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PART III



How to spot a terrorist, according to US airport security

By Oliver Smith

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travelnews/11503843/How-to-spot-a-terrorist-according-to-US-airport-security.html>

Excessive yawning, strong body odor and arrogance are among the suspicious signs that US airport staff are trained to associate with potential terrorists, a leaked document has revealed (in 2015).

A confidential security checklist used by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the organization in charge of airport screening in the US, was published by The Intercept.

Other warning signs, according to [the document](#), include protruding or throbbing neck arteries, whistling, excessive laughter, and "verbally expressing contempt for the screening process".

Its Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques (SPOT)

guidance, used by staff to root out potential terrorists, lists a total of 17 "stress factors", each of which are worth one point, 15 "fear factors", worth two points, and six "deception factors", worth three. If a traveler scores four or more points, they should be referred for selective screening, according to the instructions.



The 17 stress factors are:

- Arrives later for flight
- Avoids eye contact with security personnel
- Exaggerated yawning as the individual approached the screening process
- Excessive fidgeting, clock watching, head-turning, shuffling feet, leg shaking
- Excessive perspiration inconsistent with the environment
- Face pale from recent shaving of beard
- Facial flushing while undergoing screening
- Faster eye blink rate when individual requested to submit to screening procedures
- Increased breathing rate, panting
- Obvious "Adam's Apple" jump when requested to submit to screening procedures
- Protruding or beating neck arteries
- Repetitive touching of face
- Rubbing or wringing of hands
- Strong body odor

- Sweaty palms
- Trembling
- Whistling as the individual approaches the screening process

The 15 fear factors are:

- Bag appears to be heavier than expected or does not suit the individual's appearance
- Bulges in clothing
- Cold penetrating stare
- Constantly looking at other travelers or associates
- Exaggerated emotions or inappropriate behavior such as crying, excessive laughter or chatter
- Exaggerated, repetitive grooming gestures
- Hesitation/indecision on entering checkpoint
- Individuals who are seemingly unrelated but display identical dress or luggage



- Powerful grip of a bag or hand inside the bag
- Rigid posture, minimal body movements with arms close to side
- Scans area, appearing to look for security personnel
- Shows unusual interest in security officers and their work routine
- Displays arrogance and verbally expresses contempt for the screening process
- Wearing improper attire for location
- Widely open staring eyes

And the six deceptions factors are:

- Appears to be confused or disoriented
- Appears to be in disguise
- Asks security-related questions
- Does not respond to authoritative commands
- Maintains covert ties with others
- Repeatedly pats upper body with hands

Points can also be deducted should certain observations make an individual less likely to be a terrorist in the opinion of the TSA. They include being an “apparent married couple with

both spouses over 55 years old”, a female over 55 years old, or a male over 65 years old.

According to the Intercept, the document is not classified but has not been previously released to the public. A source “concerned about the quality” of the official guidance sent the website a copy.

Nick Trend, Telegraph Travel’s consumer editor, also expressed doubts about the advice. “Given the stresses involved with negotiating immigration and security at most major US airports, it would be a challenge for travelers not to display several of these indicators,” he said. “I’m pretty sure the arteries on my neck were protruding the last time I queued to get through JFK.

“Trembling and sweaty palms could simply be a sign that you’re a nervous flier.”

The TSA responded to The Intercept in a statement.

“Behavior detection, which is just one element of the Transportation Security Administration’s efforts to mitigate threats against the travelling public, is vital to TSA’s layered approach to deter, detect and disrupt individuals who pose a threat to aviation,” it said.

Confessions of an airport security worker

By Oliver Smith

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travelnews/10619017/Confessions-of-an-airport-security-worker.html>

A former US airport security worker has confirmed the suspicions of many fliers by admitting that staff will often laugh and gawk at the images of naked passengers that appear



on full body scanners.

In a candid confession for the website Politico, Jason Harrington, a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officer from 2007 until

2013, also alleged that passengers were – until 2010 – profiled based on their nationality, and said that he and fellow staff accept that many measures are unnecessary and ineffective.

“The [full-body scanners] were good at detecting just about everything besides cleverly hidden explosives and guns,” wrote Mr Harrington. “Many of the images we gawked at were of overweight people, their every fold and dimple on full awful display. Piercings of every kind were visible. Women who’d had mastectomies were easy to discern — their chests showed up on our screens as dull, pixelated regions.”

“Hernias appeared as bulging, blistering growths in the crotch area.

Passengers were often caught off-guard by the X-Ray scan and so materialized on-screen in



ridiculous, blurred poses—mouths agape, à la Edvard Munch. One of us in the I.O. room would occasionally identify a passenger as female, only to have the officers out on the checkpoint floor radio back that it was actually a man. All the old, crass stereotypes about race and genitalia size thrived on our secure government radio channels.”

He went on to explain that technological changes eventually made the images less revealing, and discusses how – in March 2012 – a blogger named Jonathan Corbett demonstrated in a YouTube video how the scanners could not detect metal objects, such as a gun.

Another issue Mr. Harrington looks at was the confiscation of seemingly innocuous items from passengers, and intimate pat-downs.

“I hated it from the beginning,” he said. “It was a job that had me patting down the crotches of children, the elderly and even infants as part of the post-9/11 airport security show. I confiscated jars of homemade apple butter on the pretense that they could pose threats to national security. I was even required to confiscate nail clippers from airline pilots — the implied logic being that pilots could use the nail clippers to hijack the very planes they were flying.

“Once, in 2008, I had to confiscate a bottle of alcohol from a group of Marines coming home from Afghanistan. It was celebration champagne intended for one of the men in the group—a young, decorated soldier. He was in a wheelchair, both legs lost to an I.E.D., and it fell to me to tell this kid who would never walk again that his homecoming champagne had to be taken away in the name of national security.”

Mr Harrington – who is writing a book about his experiences, and who also writes a blog called Taking Sense Away – later alleged on Twitter that airport employees would “often drink those bottles of alcohol you surrender at the checkpoint”.

He also confirmed that passengers from 12 nations – Syria, Algeria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Cuba, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and North Korea – were, until 2010, automatically given enhanced screening,

meaning they were “pulled aside for full-body pat-downs and had their luggage examined with a fine-toothed comb”.

“Each day I had to look into the eyes of passengers in niqabs and thawbs undergoing full-body pat-downs, having been guilty of nothing besides holding passports from the wrong nations,” he added.

The TSA has issued a statement following Mr Harrington's confessions.

“Many of the TSA procedures and policies referenced in a recent opinion piece are no longer in place or are characterized inaccurately,” it says. “TSA has installed Automated Target Recognition software on every Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) unit in use, eliminating the analyzed images references in the article.” As of last summer, there were more than 700 AIT scanners in use at 165 US airports.

It added: “Every passenger deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and Transportation Security Administration policy upholds this standard. TSA does not tolerate any form of unethical or unlawful behavior by its employees and takes swift disciplinary action if discovered.”

Nigel Richardson examined the issue of airport security in Britain for Telegraph Travel last year, and found that many readers – and experts – are beginning to question the effectiveness of the measures in place.

“I’m not sure airport security has ever stopped anybody from doing anything, anywhere,” said Chris Yates, a respected consultant on international security issues.

“Some of the measures imposed upon travelers – such as the (thankfully withdrawn) ban on some sharp objects and the on/off requirement to remove shoes and belts – could be fairly described as being there for the sake of public relations. These and other such measures serve no purpose other than to increase the workload of already hard-pressed security personnel, create confusion among passengers and perpetuate a climate of fear.”

A subsequent poll of more than 3,000 readers found that 84 per cent believed airport security measures had “gone too far”, and did not make them feel any safer.

Oliver Smith is the Telegraph's Digital Travel Editor. His favorite holiday destinations are Cornwall, Greece and Italy. The best part of his job is compiling the Sign Language gallery.



'SEXUAL TERRORISM': Geert Wilders Says We Must Stop Europe's 'Testosterone Bombs'

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/01/22/geert-wilders-migrant-men-must-be-kept-off-streets-if-we-are-to-protect-our-women-and-children/>



Jan 22 – **Dutch politician Geert Wilders has called for all male asylum seekers in Europe to be kept within asylum centres to prevent Muslim "testosterone bombs" from waging "sexual jihad".**

Referencing the mass sexual attacks which have taken place in recent weeks across Europe, Mr Wilders said that European women and children would only feel safe when the Islamic asylum seekers, who come from a very different culture, are kept off the streets.

"Recently thousands of Arab men sexually attacked, humiliated and raped hundreds of women. All women are fair game," he said, in a video posted to YouTube. "I called the perpetrators "testosterone bombs". We have seen what they are capable of. It's sexual terrorism – a sexual jihad, and it is happening all over Europe.

"Everywhere we are now confronting a rape epidemic," he continued. "And in many countries, the authorities tried to keep the terrible news hidden, but they no longer succeed in doing so. The genie is out of the bottle."

According to the Gatestone Institute, the rape of German women by migrant men has already

become "commonplace". They highlight a number of cases, including the rape of a 16 year old girl in Bavaria, to which police responded by warning parents not to let their children out unaccompanied, and a rape which occurred in June but was not mentioned by the police for three months for fear of giving "legitimacy to critics of mass migration".

The German police also tried to suppress reports of the **'taharrush' attack** in Cologne on New Year's Eve, and were only thwarted thanks to multiple reports on social media.

Similarly, the Austrian Police allegedly deliberately covered up sex attacks in Salzburg on New Years Eve; after victims came forward to the local press, the police claimed that they had stayed silent to protect the victims.

Meanwhile the Swedish police and media have been accused of covering up a series of attacks over the last two years, which occurred at a popular music festival for young people in Stockholm. 38 reports of rape and sexual assault were made at the festival in 2014 and 2015, yet the Police's report announced that the festival had passed off peacefully and without incident.



And in Finland a huge debate has been raging after the police reported that a 15 year old girl had been raped by two ethnic Finnish men, despite her reporting that she had been attacked by migrants. The authorities are now offering migrants voluntary courses on Finnish culture in the hope that they will leave their old ways behind.

In light of this "rape epidemic", Mr. Wilders said the people of Europe "are right to be angry and afraid," as they question their ongoing safety.

"Horrible mass assaults such as the one in Cologne can also happen here in the Netherlands, and it's time to finally face the truth," he said.

"The perpetrators come from a culture where women are inferior beings. A culture of honor killings and humiliation of women. A culture established by a so-called prophet who had sex slaves and raped a nine year old girl called Aisha.

"It's time to face that truth about Islam as well, and anyone, *anyone* who looks away is guilty."

Mr. Wilders urges concerned citizens to turn away from pro-immigration politicians who "rolled out the red carpet for these testosterone bombs", and are therefore partly to blame for the crisis.

His party, the Party for Freedom "is very clear," he says. "We have to close our borders to all asylum seekers and all immigrants from Islamic countries.

"But as long as this does not happen; as long as our women are endangered by the Islamic testosterone bombs, I propose that we lock the male asylum seekers up in the asylum centers.

"For them, the asylum centers have to be closed institutions, so that not a single male asylum seeker can still go on the streets and our women finally are protected."

Taharrush jamā'ī (Arabic: *تحرش جماعي*; Egyptian pronunciation *taharrush gamā'ī*; *taharrush* means "harassment" and *jamā'ī* "collective") is the sexual assault of women in public spaces by large groups of men. The term gained prominence in 2016, transliterated as **taharrush gamea** by the media following a German government report, after several such attacks in German cities on New Year's Eve.

Before 2006 the term *taharrush* (Arabic: *تحرش*) referred mainly to the sexual abuse of children. During the Egyptian constitutional referendum in May 2005, on what became known as "Black Wednesday," women demonstrators were sexually assaulted by police and agents provocateurs (*baltigiyya*). *Al-Nabā News* referred to the attacks interchangeably as *taharrush* and *h[a]tk 'ird* (Arabic: *هتك عرض*; rape or indecent assault).

According to Amnesty International, women in Egypt say the attacks last from a few minutes to over an hour. The men are usually in their 20s and 30s. Victims have been aged seven to 70, and have included women wearing full-face veils (the niqab).

Separated from her friends by the crowd, or out alone, the woman finds herself encircled by a large group of men who grope her breasts, genitals and buttocks. Her hair is pulled, attempts are made to pull her clothes off, and her body is pulled in different directions. Attackers have used sticks, knives and blades, and in several cases sharp objects have been inserted into the victim's vagina.

Perpetrators regularly claim to be helping the women when in fact they are attacking them, which increases the difficulty for rescuers. The women may try to fight people coming to their assistance, not knowing who to trust. People genuinely trying to help can find themselves being beaten and sexually assaulted too. Volunteer groups in Cairo, including OpAntiSH (Operation Anti Sexual Harassment), organize "extraction teams" who push into the circles wearing padded clothing, helmets and gloves, and get the women out. Other OpAntiSH teams carry spare clothes and medical supplies, operate a hotline so that the extraction teams know where to go, and offer counselling and legal and medical help. They were called to 19 incidents on 25 January 2013 alone, and were able to respond to 15 of them.

Rescuers have described how assailants have set up makeshift tea stands in the crowd; in one case boiling water from a tea stand was thrown over rescuers who had formed a protective ring around a woman. During an attack in Cairo in 2013, the attackers allowed an ambulance to reach the woman only when the driver told them she was dead.



ISIS terror nuts vow to 'unleash attacks in Spain' with millions of holiday Brits at risk

Source: <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/489346/ISIS-Islamic-State-terror-threat-Spain-travel-advice>



Jan 22 – ISIS has threatened to launch deadly terror attacks in Spain – following stark government warnings holiday Brits there are top targets.

The sick group's latest propaganda video features an ancient map of the Iberian Peninsula slowly turning to red.

Then a militant warns ISIS will "recover our land from the invaders" in reference to the collapse of Islamic rule in Spain.

Millions of sun-seeking Brits travel to Spain every year, with Majorca, Tenerife and Ibiza the most



popular destinations.



There has been a surge in Brits booking holidays to Spain after ruling out terror-hit Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey. But the Foreign Office still warns of a "high terrorist" threat to Britons travelling to sunny Spain, with an estimated 12 million visiting the country every year.



TURNING RED: The video showed ISIS reclaiming Spain. The clip comes just two months after Madrid police arrested three people suspected of links to ISIS, also known as Daesh.

The Moroccan suspects, who haven't been named, were reportedly planning to carry out terror attacks in the country.

More than 100 people from Spain are feared to have travelled to join the so-called caliphate in war-torn Syria and Iraq.

Thirty Brits were gunned down on a beach in Sousse, Tunisia last summer by an Islamic extremist.

Daily Star Online warned last summer that Brits visiting the Costa Brava, Costa Blanca and the Costa del Sol were prime targets for ISIS terrorists.

The Foreign Office warns Brits travelling to Spain to be "vigilant".

A spokesman said: "There is a high threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by foreigners.

"The Spanish authorities take measures to protect visitors, but you should be vigilant and follow the instructions of the local authorities."

Female jihadi in Paris attacks died of 'asphyxiation', say prosecutors - as her family sue French police claiming she was murdered by police

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3409970/Family-Paris-massacre-jihadi-sues-French-police-claiming-victim-attacks-killed-130.html>

Jan 22 – **French prosecutors today said a female jihadi who was killed in a police raid after the Paris attacks died of asphyxiation - however her family claim she was murdered.**

Hasna Aitboulahcen, 26, died in a Saint-Denis apartment alongside Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the ringleader of the attacks.

Prosecutors said she died of asphyxiation after another fanatic's suicide vest was detonated.

But her family's lawyer Fabien N'Doumou said she may have been shot by police.

Today the families of Boulahcen and Tarek Belgacem, who was in his 30s, began legal proceedings against the police claiming their loved ones were not carrying weapons when they were 'murdered' by officers.

Aitboulahcen died five days after the November 13 Islamic State terror attacks on Paris, in which 130 innocent people were killed.

She was in a hideout in the northern suburb of St Denis, when thousands of rounds of gunfire



were poured inside by police commandos. Aitboulahcen died alongside her cousin Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the Belgian-Moroccan ringleader of the attacks, and Chakib Akrouh, another suspected terrorist.

But Aitboulahcen's family believe she was innocent of any wrongdoing, and should have been given the chance to give herself up.

Fabien Ndoumou, lawyer for her family, said: 'I consider that Hasna Aitboulahcen is a victim.

'She was under pressure from her cousin who threatened her family and the families of her friends.'

Aitboulahcen's mother, sister and brother have filed a complaint against persons unknown for terrorism and murder on January 13 with Paris anti-terrorist judge Christophe Teissier.

The same kind of complaint has also been filed by the father of Belgacem, who was shot by police outside a Paris police station on January 7.



He allegedly approached police with a meat cleaver and was wearing a fake suicide bomb vest, while shouted 'Allahu Akbar'.

But his family said many of these details were fabricated by the police, and point to the fact that detectives refuse to release video of what really happened.

Police said they found a handwritten note on Belgacem's body in which he pledged allegiance to ISIS, but his father, Taoufik Belgacem, said this was planted.

Mr Belgacem said his son was 'normal, like all young people, a good person', and said complaint of manslaughter had been lodged against the policeman who shot him dead.

He added: 'They could have fired at him without killing him.' Police have, in turn, denied any wrongdoing and indicated they would contest the complaints.

ISIS declares war on...Muslims: Latest edition of terror group's magazine calls for Shiites to be targeted

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2016/01/isis-declares-war-onmuslims-latest.html>

Jan 22 – ISIS has used the latest issue of its online magazine Dabiq to declare an all-out war on fellow Muslims.

The Sunni terror group dedicates much of the 56-page propaganda publication to justifying the killing of Shia Muslims, who it claims are apostates to the Sunni majority.

Although not the first time ISIS has called for the killing of Shia Muslims, the magazine makes it clear that ISIS is calling for a concerted effort to wipe out the Shiite population of the Middle East.

The magazine, the **13th issue of Dabiq**, is entitled: 'The Rafidah: From Ibn Saba' to the Dajjal'. The word 'rafidah' is a derogatory term for Shiite Muslims and can be translated as 'rejecters'.

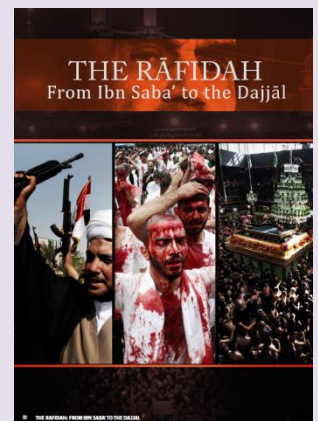
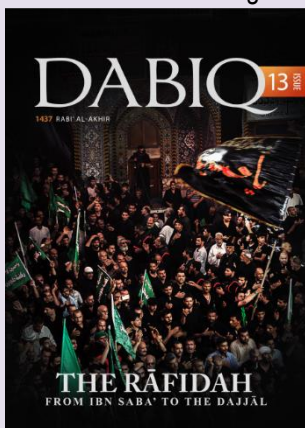
It contains pages of violent

rhetoric directed against Shiites, which it refers to as 'the followers of deviant desires'.

'Some of them are Jews who fake Islam to spread their deviance, just as Paul of the Jews faked Christianity to spread his deviance,' it reads, quoting the Tābi'ī ash-Sha'bī who died in 104AH [719AD].

'The Rafidah hate Islam just as the Jews hate Christianity. They did not enter Islam longing for Allah or fearing Him, rather out of spite for the people of Islam and so as to inflict harm upon them.'

It continues: 'The Jews and the Rafidah are two sides of the same coin.'



'Our condition dictates that we deal with the matter with courage and clarity and endeavor for a solution... The solution as we believe, and Allah knows best, is to expose the Rafidah...to fight them and stop them,' it continues.

The propaganda magazine claims the minority Shiites have 'declared a hidden war against the Muslims'.

'Even though the Americans are also a major enemy, the Rafidah are more severely dangerous and more murderous...than the Americans,' it adds.

'They took the Americans as allies, supported them, stood in their ranks in the face of the mujahidin [jihadists], and sacrificed and continue to sacrifice for the Americans everything precious so as to end jihad and the mujahidin.'

Although ISIS has been slaughtering and torturing Shiite Muslims throughout its reign of terror in the Middle East, this is one of the most explicit calls for the Shiite branch of Islam to be destroyed.

As ISIS took vast swathes of western and northern Iraq throughout the summer of 2014, there were frequent reports of fighters' capturing groups and releasing the Sunnis while singling out the Shias for execution.

The latest issue of the magazine also praises the December 2 terrorist attack launched in San Bernardino, California.

It claims the couple demonstrated Muslims' willingness to make sacrifice for the sake of 'fulfilling their duty to Allah'.

'On this particular occasion the attack was unique,' it reads. 'The mujahid [jihadist] involved did not suffice with embarking upon

This is a reality of which there is no doubt. The Jews and the Rafidah are two sides of the same coin. The religion of Rafid ("Shiism") was nothing but a plot by a Jew – Ibn Saba' – following the footsteps of his Jewish predecessor Paul, who had corrupted the pure religion of the Messiah ﷺ, leaving the Christians upon the Pauline deviance and heresies of the cross, original sin, incarnation, atonement, the lordship, divine sonhood, and godhead of the Messiah, and antinomianism (abandonment of the Law of Mūsā ﷺ).

the noble path of jihad alone. Rather, he conducted the operation together with his wife, with the two thereby aiding one another in righteousness.'

The magazine also published an obituary for British fighter Mohammed Emwazi - also known as Jihadi John - saying that he had been killed in November by a drone strike in the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa, in Syria.

It reported how, on his last attempt to leave the UK for Kuwait, Emwazi was stopped at the airport and kept for questioning by MI5.

It says he 'presented himself as unintelligent, as was his method when dealing with intelligence agencies', and thereby escaped by tricking MI5.

He later became known as the balaclava-clad executioner who appeared in a string of videos showing the beheadings of Western hostages.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUNNI AND SHIITE BRANCHES OF ISLAM?

The two main branches of Islam disagree over who should succeed the Prophet Mohammed, who died in 632.

Some felt his successor should be chosen from among his followers, while others – the 'Shiite Ali' or Partisans of Ali – believed the position should stay within the prophet's family and that Mohammed had backed his cousin Ali for the post.

Shiite Muslims hold all of the prophet's family, and particularly Ali and his sons Hassan and Hussein, in high esteem.

The two branches share many practices and beliefs, including the so-called five pillars of Islam that encompass fundamentals such as five daily prayers and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Shiite Muslims, however, consider Ali to be the first of a series of imams, who are successors to the prophet and provide models and guidance for the faithful.

Shiites believe in an unbroken line of 12 imams who succeeded the prophet, beginning with Ali, and that the twelfth imam is in occultation but will return to restore justice on earth before the Day of Judgment.



While Sunni Muslims deem the four men who succeeded Mohammed to be the "rightly guided" caliphs, they do not place any particular significance on the religious practices of the leaders who came after them.

According to a 2015 study by the Pew Forum, there are just under 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide. Sunnis are generally thought to constitute up to 90 per cent of the population of Muslims, with the rest divided between different Shiite branches.

Iran is traditionally regarded as the most powerful and important Shiite-majority country in the world, with Shiites also forming a majority in the neighboring Iraq and Bahrain.

Despite being in the minority in Syria, Shiites are also powerful there, too. President Bashar al-Assad's ruling party belongs to a Shia sect called the Alawites.

Germans must ban ALCOHOL if they want to prevent further sex attacks and help North Africans integrate, says Muslim group

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3411641/Germans-ban-ALCOHOL-want-prevent-sex-attacks-help-North-Africans-integrate-says-Muslim-group.html>

Jan 22 – **Germany needs to ban alcohol if it wants to prevent further sexual violence and to help North African migrants integrate into society, a Muslim pressure group has claimed.**

Commenting on the Cologne sex-attack controversy, **MuslimStern**, which has 20,000 followers on Facebook, said its mission was to 'highlight the way the media was using the incidents to promote racism against minorities'.

The group complained that the female victims had brought the unwanted attention to themselves by dressing in a manner that North African men were not accustomed to.

The group claimed:

'You cannot expect to chuck a naked antelope in front of a lion and not expect it to react. It is mind boggling that with so much time spent teaching children about sex at school, they completely forget to pass on this basic biological fact.'

As a consequence of the attacks, they urged the German government to introduce a ban across the country on the consumption of alcohol.

The group also blamed women for getting attacked by inciting the young men.

In one section of the Facebook post, which has since been deleted, the group claims: 'Some women should think about whether it is wise to

lightly dressed and drunk, to go between hordes of drunken men.

'In general, the woman wearing due to their nature have a responsibility when it goes out of the house.

'You cannot throw a naked antelope from a lion and expect that at the lion stirs nothing.

'It is amazing that is taught in biology class so



much about the mating and sexual behavior of living things, but these rules are completely ignored in everyday life.

'And because many non-Muslims constantly emphasise that we live in a Christian country, we call on you, in this country that women should dress Christian.

'Mary, Mother of Jesus, lived out as a Christian woman has to dress. So it would be highly recommended for some women to take Mary as a role model and not Lady Gaga.'

More than 520 women have reported assaults from New Year's Eve with at least three



rapes which have been blamed on Muslim migrants who congregated around Cologne's cathedral during the night.

Cologne's Muslim preacher Imam Sami Abu-Yusuf, who blamed women wearing perfume for the fact they were assaulted over the New Year, went on to justify it by saying that alcohol had taken away the restrictions of 'men from North Africa'.

He also added that the sex attackers were 'from North Africa', unlike Salafists like himself who are mostly from India and the Middle East.

Mr Yusuf had earlier told Russian TV women only had themselves to blame for being assaulted because of the way they dressed. When asked why the attacks had happened he told REN TV: 'One of the reasons is the way the women were dressed. If they just wear light clothing and put on perfume, then things like this will happen.'

After the comments local Green MP Volker Beck complained to police about the comments saying it was incitement to carry out crime.

As the controversy raged over the remarks, a reporter from the Cologne Express asked him to qualify his statements, and reported that he laughed when asked if he really believed that women were responsible for the attacks they suffered.

He told the Express: 'My reply was taken out of context. What I said was that we have a real

problem with men from North Africa living in Cologne. These young men take tablets and drugs, and over New Year they took alcohol which took away all the barriers.'

Asked if that was the reason he was saying the women were attacked, he said: 'No, that is of course forbidden and not only for Muslims. But there were women with very open clothing and they were wearing perfume, and at the same time while walking through the drunken masses, of course for these North African men, that was an excuse to grope them. That doesn't mean to say that I believe women cannot be dressed like this. Everyone has to accept that.' However as the controversy grows, German security experts have admitted that they had the mosque where he preaches under surveillance for more than a decade, including a raid in 2004 over suspicions that it was at the heart of a secret network of Arabic mujahedeen.

However they failed to come up with any concrete evidence of terrorist attacks that were planned. It has also been confirmed that he is regarded as Salafist extremist orientated on Wahhabism, which is the stricter Saudi Arabian form of Islam.

German FDP-Politician Tobias said: 'His statements are typical thinking for a Salafist. Not just he but other Salafists and Salafists on online platforms have justified the rape of women in the same way.'

EDITOR'S COMMENT: As part of the transformation of European societies into societies where Islam will have the first place, the design is to create the conditions that will initially cause the common feeling and then propose ways to find necessary "solutions". It was originally the "solutions" that proposed to look like and be extravagant and discarded immediately but the water will "get into the groove." In this context, Muslims will require continuity from now on the transformation of European societies in the standards of Islam in order to avoid cases of "bad interpretation of cultural differences." Such solutions may now easily discarded but the principle has already been done. The rest will come with time.



Hotel security – We have to do better

By Mac Segal

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hotel-security-we-have-do-better-mac-segal>

Jan 16 – **We have all failed. The security industry has failed the hotel sector by not being able to convince them to introduce the necessary measures to mitigate, contain**

and control armed assaults on hotels.

The hotel industry has failed its guests and employees by not providing effective protection against these attacks.

Albert Einstein said that the definition of insanity is



repeating exactly the same action over and over again, expecting a different result. Is this not what we are doing in hotel security? Terror attacks are happening one after the other with an astounding and disturbing success rate and yet the required shift in the hotel security paradigm is conspicuously dormant.

I apologize if I am sounding like a broken record and have no intention of regurgitating the contents of the articles we have published over the last few months discussing the terror threat to hotels and what is required to prevent and contain them. I have no intention of laying the blame at anyone's feet but our own. The hotel security personnel are certainly not to blame and the cameras, metal detectors and walls have no protection to offer in the face of armed gunmen.

I just read an article stating that the Egyptian authorities, in light of the recent attack in Hurghada have announced that they are investing in hotel security in order to ensure tourists safety. I quote;

"Egypt to spend £26m on X-ray machines and CCTV cameras at tourist resorts. New X-ray machines, sniffer dogs and CCTV cameras in

resorts will not have 'army field' atmosphere, insists minister, as Egypt urges UK government to restart flights to Sharm el-Sheikh."

These are massively misguided good intentions from the Egyptian authorities. The attacks we are witnessing are brazen, frontal and tremendously violent. **The terrorists are not attempting to sneak weapons or explosives into hotels they are simply shooting and blasting their way in. X-ray machines, cameras and sniffer dogs have a zero benefit factor in stopping such attacks.**

There are effective measures that can and desperately need to be implemented but these, to be sure, are not them. I am not discounting the need for technological security measures but they are not the answer to this particular threat.

We are witnessing a vicious cycle of self-fulfilling violence. With each armed assault on a hotel that succeeds, it encourages the hostile forces to start planning the next one which unless we all do the necessary, it too will tragically succeed. I call on all of us to step up and do what is needed before any more lives are lost.



Mac Segal is Senior Consultant, Global Hotel & Fixed Site Security Division at AS Solution

Terror dampens vital tourism to parts of North Africa

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35342281>

Jan 18 – Attacks by the Islamic State group have led to a dramatic fall in tourism in parts of North Africa, where millions rely on the trade to make a living.

New figures from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) show that visits to North Africa fell by 8% in 2015, bucking a global upward trend.

International tourism grew by 4.4% overall, to reach a total of 1.18bn arrivals, according to the UNWTO.

But countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco have been hit hard.

Beach resorts such as Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, where a passenger jet was loaded with a bomb in November, and Sousse in Tunisia, where gunmen opened fire at holidaymakers in

June, have seen visitor numbers sharply decline.

Some 3,500 British tourists left **Tunisia** in the days after the Sousse attack, in which 38 people - 30 of them British - were shot by Islamist gunman at the Port El Kantaoui resort.

Tunisia was still reeling from an attack in March, when gunmen killed 22 people at the Bardo museum in Tunis, mostly European tourists. And the country was a whole was still attempting to reinvigorate tourism following the Arab Spring.

Egypt was also trying to rehabilitate its image after the 2011 uprising there, and had been promoting the Sharm el-Sheikh resort as a safe and luxurious destination. But the



plane crash, which killed 148 people and was attributed to IS, led a number of foreign countries to ground all flights to and from the resort.

Morocco has not suffered directly from terrorism, but the Foreign Office does warn potential travelers that they face "a high threat from terrorism" in the country.

Limited data available for Africa as a whole suggested that tourism was down by 3% to 53m - 8% in North Africa and 1% in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Strong continued growth in other parts of the world meant that global tourism rose, although no individual region saw gains as high as North Africa's decline.

Europe, the Americas, and Asia and the Pacific all recorded about 5% growth. Arrivals reached

609 million in Europe, 29 million more than in 2014. Arrivals in the Americas grew 9 million to 191 million and Asia and the Pacific recorded 277 million, 13 million more than last year.

Arrivals to the Middle East increased by 3% to a total of 54 million.

China is among the largest sources of tourists, according to the UNWTO, benefitting Asian destinations such as Japan and Thailand, as well as the United States and various European countries.

The number of tourists from Russian and Brazil declined significantly, reflecting the economic constraints in both countries.

Citing a "larger degree of uncertainty and volatility", the UNWTO has predicted between 3.5% and 4.5% of growth in global tourism in 2016.

'Does Islam teach you to hurt your parents?'

Source: <http://www.rediff.com/news/special/does-islam-teach-you-to-hurt-your-parents/20160111.htm>

Jan 23 – Wajid Shaikh is one of the four young men from the northwest Mumbai suburb of Malvani who was picked by the Maharashtra Anti Terrorist Squad on suspicion that he was on his way to join Islamic State/Da'esh.



Shaikh is currently being interrogated by the ATS on a daily basis -- he reaches the Charkop police station in northwest Mumbai at 9.30 am. The ATS

drops him home by 10.30 pm; this has been his routine since he was arrested in Pune on December 22, 2015.

He may have presumably revealed how he and his friends Noor Mohammad and Mohsin Sayyed were planning to join Ayaz Sultan on their way to being recruited by Islamic State/Da'esh after being brainwashed through social media, videos and jihadi literature allegedly provided by Ayaz Sultan.

While newspaper reports based on the ATS's interrogation have revealed much about how the four friends were being beguiled online to join Da'esh, based on transcripts of Wajid Shaikh's video -- three of them seen twice by Prasanna D Zore/**Rediff.com** and then transcribed -- Shaikh narrates what he told the ATS after his arrest on the evening of December 22 when he was returning from Chennai, via Bengaluru, to Pune.

This transcript provides details of how Shaikh and his friends left Malvani and traces their journey to Hospet to Hyderabad to Chennai to Bengaluru to Pune and then finally to Mumbai where they were detained by the ATS.

This transcript reveals, interestingly, how the ATS is helping Wajid Shaikh's rehabilitation, if one can call it that.

This report was transcribed after seeing three separate videos -- not done in the ATS' custody -- of 12.11 minutes, 1.25 minutes and 5.40 minutes duration in which Wajid Shaikh speaks about what happened.

On his interrogation by the ATS

The ATS asked who used to brainwash me (*for jihad*). They also asked me since when I start visiting this masjid.

Who told you about ISIS and jihad?

I told the ATS that we came to know about jihad from a WhatsApp group. Abdul Fahim, Viqar, Yusuf, Arshad and Moin (*perhaps the names of young men from the mosque where*



Ayaz, Mohsin, Noor Mohammad and Wajid visited to offer prayers) too were part of this group and we used to meet during prayers and discuss these (*jihad*) things.

Apart from the WhatsApp group we would also listen to videos and lectures of jihadists and search YouTube for videos of Abu Bakr (the caliph of Da'esh) and other ISIS leaders.

When I joined the masjid as a new entrant we would offer prayers.

When we met Ayaz (*Sultan, who has reportedly fled to Afghanistan from India and who has been missing from Malvani since October 30, 2015*) he told us about ISIS and we decided *kuch karna chahiye* (*we should do something*).

Once when Ayaz fell ill we began to go to his house and then we all got very close. He used to show us videos (*of ISIS, perhaps*) and he asked us all that we should go out (*of India for jihad*) but I told him I don't have a passport.

Ayaz's mother thought something was fishy and asked him what was going on in his life.

Ayaz had taken Rs 2 lakh (*Rs 200,000*) from his mother to start a business. He was planning something, but his plan was cancelled.

He went to Kashmir and from there to Delhi and when he came back home he had spent half the amount.

Ayaz's father is a Pakistani. His mother suspected that Ayaz might go to Pakistan to meet his father.

Ayaz's passport was confiscated by the Indian Army in Kashmir. When he came back he convinced his sister that he would start afresh, who in turn convinced her mother to trust Ayaz and told her that he would mend his ways (*the video doesn't describe when these incidents took place in Ayaz's life*).

Ayaz and Moin would often fast (*keep roza*) on some days, offer prayers and then discuss (*Islam*) among ourselves. There was Moin, Tabish, Fahad and Moin's two nephews Afzal and Imran (*during these meetings*).

Then we would engage in a *khutba* (*religious sermons*), offer prayers, break our fasts by eating *sheer kurma* and go back to our homes.

When Ayaz first went to Delhi (*or Kashmir?*), his mother had come here asking about his whereabouts. Then when he went missing again (*on October 30*) his brother and sister too came to us asking about Ayaz's whereabouts.

I had sent him a message asking where he was and informing him that his family were worried about his well-being.

I also took Ayaz's brother to Mohsin (*Sayyed, the third boy who fled Malvani on December 15 along with Noor Mohammad and Wajid Shaikh*). Mohsin told Ayaz's brother that he had borrowed Rs 10,000 from him.

Later Ayaz had called Mohsin and promised to return his money to him. After Ayaz left he was in touch with Mohsin and informed him that he was in Afghanistan.

I also spoke to him (*Ayaz*), did *salaam-dua* (*greeted each other*) and told him I was also in the process of getting a passport.

I told one of the chaps at the mosque about this. He mentioned this to the trustee of the mosque, who in turn decided that the names of eight boys should be given to the CBI (*perhaps, Wajid means the local police or the ATS here*).

Once Mohsin also told us that one auto driver, who was his friend, told him that four people in his (*Mohsin's friend's*) auto, along with four people on two motorcycles were following the auto that was ferrying Mohsin.

Mohsin would often speak with some people on the phone and was planning to leave (*India*). We also wanted to go, but we did not have passports.

Then Mohsin, who was afraid that the CBI (*the local police or the ATS*) was on his trail, suggested that this group leave without their passports because he feared the CBI (*the local police or the ATS*) would arrest him soon.

Mohsin said he would tell them soon when and where to go after leaving Malvani. Mohsin said, '*ab yahan rukna theek nahi* (*it will not be prudent to continue staying in Malvani anymore*).'

Before leaving Malvani, I purchased two SIM cards on a fake identity. I gave those SIM cards to Mohsin. Then we sold our old mobiles and bought new ones, recharged them online by making fake identities.



But when Mohsin sent a message from the new phone to his contact (*this contact could perhaps be Ayaz Sultan, but the video doesn't name Ayaz specifically as Mohsin's contact*), he didn't reply.

From Malvani to Hospet to Hyderabad to Chennai to Mumbai

Mohsin said it was getting riskier to stay back and told us his plan was to take us to Harihar in South India where he knew some people.

When we went to Harihar, he introduced us (*Noor and I*) as recent converts to Islam to a person there named Nazir. About me, he said my Hindu name was Amit and after converting to Islam my name was Abdul Wajid. We spoke with Nazir and decided that we would spend that night at a hotel. Nazir insisted we stay at his place as it was just a matter of spending one night.

Next morning we left for Hospet, but instead of going there we went to Devanagari (*this could perhaps be Davangere and not Devanagari, which is closer to Bengaluru, but Wajid calls it Devanagari*) and from there to Hubli since he (*Mohsin's contact, perhaps Ayaz*) had not yet contacted (*Mohsin*). So, we decided to go to Hyderabad by train.

We reached Hyderabad on Friday morning (*December 18; these three had left home on December 15 and a missing person's complaint had been lodged at the Malvani police station on the intervening night of December 15 and 16*) and (*Mohsin*) asked for further instructions (*from his contact*). But he (*the contact*) said he will let him know later.

We stayed at a lodge in Hyderabad, visited Charminar, offered *namaaz* at the Mecca Masjid and in the evening we decided to change our lodge.

The lodge we went to did not have clean toilets, so we went to another hotel (*in Hyderabad*).

Next evening (*December 19*) we bought train tickets for Chennai and boarded the train at 8.30 pm. We reached Chennai at around 1-1.30 pm (*on December 20*).

After roaming around Chennai Central for some time we booked ourselves in a hotel named Khaja and stayed at the same lodge.

Next day (*December 21*), early morning on Monday I saw my photo, Ayaz's and Mohsin's photos being flashed on TV, but they made no mention of Noor Mohammad.

'Why should my name flash on TV? What wrong have I done?' Noor asked us.

I told them let's go home, but Mohsin objected saying they will arrest us if we went back to Malvani. I told Mohsin that they will arrest us even if we stay away from home now that our names and photographs were on TV.

Then Mohsin told me that he would come back in some time and took his mobile with him. When he came back after 10 minutes he said he will pack his bags and leave for the station (*Chennai Central*). He asked us to meet him there after checking out from the hotel. The person at the lodge went upstairs to check our room and when he came back after some time we signed and checked out.

When we reached Chennai Central, Mohsin was not there. Noor went to look out for him and came back after 10 minutes without Mohsin. After Noor came, both of us went to look out for Mohsin inside the station, but we didn't see him anywhere.

Noor then asked me for some money. I gave him Rs 5,000. He said he will come back in some time. He left at around 11.15 (*am, on the same day*). I waited for him till 1 pm and when Noor did not come back I decided to leave taking his bag (*belongings*) with me.

I boarded bus number 15 and roamed around for a while. I was hungry so I ate something and drank Maaza and then booked one ticket for Mumbai from a travel agency. He said the bus was ready to leave. I paid him Rs 2,200 for the ticket and boarded the bus at 2.45 pm.

Soon, I slept and when I woke up the bus had stopped at Bengaluru. The bus boy told me that the bus would not go to Mumbai and he said he will arrange another bus for me.

I waited for an hour. At 10.30 am (*December 22*) the bus came and I left for Mumbai.

When the bus reached Pune, the ATS caught me from inside the bus (*on Tuesday evening, December 22*).

The ATS interrogation and how they are dealing with Wajid

A good-looking, tall, fair ATS man from Pune interrogated me about when I had begun from home, who was with me and the places we had travelled after leaving home on December 15. I told him the entire story narrated above.



I still had Rs 10,125 left with me (*newspapers have reported that Wajid had sold his wife's jewelry worth Rs 18,000 while leaving Malvani*).

The (Pune) ATS gave me chicken burger to eat and water and tea to drink and then brought me to Kalachowki (*central Mumbai*).

There the ATS interrogated me, asked me the same questions the Pune ATS had asked. They took my fingerprints and photographs and then took me to the Malvani police station and closed the 'missing person' complaint filed by my wife and parents.

On Wednesday (December 23) I gave them all the details about our journey from Malvani to Pune. The very next day the ATS interrogated Moin, Tabish, Salim (*Wajid keeps changing these names in this recorded video*) and when I went to () Nagpada the next day Afzal and Imran were being interrogated there.

Ayaz's maternal uncle was present there. He had fractured his leg. The police there told me not to speak at all with the media.

The soft side of the ATS

The ATS made me see reason and advised me to walk on the righteous path.

'*Bole hamare saath cooperate karo (the ATS asked me to cooperate with them).*'

They said, '*tereke chance mila hai tere ma-baap ki dua se jo tujhe kheench ke lekar aayi hai galat raste se (you escaped from misfortune because of the blessings and prayers of your parents).*'

'You understand that you have got another chance. You cooperate with us and your life will be reformed.'

'You can stay with your parents and wife. Ask your wife for forgiveness for she has suffered a lot because of you. You abandoned her and fled home.'

'Does Islam teach you to hurt your parents and wife?' the ATS asked me.

'No,' I said.

'When you fled home your mother and father were very hurt and sad. Your family was so hurt. You should not abandon your parents. Both your father and mother are old now and don't keep well. The path you were planning to choose was wrong. The safest place in this world is India. Why do you want to waste your life? *Tereko kisi kafir ne personally torture kiya hai kya (has any kafir tortured you personally?)*'

'No,' I said.

The ATS was very nice to me when they interrogated me.

Hundreds of Islamic State Terrorists Move Into Libya

Source: <https://www.thetrumpet.com/article/13493.19.0.0/world/terrorism/hundreds-of-islamic-state-terrorists-move-into-libya>



Jan 23 – **The Islamic State is strengthening its forces in Libya. Hundreds of terrorists are coming from Syria and Iraq, plus a number of local jihadist groups who have announced their alliance to the terrorist group.**

Following the ouster of Libyan dictator Muammar Qadhafi in 2011, the nation has become the battlefield for a number of competing factions and

numerous jihadist groups. Amidst the turmoil, the Islamic State has gained control of a number of coastal cities, including Sirte, Bin Jawad and previously Derna.

Recent American intelligence identified at least 500 Islamic State terrorists moving into Libya. **A November United Nations report estimated that there are around 3,000 terrorists currently in Libya. The Libyan Center for Terrorism Studies puts that number around 10,000.**

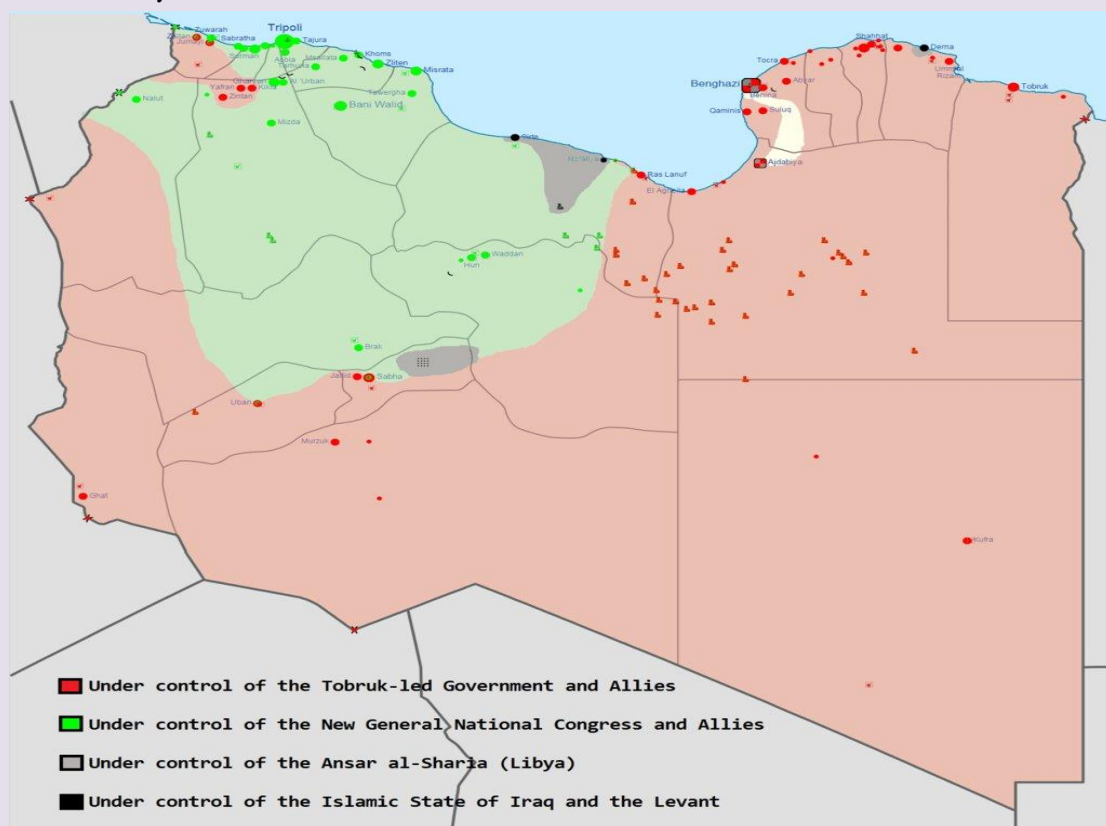


Most of the Islamic State fighters in Libya were recruited from the Ansar al-Sharia militia in early 2015. In recent weeks, two other groups switched their allegiance to the Islamic State: the Ajdabiya Revolutionaries Shura Council, in Ajdabiya, and a second terror group in Misrata.

The *Washington Free Beacon* reported that a U.S intelligence official confirmed “the [Islamic State] is expanding in Libya,” but not necessarily because “of the stepped up counterterrorism operations in Syria and Iraq.”

Libyan officials say the Islamic State has targeted oil fields around Sirte. Since the beginning of the year, two of Libya’s largest export terminals—Es Sider and Ra’s Lanuf, which handle a large portion of Libya’s oil—were attacked and set on fire.

The Islamic State could be trying to gain control of Libya’s oil as a revenue producer, which it does effectively in Syria and Iraq. Disruption of oil production throughout the country would also benefit the Islamic State. The absence of a unified government in Libya has allowed the growth of the terrorist group, and the loss of much-needed oil revenue would further weaken the two largest opposing factions in Libya.



Finances are currently not an issue for the Islamic State in Libya. The United Nations report even indicated that “members of other groups ... had switched to [the Islamic State] for financial reasons.”

Islamic State operatives are also in Benghazi and have carried out attacks in the capital city of Tripoli. European governments close to the Libyan coast have been expressing their concern. Chairman of Italy’s Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Ferdinando Casini called for military intervention to prevent the Islamic State from spreading to Tripoli.

“The more the birth of a government is delayed, the more threats will multiply. Their number will be reduced only when the government takes office,” Casini told an Italian newspaper.

In the month of Qadhafi’s death, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry predicted that Libya would come under the influence of Iran. In his article “Egypt and Libya to Join Iran’s Terror Network” he wrote:

We are rejoicing about the overthrow of Libya’s Muammar Qadhafi, while we should be mourning. Libyan chaos is now the ideal setting for Iran to bring that nation into its deadly terrorist web.



Nearly five years later, chaos still abounds and terrorism runs rampant throughout the country. Keep your eye on the developments of the Islamic State within Libya, for it could be part of the catalyst that causes Libya to fall under the influence of Iran.

Foreign Ministry Issues Terrorism Response Manual to Prepare People for Possible Terrorist Attacks When Travelling Abroad

Source: <http://en.koreaportal.com/articles/13162/20160123/foreign-ministry-issues-terrorism-response-manual-prepare-people-possible-terrorist.htm>

Jan 23 – South Korea had always considered the neighboring North Korea as a primary security concern ever since the division of the Korean Peninsula in 1945. While this is true up to the present time, recent intelligence reports



had raised another security concern for the South Korean government over the threats of Islamic extremism in the country.

Asia Times reported Thursday that the National Intelligence Service (NIS) has released new data related to the alleged attempts of some Korean nationals to join ISIS. The report mentioned a number of South Korean migrant workers who had joined the Islamic terrorist group after leaving the country. It was also mentioned that 51 foreigners had been deported because of their reported ties to the group.

Song Dae Sung, a political science Professor at the University of Konkuk and a former South Korean Air Force Brigadier General, said that

intelligence reports from the NIS "called for a new approach to terrorism" and that South Korea's future is in great danger.

"North Korea is an entity that is very good at provocations that change one's thinking and defy estimation. ISIS, too, is a brutal terror group. In the case of them being affiliated, the danger to South Korea could be severe," Song said.

The Foreign Ministry of South Korea has issued a terrorism response manual on Monday, a tool perceived to help its people deal with emergency situations when they are traveling in foreign countries, Yonhap News reported.

According to the report, the manual was initiated because of the terrorist attacks and threats in the Asian Peninsula, particularly the recent bombing incidents in Istanbul and Jakarta.

The guide provided important details to South Koreans on how to deal with incidents that involve kidnappings, hostage situations, guns, bombs, and chemical, radioactive, and biological agents.

"There is no place in the world that is safe from terrorism," the manual cautions.

South Korea has never experienced Islamic terrorism, but three of its citizens were killed by Islamic militants in 2004 and 2007 after being taken as hostages in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Eclipse of the Caliphate

By Jonathan Spyer

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5808/eclipse-of-the-caliphate>

Jan 21 – Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, in the last days of 2015 is a place that appears to have risen from a near-death experience.

In the summer of 2014, the fighters of the Islamic State (IS) got to within 45 kilometers of this city. Around 30 percent of the inhabitants

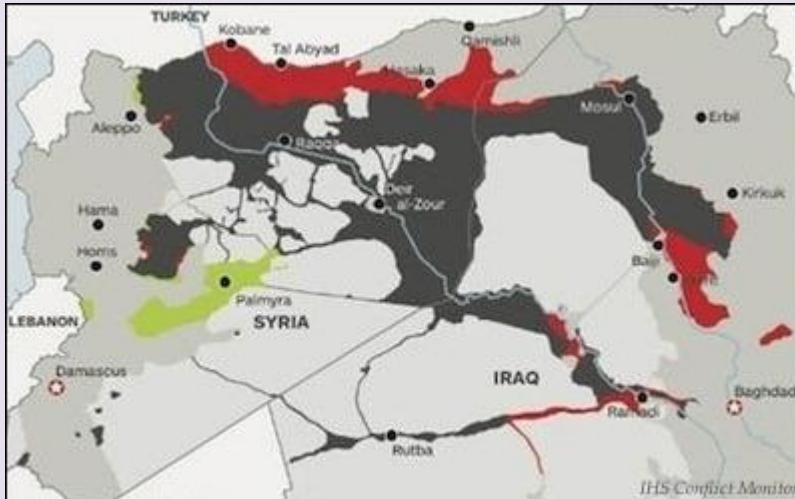
left. The foreign companies that had turned Erbil into a boom town hurriedly pulled out.

In their place, throngs of refugees filled all the available empty spaces. US air power stopped the



advance of the jihadis, but the Iraqi Kurds were left bruised and shaken.

I visited the city at that time. It was a place in a state of shock. Since the 1990s, the Kurds of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the north of strife-torn Iraq had become accustomed to viewing themselves as a haven of sanity and industry in the heart of the Middle East. In the summer of 2014, the Iraqi Kurds discovered just how fragile all that was. And



just how easily the most frenzied of the region's furries could force their way in.

A year on, they have recovered their composure. The refugees are still here, but they are now in tent encampments or housing, rather than on the streets and in disused buildings. The foreigners have begun to return. The restaurants are full on weekday evenings. The Islamic State has been driven back to the western side of the Tigris, all along the plain between Erbil and Mosul.

[Kamal Kirkuki \(left\) and the author with a captured Islamic State flag, Kirkuk area, December 2015.](#)

Now it is the Kurds and their allies who are outside the main cities of IS, rather than the other way round. Yet, Erbil has not become immune. An IS suicide bomber hit the US Consulate on April 17 – a cocky demonstration on its part that even the most security-saturated parts of the city were not immune to penetration.

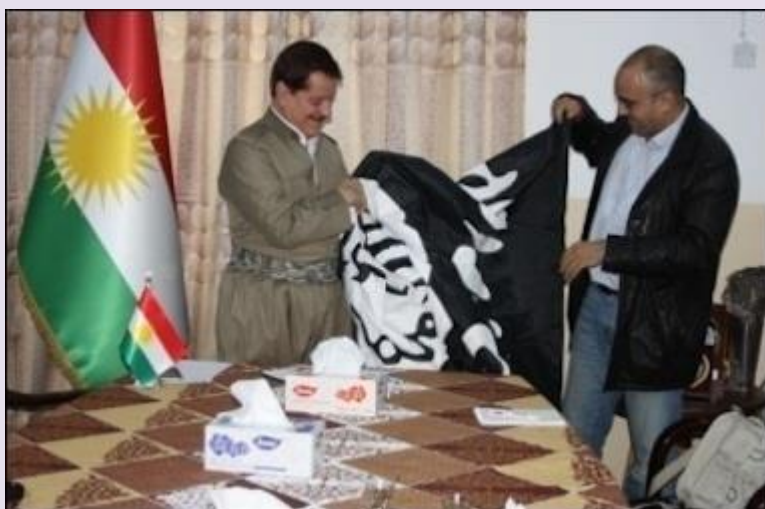
I am here again to take a look at the ground war against IS in Iraq and Syria, a year after the jihadis reached their furthest point of advance.

The year 2015 was not an especially good one for the Islamic State. Its slogan, famously, is "*baqiya wa-tatamaddad*" – remaining and expanding. As of now, the first of these objectives remains firmly in place, the second far less so. With the Kurdish Pesh Merga outside Mosul, and further south the Iraqi Golden Division inside Ramadi City, and Tikrit, Baiji and Sinjar lost in the course of the year. 2015 was a year of slow contraction for IS in Iraq.

[Islamic State territorial gains \(green\) and losses \(red\) in 2015](#)

In Syria, too, IS has lost ground. Here, the unlikely partnering of US air power with a local franchise of the Kurdish PKK, the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party, is mainly responsible for the advances. In Syria, too, it was US air power that was the crucial addition to the fight that halted and reversed the headlong advance of the jihadis.

In both the Iraqi and, even more, the Syrian



cases, the crucial contribution of air power was to nullify the advantage enjoyed by the jihadis because of their possession of heavy weapons. Neither the Pesh



Merga, the KRG's military force, nor the lightly armed YPG People's Protection Units in Syria had any real response to the up to date artillery, armored vehicles and Humvees – looted from the garrison at Mosul – that the jihadis could put into action.

US air power served to even the playing field. The courage and tenacity of the Kurdish fighters could then come into play. It is a formula that has proved tentatively successful. It halted the jihadis and is now very slowly pushing them back.

Interviews with commanders and fighters of the Pesh Merga, revealed a growing confidence that the Islamic State had passed its high point as a semi-conventional military voice.

Captain Rebin Rozhbayane, a commander of the Pesh Merga Special Forces, describes largely quiet frontlines in which the initiative is now in the hands of the Kurds. "Mortars, sniping but no major attacks at the moment," he tells me, as we meet in the lobby of a hotel in the Christian section of Erbil.

Rozhbayane, a 10-year veteran of the Pesh Merga, commands a rapid reaction force of 80 fighters on the Gwer front.

IS is no longer seeking the initiative, the captain notes. Rather, they now appear content to wait. It is the Kurds who are moving forward. "Mosul is the next target," he asserts. Once Iraq's second-largest city with a mainly Arab population, Mosul is likely to prove a tougher target. IS's ability to proclaim itself a "state or caliphate" rather than simply a jihadi fiefdom in Iraq largely rests on its holding Mosul. The taking of this city in August 2014 was the key moment in the Islamic State's advance and the group will defend it with all means available.

This is not the case, however, with the generality of its holdings. IS now needs to conserve resources.

Rozhbayane notes that the latest major victory of the Kurds, in Sinjar city, was achieved against relatively minor resistance. The desperate determination with which IS pressed its offensive in Kobani at the end of 2014 against the YPG and US air power cost it heavily. Some 2,000 jihadi fighters are thought to have died in the ruins of that Syrian Kurdish city. But by the end of January, IS was forced to retreat. The lesson the jihadis learned from this is that unless a point absolutely must be held, it is better to abandon it than to risk another costly defeat like Kobani.

Even in Ramadi, which IS clearly wanted to keep, a force of only about 1000 jihadis was left to face the assault of 10,000 Iraqi government troops, backed by US aircraft.

Kamal Kirkuki, former speaker of the KRG's parliament, a veteran of the ruling Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and now a commander of the Pesh Merga on the north-west Kirkuk front, tells me that "ISIS has declined and is morally weak. They no longer have the force to attack us. "What they can do," he adds, "is terror attacks." Kirkuki is referring to specific events in the Kirkuk area. But the sense that IS may be returning to focused terrorist attacks as its ability to expand militarily evaporates was repeated to me many times during the course of my time in Iraq and Syria.

The turn of the jihadis toward international terrorism – with the downing of the Russian Metrojet Flight 9268 on October 31 and the coordinated attacks in Paris on November 13 – are ominous signs of the potency that a refocused IS could have.

A European volunteer with the Pesh Merga told me in Erbil that "we need to fight IS here or we'll be fighting them in Europe in 10 years."

The rhetoric of this statement is impressive and there is a deeper truth to it. However, it may well be that, tactically, the correlation is more complex. The more IS loses ground in its "state," the more it may turn its attention to terrorism against both near and far enemies to maintain the sense of momentum on which it depends.

For the Iraqi Kurds, there is, of course, a larger political context to all this. Kirkuki, who is known as one of the more nationalist of senior KDP members, refers to Iraq as a "failed state" and advocates the establishment of three states to replace it – "Kurdistan, Shia-stan and Sunni-stan."

KRG President Massoud Barzani recently announced the recommencement of preparations for a referendum on independence in the KRG area. Plans were afoot before IS erupted across the border in the summer of 2014. Now that the jihadis have been held and the immediate danger has passed, the notion is returning to the agenda.

There are complications, however. The Patriotic Union of



Kurdistan, the KDP's rivals, is close to Iran and would be likely to oppose a bid for political separation. The West's position remains ambivalent.

But the very fact that independence has returned to the agenda is an indication both of the perceived waning threat of IS and of the persistent, structural problems facing Iraq, of which the Sunni jihadis are a manifestation, rather than a cause.

Syria

In Syria, the situation is even more complicated. The "border" that separates northern Iraq from northern Syria is now administered by Kurdish forces on both sides. The process of administration and passage at the FishKhabur/Semalka crossing is orderly enough. A traveler passes through one set of Kurdish officials, across the Tigris river in an old metal barge, and then past a second bureaucratic process on the other side.

But the seeming tranquility belies a strained reality. The Kurds may control an uninterrupted area of ground all the way from the Iraq-Iran border to seven hours' drive into Syria. But the Iraqi Kurdish KDP and the PKK-oriented Syrian Kurdish PYD remain implacable rivals.

In northeast Syria, though, the ambiguities go beyond the narrow Kurdish context.

The last positions of the Assad regime still remain deep in the area of Kurdish control, with tension between the sides never far from the surface.

The regime's presence has been eroded in recent years. Where once there was an imposing government checkpoint at the entrance to Qamishli city, the main urban center of "Rojava," the Syrian Kurdish domain, now Assad's forces remain confined to a few clearly defined points of the city.

The regime soldiers look scruffy and exhausted, not so different from the rebels. Every so often, one sees a well-fed *mukhabarat* (secret service) type in a leather jacket moving about close to the regime facilities. Caution is advised. The regime tries every so often to force young Kurds into the ranks of its army. The Kurdish security forces resist.

Syrian Kurdistan is a much poorer, more provisional affair than the KRG. In the KRG, a class of KDP-linked people has enriched itself enormously and an atmosphere of consumerist

normality prevails. IS put a dent in this in 2014, but it has now been contained.

In Syrian Kurdistan, by contrast, there is still something of the atmosphere of revolution, of scant resources and devotion. The YPG militia has proven the most powerful irregular force in northern Syria apart from IS itself. The partnering of US air power with Kurdish determination on the ground has brought the YPG to within 30 kilometers of the "capital" of the Islamic State – Raqqa City.

There is a central dilemma in this partnership, however. The PKK, the evident "mother organization" of the PYD and YPG, remains on the US and EU list of terrorist organizations. There appear to be no serious efforts under way to amend this.

The result is that while YPG fighters are responsible for calling in US airstrikes against IS targets, legal restrictions on supplying their fighters' mean that they operate in the most primitive conditions, almost always without helmets and body armor, often without boots, without night vision equipment and without anything approaching adequate medical provisions.

In spite of all this, they are covering ground, and driving IS back.

In the town of al-Hawl, 40 kilometers east of Hasakeh city and liberated in mid-November, I saw the swiftly rotting remains of the primitive administration that IS had established in the town. The painted black signs proclaiming the "Islamic court" in Hawl painted over with the YPG's vivid red and the building broken and abandoned.

The next target is Shadadi, further south, Kemal Amuda, a YPG commander tells me at a frontline position south of the city. The intention is to cut Mosul off from Raqqa and split the Islamic State in two.

"We need better weapons systems," says Amuda. "Anti-tank weapons, tanks, armored cars. Then we could take Raqqa in a month. Support from the air isn't enough."

As of now, the US appears to be supporting a rebranding of the Kurdish YPG that will allow the deepening of cooperation.

In October 2015, a new anti-IS coalition, called the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), was announced. This force brings together the YPG with the remains of non-jihadi rebel formations in northern Syria –



Shams al Shamal, Thuwar Raqqa and others, and with a militia of the Shammar tribe, the so-called Jaysh al Sanadid (Army of the Brave).

It is a somewhat lopsided affair, however. The 40,000 strong YPG accounts for around 90 percent of its strength. The Sanadid has about 5,000 fighters, the remaining rebel groups substantially fewer. The goal of the SDF is clearly to enable the Kurds to avoid (or seek to avoid) accusations of separatism, and the US to avoid accusations of favoring the Kurds.

There is a built in tenuousness to the political side of the alliance. The American goal is to bring a force into the IS capital of Raqqa city, and by so doing terminate any notion of the Islamic State as an actual quasi-state entity.

The Syrian Kurds are more interested in uniting the Kurdish cantons along the Syrian-Turkish border and thus completing their control of the Syrian side of the border (a prospect that alarms and infuriates the Turks). On December 26, the SDF completed the conquest of the Tishreen Dam.

This target could form part of a drive toward Raqqa (it removes from IS the chance to rush forces from Aleppo province to the city). Or it could be the commencement of a Kurdish push westward to begin the unification of the cantons.

But while the politics remain deeply ambiguous, once again, the military direction seems clear – IS is losing ground in northern Syria, slowly, but surely.

A YPG commander at a frontline position describes to me the changing tactics employed by the jihadis. Where once they sent waves of men across open ground, preceded by "suicide cars," now they move in small groups,

cautiously, seeking to preserve manpower. "Their power is derived from intimidation and imposing terror," suggests the commander. "This has now gone. They are afraid of us and of the international coalition."

It is important, of course, not to exaggerate the advances made against IS. Both Raqqa and Mosul remain formidable targets, along with much additional territory. But the direction of Western supported coalition forces is clear – and it is forward.

Even if IS continues to be eroded, this will not answer the bigger questions concerning the future arrangement of what was once Iraq and Syria. The clashes of formidable regional powers – Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey – and global ones – the US and Russia – will continue independently of the fate of the jihadi entity.

But in a region in which good news is scant, the survival of two very different Kurdish projects in northern Iraq and northern Syria, and their successful rallying in partnership with the West against perhaps the most graphically murderous manifestation of political Islam in recent times is a point of light.

In the desert south of Hawl, I came across what initially looked like a small clump of mounds on the side of the road. On inspection, these were the bodies of IS fighters torn apart in a coalition air strike during the fighting a month earlier. The sightless eyes stared skyward. The Kurds had covered the bodies lightly with sand before continuing south. These unrespected dead were a silent indication of the current direction of the war.

As of now, the Islamic State is remaining – but retreating.

Jonathan Spyer is director of the Rubin Center for Research in International Affairs and a fellow at the Middle East Forum.

ISIS recruiting refugees in TERROR TRAINING camps in Europe as it plots UK attack

Source: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/637888/ISIS-plot-Paris-style-attacks-UK-Europe>

In the report, the international police agency said that ISIS had set up a number of smaller bases in the

Jan 26 – **EU and the Balkans are were plotting multiple Paris-style attacks in Britain and across Europe as jihadi recruiters target Syrian refugees.**

The terror group is feared to be preparing more mass casualty strikes after the jihadis developed an "external actions command" for "special forces style" operations abroad.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

A total of 130 people were killed in Paris last November after ISIS fighters went on a suicide rampage around the French capital, targeting cafes, a concert hall and a football stadium. This could mean that more attacks such as those that took place in Paris in November are currently being planned and prepared



Europol report

A report on the group, also called Daesh, by Europol, said: "This could mean that more attacks such as those that took place in Paris in November are currently being planned and prepared."

It said: "It is possible that elements of the (Sunni Muslim) Syrian refugee diaspora in Europe may be vulnerable to radicalisation. "Indeed there are reports that refugee centres are being specifically targeted by Islamic extremist recruiters."



Entitled 'Changes in modus operandi of Islamic State terrorist attacks', the study found the Paris attacks appear to indicate a shift towards a broader strategy of ISIS "going global".

It said new attacks will most likely primarily target "soft targets", with strikes against critical infrastructure such as nuclear facilities not seen as a priority for ISIS at the moment.

The report revealed there may be smaller scale terror training camps in the EU and Balkan countries as well as in Syria.

The European Union's (EU) law enforcement agency also suggested extremist recruiters may target the tens of thousands of refugees who reach Europe after fleeing the Middle East and West Africa.

The report was published at the launch of the European Counter Terrorism Centre.

Shockingly, the report said a significant proportion of foreign fighters were diagnosed with mental problems before joining ISIS.

And the terrorists are using encryption and anonymous tools to acquire weapons and to communicate which prevents



overseas authorities from using "conventional observation".

The report said: "There is every reason to expect that ISIS, ISIS inspired terrorists or another religiously inspired terrorist group will undertake a terrorist attack somewhere in Europe again, but particularly in France, intended to cause mass casualties amongst the civilian population.

"This is in addition to the threat of lone actor attacks, which has not diminished.

"In selecting what to attack, where, when and how, IS shows its capacity to strike at will, at any time and at almost any chosen target."

British security services have repeatedly highlighted the risk of a roaming gun massacre following the Mumbai bombings in 2008.

And Europe has been on tenterhooks in the wake of the November 13 2015 Paris attacks.

Talking at the launch of the new centre, Europol director Rob Wainwright, said: "Our ambition is for the European Counter Terrorism Centre to become a central information hub in the fight against terrorism in the EU, providing analysis for ongoing investigations and contributing to a coordinated reaction in the event of major terrorist attacks."

Scholar goes to prison to study religious radicalization

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160126-scholar-goes-to-prison-to-study-religious-radicalization>

Jan 26 - University of Calgary postdoctoral scholar Ryan Williams never imagined his religious studies degrees would one day lead him to jail.

But it turns out prisons provide an important site for learning about the gravest concerns around radicalization and how society can better respond.

UCalgary reports that the visits to prison began in August 2013 when Williams, a University of Calgary alumnus who earned his Ph.D. in 2012 from the Faculty of Divinity in Cambridge, joined three colleagues on an 18-month study funded by Canada's Economic and Social Research Council.

The researchers spent 260 days in two maximum security institutions in the United Kingdom and conducted sixty interviews with staff and 100 with prisoners — some of them convicted for terrorism – better to understand the differences between prison environments that support human growth and those that damage well-being and character.

"The first few visits were very hairy," Williams says. "When you got used to it, though, you realized that if you approach people with humanity and with a spirit of kindness and politeness, you get that back."

And it is exactly that interaction between expectation and outcome which Williams experienced first-hand that is at the crux of his work: research that has gained international prominence as the world seeks to understand

the recent tragedies in Paris, and concern escalates about ISIS and terrorism across Europe and beyond.

In 2015 Williams returned to the University of Calgary as a postdoctoral scholar, where he also earned his master's degree in religious studies. With the support of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) postdoctoral fellowship, he will take what he learned from his prisons research to ask broader questions around human security, belonging and society.

"This is truly groundbreaking work," says Tinu Ruparell, an associate professor in the Department of Classics and Religion and Williams's postdoctoral supervisor.

"This is the first time a religious studies scholar has been able to go in and get to know these people who are so demonized; we don't know what they are like or what their motivations are," says Ruparell.

"Ryan Williams' insight into one of society's most urgent problems is helping community organizations, academia, law enforcement and anti-terror groups to understand and potentially mitigate this highly complex issue," says Ed McCauley, vice-president (research).

"He is a wonderful example of the top-tier postdoctoral scholars who are building the university's global leadership in our strategic research theme Human Dynamics in a Changing World: Smart and Secure Cities, Societies, and Cultures."



Studying trust instead of radicalization opened doors

"You don't necessarily think of trust or humanity when you think of terrorists," says Williams. "But we went into those prisons with a goal of studying trust rather than radicalization; a concept that does not provide a very good social scientific starting point."

Williams says the topic of trust opened up a lot of doors with prisoners that the subject of radicalization and extremism would have closed.

"We asked prisoners to give an example of when they have been trusted, what they were most proud of in their life," Williams says. Fundamentally human questions that revealed, Williams says, that these prisoners were fundamentally human.

"Trust is something that binds the social fabric," Williams says, "where criminalizing, stigmatizing and 'othering' certain groups based on their religion tears at that fabric."

Sharing expertise on counterterrorism efforts locally and internationally

Williams says institutional support is key in getting your message out. He underlines that he has been very fortunate that the university, the Department of Classics and Religion and his supervisor have been very helpful, opening

doors and providing opportunities, which is key for a postdoctoral fellow.

"My role is to act as a kind of critical interlocutor," Ruparell says of his work with Williams. "I can ask him those prickly questions, but past that, it's his work to do; I give him as much support as possible and the opportunities to get his work out there."

Williams's invitations to speak in Canada and internationally are piling up. In recent months, he has written a *Globe and Mail* article about his research, led a panel discussion in Calgary on countering Islamist extremism and will participate in another in Cambridge on Legal Harms and the New Politics of Resistance. He also had his work highlighted in a recent *Calgary Herald* article.

With his wealth of experience from the United Kingdom, Williams says he returned to Calgary with a clearer sense of what has worked there as far as anti-terror campaigns, and what hasn't.

"When I arrived in the United Kingdom in 2008, they were just ramping up their counterterrorism efforts," Williams says. "Now, in Calgary, we are in much the same place as they were then, and I hope to be able to contribute what I've learned, and to inform and feed into the debates here."

Purple Jihad???

Source: <http://www.religiousfreedomcoalition.org/2016/01/13/an-islam-that-loves-gays-and-free-speech/purple-jihad/>
Jan 13th, 2016



What does the Koran really say about this?



Europol bolsters EU's counterterrorism capabilities

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160125-europol-bolsters-eu-s-counterterrorism-capabilities>

Jan 25 – Europe is currently facing the most significant terrorist threat in over ten years. The Paris attacks on 13 November 2015 indicate a shift toward a clear international dimension of Islamic State to carry out special forces-style attacks in the international environment. This and the growing number of foreign fighters are



posing new challenges for EU Member States. Europol says that more attacks in the EU may happen in the future. Therefore, there is a great need within the European Union to strengthen our response to terror, to suspected terrorist networks and foreign fighters, and have an improved strategic understanding of threats. “EU institutions responded swiftly and strongly to the terrorist attacks of last year and moved to augment the European Union’s capacity to deal with terrorist threat. As foreseen in the European Agenda on Security put forward by the European Commission, the establishment of the European Counter Terrorism Centre is a major strategic opportunity for the EU to make our collective efforts to fight terrorism more effective. I call on EU Member States to trust and support the European Counter Terrorism Centre to help it succeed in its important mission,” said Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship.

The launch of the [European Counter Terrorism Center](#) (ECTC) as of January 2016 followed a decision from the EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers last November. Europol says that the ECTC will be an enhanced central information hub by which the

Member States can increase information sharing and operational coordination. “The ECTC will improve the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies. This is the kind of cooperation Europe needs in the fight against organized crime and terrorism,” said Ard van der Steur, Minister of Security and Justice of the Netherlands, currently holding the presidency of the Council of the EU.

The new ECTC has been set up within the current organizational structure of Europol that is already playing an important part in the European response to terrorist threats.

For example, after the Paris attacks, Europol assigned up to sixty officers to support the French and Belgian investigations in Taskforce Fraternité. Up to now, 2.7 terabytes of information have been received from these two

countries, resulting in 800 intelligence leads and more than 1,600 leads on suspicious financial transactions.

“Our ambition is for the European Counter Terrorism Centre to become a central information hub in the fight against terrorism in the EU, providing analysis for ongoing investigations and contributing to a coordinated reaction in the event of major terrorist attacks. Europol is grateful for the support of the Member States, the European Parliament and the European Commission in the establishment of the ECTC. It will lie at the heart of a stronger EU standing up to the threat of terrorism,” said Europol’s director Rob Wainwright.

Europol says it has used this trend of increased information sharing to upgrade its counter terrorism capabilities. The aim is to raise trust and awareness among the different counter terrorism authorities in the EU and maximize existing capabilities. By serving as a center of expertise, ECTC will focus on tackling foreign fighters, sharing intelligence and expertise on terrorism financing (TFTP [Terrorist Finance Tracking Program] and support by the FIU.net [Financial Intelligence Units]), online terrorist propaganda and extremism



(Internet Referral Unit), illegal arms trafficking and international cooperation to increase effectiveness and prevention.

The European Union Internet Referral Unit's main tasks are to:

- coordinate and share the identification tasks (flagging) of terrorist and violent extremist online content with relevant partners
- carry out and support referrals quickly, efficiently and effectively, in close cooperation with the industry
- support competent authorities by providing strategic and operational analysis

Since 1 January 2016, Europol's financial intelligence and counter terrorism capabilities have been substantially strengthened by the integration of a decentralized computer network of the European Union Member States' Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), known as **FIU.net**. Under the auspices of the EU FIU platform and the renewed provisions set out in the IV Anti-Money Laundering Directive, the embedment of FIU.net into Europol aims to create more synergy between financial and criminal intelligence, ultimately boosting efforts to fight organized crime and terrorism in the EU.

FIU.net became operational in 2002 and was co-financed until 2015 by the European Commission. It supports relevant EU Member States' authorities in their fight against money laundering and terrorist financing by allowing the exchange of information between FIUs on financial transactions with a cross-border nature. It is a decentralized network, involving no central storage of information: when sending information from one FIU to another,

the exchanged data is only, and securely, stored on the FIU.net databases at the premises of the FIUs involved in the exchange. These tasks are carried out by receiving requests from the European Union Member States or through the research for content online and are performed in accordance with the data processing rules set up in the Europol Council Decision.

Europol says it will provide the Member States, and its key partners like Interpol and Eurojust, with new possibilities to ensure the most effective management of counter terrorism intelligence:

- upgraded information exchange for sensitive counter terrorism intelligence (Secure Information Exchange Network Application, or SIENA, and Europol Information System, or EIS)
- the possibility to second experts to the ECTC to support enhanced cross-border investigations, capable of providing quick and comprehensive response to major terrorist incidents in the EU

The ECTC will be led by Manuel Navarrete Paniagua, a high ranking officer of the Spanish Guardia Civil with extensive practical counter terrorism experience. He was already the head of the counter terrorism unit at Europol. Currently, thirty-nine staff members and five seconded national experts work in the ECTC. Working alongside other operational centers at Europol, such as the European Cyber Crime Centre (EC3), the ECTC will be a constituent part of Europol, under the general command of its Director, and will serve to augment the organization's capabilities as the EU's law enforcement agency.

Concern about terrorism vulnerability in New Guinea

Source: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/201786697/concern-about-terrorism-vulnerability-in-new-guinea>

Jan 25 – Concern has been raised on both sides of the land border between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea about the region's vulnerability to terrorism.

This month's deadly attack in Jakarta claimed by Islamic State convinced many Indonesian officials that existing counter-terrorism efforts are not sufficient to stop another attack.

Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission has warned that high corruption, especially

around the country's military, may lead to increased recruitment for terrorists.

The remote region of West Papua is believed to be particularly vulnerable, and so too neighboring PNG.

John Tekwie is a community leader in Vanimo, the PNG town closest to the border. He says that via the border, terrorism is a threat to the Pacific region.



"In the case of our Pacific region, the hotspot is West Papua, the threat of ISIS, if there's any



degree of threat at all, it would be West Papua, because of the issue of West Papuan independence."

The flow of illegal guns into PNG is already a big problem and poses a risk to major development projects, according to Akat Mai, the Governor of PNG's West Sepik province, along the border.

"It's a major problem I'm facing now because of drug smuggling and arm smuggling as well. As a governor I am scared about gun smuggling because I do not want to see these guns end up at the LNG in the southern highlands, where some of our big businesses."

Mr Tekwie says it's become easy for people to come over from Indonesia to live and work in PNG without visas.

"We have a problem with intelligence gathering, we have security problems and we do certainly need help from Australia and New Zealand, PNG defence force and the foreign affairs department and the border development authority up at the border to do intelligence gathering. This is our main problem. The threat to our border is real and we cannot underestimate it."

People from Papua New Guinea make frequent trips across the Indonesia border at Wutung (Photo: RNZ / Johnny Blades)

Across on the Indonesian side, church leaders are concerned about religious extremism which exists in small pockets of West Papua.

Father Neles Tebay of the West Papuan Catholic Justice and Peace Secretariat says all mainstream churches in Papua, including Christian and Muslim faiths, have agreed not to accept fundamentalist groups in the region, and have pushed for local police to expel them. "They have not been identified as terrorist group but they need to be watched closely in



order to prevent them from creating violence in the land of Papua."

Melanesian leaders are wary of Indonesian security forces' counter-terrorist efforts, knowing that in the past, these have targeted peaceful West Papuan pro-independence groups.

However, on the other side, the message is clear that Australia, and New Zealand, should be worried about PNG's lack of capacity to control its side of the border.

Will ISIS Attack Italy? Terror Threat Grows As Alleged Islamic State Group Supporter Arrested In Calabria

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.com/will-isis-attack-italy-terror-threat-grows-alleged-islamic-state-group-supporter-2278418>

Jan 25 – Authorities arrested a 25 year-old Moroccan man in the Italian region of Calabria Monday who was suspected of preparing a terrorist attack on Italy, local news outlets reported. While the man denied allegiance to the Islamic terrorists known as the Islamic State group or ISIS, terrorist training manuals were found in his home.



The unnamed suspect had been under surveillance since July after he attempted to enter Turkey and authorities suspected he then planned on crossing into Syria to rejoin ISIS. He told border police he was going to Turkey "to pray," according to a report in the Local.



Italy has been facing an elevated terror threat since Nov. 13, 2015 attacks on Paris that sent shockwaves throughout Europe. At least eight Islamic terrorists pledging allegiance to ISIS descended upon the French capital, carrying out a spate of assaults on bars, cafes and other scenes of Parisian nightlife, leaving 130 dead.

All of the known attackers in Paris were French or Belgian nationals, and the attack has raised concerns throughout Europe of European nationals or permanent residents carrying out acts of terrorism on their home soil. The suspect in Calabria, while not an Italian national, had a residence permit and had been living in Italy since 2006, according to the Local.

ISIS threatened Italy directly in a video released Nov. 16, just days after the Paris attacks. "By Allah, you will have a day like that of France. By Allah, if we brought down France in its homeland, in Paris, then we swear, by the command of Allah, we will attack America in its heartland, in Washington, Allah permitting, and [we will invade Rome](#), Allah permitting," a militant said in a video released by the group, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Italy's counter-terrorism unit Divos has stepped up its efforts in the past months, conducting dozens of raids. The system is poorly funded, however, and often relies on information from the FBI and other larger intelligence services.

Experts warn that the US is underestimating a greater jihadist threat than ISIS

Source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/jabhat-al-nusra-isis-threat-2016-1>

Jan 26 – A joint report between two Washington, D.C.-based think tanks concludes that the US is dangerously underestimating a jihadist group that could become even more of a threat to the long-term security of the country than ISIS.



The Institute for the Study of War and the American Enterprise Institute [released its report last week](#). A group of experts, some of whom were involved in planning the 2007

accused of massacring his own citizens, is the top priority for many rebels.

In that case, they'll align with the groups with the best funding and equipment that allow them the freedom to fight both ISIS and Assad. In many areas, that group is Jabhat al-Nusra.

"Jabhat al-Nusra has weakened the moderate opposition and penetrated other Sunni opposition groups in Syria so thoroughly that it is poised to benefit the most from the destruction of ISIS and the fall or transition of the Assad regime," the report said.

"The likeliest outcome of the current strategy in Syria, if it succeeds, is the de facto establishment and ultimate declaration of a Jabhat al-Nusra emirate in Syria that has the backing of a wide range of non-al-Qaeda fighting forces and population groups," it continued.

ISW and AEI predicted that Jabhat al-Nusra could then become a key affiliate for the global Al Qaeda terrorist network that focuses on attacking the West.

So far, it appears that Jabhat al-Nusra has been focused mostly on fighting in

Syria. But that could be part of a strategy to avoid scrutiny from Western officials.

"The fact that the US is focused so exclusively on ISIS means that we are ignoring a threat that is as great," Kimberly Kagan, the founder and president of ISW and one of the authors of the report, told Business Insider.

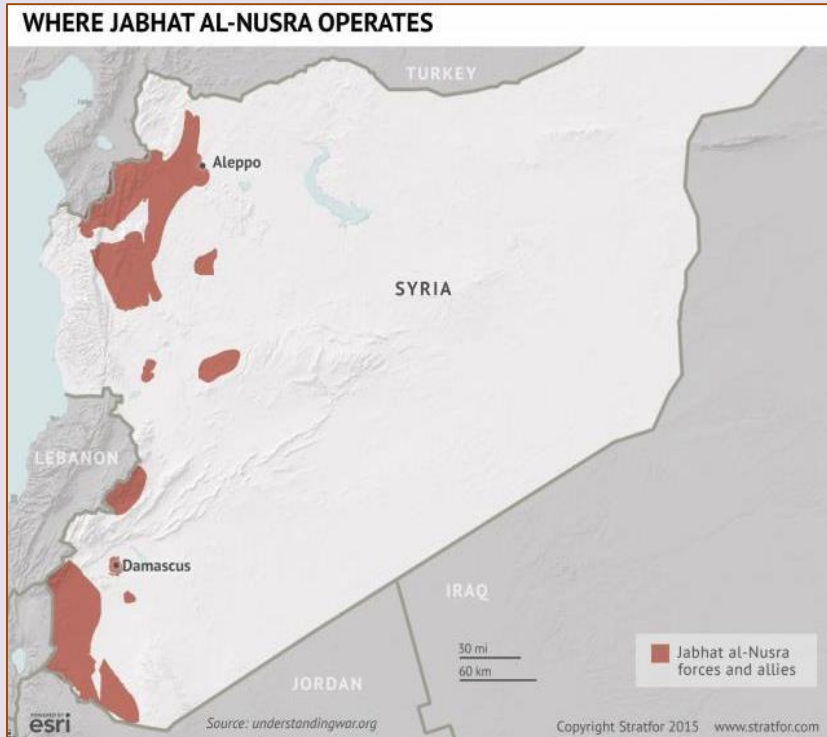
Jabhat al-Nusra is playing a "long game," Kagan said.

"ISIS is in fact overt about its presence and Nusra is covert about its presence," she said.

"Nusra's covert presence means the US hasn't focused enough on its presence."

She added: "Al Qaeda's senior leaders have had a deliberate strategy of where they host cells that are planning deliberate attacks against the West at any given moment. Because the US has deliberately targeted Al Qaeda on the basis of whether or not there are attack cells focused on the West, Al Qaeda has tried to minimize the footprint of these cells in areas where it actually wishes to see long-term success. Syria is the top priority for Al Qaeda."

Other experts, however, have characterized the potential threat



surge of US troops in Iraq, met over multiple weeks to create the report.

The report said Al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra, posed "one of the most significant long-term threats" of any jihadist group.

"This Al Qaeda affiliate has established an expansive network of partnerships with local opposition groups that have grown either dependent on or fiercely loyal to the organization," the report said. "Its defeat and destruction must be one of the highest priorities of any strategy to defend the United States and Europe from Al Qaeda attacks."

While the US's strategy in the Middle East is heavily focused on ISIS, which is also known as the Islamic State, ISIL, or Daesh, Jabhat al-Nusra, which is also known as the Nusra Front, is spreading its influence through groups that oppose the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Fighters with whom the US partners in Syria have previously been told they must focus on battling ISIS and refrain from attacking Assad's troops. But ISW and AEI pointed out that deposing Assad, a brutal leader who has been



from Jabhat al-Nusra in less dire terms. Fred Hof, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council who was a special adviser for transition in Syria under Hillary Clinton, then the secretary of state, agreed that Nusra's resources had attracted many anti-Assad rebels to the group's ranks. But he contended that these fighters weren't very interested in broader operations. "Absent a specific focus on fighting the Assad regime I think it will be difficult for the Nusra Front to exist in any meaningful way in Syria, thereby making it difficult for the group to use Syria as a launching pad for global operations," Hof told Business Insider. Hof also pointed out that the US could lure these Nusra recruits back to moderate opposition groups if the moderate groups had resources comparable to Nusra's. Still, Kagan warns that groups like Nusra intended to attack the West "whether they're actioning that intent right now or not."

"US policymakers are underestimating Jabhat al-Nusra because Jabhat al-Nusra wishes to be underestimated," Kagan said.

"We are so focused on ISIS that we are not looking at the second threat," she added. And defeating ISIS

could unintentionally strengthen Nusra. Both ISIS and Nusra are Sunni terrorist groups. ISIS has presented itself as a group that can protect Sunnis against the Assad regime, which is aligned with Shiites. Once ISIS is gone, Nusra could step in and assume that role.

"Defeating ISIS inside of Syria is likely to increase the capability and strength of Jabhat al-Nusra," Kagan said. "It's waiting in the wings for ISIS' demise in order to establish itself more firmly in key terrain and to present itself as the only reliable ally for the Sunni population."

Air India Flight 182 bomber released from Canadian prison

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/air-india-flight-182-bomber-released-from-canadian-prison-1.2513071>



A victim of the Air India Flight 182 bombing is removed from Cork Airport on a stretcher in June 1985.

Jan 28 – Sikh militant Inderjit Singh Reyat, who was convicted for his role in the bombing of an Air India flight off the Irish coast in 1985, has been released from prison in Canada.





Canadian authorities told The Irish Times that Reyat left custody sometime on Tuesday or Wednesday. He now faces strict release conditions that will monitor his whereabouts and associations, a spokesman said. The Canadian national had completed two-thirds of a nine-year sentence for perjury committed during the trial of two other men accused of involvement in the

bombing.



The men, Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajiab Singh Bagri, were both acquitted of murder. Reyat had previously pleaded guilty to reduced charges of helping make the bomb at his home in Duncan, British Columbia, for which he spend five years in jail. Air India Flight 182 exploded over the Atlantic Ocean on June 23rd, 1985, killing 329 people. Reyat was the only person ever convicted in relation to the bombing.



Revenge

Canadian and Indian authorities have long believed the bombing was conducted by Sikh extremists living in western Canada, as revenge for India's storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1984.



Police in Canada have said the plotters planned to destroy an Air India jet over the Pacific Ocean at the same time, but the suitcase bomb exploded in Japan's Narita airport instead, killing two baggage handlers.

Reyat spent 10 years in prison for building the bomb that exploded at the Narita airport.

The completion of his perjury sentence brought to an end two decades of incarceration.

The Parole Board of Canada said eight conditions have been attached to Reyat's release, including the rare demand that he remain in a halfway house.

He is not to have any access to or possession of extremist propaganda; he must attend counselling to address issues of violence, empathy and cognitive distortions and he must report any contact, friendships or acquaintances with other men.

He also must not possess any components that could be used to build an explosive device; avoid any contact with the families of the airline victims; not participate in any political activity and not associate with any people whom he knows to have been, or has reason to believe is, involved in any criminal or political activity or extremism.



Anniversary

The 30th anniversary of the 1985 bombing was marked at ceremonies in Cork last year.

The Canadian government has formally apologised to families of the Air India victims and said authorities failed to act on information that could have prevented the bombings.

Police say the investigation remains open,

but many of the other people believed to have been involved in the plot have since died.

The Islamic State's Attack in Jakarta: Progeny, Profiles and Prospects for a Southeast Asia Province

By Jacob Zenn

Source: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=45027&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=7475c367ea6ce7a29c2a1f5432285730#.VqnfbILKqHs](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=45027&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=7475c367ea6ce7a29c2a1f5432285730#.VqnfbILKqHs)

Jan 27 – On January 14, 2016, five militants carried out coordinated attacks in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. The targets included a shopping mall and a Starbucks located near UN and diplomatic facilities. The Islamic State claimed the attack on Twitter accounts, via its Al-Amaq news agency, and on its official Telegram channel.

Indonesian intelligence believes the mastermind was a Syria-based Bahrun Naim, a militant from Central Java, Indonesia. The international money transfer the attackers received from Syria came from the Bahasa Indonesian- and Malaysian-speaking faction of the Islamic State called Katibah Nusantara, led by Bahrun Naim and comprised of anywhere from 300 to 700 militants (smh.com.au, January 16). Nusantara is a historical name for maritime Southeast Asia encompassing parts

of southern Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and southern Philippines.

Al-Qaeda under Osama Bin Laden had wanted to unite Nusantara under one jihadist banner. With the demise of Jemaa Islamiya, Bin Ladin's death, and Bali-bombing mastermind Umar Patek's arrest all occurring in 2011, in conjunction with the shift in allegiances of former pro-al-Qaeda jihadists in Southeast Asia to the Islamic State starting in 2014, the Islamic State has been able to do what al-Qaeda could not. With the Jakarta attack, Bahrun Naim made a case to lead the Islamic State's prospective Nusantara Province, going by the name *Wilayat Nusantara*.

Profiles: Behind Bars, Abroad, and Bureaucracy



One of the four suicide bombers in the attack in Jakarta was Afif (alias Sunakim). Similar to Bahrin Naim, he was previously arrested for terrorism offenses; he had trained in an “Al-Qaeda in the Veranda of Mecca” camp in Aceh under Jemaa Islamiya founder Abubakar Baasyir in 2010. Both before and after Afif’s imprisonment, he was under the influence of the formerly Jakarta-based leader of Tauhid Wal Jihad (TWJ), Aman Abdurrahman. Aman Abdurrahman, who is now in prison in Central Java for funding the camp in Aceh, remains active on social media sending out pro-Islamic State messages to potential supporters, such as Afif ([Reuters](#), January 19; [Jakarta Post](#), June 14, 2014) [1].

Less than one month before the attack in Jakarta, Bahrin Naim appeared on the radar of Indonesian intelligence services. In December 2015, a would-be suicide bomber in West Java admitted to receiving \$600 from his Hong Kong-based wife, who was also an immigrant worker and funder of Katibah Nusantara ([Time.com](#), December 18, 2015). Clearly, the relatively high salaries for low-skilled labor in Hong Kong and the other three “Asian Tigers” (South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore) - as well as in Japan and the Gulf states - has provided a fundraising mechanism for pro-Islamic State supporters to finance their “unemployed” jihadist brethren in Southeast Asia ([Metrotvnews.com \[Seoul\]](#), November 20, 2015).

At the same time the failed suicide bomber was arrested in December 2015, a Chinese Uighur named Alli (alias Abu Muzan) was also arrested in West Java after entering the Indonesian island of Batam from Singapore (and Thailand and Malaysia before that). Alli was part of six-man cell including two other Uighurs. They were planning suicide attacks ordered by Bahrin Naim on Indonesian government officials, Shia mosques, and Christian churches. ([Detik.com](#), December 25, 2015; [Rappler.com](#), January 7).

In 2014, four other Uighurs with fake Turkish passports were also detained in Sulawesi after attempting to join Mujahidin Indonesia Timor (MIT), whose leader, Santoso, pledged *baya* (loyalty) to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2014. This suggests that Bahrin Naim may be among the driving forces behind the Islamic State’s outreach to Uighurs and Mandarin-speaking Muslims since 2015. It may

also explain why Indonesian authorities consider Bahrin Naim a candidate not only for a leadership role in the Islamic State’s Southeast Asia operations, but also for Central Asia’s ([Straits Times](#), September 16, 2014) [Jakarta Post](#), January 18).

Thus, one of Bahrin Naim’s strengths is his unparalleled ability to connect Indonesian ideologues (Abubakar Baashyir, Aman Abdurrahman), militants (Santoso), jihad aspirants including in the online space (Afif), small-scale funders (immigrant workers) and regional networks (Uighur militants) to execute an attack like the one in Jakarta on January 14. Moreover, Naim seems to understand Islamic State “bureaucracy”: the Islamic State’s immediate and unequivocal claim of the attack in Jakarta suggests Naim informed, as well as received approval from, Islamic State leaders before ordering the attack. On a blog he resuscitated one week after the November 2015 Paris attacks, Naim also conducted an analysis of “lessons learned” from the coordinated acts of terror, suggesting he may have used Paris as a template — and inspiration — for his Jakarta plot.

However, Naim failed to reach the scale of Paris. Despite broad media coverage of the attack in Jakarta, “only” two foreigners (and five attackers, including four suicide bombers) were killed, compared to more than the 130 people killed in Paris ([Malaysiainsider.com](#), January 16). However, had Alli’s cell not been disrupted in West Java, the attack in Jakarta may have incorporated his cell and their targets, and therefore could have brought about a greater number of fatalities.

Prospects: Regional Aspirations Shift to Southeast Asia

Considerable evidence exists in 2016 that the Islamic State is preparing for an “expansion” in Southeast Asia following its 2015 extension into Africa. However, there appears to be significant stumbling blocks in the way the Islamic State accepts Southeast Asian pledges of loyalty.

The first explicit sign of the Islamic State’s interest in expansion to Southeast Asia was in *Dabiq* 5 in November 2014. On page 24, the Islamic State wrote that members in groups in Khurasan (Afghanistan), the Caucasus, Nigeria [Boko Haram],



the Philippines and Indonesia pledged allegiance to leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but the Islamic State would only accept pledges from groups that satisfied two conditions:

- Members and factions are united in making the pledge; and
- A single leader is recognizable

The groups in Khurasan, the Caucasus and Nigeria all publicly pledged to al-Baghdadi between March 2015 and June 2015, and were accepted as the provinces of their respective namesakes. The public pledges from the groups in Indonesia and Philippines, however, are still unrecognized by the Islamic State. From the Philippines, such pledges include:

- Imprisoned members of “Harakatul al-Islamiyah” (an alternate name for Abu Sayyaf) on July 2, 2014, who were able to smuggle the video out of the prison with a prisoner’s wife;
- Innon Hapilon’s faction of Abu Sayyaf on August 2, 2014 (Rappler.com, August 2, 2014); and
- The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) in August 2014 (Inquirer.net, August 22, 2014)

From Indonesia, as many as 30 jihadist factions and leaders have pledged *baya* to al-Baghdadi, including Bahrin Naim, Santoso, Abubakar Baasyir (although he may have recanted his support before the attack in Jakarta in early 2016), and Aman Abdurrahman.

Yet, it is possible that neither the jihadists in the Philippines nor Indonesia fulfill the two conditions to become a province as delineated in *Dabiq 5*, due to the lack of unity among Indonesian and Philippine jihadists. For the Islamic State to continue the narrative of “expansion” and that it is “always winning,” it would need prominent attacks in the wake of a creation of a Southeast Asian province or provinces; neither Philippine nor Indonesian jihadists group — at least until the attack in Jakarta — have consistently shown.

Another factor constraining the announcement of a Southeast Asian Province is the lack of a consistent and unified media effort between the Islamic State and Abu Sayyaf, MIT, or any other group based in the region, similar to how the Islamic State fully harmonized and upgraded Boko Haram’s media in advance of its pledge in March 2015 [2]. Since 2014, Abu Sayyaf has adopted some trademarks of

Islamic State media, including videos with group pledges to al-Baghdadi, the black-and-white *rayat al-uqab* flag of the Islamic State with the inscription of “Soldiers of the Caliphate” on it, and a training video that was promoted online by Islamic State supporters. However, these productions lack the “official” branding of Islamic State media as well as other Islamic State markers, namely *nasheed* soundtracks and Hollywood-style special effects, suggesting that any media harmonization is presently incomplete for Abu Sayyaf, let alone MIT, whose media is still less advanced than that of the aforementioned group.

Nonetheless, a turning point for the Philippine jihadists can be seen in a video disseminated on January 14, 2016, likely coordinated with the Jakarta attack. In the video, Isnlon Hapilon appears once again in a loyalty pledge as leader of the Basilan-branch of Abu Sayyaf, along with Abu Anas Al-Muhajir of the Ansar al-Shariah Battalion and Abu Harith al-Filipini of the Marakat al-Ansar Battalion in Sulu. They promised to make the Philippines “a graveyard” for American soldiers (Straits Times, January 20). The three leaders featured together could suggest that Abu Sayyaf is now unified under the leadership of Hapilon, and that Abu Sayyaf is closer to meeting the Islamic State’s condition for *baya* as outlined in *Dabiq 5*.

Nonetheless, whether Abu Sayyaf can evolve into the Nusantara Province (or a “Mindanao Province”) may hinge on Bahrin Naim. Naim’s advantage over Hapilon is that he has now carried out an internationally high-profile attack in the name of the Islamic State, and apparently has the ear of Islamic State leaders in Syria. However, Hapilon, like all other Provincial leaders, is based in the territory that he represents, Mindanao, as opposed to residing in Syria like Naim. Hapilon has deeper roots in jihadism than Naim, fostered by his leadership role in Abu Sayyaf since at least 2010 when it maintained close ties with al-Qaeda. He has also overseen the shift in loyalty of Abu Sayyaf from al-Qaeda to the Islamic State, which further supplements his leadership credentials.

Ultimately, the Islamic State’s leadership in Syria will decide if and when to announce its expansion into Southeast Asia. The attack in Jakarta serves to



confirm and legitimize the Islamic State's potential announcement. Evidenced by the messaging coming from Southeast Asian groups like Abu Sayyaf and MIT and Southeast Asians in Syria like Naim, but also by the December 26, 2015 audio release of al-Baghdadi in which he urged support for mujahidin "brothers" in the Philippines and Indonesia (as well as Bangladesh), Southeast Asia certainly remains on the Islamic State's radar.

Conclusion

As 2016 unfolds, further information on the Islamic State's narrative and military strategy for Southeast Asia will emerge. The Islamic State does not need another attack in the region imminently, as the Jakarta attack already has heralded its entrance into Southeast Asia. The Islamic State will need to further embed itself in the region, however, via a media assault to capitalize on the attack in its wake; otherwise, it will appear as a sporadic threat and thus, a sign of inconsistency and weakness.

The Islamic State is facing struggles in Africa amid the resurgence of AQIM and al-Shabaab as countervailing forces - including the groups' killing of former Islamic State militants and religiously challenging al-Baghdadi's Caliphate. The Islamic State, as a result, may attempt further advances in Southeast Asia through the establishment of a province, notably setting up a province in a region where Al-Qaeda is now relatively weak due in part to neglect of the region by Bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri. In addition, the continuation of setbacks in Syria and Iraq could propel the

Islamic State to shift to Southeast Asia and offset reports of its "losing" elsewhere. Nonetheless, the relationships between the Islamic State and either Abu Sayyaf or MIT (or possibly a unified front of the two) are too unclear at this point for either to take on the mantle of a Southeast Asia Province. If such is the case, the Islamic State — perhaps under Bahrin Naim — will need to carry out further "diplomacy" with these two groups to coordinate where their narratives and attacks can more consistently promote the objectives of the Islamic State "core."

The Islamic State's expansion into Southeast Asia will not be without reaction and repercussions. Ayman al-Zawahiri coincidentally issued a statement in his "Islamic Spring" series on the same day as the attack in Jakarta, suggesting that after several years of "ignoring" Southeast Asia, al-Qaeda may try to rejuvenate its own networks in the region. Similarly, the opening up of an Islamic State front in Southeast Asia could compel ASEAN — and certainly China — to become more active in counterterrorism in the region, especially considering the role of Uighurs in Indonesian militancy.

The nations of the "Nusantara" region will also likely have to reform their counterterrorism strategies in light of the holes that the Islamic State's attack in Jakarta exposed: namely, ineffective de-radicalization programs as evidenced by recidivism in terrorism, the use of social media for recruitment including by leading ideologues in prison such as Aman Abdurrahman, and the inability of the intelligence services to uncover the Syria-masterminded attack on Indonesian soil.

Jacob Zenn is a Fellow of Eurasian and African Affairs for The Jamestown Foundation. Mr. Zenn is an alumnus of the US State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Critical Language Scholarship for advanced Indonesian language in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. He has written on militancy and extremism in Indonesia and southern Philippines for The Jamestown Foundation since 2010.

ISIS and Antiquities: The Missing Pieces

By Alexander H. Joffe

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5809/isis-antiquities>

Jan 25 - **Why does ISIS destroy and loot antiquities? Two explanations have been offered.** This **first** is Islamic antipathy towards the pre-Islamic past. The **second** is that the

group profits from selling looted antiquities. But there is a third and equally sinister reason that has barely been mentioned. Both



destruction and looting comprise a system of social control over captive populations, a system that strives to regulate individual behavior down to the level of digging holes in the ground.



ISIS's ideological animosity is clear enough. It is loudly trumpeted in their propaganda videos that show the destruction of antiquities sites and museums. It is also patiently explained in their online magazine *Dabiq*, which taunted, [T]he enemies of the Islamic State, who were furious at losing a 'treasured heritage.' The mujahidīn, however, were not the least bit concerned about the feelings and sentiments of the kuffar. The kuffar had unearthed these statues and ruins in recent generations and attempted to portray them as part of a cultural heritage and identity that the Muslims of Iraq

The goal is not simply economic profit but psychological control.

should embrace and be proud of. Yet this opposes the guidance of Allah and His Messenger and only serves a nationalist agenda.

These pronouncements make it clear that their motives are precisely Islamic and have excellent precedent. Those who claim that these actions somehow go against Islamic tenets or history are deluded. This iconoclasm is no different from ISIS's punishments like amputation for theft or stoning women for adultery—or throwing gay men off of the roof, crucifying criminals or beheading enemies. ISIS explains this all very clearly.

But ISIS's profit motive is equally clear. Looting of sites and museums in Syria has skyrocketed since the start of the conflict. Government

forces, anti-Assad rebels and Kurds are all involved, but ISIS introduced a level of organization and control that is unique. Satellite photos show neat rows of looting holes on archaeological sites in ISIS controlled territories.

Documents reveal that ISIS treats antiquities as a natural resource on par with gemstones and stolen property. The same department, the Diwan al Rikaz (Department of Precious Resources) that deals with mines and minerals also handles antiquities. ISIS issues excavation licenses, takes a share of goods when they come out of the

ground, taxes sales and does some amount of its own marketing, including through social media.

And yet recent studies, including one that I coauthored with Yaya Fanousie for the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, suggest that profits simply aren't that large. Far from the initial claims that ISIS was making tens of millions or more from stolen antiquities, the true figures are likely far lower. All observers agree that oil and stolen goods, including funds taken from Mosul banks, comprise the bulk of ISIS's wealth.

Some antiquities can indeed be sold to the final buyer in Europe, the United States or Asia for vast amounts. But most of the material coming out of the ground—pottery, glassware, coins, architectural fragments—are not high ticket items and are worth, at most, only a few thousand dollars even at the final point of sale. And when they are extracted they are worth far less; most studies of looted antiquities suggest that the final sales price can be as much as 98 percent higher than what diggers in the field are paid. Of course, to the impoverished residents of Syria and northern Iraq even a few dollars have immense value. **But where is the value for ISIS if the total income from antiquities is only a few million dollars, compared to, say, oil revenue, which for 2014 was estimated to be between \$100 million and \$263 million?**



The missing value of antiquities looting for ISIS lies precisely in the realm of social control. ISIS is creating a state ostensibly modeled on that of early Islam but does so with a modernist obsession with bureaucracy. It produces a stream of rules and regulations, for everything

demand the continued extraction of surpluses, and more importantly, mechanisms of social control, including over antiquities.

Looting antiquities has been part of the coping economy of Middle Eastern societies for centuries. Digging up antiquities



from school curricula and children's vaccination schedules. It produces chits authorizing the movement of fighters, it fixes the prices for childbirth, regulates fishing methods, bans Apple products and sets college examination schedules. And of course there is detailed religious guidance, including for schools, which operate on "Islamic State time."

There are numerous taxes, including *jizya* for non-Muslims, and on businesses and economic transactions, and fees for water, electricity and other services. Antiquities are usually taxed at the *khums* rate of 20 percent. And there are massive expropriations of property—including at gunpoint—from Muslims and especially non-Muslims, everything from cars, refrigerators and apartments to the most heinous of all, slaves. A recent estimate suggests roughly half of ISIS's monthly income derives from confiscation and theft.

All these feed an imperial economy that relies on the continued allegiance of fighters, now estimated to number at least 30,000. Recruiters are paid thousands of dollars for each fighter, depending on their skills. Fighters themselves receive signing bonuses, monthly salaries, child allowances, honeymoon rewards, apartments and much more, including slaves. The ISIS economy and ideology

from archeological sites, and even using their organic rich soil as agricultural fertilizer, is a traditional source of extra money for Middle Eastern populations. By controlling antiquities like other resources ISIS inserts itself into countless holes in the ground. It taxes countless antiquities transactions along the supply chain and controls the movement of the loot, guiding and directing what had been a traditional economic activity.

The real goal is not simply economic profit but psychological control over new ranges of behavior and thought. Making the central government the absolute source of both rewards and punishments was a fundamental part of ancient Mesopotamia, where thugs and their religious henchmen transformed themselves from organized criminals into kings and priests. Similar problems of paying fighters with loot helped drive the imperial expansion of the Umayyad caliphate. ISIS's plunder of ethnic minorities in particular is also reminiscent of Nazi treatment of Jews and their property. ISIS's checkpoints, surveillance and inspection visits, public humiliations and punishments of criminals and others, like breastfeeding women who run afoul of its draconian ways, are parts of a totalitarian



vision of absolute control. ISIS has transformed the pre-Islamic past of Syria and Iraq into a forbidden zone, a mere natural resource to be exploited. But while the financial profits may be relatively small, it also offers ISIS yet another

way to control the behavior and thoughts of its population, transforming them from captives into dependents of what strives to be an all-powerful, divinely mandated state.

Alex Joffe is editor of The Ancient Near East Today, the monthly e-newsletter of the American Schools of Oriental Research. He is also a Shillman-Ginsburg Fellow at the Middle East Forum.

3 Islamic terror groups — ISIS, al-Qaeda, Muslim Brotherhood — seek 'mega-merger' in Libya

Source: http://www.christiantoday.com/article/3_islamic_terror_groupsisis.al.qaeda.muslim.brotherhoodseek.mega.merger.in.libya/77796.htm

Jan 27 – The Libyan branches of Islamic State (ISIS), al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood are finalising a "mega merger" that would include the formation of a joint council of sages, according to London-based newspaper Al Sharq al Awsat.



Citing leaked documents, the paper said the Islamist organisations are considering an alliance, which comes on the heels of an international effort to unite Libya's various factions and warring militias under one government, the Arabic language daily reported, according to WND.

"The three terror groups want to send a message that 'all the Islamist opposition elements speak in one voice and should be treated as such,'" a source told the Arabic newspaper, according to Breitbart.

Negotiations among the three Islamic groups were reportedly prompted by reports of "a rapprochement between the internationally recognised government based in Tobruk and the unrecognised government in the capital Tripoli."

According to the paper, the Muslim Brotherhood is considering a united Islamic front even though the movement is officially in favour of forming a unity government. But sources

within the movement told the paper that their support for the international endeavour is merely tactical, and that they're waiting for it to collapse, Breitbart reported.

The parties have agreed to form a joint Shura (advisory) council and territories that are currently under Islamic control will be divided among them, said the report.

An al-Qaeda representative was quoted as saying that the move would inspire Islamist in Algeria and Egypt to follow suit.

Moreover, Breitbart Jerusalem also disclosed of mediation efforts between the Muslim Brotherhood-aligned Hamas and Salafists aligned with the ISIS.

A previous report by the paper indicated that Shadi al-Menai, one of the leaders of Wilayat Sinai, the ISIS branch in Sinai, visited Gaza in a bid to mediate between Hamas and local Salafi groups after clashes erupted that resulted in the arrests of dozens of jihadists by Hamas forces.

ISIS making millions selling drug that makes fighters feel fearless

Source: <http://news.rediff.com/commentary/2016/jan/28/isis-making-millions-selling-drug-that-makes-fighters-feel-fearless/0eefc1c6ad050667d0ed40e608c577db>



Jan 29 – The Islamic State is making millions of dollars by selling a banned drug that makes fighters feel 'fearless', to different parts of the Middle East, according to the United Nations. The amphetamine, known as **Captagon**, has been available since the 1960s and was used to treat attention deficit disorder.

The drug masks feelings of pain, fear and hunger, while keeping fatigue at bay. The Paris attackers were thought to have taken Captagon before savagely killing 130 people in November. It was put on a list of controlled substances by the World Health Organisation in 1986.



Disneyland Paris Terror Arrest?

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.com/disneyland-paris-terror-arrest-armed-man-custody-amid-islamic-state-fears-france-2284350>

Jan 28 : UPDATE: 1:07 p.m. EST -- The girlfriend of an armed man who was arrested Thursday at Disneyland Paris has also been arrested, BBC reported. She was not armed, and her role in the episode was not immediately clear.

UPDATE: 12 p.m. EST -- French police are reportedly searching for a woman who might have been accompanying an armed man arrested earlier Thursday at Disneyland Paris, according to a tweet from BBC.

Original story: An armed man residing in Paris was arrested Thursday at the entrance of a hotel at Disneyland Paris, BBC reported. In addition to reportedly carrying two handguns, the suspect was also found with a copy of the Quran, according to police sources. The 28-year-old suspect was not known to security services and did not resist arrest. An



official comment from local authorities was not immediately available. Staff notified police after the man's weapons, reportedly concealed in a bag, were detected as he walked through an X-ray scanner while trying to book a hotel room, Metro reported.

France has remained in a state of emergency following the November terrorist attacks in Paris linked to the Islamic State group that left at least 130 people dead and hundreds more wounded.

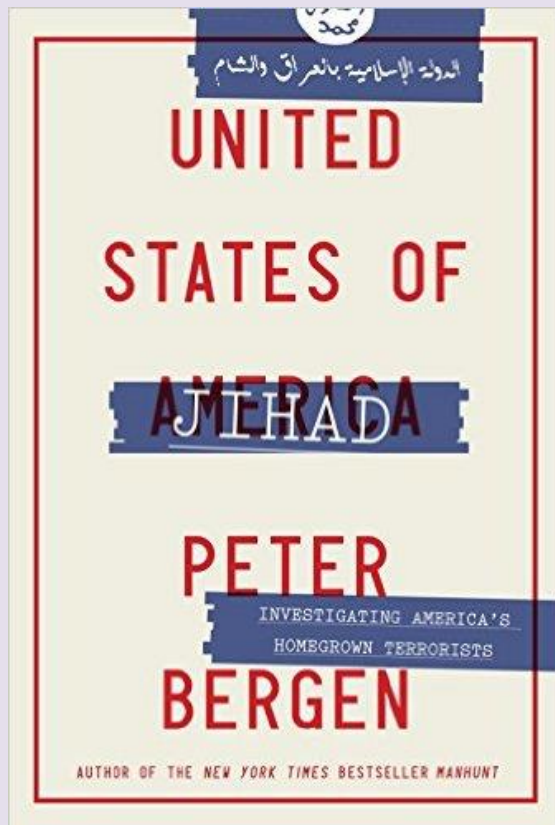
Review

What drives Americans to join the jihad? The book 'United States of Jihad' explains

By Zach Dorfman

Source: <http://www.latimes.com/books/la-ca-jc-united-states-jihad-20160131-story.html>

Jan 28 – Consider the case of Omar Hammami: Born in Alabama to a Syrian Muslim father and American Baptist mother, he attended Bible studies on Sundays and was in



the gifted program at his high school. He then made a long intellectual and temporal journey — from Alabama to Toronto to Egypt and then Somalia — to fight with al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda's Somali affiliate. Hammami released jihadist agitprop hip-hop singles online with song titles like "Send Me a Cruise [Missile]" and "Make Jihad with Me." A prolific user of Twitter, Hammami referred to people as "homie" and name-dropped Tupac Shakur, not unlike any American rap fan.

In "**United States of Jihad**" Peter Bergen, a vice president of the New America Foundation and one of America's most prominent terrorism experts, makes a compelling and often unsettling case that, in the years since Sept. 11, 2001, Islamist terrorism in the United States has metamorphosed. Worries about " sleeper cells" operating under the hierarchical, elitist model of organizations like Al Qaeda have been overshadowed by the domestic threat from diffuse networks and virtual, online communities of like-minded jihadists.

These "lone wolves" may not have the capacity or training to inflict terror on the scale of 9/11, but they are menacing nonetheless. We knew this before the December attack in San Bernardino, during which Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik shot and killed 14 people at a county employee holiday party, but that event underlined the changing nature of domestic Islamist terrorism. While Bergen completed his book before the San Bernardino attacks, his exploration of the environment in which individuals such as Farook and Malik operate helps shed light on this newer, "leaderless" form of jihadist violence.

However, as Bergen shows, the transformation of domestic jihadism has not only dispersed the Islamist terrorist threat but in a perverse process of cultural intermingling has partly *Americanized* jihad itself. The "soft power" appeal of American culture is often considered to be one of this country's most enduring assets, but the new admixture of jihadi terror and pop culture savoir faire potentially turns this idea on its head.

In addition to Hammami, Bergen provides many examples of this phenomenon, which often appears like an especially gruesome farce. Take the case of



Hoda Muthana, a college undergraduate who left her home in Birmingham, Ala., (yes, also Alabama) to join the Islamic State. Tweeting from Syria, Muthana posted pictures of herself (completely veiled, of course) "holding an AK-47 ... on top of a fancy white BMW with the caption 'chillin in the Khilafa [caliphate].'"

Or take the story of Samir Khan, who grew up in the suburbs of New York City, traveled to Yemen to join Anwar Awlaki — then the leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and himself an American citizen — and founded Al Qaeda's first English-language publication. He named it Inspire. The magazine featured articles such as "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom."

The American jihadists profiled in the book — who are white, black, Middle Eastern and Asian, and Muslims by birth as well as conversion — are a motley bunch, as variegated by ethnicity, class and region as America itself.

Some, like Samir Khan and Anwar Awlaki, have been killed by U.S. forces (together, in Yemen in 2011) as part of the war on terror; others, like Hammami, have met their end at the hands of their erstwhile jihadist allies. (Hammami — perhaps neglecting to consider that protections of speech are less rigorously adhered to in Somalia than in the United States — was killed by al-Shabaab leaders after repeatedly criticizing them on Twitter. In another very American innovation, Hammami also live-tweeted what became his execution.)

Many of the people profiled by Bergen seem motivated by the potential for military glory or adventure, others by basic carnal rewards. Most come off as deeply puerile, jihadist Holden Caulfields, rejecting the banalities of American life and seeking refuge in a system of complete intellectual security.

What these men and women often have in common, though, is their emergence from an American cultural milieu they are simultaneously rejecting and appropriating for their own ends.

How successful have they been in this process? The evidence here should make us cautiously optimistic. According to Bergen's findings, since 9/11, a mere 330 people have been charged in the United States with crimes related to jihadist terror — from attempting to join a group abroad or plan a domestic attack, to financing terrorist networks. four out of five

of these individuals are American citizens or permanent residents.

Now, these are not entirely insignificant numbers, but they need to be put in perspective. The nature of terrorism, of course, is such that a small number of determined individuals can cause mass casualty events, so these threats must be treated with deadly seriousness. But what that should actually entail in terms of expenditures in blood and national treasure, and how much of our precious, fragile "open society" we are willing to forfeit in that fight, is a properly political question that deserves to be adjudicated in public, soberly. Nearly 15 years after the 9/11 attacks, many in Washington seem unable or unwilling to respect the American people enough to speak to them like adults.

While acknowledging the real threat that "Binladenism," as he calls it, poses to American interests abroad and security at home, Bergen takes a generally skeptical view of the growth of the post-9/11 national security state and of the fear-mongering about Islam that has increasingly transfixed the darker crannies of American politics. This skepticism, I think, is not only strategically and morally sound but also borne out by the facts.

For example, according to data assembled under Bergen at the nonprofit public policy institute New America Foundation, since 9/11 jihadists have killed 45 people in the United States. During this same period, right wing extremists of various stripes — such as antigovernment and anti-abortion fanatics — have been responsible for 48 deaths domestically. (Before the jihadist attack in San Bernardino, the count was 31 to 48 — not even close.)

This points to a major tension in the book. The United States is an exceedingly violent place by the standards of all other developed countries, and, given the litany of cultural pathologies (entrenched multigenerational poverty, systemic racism, lax gun laws, to name but a few) that drive this violence, jihadism is, in this sense, really the least of our worries. Indeed, as Bergen writes, from 2003 to '10, 88,000 Americans were killed by guns; in the post-9/11 era, jihadists have killed 45 people in the United States. For all their manifest evil, Farook and Malik — perpetrators of the single deadliest instance of



jihadist violence in the United States since 2001 — killed 14.

Bergen is clearly aware of this gap between perception and reality, but he saves almost all of his reflections on the matter until the last chapter, which serves to retrospectively color the rest of the book. As he writes, correctly, "the extent to which our government and the media participate in this endemic paranoia is damaging in that, apart from doing the terrorists' job for them, which is to terrorize, it helps crowd out more serious issues the planet

faces. Climate change is far less telegenic than jihad."

There is small but palpable irony in making this point in a book provocatively titled "United States of Jihad," published at the beginning of an election year. I eagerly await a rush of equally high-profile work on right-wing antigovernment terrorism and a flood of bestsellers with titles like "United States of Disastrous Climate Change Deniers." But I'm not holding my breath for their advent any time soon.

Zach Dorfman is senior editor of "Ethics & International Affairs," the journal of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, where he is also a senior fellow.



ISIS's next target could be cruise ships in the Med

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3422044/Terrorists-target-cruise-ships-Med-ranking-commander-says-ISIS-s-spread-Libya-casts-uncomfortable-shadow.html>



Warning: Vice Adm Johnstone (centre, with Spanish Rear Admiral Jose Delgado, left, and Commander Ignacio Paz, right) said yesterday that Nato must not get 'hustled out' of eastern Mediterranean water space

Jan 29 – **Cruise ships in the Mediterranean could be targeted in a terror attack by militant groups armed with Russian weapons, a top British commander warned yesterday.**

Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone, the UK's highest naval officer in NATO, said Islamic State's spread into Libya had cast an 'uncomfortable shadow' over the sea.

In stark remarks, he revealed the IS terror group are attempting to build a navy to wage war against the West.

He said there was a 'horrible opportunity' that a 'very high quality weapons system' would be used to hit ships crossing the sea, having 'extraordinary implications' for the Western World.



Speaking onboard a Spanish Nato ship in London yesterday, Vice Adm Johnstone said that NATO must not get 'hustled out' of eastern Mediterranean water space.

He said: 'NATO mustn't think the Mediterranean is just about immigration. It is the spread along the North African seaboard, it is the Daesh entry into Libya, it is the Daesh control of Sirte and other places, which has an uncomfortable shadow over maritime trade and maritime access.'

Conflict and revolt across the region had made it more difficult for NATO countries, including Britain, to 'ascertain what threats are there', he said.

He added: **'At the same time, we are tracking the spreads of really quite capable Korean, Chinese and Russian hardware, into bodies such as Hamas and Hezbollah and other places.'**

While they were not targeted at Nato or commercial shipping at the moment, he said: 'There is a horrible opportunity in the future that a misdirected, untargeted round of a very high quality weapons system will just happen to target a cruise liner, or an oil platform, or a container ship.'

He said: 'The eastern Mediterranean has started to become a competed space.'

'We are not in any war, we are not in any period of tension, but there are quite a lot of actors with a say there and we have just got to make sure we can access that, with all the freedom of navigation in international law we want. Does it worry me, yes, quietly it does worry me a bit.'

terrorism that will suddenly have extraordinary implications for the Western world'.

While there is not a threat to shipping from Islamic State currently, he said Nato had watched them 'grow and morph in such extraordinary ways', that he could not predict the future.

Does it worry me, yes, quietly it does worry me a bit

Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone

'We know they have had ambitions to go off shore, we know they would like to have a maritime arm, just as al Qaeda had a maritime arm', he said.

Last year it was revealed that IS militants were building a 'retreat zone' in Libya to avoid international air strikes in Syria and Iraq.

As many as 3,000 jihadist fighters are believed to have travelled to the war-torn country to create a strategic hub for recruits unable to reach IS in its Syrian heartland.

Speaking about the Russian threat to NATO, Vice Adm Johnstone revealed how defence officials were looking to move submarines from the Gulf back to protect countries such as Britain.

He said he was 'worried' about Russian submarines coming close to Britain's waters. He said there was more activity from Russian submarines than NATO has seen since the days of the Cold War.

He said: 'Indeed we are seeing that level of activity but with a level of Russian capability that we haven't seen before.'

'We were used to in the Cold War playing a game of cat and mouse... but it is very different

from the period of quiet submarine activity that perhaps we've seen in the past.'

He said he was starting to see nations 'who in the past had prioritised to have submarines in the Gulf or eastern Mediterranean', 'now looking to reinvest that capability' to protect British, French and American waters.

In October 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked an Italian cruise liner in the Mediterranean and threatened to blow it up.

The **Achille Lauro** was on its way to the Israeli port of Ashdod with more than 400 holidaymakers and crew onboard.



He said he believed an attack on ships such as cruise liners would be an act 'which is almost a mistake...or it will be an act of random



The four heavily armed gunmen demanded the release of 50 Palestinian militants imprisoned in Israel.

If their demands were not met, they threatened to blow up the ship and kill the 11 Americans on board. The next morning, they also threatened to kill the British passengers.

They ended up shooting an American-Jewish pensioner in a wheelchair and then threw him overboard.

On July 10, 1986, an Italian court convicted three of the terrorists and sentenced them to prison terms ranging from 15 to 30 years.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Despite the anti-Russian rhetoric Admiral is so right! It doesn't happened yet but the possibility is visible. In the first 18 days of 2016, there have been 41 terrorist attacks across the globe that have killed more than 500 people. Several of these attacks took place in popular tourist destinations, such as Paris, Istanbul, and Tel Aviv. In 2015, there were more than 22 million passengers aboard cruise ships worldwide — meaning that at any time, there are tens of thousands of travelers afloat. Even now there is still time to take pre-emptive security/defense measures both in ports and aboard. The stake is huge and the consequences even bigger since apart from those victimized inside the cruiser the vessel can be a floating bomb as well. Mark my words: airplane hijacking and cruisers' piracy would be two future threats we are all going to face in the years to come or tomorrow!

Cruise Ship Terrorism: "The Elephant in the Room" for 2015

By Jim Walker

Source: <http://www.cruiselawnews.com/2015/12/articles/worst-cruise-line-in-the-world/cruise-ship-terrorism-the-elephant-in-the-room-for-2015/>

Dec 31, 2015 – We are just a few hours before placing 2015 is in our rear view mirror as we start upon a fresh New Year. So what are the memories which come to mind when we think of taking a cruise in 2015? And what are the lessons that the cruise industry learned in 2015 which will ensure that history does not repeat itself in 2016?

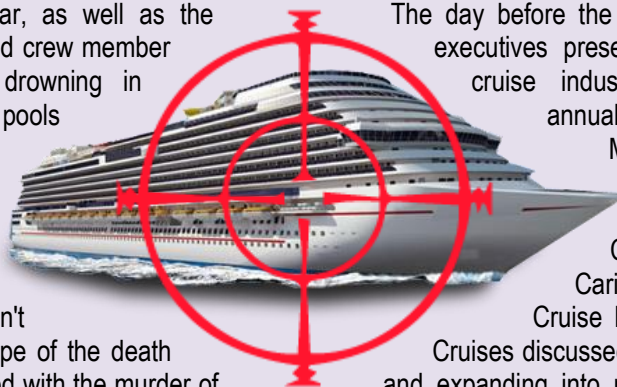
I started the draft of this article by listing all of the ship fires this year, as well as the cases of passenger and crew member overboards, children drowning in cruise ship swimming pools without lifeguards, and sexual assaults of children and women. But all of these incidents, no matter how tragic, don't come close to the scope of the death and mayhem associated with the murder of two dozen cruise passengers by terrorists in Tunisia, Tunisia.

The incident which kept coming back to me as I wrote this article was the massacre of twenty-two cruise passengers from Costa and MSC cruise ships in Tunisia. This terrifying incident involving cruise ships which were docked at the La Goulette cruise port in Tunis should have brought the reality of radical Islamic

terrorism directly to the attention of cruise executives in the U.S. and Europe. We warned about incidents like this happening a month prior in [ISIS Poses Terrorist Threat to Cruise Ships in Mediterranean](#). The passengers, however, received no warnings from the cruise operators which sent bus loads of tourists to the Bardo Museum without making any security arrangements whatsoever.

The day before the massacre, the cruise executives presented a "state of the cruise industry" speech at the annual trade convention on Miami Beach, Cruise Shipping Miami. The CEOs of Carnival, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), and MSC Cruises discussed building bigger ships and expanding into new markets such as Cuba and China. The CEO of NCL, Frank Del Rio, remarked that "Libya, Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon could be more lucrative than Cuba." The convention audience politely applauded and the other cruise executives smiled. I couldn't help tweeting "have you heard of ISIS?"

With the blood of twenty-two dead passengers on their hands, the



cruise lines doubled down and announced that there were no indications that terrorism could strike a cruise ship or its passengers and crew in Tunis. The cruise industry not only refused to take any responsibility for the massacre but the spokesperson for the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) boasted that "cruise ships are a safe and secure place for our guests in the rare event of a shore side incident." MSC Cruises USA CEO Rick Sasso said "There was no hint of terrorism or uncertainty in Tunisia before the attack . . . There are a zillion ports around the world, and we follow all of them. . . There was nothing going on there that indicated this should've been a concern."

The truth is that Tunisian soldiers were engaged in ongoing battles against Al Qaeda when the MSC and Costa ships sailed there. There were prior suicides bombers which targeted hotels and museums filled with tourists. The U.K. had issued a prior warning of a terrorist attack on tourist sites and the U.S. repeatedly urged caution. ISIS was recruiting young men from mosques in Tunis to be trained and radicalized in Libya. The signs of trouble were all there.

The most frequent question which I have received this year is "is it safe to cruise in the Mediterranean with my family?" Yahoo asked me to write an opinion piece about the cruise industry shortly after disaster struck at the Bardo museum. In response, I penned [Is Cruising Safe? A Chilling Look at an Industry Under Siege](#) which provides my thoughts about the issue of safety and international terrorism.

The cruise industry needs to wake up. Tunis was preventable. Greater attention to Al Qaeda and ISIS is necessary to avoid a similar if not worse attack on innocent passengers. Dangerous ports need to be avoided. In the past, Princess Cruises used security teams / police to accompany tour bus excursions in Egypt. Maritime security teams are also required in foreign ports of call to address the risk of waterborne attacks. Cruise lines are overflowing with cash. The cruise industry collects around \$45 billion a year, pays their crew members peanuts and doesn't pay U.S. taxes. The industry needs to start investing some of those tens of millions of dollars into substantial security to keep their guests safe.

NCL's executive Del Rio, who salivated over record profits in Tunis and other risky

Arab/Middle Eastern ports earlier this year was interviewed by Travel Weekly last week. Of course he remains bullish about cruising in 2016 but said that terrorism is always the "elephant in the room." Well it's time that the cruise lines began talking about the elephant.

In the past couple of weeks, travel agents and travel writers have written articles about whether cruise lines are prepared for radical Islamic terrorism. A Florida travel agent wrote ["A Boatload of Reasons Why You Should Feel Secure on a Cruise Ship"](#) for Travel Pulse. Australian travel writer Michael Gebicki wrote ["How Do Cruise Ships Guard Against Terrorism?"](#) Neither article explains what cruise lines are actually doing or provide any reason why you should feel protected on a cruise ship. Both articles are just spinning the story to assure that travel in places like North Africa and the Middle East are not disrupted. These articles don't even admit that most cruise lines do not have any weapons on the ships to repel an organized attack up the gangway. Take a look at the pitiful way [cruise ships responded to the threat of pirates](#) and you can quickly realize that the industry is unarmed and not prepared to protect the passengers or crew.

Cruise ship security teams seem to have their hands full responding to drunk passengers on their ships. A well organized attack by ISIS will send the weapon-less security guards scurrying into the ship. The obvious will then become apparent - that cruise ships are sitting ducks. We already know that [al Qaeda has planned to seize cruise ships and execute passengers](#) years ago. The difference today is that terrorists are no longer interested in holding hostages, but are motivated to simply kill and terrorize as many people as possible.

There will be travelers who read this and will respond that the threat of terrorism is everywhere; just ask the residents of Paris or the citizens in San Bernardino, California. Don't be afraid because the terrorists will already be winning, they will say. Perhaps so. But my thoughts are that a family looking for a relaxing vacation who picks a cruise vacation to the Mediterranean on a huge cruise ship filled with thousands of other passengers is just asking for trouble.



*The New York Times describes **Jim Walker** as "a maritime lawyer in Miami who has attended more than half a dozen Congressional hearings about cruise ship crime and passenger safety." Jim has been involved in maritime litigation since 1983. Based in Miami, Florida, Jim represents passengers and crew members injured or assaulted on cruise ships around the world. He is interviewed frequently when there are fires and mishaps at seas. He is asked to appear regularly on television programs and share his views of disasters at sea. In 2016, Jim has continued as one of the "go to" maritime lawyers when things go wrong on the high seas.*

Are Cruise Ships Vulnerable to Terrorist Attack?

By Paul Bruno

Source: <http://maritime.about.com/od/Engineering/fl/Are-Cruise-Ships-Vulnerable-to-Terrorist-Attack.htm>



The 225,000-GRT Oasis of the Seas is the world's largest cruise ship, carrying 5,400 guests in double occupancy, and 6,296 when full. The ship has 2,165 crew from over 70 countries onboard. Oasis of the Seas has a 30-foot draft, towers 213 feet above the water, and is 1,184 feet long and 208 feet wide. She's big!

May 2015 – Until recently the cruise industry was lucky to avoid terrorist related violence on shore excursions. The killing of cruise passengers visiting a Tunis museum in 2015 sparked a lingering fear that a ship could be hijacked.

The world's largest cruise ship can carry more passengers and crew than everyone who died in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. Five thousand lives could be in danger or even more if a second ship is involved.

Before we get into the specific risks of cruise terrorism let's clear a few issues from the discussion.

First, I'm writing this independently without additional editorial oversight just like everything else on the site. The issue is overlooked and important in my eyes. This twitter user is another person raising a warning and has been interviewed on CNN. He is a recommended follow on Facebook too.

We have a strong body of cruise content on our About.Com Cruising and other travel sites. About.Com accepts advertising from cruise companies and I will stress that my opinions are not influenced by these relationships.

This is particularly true of the next statement. **Overall cruising is a very safe activity that has minimal risk of accidents and an even smaller risk of attack. The risk of a flooded bathroom is thousands of times more likely to inconvenience you than a terrorist hijacking.**

If you think I'm soft on cruise lines take a look at my [Costa Concordia coverage](#) and you will see pointed and deserved criticism.

Risks in Port

Historically ships in port are seen at great risk. Tight quarters and risk of fire at wooden docks were real. The same congestion at cruise ports poses a similar risk.



Accessing the ship is much easier and all ships at berth are only as secure as the least secure ship in the bunch. Bombing is a real threat since resupply cargo must move through local ports.

Hijack in port is a possibility and it could be a long standoff, some commercial piracy standoffs lasted for years. Movement out of the port would likely be blocked and the ship would eventually be taken by local forces.

A cruise ship has three distinct areas; a hotel section made up of the front of the house seen by passengers, the back of the house used by staff.

The amount of explosives to breach the hull from a below the waterline cabin is massive, far more than could get through a security gap at the terminal. Boarding of small parties is possible while underway but they are outnumbered even by the security team alone.

The Worst Situation Imaginable

An internal conspiracy to staff ships on similar routes over a long period of time is a security hole that relies on good screening of employees. Cruise lines and their staffing services don't always do a great job of background checks.



This is how all the laundry and garbage and supplies move around the ship. They are parallel worlds inches apart.

The third area contains the command and mechanical spaces that support the ship itself. These areas offer a second level of security since they are hardened against break in and only are accessible from a few controlled points of entry.

Risks at Sea

Security teams are made up of several well qualified gentlemen with plenty of sea and land security training. The few you see patrolling public spaces are only the most publicly presentable. These personnel act like other passengers or may be hidden in the back of house areas.

Cameras are everywhere and new RFID technology allows individual passengers to be located. Most of the new safety technology on cruise ships plays a dual role and speeds evacuation no matter what the emergency.

It would take a few dozen internal terrorists per ship and plenty of outside help to gain control over a ship. Hostages could be held or killed for ransom. Since financial gain is rare among terrorist motivations it is clear that their preferred currency of change is violent killing of innocent victims.

It's difficult to kill many people on a ship when you are outnumbered and there are so many resources and places to hide. **Destroying the entire ship is the penultimate evil goal, unless it's two ships. Two large cruise ships crashed together at high speed could kill as many as ten thousand people.**

This is the only way to destroy two very strong and large structures like cruise ships and no explosives or bulky equipment is needed.

At one time we thought the idea of flying airliners into tall buildings was a silly idea. The cruise business is full of smart and experienced people who may have a plan in place to deal with such risk, we won't likely ever



know and that is a strong security itself.

Paul Bruno is a United States Coast Guard licensed Ship Master with Passenger Certification. He has been involved in the maritime industry for almost two decades. Throughout his maritime career Paul has worked with a variety of vessels. Commercial ships and work boats mostly, but occasionally something really different, like the Great Lakes schooner reproduction "Dennis Sullivan". As a marine contractor Paul is familiar with all ship systems. Recently a lifelong passion for electronics has sparked an effort to focus on marine hardware and software development. Knot work is a hobby when he is not working, and with nearly 4,000 documented knots, splices, and eyes he will be busy for awhile. Paul studied creative non-fiction and technical writing at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee and University of Waikato, Hamilton NZ. He earned his USCG Master's License in 1993.



European Governments Ignoring Security Warnings?

By Judith Bergman

Source: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/7309/europe-security-warnings>

- *"We are importing Islamic extremism, Arab anti-Semitism, national and ethnic conflicts of other peoples, as well as a different understanding of society and law." — From a leaked German intelligence document.*
- *The mayor of Molenbeek, Belgium ignored a list she received, one month prior to the Paris attacks, "with the names and addresses of more than 80 people suspected as Islamic militants living in her area," according to the New York Times. "What was I supposed to do about them? It is not my job to track possible terrorists," Mayor Schepmans said.*
- *In October 2015, Andrew Parker, director general of Britain's Security Service, said that the "scale and tempo" of the danger to the UK is now at a level he has not seen in his 32-year career. British police are monitoring over 3,000 homegrown Islamist extremists willing to carry out attacks on the UK.*

Jan 30 – **The head of the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST), Benedicte**



Bjørnland, was recently a participating guest at a security conference in Sweden, where she warned against further Muslim immigration.

One cannot," she said, "assume that new arrivals will automatically adapt to the norms and rules of Norwegian society. Furthermore, new arrivals are not homogenous and can bring ethnic and religious strife with them... If parallel societies, radicalization and extremist environments emerge in the long run," she

added, "We will have challenges as a security service."

The changes Bjørnland speaks of -- parallel societies, radicalization and extremist environments -- are nothing new; they have been proliferating throughout Western Europe for years. The Brussels suburb of Molenbeek, which was home to two of the perpetrators of November's terror attacks in Paris, is known as a "terrorist den." Yet the mayor of Molenbeek ignored a list she received, one month prior to the Paris attacks, "with the names and addresses of more than 80 people suspected as Islamic militants living in her area," according to the *New York Times*. "What was I supposed to do about them? It is not my job to track possible terrorists," Mayor Schepmans said. "That is the responsibility of the federal police."

This statement is, in many ways, symptomatic of the European failure to deal with the security problems that Europe faces. The



problem is always supposed to be somebody else's.

Anders Thornberg, the head of the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO), literally begged Swedish society for help: "The Islamist



environments have grown considerably in the past five years," he said "and tensions are growing between various population groups. We need all of society to help fight the radicalization, there are limits to how much faster a security service can run."

These are sentiments that are rarely, if ever, voiced by official Norway or Sweden. Apparently, the fear of offending Muslim sensitivities has thus far overridden security concerns. But even Sweden, which sees itself as a "humanitarian superpower," and up until recently had sworn to keep its doors open to all migrants and refugees, has had to reassess its policy. At the end of November 2015, Sweden's Deputy-Prime Minister Asa Romson, reluctantly and in tears, said that the government had been "forced to take reality into account," given the huge number of migrants that entering the country. Sweden (and Denmark) tightened their border controls a few weeks ago.

It is questionable, however, whether the warning cries of the Scandinavian security services will have any noticeable impact on the fundamental political course of their political leaders, especially if the latest statements by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven are anything to take into account.

In an interview at the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 21, Löfven declared that it was "wrong" to mix up either sexual assaults on European women or the threat of ISIS with the mass migration into Europe: "Sexual harassment is not automatically binding to migration and immigration. We have had sexual harassment in Sweden for many, many years, unfortunately," Löfven told CNBC, thus

pretending that the imported Middle Eastern pastime of *Taharrush* [collective sexual harassment] of thousands of women in Cologne and other European cities on New Year's Eve had nothing to do with migrants.

"What it now takes is to be very clear that this is not appropriate, it is absolutely out of line and we need to take a very clear message now to show to these young girls and women they are of course entitled to walk in the city... without sexual harassment," Löfven added.

No, the girls and the women are not the ones in need of a "clear message." The men harassing and raping them are -- especially in a country now known as the [rape capital of the West](#).

The Swedish prime minister's refusal to "deal with reality" -- including that ISIS terrorists enter Europe together with the migrants -- is disturbing and should be of immense concern to Swedish citizens. It also displays the huge gap in perception of the current situation between the Swedish Security Service and the Swedish government.

The head of the Swedish Security Service has every reason, it turns out, to beg Swedish society to help fight the security challenges Sweden is facing. Considering the current Swedish government, he is going to need all the help he can get.

The additional gap between the genuine concerns of various countries' intelligence and security services on one hand, and governments' fear of offending Muslim sensibilities and venturing beyond the politically correct "narratives" on the other hand, is not confined to Sweden, but evident across Western Europe.

European intelligence and security services have warned for a long time that -- given the increase of mainly Muslim migration and the ensuing growth of parallel societies and extremist environments -- they cannot keep up with the ever-increasing threats of jihadist terrorism, which in the past decade have grown exponentially.

In the **Netherlands**, the Dutch jihadist movement began a far-reaching process of becoming more professional in late 2010, and adopted propaganda methods developed by British jihadists. "The increasing momentum of Dutch jihadism poses an unprecedented threat to the



democratic legal order of the Netherlands," stated the Dutch intelligence service, AIVD, in the autumn of 2014.

In **Germany**, the intelligence agencies warned in the early fall of 2015 that, "We are importing Islamic extremism, Arab anti-Semitism, national and ethnic conflicts of other peoples, as well as a different understanding of society and law."

Four major German security agencies made it clear that "German security agencies... will not be in the position to solve these imported security problems and thereby the arising reactions from Germany's population." Still, this dire warning, which was leaked to the German press, did not cause Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, to change her open-door policy. While Germany has introduced border controls, 2000 asylum claims are still processed there every day.

In **Britain**, the MI5 has openly declared that it cannot stop all terrorist attacks on English soil. In October 2015, Andrew Parker, director general of the Security Service, said that the "scale and tempo" of the danger to the UK is now at a level he has not seen in his 32-year career. He warned that while the threat to the UK from ISIS is on the rise, MI5 can "never" be confident in stopping all terror plots.

Little wonder. British police are monitoring over 3,000 homegrown Islamist extremists who are willing to carry out attacks on the UK, British security sources have warned. That is a 50% increase in less than a decade. Already in November 2014, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, told an international terrorism conference that 25% of the population growth in the UK had arrived in London in the last 10 years, and poses big challenges for the police force, who could not keep up with the pace of immigration.

Judith Bergman is a writer, columnist, lawyer and political analyst.

100s of Saudi Coalition Forces Killed in Missile Attack on Al-Anad Military Base in Yemen

Source: <http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941111001587>

Jan 31 – The Yemeni army and popular forces inflicted heavy losses on the Saudi-led coalition forces in Southwestern Yemen on Sunday, a senior military official announced. "The Saudi forces sustained a great human loss in Yemen's Tochka missile attacks on Al-Anad military base in Lahij province today," Yemeni Army Spokesman Sharaf Luqman said on Sunday.

The difficulties in properly monitoring so many extremists and effectively preventing them from committing acts of terror has also become a tremendous challenge, compounded by the sheer volume of extremists. **Dame Stella Rimington, former head of the MI5, estimated in June 2013 that it would take around 50,000 full-time MI5 spies to monitor 2,000 extremists or potential terrorists 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That would be more than 10 times the number of people currently employed by MI5.**

The situation is not much different in many other European countries. In Germany, Hans-Georg Maassen, head of Germany's BfV domestic security agency, claimed that his office was aware of almost 8,000 Islamic radicals in Germany. He said that all of these extremists advocate violence to advance their goals, with some trying to win over migrants, and that his office receives one or two 'fairly concrete tips' of planned terrorist activity each week.

Most European countries, such as Germany, Britain and France, are operating at their highest terror alert ever. The intelligence services are trying to cope with a situation beyond anything one could have imagined a decade ago.

The fight against the terrorist threat is never going to be won, however, only by pouring more financial resources and manpower into the counter-terrorism effort, although that is of course a necessary first step. As long as the national political leaders who give orders to the security and intelligence services refuse to openly address the threat without shrouding the issue in politically correct language, they will never be able to reduce it, let alone eliminate it.



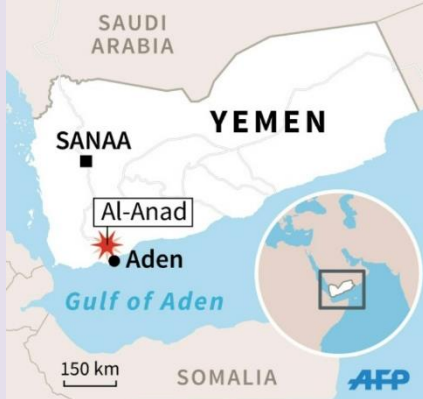
He reiterated that hundreds of Saudi-led forces, including over 200 Sudanese Blackwater mercenaries, have been killed in the Saudi missile attack.

The Yemeni forces' attacks on the Saudi forces' positions in Lahij killed tens of Blackwater mercenaries, including their US commander, and destroyed several Apache and Typhoon helicopters.

The **Tochka missiles** hit a gathering of the Saudi forces at al-Anad military base, killing 200 Sudanese Blackwater mercenaries and their new commander US Colonel Nicolas Petras.

The Blackwater forces' military operations room and the houses of the Blackwater forces were also destroyed in Yemen's attack.

In a relevant development in December, a Yemeni Tochka missile hit the Saudi-led coalition's command headquarters in Sha'ab al-Jen region near Bab al-Mandeb in Ta'iz province, and killed over 150 coalition



servicemen, including 23 Saudi troops, 9 UAE officers and soldiers.

Also on January 17, the Yemeni forces' missile attacks on a Saudi-led command center resulted in the death of over 120 mercenaries, including the Saudi, UAE and US officers.

"The Yemeni army missile unit fired a Tochka missile at the operations room of the Saudi-led forces in Ma'rib and killed over 120 mercenaries with different nationalities," Ali al-Houthi, an Ansarullah Movement Leader, told FNA at the time.

"46 Saudi mercenaries, 11 UAE and 9 Saudi officers and 11 foreign commanders of the US Blackwater company were among those killed in the attack," he added.

Houthi said that 6 Apache and 4 Black Hawk helicopters and 4 drones armed with missiles were also destroyed in the attack.

The command room of communications with the spying satellites and airplanes was also destroyed completely.

Al-Houthi had also said earlier that the missile had hit al-Bairaq military base which hosts the headquarters of the Saudi army's operations.

"The Tochka missile hit the target with high precision and killed tens of the Saudi-led forces, including a senior Saudi commander, who had arrived at the base just yesterday," he said.

Houthi added that in addition to the heavy toll, a large volume of state-of-the-art weapons and military equipment were destroyed in the attack.

He described the missile attack against the Saudi's headquarters in Ma'rib as a major intelligence and military achievement for the Yemeni army and popular forces.



UK terror threat: Isis threaten doomsday attack that will 'turn children's hair white'

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/uk-terror-threat-isis-threaten-doomsday-attack-that-will-turn-childrens-hair-white-1541079>

Jan 31 – Islamic State (Isis) terrorists have warned the UK of a "Doomsday attack" that will eclipse the brutal Paris killings and turn "children's hair white". Despite the numerous warnings by Isis (Daesh) that they are planning to attack the UK, most recently in a



gruesome beheading video believed to have starred British extremist Siddhartha Dhar, this is the "most menacing yet" according to experts.

The new threat was made in its latest edition of the extremists, Arabic language newspaper, al-Naba



(the News) and comes as the group published a [new execution video](#) on the internet on 30 January which featured threats to attack Western nations, particularly Spain. The IS extremists want Spain to "pay dearly" for having crushed Muslim rule in Andalusia which lasted from 711 to 1492.

The article, which eulogises Mohammed Emwazi, dubbed "Jihadi John", who was killed by a US reaper drone strike, warned that the UK will receive the "lion's share" of punishment dished out by the

terrorists. The new warnings have sparked frenzied searches by MI5 for terrorist cells hiding in the UK.

The new attack on Britain will be so severe, IS claims, "that it will turn children's hair to white" said the Sunday Times. The warning is said to refer to a verse in the Koran telling of the horrors expected on Judgement Day.

According to UK security forces around [50 "high-risk" fighters](#) are said to be under close surveillance by MI5 with phone taps and travel restrictions after returning from fighting in Syria. In total, **an estimated 450 British Muslims who travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight with jihadists have returned home.**

In a video released last week nine of the Paris attackers, including ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, threatened Great Britain. Abaaoud, 28, is believed to have travelled to London ahead of the Paris attacks after UK landmarks were found on his phone.

In the video Abaaoud says: "By Allah, we will come to you. Rather, we are already in your lands. We will slaughter you inside your homes." Which could be construed as an existing cell conducting operations inside the UK.

Last week Shiraz Maher, of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College London, wrote in the [New Statesman magazine](#): **"This is not the first time that Isis has appeared to threaten Britain, but it is the most pointed and menacing warning yet."**

The Metropolitan Police reacted to the possibility of an imminent terror threat to the nation's capital by saying: "We want the public to be alert, not alarmed. The current threat level across the UK from international terrorism remains at severe, meaning an attack is highly likely.

"UK police and security and intelligence services are working tirelessly to confront this terrorist threat and keep the public safe."



Colombia urges U.S. to remove FARC from U.S. terror watch list

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160201-colombia-urges-u-s-to-remove-farc-from-u-s-terror-watch-list>

Feb 01 – Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos said in an interview that he would like the United States to remove the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a Marxist rebel group, which had fought successive

Colombian governments since the early 1960s, from the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. He also said he would ask the U.S. authorities to suspend drug warrants against



FARC commanders if a deal is finally signed to bring to an end the country's five-decade civil war.



THE WASHINGTON POST
Fox News Latino reports that in an interview days before an important key visit to the White House, Santos said that once a deal between the Colombian government and FARC is signed, it would be right for the Obama administration to remove FARC from a [State Department list of terrorist organizations](#), where the group has been included for nearly two decades.

FARC and the Colombian government have been engaged in peace talks mediated by Cuba, and last week received a UN commitment to monitor the implementation of the agreement for one year. FARC has already renounced kidnapping and declared a unilateral truce, but not all the details about how, when, and where the group members would turn their arms to the government have been worked out.

"If they sign it's because we have a timetable for their disarmament and they have committed themselves to lay down their arms and make this transition to legal life. So I would say yes, I hope that they would be eliminated from the terror list," said Santos.

Santos' 4 February meeting with President Barack Obama will mark fifteen years and \$10 billion in U.S. counterinsurgency and anti-

narcotics aid to one of the U.S. closest hemispheric allies.

Fox News Latino notes that the high-profile



GENE THORP/THE WASHINGTON POST
meeting highlights a historic moment in Colombia's violent history: Both sides agree that the peace talks in Cuba have reached a point of no return, and both side expect a final deal to be signed as early as March.

Last week the UN Security Council unanimously endorsed sending a mission to monitor an eventual accord. The UN decision was an important victory for Santos, who is trying to raise funds from regional and international donors for a broad, 10- to 15-year effort to recover and develop vast swaths of Colombian territory – a territory the size of Switzerland – which had been under FARC control for five decades. The FARC-controlled areas did not benefit from the infrastructure and development programs of successive governments, and were the theater of on-going war between FARC, on the one hand, and the Colombian military and right-wing paramilitary militias, on the other hand.

Santos, when asked about how soon after the peace agreement is signed should FARC be removed from the U.S. terror list, said "the shorter the better."

A coalition of Colombian paramilitary militias had to wait six years after it disarmed to be removed from the U.S. terror list.



Santos urged the United States to follow his lead in Colombia and suspend drug-related arrest warrants targeting the FARC's top leadership. Many of these leaders are part of the FARC negotiating team in Havana.

In 2006, U.S. federal prosecutors obtained indictments against fifty FARC leaders for supplying more than half of the world's cocaine. Santos said these charges were exaggerated, and that in any event, they would make it more difficult for the FARC leaders to carry out their commitments, which bare part of the peace agreement, to end the group's involvement in the drug trade and join the government in the campaign to eradicate cocaine crops.

"Any effort by the United States to allow us to apply transitional justice, for example by suspending the arrest warrants, would help us tremendously," he said.

Santos told the *Guardian* that FARC's charging of a war tax on cocaine moving through FARC-controlled territory was not unlike tactics used by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in its fight with Britain.

"The way the IRA was robbing banks, the guerrillas were financing themselves from drug trafficking," he said.

He stressed, though, that if FARC members continue to enrich themselves through drugs, all bets are off.

"Let's be very clear: if they don't behave, they'll be extradited [to the U.S.]," he said.

The State Department insists that only prosecutors can suspend the arrest warrants.

Santos noted that under Plan Colombia, launched by President Bill Clinton fifteen years ago, Colombia has evolved from a near-failed state into one of the world's fastest-growing emerging markets, with ever-decreasing levels of conflict-linked violence.

As the country has stabilized, the United States has reduced its economic aid to the country – but Santos said he hoped the United States would now consider bringing funding for Plan Colombia to levels closer to those of fifteen years ago. He said this increased aid is necessary as Colombia turns to building roads, schools, and other infrastructure, and as the state tries to extend its reach to area which traditionally had been forsaken and to which, beginning in the early 1960s, the government has been denied access altogether.

Santos will also meet with GOP leaders in Congress – an important meeting, since some conservative Republicans have joined Colombian conservatives in criticizing what they see as Santos's easing up on the war on drugs, and leniency toward rebels who committed grave atrocities.

"Colombia is at a tipping point," Santos said. "If we receive the help that we need, because we are in a difficult situation financially as is all of Latin America, we can take advantage of this new situation."

Another Top Islamic State Leader Reportedly Killed as Terrorists Live in Fear of Mystery Sniper Known as the 'Daesh Hunter'

Source: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2016/02/01/another-top-islamic-state-leader-reportedly-killed-as-terrorists-live-in-fear-of-mystery-sniper-known-as-the-daesh-hunter/>

Feb 01 -- **Reports of a mysterious sniper taking out Islamic State leaders gained national attention over the weekend.** As of Monday, another prominent Islamic State recruiter has reportedly been killed.

Neil Prakash, who came to be known as Abu Khaled al-Cambodi, was an Australian-born terrorist linked to courting young people to come and fight for the terrorist group in Syria, *Mirror* reported. It was not long after Prakash arrived in Syria in 2013 that he became a crucial player in advancing the conglomerate now known as the Islamic State. Prakash appears prominently in one of the group's propaganda videos, urging fellow Australian "brothers" to rise up against their government.



The Islamic State listed him in recruitment handbooks as a contact person for young radicals hoping to join the terror cult.

Julie Bishop, foreign affairs minister to the U.K., told parliament that he had “sought to commission violent terrorist acts, including in Australia, and to recruit others, including young Australian women and girls, to travel to Syria and Iraq to join the Daesh terrorists.”

Though IS has confirmed Prakash’s death, as of Monday morning, the Australian government has yet to confirm his passing.

According to Mirror, the office of the attorney general George Brandis said the government “cannot confirm reports of the death of Neil Prakash at this time because of the serious security situation in Syria and Iraq.”

Last June the Australian government targeted Prakash with financial sanctions, threatening 10 years of jail time to anyone caught providing the terror leader with “material support.”



Details of how Prakash died remain unclear, though many believe his death to be linked to a series of killings by a sniper known as the “Daesh Hunter.”

Recent assassinations of several Islamic State leaders occurred in the coastal city of Sirte, the home town of Muammar Gaddafi, which became a stronghold for the terrorists last year.

Now IS troops are searching Sirte for the assailant.

According to Libya Prospect, the first commander to be killed by the mysterious sniper was Hamad Abdel Hady, a

Sudanese national nicknamed Abu Anas Al-Muhajer. Al-Muhajer is thought to have been an official Sirte’s shariah court.

The next leader to be slain was Abu Mohammed Dernawi, killed on January 19 near his home in Sirte.

And on January 23 Abdullah Hamad al Ansari, an IS commander from southern Libya, was gunned down while leaving a mosque.

According to Mirror, one source said there is now a “state of terror” among the Islamic State higher-ups. The same source reported that militant leaders’ “randomly shot in the air to scare inhabitants” while looking for the sniper.

The recent killing of Prakash is thought to be the work of the same gunman, who is thought to have become something of a hero to those living in the city under ISIS rule.

Obama ignoring evidence of Baltimore mosque's ties to terror

By Leo Hohmann

Source: <http://www.wnd.com/2016/02/obama-ignoring-evidence-of-baltimore-mosques-ties-to-terror/#ZDAPG3rowAIDS3DI.99> Published: 5 hours ago

President Obama ignored evidence from law enforcement warning him that the Baltimore mosque he plans to visit as a gesture of religious tolerance has a long history of ties to terrorism, according to the Investigative Project on Terrorism.

The mosque’s leaders have also made outrageous anti-Israel statements.

IPT president and founder Steve Emerson told WND his organization was told first hand by law enforcement that Obama was presented the evidence against the Islamic Society of Baltimore.

According to Emerson’s investigation, law enforcement officials told him they were asked

about whether the Baltimore mosque had engaged in radical politics or was connected in any way to terrorism in the past.

“They prepared memos for the president’s aides that specifically laid out the sordid history and nexus to terrorism of the Islamic Society of Baltimore,” Emerson told WND.

So what did the president do?

“As he has done so many times in the past, he decided to ignore this evidence and still continue his plans to confer legitimacy on a mosque that has a history of having officials connected to Islamic terrorism and to this day still has officials making



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

outrageously pro-terrorist statements that would seem to conflict with the president's policies," Emerson said.

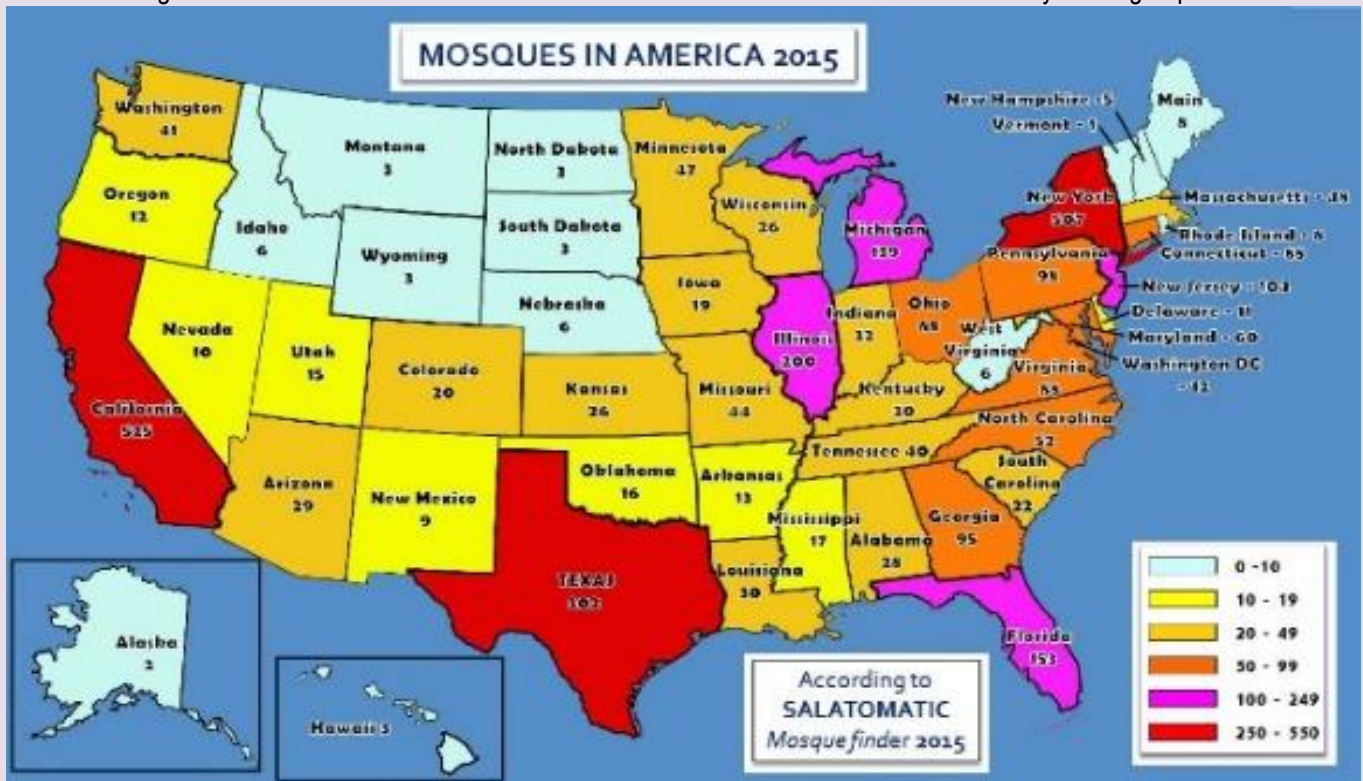
The mosque is affiliated with the Islamic Society of North America or ISNA, which has its own sordid history.

ISNA was started by members of the international Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s. The Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, is banned in many countries as an extremist organization.

the expense of the Muslims he should be reaching out to — those that have courageously acknowledged the serious magnitude of radical Islam that seems to be prevailing in the American Muslim community," Emerson added.

While performing his media "stunt" aimed at promoting religious tolerance, Emerson said he fully expects Obama "to invoke the fabricated concept of 'Islamophobia.'"

That term was "invented by front groups for



There are now 3,186 mosques in America and nearly 80 percent of them have been opened since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

"One can only conclude that the selection of this mosque by the president was made as part of his consistent policy to not even utter the term 'radical Islam' and the simultaneous policy of inviting only radical Islamist groups and leaders to the White House that FBI documents clearly show were derived from the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas," Emerson told WND. "By blithely dismissing the radical statements made by the officials of this mosque and more importantly by ignoring federal law enforcement's warning not to confer legitimacy on this mosque because of its previous ties to terrorist groups and leaders, the president has once again legitimized radical Islamic groups at

Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood in a deliberate effort to silence criticism of radical Islam," Emerson said.

Mohammad Adam el-Sheikh, an imam who served at the Baltimore mosque for 15 years, most recently in 2003, was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan in the 1970s. He also has worked for an Islamic relief group that the Treasury Department designated as a terrorist organization in 2004.

But he also told his congregation in Falls Church, Virginia, that Palestinian suicide bombings were sometimes justifiable.

"If certain Muslims are to be cornered where they cannot defend themselves, except through these kinds of means, and their local religious leaders issued fatwas to permit that, then it becomes acceptable



as an exceptional rule, but should not be taken as a principle,” el-Sheikh said.

It should come as no surprise that Obama has chosen the Islamic Society of Baltimore for his first visit to an American mosque, says Dr. Mark Christian, a former child imam who grew up in Egypt the son of a Muslim Brotherhood member.

Dr. Mark Christian grew up in a prominent Muslim family in Egypt and converted to



Christianity as an adult.

Christian, grew up in a prominent Muslim Brotherhood household in Cairo and had memorized two-thirds of the Quran by the time he was 13. He would eventually break away from Islam and travel to England, then the United States, where he has lived in Nebraska and started the Global Faith Institute.

Christian says ISNA exercises a stranglehold over close to 70 percent of U.S. mosques, making it one of the most influential Muslim organizations in the country.

‘He knows exactly what he is doing’

In keeping with its Muslim Brotherhood benefactors, the Baltimore mosque has a reputation for pushing political Islam or “Islamism.”

“President Obama visiting that mosque is part of his agenda. He knows exactly what he is doing,” Christian told WND.

Most of the recent terrorist attacks on U.S. soil have in fact been carried out by Muslims who attended Islamic Society mosques. The Tsarnaev brothers, who carried out the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 had attended the

Islamic Society of Boston. The Chattanooga shooter, Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez, who murdered five U.S. servicemen last year, attended the Islamic Society of Greater Chattanooga. Syed Farook, one of the San Bernardino attackers who killed 14 at a Christmas party, attended the Islamic Center (formerly Islamic Society) of Riverside.

“By law ISNA should be shut down immediately,” due to its ties to terrorism, Christian said.

“But because of Obama this organization is still in existence and it will continue in existence because of him and because of Hillary Clinton if she is elected,” Christian said. “The law is clear. If any institution has ties to terrorism it should be shut down and its officers arrested. ISNA has been caught doing that very thing.”

[Masjid Fatima mosque, Catonsville, MD](#)

Evidence in court documents

The evidence against ISNA was presented during the Holy Land Foundation terror-financing trial in 2007 and 2008 in Dallas, Texas. ISNA was an unindicted co-conspirator in a funding scheme that funneled money to Hamas.

But one of the first things President Obama’s attorney general, Eric Holder, did upon taking office in 2009 was to postpone the Holy Land Foundation trial.

“He refused to continue the prosecution,” Christian said.

He not only refused to continue what had been a successful series of prosecutions of American Muslims for their involvement in funding an overseas terrorist organization, but Obama also went to work to legitimize the Muslim Brotherhood brand in the U.S.

“We should not be surprised that the current administration is visiting this kind of establishment in Baltimore, because this has been the way of President Obama and his administration from day one,” Christian said. “He insisted to have Muslim Brotherhood aides and counsels in the White House, he insisted to have their presence when he was touring Egypt and the Middle East after he became president. He has recorded a video presentation to send to the ISNA every year at their convention. He regularly and



religiously invited the Muslim Brotherhood leaders to the White House at every occasion to get their counsel.”

Of the more than 3,000 mosques currently operating in the United States, about 80 percent of them have opened their doors since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., Christian said.

Without Saudi cash and the backing of a large organization like ISNA many mosques would struggle financially in the U.S.

This is where the Muslim Brotherhood steps in to “rescue” the struggling mosques.

Another brotherhood-affiliated organization called the North American Islamic Trust or NAIT holds the key.

“They buy the land, build the mosque and staff that mosque to keep it running. The imams have to agree with the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood so there will be no compromises,” Christian said. “They get training through the Muslim Brotherhood.”

Many of the older, more independent mosques have been suffering financially and become vulnerable to a Brotherhood takeover.

“NAIT comes in and offers to help out with renovation or staffing, and once they get their foot in the door they start dictating what this mosque must teach and do,” Christian said.

Different than churches

The mosque does not function like most churches or synagogues in America, he said. There is very little autonomy.

“The mosque does not have the freedom to have a separate message from the larger institution. They actually have to work in harmony and they cannot divert from the mainstream whatsoever,” Christian said. “They have to follow Islam, which as an ideology does not allow this type of free thinking. The Muslim Brotherhood cannot allow any mosque to stray.”

Just ask Texas imam Nidal Alsayyed. He stated last month he agreed with GOP presidential hopeful Donald Trump that Muslim immigration should be temporarily halted and was forced to resign his post as director of the Islamic Society of the Triplex in Beaumont, Texas, reported Fox 4 TV in Beaumont.

Nidal Alsayyed, an imam at an ISNA-affiliated mosque in Texas, was fired when he spoke up in favor of Donald Trump’s proposed halt on Muslim immigration.

“He was imam at an ISNA mosque and as soon as he opened his mouth he was ousted,” Christian said. “Peaceful Muslims are not so much dedicated to building a mosque and staffing it and keeping it running. Most of the ones who do that are political Muslims. So the money is key to their control. The Muslim Brotherhood controls mosques like a mafia in America and are not allowing anybody to divert from their way or change the way of thinking.

“So we should not be surprised when we see President Obama visiting this mosque in Baltimore with a radical background and ties to ISNA.”

Baltimore mosque works with CAIR to blast Israel

Islamic Society of Baltimore leaders have worked closely with the Council on American-Islamic Relations or CAIR, which is another offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, said Emerson.

In 2014, two leaders of the Baltimore mosque joined with CAIR in a news conference blasting Israeli military actions in Gaza. The conflict, known as Operation Protective Edge, started when Hamas operatives kidnapped and murdered three Israeli teens and continued its incessant campaign of firing rockets with the hope of killing Israeli civilians.

Those rockets were fired from densely populated areas, including near schools and houses of worship.

“But Hamas murders and ongoing efforts to carry out more were never mentioned by the CAIR and ISB officials,” according to Emerson’s investigation. “Instead, they blamed Israel when raids aimed at rocket launchers and other Hamas targets inadvertently killed and injured civilians.”

Islamic Society of Baltimore President Muhammad Jameel referred to ‘genocide in the name of self-defense’ and said, “as an American I am ashamed to stand here.”

Abid Husain, the mosque’s general secretary, joined Jameel in calling for the U.S. to pressure Israel into opening Gaza’s borders, ending an embargo that was enacted to stop the flow of weapons and materials used to make them.

“The U.S. government must not remain silent about Israel’s indiscriminate assault and unjust use of force,” Husain said. “The right of a nation to defend itself



does not extend to unrestrained aerial bombardments of civilian populations and must

be condemned.”

Leo Hohmann is a news editor for WND. He has been a reporter and editor at several suburban newspapers in the Atlanta and Charlotte, North Carolina, areas and also served as managing editor of Triangle Business Journal in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Two Jihadist Terrorist Suspects Arrested in Greece

Source: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2016/02/01/two-jihadist-terrorist-suspects-arrested-in-greece/#sthash.LLDV77Vd.dpuf>

Feb 01 – Greek police are investigating the two jihadist terrorist suspects who were arrested in Alexandroupolis on Thursday while trying to cross to Turkey. One of them is believed to be “Maximus,” a man known to European authorities as a possible terrorist.



The men were traveling with Swedish passports. Bosnian Mirsad Bektasevic, aged 29, (photo) and Yemeni Al Hasani Amer, aged 20, were arrested on charges of carrying weapons for the Islamic State with their final destination believed to be either Syria or Iraq.

Police arrested the two men at the Alexandroupolis bus station, when they found military knives and a military combat vest in their luggage.

According to police information, the 29-year-old was arrested in Bosnia in 2005, when explosives and a belt with explosives were found in his apartment.

Also, a video was found showing a hooded person heralding hooded terrorist attacks in the U.S.A., the

White House and on Capitol Hill.

The hooded man was believed to be Bektasevic. Investigation, however, could not prove that he participated in terrorist attacks. Bektasevic was sentenced to 15 years in prison in Bosnia. He served a part of his sentence and was then released. Shortly after, he went to Sweden where he requested and received political asylum.

The detainees at Alexandroupolis refuse to answer police questions and have been taken to the prosecutor. They haven't asked for a lawyer either. They insist that they did not want to cross to Turkey or travel to Syria, they have no ties with ISIS and they wanted to visit the village of Peplos as tourists.

The Counter-Terrorism unit of the Hellenic Police and the National Intelligence Service are investigating the route, the final

destination and the activities of the two suspects, who were planning to cross from Alexandroupolis to Turkey. Their cell phones and the people with whom they had contact with are under investigation.





Authorities were alerted of the suspects' presence when they arrived (from Denmark) at Eleftherios Venizelos Athens International Airport. From there, both men took a KTEL bus for Thessaloniki and from there they took another bus to Alexandroupolis. When they booked bus tickets for Tyhero — a village adjacent to the Turkish border — a signal for their arrest was given by European intelligence services.

Swedish passports found traded on black market

Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-04/13/c_133257752.htm

April 12, 2014 – Swedish passports are becoming "hard currency" on the black market, and over the last two years 177,000 valid Swedish passports in total were reported missing, local media reported on Saturday.

Each Swedish passport can be prized up to 80,000 Swedish kronor (about 12,200 U.S. dollars) on the black market. It is believed that the number of the actual missing Swedish passports is higher than what has been reported, said the Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter (Dn).

Statistics from the National Police Board of Sweden show that 861 people have reported at least three passports missing over the last two



years while two persons reported that they had lost 12 passports during the period.

It is reported that Swedish passports are common to be used in illegal activities such as human trafficking.

"We are convinced that the documents are also used in other organized crimes such as fraud and terrorism offence," Kerstin Hogback, police inspector with the Swedish National Bureau of Investigation, was quoted as saying by Dn.

Despite that, there is nothing much that can be done by the Swedish police so far, said Dn.

Swedish passports are considered as one of the passports that are most difficult to copy in the world after being modernized in 2012, but Sweden has poor control over the lost and stolen passports, which leads to that a Swedish passport could be used



by people who have a similar look with the original owner, said Dn.

"We have very liberal rules in Sweden. Some other countries have tightened their rules and set higher requirements," Lars Bohle, head of travel documents with the National Police Board of Sweden, was quoted as saying by Dn. **Furthermore, to get a legal Swedish passport only costs 350 kronor (about 54**

dollars), even for those who have lost their passports repeatedly.

A solution to the problem can be that Sweden introduce fingerprint in the passports ahead of the European Union.

Besides, it should also be investigated if it ought to be more difficult for people who have lost many passports to get a new one, said Dn.

DEA, European authorities uncover massive Hezbollah drug, money-laundering operation

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160202-dea-european-authorities-uncover-massive-hezbollah-drug-moneylaundering-operation>

Feb 02 – **The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) yesterday announced what the agency described as a "significant enforcement activity," including arrests targeting Lebanese Hezbollah's External Security Organization Business Affairs Component (BAC), which is involved in international criminal activities such as drug trafficking and drug proceeds money laundering.** These proceeds are used to purchase weapons for Hezbollah for its activities in Syria. The agency notes that the investigation into the Lebanese Shi'a militia's criminal activities is ongoing, and that it involves numerous international law enforcement agencies in seven countries. The investigation "once again highlights the dangerous global nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism," DEA says.

DEA [notes](#) that the effort is part of DEA's Project Cassandra, which targets a global Hezbollah network responsible for the movement of large quantities of cocaine in the United States and Europe. This global network, referred to by law enforcement as the Lebanese Hezbollah External Security Organization Business Affairs Component (BAC), was founded by Hezbollah chief of operations Imad Mughniyah, who was killed by Israeli agents in Damascus in 2008, and currently operates under the control of Abdallah Safieddine and recent U.S.-designated Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) Adham Tabaja.

Members of the Hezbollah BAC have established business relationships with South American drug cartels, such as La

Oficina de Envigado, responsible for supplying large quantities of cocaine to the European and United States drug markets.

The Hezbollah BAC continues to launder significant drug proceeds as part of a trade based money laundering scheme known as the Black Market Peso Exchange.

"These drug trafficking and money laundering schemes utilized by the Business Affairs Component provide a revenue and weapons stream for an international terrorist organization responsible for devastating terror attacks around the world," said DEA acting deputy administrator Jack Riley. "DEA and our international partners are relentless in our commitment to disrupt any attempt by terrorists and terrorist organizations to leverage the drug trade against our nations. DEA and our partners will continue to dismantle networks who exploit the nexus between drugs and terror using all available law enforcement mechanisms."

DEA notes that beginning in February 2015, based on DEA investigative leads, European authorities launched an operation targeting the network's criminal activities on the continent. Since then, law enforcement authorities, supported by DEA, have uncovered an intricate network of money couriers who collect and transport millions of euros in drug proceeds from Europe to the Middle East. The currency is then paid in Colombia to drug traffickers using the Hawala disbursement system. A large portion of the drug proceeds was found to go through Lebanon, and a significant



percentage of these proceeds is benefitting Hezbollah.

This investigation benefitted from leads developed during the investigation into the Lebanese Canadian Bank.

“The combination of aggressive international law enforcement investigations and Treasury’s ongoing sanctions pressure shows the scope of the global commitment to diminish the ability of Hezbollah and its financial supporters to move funds worldwide,” DEA says.

The most significant arrest announced yesterday was of the U.S.-designated SDGT Mohamad Nouredine, a Lebanese money launderer who has worked directly with Hezbollah’s financial apparatus to transfer Hezbollah funds via his Lebanon-based company Trade Point International S.A.R.L. and maintained direct ties to Hezbollah commercial and terrorist elements in both Lebanon and Iraq.

Separately, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced sanctions last week targeted Hezbollah’s financial support network by designating Hezbollah-affiliated money launderers Nouredine and Hamdi Zaher El Dine, as well as Trade Point International S.A.R.L, a company owned or controlled by Nouredine, in accordance with Executive Order 13224. This order targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism.

Adam J. Szubin, Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, stated that, “Hezbollah needs individuals like Mohamad Nouredine and Hamdi Zaher El Dine to launder criminal proceeds for use in terrorism and political destabilization. We will continue to target this vulnerability, and expose and disrupt such enablers of terrorism wherever we find them.”

Terrorism will destroy tourism for generations to come

Source: <http://www.heraldgoa.in/Edit/Editorial/Terrorism-will-destroy-tourism-for-generations-to-come/98526.html>

Feb 03 – **The biggest casualty of war and terrorism, even in the most breathtaking of places is tourism. Goa is at the crossroads.**

The state has been free from any terror strike, in spite of threats looming large and annual intelligence warning of impending attacks in the tourist belt. However, even if there is even a hint of complacency and the cry wolf syndrome sets in, the state will be woefully short of intelligence, preparedness, crisis management, and finally the strength to combat terror, if (and hopefully not when) it actually strikes.

As the threat from impending attacks in parts of Goa, has acquired, for the first time, very credible proportions, Goa’s biggest asset - tourism - is under real threat. The 20 % shortfall in foreign tourists due to various reasons could lead to a spiraling drop, if a terror threat is added to the

bag of reasons. From the Middle East to the sub-continent of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have all been victims of terrorism. But the economic downturn has been felt very acutely,

when terrorism has wiped out tourism. Look at pre-war Jaffna in Sri Lanka and compare it with the post-LTTE era. While the battle fields of Jaffna became the venue of terrorism tourism, as hordes descended in the erstwhile war-torn area to take a look at the LTTE strongholds, this soon gave way to many visiting Sri Lanka to see the beauty of the land, the cleanliness of its cities and beaches and the confidence of a nation

bursting with energy to welcome the world after decades of living under the shadow of terror.



Goa needs to be very alarmed because the current terror threats are not from the Kashmir



school of militancy or even from the Indian Mujahideen. The National Security Guard (NSG) has warned that the Islamic State and al-Qaeda are likely to launch a combined attack in India, especially in tourist spots such as Goa and metropolises such as Bangalore. Fourteen people, aged between 20 and 53 years, were picked up across the country after they had purchased explosive material and electronic circuits used for fabricating Improvised Explosive Devices, acid, nuts and bolts that are used as splinters in bombs.

In a report in the Indian Express, JN Choudhary, the director general of the country's elite anti-terror force, warned that there is a threat of such an attack in India and that the 26/11 attack was a "curtain raiser".

News channels reported that the NSG chief further said the two groups can ally with the Indian Mujahideen to carry out the attacks

And then of course the postcard received in Goa warning that the Prime Minister and the

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar were on the immediate hit list of ISIS, has put the security agencies on very high alert.

This brings us to a fundamental issue. **Is Goa prepared for a terror attack?** The long and the short answer is a two letter word called NO. The combined strength of the police, the Anti Terrorist squad and other agencies are not capable of handling any serious terror attack. Some would argue that they are not expected to. This needs to be handled by the centre. That's a fair point. However no terror plot can be effective without local intelligence and handlers. 26/11 did not happen because Ajmal Kasab and his team executed

the plan brilliantly. It happened because one David Coleman Headley spent months in Mumbai, undercover, on a reconnaissance and intelligence gathering mission. And if the local IB unit and the police had picked on this, 26/11 may never have happened.

This is Goa's biggest challenge. It needs to get its act together and pick up local intelligence in a manner in which it has never done before. Kashmiri terrorists, IM's Yasin Bhatkal and others have all been terror guests in Goa without the local police getting a whiff. Goa cannot afford such costly mistakes, because now, there will be no second chance. If a single bomb goes off or a single bullet is fired, no amount of beach cleaning, garbage free roads, helicopter rides and efficient taxis with meters and low fares, can ever get back tourists to Goa.

A terror attack will not just harm humans, but set Goa back for generations to come.

The ghost town of Sharm El Sheikh

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3338674/How-bombings-political-turmoil-plane-crash-left-Egypt-s-tourism-industry-crisis-millions-stop-visiting-country-s-resorts.html>

Nov 2015 – It's faced bombings and political turmoil over the past decade - and last month's plane crash has left Egypt's tourism industry in chaos.

Some 15million visitors a year were heading to the country up until the 2011 Arab Spring, but that had dropped to just 9million in 2014.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

And this eye-opening collection of photos reveals an abandoned landscape of deserted beaches, unfinished hotels and a country in crisis.



Married photographers Andrea and Magda have documented the Sinai region including resorts such as Sharm El Sheikh and Nuweibaa. They spent nine months touring the area after finding more and more of the places they had previously visited were closing down. They say a big reason for the abandoned landscape is the Sinai economy being entirely based on tourism and therefore extremely fragile.



Andrea said today: 'I just spoke with someone in Sharm el Sheikh to verify about the tourists and they told me there is almost nobody.' He called the situation 'very desperate', adding that his visits felt 'like a video game - when you enter a place and you uncover things'.



Andrea told MailOnline: 'What was fascinating also is this impression of artificiality of these buildings – everything looked artificial.' He explained how mass tourism had transformed Sharm, saying that tourists are 'not connected any more with the culture of the place'. And France-born Andrea also

observed that the Bedouins, the main inhabitants of Sinai, are 'rarely part of the tourism economy'.



The suspected bombing of a Russian passenger jet saw British Airways and easyJet cancel flights between Sharm and the UK until 2016. The Foreign Office has warned British tourists of a 'high threat from terrorism' in Egypt, where more than 900,000 UK nationals visit a year.

Arrested: Suspected Islamic State Terror Cell Plotting Attacks on Swingers Clubs

Source:

<http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/02/02/suspected-islamic-state-terror-cell-plotting-attack-on-swingers-club-arrested/>

Feb 02 – **Six Muslim coverts have been arrested in France, after police intelligence indicated the cell was days away from committing a series of attacks on swingers clubs.** The group had already purchased bus tickets so they could flee to Syria.

The arrests occurred in Rhône, just outside the city of Lyon in east-central France. The suspects, five men and a woman, had converted to radical Islam and were all on the radar of French intelligence. Several were well known for actively proselytising their views on jihad and the Islamic State (IS) in the local area.

"Intelligence indicated that an attack on French soil was being prepared against swingers clubs", a police source told *BFM TV*, adding that "house searches are underway".

At least two of the group had made attempts to obtain weapons, and all had **purchased bus tickets to Syria via Bulgaria and Turkey** – presumably because they planned on escaping to join IS if they were not 'martyred' during their attack.

According to *Metro News*, the tickets were booked for 8th February, in less than a week's time, indicating that the attacks were imminent.

Swingers clubs are commonly known as 'clubs échangistes' or 'club libertin' in France, and there are thought to be around 500 across the country. They serve as private meeting places for consensual sex between couples and individuals, however in recent years they have become increasingly fashionable and expensive, and act more like chic nightclubs.

Just two days ago, on Sunday the 31st of January, a blond-haired Frenchman appeared in the latest IS propaganda video, threatening new terrorist attacks in the west that will "make them forget September 11 and Paris".

France is still reeling from two terrorist attacks in the country last year, including the series of attacks in January 2015 on the satirical publication *Charlie Hebdo* and a Jewish supermarket, and the November shootings and suicide bombings which killed 130 in Paris. Both were committed by jihadists including French and Belgian citizens.

Anti-terrorism chiefs ready for 'worst' at Rio Olympics

Source: <http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/2016/02/05/Anti-terrorism-chiefs-ready-for-worst-at-Rio-Olympics>

Jan 05 – **Brazil may have so far escaped the radar of radical Islamist groups, but the Rio Olympics is taking no chances on terrorism when the Games start in six months.**

"We are on permanent alert. We are ready for the worst-case scenario," said Andrei Rodrigues, secretary of government security for major events.

Rodrigues' department already has solid experience from keeping order at events

including the 2014 World Cup and Pope Francis' visit in 2013.

But attacks by Islamist gunmen in Paris and elsewhere in 2015 have raised the stakes at big, international events.

Some 85,000 security personnel -- 47,000 police and 38,000 soldiers -- will guard 10,500 athletes and the huge number of journalists, tourists



and others flocking from around the world to Rio for the August 5-21 Games. The deployment will be double that in London in 2012.

And even without terrorism, Rio can be dangerous. Large parts of the city are off-limits to tourists, street crime is common, and



authorities are on guard against possibly violent political demonstrations.

Brazil has stayed outside the war waged by Islamic State and other jihadist groups.

But after a wave of attacks in Paris, Egypt, Mali and Tunisia by Islamists armed with little more than assault rifles, the worry is that Rio might be vulnerable to the same kind of dramatic, low-tech assault.

"As Brazil is not taking part in the various conflicts in the Middle East and overall South America is a zone far apart from current geopolitical troubles, you might think that it's not a target," said Pascal Boniface, director of the Institut de Relations Internationales et Strategiques in Paris.

"However, what terrorists look for is to make an impact on opinion, and apart from the World Cup there is no world event more visible than the Olympics," he said. "The risk of terrorism follows where the cameras go."

The Olympics still bears the scars of the 1972 Munich Games where Palestinians took hostage the Israeli team and killed 11 members. And while Brazilians might feel safe now, the Games will feature citizens of the United States, European countries, Israel and others whose countries are in direct conflict with jihadist groups.

On November 16, three days after the latest Paris attacks, Maxime Hauchard, a leading

French recruit of the Islamic State group, tweeted: "Brazil, you're our next target."

As during the World Cup, Brazil will run coordination centers in Rio and the capital Brasilia for all its police, army, customs and intelligence services.

These nerve centers will be able to send agents on the ground in case of alarm and will also be in close contact with security centers in Rio's four Olympic hubs: Barra da Tijuca, where the athletes' village will be; the Maracana stadium, where opening and closing ceremonies take place; Deodoro and Copacabana.

In the aftermath of the Paris attacks of January 2015 on the offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, it was also decided to set up a dedicated anti-terrorism center, Rodrigues

said.

Intelligence services of numerous countries have been sharing sensitive information there since July, he said.

"All states want this to go well," Boniface said. "We can expect cooperation to be very strong. National rivalries will be set aside."

Brazil is also a member of the API-PNR system, which monitors all air travel, so police will be kept informed in real time of who is flying to the country.

Boosting that international cooperation, about 100 Brazilian police officers have traveled to study security at events like the Tour de France, the Boston and Berlin marathons, and also during the UN General Assembly in New York.

Elite Brazilian troops also regularly train with foreign colleagues on hostage situations.

"At this stage, the risk of a multiple, coordinated attack is reckoned fairly low," said a French diplomatic source.

That kind of assault needs logistics and a sufficiently large recruitment pool -- something that exists in France, but probably not Brazil.

But authorities say they still fear a so-called lone wolf attack, such as the one by two self-organized jihadist sympathizers at the 2013 Boston marathon that killed three and injured 264.



And even if Brazil is off the terrorism map, its vast frontiers make it impossible to seal off, as the constant arrival of drugs and

illegal weapons make clear. Last year, Rio drug traffickers even managed to steal a truck carrying a ton of dynamite.

Major investigation into fatal hotel shooting gets under way

Source: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2016/0205/765708-one-person-injured-in-shooting-incident-at-hotel/>

Feb 05 – The fatal shooting at a Dublin hotel today 'was a particularly nasty incident', said a senior Garda as a major investigation gets under way.

A short time after the incident a van was found burnt out at the Charlemont Estate in Marino.

Detectives are trying to establish a motive for the murder but one line of inquiry is that it could be connected to the murder of Gary Hutch, who was shot dead in Spain last September.

It is believed he was murdered by a drugs cartel led by an Irishman based in Spain and that today's shooting could be in retaliation for that killing.

The two other men injured in the shooting were taken to the Mater and Beaumont hospitals.



One man was shot dead while two others were seriously injured in the attack this afternoon.

The shooting took place at 2.30pm at the Regency Hotel on the Swords Road during a weigh-in for tomorrow's now-cancelled WBO European Lightweight title fight between Jamie Kavanagh v Antonio Jao Bento.

Gardaí believe that at least four people were involved in the incident. Two were described as wearing police-style uniforms similar to a SWAT team uniform, including metal helmets. The men were armed with automatic weapons. Two others were carrying hand guns.

In a press conference this evening, Chief Superintendent Barry O'Brien said: "One [of the attackers] is described as possible being a male disguised as a female wearing what was described as a blonde or auburn wig."

The fourth suspect was a middle-aged man, of stocky build, wearing dark clothing and a light-coloured cap.

Chief Supt O'Brien said the Assistant State Pathologist has visited the scene and will carry out a post-mortem examination on the deceased tomorrow morning.

"This is a particularly nasty incident," said Chief Supt O'Brien.

"A very detailed and substantial investigation has commenced," added Chief Supt O'Brien.

It is understood that the men were aged in their 20s and 30s.



The scene has been sealed off for a technical examination of the area.

Boxers were weighing in ahead of tomorrow's 'Clash of the Clans' bout at the city's National Stadium.

Fighters on the bill include Dublin boxer Jamie Kavanagh, who was scheduled to fight for the WBO European lightweight title against Portuguese Antonio Joao Bento.



BBC reporter 'looked down barrel of the gun'

Speaking on the Six One, BBC sports journalist Kevin McAnena said he saw two men with AK-47 rifles dressed in Garda uniforms.

He said he was in the lobby at the time, having made his way out of the function room.

He said one of the gunmen shot a man, who was running across the middle of the lobby in the lower leg, saying "he was approximately six feet from me".

He said the man was fatally wounded.

Mr McAnena said: "At that point I jumped over the receptionist's desk and got on the ground and I started shouting 'don't shoot, don't shoot' and I think I actually said 'I'm innocent'.

"At that point, the gunman leaned over the reception desk, looked down at me - pointing the gun at me - and he said something to me, I can't recall now, and left.

"I was looking down the barrel of the gun and at this point I think I am going to die.

"I never knew the meaning of the word terrified until this afternoon."

He said he did not hear any more gunfire after that.

Mr McAnena said he stayed in a room behind the reception desk with the receptionist for an hour. He then rang gardaí who said it was safe to leave the room.

"The whole thing was so surreal. It's hard to make sense of it," he added.

Mel Cristle, the President of the Boxing Union of Ireland, said that the shooting was not indiscriminate and that individuals, not the boxers, were being targeted.

Speaking on RTÉ's Drivetime, Mr Cristle said that people were diving for cover and he saw the fear in children's eyes, saying "they couldn't believe what was going on".

He said there were approximately 200-300 members of the public at the weigh-in.

Box Nation, the television channel scheduled to broadcast the fight, said in a message on Twitter that the show had been cancelled due to the shooting.

"Following today's incident at the Dublin weigh-in, tomorrow's show from the National Stadium has been cancelled," the post said.

The bout was being promoted by Frank Warren and MGM Promotions, according to MGM, a Marbella-based gym run by Birmingham-born Irish boxer Matthew Macklin.

Chief Supt O'Brien said: "We know that there were a considerable number of people present in the Regency Hotel and we are appealing to them to provide any information they may have in relation to the shooting.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I was expecting to read the word "terrorism" but it seems that this is not politically correct so the drug cartel war was a more palatable explanation...

UPDATE (Feb 08): In a statement to the BBC, a man claiming to speak on behalf of the leadership of the Continuity IRA said its members were responsible.

U.S. Intelligence Puts ISIS Army at 20-25K Fighters Strong

Source: <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/us-intelligence-isis-army-25k-fighters/>

Feb 04 – **A new estimate from the U.S. intelligence community puts the count of ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria at between 20,000 and 25,000.**

USA Today first reported the new estimate, relayed by a top government official, which compares to the estimated 19,000 to 31,000 fighters in the terrorist group's army over a year ago before the U.S.-led air strike campaign against ISIS began. The unnamed official warned that the numbers were a rough estimate.

Separately, a U.S. official who reviewed the new estimate told Fox News that the count of ISIS fighters pretty much "remains the same" since last year. The U.S.-led coalition fighting ISIS has launched over 10,000 air strikes against the terror group since August 2014. **According to estimates from the U.S. military, ISIS has lost control of 40 percent of its territory in Iraq and only 5 percent in Syria.**

Meanwhile, ISIS has been making significant gains in Libya and has expanded into Afghanistan.



The U.S. announced last October that it was sending a small number of special operations forces to Syria to work with moderate opposition forces fighting ISIS there. The administration also revealed in December that it would deploy a “specialized expeditionary targeting force” of about 200 to assist the fight against ISIS in Iraq.

Despite U.S. efforts, terrorism concerns among Americans have heightened, particularly in the wake of the coordinated attacks in Paris that killed 130 people last November. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks, and the terror group is also believed to have inspired the deadly attack on a San Bernardino, California, holiday party in December.



Paris attack leader said he slipped in with 90 extremists

Source: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/02/05/paris-attack-leader-said-he-slipped-with-90-extremists.html>

Feb 04 – **The Belgian who led the Nov. 13 attacks on Paris bragged that he slipped into France with a group of 90 extremists from Europe and the Middle East,** according to testimony from the woman who tipped police to his location.

In an interview aired Thursday by RMC television and confirmed by her lawyer, the woman identified only as Sonia said Abdelhamid Abaaoud was proud of the attack that killed 130 people.

The 42-year-old woman was with Abaaoud's female cousin on Nov. 15 when the younger woman got a call from a Belgian number. It was Abaaoud, asking for a hideout.

The two women drove to a deserted industrial road outside Paris and Abaaoud came out of a bush. It was at that moment she realized who he was, according to her testimony. What followed is Abaaoud's only known conversation about the attacks and their aftermath — with a woman so horrified and angered by the bloodshed that she challenged him repeatedly.

She said the Islamic State group commander told her he had entered France without documents, among a group of 90 people that had scattered around the Paris region. She accused him of killing innocent people, which he denied, and challenged the deaths of Muslims that night. Those, she said, he described as “collateral damage.”

“He was proud of himself. That was the worst,” she said. “He appeared to fear no one, a superman. He talked about it as though he was shopping and had gotten a bargain on a box of detergent.”



She asked him whether he had come in with Syrian refugees and he told her he came in a group without any documents. **“There are Syrians, Iraqis, French, Germans, and British. We came in a group of 90 and we're a little bit everywhere around Paris.”**

She asked him why he needed the help of his cousin, her friend Hasna Ait Boulahcen, who ultimately died in the Saint-Denis apartment with him and another of the gunmen who attacked customers at bars and restaurants in central Paris.

“He told me no, they left a lot of traces and they'll be identified quickly. And that it's not over,” she said. His description of the triple suicide bombings at the French national stadium, which claimed only one victim amid a night of carnage: “The exact words of his response were: ‘There were some failures. I am here to make sure that there will be no more.’”

At that point, Abaaoud told Ait Boulahcen to find a hideout, buy a pair of business suits for him and his accomplice and return without wearing the full Islamic dress. As the two women drove away, the Belgian number rang again, this time threatening Sonia if she spoke. As soon as Ait Boulahcen left her apartment the next morning — Monday, Nov. 16 — Sonia called police and got a response instead from the top intelligence services.

All that evening, she tried to persuade the younger woman to abandon her cousin, who she said planned an attack that Thursday on a nursery school, a shopping mall and a police station in the La Defense business district.



Finally, the younger woman gave her the address where she was going to hide Abaaoud.

"She's not a victim of terrorism. She chose to help her cousin, which means he was stronger than me," she told RMC.

Sonia's lawyer said she came forward because she felt ill protected by France.

"She is in a state of permanent fear," Patrick Baudouin told The Associated Press. He wants a new identity for her — until now, he said, she has simply been advised to revert to her maiden name.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said she was under protection.

"My responsibility is to avoid risking this person's life," he told Europe 1 radio. But the French magazine Le Point said investigators themselves had already left her vulnerable, by revealing her name and her role during the interrogations of people linked to the Saint Denis hideout.

Baudouin said in any event the government did far too little to protect witnesses.

"We do not have witness protection in France," Baudouin said. "My fight is larger, so that the public understands the need to protect these witnesses, so any future potential witnesses are not dissuaded from coming forward when they decide it's too risky. It is important for the future."

Lessons Learned from Mental Health and Education: Identifying Best Practices for Addressing Violent Extremism

By Weine, S. M., Ellis, B. H., Haddad, R., Miller, A. B., Lowenhaupt, R., & Polutnik, C.

Final Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (October 2015)

Source: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_LessonsLearnedfromMentalHealthAndEducation_FullReport_Oct2015.pdf

Although to date law enforcement has been the primary lead on efforts to address violent extremism, shortfalls in successfully engaging communities and providing pre-criminal prevention and intervention initiatives have seriously challenged this approach.

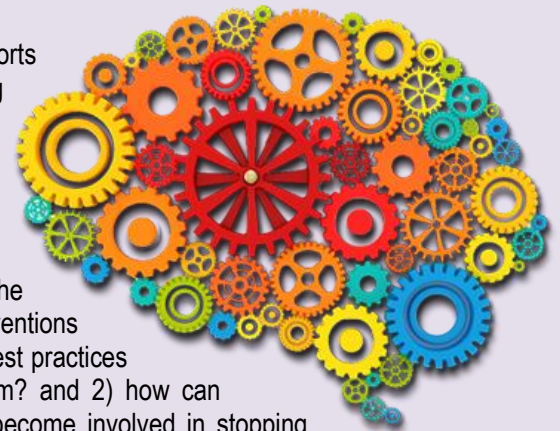
The overall purpose of this research was to identify assets from the mental health and education fields that could contribute to best practices for preventing and intervening with violent extremism.

Specifically we aimed to address the following questions: 1) what prior knowledge, programs, or interventions within the mental health and education fields could contribute to best practices and other strategies that could inform stopping violent extremism? and 2) how can professionals from the mental health and education fields best become involved in stopping violent extremism?

We approached these questions by first conducting a scoping literature review of prior knowledge, programs, and intervention in the mental health and education fields so as to identify evidence-based knowledge, program models, best practices, and/or other strategies that could inform prevention or intervention activities. Next we convened a multidisciplinary workshop to review and analyze the findings and to further articulate best practices and begin to develop training materials.

Overall we demonstrated that the fields of mental health and education, including both community-based practitioners and lessons learned from those fields, are uniquely poised to contribute to effective prevention and intervention activities in relation to violent extremism.

Three key findings were: 1) communities need to have a say in how to prioritize and organize actions intended to make them strong; 2) strategies for addressing the threat of violent extremism need to be organized and led by community-based multidisciplinary teams who draw upon mental health, public health, religious, education, and law enforcement frameworks and remedies; and 3) efforts to address violent extremism should adopt a comprehensive approach to promoting community safety which includes ideologically inspired violent extremism as one of many forms of violence that afflict communities. We also identified how mental health



and education professionals could become involved either through being informed, being team members, or being leaders in addressing violent extremism.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

The biggest hijacking threat Americans face today

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/01/the-biggest-hijacking-threat-americans-face-today.html>



Feb 02 – **Along the U.S.-Mexico border, drug traffickers are hacking into the drones that border-patrol agents use to monitor from the skies.** That was the latest from Department of Homeland Security program manager Timothy Bennett, who shared this news during a panel discussion in mid-December. Despite Bennett's sober delivery, he spoke in no uncertain terms about what U.S. border-patrol agents are up against.

"The bad guys on the borders have lots of money, and what they're putting money into is in spoofing and jamming of GPS [systems]," said Bennett, referring to two techniques used to hack into drones that DHS has been tracking.

Spoofing is a familiar term for those who follow drones closely. It's a technique where a signal sent by hackers impersonates the signal a drone had been receiving, effectively relinquishing control of the drone. In June 2012, a research team from the University of Texas at Austin [used spoofing](#) to nearly take a surveillance drone out of the skies. As research team leader Professor Todd Humphreys told Fox



News at the time, it was a test of technological mischief with broader implications: "What if you could take down one of these drones delivering FedEx packages and use that as your missile?"

Humphreys' question was a nod toward the drone-filled future that is now 2016. While businesses who would pilot for profit are clamoring for the Federal Aviation Administration to finalize its proposed commercial drone regulations, Amazon is preparing **Prime Air** (packages delivered to your doorstep and accompanied by the sound of 1,000 angry hornets).



Drones are entering U.S. skies in ever increasing numbers, and spoofing presents one potential threat not only to drones used by the government but also to smaller, unmanned aerial vehicles — the camera-toting quadcopters often used to make YouTube videos of spectacular aerial sights.

"Drone hacking will be an increasing threat in years to come," said Peter Singer, a cybersecurity strategist at the New America Foundation.

Should we be increasingly concerned about the possibility of airborne technology being hijacked?

"The drone manufacturers are looking at encryption methods to secure their drone channels. That would be the most vulnerable to hijacking." -Rich Hanson, head of government and regulatory affairs, Academy of Model Aeronautics

In early 2015, DHS was warning that "current-generation unmanned systems are vulnerable to spoofing, hacking and jamming." But according to Carlos Lazo, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesperson, the vulnerability lies in the smaller drones.

He said that CBP unmanned aircraft systems are equipped with encryption that prevents GPS spoofing, and GPS spoofing does not interfere with CBP's ability to perform its border security mission. Lazo also said that the CBP actively works in concert with the Department of Defense to assess and address possible future threats to their security.

Currently, more than 180,000 recreational fliers — hobbyists who fly drones for fun — have completed their FAA-mandated sign-ups on a drone registration website the agency launched in December. At the December panel, Bennett alluded to the "millions of aircraft that are going to be in the air" over the next few years when talking about small UAVs.

After his 2012 test, Humphreys said that while civilian drones will be vulnerable to spoofing, actually gaining remote access to a drone is not so simple.

"Hacking a drone is a lot more difficult than people make it out to be," said Michael Robinson, department chair of cyber forensics at Stevenson University in Maryland and a threat intelligence analyst for a major software company.

The ease with which a drone is hacked usually depends on the way in which the drone is controlled. **Hacking drones that utilize Wi-Fi connectivity in order to fly is an easier prospect**, one that Robinson himself [described](#) last August at the annual DEF CON hacking conference. When it comes to drones that are operated via radio control, there is no open Wi-Fi connection for a hacker to exploit.

"While those drones are a much more difficult hack, we have seen people who have jammed them," said Terry Kilby, co-owner of drone photography company Elevated Element. Kilby is referring to frequency jammers, devices that interfere with a person's control of a drone. Such jammers can be found and bought online, but using them in the U.S. is illegal.

Manufacturers fight back

Still, gaining remote access to a drone, or even the data being collected by a drone, can be done. Just look at the cybersecurity researchers from China who claimed they successfully spoofed a DJI Phantom 3 and changed its GPS coordinates.

Indeed, many drone manufacturers already outfit their aerial devices with a variety of security technology, more for the benefit of the customers than due to a significant fear of someone's drone being hijacked. Geofence software, for example, prevents drones from flying into demarcated GPS coordinates. A fail-safe system on radio-controlled drones ensures that if the connection between the controller and drone is broken, the drone flies itself back to where it took off. So while it might be possible to hack into a drone, as this YouTube uploader shows, chances are good the drone just returns to its starting point.

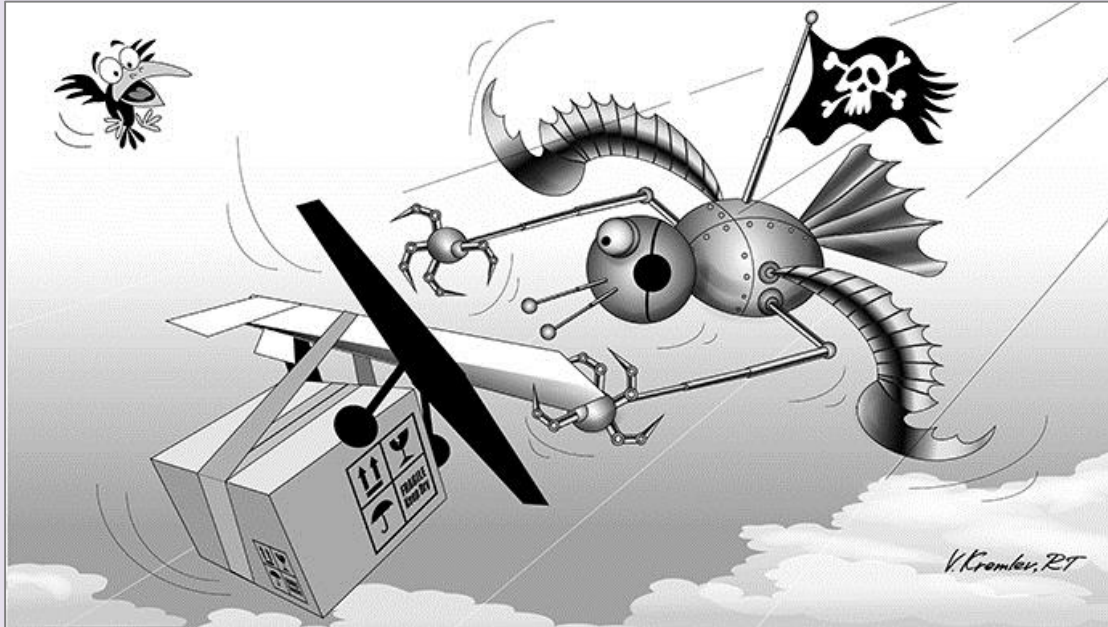
Nonetheless, the drone industry is taking further steps to safeguard the technology. "The drone manufacturers are looking at encryption methods to secure their drone channels. That would be the most vulnerable to hijacking — the command channel, but also the data link, depending on what kind of data is coming down," said Rich Hanson, head of government and regulatory affairs for the Academy of Model Aeronautics, a nonprofit that represents more than 140,000 model aviation enthusiasts in the U.S.

The FAA doesn't have an official line on the potential of drones being hacked (it declined to speak on the record). Ultimately, whether the sorts of demonstrations that pop up at



hacking conferences trickle into the world of purposeful, malicious hacking — the commandeered quadcopter carrying your Amazon order — is the question.

For the time being, consumers new to flying drones should focus on responsible flying to ensure that their drones don't end up in a position where a hacking attempt could spell bigger trouble. As Stevenson University's Robinson puts it, inexperienced pilots are the bigger threat — for now.



U.S., other nations condemn North Korean launch of long-range rocket

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/06/asia/north-korea-rocket-launch-window/index.html>

Feb 07 – **North Korea has successfully launched a satellite into space, its state-run TV said, an action immediately condemned by the United States as "destabilizing and provocative."**

Carrier rocket Kwangmyongsong-4 blasted off from the Sohae Space Center at 9 a.m Sunday local time, state news agency KCNA confirmed.



The satellite entered orbit nine minutes and 46 seconds after the liftoff, an operation "great leader Kim Jung Un personally ordered and directed," the TV announcer said.

Though North Korea said the launch was for scientific, "peaceful purposes", adding it plans to launch more satellites, it was viewed by other nations, such as Japan and South Korea, as a front for a

ballistic missile test, especially coming on the heels of North Korea's hydrogen bomb test last month.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

A senior U.S. defense official said the rocket headed toward space and, based on its trajectory towards the Yellow Sea, "did not pose a threat to the U.S. or our allies."

The United States, Japan and South Korea have called for an emergency U.N. Security Council meeting on Sunday, a senior U.S. official told CNN.

'A major provocation'

The U.S., South Korean, Japanese and Chinese governments immediately criticized the rocket launch.

"This is the second time in just over a month that the DPRK has chosen to conduct a major provocation, threatening not only the security of the Korean peninsula, but that of the region and the United States as well," U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said in a statement.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye called the launch a "challenge to world peace." The South Korea Unification Ministry said it would be reducing the personnel at the Kaesong Industrial Complex, a joint economic development between the two Koreas, from 650 to 500 "in consideration of safety of our people."

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said, "China expresses regret that DPRK, in spite of the pervasive opposition of the international community, insisted on using ballistic missile technology to carry out a launch."

Resolutions, he promised to "resolutely take measures, acting in cooperation with the international community."

Japan's analysis of the launch indicated parts the rocket fell into four locations offshore after takeoff, the Japanese Prime Minister's office said Sunday via Twitter.

One location is 150 kilometers west of the Korean peninsula in the Yellow Sea, two other locations are southwest of the Korean peninsula in the East China Sea and a fourth location is about 2,000 kilometers south of Japan in the Pacific Ocean, according to the Prime Minister's office.

Satellite... or nuclear missile?

At present, North Korea is believed to have one satellite in orbit, the Kwangmyongsong 3-2, though doubts have been raised about whether it is functioning.

U.S. officials have said the same type of rocket used to launch today's satellite could deliver a nuclear warhead.

China, the Soviet Union and the United States



Meanwhile, the Japanese government said it had lodged a "serious protest" at the action. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said "this is totally unacceptable." Echoing that it was a clear violation of UN Security Council

have all used intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, to launch satellites in the past. During the Cold War era of the 1950s, ICBMs were used by both



the United States and the Soviet Union as warhead delivery systems, as well as in the early development of both countries' space programs.

The Unha rocket used to launch North Korea's last satellite is believed to be based upon the Taepodong long-range ballistic missile, which has an estimated range of around 5,600 miles (9,000 km).

That would put Australia, much of Western Europe, and the U.S. West Coast in range of a North Korean warhead.

According to multiple experts, North Korea has at least a dozen and perhaps as many as 100 nuclear weapons, though at present it lacks sophisticated delivery mechanisms.

Increased pressure on China

The launch will heighten international pressure on China, North Korea's biggest foreign investor, to do more.

Wary of creating a refugee crisis should Kim's regime collapse, however, it has been unwilling to implement sanctions that would really put a choke in North Korea's economy.

"Sanctions are definitely not the aim," an editorial published Sunday by Chinese state

news agency Xinhua said. It did, however, note that foreign minister Wang Yi would "continue to exercise strategic composure and play a constructive role in helping seek a solution to the peninsular conundrum."

Chinese companies helped supply the equipment for the world-class Masikryong Ski Resort in North Korea, which opened in 2013, according to The New York Times. Chinese customs data showed that North Korea imported \$2.09 billion in luxury goods between 2012 and 2014, including Mercedes Benz cars and luxury yachts.

China's position stands at odds with stronger measures the United States and South Korea are pushing for.

"The only route to have North Korea give up its nuclear program is by having North Korea voluntarily abandon its nuclear (development) by coming up with effective and strong U.N. Security Council sanction, South Korean presidential security adviser Cho Tae-yong said after the launch.

Kerry, when meeting with Chinese officials last month, said, "With all due respect, more significant and impactful sanctions were put in place against Iran, which did not have a nuclear weapon, than against North Korea, which does."



ISIS vs. Al-Qaida: How Do Affiliates Choose?

By Leah Farrall

Source <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/17790/isis-vs-al-qaida-how-do-affiliates-choose>

Jan 07 – Attacks earlier this month in Jakarta by Indonesia's Islamic State affiliate and a claim of allegiance to the jihadi group from a militant collective in the Philippines seem to show the Islamic State's ascendancy in yet another region outside its core operating base in Syria and Iraq. Confounding efforts to contain its global expansion, the Islamic State appears to have an increasing number of territories, or wilayat, and organizations

nominally under its authority, amid an uptick in attacks against Western interests carried out at its behest.

On this basis, it's tempting to conclude that the Islamic State's reach and successful franchising and incitement strategies mark a dangerous new era, shaped in particular by the resonance of its ideology. But politics is ultimately local, and terrorism as a form of



violent political activity is no different—regardless of its window-dressing. The ascendance of the Islamic State along with the resilience of al-Qaida—the organization to which it previously aligned and from which it subsequently split—have as much to do with local factors driving individual and group dynamics as they do with ideological appeal. Ideology is important when assessing a terror threat environment. But more often than not a quest for benefits and empowerment—real or perceived—ultimately drives group relationships, as well as the trajectories for attacks and even the motivations of individual actors, as the history of militant Salafism shows. Therefore, how much of what has recently taken place from Jakarta to Paris is actually driven by ideology, as opposed to disguise by it?

If the Islamic State's jihadi ideology is, in fact, the key driver of its appeal and global spread, more militant groups around the world would have quickly declared their allegiance following the Islamic State's 2014 declaration of a caliphate. Likewise, there would have been more attacks and other terrorist activity after the group's September 2014 dictate calling on its adherents around the world to carry out attacks with little operational lead-time or preparation. That neither terrorist groups nor individuals rushed forward following either of these announcements suggests factors other than ideology continue to play a determining role among affiliates and franchises.

Because these groups often proffer ideology as a rationale for their activities and actions, ideological explanations can sometimes be favored over less esoteric realities. As a result, factors such as money, infrastructure, people, resources, empowerment and real and perceived benefit—all of which can drive allegiance politics—are often overlooked. Even less attention is paid to the sustainability of allegiances, even though militant Salafi groups are much more often competing with each other than cooperating.

In recent testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, the CIA's former deputy and acting director, Michael Morrell, said that the Islamic State "has gained affiliates faster than al-Qaeda ever did." While this may be true, a closer look at many of the organizations that have become Islamic State affiliates raises questions about the durability of these

relationships over the longer term and indeed even of the groups themselves. Among the Islamic State's Southeast Asia affiliates especially, local dynamics still dominate on a day-to-day level.

The Islamic State appears ascendant, but it has yet to come under the type of sustained pressure and losses that tend to stimulate fracturing and splintering of groups and allegiances. With its coffers still relatively full, it can get away with sloganeering and its burgeoning status as the basis for attracting other jihadi groups and individuals—for now.

It isn't clear yet how the Islamic State will fare when it is under greater pressure, deprived of income and reliant only on its propaganda. So far, its approach to non-aligned or rival jihadi groups has been one of hubris, arrogance and presumed authority—hardly an ideal basis for encouraging them to publicly join its cause.

Moreover, unlike al-Qaida, the Islamic State does not have a longstanding network of emissaries and financiers through which it can build favor in a region and fund itself in bad times. It may not believe these are needed, which could be the case while it has money and numbers on its side. However, with the average survival rate of an Islamic State fighter around just a year by the admission of its own members and some nationalities represented by only a handful of militants with significant ties back into their local communities, there will come a time when such ties and exposure matter.

Relationships between people and long-standing connections to particular regions are important not only for funding, but also to maintain authority and networks of influence. Al-Qaida, for example, is resilient in Yemen and Somalia because its ties and presence in the countries in terms of both people and infrastructure go back over 20 years. Emissaries for al-Qaida have generally operated in both countries without much interference.

The same cannot be said for Southeast Asia, however, where support from al-Qaida and its affiliated financiers and emissaries has always been intermittent—and where groups might therefore be more susceptible to declaring their allegiance to the Islamic State. Militant groups in the region have long struggled to obtain and retain the attention of



Arab benefactors, with Southeast Asia seen as second class in the Arab-centric jihadi milieu. Allegiances in this part of the world are often driven by accessibility and whether becoming a franchise could be a potential source of benefit. The few al-Qaida-affiliated emissaries and financiers active in Southeast Asia since 9/11 and the 2002 Bali bombings have been widely disrupted by counterterrorism efforts. When emissaries and financiers can no longer travel and are prevented from interaction, and when attention, support and financing languishes, the ground for switching allegiances is laid, particularly for those groups that have not developed or retained a strong ideological link to al-Qaida.

While newly emergent groups in Southeast Asia, along with those that in the past have struggled to obtain al-Qaida's support, might receive a more welcoming reception from the Islamic State as long as they acknowledge its authority, it remains to be seen if pledging allegiance will bring them any material benefit. And when transnational allegiance either doesn't support or directly harms local interests, many militant groups, as history shows, will simply revert to their own devices. The Islamic State's expansion and acquisition of franchises, at least in Southeast Asia, therefore may not last very long.

Leah Farrall is a research associate in counterterrorism at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. She was formerly a counterterrorism intelligence analyst with the Australian Federal Police and served with its regional cooperation team in Jakarta.

SE Asia 'emerging battleground for ISIS'

Source: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/terror/se-asia-emerging-battleground-for-isis/news-story/9813751bb0ebaa9b47845dd60ac8f75e>

Feb 08 – **Australian authorities are seeing a revival of jihadism across Southeast Asia, prompting police and intelligence agencies to retool their assets in the region, taking - officers off people-smuggling - duties and putting them on counter-terrorism.**

Justice Minister Michael Keenan said Southeast Asian communities were grappling with the same problems as Australia — Islamic State-style radicalisation, attack planning, and a tide of enthusiastic Muslims travelling to Syria to fight for the terror group.

The result was an overall decline in regional security, with authorities increasingly concerned Australians may be caught up in terror attacks, such as last month's gunbattle in Jakarta that killed four innocent people along with four of the attackers.

"It's been clear for some time we've been seeing a deteriorating security picture in the region," Mr Keenan told *The Australian*. "They (our neighbours) are subject to the same threats that we've seen in Australia. (Islamic



State) has been recruiting their citizens to go to fight in the war zone and it's also been encouraging their citizens to carry out attacks at home."

Australian officials now regard Southeast Asia as the emerging



battleground with Islamic State, which has re-energised militant groups in Indonesia and fuelled radicalisation in Malaysia.

The Australian understands Malaysia's Special Branch police have thwarted at least four terror plots in recent times. Malaysian authorities also have investigated members of their police and military over suspected radicalisation.

In The Philippines, authorities are concerned the southern region of Mindanao, which is largely lawless, will be used as a redoubt for foreign fighters or a base for attacks in Indonesia.

There are also concerns Islamic State could nominate an area such as Mindanao as a "province" of the so-called caliphate, potentially attracting local jihadists.

The concerns have prompted a flurry of ministerial visits, with Mr Keenan and Attorney-General George Brandis frequent visitors to Indonesia, Malaysia and The Philippines in an attempt to deepen the existing co-operation between Australia and the region.

The Australian has been told officials have "retasked" existing assets in the region, something they can do now the people-smuggling networks have been largely defeated. Australian Federal Police and Australian Secret Intelligence Service officers, who until recently were gathering intelligence on people smugglers, are now focused on counter terrorism.

Assessing Obama's Mosque Speech on Islam

By Daniel Pipes

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5843/obama-mosque-speech>

Feb 08 – Wishing to address growing anti-Islamic sentiments among the American public, Barack Obama ventured on Feb. 3 to the Islamic Society of Baltimore (sadly, a mosque with [unsavory Islamist associations](#)) to [talk about Islam and Muslims](#). The 5,000-word speech contains much of interest. Here's an in-depth assessment of its key points:

"a lot of Americans have never visited a mosque. To the folks watching this today who haven't — think of your own church, or synagogue, or temple, and a mosque like this will be very familiar. This is where families come to worship and express their love for God and each other. There's a school where teachers open young minds. Kids play baseball and football and basketball — boys and girls — I hear they're pretty good. Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts meet, recite the Pledge of Allegiance here."

All true, but what about the dark side, the unique and repeated [role of mosques in parlaying totalitarian ideas and fomenting violence](#)? That goes unsaid in the president's rose-colored presentation.

"as Muslim Americans, you [worry that] your entire community so often is targeted or blamed for the violent acts of the very few."

Obama makes Muslims sound like innocent bystanders when there's a perfectly reasonable fear of them due to (1) so much violence emanating from this 1 percent of the U.S. population and (2) non-violent Muslims showing sympathy for the violent ones.

"The Muslim American community remains relatively small—several million people in this country."

This is a coy way for Obama to walk back his [exaggerated 7 million figure](#) of 2009 without explicitly saying so.

"recently, we've heard inexcusable political rhetoric against Muslim Americans that has no place in our country."

A veiled critique of Donald Trump that Trump [deserves](#).

"No surprise, then, that threats and harassment of Muslim Americans have surged."

That's ridiculous. Insofar as there has been a surge of threats and harassment – and this is open to doubt given the [disreputable nature](#) of the reporting – this is due to Muslim violence. Reasonably, non-Muslims worry that a co-worker will behead them or attack them at a party, that they'll be bombed attending a sporting event, or rammed into by



planes when working at their offices. To blame non-Muslims for this commonsensical, life-preserving fear is to confuse symptom with cause.

"For more than a thousand years, people have been drawn to Islam's message of peace."

Some converts, to be sure, have been attracted to the peaceable side of Islam but many others have seen it as a militant force and converting as joining a winning team. Look at the Western converts who have gone to ISIS as one subset of these. Again, Obama just focuses on the cheery dimension and ignores the unpleasant one.

"the very word itself, Islam, comes from salam — peace."

How can a person in a position of responsibility say something so patently wrong? Islam means *submission*, and does not derive from *peace*. As I [explained in 2005](#), "There is no connection in meaning between *salām* and *islām*, peace and submission. These are two distinct words with unrelated meanings." Shame on Obama.

"For Christians like myself ..."

Standing in a mosque, Obama presumably feels a need to remind his audience that he's not a Muslim. He would be more convincing if he could get his autobiography straight. For example, he sometimes declares he has "[always been a Christian](#)" and at other times that he "[didn't become a Christian](#)" until after college.

It would also help if he could date this important milestone rather than offer, in the view of [Jason Kissner](#), an associate professor of criminology at California State University, Fresno, there are "two completely contradictory accounts" regarding its time frame.

"Muslim Americans keep us safe. They're our police and our firefighters. They're in homeland security, in our intelligence community. They serve honorably in our armed forces."

Again true, but again not mentioning the other side – the persistent [penetration of American security and military services](#) by Islamist enemies.

"it is undeniable that a small fraction of Muslims propagate a perverted interpretation of Islam."

Here we go again, Imam Obama declaiming on what the proper and the perverted interpretation of Islam are. He's done this before, as have many [other non-Muslim leaders](#), including prior U.S. presidents. It's silly and embarrassing.

"right now, there is a organized extremist element that draws selectively from Islamic texts, twists them in an attempt to justify their killing and their terror."

It would be more accurate to replace this with "right now, there is a organized extremist element that draws on medieval Islamic texts and interprets them in medieval ways to justify their killing and their terror."

"Part of what's happened in the Middle East and North Africa and other places where we see sectarian violence is religion being a tool for another agenda — for power, for control."

This is typical left-wing materialism, which sees religion as a vehicle for something else, usually connected with economic benefit. No, the Islamists are true believers who engage in violence to pursue their vision, not for power as an end in itself, as Obama insists.

"Thomas Jefferson's opponents tried to stir things up by suggesting he was a Muslim – so I was not the first. No, it's true, it's true. Look it up. I'm in good company."

I did look it up – in [Jefferson's Religion](#), a 2007 book by Stephen J. Vicchio, and found no evidence that Jefferson was called a Muslim. His opponents called him names such as "French infidel," "confirmed infidel," "howling atheist," and "fanatic," but never "Mahometan."

"just as faith leaders, including Muslims, must speak out when Christians are persecuted around the world – or when anti-Semitism is on the rise – because the fact is, is that there are Christians who are targeted now in the Middle East, despite having been there for centuries, and there are Jews who've lived in places like France for centuries who now feel obliged to leave because they feel themselves under assault — sometimes by Muslims."

It's not a complete or coherent sentence but it does correctly demand that Muslims speak out against religious persecution and it does note that Jews in Europe are "sometimes" (really, nearly always) attacked by Muslims. It's a relief to see the dark side peek through for an instant.

"the suggestion is somehow that if I would simply say, these are all "Islamic terrorists," then we would actually have solved the problem by now, apparently." (Laughter.)



This is a cheap laugh line. No one thinks the problem of Islamist violence would be solved by Obama using the right wording; many, including me, however, say that he can't properly address the problem unless he accurately identifies it.

"Groups like ISIL are desperate for legitimacy. They try to portray themselves as religious leaders and holy warriors who speak for Islam. I refuse to give them legitimacy."

In fact, ISIL (or ISIS, Islamic State, Daesh) could not care less what Obama or other non-Muslims think of it. It cares only about the views of Sunni Muslims. So, Obama can deny it legitimacy all he wants; ISIL won't notice or care.

"the notion that America is at war with Islam ignores the fact that the world's religions are a part of who we are. We can't be at war with any other religion because the world's religions are a part of the very fabric of the United States, our national character."

By this infantile logic, Hitler could not have been at war with Judaism because Jews were part of the very fabric of Germany.

"the best way for us to fight terrorism is to deny these organizations legitimacy and to show that here in the United States of America, we do not suppress Islam; we celebrate and lift up the success of Muslim Americans."

No, the best way to fight Muslim violence is by (1) getting out of the way of law enforcement and others on the front line and (2) helping anti-Islamist Muslims find their voice.

"we can't suggest that Islam itself is at the root of the problem. That betrays our values. It alienates Muslim Americans. It's hurtful to those kids who are trying to go to school and are members of the Boy Scouts, and are thinking about joining our military."

This nicely summarizes the [Establishment mentality](#) that one must not publicly connect Islam to violence; just whisper this behind closed doors.

"Muslims around the world have a responsibility to reject extremist ideologies that are trying to penetrate within Muslim communities. Here at this mosque, and across our country and around the world, Muslim leaders are roundly and repeatedly and consistently condemning terrorism."

The equation of "reject[ing] extremist ideologies" and "condemning terrorism" reveals Obama's facile understanding of the Islamist challenge, reducing it merely to wanton political violence. Stop that violence and the problem is solved. Hardly; for lawful Islamism poses a deeper threat than some bomb-totting fanatics.

"this is not a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam. This is a struggle between the peace-loving, overwhelming majority of Muslims around the world and a radical, tiny minority. And ultimately, I'm confident that the overwhelming majority will win that battle. Muslims will decide the future of your faith. And I'm confident in the direction that it will go."

I would phrase it quite differently but I endorse these sentiments.

"If you're ever wondering whether you fit in here, let me say it as clearly as I can, as President of the United States: You fit in here – right here. You're right where you belong. You're part of America, too. You're not Muslim or American. You're Muslim and American."

I endorse this as well.

"We are blessed to live in a nation where even if we sometimes stumble, even if we sometimes fall short, we never stop striving for our ideals. We keep moving closer to that more perfect union. We're a country where, if you work hard and if you play by the rules, you can ultimately make it, no matter who you are or how you pray. It may not always start off even in the race, but here, more than any place else, there's the opportunity to run that race. ..."

After more than 200 years, our blended heritage, the patchwork quilt which is America, that is not a weakness, that is one of our greatest strengths. It's what makes us a beacon to the world."

These are unusually patriotic and warm words for the United States from a leftist who rarely has much good to say about his own country. Good to hear them.

In all, this speech gets much more wrong than it gets right, from factual mistakes to evasions to distortions. It does get a few points right, especially toward the end, but as a whole, it's a typically shoddy Obama production.

Daniel Pipes is president of the Middle East Forum.



First, immigrants. Now, terrorism. Will Cameron's EU scaremongering ever stop?

By Fraser Nelson

Source: <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/02/project-fear-scaremongering-almost-lost-scotland-what-makes-cameron-think-it-will-work-for-england/>



Jan 09 – **A few weeks ago, James Forsyth revealed David Cameron's strategy for fighting the EU referendum: to campaign on the theme on security, rather than an economic argument. This is already backfiring badly.** Britain's security does not

depend upon the EU, and the Prime Minister's attempts to suggest otherwise are inflicting grave damage to his chances of winning the referendum.

Yesterday, he threatened Britain with an influx of migrants if we vote to leave. His logic was that the deal agreed with France about policing Sangatte was somehow dependent on EU membership. But, being a bilateral deal, it had nothing to do with the EU – as today's Daily Telegraph reveals. It also reminds us of another claim he made yesterday:-

"If we stay in a reformed EU, you know what you get – a border in Calais and vital information about criminals and terrorists travelling around Europe."

So the Prime Minister would like us to believe that leaving the EU would somehow lead to the

drying up of this "vital information" about terrorists. This is no slip of the tongue: it's entirely consistent with the 'security' strategy agreed some time ago. It's also utterly untrue.

Let's leave aside the rather risible notion of Norway being at greater risk from terrorism because EU members refuse to share intelligence with anyone in Oslo. The UK's closest intelligence network is the Five Eyes – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It's a classic example of how Britain always strikes global alliances in the national interest: in this case, it's most fruitful for us to work with English-speaking global alliance, with whom our interests are most closely aligned.

Some 40 years after we joined the EU, the Five Eyes network remains our most important intelligence-gathering network: our surest guarantor against terrorist attacks.

Plots tend to originate in places like Pakistan and Syria, and the jihadis could attack anywhere. So we collaborate with allies, but the



idea that this has anything to do with the EU is not only untrue but an insult to the intelligence of the voter.

Cameron risks pushing wavering voters into the 'out' camp, propelled by disgust at the quality of the arguments for 'in'. This is precisely how Cameron almost lost Scotland – a 'Project Fear' campaign turned a country ambivalent about separation into a SNP one-party state. Andrew Cooper was the chief strategist of the Scottish 'in' campaign; he is now doing the same job for the 'in' campaign. We can see the same cack-handed

techniques, the same attempt at scaring people into voting for the status quo – with the same results.

And I write this as a Europhile, who had hoped – even expected – that Cameron would come up a compelling argument to vote 'in'. His antics in the last seven days – the inadequate deal, his breaking his own ban on campaigning, his implausible scare stories – have constituted one long advert for 'out'. At this rate, the Brexit campaign won't need a leader: Cooper and Cameron are capable of losing this vote all on their own.

Fraser Nelson is the editor of The Spectator. He is also a columnist with The Daily Telegraph, a member of the advisory board of the Centre for Social Justice and the Centre for Policy Studies.

The Philippines: The Next Safe Haven for Terrorism

By Anthony DeChristopher

Source: <http://www.theblaze.com/contributions/the-philippines-the-next-safe-haven-for-terrorism/>

Feb 12 – **Just as the Taliban's association with Al Qaeda provided a safe haven for terrorists in Afghanistan, the relationship between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front has the potential to create many of the same difficulties on the Philippine island of Central Mindanao.**

Recently, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process urged the Philippine Congress to approve the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law. Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles stated:

"[The] process can help us arrest the spread of extremism around the globe by showing clearly that an Islamic movement can address its grievances and pursue its interests through a legitimate mode of democratic political engagement."

Although the advisory board believes the law is a model that can be implemented globally, in reality, the Philippine's history of appeasing Muslim secessionists has demonstrated that a repeated capitulation to insurgent groups breeds more violent factions and further demands for autonomy.

In response to the recent terror attacks in Indonesia, Filipino President Benigno Aquino III claimed there is no "imminent, credible"



terrorist threat in the Philippines. Those statements came on the same day two men wearing Islamic State insignia were killed in the historically violent and insurgent-laden area of the Southern Philippine island of Mindanao.

The fighting occurred in the province of Lanao del Sur, an area that currently falls in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and has been described as "a dysfunctional system of governance that empowers despotic warlords and permits criminals and extremists to wreak havoc in the Philippines and beyond."

Ironically, the ARMM was created in response to almost two decades of intense conflict between the Government of The Philippines and the Moro National Liberation



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

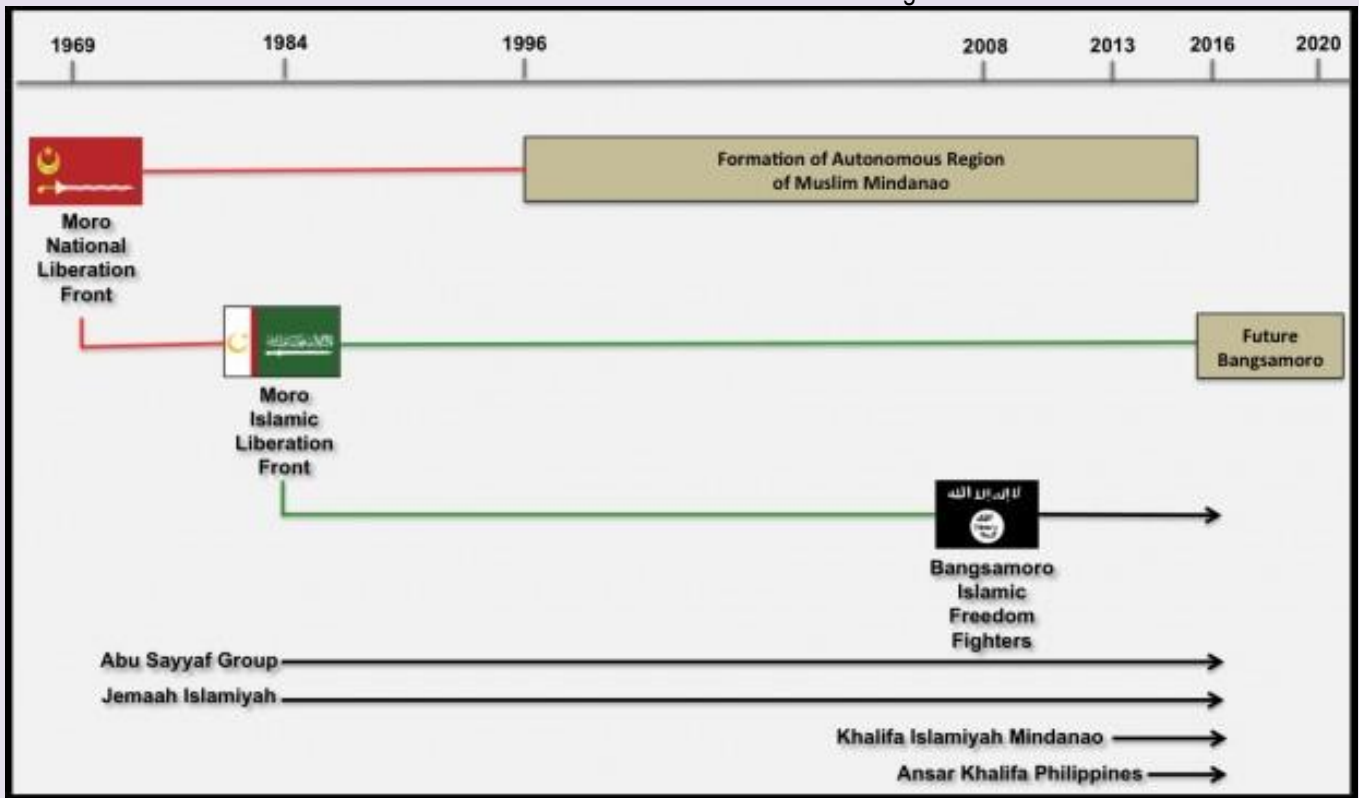
Front (MNLF) — headed by Nur Misuari. After the MNLF entered into the ARMM agreement with the government, several militant groups have since broken away from the MNLF — most notably is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Hashim Salamat founded the MILF in 1984 and viewed the ARMM agreement as a compromise. Unlike the MNLF, which was dominated by “secular ethno-nationalists,” Salamat was educated in Egypt and drew inspiration from the Islamic scholars Qutb and Mawdudi — both known for their rejection of secular nationalism. Violence between the GPH and the MILF lasted for three decades.

In 2000, President Joseph Estrada launched an “all-out-war” campaign against the MILF. Fourteen years later, however, the government signed yet another peace agreement that would see the formation of a new autonomous region known as Bangsamoro — replacing the ARMM.

day siege of Zamboanga City in 2013. Furthermore, in January 2015, the Philippine police’s Special Action Force conducted a surprise raid in Central Mindanao targeting a Malaysian bomb maker known as Marwan. Although Marwan was killed, the disastrous raid resulted in 44 Special Forces members killed while engaging in firefights with both his security detail and MILF fighters — thus ending a three-year ceasefire with the MILF. Suffice to say, there is still a long road ahead to resolving many pervading grievances.

Unfortunately for the government, these grievances are in addition to contending with the most recent group to assume the mantle as the primary insurgency in the Philippines — the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The group’s stated goal is to establish an Islamic state governed by strict Shariah laws. Before his death in April 2015, BIFF founder Ameril Umbra Kato made similar condemnations against what he claimed was a



A timeline summary of the Islamic Insurgencies and terrorist groups operating in Central Mindanao. (Anthony DeChristopher)

In response to the Bangsamoro arrangement, MNLF chief Nur Misuari, declared the formation of the United Federated States of Bangsamoro Republik and led 100 MNLF fighters on a 23-

compromise by the MILF. The Aquino administration has repeatedly condemned BIFF violence. Unfortunately, the government’s history of accommodating insurgencies has all but nullified this type of familiar rhetoric. The most disturbing result of this Filipino policy has been the



transformation of Central Mindanao into a safe-haven for members of various terrorist organizations. Since the 1990's, the Abu Sayaff Group and Jemaah Islamiyah have facilitated the supply of weapons and IED-making materials into MILF-controlled territory. From 2013 to the present, Central Mindanao has seen the rise of the Black Flag Movement with groups like Khalifa Islamiyah Mindanao and Ansar Khalifa Philippines. Most of these groups have since declared allegiance to the Islamic State — a trend that Asia Foundation's Steven Rood believes "hints at transnational links between Southeast Asian militant groups." Contrary to the claims made by Secretary Deles, the Bangsamoro Basic Law is not ready

to be implemented "globally" or "help curb the growing threat of religious extremism." The government's policy of acceding to insurgents is a case study in failed counter-insurgency. The precedent the government established with the MNLF has ensured future insurgencies that the government is willing to both negotiate and give political legitimacy to an organized group of Islamic insurgents. These concessions will undoubtedly serve as motivation for current and future insurgencies, and a commitment to this failed policy has the potential to transform Central Mindanao into the *de facto* clearinghouse for South East Asian terrorists.

Anthony DeChristopher is a nine-year veteran of the United States Army Special Forces. His background offers comprehensive knowledge and hands-on experience as a U.S. Special Operator and Military Advisor assigned to the Pacific Command, Southern Command, and Central Command Areas of Operations.

Could Micro-Drones Be Weaponised?

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2016/02/micro-drones-weaponised/>

Feb 13 – Micro-drones are an emergent trend in the world of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). There are several models currently in production, with a prominent example being the **US Navy's Cicada**



(Close-In Covert Autonomous Disposable Aircraft). It was designed to deploy out of a moving aeroplane, and a recent AFP article described it as a "paper airplane with a circuit board."

For the time being, Cicadas are little more than remote microphones that can fly. "You equip these with a microphone or a seismic detector, drop them on that road, and it will tell you 'I heard a truck or a car travel along that road.' You know how fast and which direction they're traveling,"

Aaron Kahn of the Naval Research Laboratory told AFP.

It now costs \$1,000 per pop, but could drop to as little as \$250 a unit. The military envisions using them in swarms, but these swarms could prove deadly in the not-so-distant future. The official description of the Cicada is an "an unmanned glider, nearly undetectable, that delivers payloads to precise waypoints." Payload can stand for a variety of things, depending on context, but one of the more relevant meanings has a lot to do with deadly force.

The carrying capacity of any drone this size is miniscule. However, the combined carrying capacity of a large enough swarm of these tiny flying machines can potentially be quite large. As they're equipped with precise guidance systems and telemetry equipment, guiding a whole lot of them to a very specific location is entirely within the realm of possibility. Coupled with a distributed explosive-carrying capacity, they could make for a cheap, hard to detect yet easy to deliver killing swarm.



Islamist terrorists al-Shabab claim responsibility for wheelchair bomber who blew hole in plane side

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/islamist-terrorists-al-shabab-claim-7362962>

Feb 13 – Somalia's Islamist militant group al-Shabab have reportedly claim responsibility for the Daallo Airlines blast.

It comes after reports the Somalia plane bomber may have had some type of link to the airline or airport staff. The National Intelligence and Security Agency has released footage apparently showing a passenger being handed a laptop by two men in the airport departure lounge. One of the men is wearing a hi-vis security jacket.



The video shows the suspected bomber appearing to be handed a laptop packed with explosives before the failed terror attack. Security officials have released [CCTV footage](#) thought to show how wheelchair-bound Abdullahi Abdisalam Borleh got a bomb on Daallo Airlines Flight D3159.

The jet exploded soon after taking off from Mogadishu airport on February 2.

The blast opened up an enormous hole in the commercial plane's

fuselage, sucking the burning bomber to his death. Incredibly, the captain was able to make an emergency landing back at Mogadishu and only two other people were injured.

Officials probing the explosion initially suspected the bomber was able to bypass airport security by smuggling the device in his wheelchair before moving to another seat once on board, according to a source speaking to the Wall Street Journal.

However, the security footage does not show anyone in a wheelchair and suggests the attack was co-ordinated by a network of terrorists.

So far between 15 and 20 people have been arrested in connection with the attack. "We have confirmed that it was a bomb that exploded," Transport Minister Ali Ahmed Jamac told a news conference on Saturday. "It was meant to kill all aboard."

Abdisalam Borleh's body was later recovered from the town of Balad - about 20 miles away from Mogadishu.

Inside Islamic State Terror War: Suicide Bomber Reveals Himself in Private Chat

By Aaron Klein and Ali Waked

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/jihad/2016/02/13/exclusve-inside-islamic-state-terror-suicide-bomber-reveals-himself-in-private-chat/>

Feb 13 – Screenshots obtained by *Breitbart Jerusalem* of an Egyptian suicide bomber's online chat with another jihadist provide a rare inside glimpse into the Islamic State's suicide operations.

Abu al-Shuhadaa al-Russy, the terrorist's *nom de guerre*, told a jihadist friend based in Gaza via an encrypted chat on the Telegram messaging application that he was "number 15 on the list." This means there were 15 other IS militants slated to carry out suicide bombings before him, according to the suicide bomber.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

“Allah is great,” his friend responded, adding: “Are the brothers carrying out suicide attacks every day?” “No,” al-Russy replied. “It depends on the circumstances.”

“You will soon be in heaven,” the friend reassured the bomber, to which the bomber responded with a smiley face.

The chat buddy of the suicide bomber is an IS militant who recently returned to the Gaza Strip after fighting in Iraq and Syria. He revealed to *Breitbart Jerusalem* the suicide bomber’s real name, Assadullah Abdullah al-Salam, who turned out to be a resident of Cairo’s Giza district.

The chat took place January 27, 2016. Eight days later, Salam carried out a suicide mission in Iraq, the

Gazan jihadist said.

Salam’s four brothers have enlisted with IS, the Gazan jihadist said. One was killed last year and another severely wounded, both in Iraq, according to the Gazan jihadist.

The Gazan jihadist told *Breitbart Jerusalem* that Salam’s wife and sister recently arrived in Mosul – a jihadi stronghold in Iraq – from Egypt.

Salam’s Facebook page features a picture of his dead brother, Salameh, and underneath it a picture showing the four-finger sign (see below), the new symbol of the Muslim Brotherhood, commemorating the killing of hundreds of Islamic activists by then-Chief of Staff Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s troops. Al-Sisi is now president of Egypt.



The caption [reads](#): “Young people of Egypt, don’t give in to evil or you’ll end up in hell. Believe in Allah, show him your good side, carry the flag of jihad to avoid humiliation. This is my advice to you.”

Another picture depicts a vehicle packed with explosives and flying the IS flag. The caption on that Facebook post [reads](#): “Explosives are our way to do away with dictators. I’m committing suicide.”

Elsewhere on his page, Salam [encourages](#) sympathizers who haven’t joined the “ISIS caliphate”



to act as “lone wolves.”

“At this desperate time, Islam has no other choice,” he wrote. “Lone wolf, the nation looks up to you.” Another post, apparently written by Salam’s sister reads: “The brothers in headquarters have confirmed that my brother was killed. He wasn’t after fame and glory, and didn’t want people to admire him. A few months ago, he asked to be tasked with a suicide operation, told me about it, and asked me to keep it a secret. Only recently, when his turn approached, he made it public. Since he arrived in the Caliphate, his heart went out to Allah.”

The post received many comments praising the suicide bomber and his IS-supporting sister.





In another [post](#), Salam was chatting with a friend who joined IS forces in the Libyan town of Sirte and praised him for finishing his training. "I want to see what the security forces will do now. They need to know that our lions are waiting."

"The West perceives suicide bombers as barbarians," the Gazan jihadi told *Breitbart Jerusalem*. "They fail to understand that these are young people who are unimpressed with this life. They yearn for the afterlife, that's why they compete for suicide missions. They want to get a place in heaven."

"Being tasked with a suicide mission is a great honor," he said. "Those who have been selected feel humbled and are admired by many others."

Aaron Klein is Breitbart's Jerusalem bureau chief and senior investigative reporter. He is a New York Times bestselling author and hosts the popular weekend talk radio program, "Aaron Klein Investigative Radio."

Keep convicted Islamist terrorists in one prison, says review

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/12155454/Keep-convicted-Islamist-terrorists-in-one-prison-says-review.html>

Feb 13 – Convicted Jihadi terrorists could be placed in a single top security prison unit in a bid to prevent them infecting other inmates with their propaganda, it was reported today.

A review of radicalisation in jails in England and Wales is understood to have concluded that placing all Islamist terrorists in one unit would make it harder for them to prey on weak inmates.

Any such move would reverse a 50-year policy in which dangerous inmates are dispersed around eight jails.

Former soldiers could also be called up to teach young offenders in new boarding school secure units, the author of the plans has revealed.

Charlie Taylor, the government's adviser on youth justice, said that he wanted the armed forces to be involved and for retired soldiers to teach youngsters, who would also be part of a cadet corps.

The proposal to hold terrorists separately was reportedly raised in discussions as part of a review into radicalisation in jails. The study, ordered by Michael Gove, is being carried out by Ian Acheson, a former prison governor.

A Whitehall source said: "Michael Spurr [the head of the National Offender Management Service] is concerned that Acheson is going to come to the wrong conclusion."

The prospect of putting all 131 Islamist terrorists in one place and separating them from other inmates, such as the special secure unit at Belmarsh, was hinted at by the prime minister this week.

He said that about 1,000 prisoners have been identified as extremists or vulnerable to extremism and that some were preying on the weak



and forcing prisoners to convert to Islam.

"I am prepared to consider major changes: from the imams we allow to preach in our prisons to changing locations and methods for dealing with prisoners convicted of terrorism offences, if that is what is required," Mr Cameron said.

One prison source told The Times: "If we could identify extremists spreading the wrong messages it would be a good idea to hold them separately to stop them having the opportunity of infecting other inmates with their views."

But the suggestion of a single prison for convicted terrorists was dismissed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) on Saturday.

A MoJ spokesperson said: "This story is wrong. No plans for a single prison for terrorist prisoners are under discussion or form part of any review. NOMS senior management is wholly supportive of the review and determined to do all it can to meet the challenge of extremism."

Opponents of putting them in one jail or a secure unit within a prison fear that it could provide a focal point for protest and lead to allegations that it was a "British Guantanamo". There are also fears it would allow terror groups such as Isis to create a unified command and control structure drawing in disparate Islamist terrorists previously scattered across several prisons.

Prof Peter Neumann, a counter-terrorism expert at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, King's College London said: "A policy of concentration may inadvertently help to create the kind of hierarchical organisation that the terrorists found it impossible to create outside."

There is also a danger that staff in such units would be vulnerable to "conditioning" and could be intimidated, as happened before six prisoners including IRA members broke out of the special secure unit at Whitemoor jail in 1994.

Dangerous prisoners including terrorists are currently held in eight dispersal jails which allows staff to move them around, preventing them from creating gangs and command structures.

In 1966 Earl Mountbatten of Burma recommended building a 'supermax' prison for all dangerous prisoners following the escape of the spy George Blake. The plan was rejected, as it was when it was raised again in 1994.

The MoJ added: "The justice secretary has asked the department to review its approach to dealing with Islamist extremism in prisons. This is being supported by external expertise and sits alongside the cross government work currently underway on developing de-radicalisation programmes."

Dozens of guns and 240,000+ bullets seized after three men arrested in Greece

Source: <http://en.protothema.gr/dozens-of-guns-and-240000-bullets-seized-after-three-men-arrested-in-greece/>

► Following the arrests mentioned in p.51)

Feb 14 – Police authorities arrested three "heavily armed" British men of Iraqi origin carrying more than a dozen guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition in Alexandroupolis, northern Greece.



Authorities seized more than 240,000 bullets, 4 rifles and 18 weapons after searching their trailer.

The photos released by police counterterrorist elements and National Intelligence Agency show that the three persons arrested had turned their trailer

where they were living into an armory.

The suspects reportedly claimed they are translators and had been staying at a hotel in Alexandroupolis for eight days.



According to recent information, while initially the two arrested men reportedly were Islamist extremists without being on any terrorist or criminal database, they are now reportedly believed to be Kurdish who fight against IS in Syria and Iraq. The third man claims he is Kurdish and is believed to have been carrying weapons for his patriots who fight against IS in Syria.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: (1) Arrested men bought ammo from the UK and Germany; (2) This was the third trip to Turkey; (3) Swedish authorities still silent after the arrest of the first two (p.51) one of which had Swedish passport. Make your own conclusions!

Somalia: Why is Al-Shabaab Still a Potent Threat?

By Abdul Khalif & Cedric Barnes

Source: <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/africa/2016/02/11/somalia-why-is-al-shabaab-still-a-potent-threat/>

Feb 15 – This year, the armed Islamist extremist group Al-Shabaab has notched up a series of bloody successes against both Somali targets and the African Union peace-enforcement mission AMISOM. Meanwhile, the international community has been busy cajoling principals of the Somali federal and state governments into agreeing on the means by which to hold new elections due in August. Despite four years of “post-transitional” government and a level of international engagement and foreign military presence not

seen since the early 1990s, Somali politics remain dysfunctional and prone to violent disagreement – exactly the conditions in which Al-Shabaab thrives.

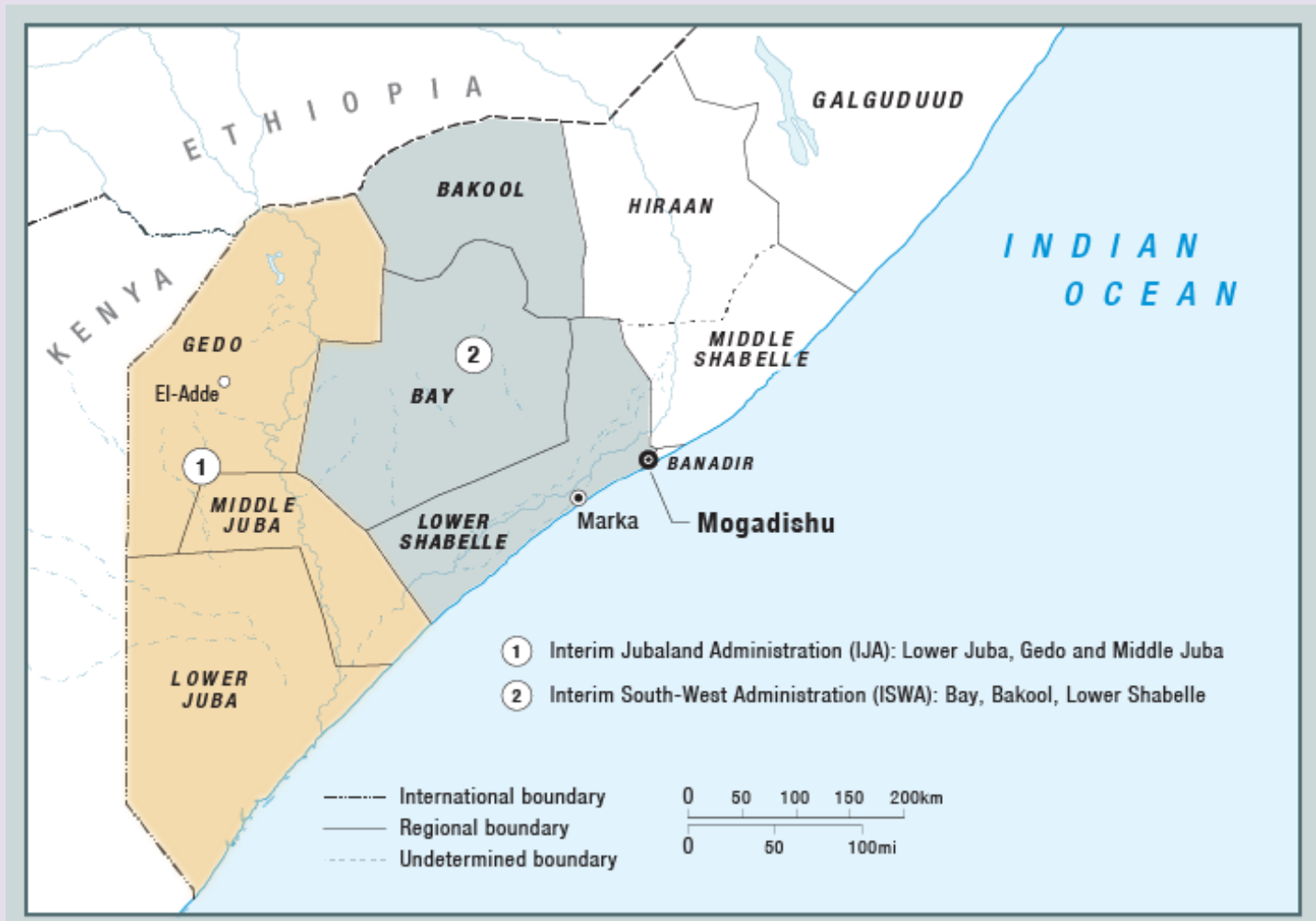
Al-Shabaab's recent string of high-profile attacks began on 15 January, when it overran an AMISOM forward operating base manned by a company-sized Kenyan contingent in El-Adde, in the Gedo region, inflicting heavy casualties (estimates upwards of 50 dead with additional hostages taken);



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

the Kenyan military has not provided details. On 21 January, Al-Shabaab hit Mogadishu's popular Lido beach area, a symbol of the city's return to normalcy, killing at least twenty civilians. On 2 February, a bomb blew a hole in

forward a five-point plan for its expansion. AMISOM troop-contributing countries met in Nairobi on 8 February, and another summit is planned for late February in Djibouti to agree a new approach.



the side of a Somali-owned Daallo Airlines plane minutes after take-off. The attack killed only the suspected suicide bomber and the plane was able to land safely, however this was the first time Al-Shabaab – who have not yet claimed the attack – has attempted to bring down an aircraft with an on-board device. Lastly, from 5-8 February, the group temporarily re-occupied the centre of Marka, in the Lower Shabelle region, which it lost to AMISOM and Somali National Army forces in August 2012, after Somali troops withdrew due to lack of pay.

In late January, following the Kenyan contingent's losses at El-Adde, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta spoke at the African Union's Peace and Security Council to call for a review of AMISOM's mandate and put

[Somalis's southern interim federal states and regions.](#) CRISIS GROUP

AMISOM's vulnerabilities ultimately stem from the lack of a political settlement in Somalia. Whatever the failings and remedies to be identified, the mission's vulnerabilities ultimately stem from the lack of a political settlement in Somalia. AMISOM is again being forced to up the military ante, in response to Al-Shabaab's tactical switch to guerrilla-style attacks. Its rural insurgency has exposed AMISOM's territorial overstretch after a previous expanded mandate allowed the large-scale Operation Eagle and Operation Indian Ocean, which both began in 2014. These offensives resulted



in the “liberation” of much of south central Somalia, which in certain areas has looked more like “occupation” by outsiders. In addition to the longstanding problem of Somalia’s neighbours as troop contributing countries, the

Marka has its own specific dynamics, but again local communities are caught between various conflicting forces. The Interim South West State of Somalia was disputed from the start in Marka and environs, and did not resolve the



interim federal administrations and the Somali National Army that followed in AMISOM’s wake are still largely clan-based, and locally identified as such. The two recent AMISOM reversals took place in Gedo and Lower Shabelle, both of which were subsumed into the new Interim Juba Administration and Interim South West State of Somalia, respectively, and are still disputed by or between local populations.

A combination of factors accounts for the success of Al-Shabaab’s El-Adde attack: blunders and conspiracy can be applied in equal measure. But most importantly, Al-Shabaab has not been defeated politically and socially in the south-western region of Gedo. To simplify a many-layered context, local communities, belonging predominantly to the Marehan-Darod clan, are caught between an Interim Juba Administration which they did not fight for and which is led by a rival clan based in distant Kismayo; Kenyan and Ethiopian AMISOM contingents who have different priorities and local clients; and a federal government that can’t project beyond its mostly Hawiye-clan heartlands. The El-Adde communities have little reason to intercept Al-Shabaab sympathisers and fighters, let alone confront them militarily.

The situation in Lower Shabelle that allowed Al-Shabaab to take control of the centre of

competition between the most powerful clans, namely Habr Gedir-Hawiye and Bimal-Dir, who at different times have found it politically advantageous to fight for and with Al-Shabaab, the Somali National Army and AMISOM.

The competition of interests provides space for Al-Shabaab...

These competing interests leave the ground clear for Al-Shabaab’s overarching narrative of one Islamic system that claims to put the Somali faithful first. The group often styles itself as a mediator in local conflicts, where international, regional and Somali forces are frequently seen as partisan. The competition also provides space for Al-Shabaab to deal with its own internal rivalries and appear resilient. In the past couple of years, the group suffered and survived not only territorial losses but also a bitter internal leadership battle in July 2013, a U.S. drone strike killing its long-term emir Ahmed Abdi Godane in September 2014, and most recently a challenge from factions who wanted to transfer official allegiance from al-Qaeda to the Islamic State.

As Crisis Group recommended in its June 2014 briefing, *Al-Shabaab: It Will Be a Long War*, more military pressure can only sustain progress within durable political settlements. To achieve this, more systematic efforts and support should be given to



parallel national and local reconciliation processes at all levels of Somali society. The paramount focus should be on addressing local Somali political grievances, not on regional or

international priorities. Tapping into the grievances of local communities is what enables Al-Shabaab to remain and rebuild in Somalia.

Abdul Khalif is Horn of Africa Research Intern.

Cedric Barnes is Crisis Group's Horn of Africa project director. Barnes holds a doctorate in African History from University of Cambridge, and a masters' degree from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, where he also researched and taught for five years. From 2007 until 2012 Cedric was Principal Research Analyst for the Horn of Africa at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with short-term postings in Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Cedric is a Research Associate at SOAS and a fellow of the Rift Valley Institute.

The little-understood connection between Islamic terror and drug profits

By Robert Rotberg

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160216-the-littleunderstood-connection-between-islamic-terror-and-drug-profits>

Feb 16 – Terrorists are in it as much for the loot as for the ideology.

The Islamic State, or ISIS, could hardly exist, whatever its Islamist fervor, without hard cash [from sales](#) of pilfered petroleum, taxes on its subject population and kidnappings for ransom.

Likewise ISIS- and al-Qaeda-linked groups in Africa prosper by trafficking drugs across the Sahara and by offering “protection” to smugglers who have long been trading illicit goods throughout the continent. Although Westerners tend to think of these groups as driven by ideology, new recruits may be more attracted by opportunities to make money. Terror is big business, especially in the weak and fragile parts of the world.

A growing market

The market for narcotic substances is [growing substantially](#) within Africa itself. Until recently, the majority of powerful drugs in Africa passed through only on their way to Europe and North America.

West Africa, for example, provides a convenient shortcut and stopover point for cocaine destined for markets in Europe. East Africa sends Asian heroin to both to Europe and North America. Hashish may be locally grown in Africa, but large quantities end up in Europe along with khat, a favorite of the Somali community.

Too few social scientists have studied narcotics trafficking, particularly how drug profiteering influences and fuels terror and radical insurgent movements. My work on failed states, governance and civil conflict leads naturally to a consideration of such associations and relationships.

In my view, understanding how plunder makes terror possible is fundamental to understanding

how some nonstate actors are more mercenaries than servants of a cause.

Defeating ISIS, al-Qaeda and their offshoots will, in other words, depend more on cutting off their riches than countering their appeal to wide-eyed would-be fundamentalists.

Drugs and militancy

Various big-power intelligence services are looking into how the drug trade works in Africa, and the interconnections of drug routes and militancy. The most comprehensive work is being done by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), which has agents in Africa and issues [pointed reports](#) about the trade.

Nevertheless, given the clandestine nature of narcotics and trafficking, conjecture and speculation abound. With big money at stake, operatives have every reason to cover their tracks.

Thanks to research done by the Strategic Studies Institute at the Army War College, we [do know](#)



that cocaine arrives in Africa from South America on an almost daily basis.

Stemming from growers in Peru and Colombia, some cocaine leaves Venezuela and Brazil by private jet aircraft bound for secret airfields in Guinea-Bissau. This small West African nation is widely regarded as Africa's primary narco-state. In recent years, military coups and other forced changes in Guinea-Bissau's weak government have directly reflected competition for control of drug-fueled profits.

Other loads of cocaine from Colombia arrive at proper international airports in Nigeria, Benin and Ghana, hidden in shipments of plantains or coffee. Corrupt airport officials and customs and police officers make sure that the valuable shipments are soon on their way by air or road to Europe.

The fact is that today about 40 percent of the cocaine that reaches Europe annually comes via Africa.

That is where al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), or several of the Islamist groups that have been active in raiding and destabilizing Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, muscle into the picture. They want their cut of the profits, either from being the major transporters of cocaine across the Sahara to Europe or from facilitating that traffic for a sizable slice of the returns.

The competing groups battle, as they have for [the past two years](#) in Mali, for primacy and control. That competition also leads to the macho assertion of prowess, as in the raids on Timbuktu and, in January, in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Innocent bystanders lose their lives when the drug runners randomly invade hotels to boost their power and standing. Additionally, development suffers when drug traffickers threaten fragile governments.

Nigeria and its neighbors

Most analysts are unsure of the extent to which Boko Haram, the homegrown, now ISIS-tied, Islamist rebel movement in northeastern Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger, traffics in narcotics as well as uses them.

What is clear is that Boko Haram guards one of the traditional long-distance trading routes northward to the Mediterranean. It also requires cash to purchase what guns and ammunition it can't obtain by overpowering

the Nigerian military or raiding its barracks. The suspicion, therefore, is that Boko Haram, having killed thousands, kidnapped hundreds and destroyed 70 or so villages, fuels its growth and pays its new recruits from proceeds derived from the drug trade.

On the other side of the continent, Asian-refined heroin derived from Afghan or Burmese poppy seeds flows by dhow sailing vessel and by air into Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. There it is redirected to Europe, and sometimes, via Nigeria, to Mexico and North America.

Al-Shabaab, the Islamist, al-Qaeda-affiliated terror movement of Somalia, derives much of its [predatory income](#) from the movement of Asian heroin and locally produced qat.

Seleka, the Muslim insurgent group that captured and fractured the Central African Republic before being ousted by French and other militias, made money from transshipping drugs from south to north. Lebanon's [Hezbollah](#), which has always had side operations in West Africa among the Lebanese diaspora, also profits from narcotics dealings on the periphery of the Sahara.

Whether al-Shabaab, or any of the other al-Qaeda- and ISIS-associated movements in Africa, would continue to constitute serious threats to local and world order absent abundant incomes derived from smuggling drugs and other goods like charcoal and hashish is not known with any certainty. But, certainly, drug profiteering is an opportunistic pursuit that drives terror activities.

Making trafficking more costly

Interventions by French and local forces, backed by the United States and Britain, have made drug trafficking more costly in Africa. They have also threatened the rent-seeking from which the various Islamist insurgent groups derive steady incomes by controlling drug movements through ports and cities such as Kismayu and Merca in Somalia and Timbuktu and Gao in Mali. The U.S. and its allies also provide security for local administrations in beleaguered places like Somalia, Mali and Niger, thus countering the insurgents.

But another, longer-term, way of depriving the terror groups of their cash and their influence is by



legalizing the cocaine and heroin market in Europe.

Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's Global Commission on Drug Policy is battling to have that obvious decriminalization proposal taken seriously, but so far with little result. His proposal, if adopted, would reduce consumer prices, make the product taxable and eliminate much of the incentive to ship narcotics

clandestinely. In short, it would undercut terror movements. But, so far, there is no U.N. or national support for his sensible, albeit controversial, proposal.

Combating terror in Africa, at least, now depends as much on cutting off insurgents from their sources of income as it does on defeating them on the battlefield – a much longer, tougher, and more costly pursuit.

Robert Rotberg is Founding Director of Program on Intrastate Conflict, Kennedy School, Harvard University.

Immigration overall **not** a source of terrorism

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160216-immigration-overall-not-a-source-of-terrorism-study>

Feb 16 – Migration is overall not a source of terrorism, according to new research from the University of Warwick.

In fact the study indicates that more migration could create a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks, not an increase.

The research was designed to establish whether migration helps spread terror attacks between countries. The lead author, Vincenzo Bove, associate professor in the University's department of politics and international studies (PAIS), said: "Our findings shouldn't be surprising. When migrants move from one country to another they take new skills, knowledge and perspectives. These stimulate technological innovation and diffusion of new ideas and this in turn stimulates economic growth.

"If we subscribe to the belief that economic development is linked to a decrease in extremism then we should expect an increase in migration to have a positive effect."

U Warwick notes that the study, published in the *Journal of Politics*, is based on the analysis of terrorism in and migration flows among 145 countries between 1970 and 2000. Dr. Bove and his fellow author, Tobias Böhmelt from the University of Essex and the ETH Zürich, measured the average number of terror attacks stemming from countries in a given year, taking into consideration the level of migration as a "link" between states.

The academics measured the level of risk using data on migration inflows from the World Bank, weighted by the number of terrorist

attacks in the country of origin of the immigrants.

They ascertained that the countries with the highest level of exposure to the diffusion of terrorism are those with many migrants from regions with a high number of terrorism incidents such as India, Pakistan, Morocco, Western Sahara, and Tunisia. They also determined that in 2000, countries such as Finland, Sweden, Italy, Bolivia, and Paraguay had very low risks.

They found that this measure of exposure is positively and significantly associated to the actual level of terrorism "at home."

Dr. Bove and his researchers noted that patterns can change over time. He said: "This is one example as our study looks at the period 1970-2000. Every year the risk of terrorism diffusion in each country varies, as a result of new migrations waves and changing levels of terror in the country of origin of the migrants."

They found that migration can, under some specific circumstances, be a vehicle for and driver of terrorism. The researchers detected that there was an increase in terrorism in a country that accepted migrants from another where terrorism is rife. However, countries which accepted immigrants from countries where there is no or a low level of activism, did not suffer exposure to terrorism.

The research paper also indicates that extremism could spread from countries with high incidences of terrorism at a macro or micro level. At a macro level, terrorists



can exploit ties among a migrant group's members through radicalization. At a micro level, migrants may bring to their new country expertise in terrorist skills and tactics, which they could pass onto individual terrorists in the host country.

The research highlights that whereas terrorism can travel from one country to another via migration flows, only a very small minority of migrants from high-terrorism states can be associated with increases in terrorism, and very often in an indirect way. Dr. Bove said:

“Terrorist organizations often exploit migrant networks and migrant communities as a recruitment pool.

“Therefore, even the enforcement of discriminate immigration laws on immigration from terror-prone states is not advisable if national security agencies and immigration authorities fail to identify the organizers of terrorism in the first place. “We hope that policymakers will not enforce immigration laws in an indiscriminate way as this may lead to the loss of the positive impact of migration.”

— Read more in *Vincenzo Bove and Tobias Böhmelt, “Does Immigration Induce Terrorism?” Journal of Politics* (on line: 11 February 2016).

EDITOR’S COMMENT: I think that when politics meet academia the result is controversial.

DHS Securing Super Bowl 50

Source: <http://www.firstresponder.gov/Pages/DHS-Securing-Super-Bowl-50.aspx>



On February 7th, while football fans tuned in to see the Denver Broncos and the Carolina Panthers took to the field, dozens of components with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – both seen and unseen – proudly worked to make sure that Super Bowl 50 was a safe and enjoyable experience for players, employees, and fans alike.

From the stadium and well beyond, DHS components – including TSA, CBP, ICE, Coast Guard, the Secret Service, FEMA, our Office of Intelligence and Analysis, and our National Protection and Programs Directorate – contributed to the security of more than 15 million fans and visitors.

Before the game, Secretary Johnson [visited the San Francisco area](#) where he met with local law enforcement officials and the National Football League (NFL) security team to oversee the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) security operations.

Securing the Super Bowl is a shared responsibility, and all of [DHS worked together](#) to do our part.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016



Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers, Passenger Screening Canine teams, Behavior Detection and Analysis Officers, and other specialists [secured area airports and mass transit locations](#).

The U.S. Secret Service supported open-source social media monitoring for situational awareness and assisted with cyber security vulnerability assessments



and mitigation. The Secret Service also conducted magnetometer training for security personnel.

The U.S. Coast Guard provided maritime security and interagency support ahead of and during the Super Bowl through increased patrols, ferry security and cruise ship security operations.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) helped [ensure the legitimacy of game-related merchandise](#) by targeting counterfeit vendors and local merchants of game-related sportswear.

CBP's Air and Marine Operations [helped secure the skies surrounding Levi's stadium](#), deploying three Black Hawk helicopters, three Cessna C-550 Citations and two



AS350 Astar helicopters oversee the areas restricted airspace. CBP also screened cargo entering the stadium contraband such as narcotics, weapons, and explosives.



The DHS [Blue Campaign](#) is the unified voice for efforts to combat human trafficking. Throughout the bay area – including airports, transit hubs, buses, and hotels – the Campaign [displayed awareness materials](#) to help individuals and communities identify and recognize indicators of human trafficking.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Were both 9th and 95th WMD-CSTs also alerted or deployed?

'The X-Files' Just Confounded PC Expectations for How Terrorists are Portrayed on TV

Source: <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/culture/alexa-moutevelis-coombs/2016/02/16/x-files-just-confounded-pc-expectations-how>

Feb 16 – A show that has already [attacked conservatives](#) and brought us [evil pro-life Catholics](#) this season just portrayed terrorists in a totally unexpected way.



The *X-Files* episode “Babylon” begins with a young Muslim man praying to Allah before going about his day, speaking Arabic with a friend and heading to an art gallery. But in *The X-Files*, nothing is ever as it seems and audience members have learned after many years to anticipate a big twist in the cold opening. In this

case, we’re thinking, surely they are going to be politically correct and the Muslim aspect is just a red herring. One reviewer even admitted to PRAYING, “[Please don't be terrorists, please don't be terrorists, please don't be terrorists...](#)”



But much to our surprise, we find out that the two young Arabic-speaking Muslim men who perfectly fit the profile of Islamic terrorists ARE in fact Islamic terrorists! (Liberals must be so disappointed! After all, primetime shows have recently resorted to having their terrorists be [Chinese immigrants](#) or [anti-government militias](#) to be PC. Countdown to CAIR freak out in 3...2...1...)

The terrorists detonate suicide vests inside a Texas art gallery that was showing an image of “Mohammed sitting on a toilet defecating radical Islamists,” killing 9 people, in an attack eerily similar to a thwarted terrorist plot against a Muhammad art exhibit in Garland, Texas, last year. Even the language used in the news is similar: “Using artwork to desecrate the prophet of someone else's religion just incites fanatical terrorists,” says one TV commentator on *The X-Files*, echoing a [real life Hardball broadcast](#) about the Garland terror attempt that said the victims “incited” the attack.

But most powerful is this juxtaposition of



two talking heads on a TV in the background arguing about “hate speech” and the age-old question of “why they hate us” while a radical Muslim silently puts together a new bomb.

-Woman (on TV): When did radical Muslims become a protected class in America?

-Man (on TV): When the Founding Fathers signed the Constitution-- that's when.

-Woman: The same document that's supposed to protect my freedom of speech.

-Man: But not your freedom to hate!

-Woman: What is wrong with you?

-Man: It is not a freedom to hate! Why do you think these guys are acting this way? Why do you think that guy went up and shot five servicemen in Chattanooga? Because they loved him? Because we treated him well? Because we don't plaster their names as terrorists all over the media? No! Because we hate them.

-Woman: We do not hate them. I will not... No, we do not hate them. And I will not allow for that. We are not going to continue to spread lies about a people...

Notice the terrorist is not watching the TV and getting angry. The comments are not radicalizing him; he is patiently building a bomb. A bleeding heart liberal pleading for love to trump hate will not sway him either. As one special agent warns, “There's a large and unassimilated Muslim community in the area, with one shared wish: To wipe you and America off the map.”



Of course, the episode being based in Texas, they had to throw in the stereotypical drunk rednecks in a pickup truck pulling up next to the soon-to-be terrorist, calling him “brownie” and asking, “Are we in the wrong country?” Then there's the nurse who wants the terrorist dead ranting about Muslim immigrants taking jobs and using government benefits paid for by her tax dollars, all as part of some grand U.N. conspiracy.

-Nurse: You know, I've never seen a patient receive so much attention... Especially one who's so unworthy of it.

-Agent Einstein: Well, this is a special case.

-Nurse: Just like all those immigrant groups coming over here, taking all our jobs, clogging up the health care system and our schools, and they don't even speak English.

-Einstein: We're not gonna fix that right now, so...

-Nurse: A church group brought 200 Arab refugees to our town, and now they're saying that they want to bring more.

-Einstein: Maybe we need to come back. Or maybe... We can talk outside.

-Nurse: It's all part of a government program paid for by my tax dollars, which means that I come to work every day, and I pay for these people... So I did some research, and I found out that this is all part of a plot by the United Nations to get these people into the U.S., so that they can form terrorist cells.

-Einstein: That sounds very suspicious.

-Nurse: Yeah. You turn your back on these people, you're taking your chance.

Hitting conservative Texans as racist rednecks? Totally predictable. Showing young Muslim men as terrorists? Totally unexpected.

Egypt's 'Security Threat': Churches

By Raymond Ibrahim

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5851/egypt-churches-security>

Feb 16 – On February 1, Tharwat Bukhit, a Coptic Christian member of Egypt's parliament, [announced](#) “there are approximately 50 churches in Egypt closed for reasons of security.”

When the “Arab Spring” broke out in 2011, Egypt's Christians compiled a list of 43 churches that had been shut down by local

authorities over the years. This list was given to the prime minister of Egypt at the time, Dr. Essam Sharaf, who said that the churches would be opened as soon as possible. Yet since then, according to Bukhit, “Today, the number of closed churches has grown to almost 50.”



Why are Christian churches being "closed for reasons of security"? Whenever Christians attempt to repair, renovate, or build a church -- all of which [contradict Islamic law](#)^[1] -- the same chain of events follows. Local Muslims riot and rampage, and local (Muslim) officials conclude that the only way to prevent "angry youths" from acts of violence is to ban the church, which is then declared a "threat" to security.

Such events have occurred repeatedly throughout Egypt. For instance, Abdel Fattah Sisi, Egypt's president, agreed to build a memorial church in the village of Al-Our, which was home to 13 of the 21 Christians [beheaded in February 2015](#) by the Islamic State in Libya. The families of the victims still live there. After Islamic prayers on Friday, April 3, 2015, [Muslim mobs](#) from Al-Our village [violently protested](#) Sisi's decision. They yelled that they would never allow a church to be built. They chanted, "Egypt is Islamic!" and then attacked a Coptic church with Molotov cocktails and stones. Cars were set on fire, including one belonging to the family of a Christian beheaded by the Islamic State. Several people were seriously hurt.



The Christians of Nag Shenouda, Egypt celebrated Easter 2015 in the street after local Muslims rioted and burned down their temporary worship tent and attacked their religious service at a home.

In Sohag City, a similar chain of events took place. After waiting 44 years, the Christians of Nag Shenouda were issued the necessary permits to build a church. According to a 2015 [report](#), local Muslims rioted and burned down the temporary worship tent. When a Christian

tried to hold a religious service in his home, a Muslim mob [attacked](#) it. Denied a place to worship, the Christians of Nag Shenouda celebrated Easter 2015 in the street.

In a separate incident, also after waiting years, the Christians of Gala' village finally received formal approval to begin restoring their dilapidated church (see pictures [here](#)). Soon after, on April 4, 2015, [Muslims rioted](#), hurling stones at Christian homes, businesses and persons. Christian-owned wheat farms were destroyed and their potato crops uprooted. The usual Islamic slogans were shouted: "Islamic! Islamic!" and "There is no God but Allah!"

In July 2015, [Muslims suspended prayer in a church](#) in the village of Arab Asnabt. They called for the church to be demolished as part of an effort "to prevent Coptic Christians from practicing their religious rites."

Repeatedly, Christian leaders accuse local officials of inciting Muslim violence against churches. Muslim leaders then point to this violence to deny the church a permit on the grounds that it has attracted violence.

More recently, [a church](#) under construction in the village of Swada was attacked by a mob of at least 400 Muslims, possibly incited by local officials. After the attack, the church was closed by the same officials who had previously granted the necessary permits required for its construction. The 3,000 Coptic Christians in Swada, who make up approximately 35% of the population, do not have even one Coptic Orthodox Church to serve them.

This year, on February 1, the same day as Coptic Christian MP Tharwat Bukhit said nearly 50 churches had been shut down, the priest of St. Rewis Church [described](#) how, on the first day Christians met to worship in a fellow Christian's home that he had transformed into a church, "Muslims prevented them so that the church was closed on the very day it was opened."

On February 2, Father Lucas Helmi, an official of the Franciscan Order in Egypt, [explained](#) how "the closure of St. George's Church in the village of Hijazah in Qous [shuttered 25 years earlier] goes back to tensions between Coptic and Muslim families in the village, especially the Muslim neighbors around the old church, which is still



unfinished because they refused to allow it to be rebuilt after it was demolished."

During a 25-minute [interview](#) on Arabic satellite TV, Bishop Agathon [revealed](#)^[2] how, after an official council meeting with government leaders on the possibility of building a church, one of the authorities contacted the Islamic sheikhs of the village. The official asked the

sheikhs if they stood "with the Coptic church or with the State?"

The sheikhs apparently told the Muslim households to each send one family member to protest the building of the church. Security officials could then point to the "rioting mob" and, as usual, on grounds of security, ban the church.

Notes

[1] According to the Conditions of Omar, a Medieval Muslim text that delineates the debilitations Christians must accept in order not to be killed by an Islamic state, Christians are commanded "Not to build a church in our city—nor a monastery, convent, or monk's cell in the surrounding areas—and not to repair those that fall in ruins or are in Muslim quarters; Not to clang our cymbals except lightly and from the innermost recesses of our churches; Not to display a cross on them [churches], nor raise our voices during prayer or readings in our churches anywhere near Muslims..." See [Crucified Again](#), pgs. 24-30.

[2] In his May 2015 interview, Bishop Agathon made many remarks accusing the Egyptian government of being behind the persecution of Christians in Egypt—including the rampant kidnapping of Christian children. A translation of his remarks can be [read here](#).

Raymond Ibrahim is a Judith Friedman Rosen fellow at the Middle East Forum and a Shillman fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

First UN report on ISIL

Source: <http://www.voltairenet.org/article190294.html>

Report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 97 of Security Council resolution 2253 (2015), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide an initial strategic-level report that demonstrates and reflects the gravity of the threat posed to international peace and security by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, including foreign terrorist fighters, provides information on the sources of financing of such individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, including through illicit trade in oil, antiquities and other natural resources, as well as their planning and facilitation of attacks, and reflects the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering this threat.

2. Security Council resolution 2253 (2015) was adopted at the meeting of the Council on 17 December 2015, which included the participation of Ministers of Finance from around the world. In adopting the resolution, the Council expressed its determination to address the threat posed to international peace and security by the groups and individuals and the importance of cutting off their access to funds, including the illicit trade in oil, antiquities and other natural resources, as well as their planning and facilitation of attacks. In the resolution, the Council decided that such groups and individuals will be subject to the measures imposed by Security Council resolution 2161 (2014); that the former Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities will be known as the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989



(2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and that the Al-Qaida Sanctions List will be known as the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List.

3. The report also contains recommendations on strengthening the capacities of Member States to mitigate the threat posed by ISIL, as well as ways in which the United Nations can support those efforts. As requested by the Security Council, the report has been prepared with the input of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, in close collaboration with the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1526 (2004) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and other relevant United Nations actors and international organizations. Information has also been provided by some Member States.

II. The gravity of the threat posed by ISIL and associated groups and entities

A. The threat

4. The emergence of ISIL has been facilitated by the protracted conflicts in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and the resulting political and security instability, as well as by the weakening of State institutions and the inability of the two States to exercise effective control over their territories and borders. In less than two years, ISIL has captured large swathes of territory in both Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, which it administers through a sophisticated, quasi-bureaucratic revenue-generating structure that is sufficiently flexible and diversified to compensate for declines in income from single revenue streams. ISIL has also benefited from its relationship with individuals and groups involved in transnational organized crime. It uses its financial resources to support ongoing military campaigns, administer its territories and fund the expansion of the conflict beyond Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, and it has developed an extremely effective and sophisticated communications strategy to ensure that its distorted vision of the world resonates with a small but growing number of disaffected individuals who are disengaged from, or no longer identify with, the core values of their societies.

5. Despite the efforts of the international community to counter ISIL through military, financial and border-security measures (which have recently inflicted substantial losses), ISIL continues to maintain its presence in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. It is also expanding the scope of its operations to other regions. The terrorist attacks carried out in the final months of 2015 demonstrate that it is capable of committing attacks on civilian targets outside the territories under its control. The extent of its reach was notably demonstrated by the suicide bombings in Beirut on 12 November 2015, the coordinated attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 and the attacks in Jakarta by an ISIL affiliate on 14 January 2016, which closely resembled the Paris attacks.

6. The recent expansion of the ISIL sphere of influence across West and North Africa, the Middle East and South and South-East Asia demonstrates the speed and scale at which the gravity of the threat has evolved in just 18 months. The complexity of the recent attacks and the level of planning, coordination and sophistication involved raise concerns about its future evolution. Moreover, other terrorist groups, including the Islamic Youth Shura Council and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Libya Province (Derna) in Libya, the Mujahideen of Kairouan and Jund al-Khilafah in Tunisia, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Tehreek-e-Khilafat in Pakistan and Ansar al-Khilafah in the Philippines, are sufficiently attracted by its underlying ideology to pledge allegiance to its so-called caliphate and self-proclaimed caliph. ISIL has also benefited from the arrival of a steady stream of foreign terrorist fighters, who continue to leave their communities to replenish its ranks. The return of these fighters from the battlefields of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and other conflict zones is a further major concern, as returnees can extend the presence of ISIL to their States of origin and use their skills and combat experience to recruit additional sympathizers, establish terrorist networks and commit terrorist acts.

1. *ISIL outside Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic*

7. The growing threat posed by ISIL to international peace and security is reflected in its strategy of global expansion, the development of which may reflect a reaction to recent territorial losses inflicted in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic by international military efforts. As of 15 December 2015, 34 groups from all around the world had reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIL. Moreover, in view of its territorial claims of more "provinces", it



is expected that ISIL affiliates will increase in number and that its membership will grow in 2016. This is a matter of considerable concern, since these groups appear to be emulating ISIL's tactics and carrying out attacks on its behalf.

8. In 2016 and beyond, Member States should prepare for a further increase in the number of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to other States on the instructions of ISIL. Many groups and individuals have pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the proclaimed "caliphate" since 2014, although only its affiliates in Libya and Afghanistan currently control territory of any significance. The ISIL presence in Libya is the affiliate that has received the greatest amount of attention, including support and guidance from the ISIL core. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, ISIL continues to develop a network of contacts and sympathizers who carry out attacks in its name. On 13 January 2016, the ISIL group "Khorasan province", which operates in Pakistan and Afghanistan, issued a statement claiming credit for an attack on the Pakistani Consulate in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

2. Grave human rights violations

9. ISIL continues to perpetrate appalling human rights abuses against populations under its control. Executions, torture, amputations, lashings, ethno-sectarian attacks and floggings in public places against "infidels" offer sobering testimony to the degree of barbarity to which it is prepared to descend to achieve its goals. ISIL systematically targets communities and members of communities who refuse to subscribe to its extremist ideology, including Christians, Yezidis, Shia and Sunnis. Since the emergence of ISIL, sexual slavery has been imposed upon women and girls as an instrument of terror to humiliate and subjugate entire communities. Sexual violence in conflict, when used or commissioned as a method or tactic of war or as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate and prolong situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security. Against this backdrop, the sexual and gender-based violence used as a tactic of terrorism by ISIL has become part of its strategy for controlling territory, dehumanizing victims and recruiting new supporters. According to the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, extremist groups like ISIL view female bodies as vessels for producing a new generation that can be raised in their own image, according to their radical ideology, and control over women's sexuality and reproduction is integral to the nation-building aspirations of ISIL and its affiliates. The nexus between sexual violence and violent extremism is becoming increasingly evident, and combatting extremist groups is an essential component of the fight against conflict-related sexual violence. In its resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council stressed the increasing need to ensure that the protection and empowerment of women is a central consideration of strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

10. Thousands of children have also become victims, perpetrators and witnesses of ISIL's atrocities. The group is systematically indoctrinating and grooming children as young as five years old to be future militants. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continue to receive reports that ISIL has been forcibly recruiting and using children in military operations. Several videos posted on social media purportedly show recruitment and training of children in ISIL camps in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. The systemic recruitment and abuse of children by ISIL and the reported emergence of youth training camps in several regions are cause for grave concern.

3. Humanitarian crisis

11. The international community faces a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. The Syrian conflict, the largest and most complex of the current humanitarian emergencies, has become an international crisis. In the Syrian Arab Republic alone, around 12 million people (including more than 4 million people who have sought refuge in neighbouring States) have been forced to flee their homes, and more than 13.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. The emergence of ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. With no political solution in sight, and military confrontation continuing, the number of people affected by internal conflict in both countries is likely to increase in 2016. The presence of significant displaced populations also places a significant strain on the resources of States neighbouring the conflict zones.

4. Destruction and looting of cultural sites and artefacts

12. The large-scale, systematic destruction and looting of cultural sites that is also part of the ISIL strategy highlights the strong connection between the cultural, humanitarian



and security dimensions of conflicts and terrorism. This has been recognized in numerous United Nations statements and declarations, including by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/281, entitled “Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq”, and notably by the Security Council in its resolution 2199 (2015), by which the Council established a ban on trade in antiquities illegally removed from Iraq since 6 August 1990 and from the Syrian Arab Republic since 15 March 2011 and which recognized illicit trafficking in antiquities as a potential source of financing for terrorist organizations.

5. Conclusion

13. ISIL represents an unprecedented threat to international peace and security. It is able to adapt quickly to the changing environment and to persuade or inspire like-minded terrorist groups in various regions of the world to facilitate and commit acts of terrorism.

14. In view of the gravity of the threat, the international community must also be adaptive in its responses, ensuring that they are consistent with the rule-of-law and international human rights and humanitarian norms and standards. Member States should adopt comprehensive approaches that incorporate security-led counter-terrorism initiatives and preventive measures that address the drivers of violent extremism leading to terrorism.

B. Sources of financing for ISIL

15. ISIL’s rapid and effective mobilization of vast financial resources in the service of recruitment and territorial expansion demonstrates the gravity of the threat posed to international peace and security by terrorist organizations that use techniques similar to those employed by transnational organized criminal groups, constantly adapting their financing strategy to changing circumstances.

16. ISIL is the world’s wealthiest terrorist organization. Its funding sources have been described in detail in a number of reports, including those of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and the Financial Action Task Force. Its funds derive mostly from the exploitation of the natural and economic resources of the territories it occupies (including oil fields and refineries and agricultural land), as well as from bank robbery, extortion, confiscation of property, donations from foreign terrorist fighters and the looting of antiquities.

17. Numerous reports, including reports of UNAMI, estimate the income generated by ISIL from oil and oil products in 2015 to have been between \$400 million and \$500 million. ISIL uses income from oil sales to buy supplies, including weaponry, military equipment and ammunition. As a result of the international air strikes on oil refineries and tanks, the blocking of smuggling routes and the sale and purchase of oil, it is expected that ISIL’s oil income, both in total and as a proportion of its overall earnings, will gradually diminish in 2016. Other resources, including gas and phosphate sites, have also been subject to airstrikes. Moreover, further exploitation of existing resources would require expertise and heavy investment, which may not be readily available. However, ISIL’s degree of diversification is such that dwindling revenue streams can be quickly replaced by others. Data and imagery provided by Member States of potential routes of illicit trade in oil and oil products by ISIL cannot be independently verified by the United Nations. Moreover, the differences in the materials provided point to the difficulty in establishing exact routes and distribution networks, given the diversification and flexibility adopted by ISIL, and underscoring the fact that close coordination and cooperation among Member States is imperative. Such high-level coordination and cooperation was demonstrated by the passage of Security Council resolution 2253 (2015).

18. Over the past year, “taxing” and confiscation appear to have become another significant revenue source. ISIL has developed a sophisticated system for the confiscation of goods and property, including from banks (cash taken from 90 branches located in the Iraqi provinces under its control totalled \$1 billion (\$675 million from banks in Mosul alone), according to UNAMI). ISIL also confiscates the homes of officials and others who leave the territory and sells them in local markets, providing discounts to its members. ISIL also taxes economic activity by extorting the estimated 8 million people living in territories under its control. It attempts to legitimize this system by calling the “tax” a “religious tax” or “zakat”. The tax amounts to at least 2.5 per cent of the capital earned from businesses, goods and agricultural products, including wheat, barley, cotton and livestock; from services of contractors and traders in Iraq’s western and northern provinces and from trucks entering the territories under ISIL control. According to UNAMI, the tax on trucks



generates around \$900 million per year. In some cases the group extorts up to 10 per cent, on the grounds that “it is a nation in time of war”.

19. The Iraqi Government recently decided to cut off salary payments to workers in ISIL-controlled territory, with the aim of reducing opportunities for such “taxation”. However, it appears that remittances from relatives abroad are transferred using local “hawala”-type services that are very difficult to control. In the longer term, however, this taxation system will become more difficult to sustain. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), this is especially true in the agricultural sector, where the yield from wheat and barley crops is decreasing in ISIL-controlled territory due to poor seed quality.

20. Like transnational organized criminal groups, ISIL relies on laundering and smuggling techniques and smuggling networks to circumvent the international embargo. ISIL sells oil and agricultural products at discount prices using established historical smuggling routes in and out of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Once these goods have reached the countries of destination, it is very difficult to track their origin, particularly oil products. Convoys bring in basic food and raw materials for the population, and illicit merchandise is concealed within such convoys as they leave ISIL-controlled territory. ISIL imposes “taxes” and fees on anyone living in the territories under its control.

21. Numerous Iraqi and Syrian archaeological sites are under the close control of ISIL, which imposes taxes on the looters, based on a pre-appraisal of the value of what is taken, and it also grants licences for excavation. As reported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the American Schools of Oriental Research estimates that around 25 per cent of archaeological sites in the Syrian Arab Republic (including over 21 per cent in ISIL-controlled territories) have been affected by the looting. The Syrian Arab Republic has seized, or obtained the restitution, of more than 6,000 artefacts (including 1,000 from Lebanon) over the past four years. UNESCO notes that, in view of the scale of the looting and its significant economic value, it is likely that many items are being stored by criminal networks. It is to be expected that, once the attention diminishes, criminal networks will begin to introduce additional laundered items into the market. According to preliminary information received by UNESCO from its member States, many small pieces, such as coins and statuettes, are generally smuggled and put up for sale on Internet platforms. It is therefore essential that police, customs and art market officials take the strongest possible measures to combat illicit trafficking in such items. UNESCO has also noted the vital importance of determining where and with whom such artefacts are stored and of identifying the smuggling routes.

22. In addition to the above revenue sources, ISIL continues to benefit from external donations and ransom payments by families of hostages, particularly from the Yazidi community. UNAMI estimates that these payments amounted to between \$35 million to \$45 million in 2014. It is believed that \$850,000 was paid in January 2015 for the release of 200 Iraqi Yazidis. ISIL has used sexual violence to mobilize resources and fund its operations, including the ransoming and sale of women and girls through human trafficking and slave markets. It also receives voluntary payments from those seeking to free foreign terrorist fighters from the conflict zones. According to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, revenue from foreign terrorist fighters represents another significant source of funding. Wire transfers, credit card withdrawals from the accounts of known foreign terrorist fighters and money transfers reveal a constant flow of funds in and out of ISIL-controlled territories. Further research is needed to better understand the financial networks operating in border cities, including the role of intermediaries.

23. In view of the considerable pressure being exerted by the international community, it is likely that ISIL will attempt to identify other funding sources. There is a need to achieve a better understanding of the financial mechanisms used by ISIL affiliates and by groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIL.

24. The Financial Action Task Force notes that ISIL and its affiliates continue to make extensive use of the Internet and social media to raise funds. Misuse of these technologies in a coordinated manner can generate significant funds, which are difficult to detect without the support of the Internet site providers. This is an area of particular concern, as it could enable foreign terrorist fighters returning from Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic or local sympathizers to generate sufficient funding for recruitment and the planning of terrorist attacks around the world.

C. Foreign terrorist fighters joining ISIL and associated groups and entities

1. Recruitment



25. According to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and other sources, the attraction of ISIL to potential recruits has risen to an unprecedented level. It is estimated that around 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters, coming from over 100 Member States, are actively engaged in the activities of Al-Qaida, ISIL and associated groups. This phenomenon clearly demands not only global and national solutions, but also urgent action at the local level. In view of the current situation on the ground, it is unclear whether the recent dramatic rate of growth in the number of foreign terrorist fighters will be sustained over the long term. It is also unclear whether the final destinations of most of the fighters will continue to be Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic since ISIL has been encouraging potential fighters to travel to States outside the Middle East.

26. In both developed and developing States, significant numbers of young people are seriously considering travelling to areas where their personal security would be at great risk. The departure of so many young people to conflict zones has a profoundly destabilizing effect on their communities and, above all, on their families. In order to attract individuals to its cause, ISIL exploits socioeconomic grievances and feelings of alienation, marginalization, discrimination or victimization, precipitated by, among other things, a perceived or real lack of good governance, inequality, injustice and lack of opportunity. It pretends to offer potential recruits the opportunity to achieve “social status”, kinship, a sense of identity and belonging, fulfilment of a sense of religious duty and a purpose. Its ideology is predicated on a perverted interpretation of Islam that also exploits historical grievances (offering an opportunity not only to rebel against the corruption of the current political order, but also to eradicate the “artificial” border between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic).

27. The challenges faced by those seeking to identify potential foreign terrorist fighters and prevent their travel are exacerbated by the absence of a clear “personality type” that is more prone than others to engage in terrorist activities. Preliminary studies have shown that foreign terrorist fighters are motivated by a number of, social, economic and geopolitical conditions, combined with individual circumstances that appear at a particular moment in time and make individuals vulnerable to recruitment or engagement in violent extremism and terrorism. This appears to be the case for recruits located both inside and outside territories where ISIL and its affiliates have a large presence. The journey of each individual fighter into terrorist activity involves a unique combination of factors that differ in order of magnitude, depending on the local context.

28. According to the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, ISIL’s recruitment messaging also includes the promise of access to women for young, single, economically marginalized men who seek status, power and sexual access not available in socially conservative contexts. ISIL also has a large team of dedicated “online groomers” whose job it is to identify individuals who express an interest in the group on online forums. The grooming of would-be sympathizers for terrorist activity locally or for travel to ISIL-held territory is based on information about the individual’s particular social and personal context.

29. Terrorist recruitment is not the exclusive preserve of ISIL recruiters. There is often an intimate and personal element. Studies on European foreign terrorist fighters⁸ show that peer pressure or support plays an active part in the final stages of radicalization, and that the role of family members, especially mothers, could be particularly relevant in countering such pressure.

2. Use of the Internet and social media as a promotional and recruitment tool

30. The threat posed by ISIL is made even greater by the group’s growing technological sophistication. ISIL increasingly turns to the Internet and social media to disseminate its messages to potential recruits. It appears that ISIL has been able, through information and communications technologies (ICT) in general, and social media tools in particular, to establish a low-cost and powerful system to broadcast its propaganda, identify potential recruits and allocate human resources to persuade targeted individuals to join its ranks. This has fuelled the growth in the number of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Prosecutors and law enforcement officials in many affected States increasingly report that foreign terrorist fighters and would-be fighters, and terrorists acting alone or in small cells, but without formal links to ISIL, consume its propaganda online and interact online with its members and sympathizers. Following action by Twitter to close down thousands of these accounts, ISIL has migrated to other social media tools, such as Telegram messenger. When Telegram, in turn, begins to close down ISIL-related channels, ISIL and its support base will likely migrate to new platforms.



31. ISIL has also demonstrated the capacity to tailor its online messaging to its audience. Over the past two years, videos of ISIL have shown: acts of war (30 per cent); interviews with mujahideen (25 per cent); images showing ISIL as a functioning and utopic “State” (18 per cent); and executions (15 per cent). Purely religious themes are less common. Videos are often well edited and inspired by action movies and videogames. This approach seeks to attract not only young men looking for action, but also professionals such as doctors, engineers, ICT specialists and women and girls. ISIL’s branding and marketing campaigns are accompanied by individualized radicalization and recruitment campaigns conducted by well-trained groomers using live chat applications, videoconferencing and other ICT tools.

32. It has been shown that ICT plays a crucial role in the travel preparations of foreign terrorist fighters to join ISIL and its affiliates, the training and sharing of “effective practices” and the planning of attacks. ISIL online forums discuss best ways to avoid detection while crossing borders by using routes that will not raise suspicion and through States perceived as having inadequate border controls. The use of ICT to demonstrate how to build improvised explosive devices is also well documented. This matter has been raised by the Security Council in its resolutions 2161 (2014) and 2178 (2014) and could be exploited by ISIL and its affiliates. Prosecutors and law enforcement officers have expressed their concerns about the routine use of encryption technologies by ISIL terrorists. ISIL-related forums on the “dark web” regularly inform their members about the most effective encryption tools and recommend the adoption of new products when ICT solutions are considered to be compromised.

33. A further challenge is the complexity of the global ICT framework, which raises several difficult jurisdictional issues in terms of the applicability of domestic laws and the powers of States to enforce them. Private corporations must find ways to deal with conflicting domestic laws in their international operations. Facebook, for example, has established guidelines for cooperation with law enforcement agencies worldwide, including for the preservation of data and emergency requests. Many private corporations already enforce their own terms of use and can either remove ISIL content or terminate the accounts of users violating those terms. Such measures are taken by corporations in the context of terrorist activities such as recruitment and incitement to terrorism. Most large corporations proactively and voluntarily moderate content uploaded by their users or remove content that is contrary to their terms and conditions.

34. The online sale of Iraqi and Syrian antiquities continues despite the worldwide prohibition on their trade, as set forth in Security Council resolution 2199 (2015). Illegitimate sellers of such antiquities, who may have direct or indirect links with ISIL, use social media platforms to find customers for illicitly obtained and exported artefacts. UNESCO has been raising awareness of this phenomenon for a decade. The global ICT community should take the necessary countermeasures, following established good practices.

D. Travel of foreign terrorist fighters

35. Foreign terrorist fighters from many States continue to reach Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic through neighbouring countries. In some instances, this is facilitated by linguistic similarities and the lack of visa requirements. ISIL has shown itself to be effective in identifying and circumventing countermeasures put in place by Member States. It has also proven adept at informing potential foreign terrorist fighters of any vulnerabilities, using the Internet and social media. Even if one State detects a vulnerability that facilitates the cross-border movement of foreign terrorist fighters, the same vulnerability may be easily exploited by ISIL in a neighbouring State. The international community must therefore develop a more effective way to determine which vulnerabilities are being exploited by ISIL and to share this information with other States that are adversely affected by such measures so that collective responses can be rapidly implemented.

36. ISIL has recently issued Internet guidelines to help facilitate the travel of foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Those guidelines clearly indicate ISIL’s awareness of the techniques commonly used by Member States to identify foreign terrorist fighters, as well as systemic shortfalls in existing measures to track their travel patterns. It is also evident that ISIL is well aware of the difficulty of identifying foreign terrorist fighters prior to their departure. Many potential fighters are not persons of interest to law enforcement officials in their States of origin or residence and are therefore not subject to monitoring. The ISIL guidelines also include detailed information about the most easily penetrable travel routes, those to avoid because of stepped-up controls and the best modes of travel to be used to reach territories under



its control. Member States have reported to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team that foreign terrorist fighters travel to conflict zones in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic by air, maritime and land routes through European and neighbouring States.

37. ISIL has also exhibited a growing interest in, and capacity for, launching attacks outside the territory it controls. These attacks are carried out not only by home-grown terrorists, but also by individuals who have received training abroad, including in ISIL-held territories. This demonstrates the urgent need for Member States not only to ensure that foreign terrorist fighters do not travel from their country of origin to ISIL-held territories, but also to curtail the flow of such fighters from ISIL-held territories to third States where they can facilitate terrorist attacks. Concerns have been raised about the potential for foreign terrorist fighters to use the massive inflow of asylum seekers into Europe as a means of transporting its operatives into Europe.

38. With regard to refugees entering third States through the resettlement schemes organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it is highly unlikely that ISIL will attempt to take advantage of these programmes to move terrorists abroad. Given the extensive screening measures and background checks adopted by most States accepting refugees for resettlement, and the lengthy waiting periods associated with these checks, resettlement would not appear to be an attractive avenue.

E. Planning and facilitation of attacks by ISIL

39. ISIL's dissemination of propaganda through the use of ICT forms part of its military strategy to destabilize States outside Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic by provoking a confrontation between "believers" and "apostates". Since its acquisition of territory in 2014, it has changed its tactics, notably during the second half of 2015 when it began to expand the geographical scope of its attacks. This led to a series of attacks perpetrated by ISIL sympathizers acting alone or in small cells (including attacks at: a museum in Brussels; a café in Sydney, Australia; a museum and resort in Tunisia; a train bound for Paris; and the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health). The main characteristic of these attacks was their low level of complexity.

40. Recent attacks, including the attacks in Paris and Djakarta, reflect a significant shift towards large-scale operations perpetrated outside the Middle East. It is very likely that attacks by terrorists acting alone will also continue. The November 2015 attacks in Paris, in particular, bore the hallmarks of a classic Al-Qaida attack: long-term preparation, multiple targets, several planned waves of attacks and the involvement of a coordinated multi-cell structure directed on the ground by an operational leader and led by planners located in the Syrian Arab Republic and facilitators located outside France. The combination of home-grown small cells and terrorists who travel back and forth from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic represents a new and complex challenge. Evidence gathered since January 2015 reflects the existence of effective operational connections between ISIL and its militants abroad. These attacks also point to the existence of distinct capacities to: identify large-scale targets (including restaurants, sport stadiums, tourism infrastructure and concert halls); advise on evasive travel patterns; organize logistical support; provide training in the use of communications, weapons and explosives; remotely manage a roster of potential attackers; and call upon a global network of sympathizers to facilitate such operations.

41. The ability of ISIL and its affiliates and its self-proclaimed members and adherents to communicate internationally by means of sophisticated technologies, including mobile telephones and encrypted tools, to transfer funds, to provide logistical support (for example by renting apartments and cars, purchasing weapons and constructing explosive vests), and to use evasive travel patterns in preparing attacks demonstrate their capacity to mount operations outside the territories under their control.

42. ISIL's shift towards the use of suicide attackers outside areas under its direct control represents a significant increase in the gravity of the threat it poses to international peace and security. Even though these attacks do not rely on the use of sophisticated weapons (relying essentially on automatic rifles and explosive vests), their effectiveness is reflected in the very real death tolls and the sense of instability and insecurity instilled into civilian populations. There are indications that ISIL may be seeking to develop a long-term capacity to use more sophisticated weapons, including chemical and biological weapons, in such attacks.



43. A further significant concern is the growing capacity of terrorist groups to recruit assailants from a roster of foreign terrorist fighters selected and trained specifically to carry out such attacks. These individuals may have known one another for several years, been detained in the same prisons, travelled to the Syrian Arab Republic together, speak the same language and/or belong to the same country of origin or community. This ensures cohesion and increases their chances of success.

44. The complex nature of many recent attacks suggests that ISIL militants are adapting to the law enforcement and security measures taken against them. Against this backdrop, judicial authorities, law enforcement and security agencies are often at a disadvantage in cases that involve terrorists who act alone or who are more insulated from detection. This is especially true for law enforcement and intelligence agencies that rely on human intelligence sources. Empirical evidence suggests that, in general, while there are people who know about an offender's grievance, extremist ideology, views and/or intent to engage in violence in the lead-up to most lone-actor terrorist events, they do not report such information to the relevant authorities. Consequently, opportunities to identify a perpetrator or obtain information in advance of an attack are reduced.

F. Returnees

45. The threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters for ISIL returning from the battlefields of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and other conflict zones is another major concern for many States of origin. In general, returnees serve to extend the presence of ISIL into other States and to set up networks for future attacks, planning and facilitation. It is currently unclear how many foreign terrorist fighters serving ISIL are likely to return to their home States (rather than remaining in conflict zones or travelling to third States) and how likely they are to engage in terrorism upon their return. However, as they become disillusioned, there is a high probability that many will return to their home States. Empirical evidence suggests, however, that even though very few ISIL foreign terrorist fighters appear to engage in terrorist activity after their return, attacks carried out by trained foreign terrorist fighters are more likely to be successful and lethal. It should also be noted that returnees are a potentially valuable source of information, and that they may use their experience to persuade others not to become involved in terrorism, including through effective counter-messaging campaigns.

III. The range of United Nations efforts in supporting the efforts of Member States to counter the threat of ISIL

46. The primary responsibility for countering the threat of ISIL lies with Member States. However, the United Nations and other international organizations, which have a critical role to play in supporting their efforts, have already taken a number of measures, including conducting assessments of the threat, and of the capacity of States to counter it, formulating recommendations for addressing identified shortcomings and developing and implementing capacity-building programmes. However, in view of the increased gravity of the threat posed by ISIL, the United Nations and other international organizations must adopt a more comprehensive, concerted and coordinated approach.

47. The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team has produced a series of reports assessing the global threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, the threat from ISIL and the Al-Nusrah front, including to the Middle East region, and the terrorism threat in Libya and Afghanistan posed by ISIL and other terrorist groups. The Monitoring Team has made a number of recommendations for mitigating the threat.

48. The Counter-Terrorism Committee has conducted an assessment of the ability of Member States to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, focusing on the States most affected, and has provided Member States with recommendations on ways to address the gaps identified in its assessments. The Counter-Terrorism Committee recently held an open briefing in New York on "The role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism", a special meeting in Madrid on "Stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters", and a special meeting in New York on "Preventing terrorists from exploiting the Internet and social media to recruit terrorists and incite terrorist acts, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms". The special meeting in Madrid resulted in a set of guiding principles for detecting, intervening against and preventing the incitement and facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters; preventing their travel; criminalizing and prosecuting them; cooperating internationally; and rehabilitating and reintegrating returning foreign terrorist fighters.



49. Following the establishment of an ad hoc inter-agency working group on foreign terrorist fighters by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, a capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters was developed in close consultation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. The development of this plan was called for by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 29 May 2015 (S/PRST/2015/11).

50. The plan sets out priority recommendations for addressing the capacity-building assistance needs of the most affected Member States, based on the assessment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and includes a prioritized list of capacity-building and technical assistance projects submitted by entities of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, to be implemented over the next 24 months. It represents the first attempt to develop a more concerted, coherent approach to capacity-building.

A. Countering the financing of ISIL

51. The Global Programme Against Money Laundering of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has collated good practices in disrupting the financing of terrorist and organized criminal groups. According to the Global Programme, a “Financial Disruption Workbook”, produced and used for operations in Afghanistan, has reduced the Taliban’s annual budget in Southern Afghanistan by over a third. UNODC also plans to launch an initiative on enhancing the operational capability of countries in the Middle East and North Africa to counter terrorism financing in the context of foreign direct fighters.

52. The Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recently launched a new global programme, entitled Building Effective Networks against Transnational Organized Crime, which aims to strengthen interregional criminal intelligence exchange and international cooperation on transnational organized crime and terrorism. This will be achieved through the “Networking the Networks” initiative, which has established a network between existing international and regional law enforcement centres and entities to promote criminal intelligence exchange and multilateral operations targeting organized crime. The second focus area is the establishment of a network of law enforcement training institutions to promote professional training. The third key area will be strengthening capacity to conduct financial investigations.

53. In order to counter the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property during conflict, UNESCO will further strengthen its cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, national specialized police and customs units, the International Council of Museums and other key partners, such as museums and art market operators, for the tracking, authentication, seizure, conservation and restitution of stolen and illegally exported objects.

54. INTERPOL has launched a programme, with the support of the European Union and in collaboration with the Common Markets of East and Southern Africa, to develop capacities to prevent criminals and terrorists from exploiting financial institutions. The programme will enhance cooperation between financial intelligence units, law enforcement officers and criminal-justice officials in prosecuting those who engage in money-laundering and terrorist financing, whether through the formal banking system or through hawala-type services.

B. Criminal-justice responses to the terrorist threat

55. Several United Nations entities are actively engaged in supporting the efforts of Member States to provide an effective criminal-justice response to the threat posed by ISIL. The recently established Working Group on Legal and Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force brings together the main United Nations bodies dealing with this issue. United Nations entities are devoting considerable effort to identifying specific good practices and assisting Member States to criminalize, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters. They are also supporting the efforts of States to develop prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returnees. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate assists the Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor States’ implementation of the criminal-justice requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions and facilitates related technical assistance activities, in cooperation with United Nations and international and regional partners. The Terrorism Prevention Branch, for



example, has launched a five-year initiative on criminal-justice responses to foreign terrorist fighters for countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law.

C. Preventing and disrupting travel by foreign terrorist fighters

56. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, acting in close cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and several other partners (including the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), INTERPOL, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Customs Organization), has developed a project to raise awareness of and gather information about the challenges faced by the most affected Member States in implementing advance passenger information systems. It will conduct the first in-depth study on this topic during the first quarter of 2016. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is extending its Airport Communication Project to the Middle East and North Africa region, with a view to strengthening law enforcement capacities at international airports to detect and interdict suspicious travellers, including foreign terrorist fighters.

57. INTERPOL continues to develop its global database on foreign terrorist fighters and to help Member States to intensify and accelerate the exchange of information. It will further exploit data on foreign terrorist fighters and produce, on demand, more analytical reports, with a view to identifying new routes, travel patterns or evasive tactics they are using in travelling to and from conflict zones. INTERPOL will continue to work with its member States to update and strengthen its databases and will extend its system of Special Notices and databases (including the foreign terrorist fighter database) to frontline immigration and border control officials. INTERPOL is also assisting its members in the development of a “layered system” of screening to apprehend foreign terrorist fighters who successfully evade border checks.

D. Countering recruitment and preventing/countering violent extremism

58. On 15 January 2016, I presented the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to the General Assembly. The Plan, which takes a practical and comprehensive approach to addressing the drivers of violent extremism, includes more than 70 recommendations for concerted action at the global, regional and national levels, based on five key priorities: (a) prevention; (b) principled leadership and effective institutions; (c) promoting human rights; (d) an all-out approach; (e) and United Nations engagement. The Assembly will hold a formal debate on the Plan in the coming months and an international conference, to be co-organized by Switzerland and the United Nations, will be held in April 2016. The General Assembly’s fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, to be held in June 2016, will offer a further opportunity for Member States and the United Nations system to consider the recommendations contained in the Plan of Action.

59. The Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate continue to facilitate regional and national workshops on developing comprehensive approaches to countering incitement to commit terrorist acts and violent extremism, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014), including workshops held in Kenya and Tunisia in 2015. The workshops have served to develop the concept of strategic partnerships in this area between a broad range of Government ministries and non-governmental actors, including community and religious leaders, civil society organizations, and women’s and youth groups.

60. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre has developed a project aimed at enhancing the understanding of foreign terrorist fighters in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the motivation of individuals joining extremist groups in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, understanding key influences on their thinking and gaining insight into the reasons why they return to their home States. The project, which will be completed in 2016, is intended to support States in developing policies to dissuade potential foreign terrorist fighters from travelling, provide material for strategic communications and assist in the design of effective rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

61. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), acting in close consultation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, is developing a global research programme on the drivers of recruitment, particularly the recruitment of women, to ISIL and other terrorist groups. The programme will also strengthen the capacity of women’s civil society groups to engage in preventing



extremist violence and ensure that women and girls in areas impacted by violence have access to comprehensive and integrated strategies. Within the framework of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, UN-Women will support a number of initiatives, in partnership with relevant United Nations agencies, to politically and economically empower rural women.

62. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) is gathering a series of lessons learned and promising practices and conducting table-top exercises to engage Member States in the development of action plans to counter violent extremism and address the challenges posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters. These activities will be implemented at the regional level to encourage the sharing of experiences and knowledge. UNICRI is also developing a programme for foreign terrorist fighters who are detained and/or imprisoned upon their return.

E. Disrupting the planning and facilitation of attacks by ISIL

63. INTERPOL has developed a project, code-named “Watchmaker”, to analyse and disseminate information, including biometrics, collected on improvised explosive devices worldwide. It will continue to work with the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and other United Nations partners to identify the networks responsible for building these devices, to develop the capacity of Member States to prevent attacks using improvised explosive devices and to investigate the individuals responsible for such attacks. Joint INTERPOL-Security Council Special Notices will continue to be an important global counter-terrorism tool and INTERPOL will continue to work with the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to strengthen the Special Notices, including through the inclusion of biometrics.

IV. Strategic responses

64. The resolution of ongoing conflicts, including the Syrian conflict, would have a direct impact on the driving forces behind the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters by ISIL. The responses of Member States and the United Nations must therefore be strategic and consistent in addressing the underlying political and socioeconomic causes of both the Syrian conflict and the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters and in ensuring justice and accountability for human rights violations. The response should be multifaceted and focus on short-, medium- and long-term objectives.

65. In order to address the grave threat posed by ISIL, including the influx of foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and ISIL’s extensive financing activities, it is essential to identify a political resolution to the Syrian conflict. This process will require sustained and determined international commitment and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), which sets out a path towards formal intra-Syrian negotiations on a political transition process pursuant to the 2012 Geneva communiqué and a parallel nationwide ceasefire. It will also require that all States expeditiously implement Council resolutions 2178 (2104), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). The process should also address the grievances exploited by ISIL to gain support for its presence from among certain local communities.

66. A strategic, rule-of-law-based approach to reducing the number of foreign terrorist fighters while continuing to choke off ISIL’s funding could help advance the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including those that seek to achieve sustainable peace through the inclusion in international political processes of local actors (for example, women and youth) with an intimate understanding of the conflict’s dynamics.

V. Recommendations

67. The following recommendations are submitted for the consideration of Member States and the entities of the United Nations system.

A. Strengthening the capacities of Member States

1. Countering the financing of terrorism

68. Member States are encouraged to take action to counter the financing of terrorism as set out below:

(a) ISIL’s rapid and effective mobilization of vast financial resources reaffirms the urgent need to strengthen measures to prevent and disrupt terrorist financing in all regions of the world. In order to implement effective policies to counter terrorist financing, we must understand the nature of ISIL financing as it evolves. I therefore call on Member States to take steps to monitor and address the threat and to share information on an ongoing basis



with the relevant international assessment bodies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, the Financial Action Task Force and regional bodies styled after the Task Force, so that they can understand the gravity of the threat and formulate effective global and regional responses;

(b) I also call on Member States to implement fully, and with renewed urgency, the sanctions regime introduced by the Security Council in its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015). In accordance with the latter resolution, Member States should continue to propose names of individuals, groups, undertakings and entities participating by any means in the financing or support of the activities of ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities for inclusion on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List. In accordance with resolution 1373 (2001), States should also freeze terrorists' assets without delay, as a preventive measure to disrupt terrorist activity, rather than relying upon the provisions of national criminal law;

(c) Even though terrorism and transnational organized crime are distinct phenomena, Member States are encouraged not to rely exclusively on the international counter-terrorism instruments in countering terrorism financing. They may call on other relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2001 and its Protocols, the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 2004 and the relevant conventions on drugs. All these tools can and should be utilized to facilitate effective international and regional cooperation;

(d) I urge Member States to take immediate steps to strengthen their relationships with the private sector in countering the financing of terrorism by ISIL, including financial institutions (banks, money-value businesses of all types and other financial businesses and professions), the antiquities sector, and Internet service providers. Member States should partner with the relevant international institutions and the private sector to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of counter-financing of terrorism initiatives to prevent ISIL and its affiliates from accessing the international financial system;

(e) The timely exchange and use of financial intelligence are crucial, not just in the investigation of terrorist attacks, including those committed by ISIL, but also in disrupting the planning and facilitation of attacks. Member States should prioritize the active sharing of financial information (domestically, regionally and internationally) and adopt a holistic, whole-of-Government approach to the exchange of financial information by all relevant institutions. The gathering and use of financial intelligence, as with any other form of intelligence gathering, should be carefully regulated by law so as not to unduly infringe upon human rights, particularly the right to privacy;

(f) Lastly, Member States should ensure that they have the capacity to counter ISIL financing in a manner commensurate with the gravity of the threat in order to ensure that illicit financial flows to ISIL are effectively cut off.

2. Countering the recruitment through and the use of the Internet in countering radicalization and violent extremism

69. Member States are encouraged to take action to counter the recruitment through and the use of the Internet in countering radicalization and violent extremism as set out below:

(a) The Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism includes recommendations for action to be taken at the global, regional and national levels to address the drivers of violent extremism. Implementation of the Plan will help promote comprehensive implementation of pillar I of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, on conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and thereby help prevent recruitment by ISIL. I invite Governments to develop national plans of action to prevent violent extremism and I particularly encourage grass-roots initiatives undertaken within this framework, including, in particular, those that promote the inclusion of women and youth;

(b) It is essential to strengthen preventive and proactive action through education. The education sector can play a critical role in countering the appeal of ISIL by strengthening relevant education and training programmes, mainstreaming the prevention of violent extremism through ministries of education and developing guidelines and practices for teachers and other educators on identifying and addressing violent extremism in formal and non-formal settings;

(c) I also encourage Member States to establish effective diversion programmes for youth to reduce their susceptibility to recruitment and abuse by ISIL and its affiliates. Member States with high migrant populations from areas of conflict should develop inclusion activities targeted at children and youth;



(d) I urge Member States to adopt effective strategies to counter the threat of online radicalization by ISIL. This will require that Governments take action in addition to legislative and law enforcement measures, including engaging with communities and industry. In order for such campaigns to be effective, the private sector should be an active participant;

(e) I urge Member States to review their domestic legal frameworks to strengthen their capacities to bring to justice alleged perpetrators for criminal use of ICT in support of ISIL, in compliance with international human rights law.

3. Preventing and disrupting the travel by foreign terrorist fighters

70. Member States are encouraged to take action to prevent and disrupt the travel of foreign terrorist fighters as set out below:

(a) It is essential that Member States criminalize travel by foreign terrorist fighters, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and to take measures to strengthen their border-management regimes in order to address the most serious vulnerabilities exploited by ISIL to facilitate the movement of foreign terrorist fighters to and from territories under its control. This urgent need has recently been reaffirmed by instances in which high-profile terrorists have succeeded in travelling undetected;

(b) I call on Member States to ensure direct access by immigration officers to all relevant INTERPOL databases available through its I-24/7 global police communications system, including Special Notices, nominal data, the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database, and the Foreign Terrorist Fighters database;

(c) I call on Member States to assess the travel routes used by foreign terrorist fighters on a continuous basis and to share their findings with a view to introducing specific measures to detect and prevent such fighters from travelling to join ISIL utilizing such routes. I urge Member States to designate dedicated and/or clearly identified points of contact within relevant law enforcement, intelligence, security and immigration departments, and their counterparts at airlines, so as to facilitate the prompt exchange of passenger data on a 24/7 basis, with the aim of disrupting travel by foreign terrorist fighters.

4. Disrupting the capacity to plan and facilitate terrorist attacks in the name of ISIL

71. Member States are encouraged to take action to disrupt the capacity of terrorists acting alone or in small cells to plan and facilitate terrorist attacks in the name of ISIL as set out below:

(a) I call on Member States to employ the full range of human rights-compliant tools at their disposal, from “soft” intervention measures to criminal-justice measures, in order to thwart attacks by terrorists acting alone or in small cells in the name of ISIL. Member States should strengthen cooperation and information-sharing between intelligence and security agencies and the prosecution and develop a proactive approach to the investigation of offences committed by foreign terrorist fighters with a view to identifying them and preventing such attacks;

(b) Generating evidence against foreign terrorist fighters is a complex and multifaceted task. Member States should consider reviewing national legislation to ensure that evidence collected through special investigative techniques or from States of destination, or evidence collected through ICT and social media, including through electronic surveillance, may be admitted as evidence in cases connected to foreign terrorist fighters acting for ISIL while respecting international human rights law;

(c) I encourage Member States to take steps to ensure effective inter-agency coordination, including by developing multi-agency task forces and liaison officers, in order to ensure a collective response to countering ISIL. Member States should also consider establishing appropriate laws and mechanisms that allow for the broadest possible international cooperation, including effective joint investigations, the appointment of liaison officers, police-to-police cooperation, the establishment of 24/7 networks for cooperation, the transfer of criminal proceedings and the transfer of sentences.

5. Treatment of foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin

72. Member States are encouraged to take action to address the treatment of foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin as set out below:

(a) The employment of rigid prosecution policies and practices against foreign terrorist fighters can be counterproductive to the implementation of comprehensive strategies to combat their activities and to combat the violent extremism that can lead to terrorism.



Member States should also consider alternatives to incarceration, as well as reintegration and possible rehabilitation of ISIL returnees, prisoners and detainees;

(b) I urge Member States to ensure that their competent authorities apply a case-by-case approach to ISIL returnees, based on risk assessment, the availability of evidence and related factors and to develop and implement strategies to address specific categories of returnees, in particular minors, women, family members and other potentially vulnerable individuals; providers of medical services and other humanitarian needs; and disillusioned returnees who have committed less serious offences;

(c) Returnees can be especially effective in counter-messaging campaigns, due to their credibility based on personal experience in conflict zones. Member States should consider promoting their active involvement in prevention programmes, as appropriate.

6. Protection of cultural heritage

73. Member States are encouraged to take action to protect cultural heritage as set out below:

(a) I call on Member States to assist in strengthening the ability of affected States to prevent and mitigate the loss of cultural heritage and diversity resulting from the conflict in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic by developing institutional and professional capacities for reinforced protection. I encourage Member States to keep UNESCO and INTERPOL informed of all seized antiquities so that these organizations can help ensure their safe return in accordance with Security Council resolution 2199 (2015);

(b) I urge Member States to strengthen customs controls and to regulate the art market by improving implementation of due diligence principles and strengthening criminal investigations, with a view to detecting possible links to ISIL in the seizure of Iraqi and Syrian antiquities within their territories.

B. Strengthening the United Nations response

1. Countering the financing of terrorism

74. As noted in my report of 21 May 2015 on the threat of terrorists benefiting from transnational organized crime (S/2015/366), there is room to enhance the United Nations response to the threat of terrorist financing and its links with transnational organized crime as it pertains to countering ISIL and its affiliates. The response of the Organization needs to be more systematic, comprehensive and multidimensional, particularly at the field level, where United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions are already confronting these challenges:

(a) In addition to the work already being undertaken by agencies such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, INTERPOL, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, UNESCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, more research and analytical work should be conducted on the nexus between ISIL's terrorist activities and transnational organized crime, specifically on the way in which transnational organized crime funds ISIL's terrorist activities. Relevant United Nations entities with a field presence in areas of major ISIL operations should strengthen their understanding of new security threats and the way in which they are funded, and should report regularly to the relevant United Nations counter-terrorism entities;

(b) I shall take steps to ensure that the United Nations prioritizes this crucial cross-cutting issue and supports Member States that require and request technical assistance in building capacities to counter the financing of terrorism. I shall consider a number of options, including: the establishment of a system-wide approach against transnational organized crime and terrorism financing, which will ensure that tackling terrorist financing remains a strategic priority; that there is strategic oversight, within the United Nations, of the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism in order to ensure a coordinated and holistic response from all relevant agencies; and that Member States have the capacity to tackle financial crime, including terrorist financing.

2. Countering recruitment through and the use of the Internet in countering radicalization and violent extremism

75. The adoption of the "One-UN" approach, mobilizing all relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, both at Headquarters and in the field, will enable the Organization to comprehensively support Member States in implementing the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism:

(a) I intend to establish a high-level action group to prevent violent extremism, under my direct leadership;

(b) The United Nations system must mobilize to engage a wide range of actors, including women and youth, in developing strategies for countering recruitment and



radicalization to terrorism. Relevant United Nations entities, including UN-Women, my Envoy on Youth and my Special Envoy for Youth Refugees are committed to supporting the vision put forward by the Security Council in its resolutions 2242 (2015) and 2250 (2015) on the role of women and youth in contributing to international peace and security;

(c) More specifically, it is essential to ensure that relevant offices are equipped with the dedicated expertise and other relevant and appropriate structures/mechanisms required to specifically consider the gender dimension of recruitment, radicalization, and the financing of the activities and operations of terrorist groups, primarily ISIL. UN-Women and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict are ready to provide support in that regard. I invite United Nations offices to support the efforts of Member States to develop new ICT tools to facilitate cooperation between investigators and prosecutors involved in terrorism cases;

(d) United Nations entities, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, should support efforts to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement agencies to use ICT to counter ISIL. I invite all United Nations entities to work to empower civil society worldwide to confront the narratives disseminated by ISIL through the Internet and social media.

3. Preventing and disrupting travel by foreign terrorist fighters

76. The United Nations will take action to prevent and disrupt travel by foreign terrorist fighters as set out below:

(a) I invite the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UNHCR to encourage border guards, intelligence services and immigration and asylum authorities of the States concerned and other States located along travel routes, as well as relevant international and regional organizations, to cooperate in assisting in the early identification of terrorist suspects;

(b) I encourage the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, together with IATA, ICAO, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, to conduct a series of activities during 2016 and 2017 aimed at encouraging Member States to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted entry into or transit through their territories, of foreign terrorist fighters;

(c) I invite the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, in cooperation with relevant Member States, to identify systemic and country-specific capacity-building needs in stemming the travel of foreign terrorist fighters attempting to join ISIL. High-priority needs identified within this framework should be shared as a matter of urgency with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Global Counter-terrorism Forum, donor States and other entities tasked with providing technical assistance to States.

4. Protection of cultural heritage

77. In order to protect the cultural heritage of affected States, I urge the Security Council to incorporate such protection into United Nations humanitarian action; security strategies, including action to counter terrorism; and peacebuilding processes.

Civilian casualties in Afghanistan hit record in 2015

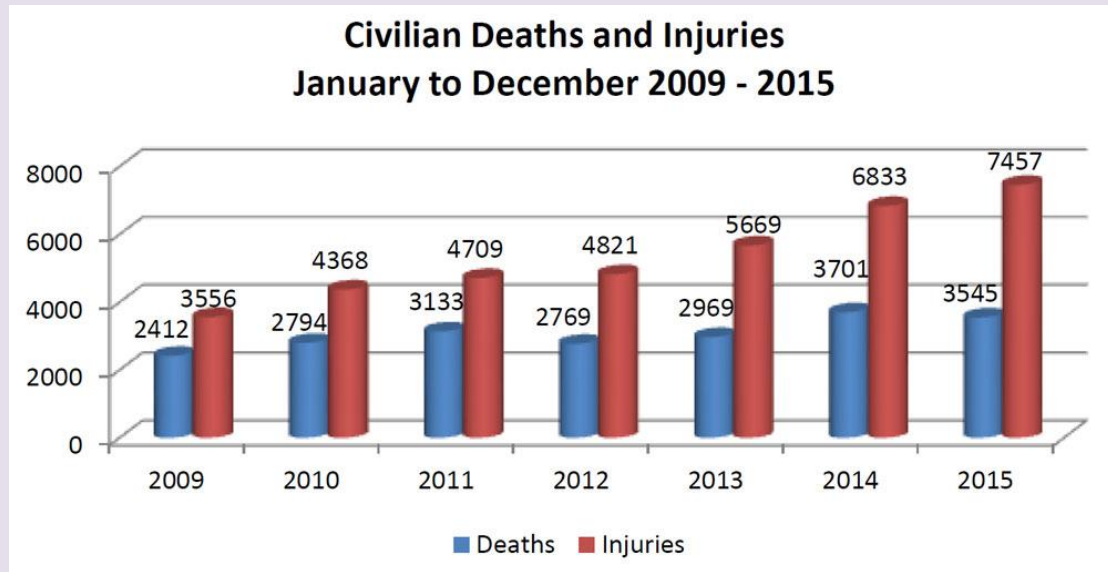
Source: <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2016/02/16/afgh-f16.html>

The US war in Afghanistan produced at least 11,000 civilian casualties last year, setting a new official record, according to a report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

The total number of civilians killed and wounded during combat actions by US and US-backed government forces, Taliban militias and other insurgent groups rose nearly five percent above 2014's figure, according to the UN.



Afghan government forces were responsible for employed as a deliberate tactic to intimidate



17 percent of the casualties, while US and NATO forces were responsible for 2 percent, the UN found. The report identified at least 1,000 civilian casualties that could not be definitely attributed to any of the warring parties.

The UN report repeats the claims of the US military, blaming the Taliban for the bloodshed and implying that the relative drawdown of international forces carried out since 2014 has intensified the killing. In reality, responsibility for the deepening social catastrophe in Afghanistan lies squarely with American imperialism, which has fomented and waged a series of wars against the Afghan people over a period of decades.

Since the invasion in 2001, US forces have carried out a continuous reign of terror against the population, in which regular killing of civilians has been considered unavoidable "collateral damage."

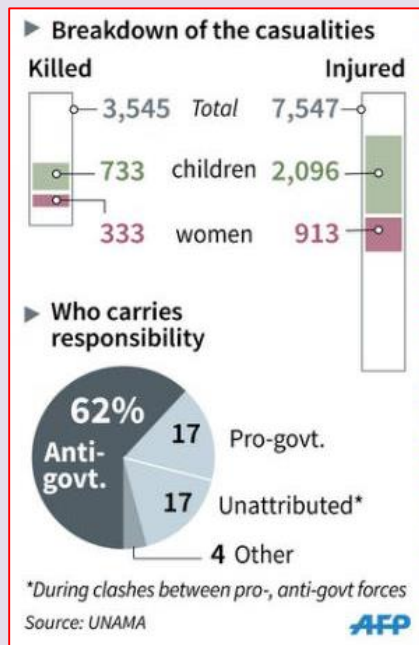
The latest UN report found that "targeted and deliberate killings" accounted for a substantial share of civilian deaths caused by American and US-backed Afghan units. Indeed, as last October's bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz made clear, the murder of civilians has increasingly been

adversaries of the US-installed Kabul government. US Special Forces scouted the hospital just days before it was bombed by an American gunship, working in concert with another commando team.

It was subsequently revealed that US military officers suspected the hospital of providing aid and shelter to Taliban forces, treating wounded insurgents and allowing them to use its facilities as a staging area.

The disaster inflicted on the country is being utilized to justify an expanded US military presence and permanent occupation of the country. Over the past six months, the White House has repeatedly signaled its agreement with Pentagon demands for a much larger US military role in Afghanistan, for years and

decades to come. Last October, the White House announced that it was delaying a planned "drawdown," keeping at least 10,000 troops in Afghanistan through the end of Obama's term. US military leaders now speak openly about their plans to indefinitely maintain a force of thousands of combat troops on the ground, along with extensive Special Forces



deployments and a network of permanent bases.

The US determination to continue combat operations in Afghanistan is fueled by the growing breakdown of the US-backed puppet government in Kabul, the instability of which is threatening Washington's ability to use the country as an organizing center for military operations throughout Central Asia, countering both Russian and Chinese influence in the region.

"Afghanistan is at serious risk of a political breakdown during 2016, occasioned by mounting political, economic and security challenges," US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper warned earlier in February.

The fragility of the Afghan government, headed by President Ashraf Ghani, flows from the fact that it is little more than a loosely organized drug mafia, propped up by opium money and massive doses of US military violence. Until recently, the Kabul regime was headed by Hamid Karzai, a man with close family ties to the country's leading drug trafficker. The State

Department's own Afghanistan special inspector characterized the political regime in Afghanistan as a burgeoning "narco-terrorist state" in recent testimony, noting that US anti-drug officials often refuse to visit Afghanistan out of fear for their lives.

Despite Washington's constant rhetorical denunciations of the Taliban, the US is striving to stabilize its puppet regime by working out a compromise with sections of the Taliban via the Afghan Peace Process. US and Afghan leaders have issued increasingly open calls for members of the Islamic fundamentalist militia to join the ruling coalition in recent days.

"Any opposition group that seeks to live in brotherhood with us is welcome," President Ghani said Monday.

"I think there are a lot of Taliban who want to come to the peace table," US commander in Afghanistan John Campbell said on Saturday in statements from Kabul. Noting the absence of "one person who speaks for the Taliban," Campbell called for efforts to "get the right people to the table."

Osama bin Laden is alive in Bahamas (?)

Source: <http://www.heightpost.com/edward-snowden-claims-osama-bin-laden-is-alive/>

August 2015 – News Report said that during an interview which he gave recently to Moscow Tribune,



Snowden said that Osama was living in Bahamas and was still on the payroll of CIA.

The report quotes him as saying – "I have documents showing that Bin Laden is still on the CIA's payroll. He is still receiving more than \$100,000 a month, which are being transferred through some front businesses and organizations, directly to his Nassau bank account.

I am not certain where he is now, but in 2013, he was living quietly in his villa with five of his wives and many children.

Snowden is at present a fugitive. He flee US after leaking documents about the NSA's surveillance programs.

The report also said that Snowden previously too made some unreported allegations about Osama Bin Laden Snowden goes on to say that CIA had orchestrated fake death of the former leader of al Qaeda.

He claims that Osama was transported with his family in an unrevealed location in the Bahamas.

The report further quotes him as follows – "Osama bin Laden was one of the CIA's most efficient operatives for a long time.

What kind of message would it send their other operatives if they were to let the SEALs kill him?



They organized his fake death with the collaboration of the Pakistani Secret services, and he simply abandoned his cover.

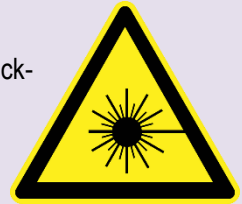
Since everyone believes he is dead, nobody's looking for him, so it was pretty easy to disappear.

Without the beard and the military jacket, nobody recognizes him." Not only this, Snowden categorically states that he will talk about the documents which prove Laden is alive in book which is likely to be released in September.

However, Snowden's claims have not been substantiated or confirmed by any other source. The US government has filed espionage charges against Snowden for revealing classified NSA documents to journalists

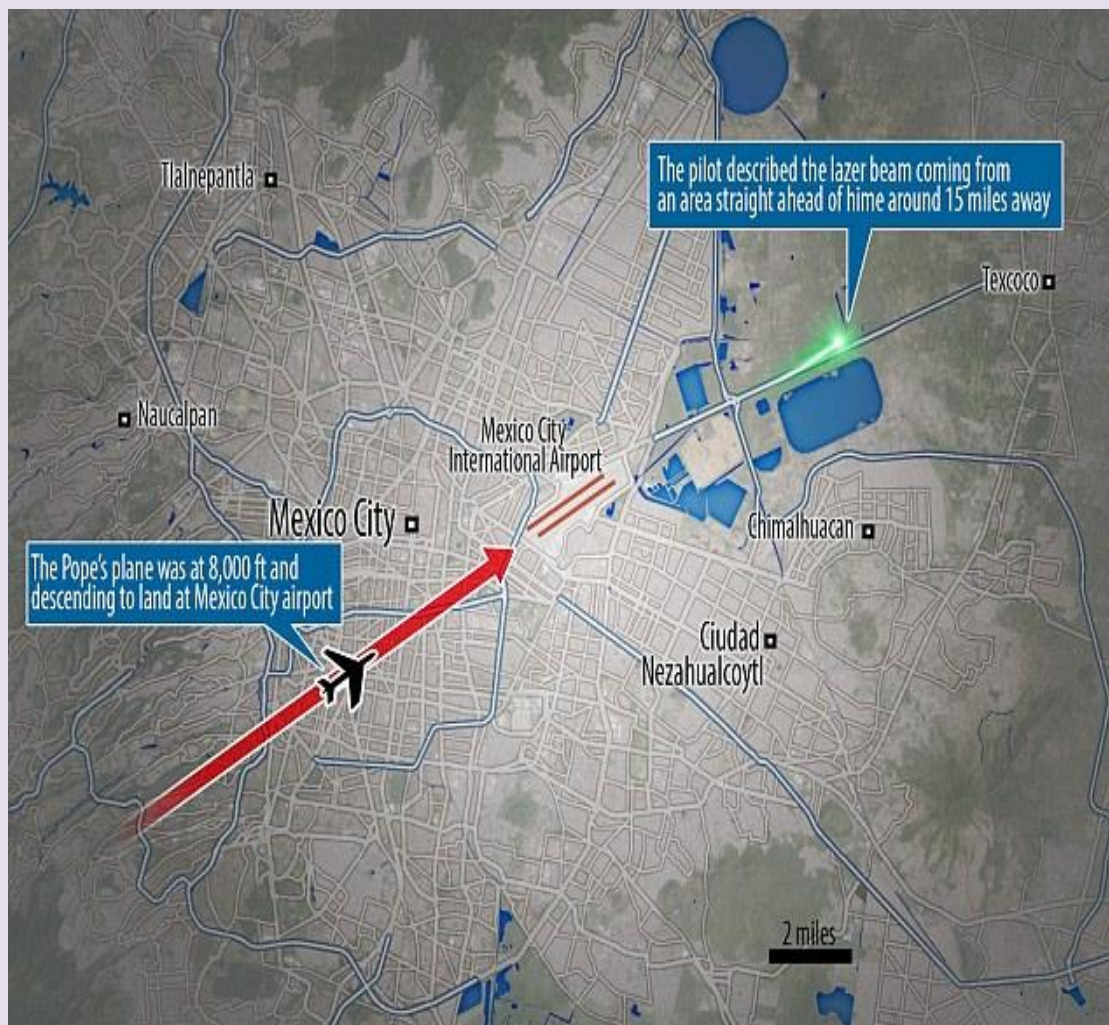
Did the Pope's plane suffer laser attack?

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3450718/Did-Pope-s-plane-suffer-laser-attack-Audio-recording-Pontiff-s-flight-approach-Mexico-City-reveals-crew-dazzled-green-laser-15-miles-away.html>



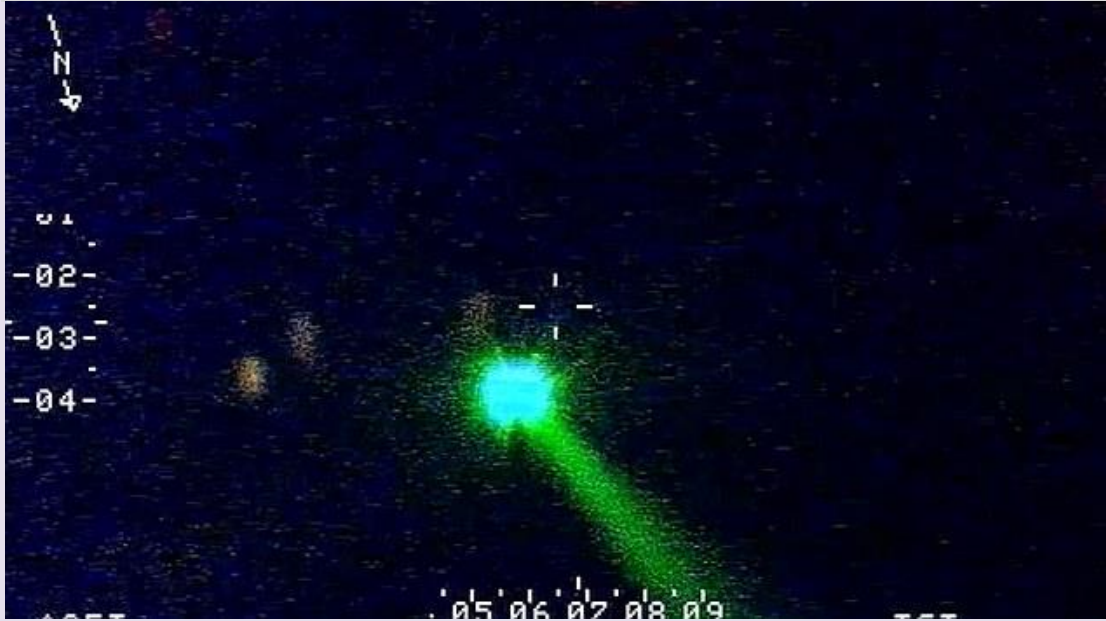
Feb 17 – A passenger jet carrying Pope Francis 'was hit by a laser' as it approached Mexico City airport on Friday, it has been reported.

The Airbus A330-202 was on a critical stage of the final approach when the flight crew told Air Traffic Control they had been struck from a laser.



The aircraft, which was carrying Pope Francis and his entourage had flown in from Havana for his five day visit of Mexico when the pilots reported the intense green beam.





Two following aircraft operated by United Airlines and KLM reported being hit by the same laser, file photo

An audio recording from the pilots on board the four-year-old passenger jet reported the laser beam coming from a 12 o'clock position from a distance of 15 miles.

It is understood at the time of the attack, the aircraft was passing 8,000 feet at approximately 150 knots and was on final approach for the airport.

The audio recording was posted on the aviation website Airlive.net which closely follows incidents involving passenger aircraft.

According to the report, two other flights, United 821 and KLM 685 also report being struck by a laser beam from the same location.

The Pope was onboard Alitalia flight, although the four-year-old Airbus is owned by ALC Blarney Aircraft Limited based in Dublin.

Alitalia have been asked for a comment about the incident.

This attack comes just days after a Virgin Atlantic passenger jet was forced to return to London Heathrow airport after one of the pilots was injured in a laser attack.

A spokeswoman for Virgin Atlantic confirmed the incident took place shortly after take-off and that the pilot was taken to hospital as a 'precautionary measure', but was unable to offer further details on his condition.

She said the safety of the crew and customers on board flight VS025 from London Heathrow to New York JFK was a 'top priority'.

In a recording from the flight, a crew member can be heard telling air traffic control they have a 'medical issue' with one of the pilots 'after a laser incident on take-off', and that they are going to return to Heathrow.

Laser expert John Tyrer, of Loughborough University, is a professor of optical instrumentation and has designed laser safety equipment for the police.

He said the pilot could have felt stunned or shocked by the incident, adding: 'If you get an attack in your eye it will make your eye water and you may get a headache.'

A pilot who has been targeted at least 20 times with a laser has said it is 'quite an unnerving' thing to happen while in the air.

Ollie Dismore, director of operations for the UK National Police Air Service, who has been a pilot for more than three decades, said there were 108 reports of lasers being used against force helicopters last year alone.

Calling the issue of laser attacks a 'growing problem', especially with the powerful lasers that are now available, he said 'you will not find a police pilot who has not been targeted multiple times'.



In a 23-year career as a police helicopter pilot, Mr Dismore said he has been targeted by a laser 'many times' - estimating the figure to be well in excess of 20.

He described being targeted with a laser while flying an aircraft as similar to walking through the beam of a high powered LCD presentation projector.

'When this comes upon you in the dark it will come through one side into the canopy, which is a bit like a goldfish bowl, and bounces around the internal surfaces - you get a very distracting flickering effect of the beam inside the cockpit,' he said.

'It is quite disorientating because it is not a steady light that you can look at and your eyes adjust to, it is a flickering strobing effect. And if you are trying to fly the aircraft and look at the instruments then it is quite an unnerving experience.'

Gulf of Guinea Sees Piracy Drop as Oil Price Deters Looters

Source: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-15/gulf-of-guinea-sees-piracy-drop-as-oil-price-deters-looters>

Feb 15 – Piracy in West Africa's Gulf of Guinea has declined as the price of oil plunged to the lowest level since 2002.



While attacks on maritime vessels have dropped in the past year, nations bordering the gulf should work to continue improving security coordination, Gulf of Guinea Commission Executive Secretary Florentina Adenike Ukonga said in an interview in Yaounde, Cameroon, on Monday.

"With oil at a low bottom price of below \$30 per barrel, piracy is no longer such a profitable business as it was when prices hit \$106 a barrel a few years ago," she said. "The price drop has contributed a great deal in reducing piracy and other maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea."

Attacks on ships transporting oil in the Gulf fell by about a third in 2015 from a year earlier, Dryad Maritime, a U.K.-based shipping consultant, said in a report last month. Nigeria, Africa's largest

oil producer, is located on the Gulf of Guinea. There is a risk that the attacks will pick up speed once oil rebounds, Ukonga said.

Beyond piracy: what next for African maritime security?

Source: http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42374:beyond-piracy-what-next-for-african-maritime-security&catid=108:maritime-security&Itemid=233

Feb 18 – Last year saw an almost total absence of reports of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the western Indian Ocean and off the coast of Somalia. This is the laudable outcome of concerted international and regional counter-piracy efforts Timothy Walker, Institute for Security Studies conflict management and peacebuilding researcher writes.

"Since 2012, there has been an annual decline in the total number of reported attempted and actual attacks in the region. The decline has led to calls for reforms to four key international counter-piracy institutions in the new 'post-piracy' environment.

"These reforms are important, but will not provide lasting solutions if African maritime, economic and



developmental interests are neglected.

“It is vital that local stakeholders, such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), drive new developments.”

Walker maintains the drop in piracy figures means many counter-piracy institutions and mechanisms are now seen as costly, inconvenient, cumbersome and unjustified.

“In their present configuration, many of these measures also seem inadequate.

“New maritime security tasks entail more than simply keeping piracy suppressed, but are also about simultaneously building blue economies and conducting peacebuilding in Somalia.

“Far up on the list of priorities has been revising the size of the so-called high-risk area (HRA), which has long been sought by countries such as India and Egypt to reduce the costs of trade and insurance. The area is a ‘core reference zone’ for all counter-piracy operations and analysis. Its geographical co-ordinates map out a space that informs insurance calculations, danger pay for crew, planning of routes and the hiring of private security guards.

“Critics have argued the HRA is too large, as it includes areas where Somali pirates no longer seem capable of capturing crews and vessels. A new, smaller HRA was subsequently demarcated and took effect from December last year – although some insurance underwriters are concerned the risk has not been sufficiently reduced.

“The second area of reform focuses on the strategy of the United Nation’s Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS); an informal grouping of states that co-ordinates counter-piracy actions. The CGPCS held a strategy meeting in Mumbai, India on February 1, where members prepared the agenda for its 19th plenary session in July.

“This suggests members feel an approach that reflects the reduced risk of piracy is needed. Whether they could produce a relevant and internationally agreed-on new strategy for co-operation is uncertain. One of the priorities for CGPCS must be to continue important investigations into piracy networks, which could reappear in the future and must be brought to justice.

“The third area of reform is amending the International Maritime Organisation’s Djibouti Code of Conduct. The code was created in

2009 to encourage co-operation among western Indian Ocean states affected by piracy through training, capacity-building and information-sharing.

“Amendments to the code show signatory states are beginning to implement holistic and co-operative maritime security measures, as opposed to mechanisms that only deal with piracy. The code’s reporting centres and contact networks could also help build a richer picture of maritime domain awareness by gathering and mapping reports of other maritime crimes, such as illegal fishing or human trafficking. These crimes are often encountered during counter-piracy patrols.

“There is no guarantee that signatory states would attach the same importance to these other transnational threats and crimes as they had to piracy. And as counter-piracy activities naturally dwindle, this could result in reduced overall co-operation if states devote fewer resources to the upkeep and functioning of the centres.

“The fourth change relates to counter-piracy patrols and missions currently operating in the western Indian Ocean; and whether these should be extended.

“The mandates of the ‘big three’ international patrols – the European Union’s Operation Atalanta; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s Operation Ocean Shield and the Combined Maritime Forces’ Combined Task Force-151 – will expire at the end of 2016. More immediately, the Southern African Development Community’s Operation Copper will expire on April 1, 2016.

“Patrols can be renewed, but the changing context and circumstances may lead many contributing states to reconsider supporting these missions. Given the almost total absence of recorded incidents of piracy, this might mean a drastic reduction in the size and capability of these operations. However, any reduction in the greater capability of the international community could increase vulnerability to renewed attacks.

“One actor that will not be taking this approach is China. The Asian superpower recently announced it had come to an agreement with Djibouti to create naval ‘logistical facilities’. The Chinese seem keen to downplay the negative connotations of the term ‘naval base’, which implies interference



and has imperialist connotations. Instead, the Chinese prefer their actions and intentions be seen as minimal and for a common or international good.

“The new base will have an effect on counter-piracy operations, as China’s profile will be enhanced as its ships benefit from improved logistical support, but could also lead to changes in Chinese foreign policy and peacebuilding capabilities. In the words of Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei, the new Djibouti base will ‘enable Chinese troops to better fulfil escort missions and make new contributions to regional peace and stability.’ As China prefers to operate independently of international co-operative counter-piracy missions it is unclear how the state intends to better contribute to existing peacebuilding programmes.

“China’s presence also raises pertinent questions about outside powers using the threat of piracy as a pretext for military intervention, or to exercise influence in international relations in the region.

“As Lee Willett, formerly a senior research fellow in maritime studies at the Royal United Services Institute suggested in 2011, ‘major powers ... appear to be using their navies’ role in the counter-piracy campaign to increase their presence, influence and leverage in the region’.

“This is a key point, which requires further research, with cautious eyes, into the interests of major powers such as China, the United States and the European Union. How, for example, do these states intend to support regional peace and stability initiatives, as well as economic development, in partnership with African states and organisations?

“The solution to piracy lies in the creation of sustainable economic alternatives and holistic maritime security. This means maritime authorities must build a safe, secure and sustainable blue economy, rather than simply patrol the seas against piracy while failing to tackle poverty and underdevelopment. This solution cannot be achieved, or realistically attempted, without the involvement, support or leadership of African organisations and their own maritime strategies.

“The implementation of the AU’s Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050 and the adoption of IGAD’s Integrated Maritime Security Strategy are pertinent in this regard. The visions of peace and prosperity bound up in these documents and the concept of a blue economy that informs the AU’s Agenda 2063 are central to any long-term solution to piracy and maritime insecurity.

“A combination of effective international counter-piracy efforts and strong commitments to local and regional peacebuilding can pave the way to safe and secure seas, resilient littoral communities and a thriving African blue economy. However, there is still a long way to go.

“As Nicholas Kay, the outgoing United Nations special representative to Somalia warned ‘The biggest mistake the international community could make would be to say, “Oh, Somalia, job done. Politics and security are reasonably OK and now we can turn our attention elsewhere.”’

“If this occurs, we might look back on 2016 as the year when, all good intentions aside, counter-piracy actions actually had a negative impact on maritime security in the western Indian Ocean and East Africa – paradoxically when there was no more piracy to counter.”

The Polythink Syndrome

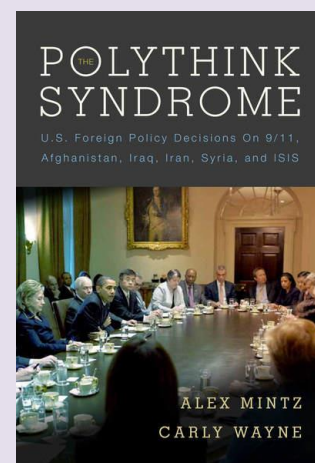
U.S. Foreign Policy Decisions on 9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and ISIS

By Alex Mintz and Carly Wayne (authors)

Source: <http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=25447>

Why do presidents and their advisors often make sub-optimal decisions on military intervention, escalation, de-escalation, and termination of conflicts?

The leading concept of group dynamics, *groupthink*, offers one explanation: policy-making groups make sub-optimal decisions due to their desire for conformity and uniformity over dissent, leading to a failure to consider other relevant possibilities. But presidential advisory groups



are often fragmented and divisive. This book therefore scrutinizes *polythink*, a group decision-making dynamic whereby different members in a decision-making unit espouse a plurality of opinions and divergent policy prescriptions, resulting in a disjointed decision-making process or even decision paralysis.

The book analyzes eleven national security decisions, including the national security policy designed prior to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the decisions to enter into and withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq, the 2007 "surge" decision, the crisis over the Iranian nuclear program, the UN Security Council decision on the Syrian Civil War, the faltering Kerry Peace Process in the Middle East, and the U.S. decision on military operations against ISIS.

Based on the analysis of these case studies, the authors address implications of the polythink phenomenon, including prescriptions for avoiding and/or overcoming it, and develop strategies and tools for what they call *Productive Polythink*. The authors also show the applicability of polythink to business, industry, and everyday decisions.

Alex Mintz is Director of the Institute for Policy & Strategy (IPS) and Agam Professor at the Lauder School of Government, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (IDC).

Carly Wayne is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Michigan.

Hezbollah Laundering Money for Colombia Cartel

Source: <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/hezbollah-laundering-money-for-colombia-cartel-dea>

Feb 18 – The DEA has revealed money laundering links between the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah and Colombian mafia group the Oficina de Envigado. However, any assertions of a mass-scale narco-terrorism nexus should be taken with a pinch of salt.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has claimed that the Hezbollah's global drug trafficking network, known as the External Security Organization Business Affairs Component (BAC), has "established business relationships with South American drug cartels, such as the Oficina de Envigado."

The assertion was made in a press release describing the arrest of various members of the BAC -- responsible for transnational criminal activities such as drug trafficking and the laundering of drug proceeds. The dirty money is reportedly used to buy weapons for use in the Hezbollah's activities in Syria.

The Colombia-Hezbollah laundering system reportedly begins in Europe, from where millions of euros worth of profits from drug sales are transported to the Middle East, via an intricate network of money couriers. The funds are then sent back to drug traffickers in Colombia through Hawala -- an informal distribution system that uses brokers to transfer money and currency. A large amount of these proceeds reportedly transit through Lebanon,

and a "significant percentage" remains in Hezbollah coffers.

These revelations come as part of an investigation into the Lebanese Canadian Bank.

"These drug trafficking and money laundering schemes utilized by the Business Affairs Component provide a revenue and weapons stream for an international terrorist organization responsible for devastating terror attacks around the world," DEA Acting Deputy Administrator Jack Riley said in the press release.

InSight Crime Analysis

Links between drug trafficking and terrorist organizations is a reality in Latin

America. However, assertions of wider narco-terrorism conspiracies should be approached with caution.

The DEA has been criticized for inducing individuals to commit so-called narco-terrorist acts with the aim of "exposing" how drug trafficking directly funds terrorist activities.



These operations against narco-terrorism are arguably a convenient way for the DEA to tap into more government funding -- a large amount of which has been redirected from drug enforcement to terrorism following the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

In many situations, undercover DEA agents set up scenarios that could arguably be considered entrapment in order to catch culprits red-handed. These set-ups often constitute the only tangible evidence of "narco-terrorism" when it comes to prosecuting the case.

That said, there is significant evidence that Hezbollah has indeed collaborated with criminal groups in Latin America, although links to established drug trafficking

organizations have not been so evident. The United States has previously blacklisted Venezuelan and Colombian nationals for laundering money for the terrorist groups, and in 2014, it was reported that Lebanese traffickers were helping the Brazilian prison gang the First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital -PCC) to access weapons.

If the allegations of links with Colombia's Oficina de Envigado crime syndicate are true, this could be one of the more convincing arguments that the Lebanese terrorist group has active links with drug trafficking networks in Latin America.

Life after Paris 2015 multiple terrorist attacks



Architect Maya Nemeta 29 years-old still recovering from multiple AK-47 wounds. Her companion Amine Ibnolmobarak (also 29 yo) was killed in the attack at café Carillon, in Paris' 10th District. On Feb 19th she exit hospital for the first time to celebrate her brother's birthday. C'est la vie...

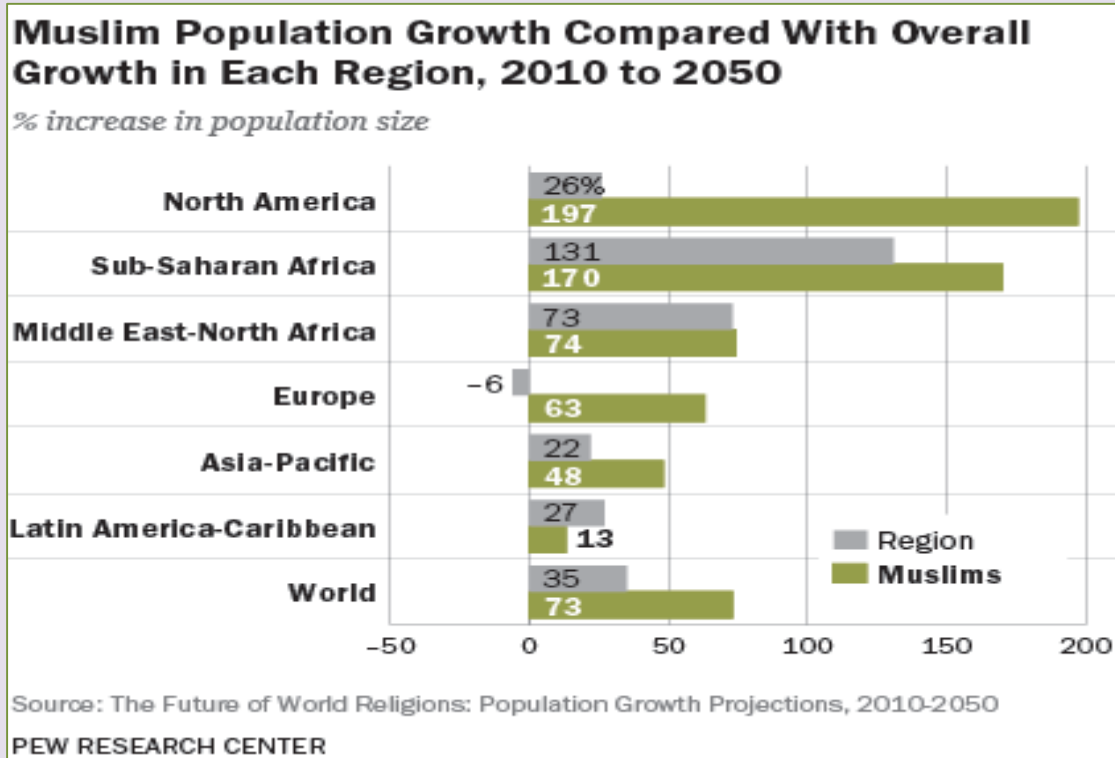
Conquering Europe by birth

It seems that Eurabia Project is based on increased birth rates – more effective than weapons and terrorism!

Country	1980	2015
Greece	9.642.500	10.696.000
Saudi Arabia	9.372.000	34.427.000
Iraq	13.010.000	36.632.000
Syria	8.704.000	26.864.000
Yemen	8.218.000	27.599.000
Jordan	2.923.000	7.399.000
Afghanistan	13.390.000	35.607.000



Iran	38.829.000	96.672.000
Pakistan	82.580.000	205.850.000
Turkey	44.737.000	79.251.000
France	55.220.000	80.684.710
UK	56.310.000	65 039 319
Germany	78.290.000	80,688,545
Italy	56.430.000	60,795,612



EUROPOL: 3,000-5,000 ISIS-trained jihadi fighters living in Europe

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160219-europol-3-0005-000-isis-trained-jihadi-fighters-living-in-europe>



Feb 19 – **EUROPOL director Rob Wainwright warned ISIS is planning more attacks in Europe.** Talking with the German newspaper *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*, Wainwright that the Paris attacks last November showed that ISIS had gained an international dimension and that more attacks were expected. “Europe is currently facing its biggest terrorist threat in more than ten years,” Wainwright said.

Wainwright warned that the high number of “international fighters” — Europeans who have gained combat experience in Syria — makes it possible for ISIS to launch attacks in Europe.

The *Telegraph* reports that **Europol estimates that there are between 3,000 and 5,000 international fighters who returned to Europe from Syria.**

“The growing number of foreign fighters is presenting EU countries with completely new challenges,” Wainwright told NOZ.

Wainwright noted, though, that the stream of refugees coming into Europe from Syria does not necessarily contribute to the terrorist threat. “There is no concrete evidence that



terrorists systematically use the stream of refugees to pass through to Europe undetected,” Wainwright said.

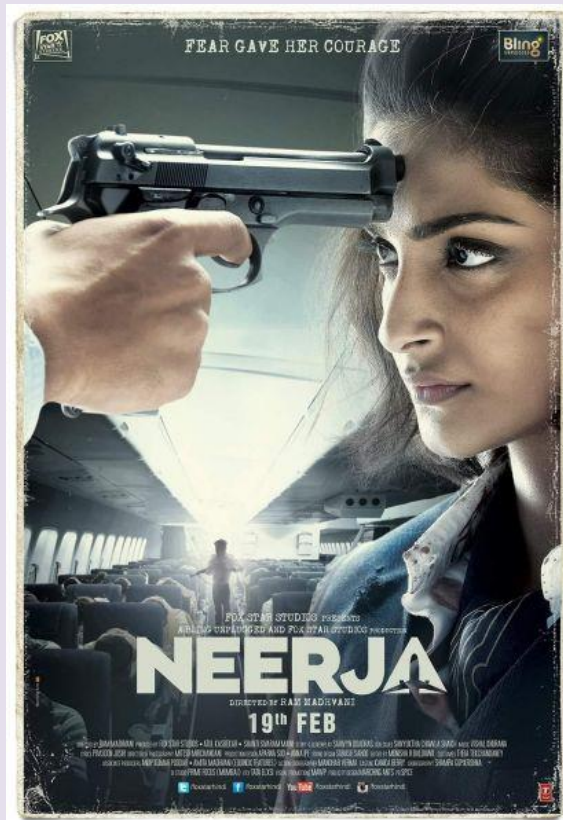
“It is to be expected that ISIS or other religious terrorist groups will carry out an attack somewhere in Europe — with the aim of killing as many civilians as possible.”

Wainwright stressed that the threat of terrorist attacks is posed not only by groups, but also from individuals. “In addition, there is a risk of individual terrorists, this has not been reduced,” he said.

EUROPOL has opened the European Counter Terrorism Center in January. The center collects terrorism-related information from European countries, and facilitates better communication and coordination among European police forces.

India Has A History Of Airplane Hijacks, But These Are Among The Most Terrifying

Source: <http://www.gizmodo.in/indiamodo/India-Has-A-History-Of-Airplane-Hijacks-But-These-Are-Among-The-Most-Terrifying/articleshow/51043128.cms>



Feb 18 – The friendly skies are not only the safest but fastest way to travel. But when there's a knock of danger, the feeling of helplessness rattles the soul of humanity. This very feeling still remains in the hearts of survivors of the 1986 Pan AM Flight 73 that was hijacked by heavily-armed terrorists in Karachi, who will be reminded of that unfateful day once again while watching 'Neerja,' the much-awaited biographical movie that is getting released tomorrow.

However, Pan AM hijack was not just one of the hijacking events that took the entire nation by storm. India has also witnessed Kandhar hijack and others in the past. Here we take a look at the most terrifying hijacking events that took place in the history of India's air transportation.

1986 Pan AM Hijack

The biographical movie Neerja is based on this hijack that happened in the 1986. While 20 of the passengers were killed during the hijacking, lives of 359 others were saved by the courage shown by the then Pan AM purser Neerja Bhanot, who first hid the passports of all

passengers so that the hijackers could not identify their nationalities.

After 17 hours, when the terrorists started firing, it was Neerja who opened an emergency exit and let everyone through. However, she was shot dead while sending a group of children off the plane. No wonder she was later regarded as the HERO of the Flight 73 and also give Ashok Chakra for this deed.



1971 Indian Airlines Hijack

Will you believe if we tell you that a hijack can take place using toy pistol and wooden grenade? Well, this is not a plot from any Hollywood or Bollywood flick, rather a real-life unfortunate incident that took place on 30 January 1971 when an Indian Airlines Fokker F27 Friendship aircraft named Ganga was hijacked by two Kashmiri militants, Hashim Qureshi and his cousin Ashraf Butt of the JKLF.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Foreign Minister of Pakistan rushed to Lahore and met the hijackers and helped them get maximum international publicity. On February 1, he persuaded them to release the crew and passengers who were then sent by road to Amritsar.

1999 Kandahar Hijack

Pakistan-based extremist group Harkat-ul-Mujahideen claimed responsibility when Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 with 176 passengers and 15 crew members on board was hijacked 16 years ago, on 24 December 1999.



The terror group demanded release three militants - Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and Maulana Masood Azhar. They also stabbed one hostage to death and his body thrown on the tarmac as a "warning attack" After a week-long stand-

off India agreed to the jailed militants in exchange for the hostages.

1984 Indian Airlines Jetliner Hijack

Seven young Sikh hijackers seized an Indian Airlines jetliner flying from Delhi to Srinagar with 100 passengers on board and took it to UAE. It was related to the secessionist struggle in the Indian state of Punjab. According to a New York Times report, the hijackers were members of the banned All-India Sikh Students Federation and "armed with bombs, pistols and Sikh daggers, threatened to kill all the passengers and blow up the aircraft if their demands were not met." The outfit ended the hijacking after negotiations with the then UAE Defense Minister Rashid Al-Maktoum.

1985 Air India Flight 182 Hijack

This incident is regarded the most tragic aviation disasters of all time and largest mass murder in the Canadian history. The Air India 182 Kanishka from Toronto via Montreal and London to New Delhi



exploded off the coast of Ireland as it was prepping to land at Heathrow airport in London, killing all 329 people on board - 82 of the victims were children and 280 were Canadian citizens. Canadian law enforcement determined that the main suspects in the bombing were members of the Sikh militant group Babbar Khalsa. Only one person - Inderjit Singh Reyat

has been convicted of involvement in the bombing. He pleaded guilty in 2003 and received a five-year sentence.



EU referendum: The debate around counter-terrorism

By Frank Gardner (BBC security correspondent)

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35600736>

Feb 22 - Is Britain more - or less - at risk of a major terrorist attack if it leaves the EU?

It is an important question and the public deserves a straight answer. Yet in the current heated debate it risks being both politicised and blurred by conflation with other issues like the economy, migration and policies towards Russia.

So what are the facts?

The UK is currently at threat level "severe", the second highest on the scale, meaning the government judges a terrorist attack to be "highly likely" (but not necessarily imminent).

Britain is right up at the top of so-called Islamic State's target list, along with France, Belgium, Germany and Denmark. MI5 and police estimate there to be more than 2,000 individuals living here who have sympathies with or connections to international terrorism, most of it IS-inspired.

There are two principal reasons why the UK has not yet suffered the sort of Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) experienced twice by Parisians last year.

One is better intelligence, the other is better borders.

That said, no-one in counter-terrorism circles is being complacent that such an attack could not still happen here.

Better intelligence

After the 9/11 attacks of 2001 and then again after the London bombings of 2005, Britain's counter-terrorism infrastructure was reformed to break down inter-agency barriers and do away with the sort of departmental "silos" that, sadly, still exist in many European nations.

So Britain's MI5, the domestic security service, works closely with MI6, the external intelligence-gathering agency, GCHQ and the Metropolitan Police.

Old rivalries have largely been set aside. Yet in France and Belgium the police and intelligence agencies hardly talk to each other, they share very little.

Absurdly, for a Belgian police officer to find out what Belgian intelligence knows about a threat, he or she sometimes needs to learn it from the UK police, who learn it from UK intelligence, who learn it from Belgian intelligence.

When it comes to EU-wide counter-terrorism, national intelligence agencies are even less willing to divulge their secrets.

Better borders

On borders, Britain has something that continental European countries do not: A single coastline.

British counter-terrorism officials say that because the UK is not part of Europe's Schengen open borders agreement it is considerably more difficult - though not impossible - for terrorists and organised criminals to acquire the sort of powerful automatic weapons, notably Kalashnikovs, used in the Paris attacks last November.

A senior EU counter terrorism official admitted to me last year, prior to the migrant crisis, that although the EU's external borders had been strengthened, once weapons had crossed over that border from the Balkans there was little to stop them being moved freely around Europe.

'Five Eyes'

The UK's strongest intelligence-sharing and security co-operation relationships are not with Europe, although those still matter.

They are with the United States, with its massive eavesdropping and interception capabilities, and the other Anglophone so-called Five Eyes partner nations: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Nearly all the most important intelligence-sharing with Europe tends to be done bilaterally, country to country, rather than through any EU-wide organisation.

Britain also works closely with other partner nations like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

On 6 June 2004, while reporting from Al-Suwaidi, a district of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Frank Gardner (ex Captain, Royal Green Jackets, UK Army), was shot six times and seriously injured in an attack by al-Qaeda sympathisers. His



colleague, Irish cameraman Simon Cumbers, was shot dead. Of the bullets which hit Gardner in his torso (others passed through his shoulder and leg) most missed his major organs but one hit his spinal nerves and he was left partly paralysed in the legs and dependent on a wheelchair. The Saudi Arabian government had forced Gardner to use official minders, who ran away once the firing started. The Saudi government promised compensation but in the end they never paid. After 14 operations, seven months in hospital and months of rehabilitation he returned to reporting for the BBC in mid-2005, using a wheelchair or a frame. Despite his injury, he still occasionally reports from the field including places like Afghanistan and Colombia but usually comments on top stories from a BBC studio.

U.S. to fly armed drone attacks from a base in Sicily against ISIS in Libya

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160223-u-s-to-fly-armed-drone-attacks-from-a-base-in-sicily-against-isis-in-libya>



Feb 23 – Italy said it would allow armed U.S. drones to be based in an American base in Sicily so they would be within to launch attacks against ISIS militants in Libya and other northern Africa countries. The agreement was reached after years of negotiations, and against the backdrop of intensified ISIS activity in Libya and other African countries.

The link between illegal fishing and piracy in Somalia

By Zeina_Awad

Source: <https://horseedmedia.net/2016/02/23/the-link-between-illegal-fishing-and-piracy-in-somalia/>

Feb 23 – When Siad Barre's government collapsed in 1991 Somalia was plunged into violence and left without a central government capable of defending it. That's when foreign vessels began fishing illegally en masse off the country's Indian Ocean coast. Piracy rose when impoverished, unemployed fishermen thought they had no option but to seize the illegal boats and release them for ransom. Soon enough, criminal gangs realised how lucrative piracy can be and it turned into a profitable criminal industry. At its height, Somali piracy was cost the global economy an estimated \$8 billion every year.

The image of Somali pirates captured the imagination of the West. So much so that Hollywood turned the real life story of the 2009 hijacking of the US-flagged MV Maersk Alabama into "Captain Phillips," a blockbuster starring Tom Hanks. The film brought the thrill of highjacking on the high seas to life but glossed over the historic reasons why piracy happens in the first place.

And now, it seems, history is repeating itself. When we were in the town of Eyl on Somalia's coast with the Indian Ocean earlier this month, fishermen there told us they are again spotting Iranian and other illegal boats in Somali waters on a weekly basis. Some said that yesterday's pirates have become today's armed escorts, contracted by foreign boats to help them fish illegally and thwart any resistance to them by the local community.

Illegal fishing vessels are estimated to now be catching three times as much fish as Somali fishermen do, according to the NGO Secure Fisheries. And they're not only depriving Somalia's fishermen of their livelihood. They're also causing great environmental damage. Their huge, heavy nets raze the bottom of the seafloor and harm marine habitat. So much



so that Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud wrote an open letter in October of last year in which he stated:



The small boats used by the special maritime police force are no match for some of the vessels used by illegal fishermen and criminal pirate gangs.

The damage is so extensive that even if trawling were stopped today, this area may need many years to recover. [...] we lack the ability to police our vast waters. The international community could make a significant difference in this area, by helping my government monitor Somalia's [coast].” The European Union and NATO have been policing Somali waters for piracy since 2008. Fishermen told us that as soon the international powers succeeded in bringing piracy under control, illegal fishing boats returned to Somali waters. Neither the EU nor NATO have a mandate to clamp down on the illegal vessels. That's why the residents of Eyl we spoke to believe that only pirates are capable of protecting them from the predators operating off their coast.

Obama to send last Gitmo relocation plan to Congress today

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160223-obama-to-send-last-gitmo-relocation-plan-to-congress-today>



Feb 23 – Moving Guantánamo detainees to the mainland United States has been one of President Barack Obama's main goals – and a major bone of contention with Congress. The issue has now become more pressing as the United States and Cuba are in the process of normalizing their relationships, and the Cubans

want the detainees out of Gitmo as well. Obama will be sending a plan to Congress today (Tuesday), urging lawmakers to agree to move the detainees to locations in the United



States – but the plan does not name the sites in the United States to which locations the administration wants to send the remaining detainees.

Understanding Islamic State: where does it come from and what does it want?

By James L. Gelvin

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160223-understanding-islamic-state-where-does-it-come-from-and-what-does-it-want>

Feb 23 – How far back in history does one have to go to find the roots of the so-called Islamic State (IS)?

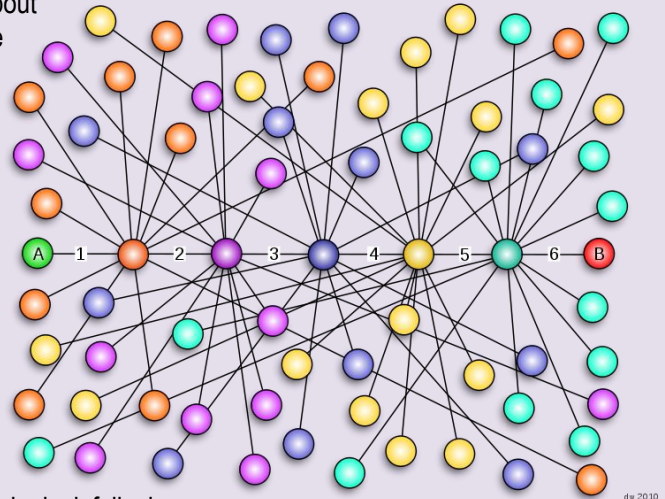
To the oil shock of 1973-74, when Persian Gulf oil producers used the huge surplus of dollars flowing into their coffers to finance the spread of their severe interpretation of Islam? To the end of the First World War, when the victorious entente powers sparked resentment throughout the Arab world by drawing artificial national borders we hear so much about today? How about 632 AD, the date of the death of the prophet Muhammad, when the early Islamic community split on who should succeed him as its leader — a breach that led to the Sunni-Shi'i divide that IS exploits for its own ends?

The possibilities seem endless and would make for an entertaining variation on the [Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon](#) parlor game (which suggests any two people on earth are six or fewer acquaintance links apart) were the subject not so macabre.

But to look at any and all historical phenomena through a simple string of causes and effects is to ignore the almost infinite number of possible effects that might follow from any one purported cause.

It also opens the door to one of the most pernicious logical fallacies

historians might commit: *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this). So rather than tracing the rise of IS to one or more events in the past, I suggest we take a different tack.



A long line

IS is an instance of a phenomenon that recurs in most religions, and certainly in all monotheistic religions. Every so often militant strains emerge, flourish temporarily, and then vanish. They are then replaced by another militant strain whose own beginning is linked to a predecessor by nothing more profound than drawing from the same cultural pool as its predecessor.

In the seventh century, there were the Kharijites (the first sect of Islam), a starkly puritanical group that assassinated two of the early caliphs. Like IS, the Kharijites thought they knew best what and who were truly Islamic, and what and who were not.

In the eighteenth century, there were the followers of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, a central Arabian preacher whose followers included Muhammad ibn Saud, the founder of the Saudi dynasty. Believing that the worship of saints and the construction of mausoleums were impious acts, ibn Saud's army destroyed sites holy to both Sunnis and Shi'is in Arabia and present-day Iraq, much as IS targets sites from antiquity today.

During the nineteenth century, Muhammad Ahmad, a member of a religious order in what is now Sudan, proclaimed himself mahdi (redeemer of the Islamic faith), just as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, inventor and leader of IS, recently proclaimed himself caliph (leader of the Islamic faith) — a more prosaic position. Ahmad's army overran Khartoum, where it massacred a British-led garrison and beheaded its commander.

Between Muhammad Ahmad and al-Baghdadi there were many, many others.



While tempting, it would be a mistake to believe that each militant group “gave rise to” the next (although later militants have sometimes drawn from or been inspired by their predecessors). That would be the equivalent of saying that the ancient Zealots (a Jewish sect that fought the Romans) gave rise to militant Israeli settlers on the West Bank, or that medieval Crusaders gave rise to abortion-clinic bombers.



The right stuff

From time to time (it's impossible to predict when), some figure emerges in each tradition who puts his own spin on that tradition. To be successful, that spin must capture the imagination of some of that tradition's adherents, who then try to put it into practice.

Some spins, such as that of contemporary Saudi Arabia's Wahhabis, have sticking power. This is not because they are somehow “truer” than others, but because those who advocate for them are better able to mobilize resources — a core group of committed followers, for instance, military capabilities, or outside support — than others. Most do not.

Al-Baghdadi is one such figure (as was al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden). His spin melds together three ideas that come from the Islamic tradition.

The first is khilafa (caliphate). Al-Baghdadi believes that Islam requires a caliphate — governance that's in accordance with Islamic law over territory that's under the authority of a caliph (a righteous and knowledgeable descendant of the prophet).

When his forces took over Mosul in the summer of 2014, al-Baghdadi proclaimed himself caliph and burnished his credentials for the job by changing his name to Caliph Ibrahim al-Quraishi al-Hashimi. The last two names signify he's a member of the tribe of Muhammad and a descendant of the prophet.

The second idea al-Baghdadi brought into the mix is takfir — the act of pronouncing Muslims who disagree with IS's strict interpretation of Islamic law to be apostates, which makes them punishable by death. This is the reason for IS's murderous rampages against Shi'is; rampages that even al-Qaeda central finds counter-productive, if not repugnant.

Resurrecting the concept of takfir was the idea of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, founder of al-Qaeda in Iraq. His strategy was to use the concept to tighten communal ties among Iraq's Sunnis by mobilizing them against its Shi'is, thus making post-American-invasion Iraq ungovernable.

Al-Baghdadi has gone one step further, finding the concept useful in his effort to purify the territory of the caliphate which, he believes, will soon stretch across the Islamic world.

Finally, there is hijra, the migration of Muslims from dar al-harb (the abode of war, that is, non-Muslim majority countries) to dar al-Islam (the abode of Islam). Just as Muhammad and his early companions migrated from Mecca to Medina, where they established the first permanent Islamic community.

IS wants a great incoming of Muslims into the caliphate, both because it needs skilled administrators and fighters and because it considers emigration from “non-Muslim territory” to “Muslim territory” a religious obligation.

A dangerous distraction

According to some commentators, al-Baghdadi brought a fourth idea to the table: an apocalyptic vision. They base this on the name of IS's glossy magazine, *Dabiq* (the site in northern Syria where, Islamic tradition has it, the Battle of Armageddon will take place), articles in the magazine and propaganda videos.

It's not too much of a stretch to attribute an apocalyptic vision to IS — after all, just as every monotheism is prone to militant strains, all are prone to apocalyptic visions as well. Nevertheless, I remain unconvinced that the concept represents a significant part of IS's worldview.

Whatever the future may hold, IS, like some apocalyptic Christian groups, has proved itself so tactically and strategically adept that it has obviously kicked any “end of days” can well down the road (roughly the same distance al-Qaeda kicked the re-establishment of the caliphate can).



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – February 2016

Further, much of the IS leadership consists of hard-headed former Iraqi Ba’th military officers who, if they think about an apocalypse at all, probably treat it much as Hitler’s generals treated the purported musings of Nazi true believers — with a roll of their eyes.

Foregrounding IS’s apocalyptic worldview enables us to disparage the group as irrational and even medieval — a dangerous thing to do. If the recent past has demonstrated one thing, it’s that IS thrives when its adversaries underestimate it.

James L. Gelvin is Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History, University of California, Los Angeles.

