THE EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM IN THE INTERNET SPACE AS A SECURITY CHALLENGE

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Abstract: Although a universally accepted definition of terrorism does not yet exist, almost all researchers of this phenomenon agree that it has existed since ancient times, evolves and very skillfully adapts to the new digital age. Terrorist organizations began to feel the benefits of the Internet as soon as it appeared, especially in fast communication, which, although at first it seemed not so secure, later with the help of the encrypted platforms developed by terrorist organizations, communication not only which has become much safer, but it has given even more courage to sympathizers to join the terrorist cause and make their contribution, whether they be the so-called "worker bees" (mujaheddin/mujaheddin - the diligent ones), or join the battlefields.
This paper aims to highlight how terrorists use the benefits of the developed technology especially the internet. One of the things that emerges as a challenge is precisely the role that women play in recruitment and radicalization for terrorist organizations. Namely, a woman seems to go beyond the conservative treatment in the regions where terrorism is present. Thus, terrorism begins to use all possible resources available to it. Children also become a potential target for recruitment mostly in the internet space, but also in the gaming world. Like the uneven distribution of goods, the power struggle of the great powers, and at the end of the day, systemic inequality contributes to terrorism still being treated as one of the biggest security threats in the global world.

Keywords : terrorism, internet, terrorist organizations, recruitment, radicalization.

Introduction

With the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, terrorism made it clear that, in this globalized world, internal and external security are intertwined and closely related.Also, during this period, Al Qaeda also established its first online presence . space, created and launched their first website, which, although it was simple, without much visual creativity, nevertheless, it allowed them to distribute their videos, images and propaganda to the general public. While on the other hand, for the states and the makers of policies for the fight against terrorism, this was a message that the issues of security and the fight against terrorism cannot be solved with the measures applied so far. From here, terrorism begins to evolve in the Internet space and grow into a significant global security challenge.

That the Internet is a powerful weapon for terrorists is also shown by the case of Diana Julia Novi, who wanted to become the first suicide bomber in Indonesia, blowing up the

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presidential salary with a bomb. But that did not happen because she was arrested before committing the terrorist act. Diana was recruited online by ISIS recruiters and was well indoctrinated. She was determined with exceptional will to die for the cause of global jihad. At the same time, it was a shock for Indonesia, because the taking of terrorist acts by women in this country were not carried out, but in general by terrorist organizations fighting for global jihad. She stated in an interview that she was inspired to commit such a terrorist act by statuses published by extremist preachers and fighters of ISIS on their Facebook profiles.

Terrorism has recognized that it will not be able to win with military force against a far stronger opponent, so terrorism has recognized the power of the internet and has switched to a different strategy, which will be a hybrid one, fighting on the ground and gaining support from the general public for their cause. Social media and online video represent the new arena where intelligence – security services and terrorists will meet.

The fight against terrorism : Is the fight in the physical world enough?

The fight against terrorism is still limited to fights that take place in the physical world, that is, mainly with the use of military and police special forces. Just to illustrate, the NATO-led global coalition to fight terrorism has spent over $22.2 billion in support of humanitarian interventions, explosives disposal and economic support in Syria and Iraq (Liang, 2017:11-20). Just for comparison, the United States spent about 14 billion dollars during almost three years, or rather 14.356 billion dollars from August 2014 to June 30 , 2017. As much as 40 % of these funds have been spent on support missions in the fight against ISIS (US Department of Defense, 2017: 1).

Although the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and other areas where counter-terrorist forces were present, was for some a sign that IS was collapsing, as if other developments had been overlooked. The US National Counter terrorism Center reported in 2016 that IS operates in 18 countries, with clear evidence of "aspirational branches" in Mali, Indonesia, Egypt, Somalia and Bangladesh. At the same time, a new terrorist diaspora is forming, consisting of new and old terrorist fighters who will either continue to support other civil wars or try to reach other IS strongholds. But what attracts particular attention is the birth of a new and more sinister cyber "army" of terrorists, who carry out cyber attacks, spread so-called scam viruses and the like, as well as the publication of "kill lists" that include the founders of Facebook and Twitter (Liang, 2017: 11-20).

Technological advances have provided very sophisticated means by which terrorists can (evilly) use the Internet for illicit purposes. (UNODC, 2012: 53). Before moving on to why the Internet is such an important tool for terrorist organizations, we will answer the question why terrorists started to wage war in the Internet space, that is, to expand the processes of radicalization and recruitment beyond the physical space - into the online sphere? Before the US and UK attacked Taliban forces in Afghanistan in 2001 in retaliation for operations carried out by AL-Qaeda in New York and Washington, AL-Qaeda's leadership realized that full engagement with US and British forces in Afghanistan would be tantamount to suicide . Faced with overwhelming power—although the United States adopted a scaled-down approach to the invasion, where local co-opted forces (notably the Northern Alliance) were hired and paid to fight on behalf of the United States—retreat was strategically chosen. For Al Qaeda, the goal of risk minimization was to slow the advance of Western forces, according to Sun Tzu's

maxim that "he defends himself when his strength is inadequate," and Van Creveld's axiom that "a belligerent fighter who is weaker than the enemy cannot to allow himself to wear out' (Mohammad, 2011: 58-62).

In order to conduct decades-long battles with coalition anti-terrorist forces, it is necessary to have material and human resources to sustain those battles. Furthermore, it is necessary to inflict damage on the enemy not only on the battlefield, but in his country. AL-Qaeda and ISIS have become aware that they are militarily weaker than their opponent, but also that they need the support of the general public. The Internet and social media have become an ideal arena in which a message can be spread in the shortest possible time from one side of the world to the other.

One of the most basic and also the main reasons why online platforms are important for these groups is the speed of spreading their message, so it penetrates much more easily to potential recruits in the online sphere as opposed to offline recruiting activities. Another way the internet can be used is advertising. There is advertising on their web pages in order to get the word out about the existence of the group, but also to spread their message. The messages that are disseminated target their own audience, may be in different languages depending on the group to be recruited. Social media, e-mails, virtual chat platforms, e-groups, videos, and other applications are particularly popular recruiting tools (UNDOC, 2017: 13).

The need for followers and new members is necessary for the organization to survive. In this direction, we will mention the statement of Kent Oots. He remarkably compares terrorist organizations with political organizations, emphasizing that these two types of organizations have the same organizational problems, namely : the recruitment of members who will follow their cause, the collection of financial resources, their competition in the area where they operate and are stationed. , as well as the need to provide selective incentives (Kent, 2006: 69). The high costs allocated to the fight against terrorism (as an example we mentioned above) and the development of technology, especially the opportunities offered by it in achieving terrorist goals, have made terrorists use the Internet and online platforms in the fight to confront the enemy. In that direction, extremist and terrorist groups use the Internet to replicate and sometimes even replace the functions (activities) they previously performed in the physical or offline space. The Internet, together with online platforms, can help (and continue to help) extremist movements and terrorist organizations in: reducing their costs, generating and increasing their effectiveness, increasing access to new audiences and anonymity to a large extent .

In today's media-saturated environment, terrorist organizations use the Internet as a primary form of communication to broadcast their messages to the world, whether to eager subscribers, opposition authorities, or a horrified public (Mirgani, 2017: 23).

Recruiting children in the Internet space

In the search for answers to the questions related to recruitment, functioning, radicalization, as well as to the way in which these processes are realized, the question of how terrorists maintain their existence, or the so-called "the recovery/maintenance process". In the literature, the trend of child recruitment, or also known as a predatory type of recruitment, through which children are prepared to participate in militant and non-militant operations, in order to advance the current and trans-generational goals of the terrorist organization,

is becoming known. In this sense, successful predatory recruitment implies undertaking or a set of coercive and manipulative actions aimed at both children and their communities in which they live . Hence, predatory recruitment involves selecting a recruit, gaining access, developing emotional trust, and ideological pre-school development (Almohammad, 2018: 6-14).

Many would wonder if the choice of children by the recruiters is random? The answer is completely negative, the recruiters themselves usually choose those places where there is easy access to families who are vulnerable or weak, such as children who live in a poor family of a single parent, children who have a weak or insufficient outside of their apartment parents, children who have been neglected by their parents and children who have been abused in their families.

Children growing up in ISIS-controlled territories in Syria live in tense and extreme conditions. Many are witnesses or victims of airstrikes, bombings and other forms of violence. Children became accustomed to, and in some cases even participated in, public displays of violence, including punishments and executions. Some are also subjected to extreme forms of torture. Exposure to and growing up in cultures of violence is associated with children's desensitization to accept violence and even the need for violence as a value-based justice system. In other words, acts of violence may be considered necessary by children in resolving social and ideological conflicts (Almohammad, 2018: 5-6).

What is significant to note is that terrorist organizations (especially ISIS) do not hesitate to recruit, train and deploy children in their ranks . Immediate evidence of this comes from supporters and participants in the ISIS propaganda campaign posting photos, videos and testimonies on social media (Horgan, et al, 2016: 7-8). The need for children to become long-term supporters of IS's radical worldview and belief system has also changed the means of their recruitment (Gina, 2018: 11).

The exact number of children who are involved in the activities of terrorist data cannot be determined while writing this paper, however, in the context of the topic we are investigating, and in order to capture the evolutionary nature of terrorism, but also the alarmism in the recruitment and exploitation of children by terrorist groups. For example, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented 1,100 Syrian children who were recruited into ISIS, of whom 52 were killed, while 8 of them carried out suicide bombings. Bloom, Horgan, and Winter's study of children and youth touted in ISIS propaganda cited 89 adolescent and preadolescent deaths. Meanwhile, the United Nations announced in June 2015 that 271 boys and 8 girls were recruited by various militant and terrorist organizations in Syria. In 77 % of the cases of child recruitment, they were used in combat, or at least they were trained in fighting and handling weapons (Horgan, et al. 2016: 8).

United Nations estimates state that since 2009 by 2017 at least 8,000 children had been recruited by the terrorist organization Boko Haram (Security Council, S/2017/304: 6). A 2021 report by the UN Secretary General found that 6,310 children were recruited and used for terrorist purposes in Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and the Central African Republic (Annual report of the Secretary-General, A/76/871-S/2022/493: 2). And ISIS has expressed its commitment and engagement in child recruitment. Thus, according to the UN, in 2017 this terrorist organization recruited 284 children, which, unlike previous years, shows a significant increase in this trend (Jorgensen, 2019: 5-23).

Before proceeding to the recruitment process, it is necessary to emphasize that people go through the process of radicalization. The recruitment is undergoing a process of radicalization. Radicalization is not something that happens overnight, it takes time. It is a gradual process, so the young people affected may not realize what is happening. Children, like other adults, can be radicalized and recruited through their families, friends, through direct contact with an extremist or terrorist group (member of the group), or, more recently, through the Internet. Recruiters can offer them a sense of belonging, community or identity, which can be attractive, especially if someone is facing a challenge in their life. Children and teenagers (especially) can be much more susceptible to the process of radicalization, as well as being recruited, that is, they can be exposed to a greater risk because they are more independent, explore new things and push boundaries as they grow and discover more about their identity , faith and sense of belonging.

Although terrorists use different, often combined, strategies for radicalization and recruitment of children and teenagers, these are some of the potential ways and methods of how they recruit children and young teenagers in the Internet space, namely :

- **"Targeted Content"**: violent extremist and terrorist groups disseminate undifferentiated propaganda, such as video clips or messages, to a target population that is considered homogeneous and will readily accept the propaganda (UNDC, 2017: 10-13). The principle of advertising made possible by the Internet gives these groups the opportunity to promote content that is attractive and often seems tempting, such as that they will be armed, dressed in uniform and have their own team and equipment;

- **"Funnel":** involves an individual approach, to target certain individuals who are considered ready for recruitment, using psychological techniques to increase the children's emotional connection and commitment to join the group. Even target children who resist outright recruitment can develop positive views of group activities through the use of these techniques;

- **"Infection":** when the target population is difficult to reach, an "agent" can be inserted to continue recruitment from within, using direct and personal appeals. Social ties between the recruiter and targets can be strengthened by eliciting grievances, such as marginalization or social frustration (UNDC, 2017: 10-13).

Terrorist organizations have long used the Internet to recruit globally for their cause, but the popularity of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube among children has allowed groups such as the so-called Islamic State (IS), Al Nusra and Al Qaeda to gain a wider audience. As a result, children are becoming victims of recruitment in new ways as these groups have succeeded in recruiting children from all over the world (CRIN, 2016: 3). Digital platforms are also used as vectors for misinformation and conspiracy theories that have a harmful impact on children and young people (United Nation, 2020).

Terrorism and online video games

The removal of content posted by terrorist and extremist organizations on social media, the web and online platforms in general, by states and creators of social media (and

other online platforms), has forced terrorists not only to migrate to the dark side of the Internet. , but to start radicalizing and recruiting through the use of video games.

The use of video games as a tool for extremist recruitment is not a new phenomenon: in 2003, the jihad organization Hezbollah created its own video game to recruit new members. Also, ISIS and violent far-right organizations have created their own video games for recruitment (Save the Children Finland, 2021: 23).

There are over two billion gamers in the world, many of them looking for excitement, connection and experience. A lot of popular games involve violence, war and bros. There are many popular games that are primarily based on the fight against terrorism, that is, on the one hand, a terrorist group, and on the other hand, anti-terrorist special police forces. Thus, the player can often pretend to play as a terrorist, rather than a special agent. For example, such are the games : Counter-Strike, Modern Warfare 2 and Medal of Honor: Warfighter. These first-person shooter games include modern, realistic graphics and a movie-style story. This creates a highly tactical simulation of the real experience. For example, a gamer may experience being stunned after a grenade explodes. David Sonboli, who killed nine people in Munich, actively used the gaming platform Steam to engage in forms where members of those forums regularly glorified mass attacks carried out by right-wing lone wolves. As well as opposing what they called a "massive invasion" of Muslim refugees into Europe. Sonboli had about 4,000 hours on Counter-Strike, and he was also active in the xenophobe network.

Another terrorist who used video games is Andres Breivik, who in turn inspired David Snoboli to commit the terrorist act, knowingly choosing the 5th anniversary of Breivik's terrorist act. Notably, before Breivik carried out his attack, he sent his 1,500-page "manifesto" via e-mail to a friend he met through a video game. In the manifesto, Breivik describes Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 as "probably the best war simulator out there" and that he sees the game as "part of his training-simulation"(Issac, 2019).

Video games have been used mostly for terrorist purposes by right-wing terrorists (Europol, TE-SAT 2022: 5, primarily serving to form communities, as exemplified by the formation of a gaming group described as a "community for Nazi gamers". This group required the persons who sent an offer of membership to it, to prove their "membership" in their fascist community (Vaux, 2021:8). The formation of such communities on video game platforms, not only by right-wing terrorists, but also by terrorist groups in general, can be used to blackmail people who want and have an affinity to join that community, or often in games referred to as clans. . The need for belonging, especially for young people who are disillusioned or struggling with their identity, can be exploited by terrorist groups and conditions are set for them to prove their membership, it can also be a condition for committing a terrorist act, or on the other hand, it can be the execution of other activities that will provide other benefits for the terrorist organization, such as illegal activities for acquiring finances that will enable the realization of any terrorist act.

Terrorism has evolved and is constantly adapting to modern developments, but also that in the future the gaming sphere may replace existing social media with gaming games (and the platforms that enable their streaming) as the preferred way of spreading propaganda and recruitment. The EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator believes that online video games can be of great benefit to terrorist organizations for three reasons, namely :

- First, there is a "huge target audience for radicalization on gaming platforms, especially among young people, who tend to be more vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment";

- Second, "gaming platforms, related applications, and streaming services provide an ecosystem that is conducive to the spread of violent propaganda . " Here, through high levels of anonymity, there are significant opportunities for social networking. It should also be taken into account that some gamers may already subscribe to or be interested in extremist ideologies and be " seekers"; and

- Third, "in conjunction with the spread of online terrorist propaganda, various terrorist groups are increasingly exploiting popular elements of video games and gaming culture to appeal to younger generations, normalize their message, and desensitize users to violence" (Lakhan, 2021: 13).
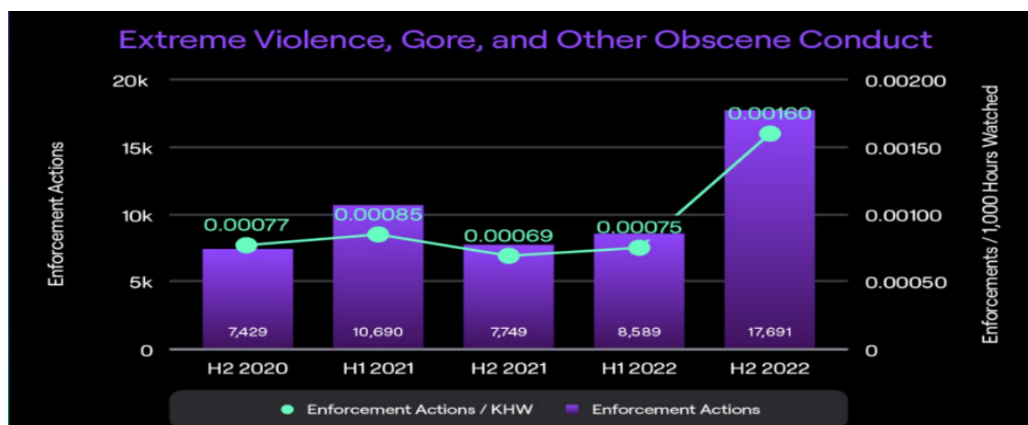

Figure 1 . Extreme Violence, Gore, and Other Obscene Conduct

The main gaming streaming platform Twitch (Twitch), in its transparency report for 2022, highlights the increased use of extreme violence, insults and other obscene content in 2022, namely the use of such content and actions increased from 8,489 in the first half of the year to 17,691 in the second half of 2022 (Twitch, H2 2022).

Regarding terrorism, terrorist propaganda and recruitment, this platform in the first half recorded an increase in reports, that is, relating to actions taken by users that are related to terrorism decreased from 273,000 to 222,000 (-18.7% HoH). However, this decline is automatically due to the fact that users have started changing their account names, using other names instead of the names or surnames of their sympathizers and terrorists.
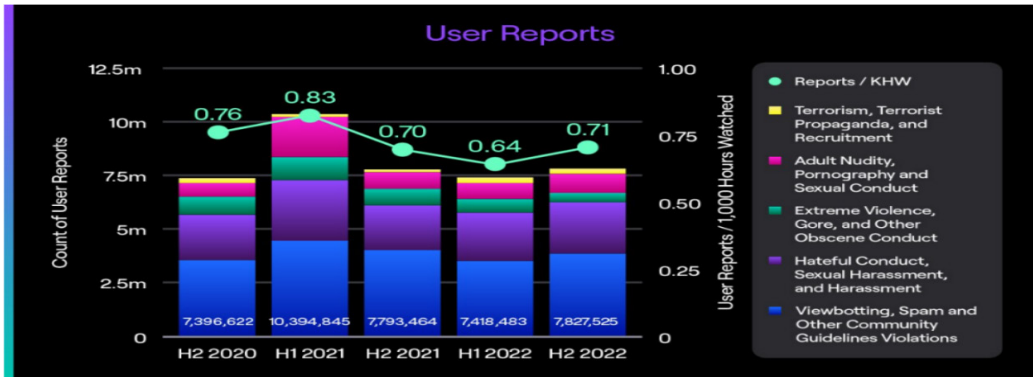
Figure 2. Total reports of illegal content on Twitch

It also states that this decline is due to the fact that users are starting to avoid using words such as terrorism, radicalization, extremism, recruitment in order not to be deleted or detected by the automatic obscene content detector established by the platform itself (Twitch, H2 2022).

Woman's participation in terrorist activities

Traditionally, terrorist acts undertaken were linked directly to members of a terrorist organization, official or affiliated groups, cells or networks, now support for such acts is openly expressed through the Internet space by those who have never had an official or direct connection to terrorist organizations.

In this direction, we will state that women can not only participate in radicalization and recruitment, both in the physical space and through online platforms, but women's faces have begun to be used (in addition to other forms) as a reason to encourage certain sympathizers to commit a terrorist act. This allows so-called "self-radicalization" to take place and encourage lone wolves to commit terrorist acts. As an example, we will cite the 2011 case of Ardi Uka, an Albanian who lived in Germany. Namely, he saw jihadist propaganda on YouTube in any featured video (edited by ISIS) that claimed to show the rape of a Muslim woman by an American soldier. Just a few hours after watching this video, he headed to the airport in Frankfurt, where he wounded two people and killed two American soldiers with a firearm - a gun. After the arrest, Uka's computers were confiscated. His activity on the Internet and social networks showed an increased interest in jihadist content, which led to his self-radicalization (Laura, 2017: 7).

The new global terrorist matrix that is appealing to many women is a specially designed campaign to recruit women by ISIS. Efforts to recruit women to ISIS begin by identifying potential matches at times of psychological and/or social weakness. Once they are identified, the terrorist organization goes to great lengths to convince them that their actions and actions do not contradict Islamic principles, nor the usual responsibilities of a Muslim woman, which is another clear example of manipulation. ISIS, aware of the importance of recruiting young women, uses social media to reach them. Knowing that the youngest of these women spend a lot of time on the Internet and it is an ideal space to exploit the

dissatisfaction with Western culture and, at the same time, increase the extreme identification with radical ideas (Sorka, 2017: 125-130).

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue analyzes the importance of the romance factor as one of the motives that makes young women join terrorist organizations. In 2013, in the context of the conflict in Syria and Iraq, the situation with the role of women changed. The first cases were reported where women were motivated by their husbands or relatives to join terrorist organizations after being recruited and radicalized normally through ISIS-related social networks. According to the testimonies of their families, they were seduced by the romantic version of life in the caliphate, not that they joined with the intention of forming the front line (Sorka, 2017: 128-129).

In the recruitment process, women play a very important role in recruiting other women. As Ramachandran says, terrorist groups have capitalized on the " martyrdom" of female suicide bombers through the expanded use of propaganda, gaining more attention and publicity for their cause (Sorka, 2017: 128-129). As Caroline Hoyle points out , it is important to recognize the great threat posed by women's presence online. Perhaps the greatest risk is precisely the fact that they may inspire other men and women to carry out attacks in Western countries or to travel to Syria and Iraq. Female ISIS recruiters on their social media publicly encourage other women to join them, offering advice on how they can cross the lines to get there, and most importantly how they can overcome the roadblocks their families, what clothes to bring with them so as not to be suspected at border crossings, and, most importantly, what they can expect upon their arrival (Carolyn et al, 2015: 33-34), often offering utopian views of life in those countries.

While more general advice is often contained in blog posts or public responses on sites like ask.fm, many of the female recruiters encourage those considering the trip to contact them directly through private messaging apps and direct messages (Carolyn et al, 2015: 33-34).

Conclusion

Violent extremist and terrorist groups use the possibilities offered by video games, for example, they change the characters and the environment in the game in order to simulate a certain terrain, or they put an image of real people on which they express their revolt and anger. This may cause interest among gamers to undertake extremist and terrorist activities. For example, ISIS used video clips from Grand Theft Auto V (GTA V) and advertised similar actions as in the game, thus offering a realistic version of the game. Also, this game has often been used by right-wing terrorists to run over and kill people of the black race.

Chat features in video games also give extremist groups the opportunity to communicate with gamers and lure vulnerable individuals into the group's activities. An example is the case of the 2019 terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand. Over 4,000 people managed to view the video before it was deleted, the perpetrator's manifesto contained abundant references to video games and gaming culture, and the attack itself mimicked first-person shooter games. The gamification of terrorist attacks has since been imitated in other far-right attacks.

Children can be especially victims of terrorist activities because they are the biggest users of these video games, and they are at a stage where they are building their thoughts

and are an easy target for emotional manipulation, especially if they are going through a certain period of emotional crisis. Recruiters can offer them a sense of belonging, community or identity, which can be attractive, especially if someone is facing a challenge in their life.

In the end, we will state that, despite the enormous sums allocated for the fight against terrorism, they still did not bear much fruit, because the fight in the internet space was left out. Even if all but one terrorist is killed (hypothetically), new waves of terrorists will reappear. Namely, terrorists are a product of their time. The adoption of restrictive measures, conditionally speaking the expulsion of terrorists from the surface of the internet and social media (especially the big platforms), is now creating a new wave of terrorist activities, moving them to the dark side of the internet and using video games to recruit new members.

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