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NEWSLETTER

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www.cbrne-terrorism-newsletter.com

Christmas market terror attacks by ISIS and al-Qaeda feared throughout Europe

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/christmas-market-terror-attacks-isis-9318520>

Nov 23 – Terrorists are planning a wave of Christmas attacks throughout Europe, targeting shopping areas and crowded market-places to maximise casualties.

against jihadist groups, other European equivalents have been less successful, sadly. "This means the entire continent is vulnerable to attack as we have seen in France, Germany



The main groups plotting Yuletide blood-letting are Islamic State and al-Qaeda and UK intelligence agencies and counter-terror police are on high-alert.

It comes as Islamic State loses ground in Iraq with a massive assault on its Mosul stronghold and attacks are already weakening its Syrian HQ Raqqa.

French counter-terror police last weekend seized seven suspects allegedly awaiting delivery of an arms cache for an assault on civilians.

The people arrested in Marseilles and Strasbourg were of French, Moroccan and Afghan origin and aged between 29 and 37.

Police found four handguns and a submachine gun in searches.

Britain's domestic intelligence agency MI5 has warned a terror attack on our streets is highly likely for the past two years as Europe has become increasingly targeted.

A security source told the Daily Mirror: "Britain is very much in the sights of the jihadists but thankfully plots and plotters have been disrupted and stopped.

"Whilst UK agencies have been extremely good at preventative intelligence operations

and Belgium but particularly in the run-up to Christmas.

"It is a Christian period of festivities, bring together large crowds of soft target civilians and will attract attention from those who wish to inflict harm."

The threat level to Britain for international terrorism has been at "severe" since 2014, meaning that an attack is "highly likely," although a known plot is not underway.

Sources have told the Daily Mirror that police in Counter Terror Command and MI5 officers have "never been under so much pressure" to stop an attack.

And the latest intelligence warning - which came from US counter terrorism officers to their European counterparts- is triggering a stepping up of security at crowded areas throughout Europe.

Since the 9-11 attacks on America and the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan MI5 has doubled its staff to around 4,000, many of them tackling jihadist terrorism.

The agency has also had to take on more ethnic surveillance officers, translators and agent



handlers to cope with the threat from radicalised Muslims.

It is feared that the current military operation on Mosul will force Islamic State to change tactics and rather than hold ground, concentrate on attacking Europe.

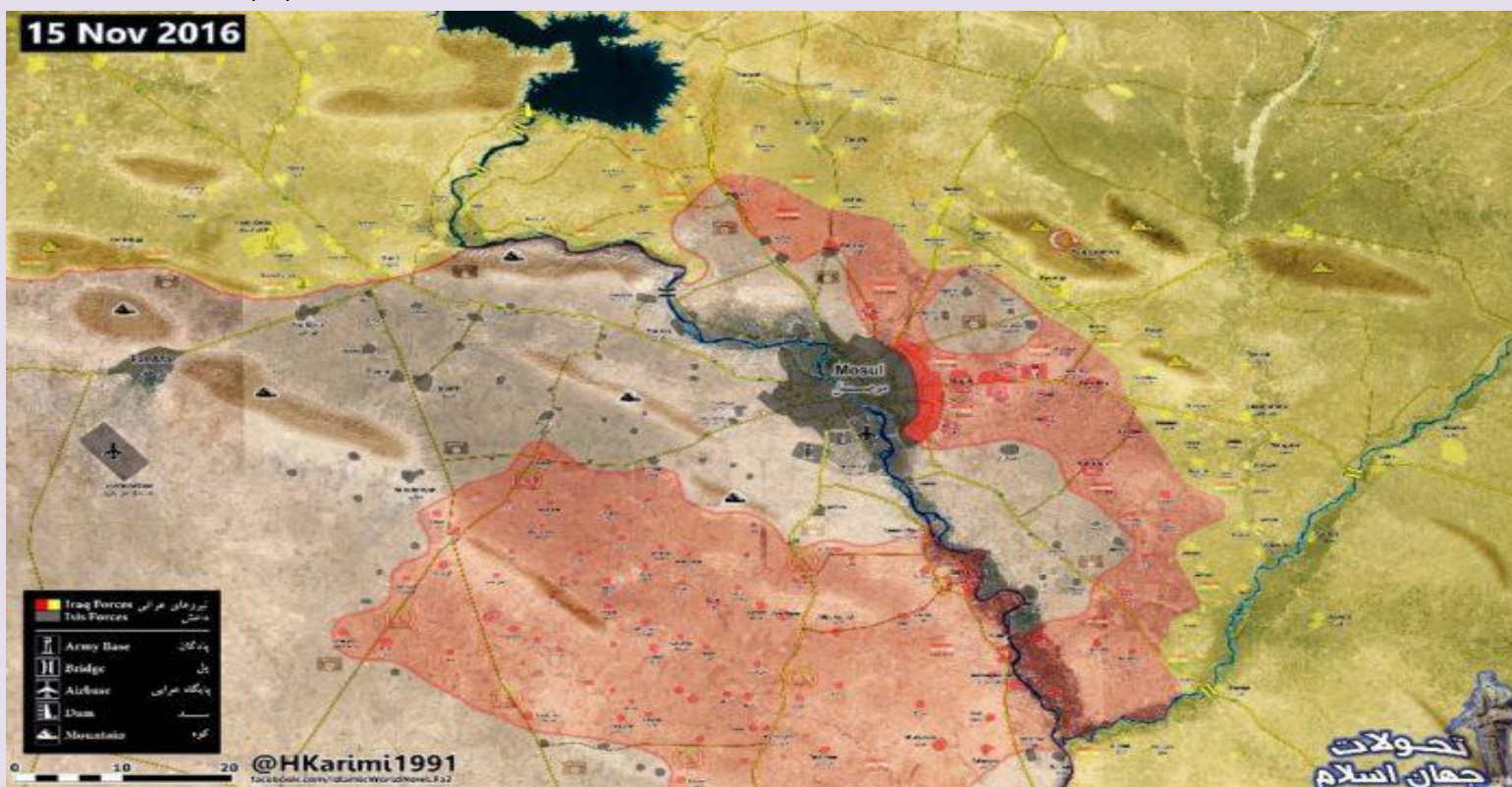
Christmas markets have become popular across Britain, in Bath, Birmingham, Exeter and London and could be vulnerable to attack.

American State Department officials have warned US travellers to be vigilant when travelling to Europe - and to be particularly careful when going to Christmas events.

France is still under a state of emergency, imposed after last November's Bataclan attack in Paris, which killed 130 victims and injured many more.

ISIS unable to turn the tides amid ongoing losses in the battle for Mosul – Map update

Source: <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-unable-turn-tides-amid-ongoing-losses-battle-mosul-map-update/>



Nov 15 – Exactly one month after the offensive to [liberate Iraq's second largest city](#) of Mosul began, the Iraqi Armed Forces have freed hundreds of villages from the grips of the Islamic State.

In the past 48 hours, the pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) have seized a further six villages from ISIS in the desert terrain west of Mosul; namely Al-Rakrak, Sirwal, Hajarat Al-'Alil, Um Hajarat Al-Suflah, Tall Um Mahyoor, and Mudhhali.

After reopening this frontline, the latest advances put the PMU just 26 kilometers from Tal Afar Airbase. Should Iraqi forces seize control of Tal Afar, they will not only have robbed the Islamic State of another city but also sever its only supply line to Mosul.

Meanwhile, on the southern flank of Mosul, the Iraqi Federal Police is closing in on Mosul International Airbase, a significant prize only 5 kilometers away. Nearby, government forces also seized Nayfah and Nimrud; the latter represents an ancient Assyrian site.

Bloody urban warfare continues in the eastern part of Mosul city where the Iraqi Armed Forces have wrestled a dozen districts from ISIS and are gradually advancing.



Participating in the battle to push further westwards into the heart of Mosul are the Iraqi Army's 'Golden Division', 9th Armoured Division, Iraqi special forces (Counter Terrorism Service) and Nineveh Protection Units (Assyrian paramilitary).

Since the beginning of the campaign to liberate Mosul, over 800 Iraqi and US airstrikes have been conducted on ISIS targets in and around the Islamic State stronghold.

According to one Iraqi official, the Islamic State death toll during the first 30 days' Mosul operations is estimated at 2800; if true, this would mean that half ISIS' regional fighting force has been annihilated in just one month. Meanwhile, Amaq Agency claims 412 Iraqi and Kurdish soldiers have been killed and thousands more wounded during the battle for Mosul.

Also, the UN estimates 54,000 refugees have escaped ISIS rule in Mosul so far.

► A larger version of the latest Mosul map can be found [here](#).

The biggest challenge Britain is facing is extremism - so what are you going to do about it Theresa May?

By Liam Byrne

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/biggest-challenge-britain-facing-extremism-9288590>

Nov 19 – As Britain faces its greatest threat in more than 60 years, Liam Byrne, MP for Britain's biggest largest Muslim constituency, discusses how we can combat extremism.



The wrong people are cheering. It's not just Nigel Farage celebrating Donald Trump's victory. It's also ISIS recruiters across the world.

This week, the Sunday Mirror revealed that 67% of Brits think America's next President is dangerous – and they're right.

On Monday, ISIS commander Abu Omar Khorasani declared the "maniac" destined for the White House will increase terrorist numbers by "thousands".

Within hours of Trump blurting out his plan to ban Muslims from America, terror group Al-Shabaab posted a Trump video with a chilling call to arms: "The West will eventually turn against its Muslim citizens. You have two choices – you either leave or you fight."

Now, with ISIS facing defeat in Iraq, security experts fear the terror group will lash out elsewhere.

Britain's EU security chief Julian King is warning that defeat in the Middle East "may lead to the return to Europe of violent ISIS fighters".

Be in no doubt about their capability. After the massacre in Nice in July, ISIS terrorists went on a three-month killing spree, launching an attack every 82 hours.

When MI5 chief Andrew Parker says: "There will be terrorist attacks in this country," he's deadly serious.

Figures revealed in the Daily Mirror show a 650% surge in terror-related deaths in the West last year.

And London Mayor Sadiq Khan is warning border security isn't tough enough to stop terrorists smuggling in weapons.

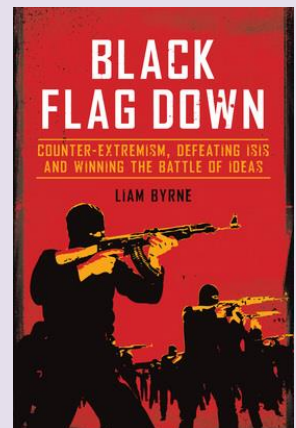
The number of UK-linked individuals involved with or exposed to terrorist training and fighting is higher than at any point since the 9/11 attacks. Counter-terror arrests are at an all-time high.

Social media apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram can spread recruitment messages from Raqqa to Rochdale in seconds.

So, with ISIS to the left of us and Trump to the right, what, you might ask, is our Prime Minister up to? Doing what she does best.

Dithering.

Nearly two years ago, as Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced Home Office control



of the government's counter-extremism drive. New laws and a plan for integration were promised. Where are they? No one knows. So what should the government do now?

In a new book, I offer some answers – based on interviews with counter-terror experts, visits to war zones, and most important of all, conversations with my constituents in Hodge Hill, the biggest Muslim constituency in Britain.

First things first. With spiralling Islamophobia at home, we need to spell out that the fight against ISIS unites Muslims and non-Muslims. It's a simple message, but it took a trip to a refugee camp near Erbil in northern Iraq for me to see it. In the blistering heat, children who had fled from Mosul were doing what children do.

In their grubby clothes, they were playing on battered bikes, pushing plastic diggers through piles of mud.

Their parents are running out of hope, desperate to go home. Amidst the horror, it suddenly struck me – everyone here is Muslim. One dad, Ahmed, told me how he fled with his children, all under the age of nine. He doesn't know if his mum and dad, who he left in Mosul, are alive or dead. He said: "The reality of life under ISIL, is that it's no life at all".

He's right. Al-Qaeda has killed seven times more Muslims than non-Muslims. Since January 2014, ISIS has murdered more than 19,000 Iraqis. The fight we're waging is not between Islam and the West. It is against murderous heretics.

I don't doubt Theresa May's intentions. She takes this seriously. But we need a plan of action now.

Let's start with social media companies. These days, extremist recruitment doesn't happen in the backrooms of mosques but in social media chatrooms.

MI5 say that someone can be radicalised in weeks. We should be debating new laws like the American Feinstein law, which would force social media corporation to report suspicious activity.

Second, we need to change the way we educate our kids.

We should boost integration, make education about basic moral values compulsory, and remind our children that 400,000 Muslim soldiers once fought for their country.

We need more de-radicalisers to work with at-risk kids. Some areas have just one to go round. We must refresh the prevent plan to make it all about safeguarding.

Third, we need new ways of celebrating our country together. Unity is strength. What better way to start than a bank holiday for St George's Day.

And a new British Bill of Rights, with a bold statement of British ideals, including free speech and compassion, to enshrine all we hold in common.

In the Budget next week, I hope there's a fresh boost for our intelligence and counter-terrorism heroes who've defeated 12 plots in the last three years.

But I also hope it is made clear we can't kill our way to victory or arrest our way to peace.

We need a long-term plan to ensure victory in Mosul isn't the end of the beginning for ISIS – but the beginning of the end.

Rumbled French terror plot suspects reveal they planned to attack THEME PARK

Source: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/735344/French-police-terror-suspect-targets-list-theme-park>

Nov 23 – One of the terror suspects arrested by the police in France have revealed that a theme park was to be targeted by the group.

The French media outlet, iTele reported an area described as having a high number of police officers was also mentioned.

Seven suspects, aged between 29 and 37 years old, were detained in Marseille and Strasbourg this weekend following raids by French security services.

According to French media reports, two suspects have since been released.

The men, of French, Moroccan and Afghan origin, were the subject of an eight-month investigation that ended with the DGSI internal intelligence agency laying a trap.

Weapons including two handguns, a machine pistol and an automatic pistol were found during the raid, along with jihadist propaganda.



On Monday, France said it had foiled a possible militant attack after detaining seven people, including some who had been in the ranks of Islamic State in Syria.

The arrests come a year after a state of emergency counter a wave of Islamist attacks, and at a sensitive time in France ahead of next spring's presidential elections where security will be a major theme. On Monday, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, said: "Yesterday, a



terrorist act on our soil that was being prepared for a long time was foiled thanks to the work of the DGSI.

"The scale of the terrorist threat is enormous and it is not possible to ensure zero risk despite everything we are doing."

A second source said some of those arrested had spent time in the Syria-Iraq region and one of them had been identified after a tip-off from the Portuguese government. Four handguns and a submachine gun were recovered during house searches, the source said.

Two were arrested in the Mediterranean port city of Marseille and four in Strasbourg in the east. Cazeneuve did not say where the seventh was arrested.

~~Masked intruder~~ TERRORIST armed with a knife and sawn-off shotgun 'kills an elderly nun by slitting her throat' as he holds 70 monks hostage at a French retirement home before fleeing anti-terror cops

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3969686/Armed-man-enters-retirement-home-monks-near-Montpellier-France.html?ito=embedded>

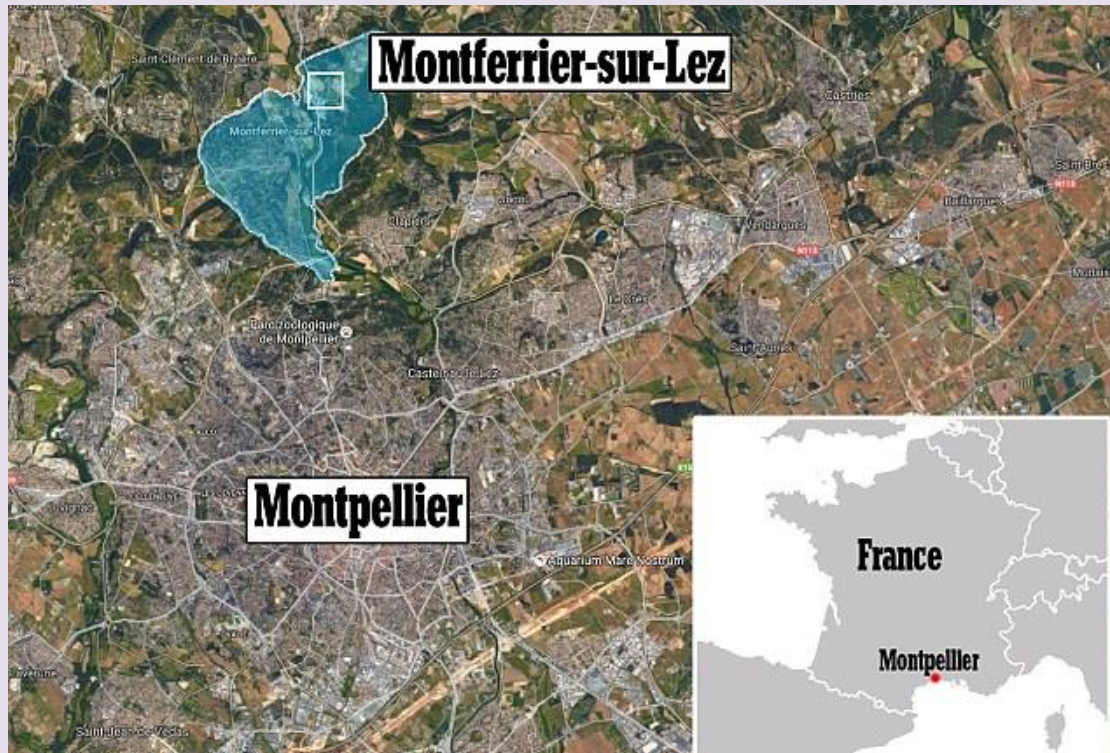
Nov 24 – Anti-terrorist police were searching for a masked gunman overnight after at least one woman, believed to be a nun, was murdered at a home for retired missionary monks in the south of France. The bloodbath unfolded at the Green Oaks care home in the village of Montferrier-sur-Lez, north of Montpellier, soon after 9.30pm.



Shots were heard as the unidentified intruder attacked member of staff and members of an elderly religious community belonging to the Society of African Missions.

Police have put up roadblocks around the area to try and detain the killer on the run.

One warden is said to have 'discreetly raised the alarm,' before being bound and gagged by the man,



who was armed with a sawn off shotgun and a knife.

Those killed are thought to be a woman worker, who may have been a nun, who was tied up, and then stabbed three times.



Early fears that a man was also killed alongside her have not been confirmed.

Gendarmes arrived within minutes of the alarm being raised, and they were soon followed by a unit of the GIGN tactical support group.

They soon found the corpse of an elderly woman who had been tied up and then stabbed repeatedly with a knife.

'A supervisor inside the building raised the alarm very discreetly,' said a local police source, who confirmed that the siege ended soon after midnight.

Some fifty monks were 'evacuated' from the building after gendarmes searched all floors, and then gave the all clear.

The gunman, believed to be wearing a mask and dark clothing including a hoodie, was nowhere to be seen, however, and a manhunt started.

'An individual, who was masked and armed with a knife and a sawn-off shotgun came into the retirement home where 70 monks live,' one source said, adding that the man's motivations were unknown.

The nursing home for monks and priests was established since 1994 run by an association Les Chenes Verts.



Speaking at a press conference, spokesman of the Archdiocese of Montpellier (Hérault) Wayne Bodkin said: 'It's a shock, it is unclear why such a tragedy, we have no idea of the intrusion pattern in this religious retreat house that welcomes former missionary in Africa. It is in the countryside, very quiet.

'Most of the residents are over 70 years old.'

Montpellier prosecutor Christophe Barret told AFP 'For the time being, there is only one victim.

'For the moment there is no particular evidence about the motive for this crime.' The man was not known to authorities.

Residents of the home 'are very elderly with an average age of 75 although some are more than 90,' said Alain Berthet, a local councillor in Montferrier-sur-Luz.

Many of the residents require assistance to walk, he said.

The secretary general of the French Bishops' Conference, Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, said in a Twitter message: 'Our prayers tonight go to the woman who lost her life in this attack on a retirement home.'

People in the surrounding areas have been told to stay inside, lock their doors and turn off their lights.

Montferrier is 20 miles from the town of Lunel, where police suspect a jihadi network may be based.

France is currently under a state of emergency following a series of terrorist attacks by Islamist terrorists. One of the most recent was in July when an 84-year-old Catholic priest was murdered during morning mass at the parish church in Saint Etienne-du-Rouvray, a suburb of Rouen.

The two attackers, who said they were from Islamic State, slit Father Jacques Hamel's throat before themselves being shot dead by police.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: Many times in the past the Editor warned about the fact that "when you strengthen the door, you weaken the windows!" Counterterrorism authorities should consider soft threats where mass gathering is a daily fact and people in them do not have the capacity to fight back – i.e., small villages with no special interest (already threatened in the UK), elderly houses, churches, schools AND HOSPITALS! Easy to enter or deploy; lots of people; state guarding absent or far away; no firearms required – knives and hatchets will do; many hostages available; difficult to properly evacuate. Be pro-active once!

Former soldier arrested on suspicion of murdering woman at Catholic retirement home

Source: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/montpellier-attack-france-catholic-retirement-home-monks-missionaries-montferrier-armed-man-arrested-a7439811.html>

Nov 26 – A former French soldier has been arrested on suspicion of attacking a retirement home for Catholic missionaries in France.

The **47-year-old man** is accused of killing a laundress whose body was found bound and gagged outside the Green Oaks home near the city of Montpellier on Thursday night.

He was caught after almost 24 hours on the run, with more than 130 police officers, road blocks and helicopters deployed in a large-scale manhunt.

Authorities had warned the suspect was "very dangerous" but sought to calm fears of a terror attack.

Initial statements from police said the man was armed with a "sawn-off shotgun" and knife but an air gun has since been recovered in his car.

The man, masked and dressed in black, attacked the retirement home at around 9.45pm local time (8.45pm GMT), when around 60 residents and workers were inside.

Alain Berthet, a local councillor in Montferrier-sur-Lez, said the home's residents - priests, nuns and others who had worked in Africa - were "very elderly with an average age of 75 although some are more than 90," with many needing assistance to walk.

The arrested man, who **had served in France's parachute regiment**, worked at the missionaries' home "some years ago" but was now unemployed, a source in the investigation told AFP.

He was arrested in the town where he lives, 10 miles from Montferrier-sur-Lez, and reportedly did not put up any resistance.



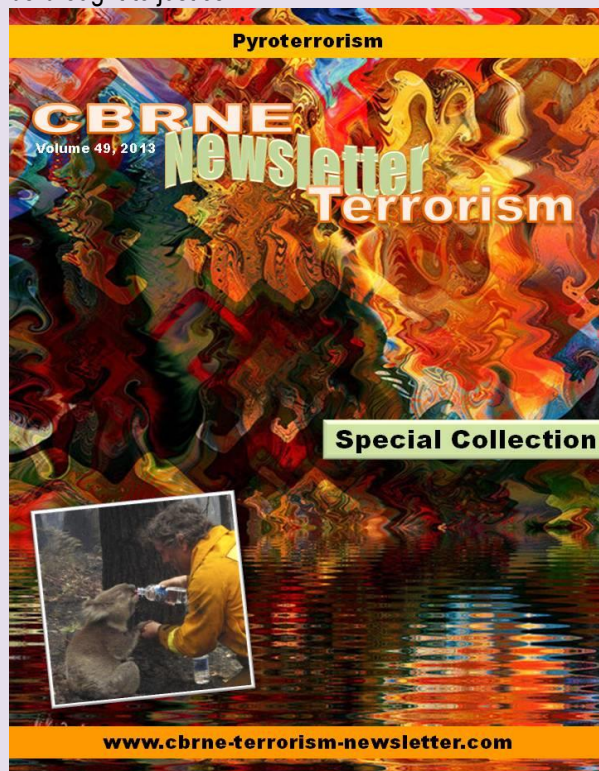
Terrorist Fires Turn Israel Into A Blazing Inferno

Source: <http://dailycaller.com/2016/11/25/terrorist-fires-turn-israel-into-a-blazing-inferno-pictures/>



Nov 26 – Terrorist elements are responsible for starting a series of fires which have engulfed Israel in recent days, according to Israeli officials.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu assured Israelis that those responsible for setting the blaze would be brought to justice.



"It's a crime for all intents and purposes and in our opinion it is terror for all intents and purposes," said Netanyahu while visiting the Israeli city of Haifa Thursday. He added that the perpetrators may have been incited to set the fires, but did not note who may be responsible.

Haifa, Israel's third largest city, endured the most damage from the blaze. Dry conditions and windy weather spread the flames through the city's northern neighborhoods, forcing residents to flee the area.

Ofir Gendelman, Netanyahu's spokesman for Arab media, tweeted several pictures of the fires, which show the flames and smoke covering the sky. He noted that some Arabs and Palestinians praised the fires.

"Arabs [and] Palestinians on social media rejoice over the wildfires that have erupted across Israel," said Gendelman. "Despicable fanatic hatred."

The first fires were reported Tuesday. Approximately 700 homes are believed to

have been damaged in the attack, with 400 described as unlivable and 37 completely destroyed. More than 60,000 people were evacuated from the city in response, though officials allowed them to return Friday afternoon. The evacuation is believed to be the largest in Israeli history.

The Israeli housing ministry set up a hotline for citizens affected by the fires, available by phone by dialing *6266 or on the Hebrew Facebook page New Amidar.



Arson would represent a new tactic in anti-Israel terrorism, if terrorists are indeed responsible. Regular stabbings are the current favored tactic of Palestinian terrorists.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: If you go back into history you will re-discover that **pyroterrorism** is not something unique or innovative. (click on photo above)



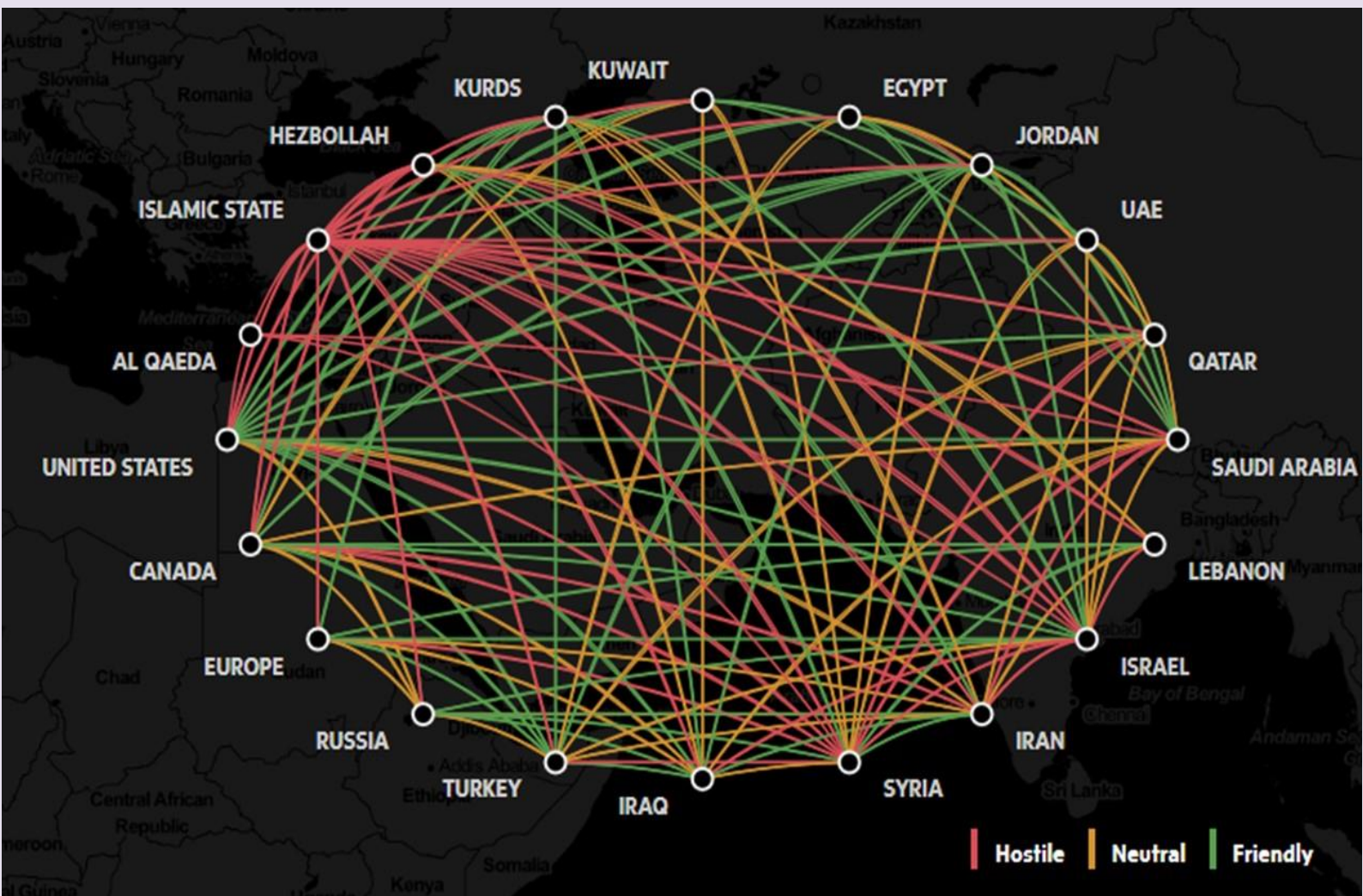
Untangling the Middle East

A guide to the region's web of relationships amid the battle against Islamic State

By Patrick Martin

Design by Jeremy Agius

Source: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/untangling-the-middle-east-guide-to-regions-web-of-alliances/article21533409/>



Aug 29 – As civil war rages in Syria and the Islamic State movement clings to control of territory in western Iraq and eastern Syria, long-time rivalries and alliances are shifting in the Middle East. Every player in the region has interests that intersect and sometimes collide with enemies and allies alike. Canada stepped into this diplomatic minefield in 2014 by joining the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State; it sought to extricate itself from the inefficient bombing aspect of the campaign in early 2016 and to focus on training Iraqi fighters. Here is a guide that cuts through the tangled web of alliances and enmities in the region.

► Explore this **INTERACTIVE** map at source's URL.



Ohio State University: ~~Suspect~~ **Terrorist** killed, 10 hospitalized after campus attack

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/28/us/ohio-state-university-active-shooter/index.html>

Nov 28 – **Ten [now: 11] people were hospitalized after an attack Monday at Ohio State University**, Columbus Fire spokeswoman Rebecca Diehm said. Nine are in stable condition, and one is in critical condition, she said.



The university released a statement after the attack. "A suspect has been shot and reported deceased," the university said. **"Victim injuries include stab wounds, injury by motor vehicle and other injuries** that are being evaluated."

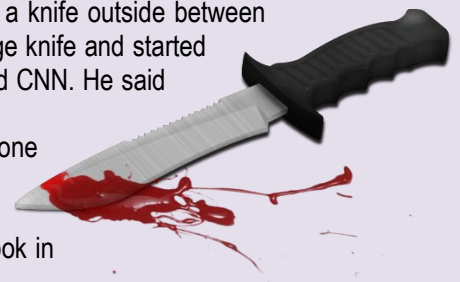
OSU student Jacob Bower, 20, said he saw a man pull a knife outside between the Koffolt Laboratories and Watts Hall. "He pulled a large knife and started chasing people around, trying to attack them," Bower told CNN. He said it appeared to be a large kitchen knife.

"Luckily there were so many people, he couldn't focus on one target. I didn't see anyone get stabbed, but I saw the police officer take down the stabber. He waited till everyone was clear, and the stabber clearly wasn't stopping. (It) took three shots to take him down. (The) stabber had a crazy look in his eyes."

When asked if the suspect yelled or said anything during the attack, Bower told CNN: "He was completely silent. Which was very creepy. Not even when he was shot (by police)."

"The cop that subdued the guy with the knife saved so many lives today."

The motive for the attack was not immediately known.



UPDATE (Nov 29, 2016)

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/28/us/ohio-state-university-active-shooter/>

The Ohio State University student who carried out a knife attack on campus Monday said in a Facebook post he was "sick and tired" of seeing fellow Muslims "killed and tortured," according to federal law enforcement officials.



Investigators are examining **Abdul Razak Ali Artan's** Facebook page to determine whether the attack was terrorism, though law enforcement officials said it will take time to ascertain motive.

In a Facebook post shortly before the Monday morning rampage, the Somali immigrant urged America "to stop interfering with other countries, especially the Muslim Ummah," a term for Muslim people at large.

"By Allah, we will not let you sleep unless you give peace to the Muslims. You will not celebrate or enjoy any holiday."

Artan rammed his car into a group of people on the Columbus campus before exiting the car and charged at others with a knife. Eleven people were hospitalized as a result of the attack.

Ohio State Police Officer Alan Horujko shot Artan after he failed to obey orders to stop.

In a news conference Monday, Ohio State President Dr. Michael V. Drake **cautioned** against jumping to conclusions when asked if the incident was terror-related or had anything to do with Ohio's Somali community, the second-largest in the country.

"We all know when things like this happen that there's a tendency sometimes for people to put people together and create other kinds of theories. We don't know anything that would link this to any community. We certainly don't have any evidence that would say that's the case," Drake said.



"What we want to do is really unify together and support each other; do our best to support those who were injured in their recovery, and then allow the investigation to take place."

What we know about the attacker

Artan was profiled in the school's student-run newspaper's "Humans of Ohio State" series in August. He had just transferred from Columbus State and said he was struggling to find a place to pray in peace on the large campus.

"I wanted to pray in the open, but I was scared with everything going on in the media. I'm a Muslim, it's not what the media portrays me to be. If people look at me, a Muslim praying, I don't know what they're going to think, what's going to happen."

A community member who spoke to the attacker's family described them as shocked. The community member described Artan as a good kid. She confirmed Artan had just finished community college before starting this semester at Ohio State.

Artan was **a legal permanent resident originally from Somalia**, a US official said. He came to the country in 2014 with his family via Pakistan, a federal law enforcement official and a US official told CNN.

Artan left Somalia in 2007 with his family for Pakistan and they were admitted as refugees as part of a minority sect of Somalis, a senior administration official told CNN. Seven members of the family applied for refugee status in the United States and were admitted in 2014. Today, they are all legal permanent residents and green card holders.

Neighbor Stephanie Leper told CNN Artan's family occupies four units. Law enforcement vehicles arrived at the town homes sometime after 10 a.m. and took people away in "paddy wagons," she said.

Artan said reports of human rights abuses in Myanmar pushed him to a "boiling point." The United States, which suspended its last sanctions against the former military dictatorship this year, said it had expressed concerns about the treatment of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims.

"I can't take it anymore," he said in the post.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I was right when yesterday changed "suspect" to "terrorist" in the title of the article...

Islamic State group claims Ohio State University rampage

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38151669>

Nov 30 – **The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for a car and knife rampage at a US college on Monday that left 11 people injured.**

The attack at Ohio State University was carried out by Somali-born Abdul Razak Ali Artan, a student at the Columbus campus, authorities said.

The IS-affiliated Amaq news agency called the 18-year-old business undergraduate a "soldier".

There is no immediate way to verify the group's claim.

Just opportunistic? Analysis by Gordon Corera, BBC Security Correspondent

The ISIS claim does not prove much in terms of the attack in Ohio. The group often refers to individuals who carry out attacks as its "soldiers", **but the crucial question is firstly whether the individual had any form of direct contact with IS.**

Face-to-face contact may be unlikely but online communication is possible. If there was no direct contact, it could still be the case that an individual was inspired rather than directed by the group. In this case, an individual may leave his or her own pledge of allegiance in written form or online or in a video. But until such evidence emerges, it remains hard to know if this is just an opportunistic claim by the group rather than one based on real substance.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: Do we need audio-visual verification to define someone as a terrorist? What about his/her actions and story played? Opportunistic or not, it is a good opportunity for "experts" to write comments and excuse their title. When modus operandi dictates terrorism, IT IS TERRORISM.

NATO Ends Anti-Piracy Mission in Indian Ocean

Source: <http://www.voanews.com/a/nato-ends-anti-piracy-mission-in-indian-ocean/3609724.html>

Nov 24 – NATO has ended Operation Ocean Shield after a sharp drop-off in attacks by Somali pirates.

The Royal Danish Air Force carried out the last Indian Ocean surveillance missions for NATO.

included the European Union, the United States and other independent nations.

During its peak, piracy off the Horn of Africa had an economic impact of \$7 billion, with more than 1,000 hostages taken.

There hasn't been a successful piracy attack since 2012, down from more than 30 ships at the peak in 2010-11. The NATO planes flew from the Seychelles.

"They have been giving a lot of assistance to us regarding the piracy issue," said Colonel Simon Dine, a commander with the Seychelles Coast Guard. "They assist us in training with the Seychelles Coast Guard and the Seychelles People's Air Force,



The NATO operation had been one part of a

which has given us a great help to assist in the



highly successful coordinated international response to the threat of piracy that also

maintaining of the security of the Seychelles' territorial water. It's



sad for them to go back, but we are looking forward to continue to work with good relationship for the future.”

The commander of the Danish air force detachment that carried out the last mission emphasized that NATO can resume its anti-piracy efforts at any time - whether in the Somali basin or the Atlantic Ocean.

NATO is now shifting resources to deterring Russia in the Black Sea and people smugglers in the Mediterranean.

NATO's spokesman Dylan White said in a statement that the global security environment

had changed dramatically in the last few years and that NATO navies had adapted with it.

After more than a decade of NATO-led operations far beyond its borders, the military alliance is shifting its focus to deter Russia in the east, following Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula.

Earlier this month, NATO broadened its operations in the Mediterranean to help the European Union stop criminals trafficking refugees from North Africa.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I added the latest IMB Piracy & Armed Robbery Map – off Somalia is clean but the off Niger area and that in SE Asia is still quite busy. **And the last sentence of this article:** “stop criminals trafficking refugees from N Africa”: If they could only tell us how they plan to do that in order to apply their brilliant tactics to stop the illegal immigrants/refugees’ tsunamia from Turkey to Greece (not to EU as they say due to closed EU [??] borders). The fact is: a frigate cannot intercept a small boat packed with tens of people and cannot identify a trafficker and neutralize him. End of story!

‘Atheist Muslims’ could be the key to defeating Islamic terror

By Ali A. Rizvi

Source: <http://nypost.com/2016/11/26/atheist-muslims-could-be-the-key-to-defeating-islamic-terror/>

Nov 26 – I was raised in three Muslim majority countries — Libya, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan — and arrived in North America in my mid-20s. Two years after I settled in Canada, September 11 happened. Nineteen hijackers acting in the name of my parents’ religion — 15 from a country I grew up in — flew fuel-laden airliners into the World Trade Center, killing thousands. From the ashes, two opposing narratives began to emerge, as it happens with most issues in the US: one on the right, and one on the left.

And today, in a nation more divided than ever after a rancorous election season, the differences couldn’t be more stark.

The right is clear: We’re at war with Islamic terrorists. They started it, and we must respond. We know the common denominator here, so enough with the political correctness — we must keep our country safe, and if that means profiling Muslims, restricting Muslim immigration or even “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States,” as President-elect Donald Trump proposed last year, so be it.

No, says the left. We need to be nuanced. Read through our history. Islamists are simply responding to America’s atrocities around the

world. We’re the imperialists who colonized them, held them down under the boot of the military-industrial complex and built our civilization at their expense. We must look at the underlying grievances and root causes driving this. The “biggest terrorist operation that exists,” according to uber-leftist hero Noam Chomsky, is actually the one being run by Obama.

Both of these narratives miss the mark. One assumes that Muslims are inherently violent because Islam is inherently violent. The other paints the act of criticizing Islam as bigotry against all Muslims.

The key distinction both sides miss is that Islam is an idea. Muslims are people.

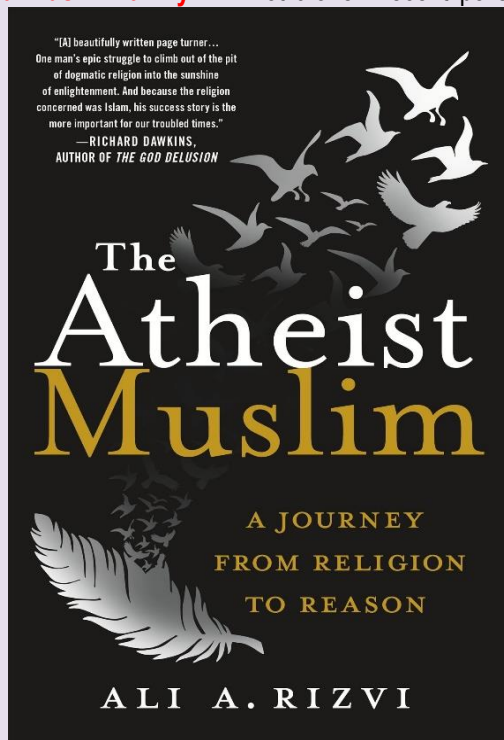
Human beings have rights and are entitled to respect; ideas, books and beliefs don’t and aren’t. No belief is sacred, but our right to believe what we want is.

Not making this distinction leads the far right to demonize all Muslims because of the problems in Islam, and the far left to completely ignore legitimate problems with Islam in an effort to defend Muslims. The result? One side calling for a ban on Muslims and the other



pretending Islamic terrorism doesn't exist.

I am a liberal atheist who grew up as part of a Muslim family. I'm not alone. Recent polls



reveal millions of secular agnostics and atheists in the Muslim world, though you probably won't hear about them unless they're being flogged in prison, executed by the state, or murdered by a mob. A WIN/Gallup poll found that 19 percent of people in Saudi Arabia — the historical birthplace of Islam and Muhammad — identify as “non-religious”; for perspective, that number is 15 percent in Italy. The same poll shows that 5 percent of Saudis — over a million people — identify as “convinced atheists,” the same percentage as in the US.

Secularists in the Muslim world are growing fast and targeted viciously within their communities. Make no mistake, these freethinking dissidents — fighting to bring universal values like free expression, liberty and equality to their people — are not shy about criticizing Islam. They are putting their lives on the line to do this, and many have died for it. They are your most dedicated allies.

But when you fail to distinguish between the ideology we're fighting and the people that make up our families, friends and loved ones, you're shutting us out.

After Trump announced his Muslim ban, Fareed Zakaria, one of the world's most respected American journalists, felt he had to embrace his Muslim identity. “I am not a practicing Muslim,” he wrote. “My wife is Christian, and we have not raised our children as Muslims. My views on faith are complicated — somewhere between deism and agnosticism. I am completely secular in my outlook.”

Why embrace the Muslim label then?

“As I watch the way in which Republican candidates are dividing Americans, I realize that it's important to acknowledge the religion into which I was born,” he continued. “I am appalled by Donald Trump's bigotry and demagoguery not because I am a Muslim but because I am an American.”

Do we really want to force well-integrated, patriotic American Muslims like Zakaria back into tribal categories under a President Trump? The greatest thing about America is that it empowers people to rise above their birth identities. This is certainly true of American Muslims. Look at Muhammad Ali. Or Ahmet Ertegun, the founder of Atlantic Records, who brought us the voices of Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin and Led Zeppelin. Or comedian Dave Chappelle. Or actor Aziz Ansari, who is avowedly secular but was incensed at Trump for unfairly targeting Muslims like his parents.

Reducing their identity to just “Muslim” doesn't help successful, hard-working Muslim-Americans rise above it. It throws them back, categorizing, ghettoizing, and tribalizing them. It alienates those who would otherwise be allies.

We should be able to criticize any doctrinal idea openly while also standing up for the right of people to believe in them. The left's failure to honestly address the Islamism problem from a position of moral strength has left a void that the Trumpian right has opportunistically — and successfully — exploited in a very divisive way, alienating reformist dissidents in the Muslim world who feel betrayed by liberals and conservatives alike. Today — more than ever — those fighting for freedom there need the support of those who love freedom here.



Ali A. Rizvi, a writer and a medical communications professional, is the author of “[The Atheist Muslim: A Journey from Religion to Reason](#)” (St. Martin’s), out now.

Bride of ISIS: One Young Woman’s Path into Homegrown Terrorism

By Anne Speckhard (Author)

Source: https://www.amazon.com/Bride-ISIS-Womans-Homegrown-Terrorism-ebook/dp/B00XTCNA1C/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1431986420&sr=1-2&keywords=bride+of+isis

Why would a “normal” American teen convert to Islam and then try to join a terrorist organization, and how do terrorists seduce women over the Internet and lure them into traveling thousands of miles to become their wives? These are the questions that internationally respected counter-terrorism expert and Georgetown University Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Security Studies asks in her book *Bride of ISIS*.



Based upon a composite of actual cases and inspired by the true story of Shannon Conley, an American teen from Denver, Colorado who converted to Islam, took the niqab, and who ultimately ended up in the clutches of ISIS, *Bride of ISIS* follows Sophie Lindsay—another “girl next-door” as she is seduced

over the Internet.

Shannon Conley was arrested in 2014 while trying to board a flight to Turkey with the alleged goal of traveling to Syria to join and marry an ISIS extremist she had met online. Conley believed her Internet mentors that “defensive jihad” was not only permissible, but her duty. She told FBI agents that she believed U.S. military bases; government facilities and personnel; public officials and law enforcement were all legitimate terrorist targets. Trained as a nurse’s aide and in firearms, Conley hoped to either fight jihad in Syria and Iraq, or if prevented from entering a combat role, to assist jihadi fighters. Lured by a romance that she carried out via Skype with an ISIS fighter, Conley was on the road to destruction—until her father turned her in to the FBI.

Sophie Lindsay follows a similar path to Shannon Conley’s but in this book we get an inside look on how she enters the terrorist trajectory and moves steadily toward carrying out a terrorist act. Will FBI agent, Cathy Chambers and Homeland Security analyst, Ken Follett sort through all the “wannabe” ISIS and al Qaeda extremists on the Internet to discover who is the true terrorist? And will they be able to stop Sophie in time to save her and the lives of countless others?

Could you be living next door to a future bride of ISIS?

Anne Speckhard, Ph.D., is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine and of Security Studies in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She is also a research psychologist and counter-



terrorism expert and has interviewed more than four hundred terrorists, their family members and close associates and is a sought after expert on the subject of terrorism, frequently appearing on CNN, BBC, NPR, Fox News, MSNBC, CTV, and quoted in Time Magazine, New York Post, London Times and many other publications. She is the author of Talking to Terrorists, Fetal Abduction and coauthor of Undercover Jihadi: Inside the Toronto 18 and Warrior Princess: A Navy SEAL's Journey to Coming out Transgender, Amazon hardcover bestsellers.

Review

"Some of the most illuminating discussions of terrorism have been works of fiction by eminent authors like Albert Camus, *The Just Assassins*; Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*; Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*; etc. works I used in the terrorism courses I taught in late 1960s before the subject interested academics. Anne Speckhard, a psychologist, who has spent considerable time interviewing terrorists, has decided to use her talent and experience to produce a novel on how one becomes a terrorist today. My students always found the great fictional works generated more valuable and exciting discussions than the academic works assigned, and the *Bride of ISIS* will have the same effect."

David C. Rapoport, Founding and Chief Editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*,
Author of *Four Waves of Modern Terror*

Getting Inside the Head of the Ohio Attacker

By Elliot Friedland

Source: <https://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/getting-inside-head-ohio-attacker>

Nov 30 – Islamic State media agency Amaq News released a statement calling Ohio terrorist Abdul Razak Ali Artan a "soldier of God" acting "in response to appeals to target nationals of the international Coalition," reported The New Yorker.

Law enforcement are combing through the cellphone and laptop of Artan in an attempt to find out what motivated him to carry out Monday's car-ramming and stabbing attack at Ohio State University. They say they found no clear links between him and specific terrorist groups.

What they have found is lengthy diatribes on social media about the oppression of Muslims. On Facebook, Artan posted he had become "sick and tired" of the treatment of Muslims and reached a "boiling point."

This is the purpose of ISIS propaganda: to provide a brand and a methodology to which to attach preexisting grievances, both perceived and real, about how badly Muslims are treated.

By nurturing these grievances and then providing a simple and cheap "action item" as a proposed solution, ISIS is able to motivate terrorist attacks remotely without any contact with the terrorists at all, beyond exposure to their narrative.

Like any form of advertising, it's a numbers game. ISIS doesn't need to radicalize everyone who sees their propaganda. They just need to show it to enough people that some of them believe it.

If enough young men come to believe the West is engaged in a war against Islam, of those a certain percentage will see a renewed caliphate (essentially a fascistic-revivalist concept) as a potential solution. Here the rhetoric of non-violent or semi-violent Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Hizb ut-Tahrir comes into play.

These groups want the same thing as ISIS but are willing to work within existing systems non-violently to get there.

In their propaganda, they contrast the idealized and romanticized vision of a caliphate as a pure Islamic state where Muslims are treated justly and are free to practice their religion against the secular, decadent and hypocritical West which oppresses Muslims (on the one hand) while pretending to give them rights (on the other).

Out of those, if enough see Islamic State propaganda telling them the only way to avenge



one's grievances against the West and to end the "suffering" is to take up weapons and begin attacking people, eventually someone is going to do it.

There is another factor: glory.

Islamism has the same utopian vision as fascism and communism, namely, there exists a perfect form of society and if we could just get there, everything, all of humanity's basest impulses and urges, all the injustice, would simply melt away. It adds on an enemy -- the bad people who are standing in the way of this glorious new world order -- and declares that if they could only see the truth, there would be nothing stopping this utopian vision from becoming a reality.

Since these people will not see the truth, the only way to deal with them is with violence. Since the worldview that the person being radicalized wants to fight for is perfect, the ends therefore justify the means. This combination of the dehumanization of Westerners and the justification of collateral damage enables the psychological jump to violence against innocent civilians.

It legitimizes any and all actions in the service of the cause.

The idea of a legitimate cause as carte-blanche to perpetrate extreme violence has been a potent elixir for damaged young men for all time. We see constantly in our own popular culture; it's the subject of every action movie and show from Die Hard to Independence Day to Game of Thrones.

It's the same reason priests were murdered and churches burned by communists in the Spanish Civil War. It's why Maximilien

Robespierre, a leader of the French Revolution, sent thousands to the guillotine in just a few short months, including erstwhile political allies. His words at the time could easily have been repeated by Castro or Franco or Pinochet or ISIS Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi:

"If the basis of popular government in peacetime is virtue, the basis of popular government during a revolution is both virtue and terror; virtue, without which terror is baneful; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing needs of the patrie."

In other words, the only things standing in our way are these people. To get what we want we need to kill them, collateral damage be damned.

As long as there are angry young men, that message will always be appealing to some and will be repackaged by extremist groups in every generation.

ISIS is packaging that message in the 21st century, empowered by a 24/7 news cycle and the world's ultra-connectivity offered by social media.

Like any advertising campaign, it's just a question of numbers.

Elliot Friedland is a research fellow with the Clarion Project, a non-profit that challenges Islamist extremism while promoting dialogue with Muslim human rights activists. He studied ancient and modern history at Oxford University before making aliyah. He interned the Center for Security Policy, a Washington think tank.

Germany's intelligence agency INFILTRATED by Islamist terrorist who wanted to BLOW IT UP

Source: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/738005/Islamist-terror-ISIS-Germany-intelligence-agency-infiltrated-Bundesverfassungsschutz>

Nov 29 - **A 51-year-old employee of the domestic intelligence service has been arrested after he made Islamist terror inspired comments on social media.**

The German national is understood to have been **planning to detonate a bomb in the Bundesamt fur Verfassungsschutz** (BfV)



building and offered to share classified information with terrorists.

A spokesman for the intelligence agency said:



organisation before being expelled from Germany.

He appeared in an Isis propaganda video calling for a wave of devastating terror attacks across Europe last year.

[The intelligence hub in Cologne](#)

Speaking in German, he ordered viewers to “pick up a big knife, go down to the streets and slaughter every infidel you encounter” before shooting a prisoner in the head.

German authorities have ramped up their surveillance of potential militant Islamist groups and individuals after two attacks claimed by the Islamic State group in July.

The BfV estimates there are about 40,000 Islamists in Germany, including 9,200 ultra-conservative Islamists known as Salafists, Hans-Georg Maassen, who leads the agency, told Reuters in an interview earlier this month.

He said: “We remain a target of Islamic terrorism and we have to assume that Islamic State or other terrorist organizations **will carry** out an attack in Germany if they can.”

Police have arrested several suspected Islamic State sympathizers in recent weeks, including a 20-year-old Syrian refugee who had tried to cross into Denmark with potential bomb-making materials.

“There is no evidence to date that there is a concrete danger to the security of the BfV or its employees.

“The man is accused of making Islamist statements on the Internet using a false name and of revealing internal agency material in Internet chatrooms.”

The spokesman said the suspect had not previously attracted attention, adding: “The man behaved inconspicuously during his employment process, training and in his area of responsibility.”

The arrested man converted to Islam two years ago and had made a pledge of allegiance to the Austrian ISIS fighter Mohamed Mahmoud, Der Spiegel reported.

Mahmoud was initially jailed for supporting al-Qaeda and he started a banned extremist

ISIS Instructional Video on How to Kill Disbelievers



Nov 2016 – ISIS has released a video titled “*Explanation of How to Slaughter the Disbelievers*”, in which a French speaking mujaheddin provides instructions on how to kill opponents, and a real life demonstration is made on a real living human.

The video continues with instructions on how make explosive devices and at the end, contains a footage of a man



forced to run through the sand dunes with the explosive in the backpack, which is remotely set off.

NOTE 1: This is a very disturbing video! You can watch it at the <BestGore.com> website by clicking on the link "Murder" [right column]. The reason for not including the full link herein is that the page contains some sex hard-core links.

► You can read also: <https://www.memri.org/jtm/warning-graphic-isis-video-features-french-fighter-demonstrating-stabbing-techniques-agent>

NOTE 2: If you decide to visit BestGore pls note the photo next to its name. I do not know if it relates to something real or it is a PhotoShop pic but it reminded me the stoy of the Greek Athanasios Diakos who was killed the same way [impalement while alive] by Turks in the years of the 1821 independence revolution against the Othoman Empire. It is the only method Daesh has not used SO FAR...

► Read more on Diakos at: <http://www.todayfoundout.com/index.php/2014/01/modern-version-king-leonidas-wasnt-spartan-badass-deacon/>

Terrorism in a Global Village

How Terrorism Affects
Our Daily Lives

Terrorism,
Hot Spots and
Conflict-Related
Issues

Maximiliano E. Korstanje
Editor

anyosoni

2016

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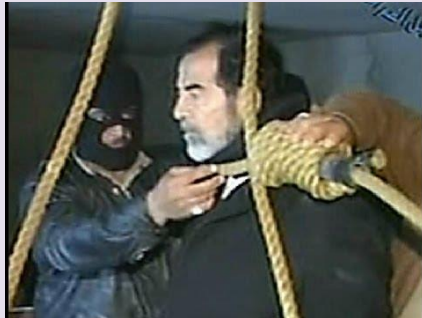


Saddam Hussein Is the Real Leader of Islamic State: Egyptian Journalist

Source: <http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/middle-east/315830>

Dec 05 – An Egyptian journalist says he has evidence that the former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was not executed, claiming that he is still alive.

Anis al-Deghidhy, the Egyptian journalist, claims that he has met the Iraqi Baathist president Saddam Hussein several times after he was hanged.



Al-De ghidy says he has met Saddam Hussein in Libya, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Saddam Hussein is hiding since he is wanted by all the world powers, he argued.

The Egyptian journalist claims that Saddam Hussein has not been executed, noting that he is the real leader of the Islamic State. He says that no one can lead such an extremist organization which is being supported by Iran and Hizbullah other than Saddam Hussein.

The journalist has recently broadcast a recording in which he is interviewing Saddam Hussein.

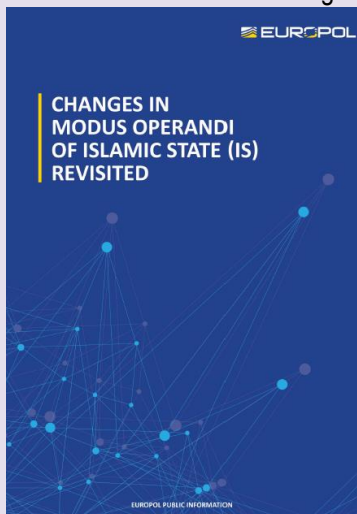
However, none of the official sources has yet confirmed the claim of the Egyptian journalist.

Saddam Hussein was born in 1937. He became the Iraqi president in 1979 and ruled the country until 2003. After the fall of Baathist regime, he was arrested and sentenced to death by hanging in December, 2006.⁴

Islamic State **changing** terror tactics to maintain threat in Europe

Source: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/islamic-state-changing-terror-tactics-to-maintain-threat-in-europe>

Dec 02 – As the so-called Islamic State (IS) loses ground in the Middle East, the pattern of its recent terrorist attacks in Europe suggests that it has already adopted new tactics to attack the West. These developments are highlighted in the report [Changes in Modus Operandi of IS revisited](#) published today by Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC). The report provides an up-to date assessment of the threat this group poses to the EU, on which basis EU Member States can prepare for



future attacks. Currently the EU is facing a range of terrorist threats and attacks: from networked groups to lone actors; attacks directed by IS and those inspired by IS; the use of explosives and automatic rifles as well as bladed weapons and vehicles; and carefully prepared attacks alongside those that seem to be carried out spontaneously. The so-called Islamic State has proven to be very effective in inspiring people to commit terrorist acts and in setting attacks in motion themselves.

Europol's Director Rob Wainwright: "The last two years have seen a number of jihadist attacks, several of which have caused mass casualties. The scale of this threat has been widely acknowledged in Europe, triggering an intensified cooperation between police and security services across the continent leading to an increase of arrests and plots foiled before terror attacks could be carried out. This shows that the increased cooperation and exchange of data between all relevant services



across Europe is a successful means to mitigate the threat posed by IS. Nevertheless today's report shows that the threat is still high and includes diverse components which can be only tackled by even better collaboration."

Gilles de Kerchove, EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator: "We have to be vigilant, since the threat posed by the so-called Islamic State (IS) and returning foreign fighters is likely to persist in the coming years. These people are trained to use explosives and firearms and they have been indoctrinated by the jihadist ideology. An effective response requires a comprehensive approach and long term commitment. Of course, the primary responsibility in the fight against terrorism lies with the Member States. However, the EU and its agencies such as Europol can and should play a supportive role that helps respond to the cross-border nature of the threat."

Ten key judgements of Europol's Changes in Modus Operandi of IS revisited:

1. Further attacks in the EU, both by lone actors and groups, are likely to be attempted. Estimates from some intelligence services indicate several dozen people directed by IS may be currently present in Europe with a capability to commit terrorist attacks.
2. In addition to France and Belgium, all other EU Member States that are part of the US-led coalition against IS may be targeted by terrorists led or inspired by IS.
3. **The most probable scenario is the use of the same modus operandi, including the same types of weapons, used in earlier attacks.**
4. If IS is defeated or severely weakened in Syria/Iraq by the coalition forces, there may be an increased rate in the return of foreign fighters and their families from the region to the EU or to other conflict areas.
5. Counter-terrorism experts expect that IS will start planning and dispatching attacks from Libya.
6. Modi operandi employed in Syria and Iraq, such as the use of car bombs, extortion and kidnappings may be employed as methods of attack in the EU.
7. **The apparent preference for soft targets means that attacking critical infrastructure such as power grids and nuclear facilities is currently not a priority for IS.**
8. Elements of the Syrian refugee diaspora may be vulnerable to radicalisation once in Europe and may be targeted by extremist recruiters. Given that it is in the interests of IS to inflame the migration crisis to polarise the EU population and turn sections of it against those seeking asylum, some infiltration of refugee camps and other refugee/migrant groups is likely.
9. Contacts between terrorists and career criminals are generally of a very pragmatic and opportunistic character, and for very specific purposes only. However, the relative incidence of such cases in which there are connections appears to have increased. Typically this is because terrorists are known for previous criminal activity and/or because they make use of organised crime networks in the preparation of attacks, e.g. to obtain false identity documents and/or firearms.
10. What should not be overlooked is that IS is not the only terrorist organisation with the intent and capability to carry out attacks against the West, or to inspire individuals and groups residing in EU Member States to do so. Al Qaeda and / or Al-Nusra affiliated or inspired groups and individuals continue to pose a serious threat to Member States of the EU and to Western interests in general.

WARNING: ISIS plots brutal 2017 SLAUGHTER across Europe to spark apocalypse

Source: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/739078/Europol-terror-threat-Isis-germany-uk-belgium>

Dec 02 – **Britain is among the countries which are "high on the target list" for aggression from the group, the European Union's law enforcement body warned.**

Europol said that - in the wake of murderous attacks in Belgium and France - extremists are very likely to strike again in the near future.

All EU member states participating in the coalition against ISIS - including Britain - are regarded by the group as "legitimate targets".

A report published today by Europol said:

"France remains high in the target list for ISIS

aggression in the EU, but so too

do Belgium, Germany, The



Netherlands and the United Kingdom."

It added: "Estimates from some intelligence services indicate several dozen people directed by ISIS may be currently present in Europe with a capability to commit terrorist attacks, and that there are indications that ISIS has been preparing terrorist attacks in Europe since 2013."

Intelligence suggests that ISIS has assembled teams in Syria which are sent to the EU tasked with carrying out attacks, the study said.

Europol also raised the prospect of an increased rate in the return of foreign fighters if IS is defeated or severely weakened in Syria and Iraq.

Increased military pressure on ISIS - including a major offensive in Mosul, Iraq - has sparked concern about potential displacement of militants.

The report said: "Those who manage to enter the EU will pose a potential security risk for the Union. Given the high numbers involved, this represents a significant and long-term security challenge."

It followed twisted [ISIS publication Dabiq calling for a "final, apocalyptic showdown" in the coming months.](#)

The propaganda magazine also called for lone-wolf attacks throughout Europe, urging radicalised Islamists to become ["serial killers" on the streets of Europe.](#)

It was revealed earlier this year that around 850 people linked to the UK and regarded as a security threat are believed to have taken part

in the Syrian conflict, with just under half thought to have returned to this country.

The Europol paper also said:

- ◆ The scale and impact of "lone actor" attacks is increasing
- ◆ A "real and imminent danger" is the possibility of elements of the SunniMuslim Syrian refugee diaspora becoming vulnerable to radicalisation once in Europe and being specifically targeted by Islamic extremist recruiters
- ◆ Unconfirmed information suggests German authorities were aware of around 300 recorded attempts made by jihadists to recruit refugees who were trying to enter Europe by April 2016.
- ◆ Automatic firearms remain the weapons of choice of terrorist cells - but it is also possible that IS will consider the use of chemical or biological weapons in the EU, while car bombs could also emerge as an attack method.
- ◆ Counter-terrorism experts are concerned that Libya could develop into a "second springboard" for ISIS, after Syria, for attacks in the EU and the North African region
- ◆ Individuals and groups involved in terrorist and extremist activities use encryption to conceal their communications from law enforcement and intelligence agencies

Britain's security services and counter-terrorism units have foiled at least ten attacks in the past two years.



A Green Beret's Threat Assessment of ISIS

By Lt. Col. Scott Mann (ret.)

Source: <https://stream.org/green-berets-threat-assessment-isis/>

March 2015 – The emerging threat of ISIS means America can no longer rely on outsourcing this effort to the shadow wars of Special Operations. It is front and center and growing more so every day, which means that our collective focus as a nation really needs to include facing this new reality.

One thing is certain. The actions by the U.S. over the last fourteen years of simply targeting violent extremists with lethal strikes while America goes about its day to day business, are not working.

Even with the death of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and the desire of the Obama Administration to pivot away from the Middle East toward cyber threats and the Pacific Rim, our most pressing enemies — Islamist violent extremists — still have a vote.



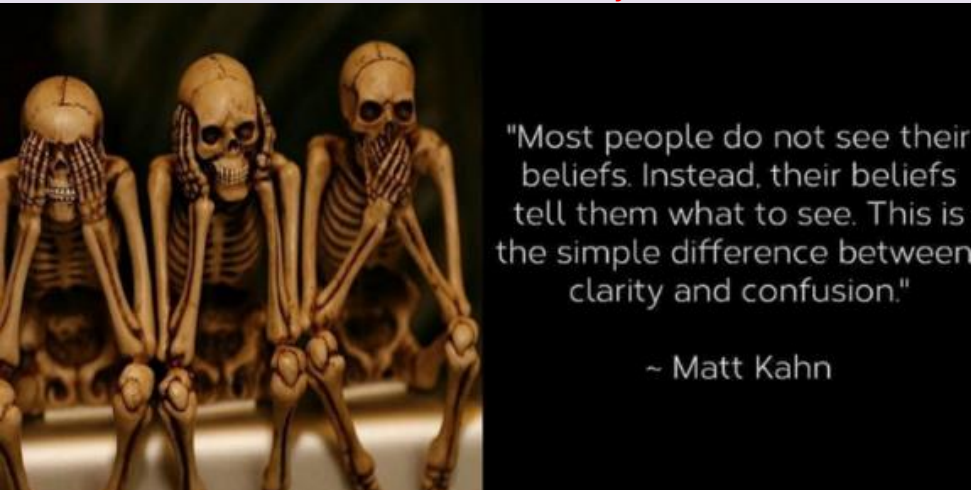
And their vote is to hold onto the U.S. firmly by the belt buckle and pull us deeper into this struggle of the ages.

The emergence of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), especially with their digital storytelling, including audacious violence, through social media, has brought Islamist violent extremism out of the shadows, onto the world stage and right into our communities.

This is now a war to which every American

fulfill the prophecy. This manufactured holy war is the essential lynch pin to the ISIS narrative for recruiting and for realizing their strategic objectives.

The challenge here is that this ideological commitment of ISIS that is so overtly medieval and violent, in order to achieve a modern-day apocalypse, seems too far-fetched for most Americans and Westerners to believe.



should pay attention, and on which a national discussion should be joined.

ISIS, more so than any extremist group on the planet, is committed to an [end of days scenario](#). They are establishing a global caliphate with the intention of achieving the Islamic prophecy of ushering in “judgment day.” This group will go to any length to draw us into their perverse universe of violence and apocalyptic revelation.

In order to do that, they need a set piece battle of epic proportions, and most importantly . . . they need to draw in the U.S. and its Western allies as the starring role of *Crusader*.

This is precisely why we see the overt violence coming to us via YouTube of beheadings, burnings etc. They want us to respond with large scale conventional force. They need it to

Well, believe it.

There is no telling how far ISIS will go to draw us in.

For this reason, every American should consider the lengths ISIS will go to in order to draw us into their manufactured holy war. It's time for the U.S. Government and those of us prosecuting this fight to bring in the talent and capacity of the United States citizenry.

Many Americans I talk to as I run the [Stability Institute](#) and research my next book are tired

of watching from the sidelines. Many want to know more about Islamist violent extremists. They want to understand the next generation of terror threat facing their communities. They want to know how they can help. Many want to vote in 2016 with a better understanding of this threat informing their decision.

Unless we plan to follow the role of ‘unwitting crusader’ that is being spun for us by these extremist myth entrepreneurs, we need to bring this war with ISIS and Islamist violent extremists out of the shadows and into the light.

Only by coming together as a nation, opening our eyes to this emerging reality and adapting how we fight them can we defeat this threat and protect our democratic ideals.

Scott Mann is a retired Green Beret Lieutenant Colonel, who spent almost 23 years in the U.S. Army and over 18 years in Special Operations, during which Scott deployed to insurgencies all over the world. During these grueling deployments, Scott developed the methodology called “village stability operations,” which has been recognized by Sen. John McCain and Gen. David Petraeus as a “game-changer” in Afghanistan. Scott captured his distinctive strategies in his book, Game Changers (February 2015). He is also author of Next Ridgeline, a book devoted to assisting Green Berets make smoother transitions into civilian life. Scott has trained more than 15,000 Navy SEALs, Marines and Special Operations soldiers in the past five years. Scott has also trained senior advisors for the Department of Defense and is a sought after



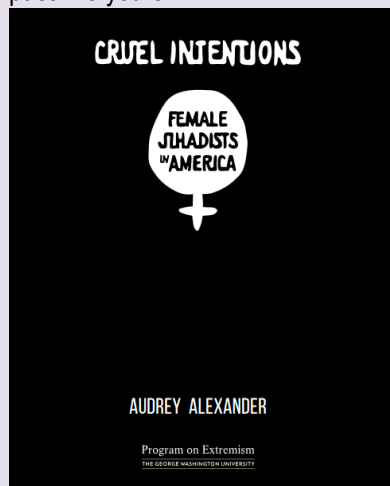
advisor to leaders in both security and law enforcement. Scott is currently the Founder and CEO of the Stability Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to brokering knowledge and connecting stability professionals on complex issues around the globe. He is also the Founder/CEO of Patriot Families, a non-profit organization committed to helping military families and wounded veterans at a grass-roots level cope with the rigors of military deployments and family stress

Female jihadists play critical roles in terror groups

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20161205-female-jihadists-play-critical-roles-in-terror-groups>

Dec 05 – George Washington University [Program on Extremism](#) researchers released a new study examining the roles of American jihadi women and found a significant increase in their participation in terrorist activity in the past five years.

enforcement officials and even the public that women were participating in terrorism,”



The paper, [Cruel Intentions: Female Jihadists in America](#), was released Thursday, almost exactly a year after Tashfeen Malik and her husband, Syed Rizwan Farook, shot and killed fourteen people at a holiday party in San Bernardino, California, as part of a planned terrorist attack. The attack came on the heels of a 2015 paper about [ISIS in America](#), which raised concerns about the growing presence of jihadi women.

The couple's path to radicalization is still the subject of an ongoing FBI investigation, but Malik's active role in carrying out the plot was a shock to many who categorize extremist women as taking an auxiliary role in jihad, said [Audrey Alexander](#), Program on Extremism research fellow and author of the new paper.

"As a result of their actions, the threat became immediately apparent to policymakers, law

AMERICAN WOMEN IN JIHAD - KEY FACTS

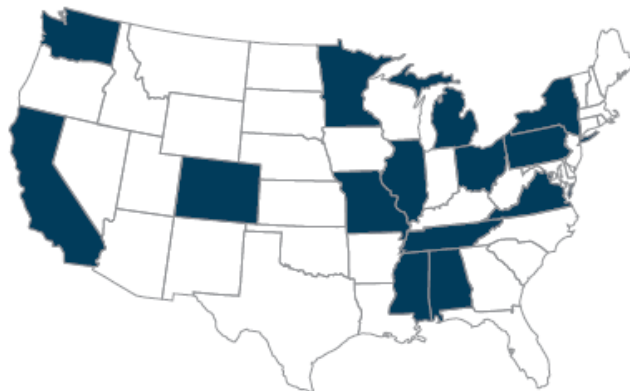
Cases Examined: 25

Average Age: Approximately 27

Age Range: 15-44 years old

States active: 14

States (name): Alabama, California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington



she said.

Alexander examined the efforts of 25 jihadi women from January 2011 to September 2016. The women hail from 14 states and range from 15 to 44 years old, with an average age of 27. The women aligned themselves with a range of organizations including, but not limited to, the Islamic State, al-Shabaab, the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

There was no discernable profile of a female jihadist. Alexander said at a Thursday panel event focused on the study that more research is needed on why and how women participate in terror to debunk stereotypes that



suggest they only play supporting roles.

"These findings do not identify a silver bullet, and they do not chart a clear path forward, but the efforts of jihadi women in America must be met with a varied response," she said. "The diverse backgrounds of these cases will render all monolithic approaches ineffective."

GW [says](#) that within the wider movement, American women served primarily as plotters, supporters, and travelers. Plotters, such as Malik, design and attempt to carry out domestic attacks. Supporters garner material support within U.S. borders, disseminate propaganda, or conceal information about impending threats to advance the agenda of jihadist groups. Travelers migrate in order to participate in the movement directly.

While few female American jihadists appear to act alone or carry out violent plots, many support activities along with friends, siblings, and romantic partners. The women are active online and offline, and social media use is common.

"Moving forward this study really supports the claim anecdotally but looking at the data, women have no fewer motives than men for engaging in jihad," Alexander said. "This is a contested question in literature, and really there is limited research on this subject, so I've been proud to advance this question."

Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, president of Women in International Security, and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, policy specialist on the United Nation's Counter-Terrorism Committee, also participated in the panel discussion. Fink said terrorist groups increasingly exploit the shock value of female jihadists, and that by using women, extremists have advanced the legitimacy and potency of terrorist narratives.

Dr. de Jonge Oudraat said when law enforcement and researchers focus on women's roles as only mothers and wives of jihadists, the scope of how they participate in terrorism can be obscured.

"If we're not looking at these gender stereotypes in a critical matter, we actually overlook and diminish activities perpetrated by women," she said.

The report says it is important for policymakers to offer alternatives to arrest. It also emphasized de-radicalization and prevention are necessary steps to countering violent extremism by woman, particularly in instances where individuals engage with the ideology but do not break the law or commit violence.

Women who denounce terrorist ideology can offer compelling narratives to deter other women from joining extremist groups, Alexander said.

ISIS deploys more women as frontline suicide bombers

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20161205-isis-deploys-more-women-as-frontline-suicide-bombers>

Dec 05 – Security services in many countries are facing a new challenge: **More and more women are sent or inspired by ISIS to engage in terrorists' acts in Europe and the Islamic world.**

Female followers of ISIS have until now been largely limited to support roles in the organization. Since the summer, however, as the retreat of ISIS in the face of a U.S.-led coalition campaign accelerated, the organization has reversed its policy on women in operational roles.

The *Observer* reports that since August, a series of terrorist plots involving women have been uncovered by security authorities in Europe and north Africa.

The employment of women as terrorists creates a new challenge for security agencies.

"It's a concern ... There is constant evolution as the pressures on [ISIS] increase, so we are not complacent," said one western European security official.

Four French women, aged 19 to 39, were arrested in September for a plot to blow up a car near the Notre Dame Cathedral. The cell, organized by an ISIS militant in France who was known to the security services, was the first to consist entirely of women.

"If at first it appeared that women were confined to family and domestic chores by the terrorist organization, it must be noted that this view is now completely outdated," François Molins, a French prosecutor, told reporters after the four were arrested.



The Paris plot received considerable media attention, which has not been the case with other plots around the world in which women played an operational role. In August, ISIS deployed at least one female suicide bomber in Libya, and in October the Moroccan security services arrested ten women on suspicion of plotting a large terror attack. Officials noted that all were in their teens, had sworn allegiance to ISIS, and were in possession of bomb-making material.

The women “got in touch with [ISIS] elements via the internet and were brainwashed into committing destructive acts targeting ... tourist sites in particular,” said Abdelhak Khiame, who leads Morocco’s Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations.

“This is the first time we have found a terrorist cell that was entirely composed of women. Terrorists are focusing [recruitment] efforts on minors who are female. That is very worrying for all of us. It’s an alarm bell,” Khiame said.

Women have been deployed to the front lines of Islamic militancy before. Senior officials in al Qaeda, however, have consistently made clear their opposition to women taking part in combat activities, saying that a more suitable role for women would be supporting male “mujahideen” and the broader struggle, rather than physically take up arms themselves.

When al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Iraq defied the policy and deployed a female suicide bomber in 2005 to attack a hotel in Amman, Jordan, the decision was roundly criticized within extremist circles.

ISIS initially restricted the many thousands of female volunteers it attracted from Europe and the Islamic world to support activities. “Thus far, ISIS has stifled the role of women in the ‘caliphate’ by limiting them to the house, ensuring they raise the next generation of jihadi militants and provide for their husbands,” Rachel Bryson, of the Centre on Religion and Geopolitics in London, told the *Observer*.

Still, ISIS affiliates – especially Boko Haram in Nigeria – have continued to use women in terrorist attacks – and some women acted as lone-wolves terrorists.

The recent change “would suggest the group is starting to heavily feel the pressure from the action taken against it,” Bryson said.

ISIS is facing a military defeat in the shrinking areas it controls in Iraq and Syria.

Some analysts argue the organization will be able to continue to attract support because of its past record of victories, with volunteers taking the view that it needs help now more than ever. Other experts believe that the appeal of ISIS will be much weakened.

Bryson said: “As [ISIS] and others start to lose more ground, their pool of recruits will grow smaller, meaning that they’ll need more women to take up combat roles. Furthermore, Isis knows that the death of a woman evokes a larger response worldwide than that of a man, and for ISIS’s PR machine increasing the group’s media platform is an attractive prospect.”

Copycat terrorists could use drone to attack plane, intelligence report warns

Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/drone-attacks-terrorists-intelligence-report-1.3881453>



Dec 05 – Publicity about near-misses between drones and passenger aircraft might give terrorists ideas about how to take down a plane, a federal intelligence report warns.

The Transport Canada report obtained by The Canadian Press also suggests small unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, could easily be used for advance surveillance of targets.

The report tempers such fears by noting the practical hurdles in employing a drone for nefarious purposes.

But the assessment underscores concern in intelligence circles that terrorists could take advantage of the tiny, inexpensive and widely available flying machines.

The report documents five reports of "near misses" between Canadian aircraft and UAVs last year. In September 2015, a WestJet flight from Edmonton to Abbotsford, B.C., reported a drone passing about 60 metres underneath the plane.

Just last month, a Porter Airlines flight to Toronto narrowly avoided crashing into an object initially thought to be a drone.



Will extremists adopt tactic?

Media coverage of near-collisions between UAVs and passenger aircraft "may encourage interest amongst extremists to consider the tactic," the Transport Canada intelligence report says.

However, given the short flying time — 10 to 40 minutes — of most off-the-shelf drones and strong, persistent winds at high altitudes, "intentionally striking an aircraft in-flight would be unlikely," the report adds.

A heavily censored version of the secret January 2016 report was released under the Access to Information Act.

Extremist use of a drone is "certainly not impossible and the authorities are not necessarily exaggerating things here," said Jez

Littlewood, a terrorism expert at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University.

But given the current state of the technology, Canadians shouldn't panic about the notion of a commercially available drone being used to ram into an aircraft, he said.

Using a store-bought drone to carry and drop a bomb would also be challenging, and extremist groups tend to gravitate to more readily available weapons, Littlewood added.

Armed drone strikes

In recent years the United States has launched hundreds of armed drone strikes to kill what it says are thousands of terrorist combatants.

But UAVs are also used for a variety of peaceful applications including agricultural surveys, police investigations, meteorology, search and rescue, and movie shoots — as well as by hobbyists with an ever-expanding choice of models.

"We judge that Canada-based extremists could easily obtain a UAV to conduct reconnaissance on transportation targets or infrastructure," the Transport Canada intelligence report says. "However, using a UAV for this purpose would draw attention to potential attack planning."

For example, the report notes, in May last year the marine security officer of a dock in the port of Nanaimo, B.C., advised Transport Canada that employees saw a drone flying around the port in a suspicious manner and that they believed it was taking photos.

In 2014, internal RCMP documents noted there had been several extremist plots around the globe — none successful — to use drones in attacks involving explosives, chemical weapons or biological agents.

Drone bomb drops in Syria

There are four terrorist groups with identifiable drone programs — Hezbollah, Hamas, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, all of whom are primarily active in the Middle East, says a recent report by the Combating Terrorism Centre at the U.S. West Point military academy.

It cites a report of Hezbollah dropping two small bombs from what was believed to have been a modified, commercially available drone over rebel positions in Syria



as a possible watershed event that could represent the "leading edge of a wave of

similar incidents that could follow in the months, years and decades ahead."



NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE
STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

Demystifying Gray Zone conflict in Libya and Colombia

In a new report and research brief, START researchers highlight the dynamics of Gray Zone conflict – the conceptual space between peace and war – in Libya since 2014 (report) and Colombia since 2002 (research brief).

- Report: [A Typology of Conflict Dyads and Instruments of Power in Libya, 2014-Present](#)
- Research Brief: [A Typology of Conflict Dyads and Instruments of Power in Colombia, 2002-present](#)

START data informs 2016 Global Terrorism Index

The Institute for Economics and Peace recently released the 2016 Global Terrorism Index. The report, based on START's Global Terrorism Database, offers insight on long-term terrorism trends, socio-economic conditions where terrorism occurs, geopolitical and ideological aims of terrorist groups, and evolving terrorist strategies based on 2015 attack data from the GTD. [Read more](#)

Clampdown on terrorism - new counter-terrorism law backed by civil liberties MEPs

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161205IPR54601/clampdown-on-terrorism-new-counter-terrorism-law-backed-by-civil-liberties-meps>

Dec 05 – **Foreign fighters as well as "lone wolves" training and preparing terrorist attacks on European soil will be criminalised under new EU-rules to fight terrorism backed on Monday.**

Civil Liberties Committee MEPs voted by 37 to 4, with 7 abstentions, to back an informal deal on the draft law, struck by Parliament, the Council and Commission on 17 November. For a preparatory act to be criminalised, it must have been carried out intentionally or knowingly, the text says. Parliament's negotiators inserted a clause stressing that fundamental rights and freedoms must be respected. The deal still needs to be endorsed by Parliament as a whole and EU ministers.

Parliament's lead MEP Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, DE) said "There is no freedom without security. Travelling abroad for terrorist purposes, training or being trained for them, inciting terrorism or financing terrorist activities will be made a crime in all EU member states. This is a very comprehensive framework which implements UN and Financial Action Task Force Directives in the fight against terror."

The following acts, among others, are to be made criminal offences throughout the EU:

- travelling abroad to join a terrorist group or for training for terrorism, such as foreign fighters travelling to Syria or other conflict zones, or returning to the EU if that the person might constitute a threat,
- recruitment for terrorism,
- providing or receiving training for making explosives or weapons or noxious or hazardous substances. This provision would also apply to "lone wolves" studying to carry out an attack on their own,
- public incitement to commit terrorism or advocating terrorism, either directly or indirectly through the glorification of such acts, that intentionally caused danger of new offences. (Member states would be required to ensure the prompt removal of online content that constitute public provocation to commit terrorism or, if not possible, block such content while ensuring judicial redress and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights), and
- providing funds to commit or contribute to terrorism (member states would also be required to take measures to freeze or seize such funds).



Stepping up information sharing among member states

Parliament's negotiators ensured that, for the first time, member states will be obliged to exchange relevant information in relation to criminal proceedings on terrorist offences as soon as possible if the information could be used to prevent future attacks or assist other ongoing investigations or proceedings.

Helping victims of terrorism

Member states would have to put in place emergency response systems in the event of an attack to ensure immediate help is given to victims and their families, for example through national websites and emergency support centres.

Help should include medical treatment, emotional and psychological support, as well as counselling on legal or financial matters, including compensation claims. Victims caught in a terrorist attack while visiting another EU country should get help to return home.

Next steps

The agreement is expected to be voted in Plenary in February 2017. Member states will have 18 months to ensure that its provisions can be applied.

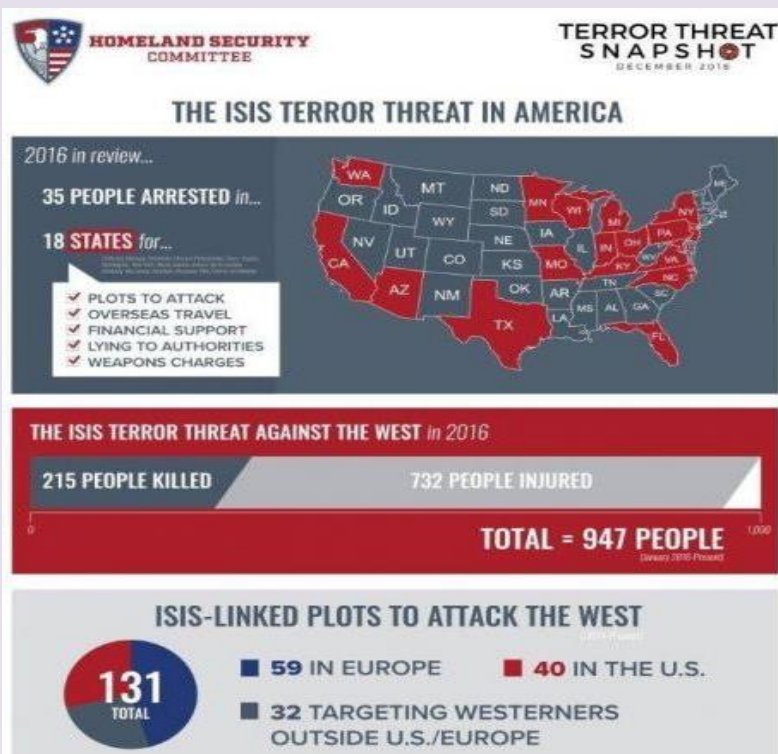
The UK and Ireland will not be bound by the directive, but may notify the EU Commission of their intention to opt-in, if they so wish. Denmark will not be covered by the directive.

Background

Further attacks in the EU are likely to be attempted, both by lone actors and groups, a [recent report from Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre](#) says. It predicts that if ISIS is defeated or severely weakened in Syria/Iraq, the numbers of foreign fighters returning to Europe will rise.

House Report: US facing biggest Islamic terror threat since 9/11

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/12/06/house-report-us-facing-biggest-islamic-terror-threat-since-911.html>



Dec 06 – The United States faces its highest threat from Islamist terrorists since 9/11 and much of that stems from those radicalized at home, according to the House Homeland Security Committee's December Terror Threat Snapshot released Tuesday.

What's more, the report said, the threat to the United States and Europe will persist in 2017. Throughout 2016, ISIS conducted 62 attacks worldwide, injuring 732 people and killing 215 in several countries, including the United States, France, and Belgium.

"Make no mistake: we face a deadlier threat than ever before not only because our enemies have gotten savvier, but because we took the pressure off them," House Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul, R-Texas, said in a statement on the report. "For eight years, the Obama Administration reluctantly played global whack-a-mole with terrorists rather than leaning into the fight with decisive leadership."

According to the report, ISIS' shift

in messaging from joining the jihad in Syria and Iraq to carrying out attacks in fighters' home countries is likely to accelerate the trend of at-home radicalization. At the same time,



terrorists are also relying on refugee programs, porous borders, and well-known migration routes to gain access to various countries throughout the West.

According to the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), individuals with ties to terrorist groups in Syria are attempting to gain entry to the United States through the U.S. refugee program, which has resettled nearly 13,000 Syrian refugees across the nation this year.

The report also said American law enforcement and intelligence officials have repeatedly indicated that the United States lacks reliable and credible intelligence to properly vet and screen potential Syrian refugees, as well as the diligent vetting of all refugee populations.

As an example, the report cited a car and knife attack last week at Ohio State University by an 18-year-old Somali refugee, Abdul Razak Ali Artan, that left him dead and 11 injured.

“The attack last week at Ohio State University is further proof that our homeland remains in the crosshairs of Islamist terrorists,” McCaul said. “Groups like ISIS are radicalizing new operatives from within our borders, and just this week, their new spokesman called for more inspired attacks by supporters ‘all over the world’.”

Artan was not the only legal U.S. resident to pledge allegiance to ISIS in November 2016. On November 19, Mohamed Rafik Naji, a 37-year-old legal permanent resident from New York, was arrested for attempting to join ISIS, expressing his support for an ISIS attack similar to the one in Nice last summer. And on November 7, Aaron Travis Daniels, a 20-year-old U.S. citizen from Ohio, was arrested after attempting to travel to Libya to join ISIS. Daniels had expressed support for ISIS through social media and sent money to ISIS operatives overseas.

Authorities have arrested 115 individuals in the United States and charged 4 others in absentia in ISIS-linked cases since 2014, according to the Committee’s report.

Also in 2016, the Obama administration transferred 48 prisoners from Guantanamo Bay in 2016, and according to the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, at least 30 percent of all former Guantanamo Bay prisoners are known, or suspected, to have returned to terrorism and jihadist activity following their release. As of early December 2016, 59 prisoners remain in detention.

“The Trump Administration will inherit a generational struggle that has only gotten longer,” McCaul said. “But rest assured, we will work closely with them to turn the table on these fanatics.”

Game theory may help protect against terrorist attacks

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20161207-game-theory-may-help-protect-against-terrorist-attacks>

Dec 07 – A new article explains how game theory and algorithms are being used to optimize security



and patrol schedules to prevent terrorist attacks.

In the *Significance* article, Dr. Thanh Nguyen notes that defenders must perpetually defend numerous targets using a limited number of resources, whereas attackers are able to surveil and learn defenders’ strategies and attack after careful planning. Wiley notes that game-theoretical algorithms can be used by defenders optimally to randomize their patrols so that attackers cannot predict which target defenders are going to protect at any given time.

“There are applications deployed in the real world that have led to measurable improvements in security,” said Dr. Nguyen.

“For example, games and calculations of this sort have been used by the United States Coast Guard since 2011 to protect both passenger ferries and ports.”

— Read more in Thanh Nguyen, “*Serious games*,” *Significance* (5 December 2016)



A license to print: how real is the risk posed by 3D printed guns?

By Thomas Birtchnell

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20161207-a-license-to-print-how-real-is-the-risk-posed-by-3d-printed-guns>

Dec 07 – [3D printed guns](#) are back [in the news](#) after Queensland Police reported last week that they had discovered a 3D printer in a raid on what appeared to be a “large-scale” weapons production facility as a part of [Operation Oscar Quantum](#).

According to [police](#), the raid uncovered homemade weapons and ammunition in a workshop manufacturing facility “containing equipment used in the production of fully automatic machine guns, including a 3D printer, lathes, drill presses and other tools”.

The Gold Coast Bulletin [reported](#) that Detective Superintendent Jon Wacker, of the Drug and Serious Crime Group, said the “Uzi”-style guns, thought to be made with the help of a 3D printer, were “fairly close” to factory quality.

One of the home made weapons was captioned in [one media report](#) as being a “3D-printed



submachine gun”. This could certainly raise alarm and hint at a new era of disorganized and decentralized weapons production, and a burgeoning “reshoring” of weapon manufacturing as an alternative to importation from overseas.

But the fact is that 3D printing technology is not yet at the stage where it can readily produce weapons. Although it can be used to help rogue gunsmiths work their shady trade.

Impracticalities

The fact is that today’s home or consumer grade 3D printers are not able to produce durable metal objects, such as would be required to print a gun. The standard nozzles used in the process of fused deposition modelling ([FDM](#)) simply do not get hot enough to melt pure metals.

There are certainly efforts to bring metal FDM 3D printers to market. One of the future contenders for mass adoption is a prototype [open source FDM metal 3D printer](#), much like a home welder. At the moment this does not really compare to the resolution of plastic printers, although the concept is claimed to be at least [proven](#).





However, there is constant innovation with 3D printer materials. There are currently [efforts](#) to make metal-infused filaments in bronze and copper. These are certainly a promising development for budding home jewelry designers and makers, but not gunsmiths, as firearms require stronger and purer metal feedstocks.

One of the key hurdles for gunsmiths is the extremely high temperatures needed to melt or [sinter](#) metals. For example, iron sinters at between 1,100°C and 1,300°C, whereas a general FDM 3D printer can reach 195-220°C.

Another hurdle is the cost of “powderized” metals found in direct metal laser sintering ([DMLS](#)) or selective laser sintering ([SLS](#)) printers.

Powdered metals also require [safe facilities](#) to use them: finely divided metal powders, such as titanium and aluminum, can spontaneously combust causing fires.

It is possible to see limited runs of critical metal parts for automobiles and other specialist objects made on 3D printers in many [research](#) and industry facilities.

Indeed, for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) around the world, “additive manufacturing” using 3D printers is a [game changer for supply chains](#). Many SMEs are investing in their own high end metal 3D printers or utilizing facilities in universities and incubators.

But one catch is the cost. For example, the [EOS EOSINT M 100](#) is a relatively “entry level” DMLS 3D printer and costs between US\$100,000 and US\$250,000. Such machines are unlikely to turn up in the Christmas stockings of criminal gangs.

Prototypes

What makes me skeptical that the guns recovered from Operation Oscar Quantum were 3D printed in their entirety is not only the prohibitive cost of 3D printing in metals, but the presence of typical gunsmith production machines at the facility.

But a 3D printer could have certainly been used to manufacture many non- or near- critical parts, such as grips or the outer framework.

A 3D printer may have also been used for “rapid prototyping” for mock-ups to test the final design in plastic. This is where a 3D printer can quickly produce a prototype part for testing before the final part is produced using more conventional means. This is one of the most common uses of 3D printers in industry today.



It should be noted that this is not the first time that police have flagged 3D printing as playing a role in weapons production.

On December 10, 2015, Queensland Police [reported](#) that Taskforce Maxima found methamphetamine and steroids, drug paraphernalia and “a loaded handgun allegedly created by a 3D printer” in a raid on a meth lab.

The handgun from Taskforce Maxima certainly appears to be made on a 3D printer, featuring the characteristic surface ribbing you see from 3D printed items. It also appears to conform to the design parameters of a [3D printed gun](#), the “Liberator”, produced by American organization, Defense Distributed.

However, the critical part – the barrel – appears to be a conventional non-printed piece, most likely metal. Whether it would have actually worked safely or simply been used for intimidation is another question entirely.

NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione’s team was also [reported](#) to have bought a 3D printer for A\$1,700 and made a polymer Liberator handgun from a design file downloaded from the internet.

Backyard gunsmiths

We shouldn’t really be surprised that 3D printers are now an integral part of illicit gunsmiths’ repertoires. 3D printing is a near essential element of any pre-production suite, particularly for rapid prototyping. Metal 3D printing will no doubt be a part of the suite too, if it is not already.

Gunsmithing also has a long heritage in Australia as the photo below shows. Indeed, [Lithgow Arms’](#) history dates back to 1912.

3D printing also offers tremendous advantages and perhaps even a [new industrial future](#). Other local industries could benefit from 3D printing boutique, custom and novelty objects. This would buck the trend of [offshoring](#) that has ailed Australian manufacturing over the 21st century.

And we should remember that it’s not only 3D printing that enables people to build illicit firearms. With the right tools, a skilled gunsmith can make a weapon in their back shed. However, 3D printing can make that process easier and more accessible to less skilled individuals.

Thomas Birtchnell is Senior lecturer, University of Wollongong.

Iran's Mashhad Municipality Opens Military-Religious Amusement Park – To Reinforce Revolutionary Values For Children

Source: <http://memri.org/reports/irans-mashhad-municipality-opens-military-religious-amusement-park-%E2%80%93-reinforce-revolutionary>

On September 24, 2016, the Iranian news agency Raja News, which is close to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), published an interview with Child and the Future Cultural Center director Hamid Sadeghi about an event held during the second half of September that is a military-religious amusement park, called The City of Games for Revolutionary Children. Sadeghi, who operates under the aegis of the Mashhad municipality and also runs the Sharbehesht.ir website, said that his center had set up and inaugurated the City of Games park, and that it is open free of charge to children aged eight through 13. It should be noted that this is the second City of Games event held by the Mashhad municipality; the first was last summer (see MEMRI Special Dispatches - No. 6098, Revolutionary, Anti-West Indoctrination Of Children By Municipality Of Mashhad, Iran, July 08, 2015).

According to Sadeghi, the City of Games park has 12 stations with activity aimed at inculcating the messages of Iran's Islamic Revolution and of the revolutionary Shi'a. He stated that in the park, the children wear military uniforms and are accompanied through the stations by a guide in the role of a military commander whose orders they must obey. The children follow paths with activities including simulating fighting the enemies of the Revolution, ranging from the Iraqi enemy in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War to the current battle against the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria and against the Saudi royal family. At the various stations, the children can launch



plastic missiles and fire plastic bullets at targets such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, U.S. and Israeli flags, effigies of ISIS fighters, and members of the Saudi royal family. At the final station, the children, who are blindfolded, are asked to throw a ball at a puzzle of an Israeli flag and knock it down, and then put together a puzzle of the Iranian flag.

Below are the main points of Sadeghi's interview with Raja News, along with photos that accompanied the interview.

Dec 01 – Cultural Center director Hamid Sadeghi: "The City of Games for Revolutionary Children [park was opened] at Mashhad's Kooch Sangi Park by the Child and the Future Cultural Center organization. It will be open September 18 to September 28, and children aged eight to 13 will be admitted free. At the City of Games, we are trying to convey to the children messages about fighting, the Holy Defense [i.e.

Iran-Iraq War] and current global issues, through games, amusements, and group activities.

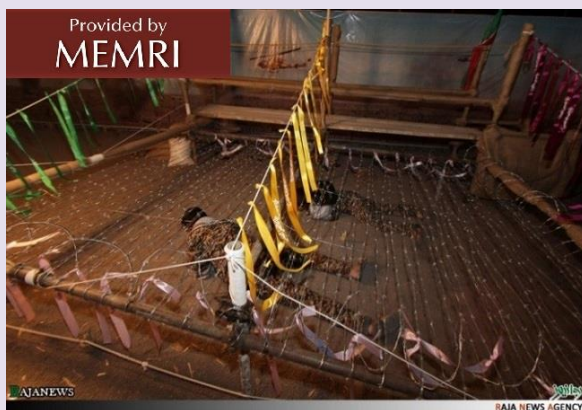
"After registering, the children enter the City of Games compound and split up into groups of eight to 10. They don uniforms and go through 12 [activity] stations.

"One of [our] cultural experts guides the children at the City of Games. First they are brought into the stations of the Ghadir [Shi'ite holiday honoring Imam 'Ali's succession to the Prophet Muhammad] and of the Lovers of Ahl Al-Bayt [the family of the Prophet Muhammad descended from 'Ali], and [the guide] explains to them about the Mahdi [the Shi'ite messiah]. Then they reach the station of the Rule of the

Jurisprudent [*Velayat-e Faqih*], and then the station of the Revolution, where the guide explains about the Islamic Revolution and how the Iranian nation vanquished the [Shah's] dictatorship. An explanation is also provided about the directives of the Imam [Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini and [Supreme] Leader Khamenei. Each group of children is assigned a commander who must be obeyed.

"Next, the children enter the first station of the Holy Defense, which houses the dome of the Tomb of Imam Reza [the eighth imam]. Like the fighters during the eight years of the Holy Defense, the children take leave of the Imam Reza and set out for the [battle]fronts.

"The children follow various paths simulating fighting the enemy, and at some places, the children learn about simple [combat] methods such as firing plastic artillery shells at a simulated enemy as well as aiming and firing a rifle with plastic bullets at [an effigy] of Netanyahu and at U.S. and Israeli flags. Here the guide tells the children a story about some of the operations that were carried out during the eight years of the Holy Defense.



"[After] the children are victorious in the war, they enter the station of the defense of the Shrine of Zaynab [the granddaughter of Muhammad and the daughter of 'Ali, who according to Shi'ite tradition is



buried in Damascus] and learn about defending the holy places, about the fighting in Syria against ISIS, and about anti-ISIS thought. At this stage, the children are tasked with finding bullets, each of which have a single letter written on it, and then play a game to complete sentences according to the guide's instructions. That is, the guide asks a question and the children have to find letters and make words and sentences out of them to answer his question.

"After that, the children have a contest throwing balls at effigies of ISIS and the Saudi royal family, and finish the station [activity] in triumph. Next they enter an area simulating the Shrine of Zaynab, and watch a video on the defense of the shrine. Finally, they receive a cultural souvenir gift, and then they enter the final stage.

"At the final station, the children learn that the most important element[s] for attaining victory are wisdom and intelligence for fighting the enemy.

"At this station, the children are blindfolded and asked to throw a ball at an Israeli flag in the form of a puzzle and knock it down, and then to assemble a puzzle of an Iranian flag.

"For each group, this [entire activity] path should take 30-45 minutes, and then the children are handed back to their families.

"So far, this City of Games has been in great demand... if the demand continues, we will extend it to October 1, if the Mashhad municipality's Culture and Leisure Department supports it... The exhibit hours are 4-11 pm. "

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Saluting in the last photo is quite interesting.

The Dragon of Islamic Terrorism

By Dex Quire

Source: <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/9506/dragon-islamic-terrorism>

- The dragon's first major tongue-dart at the West was the death threat -- a *fatwa* with a bounty issued in 1989 by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini -- on Salman Rushdie, a British citizen, for his novel, *The Satanic Verses*.



- What the dragon learned with that initial thrust! The West was so genteel. The United Nations issued condemnations on -- paper! Diplomats wrote scare-letters. Politicians said harrumph.
- How different if politicians and diplomats in the West had delivered the simple and forceful message back to the Ayatollah: Unless you remove this threat, we will cancel all diplomatic visas.

Dec 08 – "*The worst part of the dragon is in the tail.*" You do not have to know what it means; it gives off a spooky authority. This thought was written by Guillermo Cabrera Infante, the great Cuban writer who knew something about dragons' tails: he had confronted Fidel Castro and lived to tell about it. While on a diplomatic mission to Brussels in 1965, he denounced Castro, abandoned his post and lived out a life of exile in London until his death in 2005. He never went back.

For a minute, let us call the dragon Islamic Terror (we shall get back later to the tail). There is much about the dragon we do not know: where he lives exactly, his vulnerabilities, his comings and goings, his next attacks, his feeding schedule. We do know that he foments terror and inspires fear. From the front part of the dragon, his snout, emerges a tongue flick -- tasting the air, sensing out fresh victims. His first major tongue-dart at the West was the death threat -- a *fatwa* with a bounty issued in 1989 by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini -- on Salman Rushdie, a citizen of Britain citizen, for his novel, *The Satanic Verses*.

What the dragon learned with that initial thrust! The West was so genteel. The United Nations issued condemnations on -- paper! Diplomats wrote scare-letters. Politicians said harrumph.



(Image source: wikia.com)

Rushdie, on the other hand, was forced into hiding under armed, protective custody. Khomeini -- who had just shoveled half a million young Iranians into a war with Iraq -- in addition to exterminating thousands of "enemies of the Islamic Revolution" -- also learned a lot about us. The response of the West was phlegmatic. The vast apparatus of publishing and communications zipped itself into a giant mouse suit and decided it looked great (so lifelike). Penguin Books chose not to print its address in the paperback edition of *The Satanic Verses*, as if that would hide it. Major book chains refused to stock the novel and libraries "disappeared" it from their shelves. Fellow novelists from around the world, from the safety of their hearths, proclaimed, "We are all Salman Rushdie."

Even dragons know that novels, feeble though they may be, are the carriers of culture, core samples of a civilization's memory. The dragon learned that in the West, it did not matter that fighter aircraft sear the skies at patriotic festivals, that nuclear submarines flow



through ocean canyons, that warships ride the world's watery trails. The West was not about to stick up for those who traversed the holies of Islam; instead, it clenched in fear and never unclenched. How different the world would be if, in 1989, every publisher -- large and small -- had published some portion of *The Satanic Verses* on their front pages. How different if politicians and diplomats in the West had delivered the simple and forceful message back to the Ayatollah: Unless you remove this threat, we will cancel all diplomatic visas. But they did not, and this is now our world.

Novels tracking fundamentalist religious groups transplanting themselves into secular urban zones in the West go unwritten. Movies showing much of life under Islam go unfilmed. Satire of Muslim fundamentalism goes unproduced, while mockery of Christianity abounds. Comedians such as Penn Jillette, Sara Silverman, and Monty Python's Michael Palin -- entertainers who have grown wealthy proclaiming their atheism or mocking Christianity and Judaism -- openly confess their fear of Islam; really just open confessions of cowardice. It should cover us in shame. "Cowardice," wrote the novelist Mikhail Bugakov, in the darkest days of Stalin's 1930s, "is the worst sin."

The dragon doubtless now knows more about us than we know about him. But if we can reassert our freedoms -- faith, speech, ideas, laughter and definitely mockery -- we can still avoid his tail.

Dex Quire is a Seattle writer whose latest novel is Crocodile Words.

Purdue launches Institute for Global Security and Defense Innovation

Source: <http://www.purdue.edu/discoverypark/igsdi/index.php>

Dec 09 – Purdue University president Mitch Daniels announced last Thursday that the university is opening a new Institute for Global Security and Defense Innovation in Discovery Park. In the 2016 fiscal year, the university was awarded more than \$50 million for advanced defense-related research projects. The new institute will centralize defense and security research efforts across campus, and, it is hoped, will make Purdue the pre-eminent university in national defense and security. "We can no longer rely on decades of military superiority via so-called technology 'off-sets,'" said Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, chief scientist and executive director of Purdue's Discovery Park. "In the future we must out-invent, out-discover, and out-innovate our adversaries every day."



Drone flown 20m from jet 11,000ft over London

Source: <http://news.sky.com/story/drone-flown-20m-from-jet-11000ft-over-london-10689511>

Dec 09 – A drone was flown as close as 20m from a passenger jet at 11,000ft above London - in one of the most serious near-misses this year.

The device - the size of a football - passed next to the right wing of an Airbus A320, causing the plane's first officer to shout "look!" as it flew by.

But there was insufficient time for the flight crew to ensure that a potential collision with the drone was avoided, above Biggin Hill in south-east London, an official report said.

The UK Airprox Board (UKAB) has warned that a minority of drone operators are "flagrantly disregarding regulation and common sense" in

pursuit of "ever more spectacular video footage".

UKAB reports have recorded 59 near-misses involving drones this year - though the incident with the Airbus A320 has been registered as among the most serious.

The drone's operator could not be traced after the details of the incident at 6.05pm on 4 August were passed to the Metropolitan Police. Two other incidents involving near misses with drones - one with a plane above London City Airport and another approaching Manchester airport - were also investigated by the UKAB at its latest meeting.





In an effort to tackle the mishandling of drones, the Civil Aviation Authority has launched a website promoting the 'Dronecode' - its code of conduct for drone users.

It states that drones should not be flown above 400ft.

Biggin Hill Airport (London)

A spokesperson said: "It is totally unacceptable to fly drones close to aircraft and airports.

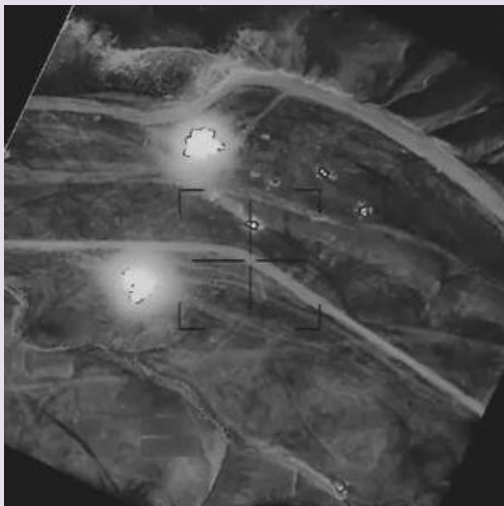
"Anyone flouting the rules can face severe penalties including up to five years in prison."



EDITOR'S COMMENT: It is finally so easy! And if a "football drone" can climb to 11,000ft imagine what a bigger "hobby drone" can do to a commercial flight during landing or take off... Why worrying about "chemical drones" or "dirty drones" when weapon-to-be drones are sold in a store next to you (global-wide). Remember the cost-to-benefit ratio in all terrorist attacks? Not to mention that they can be controlled from a roof overlooking an air field or a moving truck...

Record airstrike hits over 100 ISIL oil trucks gathered in Syria

Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/12/09/airstrike-syria-united-states-coalition-islamic-state/95210166/>



Dec 10 – **U.S. warplanes destroyed a fleet of 168 oil tanker trucks in Syria in the largest such strike against the terror group's finances this year, the U.S.-led coalition announced Friday.**

More than 20 aircraft were used to destroy the tanker trucks, which were gathered near Palmyra, in central Syria. The **oil in the trucks was worth about \$2 million**, according to a statement.

The airstrike, which was launched Thursday, is part of an operation to reduce revenues from the Islamic State, which is also called ISIS or ISIL.

The Islamic State gets 25% of its revenue from oil, the Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, a private research group, estimates.



It's not clear why the Islamic State massed so many vehicles in the open.

The first trucks that were struck did not have drivers in them and the drivers in the remaining trucks fled before they were struck, the coalition said.

Coalition aircraft have destroyed hundreds of tanker trucks and disabled infrastructure used to pump and refine oil to weaken the terror group's revenue.

The coalition has destroyed a total of 1,506 trucks as part of its campaign to target the Islamic State's oil industry.

"When ISIL has access to large sums of money, they use it to conduct violent terror attacks against anyone who doesn't share their barbaric ideology," Col. John Dorrian, a military spokesman, said in a statement.

At its peak the Islamic State, which controls territory in Iraq and Syria, had revenues of about \$1.3 million a day from oil, according to the State Department.

Revenue from oil and other sources has dropped as a result of the airstrikes and the Islamic State's loss of territory in Iraq and Syria.

Istanbul bomb blasts kill 29 and wound 166 in terror attack after football match

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/10/least-20-injured-suspected-car-bombing-near-turkish-football/>

Dec 11 – **Two bomb blasts outside a football stadium in Istanbul have left 29 dead and 166 injured**, the country's interior minister has said.

The explosions took place two hours after a match between two of Turkey's leading teams, Besiktas and Bursaspor. **Of those who died, 27 were police officers.**

"Unfortunately we have martyrs and wounded," said the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a statement. **One** of the blasts was caused by a **car bomb** and the **second** was a **suicide attack** at Macka Park nearby, 45 seconds later.

At the time of the blast Mr Erdogan was at his Istanbul residence in the suburb of Tarabya further down the Bosphorus, state media said.

Police also carried out a controlled explosion.

The Interior Minister, Suleyman Soylu, who released the latest casualty figures, said the car bomb was detonated remotely.

He added that 17 of those injured were undergoing surgery at a nearby hospital, with six in intensive care. Ten people have been detained in connection with the bombings.

Armed police sealed off streets around the Vodafone Arena, home to the Besiktas football team.

TV footage showed what appeared to be the wreckage of a burned out car and two separate fires on the road outside the stadium.

Mr Soylu said initial indications were the blast



was caused by a car bomb targeting a riot police bus.

Turkish Transport Minister Ahmet Arslan said on Twitter that it was a terrorist attack.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Omer Yilmiz, a cleaner at the nearby Dolmabahce mosque, said: "It



was like hell. The flames went all the way up to the sky.

"I was drinking tea at the cafe next to the mosque. People ducked under the tables, women began crying. Football fans drinking tea at the cafe sought shelter, it was horrible."

It happened after Besiktas beat visitors Bursaspor 2-1 in the Turkish Super League. More than a dozen ambulances arrived on a street next to the stadium.

Besiktas football club issued a statement



condemning the attack and confirming none of the fans or players were hurt.

"Terrorists... attacked our heroic security forces who ensure that both our fans and Bursaspor's supporters are safe. We will stand firm against the vile attackers who will never achieve their goal."

Turkey has experienced a bloody year of militant attacks in its two biggest cities that have left dozens dead and put the country on high alert.

Kurdish militants have twice struck in Ankara, while suspected Islamic State group suicide bombers have hit Istanbul on three occasions.

In June, 47 people were killed in a triple suicide bombing and gun attack at Istanbul's Ataturk airport, with authorities pointing the finger at Islamic State.

Another 57 people, 34 of them children, were killed in August in a suicide attack by an Islamic State-linked bomber at a Kurdish wedding in the southeastern city of Gaziantep.

The country is also still reeling from a failed July 15 coup blamed on the US-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen, that has been followed by a relentless purge of his alleged supporters from state institutions.



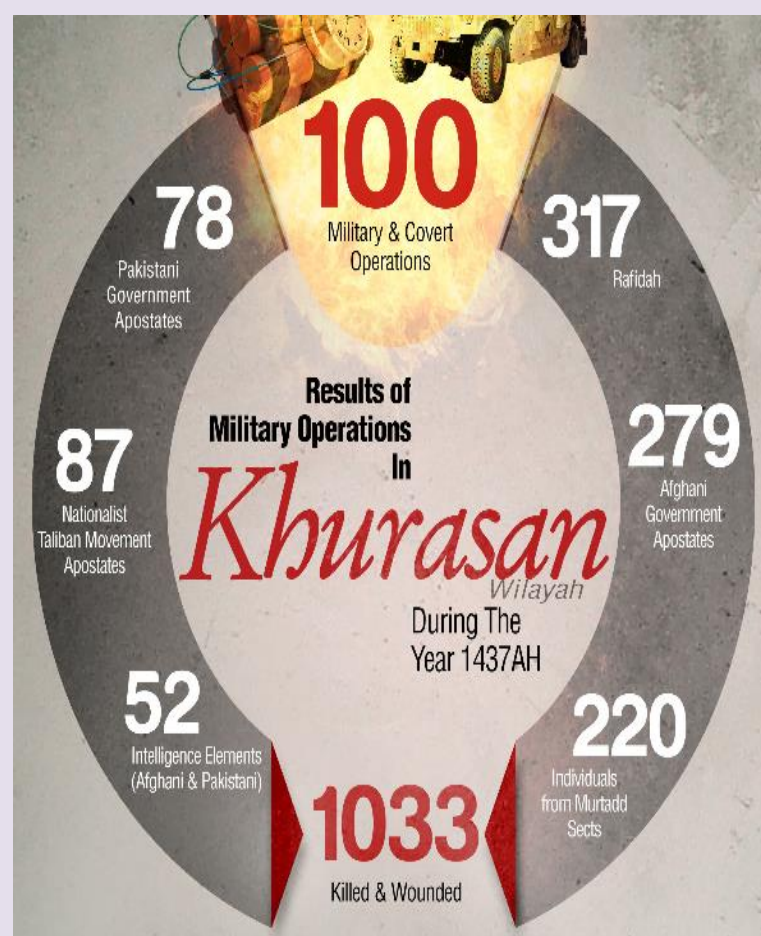
UPDATE Dec 12: 44 killed [36 police officers]; **150 injured** [14 in severe condition]; more than **400kg** explosives detonated.





Source: <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/rome-magazine-4.pdf>

►► p.38-39



IS magazine produced in Belgium?

Source: <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/News/1.2840787>

Dec 10 – A 21-year-old man from Zonhoven in Limburg has been arrested on suspicion of involvement in the terrorist organisation IS. The man's 19-year-old sister too has been detained. The two stand accused of producing translations for the IS group's magazine Dabiq. Extremely violent video images including some featuring executions were also found on their computers. Federal Belgian prosecutors are heading the investigation.

The two suspects are the children of a Muslim Sebian family that fled the war in the Balkans 16 years ago and settled in Belgium. The man and woman both went to school here and were radicalised without their parents' knowledge. The Telegram app that is frequently employed by terrorists and people recruiting jihadi fighters was used to produce and dispatch the translations.



Northumbria Police criticised over 'unnecessary' armed police presence in front of children

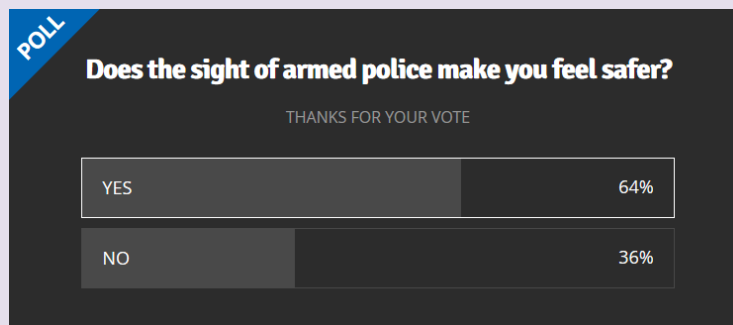
Source: <http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/northumbria-police-criticised-over-unnecessary-12303694>



Dec 11 – Families have been left shocked and alarmed at the sight of armed police patrolling city centre streets.

Coppers armed with guns were patrolling Newcastle's key shopping areas, including the festive market around Monument, on Saturday.

While Northumbria Police moved to reassure people not to be concerned by the sight of officers carrying weapons, many said the sight of large guns made them uncomfortable.



◀ When the Editor clicked on "YES"

Commenting on the force's Facebook post, Nic King said: "I don't want to see guns the size of my child when Christmas

shopping and these images have put me off going into Newcastle city centre.

"I understand there is no more threat to our safety and you are trying to reassure us, however I simply don't want to see armed police in my city."

Mum Tina Argent wrote that her son was left sobbing and upset after seeing the police with guns, while Kirsten Luckins commented: "Your armed officers make me feel less safe, not more."

"What would you do if there was an incident, shoot down Northumberland Street? Ridiculous. This is entirely unnecessary, inappropriate and a grotesque normalisation of extreme measures."

Not everyone was alarmed, with many others saying they felt reassured by the armed presence on the streets.

Suzanne Charlton write: "I think it's fantastic and exactly what we need in this day and age in my opinion all police should be armed," while Maureen Raeburn said: "I for one am pleased there out on the streets, they do a good job and I definitely feel safer with them there."



The force told people not to be alarmed by the sight of Firearms Support Unit (FSU) officers in Newcastle city centre and said: "We understand people may be concerned to see armed officers but they are not there because of any specific threat or intelligence that something is going to happen." Encouraging the public to approach armed police in the street, the force added that cops would still be performing the roles of a normal patrol officer.

The forces's Facebook post continued: "It is a really busy time of year and public safety and public confidence is our absolute priority.

"We would encourage people to approach the officers if they see them out and about - they do what they do because they want to keep you safe."

It comes after Northumbria Police announced it would be increasing the number of firearms officers by 50% following Home Office plans to boost the number of armed cops across the UK.

Assistant Chief Constable Darren Best has said the presence of armed cops acts as a deterrent to criminals, including shoplifters and pick-pockets.

"Our armed officers are there to reassure members of the public that we are in a position to respond to any incident that does occur," he added.

"They are regular police officers and them being on patrol will also deter other criminals including shoplifters and pick-pockets.

"Our priority will always be to keep those people living and working in the North East feel safe."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I read in other sites that some complaint that their children burst into tears when they saw the armed policemen. Well if children were very young they surely do not have the feeling on what they might represent. If they were old enough (10-14yo) they surely would like to explore officers' guns and see if they are just like those they use in their action video games (below). If I



was the NP Chief Constable I would immediately withdraw all my forces from the city and let them beg to deploy them again when a future terrorist attack would disturb their nirvana! Enough is enough with all these "peaceful citizens" that comment on everything for no reason (e.g., CCTVs and privacy issues) and then blame everybody for all reasons. At the same time they do nothing other than texting on their mobile phones while walking, sitting, working or even sleeping!



Fears of Christmas terror attack in Britain 'sees SAS called in to monitor the country's high streets'

Source: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2374945/fears-of-christmas-terror-attack-in-britain-sees-sas-called-in-to-monitor-the-countrys-high-streets/>



Dec 11 – **UK high streets and shopping centres across the country will be monitored by more than 200 SAS soldiers amid fears of a Christmas terror attack in Britain.**

The elite troops will be deployed after SAS commanders cancelled all holiday leave so the regiment's soldiers can join police in the largest counter terror surveillance operation in recent years, reports say. MI5 and MI6 chiefs fear terror plots are 'threatening Britain's sovereignty' as SAS units set to deploy on Xmas high streets

The plans for mobilisation came after the Home Office responded to a warning from MI5's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre that ISIS extremists were targeting mainland Britain for a major terror attack.

Sources speaking to the Sunday Express said they are responding to "new and urgent" threats uncovered after interrogating captured militant extremists in Iraq.

The UK is already on a nationwide state of alert after intelligence services disrupted 12 terror plots since 2013 – many of which were masterminded in Iraq and Syria.

Operating under police command, the Special Forces troops will be armed and capable of advising on hostage situations and chemical incidents, the paper reports.

The 200-strong force will operate as part of the Police's Counter Terrorist Command unit and will focus primarily on major Metropolitan areas like London, Birmingham and London.

Other soldiers will blend into crowds of Christmas shoppers to keep a look out for terrorist activity.

Sources told the Express: "We have seen the military supporting the police before, but not on this scale. With specialists and intelligence teams we are looking at 200 personnel.

"We could be looking at a so-called 'walk-in', when a cell travels to a city to launch and attack with bombs in their backpacks.

"But we could also face a spectacular Paris-style street attack.

"The biggest concern is an information attack where internet servers are overloaded, locking down networks."

He added that there also exists an increased threat of cyber terrorism.



A day before the revelation, MI6 chief Alex Younger warned: "The risks at stake are profound and represent a fundamental threat to our sovereignty".

Andrew Parker, the head of MI5 and responsible for UK mainland security, echoed Mr Younger's concerns, claiming there may be as many as 3,000 homegrown Islamist extremists operating in the UK. The sources said the MI6 warning means British security services are aware of at least one active UK terrorist cell, making the risk of an attack feel "very real".

A helicopter-borne SAS response unit, supported by armed police, has also been in operation for the last six months which can be called to action for terror 'incidents' anywhere across the UK.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Hope that SAS troops will not scare Brits like armed policemen in Newcastle did! Perhaps they can disguise as Santas to fit with the holidays' spirit and the stupidity of "peaceful" citizens...



How Islamic State is using consumer drones

By David Hambling

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20161208-how-is-is-using-consumer-drones>

Dec 09 – A small drone rises into the air. The operator checks its bird's-eye view on a screen before nudging a control and sending the drone buzzing across town.

This could be an enthusiast anywhere in the world. The global market for small camera-carrying flying machines has gone from a few thousand a year in 2010 to many millions. But in places like Iraq, consumer drones have also become weapons of war.

Off-the-shelf drones began to be used by so-called Islamic State in 2014. At first they used them to film propaganda videos from the air. Then they became scouts. A [drone video of a Syrian military base](#) was released shortly before the base was hit by multiple suicide bombings that targeted its weak spots, suggesting that the drone had been sent in on a surveillance mission.

Other IS drones have been used to guide armoured truck bombs to their targets in real time. And [according to US military sources](#), IS are now using drones in Mosul to watch where mortar rounds are falling so they can adjust their aim.

IS are not the only ones with drones. Several other groups in Syria and Iraq are now flying them, including Hezbollah. Even Iraqi army units have deployed consumer drones [in the battle for Mosul](#), spotting car bombs and carrying out tactical reconnaissance.

But now such drones may be more than spies. **IS have started turning cheap drones into lethal guided missiles by fitting them with explosive charges.** So far there have been few casualties but the tiny, low-flying weapons are a growing problem. What's more, the world's militaries are struggling to keep up. To maintain their edge in the face of easily obtained commercial hardware, armies are going to have to change the way they equip themselves.

Consumer drones are attractive because they provide a cheap tool for seeing over a ridge, or getting a close-up view of a distant building without exposing yourself to fire. The military have their own tactical drones, but these are rare and expensive. **The British Army's miniature Black Hornet cost around \$100,000 (£80,000) each.**

Yet consumer drones like the popular DJI Phantom – which can fly for up to half-an-hour and send back crisp high-definition video from two miles away – can be bought online for less than \$1,000 (£800).

Radio-controlled aircraft have posed a risk as potential weapons for many years. **As long ago as 1993 the**

Japanese cult Aum Shinriko looked at using a radio-controlled helicopter to spray nerve gas. But until recently the tech was difficult to master. It took time and skill to build



and fly radio-controlled aircraft, with many crashes on the way. The drones available today more or less fly themselves, however.



DJI Phantom 3

Now the tricky part is arming them.

Fitting a drone with weapons still requires some technical skill but it is being made easier with cheap add-ons intended for hobbyists, such as a kit which allows any drone to drop a hundred-gram toy bomb filled with powder. **In August, Hezbollah released a video showing small bombs dropped from commercial drones.**

A new US Army handbook recommends that at least one soldier in a patrol should

always be on the look out for drones and warning that a swarm of drones could overwhelm defences. Consumer drones are getting more advanced all the time. The latest DJI Mavic has sensors to automatically avoid obstacles like trees and buildings, while a Precision Landing feature navigates to a precise spot by comparing video images. Similar technology could soon help drones to operate autonomously, with no need for operator control or satellite signals. This may make them impervious to electronic jamming.

Drones are also difficult to shoot down, so new weapons are being developed to tackle them.

The US Army recently released a video of soldiers using a device like a rifle with a TV aerial attached against a drone in a training exercise. This is the Battelle Drone Defender which fires a beam of radio waves to jam both the drone's remote control link to its operator and its GPS guidance. The video shows the baffled drone shutting down and landing automatically. Other options being explored include trained eagles, nets and rubber balls.

Drone makers have tried to prevent the misuse of their products by building in software restrictions that prevent their drones flying in forbidden areas such as airports, a technique known as geofencing. But while **geofencing** may stop inexperienced drone users, enthusiasts have shown it can be disabled with relative ease.

The threat posed by small consumer drones is limited by their small payload, so ambitious militant groups are aiming for something larger.

In February this year, field investigators from Conflict Armament Research inspected a captured IS workshop in Ramadi where drones were being made from scratch.

The investigators found unfinished airframes and wings made from wood and Styrofoam, along with flight electronics including camera controllers and gyroscopes. The electronics included basic components from Korean, Japanese and Turkish suppliers.

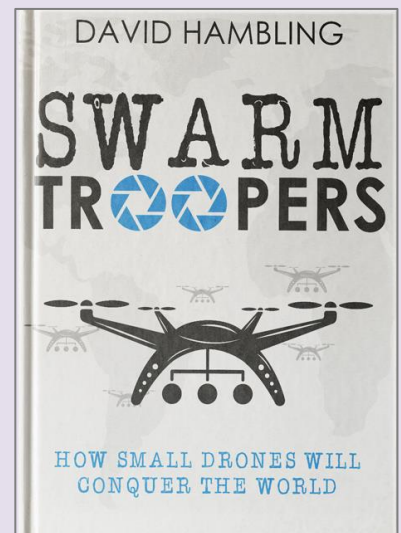
A dismantled Soviet-made Strela surface-to-air missile was found in the same workshop, suggesting IS was planning to fit the warhead to a drone.

There are concerns that Hezbollah are planning drone attacks on helicopters. **Drones cannot be detected by missile warning sensors and are unaffected by decoy flares.** They would be easy to avoid if seen, but spotting a small drone from a helicopter may be difficult.

Drone proliferation has largely caught the military by surprise. Just as mobile phones used to coordinate attacks and set off bombs in Iraq required new tactics and technology, more devices like special detectors and jammers will be needed to counter the small drone threat.

But there is a bigger lesson. Economies of scale make consumer drones cheaper than their military counterparts. **The commercial sector produces a more capable generation of drones every year or so. The military can take several years to catch up.**

That may be why US Marine Corps Gen Robert Neller wants to give every Marine squad its own quadcopter in 2017. "They're like a thousand bucks," he told a press conference in September.



The US Defense Science Board also recently recommended changing how they go about developing their kit. Rather than using custom-built components, military drones may soon be built using [off-the-shelf commercial components and open-source software](#) – assembling drones quickly and cheaply in much the same way IS was doing in its workshop in Ramadi.

This would be a big shake-up in the defence industry, which is traditionally a closed world that operates on long timescales. But to keep up with the drones in today's conflicts, change is exactly what's needed.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Perhaps changing the selling legislation would be more effective than anti-drone measures. You want to buy a commercial drone? OK – show a valid ID and get a state licence to fly it (in a week or so) – applicable to ALL sizes of drones. This might affect sales but who cares – security comes first! (or should be first...)

Copypat terrorists could use drone to attack plane, intelligence report warns

Source: <http://www.cp24.com/news/copypat-terrorists-could-use-drone-to-attack-plane-intelligence-report-warns-1.3189469>

Dec 13 -- Publicity about near-misses between drones and passenger aircraft might give terrorists ideas about how to take down a plane, a federal intelligence report warns.

The Transport Canada report obtained by The Canadian Press also suggests small unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, could easily be used for advance surveillance of targets.

The report tempers such fears by noting the practical hurdles in employing a drone for nefarious purposes.

But the assessment underscores concern in intelligence circles that terrorists could take advantage of the tiny, inexpensive and widely available flying machines.

The report documents five reports of "near misses" between Canadian aircraft and UAVs last year. In September 2015, a WestJet flight from Edmonton to Abbotsford, B.C., reported a drone passing about 60 metres underneath the plane.

Just last month, a Porter Airlines flight to Toronto narrowly avoided crashing into an object initially thought to be a drone.

Media coverage of near-collisions between UAVs and passenger aircraft "may encourage interest amongst extremists to consider the tactic," the Transport Canada intelligence report says.

However, given the short flying time -- 10 to 40 minutes -- of most off-the-shelf drones and strong, persistent winds at high altitudes, "intentionally striking an aircraft in-flight would be unlikely," the report adds.

A heavily censored version of the secret January 2016 report was released under the Access to Information Act.

Extremist use of a drone is "certainly not impossible and the authorities are not necessarily exaggerating things here," said Jez Littlewood, a terrorism expert at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University.

But given the current state of the technology, Canadians shouldn't panic about the notion of a commercially available drone being used to ram into an aircraft, he said.

Using a store-bought drone to carry and drop a bomb would also be challenging, and extremist groups tend to gravitate to more readily available weapons, Littlewood added.

In recent years the United States has launched hundreds of armed drone strikes to kill what it says are thousands of terrorist combatants.

But UAVs are also used for a variety of peaceful applications including agricultural surveys, police investigations, meteorology, search and rescue, and movie shoots -- as well as by hobbyists with an ever-expanding choice of models.

"We judge that Canada-based extremists could easily obtain a UAV to conduct reconnaissance on transportation targets or infrastructure," the Transport Canada intelligence report says. "However, using a UAV for this purpose would draw attention to potential attack planning."

For example, the report notes, in May last year the marine security

NOT
TRUE



officer of a dock in the port of Nanaimo, B.C., advised Transport Canada that employees saw a drone flying around the port in a suspicious manner and that they believed it was taking photos.

In 2014, internal RCMP documents noted there had been several extremist plots around the globe -- none successful -- to use drones in attacks involving explosives, chemical weapons or biological agents.

There are four terrorist groups with identifiable drone programs -- Hezbollah, Hamas, the Islamic State of Iraq and the

Levant, and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, all of whom are primarily active in the Middle East, says a recent report by the Combating Terrorism Centre at the U.S. West Point military academy.

It cites a report of Hezbollah dropping two small bombs from what was believed to have been a modified, commercially available drone over rebel positions in Syria as a possible watershed event that could represent the "leading edge of a wave of similar incidents that could follow in the months, years and decades ahead."

The ISIS Branch in Yemen and Its Role in the Power Struggles

Source: <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/21106>

Yemen lies at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Its population is estimated at **more than 26 million, two thirds of which are Sunni Muslims**, and **one third Shi'ite-Yazidis**. Yemen has disintegrated as a state, has no effective, stable central administration and is governed by armed tribal-like organizations. For decades the Yemenis have been waging civil wars of fluctuating intensity. The Middle East upheaval that began in 2011 only served to increase the country's chronic instability.

Yemen's location gives it great geostrategic importance. It commands the Strait of Bab al-Mandeb

between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which leads to the Indian Ocean. It is a main sea route for ships and oil tankers on their way from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Yemen is also close to the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia), and can be used by terrorist organizations as a gateway to the entire African continent. **Yemen has a long border with Saudi Arabia (1,700 kilometers, more than 1,000 miles)** which has become a turbulent area of subversion against Saudi Arabia because of the Houthi rebel takeover of the northern part of the

country.

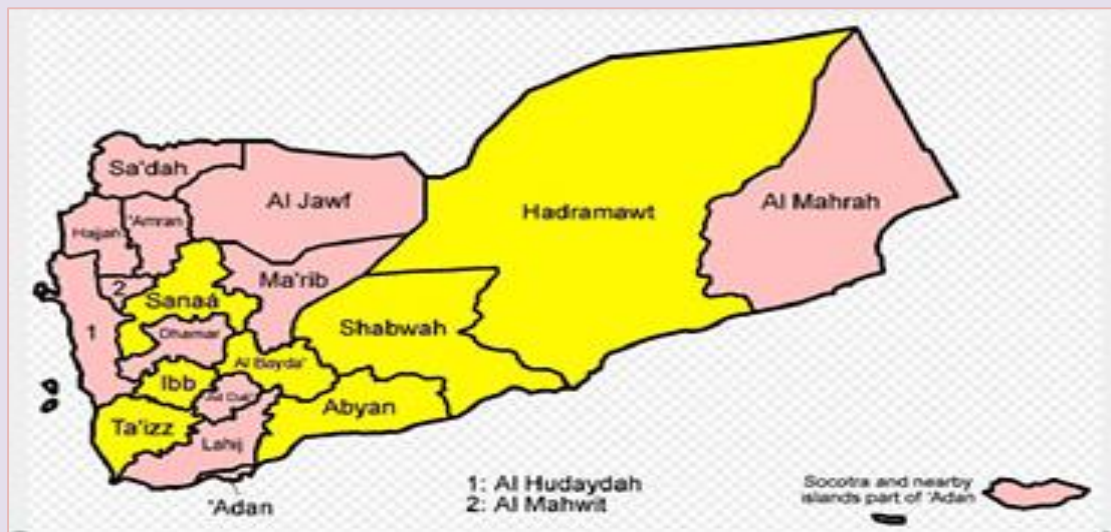
Because of Yemen's geostrategic importance, lack of governance and polarized society, it has become an arena for a regional struggle in which the United States is also involved. Most of the struggle is currently waged between Saudi Arabia, which leads the Sunni Arab camp, and Iran, which leads the Shi'ite "resistance axis." Saudi Arabia, concerned lest Iran become a state sponsor for Yemen, heads a Sunni Arab coalition which is waging a campaign against the Iranian-supported Shi'ite-Yazidi Houthi rebels. The main objective of the Saudi Arabian campaign is to end the Iranian-supported Houthi rule and restore the rule of **President Abdrabbuh**



Mansur Hadi, who was forced to leave the capital city of Sanaa for Aden after it was taken over by the Houthi rebels.

In 2014 ISIS entered Yemen's internal power struggles and governmental vacuum as another minor player alongside the various countries and organizations already involved in the fighting. ISIS had several reasons for establishing a foothold in Yemen: its geostrategic importance, its lack of effective governance, its political, sectarian and tribal schisms, and its topography, which has both mountains and deserts. The Houthi rebellion was an important catalyst for ISIS because it intensified the tensions between Shi'ites and Sunnis, led to the takeover of Sunni provinces by the rebels (including the capital, Sanaa), and increased Shi'ite Iran's influence. The presence and activity of a rival organization, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), also supported the establishment of ISIS and the beginning of its gaining a foothold (some of the operatives who founded the ISIS branch in Yemen were AQAP deserters).

In Yemen ISIS organized itself into provinces (*wilayat*), as it did in other countries. In the summer of 2016 ISIS stated it had six provinces in Yemen: **Sanaa, Aden-Abyan, Shabwah, al-Bayda, Hadramawt** and **"the Green Brigade" (al-Liwaa' al-Akhdar)**. **Ta'izz** and **Ibbare** also apparently provinces (in the past ISIS also mentioned **Lahij**, which may no longer be active).



Yemeni governorates where ISIS is active marked in yellow

The branch of ISIS in Yemen is under the command of the ISIS leadership in Iraq and Syria. It is controlled by an institution known as "the directorate of the far provinces," which is directly subordinate of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Haq, July 7, 2016). **Because of the distance, the ISIS branch in Yemen (like other distant branches) apparently does not receive attention and resources from the leadership in Iraq and Syria, and its control is fairly shaky.**

ISIS in Yemen apparently has several hundred operatives. As opposed to Iraq and Syria, where there are many foreign fighters, **most of the ISIS operatives in Yemen are local inhabitants.** Some of them left AQAP and others are new recruits from various Yemeni governorates which have a Sunni population. In Yemen ISIS **wages guerilla warfare and carries out terrorist attacks targeting Shi'ite-Yazidi Houthi rebels (supported by Iran) and President Hadi's central administration (supported by Saudi Arabia).** Between the branch of ISIS in Yemen, directed by ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, directed by al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, there is **fierce rivalry and competition for influence**, usually manifested by propaganda warfare encouraging AQAP operatives to desert and join ISIS.

As opposed to Iraq and Syria, the **ISIS branch in Yemen has not acquired control over significant stretches of territory in the regions where it is active and to enforce its governance.**

That is probably because of the relatively short time in which it has been operating in Yemen and the pressures exerted on it by its many enemies. That means its operatives **do not provide services for the local population, do not enforce the Sharia (Muslim law)**



in any organized way and have not established their own governmental institutions (as they have in Iraq and Syria, and until recently, in Libya). However, if ISIS's power in Yemen increases and its operatives become more self-confident, **it will most likely try to carve out an area of territorial control** in one of the regions where its military activities are focused to serve as a launching pad for other areas.

ISIS in Yemen **has extensive operational capabilities**, especially in **Hadramawt, Shabwah and Aden-Abyan Provinces in the south and east of the country** (See map, above). So far its operatives have carried out dozens of terrorist attacks and waged guerilla warfare targeting the Houthi rebels and Yemeni government (individuals, institutions and facilities). They have carried out suicide bombing attacks, detonated IEDs, and attacked sites of government and Houthi power. They have also carried out abductions and executions, and assassinated important Yemeni figures.

There are three territories, distant from one another, where ISIS focuses its terrorist and guerilla activities: Sanaa, the capital, where ISIS operatives attack power centers and key locations controlled by Houthi rebels; **Aden**, President Hadi's stronghold; and **al-Mukalla**, the capital of Hadramawt Province and the Yemeni government's legislative and economic center.



Currently ISIS in Yemen is apparently still organizing and establishing itself, and **has not yet deeply extended its influence within the local population** (as has AQAP, which is larger and better established). However, in the future ISIS's branch in Yemen has the potential to continue becoming stronger because of the local conditions.

However, ISIS's branch in Yemen also has several weaknesses which pose difficulties for its continuing establishment and expansion: its rival, AQAP, is larger and better established; Yemen's distance from the leadership in Iraq and Syria makes it difficult for its operatives to obtain attention and resources, and Yemen is not high on the leadership's list of priorities; the tribal divisions, large number of armies and armed groups and the influence of both Iran and Saudi Arabia also make it difficult for ISIS to operate in Yemen. As a result, ISIS has not managed to establish an area of control or gain influence within the population.

The establishment of an ISIS foothold in Yemen poses a series of local, regional and international dangers. Locally, it may make it more difficult to stabilize Yemen's internal situation and is liable to prolong the chaos in the country. **Regionally**, ISIS in Yemen may export terrorism and subversion to neighboring countries (Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and the Horn of Africa). **Internationally**, ISIS in Yemen may acquire operational capabilities which will endanger the shipping lanes passing nearby and may initiate terrorist attacks in other countries, as does AQAP.

Will the weakening of the Islamic State and the damage done to the areas of its territorial control in Iraq, Syria and Libya influence its branch in Yemen, and if so, how? In ITIC assessment, Salafi jihadist ideology and organizations will continue enjoying a strong foothold in Yemen. That is because of the basic attributes of Yemen's politics and society, which are not likely to change in the near future. However, the significant damage done to



ISIS in Iraq and Syria may weaken its branches in other countries, Yemen among them. If that happens some of its operatives may return to AQAP.

Piracy fears as NATO pulls navy ships from Indian Ocean

Source [read]: <http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Piracy-fears-as-Nato-pulls-navy-ships-from-Indian-Ocean/1248928-3485260-ir767dz/>

Will Drones Become Weapons For Terror Attacks?

By Dr. James Hess

Source 1: <http://inohomelandsecurity.com/drone-weapons-terror-attacks/>

Source 2: <http://www.start.umd.edu/research-projects/terrorism-and-extremist-violence-united-states-tevus-database>

On Dec. 16, 11 a.m. Eastern, American Military University (AMU) and Purdue University's Visual Analytics for Command, Control and Interoperability Environments (VACCINE) will explore the threat of drone terror attacks and valuable research tools available to prevent them, including the **Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS) Portal**.

The TEVUS portal is a free, public-facing tool available courtesy of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). This joint AMU and Purdue's Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence webinar, "Harnessing the Power of TEVUS," is part of an ongoing collaboration series for nearly two years that is open to all students and interested parties.

Historically, the series format pairs a professor or research scientist from both AMU and Purdue to examine a common themes related to U.S. Department of Homeland Security interests and which is represented in the national conversation. For the first time, the webinar will be presented by a student and graduate from AMU. The presenters are Matthew Hughes and Liberty Day.

Matt Hughes is a Military Intelligence Officer on Active Duty, specializing in all-source and signals intelligence. Matt commissioned in 2011 from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, where he earned a B.S. in Arabic and Spanish and minored in Terrorism Studies. He earned his M.A. in Intelligence Studies from AMU in 2016. He is currently assigned to Fort Hood, TX, where he resides with his wife and children. Matt is passionate about languages and cultures, having demonstrated proficiency in 11 different languages and dialects, which he hopes to leverage through military service and international diplomacy. Interests in predictive analysis and counterterrorism fuel his Arabic studies and research on looming national security threats.

Liberty Day is the Training Manager at START, where she assists efforts to develop a broader training capacity that focuses on making START faculty research findings accessible to policymakers and practitioners. Liberty is primarily responsible for curriculum development, training delivery, and program management. Prior to her position at START, she provided direct counseling services, delivered in-person and web-based training, developed and delivered curricula, managed client-specific projects, and assisted with grants management. Liberty earned an M.S. in Education, Counseling Psychology, from the University of Kentucky. She is also an alumna of Georgetown College with a B.A. in Political Science.

The TEVUS Portal is a visualization tool that compiles behavioral, geographic, and temporal characteristics of extremist violence in the U.S. dating back to 1970. Users have access to the underlying TEVUS Database, an open-source database that holds a wealth of information on terrorism and extremist crime. Users are able to build customized search queries that allow exploration of data locally, regionally, or nationally and over time. When used properly, the TEVUS Portal is a powerful tool that helps practitioners make informed, data-driven decisions while providing valuable historical context that aids in terrorism threat assessment. This presentation will introduce participants to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the TEVUS database, and the TEVUS Portal.

The evolving nature of lone-wolf terrorism in the U.S. poses dilemmas to policymakers and agencies responsible for national security. The recent advent of affordable consumer drones is of particular interest, as they can bypass traditional security measures and carry



START

varying payloads. What is the feasibility of a lone wolf using an explosive-laden consumer drone to conduct an attack in the United States? Exploring trends in domestic lone-wolf terrorism, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, existing drone countermeasures, and policies governing drone technology and sales aid in assessing the feasibility of such a threat.

Dr. James Hess is Faculty Director and Associate Professor of Intelligence Studies at American Military University.

Number of UK Children Traveling for Jihad Doubles in 2016

Source: <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/number-uk-children-traveling-jihad-doubles-2016#>

Dec 14 – Fifty young people were prevented from leaving the UK this year to join the fighting in the Middle East. That number is more than double the previous year's 23.

The figures were revealed by *The Sun*, which submitted a freedom of information request to obtain them.

Neil Doyle, a terrorism expert quoted in the *Daily Express*, noted, "The courts may have saved the lives of these children by preventing them from being moved to perhaps the most dangerous place on Earth. At least two British children have featured in



gripping videos and the group is increasingly relying on child fighters. It is short of manpower due to a very high casualty rate which has seen 50,000 fighters killed so far."

Children from the UK who travelled to Syria and Iraq to join radical Islamist groups include:

Isa Dare (photo) who appeared in a propaganda video for Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) in which four prisoners were executed by an exploding car

Khadiza Sultana, 17, a high school student from London, who travelled to Syria with two friends, Amira Base and Shamima Begum. Sultana was killed in an airstrike in Raqqa and the whereabouts of the two others are unknown. Sultana reportedly wanted to return home but most likely knew of the fate of Austrian schoolgirl Samra Kesinovic, 17, who was beaten to death by the brutal group for trying to escape. In her last conversation to her family, Sultana said her chances of getting out were "zero."

The UK estimates that a total of **850 people travelled to fight in Syria and Iraq** and **about half since re-entered the UK.**

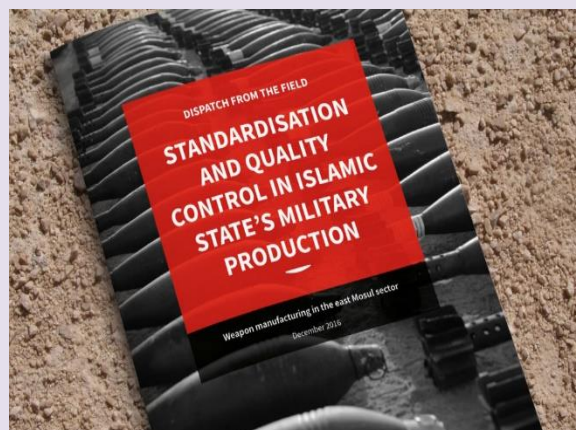
Wake Up

EDITOR'S COMMENT: **Let the children travel!** But also strip citizenship or green card and privileges from their families and relatives and pay them the tickets to travel together with their ambitious offsprings. They all have to be aware that acting like this is not without serious consequences and therefore they ALL should keep an open eye to each other instead of pretending that they see nothing, hear nothing and say nothing.

Standardisation and quality control in Islamic State's military production

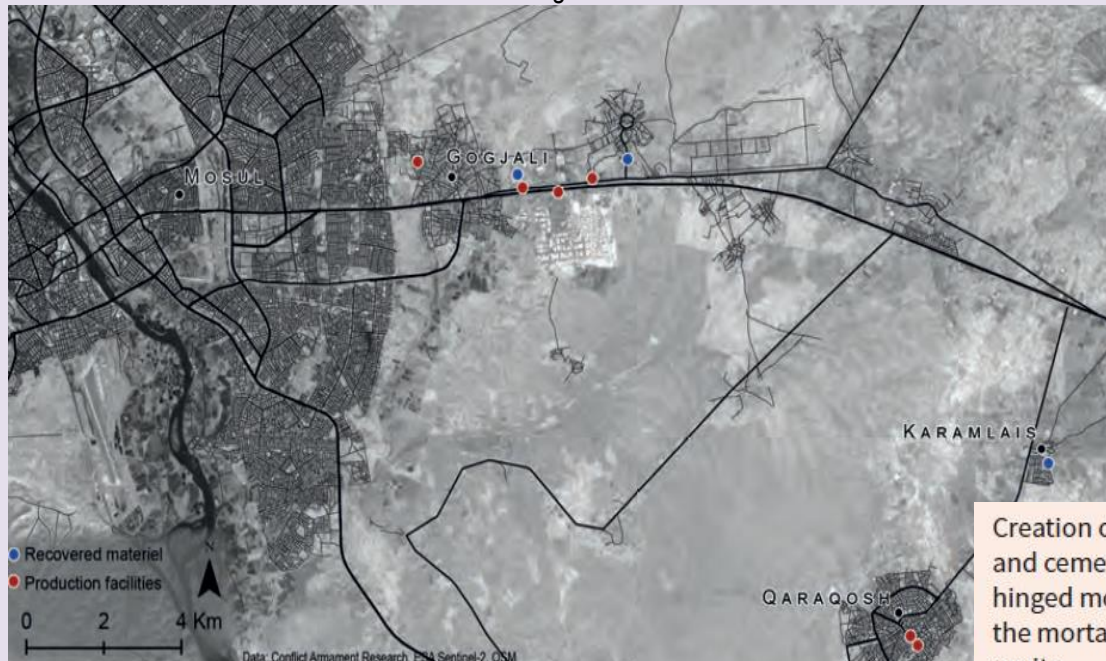
Source: http://www.conflictarm.com/download-file/?report_id=24548&file_id=2457

This *Dispatch* is the result of field investigations during the initial phases of the assault on IS forces in eastern Mosul. It provides clear evidence of IS ability to manufacture weapons on an industrial scale, with output running into



the tens of thousands.

From 11 to 16 November 2016, a Conflict Armament Research (CAR) field investigation team embedded with Iraqi armed forces during the initial phases of the assault on Islamic State (IS) forces in eastern Mosul. The team's objective was to gather, firsthand, all available information on weapons and ammunition recovered from IS forces on the battlefield. During its deployment, the team gained unprecedented access to six weapon manufacturing facilities once operated by IS forces, recorded extensive documentary evidence of centrally managed weapon production, and documented a wide range of IS-manufactured ordnance recovered during ground combat operations. CAR deployed a second team on 18 November 2016, whose work in Mosul continued at the time of writing.



Creation of moulded sand and cement cores, using a hinged mould in the form of the mortar round's internal cavity.

Key findings

STANDARDISED WEAPON PRODUCTION

IS forces operate a 'Central Organisation for Standardisation and Quality Control' (COSQC), which falls under the authority of the group's 'Soldiers' Bureau, Committee for Military Development and Production.' The COSQC issues specific guidelines on weapon production parameters and controls manufacturing quality.

PRODUCTION TO MILITARY STANDARDS

IS forces adopt similar practices to national military forces, which distinguish the group from other groups that manufacture improvised weapons on an *ad hoc* basis. The production of factory grade packaging is one example, whereby the group has constructed palletised wooden boxes for the long-term storage, and long-range transport, of rockets and mortar rounds.

SPECIALISATION

IS forces operate a wide range of specialised manufacturing plants. Although these facilities may be distant from one another, they are centrally coordinated, produce to pre-defined standards, and manufacture separate stages of weapon production.

QUANTITIES

Within a six-day period, CAR investigators documented more than 5,000 rockets and mortar rounds in various stages of production. CAR also documented more than 500



A steel rod is placed at the centre of the cores to enable later removal from the body of the finished mortar round casing.



finished mortar rounds, which Iraqi forces had recovered on the battlefield. These findings suggest that overall production by IS forces in the months leading up to the Mosul offensive runs into the tens of thousands.

RAPID PRODUCTION

Labels affixed to the mortar rounds produced by IS forces, and documented by CAR in the eastern Mosul sector in early November 2016, show that most were manufactured in October 2016, when Iraqi and Peshmerga forces had already begun the battle to liberate Mosul. These findings indicate very rapid supply to IS forces, and reinforce CAR's assertions that the total number of rockets and mortars



IS-manufactured rockets, Gogjali, November 2016

9



produced must run into the tens of thousands.



MASS DIVERSION OF COMMERCIAL GOODS

CAR documented large quantities of chemical precursors used by IS forces in the production of rocket propellant. Many of these precursors are either manufactured by the same factory, or supplied by the same distributor. IS forces procured them in bulk and sometimes at the same time. Such bulk buying from single sources is likely to be highly visible in commercial sales records.



110 mm rocket launch frame (eight rockets) manufactured by IS forces Qaraqosh, November 2016

ROBUST SUPPLY CHAIN

CAR documented other components that, while procured from the same source by IS forces, had been procured on different dates, in large quantities, and over a long period of time. This indicates that IS forces have a robust supply chain, whereby the group can repeatedly procure chemicals from the same supplier—almost exclusively



from the Turkish domestic market.

A bag of potassium nitrate from the Turkish distributor Doktor Tarsa Fallujah, June 2016

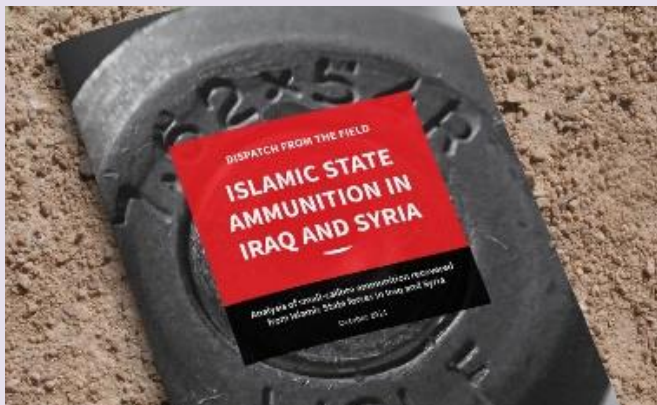
TURKISH ORIGIN

IS forces source most of the products used in the manufacture of weapons and ammunition from the Turkish domestic market. CAR's findings continuously reinforce evidence that the group operates a major acquisition network in Turkey and has a direct line of supply from Turkey, through Syria, to the Mosul area.

►► [Safe] Download the full report at source's URL.

Islamic State Ammunition in Iraq and Syria

Source: http://www.conflictarm.com/download-file/?report_id=1696&file_id=1697



Analysis of small-calibre ammunition recovered from Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria - October 2014.

This *Dispatch from the Field's* findings derive from a series of Conflict Armament Research (CAR) field investigations conducted in the Kurdish regions of northern Iraq and northern Syria 22 July–15 August 2014.

►► Download the full report at source's URL.



Daesh innovation



The tower of BMP-1 with its 73 mm 2A28 Grom low pressure smoothbore short-recoil semi-automatic gun (40 rounds), on a Toyota 4X4.

Egypt's Deadliest Church Attack

By Raymond Ibrahim

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/6426/egypt-deadliest-church-attack>

Dec 12 – The worst attack on Egypt's Christian minority in recent years occurred [yesterday](#), Sunday, December 11, 2016. St. Peter Cathedral in Cairo, packed with worshipers celebrating Sunday mass,



was bombed; at least 25 churchgoers, mostly women and children, were killed and 65 severely wounded. As many of the wounded are in critical condition, the death toll is expected to rise.

As usual, [witnesses say](#) that state security was not present, and that police took an inordinate amount of time to arrive after the explosion. Preliminary investigations point to a bomb placed inside an unattended woman's purse on one of the rear

pews of the women's section.

Mutilated bodies were strewn along the floor of the cathedral. "I found bodies, many of them women, lying on the pews. It was a horrible scene," said one witness.

"I saw a headless woman being carried away," said Mariam Shenouda. "Everyone was in a state of shock. We were scooping up people's flesh off the floor. There were children. What have they done to deserve this? I wish I had died with them instead of seeing these scenes."

In death toll and severity, this attack surpasses what was formerly considered the deadliest church attack in Egypt -- a New Year's Day bombing of a church in Alexandria that killed 23 people in 2011.



Yesterday's attack was also symbolically more significant: St. Peter's Cathedral stands alongside and is used by St. Mark's, the seat of Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Christian church and home to its leader, Pope Tawadros II.

It is to President Sisi's shame that the deadliest church attack in Egypt occurred on his watch. Yet it is also not surprising, considering how little has really changed for Egypt's Christians since Sisi ousted Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood from power in 2013.

Although Western media outlets do not report them, there have been several unsuccessful terror attacks on churches in Egypt in recent weeks and months. Last November, a man [hurled an improvised bomb](#) at the entrance of St. George Church in Samalout, Egypt. Had the bomb exploded (it was dismantled in time), casualties would have been high, as the church building was packed with thousands of worshipers congregating for a holiday.

Instances of angry Muslim mobs attacking and killing Christians on the mere rumor that they are trying to build a church, or are meeting to pray in a house church, are also on the rise. Last summer in Minya - the same place where a [70-year-old Christian woman](#) was stripped naked, savagely beaten, spat on, and paraded in the streets to jeers, whistles, and yells of "Allahu Akbar" -- [rioting Muslims](#) burned down 80 Christian homes on the rumor that Christians were trying to build a church.^[1] "No one did anything and the police took no pre-emptive or security measures in anticipation of the attacks," [said Bishop Makarios](#). He is also on record as saying that Christians are attacked "[every two or three days](#)" in Minya, and that the authorities are always turning a blind eye, if not actually aiding or enabling the attacks.

Even the much-touted new law that purports to allow Christians to build churches has been criticized by Christian clergy, activists, local human rights groups, and Christian members of parliament. They say it still continues to discriminate against Christians, including with security provisions that subject decisions on whether or not a church can be built to the whims of violent mobs.

Recently, in the village of Naghameesh, the building Christians were using to hold church services was torched by angry Muslims. Afterwards, a ["reconciliation meeting"](#) was held by top officials. As usual, the "brotherhood of all Egyptians" -- Christians and Muslims -- was highlighted, but when it came to the question of giving their fellow Christian brothers the same right to worship that Egypt's Muslims enjoy, the majority of Muslim leaders and family members refused to permit the local Christians a place to worship. Authorities did nothing to support the Christians.

"We don't understand what is so dangerous about the Copts praying and exercising their legal rights in this matter," one local Christian said.

Adding insult to injury, the Egyptian government just [boasted last week](#) that it is opening 10 new mosques every week; that there are 3,200 closed mosques that need renovating, and that the government is currently working on 1,300 of them; that it will take about 60 million Egyptian pounds (\$3.3 million USD) to renovate them, but that the government has allotted ten times that much, although a total of three billion Egyptian pounds is needed; and that the Egyptian government is dedicated to spending that much -- for "whoever abuses public funds [meant for Islamic worship], enters a war with Allah." This was announced by Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Gom'a, Minister of *Awqaf*, or endowments. But when the nation's more than 10 million Christian minority seeks to build a church -- and pay for it from their own pockets -- all is woe in Egypt.

That nothing has changed for Egypt's Christians was even asserted by [Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb](#), the nation's highest Muslim authority and Grand Imam of Al Azhar University, the Sunni Muslim world's most prestigious *madrassa* in Cairo. During a recent televised [interview](#), al-Tayeb defended Al Azhar's reliance on books written in the Medieval Era, which reformers are eager to see eliminated from the school's curriculum because they support the most radical expressions of Islam -- including killing apostates, burning infidels, and persecuting Christians.

Al-Tayeb further mocked the notion of "changing religious discourse" -- a phrase made popular by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who in 2015 [called on Al Azhar](#) and its top instructors to reform their teachings. Although al-Tayeb appeared sitting in the front row during el-Sisi's speech, he is now [dismissing it](#). "Al Azhar doesn't change religious discourse -- Al Azhar proclaims the *true* religious discourse, which we learned from our elders," said Egypt's highest Muslim authority.



Moreover, the law that the elders of Islam -- the *ulema* -- bequeathed to Egypt's Muslims, holds that all conquered indigenous inhabitants -- in Egypt, the infidel Christians -- must not be permitted to build churches, must not complain or ask for equal rights, and must be grateful merely for being allowed to live.

In short, not only has nothing changed for Egypt's Christians; the deadliest church attack in modern history has now just taken place, not under Mubarak or Morsi, but under President al-Sisi. What does he propose to do about it?

Note

[1] Among the rioters were women and children shouting "Allahu Akbar!" and "We'll burn the church, we'll burn the church." Even though Muslims were attacking Christians, Egyptian television portrayed it as a "sectarian clash." After arriving, the police stood back and allowed the mob to continue rioting, plundering and setting more Christian homes and vehicles on fire. The Muslims then performed their afternoon prayers outside those Christians' homes they had not destroyed -- with loudspeakers pointed at their doors.

Raymond Ibrahim is a Judith Friedman Rosen fellow at the Middle East Forum and a Shillman fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

Most terrorism arrests lead to no charge or conviction, figures show

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/15/most-terrorism-arrests-lead-no-charge-conviction-figures-show>

Dec 15 – The overwhelming majority of people arrested for alleged terrorism offences over the past 15 years have been freed without charge or conviction, official figures show.

The figures released by the Home Office showed that 3,349 people in England and Wales were arrested under terrorism laws since the 9/11 attacks on the US. Of those arrested for terrorism and related offences, 17.8% were convicted in relation to involvement in violent jihad, for instance plotting attacks, funding or facilitating.

Another 10% arrested on suspicion of terrorism were convicted of offences unrelated to the terrorism charges they were originally arrested for, taking the total to 27.6%.

The majority of those arrested were from British Muslim communities.

The figures sparked debate about why most of those arrested on suspicion of involvement in terrorism end up not being charged or convicted of any criminal offence.

Lord Paddick, the Lib Dem spokesman on home affairs in the House of Lords, and a former deputy assistant commissioner at Scotland Yard, said: "The police need to account for these figures. It is extremely worrying that there is such a high attrition rate

Fewer than two in 10 people detained by police since September 2001 were convicted directly of terrorism or a terrorism-related offence.

between those arrested and those convicted of terrorism offences.

"The most important thing with terrorism is community intelligence and building trust and confidence with those communities from where terrorists come. This sort of statistic will tend to undermine that trust and confidence."

A spokesman for the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) said: "No one is arrested without sufficient grounds for suspicion but the legal bar for offences is rightly set very high, meaning many will not go on to be charged or convicted.

"These powers are applied appropriately and proportionately to keep the public safe and we do not target a specific community. We take all forms of terrorism and extremism seriously – including from the extreme right wing – and will work hard with all communities to tackle it."

In Britain's counter-terrorism system, [intelligence is developed by the security service MI5](#), and then passed to police to take enforcement action and build a case that can convict someone to



the criminal standard of beyond a reasonable doubt.

David Videcette, who served as a detective with Scotland Yard's counter-terrorism command for a decade, said: "A lot of the information comes from the security services. A lot of what they give cannot be used as evidence; it is difficult to convert the intelligence into something that can be used in the criminal justice system.

"No one would thank the police if, because the intelligence cannot be converted, they did nothing."

The Home Office said decisions to arrest were a matter for the police and decisions to prosecute a matter for the Crown Prosecution Service.

The latest terrorism figures showed arrests were down from their peak a year ago. Counter-terrorism officials say they are working flat out to thwart plots to attack the UK.

In 2001, the biggest threat was from al-Qaida, which was inspired by Osama bin Laden. Since 2014 the Islamic State ideology has been linked to most terror threats on British soil.

The security minister, Ben Wallace, said: "We are determined to detect, disrupt and where possible prosecute all those who pose a threat to the UK. The figures released today once again highlight the hard work carried out by the police, security service and Crown Prosecution Service day in and day out to keep the people of this country safe."

The [Greek]American Leader in the Islamic State

Source: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/03/the-american-leader-in-the-islamic-state/510872/?utm_source=atlw

At dawn on a warm September morning in 2013, a minivan pulled up to a shattered villa in the town of Azaz, Syria. A long-bearded 29-year-old white man emerged from the building, along with his pregnant British wife and their three children, ages 8, 4, and almost 2. They had been in Syria for only about a month this time. The kids were sick and malnourished. The border they'd crossed from Turkey into Syria was minutes away, but the passage back was no longer safe. They clambered into the minivan, sitting on sheepskins draped on the floor—there were no seats—and the driver took them two hours east through a ravaged landscape, eventually stopping at a place where the family might slip into Turkey undetected.

They disembarked amid a grove of thorny trees. Signs warned of land mines. The border itself was more than an hour's walk away, through the desert. They'd forgotten to bring water. Tania dragged the puking kids along; Yahya carried a suitcase and a stroller. Midway, Tania had contractions, although she was still several months from her due date. They continued on. At the border itself, while the family squeezed through the barbed wire, a sniper's bullets kicked up dirt nearby.

Yahya had arranged for a human trafficker to meet them, and when the trafficker's truck arrived, Yahya pressed a few hundred dollars into the man's hand. Yahya and Tania had been married for 10 years, but they did not say goodbye. Satisfied that his family would not die, Yahya turned and ran across the border, back into Syria—again under gunfire—without even a wave.

The trafficker drove Tania and the kids a short distance into Turkey, then dropped them by the roadside without food or water and sped off. Tania carried the children and luggage toward the nearest town. The day ended with the intercession of a stranger on a motorcycle, who helped carry their things to a bus station. Tania started to leak amniotic fluid due to the journey, and she spent the next weeks recovering in Istanbul, and then with family in London. Six months pregnant, she weighed 96 pounds.

As his family traveled to London, relieved to have escaped the worst place on Earth, Yahya felt relief of his own—he could now pursue his dreams unencumbered by a wife and children. He felt liberated. He carried visions of the caliphate yet to be declared, and ideas for how to shape it. These thoughts were not idle. Yahya, by then, had a small but influential following, and his calm erudition had won him the respect that his teachers and parents had withheld during his youth. His own destiny seemed to be converging with that of the world's. It was the best day of his life.

I first heard the name Yahya Abu Hassan in 2014, while reporting on an article for this magazine about the rise of the Islamic State. I was in a suburb of Melbourne, talking with Musa Cerantonio, an Australian convert to Islam who has served as an unofficial spiritual



guide to many English-speaking followers of the group, about its history and theology. (He is now in jail, charged with attempting to travel to Islamic State territory.)

In our earliest conversations, Cerantonio had mentioned a fellow convert—a “teacher” or “leader,” he called him—who had done much to prepare Muslims for the religious obligations that would kick in once a caliphate had been established. Cerantonio spoke of his teacher with awe. Yahya was deeply devoted to the idea of the caliphate, he said, and showed a staggering mastery of Islamic law and classical Arabic language and literature. Jihadists in Syria knew him by reputation, and they honored him when they met him.

Cerantonio said that in early 2014, Yahya had pressed the leaders of what was then the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (isis) to declare a caliphate. He began preaching that the conditions for the declaration of a valid caliphate had been met—the group held and governed territory, and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was a physically and mentally fit male of Qurayshi descent, capable of ruling according to Sharia. Delaying further would mean disregarding a fundamental obligation of Islam.

Yahya had developed a relationship with Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the group’s spokesman, chief strategist, and director of foreign terror operations. “Yahya was like *this* with Adnani,” Cerantonio told me, pressing his fingers together. Yahya met with Adnani near Aleppo and warned him that Baghdadi would be in a state of sin if he did not promote himself to caliph immediately. Yahya and his allies had prepared but not yet sent a letter to the emirs of the isis provinces, airing their displeasure at his failure to do so. They were ready to make war on Baghdadi if he delayed further. Adnani replied with good news—that a caliphate had already been declared secretly, months before, and that it would soon be publicly announced.

[John Georgelas, aka Yahya Abu Hassan, in a photo that appeared on his website, which featured jihadist writings in English and Arabic.](#)



Yahya shared the update with Cerantonio, who leaked word of the caliphate declaration on Facebook. Within weeks the official public declaration took place in Mosul, Iraq, and Yahya immediately pledged himself to Baghdadi,

urging others to do likewise.

The figure of Yahya—an English-speaking convert within isis with powerful connections and the cojones to challenge Baghdadi to a death match—intrigued me. But Cerantonio didn’t elaborate on his identity and referred to him only by an alias, in the traditional Arabic style, with his first name and the name of his firstborn: Yahya, father of Hassan. He said Yahya was a fellow Dhahiri—a member of an obscure, ultra-literalist legal school that had enjoyed a sort of revival within the Islamic State. He didn’t, or wouldn’t, say more. I wrote down the name and committed to investigating Yahya later.

Soon enough, I began collecting clues to his identity. In early 2015, a pro-Islamic State Twitter user (his handle identified him as a “swordsmen”) wrote to me and advised me to contact “Abu Yahya” to learn more about the group. The name resembled Yahya Abu Hassan’s closely enough to lead me to believe he was the same person Cerantonio had mentioned. The Twitter user claimed Yahya was Greek. “He is on the field”—in the war zone—“and part of the IS,” the swordsmen wrote. “A great mind and a trustworthy student.”

He then shared a link to a website that featured a collection of Dhahiri writings by Cerantonio and a few others—including a “Yahya al-Bahrumi.” In fluent Arabic and English, Yahya wrote prolifically about many jihadist subjects. He projected calm even in his most grotesque opinions, and wore the label *irhabi* (“terrorist”) with pride:

This word (“terrorist”) has also been cast as an insult and has been received as such. But *irhab* [“terror”] itself is something notable scholars have declared obligatory and supported *verbatim* by the Qur’an itself.

He called for emigration to lands where Sharia would be fully enforced, and wrote that choosing not to do so was a form of apostasy:



Call me extreme, but I would imagine that all of those who willingly choose to live among those with whom Muslims are at war are themselves at war with Muslims—and as such, are not actually Muslims. Get out if you can—not only in support of your brothers and sisters whom your taxes have been killing, but also to protect yourselves from the punishment Allah has ordained for those who betray the nation. He called for Muslims to hate, fight, and kill infidels—among whom, he said, were many so-called Muslims who nullified their faith by neglecting prayer, deviating from the narrow literalism of his interpretation of scripture, or, in the case of rulers, not instituting the brutal system of justice for which the Islamic State was then becoming famous.

In dozens of articles posted over several years, Yahya demonstrated knowledge of classical Arabic—the notoriously difficult language of educated religious speech—and familiarity with Islamic sources and history. His Arabic was stunning even to Cerantonio, a notoriously self-confident religious autodidact. Cerantonio told me that another Muslim in their internet discussion group had once challenged a theological point Yahya had made. “Then Yahya did something that shocked us all,” Cerantonio said. “He responded to the guy in traditional Arabic poetry that he devised off the top of his head, using the guy’s name in the poetry, explaining the situation and answering his objections.” For any claim, it seemed, Yahya could instantly spout textual support, and confronted with any counterclaim, he could undercut the argument with a sweep of the leg.

The website the swordsman had pointed me to included a narrative biography and a small photo of its founder. Yahya’s picture showed a bearded, bespectacled young man with a Kalashnikov over his shoulder. He was dressed for cold weather, as if in preparation for a night raid or patrol. When I saw him, I wondered when I last saw someone looking so content.

As for the biography itself, nearly every word showed signs of careful selection, including his name, Bahrumi, a portmanteau of the Arabic words *bahr* (“sea”) and *rumi* (“Roman”). Many jihadists construct a nom de guerre from their first name and their national origin. He called himself Yahya of the Roman Sea, or Yahya the Mediterranean.

The biography continued:

His roots are from the island of Crete in the Roman sea (Bahr al-Rūm). Born in 1404 [a.d. 1983–4] and raised as a Nazarene [Christian], Yahya then entered Islam in 1422 [a.d. 2001–2]. He traveled seeking knowledge and work in the path of Allah until Allah granted him hijrah to Sham. He now resides in the countryside of Aleppo.

Now I thought I had enough data to narrow down his identity: a philologically inclined Cretan jihadist convert not just to Islam but to Dhahirism, a minuscule legal school. The list of candidates could not be long.

Many converts choose Arabic names that are the equivalent of their birth names. Yahya is Arabic for John, in English, or Ioannis in Greek, so I began searching online for Dhahiris with these names. In a German-language jihadist chat room, I found a reference to “Ioannis Georgilakis,” and here the trail began to sizzle under my feet. Georgilakis’s Facebook page showed photos of the same hirsute young man with glasses, dressed in Muslim garments and playing with his kids.

As I looked at his Facebook page, I began to wonder whether the Greek was an affectation. Many of his Facebook friends were English speakers, and few were Greek. Georgilakis isn’t an especially common surname, and given Yahya’s apparent creativity in self-naming, I tried a few permutations, including the English John, and the vanilla, non-Cretan Greek version of Georgilakis, which would be Georgelas.

One of the first hits on Google for *John Georgelas* was an August 15, 2006, press release from the Department of Justice. “Supporter of Pro-Jihad Website Sentenced to 34 Months,” it crowed. At the time of his conviction, he lived in North Texas, near Plano, 20 minutes’ drive from the house where I grew up. Plano is a short drive from downtown Dallas, toward the Oklahoma border, a flatland sprouting subdivisions watered by money from the region’s burgeoning tech sector. Shortly after his probation expired, John Georgelas had posted a résumé online listing as his address an elegant brick house with white Doric columns, a small portico, and a circular driveway. In August 2015, when I first drove up, I could hear the happiness of children. I saw a boy, who looked about 10, bouncing a basketball in the driveway and two others playing nearby; they were the same ages as the kids in the Facebook photos. As I approached the front door, I spied a yellow-ribbon decal (“We support our troops”) in the window, and behind it a foyer, tidy and richly decorated, and a piano festooned with family photos.



The man who answered the door was Timothy Georgelas, John's father and the owner (with his wife, John's mother, Martha) of the house. Both parents are Americans of Greek ancestry.

Tim is a West Point graduate and a physician. He has a full head of gray hair and soft features that betray no sign of the stress of having raised an Islamic State terrorist. He has, however, no illusions about the life his son has chosen. "He and John are enemies," I was told by someone who knows them both—"until the Day of Judgment."

Tim wore shorts and a T-shirt, and a crisp draft of air conditioning escaped as he said good morning. When I told him I had come to ask about John, he stepped outside and shut the door as if to seal off the house from his son's name. He slumped in a white wicker chair by the front door, and with a reluctant gesture, he invited me to sit across from him.

He stared at the magnolia tree in the front yard and said nothing. I told him what I knew—that his son, John, was Yahya. Tim sat, lips pursed, and with a shake of his head began to speak. "Every step of his life he's made the wrong decisions, from high school onward," Tim told me. "It is beyond me to understand why he threw what he had away." Yahya's two sisters have both earned advanced degrees, he added, as if to demonstrate that it wasn't failed parenting that led his only son to drop out of school, wage holy war, and plot mass murder.

"He was always the youngest kid in the class, and always a follower," Tim said. "I have bailed him out so many times—financially, in circumstances with his wife and kids, you name it. I always pick up the wreckage."

The Yahya Tim described to me was a sad figure, a sheep who had strayed into a wicked flock. Above all, he was easily manipulated. This, for me, was another puzzle. The Yahya I had encountered online, and the one Musa Cerantonio described, was nothing like a sheep, and no pathetic follower. He was not the boy his father described. At some point, Yahya had shape-shifted into a wolf, into a leader of men.

In December 1983, John Thomas Georgelas was born into a wealthy family with a long military tradition. His grandfather Colonel John Georgelas was wounded twice in the Second World War and worked for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Tim Georgelas spent three years in the U.S. Army, then accepted an Air Force commission to attend medical school. He retired as a colonel in 2001, and now practices radiology in a north-Dallas breast-imaging clinic. He is politically conservative, as is Martha, his short, dark-haired wife, whose Facebook cover photo shows her standing proudly in front of the George W. Bush Presidential Library, near downtown Dallas.

The Georgelases moved frequently during John's youth, as Tim's military assignments required. John entered school at the age of 4, while the family was living in England, and he was young and small for his class. He was sickly—he grew benign tumors and had brittle bones—and his infirmities may have pushed him toward religion. When he was 11, his leg shattered, and he spent a long period out of school, recuperating. Lonely and depressed, his mind turned to God in idle moments, and he became attached to the Greek Orthodox Church. He hounded his family into attending services more regularly.

As the family's male heir, John enjoyed a special status in the Georgelas patriarchy. With that status came expectations, and therefore disappointment when it became clear he was unsuited for a soldier's life. His body refused to grow into robust, battle-ready form. His temperament wasn't suited to military discipline. When he returned to school after his leg injury, he had little interest in academic achievement or rule-following. His father tried repeatedly to correct his behavior and failed. (This account is drawn from sources close to John, including family members, co-workers, friends, and correctional officers.)

When John uttered the Muslim declaration of faith, the ashes of the World Trade Center were barely cool.

Like many a military brat before him, John experimented with the counterculture. He smoked pot, dropped acid, and ate magic mushrooms. He hated his father for punishing his drug use and hated the U.S. government for criminalizing it. By the time he graduated from high school, his primary interest was the voracious consumption of psychedelics. His grades were miserable, Tim says, but his standardized-test scores were better than those of his high-achieving sisters. John ended up studying philosophy at the College Station branch of Blinn College, an open-admission junior college in central Texas. He passed only a few classes.

In a class on world religions at Blinn, the instructor's cursory lecture on Islam annoyed him, so John sought more information from local Muslims. Curiosity turned to something more.



A few days before Thanksgiving 2001, on the first day of Ramadan, John converted at a mosque in College Station frequented by foreign students from Texas A&M.

Whether the conversion was meant to spite his parents, or whether spite was just an ancillary benefit of his spiritual salvation, it is not possible to say. But the timing is suggestive. When John uttered the Muslim declaration of faith, the ashes of the World Trade Center were barely cool. Anti-Muslim sentiment in America was reaching new highs, and in central Texas, conversion to Islam would have been a singular act of rebellion.

John's parents found his conversion to be a sign of mental weakness. "Every university town in this country has a mosque for one reason," Tim told me. "Kids are away from home for the first time, vulnerable and subject to influence. They hear the message and they're hooked, and that's what happened to John." John took the name Yahya, and sold his pickup truck to buy a plane ticket. In December 2001, the family received an email from Yahya announcing that he was in Damascus learning Arabic.

Western jihadists find their way to violence many different ways, but they often match a profile. And that profile fit John like a wet suit. He came from an upper-middle-class family. He squandered opportunities commensurate with his innate talent; he recognized that he would not excel in the fields chosen or glorified by his parents and authority figures. Often, a personal crisis—a death in the family, a near-death experience of one's own—triggers existential contemplation, leading to religious exploration; in John's case, his childhood frailty might have filled that role.

Jihadists are also overwhelmingly left-brained, quantitative-analytic types. Diego Gambetta of the European University Institute and Steffen Hertog of the London School of Economics have noted a preponderance of former engineering students among jihadists; they suggest that the mental style of that discipline disposes certain people toward jihadism. As a teen, John had taught himself to program. His computers ran the Linux operating system, not the Windows or Mac software favored by the masses. Years later, after he had become a full-blown jihadist, he would share a line of C++ code on his website, a geeky statement of his own hard-line stance:

if (1+1+1 != 1 && 1 == 1) return true; else die();

Translation: If you believe the Christian Trinity ("1+1+1") is not really monotheistic ("!= 1"), and if you believe in the unity of God ("1 == 1"), then great. Otherwise: Die.

Despite these binary inclinations, upon his arrival in Damascus Yahya envisioned himself as a Sufi, a Muslim mystic who sought oneness with God through poetry, perhaps, or dance or song, and who could countenance a shaded, or nuanced, version of Islam. That posture may have been a holdover from his counterculture teens. Gradually, though, under the influence of British Muslims who were more rigid in their approach to the faith, he became jihad-curious. They persuaded him to follow a bin-Ladenist approach, hostile to Sufism, instead.

Yahya soon surpassed them in intolerance. To his jihadism he added general displeasure with the hierarchy of scholarly authority in mainstream religion. He objected to mainstream imams' telling him to trust the words of scholars and not to attempt his own interpretation of scripture and law. Muslim laymen are generally advised not to derive legal rulings on their own, and to follow more-experienced scholars. But Yahya maintained a typically American can-do attitude toward his religion, similar to the one many Texans adopt toward their trucks: If he couldn't understand or fix it himself, it didn't feel like his.

He acquired *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, a cuboid volume that is the standard Arabic-English reference work. It is not meant to be read through. The typical student of Arabic keeps the *Hans Wehr* on a corner of his desk and consults it as needed for the rest of his natural life. Yahya memorized it in six months. Then, as a chaser, he memorized *Kitab al-Ayn*, the eighth-century Arabic dictionary by al-Khalil al-Farahidi. He wandered through Damascus, chatting up everyone and learning classical Arabic to a level of proficiency rarely achieved even by educated native Arabic speakers.

He drifted further from his parents and sisters. Later, when counseling other Muslims about how much effort to put into proselytization at home versus heading directly to the Islamic State, Yahya wrote:

What about those [Muslims] who are trying to work on their families, but their families insist on kufr [disbelief in Islam]? Should they wait their whole lives in patience, trying to guide



someone whom Allah has not chosen for guidance, or should they move on and help their true family: the Muslims?

Yahya met his wife in 2003 on a Muslim matrimonial site. Tania was born in London in 1983 to Bengali British parents. It was almost as if they had shared the same life, before even being introduced. Like Yahya, Tania grew up riddled with benign tumors and incorrigibly rebellious. She tormented her parents by practicing, with alarming vigor, the religion they had neglected in the pursuit of an assimilated English middle-class existence.

She was a pretty girl, a petite firecracker. But her mischief was not of the usual variety, like dating boys her parents didn't approve of. When her parents suggested that she try to meet boys, Tania hissed "Muslims don't date" and swore that until marriage no strange man would know anything more of her physical appearance than its cloaked outline. She had a type: Her heartthrob was John Walker Lindh, the American who fought for the Taliban in 2001. By her late teens she was draping herself in a full-body covering, or *jilbab*, and she fantasized about packing a bomb under it. At 19, she married Yahya.

After meeting online, Yahya and Tania fell in love fast, and just as couples bond over Netflix or jogging or cooking, they bonded over jihad and a shared capacity for bad decisions. After a month of digital flirtation, Yahya flew to London, and they met in person on March 15, 2003. Within three days they married secretly, then left for Texas. They settled in College Station and partook of the pleasures of freedom, young love, and independence from family. They lived cheaply and happily, embracing as their community the foreign students at the mosque where Yahya had converted. The mosque threw them a wedding party, and rich Gulf Arabs who lived near the university kicked in money to support Yahya's continued study of Islam.

The couple indulged, too, in their other shared passion: getting high. Islamic orthodoxy considers cannabis an intoxicant, and therefore forbidden. But Yahya's practice of Islam was unconventional even then. In a historical essay entitled "Cannabis," heavily footnoted with classical Arabic sources, he made the Islamic case for pot. There was evidence, he wrote, that early Islamic leaders taxed hemp seeds. Since Muslims generally cannot tax forbidden substances, such as pork or alcohol, Yahya reasoned, they must have considered pot permissible. As for psilocybin: Yahya cited an obscure hadith (a report of the sayings and actions of Muhammad) that he said described Muhammad's having descended from a mountain after meditation and extolling the medicinal properties of mushrooms—particularly as a cure for diseases of the eye. Yahya and Tania took this to mean that God had sanctioned the ingestion of psychedelic mushrooms. So the young lovers blissed out under the Texas sky, shrooming after the example of the prophet himself.

In late 2003, Yahya and Tania traveled to Damascus for an extended honeymoon, living there furtively and quietly associating with other jihadists. Their existence mirrored that of many young radical tumbleweeds of yesteryear: Black Panthers, Baader-Meinhof gangsters, fin de siècle anarchists. They dodged the authorities and lied to anyone who inquired about their activities. When Syrian government spies started asking neighbors about them, they moved on, settling briefly in a town selected because it was prophesied to be the headquarters of the prophet Jesus upon his return.

They often quarreled. Still strong-willed, Tania wanted to obey only God. But God's words were unequivocal: "Men are in charge over women," says a Koranic verse. So for most of the 10 years before the founding of the Islamic State, Yahya maintained a Rasputinlike control over her. He hadn't had much success finding social esteem in his prior life, but in Tania he found his first student. He mesmerized her with his confidence, and she repressed her own misgivings whenever she found herself questioning him. Tania has mild dyslexia; Yahya's reading of Islamic texts convinced her, with his fluency and recall and breadth, that he could produce an unanswerable argument about any point on which she disagreed. She determined that Yahya was a genius with gifts God had denied her, and she accepted her place in the world of jihad: Service to Yahya was her ticket to heaven. She endorsed slavery, apocalypse, polygamy, and killing. She aspired to raise seven boys as holy warriors—one to conquer each continent.

From Syria they returned to London, where Yahya chose to follow a Jordanian known as Abu Issa. He had allegedly fought the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and on April 3, 1993, his followers there swore loyalty to him and created what the French scholar Kévin Jackson calls "the forgotten caliphate," an unsuccessful precursor of the Islamic State.



Abu Issa declared himself caliph and ruled a small portion of Afghanistan's Kunar province in the mid-to-late 1990s. There he implemented many practices that the Islamic State would later realize on a larger scale. The total area governed did not extend beyond a few small towns, and the local Afghans

despised Abu Issa and his supporters. When Osama bin Laden came to Afghanistan in 1996, Abu Issa sent a message demanding his obedience. (There is no record of a reply.)



Abu Issa, the leader of the "forgotten caliphate," an unsuccessful precursor of the Islamic State, shown here in a rare filmed appearance posted on YouTube, was a mentor to Yahya in London. (IslamicMovies / YouTube)

In the late 1990s, when the Taliban took over Kunar province, Abu Issa and his followers

relocated to London, and it was in that diminished state that Yahya and Tania first encountered them. For a while, Yahya had the jihadist-dork dream job of tutoring the caliph's son in the subjects of computer hacking and martial arts. Ultimately Yahya and Abu Issa fell out over a dispute regarding interpretation of Islamic law. But during that period, Yahya nurtured an interest in the obligation to declare a caliphate and in Islamic literalism, both of which would drive him, in the end, back to Syria.

At a bookshop in London, he found a copy of the works of Ibn Hazm (994–1064), by far the greatest Dhahiri scholar. Dhahirism is the most binary and monochrome of Islamic legal schools. In some ways, it mirrors the constitutional originalism of Clarence Thomas or Antonin Scalia: It drastically and pitilessly winnows down the sources of legal authority to the Koran, the sayings and actions of Muhammad, and the ironclad consensus of the prophet's followers within his own lifetime. It refuses to accept new laws based on analogy to old ones, and it urges jurists and theologians to resist allegorical or figurative readings, and instead stick to rulings with plain textual support.

The rejection of figurative readings, legal analogy, and other types of extended interpretation strikes most mainstream Muslim scholars as preposterous. But through Dhahiri eyes, scripture should simply be read like a manual—or like software. It was a legal and theological methodology that aligned well with Yahya's left-brained, autodidactic disposition.

In September 2004, Yahya and Tania returned to the United States, relying financially on Yahya's parents. They settled briefly in Torrance, California, with Yahya hoping to find work as an imam. His jihadism disqualified him for mosque jobs, however, and increasingly the two sought only each other's spiritual camaraderie. They stopped frequenting mosques altogether, on the grounds that they were dens of spies.

When a SWAT team came to their house in Grapevine, Texas, early in the morning, Yahya and Tania were already awake for dawn prayers.

In 2004, their first son was born in California. Yahya and Tania moved back to greater Dallas, and a year later, Yahya took a job as a data technician at Rackspace, a server company in Texas. At night, he cruised jihadist forums and offered tech support to Jihad Unspun, a Canada-based Islamist news site widely thought to be a recruiting ground for would-be terrorists. He also looked for ways to use his position at Rackspace to wage jihad. On April 8, 2006, he accessed the passwords of a client, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, with the intention of hijacking its website.

As hacking jobs go, it was amateurish. Rackspace found out, and the FBI, aware of Yahya's terror links, moved fast. When a swat team came to his house in Grapevine, Texas, early in the morning, he and Tania were already awake for dawn prayers. He surrendered peacefully and warned that a child was sleeping inside and that his wife needed to get dressed. The Department of Justice prosecuted him for hacking into a protected computer—this was the source of the press release I found earlier—and a judge sentenced him to 34 months' imprisonment. Prior to his arrest, he had planned to travel to Iraq to fight against the Americans, so prison may have saved his life.

Yahya's arrest caused marital friction of a new sort. With her husband in prison and studying Islamic texts full-time, Tania began asserting her independence. After receiving



scowls from neighbors due to her Muslim dress, she told Yahya she planned to wear just a veil, and not a full-body cloak. Yahya, furious, demanded that she cover herself fully when she visited him in prison, to be sure no one would titter at the immodesty of the sheikh's wife. (He had Muslim acquaintances in prison and was the most scholarly among them.) He told her to leave infidel America to join the group known as the Nigerian Taliban, a predecessor to Boko Haram. She refused and threatened divorce.

But she didn't leave him—even after he got out of prison and took a second wife, a Jamaican British friend of Tania's. Tania did not approve, but she didn't forbid the union. The bride still lived in London, and the groom could not travel without violating parole. Yahya investigated the Islamic legality of a marriage conducted across physical distance. He found precedent: Muhammad had married the widow of his brother-in-law when she was in Ethiopia and he was in Medina. Having ascertained the validity of marriage-by-telecom, Yahya and his second wife married over the phone, with Tania present and quietly fuming. (Yahya later divorced his second wife.)

About his crimes, he remained unrepentant. "He can justify anything he does, and he didn't think he did anything wrong," Tim says. "He is just full of himself." During his parole, Yahya stayed in Dallas and worked as an IT specialist for a shoe wholesaler. In August 2009, 10 months after he'd left prison, a second child arrived, another boy. The couple remained reasonably well behaved, though Yahya's colleagues at the shoe company report that he and Tania occasionally posted politically worrisome items on Facebook.

Among their enthusiasms, at this point, was the libertarian Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul, whose anti-government obsessions and isolationist foreign policy Yahya and Tania both found congenial. The prophet had endorsed the gold standard, and so did Paul. Yahya and Tania liked pot, and the Libertarians were the closest thing to an anti-prohibitionist party in the United States. And—finally—Paul's foreign policy suggested a possible disengagement with Israel. "You guys (meaning Americans) need to stop supporting democracy, and just make Ron Paul your king," Tania later wrote on Facebook, only half joking. Yahya wanted revolution. "Tyranny is here," he replied, "and the Tree of Liberty is thirsty."

On October 1, 2011, Yahya's parole expired, and he drove to the Dallas–Fort Worth airport with his wife and two children, a free man. He was leaving America—probably for good. "Muslims in America," he wrote around that time, "remember: Hijrah [migration] is always an option and sometimes an obligation." The family flew to London, then Cairo. Yahya and Tania lived in Egypt for the next three years, at first happily: The boys were clever and precocious—YouTube videos show the younger one reading words in English, French, and Arabic before the age of 3—and they were joined on Christmas Day 2011 by another boy. The family sailed feluccas on the Nile and savored life beyond the reach of the U.S. government.

Yahya earned money by translating fatwas from the salaried religious scholars of the government of Qatar. Ever allergic to human authority, he seethed at the banality of the fatwas and the government clerics' abject servitude to tyrants. None of the fatwas ever mentioned what he considered the core imperatives of Islam, stressed by Ibn Hazm a thousand years before, such as the establishment of a caliphate and emigration from lands of disbelief. The scholars relentlessly glorified the Qatari royal family. The fatwas, Yahya claimed, were based not on evidence but on mere opinion.

In Cairo, Yahya met other jihadists and became respected for his scholarly rigor. One person who knew him then describes him as one of the strongest pre-isis pro-caliphate voices, and says the online seminars he conducted in Arabic and English did much to "prepare" Westerners for the declaration of the caliphate that would come a few years later. Musa Cerantonio, who would become his leading Australian disciple, met him digitally. European jihadists began traveling to Egypt to learn from him. He impressed one sheikh so much that the man declared that it would be sinful for Yahya to expose himself to danger on the battlefield in a conflict like Syria's or Afghanistan's. "Your blood is haram," he said—bidden to spill.

In his sermons and public statements, Yahya anticipated many of the themes of Islamic State propaganda, including distrust of Islamist movements that compromised their religion by partaking in secular politics. On social media, Tania supported his views, but with each child she bore, her eagerness to join the jihad by then under way in Syria waned. Yahya reminded her that the Koran judges harshly those who give up on *hijrah*: Angels will rip their souls from their mortal bodies and prepare them for judgment by God. "The angels



will say, 'Was not God's earth spacious [enough] for you to emigrate in it?' For those, their refuge is Hell."

In July 2013, a secular military coup toppled the Muslim Brotherhood-led government in Egypt, and the Islamist moment there passed as quickly as it had arrived. Yahya and Tania fretted about the possible consequences for them as jihadists, and sought escape. Cerantonio, who had left Egypt the previous year, encouraged them to consider the southern Philippines, where he was living at the time. It turned out to be too rustic. "Look, I'm happy to be in, like, a mud hut," Yahya said to him. "But my wife is very specific and is asking you to take photos of houses." The houses were inadequate, so they scrapped that plan.

Ultimately, the Syrian civil war presented opportunities that Yahya couldn't decline. His poetry frequently had a martial tone:

*Rise, cut ties: spies disguised in white,
by the sword, for the Lord of Might
Defeat the cheat, trite fleet of fright,
by rod—by God!—by baud, by byte.*

For years before the Islamic State's rise, Yahya had said his weapon of choice was the keyboard ("by baud, by byte"). But now that Syria was becoming the battlefield he had dreamed of, he was ready to take up other arms.

When they left Cairo, Yahya insisted on going to Turkey. Once there, in August 2013, he took his family onto a bus and told them they were going on a trip. He did not reveal their destination until Tania (now almost five months pregnant with their fourth child) saw the Syrian border. By then, the Assad government had lost control of large parts of northern Syria, and around Aleppo, factions were working with and against one another. The region had become an anarchic wasteland haunted by death.

They squatted in a villa, the abandoned residence of a Syrian general, in the town of Azaz, a few miles inside the border. The windows had been smashed and the plumbing shut off, but the chandeliers were still hanging. Mujahideen groups controlled the territory, and Yahya's connections assured his family a meager supply of food. He spent days with jihadist friends. He had known some of them only in an online fantasy life; now they were comrades in arms.

Tania and the children got sick and developed mysterious infections. She prepared herself for the possibility that government forces or other rebels would overrun their position. But she also still loved the rush, and was curious about the fighting nearby. She wanted to see the action, but because she was a woman, when she poked her head out the window, she was told to be sensible and get back inside. When she complained to Yahya about being brought into a war zone without consultation—"How could you do this to us?"—he cited a hadith: "War," he said, "is deception."

She finally decided: Ten years of this was enough. She demanded to take the kids back to Turkey. Yahya could not or would not join them. He had come to fight for ISIS, and he knew the penalty in the afterlife for retreating from the battlefield. But his kids were not mujahideen, so he let them go—across a minefield, through sniper fire, back into Turkey—with the assumption that the family would reunite, in this world or the next.

Tania made reverse *hijrah* to Plano, moved into Tim and Martha's house, and gave birth to a boy, her fourth, in January 2014. In December 2014, she petitioned for divorce. Her own transformation has been bittersweet. These days she describes herself as "agnostic," and has said, in her discussions with friends online, that she is "a lost cause to Muslims now." In her social-media postings, she looks like any other painted-lady infidel of north Dallas. She dresses stylishly, baring a shoulder now and then, and has highlights in her dark hair. Still in her early 30s, she looks free, even reborn. "Some people would make takfir of me"—excommunicate her—"for this," she writes. "But I have hope in God that he understands my weaknesses."

Many would call Yahya's treatment of Tania unforgivable and urge her to forget him. But the two have shared most of their adult lives, in difficult and thrilling circumstances. She has left jihadism, but she cannot completely leave Yahya. On social media, she wrote to a relative of her husband:

Where do I begin discussing the 'Ioannis complex'? ... He's a man torn between two worlds, well actually four or more in his case (East vs. West, religious principles vs. family and happiness) ... We made some really poor choices that backfired on us ...



Ioannis is fixated on changing the hearts and minds of people and the course of history. I'm somewhat jealous of the love and devotion he has for Islam over me.

That devotion has not wavered. After he turned away from his wife and children that day in 2013, Yahya added a new and unlikely chapter to the Georgelas military tradition. For several months, he trained as a soldier as part of an Islamic State-aligned group near Aleppo. He saw battle there, and during combat in April 2014, a mortar blast sent shrapnel into his back, nearly severing his spine.

"I was in immense pain," he wrote on his website, "but I at least knew that my reward is with Allah and that comforted me greatly." He spent time in a hospital in Turkey. Then, fearing detection as an American (he could pass as Syrian, but not indefinitely), he went back to Syria and received treatment from Adam Brookman, an Australian alleged jihadist who has since returned to Australia and is under arrest (Brookman maintains that he went to Syria solely for humanitarian reasons). Yahya posted images on Facebook of his suppurating wounds and of himself on bed rest, smiling. The scars are, for him as for other jihadists, a VIP pass in the afterlife, a badge of honor that shows his commitment to God during his time on Earth.

Throughout his convalescence, he continued to tweet and write aggressively in favor of ISIS, though he was not yet in ISIS territory. His website, still obscure, attracted more followers, though it remained a highbrow product, too scholarly for the masses. It was around this time that he began pestering ISIS's leaders—particularly Adnani—to declare a caliphate. When the declaration happened, in June 2014, Yahya was living near Aleppo, about 100 miles from Raqqa, the Islamic State's capital. "This is the moment I have been waiting [for] for years," he wrote. He immediately committed to immigrating to Raqqa.

His plans were thwarted for a time after the Free Syrian Army captured him. He was eventually released, and silently vowed to return to behead his captors. For a brief while he feigned cooperation with the group. But in mid-2015, he made his way to the caliphate's capital. His shattered back would have earned him exemption from frontline military duty—but ISIS's leadership by then recognized that his talents were best put to use not as a grunt but as a scholar and spokesman.

On December 8, 2015, Yahya's voice came through clearly on Al Bayan radio—the voice of the Islamic State. He is now the Islamic State's leading producer of high-end English-language propaganda as a prolific writer for its flagship magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. For a while, he tweeted under pseudonyms, but in keeping with a general Islamic State move toward other, better-encrypted media, he stopped and now appears to be limited to official channels. The profile photo for one of his last personal Twitter accounts is a well-worn laptop with a Browning 9-mm semiautomatic handgun resting across the keyboard.

The first article in *Dabiq* that I have been able to confirm was written by Yahya was published in April 2016, and took as its subject Western Muslims who, despite calling themselves Muslims, are infidels. The headline, "Kill the Imams of Kufr [Disbelief] in the West," was only marginally less grotesque than the accompanying design: crosshairs over images of prominent mainstream Western Muslims; an image of a crouching, blindfolded "apostate" at the moment an executioner's blade enters his neck. In the article, Yahya recounted many stories of Muhammad and his companions' harsh treatment of Muslims who had lapsed. Hands and feet are severed, eyes gouged out with nails, bodies stomped to death.

The issue that followed bore Yahya's fingerprints everywhere. A polemical article about Christianity notes, with a familiar pedantry and some of Yahya's favorite Bible verses, inconsistencies between Christian doctrine and the historical record. Another article mocks the secularist claim that humans are created not by God but by natural forces.

Some articles are clearly his, and others, whether his or not, use the voice he has perfected. Unsigned, but likely written by Yahya, is the pellucid "Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You," which avows the religious nature of the war. "We hate you, first and foremost, because you are disbelievers," it begins. The article reads like a distillation of every conversation I have ever had with a jihadist:

The fact is, even if you were to stop bombing us, imprisoning us, torturing us, vilifying us, and usurping our lands, we would continue to hate you because our primary reason for hating you will not cease to exist until you embrace Islam ...

What's equally if not more important to understand is that we fight you, not simply to punish and deter you, but to bring you true freedom in this life and salvation in the



Hereafter, freedom from being enslaved to your whims and desires as well as those of your clergy and legislatures, and salvation by worshipping your Creator alone and following His messenger.

The Islamic State has staked its survival on creating a revolutionary Muslim mass movement—one that can compensate for its loss of territory in Iraq and Syria by rising up elsewhere. With Yahya it lends an American accent to its universal jihadist message, and a speaker whose strengths, weaknesses, personality, and insecurities are deeply American as well. He knows how to speak to Americans, how to scare them, how to recruit them—how to make the Islamic State's war theirs.

It is unknown how far Yahya's role extends beyond keyboard jihad. But clues have very recently emerged, pointing toward an extraordinary possibility. In August, a drone killed Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the Islamic State's most powerful leader save for Baghdadi himself, and—according to Musa Cerantonio—Yahya's friend and patron. Adnani is widely suspected of having directed foreign terrorist attacks on behalf of the Islamic State, including the

mass murder of restaurant- and concertgoers in Paris in November 2015. The suspected operational mastermind of that attack, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, was emir of the foreign fighters in Azaz around the time of Yahya's residence there. Adnani himself was from the town of Binnish, also in northwest Syria.



Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the Islamic State's spokesman and second-most-powerful figure, shown here in an undated photo, was killed by a drone strike in August. In December, an Islamic State member with a name matching Yahya's was announced to succeed him.

Adnani's death left a job opening, and on December 5, 2016, the Islamic State announced the name of his successor: Abu al-Hassan al-Muhajir. That name is an

active alias of John Georgelas. (A *muhajir* is someone who has immigrated to the Islamic State, a foreign fighter rather than a Syrian or an Iraqi.) The title inherited by "Abu al-Hassan" is *mutahaddith*, or "spokesman." The job may or may not include Adnani's responsibility for directing overseas attacks. It certainly means that the Islamic State—in all its official pronouncements, its incitements to terror, its encouragements of its supporters—will speak in Abu al-Hassan's words.

The voice that delivered the December 5 speech was not Yahya's. But the Islamic State has altered voices in the past, to protect the identities of key figures—and however fluent Yahya's Arabic, it might have preferred a native speaker to deliver a prepared text under his name.

"Al-Muhajir" is an epithet shared by a significant percentage of foreign fighters (though most go by a more specific origin-name, such as "the Belgian" or "the Tunisian"), and many jihadists would have a firstborn son named Hassan; it is a relatively common name. The Islamic State likely includes more than one person with the name "Abu al-Hassan al-Muhajir," although I can find no record of anyone in the Islamic State using that name before December 5 other than Yahya.

For Yahya to occupy such a celebrated position would mean an improbable ascent through an organization dominated by Syrians and Iraqis. To succeed Adnani directly would mean leapfrogging numerous other candidates with greater seniority and previous authority in the group. No analyst with whom I have spoken thinks it likely that an American could rise so high in the group. But no other American is quite like Yahya, and until now, few people outside jihadist circles and the American intelligence community have even known of his existence.

"We've become numb to what he's doing," Tim told me when I first met him. He says they haven't heard anything from Yahya since 2014, and they hadn't heard confirmation that he was with the Islamic State until I appeared on their doorstep. "He's no one I recognize anymore. I'm not looking out for what he's doing, or how he's doing, because I'm not sure it makes any difference." Martha, he said, has taken longer to come to terms with the loss of her son. They don't



think he will return to America—not as long as he has a following in Raqqa, and the certainty of incarceration in the United States.

Tania and the kids lived with them for a long period after her return, but she now resides separately. The kids stay with their grandparents during the week and their mother on weekends. Having spent most of the past decade as an itinerant jihadist, Tania lacks the job skills and degrees to match her intellect, so she does not have the resources or career prospects to raise four young children on her own. The kids will grow up in Plano, their safety and education financed by their father's abandoned inheritance.

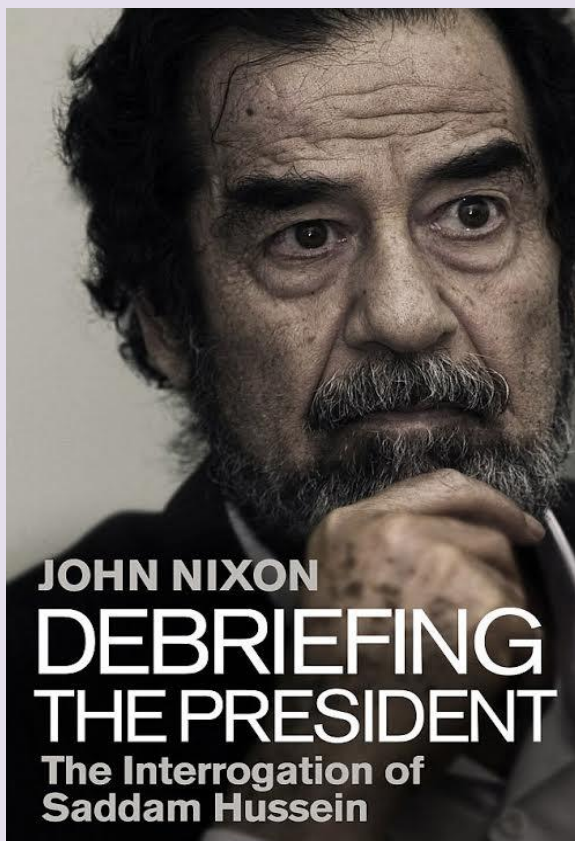
The Islamic State's enemies are drawing closer to Yahya, from all sides and from above. Drones assassinate his brethren every few days, and there is reason to believe they will kill him too if they get the chance. The U.S. government's "kill list," which once included the Yemeni American jihadist Anwar al-Aulaqi, likely now includes John Thomas Georgelas.

Whatever parenting flaws Tim may have had could not possibly merit the anguish he and his wife have suffered. He still seems to think of his son as "John," a wayward kid, easily influenced by his more assertive elders. "This is the first time in his life where he's in a position where he might be emulated," Tim told me.

I wanted to tell Tim and Martha that Yahya has been emulated for years, and their inability to see jihadism as a valid subject of intellectual expertise has kept them from realizing it. They didn't know how evil their son had become, or how coolly competent. Like other parents of jihadists, they see him as they wish to see him—as the youngster who bumbled through classes, sneaked spliffs, and struggled to hold down jobs. There is comfort in imagining that he remains hapless, and perhaps that his Islam is just another phase. They would be more troubled by the truth—which is that their son, a failure in so many prior pursuits, has found his calling.

Saddam Hussein's CIA Interrogator: He Should Have Been Left In Power

Source: <http://time.com/4603831/donald-trump-saddam-hussein/>



Dec 16 – In 2003, I was part of the effort to find Saddam Hussein. I then became the first to debrief him after [his capture](#) that December. Prior to his incarceration, I heard over and over from counterparts in the military and the Bush administration that if we caught Saddam we would be able to nip the growing Iraqi insurgency in the bud. This presupposed that Saddam had an iron-like control over the Sunni insurgency (he didn't) and that decapitating the Baathist regime would make Iraq a peaceful country (it didn't). This was the underlying ethos of the Bush administration's decision to launch [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#) in March 2003, to remove Saddam from power so that democracy and freedom could flourish in a post-911 Middle East.

When I interrogated Saddam, he told me: "You are going to fail. You are going to find that it is not so easy to govern Iraq." When I told him I was curious why he felt that way, he replied: "You are going to fail in Iraq because you do not know the language, the history, and you do not understand the Arab mind."



Unlike Barack Obama, who entered office with Iraq relatively peaceful following the the surge of U.S. troops and the [Anbar Awakening](#), President-elect Donald Trump has monumental decisions to make [regarding the Middle East](#). Iraq—and Syria, too—will be central to U.S. counter-terrorism efforts in the next administration. The new administration will have to compose a revised strategy for dealing with the menace of ISIS, one that comprises a military and a political track. While the Obama administration is making a concerted effort to destroy ISIS militarily, and Iraqi forces—with the help of the United States—have recently made some progress toward that end, we are still far from achieving this goal. However, if security and political stability cannot be achieved in the wake of military victory, the gains that will be made could be short-lived.

Today, a decade following Saddam's execution, with ISIS's black flags still unfurled over sections of Iraq, we need to ask ourselves some provocative questions. One of them is: What would have happened if we had just kept Saddam in his box or if the successor Iraqi government had shown mercy and commuted

his death sentence to life imprisonment?

It is impossible to say with any certainty. But my own belief is that if Saddam had remained in power, Iraq would have eventually gotten out from under international sanctions—which had already been crumbling by 2001—and he would probably be in charge today, preparing one of his sons to take over after his death. I doubt that he

would have had much to worry about from an event like the [Arab Spring](#). Saddam's leadership style and penchant for brutality were among the many faults of his regime, but he could be ruthlessly decisive when he felt his power base was threatened, and it is far from certain that his regime would have been overthrown by a movement of popular discontent.

Likewise, it is improbable that a group like ISIS would have been able to enjoy the kind of success under his repressive regime that they have had under the Shia-led Baghdad government. Saddam felt that Islamist

extremist groups in Iraq posed the biggest threat to his rule and his security apparatus worked assiduously to root out such threats.

Although I found Saddam to be thoroughly unlikeable, I came away with a grudging respect for how he was able to maintain the Iraqi nation as a whole for as long as he did. He told me once, "Before me, there was only bickering and arguing. I ended all that and made people agree!" Saddam used every tool in his repertoire to maintain Iraq's multi-ethnic state. Such tools included murder, blackmail, imprisonment, threats, and these were to be used to cow his enemies. For his friends, Saddam would dole out patronage to tribal leaders and supporters in the form of cash, elaborate gifts, land, and other largesse that was the lifeblood of an oil rich state. Today's Iraq has been riven by deepening sectarianism that always seems to be only a step away from igniting again, as it did after Saddam's overthrow.

Saddam also would have inevitably maintained a hostile stance toward Iran; he was very proud of his opposition to the Islamic Republic and reserved special contempt for the Shia in Iraq who would follow Iran's guidance over his. Iraq is now very much the junior partner to a much emboldened Iranian regime that has expanded its military and security influence in the chaotic aftermath of Saddam's overthrow and the aborted Arab Spring.

In December 1992, President-elect Bill Clinton was asked by a *New York Times* reporter what he intended to do about Saddam and Iraq. Clinton responded casually, "If he wants a different relationship with the United States and with the United Nations, [all he has to do is change his behavior](#)." The ensuing criticism from the national security community reportedly spooked the new president, who had won by a thin margin in a three-way race and who was coming to the office with the thinnest of foreign policy credentials. Subsequently, Clinton never returned to this instinct and, instead, attacked Iraq militarily in 1993 and 1998. Moreover, although he did not know it at the time, Clinton also sealed Saddam's death warrant when he signed the [Iraq Liberation Act of 1998](#), which made regime change in Iraq the policy of the U.S. government. What might have happened if Clinton would have stuck to his initial instinct and tried to forge a



new relationship with Iraq? What might we have avoided in terms of lives, treasure, and prestige wasted in our fruitless effort to re-order the region?

Our incoming president has the opportunity to play a very large role in shaping a new regional order in the Middle East. This will require making tough decisions and, ultimately, recognizing that we may have to deal with

people and leaders that we abhor if we want to help bring stability back to the region and limit the scope of terrorism's reach. Most of all, it will require placing diplomacy back into our foreign policy. President-elect Trump has shown with his election victory that he is a believer in "the art of the deal." Maybe his administration can use this negotiating skill and end our involvement in the forever war.

Adapted from [Debriefing the President: The Interrogation of Saddam Hussein](#) by John Nixon. Published by arrangement with Blue Rider Press, a member of Penguin Random House. Copyright © 2016 by John Nixon.

Nixon was a CIA analyst from 1998 to 2011 and has taught leadership analysis for the agency at its Sherman Kent School; he is the author of the forthcoming book, [Debriefing the President: The Interrogation of Saddam Hussein](#).

Jordan declares end of castle siege

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-jordan-security-shooting-idUSKBN1470GG>



Dec 18 – Jordanian security forces said they killed four "terrorist outlaws" after flushing them out of a castle in the southern city of Karak where they had holed up after a shoot-out that killed nine (Update: 10) people.

An official statement said the four assailants, who shot at police targets in the town before heading to the Crusader-era castle, carried automatic weapons. Large quantities of explosives, weapons and suicide belts were seized in a hideout, the statement said.

It made no mention of their identity or whether they belonged to any militant group, raising speculation they could have been tribal outlaws with a vengeance against the state rather than Islamic State fighters, who control parts of neighboring Syria and Iraq.

A Canadian woman, three other Jordanian civilians and five (Update: 6) police officers were among the ten killed during the exchange of gunfire between the assailants and security forces.

At least 29 people were hospitalized, some with serious injuries.

Earlier, government spokesman Mohammad al-Momani said a manhunt to "eliminate" the gunmen had entered its final phase.



Jordan's position made it vulnerable to spillover of violence, Momani said.

"When we are in a region engulfed with fire from every side you expect that such events happen," the official said.

Witnesses said exchanges of fire continued for several hours between the gunmen and security forces. Police said earlier they had rescued 10 tourists and trapped inside the historic site when the gunmen went into the castle.

A former government minister from Karak city, Sameeh Maaytah, said there were signs Islamist militants may have been behind the attack.

"This was a group that was plotting certain operations inside Jordan," Maaytah told pan-Arab news channel al-Hadath.

Video footage on social media showed security forces taking groups of young Asian tourists up the castle's steep steps to its main entrance as gunshots were heard overhead.

The castle is one of Jordan's most popular tourist attractions.

Prime Minister Hani al Mulki told parliament "a number of security personnel" had been killed and that security forces were laying siege to the castle. The Canadian government confirmed one of its nationals had been killed.

Police and witnesses said gunmen had earlier gone on a shooting spree aimed at officers

patrolling the town before entering the castle, perched on top of a hill. They used one of the castle's towers to fire at a nearby police station. Police said the gunmen had arrived from the desert town of Qatranah nearly 30 km northeast of Karak city, a desert outpost known for smuggling, where many tribal residents are heavily armed and have long resisted state authority.

They had fled to Karak after an exchange of fire with the police at a residential building, security forces said.

Jordan is one of the few Arab states that have taken part in a U.S.-led air campaign against Islamic State in Syria.

But many Jordanians oppose their country's involvement, saying it has led to the killing of fellow Muslims and raised security threats inside Jordan.

Several incidents over the past year have jolted the Arab kingdom, which has been relatively unscathed by the uprisings, civil wars and Islamist militancy that have swept the Middle East since 2011.

Last November three U.S. military trainers were shot dead when their car failed to stop at the gate of a military base and was fired on by a Jordanian army member in an incident which Washington did not rule out political motives.

THE 'NEW JIHADI JOHN'

British jihadi who acted as Anjem Choudary's bodyguard appears in gruesome new ISIS beheading film



Source: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2425541/british-jihadi-who-acted-as-anjem-choudarys-bodyguard-appears-in-gruesome-new-isis-beheading-film/>

Dec 18 – A British extremist who once acted as Anjem Choudary's bodyguard has been described as 'the new Jihadi John' after he appeared on camera beheading a prisoner.

Mohammed Reza Haque has previously been pictured acting as a bodyguard for Choudary at demonstrations in London.

He has now appeared unmasked somewhere in Syria or Iraq – cutting off the head of a bound prisoner in a grisly ISIS murder propaganda film.

Haque, 36, was nicknamed Giant by his fellow jihadis after [fleeing to Syria in 2014](#).





Despite his huge stature, he evaded security services to fly from Stansted to Istanbul via Cyprus.

Syrian Ambassador claims that the other foreign military officers are GENETICALLY MODIFIED (super soldiers?) HE WILL SHOW THE WORLD.

Source: <http://thewatchtowers.com/syrian-ambassador-claims-that-the-other-foreign-military-officers-are-genetically-modified-super-soldiers-he-will-show-the-world/>

Dec 19 – “**Syria ambassador has proof that the ones they are fighting against are not human at all.**”

Bashar Ja’afari (Syria) on Syria – Security Council Media Stakeout (19 December 2016)
19 Dec 2016 – Informal comments to the media by H.E. Bashar Ja’afari, Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

He makes mention of them at the **6:50 mark** in the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWrbVknEO4A>



Berlin terror attack: Twelve dead and 48 injured as truck ploughs into crowd at Christmas market

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/19/lorry-ploughs-crowd-christmas-market-berlin/>

Dec 20 – Germany was the victim of a suspected mass terror attack on Monday night after a lorry ploughed into a busy Christmas market in Berlin.





At least twelve people were killed and 48 were injured, some seriously, after the vehicle mounted the pavement at about 40mph and crashed into them.

The driver, whose nationality is unknown, was reported to have fled but was later said to have been arrested by police. A passenger in the lorry – which came from Poland and may have been hijacked – was later found dead inside. It is

believed he may have been the original driver of the truck. German authorities confirmed that the passenger was a police national.



Police said the incident – [which echoed an attack in Nice in July this year where 86 people were killed by a truck driven by a terrorist inspired by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(Isil\)](#) – appeared to be deliberate. On Monday night they warned local residents to stay indoors.

The crash was labelled as an apparent "terrorist attack" by the White House. National Security spokesman Ned Price said the US condemned the events "in the strongest terms".

Officials were said to be investigating the crash as a

terrorist act, according to a German intelligence source, CNN reported on Monday night.

Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, expressed her sympathy for the victims of the incident.

Germany was put on high alert for a major terror attack in the months after Mrs Merkel opened the country's borders to more than one million refugees from the Middle East. Within minutes of last night's incident, far-Right politicians were criticised for exploiting the attack to suggest that Germany's generosity had allowed extremists into the country.

The carnage came just hours after the Russian ambassador to Turkey had been shot dead in the Turkish capital Ankara by a policeman who claimed to be taking revenge for Moscow's involvement in the battle for Aleppo.

And it followed warnings that Isil terrorists may target Christmas markets in Europe.

Witnesses of the Berlin attack described scenes of panic and horror as a lorry veered off the street and ploughed into the crowded Christmas market just off the famous shopping street of Kurfürstendamm at around 8pm local time (7pm GMT).

Emma Rushton, a tourist, told CNN: "We were enjoying the Christmas lights and mulled wine. We were ready to get up when we heard a loud bang, To our left we saw Christmas lights torn down and the top of an articulated lorry crashing through the stalls and through people.

"We wanted to get out as soon as possible. We wanted to get to a safe place. In my opinion, it was going at 40mph, there was no sign it was slowing down. It did not feel like an accident. There was no way it could have come off like an accident, it was through the



middle of the market. The stall where mulled wine was being served was crushed. I saw people bleeding, lying in the pavement.”

Mike Fox, who was visiting Berlin from Birmingham, said the lorry missed him by around three yards. “It was definitely deliberate,” he said. He added that he helped people who appeared to have broken limbs, and that others were trapped under Christmas stands.



Crushed stalls were left in the remains of the Christmas market last night, in the shadow of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, which is preserved in ruins from Second World War bombing.

Other witnesses described bystanders rushing to the aid of the injured in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Many of the injured were said to be in a life-threatening condition last night.

Witnesses described the driver of the lorry as “Eastern European” in appearance.

The truck, which had Polish number plates, belonged to a Polish delivery company.

The company said the vehicle, which was loaded with steel beams, had left Poland for Berlin earlier in the day but that contact with the driver was lost at around 4pm local time (3pm GMT) and the firm believed the lorry may have been hijacked.

Ariel Zurawski, the owner of the vehicle, told Polish television his cousin had initially been driving the truck, but he believed it had been hijacked.

“I can say, hand on heart, that the man who drove into those people in the centre of Berlin was not my driver,” Mr Zurawski said.

“This is my cousin. I’ve known him since birth. I have faith in him, this is not the man I know, they have done something to him.” He said he believed the dead man found inside the cab of the lorry was his cousin.

Berlin police said they suspected the truck was stolen from a construction site in Poland. There were unconfirmed reports in the

German press last night that the alleged truck driver had arrived in the country this year as a refugee from Pakistan.

There has long been concern in Germany that the country’s traditional Christmas markets could be a target for a terror attack. German intelligence picked up several indications of an imminent attack on a market in the days leading up to the attack, according to Die Welt newspaper.

The attack took place at 8pm (7pm GMT) last night, when the



market was thronged with Christmas shoppers and people stopping off for a mug of Glühwein or mulled wine on their way home. The Breitscheidplatz market, where the attack took place, is particularly vulnerable as it is situated on a pedestrian island between two busy thoroughfares.



Witnesses said the truck had approached from Budapester Strasse, to the north of the market, before veering into the stalls without slowing.

"With the apparent attack on the Christmas market in Berlin, our worst fears have come true," Stephan Mayer of Mrs Merkel's Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), said.



"Now the security concepts at all the Christmas markets in Germany have to be examined — including the question of whether they can still take place at all."

Polish driver photo (it seems he fought terrorist [Tunisian man Anis Amri, 24 – right photo] hard)



Since Nice, security experts have warned that it is largely impossible to protect people against this style of attack, in which a lorry is driven into a crowd.

Attention will now focus on the identity of the perpetrators. [Any indication that they may have been asylum-seekers will heap pressure on Mrs Merkel over her controversial "open door" refugee policy, under which more than one million migrants entered Germany last year.](#)

Ariel Zurawski, the owner of the vehicle, told Polish television his cousin had been driving the vehicle, which had stopped off in Berlin on its way back from Italy with a consignment of steel.

Mr Zurawski said the driver's wife had spoken to him around 4pm, but had been unable to reach him later.

"I can say hand on heart that the man who drove into those people in the centre of Berlin was not my driver," Mr Zurawski said.

"This is my cousin. I've known him since birth. I have faith in him, this is not the man I know, they have done something to him."

Mr Zurawski later said he believed the dead man found inside the cab of the lorry was his cousin.

"My wife told me they had found a body in the cab. From what they say it could be my driver. My cousin," he said. "Please forgive me but I can't talk any more now."

There has long been concern in Germany that the country's traditional Christmas markets could be a target for a terror attack. German intelligence picked up several indications of an imminent attack on a market in the days leading up to the attack, according to Die Welt newspaper.

Mrs Merkel has distanced herself from the policy in recent months, and promised it will never be repeated, after her party suffered damaging losses in regional elections and with general elections looming next year.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS: (1) A copy cat attack similar to the in Nice, France – problems identified remained problems identified. (2) A lorry moving around for around half an hour did not alarmed security forces – a "what if culture" still missing; Install human fences around soft targets and stop anything that does not fit (the easy way or the hard way); (3) Driver is free, armed and dangerous; (4) I am not sure if the nearby subway/train station was IMMEDIATELY CLOSED – if not, another lesson NOT learned (Brussels).

Gunman wounds three in Zurich mosque rampage, motive unclear

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-swiss-shooting-idUSKBN1481X0>

Dec 20 – A man stormed into a Zurich mosque on Monday evening and opened fire on people praying, injuring three, Swiss police said.

They said they had collected evidence inside the building and would make more details available on Tuesday. They declined to comment on the potential motive.



Two of the three men -- aged 30, 35 and 56 -- were seriously injured in the attack shortly after 5:30 p.m. local time (1630 GMT) near the main train station in Switzerland's financial capital, Zurich police said. A third sustained less severe injuries. All three were brought to hospital.



The unidentified suspect, a man around 30 years old who according to witnesses was wearing dark clothing and a dark wool cap, fled the mosque, police said.

Police said a body was found nearby but would not comment on any link to the shootings while investigations continued.

People at the scene told Reuters the Islamic Center on Zurich's Eisgasse was used as a mosque, often by Somalis.

"We never once had a problem,"

said Abukar Abshirow, a Somali who said he was a regular worshipper at the center that attracted Muslims from around the world.

"We never had anyone come and say why are you here. We never had that," Abshirow said. He said the three victims were Somalis.

Two thirds of Switzerland's 8.3 million residents identify as Christian but the nation has been wrestling with the role of Islam as its Muslim population has risen to 5 percent, swelled by the arrival of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia.

In 2009, a nationwide vote backed a constitutional ban on new minarets.

The Federation of Islamic Organisations in Switzerland said the center was not a member and it did not have any direct knowledge of the incident.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS: (1) The usual scenarios were made public: psychologically disturbed; satanist; not IS connected; (2) ~~(Gunman)~~ Terrorist was 24yo from Ghana with Swiss passport, minor criminal record (bike theft) and legitimate gun licence. Go Swiss!

Russia's ambassador to Turkey assassinated in Ankara

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/12/19/europe/turkey-russian-ambassador-shot/>

Dec 20 – A gunman shouting "Do not forget Aleppo!" assassinated Russia's ambassador to Turkey at an Ankara art gallery on Monday in what leaders of Russia and Turkey called a provocative terror attack.

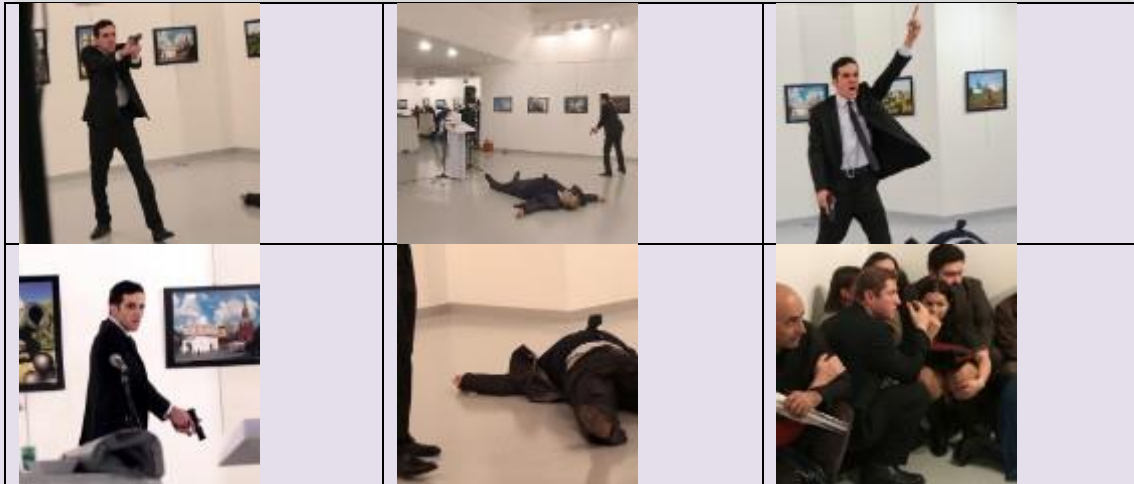


[Ambassador Andrei Karlov's](#) shooting was captured in real time in photos and video that quickly spread through the Internet worldwide.

The assassination comes at a time of improved relations and increased cooperation between Russia and Turkey. Leaders of both countries vowed to not let the assassination cast a shadow over that friendship.

It also comes during a pivotal moment in Syria, where Russia has been instrumental in President Bashar al-Assad's push to retake rebel-held parts of Syria.





Mert Altintas – former riot police officer

Russian Ambassador's killer Mert Altintas worked as a bodyguard at Erdogan rallies. Photo of him in front of AKP banner. (via Haberturk)

İngilizce dilinden çevir



19.12.2016 23:32

In televised remarks, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the killing was a clear "provocation" aimed at undermining not just the normalization of Russia-Turkish relations but the "peace process in Syria" promoted by Russia, Turkey, Iran and other countries.

"The only response we should offer to this murder is stepping up our fight

against terror, and the criminals will feel the heat," he said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan echoed Putin's sentiments, saying the assassination was intended to destroy the normalization of Turkey-Russian relations.

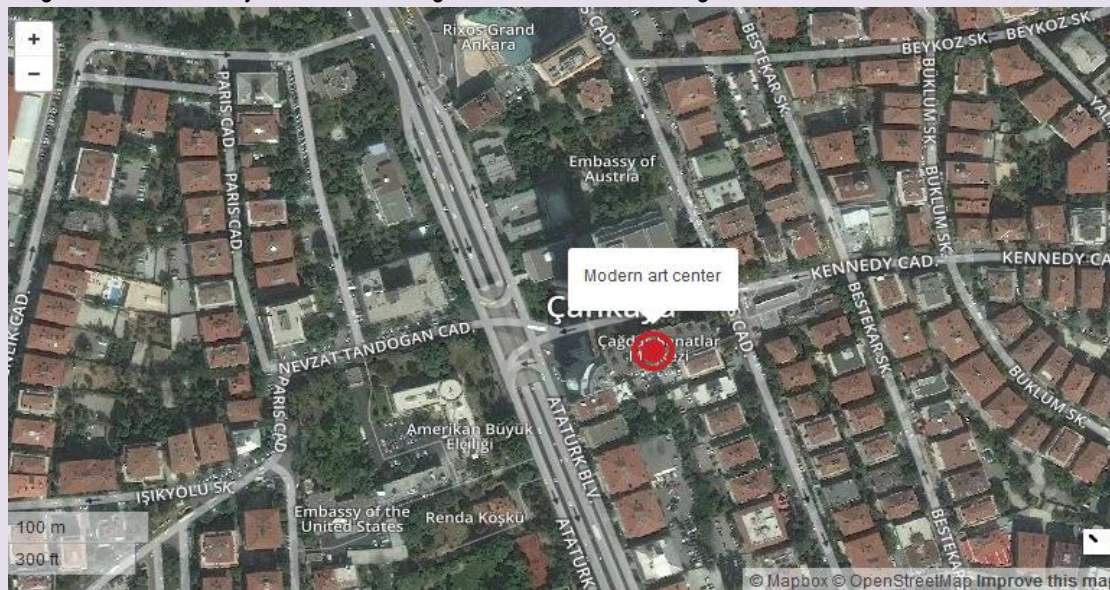
"But the Russian government and the Turkish republic have the will to not fall into that provocation."

What we know

The gunman, identified as police officer Mevlut Mert Altintas, was killed in the attack, according to various news organizations including Reuters. CNN initially reported the officer was off-duty at the time of the shooting, but Turkish government statements left his duty status Monday unclear. He was born in 1994 in the town of Soke in Turkey's Aydin province, Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said.



The attack occurred at the Cagdas Sanat Merkezi modern arts center in the heart of Ankara, a posh neighborhood of luxury hotels and foreign embassies -- including the US and Russia -- a short walk to



Turkish parliament. Karlov, envoy to Turkey since 2013, was invited to speak at a photography exhibit opening featuring the work of Turkish photographers in the Russian countryside.

The longtime diplomat had begun to speak when Altintas, wearing a dark suit tie, fired shots in rapid succession, according to multiple witness accounts.

The ambassador fell to the floor. The gunman circled his body, visibly agitated as he smashed photos hanging on the wall, [said Associated Press photographer Burhan Ozbilici](#), who captured the incident.



"Allahu akbar (God is greatest). Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria! Do not forget Aleppo! Do not forget Syria!" Altintas is heard shouting in video of the incident.

"Only death will remove me from here. Everyone who has taken part in this oppression will one by one pay for it," he said.

A Russian investigative team is scheduled to arrive in Turkey on Tuesday to assist local authorities, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

"The important thing is to understand who is behind this crime," he said. "We are convinced that the main goal of those who planned this barbaric act [is] to undermine the process of normalization of relations between Russia and Turkey, largely in order to prevent an effective fight against terrorism in Syria. This goal is futile. It will not work."

In a separate incident hours later, Turkish police arrested a man who fired into the air with a shotgun outside the US Embassy in Ankara, according to Turkey's state news agency Anadolu. Video fed by Turkish video news agency IHA showed a handcuffed man being led by security officers into an unmarked police car as he shouted "I swear to God. Don't play with us," in Turkish.



EDITOR'S COMMENTS

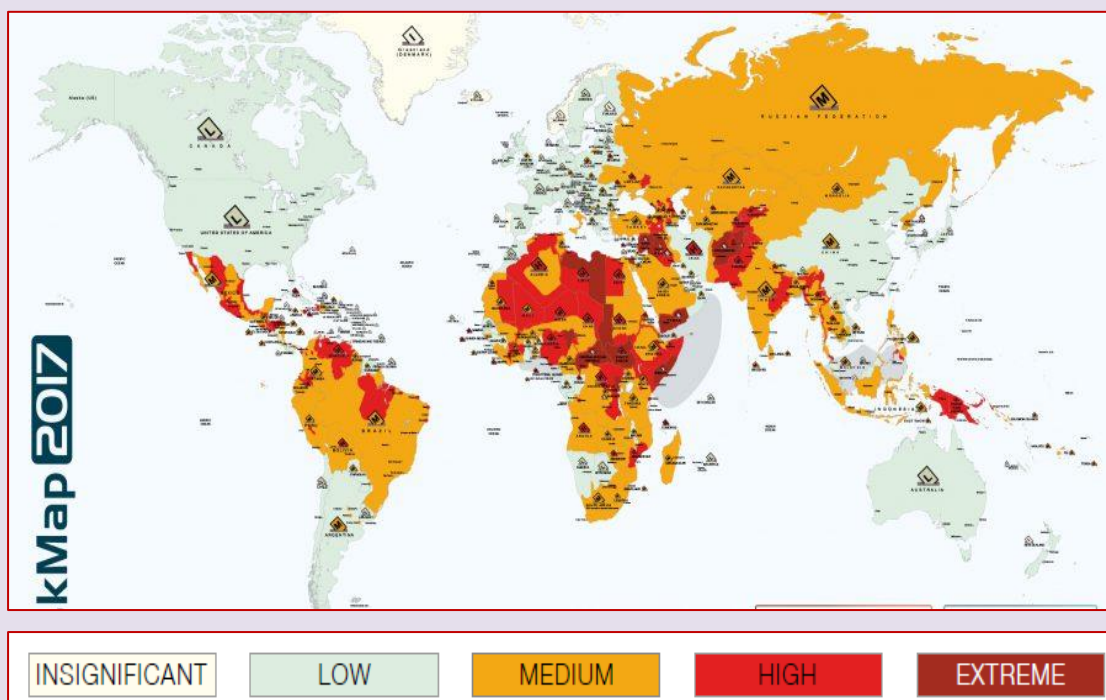
Many different kinds of handguns are produced in Turkey, with even more types from foreign manufacturers seeing use inside the country. Turkey is one of the largest producers of handguns in the world, making clones of the Beretta 92, CZ 75, 1911, Walther P99, and a number of domestic designs for sale on both the Turkish market and, increasingly, the Western market as well. The firearm used by the gunman was a compact model of the **Canik TP9**, although the photos released to the public are not clear enough to identify exactly which variant. Due to the contour of the slide near the muzzle, the most likely version is the **9mm TP9(SF?) 55 Compact**, which still uses the Walther-style SA decocking button on the top of the slide, in front of the rear sight. It comes with an 18 round Mec-Gar magazine. An alternative could be a copy of a Jericho pistol (model/variant not easily identified).

Now some security basics and related comments (from a distance): (1) when a VIP is in a confined space nobody enters the room if not in the list (civilians and security personnel). Terrorist showed his not valid ID and entered WITH his pistol (when someone is fired from a special service supposedly delivers his arms, ID/badge and related credentials); He also did some recon work the day before (security breach #2); (2) the chief of security protecting the VIP knows all his men/women deployed for the specific occasion. That chief DID NOT; (3) the moment someone pulls a gun close to the VIP, security personnel fires back. That DID NOT; (4) terrorist fired 11 times – this means he had 7 more bullets to use (+ 2 more magazines) That was a threat for audience around and should be immediately neutralized. It took some time to do this; (5) when someone is shot 9 times there is a blood lake around him. No blood is visible both on photos and videos (compared with the picture of the dead terrorist) – perhaps non-penetrating ammunition was used?; (6) when shooting with a pistol, empty shells casings are popping out and fall nearby. This was NOT seen in video and photos; and (6) the Ambassador should have worn a bullet proof vest under his shirt. Current VIP vests are both thin and effective and difficult to notice when worn underneath. Ambassador DID NOT. Finally the photographer or cameraman was very cool to continue shooting the incident. Perhaps terrorist was not alone and perhaps others should be looked for that might facilitated his access to the scene.



RiskMap 2017

Source: http://riskmap.controlrisks.com/portfolio_category/global/



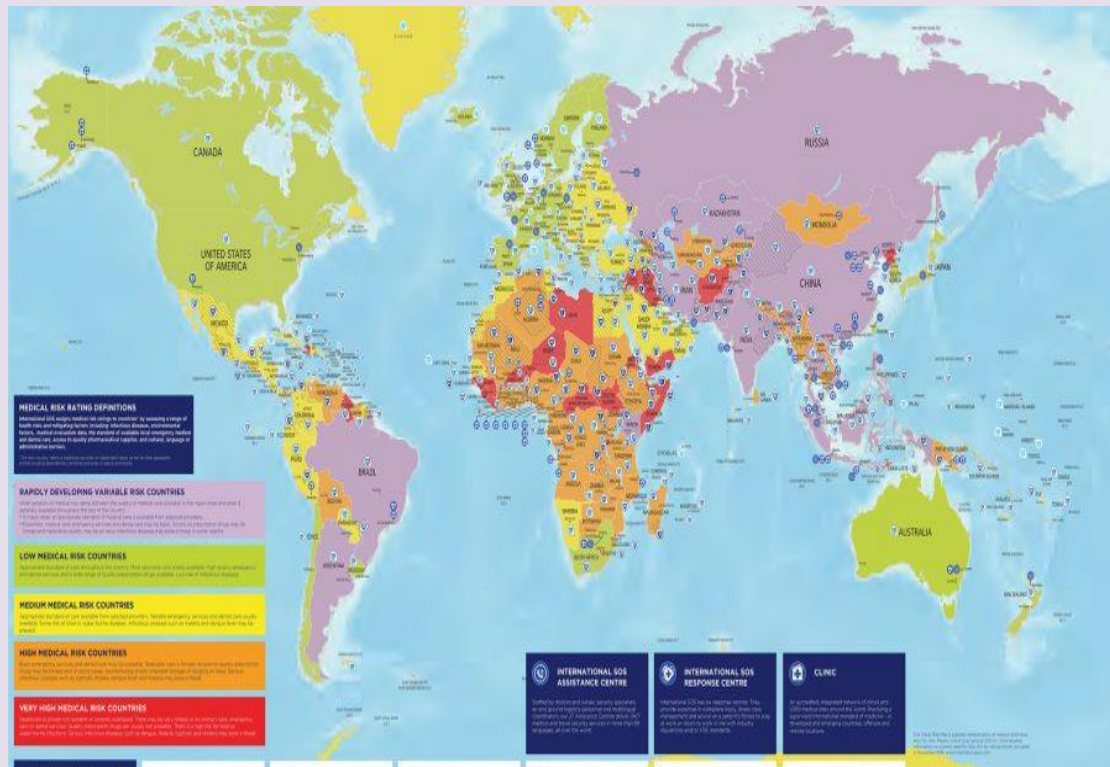
The 2017 RiskMap is Control Risks' forecast of the global risk landscape in 2017. The colouring reflects the security risk rating and the letter tiles denote the level of political risk.

Maritime



Control Risks' RiskMap Maritime 2017 features combined risk ratings based on the threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea, port and anchorage crime, conflict and territorial disputes and terrorism and militancy. The map outlines the top ten ports for port and anchorage crime and top stowaway embarkation areas.

Travel Risk Map 2017



The Travel Risk Map is produced in conjunction with our joint venture partners, International SOS. It focuses on medical and travel risks across the world.

ISIS unveils anti-aircraft missile design

Source: <https://neildoyle.com/isis-unveils-anti-aircraft-missile-design/>

Dec 09 – **Islamic State has circulated designs for DIY anti-aircraft missiles, fuelling fears that they will be used to shoot down airliners in revenge for military action against it in Iraq and Syria.** The detailed plans include mobile phones which are installed inside the projectiles and are used to steer them to their targets.



A guide to building the guidance system is outlined in a video posted to YouTube and links to it have been distributed on a website linked to ISIS.

The high definition production had clocked up 10,206 views, suggesting that multiple cells in the West may already working on the devices. It is produced in Arabic and is entitled: "Islamic State anti-aircraft missile manufacturing". The 35-minute video explains in detail how to build the system, which enables the weapon to home in on its target autonomously.

The comments below the video included expressions of good luck to the builders and attracted a reply from an apparent ISIS commander with the user name "minister of war".

One user suggested that the missile should be used to extract revenge for the current military assault on ISIS's Iraq HQ in the

country's second city of Mosul. He said: "Their graveyard will be in Mosul and the walls of Mosul, God willing." Some even suggested making certain improvements to the design to increase its effectiveness. The emergence of the plan is believed to be linked to difficulties encountered by ISIS in obtaining commercial shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles.

Western intelligence agencies are thought to have worked hard to ensure that obtaining them on the black market is extremely difficult.

Are they enough and capable of intercepting big lorries/trucks???



Dec 2016 – Improved security measures (bollards) around the Frankfurt German Market (UK), with concrete blocks now covered with wooden panels (action taken after Berlin attack – **but** in Germany all Xmas markets were closed...)



Mock-up massacrs (Syria rebels)



What a journey!

This M56A1 went from US to Tito under US-Yugo 1951 military assistance agreement; survived Yugoslav wars; ended up in Syria (al Nusra/AQ).



One Killed, Two Wounded in Central Germany Shootout

Source: <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201612201048785114-germany-shooting-hesse/>

Dec 20 – A woman was killed and two other people were wounded in a shootout in central-western German state of Hesse, local police said Tuesday. "A woman was killed this morning... In addition, two men were injured and hospitalized," Wiesbaden city police said in a statement, adding that the motives behind the attack are unclear. Additional forces and a helicopter have been deployed in search operations for the suspect said to be 20-30 years old.



ISIS Indoctrinating Kids With Apps to Blow Up Eiffel Tower

Source: <https://www.clarionproject.org/news/isis-indoctrinating-kids-apps-blow-eiffel-tower>

Dec 20 – Devising new ways to indoctrinate the next generation of jihadis, Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) is providing apps [to teach children how to attack landmarks in the West](#), reported *The Independent*.

The apps are distributed through kiosks set up in territory controlled by the brutal terror group where children can read the latest issues of ISIS' online magazine [Rumiyah](#) (a simpler version of their magazine [Dabiq](#)) and learn Arabic.

"[The app] is supposed to teach them Arabic. But the words they learn are related to violence and extremism such as tanks and grenades. The children are rewarded if they say they are prepared to carry out attacks on the West, the targets are places like the Statue of Liberty, Big Ben and the Eiffel Tower," said Colonel John Dorrian, who is with the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS.

"We are obviously very concerned about what they are learning through these apps turning to reality. But at the same time we need to take care of these children when the time comes, untold damage has been done to them which needs to be undone," Dorrian added.

Children brainwashed by ISIS, dubbed by the group the "[Caliphate](#) Cubs," are estimated at 1,500. The majority of the children are from Syria and Iraq and other Arabic-speaking countries. However, an estimated 50 are from the UK, with lesser numbers from France, Australia and other Western countries.

"We need to consider what needs to be done with these children. Some of them who have been used to carry out criminal acts, some really dreadful ones, are below the age of criminal responsibility in many countries in Europe. We know of children from the West who have been taken to Syria, but there are also children who have been born there to European parents. This is a complicated scenario and there are no easy answers," said a senior British official quoted in *The Independent*



Source: <https://www.causematch.com/en/projects/kids/>

KiDS: Inside the Terror Factory (working title) dives deep inside the world of terrorist organizations to expose an unconscionable and heartbreaking truth. The film tells the anguishing stories of children who have been indoctrinated and manipulated - used and abused - to incite violence and radicalism.

This is child abuse of the worst kind.

► ► Watch a trailer at source's URL.



A new terror group has emerged in Myanmar—and India should be worried

Source: <http://qz.com/866665/rohingya-crisis-a-new-terror-group-has-emerged-in-myanmar-and-india-should-be-worried/>

Dec 20 – In case the long list of terror organisations already menacing India wasn't enough, there's a new threat brewing beyond the country's eastern borders—in Myanmar.

The recent involvement of foreign jihadi groups in the conflict between Myanmar's majority Buddhist population and the embattled Rohingya minority could mean further instability on India's eastern and northeastern flanks.



Violence has flared up in Myanmar's restive Rakhine province, bordering Bangladesh, after militants attacked border guards in October, subsequently drawing an [allegedly brutal reprisal](#) from government forces. The primary terror group involved in Rakhine appears to be the Harakah al-Yaqin (Movement of Certainty), which the Myanmar government refers to as the **Aqa Mul Mujahidin**.

The organisation is led by a committee of around 20 senior leaders based in Saudi Arabia, according to a [report released earlier this month](#) by International Crisis Group (ICG). "All are Rohingya émigrés or have Rohingya heritage. They are well connected in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and possibly India," the Brussels-based think-tank reported. "Some or all have visited

Bangladesh and northern Rakhine state at different times in the last two years."

The Harakah al-Yaqin itself may have been born out of the jockeying for power between the so-called Islamic State (ISIL/ISIS) and Al-Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent, the regional branch of the terror group, according to Jasmininder Singh and Muhammad Haziq Jani of Singapore's S Rajaratnam School of International Studies. [In a commentary released in October](#), Singh and Jani wrote:

This group of militants, now identified as belonging to Harakah al-Yaqin, wants foreign-based Rohingya and jihadists to join them in northern Arakan to fight Myanmar forces who were looking for them at that moment. They requested medicine and for foreign-based Rohingya to relinquish their love for the world and their fear of death and to sacrifice their lives. They also asked for religious leaders to issue fatwa to legitimise their violence.

Among the prominent members of the group is one Ata Ullah (alias Ameer Abu Amar, Abu Amar Jununi). The Karachi-born son of a Muslim man from northern Rakhine state, according to ICG, Ullah grew up in Mecca and Saudi Arabia and received an Islamic education.

"He disappeared from Saudi Arabia in 2012 shortly after violence erupted in Rakhine state. Though not confirmed, there are indications he went to Pakistan and possibly elsewhere, and that he received practical training in modern guerrilla warfare," ICG said.

"Some 20 Rohingya from Saudi Arabia (separate from the leadership committee), including Ata Ullah, are leading operations on the ground. Like him, they are thought to have experience from other conflicts, possibly Afghanistan and Pakistan," the report added.

The Harakah al-Yaqin, [according to some accounts](#), could also have links with the Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based terror group that organised the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and the Jaish-e-Mohammed, a militant organisation that operates in Jammu & Kashmir.

The rise of an Islamic terror group could gravely complicate matters for the 1.1 million Rohingyas living in Rakhine. Although a mujahidin rebellion has been simmering in the region since the 1940s, the Rohingyas had little in the way of an armed struggle by the late 1990s after the decline of the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation. But with renewed armed resistance, albeit with significant external motivation, an already bloody government crackdown could potentially become even harsher.

And for the neighbourhood, including the Southeast Asian countries, Bangladesh, and India, this could be the beginning of a new security headache.



Chronology: Terror plots in Germany

Source: <http://www.dw.com/en/chronology-terror-plots-in-germany/g-36268475>

Dec 20 – Several times over the past 18 months, police have managed to thwart terror attacks and plots in Germany, which has clearly become a target for Islamic militants in Europe. The following made the headlines:

Leipzig, October 2016

Police in Leipzig arrested 22-year-old Syrian refugee Jaber al-Bakr after a two-day manhunt following the discovery of explosives and other bomb-making equipment at his apartment in Chemnitz. He was suspected of plotting to attack a Berlin airport. Two days later, he hanged himself in his prison cell.

Ansbach, July 2016

In July, the "Islamic State" (IS) claimed responsibility for two attacks carried out by asylum seekers. 15 people were injured in a crowded wine bar next to the entrance to a music festival in the Bavarian town of Ansbach after a rejected Syrian asylum seeker detonated an explosive device. The man killed himself in the attack.

Würzburg, July 2016

A 17-year-old asylum seeker wielding an axe and a knife went on a rampage on a regional train near Würzburg, seriously injuring four members of a tourist family from Hong Kong and a passer-by. The attacker was shot dead by police. German authorities said the teenager was believed to be a "lone wolf" inspired by the IS, but without being a member of the network.

Düsseldorf, May 2016

Three suspected members of the "Islamic State" terror network were arrested in the German states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg and Baden Württemberg. Authorities say two of the men planned to blow themselves up in downtown Düsseldorf, while the other attacker and a fourth jihadist arrested in France planned to target pedestrians with guns and explosive devices.

Essen, April 2016

Police arrested three people over a bomb blast that injured three people in a Sikh temple in Essen. The bomb detonated after a wedding party, blowing out windows and destroying a part of the building's exterior. A 16-year-old suspect turned himself in after police showed footage of the attack from a surveillance camera and special police units arrested another young suspect in his parents' home.

Hanover, February 2016

German-Moroccan Safia S. is charged with stabbing a police officer at the main train station in the northern city of Hanover. The 16-year-old girl is suspected of having been "motivated by members of the Islamic State group in Syria to commit this act," chief prosecutor Simon Heinrichs said.

Berlin, February 2016

In separate raids across the country, police arrested three Algerians suspected of links to the "Islamic State" militant group and of having planned a terrorist attack in Berlin. The Berlin prosecutor's office said prosecutors were aware of a "concrete" plan to target the capital.

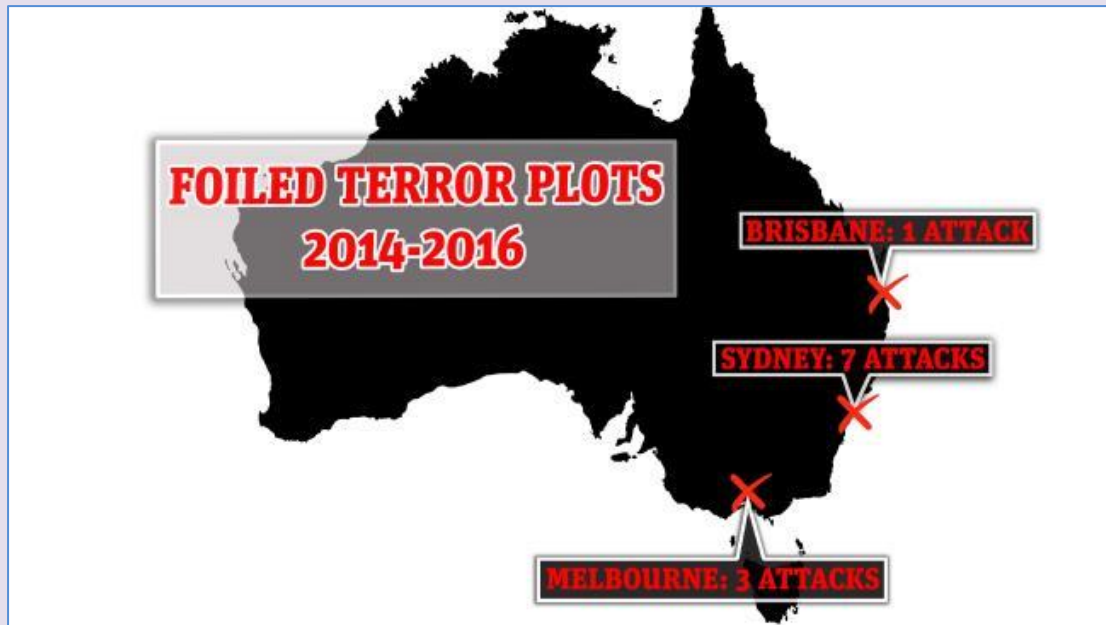


Oberursel, April 2015

The Eschborn-Frankfurt City loop bike race was called off after German police discovered it may have been the target of an Islamist terror attack. A 35-year-old German with a Turkish background and his 34-year-old wife were arrested on suspicion of planning the attack. Police found bomb-making materials in their home near the bike route.

The 11 'imminent' terror attacks **Australia narrowly escaped**

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/national/crime/the-11-imminent-terror-attacks-australia-narrowly-escaped/news-story/86fc734df0963e21fe038c0eecc7d80>



Oct 2016 – AUSTRALIA would have experienced 15 terror attacks including public beheadings on home soil over the past two years if most plots in their advanced stages hadn't been foiled, according to police.

The country has survived four terror attacks — three in New South Wales and one in Victoria — and narrowly escaped 11 since September 2014.

The terror attacks that police were unable to prevent include the [Lindt Cafe siege in Sydney](#) in which manager Tori Johnson and mother-of-three Katrina Dawson lost their lives; the [killing of police accountant Curtis Cheng](#) by 15-year-old schoolboy Farhad Khalil Mohammed Jabar in Parramatta and [the non-fatal stabbing of Wayne Greenhalgh](#) in Minto last month. In Victoria, [Numan Haider, 18, attacked two police officers](#) with a knife outside the Endeavour Hills police station before being shot dead in September 2014.

Twenty three people have been convicted of terrorism offences in Australia in the last four years, according to Australian National Security.



Among the alleged "imminent" terror plots foiled by police in the last two years were advanced plans to kidnap members of the public in Sydney and Brisbane then behead them on camera and release the footage; detonate bombs at a Mother's Day running event; stab and shoot police and members of the public at Anzac Day ceremonies; and target government buildings including the Garden Island Navy base and Parramatta Court House.

Hostages Marcia Mikhael and Katrina Dawson in the window of the Lindt Cafe during the siege. Source: Channel 7



The latest plot to be thwarted in NSW allegedly involved two 16-year-old boys who purchased knives and were en route to behead a stranger in Sydney's Bankstown before they were arrested on Wednesday.

NSW Police deputy commissioner Catherine Burn claimed on Thursday it was the "11th imminent attack ... we have prevented in this country".

"There have been four attacks, three have been in NSW," Ms Burn said.

"While we cannot necessarily guarantee that attacks won't occur, we know that the processes and what we are currently doing, we are doing everything we can to prevent such attacks."

A recent US Homeland Security report revealed that Australia ranked equal third among Western nations as a target for Islamic State-inspired terror attacks.

The likelihood of Australia suffering another terror attack is "probable", as ranked on the National Terrorism Threat Level.

"Credible intelligence, assessed by our security agencies indicates that individuals or groups have developed both the intent and capability to conduct a terrorist attack in Australia," according to Australian National Security.

Here are some of the most recent alleged "imminent terror attacks" Australia has narrowly escaped:

PLOT: BEHEAD A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC IN SYDNEY

October 2016

Two schoolboys who were allegedly preparing for a terror attack in Sydney's southwest, with police alleging they had links to the Islamic State, were arrested and refused bail on Wednesday. The 16-year-olds were detained in a laneway behind a Bankstown mosque about midday, hours after they allegedly bought two bayonets at a local gun shop. Police wearing protective vests headed to the prayer hall after officers received information about the alleged purchase of the knives. The pair allegedly also had pieces of paper with religious statements on them, which the *Daily Telegraph* reported they planned to read out while they carried out a beheading. Police said the students, who were due to start their HSC exams at East Hill Boys High on Thursday, may have been influenced by "radicalised peers". One is related to a convicted terrorist and refused to stand for the national anthem at school two years ago.

PLOT: DETONATE EXPLOSIVES IN MELBOURNE

August 2016

Operation Fortaleza disrupted an alleged domestic terrorist attack at an undisclosed location in Melbourne, potentially involving improvised explosive devices. The AFP has not responded to questions from news.com.au in relation to this incident.

PLOT: STAB A NSW POLICE OFFICER TO DEATH

June 2016

A Sydney teenager allegedly planned a "serious" terror attack — potentially involving a knife — on a police officer in NSW. The [17-year-old was charged with a "terrorism-related offence"](#) after police were alerted to a series of social media posts where the teen had threatened to kill a police officer. He was charged with planning a terrorist act and using a telecommunications network to commit a serious offence, police said in a statement. NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione told media the teen "talked about ... killing a police officer" in the post. "It talked about hurting a police officer, in fact killing a police ... officer," Mr Scipione said. Mr Scipione said the individual "indicated he proposed to act in the very, very near vicinity in terms of time". "He was allegedly going to conduct any act within a very short period of time," he said.

PLOT: ACQUIRE FIREARM AND SHOOT CIVILIANS IN SYDNEY

May 2016

A Sydney man, 18, who had allegedly bid to join extremists in Syria, was accused of planning an imminent lone-wolf terror attack in Australia. Attorney-General George Brandis said authorities had not acted until relatively late so more evidence could be gathered.



The man was “in the process” of acquiring a weapon, he told reporters. “The judgment of the police was that he was intending to put it to use imminently,” Mr Brandis said. He had allegedly been scouting out possible sites in Sydney to carry out the attack.

PLOT: BEHEAD A POLICE OFFICER & SHOOT CIVILIANS ON ANZAC DAY

April 2016

Sevdet Ramadan Besim, 19, pleaded guilty to a plot to run over and then behead a police officer before using his gun in a bloody rampage, after his plan was foiled. A court heard he used an encrypted messaging app to try and obtain a gun to “terrorise” the “kafirs” on Anzac Day. He allegedly wrote he was “ready to fight these dogs on there (sic) doorstep” in online communications with a person overseas, according to court documents. “I’d love to take out some cops,” Besim is alleged to have written. “I was gonna meet with them then take some heads ahaha.” Besim was in regular communication with a teenager in the United Kingdom, who encouraged him to not only carry out the Anzac Day attack, but to break into someone’s home “and get your first taste of beheading”. Crown prosecutor Chris Choi said Besim, an electrical apprentice, tried to obtain a gun for an Anzac Day attack and, when that failed, a bomb manual. He said he targeted April 25, “because here in Australia the kafir (non-Muslims) celebrate Anzac Day and I want to terrorise them on that day”, Ms Choi said. He sent a text on April 16, “I want to learn how to make a bomb”. The Islamic State flag appeared in his messaging avatar, Ms Choi said. The Hallam teen was handed a 10-year jail sentence in the Victorian Supreme Court in September 2016 and must serve at least seven and a half before he is eligible for parole. Police said he was motivated by an extremist ideology and had expressed support for terrorist organisations, particularly Islamic State, which adopt a radical interpretation of Islam.

PLOT: TARGET PARRAMATTA WESTFIELD

Jan-Feb. 2016

One of two accused terror plotters who allegedly planned to carry out a terror attack at Parramatta Westfield was found with a hunting knife and a Shahada flag in her handbag as well as instructions for making a bomb detonator. The teenager laughed and cheered as a Sydney court heard evidence of her “favourite” beheading video.

PLOT: BOMB MELBOURNE'S MOTHER'S DAY CLASSIC EVENT

May 2015

A teen terrorist who planned to detonate bombs at a Mother’s Day event in Melbourne described all non-Muslims as cockroaches. Police raided the teen’s home on May 8 after he began messaging radicals overseas that he would become a martyr. Counter-terrorism officers found IS propaganda material, pressure cookers, pipe bombs, shrapnel and homemade explosive that the teen now admits were to be used in a bombing. “I thought that a lot of (Australian) people were not innocent because they were supporters of the killing of Muslims around the world,” the teen allegedly said.

PLOT: KILL POLICE AT ANZAC DAY CEREMONIES

April 2015

Aspiring terrorists allegedly planned to run over a police officer, kill him with a knife and seize his gun before going on a shooting rampage during Anzac Day centenary celebrations in an attack foiled by a police operation. The group behind the alleged plot had reportedly anticipated the attack on Melbourne streets would end in their own deaths. Australian police arrested five teenagers in Melbourne over their alleged plans to target police uncovering knives and other weapons in their raids.

ALLEGED PLOT: TO BEHEAD INNOCENT PEOPLE

February 2015

Two Sydney friends were arrested just hours before they planned to carry out a terror attack. Omar al-Kutobi, 24, and Mohammad Kiad, 25 were accused of planning to carry out an attack, amid suspicions they were plotting a public beheading. A machete, a hunting knife and a flag associated with Islamic State were among items seized in the raids on their Fairfield home, along with a video of Al-Kutobi holding knives and vowing to stab



white people in the kidneys and necks “today” with a note declaring he and Kiad “are here to cut your head”. Less than a week before they were due to face trial, the pair pleaded guilty in the NSW Supreme Court to one count each of “to act in preparation/planning for terrorist act”.

PLOT: TARGET GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

December 2014-March 2016

A Sydney teenager accused of plotting an “imminent” terrorist shooting in Sydney had allegedly scoped out the Parramatta court complex, Garden Island Navy Base and the Victoria Barracks before he was arrested as part of Operation Appleby. The original plot involved alleged planning of an attack on a random member of the public. Police said the second plot “may have involved an attack on a government building, whether that be AFP or police”.

PLOT: KIDNAP INNOCENT PEOPLE IN SYDNEY & BRISBANE THEN BEHEAD THEM ON CAMERA

September 2014

An accused terror plotter was within days of launching a terror attack on Australian soil, embarking on a frenzied, deadly shopping spree to load up on weapons, before he was arrested, police alleged. Police said the man planned to launch a terror attack on home soil. Government officials revealed that the plan was to kidnap random members of the public, behead them on camera and then release the video of the killings. The man was charged with transporting a gun and stockpiling machetes, knives and balaclavas, military clothing and a firearm in preparation for a terrorist act.

Killer trucks: What can the West do to stop the next attack?

Source: <http://www.jpost.com/International/Killer-trucks-What-can-the-West-do-to-stop-the-next-attack-476034>

Dec 21 – **Following Monday’s terrorist attack in Germany, what can the Germans and the rest of the West do better to prevent the next terror attack?**

The first step is understanding the current heightened motivation of ISIS and other terrorists to hit the West, according to Meit Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Director and IDF Intelligence Col. (res.) Reuven Ehrlich in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*.

ISIS have claimed to have inspired the attack on the Christmas market.

A position paper that Ehrlich’s center sent out on Sunday said in bold letters, “ISIS can be expected to continue attempting attacks, especially during the upcoming holiday season.”

The **position paper** also specifically noted an ISIS publication about vehicular attacks from November 11 which appeared in English, French, German, Russian, Turkish, Turkmen, Indonesian and Pashtu. It said, “Vehicles are like knives, as they are extremely easy to

acquire. But unlike knives, which if found in one’s possession can be a cause for suspicion, vehicles arouse absolutely no doubts due to their widespread use throughout the world.”

“Likewise, it is one of the safest and easiest weapons one could employ against the kufar [infidels], while being from amongst the most lethal methods of attack and the most successful in harvesting large numbers of the infidels. Large heavy trucks should be used because they can reach high speeds and lessen the chances for victims to escape,” the article continued.

Ehrlich said, “ISIS wants to change the subject from Mosul and its failures in Iraq and Syria.”

Besides those background issues, he emphasized that Germany needs “better prevention and intelligence. We see many Western countries and Russia have had many successes recently with preventive arrests.”

Ehrlich also added that “security on the ground needs to be better, especially around Christmas and New Year’s Eve, maybe they are not doing this well enough.”



Moreover, he called for improved cross-border cooperation and intelligence sharing between

supporters carrying out attacks are not necessarily refugees.”



countries, noting a suspect in the crime may have killed a Polish driver and taken the Polish car to Germany.

Asked if Europe has found the proper balance of increasing security versus civil liberties, he said, “You cannot make security more rigorous without some infringement to human rights, but you do also need to keep the public’s faith. There is always a tension between these.”

Ehrlich referred to Israeli increased security at restaurants and in public areas which helped reduce suicide bombings during the Second Intifada, but also infringed on individual rights to some degree.

He rejected any connection between the attack and the phenomena of attacks as being directly connected to Europe’s relatively open policy on Middle East refugees, but said that even if there might be some connection, the current suspect “was from Pakistan or Afghanistan. ISIS can get refugees from any Muslim country, not just the Middle East and most of its

Institute for National Security Studies terror expert and former counter terror adviser to the prime minister Yoram Schweitzer, said that **Germany “should have closed off its big streets to trucks** and that you should not wait until your country” is targeted to make security adjustments.

He noted a “wave of terror attacks” by ISIS or ISIS-inspired attackers in the West have shown the influence of those terror groups in the West.

Schweitzer also said **employing a driver to use his truck as a weapon, as occurred here, was not new, noting a 1994 Thailand terrorist attack that used the same tactic.**

Asked why Germany was being targeted (ISIS has mentioned targeting Germany, even if this current attack was not committed by the group) when it is not militarily involved in fighting ISIS, he said, “Germany is part of the West. Whether it supports the West logistically, or supports the West’s decisions regarding ISIS, ISIS sees the West as one big unit and seeks to destroy and strike the entire West.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Yesterday (20/12) NYPD commented that the heavy traffic in NY city could be a barrier for similar truck attacks. Not very to the point comment since an attack can take place in mass gathering areas (especially during season holidays) off downtown. **In addition:** customers in bars and supermarkets in Israel pay some extra cents for the security of the shop they are in. Not a bad idea!



Jihadi Terrorism in Europe: The IS-Effect

By Petter Nesser, Anne Stenersen and Emilie Oftedal

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/553/html>

Dec 2016 – The article examines the extent to which Islamic State (IS) has affected jihadi terrorism in Europe. We look at the scope of attack activity, perpetrators and their networks, modus operandi and funding. For all the talk of a new threat we argue that, apart from scope, less is new than most assume. IS wants largely the same as al-Qaida did by attacking Europe. Their tactics are similar and their networks overlap in time and space. The core dynamics of the threat endure. It is premature to talk of a new paradigm in recruitment, but more terrorists are instructed online than before. Patterns in funding remain relatively stable, but there is an increase in plots financed from abroad. Despite military setbacks, IS remains a formidable terrorist actor, with territorial control, economic muscle and thousands of Europeans in its ranks. These things, combined with the group's skillful social media usage, are exhausting European security services' capacities. So is the refugee situation, which is exploited by IS to transfer personnel. If IS's territorial control persists, we foresee attempts at large-scale operations, including attempts at using improvised chemical or radiological devices. If IS continues to lose ground, small-scale attacks by single actors will become even more frequent.

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Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus

By Rajan Basra, Peter R. Neumann

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/554/html>

Dec 2016 – The prevalence of criminal backgrounds amongst European jihadists is remarkable. Whether amongst 'foreign fighters' that have travelled to Syria and Iraq, or amongst those involved in terrorism in Europe, criminal pasts are common. Yet, they remain unexamined. This article presents a unique empirical examination of 79 European jihadists with criminal backgrounds, examining the relevancy of their criminal pasts in relation to their terrorist futures. The results fall into four themes. Firstly, jihadism can affect a criminal's radicalisation process in two ways: it can offer redemption from past sins, or it can legitimise crime. Secondly, prisons offer an environment for radicalisation and networking amongst criminals and extremists. Thirdly, criminals develop skills that can be useful for them as extremists, such as access to weapons and forged documents, as well as the psychological 'skill' of familiarity with violence. Finally, white-collar and petty crime is often used to finance extremism. The results challenge conceptions on radicalisation, and can affect counter-terrorism responses.

Rajan Basra is a Research Fellow at ICSR, and a PhD candidate at King's College London.

Peter R. Neumann is Professor of Security Studies at the Department of War Studies, King's College London, and has served as Director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR) since its foundation in early 2008.



Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq and the Socio-Economic Environment They Faced at Home: A Comparison of European Countries

By Philip Verwimp

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/558/html>

Dec 2016 – This article looks at the gap in labour market and school outcomes between non-EU immigrants and natives in European countries. It then correlates the related socio-economic data with the number of foreign fighters per million inhabitants as well as per million non-EU immigrants. It emerges that larger gaps correlate with higher numbers of foreign fighters, with Belgium emerging as the worst performer in the sample. While not offering a full, causal and micro-level model to understand the link completely, the present analysis nevertheless finds a clear and robust pattern across much of Europe.

Philip Verwimp teaches Development Economics at Université Libre de Bruxelles where he is a Fellow of the European Centre for Advanced Research in Economics and Statistics (ECARES) as well as the Centre Emile Bernheim. Valuable comments on the first draft were received from Chris Blattman, Micael Castanheira and Yvan Guichaoua. Participants at the Foreign Fighters Conference in Oslo in September 2016 also provided insightful comments. I am particularly grateful to Petter Nesser, Thomas Hegghammer and two anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions.

Terrorism and Beyond: Exploring the Fallout of the European Foreign Fighter Phenomenon in Syria and Iraq

By Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/559/html>

Dec 2016 – The foreign fighter phenomenon in Syria and Iraq has led to many worries about the potential negative consequences that might occur in the near future. The scenario of returned foreign fighters launching attacks in the West is by far the most prominent one. This article aims to broaden the discussion on the potential fallout of the phenomenon by examining three particular dimensions: the physical threat (including the terrorist threat), ideological consequences, and societal consequences. After presenting these dimensions, three historical cases of jihadi foreign fighting (Afghanistan, Bosnia and Somalia) are examined to see to what extent different types of fallout materialized. The final part of the article attempts to gauge which indicators or signs of potential fallout are already observable in the case of the on-going conflict in Syria and Iraq. If we seek to prepare ourselves for the future fallout of today's foreign fighter phenomenon, we must look beyond the terrorist threat.

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Jihadism in Norway: a Typology of Militant Networks in a Peripheral European Country

By Brynjar Lia and Petter Nesser

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/563/html>

Dec 2016 – Jihadism in Norway has witnessed a huge shift from consisting primarily of foreign ethnically homogenous networks with a low capacity for mobilization, to the current situation where a loose country-wide network of domestic extremists have demonstrated a



considerable capacity for foreign fighter recruitment over the past four years. In this article we introduce a typology for better understanding how jihadism takes root in Europe's periphery.

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The Future of Jihadism in Europe: A Pessimistic View

By Thomas Hegghammer

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/566/html>

Dec 2016 – This article presents a ten-year forecast for jihadism in Europe. Despite reaching historically high levels in recent years, violent Islamist activity in Europe may increase further over the long term due to four macro-trends: 1) expected growth in the number of economically underperforming Muslim youth, 2) expected growth in the number of available jihadi entrepreneurs, 3) persistent conflict in the Muslim world, and 4) continued operational freedom for clandestine actors on the Internet. Over the next decade, the jihadi attack plot frequency in Europe may follow a fluctuating curve with progressively higher peaks. Many things can undercut the trends and lead to a less ominous outcome, but the scenario is sufficiently likely to merit attention from policymakers.

Thomas Hegghammer is Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the University of Oslo.



Bibliography: Islamist Terrorism in Europe

By Judith Tinnes

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/567/html>

Dec 2016 – This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on Islamist terrorism in Europe. Though focusing on recent literature, the bibliography is not restricted to a particular time period and covers publications up to November 2016. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to expand the search.

Judith Tinnes, Ph.D., is a Professional Information Specialist. Since 2011, she works for the Leibniz Institute for Psychology Information (ZPID). Additionally, she serves as Information Resources Editor to 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. In her editorial role, she regularly compiles bibliographies and other resources for Terrorism Research. She wrote her doctoral thesis on Internet usage of Islamist terrorists and insurgents (focus: media-oriented hostage takings).

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 12 Books on Al-Qaida and ISIS-related Subjects

By Joshua Sinai

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/568/html>

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

