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Islamic State-Inspired Terrorist Incidents Highlight Growing Threat of Returning Jihadists

By Amanda Vicinanzo (Senior Editor HSToday.us)

Source: <http://www.hstoday.us/single-article/in-depth-islamic-state-inspired-terrorist-incidents-highlight-growing-threat-of-returning-jihadists/8210f3ec440e613864939646d4cb3b0d.html>

An alarming increase in recent Islamic State-inspired terrorist plots has contributed to rising concerns among counterterrorism officials about Americans and other Westerners traveling to Iraq and Syria to obtain terrorist training and then return home to carry out attacks.

Beginning in the early 1990s, law enforcement authorities became increasingly concerned about “lone wolf” terrorism, which the University of Maryland-based, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funded National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) defines as “persons who had no help in planning, preparing, or committing the terrorism incident.” The FBI, for example, concerned by homegrown jihadists, issued a report in 2006 outlining indicators of radicalization.

The advent of the Internet significantly contributed to this concern, since cyberspace broke geographical boundaries, allowing the scope of the radical Islamist message to rapidly expand. Extremist propaganda began to seep into every corner of the globe and terrorist groups have increasingly used the Internet—particularly social media in recent years—to call for lone wolf attacks.

Although lone actor terrorists represent a very small proportion (8 percent) of terrorists, they have been responsible for one-fourth of the terrorism incidents in the United States, according to a report obtained by *Homeland Security Today* from START.

Unlike group participants, lone actors are more likely to be female and better educated than their group participant counterparts. Lone actor terrorist attacks are often difficult to predict, since lone actors tend to engage in significantly fewer precursor behaviors per incident than do group participants.

Lone actors also avoid arrest significantly longer than do group participants. On average, group participants “survive” 370 days from the time they commit their first preparatory activity until the time they are arrested compared to lone actors who “survive” in excess of 1,900 days.

START stated, “All of these general patterns by lone actors (more likely to be single, fewer planning activities, greater distances from residence to target, etc.) are all indicative of greater secrecy on the part of lone actors than group participants. It is not surprising, then, that lone actors are able to avoid arrest significantly longer than group participants.”

2015 alone has seen a significant number of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-inspired plots by lone actor terrorists on American soil. So far in 2015, an Ohio man traveled to Syria to obtain terrorist training and returned to the US to conduct an attack, two Kansas men allegedly plotted to explode a car bomb at a military base, six Minnesota men were arrested for conspiring to support ISIL, and two New York women were accused of a bomb plot inspired by ISIL, to name just a few.

Columbus, Ohio, man charged with providing material support to terrorists

An Ohio man who traveled to Syria to receive terrorist training has been arrested by federal authorities after returning to allegedly launch attacks against the US homeland, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

A federal grand jury charged Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud, 23, of Columbus, Ohio, with one count of attempting to provide and providing material support to terrorists, one count of attempting to provide and providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, and one count of making false statements to the FBI in an indictment returned in the Southern District of Ohio.

Mohamud, a naturalized citizen of the United States, left the US in April 2014 for the purpose of training and fighting with terrorists in Syria. The indictment states that after completing this training, he was instructed by a cleric to return to the US to commit an act of terrorism.

“Mohamud sought and obtained terrorist training in Syria,” said US Attorney Stewart. “Upon his return to the United States, he discussed carrying out acts in the United States.”

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Although Mohamud's lawyer, Sam Shamansky, referred to the case as "a whole bunch of nothing," Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, says the arrest of Mohamud highlights the "grave threat" of returning American jihadists.

"Terrorist groups like ISIL and Al Qaeda are luring Americans to the combat zone in Syria and Iraq, and radicalized individuals are now clearly returning with the training and motivation to bring terror to our shores," McCaul said.

McCaul continued, "The Director of National Intelligence recently said around 40 US residents have joined extremists in Syria and are already back in our country, an alarming admission that suggests there are gaps in our defenses. The Obama administration must ramp up its efforts to keep more Americans from traveling to terrorist sanctuaries—now—and must do everything possible to keep these terrorists from returning to the United States."

Kansas men charged in plot to explode car bomb at military base

Earlier this month, the FBI's Kansas City Division announced that a Kansas man who pledged loyalty to ISIL was arrested for planning to detonate a vehicle bomb at the Fort Riley military base.

John T. Booker Jr., 20, of Topeka, Kansas, was charged in a criminal complaint with one count of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, one count of attempting to damage property by means of an explosive, and one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIL.

In March 2015, Booker—who refers to himself as Mohammed Abdullah Hassan—allegedly plotted to construct an explosive device for an attack on American soil and he repeatedly stated that he desired to engage in violent jihad on behalf of ISIL.

Alexander E. Blair, 28, also was charged in connection with the car bomb plot. During the investigation of Booker, law enforcement officers discovered that Blair shared Booker's extremist views and loaned money to Booker to rent a storage unit to store components for a bomb.

"We face a continued threat from individuals within our own borders who may be motivated by a variety of causes," said US Attorney

Grissom. "Anyone who seeks to harm this nation and its people will be brought to justice."

Six Minnesota men charged with conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL

According to a report released by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), *Homegrown Islamic Extremism in 2014: The Rise of ISIS & Sustained Online Recruitment*, Minnesota was among the states with the highest level of Islamist extremist recruits in 2014.

Homeland Security Today previously reported that ISIL's propaganda campaign targeting Minnesota—which has become a terrorist pipeline to the Middle East in recent years—has achieved great success in luring Minnesotan Somali youth to overseas training camps.

Last year, a 33-year old Minnesota man, Douglas McAuthur McCain, who was recruited to fight for ISIL was killed in Syria, just five years after his high school friend Troy Kastigar died fighting for Al Shabaab in Somalia.

More recently, a criminal complaint was filed Monday charging six Minnesota men with conspiracy and attempt to provide material support to ISIL.

Zacharia Yusuf Abdurahman, 19, Adnan Farah, 19, Hanad Mustafe Musse, 19, and Guled Ali Omar, 20, were arrested in Minneapolis. Abdirahman Yasin Daud, 21, and Mohamed Abdihamid Farah, 21, were arrested on Sunday in California after driving from Minneapolis to San Diego.

"The six defendants charged in the complaint allegedly planned to travel to Syria as part of their conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL," said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. "One of the National Security Division's highest priorities is to identify, disrupt, and hold accountable those who provide or attempt to provide material support to designated foreign terrorist organizations."

According to the criminal complaint, the FBI has been conducting an investigation for the last 10 months into a group of individuals who have tried to join, or succeeded in joining, an overseas designated foreign terrorist organization. At least nine Minnesotans have now been charged as part of this conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL.

"As described in the criminal complaint, these men worked



over the course of the last 10 months to join ISIL,” said US Attorney Luger. “Even when their co-conspirators were caught and charged, they continued to seek new and creative ways to leave Minnesota to fight for a terror group.”

In addition, in November, DOJ announced a criminal complaint charging Abdi Nur, 20, and Abdullah Yusuf, 18, with conspiracy to provide material support to a designated terrorist organization after attempting to travel from Minnesota to the Middle East to join ISIL.

“As charged, these two young men conspired to join ISIL and travel from Minnesota to the Middle East to engage in a campaign of terror in support of a violent ideology,” said US Attorney Luger. “Since Al Shabaab began recruiting young adults from the Twin Cities in 2007, our region has lost dozens of disaffected young people to terrorist organizations that would sooner see Somali Minnesotans die on foreign battlefields than prosper in peace and security in the United States.”

Luger added, “The law-abiding members of Minnesota’s Somali community are great partners in our fight against terror, and I am proud to work closely with community and religious leaders to lift up those Somali youth who remain vulnerable to terrorist recruiters. Unfortunately, Yusuf and Nur were not the first – and may not be the last – to conspire in support of ISIS. As we work with our many partners to improve the lives of Somali Minnesotans, we will continue to investigate and prosecute aggressively criminals who provide support for terror.”

Two Queens, New York, residents charged with conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction

Earlier this month, a criminal complaint was unsealed in federal court in the Eastern District of New York charging two New York women, Noelle Velentzas and Asia Siddiqui, with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction against persons or property in the United States.

The complaint states the women repeatedly expressed support for violent jihad. For example, Velentzas declared that she and Siddiqui are “citizens of the Islamic State” and Siddiqui published a poem in a magazine published by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula exhorting readers to wage jihad.

Since at least August 2014, the women have allegedly plotted to construct an explosive

device for use in a terrorist attack on American soil. Although they had not yet specified targets, the women had carefully studied how to construct an explosive device to launch an attack on the homeland, including how to develop bombs with items such as pressure cookers, which were also used in the Boston Marathon bombing.

“The defendants allegedly plotted to wreak terror by creating explosive devices and even researching the pressure cooker bombs used during the Boston Marathon bombing,” said Assistant Director in Charge Rodriguez. “We continue to pursue those who look to commit acts of terror and deter others who think they are beyond the reach of law enforcement.”

Analysis

ISIL’s mastery of social media as a mechanism for spreading propaganda and recruiting followers in the West, and around the globe represents a paradigm shift within the global jihadist movement away from the organization-centric model advanced by Al Qaeda towards a movement unhindered by organizational structures, according to the START report, *Transcending Organization: Individuals and The Islamic State*.

At its inception, Al Qaeda was an “elitist, hierarchically structured global terrorist group,” which conveyed its messaging in a very one-directional manner. Although Al Qaeda’s online media efforts during the mid to late 2000’s made the terrorist organization’s ideology and strategy more accessible, it provided little interaction between Al Qaeda’s senior leaders and followers around the globe.

“Messages were produced, disseminated and received – there was no formal feedback mechanism built into the process,” START stated.

The paradigm shift began with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s (AQAP) Shaykh Anwar Al Awlaki who advanced a do-it-yourself approach to operationalizing the global jihadist movement. Al Awlaki’s call for grassroots action undercut what Al Qaeda’s senior leaders had been preaching for decades—the need for operational experience and ideological knowledge to conduct a terrorist attack.

Al Awlaki began to displace the notion of Al Qaeda as elitist and hierarchical with the proposition that anyone could become involved in conducting a terrorist



attack. START indicated that AQAP's *Inspire* magazine "opened a Pandora's Box where individuals around the world felt empowered to take matters into their own hands."

"Lowering the sophistication of discourse from grand geopolitical strategy to basic insights into what life on the battlefield really looks like, AQAP seemed to be stealing the wind out of their parent company's sails. And as opposed to Al Qaeda's senior leaders who offered their followers little way to provide their reactions and thoughts, AQAP established multiple avenues for the global movement to directly contact them via the Internet," START said.

Al Qaeda's senior leadership expressed serious reservations over the idea of "do-it-yourself" terrorism. They worried about how to attribute attacks and how to deal with gaffes by individuals claiming to operate on behalf of Al Qaeda. Despite these reservations, at Al Awlaki's death, Al Qaeda could have taken advantage of the surge of loyal followers responding to AQAP's call-to-action.

However, ISIL beat them to the punch. Initially, ISIL's 2011 break with Al Qaeda's senior leadership left the global jihadist movement confused about what exactly they were supporting. However, the global jihadist movement gradually began to see that they need not be tied to an organizational brand.

By leveraging mobile apps and social media channels, ISIL has attracted individuals from around the globe who are flocking to Iraq and Syria by the thousands. *Homeland Security Today* recently reported that the number of foreign fighters leaving their home nations to join extremist groups in Iraq, Syria and other nations has hit record levels, with estimates of over 25,000 foreign fighters coming from nearly 100 countries, according to a recent United Nations report.

Moreover, the widespread availability of the smartphone has given everyone the ability to participate in the global jihadist movement. Foreign fighters on the battlefield can correspond with followers around the home to rally support. Participation no longer requires anything more than superficial knowledge of the ideology fueling their jihad.

"There is now a mass of individuals participating through mobile apps and social media channels who feel themselves as being part of a global mujahidin movement that may have been initiated by Al Qaeda but for which

Al Qaeda no longer holds much relevance or authority today," the START brief stated.

The Consequence

The movement away from the organization-centric model advanced by Al Qaeda towards a movement unhindered by organizational structures has created a mass of individuals empowered by the jihadist message but unwedded to any organization.

Through the shift that began with AQAP and is being furthered through ISIL, individuals have moved away from simple support of the global jihadist movement to direct engagement. This shift requires a change in counterterrorism policy that will address the increasing threat of lone wolf actors and foreign fighters returning to conduct an attack on the homeland.

The beginning months of 2015 alone have seen a number of ISIL-inspired terrorist plots threatening the safety of the US and multiple other Western countries.

"This evolving Islamist terror landscape has given rise to the —dual threats of foreign fighter returnees and homegrown terrorism," McCaul said at a recent hearing. "The recent terror attack in Paris, and other attacks and plots in Belgium, Germany, the UK, Australia, Canada and here in the US are proof that the threat has surged and that the enemy is dead set on attacking the West."

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), FBI and Pentagon have issued multiple alerts about the possibility of a range of attacks, including cyberterrorism, lone wolf attacks, and attacks specifically targeting military and law enforcement. However, despite ISIL's reliance on social media to inspire followers, little has been done to curb terrorist use of online tools.

The Middle East Media Research Institute recently told *Homeland Security Today* that "The use of social media in the conflict in Syria and Iraq highlights the global jihad movement's now complete dependence on the Internet and on US-based social media companies -- and is the template for the future of jihad."

Until the US debate on how to counter the threat of ISIL begins to include terrorist use of the Internet, particularly social media, to spread their extremist ideology and recruit followers, an entire generation of followers will continue to be radicalized online.



Increased al-Shabaab attacks in East Africa a sign of weakness

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150424-increased-alshabaab-attacks-in-east-africa-a-sign-of-weakness-experts>

Apr 25 – Somali-based al-Shabaab is increasing its guerrilla-style attacks in East Africa, but terrorism experts say the attacks are the results of the group losing its ability to fight and win on the battlefield. In the past few years, the United States has supported, with arms and training, an African Union force to carry out missions against al-Shabaab in Somalia's major towns and urban areas. That

expansion. This is a sign of inability to fight in the battlefield," Nandwa told Xinhua News.

At its peak between 2007 and 2010, al-Shabaab ruled a large portion of Somalia, about the size of Denmark. "They were doing something like state building," said Stig Jarle Hansen, author of "Al-Shabaab in Somalia." "They were administering territory. They were delivering services," all while suppressing the

local population by enforcing their interpretation of Sharia. Now the group recruits East African youths to help it carry out attacks in Kenya and parts of Somalia.

The *Shanghai Daily* points out that while East African governments have acknowledged that they must halt the Islamic radicalization of young people, religious and political leaders have failed to influence the region's young Muslims, many of whom are uneducated and poor. "The lack of religious ideology to counter radical ideas and the absence of credible leadership able to win the support of the youth amongst the Muslims in Kenya is a result of the absence of a strategy to de-radicalize the youth," Nandwa said.

The Kenyan parliament recently passed a law imposing stiff penalties for the crime of radicalization. Last Monday, Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta announced a ten-day amnesty for radicalized Kenyan youths who may have joined al-Shabaab. The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) has called



has forced al-Shabaab to retreat to small villages, where they still collect taxes to fund their operations throughout East Africa. These operations include a 2 April attack at Garissa University College in north eastern Kenya, which claimed the lives of 148 people, and a 14 April attack at the Somali ministry of education in which ten people were killed.

For many East Africans, the recent attacks represent signs of a desperate al-Shabaab. "I do not believe al-Shabaab is expanding," said Hassan Nandwa, an Islamic Studies expert at Umma University. "Al-Shabaab seems to be heading to its ultimate end. The ability to make some terrorist strikes is not evidence of

for the extension of the amnesty period to thirty days. Kenyans are also debating whether the Kenyan Defense Forces should pull out of Somalia. Opposition politicians have blamed al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya on the country's involvement in the African Union's military operation in Somalia.

The attacks have also positioned the police against the civilian population. Law enforcement agencies claim civilians are shying away from sharing information, but many civilians and analysts say the police forces have been infiltrated by al-Shabaab supporters who circulate



inaccurate intelligence to mislead police on the particular targets of attacks. The Garissa University attack came just four days after many universities in Kenya shared alerts of impending terrorist attacks with Nairobi, but the target was more than 400 kilometers away. Corruption within the police force, Nandwa

said, makes it difficult to combat al-Shabaab in Kenya.

“The East African countries are facing the corruption which is exposing the police to infiltration and inaccurate intelligence with the motives like revenge, business rivalry and even tribalism,” Nandwa said.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I just love article titles like this one! And "experts" like those expressing opinions trying to persuade audience that night is a beautiful day!

Around 680 Germans Travel Abroad to Join Islamic Terrorist Groups

By Edwin Mora

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/04/23/report-around-680-germans-travel-abroad-to-join-islamic-terrorist-groups/>

Apr 23 -- **“Around 680 Germans had left the country to join jihadi forces abroad as of March, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) revealed on Wednesday,”** according to the DW article. “In 2014, the number of people leaving to fight with jihadis was estimated to be around 550.”

The BfV is the domestic intelligence agency in Germany.

“Departures to war zones show no signs of abating,” reportedly said BfV President Hans-Georg Maassen.

At the beginning of this month, a U.N. report revealed that the number of foreigners who leave their home country to join jihadist groups abroad had reached a record level, **exceeding 25,000 from over 100 countries.**

Most of the foreigners have traveled to Iraq and Syria to join radical Islamist forces there, such as the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) and al-Qaeda.

Many European countries are concerned about those citizens who return from the war zones, battle-hardened and radicalized.

“One third of the 680 people who had traveled abroad had returned to Germany while 85 had died in Syria or Iraq,” reportedly said the president of Germany’s domestic intelligence agency.

“Many of those returning to Germany had gained experience in warfare and were being seen as a potential threat to domestic security,” notes DW.

Most of the Germans who left were part of their country’s growing Sunni Salafist scene, the BfV president told reporters.

“The government estimates the number of Salafist supporters in Germany at around 7,300,” reports DW. “That’s about twice as many as in 2011.”

Salafist supporters in some German states want to “establish an Islamic caliphate in Germany,” according to data from Germany’s domestic intelligence agency.

“The Islamist scene is growing without a pause,” said the agency’s president, adding that “the breeding ground for jihadis is consequently getting larger.”

Such a scene is also going on in the Netherlands where the Dutch security agency AIVD said there are “thousands” of jihad sympathizers and “several hundred” jihadis, according to DW.

AIVD estimates that 180 Dutch nationals have traveled to join Islamic terrorist groups abroad. About 20 are believed to still be in the war zone while 35 are believed to have returned.

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Edwin Mora primarily covers national security and defense issues. He earned a BA in Communication (Journalism) from George Mason University. Mr. Mora served as a Congressional correspondent for CNSNews.com

EDITOR'S COMMENT: If they know the exact numbers of those joined the jihad it would be easy to remove their documents and let them pursue their dreams in another country!



Islamic State Health Service

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/islamic-state-health-service-video-5579232>



Familiar? The ISHS logo, which resembles the NHS logo in the UK

A slickly-produced video to tempt Muslims to join ISIS showcases the murderous regime's medical service - complete with a logo ripped off from the NHS.

It features footage of a hospital in the de-facto capital of Raqqa in Syria, and shows medical equipment, ambulances and features interviews with doctors and medical staff.

The Islamic State Health Service, or ISHS, even has a blue and white logo strongly resembling that of the British National health Service, complete with a similar font.

One of the medics is an Australian man, who urges health professionals living in the West to join the group's new health service.

He has been identified by news.com.au as former Adelaide University student Tareq Kamleh (photo), believed to be in his late 20s, who completed his medical studies at Adelaide University and later moved to Perth.

At the time he was a medical student who drank alcohol and "had lots of girlfriends", but later settled down with a nurse from the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Calling himself Abu Yusuf and speaking in an Australian accent, he said: "I saw this as part of my jihad for Islam, to help the Muslims ummah (community) in the area that I could, which is the medical field."

"It's disappointing to think how many fellow Muslim brothers and sisters who are in the medical field - doctors and nurses, physios, dentists - are still living in the West.

"Unfortunately the Muslims here are really suffering, from not necessarily a lack of equipment or medicine but mainly a lack of qualified medical care."

He also speaks of his own regret at not joining the terror group, which routinely executes its enemies or those that don't conform to their twisted interpretation of Islam, sooner.

"It's a good system that they're running here. Everything lived up to my expectations completely and we really need your help," he said

"I wished that I'd come a lot sooner."

A former student who knew Kamleh said he was not a radical at university. She described him as "clean cut" but was known as a womaniser and a drinker.

She said: "He was a pretty normal guy, he didn't have any IS-related interests."

The video emerges at the same time as reports that ISIS fighters ambushed an Iraqi army convoy with a bulldozer packed with explosives, killing the commander of the Iraqi 1st



Division and three of his staff officers north of Fallujah.

The suicide bomber attacked the convoy and then militants opened fire, killing Brigadier General Hassan Abbas Toufan, a colonel and

two lieutenant colonels in the Nadhem al-Taqseem region, said a member of the division and an intelligence officer.

There was no initial count on the number of soldiers killed in the attack.

Terrorism and West's Islamophobia

By Muhammad Ali Zoab

Source: <http://www.voiceofjournalists.com/terrorism-and-wests-islamophobia/>

"The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people [is] convinced of the superiority of their culture and [is] obsessed with the inferiority of their power." These are words of Samuel P.

Huntington in *The Clash of*

Civilizations and

the Remaking of

the World Order,

which was

published in 1996,

when there was a

good image of the

West among

Muslims' minds

because the West had

helped the Muslims to

liberate Afghanistan

from the occupation of

Soviet. A few years later

(1999), it fought a war to

save Muslims in Kosovo.

However, the statement of

Huntington is clearly

indicating that the fear of

Islam in the West is there

even before 9/11; when

there was no apparent drift

between Islam and the West.

The Clash of Civilizations pointed out that there

was a strong possibility of collusion between

Muslims and the West in the coming years.

What would cause this conflict? It is not

fundamentalism, but it is "Islamic culture" which

put the West under a constant fear.

The 9/11 was an important event which

changed the history and the United States

along with its allies attacked Afghanistan.

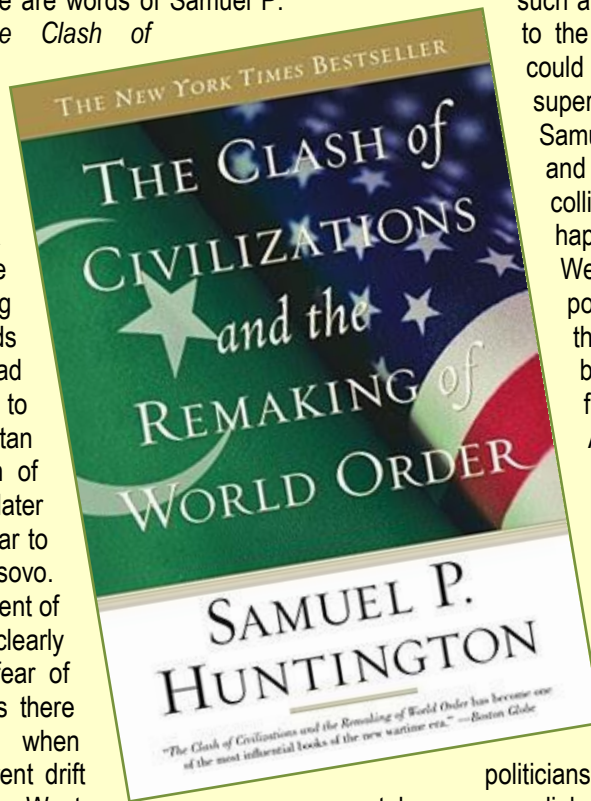
However, it could not be called a war between

the West and Islam because its target was

Taliban and the Al-Qaeda and most of the

Muslim States participated in this war and

supported the Western coalition.



In Iraq war however, most of the Muslim countries condemned the attack and considered it a part of a strategy of the West to isolate Islamic countries and attack them one after another. However in Iraq, the US faced

such a tough time that they came to the understanding that a war could not be won just by having a superior military forces.

Samuel pointed out that Islamic and Western civilizations would collide in future and it has happened. However, many

Western scholars and

politicians are of the view that

the West does not fear Islam

but the Islamic

fundamentalists. The former

American President Bill

Clinton said that the West

does not have problems

with Islam but only with

violent Islamic

extremists. His

successors, Bush and

Obama, repeated his

idea in different words.

However, being

politicians, their declaration could be

taken as mere diplomatic statements.

Another Western Scholar Dr. Mervyn Hiskett,

an orientalist and author of several books on

Islam, said the spread of Islam should not be

encouraged in the West in order to save the

future generations.

Why does the West fear Islam so much?

According to many scholars, Islam is a fast-

spreading religion in the West and it may

challenge their social, political and economic

system in future.

After Bolshevik Revolution in

Soviet Union, the West considered

Communism as an eminent

threat, which ended two and half



decades ago, and now Islam is a fear for the West.

Today, it is the age of globalization where material and cultural resources are exchanged in moments because of rapid means of communication. It is important to note that it is very simple principle (of any field) when you offer something to others, it pays its price, and when you get something, you pay its cost. In the language of Economics, both cost and material are resources and they are exchanged in a deal.

Today, it can be seen that the Western culture is dominating the Islamic world. Their foods and drinks such as burger, sandwich, French fries, Ice Creams, Coke, Pepsi and Juices are very popular in the Muslim world and several Western Franchises such as Nestle, Unilever, MacDonald are operating in the Muslims World. There is a dominant influence of the Western culture on Muslim Youth and their dresses such as jeans and T-Shirt are very popular in the Muslim World.



It is important to note that Arab Spring in several Middle Eastern countries was brought by the Western Influenced Youth, and it could simply be observed from the crowd gathered at Al-Tahrir Square, Cairo (Egypt), where more than two-third people were wearing jeans and T-Shirts.

This did not put the Muslim World in a fear or dilemma of the Western culture. If someone visits Western markets, one can hardly see any Muslim World influenced material. What this shows is that despite having a dominant cultural influence over the youth of the Muslim world, the West fears Islam.

Currently, the anti-Islam movements are gaining strength in the European Countries. Its simple example is "Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident" (PEGIDA) which is a German anti-Islam movement. The

group arranged several protests in 2014 and on January 12, 2015 . about 25,000 people participated in the rally they organized. Such types of movements are common in other European countries as well.

These types of movements at times provoke Muslims by their actions. Its best example is Charlie Hebdo which published some disgracing cartoons of Muslims' Holy Prophet. Some Muslims just expressed their anger by protesting against it. However, the violent reaction came from Al Qaeda. They managed to attack Charlie Hebdo and killed twelve people.

However again, the number of people killed in this sad incident was in no way comparable to the number of killings in July 2011 by Anders Behring Breivik who killed more than sixty people. Condemning statements over Charlie Hebdo attacks came from every corner of the Muslim World and some Muslims leaders participated in the funeral ceremony.

No doubt, the West is the victim of terrorism committed by some Islamic Extremists, but Muslims themselves have suffered more badly due to such extremists. Terrorism is in fact a common problem for both civilizations and both are combatting against it, but the sacrifices of the Muslims are much more than that of West. Muslim world has faced more bomb blasts and suicide attacks from these terrorists.

Their economies and social structures have suffered more badly because of terrorism. The war against terrorism is the common war of the West and Muslims, in which the share of the Muslims is more than that of the West.

A report of *Daily Telegraph* said that seven hundred foreign students were not given admission in Science subject in Britain Universities because they thought the knowledge could be used to prepare weapons of mass destruction. Such knowledge, they thought, could be used to carry out Nuclear, Radiological, Biological or Chemical terrorism against the West.

On the other hand, the West is asking several questions about Madrassas in many Islamic countries and some of these questions are valid. What does it



mean? No Modern Scientific as well as Religious Education for Muslims? Then where the Muslim students in poor Islamic countries should go for education?

The West should revisit such policies and must allow Muslim students to get Scientific Education in its institutions, otherwise Madrassa's culture will groom further, where there is an easy chance of producing militants.

The Western and the Muslim world, both, have some fault lines and these gaps could be reduced only through a keeping a close contact and frequent dialogue. Both civilizations should cooperate with each other to combat terrorism. Such cooperation against a common enemy will produce a more homogenous society which will ensure peace and prosperity for future generations of both civilizations.

Muhammad Ali Zoaib is an independent defense and security analyst.

Changes in Egypt's Schoolbooks May Help Counter Islamic Terrorism

Source: <http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/article/changes-in-egypts-schoolbooks-may-help-counter-islamic-terrorism-5877928264990720>

Government ministers in Egypt are taking steps to nip new generations of Islamic terrorism in the bud by making changes in primary and secondary school curricula, according to a report on the website of Voice of

omitted, including one saying, "I was ordered to fight people until they testify that there is no god but Allah."

Some who oppose the changes accuse the authorities of "an assault on our history" and of deleting the words of the Quran.

But the country's education ministry says, "Some of the material was inciting violence and was first entered into the curriculum during the Muslim Brotherhood's era." Officials say the censoring of material used to encourage violence is part of a larger ideological battle the government is determined to wage against Islamic extremism.



America.

The country's Ministry of Education is removing some religious texts and passages on historical Islamic figures including Saladin, the 12th century Muslim ruler and anti-Crusader hero.

The changes, though, are provoking the ire of Egyptian Islamists.

Salafists say the deletions recommended by a curriculum development panel set up in March amount to the government declaring war on Islam. But the Prime Minister, Ibrahim Mehleb, who has endorsed the recommendations made after a brief review of textbooks, says jihadists are exploiting outdated ideas to incite youngsters to violence. ...

Some fatwas and Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad) are also being

The plan seems to be in response to the call of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi for a radical reform of Islam. The VOA article pointed out that the changes are:

...in line with a controversial speech the Egyptian president gave earlier this year before an audience of leading religious scholars calling for a "religious revolution" in Egypt. He said dominant Islamic thought had become too closed and antagonistic to the world. "It's inconceivable that the thought that we hold most sacred should cause the entire nation to be a source of anxiety, danger, killing and destruction for the rest of the world," he told the scholars. President el-Sissi said Islam wasn't the problem per se. The problem lay with "that corpus of



texts and ideas that we have sanctified over the centuries, to the point that departing from them has become almost impossible.”

He made that call amid rising violence against non-Muslims, especially the Islamic State group's beheading of 21 Copts working in Libya earlier this year. Ashraf Ramelah, president of Voice of the Copts, told Aleteia that el-Sissi may be well-intentioned but still must overcome the hurdle of influencing the main Islamic religious authority in the country—Al-Azhar. The president, he said, "has not successfully influenced the Al Azhar stronghold which consistently counters el-Sissi's efforts to renew Islamic discourse. Publicly, Al-Azhar leaders are welcoming the president's initiative, but in reality they are against any change."

Ramelah is cautiously optimistic about the curriculum reform but points out that nothing is

set in stone yet. He is also concerned that el-Sissi has not come to the public defense of Islam al-Beheiry, a Muslim scholar who is under a death fatwa because he spoke freely about inaccuracies in the hadiths of Islam. "Beheiry challenged traditions held by Al-Azhar scholars, and now his program is shut down along with a death fatwa issued against him. El-Sissi is silent.

The VOA article quoted Egypt expert Samuel Tadros of the Hudson Institute in saying, "Egypt's current educational system is an incubator for extremism and radicalization."

"Attempting to address the question of intolerance, radicalization, and extremism in the Egyptian educational system must begin by addressing the very structure of that system and not merely changing curricula," Tadros said.

PF is operating in Brasilia on suspicion of terrorism

Source: <http://veja.abril.com.br/noticia/brasil/pf-faz-operacao-de-carater-internacional-por-suspeita-de-terrorismo>



Apr 24 – The Federal Police (PF) mobilized the Bomb Disposal Group on Friday in a rare crackdown targeted suspected involvement in terrorism. The agents scour from the early morning, an apartment block in 104 North Wing, prime area of Brasília (DF). Depending on the nature of the operation, the Superintendency of PF in the Federal District explained



that it is still not possible to confirm details of the operation. PF intelligence sectors were fired. In the lawsuit, at least one person had been arrested.

A month ago, government intelligence agencies produced reports pointing attempts to co-opt the Islamic State Brazilians - and alerting the government to the need for a specific law to combat terrorists. The President of the Senate, Renan Calheiros (PMDB-AL), guided the matter, which was not voted because some parties, including the PT, demanded a public hearing on the subject, which has not yet been scheduled. According to Renan's interlocutors, it must occur in the coming days.

ISIS Encyclopedia of Terror: The secrets behind Islamic State's 'information Jihad' on the West revealed

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/technology-science/technology/isis-encyclopedia-terror-secrets-behind-5528461>

ISIS terrorists are arming extremist 'sleeper cells' in Britain with the expertise to remain undetected, spread propaganda and brainwash new recruits, the Mirror Online can reveal today.



We have gained access to a huge cache of documents which demonstrate the frightening level of ease with which the Islamic State's undercover operatives can access highly technical expertise.

The brutal regime has spent years building up an online terrorism library filled with an enormous range of material designed to help extremists based in the West.

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But much of this material was updated in the wake of the Edward Snowden revelations that caused an international sensation - because he revealed many of the spies' secrets tactics.

In post-Snowden Britain, police and security services admit they are struggling to keep up with the level of sophistication they are faced with - and that Britain is now embroiled in digital guerrilla warfare.

These documents illustrate how ISIS supporters try to stay one step ahead of spies and police, Mirror Online has confirmed in consultation with security services.

A security source said: "Members of ISIS grew up in a different generation to Al Qaeda. They learned how to use the internet and smartphones whilst at school and are at that age where using tech is part of everyday, normal life.

"They change the way they communicate all the time, constantly using different apps or platforms.

"This presents an evolving challenge to intelligence services in the UK and overseas."

Mirror Online was alerted to the existence of the document cache by a group of hackers splintered from the hacktivist group Anonymous, which calls itself Global Vigilance.

Our source - who wished to remain unnamed - founded the group after enduring the ordeal of seeing former friends from a pro-Palestinian wing of Anonymous converted to extremism.

"ISIS uses digital guerrilla warfare tactics online which cannot be fought in the normal manner," he said.

"We can go where others can't and bring back information and data which other people miss.

"Extremists are able to recruit with impunity using a variety of platforms. Our research brings home the level of sophistication employed by the extremists.

"Knowledge is power. The more we have, the better we can fight them."





The terror training manuals include images of European landmarks like The Louvre - a landmark close to the location of the Charlie Hebdo massacre

With the cache, we can reveal:

- The Islamic State teaches extremists to wipe out their digital footprint and avoid detection by all security services
- This means they reveal how to disseminate footage of atrocities without being traced
- Warns extremists of the spy devices they should look out for, ranging from cameras hidden inside clocks to tiny bugs which can be drilled into walls
- Potential recruits in the West use a Russian social network to contact high-level extremists in Syria and Iraq
- British ISIS recruits are taught how use the "dark web" to communicate with a global network of terrorists
- Supporters have call centre-style lists of prefabricated religious arguments to use during radicalisation attempts



An image taken from a guide on how to give drones the slip

The Mirror has discussed some of the documents to one of the world's leading experts in terrorism and digital radicalisation, Jamie Bartlett of the thinktank DEMOS.

He described them as 'extremely useful' to already radical undercover ISIS operatives as well as serving as an introduction for wannabe jihadis looking to join the

extremists' brutal war.

We also shared the training manuals with a police source at a specialist cyber crime division, which is currently working to smash the ISIS online recruitment ring.



"These are very close to the bone - and they are all too easy to find if you know where to look," he told us.

The Terrorism Act 2006 lists as offences under Section 1:

1 Encouragement of terrorism

2 Dissemination of terrorist publications

So while the legislation exists giving security services the ammunition to prosecute, the reality is much more difficult, confirmed our police source.

"It's possible to shut these websites, but it is difficult to stop them (the documents) from popping up elsewhere," he said.

"There is no restriction on accessing them."

How to defeat Al Shabaab

By Nodin Muzee

Source: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/667502-how-to-defeat-al-shabaab.html>

I read a recent article in the New York Times in which it outlined the Kenyan government's plans on building a security wall spanning 700km (440 miles) along the border with Somalia.

Whilst this idea has the intention of stopping terrorists from crossing the border, it is very simplistic in assuming that this measure alone will stop terrorist attacks.

For a very long time, Kenya's counter terrorism strategy has been fragmented and incoherent. It has lacked the vigor and focus to neutralize the threat from Al-Shabaab .

Such situations require that you appoint a counter terrorism coordinator also known as a Czar. They would be in charge of a joint task force which would encompass various government agencies such as representatives from the central bank, police, internal and external intelligence, military, Interpol, security vetted religious scholars. Given the complex nature of combating terrorism, this requires a multi-pronged, multi-layered response from the various agencies that are working in a cohesive manner regarding one common goal, hence the need for such a task force.

At the heart of any successful counter terrorism strategy is the need to positively influence the "hearts and minds" of the population. As a government you have to ask yourself whether or not your doing all you can in eradicating the social ills that help breed terrorism, such as unemployment, religious intolerance, wide spread mistrust and corruption of the security agencies by the public, the marginalization of some parts of the population.

A case in point is the Dabaab refugee camp in Northern Kenya which houses 350,000 Somalia's displaced by years of war. It is claimed that the terrorists that amounted the attack on Garissa University College at some point hide in this camp. The Kenyan government has told the United Nations that it wants this camp moved out of Kenya within 3 months.

This kind of action can only further alienate parts of the population. This will breed more anger and resentment and drive young men and women into the arms of terrorist recruiters. The majority of these refugees are innocent and have no links to terrorism. A truly visionary counter terrorism strategy would develop a long term plan to house, educate, and employ these refugees, eventually at some point integrating them into Kenyan society by giving them citizenship.

Treating these refugees with the respect and dignity they deserve can only earn you the respect and admiration of the population and the wider international community. Most importantly, this would deny Al-Shabaab potential recruits and would give you 350,000 new citizens, who when called upon in helping stop terrorism, will gladly do so by passing on intelligence information regarding terrorists operating in their midst.

Finally, the fact remains, if Somalia is to become a stable and developed country, Somalia's will have to take ownership of their countries political destiny and no amount of external interference will ever achieve this.

Nodin Muzee is a risk management professional



UK Police Note Potential for 3D Printing Uses in Terrorist Activity

Source: <http://3dprint.com/59830/uk-anti-terror-3d-printing/>

While 3D printers create amazing products for the good of humanity—assisting in surgeries via modeling, tissue reconstruction via bioprinting, and manufacture of prosthetic limbs, to name just a few ways—the weapons capabilities of the disruptive production technique present a growing dark side. We’ve seen 3D printed guns increase their presence on the media’s radar, and while these tend to be created by hobbyists and guns rights activists, there are those who would create other weapons for more horrific purposes.

Unfortunately, this isn’t the first time we’ve had to consider how terrorists might employ 3D printing technology for their ends. Implications for the creation of powerful, functional weapons by those who wish ill on others are far-reaching, and in the UK, the intelligence community is taking into account what the rising level of the terror threat in the country might mean when aided by this advanced technology.

Mark Rowley, Metropolitan Police Head of Special Operations and Assistant Commissioner, has taken serious note of the level of terrorist threat in his country, noting that the current threat is “fundamentally” different from what has been seen in the past. He

has now warned that terrorists might utilize 3D printing technology to create airborne drones or to build bombs.

“We are wrestling with the new technologies constantly,” Mr Rowley said in London at the Counter Terror Expo today, April 21. “We’re wrestling with the issue of drones, we’re wrestling with the issue of 3D printing and we’re wrestling with the issue of new communication technologies and methodologies, new applications and the challenges that presents to us from an intelligence perspective.”

The UK’s Metropolitan Police have been aware for several years now of the potential for

destruction posed by 3D printers in the wrong hands. In 2013, for example, they reported an attempt at weapons manufacture and seized



3D printed parts that might have been used to make guns. Gun ownership in the UK is tightly regulated, thus making the home creation of a firearm illegal.

Drones, however, represent another high-tech threat on the radar. 3D printed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are a popular and well-documented DIY project that many hobbyists are familiar with. Outside of these hobbyists, the word “drone” for most people can summon images of terrorist activity and warfare, where these airborne machines are often employed. Rowley has voiced his concerns regarding their potential use for close-to-home threats, particularly as they are easy to create. Combined with explosives, results could be lethal—and extremely difficult to detect ahead of time.

Highly publicized cases of UK citizens who have teamed up with ISIS (ISIL), Jihadi John and Jihadi Jane, have increased the visibility of the threat of homegrown terrorists who may be swayed by jihadist and other extremist, violent groups.

“If we have terrorist groups now able, from relatively safe environments in ungoverned space of broken areas of the country, able to reach from there into communities in the UK and influence people to act in their name to commit terrorist acts, that is a



fundamental difference in the challenge the UK is facing,” Rowley cautioned at the Counter Terror Expo. Speaking on the face of terrorism the world over, Rowley noted that “the nature of terrorism has changed so much, so quickly.”

Do you agree with Rowley? Let us know your thoughts on the controversy surrounding potential uses of disruptive technology in the UK Counter Terror forum thread at 3DPB.com.

Behavioral Problems and Disorders among Radicals in Police Files

By Anton W. Weenink

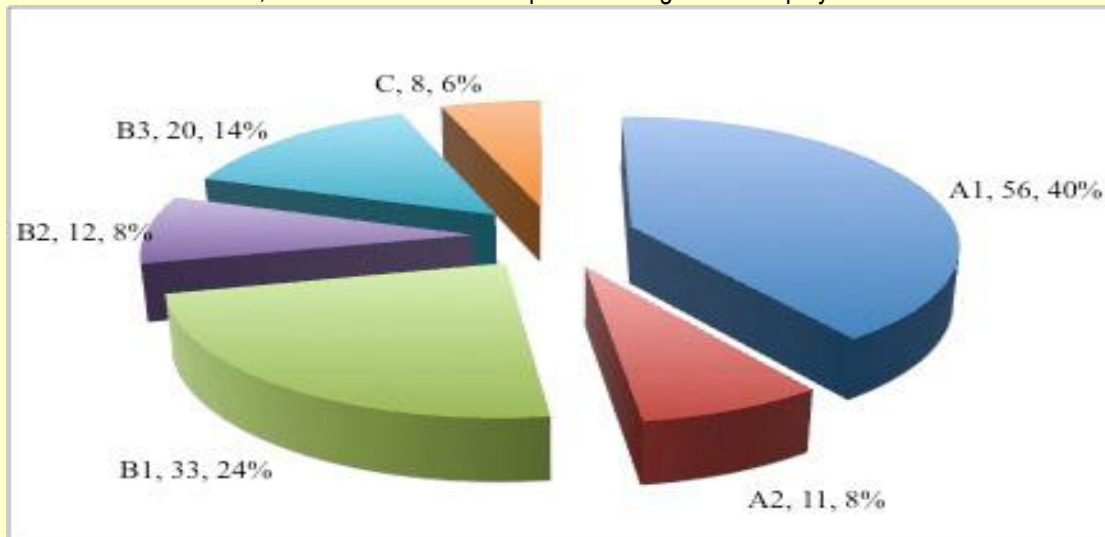
Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/416/html>

Whatever label we put on those who participate in this type of behavior, our core focus must be on the behaviors themselves, and the ways in which they develop.- John Horgan

Abstract

In this article we explore to what extent behavioral problems and disorders can be found in a sample of radical Islamists that are known to the police in the Netherlands as actual or potential ‘jihadists’. Our aims are, first, to assess whether the consensus in terrorism studies that terrorists are ‘surprisingly normal’ is justified when it comes to these subjects; second, we try to establish whether behavioral histories offer clues to the police on how to approach them. Personal details of 140 subjects, who are considered to have traveled from the Netherlands to Syria, or on whom police had information that they might be preparing to do so, were entered in police databases. Preliminary results indicate that individuals with histories of behavioral problems and disorders are overrepresented. The results are at odds with the consensus view on terrorists alleged ‘normality’. A focus on individual psychology could complement existing social-psychological approaches to radicalization. It may also assist in broadening awareness among policy makers and law enforcement officials that disengagement efforts need to be tailored to the individual, and that mental health specialists might have to play a role here.

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Behavioral problems and disorders, by category (n 1 = 140)

Category A No hit

For individuals without any traceable problem behavior or mental health problem, we created two subcategories:

- A.1 No problem behavior found
- A.2 No problem behavior found, but problematic social setting

Category A.2 allows for tracing back those cases where we found no information on problem behavior in an individual, but where there is evidence of serious social problems.

Category B: Problem behavior



- B.1 Mild problem behavior: a limited number of petty crimes and misdemeanors, vandalism, high debts, etc.
- B.2 Problem behavior: Persistent offending; child neglect (by the subject).
- B.3 Serious problem behavior: e.g. persistent serious criminality; references that a subject is mentally impaired, or seems to suffer from a conduct or personality disorder, or mental illness, but where no indications of a diagnosis were found.

Category C: Diagnosed mental health problem

Category C contains individuals of whom we found information that they have been clinically diagnosed with a disorder. The main source here is police reports; indications of a diagnosed mental health problem in a police report we try to control in other police reports and in sources like VIP (residential history) or verdicts. Having a mental disorder does not necessarily imply more serious problem behavior, or that someone is to be considered more dangerous than individuals in Category B.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Anton Weenink is a Senior Researcher in the Central Unit of the National Police of the Netherlands.

NATO's Role in Counter-Terrorism

By Juliette Bird

Source:

<http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/419/html>

Abstract

NATO's contribution to the global approach to Counter Terrorism was expressed publically in the NATO Policy Guidelines on Counter Terrorism endorsed at the 2012 NATO summit. The evolution of NATO's approach is described and NATO's current contribution is detailed, including recent examples of activities that reflect progress against the Counter Terrorism Policy Guidelines. Looking ahead, beyond agreed roles for NATO, the Alliance's relevance to work against Foreign Terrorist Fighters and to Countering Violent Extremism is examined. Finally, new ways are suggested to assist the UN and use NATO's existing assets more flexibly in the field of Counter Terrorism. Adoption of these would, however, require a change in Allies' ambition for the use of NATO in Counter Terrorism and hence a change in mandate.

Introduction

In today's febrile climate where terrorism has become a topic of importance, not only for terrorism 'experts' but for the average citizens of many countries, there has been a huge amount of soul searching and summit summoning in search of an adequate response. Terrorism, in addition to being subject to what has been referred to as the 'politics of labelling'[1], is not monolithic; it has no single trigger or context and its manifestations are many and varied. Thus, as the United Nations' Global Counter Terrorism Strategy[2] recognises, there are roles for a broad spectrum of actors in taking action against it. The perpetrators of terrorism and those that support terrorism as a legitimate strategy are the base level actors who must be countered. The responsibility to monitor, engage, deter or punish such individuals—as nationals of particular countries and members of specific communities, lies predominantly with nations—whether these actions are taken through governmental bodies or civil society. The range of counter terrorism relevant roles is wide and was well described in the 2011 U.S. National Strategy for Counter Terrorism which speaks of the need to harness 'every tool' of national power.[3] The idea is refined in the 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy which counsels use of the military, of diplomacy, development, science and technology and people-to-people relationships within a long term perspective.[4] The military are an asset to be used within a coherent, comprehensive approach whilst remaining conscious that, as President Obama underlined in 2013, "force alone cannot make us safe." [5] In addition to tasks within all national fields, the UN strategy also sets out tasks for organisations at the regional,



multinational and international level and here, as a political/military actor, NATO has a part to play within the global approach.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Dr Juliette Bird has, for the past four years, held the post of head of NATO HQ's Counter Terrorism section within the International Staff. This Policy Note reflects the author's own views and opinions which do not necessarily correspond to the official position of NATO on the topic.

Islamic State and al-Qaeda Competing for Hearts & Minds

By Ely Karmon

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/420/html>



Abstract

The Islamic State under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and al-Qaeda under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri are competing for the hearts and minds of jihadists worldwide but also for territorial control in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. Three examples, referring to France, Yemen and Nigeria respectively, illustrate this struggle among the main jihadist entities.



Introduction

In his attempt to successfully compete with the Islamic State (IS) under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—who has claimed the title of Caliph Ibrahim—al-Qaeda (AQ) leader Ayman al-Zawahiri announced, on September 4, 2014, the establishment of the new affiliate group “Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent” (AQIS). He also challenged the legitimacy of al-Baghdadi’s claim to the title of caliph by clarifying that the new jihadi organization will work under the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, whose Emir is the “commander of the faithful” Mullah Mohammad Omar, the Taliban leader.

AQIS has the same objectives as those articulated by Osama bin Laden and the other founders of al-Qaeda: prepare Muslims for jihad against their enemies; liberate Muslim lands now ruled by non-Muslims; and revive the Islamic caliphate. Al-Zawahiri mentioned Burma (Myanmar), Bangladesh, and India’s regions of Assam, Gujarat and Kashmir as battlegrounds for jihad by the new organization. This episode illustrates the evolving struggle of the two jihadist leaders, al-Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi, for the allegiance (bay’ah) of AQ and other jihadist and salafist franchises in the Middle East and beyond. This research noted provides an analysis of three recent examples of this competition for hearts, minds, territory and influence.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Ely Karmon is Senior Research Scholar at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) and the Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, Israel. Dr. Karmon lectures on International Terrorism and CBRN terrorism at the M.A. Counterterrorism Studies at IDC. His fields of research include political violence, international terrorism, CBRN terrorism, and the strategic influence of terrorism and subversion in the Middle East and worldwide.



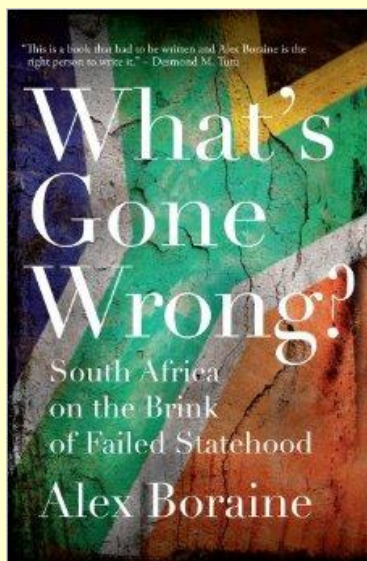
Counterterrorism Bookshelf: Nine Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

By Joshua Sinai

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/422/html>

This column consists of capsule reviews of books published by various publishers, with the authors listed in alphabetical order.

Alex Boraine, *What's Gone Wrong? South Africa on the Brink of Failed Statehood* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014), 174 pages, US\$27.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 9781479854974.

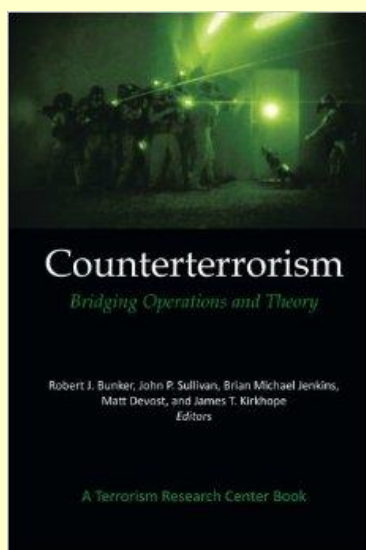


This book offers an important account by a leading South African political activist of what had “gone wrong” in South Africa since the replacement of the Apartheid regime by a democratic political system under African National Congress (ANC) rule. As discussed by the author, the ANC—especially in the post-Nelson Mandela period, which was characterized by a high degree of enlightenment—has been taken over by growing intolerance of opposing views and government corruption. The author describes a significant worsening of conditions in education, public health, safety and security, and employment: the characteristics of a “failing state.” However, he concludes on an optimistic note that “In many ways we are a failing state, but we are not a failed state. Institutions such as the Constitutional Court and parliament are still in place. The media is largely free, civil society is still active. There have been other dark days (think back to the 1980s), and we survived and eventually triumphed.” (p. 145) Alex Boraine, who served in South Africa’s parliament, and helped to set up South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, now serves as

Global Visiting Professor of Law at New York University’s Hauser Global Law School Program.

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Robert J. Bunker, John P. Sullivan, Brian Michael Jenkins, Matt DeVost, and James T. Kirkhope (Eds.), *Counterterrorism: Bridging Operations and Theory* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2015), 444 pp., US \$ 27.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 9781491759776.

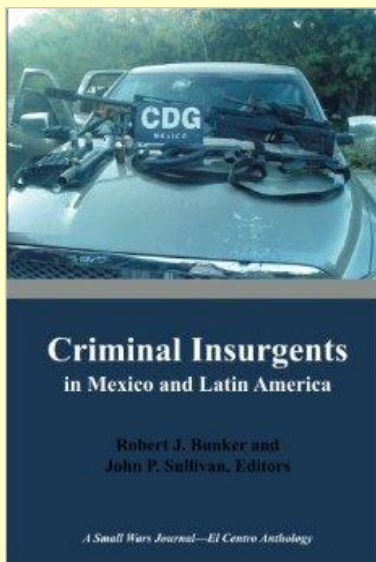


Since this reviewer wrote one of the volume’s articles (on “Threat Convergence” – the creation of a new category of terrorist threat through the convergence of terrorism, WMD proliferation, criminality, cyber weapons proliferation, and enabling conditions in weak, failed, and even strong states), this should not be considered as a book review but a general overview of this book’s chapters. Led by Robert J. Bunker, who assembled prominent contributors to write the volume’s 65 articles, this book is encyclopedic in scope, with the articles’ topics organized alphabetically. The articles [with the authors’ names within parentheses] cover topics such as the Abu Nidal Organization (Jennifer Hardwick), al Qaida (Rohan Gunaratna), asymmetric warfare (Robert J. Bunker), aviation security (Kevin R. McCarthy), biological warfare (Peter Katona), chemical weapons (Raymond Picquet), conditions promoting terrorism (Byron Ramirez), counterinsurgency (Thomas X. Hammes), critical infrastructure protection (Stefan Brem), global insurgency (David J. Kilcullen), Hizballah (James. T. Kirkhope), homegrown violent extremism (Erroll G. Southers), netwar and networked threats (John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt), radicalization (Mitchell D. Silber); surface transportation security (Brian Michael Jenkins), terrorist mindset (Jeffrey A. Baxter and Daniel S.



Gressang IV), and urban terrorism (Russell W. Glenn). Overall, these topics represent important issues in terrorism and counterterrorism studies.

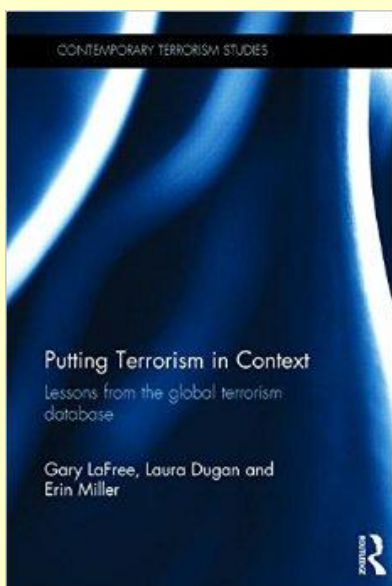
Robert J. Bunker and John P. Sullivan (Eds.), *Criminal Insurgents in Mexico and Latin America* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2015), 432 pp., US \$ 26.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 9781491759790.



Continuing the long-term work on these issues by Robert J. Bunker and John P. Sullivan, this edited volume is a fourth compilation of articles published in *Small Wars Journal*, this time covering developments in the narco-trafficking-related crime wars and criminal insurgencies in Mexico and Latin America in 2014. The volume's chapters [with the authors' names within parentheses] cover topics such as coverage of the activities of Mexican cartels (John P. Sullivan and Robert J. Bunker), an assessment of the effectiveness of the first year of Mexico President Pena Nieto's "war on drugs" (Chris Ince), an application of "grounded theory" in defining the cross-border violence by Mexican drug trafficking organizations (Clint Osowski), institutionalizing a risk-based approach for the U.S. Border Patrol (Robert D. Schroeder), the employment of advanced technologies such as 'narco-submarines' by drug smugglers (Byron Ramirez), the prevalence of 'narco-cities' in Mexico and beyond (John P. Sullivan), coordination failures among Mexican security forces (Irina Alexandra Chindea), how Plan Colombia can be applied to

countering the drug cartels in Mexico (Michael Osborne), and the narco-trafficking problem in the Caribbean (Geoffrey Demarest).

Gary LaFree, Laura Dugan and Erin Miller, *Putting Terrorism in Context: Lessons From the Global Terrorism Database* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 262 pp., US \$ 145.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0415671422.



This book is an important empirically-based examination by social scientists of the nature and magnitude of contemporary terrorism, drawing on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), an unclassified source for data on terrorist incidents which is maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), headquartered at the University of Maryland (where the three authors work, with Dr. LaFree serving as START's Director). The book begins with an overview of the GTD, as well as other comparable terrorist incident databases, and the definition of terrorism utilized in populating the GTD's terrorist incidents: "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation." (p. 13). One of the advantages of such a general definition, the authors point out later in the discussion, is that it includes attacks by terrorist groups against civilian noncombatants as well as, in certain instances, military targets. (p. 112)

The book's chapters then discuss trends in the frequency and geographic distribution of terrorist incidents around the world, the groups that are "attributed responsibility" for conducting such attacks (including their organizational "life spans"), an assessment of the types of weapons (e.g., firearms, bomb explosives, chemical or biological agents or radiological devices), tactics (e.g., armed assaults, bombings/explosions, assassinations or kidnappings), and targets (e.g., private citizens, businesses, government facilities, police, military, etc.) that terrorists consider and use in their attacks. They also examine the extent of fatalities and injuries produced by terrorist attacks (with airline bombings among



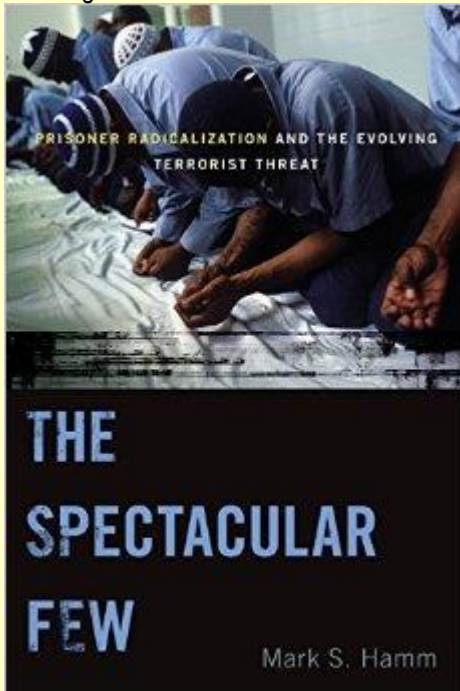
the most lethal of such attacks), the factors that need to be considered in distinguishing domestic from international terrorist attacks, tactical innovations in terrorist attacks, the components of effective counterterrorism (e.g., coercive vs. conciliatory) in deterring terrorism, and what the authors term “taking stock” of lessons learned in their study of terrorism.

With much to commend in this comprehensive volume, especially interesting is the authors’ discussion of tactical innovations in terrorist warfare, such as in aerial hijackings, as well as the attractions of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons to attackers, the difficulty of obtaining and ‘weaponizing’ such weapons and the potential risks to their own safety in attempting to employ such dangerous weapons for those contemplating such catastrophic warfare. It is curious, however, that the most significant and, surely, the most effective tactical innovation in terrorist warfare in the contemporary period is not discussed: the use by terrorist groups such as Hizballah and Hamas of sophisticated rockets and mortars in several wars against Israeli targets, which represents a ‘revolution in military warfare’ by such terrorist groups and making it possible for them to rely on less effective tactics such as suicide bombings, which do not inflict as much widespread panic and anxiety, as well as physical damage on their targets – the primary objectives of terrorist warfare.

Also valuable is the authors’ discussion of the risks and ‘rewards’ to terrorist groups that employ the tactic of suicide terrorism in their warfare, especially their noting that “Probably the greatest disadvantage of suicide terrorism as a strategy is the difficulty of recruiting individuals who are willing to die for the cause.” (p. 194) When they write that “as organizations become more prestigious, they likely get more volunteers for their missions,” (p. 194) perhaps the term to describe such recruiting success is not “prestigious” but effectiveness in their “ideologically or religiously doctrinaire” appeal to persuade such susceptible adherents to become martyrs for their cause. The concluding chapter is especially interesting for its many insights about the state of terrorism and counterterrorism research, including a valuable discussion on future trends in automating terrorism incident databases.

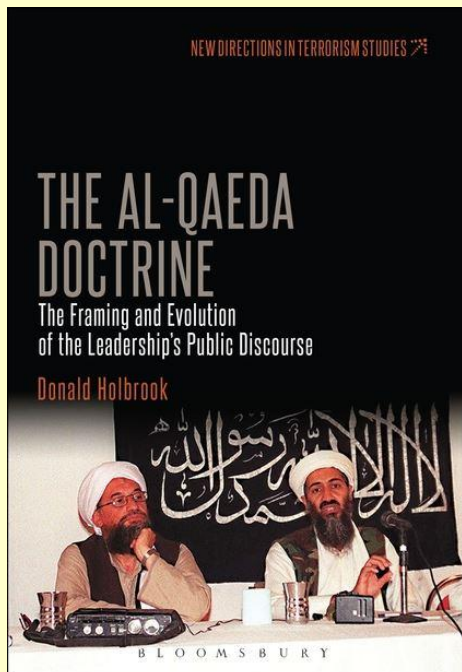
Mark S. Hamm, *The Spectacular Few: Prisoner Radicalization and the Evolving Terrorist Threat* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013), 272 pp., US \$ 85.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 9780814725443.

This volume provides a compelling account (by a former prison warden in Arizona) of the origins, nature and magnitude of Islamic radicalization into violent extremism in the American prison system within the wider context of radicalization into extremism within prisons systems throughout modern history. As Mr. Hamm explains, his book is “about how prisoners use criminal cunning, collective resistance, and nihilism to incite terrorism against Western targets.” (p. 16) What is especially different about radicalization in prison as opposed to other venues, such as universities, mosques or the Internet, is that “Those radicalized in prison tend to play for keeps....[and are] transformative experiences among inmates....[because of] the social marginalization of inmates and their desire for bonding, group identity, and spiritual guidance. These changes make prisons a better place to foment terrorism than any other setting.” (p. 16) The book’s chapters cover topics such as Islam in prison, prisoner radicalization after 9/11, pathways to terrorism, “Al-Qaeda of California,” and a highly important discussion of “Terrorist Kingpins and the De-Radicalization Movement.” The appendix includes a valuable listing and description of terrorism-related activities of inmates in American prisons who were radicalized during their incarceration. Mr. Hamm is currently a professor of criminology at Indiana State University and a Senior Research Fellow at the Terrorism Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.



Donald Holbrook, *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine: The Framing and Evolution of the Leadership's Public Discourse* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2014), 304 pp., US \$ 130.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 9781623563141.

A comprehensive examination, as explained by the author, of “the ideational elements that have been communicated publically by the Al-Qaeda leadership and the ways in which these have evolved over the past two decades,” in order to comprehend the organization’s ideological doctrine and objectives. (p.



xvi) What makes this book innovative is its utilization of manual coding, based on a “bespoke checklist of themes,” of the statements of al Qaida’s leadership, particularly Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, to discern “long-term trends and changes over time” in the organization’s public rhetoric. (pp. 6-7) These themes are arranged according to three broad categories: first, problems, issues, and grievances; second, “envisaged responses and alternatives to these identified problems; and, finally, “communicative efforts to convey these sentiments toward various audiences.” (p. 7) The themes are also outlined in numerous figures and tables that accompany the text. This book was written prior to the emergence of the Islamic State as al Qaida’s primary jihadist challenger, where its forces have overtaken al Qaida’s allies in Syria and Iraq as well as apparently superseding al Qaida’s ideology in attracting Western recruits to wage jihad in those countries (as well as in their own societies). The author’s conclusions, as a result, are out-of-date, but he does make the insightful point that the mass mobilization that bin Laden and Zawahiri had

“envisaged had failed to materialize.” (p. 165) This author’s analysis sheds important light on how al Qaeda’s multifaceted discourse has evolved and affected, as he writes, “a new generation of Al-Qaeda supporters, activists, and sympathizers.” (p. 166)

Jeffrey Kaplan, Helene Loow and Leena Malkki, editors, *Lone Wolf and Autonomous Cell Terrorism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 276 pp., US \$ 145.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1138851221.

This edited volume was initially published as a special volume of the academic journal *Terrorism and Political Violence* (January–March 2014, Vol. 26, No. 1) by Routledge’s ‘parent’ company Taylor & Francis.[1] The contributors to that issue of the journal had initially presented their papers at the conference “Lone Wolf and Autonomous Cell Terrorism” that was held at Uppsala University, Sweden, under the auspices of the university’s Center for Police Research, on September 24-26, 2012. Following an introductory overview by the special issue’s editors, the contributors discuss issues such as counterinsurgency, law enforcement tactics, lone wolf terrorism, profiling lone wolf terrorists, governmental responses to lone wolf terrorists prior to the First World War, case studies of lone wolves such as Carlos Bledsoe, Anders Breivik, loners and autonomous cells in the Netherlands, school shootings as examples of lone wolf violence, lone wolf terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and detecting “linguistic markers” for signs of extremist violence in social media. Although one might argue that some of the lone wolves discussed in the volume may have actually been part of larger “packs of wolves” and were radicalised in social media by more “conventional” terrorist groups, this volume represents an important contribution to advancing our understanding of this important phenomenon.

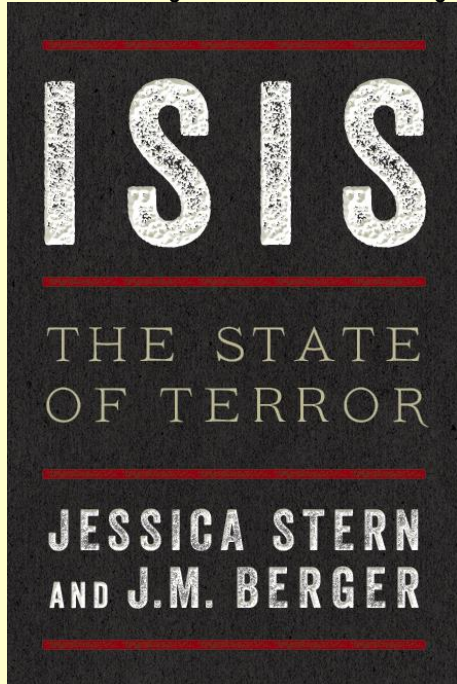
Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (New York, NY: ECCO/Harper Collins, 2015), 416 pp., US \$ 27.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 9780062395542.

Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York, NY: Regan Arts, 2015), 288 pp., US \$ 14.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 9781941393574.

Since their recent publication within a few weeks of each other, these two books have become best sellers on the subject of ISIS, the acronym of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also called Islamic State, or, in its derogatory term, Daesh. With ISIS becoming the world’s most notorious and territorially



successful terrorist group due to its savage, brutal and genocidal warfare tactics—even surpassing al Qaida and its affiliates as the top concern of counterterrorism community members in many countries—readers are eager to understand its origins, leadership, strategy, the nature of its religious appeal to



susceptible Muslims around the world, and future trends in its warfare. Both books accomplish these objectives to some extent, although each is flawed in its own way.

Stern and Berger's *ISIS: The State of Terror* is written in a more clear fashion and is better organized than Weiss and Hassan's *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (which reads like a series of densely written episodes in ISIS's history and current activities). However, the latter book, written by journalists who have spent extensive time in the region, is, nonetheless, better at capturing events and their dynamics on the ground, while the former is more academic, with a reliance on social science concepts to explain the ISIS phenomenon. At the very beginning of Stern and Berger's book they spend too much time discussing ISIS as a 'terrorist' organization, defining terrorism as "an act or threat of violence against noncombatants." And yet, ISIS has demonstrated a military prowess in its combat against the ineffectual Syrian and Iraqi military forces (also due to the presence of former Iraqi Baathist military officers in ISIS's ranks), demonstrating that it is, in fact, a paramilitary guerrilla army and not merely a grouping of 'terrorists.' The

book's successive chapters provide a valuable overview of the origins and evolution of ISIS (although one may disagree with the authors claim that "ISIS was born from the crucible of America's 'war on terrorism,' (p. 177) when it should be seen instead as the product of the internal breakdown of Muslim societies in which it operates); the strong appeal of its religious ideology to recruits from around the world, including Western countries (as well as, unlike al Qaida, appealing to women, who have joined en masse); and its great success in exploiting the Internet to advance its 'message.'

Stern and Berger explain that "Salafism, like all fundamentalism, is a response to the pain of modernity," (p. 242) but they neglect to mention that as religious traditionalists, Salafists are driven by a fear of the opportunities for 'liberation' (especially among the sexes) and the scientific progress provided by modernity. The authors minimize the threat presented by Western returnees from Syria and Iraq, when they write that "Western returnees have been horrified by what they saw in the Islamic State and appear to have little interest in attacking their home countries, at least for now."(p. 201) However, this analysis is called into question by recent cases in Europe and elsewhere that have involved returnees who have proceeded to plot or carry out terrorist attacks in their home countries. Finally, while the authors are correct that an effective campaign against ISIS must blunt its narrative, this reviewer feels that the ISIS narrative is so extremist and genocidal that the only means to counter this group is to substantially degrade its military capability and the territory under its control.

In comparison, the Weiss and Hassan book presents a more realistic portrayal of ISIS, and does not aim to provide sweeping policy recommendations to counter its wide appeal. They conclude that as "a deadly insurgency adept at multiple forms of warfare [it] has proved resilient, adaptable, and resolved to carry on fighting. A legacy of both Saddam and al-Zarqawi, ISIS has excelled at couching its struggle in world-historical terms. It has promised both death and a return to the ancient glories of Islam. Thousands have lined up to join it, and even more have already fallen victim to it." (p. 242) On the same page, the authors also claim that "The army of terror will be with us indefinitely," although anyone who has studied terrorism long enough will recognize the impossibility of such a claim.

About the Reviewer: Dr. Joshua Sinai is the Book Reviews Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'.



EU to set up new counter-terrorism centre

Source: <http://news.yahoo.com/eu-set-counter-terrorism-centre-173643858.html>

Apr 29 – **The EU on Tuesday announced plans for an intelligence sharing centre to help its 28 member states ward off deadly jihadist attacks, but with limited powers that will not amount to the equivalent of a European FBI.**

Unveiling the bloc's security priorities for the next five years, European Commission First Vice President Frans Timmermans told AFP that the counter-terrorism centre would be set up within Europol, the continent's policing agency based in The Hague.

"We're creating the centre to see whether the member states can come together more often and learn to work with each other on the basis of trust," Timmermans said in an interview in his Brussels office before travelling to the French city of Strasbourg to brief the European Parliament on the security plan.

"But I'm not naive. That's not going to happen overnight. What does help a lot is there is a lot of sense of urgency in every single member state that we need to do better in cooperating with the intelligence services to prevent information being lost between one country and the other," he added.

With jihadists launching deadly attacks in the last 12 months in Brussels, Copenhagen and Paris, the European Commission -- the bloc's executive arm -- is trying to promote counter-terrorism cooperation among member states.

Timmermans said many states now see the need to work more closely despite the long-held principle whereby national security services give information to others only on condition they get something equally valuable in return.

Intelligence sharing is not easy, especially when a large member state tries to work with a smaller ally that does not have the same resources and capacities, he said.

Trust factor

Member states also worry if information they give another "is safe in the hands of my friends," he added.

Unlike the US federal government, the Commission can only be a catalyst for cooperation, since responsibility for security remains the fiercely guarded prerogative of the sovereign member states.

In reply to a question, Timmermans said the counter-terrorism centre would not amount to an EU version of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation which won powers of mass surveillance under the Patriot Act introduced in the United States after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

"No, because we don't change the law, we don't change the (EU) treaties, we don't change the division of responsibilities," Timmermans said in his 12th floor office overlooking the Belgian capital.

The counter-terrorism centre features on a roadmap to combat not only terrorism, but organised crime and cybercrime that was debated Tuesday in the European Parliament.

The commission plan calls for also setting up a centre to prevent radicalisation of the young as well as to hold talks with top Internet firms on combatting jihadist propaganda.

On cybercrime, the commission said "the priority is to identify ways to overcome obstacles to criminal investigations online."

Timmermans called for tighter screening of departures and arrivals at the external borders of the Schengen system, which allows passport-free travel for nationals of 22 EU states, plus Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

EU members Britain, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, Romania and Bulgaria are not part of Schengen.

But Timmermans said London has shown it wants "very strong cooperation" on European counter-terrorism efforts.

Schengen members also seek to establish an EU-wide database of airline passenger information, something the United States has also called for.

Such a database, known as passenger name records (PNR), is designed to track militants and disrupt plots.

"We must proceed with PNR," Timmermans said.

Thousands of European jihadists

But the proposal remains blocked in the European Parliament which is demanding guarantees to protect personal information that is collected and shared.



The aim of both measures is to obtain information on the departure of EU nationals suspected of wanting to join jihadist groups fighting in the Middle East and then inform EU countries of their return.

Experts fear that jihadists will return home battle-hardened and well trained in the use of explosives and weapons, posing a direct threat as highlighted in the January Paris attacks which left 17 people dead.

Several thousands European nationals are feared to have joined jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq.

In Lisbon, the interior ministers of France, Morocco, Portugal and Spain said Tuesday in a statement that they have agreed to step up counter-terrorism cooperation, including efforts to prevent their residents or nationals from travelling abroad to wage jihad and monitor their return home.

Zoological terrorism? Israelis up in arms over 'Palestine Gazelle'

Source: <http://972mag.com/zoological-terrorism-israelis-up-in-arms-over-palestine-gazelle/106009/>

A Facebook post livid at the fact that the Palestine Gazelle at the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo is being listed as such has been making some waves on Israeli social media today. The status was posted by Israeli right-wing protofascist Yoav Eliassi, who goes by "The Shadow" (and was involved in violence against leftists protesting the Gaza war last summer in Tel Aviv).



The Shadow posted a photo of the sign at the zoo on his Facebook page and next to it the caption: "At the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo!!!!!" (By the way it says "Israeli Gazelle" in Hebrew and just "Palestinian" in Arabic).

Screenshot from The Shadow's Facebook status (April 27, 2015)



The kicker? "Palestine Gazelle" *is* the animal's scientifically accurate name.

The Jerusalem Biblical Zoo explained as much in a response on his Facebook page:

"That is the gazelle's official scientific name, as accepted by the international community." When we

list the name of an animal we are obligated to list its name as it appears in the scientific literature. These are the accepted norms throughout the world, irrespective of politics. Let's invest our positive energies in preserving Israel's nature. That is where we can really have an impact!"

I don't know what is sadder (or dumber): The fact that any human being would see a problem with this, or that the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo felt the need to respond to this idiocy.

This is truly a low point in Israeli society. An Israeli nationalist so filled with animosity that he is picking a bone with science, with history, spreading not only hate but stupidity. And a national zoo so concerned with the idea that Israelis may begin boycotting it for using the word "Palestine" that it feels the need to respond. (The Facebook page has a bunch of comments calling The Shadow out for being a moron, but also many agreeing with him).

In some ways, this Facebook status perfectly captures the atmosphere in Israel of 2015. Next thing you know The Shadow will organize a protest at the Jerusalem Post offices for once being called the Palestine Post. Or maybe the next government will propose a bill to ban utterance of the word "Palestine."



Counter-Agroterrorism: Understanding and Responding to the Threat

Source: <http://www.cbrneportal.com/counter-agroterrorism-understanding-and-responding-to-the-threat/>

Introduction

The food and agricultural sector is one of the easiest sectors of any nation's economy to disrupt and its disruption could have catastrophic consequences both nationally and regionally. Both developing and developed countries will be impacted by a disease outbreak or agroterrorism attack. For countries with agriculture as a significant portion of their gross domestic product, disruptions anywhere along the food chain could lead to food insecurity and national instability in addition to the direct and indirect economic impacts. Yet in the context of CBRNe planning, preparations for a major biological emergency, whether naturally occurring or intentional, are often given less attention and allocated fewer resources than chemical or radiological events due to the reduced potential for a significant human death toll. However there are steps—some easily accomplished, others more difficult—that can be taken to mitigate the impact of disease outbreaks and agroterrorism activities.

► Read the rest of the article at source's URL.

A lone wolf but very focused

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/04/a-terrorist-acting-on-his-own/>

Lone wolf terrorism not on the rise, but police, military personnel are top targets, report says. Most 'lone wolf' terrorism in the US is perpetrated by "single white males with criminal record," according to recently released report by Indiana State University. "Compared to members of terrorist groups, lone wolves are older, less educated and more prone to mental illness."

The study, as reported by *Fierce Homeland Security*, found 98 cases fitting the description of lone wolf terrorists between 1940 to 2013 – with a majority of the cases occurring after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Post-9/11 terrorists acting on their own tend to have a greater arsenal of weaponry, involving not only guns, but bombs, airplanes, biological weapons, knives and construction equipment. Before 9/11, they mainly used guns and bombs. Another difference is that post 9/11 lone terrorists are targeting more law enforcement and military

personnel. "Twelve law enforcement officers were killed or wounded by lone wolf terrorists in the 60 years preceding 9/11," the study found. "This figure doubled in the first 13 years following 9/11 and rose to 24."

All such attacks against law enforcement after 9/11, with one exception, were "motivated by anti-government and white supremacy anger," over President Obama's election.

Among many other elements, the report discussed the different motivators and reasons for radicalization and found that post 9/11 these terrorists get radicalized by informal online social networks, civilian workplace and mass media. They also combine personal grievances with political ones. "The end result of radicalization is the same, however," the report continued. "For both lone wolves and organized terrorists, violence is considered the only alternative to an unjust system."

27

Hizbullah airstrip revealed

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/04/hizbullah-airstrip-revealed/>

Google Earth photos reveal an airstrip in the northern Bekaa Valley for Hizbullah UAVs – unmanned aerial vehicles. The airstrip consists of a single unpaved strip 670 m long and 20 m wide, the short length of the runway suggesting the facility is not intended for weapons smuggling, as it is too short for nearly all transport aircraft used by Syria or Iran. The plausible explanation is that the runway was built for Iranian-made UAVs, including the Ababil-3, employed over Syria by forces allied to the Syrian regime, and possibly the newer and larger Shahed-129.





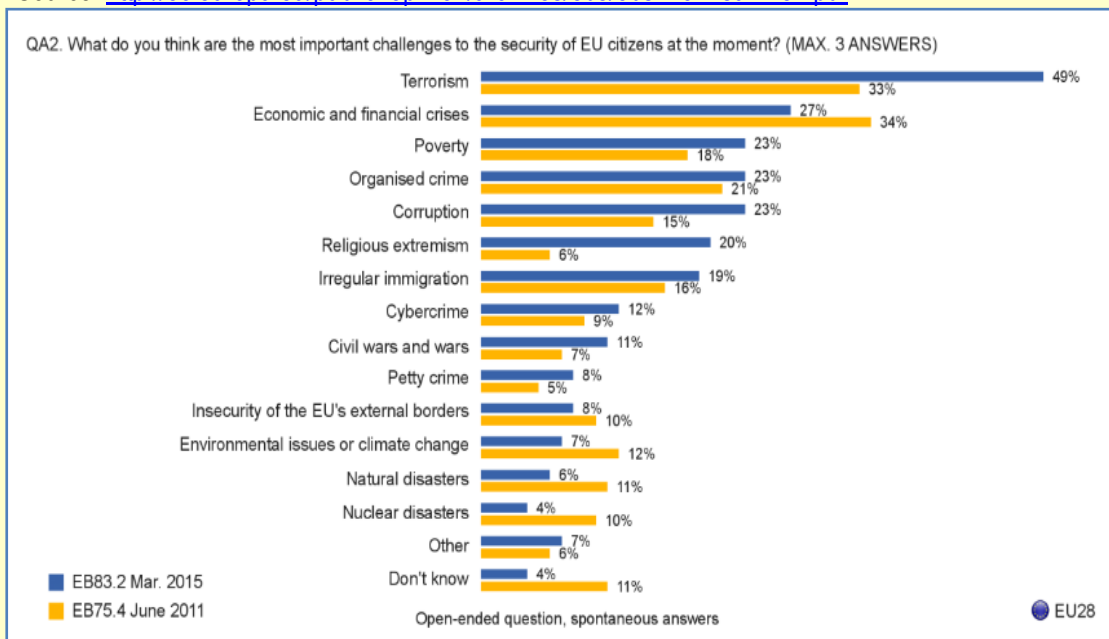
Hizbullah sources have confirmed to *IHS Jane's* that the organization is using UAVs to support operations against rebel forces in Syria, particularly over the mountainous region on Lebanon's eastern border. Hizbullah has operated UAVs from Lebanese airspace since at least November 2004, when it dispatched one that it identified as a Mirsad-1 for a brief reconnaissance mission over northern Israel. It then attempted to fly at least three UAVs into Israel during the July-August 2006 war.

Hizbullah said it was responsible for the UAV that was shot down over southern Israel on 6 October 2012. It said it used an Iranian-made aircraft for the incursion. The Saudi *Al-Watan* newspaper claimed in March 2014 that Hizbullah had built a "military airport" for its UAVs in the Bekaa Valley. The site, which is guarded by a checkpoint and swing gate, resembles other Hizbullah facilities scattered around the Bekaa Valley.

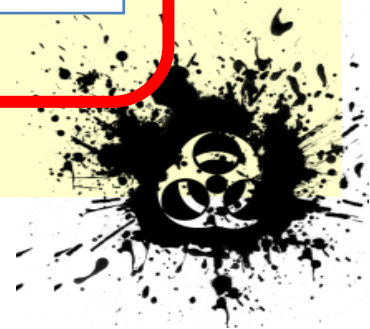
Special Eurobarometer 432

EUROPEANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECURITY

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_432_sum_en.pdf



► Read the full survey at source's URL.



BMC develops protocol for preserving forensic evidence after a terrorist attack

Source: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-04-bmc-protocol-forensic-evidence-terrorist.html>

Boston Medical Center (BMC) pathologists have developed a set of protocols for processing and preserving forensic evidence, such as shrapnel, bullets and other projectiles, in surgical specimens (i.e. amputated limbs, injured organs, etc.) after a terrorist attack based on lessons learned



from the Boston Marathon bombing. Their findings are published online in advance of print in the Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.

As a result of the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013, three people were killed and 264 others were injured - some suffering from injuries so severe that they required amputations. Many of the specimens contained forensic evidence, but without any clear guidelines, pathology departments developed ad hoc protocols. While each institution was able to appropriately collect and preserve the necessary specimens, it was obvious that a need existed to develop a set of guidelines and standard operating protocols for preserving forensic evidence.

In the aftermath, a team of BMC pathologists met with Boston-area pathology departments, representatives from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Massachusetts Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to develop a set of predetermined guidelines to be used in times of crisis.

"Preservation of evidence was key in those first few hours following the Boston Marathon bombing because most of the amputations were being processed while the suspects were at large," said Cathryn J. Byrne-Dugan, MD, MPH, chief resident of the department of pathology and laboratory medicine at BMC and first author of the report. **"In times of chaos, if there is no predetermined, planned**

approach, the overall efficiency lags and missteps are inevitable. These guidelines will streamline how evidence is collected in a medical setting, reducing the risk of human error, and provide critical information to the law enforcement community that may shed light on the attack itself, or those responsible for it."

As patients with serious injuries begin to arrive at a hospital, the protocol recommends identifying one pathology assistant and/or resident and one attending physician to act as a team to handle all of the surgical specimens associated with the incident and be the point-of-contact for law enforcement. Once

a specimen associated with the incident is identified, the team should carefully check the patient identifiers. If foreign bodies arrive separately from the surgical specimens, they should remain untouched in their sealed surgical container.

During the gross examination phase, the guidelines recommend that pathologists obtain labeled photographs and x-rays of the specimen. All loose objects, including clothing and make-shift tourniquets, should be placed in a container for the FBI and labeled with the patient's name. If there is any indication for DNA analysis, a frozen tissue sample may be stored. All forensic evidence should be described, measured, weighed, photographed, and then locked in a secure area. FBI or police can pick up the collected evidence on an as-needed basis. Any surgical specimens associated with a deceased patient should be transferred to the medical examiner's office.

"This protocol was validated by the nation's top forensic experts and provides simple, concrete steps that will prove extremely beneficial in a crisis situation where time, staff and resources may be stretched thin," said Daniel Remick, MD, chief of the department of pathology at BMC and chairman of pathology and laboratory medicine at the Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) who served as senior author of the report.



Elite International Squads Compete in 'Counter Terror Olympics'

Source: <http://www.hstoday.us/single-article/elite-international-squads-compete-in-counter-terror-olympics/cdbef067fcc70015d48f4d75d79b379c.html>

Apr 30 – In February, a highly sophisticated and technically produced video, "Healing of the Believers' Chest," was released by the Islamic State (ISIS) through social media sites showing Jordanian pilot Mu'ath Al Kassasbeh – who'd been shot down and captured by ISIS during coalition airstrikes -- being burned alive while trapped inside a small metal cage. Later that month, ISIS announced it was providing screenings of the 5-minute video, "Muslim Rejoicing over the Jordanian Pilot's Punishment," in Iraq's Ninawa province.

Ever since the kidnapping and brutal execution of Al Kassasbeh, the Hashemite Kingdom has assumed a much higher-profile role in the war

counterterrorism squads from several countries went to Jordan's capital, Amman, to participate in what organizers call "The Olympics of Counter Terrorism." **The contest was started in 2009** when the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) opened just outside Amman. The center is run by Jordanian Armed Forces which hosts and funds the Warrior Competition.

The goal of the competition is to build esprit de corps among special operations and police forces from around the world as they partner to fight terrorism. Other aims of the competition are to facilitate sharing of best practices, lessons learned, technology and hardware, and to strengthen international cooperation.

This year, 35 counterterrorism squads from 18 countries,

including fellow members of the military coalitions fighting rebels in Yemen and Islamic State jihadists elsewhere in the Middle East, arrived in Jordan to participate in the 7th annual Warrior competition which took place last week, from April 19 - 23, at a cost of \$200 million.

Jordanian Col. Khaled Abu Hammad, the competition's spokesperson, told *Homeland Security Today* the competition showcases participants' resilience, patience, teamwork and martial arts skills, adding that that this year's contest featured more teams with greater variety, including an all-female team competing for the first time from France's National Gendarmerie Intervention Group, a special operations unit of the French Armed Forces.

Captain Ahmad Wasif, the head of the Palestinian team participating in the competition, said fighting terrorism is a top priority for every country at the moment, describing participating in the competition as a "great opportunity."

Teams from the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia,



WARRIOR COMPETITION 2015		
Champion		Counter Terrorism - Team (1)
2nd		Assault Hawk Commando Unit of the PAPF
3rd		Royal Guards
4th		Lebanese Armed Forces - Team (2)
5th		Lingnan Special Operation Unit of the PAPF Guangdong Corps
6th		Counter Terrorism - Team (2)
7th		Black Panthers
8th		Canadian Special Operations Regiment
9th		National Security Forces - Palestine 101
10th		Lebanese Armed Forces - Team (1)

against regional jihadi terrorism -- in particular against the Islamic State.

With that as the backdrop, former US special operations members working at King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center created the Annual Warrior Competition in which elite



Afghanistan, Bahrain and China also took part in 10 events, which included storming buildings and evacuating airplanes in a series of exercises with names like Top Gun, Urban Assault, Hostage Rescue, Gun Gauntlet, Desert Stress Shoot, Airbus Seizure, Cross Country Stress Shoot and the King's Challenge, the latter of which included a cross-country run and four shooting ranges where the participants were tested on their ability to use pistols, shotguns, sniper and assault rifles.

The events were aimed to test the skills, fitness and cohesion of each team. Over the four days of the intense competition, the teams raided buildings, stormed hijacked jets, rescued hostages and shot targets with live ammunition, all while being scored for speed and accuracy.

As part of a "shock and awe" building method of entry drill, participants mounted a mechanical breach to engage steel targets inside the building. The Ironman Stress Shoot was a pistol and rifle event in which participants had to make it through a maze and engage enemy targets. The King's Challenge involved engaging targets as part of a 5-stage sequential event that included running, a pistol, rifle and sniper stage at the King's pistol stage. The competition opened with a drill by a Jordanian special forces unit which rescued mock-hostages from a passenger plane following one of the hostages having been executed, requiring a hasty attack. The team rappelled from a helicopter into a five-story

building to hunt down the terrorists. Once the assault forces were inside the aircraft, they conducted a close quarter battle with the terrorists while at the same time evacuating the hostages from the emergency exits.

The special "anti-terror" squad representing the United States gave their all in a cross country shooting exercise in Amman on April 22. The team jumped over walls and climbed nets, with one member climbing a rope to ring a bell fixed at the top of the structure. After navigating wires while crawling on the ground, the team then rushed to a shooting range where they fired at targets using pistols and HK 416 assault rifles.

A team comprising members of Jordan's Hamzah Bin Abdul Mutalab Brigade, the "Royal Guards," won first place in the sharp shooting contest. The Royal Guards team was competing against a US Marine Corps team in the final stage of the contest.

A new vehicle also was tested at the event -- the AL-JAWAD. This is an armored internal security vehicle comprising an armored body based on a heavy duty Ford F-550 chassis. The vehicle has high levels of ballistic and fragmentation protection, and its large doors enable quick deployment and large bullet-proof glazed areas offer wide fields of vision for the commander and crew. It was designed by the King Abdullah Development & Design Bureau, and manufactured by the Jordan Light Vehicle Company.

Who Protects the Skies Over the Capitol?

Source: <http://www.nationaljournal.com/congress/who-protects-the-skies-over-the-capitol-20150428>

April 28, 2015 A phalanx of Washington's top security officials will explain to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Wednesday just how a gyrocopter was able to land next to the Capitol—and who is ultimately in charge of protecting congressional airspace. The agency directors will be six deep—the Secret Service and the Federal Aviation Administration heads, the Park Police and the Capitol Police chiefs, the House Sergeant at Arms, and the commander of NORAD. The witness list alone illustrates the wide and complicated web of jurisdiction governing the skies over the Capitol.

Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz says he wants to get to the bottom of how exactly 61-

year-old Doug Hughes was able to fly from Gettysburg, Pa., and through restricted airspace to land on the Capitol's west front lawn—and who knew what and by when. Answering those questions will require untangling the web of agencies charged with policing, monitoring, and defending that small slice of restricted airspace.

The growing use of small, manned planes and unmanned aircraft systems concerns the committee, as do the agencies' preventative measures.

"[These] are big, large agencies, but when you have minutes to respond, communication is key," Chaffetz told *National Journal*.



"After 9/11, we better darn well have our act together."

The North American Aerospace Defense Command is in charge of preventing air attacks against the United States and Canada, which it does alongside law enforcement and Homeland Security. NORAD uses command centers to track planes in tandem with Federal Aviation Administration officials, Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a NORAD spokesman, told *National Journal*. And it can defend the country when a plane comes in with the "intent to attack the nation," Davis said.

the daily flow of planes and passengers; and ensures aircraft arrive safely at their destination, according to an emailed agency statement.

Then there's the law enforcement agency charged with policing the congressional campus every day. And in the days following the gyrocopter incident, Capitol Police Chief Kim Dine met with multiple lawmakers who oversee the department to answer their questions on just what happened April 15.

Typically, when an aircraft comes within the restricted airspace around the building, the



But when it comes to distinguishing a gyrocopter or a drone from a bird or a cloud or terrain, the difficulty increases. "We've been saying for some time detecting and tracking low, slow air threats is a technical and operational challenge," Davis said.

Finding a solution is a multi-player deal, and "the key is that we all work together and share information and respond together," Davis said. And this involves combining the prowess of the other agencies sitting at the witness table of Wednesday's committee hearing.

The Department of Homeland Security has a science and technology directorate that works with the public and private sector to help with security issues stemming from the rise of commercial unmanned aerial systems, according to a DHS spokeswoman.

The FAA is another piece of that puzzle, working closely with the Department of Defense and DHS as support for aviation-security missions. But the FAA also operates the nation's air-traffic-control system; manages

Capitol Police Board—made up of the House and Senate Sergeant at Arms and the Architect of the Capitol—is notified. The board will monitor the situation as it unfolds, receive updates from the Capitol Police Command Center, and be available if campus decisions need to be made or orders need to be given to the Capitol Police.

That's a challenge, said Rep. Candice Miller, who chairs the House Administration Committee charged with overseeing the chamber's security. "It's a very difficult wiring diagram because I think whoever is the chief is not quite sure who they report to," Miller told *National Journal*.

The myriad agencies involved—and their bureaucracy—further complicate an already complex decision when an intruder flies through restricted airspace. "You have 32 different agencies with some degree of law enforcement responsibly in the Capitol region," Chaffetz said. "The question



about airspace is a complicated one. That's why we have to have so many people testify."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: A more simple answer to title's question: "None!" or "God!"

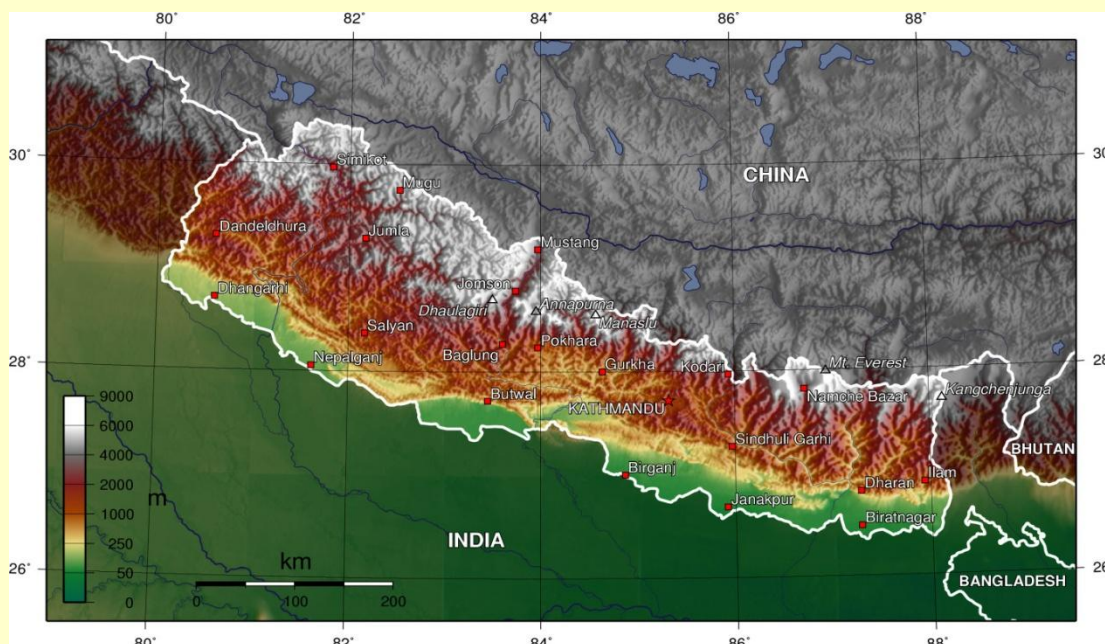


Will Maoists Arise Out Of Nepal's Ruins?

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/04/will-maoists-arise-out-of-nepals-ruins.html>

The devastating earthquake that hit Nepal, killing over 5,000 people – that we know of at this moment – and injuring many more, has many wondering: why hasn't the Nepalese government been much help? The answer is that Nepal has barely had a government, for these many years: the country has been mired in political and ethnic feuds that have made any thought of having a functional government next to impossible.

majority in parliament but which did briefly enter into a coalition government with the real Maoists, the United Communist Party(Maoist) – a government that quickly fell apart. The latter are pro-“Gang of Four” Maoists, who are currently divided into two separate parties but which, back in the day, led an armed insurgency against the elected government that ended in a truce and the absorption of the Maoist militia into the regular armed forces. To further complicate matters, there are



Nepal in modern times has been engaged in a delicate balancing act, avoiding dominance or even outright absorption by its two big neighbors: India and China. The former has already gobbled up Sikkim, a formerly independent Himalayan kingdom even smaller than Nepal, and the Indian imperialists have been battering at the gates for quite some time. The Nepalese Congress Party, which won the most seats in the last parliamentary elections (2013), has functioned as an extension of its sister party in India, and has generally advanced Indian interests. China, on the other hand, has its own agents in the pro-China United Marxist-Leninists (Communist Party of Nepal – UML), which has never achieved a

several minority ethnic groups, each with their own parties, who demand a federalist structure rather than the traditional super-centralist model in which all authority is monopolized by Katmandu, the capital. Yet more complications arise with the presence of the royalist remnants: supporters of the exiled and now largely deceased members of the former royal family. The royalists were once the single most powerful independent political force in the country, opposing both de facto annexation by India and domination by China. However, that ended in spectacular fashion in the summer of 2001, when the Crown Prince went on a rampage, killing the



King, the Queen, several brothers and sisters, as well as some royal cousins.

That signal event threw the country into chaos: the new King declared martial law, outlawed all political parties, and sparked a Maoist insurgency that killed many thousands and paralyzed the country. Nepal hasn't been the same since. The King was eventually deposed, and a republic proclaimed: but a political deadlock between the pro-Indian, pro-Chinese, and Maoist factions has made the creation of a constitutional structure impossible.

Caught in the crosshairs of several big-power regional conflicts – India vs. China, India vs. Pakistan, the US vs. China, the Taliban vs. India and the US – Nepal has managed to maintain its independence against great odds. Yet internal centrifugal forces constantly threaten to tear it apart and leave it at the mercy of local predators, mainly the Indians – who would like nothing better than to make the country into a province of Greater India, especially now that Hindu nationalist fanatics are in power in New Delhi.

The only real opposition to this trend has been the Maoists, who worship at the altar of the deposed “Gang of Four,” and angrily denounce the Chinese “revisionists” and their local amen corner, the UML, as well as the Indian imperialists. The Maoists actually came to power in 2008, winning the most votes in the parliamentary elections, but the army stepped in and they left the government in a huff. Since that time they have constantly threatened to re-ignite their “people’s war.”

With Nepal now in ruins, literally as well as figuratively, the Maoists have an open road to stage a major comeback. Days before the earthquake struck, they staged a nationwide strike that brought businesses and other services to a halt. Although the Maoist action was called off after three days, it looks to me that this could be a foreshadowing of things to come as the Congress-led government continues to display its utter inability to deal with the disaster that has paralyzed the nation.

With the implosion of the Russian version of communism, and the apparent conversion of their Chinese archrivals into more-capitalist-than-even-Wall Street “revisionists” – as the Nepalese Maoists would put it – the world has looked at Marxism-Leninism pretty much the same way it views phrenology: as an ideological dead end that no one should take seriously.

This is flat out wrong. The Maoist version of Leninism continues to inspire millions of people in South Asia, one of the world’s poorest regions: this is true not only in Nepal, but also in India, particularly in the eastern provinces. There exists a whole range of mass-based Indian Marxist parties, some of which have won control of eastern states, and the long-running Naxalite guerrilla insurgency has continued to preoccupy the increasingly repressive Indian central government, which has pulled out all the stops to crush it.

The mountain fastness of Nepal is a veritable fortress of unreconstructed Maoism, where millions of activists fanatically devoted to the Little Red Book are quite ready to take up arms on behalf of their ideology. If and when they do, one can expect a response from New Delhi, which may well be “invited” in by the Nepal Congress government, at least for the duration of the “emergency.”

Will Nepal meet the same fate as its erstwhile neighbors Bhutan and Sikkim? While China is unlikely to be happy with this outcome, if it happens Beijing may well go along with it at Washington’s behest. The US, which has been courting the new Hindu nationalist regime, won’t stand in India’s way: while it may be “aggression” for the Russians to take Crimea – a province of the Kremlin since the days of Catherine the Great – an invasion by India of a kingdom that has been independent for thousands of years is more than likely to be labeled a “humanitarian intervention” by Washington and its media echo chamber.

After quake, terrorists may enter India via Indo-Nepal border

Source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/nepal-earthquake-indo-nepal-border-terrorists-ib/1/432869.html>

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) in its latest communique has sent an alert to Uttar Pradesh to intensify vigil at the border in Maharajganj,

Siddharthnagar, Balrampur, Shravasti, Bahraich, Lakhimpur Kheri and Pilibhit in the state.



"It has become impossible for the forces to keep an eye on every person entering India from Nepal after the devastating earthquake in that country.

of the situation. He said that while it was their duty to ensure that the people in the camps get food and medicines, security was still their top priority. "We cannot afford to keep our eyes



The Uttar Pradesh government has opened several camps along the border to provide relief to the affected people of Nepal. In this situation it is our duty to ensure a hassle-free passage these people. But terrorists have got an opportunity to enter India in the guise of earthquake victims. The Intelligence Bureau has said that members of the anti-India forces may have entered India," a senior intelligence officer said.

Inspector General of Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) Ram Kumar said, "We are keeping close vigil along the Indo-Nepal border. Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), local police, ATS and other agencies have been working to prevent any infiltration."

He admitted that the terrorists could also enter India in the guise of relief workers. Meanwhile, Nazir Khan, IG of SSB visited Sonauli border in Maharajganj district on Tuesday and took stock

away from those who are entering India through Nepal border," he said.

SSB Director General Banshi Dhar Sharma also visited Nautanwa area in Maharajganj to take stock of the situation.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh government has brought over 6,000 people in 106 buses from Nepal and kept them at several relief camps. Two-hundred buses have been sent to Kathmandu to bring whosoever was rendered homeless in the earthquake. Over a dozen camps have also been set up along the border. With the attention now on sending relief through road, an extra vigil on the Indo-Nepal border is required as thousands of people are expected to arrive in India. The officials said that a convoy of 80 buses has already moved through road. The Indian government want to stop sending relief by air and use the road route.

War on terrorism: What Texas is doing to keep our nation safe

Source: <http://www.foxsanantonio.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/war-terrorism-texas-doing-keep-our-nation-safe-12375.shtml#.VUMsF5OTLz4>

Apr 29 – Inside a highly protected Department of Justice building, which spans 90,000 square feet on Fort Bliss in El Paso, dozens of law enforcement agencies work together--around the clock--to thwart criminal activity in Texas, including homegrown terrorism.

It's called the El Paso Intelligence Center or EPIC.

Interagency partners like the Drug Enforcement Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Texas Department of Public



Safety collectively joined forces at EPIC to fill intelligence gaps on illegal activities within the Western Hemisphere.

There's a particular emphasis on Mexico and the Southwest border with illegal drugs, weapons trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering and terrorism.

Fox San Antonio's Ryan Wolf traveled to EPIC and was the first television news anchor to be granted an onsite interview with its 11th director named Timothy Jennings.

"How we keep San Antonio safe and the rest of the country safe is ensuring our information that we develop and the info we put together is timely, accurate and addresses the needs of law enforcement," Jennings said.

EPIC averages 200,000 queries every year into its 24-hour watch operation center. Jennings said it's just one area of the center that provided tactical, real-time intel to law enforcement on the ground.

"By making one call instead of having to call 10 different entities for some of the data that we have here...heads of agencies, the sheriff of Bexar County, can address resources and manpower to address criminal activity in his or her area," he added.

Because the facility is off limits to the general public for national security concerns, Jennings could not allow Fox San Antonio to record what goes on behind the scenes or go into specifics on current cases.

He said intelligence gathering at EPIC is always evolving to stay one step ahead of criminals, including terrorists.

"From federal, state, local, tribal law enforcement partners, we are looking at any information and intelligence we can put together."

U.S. Rep. Will Hurd, who represents Texas's 23rd district, believes EPIC is helping law enforcement stay a step ahead of potential threats from people looking to do harm in San Antonio.

"When you look at the number of military bases, when you look at the cyber-security infrastructure here in San Antonio, whether it's the 24th and 25th Air Force, NSA Texas, there are a lot of potential targets," the congressman said.



Several people with ties to our area were linked by authorities to terrorist activity this year alone.

The FBI spoke out after a former cab driver and Somali citizen was sentenced to 15 years in prison for aiding a terrorist organization overseas.

"I think what could be frightening to most people is that this individual was in the United States legally, was gainfully employed lived in San Antonio, interacted with citizens every day, yet he still felt it in his heart that he needed to support terrorism overseas," Agent Christopher Combs told Fox San Antonio back in March.

Rep. Hurd said homegrown terrorism is a real threat for Texas, especially with our close proximity to the border. "This is what is dangerous, because this could pop out from anywhere," he said.

The San Antonio native believes terror groups like ISIS are using the Internet in unprecedented ways to recruit westerners to do harm.

"You may have some young folks or some people who are living here in the United States that get inspired and see that message and it resonates with them and you can see that filter in our communities," Hurd explained.

But this former CIA undercover agent also knows there's a tremendous amount of intelligence resource gathering going on behind the scenes at places like EPIC to try and keep local law enforcement one step ahead.

"The folks tasked with protecting us are making sure they are sharing everything they possibly can in order to make sure we're protected," he said.

The role EPIC plays is only growing.

Jennings said the 40-year-old national level intelligence center will be expanded soon by another 20,000 square feet.

Rep. Hurd said he wasn't aware of any credible or specific threats of terrorism in our area. He felt law enforcement could win the high stakes game of cat and mouse with EPIC's timely analysis and dissemination of intelligence threats.





Jihad turns global

Source: http://in.rbth.com/world/2015/04/23/jihad_turns_global_42775.html



Apr 23 – **International terrorism has become one of the most dangerous threats to mankind and it has turned global. This is the considered opinion of Colonel-General Igor Sergun, Director of GRU, the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Gen. Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.** Speaking in mid-April at the IV Conference on Security in the Defense Ministry in Moscow, Sergun provided a detailed analysis of the problem. Since he is not among the public figures frequently cited in the media, RIR decided to offer its readers the most complete summary of the key theses of the general.

According to the chief of the Russian military intelligence, there is a steady trend towards globalization of activities of extremist organizations. This includes a wide geographic spread, strengthening of the interaction between previously disparate groups, as well as swift adaptation to situational changes.

Radical Islamists

Among international terrorist organizations, the role of radical Islamists is increasing.

“Their leaders are developing collaboration and seek to create zones of instability, which include not only countries, but entire regions,” Sergun said. ‘Al-Qaeda’ remains one of the most powerful terrorist organizations, although in current conditions it has become to a greater extent “the banner of the war against infidels” and “related regional groups operate almost independently”.

‘Islamic State’ has assumed the lead role

Speaking about the genesis of the problem, Sergun said, “It is no secret that it was at the instigation of Western ‘partners’ that since the 1980s, Islamic extremism was rapidly gaining momentum. It is the legacy of the United States and other NATO member states, as well as of some countries in the Middle East and Central Asia.”

To counter the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, there was heavy arming of scattered groups of Mujahideen who “subsequently merged into major terrorist groups and movements,” he said.

Following the same pattern, “with financial and military assistance from Washington and its allies to eliminate the regime in Syria, unwanted by the West, the ‘Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant’ and ‘Jabhat al-Nusra’ were created. Military intervention in Libya by the Alliance entailed similar results.

The GRU chief said “the terrorists have declared the establishment of an ‘Islamic caliphate’ on occupied territories and started to set up their own ‘public institutions’, including financial and judicial systems. Sustainable centralized control over the armed groups has been organized,” he said.

The situation in Africa

At the same time, the strengthening of ISIS has seriously destabilized the situation in Africa.

“ISIS provides substantial military and financial assistance to the local extremists, sends reinforcements to the Syrian and Iraqi terrorists.”

According to Sergun, groups receiving such support are, ‘Ansar al-Sharia’, operating in North Africa, and ‘Boko Haram,’ in the west of the continent, while the greatest threat to the stability of East Africa is the Somali terrorist organization ‘Al-Shabab al-Mujahedeen,’ responsible for a number of high-profile actions.

Asia

Equally alarming is the situation that is developing in the Middle East and Central Asia. According to the general, extremist organizations such as the ‘Taliban’, ‘Hizb-ut-Tahrir’ and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan maintain high combat potential.

“Currently, in Afghanistan alone, about 50 thousand militants are fighting. Afghan and Pakistani territories host a network of



terrorist training camps, including for suicide bombers.”

In addition, according to Sergun, active dissemination of radical Islamist ideas “has a negative impact on the development of the situation in Southeast Asia. In particular, unpredictable consequences could be caused by the extremist organization, ‘Jamaa Islamiya’, whose main goal is the creation of a single Islamic theocratic state within the borders of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Muslim provinces of Thailand and the Philippines,” Sergun said.

Europe and America

In recent years, the level of terrorist threat in Europe has increased. This is primarily due to the insurgents returning from the “hot spots” ready to use the gained experience at home. “More than 600 jihadists returned in the past four years to Germany alone,” Sergun said.

Finally, according to Sergun, the extremists’ influence has spread to include some South American regions.

“The Tri-border Area, located along the junction of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, is considered a springboard by the extremists,” the general said.

Funding

Referring to the economic base of terrorism, Sergun noted that “reliable cash-flow channels include various non-governmental organizations and foundations. For example, in the states of the Arabian Peninsula there are about 200 such organisations.”

In addition, “a major source of income is control over drugs production and trafficking. This activity brings the Islamists of the Middle East and Central Asia up to US \$500 million a year.” In general, he said, under the slogan of struggle for ‘pure Islam’, international terrorism is becoming a form of transnational crime. “In fact, it has become a lucrative business with capital turnover running into billions, with drug trafficking, hostage-taking, smuggling weapons and precious metals,” said the head of the GRU.

In search of additional sources of funding, jihadists purposefully develop links with nationalist organizations, pirates and separatists.

Thus, according to the head of Russian military intelligence, “we should expect that, in the short term, the level of terrorist threats in the world will remain high. Scaling up of extremist groups, among others at the instigation of the United States and its allies, especially in the Middle East and Central Asia, poses a real threat of terrorism export in Europe, the republics of the CIS and the Asia-Pacific region.”



It may be time to retire the word ‘terrorism,’ here’s why

Source: <http://www.albawaba.com/editorchoice/it-may-be-time-retire-word-%E2%80%99terrorism%E2%80%99-here%E2%80%99s-why-689172>

terrorism or evil, argues political analyst James M. Dorsey.

Recent documents uncovered by German magazine Der Spiegel trace the rise of the Islamic State to a network of former Iraqi intelligence officers loyal to toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. In 2003 they were deprived of their jobs with no future prospects when then US administrator of Iraq Paul Bremer disbanded the Baathist military and security forces. They were aided by Syrian military officers and officials who saw the



group as a buffer against a feared US attempt to topple President Bashar al-Assad. The history of the rise of the Islamic State as an extreme Sunni Muslim rejection of discrimination by a Shiite majority in Iraq and repressive dominance by an Alawite minority in Syria revives the notion of “one man’s freedom fighter is another’s terrorist”. That notion is similarly embedded in the policies of both Western nations and conservative Arab regimes concerned about their survival. They not only forged cooperation with Turkey’s Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and Syria’s Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) but also Gulf support for the jihadist Syrian rebel group Jabhat al Nusra that is locked in battle with Islamic State and in Western distinctions between good and bad foreign fighters.

Good and bad fighters

‘Bad foreign fighters’, angry at the human and political cost of combatting political violence with a military rather than a predominantly political campaign, are the thousands who have joined the ranks of Islamic State; ‘good

foreign fighters’ are those who have gone to Syria to fight with the Kurds against the jihadists, particularly during last year’s battle for the besieged Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani.

The notion is also evident in the US National Intelligence’s most recent report to Congress that for the first time in years no longer includes Iran or the Tehran-backed Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah as a terrorist threat to US interests.

The list of internationally recognised political leaders who can trace their roots to political violence and terrorism is long. Yet, they and their predecessors disavowed what is termed political violence once they achieved their goals. The list includes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose ideological roots like those of former Israeli leaders Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, lie in the use of political violence and terrorism in pre-state Palestine without which the State of Israel most likely would not have been established. Both Begin and Shamir were wanted commanders of Irgun, a group denounced as terrorist by the British Mandate authorities.

Impact of jihadist terrorism in the United States and Western Europe: a comparative analysis (2001-2013)

Source: <http://www.ugr.es/~jjordan/Terrorismo%20yihadista%20en%20Europa%20y%20Estados%20Unidos.pdf>

Incidencia del terrorismo de inspiración yihadista en Estados Unidos y Europa Occidental: un análisis comparado

Impact of jihadist terrorism in the United States and Western Europe: a comparative analysis

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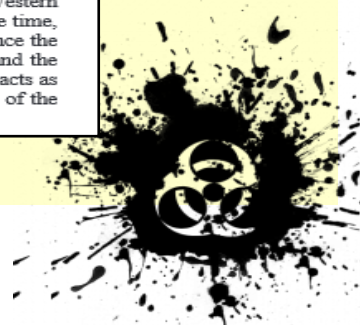
Resumen

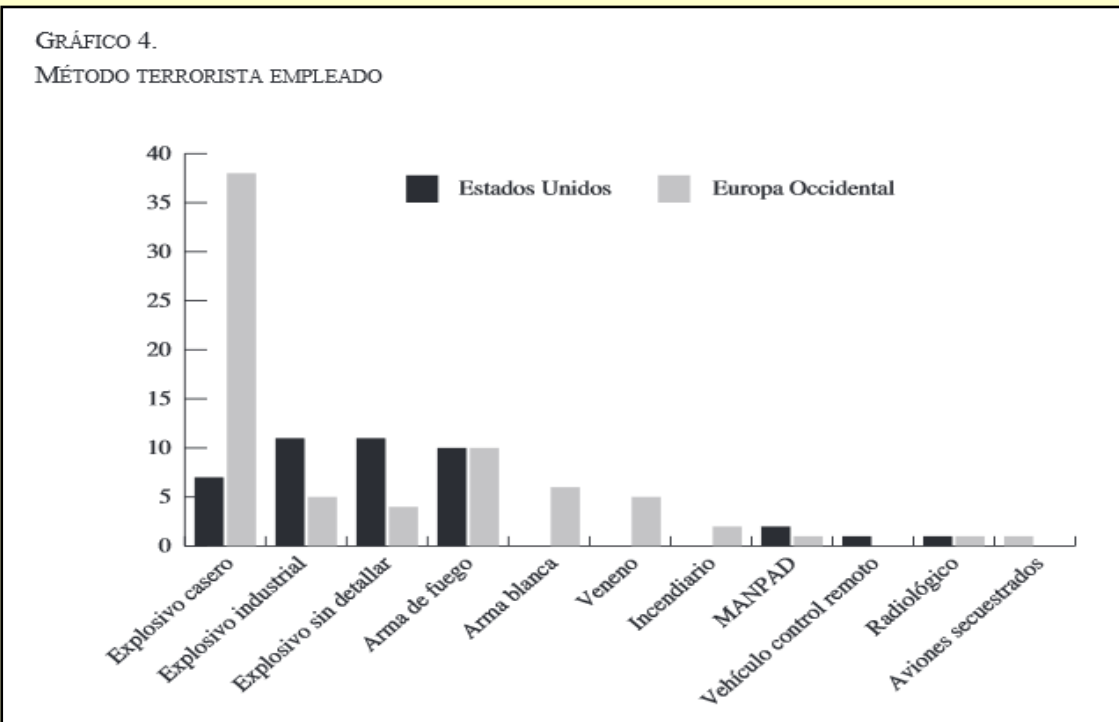
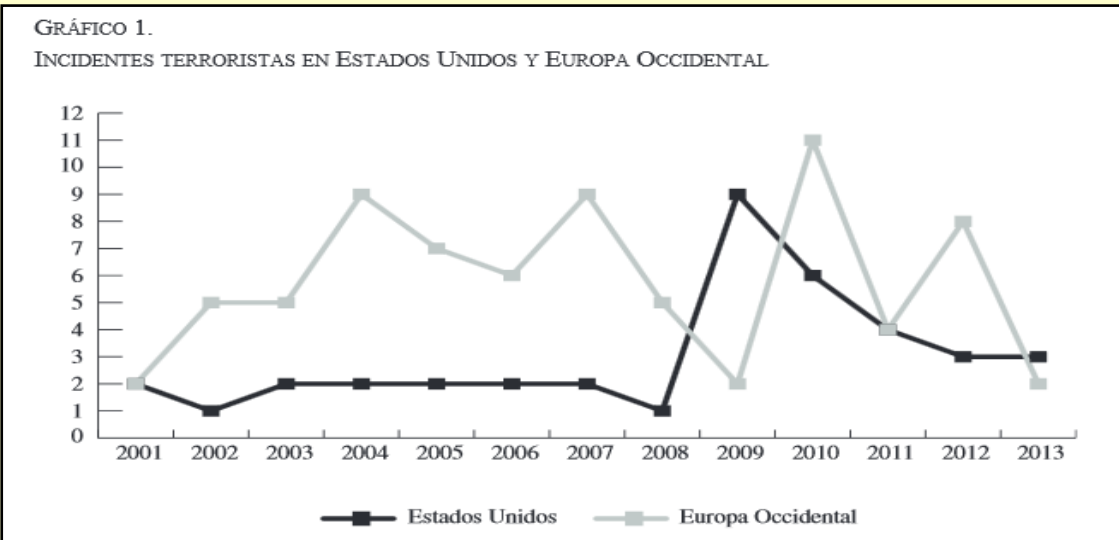
Este artículo ofrece un análisis descriptivo comparado sobre la incidencia del terrorismo de inspiración yihadista en Estados Unidos y Europa Occidental, basándose en una muestra de 114 incidentes comprendidos entre el 11 de septiembre de 2001 y el 31 de diciembre de 2013. Por otro lado, el artículo se pregunta por los motivos que explican el descenso de la letalidad de las acciones terroristas en los territorios norteamericano y europeo desde los atentados de Londres en julio de 2005. Ello se explica por la respuesta estatal antiterrorista y por el cambio en la agenda política de algunos grupos terroristas. Al mismo tiempo, otro factor clave —que actúa como variable interviniente— es la fortaleza o debilidad de las grandes organizaciones terroristas que articulan parte de la militancia yihadista en Estados Unidos y Europa Occidental.

Palabras clave: violencia política, terrorismo, radicalismo islamista, Estados Unidos, Europa Occidental.

Abstract

This article provides a descriptive comparative study on jihadist terrorism in United States and Western Europe on a sample of 114 incidents between 11 September 2001 and December 2013. At the same time, the article inquires about the decreasing lethality of terrorist actions in Europe and U.S. territory since the London bombings in July 2005. This is explained by the U.S and EU counter-terrorist response and the change in the political agenda of some terrorist groups. At the same time, another key factor, which acts as an intervening variable, is the strength or weakness of large terror organizations that articulate part of the jihadist membership in the United States and Western Europe.





EDITOR'S COMMENT: Although the article is in Spanish, it contains some very interesting tables and graphics.

Isis have reopened a hotel in Iraq

Source: <http://metro.co.uk/2015/05/02/isis-have-reopened-a-hotel-in-iraq-5178376/>



It might not be The Savoy, and you certainly won't be able to order a beer from the bar, but Isis have opened their first hotel in the Iraqi city of Mosul. The Ninawa hotel was previously described on TripAdvisor as the best hotel in Iraq – boasting an opulent reception area, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. But despite ISIS closing down all hotels in captured territories, the hotel has now



been reopened, with all 262 rooms reserved for visiting commanders.



A 2013 TripAdvisor review of the hotel hailed it as 'amazing'.

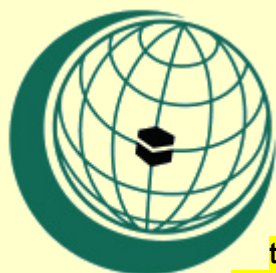
And the luxury hotel will also be available for weddings – so that jihadi brides can marry Islamic State militants on the former £65-a night site.

As for the facilities, women will be banned for swimming or playing tennis in public unless they keep every inch of flesh covered, while the hotel is likely to be patrolled by members of IS' feared all women police brigade.

Other banned activities including drinking alcohol, dancing, smoking or gambling, and those who don't obey risk being flogged, crucified or beheaded.

UAE proposes anti-terror charter

Source: <http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/government/uae-proposes-anti-terror-charter-1.1503724>



May 03 – A parliamentary panel of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) met in Abu Dhabi on Sunday to review a UAE-proposed anti-terrorism charter to eliminate international terrorism, condemning the association of terrorism with any specific religious, cultural or ethnic grouping.

The members of the Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUOICM) have unanimously approved a proposal submitted by the Parliamentary Division of the UAE's Federal National Council (FNC) for drafting the union's draft Islamic parliamentary charter on combating terrorism and extremism.

The UAE's proposal was approved during the Parliamentary Union of the OIC meeting's 10th session which took place on January 20-22 in Istanbul, Turkey.

The executive committee of the OIC's parliamentary body was tasked with preparing a draft of the 'Islamic Parliamentary Charter on Action against Terrorism and Extremism'.

The UAE's proposal reiterated the need to make a distinction between terrorism, and the exercise of the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation.

The draft charter also calls for promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue between the OIC Parliamentary Union, on the one hand, and the European Union, the

Parliament of Latin America and the US Congress, on the other hand.

Mohammad Ahmad Al Murr, FNC speaker, said there was no religious doctrine supportive of terrorism and that it was crucial for the international community to cooperate and apply a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that addressed terrorism's root causes.

The draft counter-terrorism charter based on international law calls on individual states to refrain from inciting hatred against any religious and cultural systems, calling special attention to provocative acts that had been taken against Islam. It also urges to define terrorism and to distinguish it from the right of people to self-determination. Further, technical assistance should be given to countries to combat terrorism, and international plans should strengthen assistance to victims of terrorism.

The UAE is pursuing a policy to fight terrorism and terrorist financing, as well as activities to address its causes, including poverty reduction, education and dialogue. National legislations had been passed on money laundering and prosecuting transnational crimes, small arms and weapons. The UAE was committed to regional, subregional and national coordination that ensured air, sea and land corridors not be used to carry materials into the hands of terrorists. Additionally, his country had joined a number of international and regional conventions and had, among other accomplishments, created the International Centre



of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism.

The UAE's proposal also calls for setting up a strategy to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and build capacity to prevent and combat terrorism.

These efforts should include a comprehensive process of reforms. Muslims countries should

endeavour to improve their image in the world to appear as a nation of culture and civilisation. Effective initiatives must also be undertaken to educate non-Muslims concerning correct Islamic concepts of peace and tolerance and to clarify the incorrect views of Islam held by some, states the draft charter.

2 gunmen shot dead outside Muhammad Art Exhibit in Garland

Source: <http://www.wfaa.com/story/news/local/2015/05/03/garland-curtis-culwell-center-swat/26848435/>

Two men were shot and killed in a parking lot outside the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland Sunday afternoon, SWAT officials told News 8.

The two suspects drove up and opened fire near the center, which was hosting a provocative contest for cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, and hit a Garland ISD officer.

Garland Police shot and killed the two men.

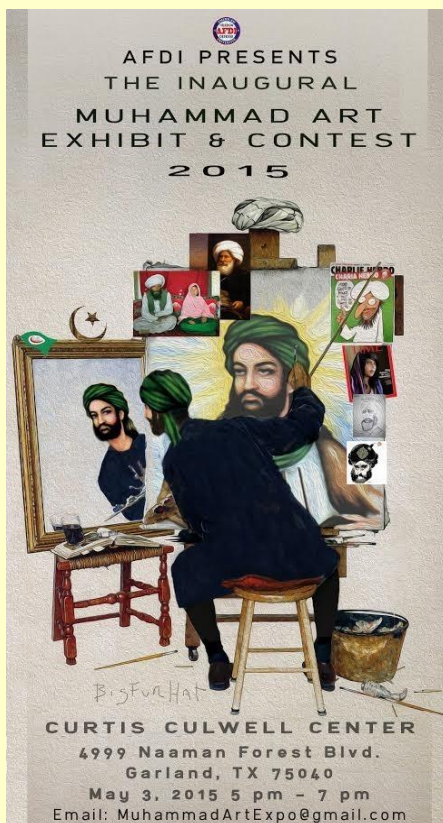
The Garland ISD officer, identified as Bruce Joiner, was shot in the lower leg and suffered non-life threatening injuries, according to a spokesman for Garland Police. He has been released from a local hospital.

Multiple SWAT teams and an FBI bomb squad were searching the area around the center for explosives in a vehicle.

"Because of the situation and what was going on today and the history of what we've been told has happened at other events like this, we're

considering their car as possibly having a bomb," said Garland police officer Joe Harn.

That process could take several more hours, Harn said. He described the search as



"precaution." Police had not identified the suspects because their bodies were near the vehicle in question.

Some SWAT members were already at the scene for the art event. Harn said additional officers were hired for the event.

A 1,000-foot radius around the Walmart was initially shut down and multiple businesses in the area were evacuated. The area shut down by officials expanded throughout the evening.

An Academy store and other businesses were evacuated after a shooting took place outside the Culwell Center in Garland. Rebecca Lopez reports.

Pamela Geller, president of the American Freedom Defense Initiative, put on the

Muhammad Art Exhibit. She referred to it as a "free speech event" on Twitter. One tweet from

her after the apparent attack read "this is a war."

Attendees of the event were rushed inside the Culwell Center after gunfire was heard. People in a secure room at the center sang patriotic songs.

Witnesses who saw or heard the events were later

bussed to the Garland police station. Others were taken to a different secure location at a nearby school.



What we know about Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/05/us/texas-shooting-gunmen/>

Whatever spurred Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi to drive across two states to shoot up a Prophet Mohammed cartoon contest is lost on their families, their neighbors and the place they had worshipped. One was described as "gentle person," albeit one who had been convicted of a terror-related charge and supported an ISIS propagandist.

The other was a father who had "put his son above everything" -- until the day he and his roommate opened fire at the event in Garland, Texas, wounding a security guard before police shot and killed the gunmen.

Here's what we know about the attackers:



Nadir Soofi, left, and Elton Simpson

ELTON SIMPSON

He may have been an ISIS supporter

While U.S. authorities investigate whether Sunday's shooting has any link to international terrorism, ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. In a radio broadcast, ISIS referred to Simpson and Soofi as two of its "soldiers" and threatened more attacks. But it's unclear whether the terror group in Iraq and Syria actually had contact with Simpson or Soofi, who both lived in Phoenix. Moments before the shootout, Simpson posted an ominous tweet with the hashtag #texasattack: "May Allah accept us as mujahideen." The tweet also said Simpson and his fellow attacker had pledged allegiance to "Amirul Mu'mineen," which means "the leader of the faithful." CNN terrorism analyst Paul Cruickshank said that probably refers to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. Earlier, Simpson had asked his readers on Twitter to follow an ISIS propagandist.

After the shooting, the same propagandist tweeted: "Allahu Akbar!!!! 2 of our brothers just opened fire."

Both Twitter accounts have been deactivated.

He has a rap sheet

In 2011, Simpson was convicted of making a false statement involving international and domestic terrorism. Prosecutors said he told FBI agents that he had not discussed traveling to Somalia to engage in "violent jihad" -- when, in fact, he had, according to an indictment. Simpson was sentenced to three years of probation, court records show.

He had 'a good demeanor'

That's according to the president of the Islamic Community Center of Phoenix, where both Simpson and Soofi worshipped. Usama Shami said Simpson came regularly until around 2010 or 2011, about the time the FBI



arrested him on the false statement charges. Soofi came less frequently. Simpson "was a gentle person," Shami said. "He always had a good attitude, a good demeanor." Like others at the mosque, Shami said he was stunned to hear about the attack Sunday night. "They didn't show any signs of radicalization or any signs of even thinking about those things in that manner," he said. "So when that happens, it just shocks you. 'How good did you know these people?' That's the question that people ask themselves."

His family is stunned, too

On top of their grief, Simpson's relatives are struggling to come to terms with his involvement in the attack. "We send our prayers to everyone affected by this act of senseless violence, especially the security guard who was injured in the line of duty," Simpson's family said in a statement.

"We are sure many people in this country are curious to know if we had any idea of Elton's plans. To that we say, without question, we did not. Just like everyone in our beautiful country, we are struggling to understand how this could happen. ... We are heartbroken and in a state of deep shock as we grieve."

He and Soofi were roommates

Their neighbors in Phoenix said they had no clue about what Simpson and Soofi were plotting to do.

Ariel Whitlock was actually about to buy a car from Simpson. She was horrified to see the same black Chevrolet Cobalt, damaged from the attack, on the news. "I'm getting goose bumps thinking about it right now just because I wanted to buy that car," she told CNN's Kyung Lah. "On the news, I see it, it's just blown up. I'm like, 'I was going to purchase that car.' " Whitlock said she's sickened by the possibility that, had she bought the car, the money could have gone to fund an attack. "Maybe he's just gonna go plot something and you're giving the money to help him go plot something," she said. "It's just crazy."

NADIR SOOFI

He died near where he was born

Soofi was born in Garland and spent the first three years of his life there, his mother said, according to The Dallas Morning News. "He was raised in a normal American fashion,"

Sharon Soofi said. "Yes, he was very politically involved with the Middle East. Just aware of what's going on. I don't know if something snapped or if Elton Simpson was just working on him."

He left behind an 8-year-old son

Sharon Soofi also said her son had an 8-year-old boy whom he adored. "He put his son above everything," she said. "The hard thing to comprehend is why he would do this and leave an 8-year-old son behind."

He went to a prestigious private school

Soofi's father is Pakistani, and his mother is American, a source with knowledge of the family told CNN.

After his parents divorced, Soofi and his brother moved to Pakistan to live with their father and stepmother, the source said. In the 1990s, Soofi attended a prestigious private school in Islamabad. The source added that the boys left abruptly at some point, ostensibly to go live with their mother.

He wasn't on the FBI's radar

Unlike Simpson, who had been convicted of a terror-related charge, Soofi was relatively unknown to federal investigators, a law enforcement official told CNN. Authorities knew of no indication the two planned to launch Sunday's attack, another law enforcement official said.

He had asked for forgiveness

Soofi's Facebook page reveals strong opinions, but no call to violence. But a note from four years ago shows he asked Allah for forgiveness for every sin -- both intentional and unintentional.

He was a helpful neighbor

Tim Rains remembers Soofi helping him when he had a heart condition about a year ago. As Rains was coming home, he collapsed on a stairwell. Soofi noticed. "He seen all that, and he came over and offered me help," Rains said. So how does he reconcile the notion that his neighbor also tried to shoot people in Texas? "Oh, it's easy, everybody has a good side to them," Rains said. "If you see somebody hurting like that, you're going to help them. I think he went to Texas to shoot people for a reason."



IS says it was behind US Prophet cartoon attack

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-32589546>

Islamic State (IS) has said that it was behind the attack on a Prophet Muhammad cartoon contest in the US state of Texas. It said that "two soldiers of the caliphate" carried out the attack at a conference centre near Dallas. IS's al-Bayan Radio news bulletin said the exhibition "was portraying negative pictures of the Prophet Muhammad".

Analysis: Frank Gardner, BBC security correspondent

This is obviously not the first jihadist attack to take place on the US mainland, but if Islamic State is able to prove that it planned and directed it - rather than just staking a claim after the event - then that would be a significant development.

It is also possible that IS's claim is one of convenience, that it played little or no part in the attack.

In some ways, it was a failure. The attackers did not get near the actual event organisers or speakers and the two gunmen ended up being the only ones killed, shot down not by a SWAT team, but by a traffic policeman.

But that would be to miss the point. For IS, this is all about publicity and the generation of fear. The message they want to give Americans is: "You're not safe in your own backyard, this was just the beginning and there are more attacks to come".

Francis Rolleston "Frank" Gardner, OBE, FRGS (born 31 July 1961), is a British journalist and correspondent. He is currently the BBC's Security Correspondent. He was appointed an OBE in 2005 for his services to journalism. On 6 June 2004, while reporting from Al-Suwaidi, a suburb of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Gardner was shot six times and seriously injured in an attack by al-Qaeda sympathizers. 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.

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The ISIL is in Ukraine: America's "Agents of Chaos" Unleashed in Eurasia

By Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-isil-is-in-ukraine-americas-agents-of-chaos-unleashed-in-eurasia/5446989>

May 03 – Is the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) / Islamic State (IS) / Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah fe Al-Iraq wa Al-Sham (DAISH/DAESH) active in post-EuroMaidan Ukraine? The answer is not exact. In other words, the answer is both yes and no.

Then again, what is the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH? It is a loosely knit band of militias, just like its predecessor Al-Qaeda. Included in its network are groups from the Caucasus, which have been fighting in Syria and Iraq. Now they are in Ukraine and using it as a steppingstone into Europe.



The Agents of Chaos and the War for Eurasia

The conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are all fronts in a multi-dimensional war being waged by the US and its allies. This multi-dimensional war aims to encircle Eurasia. China, Iran, and Russia are the main targets.

The US also has an order of operations with which to takeout these countries. Iran is first, followed by Russia, with China as the last part of the Eurasian set comprised of this «Eurasian Triple Entente.» It is no coincidence that the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are near the borders of Iran and Russia, because Tehran and Moscow are the nearer term targets of Washington.

In the same vein as the interlinked nature of the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, there is also a connection between the violent, racist, xenophobic, and sectarian forces that have been unleashed as «agents of chaos.» It is no mere coincidence that *Newsweek* had a headline saying «Ukrainian Nationalist Volunteers Committing 'ISIS-Style' War Crimes» on September 10, 2014. [1] Whether they know it or not, these deviant forces, whether they are the ultra-nationalist Pravy Sektor militias in Ukraine or the head-cutting gangs of Al-Nusra and the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH in Syria and Iraq, all serve one master. These agents of chaos are unleashing different waves of constructive chaos to prevent Eurasian integration and a world order that is free of US dictates.

The «constructive chaos» that is being unleashed in Eurasia will eventually wreck havoc in India. If New Delhi thinks that it will be left alone, it is foolishly mistaken. The same agents of chaos will plague it as well. It too is a target like China, Iran, and Russia.

Strange Alliances: Alliance between the ISIL/DAESH and Ukraine's Ultra-Nationalists?

It should not come as a surprise that the different agents of chaos are loosely aligned. They serve the same master and they have the same enemies, one of which is the Russian Federation.

It is in this context that Marcin Mamon has reported about the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH connection in Ukraine. He even explains that some of the fighters from the Caucasus feel that they have a debt to Ukrainians like Oleksandr Muzychko. [2]

Mamon is a Polish documentary filmmaker who has produced a number of documentaries about Chechnya, such as *The Smell of Paradise* with Mariusz Piliś in 2005, for the British Broadcasting Corporation's Storyville program. He is also openly sympathetic to the cause of the Chechen separatists against Russia in the North Caucasus.

Mamon's travels to Afghanistan and his interaction with Chechen separatist fighters have resulted in the Polish filmmaker having contacts with the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH inside Syria and Turkey. This extraordinarily led him down a new path to Ukraine.

«I didn't even know, at that point, whom I was meeting. I knew only that Khalid, my contact in Turkey with the Islamic State [ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH], had told me his 'brothers' were in Ukraine, and I could trust them», he writes about his meeting in a «potholed street in Kiev, east of the Dnieper River, in an area known as the Left Bank.» [3] In an earlier article Mamon explains that these so-called «'brothers' are members of ISIS and other underground Islamic organizations» who «are on every continent, and in almost every country, and now they are in Ukraine, too.» [4] He also explains that «Khalid, who uses a pseudonym, leads the Islamic State's underground branch in Istanbul. He came from Syria to help control the flood of volunteers arriving in Turkey from all over the world, wanting to join the global jihad. Now, he wanted to put me in touch with Ruslan, a 'brother' fighting with Muslims in Ukraine.» [5] Ukrainian ultra-nationalists like Muzychko also became so-called «brothers» and accepted into this network. Mamon explains that the Chechen fighters accepted him «even though he never converted to Islam» and that «Muzyczko, along with other Ukrainian volunteers, joined Chechen fighters and took part in the first Chechen war against Russia» where they «commanded a branch of Ukrainian volunteers, called 'Viking,' which fought under famed Chechen militant leader Shamil Basayev.» [6]

Why is the ISIL manning Private Battalions in Ukraine?

What does it say when Chechen separatists and the transnational network of so-called «brothers» tied to the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH are being



recruited or used to fill the ranks of private militias being using by Ukrainian oligarchs? This is a very important question. It also clearly demonstrates how these elements are agents of chaos.

Marcin Mamon travelled to Ukraine to meet the Chechen fighter Isa Munayev. Munayev's background is explained thus: «Even before he arrived in Ukraine, Munayev was well-known. He fought against Russian forces in both Chechen wars; in the second, he was the commander of the war in Grozny. After the Chechen capital was captured by Russian forces between 1999 and 2000, Munayev and his men took refuge in the mountains. He fought from there until 2005, when he was seriously injured and went to Europe for treatment. Munayev lived in Denmark until 2014. Then war broke out in Ukraine, and he decided it was time to fight the Russians again.» [7]

The above is an important passage, because it illustrates how the US and EU have supported militants fighting against Russia. In the US and the EU, the refuge that Denmark gave Isa Munayev is not questioned, whereas the

allegations leveled against Moscow for supporting the soldiers of the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic are seen as criminal. Why the double standards? Why is it okay for the US, EU, and NATO to support separatist movements and militias in other parts of the world, but criticized and forbidden for other countries to do the same?

«An older man in a leather jacket introduced me to Munayev. 'Our good brother Khalid recommended this man,' the man said. (Khalid is today one of the most important leaders of the Islamic State. Khalid and Munayev knew each other from years spent fighting together in Chechnya),» Marcin Mamon explains about the connections between the Chechen separatists and ISIS/ISIL/IS/Daish/Daesh. [8]

Munayev has come to Ukraine to establish «one of what would become several dozen private battalions that sprang up to fight on the side of the Ukrainian government, operating separately from the military.» [9] His militia was named the Dzhokhar Dudayev battalion, which was named after the separatist president of Chechnya.

NOTES

[1] Damien Sharkov, «Ukrainian Nationalist Volunteers Committing 'ISIS-Style' War Crimes,» *Newsweek*, September 10, 2014.

[2] Marcin Mamon, «In Midst of War, Ukraine Becomes Gateway for Jihad,» *Intercept*, February 26, 2015.

[3] Marcin Mamon, «Isa Munayev's War: The Final Days of a Chechen Commander Fighting in Ukraine,» *Intercept*, February 27, 2015.

[4-6] Marcin Mamon, «In Midst of War,» *op. cit.*

[7-9] Marcin Mamon, «Isa Munayev's War,» *op. cit.*

An award-winning author and geopolitical analyst, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is the author of Globalization of NATO (Clarity Press) and a forthcoming book The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa. He has also contributed to several other books ranging from cultural critique to international relations. He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy.



Greece – What the six jihadis caught in Rhodes Island were preparing for?

Source: <http://www.defencenet.gr>

On Sunday, May 3, 2015 in Faliraki area (Rhodes Island) the National Intelligence Service (EYP) arrested six people who were jihadists.

EYP followed information given by Syrians and Lebanese immigrants who had complained that the group propagated Islam, Sharia and Jihad and pushed the Muslims of the region in actions and



deeds against local inhabitants put the suspects under close surveillance.

The nightmare is the fact that when they arrived in Greece, they shaved and wore European clothes, even though the Koran forbids such actions!

This marks a shift into their way of thinking since the Koran permits shaving only if it serves a holy cause, such as Holy War (Jihad) and the murder or proselytism of unbelievers!

What were their plans?

New mathematical logic to help intelligence services cope with uncertainty

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150506-new-mathematical-logic-to-help-intelligence-services-cope-with-uncertainty>

Imagine that you are the head of U.S. military intelligence services immediately prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. You have a wealth of intelligence to help you find out whether Saddam Hussein really has weapons of mass destruction or not. You have access to satellite photos and huge amounts of information from spies and defectors. Each of these sources is fraught with uncertainty to a greater or lesser extent. Some pieces of evidence are more reliable than others.

The amount of information is so huge that nobody is capable of establishing a total overview. You therefore need computational tools to interpret all the information. One of your hypotheses is that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction. The other hypothesis says the opposite. It is your job to determine which hypothesis appears to be the most correct one.

The head of the U.S. intelligence services got it wrong. He erroneously determined that Saddam had access to weapons of mass destruction.

“Current intelligence analyses are often based on information with a considerable degree of uncertainty. Intelligence analysts are constantly struggling with the reliability of circumstantial evidence. The sources may be unreliable or directly misleading. When intelligence services in one country attempt to find out what another country is planning to do, they need to take into account the credibility of the information”, says Audun Jøsang, professor at the Department of Informatics, University of Oslo (UiO).

The fact that the information tends to be incomplete and the circumstantial evidence often is contradictory does not make things any easier.

“It is therefore essential to assess all information, evidence, facts and circumstances in a way that reflects this situation.”

The new logic

A UiO release reports that Jøsang has developed a completely new type of mathematical logic that may improve the ability of intelligence services to deal with unclear evidence while pointing out intelligence areas that merit further investigation.

This new form of intelligence analysis is based on subjective logic. This type of logic can explicitly handle degrees of uncertainty, and this produces intelligence analysis models that are far more realistic than those produced by current interpretation methods.

In current intelligence analysis models, all circumstantial evidence must be weighted by a specific probability. Jøsang points out that this is not enough. He claims that an estimate of the certainty of this probability also must be

included. “Most people are unaccustomed to the fact that a probability in itself may be uncertain.”

Certainty

Let us assume that an intelligence agent estimates the probability of two different events to be one half. Even though the probability is the same, their certainty and uncertainty may vary. If you flip a coin, the probability of heads is one half. There is a very high certainty that this probability estimate is correct. Unless the coin is biased or manipulated, this certainty is one hundred per cent.

The probability that Oswald shot Kennedy in 1962 may also be estimated to one half, but this probability is fraught with a large



margin of uncertainty. Even though the probability is set at one half here as well, there is a large uncertainty that the probability estimate might be totally wrong.

Quantifying uncertainty

Intelligence people struggle precisely with such things. They need to take uncertainty into account, but there are no tools available for undertaking intelligence analyses that consider the degree of uncertainty in each probability estimate. With the aid of subjective logic, the certainty and uncertainty of all probability estimates can be quantified.

“Unless this is done, the uncertainty is swept under the carpet. We humans are stuck in our preconceived notions and follow the beaten track. We are unable to see things objectively. If the Americans had used this new mathematical logic, they would have seen that the uncertainty as to whether Saddam had access to weapons of mass destruction or not was too large,” Jøsang points out.

To express the uncertainty of their probability estimates, statisticians use a tool called the confidence interval. A confidence interval describes the likelihood that an event will occur with a probability within a certain interval. However, there are no tools that can simply handle confidence intervals as input arguments in complex models. As a rule, confidence intervals are used only for presentation of results.

Today, all input arguments in intelligence models must be entered with a specific probability, even if this figure is uncertain.

“What they really ought to say is ‘we don’t know this.’ However, such input arguments are not permitted in traditional analytical tools. With subjective logic, the input arguments may be completely uncertain and estimates can be made with these probabilities, even though they are fraught with uncertainty.”

Mathematical repertoire

The certainty and uncertainty of each probability can be represented by triangles, where the horizontal line describes the magnitude of the probability and the vertical height represents the uncertainty of the probability estimate. In order to describe situations, Jøsang is now working to expand the repertoire of mathematical operators, such as deduction and abduction, and how these mathematical operators can be combined.

By emphasizing the uncertainty of the input arguments, decision-makers can visualize the degree of uncertainty of their analyses in order to make better decisions. If the result is fraught with large uncertainty, one will be reluctant to make significant, important decisions, but perhaps call for more intelligence work instead.

“When we implement this logic, we can see the aspects of the theory that are incomplete and need to be straightened out. If the Americans had been in possession of this tool, perhaps they would have found that there was too much uncertainty with regard to the hypothesis saying that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction before taking such a momentous decision as to invade Iraq. Unless the uncertainty of the circumstantial evidence is taken into account, the analysis tool may erroneously conclude that there was a clear probability that Saddam had access to weapons of mass destruction.”

The gist of the matter is:

“In order to balance all circumstantial evidence it is crucial to describe the uncertainty of each individual piece of information. If this is not done, there is a risk that evidence with a large degree of uncertainty is compared to evidence that is basically certain. One should be cautious in taking large, momentous decisions if the results are fraught with a large degree of uncertainty.”

Jøsang emphasizes that his theory is sufficiently developed to be adapted to analytical tools.

Intelligence services: Applicable

The release notes that the Norwegian military intelligence service has expressed an interest in this new, mathematical logic, but the intelligence officer who had familiarized himself with the theory did not wish to make a statement to the UiO’s press office. The intelligence officer referred the office to Dean Tore Pedersen who is head of intelligence studies at the Norwegian Intelligence College. He made it clear to the office that his statement was of a general, academic nature:

“Subjective logic can be used to explore complex problems that include a large element of subjectivity and uncertainty,” Pedersen said in response to a question.

The U.S. Army is interested

American intelligence services are currently using an analytical



framework called ACH (for Analysis of Competing Hypotheses). The U.S. Army Research Lab, the American equivalent of the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment at Kjeller, supports this research at UiO with NOK 2 million (\$265,000) to explore how subjective logic can be implemented in their intelligence analyses.

“By incorporating uncertainty, subjective logic has the potential to revolutionize automated probability reasoning and improve intelligence operations. The method may enable the

decision-maker to realize when the responses are too uncertain and that more information needs to be collected. We still need answers to a number of fundamental questions. The U.S. Army Research Lab is therefore collaborating with Professor Jøsang through the project ‘Advanced Belief Reasoning in Intelligence’ to determine whether and how his idea can be realized,” says Dr. Lance Kaplan in the Networked Sensing & Fusion Branch, U.S. Army Research Laboratory.

Using shotcrete to make tunnels withstand terrorist attacks

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150506-using-shotcrete-to-make-tunnels-withstand-terrorist-attacks>

A two-by-one-meter concrete block is lying in the open. “Watch out! Three, two, one,” a voice is counting down. Then, a loud crash, dust



swirls through the air. This explosion would have left a crater in traditional concrete. The experiment, however, results in only a handful of scratches. This is because the stone block is coated with shotcrete which was developed by Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB) engineers in order to ensure better protection of building structures from large fires and terrorist attacks.

A RUB release reports that for seven and a half years, the team headed by Dr. Götz Vollmann from the Institute for Tunneling and Construction Management has been studying issues surrounding tunnel safety under the umbrella of a project sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (see also [“Psychology in the tunnel”](#)).

“When today’s tunnels were built, nobody had foreseen that one day a madman with a bomb may run inside,” says Vollmann. “Bizarrely, in the 1950s and 1960s Europeans were building bridges that were partly fitted out with so-called explosion chambers, having retrospectively learned from the Second World War. Accordingly, the structures have predetermined breaking points, the purpose of which is to ensure that a bridge can be blown up in order to cut off the enemy’s supply lines.”

This, however, is counterproductive if one wants to protect them from terrorist attacks. Today, engineers are searching for ways to make tunnels and



bridges as robust as possible. Construction materials, such as special types of high-performance concrete, which can partly absorb the impact of explosions already exist. Due to their manufacturing principle, however, they cannot be made in any other shape than



the slab, which cannot be used for cladding surfaces with complex geometries.

“This has been a problem for years,” explains Vollmann. A problem for which he had a solution in mind: shotcrete. This is because it is easy to apply on surfaces of any shape.

A concrete which is required to be ultra-solid must contain as many steel fibers as possible. Those fibers, however, render it stiff and unsuitable for getting pumped through a hose to be sprayed on a surface. “It used to be said that approx. seventy kilogram steel fibers per cubic meter of concrete are just about as good as it gets. That’s the absolute limit in terms of what is still processable,” explains Vollmann.

Together with external partners, his team has now realized a shotcrete with 140 kilogram steel fibers per cubic meter, and they added three kilogram of synthetic fibers on top of that.

“Everyone with whom we discussed this in the run-up had said: you’ll never pull it off. And indeed, we were going to throw in the towel,”



Vollmann says.

About to give up, the group had one last brainwave: air. The researchers foamed up the concrete until the mixture contained approx. 20 percent air bubbles. “We assume that this process generates a ball-bearing effect of sorts,” says Vollmann. “The fibers presumably roll over the air bubbles, and everything is thus rendered smoother.”

Accordingly, the concrete can be pumped through a hose and sprayed through a nozzle despite its high steel-fiber content. The air must not remain in the mixture, however, because it would reduce the strength of the concrete.

Therefore, the RUB team built in a defoaming mechanism.

For the spraying step, the concrete is pumped through a nozzle. There, a substance is added by default which accelerates the solidifying process. “Otherwise, the concrete would be much too liquid and, at the required layer thickness, would slide off the wall,” explains Vollmann. “We have simply added a defoaming agent to the accelerating agent.”

Small-scale lab experiments had shown that the defoaming agent takes effect instantaneously and extracts air from the concrete within the fraction of a second. This effect was verified on the large scale, following experiments with a shotcrete robot.

The Institute for Tunneling and Construction Management and the Institute for Construction Material Technology operate a shotcrete test rig. Its heart is a reprogrammable robot manufactured by the company “Kuka,” which is commonly deployed for welding cars. At the

RUB campus, the robot applies shotcrete — layers with a thickness of several centimeters onto traditional concrete. The engineers conveyed a portion of the thus manufactured slabs to Leipzig, for fire tests in the material testing facilities there.

Other slabs were tested by project partners from the Ernst-Mach-Institut at Fraunhofer in Freiburg in controlled explosion tests, in order to find out the shotcrete’s resistance capacities. By deploying shotcrete, they were indeed

able to maintain up to 60 percent of the remaining load-bearing capacity of the construction that was to be protected. To compare: in the same experiment setup, the remaining load-bearing capacity of unprotected concrete amounts to a mere 20 percent.

The release notes that it is not possible to apply the new shotcrete to all structures or to render them safer by another method. The costs would be much too high.

Rather, it is necessary to determine which tunnels and bridges in Germany are particularly at risk. In a project



managed by the Federal Highway Research Institute, Vollmann's team investigated this issue together with other partners. The group analyzed which structures are crucial for a traffic infrastructure to work and which constructions are particularly vulnerable to fire or explosion damage. They developed a process which can be used to compile such a ranking of critical structures, the results of

which cannot, however, be published for security reasons.

"Our structures are actually more robust than we'd assumed," says Vollmann. "Still, with enough explosives, one could theoretically cause any building to collapse."

The ranking is now going to help decide for which structures measures are going to be implemented next to boost security.

Federal Building Security Still Needs Improvement, Audit Finds

Source: <http://www.hstoday.us/single-article/federal-building-security-still-needs-improvement-audit-finds/3c2878c27b6cec45ed61e814807d46c9.html>

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Protective Service (FPS) and Department of Justice's (DOJ) United States Marshals Service (USMS) experience a range of challenges in their efforts to provide effective security screening, according to a 48-

page Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit report released last week.

FPS and USMS conduct building security screening at thousands of General Services Administration (GSA) buildings across the country.

Coinciding with the GAO audit report's release, Rep. André Carson (Ind.) introduced two bills that would make improvements to the security at federal facilities and extend law enforcement retirement coverage to FPS officers.

GAO recommended FPS and USMS "each develop and implement a strategy for using covert and intrusion testing and prohibited items data to improve security-screening efforts."

"Specifically, for FPS," GAO said, "the strategy would, among other things, help determine which covert testing scenarios to use. For USMS, the strategy would, among other things, help determine the appropriate frequency of intrusion testing."

Both DHS and DOJ concurred with GAO's recommendations.

GAO determined that:

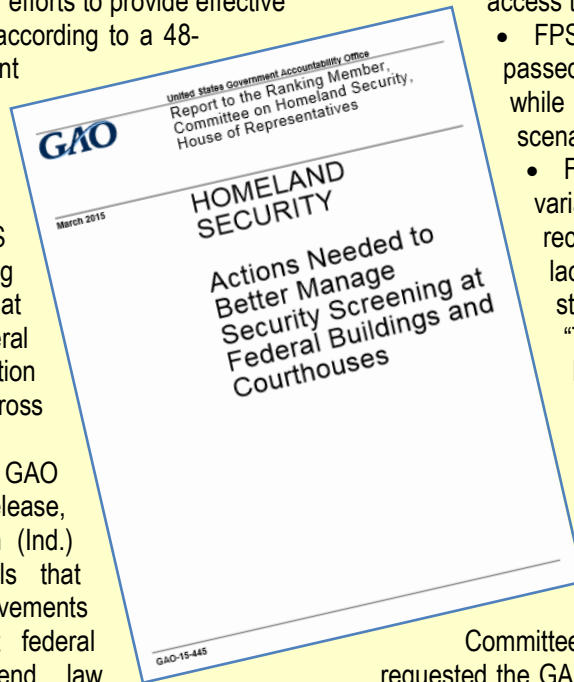
- Many challenges exist in protecting these buildings – including a lack of resources and the need to balance security with access to the public;
- FPS protective security officers passed covert tests at a low rate while FPS also reduced testing scenarios; and
- FPS and USMS reported wide variations in prohibited item record keeping, suggesting a lack of a unified policy and strategy.

"This report is another in a line of many which show that FPS is lagging in ensuring our federal facilities across the nation are properly secured," responded Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-Miss.), the ranking member of the House

Committee on Homeland Security who requested the GAO audit. "We need to ensure that record keeping and testing procedures are properly uniform and robust. This is the only way to access security performance and therefore improve security screening. I am glad the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice agreed with the recommendations in the report."

GAO said FPS and USMS experience a range of challenges in their efforts to provide effective security screening, including:

Building characteristics and location may limit security options: many General Services Administration (GSA) buildings were designed and constructed before



security screening became a priority;

- **Balancing security and public access:** striking an appropriate balance between facilitating the public's access to government services and providing adequate security can be difficult, for example, when there is a high volume of visitors;
- **Operating with limited resources:** some FPS protective security officers are not fully trained to conduct security screening, and FPS and USMS may have limited funding for additional training or additional security officers;
- **Working with multiple federal tenants:** many tenant stakeholders at multi-tenant GSA buildings have differing needs and priorities that may not always align when trying to build consensus for security-screening decisions; and
- **Effectively informing the public of prohibited items:** prohibited items vary by building, and some signage did not effectively relay information to the public.

"To assess security-screening efforts, both FPS and USMS have taken steps such as conducting covert and intrusion tests and collecting data on prohibited items," GAO said, noting that, "From fiscal years 2011 to 2013, FPS data show that protective security officers passed covert tests on security-screening procedures at a low rate."

"In October 2012, FPS reduced the number of screening scenarios used for covert testing, but has since reinstated some of them. USMS data show that court security officers passed intrusion tests on security screening at a higher

rate," GAO reported. "For example, USMS reported that court security officers passed 83 percent of intrusion tests on security screening in fiscal year 2010, 91 percent in fiscal year 2011 and 92 percent in fiscal years 2012 and 2013."

"Although USMS tests more frequently than FPS, it has not met its intrusion-test frequency requirement per building each year," GAO found. "In addition, FPS and USMS's data on prohibited items show wide variations in the number of items identified across buildings. For example, FPS reported it had detected approximately 700,000 prohibited items in 2013; however, FPS data showed that there were 295 buildings with no reported data on prohibited items from fiscal years 2004 through 2013."

GAO said that, "While FPS and USMS may use the results of covert and intrusion tests to address problems at the individual building or FPS region or USMS district level, to some degree, they do not use the results to strategically assess performance nationwide. The benefits of using data in this manner are reflected in the Interagency Security Committee's (ISC) guidance, as well as key practices in security and internal control standards GAO has developed."

"Without a more strategic approach to assessing performance, both FPS and USMS are not well positioned to improve security screening nationwide, identify trends and lessons learned and address the aforementioned challenges related to screening in a complex security environment," GAO concluded.

► Read the GAO Report at: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/669412.pdf>

Mexico declares all-out war after rising drug cartel downs military helicopter

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/04/mexico-declares-war-rising-drug-cartel-downs-military-helicopter>

Mexico has declared an all-out offensive against the relatively new drug cartel which shot down an army helicopter during a weekend of coordinated attacks across the western state of Jalisco which prompted fresh concerns over the latest escalation of the country's drug wars.

Six soldiers were killed when gunmen from the New Generation Jalisco Cartel used a rocket-propelled grenade to bring down an army helicopter that was pursuing a cartel convoy on Friday, the national security commissioner, Monte Alejandro Rubido, told Televisa.



At least 15 other people were killed and 19



injured in a coordinated show of strength by the cartel which included several shootouts with

until its response to Friday's launch of a federal operation in its Jalisco stronghold, reportedly aimed at capturing or killing the group's leader Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, alias "El Mencho".

While RPGs have reportedly featured in battles between rival crime factions before, particularly those involving the Zetas – a paramilitary cartel originally formed by special forces soldiers – this was the first time the authorities have reported the weapon's use against one of its aircraft.

"This is a criminal group with very significant firepower," Rubido said, in answer to a question about whether the cartel has now



soldiers and police, and involved hundreds of low-level operatives who set up roadblocks with burning cars, buses and trucks in Jalisco and three neighbouring states. Eleven banks and five petrol stations were also set ablaze.

"The full force of the Mexican state will be felt in the state of Jalisco," Rubido said on Monday. "Satisfactory results will start to be seen very soon."

Formed five years ago, the New Generation Jalisco Cartel has grown to become one of the biggest players in the country's drug wars, at the same time as other major criminal groups have lost operational capacity in the face of government offensives.

But the cartel's ability and desire to openly challenge federal forces had not been obvious

become the most dangerous and powerful in Mexico. "Without doubt this gives it a special connotation."

The rise of the New Generation Jalisco Cartel challenges the government's hopes that its chosen tactic of killing or capturing cartel bosses will eventually put an end to the drug wars that have killed at least 100,000 people over the last eight years.

Taking down the biggest kingpins has undoubtedly weakened several formerly powerful cartels, but it also appears to have provided the Jalisco-based cartel with opportunities for growth and expansion. This is particularly clear in territories once dominated by the Zetas, now a shadow of



their former selves, as well as their recently dismantled Caballeros Templarios, or Knights



infiltrate the authorities. The latter is most commonly associated with the Sinaloa cartel which, despite the capture in February 2014 of Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, **remains the biggest criminal group in the country.**

Guerrero said the combination of styles was clear in the weekend’s coordinated attacks that were probably only possible with the help of corrupt local police. He also noted the low level of civilian casualties, contrasting with the kind of bloodbaths Mexicans have become accustomed to

Templar.

“The government does not have the capacity to attack more than one big group at a time,” said security expert Eduardo Guerrero. “Now it is the turn of the **New Generation Jalisco Cartel.**”

According to Guerrero, the group has also developed a “perfected model” of operations that combines the militaristic sophistication and firepower of the Zetas with a capacity to

in the drug wars.

The expert added that he expected the government will eventually win out in a prolonged upcoming battle with the New Generation Jalisco Cartel, though he stressed this would not necessarily bring peace.

“The government’s biggest challenge remains how to contain the particularly acute violence of the smaller groups that are formed after the big ones fall apart.” he said.



ISIS: Potentially 'Thousands' of Online Followers Inside US Homeland, FBI Chief Warns

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/thousands-online-isis-followers-inside-us-homeland-fbi/story?id=30882077>

May 07 – **There may be as many as thousands of people inside the United States consuming online “poison” from ISIS alone, and, “I know there are other Elton Simpsons out there,” FBI director James Comey warned today,** referring to one of the men who opened fire outside of an event in Texas earlier this week celebrating artists’ portrayals of the Prophet Mohammad.

“We have a very hard task” in trying to identify and stop anyone inspired to launch an attack inside the U.S. homeland, Comey told ABC News’ Pierre Thomas and a small group of reporters.

Such efforts have become particularly challenging because ISIS has reconfigured and redefined terrorist recruitment, according to Comey. In fact, while the FBI is trying to find

that so-called needle in a haystack, “increasingly the needles are invisible to us,” he said.

As recently as two years ago, someone in the United States who wanted to consume “radical poisonous propaganda” would have to seek that out on the Internet, most likely on a jihadist web forum. So the FBI focused its investigative efforts on those jihadist web forums, Comey said.

But “that has changed dramatically, especially with [ISIS] and their use of social media,” where on phones in people’s pockets they ask Americans and other foreigners “to travel to the so-called caliphate to fight” but simultaneously say, “If you can’t travel, kill where you are,” according to Comey.



"It's almost as if there is a devil sitting on the shoulder saying, 'Kill, kill, kill, kill' all day long," he said. "[They are] recruiting and tasking at the same time. ... In a way, the old paradigm between 'inspired' and 'directed' breaks down here."

And with that distinction "no longer relevant," is it all the more challenging for the FBI to determine whether someone seeking jihadist propaganda online or even promoting themselves is "a talker or a doer," as Comey described it.

There's also the question, "Where are they on the pathway from 'talker' to 'doer'? And that's really hard," Comey added.

Those are the exact types of questions the FBI faced with Simpson.

Comey acknowledged today that Simpson had been under FBI watch since 2006, when the agency opened an investigation on the Phoenix-area man based on information suggesting he wanted to join al-Shabab, the al Qaeda-linked group in Somalia. Simpson was ultimately indicted on terrorism charges and convicted, but due to questions over the government's case he never went to prison and was sentenced to probation. The FBI officially closed its case into Simpson last year.

But two months ago, based on social media postings suggesting "renewed interest in jihad" with ISIS, the FBI reopened its investigation into Simpson, hoping to determine "what he was up to," according to Comey.

After spending recent weeks trying to identify people inside the United States who might have interest in attacking the community center in Garland, Texas, hosting the controversial cartoon contest, the FBI developed information "just hours" before the event on Sunday that

Simpson might be among those interested, Comey said.

About three hours before the event was to begin, the FBI sent Garland police an intelligence bulletin warning that Simpson may be interested in traveling to Texas and attacking the event, according to Comey, who said the bulletin included a picture of Simpson and a suspected license plate.

Garland police spokesman Joe Harn wouldn't discuss the FBI bulletin specifically, but he told ABC News that in terms of "any information that we had that these guys were coming to Garland from Phoenix, we had no information on anything like that."

Nevertheless, the FBI had no reason to believe Simpson would actually try to carry out an attack, and, "We didn't have reason to believe he left Phoenix," Comey said. The bulletin was simply a precaution, Comey indicated.

Comey praised the traffic officer who killed Simpson and his roommate and accomplice, Nadir Soofi, before they could seriously hurt anyone. The pair were killed outside of the community center. Comey said the officer was an "extraordinary example" of judgment, skill and calm.

Comey, meanwhile, warned that even when the FBI finds someone who has in fact connected with ISIS, keeping track of that person is becoming increasingly difficult. More and more, ISIS is making contact with individuals on Twitter or Facebook and "steering" them to encrypted forms of communications, he said.

"[We see] a connection made, and then it disappears," said Comey, adding that even with a court order some of those encrypted communications are impenetrable.

Kosovo Indicts 32 Suspected Islamist Terrorists



Source: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/32-indicted-for-terrorism-in-kosovo#.VUy6D2AN8QM> .linkedin

Kosovo's Special Court in Thursday charged 32 persons with terrorism and for having direct or indirect ties to Islamic State, IS, and Al Nusra.

Of the 32 accused, 29 are accused of organizing, participating in and recruitment to terrorism, while three are accused of weapons possession.

According to the Special Prosecution, some of the suspects joined armed groups in Syria, deemed to be terrorist organizations by the United Nations. The Kosovo daily *Koha Ditore* published the names



of those accused on Friday.

Last August, Kosovo police carried out two nationwide raids and arrested around 60 individuals, thought to be involved in or supporting terrorist activities.

Last year the government vowed to fight the perceived rise in radical Islamic activities, declaring it a "threat to national security".

Investigations into those who could be involved in such movements are ongoing, the Special Prosecution said.

The radicalization of Kosovo's traditionally moderate Muslim population has been a worrying phenomenon. The Interior Ministry estimates that around 300 fighters from Kosovo have gone to fight on the side of IS since the start of the conflict.

A recent report [released by the Kosovo Center for Security Studies](#) said the phenomenon had been "imported" to Kosovo from neighbouring Macedonia via radical imams.



Brazil to Share Russian Experience in Ensuring Olympics Security

Source: <http://sputniknews.com/latam/20150510/1021948175.html>

May 09 – Brasilia will accept Moscow's proposal to share Russia's experience in ensuring security during major sports events, Brazilian Minister of Defense Jaques Wagner told Sputnik.

The 2014 Winter Olympic Games were held in the Russian city of Sochi. The 2016 Summer Olympics will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"Recent terrorist attacks in several states tell us that no country can consider itself fully prepared to repel the terrorist threat. So I do not think that anyone could refuse a cooperation at such a moment," the Brazilian minister said on Saturday.

Jaques Wagner stressed the necessity of the international information exchange in order to prevent terrorist attacks.

At the same time, he added, Brazil also has successful experience in hosting major international events such as the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Rio 2016



Brazil cancels \$2 billion contract with Israeli security firm for 2016 Olympics

Source: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/charlotte-silver/brazil-cancels-2-billion-contract-israeli-security-firm-2016-olympics>

May 12 – **Brazil's government has excluded an Israeli "security" company from working at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro following a campaign by Palestine solidarity activists.**

In October 2014, the Israeli firm International Security and Defence Systems (ISDS) announced it had won a \$2.2 billion contract with the Brazilian government to coordinate security at the huge sports event. *The Times of Israel* described the deal as "an unprecedented achievement for Israel," while senior figures from the company stated it had already begun work.

But on 8 April a division dealing with large events at Brazil's justice ministry denied that ISDS had been awarded any contract.

A letter from the ministry stated: "Any contract made by Rio 2016 won't result in compromises by the Brazilian government." The campaign against ISDS, which was supported by some of Brazil's labor unions, is interpreting this as an acknowledgement of its grievances.

Julio Turra, executive director of CUT, the largest workers' union in Brazil, says in a press release: "We are glad that the government distances itself from ISDS. It



would be illegal and shameful to hire a company that develops its technologies in complicity with Israeli crimes and that accumulates complaints about its participation in Central American dictatorships.”

This boycott success comes on the heels of another recent and very significant win in Brazil for activists urging boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel. **At the end of 2014, in response to a separate campaign, the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul canceled a contract with the Israeli weapons company Elbit Systems to develop a major aerospace research center.**

Bloody past

The campaign against the ISDS contract focused on lobbying the government to cancel any contract with ISDS on the grounds that the company had close ties with the Israeli military, as well as a long and sordid history in Central and South America.

Founded in 1982 in Tel Aviv by a former colonel in the Israeli army, ISDS has provided security and “counterterrorism” training to many Central American states, including paramilitaries in Honduras and Guatemala, throughout the 1980s.

ISDS helped train and arm the Contras in Nicaragua who tried to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government. In the 1989 book, *The “Terrorism” Industry*, Edward Herman and Gerry O’Sullivan document how ISDS also trained and helped form anti-terrorism “squads” within the Guatemalan military to

target opposition forces and grassroots organizing, while providing the military with electronic surveillance, arms, helicopters, and airplanes. Furthermore, ISDS trained Honduran death squads, including the notorious Battalion 3-16, which conducted kidnappings, killings, and torture against political dissidents.

Not done

While Palestine solidarity activists are celebrating Brazil’s decision, they are now turning their focus to the Olympics Committee, which has named ISDS as an “official supplier” for the games.

Maristela Pinheiro, a member of the Rio de Janeiro Committee in Solidarity with the Palestinian People stated: “There will be for sure a strong campaign against the supplier deal between ISDS and the 2016 organizing committee and we’ll keep monitoring Coesrio [the government agency responsible for the Olympics]. The games can’t be intensifying repressive practices in our country, or endorse illegal and immoral actions.”

Large sporting events, like the Olympics and the World Cup, are magnets for military and security firms that are hired to pacify, place under surveillance and remove poor and other “undesirable” segments of the population from the festivities. ISDS is just one of several Israeli and other international companies that have profited from this routine in the past.

Due to Palestine solidarity activists, the company will not be enjoying as much profit as it had hoped to reap in Brazil next year.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: This is kind of surprise! With approximately one year left for the coming 201 Olympics the major security contractor is out! Will Russians take over – see article above. Will anybody take over? This messy situation is not very relaxing for the biggest sports mega-event to come. Deeply concerned about security issues – I am not mentioning CBRN issues because most probably they will have no time to take care of (and existing military capabilities are not sufficient to cover all venues in megacities’ involved).

'The Great War of Our Times' offers an insider's view of the war on terror

Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/Books/Book-Reviews/2015/0512/The-Great-War-of-Our-Times-offers-an-insider-s-view-of-the-war-on-terror>

The Great War of Our Time, a new memoir by Michael Morell, former Deputy Director of the CIA, offers a rich haul of gossipy insider details. We learn that George Tenet, the director of the CIA from 1997 to 2004, liked to

sing Aretha Franklin hits and dribble a basketball down the hallways of the agency. We watch as Bush’s beloved dog, Barney, chews the tassels on Tenet’s loafers in the



Oval Office. But the book also makes many strong and unsettling claims: that the Arab Spring helped Islamic extremism flourish, that the Edward Snowden revelations directly aided ISIS, that the use of enhanced interrogation techniques such as waterboarding yielded essential intelligence, and that the hijacking of a transatlantic flight remains well within the capacities of Al Qaeda.

Morell worked in the intelligence community for 33 years, but he won the important post of intelligence briefer for George Tenet in the late 1990s. The job demanded that he survey and synthesize massive quantities of intelligence that the CIA gathered from around the world and select which items to bring to the director's attention. In 2000, he assumed the coveted position of daily briefer for George W. Bush. Six and often seven days a week, Morell delivered the PDB – President's Daily Brief – in the Oval Office, or anywhere in the world Bush was traveling. Once again, he was charged with deciding what intelligence items merited the attention of an immensely powerful figure. The information he presented directly shaped the President's worldview and informed his policy decisions.

Before 9/11, Morell rose at 3:30 a.m. every morning to prepare and polish the daily brief. After 9/11, he began waking at 12:30 a.m. to sift through the wave of threats inundating the CIA. In a candid assessment, Morell offers what some might consider an understatement, noting that Bush "did not have a particularly deep background in foreign affairs." But Morell defends Bush against accusations that he dismissed and ignored ominous threat briefings in the months before 9/11. Because the intelligence did not contain specific and actionable information, he argues, there was not more that Bush could have done to prevent the attacks.

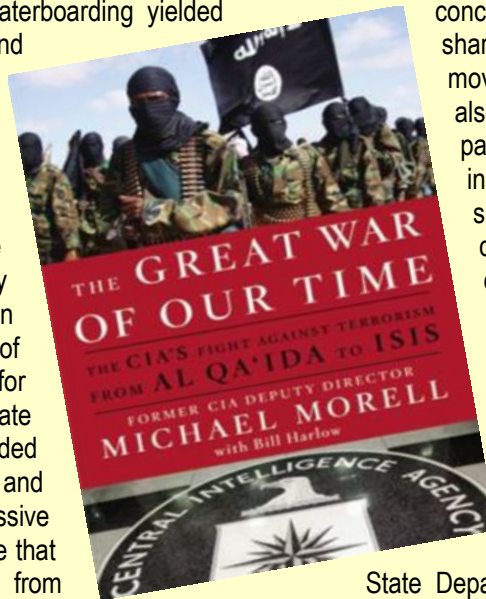
Morell is hardly the first to analyze the pre-9/11 failures of US intelligence agencies. He narrates the familiar story of the 1998 missile strike in Khost, Afghanistan, that almost killed Bin Laden, a near-miss that invites tantalizing

speculation about possible alternate histories. He explains how bureaucratic infighting at the CIA hampered the efficacy of certain operations – analysts were not always taken as seriously as they should have been – and concedes that the CIA and FBI did not share vital information about the movements of the 9/11 hijackers. He also, unsurprisingly, defends the CIA, painting it as the victim of a broader indifference to terrorism and a subsequent lack of funding that characterized the political climate of the late 1990s.

It was 9/11, of course, that made counterterrorism a priority for the CIA and mobilized the political will to expand the agency's budget and powers. On Saturday, Sept. 15, 2001, Morell remembers Bush dismissing the advice of a

State Department official with the following words: "F**k diplomacy. We are going to war." This was the spirit that led to the invasion of Iraq, although questionable intelligence about that country's possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction was a more immediate catalyst. Dick Cheney and his staff look particularly bad in Morell's account. Despite the fact that the CIA doubted and retracted certain intelligence sources indicating WMDs, Cheney and his aides continued to mention the dubious intelligence in public statements and exerted pressure on the CIA to support their political agenda of invading Iraq.

Morell staunchly defends the use of drone strikes and enhanced interrogation techniques that the military and the CIA deployed after 9/11. He claims that the number of women and children killed by drone strikes is vastly exaggerated and that the weapons are precise and effective means of targeting known terrorists. Unfortunately, however, his argument is undermined by the fact that he is unable to reveal classified data that would support his point. Absent such evidence, he's basically asking his readers to trust him. He does give certain examples of terror plots that were foiled in part because of information extracted using EITs: a scheme to target the Brooklyn Bridge, for example. He also notes that some of the intelligence that led to the successful 2011 raid on Bin



Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, resulted from interrogation techniques that some have denounced as torture.

Whether such intelligence might have been obtained by other means is difficult to know. Morell's position, once again, is essentially that we should trust him when he says that EITs were necessary to national security. But he does poke some persuasive holes in Sen. Dianne Feinstein's report on torture, and he certainly establishes that the CIA was acting with the knowledge and approval of both the White House and the Senate, not simply operating as a rogue agency.

Some of the more startling claims in the book involve Edward Snowden, ISIS, and the Arab Spring. "Snowden has made the United States and our allies considerably less safe," he writes. "I do not say this lightly: Americans may well die at the hands of terrorists because of Edward Snowden's actions." While he does not endorse the view that Snowden was an agent of Chinese or Russian intelligence agencies, Morell raises the possibility that Snowden underestimated the capacities of hostile foreign governments and was himself the victim of information thefts. After Snowden revealed specifics about the surveillance and collection methods used by the NSA, CIA, and other American intelligence agencies, ISIS and other terrorist organizations immediately began changing their tactics, using non-American email programs and encrypting communications that were previously a valuable source of intelligence. Foreign intelligence agencies in Iran and China have also adjusted their operational protocols after the Snowden revelations, according to Morell.

These changes roughly coincided with the series of revolutions in the Middle East known as the Arab Spring. Morell argues that Libya and Egypt are just two examples of a broader

phenomenon: After a revolution topples a repressive ruler, the resulting power vacuum often allows Islamic extremism to flourish. Having dismantled the military capacities of former regimes, the new leaders should not be surprised when they lack the means to control their territories and stop the spread of ISIS.

Morell reveals many interesting details – some previously unknown – from his long career. He helped negotiate the release of four New York Times employees captured by Qadhafi's forces in Libya in 2011. He was present during President Obama's careful deliberations and intricate planning preceding the strike against Bin Laden in 2011. He also gives a thorough account of the Benghazi attack in 2012, offering a play-by-play of the attack itself and the political wrangling that ensued.

The fundamental argument of his book is that robust intelligence agencies are essential for national security and that support for them should thus transcend partisan feuding. He offers many chilling examples of narrowly averted terror attacks that could easily have caused mass casualties. He also mentions frightening future threats ranging from a weaponized strand of the bubonic plague to bombs that are surgically implanted inside the human body in order to escape detection. Al Qaeda's desire to obtain a nuclear bomb represents another looming risk.

Though it's clear that he wants to defend the reputation of the agency where he worked for so many years, Morell gains credibility by noticing the many weaknesses and flaws in the design and function of intelligence agencies. Ultimately he presents a persuasive and powerful case that without substantial financial and political investment in disrupting international terrorism, most of these future threats are not simply possible but inevitable.

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Confirmed: US "Operation Rooms" Backing Al Qaeda in Syria

By Tony Cartalucci

Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/confirmed-us-operation-rooms-backing-al-qaeda-in-syria/5448712>

The war in Syria continues to drag on, with a recent and renewed vigor demonstrated behind an opposition long portrayed as fractured and reflecting a myriad of competing foreign interests. Chief among these competing interests, the public has been told, were the US and Saudis on one side, backing so-called

"moderate rebels," and Turkey and Qatar on the other openly backing Al Qaeda and its various franchises including the Islamic State (ISIS).

However, for those following the conflict closely, it was clear from the beginning and by the West's



own admissions that success hinged on covertly providing arms, cash, equipment, and both political and military support to Al Qaeda and other sectarian extremists, not opposed by Saudi Arabia, but rather by using Saudi Arabia

as the primary medium through which Western material support could be laundered. And this fact is now confirmed in a recent article published on the Brookings Institution's website titled, "Why Assad is losing."

It states unequivocally that (emphasis added):

*The involvement of FSA groups, in fact, reveals how the factions' backers have changed their tune regarding coordination with Islamists. **Several commanders involved in leading recent Idlib operations confirmed to this author that the U.S.-led operations room in southern Turkey, which coordinates the provision of lethal and non-lethal support to vetted opposition groups, was instrumental in facilitating their involvement in the operation from early April onwards. That operations room — along with another in Jordan, which covers Syria's south — also appears to have dramatically increased its level of assistance and provision of intelligence to vetted groups in recent weeks.***

*Whereas these multinational operations rooms have previously demanded that recipients of military assistance cease direct coordination with groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, recent dynamics in Idlib appear to have demonstrated something different. **Not only were weapons shipments increased to the so-called "vetted groups," but the operations room specifically encouraged a closer cooperation with Islamists commanding frontline operations.***

Overall, Brookings is pleased to report that with the infiltration and overrunning of much of Idlib in northern Syria, it appears their long-stated goal of creating a seat of power for their proxies within Syria's borders and perhaps even extending NATO aircover over it, may finally be at hand. Brookings still attempts to perpetuate an adversarial narrative between the West and Al Qaeda, despite admitting that it was only with Western backing that recent offensives spearheaded by Al Qaeda itself were successful.

In reality, as far back as 2007, it was the admitted policy of the then Bush-led White House to begin arming and funding sectarian extremists, including Al Qaeda, through the use of intermediaries including Saudi Arabia. Veteran journalist and two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Seymour Hersh in his report "The Redirection: Is the Administration's new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?" would lay bare this conspiracy which has since then unfolded verbatim as described in 2007.

The above mentioned Brookings article also alludes to a grander geopolitical landscape taking shape beyond the Syrian conflict. It states in regards to the US now openly backing what is for all intents and purposes an Al Qaeda-led offensive that:

The most likely explanation for such a move is pressure from the newly emboldened regional alliance comprising Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. The United States also is looking for

ways to prove its continued alignment with its traditional Sunni Gulf allies, amid the broader context of its rapprochement with Iran.

The continuation, even expansion of the US-backed conflict in Syria is the most telling evidence of all regarding the disingenuous nature of America's rapprochement with Iran. The entire goal of destabilizing and potentially overthrowing the government in Syria is to weaken Iran ahead of a similar campaign of encirclement, destabilization, and destruction within Iran itself.

The fact that events in Syria are being accelerated, with Brookings itself admitting that "international and ideological differences," have been "pushed to the side," illustrates a palpable desperation among the West to finish the conflict in Syria in hopes of moving forward toward Iran before regional dynamics and Iran's own defensive posture renders moot the West's entire regional agenda, jeopardizing its long-standing hegemony across North Africa and the Middle East.

Similarly rushed operations appear to be underway in Yemen. With Western-backed conflicts embroiling virtually every nation surrounding Iran, the idea that the US seeks anything but Iran's eventual destruction, let alone "rapprochement" must surely have no one fooled in Tehran.

While Brookings enthusiastically reports on the continued destruction in Syria it itself played a part in engineering and



promoting, it still admits that overthrowing Syria's legitimate government is not inevitable. While it attempts to portray Syria's allies as withdrawing support for Damascus, the reality is that if and when Syria falls, Syria's allies are indisputably next in line.

Iran will face an entire nation handed over to Al Qaeda and other heavily armed and well-backed sectarian extremists dreaming of a cataclysmic confrontation with Tehran, fueled by a global network of US-Saudi backed madrasses turning out legions of ideologically poisoned zealots. And beyond Iran, Russia faces the prospect of its Caucasus region

being turned into a corridor of terror aimed straight at the heart of Russia itself.

The conflict in Syria is but a single battle among a much larger war—a global war constituting what is basically a third World War, fought not upon vast but clearly defined fronts, but rather through the use of fourth generation warfare, proxies, mercenaries, economics, and information. For those that fail to see how Syria is linked to the survival of many nations beyond its borders and the very concept of a multi-polar world built upon the concept of national sovereignty, they invite not just Damascus' defeat, but that of the world as we know it.

Tony Cartalucci, Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine "New Eastern Outlook".

Terrorists' personality traits indistinguishable from traits of the general population

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150512-terrorists-personality-traits-indistinguishable-from-traits-of-the-general-population-experts>

May 12 – Social scientists and psychologists have not found a personality trait that visibly marks a potential for violent extremism, making it difficult to identify members of a group who may take up arms in support of a common cause.

"As of now, there is no specific terrorist profile," said Jocelyn Bélanger, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Quebec at Montreal who studies violent radicalization. "They come in all shapes and sizes." Research on violent extremism, including interviews with current and former radicals, provide broad lessons on why and how some individuals might become violent radicals.

The *Dallas Morning News* points out that violent extremism occurs throughout an different communities, and is not limited to religious or political movements. For many individuals who feel humiliated or oppressed, or who seek rewards through heroism or martyrdom, radical movements offer "the highway to significance," Bélanger said. Mental illness plays almost no part in political or religious terrorism, and while extremists might convince themselves that their actions are justified, research shows that they are not psychotic.

"There is little evidence of major psychoses being implicated, except in a minority of instances," said Dr. Kamaldeep Bhui, a

psychiatrist at **Queen Mary University of London** who studies violent extremism and is also editor of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*. In a recent research paper, Bhui and two colleagues wrote that "terrorists are generally well-integrated, 'normal' individuals," not angry, social outcasts like many school shooters.

Psychiatrist Jerrold M. Post, who founded and directed the CIA's Center for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior during twenty-one years with the agency, and now a professor at **George Washington University**, echoed that view in a report published last month. "There are no psychological characteristics or psychopathology that separate terrorists from the general population," wrote Post. "Rather, it is group dynamics, with a particular emphasis on collective identity that helps explain terrorist psychology." Post added that the Internet can let isolated individuals feel like an important member of "the virtual community of hatred."

Pete Simi, a criminologist at the **University of Nebraska at Omaha**, is not surprised at the normality of violent extremists. Simi and colleagues studied forty-four members of radical American white-supremacist groups. All but four of the study subjects had personally committed acts of politically or racially motivated violence. The



research uncovered that many of the study subjects had a high prevalence of childhood trauma, but Simi cautioned against drawing too many conclusions from his study. Childhood background might be a factor in embracing violent ideology, but it is not automatic.

Many people are abused as children, but not all grow up to become abusers. "What is clear is that most people in the general population who experience these conditions do not become violent, let alone violent extremists," Simi said.

Don't Take Terrorism Threats at Face Value

By Scott Stewart

Source: <https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/dont-take-terrorism-threats-face-value>

The Islamic State has demonstrated in the past year that it is quite adept in its use of social media as a tool to raise money, recruit fighters and inspire grassroots jihadists to conduct attacks. This week, however, its social media network was heavily focused on making threats. On May 11, Twitter users associated with the Islamic State unleashed two seemingly unrelated threat campaigns. One using the hashtag #LondonAttack, displayed photos of London and weapons (including AK-47 rifles and what appeared to be suicide bombs) and urged Muslims in the United Kingdom not to visit shopping malls. The second campaign threatened to launch a cyber war against the United States and Europe.

The Islamic State took credit for the botched May 3 attack in Garland, Texas, saying it would carry out harder and "more bitter" attacks inside the United States. Coinciding with the Islamic State's threats, FBI Director James Comey warned that his agency does not have a handle on the grassroots terrorism problem in the United States. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson noted that the United States has entered "a new phase in the global terrorist threat, where the so-called lone wolf could strike at any moment." Michael Morell, the former Deputy Director of the CIA, added his voice by claiming that the Islamic State has the ability to conduct a 9/11-style attack today.

While these statements and warnings paint a bleak picture, a threat should never be taken at face value — when placed into context, these claims aren't as dire as they seem.

Analyzing Threats

When analyzing a direct threat from a person or organization it is important to understand that in most cases they come from a position of weakness rather than power. The old saying "all bark and no bite" is based on this reality.

This applies to personal threats as well as terror-related threats. Terrorism is frequently used by weak actors as a way of taking asymmetrical military action against a superior opponent. Despite its battlefield successes against the Iraqi and Syrian governments and militant groups, the Islamic State is certainly far weaker militarily than the United States and Europe.

An important part of threat evaluation is assessing if the party making the threat possesses both the intention to conduct such an action and the capability to carry out that intent. Indeed, many threats are made by groups or individuals who have neither intent nor capability. They are made simply to create fear and panic or to influence the conduct or behavior of the target, as in the cases of a person who sends a "white powder" letter to a government office or a student who phones in a bomb threat to his school to get out of taking a test.

Generally, if a person or group possesses both the intent and capability to conduct an act of violence, they just do it. There is little need to waste the time and effort to threaten what they are about to do. In fact, by telegraphing their intent they might provide their target with the opportunity to avoid the attack. Professional terrorists often invest a lot of time and resources in a plot, especially a spectacular transnational attack. Because of this, they take great pains to hide their operational activity so that the target or authorities do not catch wind of it and employ countermeasures that would prevent the successful execution of the scheme. Instead of telegraphing their attack, terrorist groups prefer to conduct the attack and exploit it after the fact, something sometimes called the propaganda of the deed.

Certainly, people who possess the capability to fulfill the threat



sometimes make threats. But normally in such cases the threat is made in a conditional manner. For example, the United States threatened to invade Afghanistan unless the Taliban government handed over Osama bin Laden. The Islamic State, however, is not in that type of dominating position. If it dispatched a team or teams of professional terrorist operatives to the United States and Europe to conduct terrorist attacks, the very last thing it would want to do is alert said countries to the presence of those teams and have them get rolled up. Trained terrorist operatives who have the ability to travel in the United States or Europe are far too valuable to jeopardize with a Twitter threat.

Rather than reveal a network of sophisticated Islamic State operatives poised to conduct devastating attacks on the United States and Europe, these threats are meant to instill fear and strike terror into the hearts of one of their intended audiences: the public at large. I say one of their audiences because these threats are not only aimed at the American and European public. They are also meant to send a message to radicalize and energize grassroots jihadists like those who have conducted Islamic State-related attacks in the West.

Examining the Statements

First, it is important to understand the context of the statements made by FBI Director Comey, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Johnson and former CIA Deputy Director Morell.

Comey's statement about not having a complete handle on the grassroots terrorist threat is true. The very nature of such operatives makes them difficult for governments to combat. However, the FBI has been very successful in interdicting grassroots plots in recent months. In fact, I cannot recall so many grassroots operatives being arrested so closely together. However, one of the factors driving Comey's recent remarks is his steadfast belief that technological developments, such as encryption, are creating

"dark spaces" that the FBI does not have the ability to investigate. Comey contends that there is no place in the physical world that the FBI cannot get a warrant to search, but technology has permitted criminals and terrorists to create virtual places where the FBI simply cannot penetrate even if they procure the proper search warrants. Comey's recent statement is part of his campaign to convince the public and congress that the FBI needs the ability to investigate those places.

Secretary Johnson's statement about the new jihadist threat is also nothing new. Indeed, I heard him make the same statement last November and took issue with it then. Leaderless resistance, the terrorist operational model that stresses the importance of lone wolf operatives, is simply not a new problem in the United States. It has existed for decades and been actively promoted in the jihadist world since at least 2004.

Michael Morell is on a book tour and attempting to sell as many books as possible. One way to accomplish that is to make eye-popping claims. If the Islamic State had the capability to launch a 9/11-style attack inside the United States, or a similar spectacular terrorist attack, it would have already done so. Instead, the Islamic State has been forced to rely on grassroots operatives to conduct less than spectacular attacks on its behalf. Furthermore, the pre-9/11 paradigm has changed and there is simply no way an airline captain is going to relinquish control of his aircraft to be used as a guided cruise missile — nor would the passengers permit it. Because of this, it is very hard to imagine the Islamic State conducting a 9/11-style attack.

Certainly, the Islamic State is making threats and government officials are concerned, but in practical terms today's jihadist threat is no more severe than it has been in the past several years. Frankly, there has not been a time since 1992 when some jihadist somewhere was not plotting an attack against the United States, and occasionally some of them succeed.

Scott Stewart supervises Stratfor's analysis of terrorism and security issues. Before joining Stratfor, he was a special agent with the U.S. State Department for 10 years and was involved in hundreds of terrorism investigations.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Read this article and then read the two articles that follow — then make your own conclusions...



Britain faces growing threat from 350 jihadis back from Syria who may be plotting attacks in the UK says top anti-terror officer

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3081587/British-terror-suspects-numbering-700-travelled-Syria-half-returned.html>

Half of the 700 British jihadis suspected of fighting alongside Islamic State militants in Syria are back in the UK, police revealed yesterday. Scotland Yard said the nation was facing the

zone had passed 700. Asked how many had returned, he said there was a 'fairly even balance' between those who remained in Syria and those who had come home. 'Islamic State and other terrorist groups are

trying to direct attacks in the UK, encouraging British citizens to travel to Syria to fight and train. They are seeking, through propaganda, to provoke individuals in the UK to carry out violent attacks here.

'There is no doubt of the horrific nature of the offences being committed overseas. The influence of those who wish to bring similar violence to the streets of the UK has been an increasing threat here.'

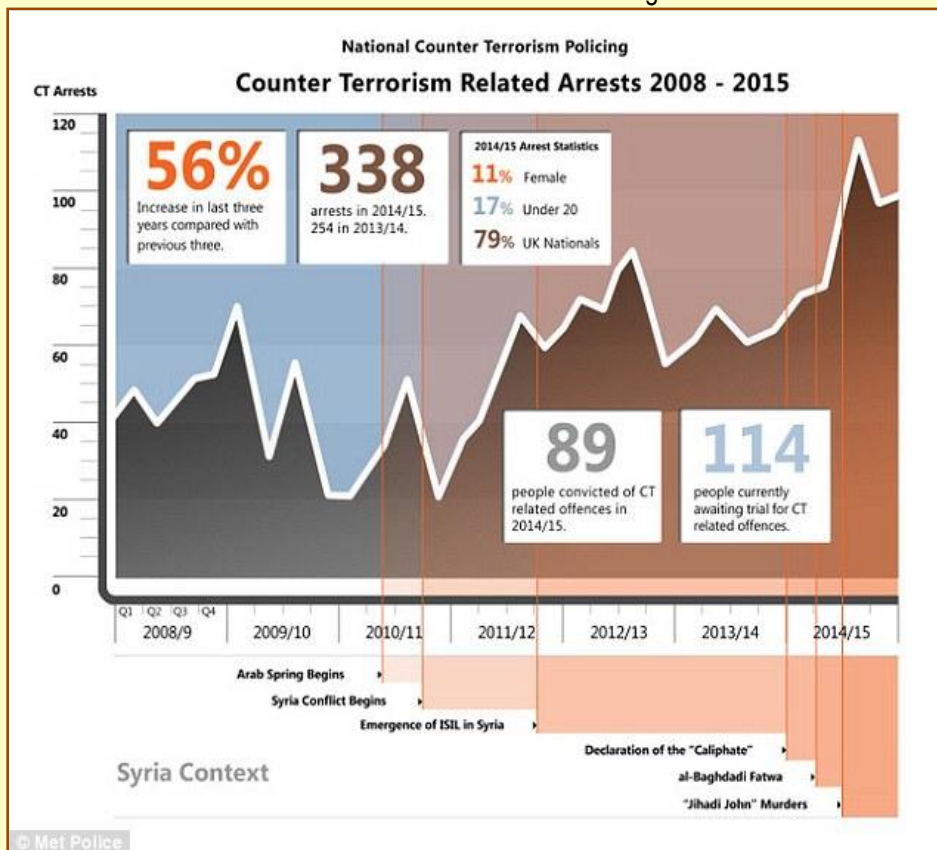
New figures reveal there were a record 338 arrests for suspected terrorism offences in 2014/15, an increase of a third on the previous year. Of the arrests, 11 per cent were women and almost one in five (17 per cent) were teenagers. A total of 89 people were convicted of terror-related

offences in the same period and an astonishing 114 suspects are awaiting trial.

An analysis by the Metropolitan Police reveals a steady increase in terrorism arrests since the conflict began in Syria in 2010.

Significant milestones in the bloodshed, including the declaration of an Islamic Caliphate and the Jihadi John murders, have all been reflected in increased police activity. Mr Rowley described the number of arrests in the past year as 'quite dramatic', adding: 'You are getting towards an arrest a day.'

The top officer said there were growing parallels between gang crime and the trend for teenagers to be lured into extremism.



biggest terrorist threat since the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, with suspects being arrested at a rate of almost one a day as growing numbers of women and children are drawn to extremism.

Senior officers fear troubled teenagers are being groomed by the flood of online Islamic State propaganda. Street gang members previously involved in knife crime and muggings are forming Islamist cells and even trying to co-ordinate international plots.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the country's most senior counter-terrorism officer, said police were working on hundreds of active inquiries. He said the number of people of 'significant concern' to have travelled to the war



He said: 'The make-up of terrorism has changed. You would not have seen that five or ten years ago. That mix of families, women, teenagers getting involved in terrorism is something that comes out. It's not going to be a one-off to see people in their teenage years coming into this. It replicates a bit what we see in gang crime – people with troubled histories get drawn into serious crime and can get drawn into this.'

Meanwhile, Met Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe said he supported Tory plans to update powers to obtain communications data. Home Secretary Theresa May has confirmed she will push to bring in a so-called 'snooper's charter' to maintain the security services' ability to monitor electronic communications. Sir Bernard branded it a 'welcome development'.

Terrorist threats made against the United States have forced officials to increase security at Patrick Air Force Base and the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station

Source:http://www.mynews13.com/content/news/cfnews13/news/article.html/content/news/articles/cfn/2015/5/14/threats_suspend_bus_.html

Threats made by Islamic State militants have forced threat levels at military bases to be raised to



"Force Protection Bravo" which is the third highest threat level on the five-tier scale.

The third level of alert means the Cape Canaveral: Then & Now tour — the popular bus tour that takes guests from the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex into the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station — has been suspended, officials said Wednesday.

The tour takes guests to some of the historic launch pads at the Air Force station.

"Once security levels change, we look forward to returning to normal operations with the once-a-day tour into the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station," said Andrea Farmer, a spokeswoman for the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, in an email.

Officials at the 45th Space Wing said the heightened alert is in response to a generalized threat against the country.

Earlier this month, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a weekend attack at a center near Dallas, Texas, exhibiting cartoon depictions of the

Prophet Muhammad.

The increased security will lead to delays at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and Patrick Air Force Base, officials said.

It's unclear how long the heightened security level will be in place, but Farmer said the no other tours are impacted.

"The rest of our tours, including the KSC bus tour included in daily admission, remains operational as it goes only to Kennedy Space

DELTA	Localized, specific terrorist threat or attack.
CHARLIE	Imminent threat of terrorism.
BRAVO	Increased and predictable threat of terrorism.
ALPHA	Possible threat of terrorist activity.
NORMAL	No known enemy or threat.



Center, not Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, which is under heightened security measures," Farmer said.

ANALYSIS - The Cycle of Radicalization

By Godfrey Garner

Source: <http://www.hstoday.us/single-article/analysis-the-cycle-of-radicalization/a0496fa4d922aaf8a565f67dd6e0a0c2.html>

The term "radicalization" is not a newly coined word. It is defined, simply, as, "to make a person more radical." Just as have other barbed terms used throughout history, this descriptor also has taken on a new meaning in the past decade -- and along with this new meaning, an ability to rouse feelings of hate, fear and apprehension.

Headlines around the world assure, or warn us, depending on one's interpretation, with headlines like, "*Initiative Aims to Address Roots of Terrorism and Radicalization*," "*Homegrown Radicalization not a Threat*," and "*No Mass Phenomenon of Radicalization in Canada*."

To Americans today, though, the term denotes alarm and portends some level of fear. The term evokes images of 9/11 and, more recently, the Boston Marathon bombings. Along with these images comes the seemingly unanswerable question: how does a young person, living in one of the most prosperous countries in the world, become someone who is capable of terrorism?

Americans have been exposed to acts of terrorism for decades, beginning with violent acts perpetrated by underground groups opposed to the Vietnam war and nuclear power. Still, those domesticized acts of terrorism did not strike the sort fear in the hearts of Americana as they do today. The first internationally well-known terrorist was "Carlos the Jackal," who was active in the mid-1970s. His real name was Ramírez Sánchez. He was an inept though prolific terrorist from Venezuelan who, due to a weight problem, was known as Gordo. Carlos was not an ideological terrorist, however -- he was "in it" for the money, even though he originally was recruited by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Closer to home and more recent, however, America's first nationally shared experience with radicalization came at the onset of the invasion of Afghanistan when the Northern Alliance --assisted by American forces -- routed

the Taliban from northern Afghanistan and captured a large group of Taliban fighters. Among them, American CIA operatives discovered, was a scrawny, scraggly-bearded young man with a gun powder-smoke smudged face who, to everyone's dismay, identified himself as an American citizen.

This "first of its kind" event occurred at the hastily improvised prison, Qala-i-Jangi outside Mazer-e Shariff within a day of another more tragic "first of a kind" event -- the first American casualty in the war to oust the Taliban.

John Walker Lindh was captured in a battle resulting from an uprising of Taliban prisoners held at Qala-i-Jangi. During this battle, CIA field officer Michael Spann was killed, along with all but 86 of the estimated 500 prisoners. Spann was the first of many Americans who would die in this country.

In the ensuing weeks, media in the United States would be deluged with stories, not of the American hero Michael Spann, but of John Walker Lindh, who originally was from San Francisco. He was the first radicalized Islamic jihadist, and we all wanted to know who, what, where, when and why he was radicalized. The most lingering of these questions was, "why?"

The discovery of the American Taliban, as Lindh quickly was referred to, ushered in a new meaning to, and emphasis on, the term "radicalization." Though not precisely accurate, in America's mind, Lindh was our first "radicalized American youth."

The term wasn't exactly accurate in Lindh's case though, because America had dealt with radicalized youths for decades, like the infamous Weather Underground romanticized in Robert Redford's, movie, "The Company You Keep." Radicalization, represented by examples such as Lindh, however, was a completely new and sinister conception.

The products of radicalization in America, it was eventually realized, were men and women much more willing to die fighting infidels given that part of the radicalization



process resulted in a resolved belief that by fighting for Allah they would be rewarded in death.

Lindh didn't travel to Afghanistan to fight with anyone; he'd become a devout Muslim and went to Pakistan to learn about Islam. While in Pakistan, though, he was disillusioned with the lack of sincerity and Islamic zeal shown by some of his fellow students. It was then he decided to go to Afghanistan and join the Taliban, whom he'd heard were much more strict and devout. Joining an army was something he'd planned, but it seemed like a natural thing to do under the circumstances.

Ironically, as Lindh fought alongside his new Taliban brethren against the Northern Alliance, he knew nothing of the 9/11 attack until it after it happened. He'd become radicalized long before jihad against the West caught fire. Nevertheless, from that point forward, radicalization would define those who ally themselves with jihadist movements against America.

It's easy for the casual observer of the process of radicalization to categorize all radicalized youth as inclined toward martyrdom through suicide. But the fact is, many radicalized American youth do not consider suicide. Americans who become radicalized and committed to acts in support of the jihadi cause -- whatever that may be -- are most often motivated by tangible rewards.

The lure of rebelliousness associated with the freedom fighter, which is how they view themselves, is tinged with adventure and romanticized for the targeted youth in the West. Terrorism, undertaken to defend "the oppressed," can always be supported by impressionable youth -- from progressive countries -- easily convinced of the moral justification of the use of terrorism.

Recruiters of American youth most often refer to the "terrorist" as the "revolutionist." The revolutionist is brave and courageous while the terrorist is someone too easily abhorred or feared. The revolutionist is often romanticized in media and action movies like the ones that depict Che Guevara or the actions of the French resistance fighter of old. Young people looking for meaning in their lives are easily enamored and seduced by this. Songs have even been written, glorifying the bravery and individualism of the revolutionist. The "terrorist," however, is rarely glamorized in the same way.

For Western youth, the reward for involvement is more tangible. The adventure itself is alluring. The idea of an immediate transformation and paradise, such as that sought by the traditional Islamic recruit, is foreign to the American. Americans aren't instilled from childhood with the concept of the glory of sacrifice in martyrdom. Western youth not only must be convinced of the worthiness and righteousness of the cause, but they also must be enticed with the earthly reward of fame and recognition. The typical American recruit, additionally, wants to be around to bask in their new found fame.

The United States government does not have a recognized, all-encompassing definition of terrorism largely because there are too many blurred lines and confusion between what is an act of war and what constitutes terrorism. An act of war, it may be argued, is not punishable by law, while an act of terrorism is more synonymous with a criminal act. Such distinctions have hampered the American government in efforts to isolate a clear definition.

Political ideologies are additional considerations that, in light of the fact that the vast majority of acts of terrorism are committed by Muslims in the name of Islam, cultural issues further hinder specifics when it comes to defining terrorism.

Since the act itself is so difficult to define, the actor also is difficult to define; and the process that connects the actor to the act is further confused because of the lack of specifics and definitions. A case in point is the incident in which Alton Nolen, fired from his job at Vaughn Foods in Moore, Oklahoma, returned to his jobsite where he stabbed one worker and beheaded another. Officials have never discounted the possibility that a connection between his Islamic beliefs and loose ties to ISIS played a role in his horrific attack, yet his actions have been categorized as "workplace violence" and therefore subject to much clearer criminal violations and sanctions. It is much easier to handle a clear violation of the law.

Specific definitions aside, a process does take place when a young American is transformed from a seemingly normal young person to a terrorist bent on potentially suicidal terroristic actions. Thankfully, there are not enough incidents to establish a firm pattern. However, there are some



recognized similarities among individuals who have been radicalized and the process or pattern of actions that resulted in their radicalization.

The process of radicalization may be viewed as sequential, along a continuum in four stages beginning at a place all young men find themselves at some point in their adolescence. Every young man -- and some young women -- go through a stage of pre-adolescence that is characterized by two things; rebellion and seeking. They dissident and begin a diligent search for an identity.

Anyone who has raised a son knows there is a period of time when they are a lost soul. They wake one day and see themselves as a punk rocker with an earring and spiked hair, and the next day they morph into a cowboy, complete with country music and boots.

The traditional way a young person survives this period in their life is through the use of solid support systems. This is why we in America saw very few young men go seriously astray in generations past. Past generations of youth had strong support systems through family, church, community and school. Sadly, these support networks for youth today have seriously deteriorated.

Young people searching for meaning and identity today are easy prey, especially for religious institutions like Islam and those within Islam who are charged with recruitment to the faith, and, ultimately, to jihad. They know how to recognize the vacuum in the lives of young men and how to fill it.

One clearly defined similarity in the lives of most every radicalized American youth is a lack of stability. Most of them sought and were rejected by foundations in other areas or other religions before turning to Islam.

John Walker Lindh, for example, found stability in Islam following the instability brought on by his parent's divorce and his father's declaration of homosexuality. In actuality, Lindh himself rejected the training he sought and received in a madrassa he attended in Pakistan and sought a much stricter interpretation of Islam with the Taliban. In his perception the foundation of the particular group of students in the madrassa was not solid.

Without the support of family or institutions such as churches, a young person is adrift in search of an identity. And along with a loss of stability and security and the comfort that comes from these support structures, a young

man can lose his sense of pride in America and the sense that his country is good. He is without a personal identity and any sense of pride in America, and is easily convinced of the veracity of the anti-American rhetoric espoused by Islamic extremism.

Another recognized similarity in individuals who have been radicalized is their intelligence. These young men are almost all above average in intelligence -- a trait useful to Islamist recruiters for several reasons, but primarily because it enhances the recruiter's ability to explain difficult religious and philosophical concepts.

Stage two is a bonding stage in which young men find true belonging in Islam. It is worth noting most jihadist recruiters do not seek candidates for radicalization in random environments; they simply wait until young people convert to Islam. It is also worth noting that not all converts to Islam become extremists or jihadists. Many simply become Muslims. Among the crowd of young, newly converted Muslims, however, the recruiter for jihad finds plenty of vulnerable candidates.

The recruiter selects his targets from the newly converted. And make no mistake; they are very adept at recognizing the converts with the best potential to be nurtured into active jihad. There is a natural human desire to please and to be accepted, especially when we join a new organization or club.

It is among the new members of any group that the older members seek individuals to take on responsibilities others do not want to shoulder simply because of the human desire to please. Evidence indicates Mohammed Emwazi, aka "Jihadi John," became a prolific executioner for ISIS at his own behest in order to prove himself soon after joining the Islamist organization.

In stage three, the hook is set. Recruits for radicalization are paired with others with similar qualities, and they're constantly reinforced and praised for their willingness to "do more and be more." They are deluged with stories of the plight of their brothers in other lands and the suffering they endure for Allah.

Their connection to individuals and situations in Islamic countries is presented in ways that most young people can understand, and with which they can sympathize. The fact they are "brothers" of those in the fight in distant lands is appealing to the newly recruited. Romanticizing the suffering and



the “struggle” is easy for the experienced recruiter.

Formal training, which is expensive and difficult to conceal, is not necessary in all cases. The recruiter simply has to instill the desire and the willingness to sacrifice for the cause; then nurture it on a fairly consistent basis until the timing is right.

Thus, our greatest threat today are radicalized youth in the US willing to do something to please their Islamic mentors in jihad. When individuals are chosen for, or volunteer for training abroad, they generally are trained as soldiers. These now veteran jihadi fighters are told they'd be more useful fighting on their homefront. These radicalized youth are indoctrinated and encouraged to carry out simple but effective actions back on their native soil.

Local training is simple, and may be seen as more of a bonding process than actual tactical training, i.e.: guys going out and firing weapons or setting off explosives. Bonding in such scenarios allows individuals to encourage each other and intensifies when they commit to jihad.

All recruits are useful, even those who are unwilling or unable to carry out an attack. Recruits such as these are often used to recruit others who are more willing to undertake jihadist missions.

Another important consideration is the fact that even an unsuccessful operation is in its own right, successful. It makes little difference whether the actual act of terror a recruit undertakes results in mass casualties. The ultimate goal is to instill terror, which is accomplished even with a failed act of jihad. A case in point is the failed attack on the Texas “Mohammad cartoon group.” The lone wolf act was not only inexpensive, it required very little command and control and therefore less risk to those higher in the cell structure.

The fourth and final stage is carrying out a jihadist operation. The recruit is often given an operation or an assignment by the person who managed his indoctrination and conversion to extremism -- it is only natural that the mentor directs his recruit's jihadi mission.

The mission need not be catastrophic in nature to be effective, because, the attack, in addition to causing panic and terror, is to instill

confidence in the recruit. Once the recruit has “taken the plunge,” with even minor success, he is emboldened. And if the process is handled right, he is anxious to carry out more serious forms of jihad.

It's important to make a distinction between the American born and raised recruit, and the individual who grew up in a predominantly Islamic country with much more lengthy exposure to jihadist, extremist doctrine. The latter individual needs less evidence of the spiritual reward for martyrdom. The reward for him is much more ethereal. Additionally, individuals born in Muslim nations often live in poverty. For this individual, stepping from a life of poverty into paradise is reward enough. And, since he has been exposed to the veracity of the paradise of the afterlife from birth, he needs little encouragement.

The American convert though, regardless of his zeal for the movement, needs more convincing and more encouragement. The exuberance of youth is unfortunately often intertwined with severe shortsightedness so the danger involved is rarely an issue for the recruit. The American recruit also is often encouraged by promises of respect from his peers should he be caught and imprisoned because he will be seen as an “Islamic freedom fighter” – much like the scores of dangerous jihadists who have been released from GITMO.

Committing an act of terrorism in support of jihad is a step into adventure for the American recruit. The thought that he might be killed carries no more weight than when a young man decides to drive a car at 100 miles per hour.

In summation, the youthful exuberance and rebellious nature of American youth with little or no support systems -- and little or no family structure – are most susceptible to radicalization. The lack of structure for these typically young men is at least in part a byproduct of American society itself, therefore these young men have very little allegiance to, and more often than not, have a level of disdain for, America.

Consequently, joining and fighting for extremist groups like ISIS is, for these young men, as much about striking out at America as it is in defending Islam.

Contributing Writer Godfrey Garner is a veteran special operations counterintelligence officer who retired from US Special Forces in 2006. He



served two military tours and six civilian government related tours in Afghanistan. His work there most recently was as a counter-corruption analyst. Garner previously wrote about jihadi groups' unification in his Homeland Security Today report, The Potential that Jihadi Groups will Unify ... and With it, More Savagery. Garner also is author of, Danny Kane and the Hunt for Mullah Omar, and, The Balance of Exodus.

Terrorists' Most Powerful Recruiting Tool: Boredom

Source: <http://time.com/3857035/terrorists-recruiting-tool/>

The young man had wavy hair down to his shoulders, white teeth, and a charisma palpable even from across the street. My driver saw it, too: "al-Qaeda," he said, fear and awe mingling in his voice. Whether or not the man was indeed al-Qaeda, he had a cosmopolitan air, making every man around him on the dusty street in downtown Sana, Yemen, seem small-town by comparison.

It was that day that I understood firsthand a key recruiting tool for violent jihadis: boredom. Nearly a decade later, it's still one reason for youth radicalization. For young people in Yemen, where youth unemployment is about 50%, the possibilities of ordinary life must pale besides joining a transnational band to fight in a foreign land. How else to catch some of that reflected globalization they saw on communal televisions?

Modern terrorist organizations, such as ISIL, are creating more complex and nuanced propaganda to lure these disenchanting youth in the Middle East, and the West. ISIL's English YouTube videos target Western kids weaned on Western pop culture. There are custom retools of Grand Theft Auto for wanna-be jihadis, and testimonials that look like snowboarding videos. Young women schooled on Disney princess DVDs join ISIL dreaming of, in the words of one recruit's tweet, "doing a Mulan" and going out disguised as a man on the battlefield.

Recruiters promise community and "sisterhood." "It's cliquy," says Erin Saltman, who heads up the Women and Extremism project at the Institute of Strategic Dialogue in London. "The people who aren't in the clique haven't made the journey out. Anyone can make the journey, they try to say, and if you don't, it's because you're weak, or not a good Muslim."

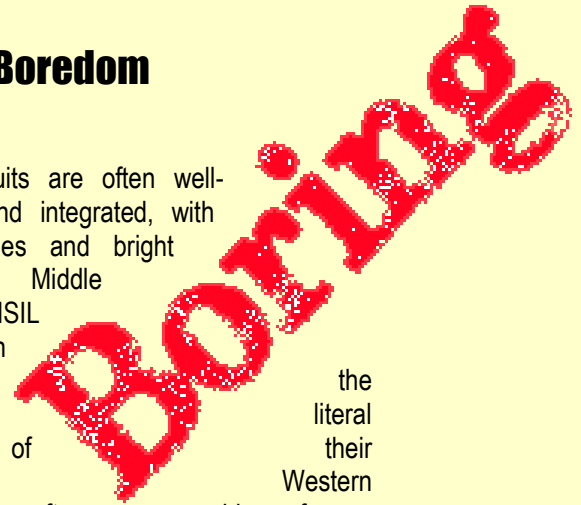
Once, terror experts saw Western jihadis as disenfranchised loners without prospects, or second-generation youth stranded between Old World mores and Western ones. Today,

recent recruits are often well-educated and integrated, with close families and bright futures. Middle Eastern ISIL fighters often join after the political or annihilation of their countries; Western recruits are often searching for a purpose and for certainties they can't find at home.

Like other youth who hit the job market in a post-economic-crash Europe, many of these radicalized youth are dissatisfied, tech savvy, and desperate to belong to something bigger than themselves. Unlike their immigrant parents or grandparents, those coming of age in the post-crash era don't believe their economic futures are secure, or that working hard will guarantee success.

For youth facing an uncertain job market, an outfit like ISIL that says they'll whisk you to the heartland of Islam to do good for a righteous cause, might prove appealing. In a murky world of zero-hour contracts and short-term rentals, the certainty of a group that says they'll fix you up with a house, a spouse, and a career could seem pretty tantalizing.

Europe has seen the dangerous mix of anxiety and boredom before. In *Defying Hitler*, a memoir on growing up in Germany between the wars, Sebastian Haffner wrote of the "emptiness and boredom" hanging over swathes of interwar Germany, with "the yearning for 'salvation' through alcohol, through superstition, or best of all, through a vast, overpowering, cheap mass intoxication." For kids raised in the mall and online, reared to believe that "choice" is their birthright but who have watched their choices dwindle after the economic crash, ISIL might just be the cheap mass intoxication they're looking for.



Ten Years Out - My Advice from "Listening" to Somalis in the Hennepin County Jail Minneapolis

By Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin, PhD

Source: http://www.familysecuritymatters.org/publications/detail/ten-years-out-my-advice-from-listening-to-somalis-in-the-hennepin-county-jail-minneapolis?f=must_reads

May 15 – Minneapolis is once again in the news as the American epicenter for recruitment to global jihad. *The Wall Street Journal* ran its story "A Test Case for De-radicalization" and *The Economist* - "The Siren Song of IS " but the best one so far is by Patrick Poole's "Minneapolis Terror 'Deradicalization Program fails after just months 'Test Case' back in jail." In email to a colleague I lamented that the Deradicalization program would not work. I did not want to be a naysayer but there is virtually no understand of these jihadis' psychopathology and developmental problems stemming from early childhood.

Ten years ago, I was among one of the first to conduct prison interviews in the Hennepin County Jail, Minneapolis. I did not "talk" to terrorists like so many experts. I **listened** to and observed them based on extensive years of training as a psychoanalyst. My expertise is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and I also hold a doctorate in medieval Spain's Islamic community, the Moriscos. I have studied aljamía, Arabic and many other languages. I have written about Minneapolis, jihadi terrorism and early childhood development before but stay with me as I reveal more important details. I have been at this for a long time.

In 1984 my doctoral work was translated into German because the Germans were well aware even back then that their Muslim populations, guest workers from Turkey, Morocco and other Middle Eastern countries were not integrating. We know what happened in Hamburg with Mohammed Atta and his Al Qaeda cell for 9/11. These populations like the Somalis have high rates of domestic violence - honor killings, child bride marriage, female genital mutilation and a significant number wind up involved in jihad.

I developed a "psychological" X-ray of terrorist behavior outlined in my books which references my work concerning the Somalis: *The Banality of Suicide Terrorism* 2010 (also translated into Hebrew 2012), *Penetrating the Terrorist Psyche* 2013. Prior to the prison interviews the U.S. Army at Fort Leonard Wood, MI. contacted me shortly after 9/11

concerning my work on the devalued female in Arab Muslim culture and the Islamic suicide attack as I proposed a link which has now been supported by neuroscience findings. My work influenced the push we witnessed to enhance the lives of women and little girls in Iraq and Afghanistan.

My third book, *The Maternal Drama of the Chechen Jihadi*, was by special invitation by Jason Aronson, a leading publisher of psychology for his free book project to place digital books in the hands of people throughout the world who normally would not have access to them: www.freepsychotherapybooks.org.

There are many similarities between Chechens and Somalis; both are Muslim shame honor clan cultures and just think of the attack on children at Beslan.

The Chechen book is being downloaded in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Malaysia, etc. I even received an email thank you for writing it from an expert on conflict resolution in Islamabad, Pakistan who plans to translate my books into Urdu.

Prior to interviewing, I had been invited by the former Sheriff of Hennepin County, Pat McGowen, to teach a continuing education course on radical Islam to his Deputies. He had invited a Muslim professor of Islam the previous summer. He confided that this professor had whitewashed jihad. I gave 13 lectures to 320 deputies. It was the deputies from the domestic violence unit who invited me to ride with them into the community to observe the problems.

Fast forward to May 2008: I presented at the 3rd Annual Conference: Terrorism and Global Security: Evolving Muslim Communities in the U.S. and Europe on the Somali community at Rand Santa Monica. My lecture's title was: "Ku So Dhawow Bulshayada [Somali meaning 'Welcome to Our community'], "Mogadishu," Minnesota aka Minneapolis. I predicted there would be significant problems coming out of this community. Five months later Shirwa Ahmed detonated in Puntland becoming the first American suicide bomber.



He came from this community. Next, a detective from the LAPD called me because the San Diego area was witnessing a surge in Somali refugees. He had heard that I was the "go to person" concerning Somali culture. We talked for over an hour.

As jihadi recruitment has grown even more severe, I believe it is because we have failed to factor in early childhood development. ***This is where the prologue to violence begins including radicalization and recruitment later on.***

The "radical" for radicalization lays dormant in a person who has been raised in a shame honor culture. The problem is much deeper than law enforcement wishes to admit or the public. Shame's unconscious violent rage becomes uncapped and acted out later on. ***Shame's violent rage is a "psychological" buried IED waiting to detonate.*** A child learns the need to hate and to have an enemy in the home even before pre-school linked to shaming. Indeed the FBI just raided a day care center run by Ardo Dirie, a Somali in Fridley, Minnesota. The day care center had a documented history of *child neglect*. There is also the question of links to terrorism funding through fraud.

While a lot of money is being thrown at "de-radicalization," reminiscent of the War on Poverty (and just think of where that has gotten us), we owe it to the public and to ourselves not to be terrified to address childrearing practices in these homes. They are different than in the West. Nevertheless, the Western converts who radicalized share a similar background of shame and troubled early childhoods.

One comment in *The Economist* article caught my eye: "Somali women made little effort to learning English." This is a red flag that shaming practices brought over from the old country persist to this day.

Yet I hasten to add that even back in 2008 many young Somali women and girls readily acquired English and many were thriving in college. They adapted better than the young males because for the first time in their lives they had an awareness of freedom. Once you taste it, you never forget and you will struggle to move forward.

The mother has tremendous impact on a baby. These are women often isolated from the larger society. I always asked the prisoners about their mothers. Often their eyes would well up

because they knew that I knew that they were Mama's Boys, bullies. Yet these mothers should not be blamed because in a shame honor culture the female is at the eye of the storm. She is THE shock absorber of chronic emasculated male rage. If we do not deal with early childhood development, we will lose this war on radicalization.

Raising a child happens behind closed doors. Neighbors always say about the jihadi that he was such a nice boy without knowing what really went on. To air one's dirty laundry in public is shaming for a clan culture. Nonetheless childhood development must be factored into a cohesive plan for "de-radicalization" if we want to foil the numerous ticking human bombs.

While all of these prison interviews were going on, something else remarkable happened. I established an email correspondence with the last two Somali Jews of Mogadishu - a son and mother - Avraham Mordechai and Ashira Hajbi. Rami, as he called himself by his Hebrew nickname, was part of a very old Yemenite Jews community. He came out blogging on the internet that he was Jewish. They were like the *Marranos/Anusim*, the forced Jewish converts to Catholicism, as they tried to fit in to Somali Muslim society, which vilifies the "Yahud" - the Jew. Rami taught me a lot about the clan system and Somali culture. I will forever be indebted to him. He also helped me learn a little af-Somali. In 2008 they fled Somalia. In 2010 all communication broke off. I am still searching for them. It haunts me daily, shades of the Holocaust.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali has written on Somali anti-Semitism. In the prison I learned that they thought there were 13 billion Jews in Israel! Their ignorance was woeful. Few knew that Israel had been the first country to recognize Somalia. Yet during the Six Day War, the Somali Jewish community was expelled and the majority deported to Kenya, save for a few like Rami's family who went underground. His father was killed in the 1990s during the civil war. Islamic anti-Semitism must also be factored into this early childhood educational model. If not, the Jew as target of this clan rage will persist.

While much needs to be done to stop recruitment and facilitate de-radicalization, early childhood development is the key to this endeavor. If we tackle the



problem in early childhood, jihadi violence can be cut at least in half. Having received a death threat myself from a Somali and Sudanese for merely asking about their mothers, I remain deeply concerned for the peace loving Minnesota I left behind in 2008 when I went to

work with the U.S. Army in Leavenworth, Kansas. Make no mistake about it - the Minneapolis St. Paul Jewish communities are at risk. It will only take, G-d forbid, one Muhammad Merah to destroy the peace. I hope here my ability to predict is wrong.

Dr. Nancy Kobrin, Psychoanalyst, Arabist and Counter Terrorist Expert Fellow, The American Center for Democracy. Author of: The Banality of Suicide Terrorism; Penetrating the Terrorist Psyche and The Maternal Drama of the Chechen Jihad.

May 16 – Boston Marathon Bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Sentenced to Death with lethal injection.

Let's Call Islamic Terrorists What They Call Themselves

Source: <http://thefederalist.com/2015/05/15/lets-call-islamic-terrorists-what-they-call-themselves/>



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For more than three decades, they have sought out and killed Americans. In 1983, in one of the first major anti-American attacks, they bombed the Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American servicemen. In 1992, they used bombs to kill two people in Aden, Yemen, in hopes of killing American troops that might be passing through. In February 1993, they used a truck-based explosive to try and topple the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. They failed, but their attack killed six New Yorkers and injured a thousand others.

What would you call the perpetrators of such acts—militants? Would you copy President Obama and call them violent extremists or simply terrorists? What is missing in such formulations? Even as he identified al-Qaeda as a threat to America, Obama refused to describe the enemy as it describes itself: “Islamic.”

Islamic Terrorists Have a Religious Goal
Emboldened by their success in Beirut and their almost-success in New York City in 1993,

terrorists used bombs in 1995 to kill five U.S. servicemen in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The



following year, al-Qaeda struck again at American troops in Saudi Arabia in the Khobar Tower bombings, killing 19 Americans and wounding 372.

Why did the terrorists persist in their plots to kill Americans? What was it about America that so enraged them? In February 1998, Osama Bin Laden provided an answer when he declared a “fatwa” (a religious decree) declaring war against America in the name of the World Islamic Front, calling for the killing of civilians as well as soldiers:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies — civilians and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it *in any country* [emphasis added] in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.

By their own words, Bin Laden and his fellow travelers declared themselves to be not just terrorists but Islamist terrorists with a religious goal—to re-establish true Islamic society in the Middle East by removing any “stain” of American influence by force. Bin Laden believed the whole world was meant to accept his universal message.

While the majority of Muslims prefer peaceful, non-violent, socio-political approaches that lead in time to a peaceful transition to Islamic society, a minority, led by revolutionary groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS, favor a jihad or holy war dependent upon violence and military action. This brand of Salafist Islam does not distinguish between combatants and civilians as the West does but sees the West as an imperialist enemy with America as its leader.

It is self-evident that the terrorists who have sought to kill us all these years are Islamist. Al-Qaeda and ISIS terrorists consider themselves to be holy warriors who believe in a *specific* ideology (Islamist extremism) that is tied to a *specific* religion: Islam.

From Al-Qaeda to ISIS

Following Bin Laden’s fatwa, the killing continued. In January 2000, al-Qaeda attacked the USS Cole in the port of Aden, killing 17 and injuring 39 Americans. In the world today, Bin Laden said, “the worst terrorists are the Americans,” and he predicted “a black future for America.” We did not understand how black they would try to make it.

While President Obama acknowledged that the fight against al-Qaeda was not over, neither he nor any other Western leader foresaw the change that Islamist terrorism would undergo.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, two hijacked passenger jets smashed into New York City’s World Trade Center, destroying the two towers and killing 2,753 people. A third hijacked jet slammed into the side of the Pentagon in Washington DC, killing 184 civilians and military personnel. A fourth plane, whose target was probably the U.S. Capitol, was diverted by courageous passengers and crashed in the Pennsylvania countryside, killing 33 passengers, seven crew, and four hijackers. In response, President George W. Bush approved and later President Barack Obama supported a global manhunt for Bin Laden, which ended on May 1, 2011, in Abbottabad, Pakistan, with his death in a raid by American Navy SEALs. Commented President Obama: “For over two decades, bin Laden has been al-Qaeda’s leader and symbol, and has continued to plot attacks against our country and our friends and allies. The death of Bin Laden marks the most significant achievement to date in our nation’s effort to defeat al-Qaeda.”

While President Obama acknowledged that the fight against al-Qaeda was not over, neither he nor any other Western leader foresaw the change that Islamist terrorism would undergo.

As the central branch of al-Qaeda withered under American assault, a regional affiliate, known as al-Qaeda in Iraq or AQI, grew and spread. In 2013, this group rebranded itself as ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. ISIS’s mission was to do more than harass American troops with improvised explosive devices or commit acts of terror. Rather, it aspired to territorial government and expansion across the Muslim world in the name of Sunni Islam. ISIS has proclaimed itself to be a re-establishment of the caliphate, or transnational Islamist state that ruled the Middle East and much of Europe a thousand years ago.

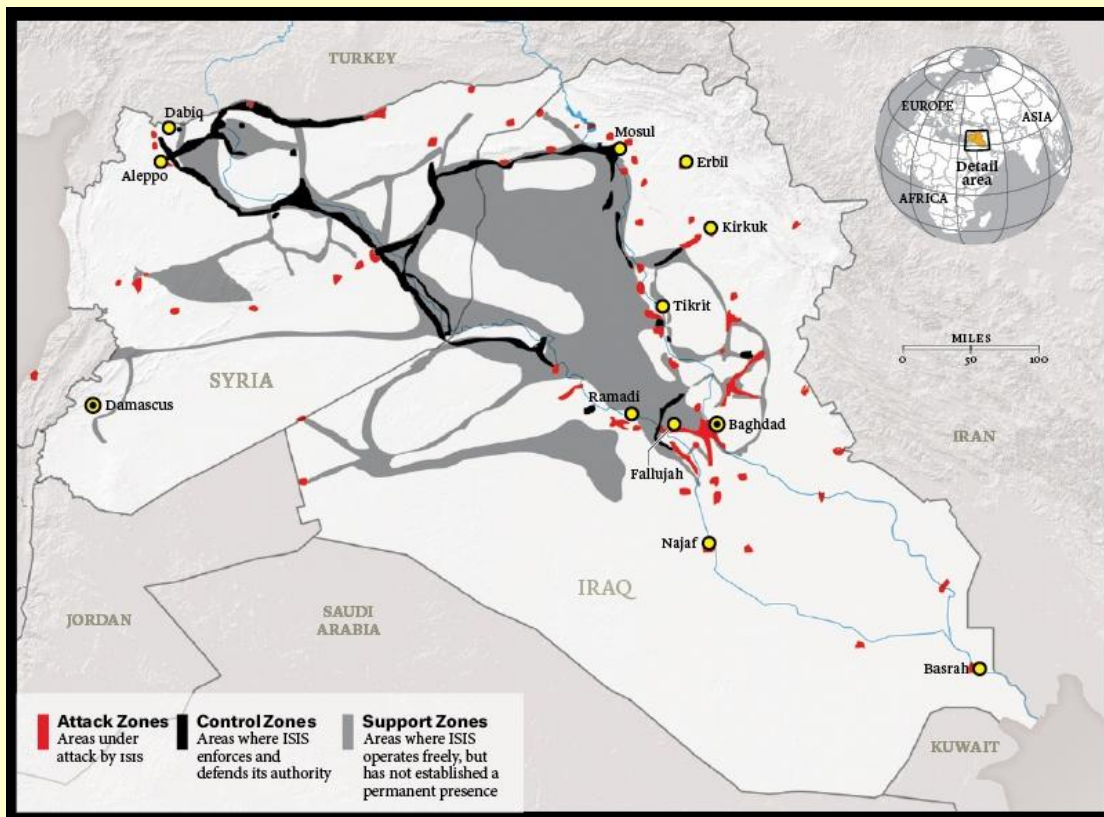
Beheadings and Massacres: Yes, They’re Serious

It shocked the world by beheading on camera James Foley, a freelance reporter with the *GlobalPost*; former Army Ranger Peter Kassig; and freelance journalist Steven Sotloff. In addition, ISIS hostage Kayla Mueller, an American volunteer



worker in Syria, was accidentally killed by a coalition airstrike.
 Islamist terrorism will only be defeated when we see it is as far more than mindless violence

have been 65 separate Islamist terrorist plots or attacks on U.S. soil. Thanks to the diligence of American intelligence and security operations, few of these plots have come to



and 'extremism.'
 While the West condemned the callousness of the beheadings, ISIS's reach grew. "We announce our allegiance to the Caliph...and will hear and obey in times of difficulty and prosperity," announced Abubakar Shekau, leader of Boko Haram, a Nigerian terrorist group dedicated to the goals of an Islamist society that ISIS represents.
 Boko Haram is merciless. In the past year, it has killed more than 10,000 people. This includes a brutal massacre of some 2,000 women, children, and elderly in the town of Baga, Nigeria. Nor is its reach limited to Nigeria. Boko Haram continues to spread havoc across parts of Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Its declared allegiance to ISIS further demonstrates the accelerating appeal of Islamist terrorism not just in the Middle East and in Africa but around the world.
 In Islamist terrorism, the United States and the West face a foe of the same ideological mold as the Soviet Union. Both communism and Islamist terrorism are threats grounded in principles deeper than geo-political or social considerations. In the 14 years since 9/11 there

fruition. However, Islamist terrorism will only be defeated when we see it is as far more than mindless violence and "extremism."
 President Obama recognizes that Islamist terrorism is a problem, sort of. Last September he declared that America would use a broad coalition to ultimately "degrade" and "destroy" ISIS. Destroy? Yes. Degrade? No. ISIS is a terrorist group, not a street gang.
 President Obama's preferred use of the euphemistic "violent extremism" to describe our enemies is problematic. The President's desire not to offend Muslims who are not engaged in terrorism may win some points in the Muslim world but it will weaken efforts to build a broad coalition against ISIS. Furthermore, it will confuse the American public. Without clarity in language there can be no clarity in strategy.

Don't Impose Western Values on Islamic Terrorists

Obama's socio-economic analysis of 9/11, at the time of the tragedy, reveals an inability to see clearly on a matter of national security:



The essence of this tragedy, it seems to me, derives from a fundamental absence of empathy on the part of the attackers.... It may find expression in a particular brand of violence, and may be channeled by particular demagogues or fanatics. Most often, though, it grows out of a climate of poverty and ignorance, helplessness and despair.

But the root of the 9/11 terror attacks was *not* a "lack of empathy" or "poverty and ignorance." It was an ideology of religious terrorism that Bin Laden willingly embraced. His beliefs flowed from forces more potent than the superficial categories Obama suggested. Islamist

terrorism is grounded in a rigid theocratic-political view of the world. As Walter Lohman, director of Heritage's Asian Study Center has put it, "the threat cannot be honestly separated from its religious context.... Calling the threat 'Islamist' allows us to distinguish friend from foe."

There is no need for America to declare its own "fatwa" against all Muslims. Rather, we must recognize that ISIS and Al-Qaeda represent a clear and present transnational danger that calls for precise definition and decisive action. We must be willing to understand our enemy as he is, not as we might wish him to be.

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Ethnic Albanian Foreign Fighters and the Islamic State

By Ebi Spahiu

Source:[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=43917&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=26&cHash=01bc3249f3fcfc008c7df0ca313cb279#.VVbXCJOTLz5](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=43917&tx_ttnews[backPid]=26&cHash=01bc3249f3fcfc008c7df0ca313cb279#.VVbXCJOTLz5)



May 15 – In recent years, several hundred foreign fighters from the Balkans are believed to have joined the ranks of the Islamic State group (Institute for the Centre for Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, December 17, 2013). Although a large number of Balkan militants fighting in Syria and Iraq are believed to be from Bosnia, with Bosnian police estimates reaching to over 180 fighters, growing numbers of ethnic Albanians, most notably from Albania, Kosovo and FYROM, have also joined jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria (RFE/RL, February 11). This article aims to explore trends of rising Albanian militancy and to put this in the context of current religious trends and the influences that have penetrated numerous Islamic orders in Albania and among Albanian-speakers in Kosovo and FYROM in the past few years.

Foreign Fighters

According to recent estimates, there are over 150 Albanian citizens and over 500 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and FYROM who have joined terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq (American Center for Democracy, March 25). In Albania, official police sources claim that 90 Albanian citizens have travelled between 2012-2014 to join groups in the region, initially Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's official franchise, and then later the Islamic State, its more hardline rival. However, religious leaders and

journalists that have followed the issue believe the numbers are a lot higher. [1] Many radicals are thought to have travelled with their families to Iraq and Syria, although there are several cases of children being taken away without their mothers' knowledge. Such was the case of Shkëlzen Dumani, a 40-year-old man from Laprakë, in the Albanian capital Tirana, who reportedly died in Syria in 2014; he allegedly tricked his wife into signing a legal agreement that gave him permission to travel



abroad with his two children, who are six- and nine-years-old (*Reporter* [Tirana], December 16, 2014).

Most recruits to Syria and Iraqi radical groups seem to have come from central Albania, including rural areas near Tirana, Elbasan, Librazhd and Pogradec; however, even smaller numbers of individuals from other towns are also present in the demographics. Interestingly, a number of men that have joined the Islamic State were not uneducated youth; some were educated and had been exposed to Western lifestyles, but had few opportunities offered at home. [2] Due to the EU economic crisis and Albania's long history of immigration, the country has experienced a surge of immigrants returning home, most notably from Italy and Greece, although there are few employment opportunities for those who return. For these individuals, radical ideologies can offer an apparent solution. Such was the case of Verdi Morava, a 48-year-old currently being tried in Albania for facilitating the travel of jihadists and for financing terrorism. Morava had, for many years, lived in Italy and had graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. [3] Similar examples are seen throughout the demographics of many young men, some of whom speak several languages, but joined due to ideological beliefs. [4] However, many have since returned, regretful of having participated in a war that was not based on the religious principles that they have imagined. Some of them have even spoken against the war in their communities.

Analysis of the significant numbers of foreign fighters from Kosovo show a generally similar picture. For instance, a recent publication by the Kosovar Center for Security Studies (KCSS), based in Pristina, explored in detail the lives and religious motivations of the over 230 fighters from Kosovo, including veterans of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), assorted youths and also religious leaders who had promoted jihad in local mosques. Some of these volunteers, such as Hetem Dema, a former KLA soldier from Kacanik who was killed in Syria in January 2014, are known to have died in the conflict, while others have since returned. [5] Indeed, the involvement of former KLA fighters is a persistent trend, dating to 2012 when, at the outset of the war in Syria, Kosovo government officials joined the international community in condemning Assad's atrocities and established "diplomatic

contacts" with the rebel Free Syrian Army, with former KLA fighters, in particular, sharing their experiences in dealing with oppressive Serb rule.

Domestic Arrests

Albania is a highly pro-Western nation, with aspirations to join the European Union. It also maintains a strong relationship with the United States, and it has supported the War on Terror since 2001 (E-International Relations, March 4). Partly as a result, it has cracked down strongly on foreign fighters and those believed to be encouraging them. For instance, in March 2014, 13 people were arrested at two mosques based in the outskirts of Albania's capital, for allegedly recruiting over 70 foreign fighters to join Jabhat al-Nusra, and later the Islamic State, and for having encouraged religious divisions. Nine of the arrested are currently being tried by Tirana's court over their links to organized crime. Almost unanimously, the indicted men did not deny their accusations, but publicly took pride in their activities. For instance, Bujar Hysa, one of the imams accused, formerly a preacher at the mosque of Unaza e Re, pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State, when questioned in court over his activities. [6] Similarly, in Kosovo, which also retains strong links with Western powers, since August 2014, more than 100 individuals have been arrested or questioned by the security services, including a number of leading religious and political figures tied to the Islamic Union of Kosovo, an officially recognized religious institution. However, even though these August operations gained tremendous praise from Western leaders, many of those detained have since been released, including the imam of Prishtina's Grand Mosque, Shefqet Krasniqi, due to insufficient evidence of their direct involvement in terrorist activities (*Gazeta Express* [Prishtina], January 22). However, in early March, seven of these suspects were indicted for "inciting others to commit or participate in terrorist activities, and for securing funds and other material resources," according to a statement by Kosovo's prosecutor's office (Balkan Insight, March 3).

Background to Radicalization

Following the collapse of Enver Hoxha's communist regime in Albania and the Balkan wars that



followed Yugoslavia's dissolution, external religious influences played a key role in facilitating the recruitment of hundreds of ethnic Albanians into Middle Eastern jihadist groups in recent years. For instance, after the fall of the communist regime in the early 1990s, Albania's Muslim clergy, particularly through the Muslim Community of Albania (MCA) organization, received significant funding from Salafist and Wahhabist groups in the Middle East, which was primarily aimed at changing how the country's majority Muslim population practiced Islam. [7] This import of Wahhabism was at odds with the country's Hanafi-influenced Sufi traditions that emphasized both the separation of church and state and also religious coexistence. In addition, although the MCA, and other organizations, have now distanced themselves from conservative and Islamist interpretations of Islam, there are also now numerous mosques that promote a radical "takfiri" vision of Islam. [8]

The Balkan wars of the 1990s served as an additional means for hardline groups to establish a footprint in the region. In particular, the war in Bosnia led to several hundred individuals from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Algeria and elsewhere, including veterans of the Afghan jihad, volunteering for what they regarded as a holy war against Christian Serbs. Although most of these fighters left after the war, their ideological influence persisted in some areas. In addition, the 1999 war in Kosovo was viewed by Islamist radicals as a jihad on behalf of Kosovo's mainly Muslim, ethnic-Albanian population. Although, the main armed group, the KLA, followed a largely nationalist agenda and discouraged foreign radicals, the recent appearance of significant numbers of ex-KLA fighters in the ranks of the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra reflects that the Kosovo war may have been given a religious dimension that is only now becoming apparent. Shefqet Krasniqi, for instance, one of Kosovo's most influential and controversial religious figures, recently posted a video to his official Facebook page that described his role as a war veteran (the first time he confirmed his participation in the war), characterized the

1999 war as conducted "in the name of Allah" and said that God and homeland are tied together (Facebook, April 10).

Implications

Despite the moderate traditions of Islam practiced among most Muslim communities in the Balkans, a number of factors, including the legacy of the Balkan wars, the influx of Wahhabi influence after the collapse of communism and Europe's recent economic problems, have combined to lead hundreds of ethnic Albanians from across the region to join radical groups in Iraq and Syria. As elsewhere, radical Islamist influence is also multiplied by skillful jihadist use of social media, YouTube and Twitter-based propaganda to target Albanian-speaking audiences, particularly those questioning the legitimacy of "traditional" Balkan Islam and also those rejecting democracy. These developments, as well as boosting the combat power of radical groups in Iraq and Syria, present an additional challenge to the long-term stability of the Balkan region, where various unresolved grievances between ethnic groups and memories of historic conflicts remain close to the surface. The volatility of the region and the potential for fresh interethnic conflict was lately underlined in FYROM where clashes on May 9-10 left 22 people dead, including fighters who had reportedly crossed the border from Kosovo, and caused severe destruction in neighborhoods populated by mainly ethnic Albanians in Kumanovo (*Reporter* [Tirana], May 11). The FYROM prime minister, Nikolla Gruevski, called the alleged perpetrators "terrorists" who sought to "destabilize the country" (*Illyria Press*, May 10). In response to the attack, many ethnic Albanians living in FYROM called for restraint and peace between ethnic groups on social media; others, however, were quick to call for war to get rid of "kuffars" and to create a Greater Albania. These differing reactions symbolize the different trends that are becoming increasingly evident in Albanian society throughout the region.

Ebi Spahiu is an independent analyst of Central Asian and Western Balkan Affairs, focusing on gender and religious extremism, and she is currently based in Albania.



Improved security for White House complex

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/05/improved-security-for-white-house-complex/>

May 15 – The United States Secret Service (USSS) and National Park Service (NPS) have begun implementing a series of new, temporary security enhancements and

After the Oklahoma City bombing and the September 11, 2001 attacks, the USSS implemented closures and increased security measures around the White House, including closing E Street,

NW and the Ellipse to public vehicle access. Many of these security features used a combination of concrete “Jersey” barriers, planters, and fencing.

According to Government Security News, the new, temporary security measures to E Street, NW and the Ellipse provide enhanced protection for the White House, while improving the aesthetics at checkpoints. The temporary design solution for the White House complex fence is meant to improve security, while minimizing visual impacts and respecting the significance of the White House.

Crews have begun rearranging existing officer booths on E Street, installing a new officer booth at the Constitution Avenue entrance to the Ellipse, and updating the vehicle checkpoints by replacing concrete barriers with mobile steel plate barriers which can be raised and lowered. These improvements are expected to be complete in early July.

A removable anti-climb feature consisting of sharp metal points will be installed on the top of the White House fence. The feature is meant to deter and inhibit individuals who may attempt to climb over the fence. Work is expected to begin in early July and take about four weeks. This temporary measure will be in place until a long-term solution is implemented.



aesthetic improvements for the White House complex, according to the agencies. These temporary measures are meant to satisfy security needs while a long-term solution is designed and implemented.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Amateuristic measures for the most protected "house" worldwide. Not a word on "human" fence or high tech technologies. Until the next attack that will embarrass those in charge hopefully without serious consequences.



Ongoing attacks against oil tankers

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/05/ongoing-attacks-against-oil-tankers/>

May 21 – A new report details a malicious and largely unknown targeted attacks on oil tankers. First discovered in January 2014, the ongoing attacks on oil cargos began in August 2013, and is designed to steal information and credentials for defrauding oil brokers. Despite having been compromised by this cyber-attacks, which has been dubbed the “Phantom Menace,” none of the dozens of affected companies have been willing to report the invasion and risk global attention for vulnerabilities in their IT security networks.

Panda Security has released Operation Oil Tanker: The Phantom Menace, a report which details a malicious and largely unknown targeted attacks on oil tankers.

First discovered by Panda Security in January 2014, the ongoing attacks on oil cargos began in August 2013, and is designed to steal information and credentials for defrauding oil brokers. Despite having been compromised by this cyber-attacks, which Panda has dubbed the “Phantom Menace,” none of the dozens of affected companies have been willing to report the invasion and risk global attention for vulnerabilities in their IT security networks. Panda Security said it is issuing its report in an effort to draw attention

to the attacks and urge companies in every industry to take precautions against these increasingly sophisticated and insidious attacks.

According to HomeLand Security News Wire , the Phantom Menace is one of the most unique attacks that PandaLabs has discovered. No antivirus engine was able to detect it when first triggered, primarily because the attackers used legitimate tools in conjunction with a number of self-made scripts to bypass any warnings that traditional AV software would detect. It was only discovered when a secretary opened a nonspecific attachment to an e-mail — a type of file that Panda Security would later identify among ten different companies in the oil and gas maritime transportation sector.

Panda Security says it ready to identify the individual to authorities, but without any credible reports being volunteered by the alleged victims, the authorities are unable to launch their investigations or make any arrests. Panda Security says it hopes the release of its report will shed light on the potential damage of the Phantom Menace and encourage companies to take the necessary steps against the perpetrator.



► Read the report at: <http://www.pandasecurity.com/mediacenter/src/uploads/2015/05/oil-tanker-en.pdf>

The balcanization of Mexican cartels

Source: <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/in-english/2015/balcanization-mexican-cartels-105835.html>

May 19 – According to the latest report from the Attorney General's Office (PGR) nine cartels operate in Mexico: Sinaloa, Jalisco New Generation, Los Zetas, Gulf, Tijuana, Beltrán Leyva, Juárez, Familia Michoacana and Knights Templar.

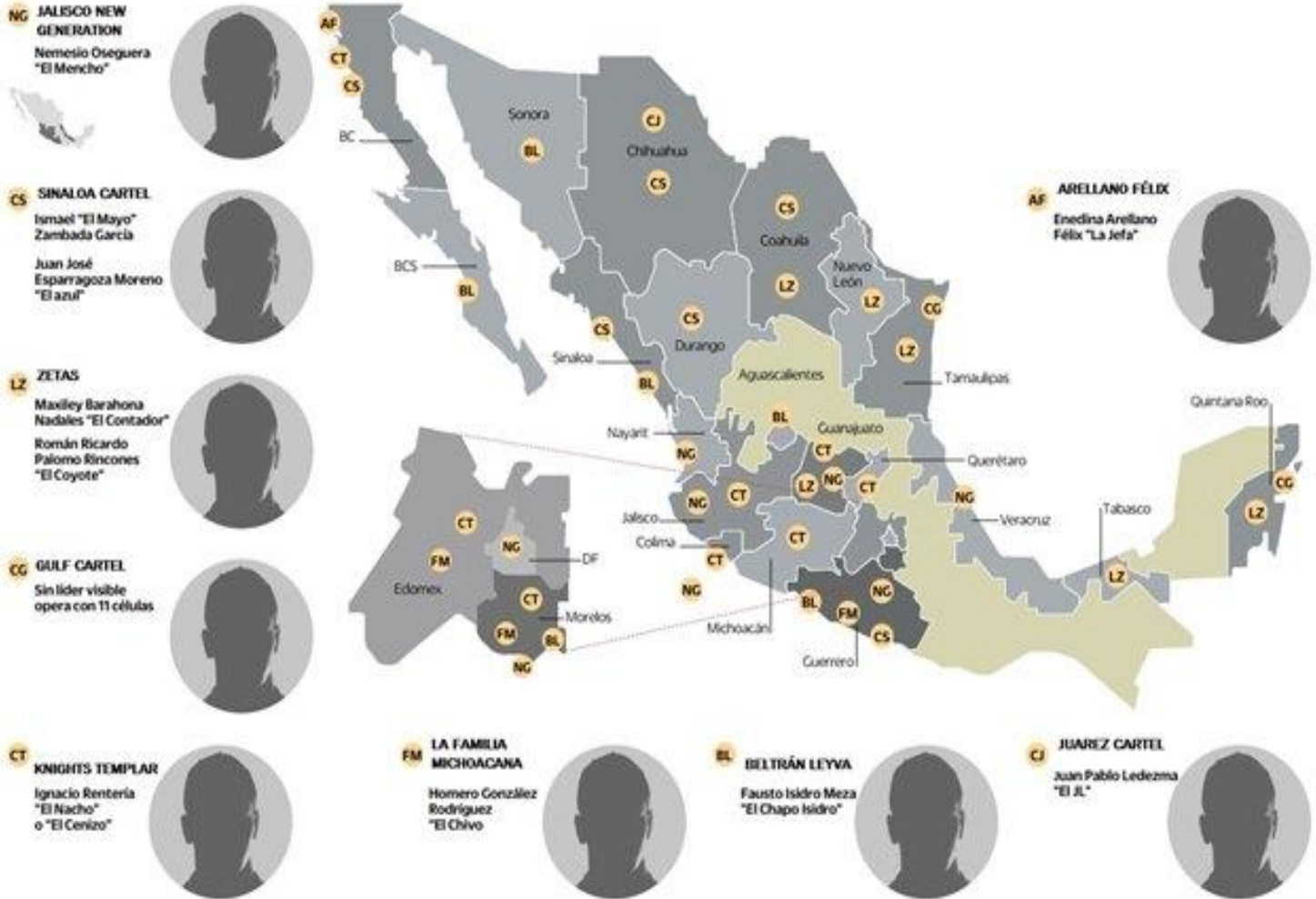
With the capture or killing of the main drug lords in recent years, Mexican drug cartels

fragmented into cells that seem to have the same influence as their predecessors.

This map of drug trafficking in Mexico is based on reports from the Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Treasury, as well as interviews with experts.



DRUG CARTELS THAT OPERATE IN MEXICO



Source: Attorney General's Office

After the arrest of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, leader of the Sinaloa Cartel; Servando Gómez "La Tuta", head of the Knights Templar cartel; Vicente Carrillo Fuentes (El Viceroy), leader of the Juárez Cartel; Miguel and Omar Treviño Morales, heads of the Zetas cartel; and the killing of Nazario Moreno "El Chayo", who commanded La Familia Michoacana, Ignacio Coronel and Arturo Beltrán Leyva (El Barbas), territorial fighting worsened. Also, new leaders emerged, though they are mostly regional and use armed cells defend "their" territory.

According to the latest report from the Attorney General's Office (PGR) nine cartels operate in Mexico: Sinaloa, Jalisco New Generation, Los Zetas, Gulf, Tijuana, Beltrán Leyva, Juárez, Familia Michoacana and Knights Templar.

Also, there are 45 criminal cells that apart from selling drugs steal hydrocarbons, kidnap and extort people and profit with human trafficking. Unlike their predecessors, the new generation of drug lords display their power on social

networks, where they also threaten rivals, publicize executions and show off their luxurious life style. They also infiltrate police forces and forge alliances with politicians and businessmen.

Arellano Félix

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) the Arellano Félix cartel controlled the states of Sinaloa, Sonora, Jalisco and Nuevo León for over 20 years.

After the capture of Fernando Sánchez Arellano, it became the first cartel to have a woman as its leader: Enequina Arellano Félix, also known as "La Jefa". Currently it operates in Baja California as the Tijuana Cartel and has three cells.

The first one, "El Chan", is headed by Juan Lorenzo Vargas Gallardo, a former ministerial agent who was arrested in October 2013 and released last August. The second cell is known as "El Jorquera" and



is commanded by the Jorquera family and the third cell is known as "El Kieto".

La Familia Michoacana

Despite the capture of its leaders -Nazario Moreno, Jesús Méndez Vargas, Servando Gómez Martínez, Enrique Kike Plancarte and Dionisio Loya Plancarte- it continues to operate in Morelos and Guerrero. Homero González Rodríguez, also known as "El Chivo", has been identified as one of its current leaders.

Knights Templar

It emerged after the dispute between of Nazario Moreno (El Chayo) and Servando Gómez Martínez (La Tuta). After the arrest of La Tuta, Ignacio Rentería El Nacho (El Cenizo) has been identified as the new leader of the cartel.

Los Zetas

Apart from selling cocaine and marijuana, this criminal organization steals fuels, extorts and kidnaps people and profits from human trafficking and piracy.

Three lieutenants of Miguel and Omar Treviño Morales have been identified as the heads of the cartel: Maxiley Barahona Nadales (El Contador), Román Ricardo Palomo (El Coyote) and Eduardo Almanza Morales.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice it operates in Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato.

Gulf Cartel

With the death of Ezequiel Cárdenas Guillén in November 2010, the Gulf Cartel stopped operating in Coahuila, Chihuahua, Tabasco, Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, Guerrero and Nuevo León.

Currently it operates in Tamaulipas and Quintana Roo through eleven criminal cells: Ciclones, Los Pantera, Los Sierra, Los Fresitas, Grupo de Apoyo Ceros or M3, Grupo Pumas, Grupo Bravo, Grupo Dragones, Grupo Lacoste, Los Rojos and Los Metros.

Los Metros does not have a leader after José Hugo Rodríguez Sánchez (El Gafe) was arrested in April, while Los Rojos is commanded by Juan Mejía González (El R-1). Grupo Lacoste is headed by Ignacio Zúñiga Blanco (El Barny), while Grupo Dragones is headed by Juan Martín Zárate Chávez.

In the United States the Gulf Cartel operates through alliances with local gangs.

Beltrán Leyva Cartel

After Arturo Beltrán Leyva (El Barbas) was killed in December 2009, the cartel fragmented but his family kept controlling it for five more years.

After the arrest of Héctor Beltrán Leyva (El H) in October 2014, seven violent cells emerged: Los Mazaltecos, El 2 mil, Los Granados, Los Rojos, La Oficina, Los Ardillos and the Independent Cartel of Acapulco (CIDA).

Fausto Isidro Meza Flores, leader of Los Mazaltecos, operates in Sinaloa and Baja California Sur while Salvador Granados Vargas (Chava Grandos) operates in the region known as "Tierra Caliente" in Guerrero.

Los Rojos control certain regions of the north and center of Guerrero, but it has more influence in Morelos under the leadership of Santiago Mazari Hernández (El Carrete).

Los Ardillos, that operates in the mountainous region and the center of the state, was founded by Celso Ortega Rosas (La Ardilla), who was killed in January 2011.

The Independent Cartel of Acapulco was disbanded after the arrest of Víctor Aguirre Garzón (El Gordo) last March. Now the area is controlled by "La Mochomera", commanded by the son of Alfredo Beltrán Leyva known as "El Dos Letras".

The most powerful cell is Guerreros Unidos, that operates in Guerrero, Morelos and the State of Mexico and even in the United States. The criminal group is allegedly involved in the disappearance of the 43 teachers in training of Ayotzinapa. It is commanded by "El Chucky", who remains at large.

Jalisco New Generation Cartel

It is considered one of the most dangerous criminal organizations by the governments of Mexico and the United States.

It stem from the Cartel del Milenio founded by José and Luis Valencia in Michoacán, but has since expanded its influence to Jalisco.

With the death of Ignacio Nacho Coronel in 2010, the Cartel del Milenio got divided in two cells: La Resistencia y Los Torcidos. The latter became the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), that sells synthetic drugs, marijuana and cocaine and also profits with



extortion, human trafficking and money laundering.

With its cell Los Cuinis, it controls clandestine laboratories of synthetic drugs in Jalisco y Colima. It also operates in Nayarit, Guanajuato, State of Mexico and Mexico City, according to the Drug Administration Enforcement (DEA) and the PGR.

Its leader is Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes (El Mencho), blacklisted by the U.S. Treasury Department along with his brother in law and leader of Los Cuinis, Abigael González Valencia, who was arrested in February.

Sinaloa Cartel

Through strategic alliances with international criminal organizations, it sells cocaine, heroine, marijuana, synthetic drugs, piracy and smuggled goods in South America, United States, Canda, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

It also launders money in Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Costa Rica and Guatemala, where it partners with local gangs.

The arrest of its leader, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán in February 2014 did not affect its operation.

Currently it has three leaders: Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada García, Juan José Esparragoza Moreno (El Azul) and Dámaso López Nuñez (El Licenciado), considered the cartel's main lieutenant.

It fights with rival cartels to control Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima and Michoacán.

The balcanization of big cartels

About the "balcanization" of big cartels, Gerardo Rodríguez, an expert on national security and terrorism, said that criminal cells have a better control over the territories because they know economic flows firsthand and can create local protection networks more easily.

"Mexico is copying the model of the emerging criminal gangs of Colombia, where small groups diversified into other profitable crimes such as extortion, theft, human trafficking and kidnapping," said the member of Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia (Casede).

He added that the government's strategy to fight organized crime is good. However, he warned that it may fail if the structures that are part of the pyramid are not destroyed.

"After capturing the big drug lords they have to do the same with the other leaders and go after their financial assets".

Javier Oliva, an expert on national security and professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, believes that "fragmentation was very predictable, because experience had shown that when drug lords are captured, cartels tend to divide, which leads to clashes over the control of territories."



Gaza's next war: Will Isis-inspired Salafi jihadis overthrow Hamas?

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/05/gazas-next-war-will-isis-inspired.html>

At a checkpoint in Deir el-Balah in Gaza, a Hamas policeman stands in dark blue uniform amidst a landscape of destroyed buildings and dried up fields. Nearby is pile of plastic, concrete and broken wood, the remains of a mosque that have since been torn down.

It was here that until a week ago radical Salafist Palestinians who idolise Islamic State (Isis) and have been accused of a series of bomb attacks gathered. Hamas, the Islamist group that have controlled Gaza since 2007, destroyed the makeshift mosque on 3 May.



But the Gaza Strip's problem with radical Islam neither began, nor ended, in this dusty patch of land off Salahaddin Road.

Domestic tensions have reached boiling point, with Hamas-led security forces claiming to have thwarted a roadside bomb attack on a busy central street said to be an attempt by ultra-radical Salafist supporters of IS.

Hamas claims the group aimed to detonate the 30kg bomb on a busy intersection next to the main market in Gaza City's Shejaiya neighbourhood, heavily damaged during the 2014 war with Israel, and was stopped with just minutes to spare.

"The bomb had a timer on it and there was a getaway car waiting for him," said Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum. Two men were arrested but Barhoum would not name them.

The latest incident comes after an escalation in attacks by the Salafists and a concerted effort by Hamas to clamp down on them. The Islamist party – which seized control of the Strip in 2007 – believes the Salafi groups are destabilising its power base and have set up dozens of new security checkpoints across the Gaza Strip.

In April, Hamas-led security forces arrested prominent Salafist activist Sheikh Adnan Mayt and carried out raids of other homes.

The arrests were followed by two roadside bomb blasts including one near the general prosecutor's office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA). Another was carried out the next day near the Abu Mazen roundabout in western Gaza. Salafist movement official Abu al-Ayna al-Ansari has denied his group was behind the bombings.

Hamas has also begun cracking down on the mosques used by the Salafi groups in Gaza. In early May, the security services attacked a makeshift mosque in Deir el-Balah. They returned to demolish the mosque – which was little more than a plastic greenhouse-type structure – on 3 May.

The issue is extremely sensitive in Gaza and when IBTimes UK visited the remains of the

mosque – now surrounded by barbed wire – police and Hamas fighters ordered we delete photographs. Reporters San Frontières has reported widespread allegations of physical assault and detention of Palestinian journalists who try to cover various events in the strip.

The day after the makeshift mosque was flattened, a radical Salafist group known as Ansar al-Dawla al-Islamiya – the supporters of the Islamic State – issued a 72-hour ultimatum to Hamas calling for the release Salafists detainees.

This was followed by a bomb going off outside the security headquarters in Gaza City, while days later the group shelled a compound of Hamas' military wing Al-Qassam in Khan Younis. Sources say Hamas has arrested more than 200 Salafi following the bombings but the Islamist group claimed the figure was closer to 30.

Until 2015, tensions between Hamas and the group have been quiet. The last major attack was in 2009 when security services entered Ibn Taymiyyah mosque killing Sheikh Abdel Latif Moussa and 29 followers.

Today, the radical-Salafis are Hamas's weak spot and according to Israel's commander of forces outside Gaza, Major-General Sami Turgeman, Israel and Hamas share common interests and they must stay in power to prevent the enclave descending into chaos.

In September 2014, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said IS and Hamas are "branches of the same poisonous tree" when he talked about the war between Israel and Hamas.

In January, Hamas allowed a rare rally by the radical Salafist groups in support of IS and the deadly attacks by three Islamist gunmen in France.

The demonstration was held five days after Charlie Hebdo's survivors' issue featured a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed on the cover after two gunmen burst into the French satirical weekly's Paris office and shot dead 12 people.

What is Salafism?

Ever since the takeover of Gaza by Hamas in 2007, the Strip has been synonymous with radical Islam.

But the Salafi movement makes Hamas, itself an Islamist group, look moderate. It rose to prominence in 2011, when a Salafist group kidnapped and murdered an Italian peace campaigner, Vittorio Arrigoni, in an extremely rare attack on foreigners in Gaza.

Salafi translates as 'as-salaf-as-saliheen' and venerates the first three generations of Muslims after Mohammed's death in the 6th century.



As such, the movement is defined by an extremely conservative and puritanical attitude towards politics and social issues.

In Egypt, it was the Salafis who attacked Coptic Christian churches, campaigned against alcohol being sold in Christian shops and pushed for laws that curtailed the rights of women.

The Salafi movement presents a threat to Hamas, which has always used its Islamic credentials to attract support from Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank.

Hamas, weakened after the 2014 war with Israel and increasingly unpopular in the Strip, now fears Palestinians will shun it in favour of the Salafis.

The radical Salafis carrying out attacks have attempted to draw links between themselves and IS, who still control large parts of Syria and Iraq. The group has not sworn allegiance formally to the Islamic group, nor has IS declared its presence in the coastal enclave.

There are plenty in Gaza who see the Hamas crackdown on Salafists as overblown. Gaza-based political analyst Mukhaimer Abu Saada said he did not believe the car bombing that Hamas claimed to have thwarted was set to be carried out.

"Since this tension has escalated, the Salafists have not killed anyone and have not gone after any Palestinian," he said.

"At the end of the day I believe they need an Islamic Fatwa [an Islamic legal pronouncement] to use suicide bombers or to go after Hamas or other civilians."

As for the allegiance of the Salafi groups, Abu Saada said they were likely to want to eventually follow IS's lead.

"It's almost a year ago since Isis took control of Mosul in Iraq in early June 2014 and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared himself the Islamic caliphate of the Islamic State. That has been seen by many Salafists in Gaza as their ultimate dream," he said.

As for Hamas, it knows that not only does it outnumber the Salafi – the Islamists has approximately 15,000 Al-Qassam fighters and 25,000 security police and internal security while it is believed the Salafists only have 2,000 fighters – but that a civil war would help nobody.

Abu Saada said: "Hamas has made the decision not to crush them and has said they can be reasoned with. Hamas does not want to start a bloody clash with them."

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum did believe things would get worse unless they received more funding and support.

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Held in Gaza: IBTimes UK's Kate Shuttleworth explains how she fell foul of the Hamas security services.

As we pulled into a side road off Salah al-Din Road in Deir el-Balah, I thought that the site of the Salafi mosque was so nondescript it bordered on boring. Piles of wood lay among bits of plastic and other material behind barbed wire.

As I began to take pictures, a Hamas police officer walked over and asked what we were doing. Seeing the camera he called for back-up and within 30 seconds two trucks with six armed Al Qassem fighters roared around the corner, boxing us in.

They demanded any photos of the remnants of the mosque be deleted and said they wanted the memory card from a camera to take back to their headquarters to delete and later return. We followed them back to the building, where four armed Hamas fighters guarded us as my camera was taken to various offices in the building.

The commander told me he wanted to keep the memory card from my camera and that he would transfer photos that he deemed acceptable on to another card. He wanted me to hand over my mobile phone but I refused as they already had my camera.

They gave me the new card and agreed to allow me to keep photos from an earlier story and then bizarrely one of the heavily armed fighters asked to have his photograph taken with me. I was intimidated but reluctantly consented to avoid escalating the situation.

The Hamas commander told us that he wanted the Salafi story "buried" as it made Hamas look unstable and was an opportunity for Palestinians in Gaza to blame the government further for the problems facing the coastal enclave rather than Israel. He also said it was a "non-story".



In many ways I was lucky. The commander, who refused to give his name, admitted Palestinian journalists reporting the story have been interrogated and there are widespread reports that a number of local reporters have been detained by the authorities.

Obama's fecklessness on Islamic terror

Source: <http://nypost.com/2015/05/23/obamas-fecklessness-on-islamic-terror/>

The stirring speeches of yesteryear inspired us then, and still do. In times of grave danger, great leaders rallied their nations with appeals to duty and visions of victory.

NEW YORK POST “With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God,” FDR said after Pearl Harbor.

“We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools and we will finish the job,” Winston Churchill said in 1941.

“I have full confidence in your courage and devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory!” Gen. Dwight Eisenhower said in his D-Day address to Allied troops.

Then there is Barack Obama. After Islamic State won major battles in Iraq and Syria last week, he said: “I don’t think we’re losing.”

Oy, how the mighty have fallen.

Commanders and commanders in chief always spoke of victory because nothing less was acceptable. When peace was not an option, triumph was the only reason to fight.

Obama has put himself at odds not just with that history, but with the very concept of national leadership. Nowhere has his failing been as obvious as in the fight against Islamic terrorism.

Beginning with his foolish refusal to concede the Islamic roots of Islamic terror, Obama’s uncertain course created the vacuum filled by Islamic State. Brutally determined to build a modern caliphate, it now controls about half of Syria and, after seizing the major Iraqi city of Ramadi, controls a huge portion of that country, as well.

It was after those shocking gains that Obama made his bizarre observation about not losing. That seems to be good enough for him.

“We’re eight months into what we’ve always anticipated to be a multiyear campaign,” he told

The Atlantic magazine, calling the Ramadi loss a “tactical setback.”

A “campaign” for what? A “setback” from what? Nothing has changed — except Islamic State is proving his critics right with its expansion. And not just in territory, but in money, arms and manpower.

Obama never laid out a clear vision, because he doesn’t have one. He pulled all American troops out of Iraq in 2011, and claimed credit for ending the war.

That helped get him re-elected, and he was dismissive of Islamic State even early last year, calling the terror group a “JV squad.” He was warned then he was wrong, yet it wasn’t until Americans James Foley and Steven Sotloff were beheaded last summer that Obama changed his tune.

Yet the pin-prick airstrikes he ordered were more about placating outraged public opinion than making a military difference. Despite his saying the goal was to “degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group,” analysts scoffed that the means he offered were too puny to achieve the ends.

Nothing has changed — except Islamic State is proving his critics right with its expansion. And not just in territory, but in money, arms and manpower.

So much so that in its propaganda magazine, the group claims it might be able to buy a nuclear weapon within a year. “It’s the sum of all fears for Western intelligence agencies and it’s infinitely more possible today than it was just one year ago,” the magazine boasts. “And if not a nuke, what about a few thousand tons of ammonium nitrate explosive? That’s easy enough to make.”

The leaders of Islamic State are madmen, but they have a vision for victory, and a mountain of corpses in two countries to prove it.

The consequences of Obama’s fecklessness fall most heavily on Muslims, Christians and Kurds in Iraq and Syria. But it will not end there.



Islamic State wants to attack America and, as its magazine says, “do something big, something that would make any past operation look like a squirrel shoot . . . something truly epic.”

Is that what it will take to wake Obama?

Strange standoff for NYPD

It is said that politics makes strange bedfellows, but they don’t get any stranger than the three-way tangle over the size and mission of the NYPD.

In one corner is Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who wants to add 1,000 cops, costing nearly \$100 million a year, while also pushing to decriminalize quality-of-life crimes.

In another corner is top cop Bill Bratton, who wants those 1,000 additional cops but wants to keep criminal penalties for public urination, fare beating and other violations.

Off in the ether, Mayor de Blasio doesn’t want to add any cops while saying he’s mostly with Bratton on quality-of-life policing.

The standoff is remarkable on several fronts. Bratton is challenging the mayor and making his case to the public and the council for more troops. That kind of end run used to be common at City Hall, with commissioners who report to the mayor lobbying the council for more money than the mayor wanted to spend. Rudy Giuliani banned the practice, saying the administration would speak with one voice — his. Mike Bloomberg retained that common-sense approach.

But de Blasio has a helter-skelter management style and zero credibility on public safety. Bratton’s maneuver exploits the gaps, but sets up a confrontation with his boss.

Indeed, the mayor used Bratton’s near-elimination of stop-and-frisk as a reason why there is no need for more cops, saying there isn’t as much for them to do. Touché!

As for Mark-Viverito, it’s not clear why she wants more cops. She doesn’t like them, and it sounds like she wants more officers to stand around and make fewer arrests. If she wants blue flowerpots, she could go to a florist and get them for a lot less than \$100 million.

Slick Willy (and Hilly)

Reader Ronald Novrit wonders why the Clintons always get away with it.

“It was obvious since they emerged from Arkansas that they were on the make for cash,” he writes. “Now that he is the ex-president and influence-peddler extraordinaire, why isn’t anyone investigating their phony foundation? In New Jersey, Democrats spent three years and tens of millions of dollars investigating a traffic jam. Are the Republicans that afraid of the Clintons?”

Don’t wait for this train

Lies, damn lies, statistics — and MTA promises.

In a prediction reeking of government-speak, the transit agency’s capital-construction boss said he’s 75 percent sure the Second Avenue Subway will open on schedule by December 2016.

Count me as 100 percent skeptical.

It’s not just that planning for the project goes back to 1929. Or that voters approved at least three separate bond acts to fund the line, with one critic calling it “the most famous thing that’s never been built.”

The problem is that the MTA always over-promises and under-delivers. Phase One of the project, from East 96th Street and Second Avenue to East 63rd and Lexington Avenue, was supposed to open last year. And then this year. Now it’s next year.

Here’s a safe bet: Completion will be pushed back again. That’s the MTA way.

Islamic State terrorists break into Palmyra museum, Syria says

Source: <http://triblive.com/usworld/world/8429058-74/town-islamic-state#axzz3b1ez1uk9>

May 23 – Islamic State fighters broke into the museum of the ancient town of Palmyra, though its artifacts have been removed and are safe, a Syrian official said Saturday.

The Islamic State group captured Palmyra in the central province of Homs on Wednesday, raising concerns around the world that it would destroy priceless, 2,000-year-old temples,

tombs and colonnades in the town’s south. A picture circulated on Twitter accounts of supporters of the group show the black flag used by the terrorists raised over the town’s hilltop castle, a structure hundreds of years old. Maamoun Abdulkarim, head of the Antiquities and Museums



Department in Damascus, said terrorists entered the museum in the town's center Friday afternoon, locked the doors and left behind their own guards. He said the artifacts earlier had been moved to safety.

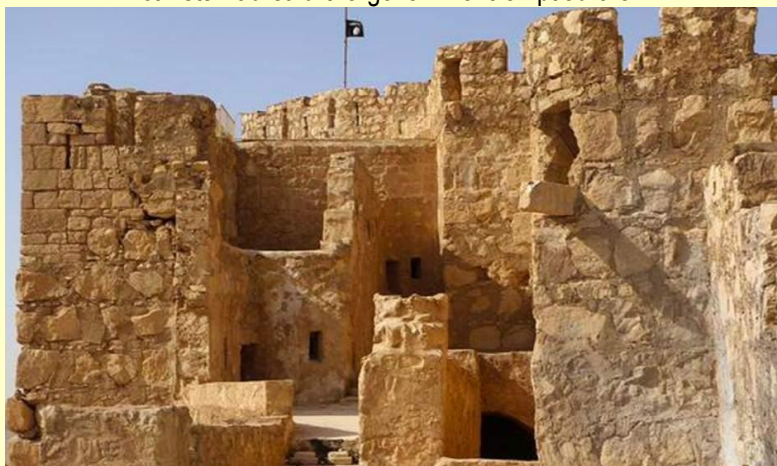
"We feel proud as all the museum's contents were taken to safe areas," he told reporters.

Abdulkarim warned that the Islamic State's control of the town remains a danger to its archaeological sites. The group has destroyed several sites in Syria and Iraq, and has had a lucrative business by excavating and selling artifacts on the black market.

Activists had said the government emptied the

neighboring Iraq. In Iraq, police Col. Aziz al-Shihawi said that Iraqi troops and Shiite militias recaptured the town of Hussiba in Anbar province Saturday. He said Iraqi allied forces killed several militants before they withdrew from the town, some 7 kilometers (4 miles) east of the Islamic State-held city of Ramadi.

In this picture released on Friday, May 22, 2015 by the website of Islamic State militants, shows the Islamic State militants flag, top center, raised on the top of Palmyra castle, in the Syrian town of Palmyra, Syria. A Syrian official in charge of antiquities says Islamic State fighters have broken into the museum of the ancient town of Palmyra which they have captured days earlier, but have not harmed its contents. (The website of Islamic State militants via AP)



Baghdad says preparations are underway to launch a wide-scale counteroffensive in Anbar province involving Iranian-backed Shiite militias, which have played a key role in defeating the Islamic State elsewhere in the country. The presence of those militias, however, could fuel sectarian

tensions in the Sunni province, where anger at the Shiite-led government runs deep.

museum of its content before the Islamic State assault on the town. The city's museum and artifacts have been damaged and looted earlier during Syria's four-year civil war. In a 2014 government report prepared for the U.N.'s cultural agency, damage already was recorded because of fighting in the area around the Temple Bel. Bullets and shells hit the temple's columns, while two of its southern columns had collapsed. The report also recorded looting. Abdulkarim said about 6,300 artifacts from Syria were seized and smuggled out of the country in the last four years.

The Islamic State group holds large territory across Syria and

