 42 percent of the Kuwaiti population, respectively. (US Dept. of State 2019: Report on Terrorism, p.6).

The Kuwaiti government disrupted several terrorist plots in 2016 ⁽⁶⁾ and expanded its efforts to counter violent extremism. It also expanded its capacity to counter financing of terrorism; imposing additional scrutiny on charitable organizations' financial transactions (Kellner: 2017, p.4). ISIS was the primary threat, and Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) posed a secondary threat. As a member of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Kuwait continues to support Coalition forces deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and was also a leader in the Defeat-ISIS Coalition's humanitarian assistance line. Kuwait co-leads the Coalition's Foreign Terrorist Fighter working group. Kuwait co-chaired the first bilateral Strategic Dialogue with the United States, in which both sides pledged to strengthen their security partnership by countering terrorism and terrorist financing, particularly through enhanced information sharing. In March 2016, Kuwait, along with other members of the GCC, designated Hizbollah as a terrorist organization (Kellner: 2017, p.5).

Through its fight on terrorism, the government stopped several attempts by foreign nationals to enter illegally. Since August 2016, the authorities have been working to intercept and arrest Iranian nationals attempting to enter Kuwaiti territories illegally. The government launched major efforts to bring the security of Kuwait International Airport up to internationally recognized levels. Kuwaiti officials stressed that the absence of cooperation between all GCC members hampered efforts to detect and arrest foreign terrorist fighters before they arrived in the country. During 2019, the Government of Kuwait participated in or conducted a significant

⁽⁶⁾ On Feb. 25, 2016, a Kuwaiti citizen killed one police officer and injured four others. (**US Dept. of State Report 2016**) at: refworld.org/docid/5981e43113, accessed 18 Nov. 2020. Edia reported the attacker confessed planning to join "jihad" in Syria.

number of training programs to counter terrorism financing.⁽⁷⁾ There were no terrorist incidents reported in Kuwait in 2019. But throughout the year, Kuwaiti government participated in several capacity-building workshops. Several of these were supported and implemented by the US, **thus:**

- a- In February 2019, the Kuwaiti Public Prosecutor's office participated in a workshop on Best Practices in Cyber Investigations and Prosecutions.
- b- In March, the Ministry of the Interior and the Kuwait State Security were trained on investigations.
- c- In April, Kuwait hosted the GCC Regional Cyber Investigations Conference with attendees from 26 entities across the Gulf and several domestic Kuwaiti entities, all of which focused on Countering Foreign Terrorists.
- d- In July, the Kuwait state news agency reported that the Ministry of Interior had deported eight Egyptian citizens who were wanted in Egypt for terror-related convictions: and
- e- In October, Kuwait imposed one round of sanctions against individuals and entities affiliated with the Iranian regime's terror-support networks in the region. And Kuwait's Ministry of Education continued to implement a program to fight what it viewed as extremist ideologies at public schools through teacher-training and student-counseling programs. The media were also there to cover all such events and procedures.

As part of the government's National Plan to Reinforce Moderation, the Ministry of Information runs **a television channel** with programming aimed at audiences believed to be at higher risk of radicalization. The Kuwait Moderation Center, which operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Endowments, sponsored a variety of programs designed to promote religious tolerance, including establishing working groups to reduce sectarian conflict; holding symposia on protecting the rights of non-Muslims in a Muslim society; and a program in the school system to promote diversity and tolerance and combat sectarianism. The Moderation Center continued a program to enable social salon (diwaniya) hosts to invite religious scholars to join in discussions with attendees and counter the potential presence of radicalizing influences. The center also sponsored **radio programs** to promote tolerance among youth; And in December, the Ministry of Foreign

⁽⁷⁾ Kuwait continues to be a leader in the Defeat-ISIS Coalition, co-leads (with Turkey and the Netherlands) the Coalition's Foreign Terrorist Fighter working group.

Affairs sponsored a workshop titled "The Concept of Extremism and its Reflection on Society". More effective measures are needed to prevent charitable donations being routed to regional terrorist groups or support for educational and religious advocacy efforts that encourage discrimination and violence. Kuwait is looking to better monitor charitable donations that might be used to support terrorist elements. International and Regional Cooperation:

Moreover, during 2019, Kuwait served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the second year of its two-year term. Kuwait remained an active member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Kuwait has also long been an active member of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. As a member of the GCC, Kuwaiti politics and media have played a leading role in the effort to mediate the dispute between Qatar and other GCC members. (Nacos: 2002, 14).

2- Saudi Arabia Media and Politics:

In 2019, Saudi Arabian government officials continued to work closely with their U.S. counterparts to deploy a comprehensive and well-resourced counter terrorism strategy that included vigilant security measures; regional and international cooperation; and measures to counter terrorist radicalization and recruitment. Saudi Arabia maintained a high cooperation tempo with U.S. and international partners including terrorist information sharing; monitoring of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, border security; countering unmanned aerial systems. The Saudi Arabian government worked to disrupt, terrorist finance networks; focusing heavily on entities supporting Iran's groups like Lebanese Hizbollah; and other Iranian proxy groups active in the Gulf. Attacks by Iran on September 14 targeted some of the Kingdom's most important oil-processing facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais. Saudi authorities moved quickly to bolster the facilities' security posture, restore oil processing, and export capacity, and repair damaged infrastructure. To help deter Iranian aggressive behavior and enhance Saudi capacity, Saudi Arabia agreed to host US service members. As before, Saudi Arabia was a full partner and active participant in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and provided significant operational and logistical support for Coalition activities in Syria and Iraq. Saudi operations in Yemen included missions against ISIS.

a-Terrorist Incidents in 2019: Saudi Arabia suffered from many terrorist incidents in 2019 that included both external attacks by Iranian and Houthi

actors and small-scale attacks, largely perpetrated by lone offender actors including ISIS sympathizers. Militants instigated violence using IEDs, gunfire, and UAS. Attacks in 2019 included: **Thus,**

- On April 7, two suspected terrorists were killed and another two arrested by Saudi security forces when they attacked a vehicle checkpoint in Abu Hadriya on the Dammam-Jubail highway. Two non-Saudi civilians were injured in the exchange of gunfire between the suspects and Saudi security forces. Two Saudi security officials also sustained injuries.
- On April 21, Saudi security officials killed four suspected terrorists in a failed terrorist attack on a Ministry of Interior building in the town of Al Zulfi, Riyadh Province. The militants detonated an explosive suicide belt, and three Saudi security officials were injured in the exchange of fire. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On May 14, unmanned aircraft systems targeted two pumping stations on the East-West pipeline carrying crude oil from Dhahran to Yanbu. Yemen-based Iran-backed Houthi militants claimed credit.
- On June 12, Saudi-led coalition senior officials reported a cross-border cruise missiles attack at Abha International Airport, injuring 26 civilians. Yemen-based Iran-backed Houthi militants claimed credit for this attack.
- On August 17, Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militants struck a natural gas liquids plant at Shaybah oilfield in the Kingdom's Empty Quarter with drones. The drone strike damaged the facility and caused a fire. No deaths or casualties were reported.
- On September 14, Iranian attacks hit the Abqaiq and Khurais oil processing facilities in the Eastern province, initially taking 5.7 million barrels per day of crude oil production offline. Although Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militants claimed credit for the attack, investigations led by Saudi Arabia and the United States concluded the Iranian government was behind the attack. Saudi Aramco resumed pre-attack production levels less than two weeks later, ahead of schedule.
- In addition, on December 6, 2019, a member of the Royal Saudi Air Force opened fire in a classroom at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida, killing three and wounding eight. The gunman, 2nd Lt Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani, was a student who was receiving training at the base. The FBI later noted that Alshamrani had coordinated with a militant group before the terrorist attack, for which the group claimed

credit. The Government of Saudi Arabia continues to work closely with the United States on the investigation.

b- Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In 2019, the Saudi Arabian government used its 2017 counterterrorism law to prosecute cases. The State Security Presidency (SSP) and the Saudi General Investigations Directorate, also known as the Mabahith, took the lead in terrorism-related investigations. Well positioned to respond to incidents, the SSP aggressively investigated terrorist suspects and dismantled suspected ISIS terrorist-related cells within its borders. According to **press reports**, the Specialized Criminal Court, tasked with judicial oversight of criminal hearings, heard several terrorism-related cases. The court sentenced 38 convicts to death for terrorism-related acts, with one Yemeni executed on April 9 and 37 Saudis executed on April 23. Some international human rights and press groups continued to assert that the Kingdom had misused counterterrorism laws to prosecute religious and political dissidents, women's rights activists, and prominent Saudi clerics. The Anti-Defamation League and other human rights organizations reported that Saudi textbooks, media, and preaching continued to feature content that condones violence against Jews, Christians, Shiite persons, and others. (US International Religious Freedom Report, 2019: p. 6). Yet, Saudi Arabia remains committed to securing its borders and denying safe haven to terrorists. With an extensive border security network, the Ministry of Interior closely monitors passenger manifests for inbound and outbound flights and used travel document security technology, and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry. The General Directorate of Border Guards expanded search operations to detect and disrupt terrorist activity and effectively patrolled land and maritime borders. Officials from the Saudi Border Guards, charged with monitoring the coast within the Kingdom's territorial waters, called for international agreements to combat the growing threat of maritime terrorism targeting oil tankers and coastal installations in the Gulf.

c- Countering the Financing of Terrorism:

Saudi Arabia's FIU, known as the Saudi Arabia Financial Investigation Unit, is committed to fighting terrorism. Saudi Arabia is a member of the Defeat ISIS group. In collaboration with other states, Saudi Arabia in 2019 imposed one round of sanctions against individuals and

entities affiliated with the Iranian regime's terror-support networks in the region.

d- Countering Violent Extremism:

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 Reform Package calls on all ministries to undertake measures to confront and weaken the violent ideology that underpins terrorist propaganda. The Muslim World League Secretary General, Dr. Mohammed al-Issa, pressed a message of interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, and peaceful coexistence with global religious authorities, including Muslim imams outside the Arab world. He also conducted outreach with a variety of Jewish and Christian leaders, including prominent US rabbis and Christian evangelicals. Saudi Arabia has recently initiated efforts to foster reform and regulate religious activities. The government reported that it continued to work to constrain the discriminatory content of its education, satellite, and religious advocacy output both domestically and overseas. Yet, its decades-long support for organizations that propagated intolerant interpretations of Islam overseas remains a concern to others. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs' officials continued to conduct outreach to imams across the country, encouraging them to refute "radical extremist" ideology in their sermons and replacing imams who included inflammatory rhetoric in their mosque sermons. Through daily monitoring of terrorist websites and social media, authorities attempted to dispel what the Saudi government views as misinterpretations of Islamic theology. 2019, witnessed an increased emphasis on family outreach tools to reduce the risk of travel to conflict zones to avoid terrorist radicalization or participation in terror-related activities. Terrorist de-radicalization programs in Saudi prisons and at the Mohammed bin Naif Care and Counseling Center remained a main feature in the reintegration and monitoring of former terrorists.

e- International and Regional Cooperation: Saudi Arabia's regional diplomatic efforts to fight terrorism saw a leap in 2019, as the country partnered with several nations, on a bilateral and regional basis, to improve information sharing related to Counter Terrorist activities. Through the UN Counter-Terrorism Center, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Saudi Arabian government worked to buttress capacity and monitor new terrorist trends through policy coordination, capacity building, and operational collaboration with international partners. Saudi Arabia signed multiple Counter Terrorist agreements with international partners and hosted three

diplomatic conferences (the Makkah Summit, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Summit, and the Arab Summit) all of which included counterterrorism discussions. Saudi Arabia is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The Saudi media have always been there to report on such all activities.

VI- Consequences for Politics and Media:

This part deals with the Impact and Repercussions for Politics and Media.

Terrorism should not be able to compromise the basic tenets of nascent democracy and freedom. For both politics and the media in the GCC countries, the consideration and realization of several principles would reduce the likelihood that any violent activity could ever reach its goal. Among the media, such principles have already been established by keen scholars. One can identify ten aspects of reporting which create a working guideline for dealing with terrorism: Information should be directed a broad audience freely.

1- Events must be covered accurately; **2-** Coverage of events must be impartial; **3-** opposite voices must also be heard; **4-** The source(s) of information must be revealed to the audience. **5-** The procedures and channels of gathering information should be transparent; **6-** Reporting should be careful in its choice of terminology ("terrorists", "martyrs"); **7-** Privacy and human dignity should always be respected and honored; **8-** Coverage should help the audience to be involved in a (national) debate; **9-** If a piece of information turns out to be wrong, that should be made publicly clear.

Aside from guaranteeing press freedom, politicians should find the right balance between a number of challenges which characterize the tensions in the specific context of media and terrorism. These balances, as agreed to among politicians, journalists, and experts, cannot be created in a standardized way but need to be approached pragmatically and per terrorist event. However, it is vital to be aware of the respective challenges, more specifically, to find the right balance for:

Field/area	Balance to be struck between
Policy	freedom of expression & avoiding offering terrorism a platform;
Information	the use of graphic images and the accurate text and context;
Emotion	between personal involvement and the need to act and react impassionately;
Ethics	market considerations and professional responsibility beyond competition;
Profession	the traditional craft of journalism and the increasing production and distribution through nonprofessional channels;
Events	the complexity of almost every terrorist attack and the need to simplify in order to gain attention and facilitate comprehension;
Society	between the public pressure to act and being honest about the limited means of reacting completely successfully;
Dramaturgy	the need to introduce "new" information and aspects permanently and caution in evaluating the situation too early;
Language	the universal symbols and icons (violence, power) and the culture-specific connotations (e. g. "martyrs");
Channels	pluralistic opinion distribution and consensual policy on terrorism.

The relation between media and terrorism demands a permanent political and public debate across all borders. The GCC Council and its Parliaments should be considered the most adequate platforms for any future debate: As it covers all regions and cultures; thereby bringing together the national representatives of GCC' citizens, it forms the bridge between national uniqueness and Arab unity. The Gulf region, and perhaps the entire Arab world, needs such guidelines for effectively fighting terrorism not only in the region but also worldwide. With regard to Perspective, the GCC and its bodies should address the issue with a short-term, a mid-term and a long-term perspective:

***Short-term:** Transfer knowledge about successful action which guarantees media-freedom and reduces terrorist threat across borders and cooperate on any individual incident; ***Mid-term:** Talk with citizens, create awareness of

the challenges regarding the right to be informed and the security issues; and*
Long-term: Trust the GCC political systems, politicians, and journalists. They are stronger than any terrorist activity.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

1. The author believes that terrorism should not affect freedom of expression and information in the media as one of the essential foundations of democracy; **2.** Terrorist acts are intended to create terror, fear, or chaos among the people. The spread of public terror, fear and feelings of chaos depends largely on the images and messages being carried by media reports about the terrorist acts and threats. The presence of mass media at the global level frequently multiplies these effects out of proportion; **3.** The author recalls UN General Assembly Resolution 1271 (in 2002) and the Assembly's Recommendation 1550 (in 2002 too) on 'combating terrorism and respect for human rights; reaffirming that the fight against terrorism must not be used "as a pretext to curb the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and related legal texts of the GCC Council. In this regard, the paper supports full respect for Human Rights worldwide; **4.** The GCC council can benefit from adopting the European Committee of Ministers' Declaration in 2005 on freedom of expression and information in the media on fighting terrorism. The paper stresses that Article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights should not be invoked in cases of terrorism in order to curb freedom of expression and information beyond the existing limitations. **5.** The author considers it necessary for the public and media to be aware of the fact that terrorists utilize the media to have the strongest possible impact. Terrorists have learnt how to use information technologies to spread their own audiovisual recordings, electronic messages or web sites on the Internet, which compels states and the media to react accordingly; **6.** With regard to the privacy and human dignity of victims and their families, the author stresses the importance of fully informing the public on terrorist acts, including the suffering caused by these acts; thereby believing that "informed public debate about concrete acts of terrorism" can lead to forming adequate political responses and to preventing others from joining terrorist groups; **7.** The author trusts the ability of the GCC systems and culture and their citizens, politicians and journalists to avoid over-sensational media reports related to terrorism; **8.** The author invites media professionals to:

- a. Develop through their professionalism a code of conduct for journalists, photographers and editors dealing with terrorist acts and threats, in order to keep the public informed without contributing unduly to the impact of terrorism.
 - b. Organizes training courses for media professionals aimed at increasing awareness of the sensitive nature of media reports on terrorism.
 - c. co-operates between themselves, for instance through their professional organizations, in order to avoid a race for sensational news and images which plays into the hands of terrorists.
 - d. Avoid adding to the feeling of public fear which terrorist acts can create or by offering terrorists a platform of high publicity.
 - e. refrain from disseminating shocking images of terrorist acts that violate the privacy and human dignity of victims and extra-terrorize public and the victim's families; and
 - f. avoids, through their comments, raising the societal tensions underlying terrorism, and in particular to refrain from disseminating hate speech.
9. The paper calls upon all colleagues in all GCC countries to take account of these recommendations in their national work and to hold a debate on these issues in their respective national works.
10. The paper further recommends that all GCC journalists must:
- a. informs regularly the public and the media about government strategies and action towards combating terrorism and its causes.
 - b. abstains from prohibiting or even restricting unduly the provision of information and opinions in the media about terrorism as well as about the reaction by state authorities to terrorist acts and threats under the pretext of fighting terrorism.
 - c. inform, upon their request, other media channels dealing with terrorism about the specific security situation in each context, in order to avoid that journalist investigating terrorism be unnecessarily exposed to dangers caused by terrorists or anti-terrorist action of state authorities.
 - d. includes media literacy in their school curricula, in order to educate society towards a critical and informed consumption of media content and raise awareness of the horror of terrorist acts; and

- e. co-operates in order to prevent the dissemination of illegal messages and images by terrorists on the Internet.
- 11.** The paper calls upon the GCC Committee of Ministers to:
- a. monitor the treatment of terrorism in the national media in particular with regard to their tacit understanding on the importance of the freedom of expression and information in the context of the fight against terrorism.
 - b. be in close co-operation with media professionals and their professional organizations, and other world organizations working in the same field, a handbook for journalists reporting about terrorist acts and violence; and
 - c. initiate work towards an creating a protocol for the GCC countries e on Cyber Crime; thereby setting up a framework for security co-operation between their states for the prevention of cyber terrorism, in the form of large-scale attacks on computer systems and through computer systems which threaten national security, public safety or the economic well-being of a state

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