

Africa – A Soft Landing for ISIL

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A Proactive Response

UK based Counter Terrorism Expert David Otto, Director of TGS Intelligence Consultants Ltd & Founder of Step In – Step Out (SISO), delivered lectures on Defence Against Terrorism at NATO School Oberammergau Germany (Figure 1).



Figure 1: David Otto, delivering lectures.

Delivering his lectures, Mr David Otto urged senior military trainees, NCOs and Civilian equivalents from a selected number of NATO States and partner Nations to keep a cautious eye on the changing environment in global jihadist group location, tactics and network with particular reference to the relationship between Daesh in Syria and Iraq, Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin, Al Shabaab in East Africa, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) & Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) amongst others.

Otto who is also the Senior Counter Terrorism Advisor for Global Risk International UK LTD maintained that the current Kinetic pressure on Daesh in Raqqa and Mosul by coalition forces will not only result in a 'balloon effect' displacement, but may likely force desperate 'Foreign Fighters' to seek for alternative operating environments in other safe Daesh Wiyalats outside Syria and Iraq.

"For the first time since splitting from Al-Qaeda in Iraq Jabhat al-Nusra and the declaration of the so called 'Caliphate' by the self-declared Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in June 2014, Daesh is

experiencing its worst defeat in the hands of the coalition forces in their strongest holds of Mosul and Raqqa. Daesh has three natural options, either fight, flight or freeze. Their fighters are not trained to freeze or surrender. Daesh will continue to engage in Jihad, however in the circumstances, the remaining leadership, will consider relocation, preferably somewhere they have a formidable Wiyalat where they will be able to re-strategize, get resources, recruit, rearm and mount a different strategy not seen before – perhaps the use of Chemical or Biological agents for maximum effect."

On the question of what Jihadist groups could provide Daesh needed support in trouble times like this, Otto continued;

"Looking at the recent upsurge in Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab attacks against hard and soft targets in Nigeria and Somalia, and the activities of the Maute group & Abu Sayed in the Philippines, there are two possible ways this may play out for Daesh. First, by carrying out multiple and continuous deadly attacks against hard military coalitions, it appears these Daesh Wiyalats are putting themselves forward as alternative 'Caliphate' to Mosul and Raqqa. These jihadist groups are showing Daesh leadership their resilience and willingness to continue the global Jihad against the near and far enemy and create a safe space for fleeing jihadist. Alternatively, the current upsurge may be a direct call by Daesh leadership itself to all its Wilayats to carry out deadly and continuous attacks to act as a distraction tactic to coalition forces who are bent on retaking Mosul and Raqqa by all means"

Otto Continued

"What is certain is that we shall see an increase in disillusioned and blood thirsty foreign fighters returning 'home' and either perform Jihad immediately on successful arrival at home soil - like the Manchester Arena bomber, Salman Abedi or become sleeper cells only to strike at unexpected moments with unexpected tactics when directed to do so by what will be left of Daesh leadership command. Other more active Jihadist who find no possibilities of going back home due to high security alert or other practical reasons may embark on joining other wilayats where they can easily blend with the local population and other jihadist to continue their Jihad.

