

SPECIAL REPORT

A S P I

‘Terrorism is terrorism’

The Christchurch terror attack from
an Israeli CT perspective



Professor Boaz Ganor

May 2020

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AUSTRALIAN
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About the author

Professor Boaz Ganor is the Ronald S. Lauder Chair for Counter-Terrorism and former dean of the Lauder School of Government and Diplomacy at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya in Israel. He is the founder and executive director of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism. In 2019–20, he was on sabbatical from IDC Herzliya and served as a visiting fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and an adjunct professor at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security at Charles Sturt University and as the Aaron and Cecile Goldman Visiting Israeli Professor and Israel Institute Fellow at Georgetown University. In his previous sabbatical (2008–09), Ganor served as a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

Ganor serves as the founding president of the International Academic Counter-Terrorism Community, an international association of academic institutions, experts and researchers in fields related to the study of terrorism and counterterrorism.

Ganor has served as a consultant to the Israeli government on counterterrorism and was appointed as a member of the International Advisory Team of the Manhattan Institute (CTCT) to the New York Police Department.

He obtained his BA in Political Sciences from Hebrew University and his MA in Political Studies from Tel Aviv University (thesis: 'Terrorism and public opinion in Israel'). His PhD thesis for the Hebrew University was on Israel's counterterrorism strategy.

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ASPI

Level 2
40 Macquarie Street
Barton ACT 2600
Australia

Tel + 61 2 6270 5100

Fax + 61 2 6273 9566

Email enquiries@aspi.org.au

www.aspi.org.au

www.aspistrategist.org.au

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INTRODUCTION

On Friday 15 March 2019, in Christchurch, New Zealand, 50 people were murdered and dozens more injured in one of the most severe terror attacks in the Southern Hemisphere in the 21st century. Most of the victims were Muslim immigrants and refugees who came to New Zealand from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Indonesia, Turkey, Somalia or India. Unlike many of the terror attacks perpetrated globally in the past few decades, the attacker was not an Islamist jihadist terrorist but rather a Christian Australian who was motivated by an extreme right-wing racist ideology.

This report examines the different phases of the attack, its similarities to and differences from Islamic jihadist terror attacks, and the lessons to be learned for preventing, thwarting and managing such attacks, based on Israeli counterterrorism (CT) experience.

THE CHRISTCHURCH ATTACK: BACKGROUND

The Christchurch attack took approximately 40 minutes and was conducted in two mosques located 5 kilometres from one another. Brenton Harrison Tarrant, a 28-year-old right-wing activist without a prior criminal record, perpetrated the attack, during which he indiscriminately used multiple weapons and copious amounts of ammunition against worshippers and people who attended the mosques at the time. The attack had been planned for a long time and involved much preparation; however, as far as we know, the New Zealand security services had no prior knowledge of the attack or of the intent to carry it out.

The terrorist's background

Tarrant was a resident of Grafton, New South Wales, Australia—an area without a large Muslim immigrant presence. After graduating from high school, he worked as a trainer in a local gym. On 14 March, a day before the attack, he posted a 74-page manifesto, titled 'The Great Replacement', which was constructed as a series of questions he asked and answered. From the manifesto, one can learn that Tarrant put in a lot of thought about the attack before its execution. He considered his motives and even posed himself difficult questions, such as whether he was a terrorist, to which he responded that, indeed, he was a terrorist (based on the definition of terrorism). Tarrant even tried to use self-deprecating humour in his answers. The manifesto therefore provides a clear view into Tarrant's soul, motives, world view and arguments and the circumstances that moved him to perpetrate the attack.

In his manifesto, Tarrant presented himself as an 'ordinary white man' who grew up in a poor working-class family. His parents, of British, Scottish and Irish descent, divorced when he was a child. He didn't like to study and after graduating from high school acquired no further formal education. After his father died at age 49, Tarrant invested his inheritance in digital currencies and made a substantial profit that enabled him to travel the world (Europe in particular), driving a car he had rented for that purpose. For Tarrant, the European tour reinforced his world view that saw Muslim immigrants as a danger to white Anglo-Saxon and European culture. On the French leg of his tour, anger and despair washed over him in the light of what he called 'the invasion of the Muslim immigrants' to France and Europe. After his grand tour, Tarrant moved to New Zealand, where he lived for two years prior to the attack.

Tarrant's radicalisation

In his manifesto, Tarrant described two years of radicalisation that shaped his racist extreme right-wing world view, which he called 'ethno-nationalistic' and 'eco-fascist'. During that period, he was exposed to myriad white supremacist materials through libraries and websites that promote such ideas around the world.¹ It appears that during this period he donated money, at least twice, to extreme right movements in Europe. The donations signified the crossing of a threshold and brought him to a 'passive involvement' (as opposed to 'active involvement', which requires enlisting in and acting within the framework of a terror organisation, or being involved in the perpetration of attacks).

Tarrant marked three triggers in his radicalisation that prompted him to move from merely having a cynical attitude to inward European immigration to wanting to take action that would change that reality.

The first trigger was the 7 April 2017 Stockholm truck attack, when 11-year-old Ebba Akerlund was among five people killed. Despite being an Australian citizen living so far away from Europe, Tarrant felt he could no longer turn the other cheek to terror attacks perpetrated 'against his culture, religion and his soul'.

The second trigger was the result of the French elections that year when Emmanuel Macron (referred to by Tarrant as a 'globalist-capitalist') defeated Marine Le Pen (referred to by Tarrant as a 'national socialist'). Even though, on the face of it, Tarrant preferred Le Pen's views over Macron's, he did think she had settled for too little by calling for the deportation solely of illegal immigrants.

The third trigger was his tour in France, where he witnessed what he called 'an immigrant invasion to every city and town in the country'.

Tarrant mentioned that his radicalisation took place via the internet, which in his view was the only credible source of information. He said that he was exposed to the thoughts and writings of many extreme right-wing elements through the internet, but the one who influenced him the most was Anders Breivik, who in 2011 perpetrated an attack on a youth camp on the island of Utoya, Norway, during which he killed 77 people and injured many more.

TIMELINE OF THE ATTACK

At 1:34 pm, during Friday prayers at the mosques, Tarrant activated a GoPro camera he had installed on his helmet, switched to Facebook Live, announced 'Let's get this party started', headed out towards the Al Noor mosque in his car and embarked on his killing spree.² While *en route*, Tarrant listened to music popular among right-wing extremists worldwide. His car was loaded with five firearms (two semi-automatic weapons, two shotguns and one lever-action firearm), all of which he purchased legally with a gun licence he obtained in 2017. It seems that he also had two improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Tarrant parked his car close to the mosque, took one of his weapons and stormed in while shooting indiscriminately. On his way to the main prayer hall, in order to intensify the impact of the attack, the number of casualties and media attention, he shot at whomever he laid his eyes on as well as into side prayer rooms. At that time, the main prayer hall had many worshippers who knelt, as they could find no place to hide. A worshipper who apparently tried to stop Tarrant and grab his weapon was shot and killed.

Two minutes into the attack, at 1:42 pm, the police were notified of it. Simultaneously, Tarrant returned to his car, switched weapons, loaded up on ammunition and went back in to make sure he had killed those whom he'd wounded. When he finished, he went out and shot at bystanders and worshippers who had managed to escape the mosque. In that killing spree, he killed 42 victims in about six minutes and injured many others.

According to the New Zealand Police Twitter feed, officers arrived at the mosque six minutes after police were notified of the attack. However when the police arrived at the scene Tarrant was well on his way to his second target, the Linwood Islamic Centre. On his way there, he shot at passers-by who apparently looked Muslim to him. When he arrived at the Linwood Islamic Centre, at 1:55 pm, he started shooting at people standing outside the building and then shot indiscriminately through the windows. After he killed seven victims and wounded others, he returned to his car to switch weapons and reload.

One of the worshippers, who had chased Tarrant and picked up one of the weapons that the attacker dropped, smashed his windshield, which caused Tarrant to leave the scene. Forty minutes after he fired his first shot, Tarrant's car was blocked by a New Zealand Police vehicle and he was captured and arrested.

The attack's classification

The Christchurch attack was an integrated and gradual mass-killing terror attack, carried out via indiscriminate shooting, by a 'lone wolf' driven by an extremist ideology. This definition is based on the following components:

- *A lone-wolf attack:* As a rule, terror attacks may be classified into three categories: lone-wolf attack; independent local network attack; organised attack. A lone-wolf attack is *an attack carried out by a single individual without any operational ties to a terror organisation*. The term 'lone wolf' may be a misnomer because most of recent years' lone-wolf attacks have been inspired by terror organisations. The perpetrators saw themselves as 'soldiers', agents or supporters of a particular terror organisation and in some cases were willing to identify themselves as such. In some cases, they made their intentions known to other individuals, consulted them and were even aided by them. That said, what makes them 'lone wolves' is the fact that they had *no operational ties*

to terror organisations. They weren't recruited by an organisation, weren't trained by it and didn't get its support (logistical or otherwise) for the attack they carried out. In contrast to lone-wolf attacks, *independent local network* attacks are attacks perpetrated by a number of activists (most often a small group of friends or family members who have all been radicalised together). *Organised attacks* are attacks that are carried out by a cell of a terror organisation's recruits, trained by the organisation, who receive logistical and operational support from the organisation and are directed by it. Therefore, Brenton Harrison Tarrant was a lone wolf. There's no doubt that he was inspired by extreme right-wing groups, organisations and terror activists and perpetrated his attack in the name of a murderous ideology, but he apparently had no operational ties to any terror organisation. He was neither recruited nor trained by any organisation; nor was he assisted operationally by one.

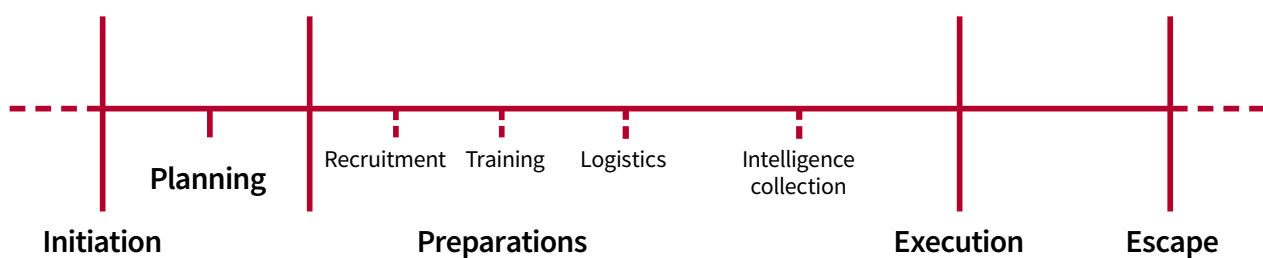
- *Integrated and gradual mass-killing terror attack*: Terror attacks that have been perpetrated around the world over the years can be classified by the *modus operandi* that was used to carry them out:
 - 'cold' weapons attacks (carried out using knives, axes and other 'cold' means, including vehicles)
 - 'hot' weapons attacks or shooting attacks (carried out using handguns, rifles and other firearms, either standard or improvised)
 - mass-killing attacks (carried out using either 'hot' or 'cold' weapons as well as grenades and sometimes involving explosive charges and IEDs), causing large numbers of casualties
 - bombing attacks (in which terrorists plant camouflaged explosives at the target and then detonate them using timers or remote-control devices)
 - suicide attacks (which are mostly bombing attacks that are unique in the sense that they are conducted by suicidal attackers)
 - hijack and kidnap attacks (in which the terrorists take control over hostages and negotiate their release)
 - unconventional attacks involving CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) agents
 - cyber terrorist attacks (attacks that are conducted by politically motivated terrorists using cyberspace).
- In the light of the above, the Christchurch attack was therefore a *mass-casualty attack*, carried out using several weapons and apparently involving some IEDs. According to the New Zealand Police, Tarrant left the IEDs next to the mosques but they didn't detonate. The attack was *integrated and gradual*—it was carried out against more than one target, and Tarrant attacked both targets one after the other. It was *indiscriminate*, as Tarrant didn't care about the victims' individual identities; he attacked them, as is often the case, based on their collective identity (that is, as Muslims living in New Zealand, either immigrants or descendants of immigrants). The selection of targets based on the victims' collective identity served as a significant component of the message Tarrant wanted to convey to various target audiences around the world: the targeted party (Muslim immigrants), the internal reference group that Tarrant claimed to represent (the extreme right wing), the local New Zealand audience and global public opinion.
- *Attack driven by extreme ideology*: The major difference between a terror attack and any other violent activity (criminal activity, attacks driven by mental illness and so on) is that a terror attack is driven by a political motive, be it revolutionary, nationalistic or separatist, or an extreme ideology, such as fascism, communism, anarchism, antisemitism or extreme religious views. It's usually very important for terrorists to advertise their ideological-political motive and thus differentiate themselves from mere criminals. In this case, Tarrant put in a lot of effort to advertise and highlight the ideological motives behind his attacks, including by posting a detailed manifesto prior to the attacks and by broadcasting the attacks on Facebook Live.

Stages of the attack

Most terror attacks are carried out in an orderly, sequential process that begins with the initiative to perpetrate the attack—the *initiation/decision stage*, when the individual or group decides that they want to mount an attack (Figure 1). Then begins the *plenary stage*, which includes examining potential targets, selecting targets, defining the mode of the attack, selecting the perpetrators, and preparing for execution through a detailed plan of attack,

including selecting the route to be taken on the way to the target, setting the desired goal and planning the escape route after the attack. The following stage, the *preparatory stage*, is when the terrorists work to acquire the operational capability required to carry out the attack, which includes gathering intelligence on the target (the routine at the target, the target's security measures and so on), recruiting and training the perpetrators, acquiring weapons, acquiring and preparing the logistic infrastructure for the attack (safe houses, vehicles, special documentation and so on) and, if necessary, mentally preparing the perpetrators to secure their commitment to the attack. After the preparatory stage comes the last stage in the process—the *execution* of the attack.

Figure 1: Sequence of a terror attack



Different attacks require different preparations, which vary based on time needed to accomplish each stage (ranging from minutes through to weeks, months and years). For example, most lone-wolf attacks carried out using ‘cold’ weapons don’t require much preparation. Some are carried out spontaneously, in which case they take minutes from decision to execution. Unlike in most lone-wolf attacks, in the Christchurch attack Tarrant chose to use multiple weapons and a large amount of ammunition. Additionally, the preparations for the attack and the posting of his manifesto required a long preparatory stage before he executed his plan.

Tarrant as a lone wolf

Tarrant claimed in his manifesto that he wasn’t a member of and didn’t act on behalf of any organisation or movement; however, he identified with various extreme right-wing groups and even donated money to them. He claimed that he wasn’t ordered by any organisation to mount the attack.

However, before the attack he approached an organisation known as the Reborn Knights Templar to get their blessing. Anders Breivik claimed in his own manifesto prior to his attack in Norway that he had been anointed as the Eighth Justiciar Knight of the Knights Templar in Europe and carried out his attack in that group’s name. According to Breivik, the Reborn Knights Templar is a nationalistic Christian resistance movement fighting Muslim immigration that has renewed the activity of the Knights Templar order of the Middle Ages.³ At least two terrorists who perpetrated murderous attacks in very different parts of the world have acted on behalf of its ideology or have been inspired by it. Even if the network is just a figment of Breivik’s imagination, the fact that Tarrant referred to it as his inspiration makes it a reality in the sense that it may trigger future attacks.

Tarrant was inspired by the Templar network, but he didn’t have any operational connection with it or with any other organisation. According to his testimony in his manifesto, he had been neither recruited nor trained by an organisation and had received no operational assistance. Therefore, Tarrant in effect identified himself as a lone wolf inspired by an extreme right-wing movement. Analysis of his steps prior to the attack shows that he wasn’t ‘a *spontaneous* lone wolf’ acting on a momentary impulse triggered by an immediate and specific stimulus. From his manifesto, one can determine that he was ‘a *consulting* lone wolf’ who apparently shared his secret with others and sought their blessing before he attacked.

Common denominators between the Christchurch attack and Islamic terror attacks

Analysis of Tarrant's manifesto finds an eerie similarity between the manifesto and Islamist jihadist propaganda issued before and after terror attacks:

- *Altruism*: Much like other lone wolves, Tarrant sees himself as an altruist—a person who decides to act for the benefit of all in order to 'secure the future of his people/community/culture/religion'. Tarrant's reference group is not Australians but white people and, more specifically, Anglo-Americans who, according to him, are under an 'invading' immigrants' attack that puts at risk the future of the group. By doing so, Tarrant builds for himself an altruistic image, very similar to that built by Islamic terrorists, among them many suicide bombers who saw themselves as 'acting to protect the Islamic nation or the Islamic faith'.⁴
- *Defensive action*: Despite the cruel and brutal characteristics of Tarrant's attack, he repeatedly explains in his manifesto that the attack is in fact a defensive action meant to convey a clear message to his enemies—the 'invaders' (that is, non-Anglo-American immigrants)—that the lands and countries of white people will never be theirs and they will never replace the white race. A similar message is being conveyed by many Islamist terror activists who present the rationale behind their actions as a defensive one and as a response to colonialism and the conquest of the lands, resources and holy sites of Islam by 'crusaders' and Jews.
- *The target*: Tarrant positions himself and his Anglo-American reference group in contrast to the immigrant 'invaders'. He declares war on the invaders much as Islamic jihadist terrorists declare war on infidels (who include any Muslim who doesn't subscribe to their fundamentalist views on Islam and, of course, the members of other faiths).⁵
- *Modus operandi*: The *modus operandi* used by Tarrant to deter his enemies is another common denominator in the Christchurch attack and attacks perpetrated by *jihadis*. In both cases, the terror attacks are meant to scare enemies and deter them from continuing their course of action. Tarrant goes further and wants to leverage the fear created by his attack to intensify the friction between US gun ownership supporters and opponents and even put a wedge between Turkey (a Muslim country) and the other NATO members.⁶ Similar motives are found behind the goals of Islamic terrorists, who strive to create a rift between the citizens of the Arab Muslim countries and their 'corrupt governments'.
- *Revenge*: Tarrant stresses in his manifesto that his attack is meant to avenge the killing of Western citizens, among them children, who perished by the hands of Islamic terrorists. This revenge rationalisation is commonly used to rationalise attacks carried out by *jihadi* terrorists, who present their attacks as revenge for attacks on Muslims or for CT activity. This rationale carries a special danger, because an attack carried out as revenge by a right-wing extremist against Muslim targets may trigger a counterattack carried out as revenge by Islamist jihadists, and so on.
- *Restoring old glory*: Much like many Islamic terrorists, Tarrant claims in his manifesto that he acts to correct some historic injustice. If the 'invaders' of Europe and the other Western countries want to change the face of history, all he wants to do is to preserve the *status quo ante*, according to which the immigrants will live in their countries of origin and the Anglo-Americans will live in the West. In that sense, he stresses that he doesn't have anything against Muslims or Jews living in their own countries.⁷ Similarly, Islamist jihadists excuse their actions by relying on an obscure 'historic justice', according to which they're acting to restore Islam's golden age, when vast areas in Europe and other parts of the world (such as the Andalusia region in Spain) were controlled by Muslim empires.
- *Call for action*: Tarrant stresses in his manifesto that one of the goals of the attack was to call the Anglo-American masses to action against the 'invaders' because, according to Tarrant, the masses are 'dormant, individualist, nihilist'. He positions himself as a role model, and with his action he wants to deepen interracial friction, rivalry and hatred in a way that will rally the masses and drive them into militant action. Here, too, an eerie similarity can be found between Tarrant's call for action and calls for action generated by Islamist terrorists, who call on their target Muslim audience to shake off their complacency and join them (either as foreign fighters in *jihadi* theatres of action or as homegrown lone-wolf terrorists in their countries of residence).

- *Sense of urgency:* Tarrant anxiously observes the Muslim immigration wave into Europe and concludes that European culture is nearing an imminent demise or, as he calls it, ‘white genocide’, because of the differences in birth rates between European natives and immigrants. This process and its severity in his eyes create a sense of urgency to start acting. This sense of urgency is also typical of the incitement messages promoted by Islamist terror organisations that rely on a ‘godly’ religious directive that allegedly compels them to take action.

Operational planning

Analysis of the manifesto teaches us that Tarrant meticulously planned the attack and examined its various aspects for close to two years. Further, it took him three months in Christchurch to prepare for the attack.⁸ According to Tarrant, in this day and age there are multiple potential targets and locations to carry out an attack, and he considered executing his plan elsewhere before he settled on his eventual targets. Initially, he didn’t plan to attack in New Zealand, but after he moved there he soon found that ‘New Zealand was as target rich of an environment as anywhere else in the West.’ Executing his attack in New Zealand conveyed an additional message: that the ‘invaders’ had spread to the four corners of the Earth and even reached a remote country such as New Zealand.

While in New Zealand, Tarrant joined a gun club in Dunedin and trained on various firearms. He says that he had initially planned to hit a mosque in Dunedin but, after he visited the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch and felt humiliated by the conversion of a church into a mosque, he changed his plan and decided to attack those two targets.

Tarrant explained that he had chosen his targets because they held large crowds of worshippers on Fridays and that most of those in the crowds were adults and not children. Apparently, this was the rationale behind the timing of the attack. Tarrant planned on attacking a third mosque, in Ashburton, but he wasn’t sure he would be able to accomplish an attack there and called it a ‘bonus’. He further explained that the mosques chosen for the attack were situated in strategic locations (apparently due to their easy access and vehicular escape options) and had a past of extreme Islamic activity. From the manifesto, it emerges that he considered various weapons, among them IEDs, suicide cars and fire bombs, but in the end he settled on shooting his victims due to the media effect he assumed that it would generate and because of the controversy the attack would spark regarding gun control legislation around the world, particularly in the US. Tarrant also claimed that he didn’t have any intention to harm law enforcement officers because New Zealand Police ‘is on overall good terms with the public’, so ‘harming the NZ police officers was to be avoided at all costs unless the state enforcer was from an invaders background’ (that is, unless the officer was an immigrant).

A little after midday on 15 March, Tarrant entered his gun-laden car, turned on the sound system and listened to an extremist Serbian song calling people to arms against the Turks, named ‘Remove the Kebab’. He then switched on his head-mounted GoPro and went out to perpetrate the most severe terror attack in the history of New Zealand.

Public awareness and use of social media

The Christchurch attack became a milestone in the evolution of modern terrorism. Throughout modern history, terrorists of all kinds have strived to gain media attention to echo their message around the world. They’ve done it through extortion (requiring media coverage in return for releasing hostages), ultimatums (threatening to perpetrate more attacks if media coverage is denied), taking control of TV studios, inviting journalists to scenes of attacks and to interview their leaders, or disseminating video clips and delivering them to media outlets, either locally or globally. In the past decade, with the expansion of the internet, the spread of social media networks and the shift in the way people consume their information, especially news and current affairs, moving from electronic media to online media, the terror organisations (led by Hezbollah, ISIS and al-Qaeda) started to use direct communication with their audiences via websites, social networks of supporters, closed forums, chatrooms, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and other web platforms.

The Christchurch attack was a watershed event that demonstrated a smart and calculated use of the internet. Throughout the attack, from Tarrant's radicalisation and obtaining the financial means for the attack through to its execution and the dissemination of his message, a massive use of social media is evident. As Tarrant said, he was exposed to extreme right-wing messages on the web; his profitable investments in cryptocurrencies allowed him to travel through Europe and most likely to acquire the guns and ammunition he used in his attack; he made his intention to attack known via a sophisticated use of social media; he used social media to disseminate his manifesto; he broadcast the attack live for 17 minutes (from the start of his travel to the attack, through the attack on Al Noor mosque and on the way to Linwood); and, finally, his message continued to echo in extreme right-wing forums for a long time afterwards.

Although he claimed in his manifesto that the attacks constituted their own goal and that the media awareness was merely a bonus, on the face of it Tarrant put in a lot of thought and effort into planning and executing various manoeuvres that were meant to disseminate his message, ideology and motives; amplify the effect of the attacks; influence others to follow in his footsteps; and trigger a chain of events that would increase intercultural and racial tension worldwide. In terms of public awareness, the Christchurch killings constituted one of the most thought out and sophisticated lone-wolf terror attacks of the modern era.

Tarrant says that he'd worked on a much more detailed 240-page manifesto for a long time but wasn't happy with how it turned out, so he destroyed it and over two weeks wrote the 74-page manifesto he published prior to the attack. One can learn that the timing of the attack was dependent on the completion and publication of the manifesto, which for Tarrant was a precondition for the attack because that was what separated him (in his eyes) from common criminals.

Once he completed his manifesto, Tarrant uploaded it to several sites, such as MediaFire, ZippyShare, Solidfiles and Mega.nz (some of which have been used by ISIS as well). A few weeks before the attack, he apparently opened a Twitter account, posted 63 racist tweets and acquired 218 followers. A few days prior to the attack, he even uploaded photos of his guns, ammunition and vest to that account.⁹ None of that activity raised any red flag or led to his early detection. Some 10 minutes before he attacked, Tarrant posted links to his manifesto on social media and various forums, among them Facebook, Twitter and 8chan, and just minutes before he posted the following message to 8chan: 'Well lads, it's time to stop shit posting and time to make a real-life effort post. I will carry out and [sic] attack against the invaders and will even live stream the attack via Facebook.'¹⁰ It seems that Tarrant saw 8chan's platform as his immediate reference group and therefore made use of it to post his written and visual materials. To ensure that people watched the attack live on Facebook, he posted the necessary links and instructed the community members on how to follow his actions. Indeed, he received immediate praise before, during and after the attack.¹¹ After the attack, the 17-minute video clip was posted to several web platforms, such as Reddit, YouTube, LiveLeak, BitChute and Kiwifarms, and as a downloadable file on Torrentz. Similarly, the manifesto was also disseminated on 8chan, Reddit and Scribd, and on newspaper sites such as *The Daily Mail*, *The Sun* and *The Mirror*.¹²

Archived versions of the terrorist's Twitter page, Facebook page and 8chan post appeared on Archive Today, and a version of the MediaFire manifesto entry was archived on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.¹³ According to Facebook, during the broadcast the video was viewed around 200 times. In addition, it had taken more than 800 hashes of the video in order to detect future uploads more easily. Facebook deleted 1.5 million videos of the attack within the first 24 hours, and 1.2 million were automatically blocked on upload. YouTube removed tens of thousands of videos and terminated hundreds of accounts glorifying the attack. So did Reddit, LiveLeak, Mega, Solidfiles, MediaFire, Scribd, ZippyShare and Live4.¹⁴

Even though Tarrant emphasised that he didn't carry out the attack on any organisation's behalf, it was important for him to advertise the attack in a clear historical-ideological context. This is manifested in the multiple references in the manifesto to other racially motivated terror attacks, past and present extreme right-wing ideologists and the religious war between the Muslims and the Crusaders. As if that weren't enough, Tarrant put time and effort into 'decorating' his weapons with written messages very similar to the ones in his manifesto: symbols, numbers, names and places with direct nexus to extreme right-wing myths. Tarrant made sure to broadcast those messages via his GoPro, and some of them he also posted to Twitter. He knew full well that the messages would be advertised and analysed long after the attack and thus assist in spreading his messages and influencing public awareness among both his supporters and his detractors.¹⁵

POST-ATTACK RESPONSES

Naturally, due to the large number of victims, the wide media exposure and the unusual location of the Christchurch attack, the attack drew many responses, some extreme. They ranged from condolences at one end of the spectrum to incitement and hate messages calling for either revenge attacks on the ‘infidels’ or additional racial attacks at the other end. In this context, some other terror attacks mounted around the world after the Christchurch attack may be considered to have been either copycat or revenge attacks.

- Thus, after Christchurch, multiple terror attacks and attempted attacks inspired by Tarrant were perpetrated against Muslims, Jews and immigrants, including:
- John T Earnest’s shooting spree at a Chabad synagogue in Poway, California, during Passover 2019
- an attempt to torch a mosque in April 2019 in Escondido, California
- an attempt to torch a holding facility for illegal immigrants in Tacoma, Washington, by Willem Van Spronsen
- Patrick Crusius’s August 2019 attack at the El Paso Walmart, in which 20 Hispanic immigrants were murdered and 26 others were injured
- Philip Manshaus’s attack on a Norwegian mosque.

Both Crusius and Manshaus published manifestos supporting Tarrant. In addition, a number of people who have expressed support for the Christchurch attack have been arrested in Canada, the United Arab Emirates, the US and the UK.

The Christchurch attack also inspired revenge attacks:

- A few days later, Tanis Gokmen, a Turkish immigrant, perpetrated an attack on a tram car in Utrecht, Netherlands, in which he murdered three people and injured five.
- In Turkey, an ISIS activist has been arrested for planning an attack on Australian and New Zealand tourists.¹⁶

According to official sources in Sri Lanka, Christchurch inspired the April 2019 suicide attacks on churches and hotels by ISIS-supporting locals, who killed more than 250 people and injured hundreds of others. While there’s no support for that claim from any other source, after the Christchurch attack ISIS released a 45-minute videotape in which its spokesman, Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, called for exacting revenge for hurting Muslim worshippers:

[T]he murder in the mosques should wake up the sleepy and encourage the supporters of the khalifate residing there to avenge the blood of their faith and people who are being slaughtered everywhere on earth under the auspice and blessing of the countries of the cross and the agnostic and collaborating governments.

Similar statements were made after the attack by ISIS supporters in various *jihadi* forums. The *Al Murafat* media outlet, which is identified with ISIS, published an article titled ‘The New Zealand massacre and the path to salvation’, which called upon ISIS supporters to go to various theatres where ISIS is active (Asia, North Africa, Central Africa, Khurasan, Yemen and Somalia) and to carry out shooting attacks, cold weapons attacks (vehicles, knives) and explosive charges attacks in the ‘countries of the infidels’. Moreover, various Muslim elements have leveraged the attack to incite. For example, in a demonstration held on 23 March 2019 in New Zealand, a local community leader

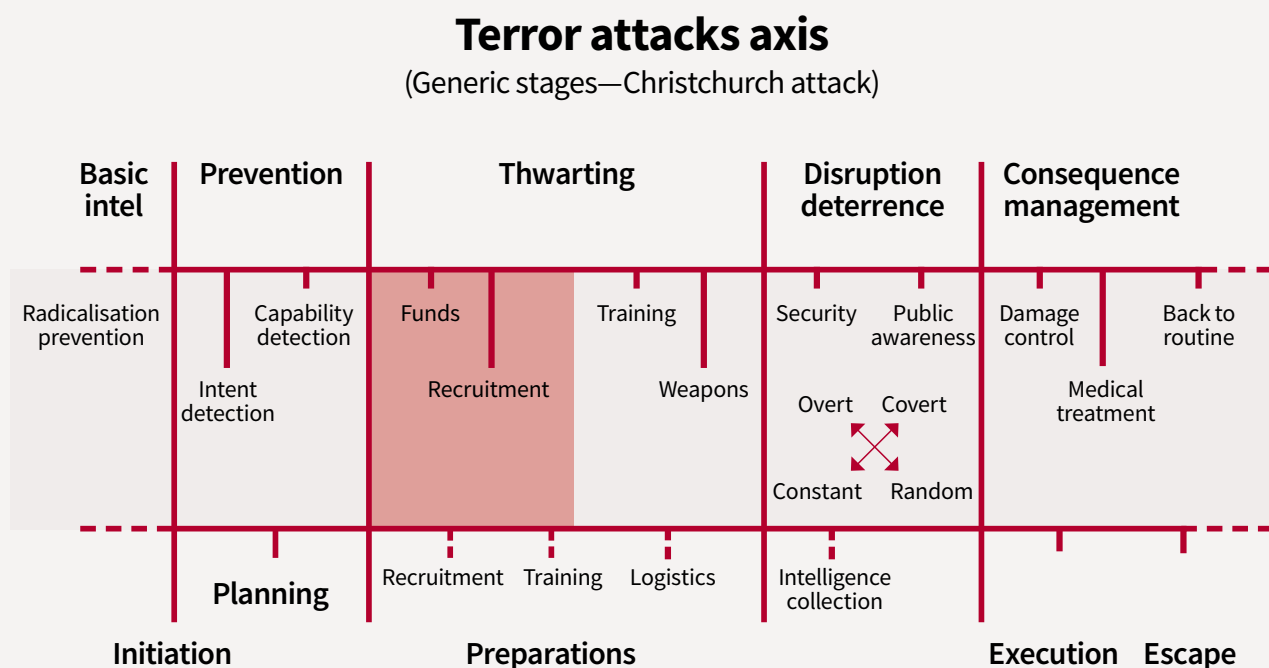
said 'he felt' that Israel's Mossad was behind the attack.¹⁷ In contrast, moderate Muslim elements, mostly Saudi, stipulated that 'terror has neither religion nor nationality' and stressed the need of the international community to prevent hatred and terror, which don't befit the values of the various religions and the values of international coexistence between nations.

On 15 May 2019, on the heels of the attack, a summit was held in Paris. G7 leaders and major technology and internet companies' senior executives attended. The summit called on the tech companies to increase their efforts to prevent incitement to terror and violent extremism. The 'Christchurch Call' included a pledge by participants to update their internet communities' regulations in a way that will fortify restrictions on the distribution of terror and extreme violence materials, develop methods that enable their users to report inappropriate content, develop technologies that will assist with the detection and removal of such materials, and develop effective capabilities to detect and block live broadcasts of terrorist content.¹⁸ Similarly, after the Christchurch attack, in an attempt to contend with online incitement in general and live broadcasts of violent activities and terror in particular, Australia passed a law that requires internet companies and social media platforms to rapidly remove all violent material and immediately notify the Australian Federal Police of the existence of such material.¹⁹ Violation of the law will result in heavy fines being imposed on the companies and the possible jailing of their executives.²⁰

PREVENTING, THWARTING AND MANAGING THE ATTACK

As I've noted, Tarrant was a lone wolf without any operational ties to any specific organisation; however, unlike spontaneous lone-wolf attacks, the Christchurch attack was meticulously planned and required a very long preparation time, similarly to attacks organised by terror groups. On that note, parallel to the Christchurch 'attack stages axis', one can position it on the 'thwarting versus attack axis'. The thwarting axis stages are parallel to the attack stages and contrast them (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Thwarting attacks



The thwarting axis starts at the preliminary *basic intelligence* stage when law-enforcement agencies gather basic and ongoing information on terror organisations and their networks, cells and operatives. This information includes, among other things, an analysis of their structures and deployments, the identity of their operatives, their ideologies, and their capabilities and intentions. The information gives law-enforcement agencies not just in-depth knowledge of the terror organisation but also the ability to detect any irregular activity suggesting an intent and preparation to execute an attack. The next stage—*prevention*—relies on detecting the intent to attack and the terrorists' efforts to acquire the means and capabilities to execute the attack. In the third stage—*thwarting*—the intelligence is *translated* into operative stages meant to foil the attack through offensive, defensive or legal actions. Within this framework, attempts are made to harm the terrorists' financial capabilities needed to carry out the

attack, their recruitment and training efforts, and their weapon acquisition capabilities (through purchase, theft, assembly, manufacturing or other routes). In the fourth stage—*disruption*—once the terrorists have completed or are about to complete their preparation for the attack, a special effort is made to deter them from executing the plan through increased security (overt, covert, random or constant) at the targets and sometimes through alerting the public to be more vigilant and to look out for suspect activity. The basic premise here is that, if a terror organisation will find out (through its pre-op intelligence-gathering efforts) that the target is well protected, and that people at the target are on high alert, then it may be deterred from carrying out its attack or at least have its plans disrupted. The fifth and last stage on the thwarting axis—*attack management*—occurs after the attack has taken place and law-enforcement agencies need to limit its damage by rapidly and efficiently treating casualties, preventing secondary attacks and returning things to normal as soon as possible.

The type of the attack and the characteristics of its perpetrators have a direct impact on the various stages of the thwarting axis and their chances of success. For example, when dealing with a spontaneous lone-wolf attack, most of the stages are not relevant because those kinds of attacks usually don't include the plenary and preparatory stages. In those cases, the focus of a thwarting effort should be placed on basic intelligence activity—using artificial intelligence (AI) and big-data technologies, for example—aimed at preventing the formation of the intent to attack by preventing radicalisation (preventing and countering violent extremism programs), and security activity aimed at deterring the terrorists from carrying out an attack. The last stages, which include damage control and mitigation, are similar to those in other types of terrorist attack.

In recent years, lone-wolf attacks have become a widespread phenomenon in many countries. Whereas most such attacks have ended with a limited number of casualties, the Christchurch attack ended with dozens of casualties. It may be that the high number of casualties resulted from difficulties and mishaps that happened during one or a few of the stages on the thwarting axis. Therefore, we should ask the question: what are the possible intervention points (on the thwarting axis) that may have been overlooked in the Christchurch attack?

- *Basic intelligence:* Until the attack, New Zealand wasn't considered to be a high-probability location for terror attacks and a target for global terror organisations. The New Zealand intelligence authorities didn't see the racist ideology of extreme right-wing elements as a concrete threat for attack on New Zealand soil, partly because of the low number of events motivated by racism or Islamophobia that have occurred in New Zealand in the past decade.²¹ Even though there was a worldwide increase in extreme right-wing terror activity, Tarrant wasn't detected by either New Zealand or Australian authorities.

Indeed, in many cases one can connect extreme right-wing elements in different countries (Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and so on) that come into play through joint incitement activities on various web platforms, mutual inspiration and role modelling, and sometimes in-person meetings and bilateral financial support. However, in contrast to Islamic *jihadi* terror organisations, extreme right-wing terror elements are much more decentralised, their operatives and cells maintain physical and operational distance from one another and, in many cases, despite their extreme ideology, they maintain a legitimate political facade so that their intelligence 'radar signature' is low, which makes it harder to gather intelligence on them. For these reasons, it's also difficult to prevent radicalisation within these circles. In many cases, 'bad seeds' like Tarrant are mixed in with others who follow right-wing ideology, oppose immigration (definitely when it is illegal) and call for the preservation of nationalistic cultural and religious characteristics. However, as long as those people don't call for violence or other illegal actions, then they have legitimate opinions in a free society that practises free speech. Preventing the growth of right-wing terrorism (much like *jihadi* terrorism) requires a community-wide effort and cooperation with right-wing thought leaders, who must draw a line in the sand that will distinguish between legitimate right-wing views and incitement to violence that encourages terror. They must identify any deviation from acceptable speech and report it to law enforcement. That said, law-enforcement agencies, decision-makers and public opinion should listen to and take into consideration right-wing views, even when the government decides to adopt a different policy.

- *Prevention—intent detection:* Tarrant was active on various internet platforms identified with extreme right-wing elements for at least two years prior to his attack. According to his testimony in his manifesto, he was in touch with those elements and even gave them money. A few days before the attack, he posted photos of his weapons on Twitter and his manifesto on web-hosting and file-sharing websites. In hindsight, all of those actions should have raised an alarm with law enforcement (in New Zealand, Australia and other countries) about his intent to perpetrate the attack, but that didn't happen. Moreover, Tarrant broadcast the attack on Facebook Live a few minutes before he opened fire, after he had announced his intention to do so earlier on 8chan. That, too, triggered no red flag.
- *Prevention—capability detection:* While living in New Zealand, Tarrant apparently acquired many weapons and a lot of ammunition. That didn't raise any red flag with law enforcement, probably because the lenient New Zealand gun control laws at the time allowed people, even tourists, to buy weapons for hunting, sporting and other needs. The amount of weaponry acquired by Tarrant (which represented significant capabilities), coupled with his presence on extreme right-wing internet platforms (attesting to his intentions), didn't complete the intelligence puzzle for law-enforcement agencies (in New Zealand or elsewhere).
- *Thwarting—financial sources for the attack:* Tarrant used his own finances to fund his attack. Unlike other terrorists, he didn't need any third-party financing, so one can't expect law-enforcement agencies to detect and intercept such funds. Yet, Tarrant donated, more than once, to extreme right-wing organisations, but those donations weren't detected by law-enforcement agencies in New Zealand, Australia or Europe, which might be an intelligence miss.
- *Thwarting—training:* Tarrant spent a significant amount of time at the Dunedin gun club. The phenomenon of a foreign citizen joining a local gun club and taking a significant amount of training didn't raise any red flags with the club's management, so they didn't report it to the police. Contrast this with the arrest of Zakaria Moussaoui in the US in 2001, when he joined a Florida flight school but refused to learn how to take off or land; his instructor reported him to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Moussaoui was arrested and questioned.
- *Thwarting—weapons acquisition:* As I've mentioned, New Zealand gun laws enabled New Zealand citizens and tourists alike to buy multiple weapons and unlimited amounts of ammunition. Tarrant exploited that leniency. He didn't have to steal his weapons, buy them on the black market or improvise them (as many terrorists are forced to do in other countries), which might have flagged him to law-enforcement agencies.
- *Thwarting—pre-operative intelligence gathering:* In his manifesto, Tarrant explains his thought process, pros and cons, with regard to his target selection. This attests to the fact that he gathered pre-op intelligence on his targets and analysed the advantages and disadvantages of perpetrating attacks on particular targets. Pre-op intelligence gathering is a sensitive stage that might expose the terrorist and his intents to local security and law enforcement elements via CCTV, local security, community policing and public awareness. Such early detection would have helped in thwarting the attack and could have led to Tarrant's arrest before his perpetration of it.
- *Disruption—security:* The targeted mosques weren't under security coverage by either local police or a private security company hired by the community. This in and of itself is problematic because of the sensitive timing of the attack during Friday midday prayers, when the mosques were filled with worshippers. The fact that there were no security guards enabled Tarrant to get into the mosques unobstructed and uninterrupted and without the need to overcome security in order to perpetrate the attack. The presence of security guards might have deterred him from attacking those specific targets or other secured targets in general or made him change his plans altogether.
- *Disruption—police response and public awareness:* According to the New Zealand Police, the first police units arrived at the scene within six minutes of the first report of the attack. Tarrant was arrested within 36 minutes after the incident started, and his killing spree was over. On the face of it, the police response was rapid, but valuable time was lost—the period between the moment Tarrant started to broadcast on Facebook Live and the time that the police received the first report of the attack. If the police had acted at the moment Tarrant began his broadcast, the massacre might have been prevented or the police could have neutralised Tarrant before he reached the Linwood mosque. Moreover, Tarrant sent his manifesto to the New Zealand Prime Minister's Office

and some 30 other addressees approximately 10 minutes before the attack. The manifesto was immediately brought to the attention of the security services, but one couldn't glean from it the locations of the attacks. Had the New Zealand Police received, in real time, information about the live broadcast of the attack while already in possession of the manifesto, that might have enabled police to understand what was going on at an earlier stage and possibly thwart the attack.

The number of potential terror targets in free societies around the globe is virtually infinite. Therefore, law-enforcement agencies can't thwart all attacks before they occur or even provide security to all potential targets. Moreover, their success rate must be 100%, whereas the terrorists need to exploit a vulnerability only once. That's why a well-aware public should serve as a power multiplier for law enforcement. Situationally aware and trained civilians can help law enforcers in neutralising terrorists, sometimes even before an attack starts, and thus hasten the attack's end and reduce the number of casualties. Similarly, the civilian who chased Tarrant's car and smashed his windshield probably saved the lives of potential victims.

- *Attack management—damage control/mitigation:* From the beginning of an attack until it's over, the goal of first responders is to limit its damage, reduce the number of casualties to the barest minimum, provide rapid and high-quality treatment in the field and rapidly transport the casualties to hospitals based on a pre-prepared, pretrained and rehearsed evacuation plan. Indeed, according to New Zealand authorities, 20 ambulances were dispatched to the scene and transported 28 gunshot victims to the nearest hospital, while others were evacuated to other hospitals, all according to the country's action plan for multiple-casualty events.
- *Attack management—back to normal:* One of the major goals of the authorities immediately after a terror attack is to return life to normal. That goal is difficult to achieve and counters the instincts of a society that's just experienced such an atrocity. On the face of it, the response of the New Zealand authorities was instinctive and was aimed at preventing additional casualties, whereas a return to normalcy was of secondary importance to them. Thus, after the attack and for the first time in New Zealand's history, the New Zealand Police raised the terror threat level to 'High'. The police recommended shutting down all the mosques and sent officers to secure various sites around the city. Schools in Christchurch were locked down, flights out of the city's airport were cancelled, the parliament building in Wellington got additional security, and tours around it were cancelled.

CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, terror attacks are becoming more and more prevalent and pose a threat to many civilians around the globe. Countries that have never suffered from this phenomenon find themselves drawn into this bloody and vicious circle: today, no country is immune to terror. Preparatory deployment—be it gathering intelligence, implementing security measures and sometimes taking operational measures to prevent and thwart terror attacks prior to their execution, mitigating their damage while they are being executed and ensuring a swift return to normalcy afterward—is an essential strategy that each country should adopt to protect and preserve the lives, security and wellbeing of its residents.

The terrorist foe, driven by extreme ideologies, is one that learns from the experience (be it success or failure) of other terrorists. Moreover, the terror phenomenon is evolutionary, so it's the duty of CT, law-enforcement and other security agencies to evolve in response. They must research the attack stages axis versus the thwarting axis of each attack and get to the necessary takeaways that will help prevent or thwart the next attack. This task falls primarily to the intelligence, security and first-response systems of each country, but also to the political decision-makers and the public at large.

That said, what can we learn from the Christchurch attack? What are the necessary takeaways?

- *Social media intelligence and regulatory takeaways:* According to Facebook, the first report of the live broadcast of the attack was received 29 minutes after the broadcast started and 12 minutes after it ended. Compare that to time from the first report to police to the time of Tarrant's arrest. Facebook explained that the delay in handling the report stemmed from the fact that the report on the attack was not classified as a report on a suicide event, which triggers a shorter processing procedure. The attack highlighted the challenge of dealing with a live-feed broadcast compared to dealing with a video clip that's been produced in full before being posted.²² Facebook stated that it had drawn its conclusions and will change its procedures for live broadcasts of attacks and live broadcasts that have ended.²³ Within this framework, the following points apply:
 - Live feeds from terror attacks may also contain critical information needed to thwart the attack. Therefore, when broadcasting live feeds, one needs to find the right balance between the need to gather intelligence on the various social media platforms and the duty to prevent the dissemination of terror and hate materials. The internet companies are going to great lengths to identify suspicious indicators and abuses of their platforms. That effort should continue and even increase. Free exchanges of information and open dialogue between technology companies, academic researchers and security services should be ongoing in order to strike the right balance.
 - There's a need to find a way to increase public awareness and involvement as a power multiplier to prevent terror, whether online or in the physical world. The public has to be educated accordingly and encouraged to take part in the global effort to detect, prevent and thwart terror, while highlighting awareness about live feeds of terror attacks.
- *AI, machine learning and big data takeaways:* AI has been proven to be effective in detecting terrorists, especially lone wolves, and has helped thwart many terror attacks. Yet, this technology is far more advanced than the current regulatory regime and therefore carries a big risk of infringing on human rights and privacy.²⁴ Another

problem is technical: the effectiveness of the specific AI technology depends on the questions asked at the genesis of the process, the quality of the algorithm built to handle those questions and the quality of data fed into that algorithm. Therefore:

- new AI, machine-learning and big-data technologies based on a neutral algorithm must be developed, and that algorithm should be aimed at detecting terror attack indicators without being influenced by any ideological or organisational affiliations or associations
- the gap in the regulatory regime must be closed and solve the 'democratic dilemma' in fighting terrorism, striking a fine balance between preserving liberal democratic values and effective CT when using such technologies²⁵
- detection and alert systems (using either AI or human analysts) for early detecting and prevention of terror have to be recalibrated to detect suspicious behaviours and expressions of incitement, support for terror or intent to perpetrate a terror attack.
- *Security takeaways:* Security activity is the last link in the thwarting chain. Its importance becomes paramount when all other links (intelligence, offensive and defensive actions) fail to thwart the attack. The Christchurch attack exemplified once again the need to secure crowded places, and particularly places of worship. Churches, synagogues, mosques and temples are ideal terror targets and in recent years have endured multiple attacks because they're open to the public without any screening and in many cases without any security measures in place. As far as terrorists are concerned, selecting a place of worship as a target enables them to identify and select their victims—the worshippers of a particular denomination. That group identity amplifies the terrorists' message and contributes to the increased fear that they're after. The dissonance created by slaughtering innocent people in a place of worship amplifies this even further. The following steps by CT and other security and police agencies are needed:
 - Consider providing (perhaps even requiring) constant security for houses of worship, especially on holidays and during major events when a large crowd is expected. The security may be provided by the government (police, other agencies) or the community itself (possibly with government subsidies).
 - On that note, the right blend of overt and covert security measures has to be maintained. For example, backing up uniformed guards (overt and fixed security) with random checks by plainclothes security officers may provide early warning to worshippers and potentially neutralise the terrorist even before he steps into the place of worship.
 - Form and train motorbike-mounted rapid-response units that can arrive quickly on the scene and end the attack quickly.
 - Increase public awareness of the potential for and possibility of terror attacks, especially in crowded civilian places. Increase people's alertness, teach them to identify suspicious activity and go as far as to guide them about what needs to be done if a terror attack occurs in their vicinity.
- *Gun regulation takeaways:* New Zealand has a lenient policy on the purchase, possession and licensing of guns and ammunition. The assessment is that 4.6 million New Zealanders own 1.5 million guns.²⁶ Every citizen aged 16 years or over can apply for an 'A' category weapon for hunting or sport (note that the A category includes some varieties of the AR-15 weapon that was apparently used by Tarrant²⁷).

In the light of the Christchurch attack, countries around the world need to reformulate their gun licensing policies to be more selective:

- Strike the right balance between the right to own and bear arms for hunting, sport and self-defence and the need to be very selective when granting a licence. Perform comprehensive background checks, maintain a detailed national database of licence holders, require licence holders to receive government-supervised training and conduct periodical reviews of each licence holder's qualifications and capacity to keep their licence.
- Prohibit tourists, visitors and non-residents from carrying arms within the country's territory.

- Limit the number of weapons per person.
- Tighten oversight over gun manufacturers and traders and limit the amount of ammunition available for sale.
- *Damage mitigation and victim treatment takeaways:* When a terror attack takes place, first responders have to act rapidly and effectively in a well-coordinated manner. Within such a framework, a deployment protocol for the various first-response elements (firefighters, doctors, paramedics, police, intelligence officers) in which each of them is in charge of different tasks on the scene is as follows:
 - *Police and enforcement elements:* These elements need to synchronise the various other first-response elements efficiently and safely. They also have to secure the scene and prevent secondary attacks, including by locating and neutralising explosive devices that may have been left by the terrorists or by neutralising additional terrorists on the scene. These elements also have a central role in keeping traffic arteries in and out of the scene open to ensure the adequate and rapid evacuation of victims and in maintaining public order.
 - *Fire brigade:* The firefighters' job is to put out fires and rescue trapped people.
 - *Rescue and medical elements:* These elements need to provide first aid to victims on the scene and take care of an orderly evacuation of victims to hospitals based on the hospital's distance from the scene, the severity of the victim's injuries and the level of occupancy at the hospitals in question.
 - *Intelligence agencies:* These agencies are tasked with gathering tactical and forensic information from the scene. That information will be used to gain insights into what's been going on at the scene as soon as possible and to locate accessories and other terrorist operatives involved in the attack.

On the face of it, these tasks are much more complex when multiple attacks are being carried out at the same time or at different scenes within a short time frame, as was the case in the Christchurch attack.

- *Post-attack activity takeaways:* One of the goals of modern terrorists is to disrupt people's daily routine and normal lives in as wide an area as possible around the scene of the attack, for as many civilians as possible and for the longest possible time in order to maximise the effect of the attack. Security personnel, first responders and political leaders must convey unified messages, during and after an attack, calming the public, and must act decisively to return life to normal as soon as possible:
 - A post-attack back-to-normal procedure must be put in place and implemented.
 - Train political leaders, heads of law-enforcement agencies and heads of emergency services to convey calming messages to the public. Such messaging has a direct and significant impact on the public response after an attack. It can curb public outcry, head off violent demonstrations and prevent vigilante activity by relatives of the victims and other elements in society.
 - Assign professional help to the victims' relatives and assist them through the difficult process of recovery from the effects of the attack.
 - Provide treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder to relatives of the victims as well as to any other civilian or first responder affected by the attack.
 - Form a government fund to provide financial assistance to victims of terror.
 - Diligently perform enforcement activities, public service campaigns and other visible and demonstrative activities to prevent any 'infection' effect, such as copycat attacks or revenge attacks. Within this framework, the government has to work in tandem with the main media outlets to prevent the glorification of either the attack or the terrorists who perpetrated it.
- *International cooperation and definition of terror takeaways:* It's a well-known fact that neither the world's countries, nor international institutions, nor social media, nor academia have agreed on a universal definition of 'terror'. The prevailing claim is that such an agreement can't be reached because terrorism is a subjective thing and 'one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter'. The problem isn't merely semantic, as the definition of a certain act as a terror activity has multiple impacts on any one of steps taken along the thwarting axis stages, as well as on the local and global narrative. For example, when an al-Qaeda and ISIS attack is defined

as a terror attack while a similar attack perpetrated by extreme right-wing racists, anarchists or other extreme ideologues is being treated as a hate crime, mere criminal activity or simply the act of deranged people, the message that's being conveyed to the public is negative and dangerous. As long as internet companies and social media platforms don't have a clear universal generic definition for terrorism as a phenomenon, they're forced to establish their regulations on specifically designated terror organisations according to subjective lists compiled by either the US or the UN. Such a policy has been proven time and again to be problematic, especially for attacks by lone wolves, who have no organisational ties, or new terror organisations that haven't yet been added to the lists:

- There's a need for a universally agreed definition of 'terror', according to which 'Terrorism is the deliberate use of violence aimed against civilian targets by a sub-state organisation or individuals in order to achieve political ends.'
- 'Terror is terror' should be an axiom, regardless of the motives or ideology behind the attack, the identity of the terrorist, the organisation that may or may not have directed, assisted or inspired the terrorist, and whether the attack is local-internal (perpetrated by a citizen of the state where the attack took place) or international (mounted by a terrorist who infiltrated the state in question or was guided by foreign elements).
- The definition should be used as a moral compass to change the somewhat tolerant attitude and narrative for certain terror activities. The message that has to be assimilated and accepted by the public worldwide is that terror in the form of the premeditated inflicting of harm on a civilian population in order to promote a political agenda is never justified.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden has justifiably defined Tarrant as a terrorist, and Tarrant has defined himself as such. However, as noted by Bruce Hoffman:

In the past, a terrorist was mostly recognisable as someone committing violence at the direct behest or on behalf of some existent organisational entity or movement that had an identifiable chain of command.²⁸

Many around the world don't regard the Christchurch attack to be a terror attack. Those are the people identifying with Tarrant's extreme right-wing racist ideology. Therefore, the definition of terror can't be left to political leaders in the hope that they'll ignore their own ideology, political interests and personal inclination about whether to define a particular attack as a terror attack or not. In the modern era, when terrorists cross borders, incitement is on a global scale and fundraising and recruitment occur in cyberspace, the definition of terror gains a paramount importance and has to be prioritised as a major goal. Once it's universally defined, the effectiveness of various activities and statements can be measured according to that global standard, and international cooperation on CT can be reinforced.

To summarise: it seems that the March 2019 Christchurch attack shows the need to develop effective CT policies that take into consideration the specific nature and the stages of different terror attacks and match them with an appropriate thwarting axis. Those policies should consider the multiple dilemmas associated with modern CT, and their effectiveness should be measured against the values of liberal democracy. Lastly, the Christchurch attack and its ramifications require deep and global learning about the interdependency between racist extreme right-wing terrorist attacks and Islamic jihadist terrorist attacks.

NOTES

- 1 Peter Bergen, 'Why terrorists kill: the striking similarities between the New Zealand and Pulse nightclub shooters', *CNN*, 18 March 2019, [online](#).
- 2 The details of the attacks were collected from several sources, including *CNN*, the *BBC*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.
- 3 From web postings (2,083) associated with Breivik's manifesto it seems that the PCCTS Knights Templar is a matrix of sporadic cells with no interconnection or communication, which protects the matrix's survivability. Every activist or group of activists is entitled to form their own cell under the auspices of the group, as long as the new members are Christian, European (or of European descent), are proud of their heritage and oppose socialism, Islam and multiculturalism. According to these postings, each cell consists of one to six activists and each head of a cell (Justiciar) is entitled to define the goals and *modus operandi* of his cell. Therefore, no one cell is in charge of all goals and targets or the goals and targets of another cell. Additionally, cells are prohibited from communicating with one another. It's advisable that an activist forms a cell only if he can't operate individually and that he takes extreme care in recruiting activists, and in any case recruits based only on personal acquaintance and not from the internet. Any internet activity (Facebook, YouTube etc.) should have reasonable user characteristics on current affairs and refrain from political debates or blogs. See 'Crusader's manual: ten questions about the PCCTS Knights Templar', *YouTube*, 6 November 2012, [online](#).
- 4 'Who do you represent?' 'Millions of European and other ethno-nationalist peoples that wish to live in peace amongst their own people, living in their own lands, practicing their own traditions and deciding the future of their own kind'.
- 5 Bergen, 'Why terrorists kill: The striking similarities between the New Zealand and Pulse nightclub shooters'.
- 6 'Why did you carry out the attack?' '[T]o agitate the political enemies of my people into action, to cause them to overextend their own hand and experience the eventual and inevitable backlash as a result. To incite violence, retaliation and further divide between the European people and the invaders currently occupying European soil ... To create an atmosphere of fear and change in which drastic, powerful and revolutionary action can occur ... To drive a wedge between the nations of NATO that are European and the Turks that also make a part of the NATO forces, thereby turning NATO once more into a united European army and pushing Turkey once more back to the true position of a foreign, enemy force.'
- 7 'Did/do you personally hate Muslims?' 'A Muslim man or woman living in their homelands? No. A Muslim man or woman choosing to invade our lands, live on our soil and replace our people? Yes, I dislike them.' 'Were/are you an Anti-Semite?' 'No. A Jew living in Israel is no enemy of mine, so long as they do not seek to subvert or harm my people.'
- 8 Ely Karmon, 'A manifesto for murder', *Australia/Israel Review*, 26 March 2019, [online](#).
- 9 Candace Sutton, Shannon Molloy, staff writers, 'Gunman's family in Australia called police after news of Christchurch massacre', *News.com.au*, 26 March 2019, [online](#).
- 10 Jessica McBride, 'Brenton Tarrant, Anders Breivik & Reborn Knights Templar', *Heavy*, March 2019, [online](#).
- 11 Robert Evans, 'Shitposting, inspirational terrorism, and the Christchurch mosque massacre', *Bellingcat*, 15 March 2019, [online](#).
- 12 To stream the attack from his GoPro camera, the terrorist used Live4 live-streaming software. In addition to being watched via Live4 and Facebook, the attack was reportedly watched in real time by users on 8chan and Reddit, where the Facebook link had been shared. See *Analysis: New Zealand attack and the terrorist use of the internet*, Tech Against Terrorism, 26 March 2019, [online](#).
- 13 *Analysis: New Zealand attack and the terrorist use of the internet*.
- 14 *Analysis: New Zealand attack and the terrorist use of the internet*.
- 15 Within his 'Public Awareness' campaign, Tarrant referenced:
 - Anton Lundin Patterson—a Swede who murdered two Muslim immigrant children
 - Alexandre Bissonnette—a Canadian who attacked a mosque in Quebec in 2017, killed six people and was sentenced to 40 years in jail
 - Skanderbeg—an Albanian who led a revolt against the Ottoman regime
 - Antonio Bragadin—an Italian military police officer in Venice who murdered Turks who were in his custody
 - Charles Martel—the Frankish military leader who beat the Muslims of Andalusia in the Battle of Tours
 - 1683—the siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire
 - 1189—the siege of Acre
 - Oswald Mosley—head of the Fascist Party in the UK in the 1930s
 - The '14'—the 14 words written by neo-Nazi David Lane, a member of The Order movement while serving a jail sentence—'We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children'
 - Dylan Roof—a fascist terrorist who murdered nine African-Americans in a South Carolina church in 2015
 - Andres Breivik—the perpetrator of the terror attack on the youth camp in Norway in 2011
 - Ebba Akerlund—a girl murdered in Stockholm in a 2017 ramming attack
 - Luca Traini—an Italian who murdered four North African immigrants in October 2018 and was sentenced to 12 years in jail
 - Darren Osborne—who murdered a Muslim next to a mosque in northern London in 2017.
- Evans, 'Shitposting, inspirational terrorism, and the Christchurch mosque massacre'; Sutton et al., 'Gunman's family in Australia called police after news of Christchurch massacre'.
- 16 Adam Taylor, 'The hazy link between the attacks in Sri Lanka and New Zealand', *Washington Post*, 25 April 2019, [online](#).
- 17 Scott Palmer, 'Jews outraged after mosque leader blames Mossad for Christchurch attack', *MSN News*, 26 March 2019, [online](#).
- 18 'Actions to address the abuse of technology to spread terrorist and violent extremist content', *Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism*, 15 May 2019, [online](#).
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI	artificial intelligence
CT	counterterrorism
IED	improvised explosive device
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

WHAT'S YOUR STRATEGY?

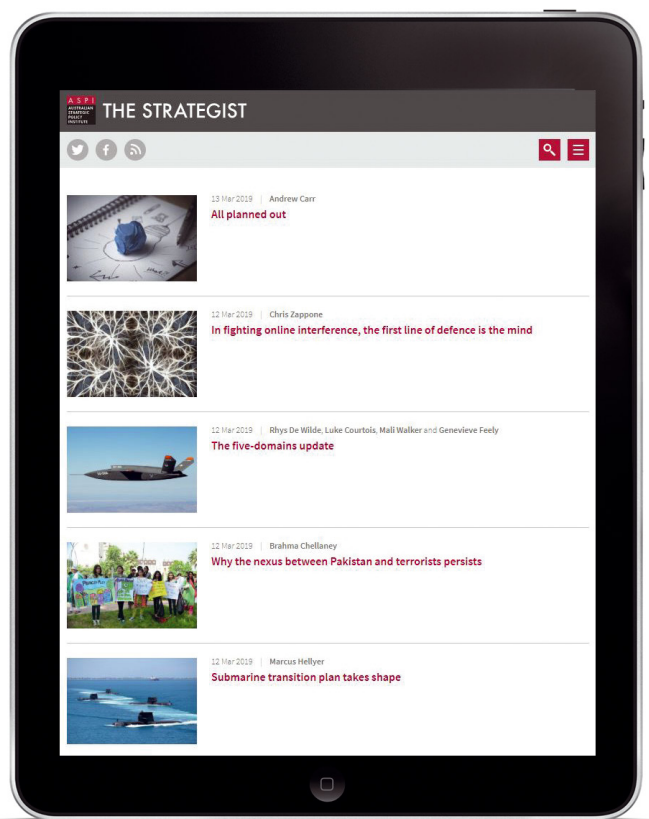


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