GL4102 Task Force

How has digital propaganda altered the process of self-radicalization?

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Abstract

This paper explores the shift from conventional to cyber warfare and how this leads to the rise of threats of a new nature. The changing new media landscape has also enabled extremist groups to use digital propaganda more extensively and increase the efficiency of their publicity and recruitment efforts. Such an effect is evident from the different approaches of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS). The latter makes use of new media to spread its message to potential recruits and reduces the time and labor needed to radicalize and recruit new followers. The paper proposes that digital propaganda has resulted in the process of self-radicalization becoming accelerated and more varied. This paper also posits that emergent technology will augment the present impact of digital propaganda, thus driving the next wave of terrorism. Policy recommendations will seek to address the impact of new media technologies and emphasize the importance of appropriate framing of counter-narratives, as well as the need to engage a variety of stakeholders that includes civil society organizations and private companies.