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CTC: Topic #1 - Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity in Terrorism

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“With guns, you can kill terrorists. With education, you can kill terrorism.” These words by Malala Yousafzai, the world's youngest Nobel Prize laureate, hold a crucial message we must heed if we want a future without terrorism. While terrorism can take many forms, none may be as potentially earth-shattering and dangerous than its newest form.

With the world constantly evolving and technology adapting faster than ever, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies have the potential to improve access to education, healthcare, and clean water. They can also play a crucial role in the fight against climate change, poverty, and hunger. These innovations can optimize resource allocation and implement data-driven strategies that transcend personal biases, ultimately contributing to a better world every day. In its most simple level, technology is used daily for social interactions, e-commerce, or finding information. However, with every emerging technology, there exists the possibility of misuse and unintended consequences.

The CTC, Counter-Terrorism Committee, reports that terrorists and their affiliated groups exploit new and emerging technologies as a way to maintain motivations and facilitate a wide range of terrorist activities. These include incitement to violent extremism conducive to terrorism, recruitment, training, planning, networking, securing logistical support, acquiring weapons and their components, fundraising, and conducting terrorist operations.¹ The CTED, Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, has partnered with the CTC and introduced multiple initiatives in this area, such as “Tech against Terrorism”, “Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism”, and more. While these initiatives indicate a commendable start, they cannot remove the negative aspects of new technologies and the vulnerability to be abused by terrorists.

Numerous forms of technology in the wrong hands pose significant danger to the world. The first thing needing protection is critical infrastructure. Terrorist groups may eventually acquire the

¹ <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/content/information-and-communications-technologies>

capacity to launch terrorist attacks through the Internet, thereby causing damage to critical infrastructure, industrial control systems, or Internet of Things devices.² Hackers can bypass data protection and privacy measures to collect information from various governments, NGOs, and other companies for planning and executing attacks. Terrorists can use the dark web to spread propaganda and recruit from all around the world, enticing them to leave their families and lives behind to take up arms. Additionally, it can be used for the illegal trade of weapons and other tools that facilitate terrorist activities. If terrorist organizations had the ability to use AI, the chaos and harm that could be unleashed on the world is immeasurable. These are not the only threats known at this time, everyday terrorists harness the power of technology for evil and it is up to you to find the other ways they can take advantage of technology.

CTC faces a difficult task of ensuring that technology is not harnessed for malicious purposes. It requires thoughtful consideration of how we can prevent the misuse of this technology in order to save lives.

Questions to think about:

- How can CTC help countries use their own technology/AI to stop the terrorists efforts?
- What steps are already in place in your country and can they be implemented across the world?
- How can nations cooperate more effectively in sharing intelligence to stop potential terrorist threats while respecting sovereignty and security concerns?
- What measures should be taken to prevent the online radicalization and recruitment of individuals by terrorist organizations through social media and other digital platforms?
- How can we balance the need for security with the protection of individual privacy when countering technology-based terrorist threats?
- What other ways can terrorists use technology/the dark web? How can CTC stop them?

While these are some questions to keep in mind while researching and writing your position papers, they are not intended to limit your research. Also, please keep in mind that you are representing your country's views, so your research should be directed accordingly.

² <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/content/information-and-communications-technologies>

All papers should include citations, and all papers will be submitted through Turn-It-In, as plagiarism and ChatGPT will not be tolerated. I look forward to hearing all your ideas! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at zwinters@mail.yu.edu. Good luck!

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Chair, CTC

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