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RAF Brimstone Missile Has Not Killed Any Isis Militants In Syria, And Only Seven Hit By UK Bombs

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2016/02/18/syria-bombing-brimstone-raf-isis-killed-_n_9261278.html

Feb 18 – The RAF's celebrated Brimstone missile system has yet to kill or wound a single Isis terrorist in Syria since MPs controversially voted to support bombing raids in December.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request by The Huffington Post UK also revealed just seven Isis militants have been killed or wounded by bombs dropped by RAF jets - either with Paveway bombs or Hellfire drone missiles.

Brimstone, hailed for its accuracy, was the main reason for the UK going into Syria, offering a military capability lacking among the US and French air forces, and was cited repeatedly by the Government and MPs.

Date	Attack in the vicinity of	Daesh Killed/Wounded	Weapon Type
25/12/15	Ar Raqqah	1	Hellfire
25/12/15	Tabqa	2	Hellfire
11/1/16	Al Busayrah	2	Hellfire
15/1/16	Umm Num Rah	2	Paveway IV

Huffington Post UK FOI

Isis casualties broken down by location and missile type

The revelation has raised questions over Britain's involvement, the number of targets and costs. The Scottish National Party's Alex Salmond said the finding "contrasts dramatically" with David Cameron's argument Brimstone would "cut off the 'head of the snake'" in Isis's Raqqa HQ.



PHILIP COBURN via Getty Images

The Brimstone missile, a rocket-propelled, radar-guided air-launched ground attack weapon

The Ministry of Defense (MoD), however, said the point of the air raids was not just to kill extremists, and pointed to the disruption they had caused to Isis infrastructure, including its lucrative oil fields.



Brimstone was used in nine raids between the vote and January 29, which is where the FOI data runs to. Often more than one bomb was dropped in a raid, taking out cranes, trucks and other Isis infrastructure.

All the strikes are [detailed on the MoD website](#), but the department has until the FOI refused to specify how many militants have been killed. No civilian casualties have resulted from British attacks, it says.

Each Brimstone missile dropped is estimated to cost £100,000. Estimates vary, but Isis is thought to be able to muster as many as many as 32,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria.

Cameron has hailed the accuracy of the Brimstone missiles for causing “the lowest level of civilian casualties” - heralding the plane’s high-definition camera that can “hover over the Isle of Wight and be able to read the hands on Big Ben”.

The SNP’s MPs to a man and women opposed the raids. SNP MP Mr. Salmond, the party’s International Affairs spokesman in Westminster, told HuffPost UK: “This information contrasts dramatically with the case made by the Prime Minister for bombing when he said that the much-lauded Brimstone missile system would be crucial in cutting off the ‘head of the snake’ in Raqqa.

“It is now the common practice of this Prime Minister to mislead the country into military engagement and then to only devote a passing interest towards these crucial issues as his case crumbles before our eyes.

“I have little doubt that we shall soon be informed that it is back to Libya as the new crucial theatre of engagement as Cameron’s attention span wanders elsewhere. Occasional spurts of interest do not represent a coherent policy against Daesh and bombing campaigns should not be used as a substitute for strategy.”

A Ministry of Defense spokeswoman said: “We are playing a crucial role in a campaign that will take



time and patience. Using the right weapon for each scenario, RAF jets have struck Daesh almost 600 times.

[Some 397 MPs voted for the Government motion to expand bombing raids from Iraq and 223 against, a majority of 174](#)

“In Iraq we have helped to drive them out of Sinjar and Ramadi. In Syria, we have severely weakened them by targeting their key

infrastructure.”

The UK is part of a coalition with allies including the US and France, and the specifics of where strikes occur are decided to ensure “maximum coalition effectiveness”.

The thinking behind targeting ISIS infrastructure, such as the Omar oil field, is to reduce its ability to raise finance to fund their terror campaign.

So far, oil revenue has been reduced by around 30% and their entire income has been cut by around 10%, the MoD says.

The MoD explained in the response to the FOI: “Since December 2015 UK military air activity has contributed to the Coalition’s aim of disrupting and degrading Daesh military infrastructure, logistics and revenue streams inside Syria.

“This includes targeting oil infrastructure and enabling equipment under Daesh control, helping to reduce their ability to profit from selling oil to fund their activities.

“We have also targeted Daesh’s military equipment and infrastructure, including vehicles, defensive fighting positions firing on friendly forces, a tunnel complex, weapons stores and a command and control center.

“We estimate that 7 Daesh combatants have been killed or wounded as a result of RAF airstrikes in Syria between 2 December 2015 and 29 January 2016.”

HuffPost UK has approached the Ministry of Defense for any further comment.



The House of Commons vote to back airstrikes in Syria - unlike in neighboring Iraq a year earlier - proved controversial after Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn came out against the policy, causing a deep divide among the Opposition.

Though the vote passed comfortably, it was set against a backdrop of protests outside Westminster and later contributed to Corbyn's "revenge reshuffle", despite giving his Shadow Cabinet a free vote.

The RAF is using three aircraft to drop missiles: older Tornado jets which can carry Brimstone missiles and Paveway bombs; newer Typhoons that drop Paveway bombs but are not - as yet - capable of firing Brimstone missiles; and unmanned Reaper "drones" equipped with Hellfire missiles and bombs.

Brimstone missiles are estimated to cost £100,000 each, while heavier Paveway IV bombs are thought to cost £30,000 each. Hellfire missiles have a £71,300 price-tag each.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: If this is not a case of bad intelligence then perhaps the possibility of jamming might require further exploitation. Turkish new mobile CORAL electronic warfare systems (by Aselsan – range >100 km) deployed since July 2015 in the Hatay Province (bordered with Syria), might have something to do with poor results of Tornado jets.

Wearing hijab is “passive terrorism”: USAF study

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160225-wearing-hijab-is-passive-terrorism-usaf-study>

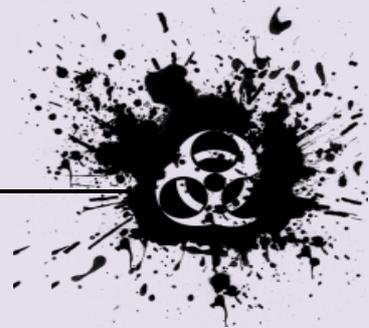


Feb 25 – A study issued by the U.S. military has suggested that wearing the hijab by some Muslim women represents a form of “passive terrorism.”

The *Independent* reports that a policy paper issued by the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory and titled [Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods & Strategies](#), included a chapter which contained discussion of radicalization. *The Intercept* reported that in addition to the comment about hijabs, the chapter also claims that support for militant groups is driven by “sexual deprivation.”

The USAF paper, first published in 2011, and was reissued by the Air Force last summer, after President Barack Obama's announcement of a national counter-extremism strategy.

The summer 2015 revised version was published online in January by Public Intelligence Web site. The introduction to the revised report referred to the counter-extremism summit convened by Obama, saying the renewed focus by the government on countering



radicalization makes “the wisdom contained in this paper collection ... more relevant than ever.”

The chapter which contains the references to the hijab was written by Dr. Tawfik Hamid, who describes himself as a former Islamic extremist and fellow at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

Hamid argues that support for ISIS and other militant groups was the result sexual deprivation among young Muslim men and that terrorism bears relation to religious dress. He says that among the best ways to combat terrorism is “addressing the factors underlying [sexual] deprivation” among young men, as well as “weakening the hijab phenomenon.”

“Extremism occurs when increasing numbers of women begin to wear the hijab, which is both a symptom of Salafi proliferation and a catalyst for Islamism,” writes Hamid.

“In turn, the proliferation of militant Salafism and the hijab contribute to the idea of passive terrorism, which occurs when moderate segments of the population decline to speak against or actively resist terrorism.

“Speaking from my own experience with the radical groups, I believe young Muslims are motivated to join radical groups because of sexual deprivation.”

Will ISIS Launch a Mass Drone Attack on a Stadium?

By Clive Irving

Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/02/24/will-isis-launch-a-mass-drone-attack-on-a-stadium.html>



Feb 24 – **A team of British intelligence analysts has drawn up a chilling scenario in which terrorists launch a swarm of small drones in an attack on a major sporting event like the Super Bowl, unleashing multiple explosive devices on the crowd in the stadium.**

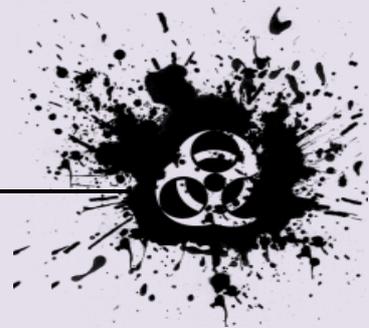
“If we do not act to prevent it, it is only a matter of time,” **Chris Abbott**, the executive director of a think tank called **Open Briefing**, told The Daily Beast in an exclusive interview.

Abbott’s group, which calls itself “the first civil society intelligence agency,” includes former military specialists and intelligence agency operatives. They have been tracking the development of drones for several years.

What they now see is a cheap and easily accessible technology that is particularly suited to the limited resources and ability of the small, widely dispersed terrorist sleeper cells that are known to exist in Western Europe and the United States—or lone wolves indoctrinated by ISIS or al Qaeda, like the San Bernardino attackers.

The experts believe that ISIS has already recognized the opportunity provided by off-the-shelf drone technology in its planning of attacks on Western cities.

“ISIS are already using drones in Iraq and Syria for intelligence gathering, quite successfully, for battlefield awareness,” says Abbott.



“They are in direct competition now with al Qaeda and are desperate to launch a mass casualty attack on Western targets. A swarm drone attack against a large sporting event would be potentially disastrous,” he said. (In the Paris mass attacks a major stadium where the French president was watching a soccer game was targeted but a suicide bomber was deterred by the gate security and blew himself up outside.)

“ISIS have demonstrated themselves to be very sophisticated in terms of propaganda. The drones would be equipped with cameras so that they could film the actual attack as it takes place and live stream it on the Internet.

“These things would have an effect long beyond the horror of the actual event, a very visual impact.”

Abbott points out that the so-called Islamic State widely known as ISIS has distributed videos showing the training of those who carried out the terrorist attacks in Paris and that drone attacks would probably be similarly planned in Syria as cell leaders are trained in the acquisition and use of drones.

In January Abbott's group published a report, through the London-based Remote Control Project, that analyzed the considerable arsenal of small drones now available and discussed their potential for terrorists. **That report has prompted British lawmakers to urgently review what steps should be taken to anticipate such attacks and prepare defenses against them.**

“The tricky thing,” said Abbott, “is that there is no individual counter-measure that could be effective. You have to have a layered defense that starts with the regulation and registration of drone ownership, has a second layer that restricts the ownership of larger and more capable drones, then you need systems that can warn of attacks and possibly jam the channels being used to control the drones and, as a last line of defense, the ability to intercept the drones and shoot them down.

“Unfortunately, if you have to resort to shooting them out of the sky in an urban environment or at a packed stadium, the risk of collateral damage is very high.”

At the same time Abbott acknowledges that regulators face a dilemma: “There is so much legitimate use for drones, they serve a very useful purpose, including in search and rescue

that you don't want to kill the innovation, you don't want so many restrictions that it becomes impossible to use them.”

In the U.S. (where 700,000 drones were sold last year alone), the Federal Aviation Administration now requires that recreational drone users register their personal details when they buy a drone, but regulations covering the use of commercial drones weighing more than 55 pounds have been delayed for more consultations with industry lobbyists.

In Britain, lawmakers are calling for what is known as “geo fencing”—in which sensitive sites like airports, official buildings, ports, nuclear power stations, and electricity power grids are designated as no-fly zones and all drones are fitted with firmware that automatically locks out the drone from entering the zones.

Abbott admits, though, that such firmware can easily be disabled. “Our best defense, as always,” he says, “is solid intelligence that can prevent an attack before it is attempted.”

Commercial aviation remains a prime target for terrorist attacks. But with airports in Western Europe and North America turned into fortresses, soft targets in aviation are far harder to find. Consequently Abbott fears that drones could present yet another example that our defenses against terrorism remain prioritized against past threats and dated technology rather than being realigned to anticipate a completely new threat before it can become lethal.

And he stressed just how lethal even a small drone could be.

“A consumer hobbyist drone can carry the equivalent of a pipe bomb, with the equivalent of five to 10 kilograms of TNT, or of a suicide vest, of roughly between four to 10 kilograms of TNT, or of the improvised explosive devices, IEDs, used for years in Iraq and Afghanistan. A mass drone attack would be the equivalent of multiple suicide bombers being launched at a single target at the same time.”

On the other hand, a single drone directed at a single, high value target—like a political leader—could also have devastating consequences. And there are precursors that expose our vulnerability to such attacks:



In 2013 a small camera-carrying drone

Abbott explains that carefully prepared and



landed directly in front of German Chancellor Angela Merkel when she was addressing a rally in Dresden. The drone was operated by the German Pirate Party, as part of a protest about government surveillance techniques. Last April (2015) a small drone carrying a sample of radioactive sand from the Fukushima nuclear plant landed on the roof of the Japanese prime minister's offices in Tokyo.



Had each of these drones been weaponized, their feats would not have faded so readily from the headlines.

targeted attacks like these would be difficult to intercept. "All we are able to do at the moment is to put increasingly sophisticated hurdles in their path so that they become increasingly less likely to succeed."

As well as attempts to take out political leaders, relatively small drones are capable of carrying other payloads of mass terror, like chemical weapons and poisons that could, for example, contaminate water supplies. Abbott also points out that a drone could deliver a radioactive "dirty bomb."

"The actual destructive effect would be limited, but the psychological and economic effects could be substantial."

But even if a defense system is able to disable the GPS guidance system of a drone, a terrorist can now have the means to send a drone from afar like a cruise missile on a pre-determined and programmed

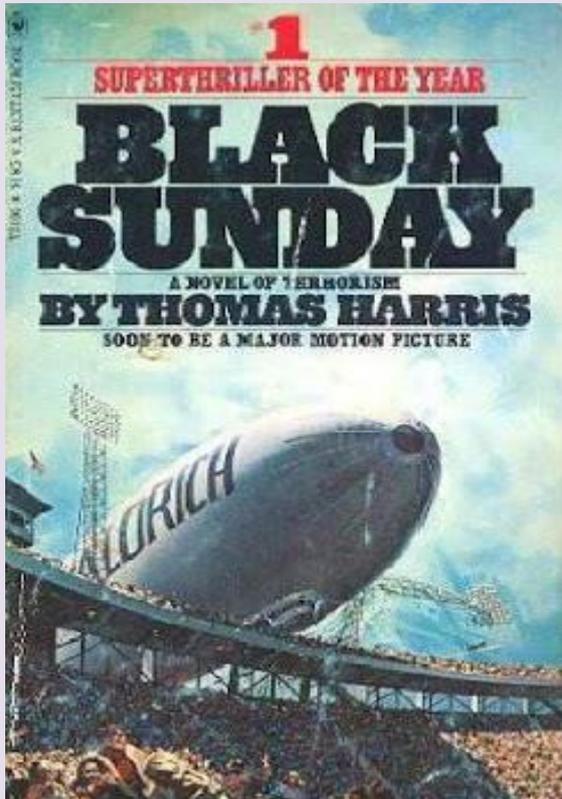
path to the target.

"You can get systems quite cheaply now that use inertial



navigation sensors, like a plane, pre-programmed with way points and using dead reckoning for the distance and timing—an example of capabilities that you wouldn't even have imagined five years ago.”

Indeed, I recalled the 1991 attempt by the Irish Republican Army to strike 10 Downing Street while the British War Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister John Major, was meeting. From a van on a nearby street the IRA launched several mortars and one landed in the garden of Downing Street, only yards from the meeting. No politicians were injured but four others, including police officers, were hurt.



Abbott agreed that today's drone technology would assure that, if undetected, such a strike on a head of state and his cabinet would now be far more accurate and deadly.

In effect, what began as a high-cost and exclusively military technology has been consumerized. And so, ironically, as we continue to use military drones for the targeted assassinations of terrorists, they are now in a position to turn the same technology against us—albeit in an improvised and less systematic form, but no less threatening for that.

To successfully counter drone attacks, Abbott summarizes the necessary steps as “foil or fail.”

He says that ISIS would need to train cell leaders to a high level of proficiency in handling and launching drones and that the best chance of foiling an attack would be when the intelligence agencies pick up the movement of such individuals during the course of acquiring drones and preparing and practicing for an attack.

“At this point that's our best hope. The second best hope is that if the attack goes ahead it fails, due to the limitations of the drone or the pilot or because our active or passive defenses bring down the flight.”

And if not...

There is the specter conjured by Thomas Harris's 1975 novel *Black Sunday* (and the movie), where an attack carried out by the Palestinian Black September group, assisted by a demented technician, flies a Goodyear blimp toward Tulane Stadium in New Orleans during the Super Bowl, loaded with a quarter of a million steel darts that will be fired to eviscerate the spectators.

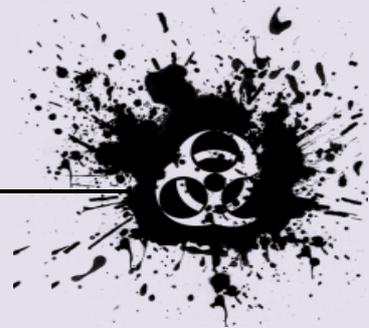
Clive Irving is senior consulting editor at Condé Nast Traveler, specializing in aviation; and the author of Wide-Body: The Triumph of the 747 (Morrow).

Who are the Bangladeshi 'Islamist Militants'?

By Ali Riaz

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/485/html>

Bangladesh has attracted international media attention for heightened militant activities in 2015, particularly after a series of killings of bloggers by a local militant group allegedly associated with Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and after murders of foreign nationals, responsibility of which was claimed by the Islamic State (IS). Islamist militant groups in Bangladesh which emerged in the 1990s have undergone several transformations. Originally grown out of the volunteers who joined the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, these groups have since then taken different shapes. Since the 1990s, five 'generations' of militant groups



appeared on the scene. In some measures, the militant groups have come full circle: they began as a result of a global agenda fighting an 'atheist' Communist system (war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan) to now being part of establishing a global 'khilafat' (by joining the IS in Syria and Iraq) via pursuing a circumscribed local agenda for a period in the early 2000s. Despite such transformations, very little is known about the Bangladeshi militants. This article attempts to address this lacuna by examining the socio-demographic profile of Bangladeshi militants arrested between July 2014 and June 2015. The findings reveal a significant diversity among the militants. Contrary to public perceptions in Bangladesh, significant numbers of militants are well-educated and come from a middle class background.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Ali Riaz is a University Professor at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, USA where teaches political science and serves as chair of the Department. In 2013, he served as Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. Riaz served as a consultant to various international organizations, and appeared before the US Congress in 2013 and 2015 as an expert witness. His primary area of interests are political Islam, madrassahs, South Asian politics, and Bangladeshi politics. His publications include 'Islam and Identity Politics among British-Bangladeshis: A Leap of Faith' (2013); 'Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Complex Web' (2008), and 'Faithful Education: Madrassahs in South Asia' (2008). He coedited 'The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Bangladesh' (2016).

How Dangerous Are Domestic Terror Plotters with Foreign Fighter Experience? The Case of Homegrown Jihadis in the US

By Christopher J. Wright

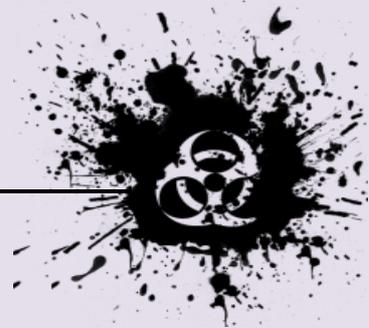
Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/487/html>

Number of plots in the US with homegrown jihadis	Number of plots involving returnees (as % of total)	Total number of deaths in homegrown plots	Number of homegrown plots executed (as % of total)	Number of executed plots with returnees (as % of total)	Number of deaths in plots with returnees (as % of total)	Number of deaths in plots with no returnees
27	9	22	5 (19%)	1 (4%)	1 (5%)	21 (95%)

Plots and Fatalities Involving Homegrown Terrorists and Returnees to the US

Do Americans who return home after gaining experience fighting abroad in Islamist insurgencies pose a greater risk than homegrown jihadi militants with no such experience? This study looks at the net effect of foreign fighters on domestic plots in the US by disaggregating data from the Jihadi Plots in the West dataset. It finds that the presence of a returnee decreases the likelihood that an executed plot will cause mass casualties. Also, plots carried out with American returnees from Islamist insurgencies abroad decrease the likelihood that a plot will come to fruition. This may be because the presence of a known foreign fighter increases the likelihood of detection and disruption by law enforcement officials. The US as a case study may not be generalizable to other Western countries because of its unique geographic position and its longer experience of prosecuting would-be foreign fighters.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.



Christopher Wright is Assistant Professor of Public Management and Criminal Justice at Austin Peay State University where he teaches in that program's Homeland Security concentration. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Southern California. His research focuses on the intersection of transnational and domestic terrorism in the US, and the ways in which radical Islamists use the Internet and emerging technologies.

Why is Contemporary Religious Terrorism Predominantly Linked to Islam? Four Possible Psychosocial Factors

By Joshua D. Wright

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/486/html>

This article explores four psychosocial religious factors that may help researchers conceptualize and explain why religious terrorism is predominantly Islamic. Empirical work supports a link between individual differences in fundamentalism and out-group hostility. Combined with significantly higher self-reported fundamentalism among Muslims compared to adherents of other major religious groups, Muslims may be more susceptible to religious appeals to violence. This may be especially true when these appeals are minimally counterintuitive. Religious involvement has been suggested to cause coalitional commitment, which may relate to more hostile behavior to outsiders; however, religious involvement does not appear significantly higher in Muslims than among other religious believers. Religious commitment may relate to a stronger desire to protect one's religious group through enhancing perceptions of threat. This has importance in the Islamic world due to the possibility of higher average religious commitment compared to other religious groups and the current political environment that often challenges the self-concept of Islamic believers. Finally, homogenization of Islamic beliefs is considered as an intergroup difference that may enhance social-psychological processes of intergroup conflict. Together, a broader emphasis on psychosocial religious factors may help explain the current rise of Islamic terrorism within the current political context of Islamic-West relations.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Joshua D. Wright is a doctoral candidate in social psychology and the collaborative program in migration and ethnic relations at the University of Western Ontario. His research addresses how the cognitive process of social identity salience affects aggression, retaliation, and emotion following social identity threat. This research is integrated within the context of religion and violence, including terrorism. The author was awarded the International Council of Psychologist's Bain-Sukemune Early Career International Psychology Award for his work in the area of religion and violence.

If Publicity is the Oxygen of Terrorism – Why Do Terrorists Kill Journalists?

By François Lopez

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/490/html>

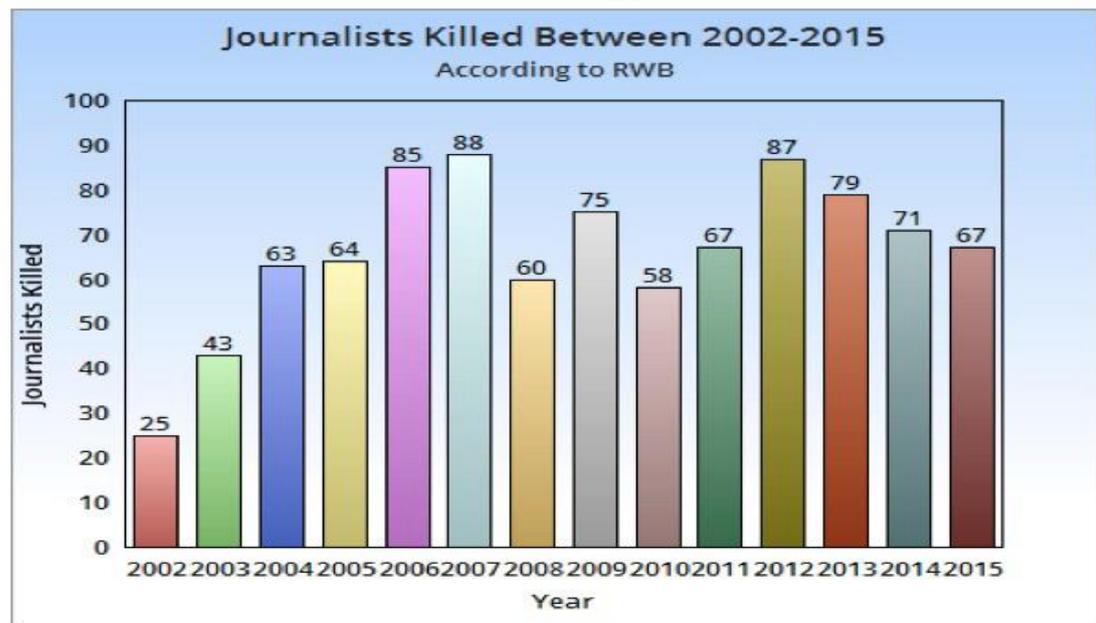
Speaking in front of representatives of the American Bar Association at the Albert Hall in the UK in July 1985, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher warned that the news media was playing into the hands of terrorists. Attracted by the violence and the atrocities of terrorists attacks, Thatcher claimed, the news media was providing “the oxygen of publicity” on which terrorist organisations depend.[1]

The problematic relationship between journalists and terrorist organisations has been labelled a ‘symbiosis’ by some academics.[2] On the one hand, terrorist organisations depend on the multiplier effects of the media to spread fear or draw attention to their cause. They follow a ‘propaganda by the deed’ strategy, which allows relatively small-

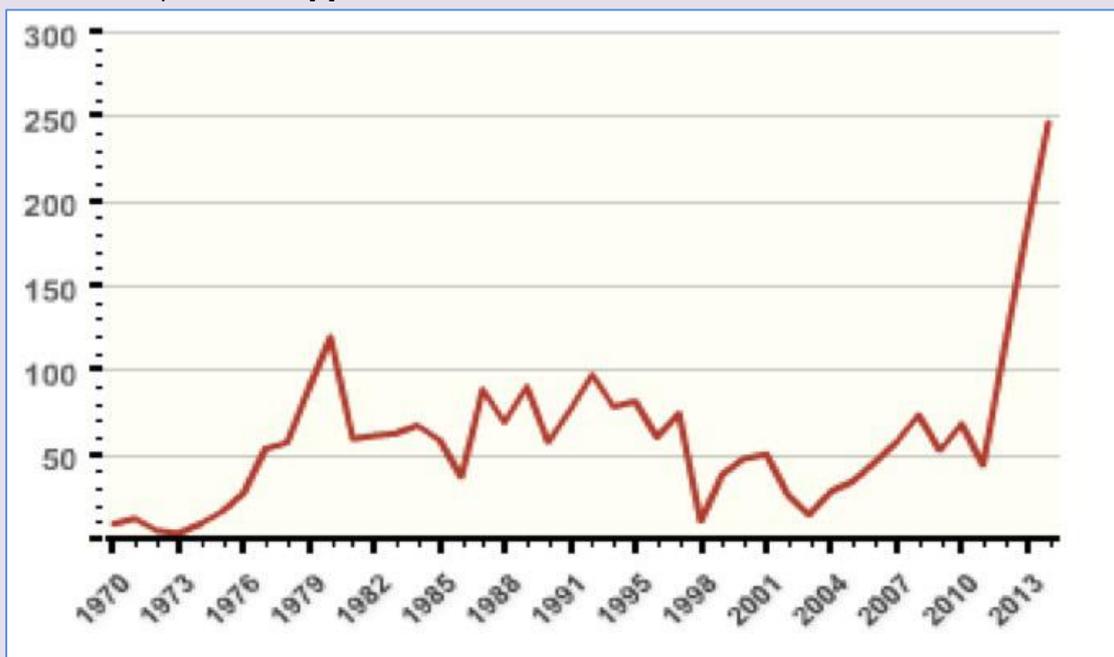


scale acts of violence to be witnessed by very large audiences.[3] As Walter Laqueur put it, “publicity is all” for the terrorist.[4] On the other hand, the news media also profit from the human drama, individual grief, personal tragedy, and collective panic which terrorism provides and which guarantees mass audiences. The news media thrives on the television-like ‘entertainment’ and real-life drama provided by terrorist attacks.[5] Terrorist organisations therefore count on the media for publicity, while the news media benefits from terrorist organisations’ ability to create fear which can be sold to anxious readers, listeners, and viewers.

Despite the apparent symbiosis between terrorism and journalism, terrorist groups have actively targeted their source of publicity. Attacks on journalists by terrorists have been on the increase in recent years.[6] The following graph, based on research by Reporters Without Borders, reveals that 932 journalists were killed between 2002 and the end of 2015.[7]



The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) of START at the University of Maryland - which has recorded attacks by terrorist groups from 1970 onwards - demonstrates that attacks on journalists by terrorists are not a new phenomenon.[8]



However, the graph also reveals that since 2011 there has been a dramatic increase in the number and frequency of attacks on members of the news media by terrorist organisations. This Research Note summarises the findings of a Master's Thesis which sought to answer the research question: Why would terrorist organisations, which depend on the “oxygen of publicity” provided by the news media, target journalists?

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Taking into account the distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ terrorist organisations [9], the thesis examined one case study of an old terrorist organisation—Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty) or ETA—and a new terrorist organisation—ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fil-Irāq wash-Shām, better known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or IS.

Two theories were chosen to guide the research, namely rational choice theory and communication theory. The former suggests that terrorist organisations are rational actors and use terrorism to achieve political ends, aiming to influence the behaviour of governments through their actions.[10] The latter suggests that terrorism is an act of communication aiming to send out a message to a specific audience.[11] By using terrorism as an act of communication, terrorist organisations implement the strategy of ‘propaganda by the deed’ to attract the news media, which will in turn disseminate their message.[12]

Together, the theories suggest the following:

- Terrorists are rational actors and their actions are strategic;
- Terrorists aim to modify the behaviour of opponents through violence;
- Terrorists want to send out a specific message to a specific audience through violence-generated publicity.

The thesis aimed to answer the research question through document analyses. In the case of ETA, open-source documents such as press releases, statements, and official documents of the organisation were selected. Regarding IS, open-source statements published on social media, the organisation's English-language magazine Dabiq, and reports by non-governmental organisations and news media outlets were chosen. Three hypotheses were devised to answer the research question:

Hypothesis One: Terrorist groups target journalists for collaborating with ‘the enemy’.

Hypothesis Two: Terrorist groups target journalists in response to ‘negative’ portrayal and reporting in the media.

Hypothesis Three: New terrorist organisations do not require the ‘oxygen of publicity’ provided by the news media since they can count on the Internet and social media to serve this purpose.

Findings of the Research

Hypothesis One

The findings revealed that both ETA and IS targeted journalists for collaborating with the enemy. The news media were regularly portrayed by ETA as collaborators of an oppressive Spanish state, and journalists accused of being “traitors” or “accomplices of the oppressors of the Basque Country”.[13] The news media was included in what a former ETA leader defined as the Spanish state's apparatus of domination—the government, the education system, the economy, and the mass media.[14] ETA portrayed the news media as “an effective instrument of war against Basque resistance” [15], and accused journalists of being “at the forefront of the Interior Ministry's campaigns (...) to prolong the conflict permanently” and “to impose their Spanish project through force”.[16]

IS is convinced that the Western news media and its local “allies” are engaged in a media and “propaganda war” [17], launched by Western journalists representing “media opposition to the Islamic State from the coalition of the cross”.[18] It claims that it is facing “a media and military campaign” from the Western world.[19] In October 2015, Reporters Without Borders published a report on the “major persecution campaign targeting all types of media workers” by IS in Mosul, revealing that IS was actively arresting and killing journalists for leaking information as well as for “treason and espionage”.[20] International Media Support reported that “IS treats all journalists as ‘enemies’ or potential traitors collaborating with the enemy”.[21]



Unfortunately, sufficient evidence in IS's English language documents to support this hypothesis was lacking. The author of this Research Note was unable to find additional evidence in English. Research regarding this hypothesis was also limited due to lacking language skills in Arabic. Nevertheless, it appears from the above that there is some evidence to support this hypothesis for IS as well.

Hypothesis Two

The findings based on the study of documents revealed that both ETA and IS target journalists in response to 'negative' portrayal and reporting in the media. Jose Maria Portell was the first journalist to be targeted and killed by ETA, right amidst Spain's transition process from Francoism to democracy. ETA released a statement following his death, stating that J.M. Portell had been "a specialist in intoxication" and charging him of "using his prestigious career, as well as his privileged methods, to discredit, calumniate, and ultimately attack ETA".[22] In 1995, an internal document originating from the Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista, the Socialist Patriotic Coordinator (KAS) [23], entitled 'Txinurriak' or Basque for 'ants', referred to journalists as 'Txakkuras' or 'dogs'.[24] In effect, Txinurriak was an open suggestive invitation for the assassinations of journalists, blaming the media for hiding "the reality of the suffering in the Basque country at the hands of the State", and for their "constant harassment and destruction of the independence movement".[25]

IS regularly accuses the media of lying about its military operations and of deceiving readers by reporting false information, and it has ordered its fighters to eliminate journalists who "damage the image of the group for the benefit of the Iraqi government".[26] Western media are accused of failing to report IS victories and of exaggerating the strengths of IS's enemies, such as the Peshmerga in Iraq "portrayed by the crusader media as a fierce ground force that can fend off IS (...) yet, they continue to take a beating at the hands of the mujahidin".[27] The terrorist organisation also targets the media for reporting "lies" and "fabrications".[28] Referring to IS's attack on the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk outside Damascus in April 2015, Dabiq stated, "following the mujahidin's liberation of Yarmouk, the media jumped on cue and began disseminating lies against the Islamic State [29] (...) Due to the major propaganda war and the deceitful media claims, there was great fear from the Muslims of the Yarmouk camp, as the image conveyed about the Islamic State was that they love killing and slaughter and that they kill people based on suspicions".[30] There was ample evidence that hypothesis two could be confirmed.

Hypothesis Three

The findings revealed that this hypothesis could partly be confirmed. As an old terrorist organisation, ETA depended on the oxygen of publicity provided by the news media. Robert Clark argues that "considerable evidence" suggests that ETA planned its attacks based on their symbolic and communicative value.[31] As Paul Wilkinson explained, "the terrorists' own organs of propaganda generally have very limited circulation", which does not extend beyond militants and some sympathisers.[32] Consequently, the news media was crucial for ETA, illustrated by the assassination of former Spanish Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco in December 1973, a propaganda coup which allowed ETA to reach "the front pages of mass media around the world".[33] In the aftermath of this attack, ETA released a statement to the media claiming responsibility and through which they "made the world aware of their fight for independence".[34] Furthermore, ETA organised a press conference "to which they had brought a group of blindfolded journalists".[35] The relationship between ETA and the news media was entirely symbiotic, and ETA planned its attacks based on the coverage these would attract locally, nationally, and internationally.

Unlike ETA, however, IS has practiced widespread repression against the news media and has purged territories of news media personnel. The research further suggests that IS can afford to kill journalists due to the Internet and social media. The Internet—cheap, accessible, decentralised, and mostly unregulated [36]—allows IS to spread its message and propaganda on an immediate basis and to report on its own actions.[37] The "unprecedented level of direct control" over the information it communicates "considerably extends their ability to shape how different target audiences perceive them".[38] Whereas old terrorist organisations "had to grasp the attention of the mass media" to successfully attract press coverage, IS can "sidestep these gatekeepers and interact straightforwardly" with its audience.[39]



IS also “demonstrates a masterful understanding of effective propaganda and social media use”.^[40] The vice-president and director of photography of the Associated Press, Santiago Lyon, argues that “everybody who has access to social media is in effect a publisher now. Everybody who was previously obliged to interact to some degree with the traditional media in order to reach the audiences now has their own path to do that”.^[41] Unlike the ‘one to many’ model provided by traditional news media, social media allows ‘peer-to-peer’ communication, which enables IS to “reach out to their target audiences and virtually knock on their doors”.^[42]

The terrorist organisation’s “highly productive media department” ^[43], described as “the most potent propaganda machine ever assembled by a terrorist organisation”, has been a crucial factor.^[44] IS’s media branch is structured according to three levels: central media units, provincial information offices, and the broader membership/supporter base of IS.^[45] Each level disseminates and promotes “the image of the organisation” ^[46] and shares large amounts of online material “that fit the narrative that the group wishes to convey”.^[47] Moreover, IS’s supporter base—the “media mujahideen” ^[48]—recycles and disseminates content created by IS’s central media units, in turn expanding IS’s audience exponentially.^[49] IS greatly takes advantage of and benefits from its network of online supporters, which “is larger than anything that has been seen before” from a non-state terrorist organisation.^[50]

IS has been “more strategic online, demonstrates greater social media sophistication, and operates in cyberspace on a larger scale and intensity than previous terrorist groups”.^[51] It is mainly through its supporter base that IS swarm-casts its propaganda and can share its message with the greatest audience.^[52] The “swarm” of IS accounts on Twitter can be simply reconfigured when accounts are deleted by administrators, allowing IS to maintain its resilient online presence.^[53] Gabriel Weimann further revealed that IS has made use of ‘narrowcasting’—the antonym of ‘broadcasting’, which consists of targeting the broadest possible audience with one distinctive message to all—on social media.^[54] Narrowcasting enables IS to “slice the target audiences into small subpopulations” based on criteria such as demographics, gender, age, or education, and suggests that IS can tailor specific messages to distinct audiences, making different appeals to different sub-populations.^[55]

Despite the means provided by the Internet and social media, the news media has not become completely redundant for IS. The terrorist organisation still needs the traditional news media in several ways.

Firstly, the terrorist organisation is exploiting local journalists in Syria and Iraq by forcing them to produce prescribed content.^[56] Journalists who have refused to join IS have been executed.^[57] Aside from exploiting local journalists, IS has made use of captured freelance British journalist John Cantlie, who has been held hostage since November 2012. Articles purportedly written by Cantlie were published in Dabiq, criticising Western governments ^[58], and describing IS’s “rapid consolidation and shrewd governance of its territories”.^[59] Cantlie has also been reporting for IS from cities which the organisation has conquered, describing military advances and life within the Islamic State.^[60] Until his disappearance, Cantlie was also used by IS in the ‘lend me your ears’ series, talking about IS’s expansion and seeking to show how Western media “twists and manipulates” the “truth” about life in the Islamic State.^[61]

Secondly, IS is able to attract media coverage worldwide by taking and holding foreign journalists hostage, which “increases the drama”.^[62] Realising that targeting journalists “nearly guarantees media coverage” ^[63], IS has ‘successfully’ managed to exploit the news media’s thirst for coverage that is “cinematic, emphasising dramatic scenes, stylised transitions and special effects”.^[64] Regarding the hostage situation involving Japanese journalist Kenji Goto in early 2015, IS set out demands and initiated a 72-hour countdown ^[65], effectively luring the news media into a trap.^[66] IS provided the news media with the images they are hungry for and the news media contributed to sharing IS’s message.

Thirdly, IS still orchestrates large-scale attacks to attract the attention of the traditional news media, such as the bomb onboard a Russian passenger plane, or the bomb attacks in a Shia neighbourhood in Beirut in late 2015. The aftermath of both attacks illustrated IS’s use of ‘propaganda by the deed’, reflected in IS statements claiming responsibility for both attacks and publicising its message that it is defending its ‘Caliphate’ and Sunni Muslims from the aggression of external powers.^[67] It should also be emphasised that IS may be strategically claiming



responsibility for attacks with which it has no direct connection, seeking additional coverage and publicity in the news media.

Lastly, IS relies on its supporters to create an online “buzz” on social media which the traditional news media will pick up and disseminate its messages further.[68] IS tailors the content of some of its videos—excluding gruesome beheadings—in order to guarantee that the news media will broadcast its videos after picking up the ‘buzz’.[69] In this way, the terrorist organisation can be sure that its videos will be shown without much censoring on television by the traditional news media, further maximising the reach of its message.[70] IS may be struggling to publicise its message online as “Western governments have successfully prodded a growing number of social media carriers to make much more serious efforts to weed out and block accounts sympathetic to IS.”[71] As a result, thousands of IS-related accounts have been deleted by Twitter while Youtube is now actively removing IS videos from its website.[72] The terrorist organisation has thus turned to the “dark web”, a hard-to-trace part of the Internet largely inaccessible to ordinary web browsers.”[73] This suggests that it will continue to use the traditional news media as a source of publicity.

Discussion of Findings

Killing Journalists - Rational and Strategic

Targeting journalists was a strategic choice for ETA for two reasons. Since ETA’s hoped-for changes were not implemented and the government refused to negotiate, the terrorist organisation turned to violence. By targeting journalists, ETA was also targeting the Spanish state. Journalists who supported the government and the newly-drafted Constitution became targets of the terrorist organisation. Targeted journalists were also the victims of a campaign of violence by ETA which had as its objective to force the state into submission by killing large numbers of people.

ETA did not initiate its most violent campaign against the news media before the late 1990s. The arrest of key members of ETA’s leadership in 1992 had been a devastating blow to the terrorist organisation [74], forcing it to turn to the strategy of ‘socialising the suffering’, which included targeting and killing familiar public figures in the Basque Country.[75] Influential journalists were included on ETA’s hit-list.

For ETA, targeting journalists was a rational move with strategic benefits. Journalists who openly supported the democratic transition and the Spanish Constitution were seen as opponents of Basque independence and had to be eliminated. Critical voices threatened ETA and its struggle as they undermined ETA’s image and legitimacy in the Basque Country. By targeting public figures, ETA sought to force the Spanish government into negotiations and, in turn, to influence the political process. In addition, targeting the news media was effectively “propaganda by the deed” as it sent a message to other journalists that they would be killed for opposing ETA’s struggle.

Killing journalists has also been strategic for IS since it portrays itself as a ‘state’ and as the protector of Sunni Muslims, IS strives to eliminate those who unmask the violence behind the terrorist organisation. Although IS itself shares videos of atrocities on the Internet and social media, notably to attract the attention of the news media, to intimidate its enemies, and to “provoke irrational reactions”, the organisation also broadcasts videos and images of life in the Islamic State showing, alternatively, well-stocked markets [76], playing children [77], social justice [78], or healthcare provision.[79] These are essential aspects of IS’s propaganda. These stories are rarely broadcast in the Western news media, unlike those about the terrorist organisation’s brutality. Journalists are considered legitimate targets for their negative portrayal of the terrorist organisation.

IS also wants to be seen as constantly on a war footing—expanding the borders of its ‘Caliphate’, as prescribed by its slogan “remaining and expanding”.[80] However, Charlie Winter noted that IS “depicts only the successes of its offensives, while almost entirely excluding its defensive operations”.[81] Information suggesting defeats is damaging to IS and sources of that kind of information are eliminated. Targeting news media personnel is thus a strategic choice for IS and killing journalists is also an act of “propaganda by the deed”. It sends out a message to all the news media that journalists will be killed for any coverage that is damaging to the image of IS.

Old vs. New Terrorism - A Disputable Distinction

The findings above reveal that the rationales of ETA and IS for targeting the news media are very similar. Indeed, both terrorist organisations have:



- Targeted the news media for collaborating with the enemy and for negative portrayal;
- Released statements which explained their justifications for their attacks on the news media, as well as publicised their struggle;
- Made use of the news media for similarly strategic reasons, namely to disseminate their message to a broad audience and as propaganda by the deed; and
- Aimed to attract the attention of the news media in order to spread their message.

Consequently, it can be said that there are many similarities in the relationship between the news media and old terrorist organisations, and the relationship between the news media and new terrorist organisations. In this regard, the assumption that there is a distinction between old and new terrorism must be questioned.

The third hypothesis postulated that new terrorist organisations do not need the news media to the same extent as old terrorist organisations do, due to the presences of the Internet and the social media. The traditional news media, however, is holding on to its “marriage of convenience” with terrorists.[82] Indeed, as Brigitte Nacos argues, there has been an “increased availability of the sort of oxygen Mrs. Thatcher warned of”. [83] This situation is somewhat paradoxical: new terrorism’s reliance on the news media has dwindled, but the news media continues to search for content posted by new terrorist organisations on social media and to broadcast it.

IS’s reliance on social media suggests that, for the first time in the history of terrorism, a terrorist organisation is capable of bypassing the gatekeepers of the traditional news media. IS is able to reach the audiences it wants with the message it wants and in the context it chooses. Yet, it has also become apparent that the traditional news media is not satisfied with this development, regularly picking up content posted by IS on social media in order to re-broadcast it. Not only does the traditional news media continue to provide terrorists with publicity but IS regularly and, most importantly, effortlessly manages “to hijack the news system” in the process.[84] One may therefore wonder whether the symbiotic relationship between the news media and terrorism has been changed by the rise of social media and the Internet, into one where the news media needs terrorism more than terrorism needs the news media.

Conclusion

The thesis’ findings summarised in this Research Note make clear that ETA and IS share similar rationales for targeting the news media. Both organisations considered that the news media was actively collaborating with their enemies, either in the form of spying or as accomplices of the oppression they faced. Both ETA and IS killed journalists for spreading “lies” and “calumnies” and both targeted the news media for misrepresenting their terrorist organisation, as well as for critical comments or ‘false’ information regarding their struggle, tactics, or violent campaigns.

These findings suggest that old and new terrorist organisations target journalists for similar reasons, questioning the validity of distinguishing between ‘old’ and ‘new’ terrorism. With regards to targeting the news media, such a distinction does not make sense as both ETA and IS used identical rhetoric to justify killing journalists. More research including additional terrorist organisations would need to be conducted to further substantiate these findings and to suggest whether or not the findings can be generalised.

The research summarized here also revealed that the traditional news media has not become completely redundant for IS. Not only does IS exploit local and foreign journalists to work for its media department, but it appears that ‘propaganda by the deed’ remains a key aspect of IS’s strategy. The terrorist organisation still needs the news media to publicise its message and IS still orchestrates attacks or hostage situations to attract the attention of the news media and by providing coverage that can be sold to anxious audiences. IS has not yet completely relinquished its symbiotic relationship with the news media.

The findings call for further research on the changing “symbiotic” relationship between the news media and terrorism. It was argued that the news media today may need terrorism more than terrorism needs the news media; consequently, research should address whether this relationship can indeed still be characterised as a symbiosis. As the findings are limited to two case studies, additional research would need to be conducted to determine whether the findings presented in this Research Note can be generalised.



► References are available at source's URL.

François Lopez received his Master's degree from the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs of Leiden University's The Hague Campus, concentrating on Crisis and Security Management. His previous research had focused on international security issues and lone wolf terrorism in France.

The Great War of our Time. The CIA's Fight Against Terrorism, from Al Qa'ida to ISIS

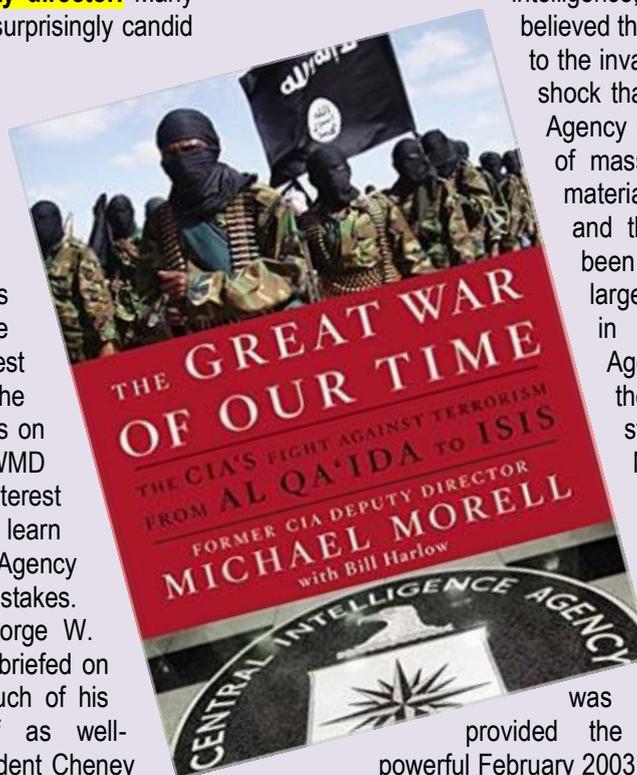
New York: Twelve, 2015; 362 pp.

Reviewed by Brian Glyn Williams

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/492/html>

The author of this memoir, Michael Morell, spent 33 years at the CIA, ultimately rising to become its deputy director. Many

of the details in his surprisingly candid (and even self-critical) account of his tenure at the CIA are new and of importance to those studying the war on terror. For example, the sections dealing with the Agency's greatest blunder, the "groupthink" mistakes on Iraq's non-existent WMD program will be of interest to those who want to learn more about how the Agency assessed its mistakes. While President George W. Bush (whom Morell briefed on terror threats for much of his career) comes off as well-meaning, Vice President Cheney and his chief of staff Scooter Libby are described in a negative light as attempting to shape CIA intelligence on WMDs to fit their political agenda. Morell describes efforts by Libby to intervene in decisions at the Agency as "the most blatant attempt to politicize intelligence that I saw in thirty-three years in the business" (p. 87). Morell is particularly critical of the fact that Cheney and his aides continued to publicly discuss intelligence linking Saddam Hussein to Bin Laden—a narrative that had previously been debunked by the Agency—in order to convince the American public of the need for war.



This does not mean that the CIA was successfully goaded into producing false intelligence; Morell genuinely believed that Iraq had WMDs prior to the invasion. He describes the shock that he and others in the Agency felt when the weapons of mass destruction failed to materialize after the invasion and they realized they had been involved in "one of the largest intelligence failures in the history of the Agency" (p. 99). In one of the most important statements in the book, Morell directly apologizes to former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, for providing him with the bad intelligence on Iraqi WMDs. It was this intelligence that

provided the basis for Powell's powerful February 2003 presentation at the UN which convinced many doubters, including Senators Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, to support the war (page 98).

Morell attributes much of this intelligence failure to an inability on the part of the CIA to penetrate Saddam Hussein's inner circle. He states that, for his part, Hussein thought American intelligence agencies had in fact penetrated his government/military and understood he had no WMDs. The whole debacle was, in Morell's words, "[a] perfect storm of imperfect intelligence" and he openly admits that the "bottom



line for the intelligence community and the Agency was that we got the vast majority of the judgments on Iraq and WMD wrong” (p. 105 & p. 91).

There were other misunderstandings between Hussein and the US. Of Saddam Hussein’s August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Morell has the dictator saying to Charles Duelfer (who led the failed WMD hunt after invasion of Iraq) “why didn’t you tell me you would deploy five hundred thousand troops, six carrier battle groups, fourteen hundred combat aircraft and a coalition of thirty-two countries. I’m not crazy. If you had simply told me I would not have gone to Kuwait” (p. 106).

Morell also weighs in on more recent events, such as the Arab Spring. While many analysts initially felt that the Twitter-driven revolutions in Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen were a rejection of Al-Qa’idaism, in actuality the Arab Spring was a “boon to Islamic extremists across both the Middle East and North Africa” (p. 180). The overthrow of long-ruling secular dictators in the region allowed Islamic militants access to new weapons and previously inaccessible routes to power.

This was certainly the case in Libya, a country that Morell states that President Obama personally decided to commence an aerial war against at a White House meeting he attended. America’s involvement in overthrowing Gaddafi indirectly led to the subsequent killing of the US ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens, in Benghazi by local militants. However, Morell vehemently rejected the “politicized” claims made by Republicans in Congress on the Agency’s subsequent analysis of this tragedy and describes the Benghazi controversy as “the poster child of the intrusion of politics into national security.” (p. 213).

Morell also discusses future threats and it is telling that he sees AQAP (Al Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula) more far more capable of carrying out a mass casualty terror attack on the United States than ISIS. He goes so far as to state “[t]o put it bluntly, I would not be surprised if AQAP tomorrow brought down a US airliner traveling from London to New York” (p. 309). Nonetheless, he worries about the demonstrative effect of ISIS’s slick media campaign which calls on home-grown “lone wolf” extremists to carry out smaller terror attacks that are harder to uncover and prevent.

Morell, not surprisingly, also supports the CIA’s drone campaign in the tribal regions of Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia as a preventative counter-terrorism tool. He boldly states on the drones’ disruptive impact on Taliban and Al Qa’ida terror plots in Pakistan: “There is no doubt in my mind that these strikes have prevented another attack on the scale of 9/11. They have decimated al Qa’ida’s core leadership in South Asia” (p. 137). As for those drone opponents who criticize these remotely piloted aircraft for being “impersonal killers” when compared to more traditional weapons, he defends them as being no more impersonal than a cruise missile or B-52 bomb, only far more accurate. To make this last point, he shares a vignette about an incident where he met with a journalist who was writing an investigative story on the purported large numbers of collateral damage civilian deaths from drones. He tells how he systematically proved to her that her sources were wildly exaggerated (she ultimately decided to “walk away” from the story) to make his point that civilian deaths attributed to drone strikes have been inflated by their critics (p. 139).

Morell also provides a rigorous defense of what the Agency called EITs (Enhanced Interrogation Techniques) and what critics call torture. He emphatically rejects the notion made by many who are suspicious of the CIA that the interrogation program was “some rogue CIA operation that might be depicted in a Hollywood movie” (p. 269). For starters, he explains that President Bush and members of Congress were regularly briefed on the program, which was approved by the Department of Justice and deemed not to be torture (i.e. a violation of domestic law or US treaty obligations). He even references members of Congress, such as Senator Jay Rockefeller, who criticized the Agency for being “risk averse” when it came to interrogations (p. 269).

Second, he states emphatically that “there is no doubt in my mind that enhanced interrogation techniques were effective” (p. 271). He cites several examples, including the enhanced interrogation of 9/11 plotter Khalid Sheikh Mohammad (KSM) to prove his point. Before he was interrogated/tortured, KSM was highly uncooperative and even belligerent, but after his enhanced



interrogation (waterboarding in this case), he talked freely and even helped thwart a plot he had been involved in to blow up the Brooklyn Bridge by informing on an important co-conspirator (p. 271).

While critics of the program, such as Senator John McCain who came out strongly against EITs, will be displeased by the way Morell glides over the moral implications of the Agency's use of enhanced interrogation/torture, the author also goes on to provide the example the case of Abu Ahmed (the courier who was tracked and led the CIA to Bin Laden in Abbottabad) to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program. He states "there is no doubt in my mind that information generated by EITs led us to push Abu Ahmed to the top of the list of leads we were pursuing on Bin Ladin....To put it bluntly; without the overall detention program, we would have not caught Bin Ladin the way we did" (p. 272).

As for CIA "black sites" established in allied countries in Eastern Europe and the Middle East to allow the Agency to interrogate terrorists without having to grant them the benefits of the US judicial system (such as reading them their Miranda Rights), Morell bemoans only the fact that the US betrayed and embarrassed the host countries by revealing the existence of the secret program itself. As with EITs, Morell firmly believes the black sites were essential to saving American

lives. There is little real reflection on the possible negative ramifications to America's reputation abroad as a beacon of law and democracy from such practices. At the end of the day, Morell sees himself primarily as a front-line fighter in the war against the lethal terrorist network that caught the CIA unawares on 9/11. Preventing another mass casualty catastrophe was his and the Agency's primary mission, not winning hearts and minds or promoting America as an example of a law-abiding democracy.

There are many other important nuggets in this insightful history of the CIA as the Agency made its transition from being an organization focused primarily on spying and counter-espionage to one waging counter terrorist operations. Morell states of this extraordinary process: "Never before had CIA refocused so abruptly and dramatically as we did after 9/11. The number of officers working on terrorism—including contractors—more than tripled, and the dollars flowing to the terrorism problem jumped even more" (p. 73).

But the overall impression one gets from this memoir is that the Agency is run by professionals like Morell who, for all their mistakes on WMDs or use of what most of the world considers torture, are genuinely concerned about keeping the country safe from its enemies and trying to avoid the pitfalls of politics as they go about their jobs.

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Britain would be SAFER from terror attacks if we left EU blast

Source: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/648069/Britain-SAFER-terror-attacks-left-EU-defence-experts>

Feb 28 – The message from intelligence chiefs, senior military officers and former defence secretaries came as a stark contrast to a Downing Street orchestrated letter by 13 former senior military officers, which claimed "within the EU, we are stronger" when it came to facing the threat of Islamic State.

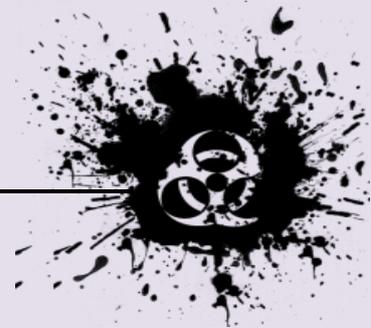
Last night intelligence chiefs said that vital intelligence gathering on terrorist activities was carried out on a bilateral agreement between member states and not with the EU as an institution.

Porous borders, they said, were a much greater risk.

Col Richard Kemp said: "As the generals pointed out, the rise of the Islamic State presents a grave security challenge to us at home.

"The most important weapon in the fight against terrorism is intelligence. Yet there is and can be no viable EU intelligence sharing mechanism."

His views were echoed by Richard Walton, former head of Counter



Terrorism Command at New Scotland Yard from 2011-15.

Mr Walton said that Britain would not suffer if it came out of the EU, as long as it maintained close relations with its neighbours.

He said: "Membership of the EU does not really convey any benefits that we couldn't access if we were outside it.



"The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, meanwhile, is exploiting weaknesses across Europe, porous borders, free movement of firearms, limited police engagement with minority communities, little joined up intelligence, which need addressing urgently to prevent the next attacks.

"But here in the UK our borders are less porous, we have remarkably few illegal firearms in circulation, and we invest heavily in building the confidence of communities to report suspicious behaviour. We also lead in collaboration between our intelligence agencies and the counter-terrorism police network. Would it really make any difference to the security of our borders if we left the EU?"

General Julian Thompson, the former Royal Marines officer who led 3 Command Brigade during the Falklands War, said: "What keeps us safer is not the EU, but rather our role in Nato. And this role will not change if we leave the EU. It is rubbish to suggest that the EU would protect us from IS terror attacks, and that we would somehow lose that protection if we left."

Downing Street was forced to apologise after it was revealed that Gen Sir Michael Rose's name had been wrongly included on the letter. Following the publication of the letter Field Marshal Lord Bramall said he had signed because it had been presented as a "fait accompli", and that it was "not the kind of letter I would have originated myself".

At least two other former Chiefs of Defence Staff, Field Marshal Lord Walker and Lord Richards of Herstmonceux, declined to sign the letter along with General Sir Peter Wall, a former head of the Army.

Speaking last night Air Chief Marshal Michael Graydon, former Chief of the Air Staff, said: "I am undecided as to whether we should leave the EU or stay, but I believe the letter was a mistake. I thought it had a civil service touch to it, and it transpires that's exactly what it was.

"Our intelligence relationships are with individual member countries, not

Europe, so it is irrelevant whether we are in or not. In fact there are countries in the EU which we are weary about passing information to, because we are not certain about what their priorities are."

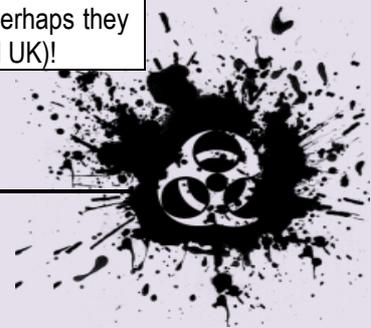
Some senior officers admitted that, while the basis of the letter was unfounded, the fear was that Britain's exit would lead to the unraveling of the EU and its institutions.

But former defence secretary Liam Fox rejected this, saying: "To use the fear that the EU will fall apart if we exit as a reason to stay in is the being of arrogance. The EU existed long before we joined it.

"We don't share intelligence because we're in the EU. The major country with which we share intel is the US, and the so-called 5 Eyes which include the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

"It is childish to suggest that, if Britain withdrew from the EU, the French and the Germans would put their own citizens at risk and stop sharing intelligence with Britain just to punish us for leaving."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: This BREXIT is becoming a bit boring! If they think that they will make it outside Europe, just do it! If they want to join USA as an overseas State, just do it! Oh! Perhaps they should also ask Scottish what they think of that and IF they want to follow (both BREXIT and UK)!



How American Soldiers Used Pig's Blood and Corpses to Fight Muslim Terrorism

By Daniel Greenfield

Source: <http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/261954/how-american-soldiers-used-pigs-blood-and-corpses-daniel-greenfield>

Feb 26 – A century before American soldiers fought Muslim terrorism in the Middle East, they fought it in the Philippines. Their attackers were Moro Muslims whose savage fanaticism appeared inexplicable. A formerly friendly Muslim might suddenly attack American soldiers, local Muslim rulers promised friendship while secretly aiding the terrorists and the yellow left-wing press at home seized on every report of an atrocity to denounce American soldiers as murderers whose honor was forever soiled. Much of what went on in that conflict, including the sacrifices of our soldiers, has been forgotten. The erasure has been so thorough that the media casually claims that the American forces did not use pig corpses and pig's blood to deter Muslim terrorists. Media fact checks have deemed it a "legend". It's not a legend. It's history.

The practice began in the Spanish period. A source as mainstream as the New Cambridge History of Islam informs us that, "To discourage Juramentados, the Spaniards buried their corpses with dead pigs."

Juramentados was the Spanish term for the Muslim Jihadists who carried out suicide attacks against Christians while shouting about Allah. American forces, who had little experience with Muslim terrorists, adopted the term and the Spanish tactics of burying Muslim terrorists alongside dead pigs.

It was a less sensitive age and even the *New York Times* blithely observed that, "The Moros, though they still admire these frenzied exits from the world, have practically ceased to utilize them, since when a pig and a man occupy a single grave the future of the one and the other are in their opinions about equal."

The *New York Times* conceded that the story "shocked a large number of sensitive people," but concluded that, "while regretting the necessity of adopting a plan so repugnant to humane ideas, we also note that the Moros can stop its application as soon as they choose, and therefore we feel no impulse either to condemn its invention or to advise its abandonment. The scheme involves the waste of a certain amount of pork, but pork in hot climates is an unwholesome diet, anyhow, and the less of it our soldiers and other 'infidels' in the Philippines have to eat the better for them."

Colonel Willis A. Wallace of the 15th Cavalry claimed credit for innovating the practice in March 1903 to dissuade the Muslim terrorist who believed that "every Christian he kills places him so much closer in contact with the Mohammedan heaven."

"Conviction and punishment of these men seemed to have no effect," Colonel Wallace related. After a "more than usually atrocious slaughter" in the marketplace, he had the bodies of the killers placed on display and encouraged "all the Moros in the vicinity who cared to do so to come and see the remains". "A great crowd gathered where the internment was to take place and it was there that a dead hog, in plain view of the multitude, was lifted and placed in the grave in the midst of the three bodies, the Moro grave-diggers themselves being required to do this much to their horror. News of the form of punishment adopted soon spread."

"There is every indication that the method had a wholesome effect," Colonel Wallace concluded.

Colonel Wallace was certainly not the only officer to bury pigs with Muslim terrorists in the Philippines, though he was apparently the only one to discuss it in such great detail.

Medal of Honor winner Colonel Frank West buried three pigs with three Muslim terrorists after the murder of an American officer. He appears to have done so with the approval of General Pershing. Some stories mention Colonel Alexander Rodgers of the 6th Cavalry becoming so celebrated for it that he was known to Moro Muslims as "The Pig". One contemporary account does describe him burying a pig with the corpse of a Muslim terrorist who had murdered an American soldier.

Rear Admiral Daniel P Mannix III had contended that, "What finally stopped the Juramentados was the custom of wrapping the dead man in a pig's skin and stuffing his mouth with pork".



Media fact checks have claimed that General John “Black Jack” Pershing would not have offended Muslims by authorizing such a course of action and that any claims of his involvement are also a legend.

General Pershing however wrote in his autobiography that, “These Juramentado attacks were materially reduced in number by a practice that the Mohamedans held in abhorrence. The bodies were publicly buried in the same grave with a dead pig. It was not pleasant to have to take such measures, but the prospect of going to hell instead of heaven sometimes deterred the would-be assassins.”

We can be certain then that the practice of burying Muslim terrorists with pigs was indeed real and fairly widespread. Was pig’s blood also used on Muslim terrorists as a deterrent to prevent attacks?

The *Scientific American* described just such an event. In a hard look at the area, it wrote of a place where, “Polygamy is universally practiced and slavery exists very extensively. Horse stealing is punishable by death, murder by a fine of fifty dollars. The religion is Mohamedan.”

A Muslim terrorist, the magazine wrote, “will suddenly declare himself ‘Juramentado’ that is inspired by Mohammed to be a destroyer of Christians. He forthwith shaves his head and eyebrows and goes forth to fulfill his mission.”

The *Scientific American* described how a Muslim terrorist who had disemboweled an American soldier was made an example of. “A grave was dug without the walls of the city. Into this the murderer was

unceremoniously dropped. A pig was then suspended by his hind legs above the grave and the throat of the animal cut. Soon the body lay immersed in gore... a guard stood sentry over the grave until dusk when the pig was buried side by side with the Juramentado.”

“This so enraged the Moros that they besieged the city. Matters became so grave that General Wood felt called upon to disperse the mob resulting in the death of a number of Moros.”

It is clear from these accounts

which encompass General Pershing’s autobiography, the *New York Times* and the *Scientific American* that the use of pig corpses and pig’s blood in the Philippines was not a legend, but fact. It was not carried out by a few rogue officers, but had the support of top generals. It was not a single isolated incident, but was a tactic that was made use of on multiple occasions.

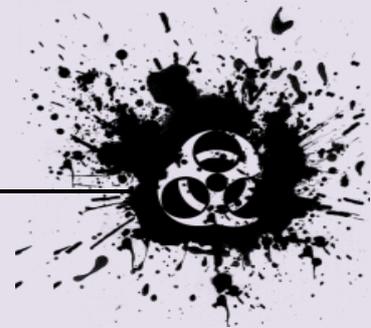
American forces in the Philippines faced many of the same problems that our forces do today. But they were often free to find more direct solutions to them. When Muslim rulers claimed that they had no control over the terrorists whom they had sent to kill Americans, our officers responded in kind.

“Shortly after General Bates’ arrival on the island, the Sultan sent word that there were some half dozen Juramentados in Jolo over whom he had no control. General Bates replied, ‘Six hundred of my men have turned Juramentado and I have no control over them.’”

Another version of this story by Rear Admiral Mannix III had Admiral Hemphill dispatching a gunboat to shell the Sultan’s palace and then informing him that the gunboat had “turned Juramentado”. As with pig corpses and blood, such blunt tactics worked. Unfortunately political correctness makes it difficult to utilize them today. And political correctness carries with it a high price in American lives.

It is important that we remember the real history of a less politically correct time when American lives mattered more than upsetting those whom the *New York Times* deemed “sensitive people” and what another publication dismissed as the “sensitive spirit” of the Muslim terrorist.

But as that publication suggested, “It is not necessary to go into spasms about the insult to the Mahometan conscience. Every Christian that walks the earth is a living insult to that ‘sensitive spirit’”.



"The murderer may feel that he is unduly treated by being defiled with the touch of the swine, but he can avoid it by refraining from becoming a practical Juramentado. Our sympathies, if anywhere, are with the innocent pig slaughtered for such a purpose and buried in such company."

These days we do not bury pigs with Muslim terrorists. Our political and military leaders shudder at the thought of Muslims accusing us of blasphemy. And so instead we bury thousands of American soldiers.

Daniel Greenfield, a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the Freedom Center, is a New York writer focusing on radical Islam.

Refined interview technique can reveal terror plots

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160226-refined-interview-technique-can-reveal-terror-plots>

Feb 26 – **An interview technique for eliciting intelligence without asking questions has in a series of experiments proven to work very well.** The idea dates back to the renowned Second World War interrogator Hanns Scharff, but has now, for the first time, been empirically validated. The technique can help intelligence agencies reveal plans of future terrorist acts.

An interview technique for eliciting intelligence without asking questions has in a series of experiments proven to work very well. The idea dates back to the renowned Second World War interrogator Hanns Scharff, but has now, for the first time, been empirically validated. The technique can help intelligence agencies reveal plans of future terrorist acts. This is the conclusion drawn in a new dissertation from the University of Gothenburg.

The idea behind the interview technique was developed by Hanns Scharff — an iconic role model for interrogators worldwide. As an employee of the German Luftwaffe, Scharff became known for an interview style that was based on treating the prisoners with respect and kindness instead of pressuring them with questions and threats of violence.

Instead of an interrogation, Scharff arranged his meeting as a conversation, emphasizing that the most important details were already known, and that all he wanted was help to fill in some minor gaps. This meant that prisoners never knew when they disclosed information that Scharff did not already know, and often ended up revealing much more information than they thought they did.

U Gothenburg reports that In Simon Oleszkiewicz's Ph.D.dissertation, Scharff's interview style has been conceptualized as a complete technique that has been

experimentally evaluated. The conceptualization includes tactics with respect to storytelling and presenting claims, while avoiding asking explicit questions. The conclusion is that the technique works very well during interviews with persons who are semi-willing to share information.

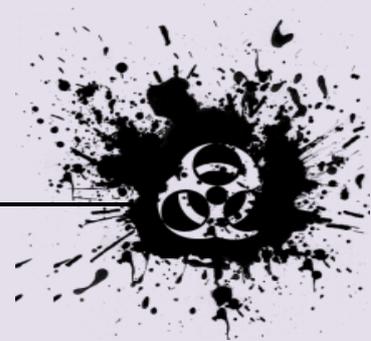
Those interviewed with the Scharff technique disclosed more information than those who faced explicit questions, Oleszkiewicz says. At the same time, they themselves thought that they were not disclosing much information.

When interviewers avoid direct questions and instead emphasize what they already know, it becomes difficult for the interviewee to cooperate without contributing with new information, and difficult to assess how much one has revealed.

Previously, Scharff's success has been ascribed to his personality. However, in Oleszkiewicz's thesis Scharff's different tactics has been conceptualized into a technique that can be taught to practitioners and may help improve current practices. The technique can be useful for intelligence agencies who attempt to reveal terror plans.

Background

U Gothenburg notes that the dissertation introduced a new experimental scenario where an interviewer held incomplete information about an upcoming fictional terrorist attack. The interviewer was contacted by an informant (a participant in the study) who had enough knowledge to fill some, but not all, of the interviewer's gaps. The informant had some motivation to reveal information to the interviewer, but was also motivated to withhold



details. Half of the informants were interviewed with the Scharff technique and the other half by a combination of open-ended and direct questions (the so called direct approach). In total, over 380 participants were interviewed.

Two of the three studies that constitute the dissertation have been financed by the U.S. High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG) contract.

— Read more in Simon Moberg Oleszkiewicz, *Eliciting human intelligence: A conceptualization and empirical testing of the Scharff technique* (doctoral dissertation, Göteborgs universitet, February 2016).

French police to receive assault rifles, bullet-proof shields

Source: <http://www.presse.fr/Detail/2016/02/29/453022/France-Paris-weapon-terrorism-guns>



A picture taken on February 29, 2016 in Paris shows a German HK G36 assault rifle during a presentation of the new equipment for the French anti-crime brigade (BAC) (AFP Photo)

Feb 29 – **French police are to be armed with assault rifles and Kalashnikov-resistant shields for the first time as a state of emergency continues in the country.**

Police in Paris will be given the equipment following the Paris attacks in mid-November that left 130 people dead, the interior minister said Monday.

"Some of the criminals you are confronted with no longer hesitate to use heavy weapons against you, and you must be equipped with the means to fire back, and adequate protection," Cazeneuve told officers at a Parisian police station.

The weapons, up until now reserved for elite intervention forces, will allow members of certain police units "to intervene as fast as possible to reinforce the first patrols, notably when we are confronted with mass killings," said the minister Bernard Cazeneuve.

The anti-criminal (BAC) police units, who most often operate in plain clothes, will be given 204 Heckler and Koch G36 assault rifles, some 1,800 bullet-proof vests and 241 shields that are resistant to Kalashnikov bullets. The new equipment, which also includes Taser guns and other items, is worth 17 million euros (\$18 million).

The state of emergency was introduced in the country after militants attacked a concert hall and several restaurants and cafes around Paris on November 13, killing 130 and leaving hundreds injured.





On January 27, France's highest administrative court, the Council of State, refused to lift the state of emergency, claiming the "imminent danger justifying the state of emergency has not disappeared, given the ongoing terrorist threat and the risk of attacks."



United Nations human rights experts, however, said the measures imposed by the state of emergency were "excessive and disproportionate" restrictions on basic human rights.

A French anti-crime brigade (BAC) officer makes a shooting simulation with a new German HK G36 assault rifle on February 29, 2016 in Paris (AFP Photo)

Critics have called for an end to the imposed state of emergency. They say the measures "strike at our freedom in the name of hypothetical security."

Woman held for Moscow child 'beheading'

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35685981>

Feb 29 – Police in the Russian capital Moscow have arrested a woman on suspicion of murdering a child after she was found apparently carrying a severed head.

The woman, believed to be the victim's nanny, is suspected of killing the child before setting fire to its parents' apartment.

CCTV appears to show the woman, dressed in a hijab, walking near a metro station with a head in her hands.

A police officer then intercepts her and wrestles her to the ground.

The suspect has been placed in psychiatric care to determine whether she is capable of understanding her actions, the Moscow Investigative Committee said in a statement (in Russian).

A criminal investigation was launched after the discovery of the remains of a child aged three to four, whose body bore traces of a violent death, in a charred flat on Narodnoye Opolcheniye Street in north-western Moscow, it added.



"According to preliminary information, the child's nanny, a citizen of one of the Central Asian states born in 1977, waited for the parents and elder child to leave the flat and then, for reasons not established, murdered the infant, set fire to the flat and left the scene," it added in the statement.

Police sources told Russian news agencies that the victim had been decapitated and the head removed from the scene by the nanny.



'I am your death'

The suspect has been named by Russian media as Gulchekhra Bobokulova, from the former Soviet republic of Uzbekistan.



Russia's tabloid news website Life News, which specialises in crime coverage, reports that the victim was a little girl.

According to Life News, a policeman asked to see her identity documents outside Oktyabrskoye Polye metro station, at which point she pulled the head of the child out of a bag and began screaming that she would blow herself up. No traces of explosives were found on the suspect after her arrest, the site adds.

Gulchekhra Bobokulova, 39, from Uzbekistan

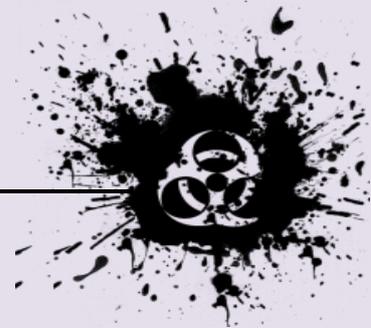
Amateur video posted online shows a black-clad woman, apparently the suspect,

outside a metro station shouting the Islamic phrase "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great).

"I am a terrorist," she cries. "I am your death."

Russian journalist Polina Nikolskaya witnessed the incident. She told Reuters: "I was on my way to the metro station from home. She was standing near the metro entrance and caught my attention because she was screaming Allahu Akbar.

"I saw that she had a bloodied head in her arms but I thought it was not real. People in the crowd said it was real."





Other witnesses says the woman walked up and down outside the metro station for some 20 minutes, shouting and brandishing the head. The phrase "Allahu Akbar" has been trending on Russian social media, in a country with a recent history of violent Islamist militancy.

Four years old Nastia

In 2010, a twin bombing by women suicide attackers on the Moscow metro killed at least 38 people while in 2011, a bomb at Domodedovo airport killed 37 people.

Islamist groups from restive parts of Russia's North Caucasus region such as Dagestan and Chechnya have been behind most of the attacks.

Uzbekistan, which like other Central Asian states has a Muslim majority, has long supplied migrant labour for the Russian capital.

Far-right poses greater threat to Britain than Islamist terror – report

Source: <https://www.rt.com/uk/333973-far-right-terror-threat/>

Feb 29 – Right-wing extremists pose a serious threat to UK security, says a new report on 'lone-actor terrorism' in Europe by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Chatham

branded right-wing extremists compared to 38 percent who were religiously inspired.

The authors of the report were themselves surprised by the results.

"Given the intense public focus on religiously inspired terrorism, the finding that right-wing extremists account for a similar proportion of perpetrators within the database is particularly significant," they said.

The report comes in light of a North West Infidels' demonstration in Liverpool on February 27.

The right-wing group marched to "exercise our democratic rights to freedom of expression, speech, movement and assembly."

However, the group sparked violence in the city center and daubed walls with Nazi-style propaganda.

The murder of British soldier Lee Rigby in Woolwich in 2013 motivated a wave of far-right attacks in the UK. Researchers behind the report warned UK security forces that the re-launched British wing of Pegida may give "moral oxygen" to far-right extremists.

Almost half of right-wing attacks in Britain over the last three years are said to have been motivated by the murder of Rigby, with



House, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the University of Leiden.

The [report](#) states that individual attacks in the mold of Anders Breivik, whose far-right ideologies inspired his massacre of 77 people in the Norwegian capital Oslo and on the island of Utøya in 2011, are harder to detect and account for more fatalities than religiously motivated attacks.

Of the 124 terror perpetrators in Europe over the last 15 years, 33 percent were



Islamic communities the target of far-right retaliation.

White supremacist Pavlo Lapshyn started his terror campaign in the summer of 2013, hoping to trigger a race war on the streets of Britain. He stabbed Mohammed Saleem, 82, as he walked back from his local mosque and continued to plant homemade explosives outside mosques in Tipton, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

The Metropolitan Police said anti-Muslim hate crimes increased 65 percent in London in 2014, a rise also thought to have been influenced by the Lee Rigby case.

Tell MAMA, an organization dealing with anti-Islamic hate crimes in the UK, said incidents soared in the month following the attack, from 22 cases per month to 109.

The authors of the report now warn the UK may face another wave of retaliation.

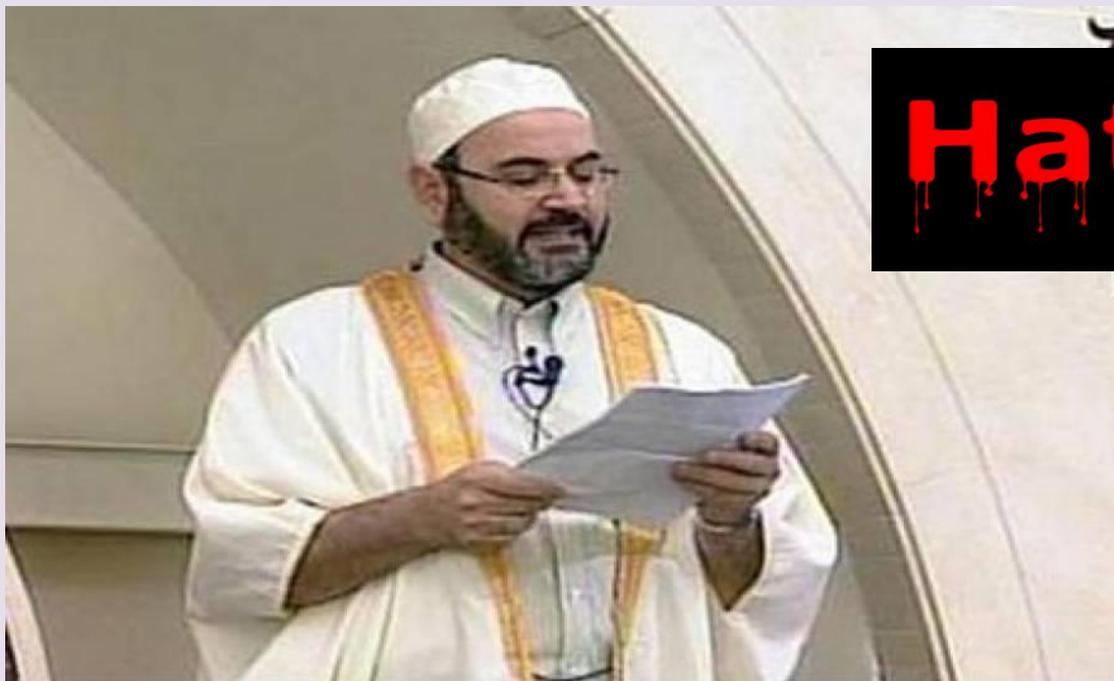
"In light of the refugee crisis currently unfolding across Europe, which has affected all European countries in one way or another, the threat of a resurgent and violent far-right attack has become intensified," they said.

The problem that security forces face is the random nature of lone attackers, who tend to avoid security 'trip wires.' With public attentions firmly fixed on Islamic terror groups, resources are comparatively sparse when dealing with far-right lone terror plots.

Melanie Smith, one of the authors of the report, said: ***"It became clear that actually the vast majority were going to [be] looking for religiously inspired terrorists, which kind of made sense to us because that's what we were expecting too."***

Greece: A look at the future...

Source: <http://www.pronews.gr/portal/20160301>



Nov 29, 2015 – Imam of a Sunni Pakistani mosque Tariq in Megara, Attica Prefecture, Greece (one of the 200 that exist in Athens), proceeded in a "preaching hatred against other Muslims and Christians." During the sermon he called the Muslims of other denominations (Shiites, Alawites, etc.) and of course Christians "infidels" and asked the (true) believers to "bear the sword against them and slay them."

► Watch the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tU2IScuEr18>



Bin Laden's will shows that he left £20m for global jihad - and worried about CIA tracker chips in his wife's teeth

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/12179488/Bin-Ladens-will-shows-that-he-left-20m-for-global-jihad-and-worried-about-CIA-tracking-chips-in-his-wifes-teeth.html>

Mar 01 – **Osama bin Laden left more than £20 million in his will so that his followers could carry on his grand jihadist schemes against the West, newly declassified documents show.**

In a series of missives that reveals anxieties about both his personal security and his long term legacy, the late al-Qaeda leader said he had **around \$29m in personal wealth** to be used "on jihad, for the sake of Allah."

His last will and testament is part of a file released by US officials from a cache of documents seized during the raid that killed bin Laden at his secret compound in Pakistan five years ago.

The file also shows the al-Qaeda leader's increasingly anxious state of mind as the world's intelligence agencies closed in on him.

In one missive, he frets over a visit by one of his many wives to a dentist in neighbouring Iran, fearing that a tracking chip could have been hidden in one of her fillings.

And in others, he warns comrades to be wary of tracking devices planted in ransom payments to al-Qaeda kidnapers and on unwitting journalists who came to interview al-Qaeda's high command.



Bin Laden's hiding place in Abbottabad is destroyed; Photo: AP

The will was released on Tuesday as part of a batch of more than 100 declassified documents taken during the May 2011 raid on bin Laden's hideout in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad.

At the time, his organisation was in its worst shape since 9-11, with its leadership being hammered by US drone strikes Afghanistan and Pakistan, and its Iraq operation all but quelled by the US troop surge in Baghdad.

Ideologically, al-Qaeda was also struggling to find a response to the Arab Spring protests that were already toppling regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

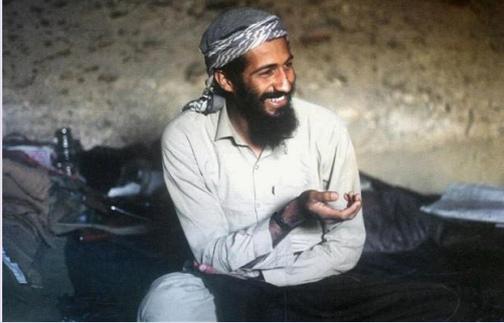
Yet the documents show that bin Laden, despite being an effective prisoner in his own home, still saw himself as a terrorist mastermind, urging new and grandiose attacks on a West that he thought was close to collapse.

"We need to extend and develop our operations in America and not keep it limited to blowing up airplanes," says a letter, apparently written by bin Laden, to Nasir al-Wuhayshi,



head of al Qaeda's Yemen branch, which masterminded the failed "Underpants Bombing" in December 2010.

In another letter, addressed to "The Islamic Community in General," bin Laden writes: "Here we are in the tenth year of the war, and America and its allies are still chasing a mirage, lost at sea without a beach."



"They thought that the war would be easy and that they would accomplish their objectives in a few days or a few weeks, and they did not prepare for it financially, and there is no popular support that would enable it to carry on a war for a decade or more."

One senior US intelligence official told the Reuters news agency that the documents showed that bin Laden "was still sort of thinking in very kind of grand

schemes, and still ... trying to reclaim that 9/11 'victory'. But he was "somewhat out of touch with the (actual) capabilities of his organisation."

In one communique, written under the pseudonym Abu Abdallah, he expresses alarm over his wife's visit to a dentist while in Iran, worrying that a tracking chip could have been implanted with her dental filling.

"The size of the chip is about the length of a



grain of wheat and the width of a fine piece of vermicelli," he wrote, showing an unexpected knowledge of a particularly thin type of spaghetti.

The letter ended with the instruction: "Please destroy this letter after reading it."

In a May 11, 2010 letter to his then second-in-command, Atiyah Abd al Rahman, he urges caution over the group arranging access for al Jazeera journalist Ahmad Zaidan, asserting that the United States could be tracking his movements through

devices implanted in his equipment, or by satellite.

"You must keep in mind the possibility, however, slight, that journalists can be under surveillance that neither we nor they can perceive, either on the ground or via satellite," he wrote.

In another document, bin Laden issues instructions to an al-Qaeda cell holding an Afghan hostage to beware tracking technology attached to the ransom cash.

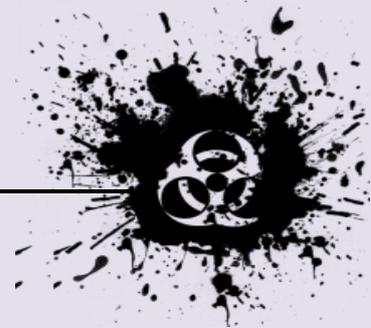
"It is important to get rid of the suitcase in which the funds are delivered, due to the possibility of it having a tracking chip in it," he advises.

He also says the kidnap negotiators should not leave their rented house in the Pakistani city of Peshawar "except on a cloudy overcast day" - an apparent reference to it being harder for drones to track them in poor visibility.

Another missive in bin Laden's possession acknowledges that al Qaeda executed four would-be volunteers on suspicion of spying, only to discover they were probably innocent.

"I did not mention this to justify what has happened," writes the letter's unidentified author, adding, "we are in an intelligence battle and humans are humans and no one is infallible."

Even as al Qaeda came under growing pressure, bin Laden and his aides planned a media campaign to mark the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, the documents show. They plotted diplomatic strategy and opined on climate change and the U.S. financial collapse.



In a undated letter "To the American people," the al Qaeda chief chides Obama for failing to end the war in Afghanistan; and accurately predicts that the U.S. president's plan for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would fail.

One hand-written note, believed to have been written in the late 1990s, laid out how he wanted to distribute about \$29 million to followers in Sudan, where he lived as a guest of the then-Islamic fundamentalist government until Washington pressured Khartoum to kick him and his followers out.

One percent of the \$29 million, bin Laden wrote, should go to Mahfouz Ould al-Walid, a senior al Qaeda militant who used the nom de guerre Abu Hafs al Mauritani. Another one percent of the sum should be given to a second associate, Engineer Abu Ibrahim al-Iraqi Sa'ad, for helping set up bin Laden's first company in Sudan, Wadi al-Aqiq Co., the document said.

Bin Laden also urged his close relatives to use the rest of the funds to support holy war, and asked that his father take care of his wife and children in the event he died first.

In a letter dated August 15, 2008, he asked that his father took care of his wife and children in the event that he died first. In one whistful paragraph, he also asks his father for forgiveness "if I have done what you did not like."

In February 2011, bin Laden also hailed the uprising in Libya against Colonel Gaddafi, who had long taken a firm line with jihadists in order to curry favour with the West.

In flamboyant and jubilant language, he says: "Praise God, who made al-Qa'ida a great vexation upon him, squatting on his chest, enraging and embittering him, and who made al-Qa'ida a torment and exemplary punishment upon him, this truly vile hallucinating individual who troubles us in front of the world!"

As it turned out, bin Laden would not live to see Gaddafi's demise. The Libyan leader was killed by rebel militiamen in October that year - some five months after bin Laden's body had been given a burial at sea in the Indian Ocean.

Euro 2016: Terror threat could see games behind closed doors

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/sport/football/35702455>

Mar 02 – Euro 2016 matches could be played behind closed doors in the event of a terror alert at this summer's finals.

European football's governing body Uefa is drawing up anti-terror contingency plans for the event in France.

The move follows November's Paris attacks, which included attempts to detonate explosives at the Stade de France during a France v Germany game.

"If there is a security issue, we would need to **play the match without fans**," tournament director Martin Kallen said.

Moving **matches to different venues** is another option being considered. "It's possible that matches would be postponed or played later," Kallen added. "But today there are no signs of any extreme threats or alarming issues."

The international friendly between France and Germany at the Stade de France was one of several targets in the 13 November attacks, although suicide bombers were thwarted in their attempts to get into the stadium. Explosions were heard by people inside the ground but the match continued. Many fans went on to the pitch at the end of the game as it started to become clear what was unfolding in the city - the attacks left 130 people dead and many more seriously injured.

The German national team remained in the stadium overnight.



UEFA
EURO2016
FRANCE



The Stade de France will host the opening game of the tournament between France and Romania on 10 June, as well as the final and other matches.

Wednesday marks 100 days to the start of the finals.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: This is a very difficult situation for “wounded” France! Cancel the games? That would be a profound victory for terrorism! Continue as usual? The best decision! BUT: (1) any kind of terrorist activity will hit France badly – both in measures of national pride and tourism; (2) international spectators might be a good cover for returning jihadist or for those coming from neighboring countries mixed with illegal immigrants and refugees invention; (3) suspicious individuals into the long surveillance lists require a vast number of security officers to watch them; (4) fortifying the games' security will cost a lot of money that will add more problems to French economy that is not as strong as it looks; and (5) the CBRNe threat will be seriously taken into account given the potential posed by Islamic State that is currently experiencing a massive counter attack in Syria (along with its inherent rival with al Qaeda and its affiliates). And all that for what? 22 men hitting a ball! (and the huge business that always accompany mega sports events). Perhaps it is time to rething a few things and change them – not because of terrorism potential, but for the core values they represent.



GCC declares Hizbollah a terrorist group

Source: <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/gcc-declares-hizbollah-a-terrorist-group>

Mar 02 – The GCC formally designated Hizbollah as a terrorist organisation on Wednesday as Gulf States continued to build up pressure on the powerful Lebanese group. The six-nation group accused the Iran-backed Shiite militia and political movement of attempting to recruit Gulf nationals for terrorist

national security,” said GCC Secretary General Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani.

He added that Gulf States “will take necessary measures” to enact their decision.

In response, Lebanon’s former Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri, a Sunni supported by Riyadh, said he would continue an open dialogue with

Hizbollah “to avoid sedition” in Lebanon. He said it was not up to him to agree or disagree with the terrorist listing but went on to criticise the group for its involvement in the Syrian war and its alleged involvement in Yemen as “criminal, unlawful and terrorist”.

Hizbollah is already considered a terrorist organisation by a number of countries, including the United States and Israel. Some actors, such as the

European Union, only consider the group’s military wing a terrorist group. While the GCC only formally designated Hizbollah as a terrorist organisation on Wednesday, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain had previously declared Hizbollah to be a terrorist group independently.



acts and said their involvement in regional conflicts threatens the security of Arab nations. “The GCC states consider Hizbollah militias’ practices in the Council’s states and their terrorist and subversive acts being carried out in Syria, Yemen and Iraq contradict moral and humanitarian values and principles and the international law and pose a threat to Arab



Thousands of Hezbollah militants are fighting in Syria in support of President Bashar Al Assad and the group has also acknowledged a presence in Iraq. Hezbollah has not said it has forces in Yemen, but Gulf States accuse the group of backing Houthi rebels in the country. Last week, Yemen's government released a video allegedly showing Hezbollah members from Lebanon advising Houthi forces.

Gulf States have been building up a case against Hezbollah and putting pressure on the Lebanese government to distance itself from the group.

Late last month, Saudi Arabia cancelled US\$4 billion (Dh14.7bn) in security aid to Lebanon saying that Hezbollah had "hijacked" the country. Last week, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait told their citizens to leave Lebanon immediately while the UAE put a travel ban on its citizens travelling to Lebanon. Saudi Arabia also blacklisted four companies and three individuals for ties to Hezbollah last week.

Saudi Arabia has demanded that the Lebanese government distance itself from Hezbollah and asked for apologies over the actions of the country's Hezbollah-allied foreign minister, who refused to endorse official condemnations of attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran in January.

But with Lebanon's government divided and wary of taking firm stances on regional conflicts, there has been no clear affirmation that its foreign policy stands in line with Saudi Arabia's.

The recent moves by Gulf States regarding Hezbollah and Lebanon are part of a larger Saudi-led foreign policy shift in the region. In January, Saudi Arabia cut relations with Iran after mobs attacked two Saudi diplomatic missions in the country following Saudi Arabia's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric who was convicted on terrorism charges. As pro-government forces in Syria made significant gains against rebels this year and

peace talks hit stumbling blocks, Gulf States have increasingly been in conversations about a possible anti-ISIL ground intervention in the country.

The GCC's declaration came hours after after Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah discussed Lebanon's recent tensions with the Gulf in a televised speech, saying Saudi Arabia was attempting to stir strife in the country.

Mr Nasrallah accused Riyadh of being behind past car bombings in Lebanon and described a speech he gave last year condemning Saudi Arabia's military involvement in Yemen as "the most honourable thing I have done".

With the cut in security aid and the travel bans and warnings seen as punishing Lebanon more than Hezbollah, Mr Nasrallah asked why Gulf States were punishing the Lebanese people instead of his group.

"If there is a criminal here, then I am the criminal from your perspective. Why punish the Lebanese people and the army and what moral or legitimate scale permits the Saudis to treat the Lebanese in this offensive way?" he said. "Your problem is with us, it is not with the country or with the Lebanese."

The formal designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist group by Gulf States was unsurprising. The group was already often referred to as a terrorist organisation by Gulf leaders. Last week, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, likened Hezbollah and other Iran-backed militias in the Middle East to ISIL and Al Qaeda's Syria branch Jabhat Al Nusra – two groups that are being targeted by the international community in Syria.

In 2013, GCC member states "unanimously agreed" that Hezbollah was a terrorist organisation, though stopped short of an official designation. At that time, Hezbollah's role in Syria where it was fighting against Gulf-backed rebels was becoming increasingly felt on the battlefield. While the GCC did not blacklist the group then, they did impose sanctions on them.

Syrian Army Captures Terrorist Helping Murder of Downed Russian Bomber's Pilot

Source: <http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941211000689>

Mar 01 – The Syrian army captured a terrorist of the notorious Turkish nationalist organization, the Grey Wolves, who had played a role in the killing of one of the pilots of Russia's Su-24 bomber which was downed by Turkey's Air Force on November 24, 2015.





"The captured terrorist was among the first group of militants who arrived at the Su-24 crash scene on November 24, killing one of the pilots and stealing his personal belongings," the Arabic service of Russia Today news channel reported.

Russia's Su-24 bomber with two pilots onboard was shot down by the Turkish Air Force on November 24, 2015.

The crew of the Su-24 bomber managed to eject but one of the pilots, Oleg Peshkov, was killed by gunfire from the ground. The second pilot, Konstantin Murakhtin, was rescued and taken to the Russian air base.

In late December, leader of the Turkish nationalist organization, the Grey Wolves Alparslan Celik claimed responsibility for killing the pilot of the downed Russian bomber.

In an interview with Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper in late December, Celik openly admitted that he had directly taken part in the murder of the Russian pilot. Moscow had repeatedly called on Ankara to find and detain Celik.

Ankara made no moves to detain Celik, Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrey Karlov said at the time. "Turkish authorities have taken no steps to detain him (Celik). He appears in TV programs and a number of newspapers have published his interview so Mr. Celik walks freely in Turkey," Karlov told the Rossiya 24 TV channel.

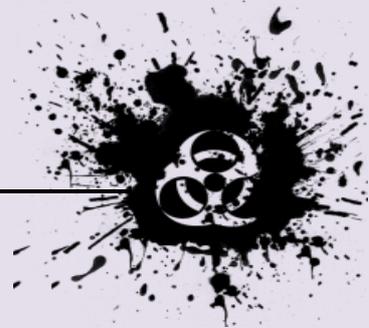
Norway rejects Anders Breivik 'inhumane' prison conditions claim

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/02/norway-rejects-anders-breivik-inhuman-prison-conditions-claim>



Mar 02 – Norway has dismissed complaints by the mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik that his conditions in prison – where he is serving 21 years for killing 77 people in 2011 – violate his human rights.

Breivik, who is being held apart from other inmates at a high-security facility, is suing the Norwegian state, accusing it of "inhumane" and "degrading" treatment in violation of the European convention on human rights.





Ahead of the hearing on 15 to 18 March, however, the office of the attorney general defended Breivik's conditions in jail.

"The measures which have been applied to the plaintiff ... are well within the limits of what is permitted" under the convention, it said in a document submitted to the Oslo district court and published on Wednesday.

The document said Breivik had access to three cells – one for living, one for studying, and a third for physical exercise – as well as a television, a computer without internet access and a games console, and that he was able to prepare his own food and do his own laundry.

While he is allowed no contact with other inmates, also for security reasons, he interacts with guards and professional staff, the attorney general's office said.

"There are limits to his contacts with the outside world which are of course strict – it pretty much has to be that way – but he is not totally excluded from all contact with other people," said Marius Emberland, the lawyer who will defend the state at trial.

Breivik's lawyer, Øystein Storrvik, argued meanwhile that his client has been subjected to "a longstanding isolation for almost five years" and he is suffering "clear isolation damage".

In the first two years of his sentence, "the only visit from a non-professional was that of the plaintiff's mother" just before she died of cancer, Storrvik said in another document submitted to the court.

"They had around five minutes together during which they hugged."

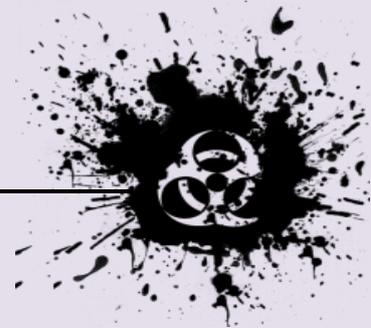
Breivik also accuses the state of violating another aspect of the convention, regarding the "right to respect for his private and family life ... and his correspondence".

Authorities have said those restrictions are necessary to prevent him from building up an "extremist network".

On 22 July 2011, Breivik killed eight people in a bomb attack outside a government building in Oslo and later murdered another 69 people, most of them teenagers, when he opened fire



at a Labour Youth camp on the island of Utøya. He was given a 21-year prison sentence in August 2012, which can be extended if he is still considered a danger to society. The hearing later this month will for security reasons be held in the gymnasium of the **Skien prison**, about 62 miles (100km) south-west of Oslo where the 37-year-old killer is incarcerated.



Lawmakers Assess US Vulnerability to Agroterrorist Attack

By Amanda Vicinanzo (HSToday Online Managing Editor)

Source: <http://www.hstoday.us/briefings/daily-news-analysis/single-article/lawmakers-assess-us-vulnerability-to-agroterrorist-attack/57a1581a4ca32d13925da8da17005f51.html>

Mar 02 – The House Committee on Homeland Security's Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee [held a hearing](#) on Friday to examine the risk the nation faces from a terrorist attack or natural disruption of the US agriculture sector, and whether the public and private

related industries, and trade embargoes imposed by other nations.”

For example, an August 2015 outbreak of **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza** (HPAI) in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest cost Iowa alone 1.5 million turkeys and thirty million layers and pullets, which cost the state an estimated \$658 million. In addition to lost production, suppliers and vendors saw a reduced income, which in turn resulted in fewer household purchases, hurting the sales of other businesses.

According to Dr. Brian R. Williams, an Agricultural Economist from Mississippi State University, a study commissioned by Iowa Farm Bureau, this multiplier effect resulted in a total economic impact of \$1.2 billion to the state of Iowa's economy, including 8,444 lost jobs.

The 2015 outbreak of HPAI exposed a number of vulnerabilities in the poultry industry, despite the biosecurity measures already in place, many of which were developed in consultation with state agencies. Williams said these security

measures were put in place by companies such as Sanderson Farms and Tyson, who own the birds but are contracting producers to grow and raise them, as a protection for their investment.

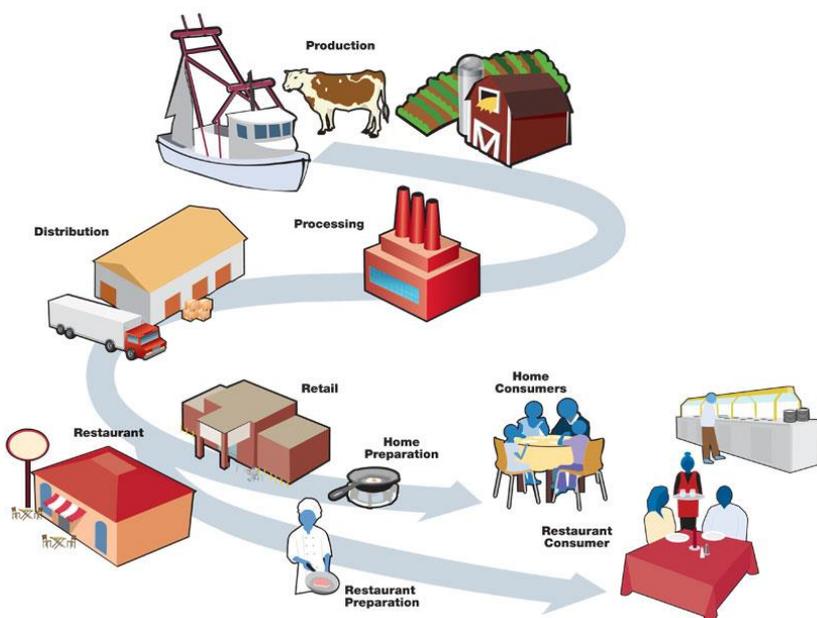
“Despite all of these measures that were already in place, the industry was ill-prepared for actually dealing with a disastrous event such as HPAI,” Williams stated. “In the time since the outbreak in 2015, industry leaders, state agencies, and federal agencies have all come together to develop an elaborate plan to quickly and efficiently address future outbreaks.”

Since the HPAI outbreak, industry leaders have come together with state and federal agencies to develop a future response plan. This plan, which Williams said can easily be applied in the event of an agroterrorism attack, includes

related industries, and trade embargoes imposed by other nations.”

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The Food Production Chain



sectors are prepared to respond to these threats.

US food and agriculture accounts for roughly one-fifth of the nation's economic activity, contributed \$835 billion to the US gross domestic product in 2014, and is responsible for one out of every 12 US jobs, according to Subcommittee Chairman Martha McSally (R-AZ). Consequently, an agroterrorist attack could have significant economic repercussions.

“An intentional attack or natural disruption of US agriculture or food, therefore, would present a serious threat to this nation and cause major economic damages on a number of levels,” McSally stated. “There will be costs related to containing disease and destruction of livestock, compensating farmers for loss of agricultural commodities and losses in other



a quarantine of the infected area, testing of all birds within a 3 mile radius, and requiring a written permit for anyone entering and/or exiting the area.

The US agricultural sector has proven remarkable resilience, when examining incidents such as the HPAI outbreak, among others. Williams believes the agricultural industry would recover if terrorists succeeded in launching an attack large enough to have a significant impact on the US economy.

“With the cooperation of individual industry groups, state governments, and the federal government in devising plans to respond to potential terror attacks or natural disasters, evidence suggests that damage from such disasters can be mitigated, Williams said.

In addition to the economic cost, an agroterrorist attack could undermine trust in the government, and spur significant public uncertainty over the safety of the food supply.

This goes to the heart of what we know groups like ISIS are trying to do—terrorize by any means possible,” McSally said.

The food supply is an attractive terrorist target—it’s also among the most vulnerable and least protected of all potential targets of attack. Quoting former Governor of Wisconsin Tommy Thompson, McSally stated, “For the life of me I cannot understand why terrorists have not targeted our food supply, since it is so easy to do.”

Despite the severe ramifications of an agroterrorist attack on the homeland, there is a growing consensus that there are significant vulnerabilities in the nation’s preparedness to deal with threats to US agriculture and the food supply, according to Bobby Acord, testifying on behalf of the National Pork Producers Council.

While the agricultural industry has always been vulnerable to pests and disease, today it faces the threat of terrorists with the capability to weaponize disease as a means of inflicting harm on the US economy. Acord said, “Whether by accident or deliberate introduction, the impact of a disease or pest on US agriculture and the food supply could be devastating.”

Acord outlined a number of current vulnerabilities and challenges impacting the US agricultural industry, including:

An insufficient quantity of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine:

FMD is a highly contagious, easily spread viral disease affecting all cloven hoofed animals. The disease is endemic in 113 countries around the world. In 2014, the World Organization for Animal Health reported 779 FMD outbreaks in member countries. Despite the economic repercussions of an FMD outbreak, there is currently not enough vaccine available.

According to Dr. James Roth, professor and researcher at Iowa State University, at least 10 million doses would be needed during the first two weeks of an outbreak. Currently, there is no surge capacity to produce additional doses of vaccine.

Gaps in US Biosecurity: Acord says biosecurity is imperative at the beginning of an outbreak. While both the US Department of Agriculture and the Department of Homeland Security focus a lot of attention on test exercises, which can be very beneficial, they do not reveal what actually happens during a real outbreak.

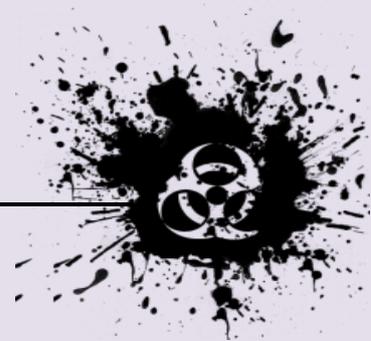
Consequently, Acord recommends that, in addition to test exercises, federal and state agencies need a more robust review of biosecurity measures in each sector of the agriculture industry.

“While this would require additional resources, the potential savings to the government are significant, providing a very favorable cost/benefit ratio,” Acord said.

More robust scrutiny of imports: While federal agencies place a strong emphasis on ensuring that ports of entry do not become a gateway for disease, the same emphasis needs to be applied during processing and production of production in the countries of origin.

Acord explained, “Not enough resources are being made available to APHIS [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services] and FDA [Food and Drug Administration] to do a thorough inspection of foreign manufacturers to determine if they are following Good Manufacturing Practices and if government regulation and oversight are effective. That shortfall increases the risk to US agriculture of disease introduction.”

Traceability: The US pork industry advocates a robust nationally standardized mandatory system for animal



traceability; however, opposition from some sectors of the livestock community has resulted in a compromise that allows only a state-based system for tracing livestock movements.

Resource constraints: Many gaps in US efforts to protect agriculture and the food supply stem from a lack of adequate resources. Acord said, “It is hard to conceive that enough efficiencies can be found to address an increasing threat and save money at the same time. Collectively, the agriculture industry, the Obama administration and Congress must face the reality that addressing these serious shortcomings in the US safety net will require a significant outlay of additional funds. We can’t have it both ways!”

Gaps in early detection: Early disease detection and rapid response to any outbreak provide the best opportunity to limit the spread

of Foreign Animal Diseases, explained Acord. However, current funding levels to support these efforts are inadequate.

Data sharing for regulated diseases: The HPAI outbreak demonstrated the need for data sharing to support response efforts. Acord said, “The industry is very concerned that this lack of connectivity will have direct and negative effects that will hinder the response to a foreign animal disease of swine.”

Based on witness testimony during the hearing, McSally concluded that the capability and the intent for an agroterrorist attack are there, making it critical that the US improve its preparedness efforts, saying, “We must ensure we are able to assess our level of preparedness for any type of major disruption to US food or agriculture.”

Mosul dam could collapse at any time, killing 1m people: Engineers

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160302-mosul-dam-could-collapse-at-any-time-killing-1m-people-engineers>



Mar 02 – Iraqi civil engineers familiar with the Mosul dam are warning of the dam’s imminent collapse, saying that the consequent death toll would likely be worse than earlier estimated. The engineers noted that rapidly building pressure on the dam’s compromised



structure. The pressure is the result of melting winter snows and more flowing into the reservoir, filling it to capacity. At the same time, sluice gates used to relieve that pressure were jammed shut.

The *New York Times* reports that the Iraqi engineers also said the failure to replace machinery or assemble a full and trained workforce more than a year after ISIS temporarily gained control of the dam, means that the chasms in the porous rock under the dam were getting bigger and more dangerous every day.

A contract with an Italian engineering company to repair the dam has not yet been signed.

The engineers warned that the loss of life from a sudden collapse of the Mosul dam could be higher than earlier official estimates of 500,000, as many people could perish in the resulting mass panic. If the dam collapses, a 20-metre-high flood wave would hit the city of Mosul, then roll on down the Tigris valley through Tikrit and Samarra all the way to Baghdad.

The Mosul dam has suffered from problematic geology from 1984, when it was built. The main problem is that the bedrock on which it is built is water-soluble.

Water began seeping through in 1986, and it became apparent that the geological problems were worse than initially thought. During the past three decades, the dam required constant maintenance to fill the holes created by water running through the soluble bedrock.

During the past year and a half, since ISIS had taken control of the dam and its subsequent capture by Iraqi forces, no maintenance work on the dam and its foundations has been performed.

ISIS “spreading like cancer” among refugees: NATO commander

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160302-isis-spreading-like-cancer-among-refugees-nato-commander>

Mar 02 – General Philip Breedlove, NATO’s top commander, on Tuesday told a congressional panel that **refugees from the Middle East and north Africa are “masking the movement” of terrorists and criminals.**

In testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Breedlove said that ISIS is “spreading like a cancer” among refugees. The group’s members are “taking advantage of paths of least resistance, threatening European nations and our own,” he said.

Fox News reports that when pressed by reporters to back up his assertion with statistics, Breedlove said: “I can’t give you a number on the estimate of the flow.”

Breedlove distinguished between “criminality, terrorist and foreign fighters,” and said that he has seen news reports saying as many as 1,500 fighters have returned to Europe.

“I’m not going to talk to you about intelligence,” he said at a news conference after his

testimony, adding that “many [countries] are saying they see planning happening” for a terrorist attack.

[Congressional researchers](#) and [think tank analysts](#) estimate that up to 1,500 of the foreign fighters who had traveled to Syria have returned to their Western home nations.

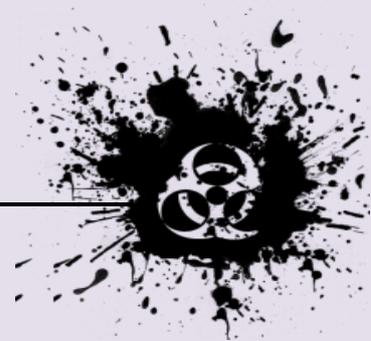
Counterterrorism experts agree that wars in the Middle East and north Africa have increased the flow of weapons, and possibly terrorists disguised as refugees, into Europe — but stress that the overwhelming majority of terror suspects and perpetrators have been home-grown radicals and sympathizers.

There is “a huge reservoir of sympathizers who all have western or European passports and who were born or raised there,” Reinoud Leenders, a professor at the Department of War Studies at King’s College London, told the *Los Angeles Times*.

Mathematical models could predict the next terrorist attack

Source: <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2016-03/02/the-maths-of-terrorism>

Mar 02 – Even with intelligence, terrorist attacks seemingly occur at random. But new research from UCL suggests that they’re not so random after all -- and **a mathematical model could help security forces predict when and how an attack is going to happen.**



The [paper](#), published in the *Journal of Applied Mathematics*, looked at incidents during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Over 5,000 explosions were analysed between 1970 and 1998, with researchers tracking where and when they occurred, how security forces responded and how effective these responses were.

[A Loyalist bar, blown up by the IRA during The Troubles, Northern Ireland](#)

They found that after the initial likelihood of an attack occurring, there was another small boost in probability. This boost in probability then decreased as time passed.

With this data, the team was then able to map the phases of the Troubles onto a timeline:

- **Phase 1**, when the IRA was arranged "in a military style, having brigades, battalions and companies"
- **Phase 2**, when the IRA took on a "cell based structure"
- **Phase 3**, when the IRA moved into the political arena via Sinn Fein
- **Phase 4**, when a ceasefire began to be negotiated
- **Phase 5**, when "peace talks were announced and the Good Friday

Agreement signalled the end of the Troubles"

And in each phase the probability of an attack was also calculated and mapped. After one attack the likelihood that another would occur increased until it reached a limit, at which point

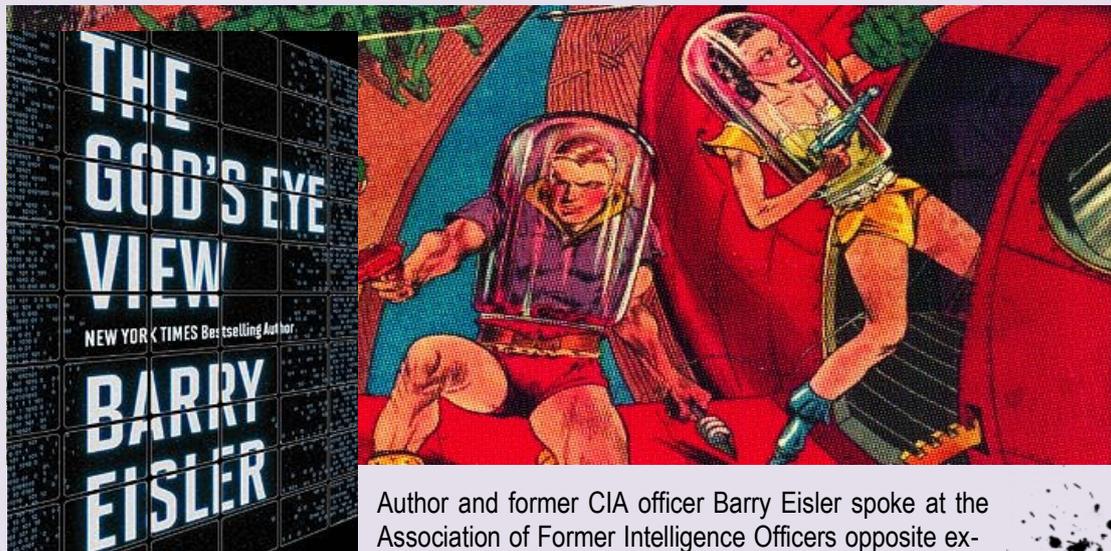


it began to decrease again.

The findings, the researchers said, can be explained by a method called the Hawkes process. The Hawkes process suggests that incidents such as terrorist attacks, gang-related crimes and burglaries don't take place in isolation. And the [probability](#) of a similar event happening immediately afterwards decreases as time passes.

How would you explain the difference between war and terrorism to a space alien?

Source: <https://boingboing.net/2016/03/02/how-would-you-explain-the-diff.html>



Author and former CIA officer Barry Eisler spoke at the Association of Former Intelligence Officers opposite ex-CIA and NSA director Michael Hayden on Monday. In front of about a hundred former CIA,



FBI, and NSA operatives, Eisler talked about bulk surveillance, whistleblowing, and why intelligence professionals need to take especially great care not to let propaganda pervert their intelligence.

Eisler's new novel, "God's Eye View," inspired by the Snowden revelations, [is available now on Amazon.](#)

"The whole thing was fun and a little surreal, and if I got a few people to look at these issues in a different light, I'm glad," says Barry.

"Unfortunately, the event format was such that no real debate with Hayden was possible. Frustrating, because, for example, at one point during Q&A Hayden opined that Iran is the world's greatest purveyor of terrorism."

"If I could have responded, I would have wondered aloud, as I like to do from time to time, how I'd explain an assertion like that to a Martian...."

Martian: We on Mars are confused by your General Hayden's comment. He is speaking of Iran, is that correct? A country with the GDP of Finland?

Me: Uh, yes.

Martian: But didn't your Martin Luther King say almost sixty years ago that the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is America?

Me: He did say that, yes. In 1967, during the Vietnam War.

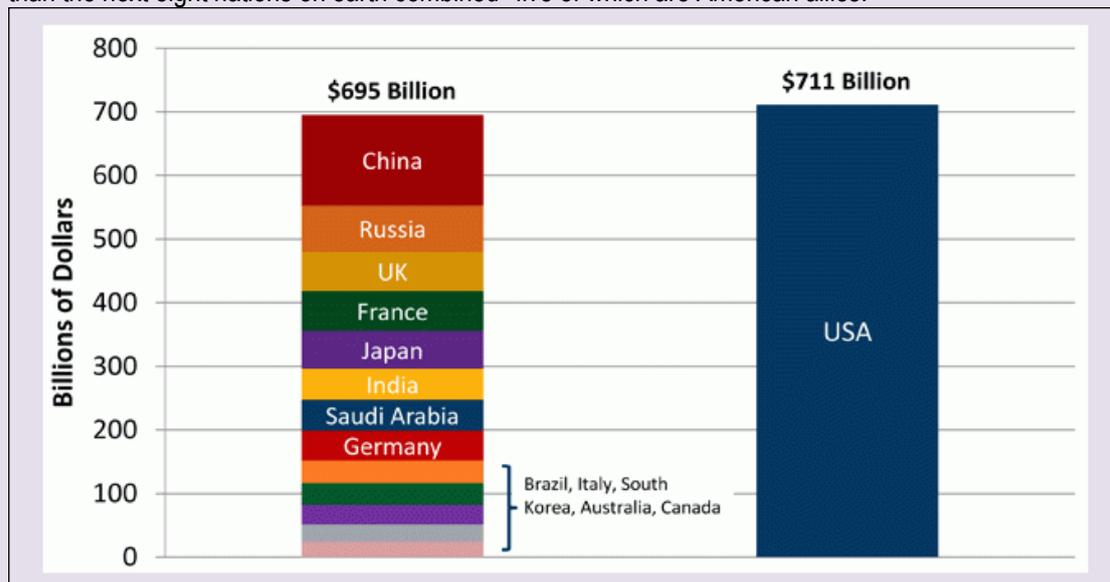
Martian: And hasn't America had innumerable additional wars since then?

Me: It has, yes.

Martian: But then America's wars must not be terrorism.

Me: Right.

Martian: That is fortunate, for our understanding on Mars is that America spends more on its military than the next eight nations on earth combined--five of which are American allies.



Me: Yes, we do have a large military.

Martian: Do you not maintain over 800 military bases—more than any other nation in your planet's history?

Me: Yes, that's true.

Martian: Watching from Mars, we have always associated overseas military bases with what you on earth call "empire."

Me: Americans don't want an empire.

Martian: Why then do you maintain so many overseas military bases, as empires do?

Me: We just want to keep the peace.



Martian: We have a joke on Mars...we like to say, “Iran must want war, otherwise why would they have moved their country so close to America’s military bases?” You see, we find this funny because of course a country cannot be moved, and in fact it is the military bases that have been created all around Iran, not Iran that has moved its country close to the military bases.



Me: Right, I get it.

Martian: And do you not also accuse Iran of “meddling” in Iraq, a country you bombed, invaded, and occupied with a quarter million troops, a country that is on the other side of the Earth from you but adjacent to Iran, a country that your last four presidents in a row have bombed?

Me: Yes, you do see that word used in magazines like The Economist. They mean Iran is funding Iraqi politicians and infiltrating Iraq with spies.

Martian: So this “meddling...” it is worse than invading?

Me: Look, we’re just trying to promote stability.

Martian: On Earth, war makes things more stable?

Me: It’s...complicated. But really, America is a peace-loving culture.

Martian: But you have more wars than anyone. On Mars, this does not seem peaceful.

Me: Okay, but it’s not terrorism. Terrorism is when, you know, you terrorize people.

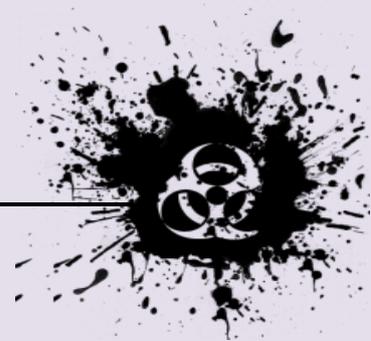
Martian: But did you not, alone among the peoples of your planet, use atomic weapons against your fellow humans, when you bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Me: Only to end the war.

Martian: Did you not kill at least 600,000 civilians in your war in Vietnam?

Me: We did.

Martian: Did you not kill at least 100,000 civilians in your latest war in Iraq, and turn four million people in that war into refugees?



Me: We did.



Martian: And did not your former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declare that a half million Iraqi children starved to death because of American sanctions was “worth it”?

Me: She did say that, though she took it back afterward.

Martian: And is it not the case that—

Me: Okay, look, I get it. America does more war and violence than anyone else. But it’s not about terrorizing people, okay?

Martian: But are not the people you kill terrorized? And what about the parents of dead children, the children of dead parents, and the burned, blinded, brain-damaged, crippled, maimed, and mutilated by your weapons? Our understanding of humans is that you are terrorized by such things.

Me: I guess so. But it’s not like we’re *trying* to terrorize.

Martian: But did you not call your own tactics in your second war in Iraq “Shock and Awe”?

Me: Well, yeah. We were trying to, you know, shock and awe them.

Martian: Perhaps the problem is our imperfect renderings of Earth languages. In Martian, we cannot distinguish between terrorizing with bombs, and shocking and awing with them.

Me: Look, I see where you’re trying to go with this, okay? But we’re not like ISIS and other terrorist groups. I mean, you know what ISIS does? ISIS burns people alive. *That’s* terrorism.

Martian: But in your war in Vietnam, did you not use an incendiary weapon called Napalm, a kind of jelly gasoline that sticks to human bodies and causes horrific burning?

Me: I guess, but that was a long time ago.

Martian: But do you not currently deploy what you refer to as thermobaric weapons?

Me: I don’t know that word.

Martian: It is derived from two Greek words meaning “heat” and “pressure.” In English, it refers to a type of explosive that produces an exceptionally hot and powerful blast. The lucky victims are obliterated. The less lucky suffer terrible agonies before they die.

Me: Well, I’m sure that isn’t our intent.

Martian: But you have named one such weapon the “Hellfire” missile. Does this not mean you are well aware that the missile burns your fellow humans with fire? Was it not in fact designed to do so?

Me: I guess it just comes down to that terrorists want to kill innocent people. But America doesn’t. When we kill innocent people, we call it “collateral damage.” Do you know that phrase?

Martian: We do, but our translators have struggled with it. For a long time, we failed to understand why a people who are ordinarily so plain-spoken would devise such a vague phrase. Then we realized, you Americans find such a phrase preferable to something like, “the burning to death of innocent human beings, the blowing into tiny scraps of meat and bone ordinary people just trying to live their lives, the ripping asunder of the limbs of children, the blinding and mutilation of baby humans—”



Me: Right, I get it. But, yes, it's not like we *want* those things to happen. When we do them, they're tragic accidents. That's the difference.



Unknown Science Fiction digest cover by Edward Emshwiller, no date.

Martian: This is interesting. You mean terrorists *want* to kill innocents, while you Americans are mere *willing* to kill innocents.

Me: Something like that, I think. Yes.

Martian: Perhaps we Martians are simply dense. It seems that terrorists have goals for which they will kill. Is that not also true for your country?

Me: Yes, but again, the terrorists *want* to kill innocent people.

Martian: It is difficult for us Martians to understand the difference. Presumably these people you call terrorists simply want to achieve certain geopolitical goals that they believe require killing innocent people. Presumably if they believed they had another way to achieve these goals, they would not feel the need to kill innocent people.



Me: I don't understand.

Martian: I mean, perhaps terrorists are killing people pragmatically. In other words, for terrorists, killing people is a means, not an end.

Me: So what?

Martian: I am trying how to understand how it is different for you, given that you are the "good guys," to use your Earth phrase. Do you not also, in all your wars, kill people as a means?

Me: But we don't *want* to.

Martian: In such circumstances, it is sometimes difficult for we Martians to distinguish between the concept of "want" and the concept of "willing." For in the service of the geopolitical goals you seek to achieve through the means of violence, is it not an empirical and historical fact that inevitably you will kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people, inflict the most horrific injuries on hundreds of thousands more, and turn millions of people into stateless refugees, with all the terrorizing that such events necessarily entail?

Me: I guess.

Martian: But this is not terrorism.

Me: No. Not when we do it.

Martian: I confess I am more perplexed now than when we started. I do not understand how the nation that commits the most violence and causes the most terror can claim other nations are the most terroristic. We Martians will have to study this question more closely.

ISIL in Libya: A Bayesian Approach to Mapping At-Risk Regions

By Douglas I. Zietz, Joshua M. House, and Rhys A. Young

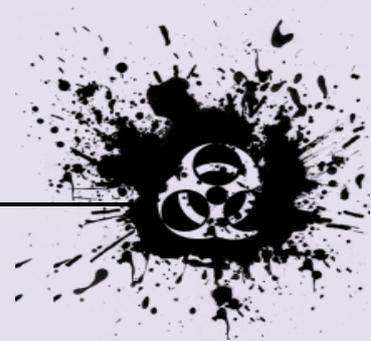
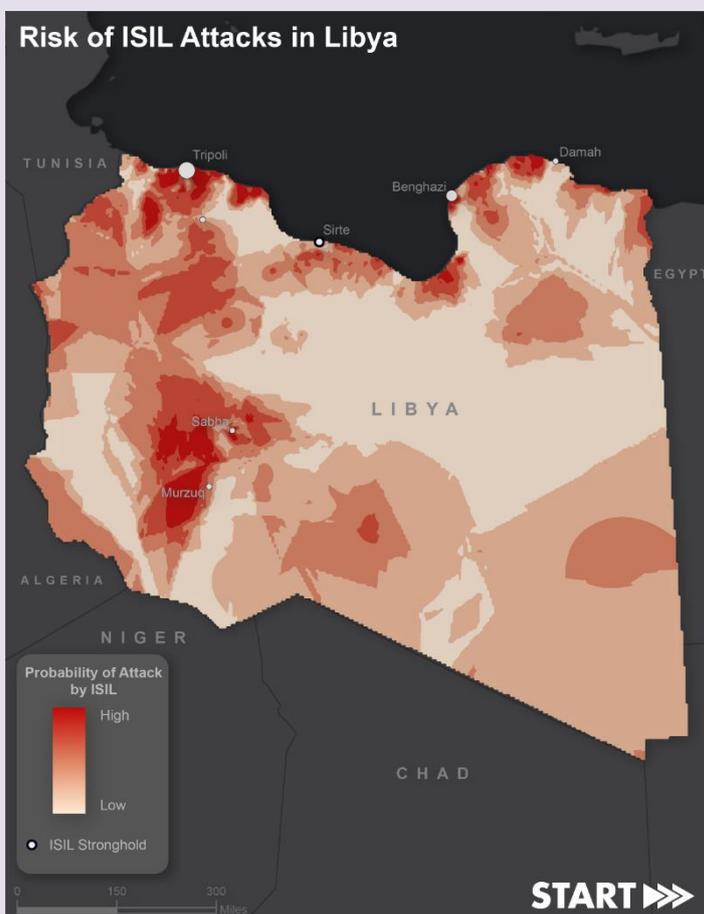
Source: <https://www.start.umd.edu/news/isil-libya-bayesian-approach-mapping-risk-regions>

Mar 02 – We expect ISIL leadership to export behaviors, including targeting preferences, to its provinces outside of Iraq and Syria. This hypothesis, as self-evident as it may appear, is not necessarily specific enough to compel a decision-maker to allocate resources to minimize that risk.

Where do I start, and how will I know if I am placing resources in the right place over time should I decide to act?

Terrorism analysis has a long tradition focused on understanding the root cause of terrorism, terrorists' motives, and in explaining terrorist behavior after the fact. Ultimately, the aim is to gain greater understanding of the adversary, allowing us to prevent terrorist events from occurring through a host of informed policies and operational programs. There is a large gap between analysis of motives and intentions, however, and predictive analysis.

Analysis of motives and intentions tend to be highly anecdotal, or highly subjective. The unintentional introduction of bias may skew conclusions



and yield inaccurate assessments. Even in the best of cases, producing analysis using vetted and validated data without flaws is fraught, because “noise” in the data – such as inaccurate coding of attributes or locations -- can skew results. But often in the field of terrorism analysis, a politicized arena populated with clandestine actors, data are unstructured and of varying quality.

Given our hypothesis above, how can analytical tools be used to overcome these challenges and provide useful predictions of where ISIL may conduct attacks, and how can we test and refine this analysis over time? This preliminary study uses geostatistical analysis to identify the risk of Islamic State (ISIL) attacks in Libya based on previous attack patterns found in Syria and Iraq.

Applying What We Know to What We Want to Know

Bayesian statistical analysis, which favors updating and reassessing the probability of a new event occurring given a probability of historic event occurrences, offers a solution to some of our challenges. Using the Global Terrorism Database [1], which categorizes target type and group type, we can develop a probability of risk for places of interest (POI). If we look at ISIL attacks in Iraq and Syria from the first six months of 2015, we can calculate the probability of risk for specific target types based on the number of actual attacks when compared to the number of potential attack locations. That probability can then be applied to POI in Libya and spatially interpolated to show likelihood of attacks on Libyan infrastructure based on ISIL tactics in Syria and Iraq.

Attack data is first filtered to omit events that are not attributed to ISIL as well as events where kidnapping for ransom was observed as the primary motivation. In addition, any attack locations that could not be given a specific location -- such as an attack reported to have occurred “in a remote region” -- are omitted.

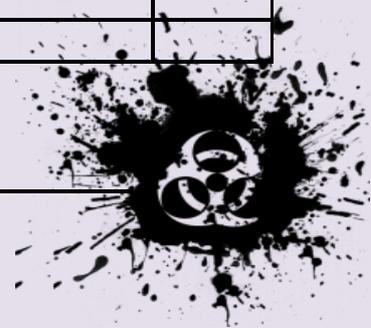
OpenStreetMap (OSM) [2] data is parsed to select POIs that could be incorporated into the target types established by the GTD methodology. Each targeted location is grouped within a specific target type (i.e. religious buildings, energy infrastructure, government buildings, etc.) because GTD target categories may not directly correlate with spatial data collected from OSM.

The Bayesian method is applied to the collected data from Iraq/Syria using Bayes' Theorem applied to each sub category. The resulting risk probability is applied to OSM data points that correlate to locations in Libya based on the aforementioned ISIL attacks in Syria and Iraq.

$$Pr(A|X) = \frac{Pr(X|A) Pr(A)}{Pr(X|A)Pr(A) + Pr(X|A') Pr(A')}$$

Pr(X A)	Chance of ISIL Attack given an Attack Occurs
Pr(A)	Chance of Attack at all (from total potential target population)
Pr(A')	Chance of No Attack at all (from total potential target population)
Pr(X A')	Chance of ISIL Not Attacking given No Attack Occurs

	ISIL Attacks	Potential Targets	Pr(X A)	Pr(A)	Pr(A')	Pr(X A')	Pr(A X)
Religion	25	2679	0.015547264	0.454222	0.545778	0.984453	1.30%
Infrastructure	14	1032	0.008706468	0.174975	0.825025	0.991294	0.19%
Government	161	696	0.100124378	0.118006	0.881994	0.899876	1.47%
Natural Resources	11	180	0.006840796	0.030519	0.969481	0.993159	0.02%
Public Gathering Areas	81	832	0.050373134	0.141065	0.858935	0.949627	0.86%
Medical	6	479	0.003731343	0.081214	0.918786	0.996269	0.03%
Total	298	5898					
Total Attacks in Iraq/Syria	1608						



Assessment and Implications

An interpolation of the point data provides a spatial analysis of risk areas for Libya, absent of the use of any attack data in Libya. Without any input from ISIL attacks in Libya, we observe that areas around major cities have a higher likelihood of being attacked by ISIL much like we would expect. As attack data in Libya begins to aggregate, we can test our initial predictions, and incorporate these events into the analysis and recalculate to improve the risk profile for this specific study area.

Given that these results prove valid, it could be assumed that, with enough data points, a Bayesian model could be applied to other groups and locations. We can then apply a risk factor without having to first observe terrorist attacks in an emerging environment, and refine those risk factors as data becomes available, giving policymakers and counterterrorism professionals the confidence to initiate actions before civilian casualties begin to mount.

Citations

[1] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2013). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd> on February 23, 2016. Note: Analysis is based on preliminary 2015 data not yet released for public use.

[2] OpenStreetMap. Contributor Geofabrik GmbH. Retrieved from <http://www.geofabrik.de> on November, 2015.

Syrian, Russian forces targeting hospitals as a war strategy: Amnesty

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160303-syrian-russian-forces-targeting-hospitals-as-a-war-strategy-amnesty>

Mar 03 – **Russian and Syrian government forces appear to have deliberately and systematically targeted hospitals and other medical facilities over the last three months to pave the way for ground forces to advance on northern Aleppo, an examination of airstrikes by Amnesty International (USA) has found.**

Even as Syria's fragile ceasefire deal was being hammered out, Syrian government forces and their allies intensified their attacks on medical facilities.

"Syrian and Russian forces have been deliberately attacking health facilities in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. But what is truly egregious is that wiping out hospitals appears to have become part of their military strategy," said Tirana Hassan, Crisis Response Director at Amnesty International.

"The latest string of attacks on health facilities north of Aleppo appears to be part of a pattern of attacks on medics and hospitals, a strategy that has destroyed scores of medical facilities and killed hundreds of doctors and nurses since the start of the conflict."

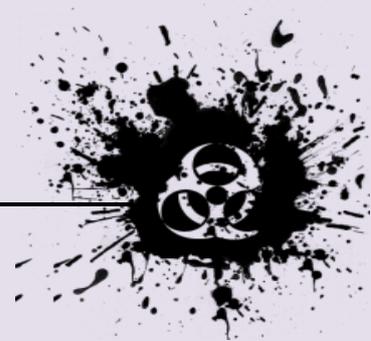
Amnesty says that the organization has gathered compelling evidence of at least six deliberate attacks on hospitals, medical centers and clinics in the northern part of the Aleppo Countryside governorate in the

past twelve weeks. The attacks, which killed at least three civilians including a medical worker, and injured forty-four more, continue a pattern of targeting health facilities in various parts of Syria which amounts to war crimes.

Amnesty International researchers spoke to medical workers from the six medical facilities and several humanitarian organizations in Turkey and Syria, who described their struggle to cope with the high number of civilians in need of medical treatment following the recent escalation of airstrikes on the area in February 2016.

Several medical workers from Anadan and Hreitan, two towns north-west of Aleppo, told Amnesty International that the Syrian government's strategy is to empty an entire town or village of residents by targeting hospitals and infrastructure to facilitate the ground invasion.

A doctor from Anadan said: "Hospitals, water and electricity are always the first to be attacked. Once that happens people no longer have services to survive. This is what happened in Anadan. By mid-February most of the residents had fled the city after the field hospital and medical center were attacked on 2 February. The field hospital is barely operating and the center



closed. The problem is that not everyone is able to leave the city. The ones who stayed behind are elderly people who are in desperate need of medical treatment.”

“Hospitals in opposition-controlled areas around Aleppo became a primary target for the Russian and Syrian government forces. This eliminated a vital lifeline for the civilians living

in those embattled areas, leaving them no choice but to flee,” said Tirana Hassan.

All of the people interviewed by Amnesty International said that there were no military vehicles, checkpoints, fighters or front lines near the hospitals that were attacked and that the hospitals were exclusively serving their humanitarian function.

U.S. Troops Suspended After Afghan Hospital Bombing

Source: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-troops-suspended-after-afghan-hospital-bombing-1448472961>

Nov 25 – The top commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan said Wednesday that the American service members most closely associated with the deadly bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan have been suspended from duty.

On Oct. 3, 2015 a U.S. gunship repeatedly bombed a compound run by the humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders, or Médecins Sans Frontières, in the northern city of Kunduz. At least 30 people died in the attack, which the group has said may constitute a war crime.

Presenting the findings of a U.S. military investigation into the incident, U.S. Army Gen. John Campbell, who commands U.S. and allied troops in Afghanistan, said some of the Americans involved didn't follow the rules of engagement. He said some of them have been suspended from their duties pending a disciplinary review.

During a press briefing on Wednesday, Gen. Campbell said the probe found “the personnel who requested the strike and those who executed it from the air did not undertake the appropriate measures to verify that the facility was a legitimate military target.”

Gen. Campbell didn't take questions. His spokesman declined to say how many U.S. military service members had been suspended because of the incident.



Source for Kunduz detail: Open Street Map



THE WASHINGTON POST



The investigation concluded that a combination of human error and technical failure led U.S. forces to bomb the wrong building.

The intended target was an Afghan intelligence agency compound that Afghan forces on the ground believed had been occupied by Taliban fighters during their takeover of the city, Gen. Campbell said.



He said the gunship crew wasn't aware they were attacking the hospital, which was on their no-strike list.

"We will study what went wrong and take the right steps to prevent it in the future," said Gen. Campbell, adding that a comprehensive review of the U.S. military's targeting process is ongoing.

The U.S. military maintains around 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, after most of its personnel departed last year.

It had deployed special-operations forces and launched a series of bombings in and around Kunduz city after the Taliban temporarily captured it, their single biggest military victory in a 14-year war against foreign troops and the Afghan government.

Gen. Campbell on Wednesday shared details of some of the failures that led to the airstrike on the hospital.

He said that flaws in the electronic systems of the AC-130 aircraft dispatched on Oct. 3 meant that it couldn't transmit video, emails or messages. The targeting system also malfunctioned: The coordinates inserted by the crew matched an open field.

As a result, the gunship crew was guided by sight when it struck the largest building near the open field, which was the MSF hospital. The bombing continued for about half an hour, even after its grid location system corrected the

mistake, locating the intelligence compound building several hundred meters away.

Personnel at the operational headquarters at Bagram Airfield were informed of the planned strike but didn't realize the grid coordinates matched the medical facility.

Gen. Campbell said the bombing continued for 17 minutes after headquarters had received a call from MSF saying the hospital was under attack. He said personnel at Bagram realized the "fatal mistake" only after the bombing had stopped.

MSF, in a statement following the news conference, condemned the U.S. actions.

"It is shocking that an attack can be carried out when U.S. forces have neither eyes on a target nor access to a no-strike list, and have

malfunctioning communications systems," Christopher Stokes, MSF's general director, said in a statement. "The frightening catalog of errors outlined today illustrates gross negligence on the part of U.S. forces and violations of the rules of war."

Mr. Stokes reiterated his organization's call for an independent investigation into the bombing.

The U.S. military's account of what happened on Oct. 3 has changed over time. The day after the bombing, a spokesman for U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan said the target were insurgents who were firing directly at U.S. service members, and that the airstrike could have resulted in "collateral damage" to a nearby medical facility.

The Afghan government welcomed the results of the U.S. military's probe. In a statement Wednesday, President Ashraf Ghani said: "This U.S. investigation didn't ignore any facts or evidence, admits mistakes that were made, and will enable the authorities to learn from the mistakes and hold people accountable where appropriate."

After the attack, some Afghan security officials said the Taliban were using the Doctors Without Borders compound as their command-and-control center during the siege of Kunduz, an accusation Doctors Without Borders has rejected.



The humanitarian organization treats anyone who seeks treatment, Taliban included, but

says it maintains a strict no-weapons policy on its premises.

Nanny who beheaded Russian girl cites revenge for Putin's Syria strikes

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-murder-child-idUSKCN0W500H>



Mar 03 – **A woman who brandished the severed head of a four-year-old girl in her care outside a Moscow metro station has said she beheaded the child to avenge Muslims killed in the Kremlin's campaign of air strikes in Syria.**

In video posted online on Thursday and circulated by several prominent bloggers, 38-year-old Gulchekhra Bobokulova from Muslim-majority Uzbekistan gave her first detailed explanation of an incident that state TV channels chose not to report.

"I took revenge against those who spilled blood," Bobokulova told someone asking her questions off camera. "Putin spilled blood, planes carried out bombings. Why are Muslims being killed? They also want to live."

She also said she had wanted to go to live in Syria but did not have the money to do so. It was not clear when the video was filmed, but Bobokulova wore the same clothes as when she appeared in court on Wednesday.

A Kremlin spokesman said her remarks should be regarded as those of someone who is mentally unwell.

"You need to regard anything that such a deranged woman says accordingly," Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman, told reporters.

The Kremlin launched its campaign of air strikes in Syria on Sept. 30 in support of President Bashar al-Assad, an intervention that altered the course of the conflict there.

Islamic State said it downed a Russian passenger plane above Egypt on Oct. 31, killing all 224 people on board, in revenge for Russia's Syria campaign.

Bobokulova, who was working as a nanny for a Moscow family, wandered around a street holding up the girl's head and shouting Islamist slogans.

One witness told Reuters he heard her screaming about the murder of children in Syria.

A police source told the Interfax news agency on Wednesday the details of two men linked to an "international extremist group" had been found among her contacts.

However, publicly, investigators were quick to raise the possibility that Bobokulova was mentally ill and have made no mention of suspecting her of any terrorism-related offense.

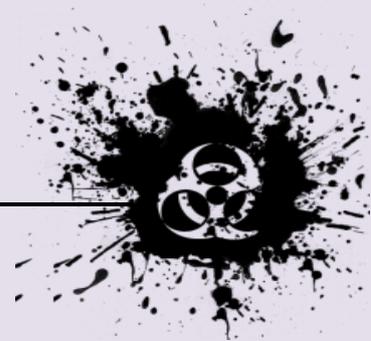
Russian investigators played down her words on Thursday, suggesting in a statement that she was schizophrenic and that the motive offered by people suffering from the condition often differed from the real reason they had acted.

Euro organizers increase security budget after Paris attacks

Source: <http://www.bigstory.ap.org/article/5ea23a24411f4e8897dc6e958eb6c75e/euro-organizers-increase-security-budget-after-paris>

Mar 02 - Euro 2016 organizers have increased the security budget by 15 percent in the wake of the Paris attacks.

The attacks that left 130 people dead in November have forced organizers to "strengthen" safety measures, with the security **budget up to 34 million euros (\$36.9 million)**, organizing president Jacques Lambert said on Wednesday at a news conference marking 100 days to the European Championship.



France remains in a state of emergency which was recently extended to May 26, two weeks before the June 10-July 10 tournament.

About 10,000 people have been privately hired for security, among them 900 agents mobilized for each of the 51 matches.

Organizers are in charge of security within stadiums, with French authorities dealing with it outside.

"Security is our essential preoccupation, but I don't lose sleep over it, we are handling it with cold blood," said Lambert, who was in charge of security issues when France hosted the Winter Olympics in 1992.

Security at team hotels will also be heightened, while fans will endure two security checks entering stadiums. A first perimeter will be set up away from the gates where spectators will have their tickets checked and be submitted to body searches. Lambert said fans will be thoroughly checked once at turnstiles.

Lambert added that Euro organizers will take over security issues at the 10 stadiums hosting matches by mid-May.

"From then, an accreditation will be required to enter the venues," he said. "And these accreditations will only be granted after a screening done by public authorities."

UEFA said on Tuesday that Euro games could be moved to different venues in France and rescheduled without fans on another day in response to terror attacks or threats. Lambert,

however, said they were not thinking of matches behind closed doors at this stage.

Security will also be increased at fan zones. About seven million supporters visited the fan zones in the host cities during Euro 2012 in Ukraine and Poland, and there are concerns the designated Euro 2016 areas for the public could be targets for attackers.

While there has been a significant drop in tourism since the attacks, Lambert said ticket sales for the Euro were not affected, with about 1.5 million fans from abroad expected in France during the tournament.

"There has not been any panic," Lambert said. "We did not receive any request for ticket refund."

A total of about 2.5 million tickets will be sold, with organizers expecting to make about 250 million euros (\$280 million) through ticket sales.

Lambert and French federation president Noel Le Graet used the news conference to express their support for suspended UEFA President Michel Platini, who is trying to overturn a six-year ban from soccer that is preventing him from attending Euro matches.

"His place is here, among us," said Lambert, a close friend of Platini. "Not on this endless vale of tears that FIFA internal instances are imposing on him. Michel, we are waiting for you, there is a warm spot for you here."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Should we continue organizing these events? It is not about terrorism. It is about the essence of sports vs. business. After the "Olympic Military Games" with billions on security, now we have "Military Football Games" and life goes on! It would be much better but cheaper to organize the games in the countries make it to the finals and have the big final game in a given country (= just one potential target). Same applies for Olympic Games – let the Games return to Greece and organize the Games here all the times (and share the profits – since everything is about money) but we do not have to spend all that money to fortify a supposed to be sports competition promoting health of both body and mind (or what is left from the latter).

Two women launch machine gun and grenade attack on Turkish Police bus

Source <http://www.newsweek.com/two-women-launch-machine-gun-and-grenade-attack-turkish-police-bus-432881>

Mar 03 – Two women opened fire and threw a grenade at a Turkish police bus as it arrived at a station in an Istanbul suburb on Thursday, footage from the Dogan news agency showed. Television stations said there were no casualties.



One of the women threw a grenade and the other opened fire with what appeared to be a machine gun as the riot police bus drove towards the station entrance in the Bayrampasa district of Turkey's biggest city, the footage showed.

Police returned fire, injuring one of the women, before tracking them to a nearby building, CNN Turk said. Special Forces units were sent to the area and residents were evacuated as security forces prepared to carry out an operation, it said.

Footage on Turkish television stations showed the street cordoned off as armed plainclothes police in bullet-proof vests emerged from the police station.

Attacks on the security forces have increased as violence flares in the country's predominantly Kurdish southeast, where a ceasefire between Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants and the state collapsed last July.



The PKK, considered a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, launched a separatist armed rebellion against Turkey more than three decades ago. More than 40,000 people, mostly Kurds, have since been killed. Turkey has also become a target for Islamic State militants, who are blamed for three suicide bombings - one last year in the town of Suruc near the Syrian border and another in the capital, Ankara, and one in

Istanbul in January. Those attacks killed more than 140 people.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Thursday's attack. The radical leftist group DHKP-C has repeatedly staged similar attacks on police stations, largely in Istanbul suburbs.

A suicide car bombing targeted military buses in Ankara killed 29 people last month. The government said that attack was carried out by a member of YPG, the Syrian Kurdish militia, with help from PKK militants.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: While watching the related videos, it was chilling to think how a bunch of individuals can cause havoc in an urban environment against hundreds of heavily armed security forces. Perhaps it would be beneficial to watch again the 2003 TV movie "44 minutes: The North Hollywood Shoot Out" and what happened in the recent Paris attacks and adjust our responses to fit the needs (tactics, plans, weaponry, rules of engagement etc.)

Most think Europe has no role in fight against IS

Source: <https://in.news.yahoo.com/most-think-europe-no-role-fight-against-141411170.html?nhp=1>

Mar 04 – **At least 80 percent of Americans feel that the US is the main force fighting against the Islamic State terrorist group in Syria and European countries have no role in it.**

According to the Sputnik.Polls survey, the 80 percent respondents believe that Europe is adding to the struggle.

Britain's role was recognised by 29 percent, of Russia by 25 percent, France 36 percent, while Germany's effort by just 8 percent. The survey was conducted by various research companies for Sputnik news agency.

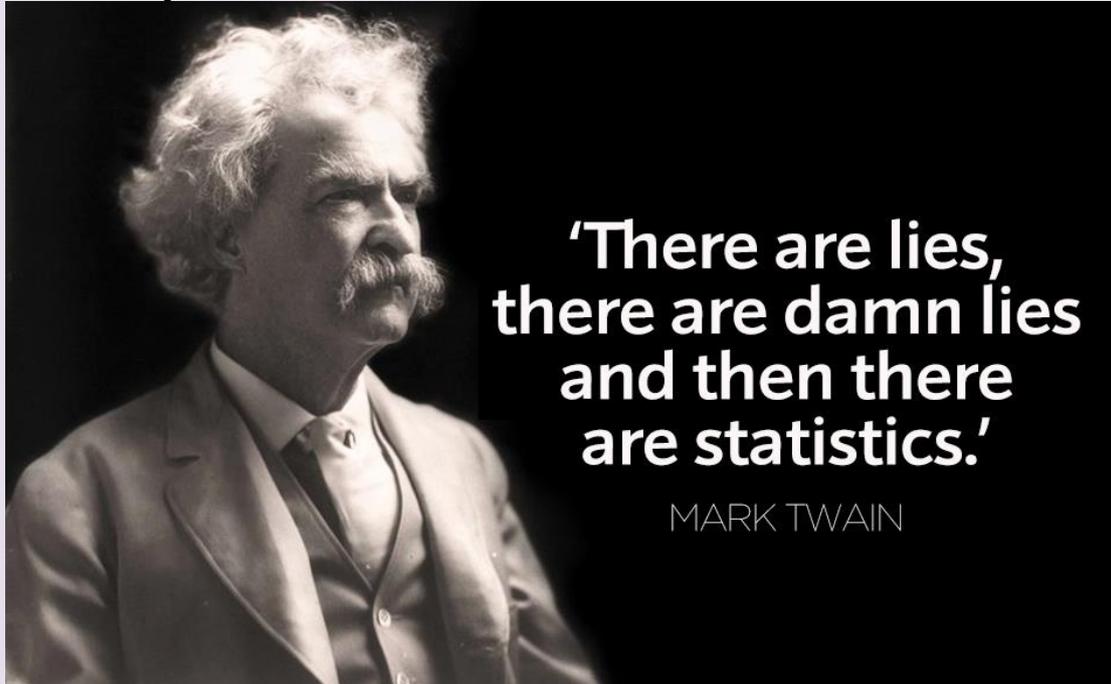
In Germany, 36 and 38 percent of respondents believe that Russia and the US are playing the same leading role in the fight against groups like IS and Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria.

France ranks third on 25 percent, while 24 percent of respondents named the Syrian Army and the Kurds among the fighting forces.



The survey involved 1,047 British respondents, 1,004 American respondents, 1,002 German respondents and 1,499 French respondents.

Russia has carried out 7,725 air strikes, the US - 3,267, Britain - 33, France - 5, according to the reports from their foreign ministries.



Terrorist Threats Damage Tourism in Bosnia

Source: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/security-threats-jeopardising-tourism-in-bosnia-03-02-2016#sthash.aIWkhTsm.dpuf>

Professionals in the tourist sector in Bosnia fear that the recent fall in visitor numbers may

According to data from the Tourism Community of the Canton Sarajevo, in January 2016 the number of foreign tourists fell by 17.5 per cent compared to the same month in the previous year. They say a similar drop will be confirmed for February.

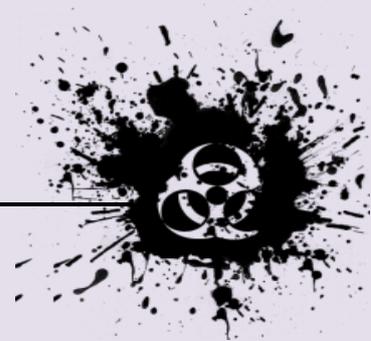
Bosnia's capital city Sarajevo

Although the grim result also reflects poor winter weather, which discouraged many from coming to Sarajevo, another factor behind the trend is reports of terrorist threats in Bosnia, Asja Hadziefendic-Mesic, of the Tourism Community of the Canton Sarajevo, told BIRN on Wednesday.

"At the end of 2015, we had two

events that had a huge negative impact on our country's image, the attack in Rajlovac and the arrest of 11 persons suspected

be due to the fact that international media increasingly link Bosnia and Herzegovina to the phenomenon of international terrorism and the Islamic State, ISIS.



of planning a bomb attack on New Year's Eve in Sarajevo," Hadziefendic-Mesic said. "Many tourists decided to cancel the trips and reservations they had already booked as a consequence," she added.

On November 18, Enes Omeragic, a Sarajevo resident, shot dead two soldiers in the neighbourhood of Rajlovac, in an attack that the authorities qualified as a terrorist act.

Only weeks later, on December 22, Bosnian police arrested 11 persons on suspicion of preparing a bomb attack on New Year's Eve in Sarajevo.

According to Hadziefendic-Mesic, the growing alarm about terrorist threats in Bosnia has especially impacted on tourists from Croatia, which is the top country in terms of the number of tourists visiting Bosnia. "The number of Croats visiting Bosnia in January 2016 almost halved compared to January 2015", Hadziefendic-Mesic said, noting that "media

from the region, especially from Croatia and Serbia, contributed to raising an alarm about the security situation in our country."

According to Hadziefendic-Mesic, security concerns may inflict major damage on tourism in the Bosnian capital, which became one of the region's main tourist destinations in recent years.

However, professionals operating in the sector told BIRN that they remain optimistic.

"We think that the poor results of the first two months were mostly due to the bad weather," Elvis Cehajic, from Relax Tours, a tourist agency operating in Sarajevo, told BIRN on Wednesday.

"Terrorism threats so far have not hugely impacted on our business, as happened, for instance, with the catastrophic floods of 2014," Cehajic added. "We expect that this season will be even more successful than the previous one," he concluded.

Twenty-Five Years of Ideological Homicide Victimization in the United States

Source: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_CSTAB_ECDB_25YearsofIdeologicalHomicideVictimizationUS_March2016.pdf

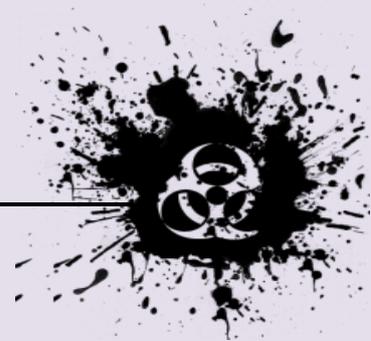
March 2016 - This brief report presents the preliminary results of 25 years of ideological victimization committed by al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements and the extremist far-right in the United States from 1990 to 2014. Excluding the homicide victims associated with the four attacks on 9/11 and the Oklahoma City bombing, 62 individuals were killed in 38 ideologically motivated homicide events committed by extremists associated with al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements¹ and 245 were killed by far-right extremists in 177 ideologically motivated incidents. The data for this report originates from the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), an open-source dataset that examines ideologically motivated and routine criminal activity, both violent and financial, committed by ideological extremists. Although the results of incident and suspect data have been released, this is the first report that focuses solely on victimization characteristics. In addition, this report also compares two distinct types of ideological victimization, homicides committed by adherents to far-right extremism (FRE) in the U.S. and those committed by individuals who associate themselves with al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements (AQAM).

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Victims of Ideological Homicides, 1990-2014

Source: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_VictimsofIdeologicalHomicides_ResearchBrief_March2016.pdf

March 2016 – Very little is known about victimization patterns, especially across ideologies, as researchers in terrorism and extremist violence tend to focus on perpetrator motives and typologies. Victim and target centered research provides a nuanced perspective of these violent events that can help mitigate victimization risk.



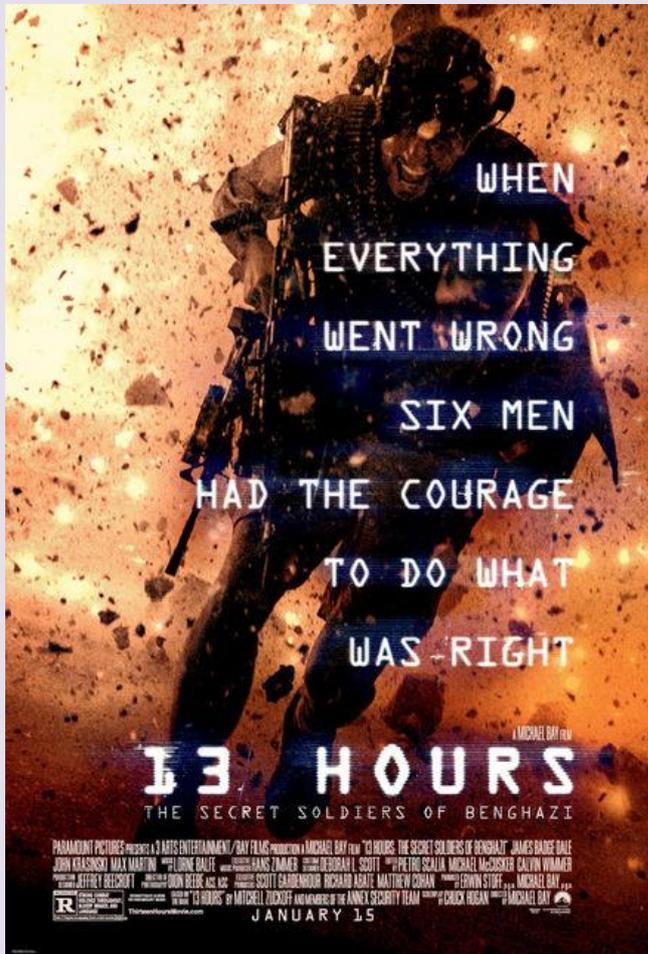
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► Read the full paper at source's URL.

13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers Of Benghazi movie review

Source <http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/movie-review/13-hours-the-secret-soldiers-of-benghazi-movie-review/>

The attack on the US Consulate in this Libyan city that left four Americans dead, including an Ambassador, in 2012 was one of the legacies that Hillary Clinton has to fight in her run for US presidency.



So she should be thankful that Michael Bay helms this film, which is adapted from a book based on the accounts of private contractors hired by the CIA for its protection in the civil war-torn country.

The director who gave us Transformers does hint that the good men and women doing the dirty work of clean-up after a half-baked revolution has swept a country didn't get much help from the US State Department in their time of need. However, most of his energy, not surprisingly, is focused on the fightback by those good men, and one incompetent woman.

Lots of vehicles blow up, many bullets are fired, an SUV proves to be a miracle on wheels, and the Libyans come out as people with flexible fingers on trigger and as flexible loyalties in their hearts. While presumably it was hard to tell friends from foes through those 13 hours starting from the night of September 11, 2012, the Americans find hardly anyone in their corner.

Lip-service is paid to exploring why the Americans are in another war that's not theirs to fight, or that the contractors — either former SEALs or Marines — have even less of a reason to be there. More care is paid towards establishing that the CIA chief treats men guarding him like dirt because that's how bureaucrats are towards hired hands.

However, as far as bucks-for-bangs goes, 13 Hours doesn't disappoint. The sense of siege, at the consulate first and the CIA secret annex later, never lifts as men and boys carrying assault rifles keep pouring out and crawling towards the buildings. The soldiers fighting it — Krasinski, Dale, Schreiber all pretty good — are men with tired eyes and little gung-ho rhetoric.

Earlier in the film, the CIA chief says, "There is no threat to us here. We won the revolution for these guys." If he isn't the only one left shaking his head at the end of 13 Hours, Bay can consider it a job well done.



The Mess in Mosul

Source: <https://www.strategypage.com/htmw/htintel/20160304.aspx>

Mar 04 – American intelligence analysts are not as confident as Iraqi and American politicians that ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) will be driven out of Mosul by late 2016. This pessimism comes from an analysis of how the smaller city of Ramadi was cleared of ISIL in December 2015 and how much more complicated the situation in Mosul is.

ISIL has controlled Mosul since June 2014 and most (all but about 700,000) of the original three million inhabitants have fled. Not only is that more than ten times what was in Ramadi



before the final assault but the Ramadai population was almost all Sunni Arab. Mosul is a much more complex place with Sunni, Shia, Kurds, Turks and so on. Moreover Ramadi was on the Euphrates river in the relatively barren western Iraq while Mosul is on three times larger Euphrates (by water volume) river in an area with more vegetation and hills. This benefits the defenders. Finally Mosul is a much wealthier place than Ramadi, largely because of the local oil fields. This makes Mosul a much more valuable asset for whoever holds it.

Politics is more of an issue in Mosul than Ramadi. Mosul involves Sunni, Shia, Arab,

Kurd and Turkish militias and each of these groups have still more factions. In Ramadi it was mainly Sunni ISIL versus Shia Iraqis aided by some pro-government Sunni. Finally ISIL had less than a thousand men in Ramadi for the final battle. Most of these defenders fought to the death. ISIL is apparently planning to have five to ten times as many fighters in Mosul for the final battle.

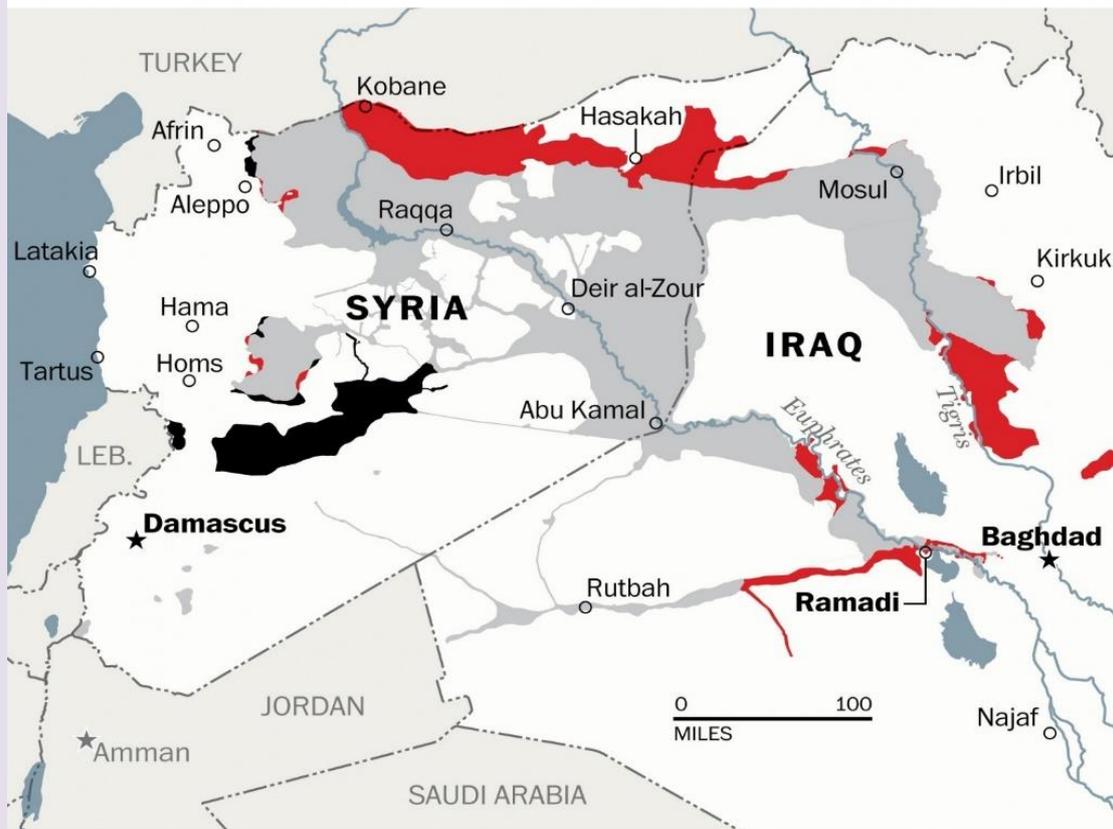
Nearly all civilians still in Mosul are openly hostile to ISIL, which is suffering from increasingly frequent and accurate air attacks. This is apparently the result of a more effective informant network in the city. Government forces south of the city and Kurdish troops (and non-Moslem militias) north of the city are preparing for the final attack, which the Iraqi government is saying will take place in mid-2016. This time a year ago Iraq was saying the attack would take place in mid-2015.

ISIL, and the Iraqi government, is most concerned with the Kurdish advance from the north because the Kurds have long had American air support. As more U.S. aircraft have arrived in the region, along with more American Special Forces to work with the Kurds, the Kurdish forces have become ever more deadly. Since early 2015 ISIL has been trying to stop the Kurdish advance and failed, suffering thousands of casualties (most of them dead) in the process. The Kurds are more vulnerable when they advance but because so many of the Kurds have years of combat experience and lots of U.S. training it is difficult to kill or wound enough Kurds to stop these movements. The Kurds are concerned about keeping their casualties low. This is good for morale, preserves the experienced fighters and recognizes the fact the Kurds have limited (compared to the Iraqi Army and Shia militias) manpower and want to conserve it.



The Islamic State in 2015

● Islamic State-controlled (no change) ● Territory lost ● Territory gained



Source: IHS Jane's Conflict Monitor

THE WASHINGTON POST

All this also scares the Iraqi government because so many powerful players have a claim on Mosul. The Arab Shias are the majority in Iraq and control the government. Some of these Shia politicians are openly accusing Turkey of backing Sunni terrorists as part of a conspiracy to regain their lost (because of the British after World War I) Mosul province (the northern third of Iraq). The Turks deny this and there's no "regain Mosul" movement in Turkey. What the Turks have done is negotiate a peace deal involving the Kurdish government of northern Iraq and Kurdish separatists in Turkey (the PKK). This was all done with little consultation from the Iraqi government. This annoys the Iraqis a great deal because the arrangement allowed the PKK gunmen to leave Turkey unmolested and move to Kurdish Iraq. One of the few things Iraqi Arabs agree on is the need to keep the Kurds weak and obedient. Since 1991 Iraqi Kurds have become autonomous and militarily powerful. The movement of thousands of armed PKK men from Turkey to northern Iraq makes it even more impossible to get the Iraqi Kurds back into line. Since 2015 that PKK deal has come apart and the Turks are once more at war with the PKK while remaining on good terms with the Iraqi Kurds.

The 2014 government defeat in Mosul was caused by a combination of corruption (leading to poor leadership and morale in the army and police) and years of Islamic terrorism in Mosul directed at the security forces. Without the crippling effects of corruption the army and police would still be in control. ISIL did not take the entire city right away. The Kurdish neighborhoods received reinforcements and support from the Kurdish controlled provinces to the north, although many Kurdish civilians fled north to avoid living in a combat zone. Over half a million civilians fled Mosul and many tried to get into the Kurdish provinces. That was a time-consuming process because the Kurds have kept Islamic terrorists out by imposing effective security measures and not falling victim to the lure of Islamic terrorism. The Kurds are not Arabs (they are related to the Iranians and other Central Asian Indo-European groups) and don't care much for the Arabs (and vice versa). But business is business and Arabs who will behave are welcome to come visit,



which a growing number of Arabs do if only to get away from the threat of Islamic terrorism for a while. All these differences up north make the liberation of Mosul from ISIL rule much more complicated. Many Shia politicians play down these complications hoping that many of these problems will not be major obstacles to defeating ISIL. That may be so but long term the Iraqi government not only has to liberate Mosul but it also has to find a way to keep the peace once all the inhabitants have returned. That will prove more difficult than defeating ISIL.

Japan's counterterrorism efforts falling short

By Jeff Kingston

Source: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2016/03/05/commentary/japans-counterterrorism-efforts-falling-short/#.VtwljubKqHt>

Mar 05 – **The Foreign Ministry invited ridicule toward the end of 2015 after it advertised job openings for part-time counterterrorism analysts.** While the expansion of the exploited precariat of non-regular workers to nearly 40 percent of the workforce is lamentable in itself, who would have thought some of them would be responsible for safeguarding the public from terrorism?!

Although generating lousy jobs is intrinsic to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Abenomics initiative, given the urgency of boosting Japan's counterterrorism capabilities it is bizarre that the government is so tight-fisted when it comes to hiring intelligence analysts, especially since they are required to have excellent language skills and a background in analyzing terrorism. These analysts are tasked with keeping the nation safe from terrorists on a three-day-a-week schedule and are paid a paltry ¥10,000 (\$89) a day! Given that a day's wages would come to less than the cost of a bottle of the vintage wines favored by Japanese diplomats, let's hope these analysts can at least get free access to the Foreign Ministry's cafeteria.

Another concern is that these analysts have probably lived and studied overseas, which means that under the controversial state secrets law they are supposedly barred from handling classified dossiers.

It is no secret that Japan's counterterrorism capabilities lag well behind those of the United States, Europe and in other parts of the world where terrorist incidents have forced governments to act. Policy analysts often talk about windows of opportunity that facilitate the enactment of long-standing agendas in the spirit of not letting a crisis go to waste. The beheading of two Japanese hostages at the

hands of the Islamic State group last year was just such a crisis, putting wind in the sails of organizations that have long pined for expanded policing and intelligence-gathering powers, and the requisite budgets and staffing. The more recent Paris, Jakarta and Ankara bombings have added fuel to the fire.

Jun Honna, a specialist on Indonesian politics and security at Ritsumeikan University, has studied how that nation responded to the wave of terrorism unleashed by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a group linked to al-Qaida that operated in Southeast Asia and claimed responsibility for the 2002 bombings on the Indonesian island of Bali, a popular tourist destination. Jakarta created a special task force in the national police that proved highly effective in degrading JI and rolling back its network. In the wake of a recent attack by the Islamic State group in Jakarta — a low-budget botched operation in January — there are signs that the more seasoned JI is regrouping. In addition, there are well over 400 Indonesian jihadis who have gone to Syria where they will develop dangerous skill sets; many of the JI terrorists had similar "training" in Afghanistan.

"My concern is Abe's blind following of the U.S.-led global war on terrorism targeting ISIS," Honna says. "His administration believes joining the 'war' club may boost Japan's counterterrorism commitment and capacity in



preparing for the G7 Summit and 2020 Olympics, but joining the club boosts the risk of being the target of an ISIS attack.”

While the government touts its cooperative arrangements with nations around the world, Honna is skeptical. **“Japan-ASEAN cooperation is nothing substantial; only seminars and workshops,”** he says.

Last year the government fast-tracked the establishment of the International Terrorism Intelligence-Gathering Unit, based within the Foreign Ministry, which is supposed to cooperate with foreign intelligence agencies and oversee the collection and analysis of relevant intelligence. Although it operates out of the ministry, its staff is drawn from the National Police Agency (NPA), the Defense Ministry, the Public Security Intelligence Agency and the Cabinet Intelligence Research Office. The government has also announced plans to eventually post 20 staff members to various Japanese embassies and consulates, with initial postings to Amman, Cairo, Jakarta and New Delhi.

Masaki Mizobuchi, a terrorism expert at Nagoya University of Business and Commerce and participant in the New Voices of Japan program run by the Social Science Research Council’s Tokyo office, is skeptical about this endeavor because the **ministry lacks Arabic-speaking employees trained in intelligence-gathering.**

Yuki Tatsumi, senior associate of the East Asia program at the Stimson Center in Washington, is also doubtful about the Japanese government’s counterterrorism initiatives.

“The Japanese government has not been able to invest enough financial resources to equip its intelligence organizations with meaningful wherewithal to boost their capacity to collect, analyze and distribute the intelligence they gather,” Tatsumi wrote in *The Diplomat* in June. “Japanese intelligence organizations have been often criticized for being stovepiped and having a predominantly law-enforcement focus, often at the expense of other national security considerations.”

Moreover, she asserts: **“The Cabinet Intelligence Officer does not have the authority to allocate resources or to move personnel among the intelligence organizations across the government, leaving these organizations to conduct their own activities with little coordination or**

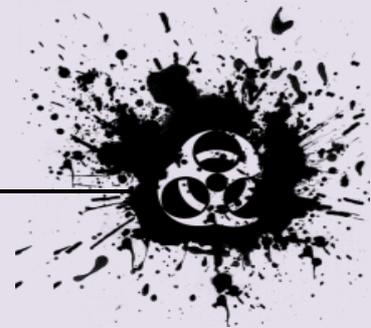
communication. The newly proposed measures do little to solve this problem.”

Tatsumi also believes the new measures are too narrowly focused on human intelligence, or HUMINT, “almost completely disregarding” the necessity of synthesizing this with other forms of information, such as: signals intelligence, electronic intelligence, imagery intelligence, technical intelligence, measurement and signature intelligence, and open-source intelligence (OSINT).

If Japan is serious about developing an organization similar to MI6 or the CIA, she points out that “it takes more than developing Japanese analysts who are fluent in foreign languages to develop a real HUMINT capacity, including the cultivation of indigenous informants and establishing the extraction of in-country agents and/or informants when necessary.”

In December, a section was established in the Cabinet Secretariat with a mandate to coordinate counterterrorism efforts between different ministries and agencies, but it remains to be seen how effective it will be in managing turf wars. In addition, a new NPA department called the Internet OSINT Center will collect terrorism-related information online. A rash of revelations about cyber-attacks, many of Chinese origin, has provided the Abe government additional ammunition to support and push for the establishment of an intelligence agency.

But in the meantime, **various agencies are beefing up their crisis-response capabilities.** For example, the NPA announced recently that it will provide highly mobile armored vehicles to counterterrorism units such as the special assault teams and anti-firearms squads in the Tokyo and Osaka police departments and those in the vicinity of other potential targets around Japan, because up until now they apparently lacked mobility to chase suspects. If true, that seems an amazing oversight, but as Koichi Oizumi, an expert on risk management and terrorism at Aomori Chuo Gakuin University, says, “Japan is still a novice in counterterrorism measures and there are lots of blind spots.” Not a reassuring assessment given the G-7 Ise-Shima Summit in May and the fast-approaching 2020 Olympics. Mizobuchi says upgrading Japan’s counterterrorism capacity



will take time because: “the size is very small; the rivalry between the ministries; and Japan has no organization specializing in clandestine foreign HUMINT.”

In his view, **the main obstacles to developing a more effective counterterrorism capacity are complacency due to the absence of any terrorist incident for two decades in Japan and “the rivalry between the ministries and the public outcry in Japan ... (as) there is a strong emotional/ideological opposition**

toward strengthening the power of police or intelligence organizations.”

The fact remains, though, that the government is poorly prepared to cope with threats to relatively vulnerable overseas interests and domestic targets, and experts agree that enhancing limited counterterrorism capabilities will take some time. But the clock is ticking, as Abe’s antiterrorism swagger has already painted a bull’s-eye on Japan.

Jeff Kingston is the director of Asian Studies, Temple University Japan.

Denmark to send Special Forces to fight IS

Source <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2016/3/4/denmark-to-send-special-forces-to-fight-is>



Mar 05 – **Danish MPs could vote for the country to step up its contribution to an anti-IS coalition with F16s and Special Forces read to battle the militants in Syria and Iraq.**

Denmark is ready to send F16 fighter jets and 400 Special Forces to Iraq and Syria to fight the Islamic State group, Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said Friday.

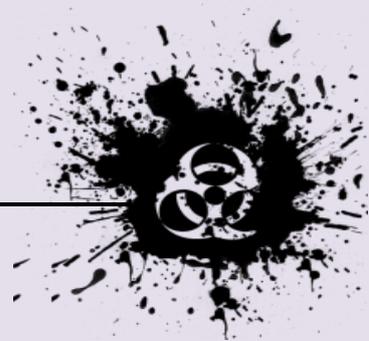
A majority of political parties in parliament’s foreign affairs committee expressed support for the government’s proposal and a vote is scheduled for 19 April.

“The government will on the basis of today’s meeting submit a bill to a parliamentary vote to strengthen the campaign against IS,” a statement from the prime minister.

“It is a serious decision to send Danish **men and women** on a mission in the world’s hot spots. Therefore, I am grateful that the government’s proposal enjoys broad support from the parties in parliament,” Rasmussen said.

The Danish contribution, which also includes a transport aircraft, would be available from mid-2016.

The 400 soldiers would include pilots, support staff and 60 special operations forces. It was not immediately known what the Special Forces would be assigned to do in Syria.



"It doesn't mean that the Danish soldiers will be in direct offensive combat. But they could be attacked, and therefore they will have a robust mandate," news agency *Ritzau* quoted Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen as saying after the foreign affairs committee's meeting.

Denmark is a member of the international US-led coalition against IS, but has so far only intervened in Iraq. In October 2014 until October 2015, it had seven F-16s in Iraq to help combat IS militants. **It currently has around 120 troops stationed at the al-Asad air base near Baghdad, where they have been training Iraqi soldiers and Kurdish security forces.**

Only few Czech Muslims support radicals

Source <http://praguemonitor.com/2016/03/04/bis-counter-intelligence-only-few-czech-muslims-support-radicals>



Mar 03 – **Support for radical positions was registered only in case of a few members of the Czech Muslim community, but none of these people had links to foreign Islamists groups**, BIS counter-intelligence spokesman Jan Subert told CTK on Thursday. "It is crucial that militants who would try to radicalise our Muslim community do not penetrate among Czech Muslims from abroad. So far, this has not happened," he said.

According to rough estimates, **about 20,000 Muslims live in the country with 10.5 million inhabitants. In the 2011 census, only 2000 people stated their religion was Islam.**

Subert said BIS had no information about any imminent terrorist threat in Czech

territory.

Subert said the Czech Republic closely cooperates with foreign secret services because of terrorism.

In 2015, BIS received over 8100 dispatches, news and documents from its foreign partners and it handed 1500 of them to the partners. The vast majority of the dispatches concerned terrorism.

Dissident republicans' weapons cache discovered in Northern Ireland

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160307-dissident-republicans-weapons-cache-discovered-in-northern-ireland>

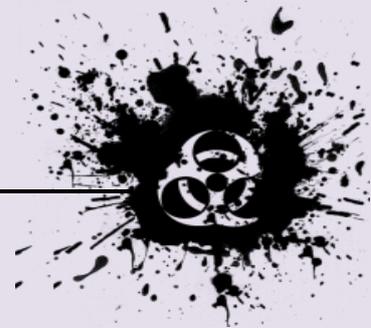


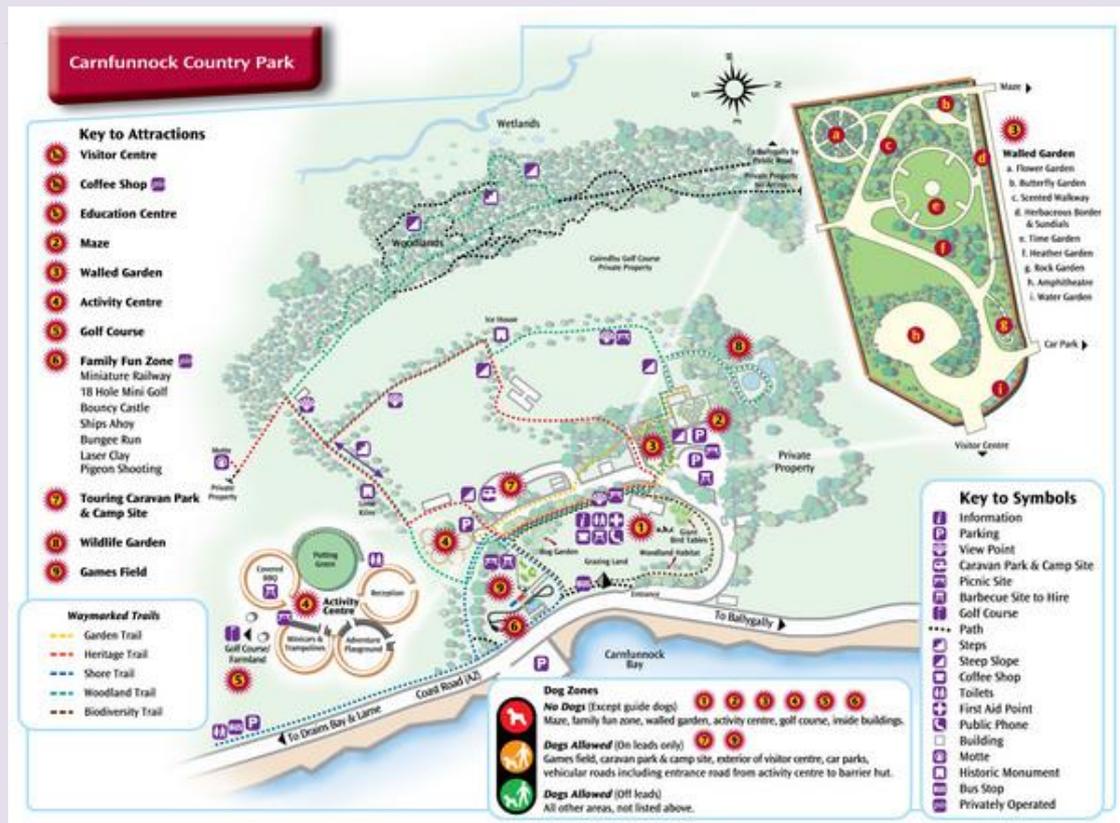
Mar 07 – **Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has discovered a terrorist weapons cache in a forest park in Northern Ireland. The bomb-making parts and explosives were found at the Carnfunnock Country Park, near Larne, County Antrim.**

Police searching the area then recovered small plastic barrels buried deeper in the woods. The barrels contained a large number of bomb-making components, including partially constructed devices and a small quantity of explosives.

PSNI Detective Chief Inspector Gillian Kearney said it was unclear which terror group the items belonged to.

"All of these items will be subjected to a detailed forensic examination," she said.





“Until this has been completed, it is too early to link these items to any particular grouping, but we are following a number of lines of inquiry.

“I would ask the public to remain vigilant, wherever they are and whatever they are doing. If people report suspicious activity to police, we will act on it to keep people safe.

“We apologise that the park will remain closed for some time while a full clearance operation is carried out, but I hope people will understand the need to put public safety first.”

The *Independent* reports that the discovery came just over twenty-four hours after a prison officer was badly injured when a dissident republican car bomb detonated under his van in Belfast.

Police have been warning for a while that dissidents republicans were planning to ramp up violence in the run-up to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising against British rule in Dublin.

Northern Ireland Justice Minister David Ford condemned those responsible for amassing the explosives and weapons.

“Those responsible for leaving these munitions have no regard for human life and are motivated by a need to create fear and disruption in our community,” he said.

“Thankfully, due to the swift actions of the public and the professionalism and expertise of security forces, a potentially serious incident has been averted. I commend all involved for their vigilance.”

California terrorists' iPhone may have been used to introduce malware into data networks

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160307-calif-terrorists-iphone-may-have-been-used-to-introduce-malware-into-data-networks-da>

Mar 07 – San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos has advanced what experts describe as an unusual reason for forcing Apple to allow the FBI to break the password of the iPhone used by the two terrorists as part of the agency's investigation of the attack. **Ramos says the phone might have been “used as a weapon” to introduce malicious software to county computer systems.**

San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos, in an effort to strengthen the

FBI's hand in the agency's on-going dispute with Apple over

access to the information on the iPhone s used by the San Bernardino terrorists, has advanced what experts describe as an unusual reason for forcing Apple to remove one element of the end-to-end encryption with which the device has been equipped. Relaxing the 10-attempt

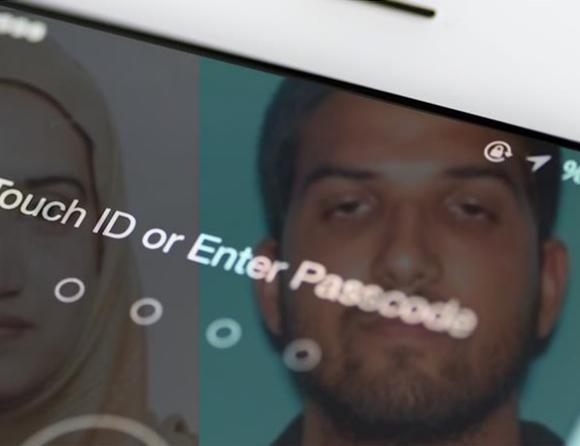
subject of a wave of social media postings – with many pointedly noting Ramos’s use of the “cyber pathogen” to describe the supposed malware.

Ramos’s idea that the two terrorists used their iPhone to transmit a “lying-dormant cyber pathogen” into county data systems is novel – but his office still cited it in a court filing Thursday as one of several reasons why the court should order Apple to cooperate with the FBI investigation.

“This was a county employee that murdered 14 people and injured 22,” Ramos said. “Did he use the county’s infrastructure? Did he hack into that infrastructure? I don’t know. In order for me to really put that issue to rest, there is one piece of evidence that would absolutely let us know that, and that would be the iPhone.”

Many software expert dismissed Ramos’s notion. Jonathan Zdziarski, independent software researcher who has signed a brief in support of Apple’s position, posted on his personal blog: “Ramos’s statements are not only misleading to the court, but amount to blatant fear mongering.”

The News notes that other security experts are more receptive to Ramos’s argument. “It’s definitely possible, technically, but it doesn’t seem to me at first glance to be likely,” said David Meltzer, a computer security expert and chief research officer at Tripwire, a commercial IT security firm. He noted that Apple’s iPhone operating system is a relatively closed environment, making it difficult for users to introduce their own programs.



limit on attempting to guess the device’s password would allow the FBI to access the calls and messages the two killers made and received before they were killed.

Ramos says the phone might have been “used as a weapon” to introduce malicious software to county computer systems.

The *Mercury News* reports that Ramos admitted to the AP that there was no evidence of malicious software in the county’s computer network, but he added: “I wouldn’t call it a total hypothetical.”

Computer security experts, however, say Ramos’s theory is far-fetched. The News notes that by late Friday, Ramos’s claim was the

Islamic State Targeting 'Western Lifestyles'

<http://news.sky.com/story/1655124/islamic-state-targeting-western-lifestyles>

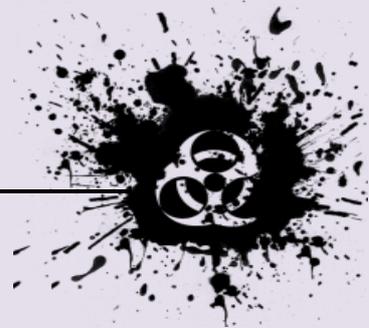
Mar 07 – The UK is increasingly at risk of mass casualty terror attacks, as the so-called Islamic State switches its intent towards targeting Western lifestyles, according to the country’s head of counter-terrorism policing.



Scotland Yard’s Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley said recent terror attacks in Paris, the bombing of a Russia-bound passenger plane over Egypt and the attempt to bring down another airliner in Somalia, demonstrated a broadening of the terror group’s ambition.

The Assistant Commissioner said that in the UK over the past few years, the Islamist group has called on would-be jihadis to attack police and the military, but now their plans had evolved to attack "Western lifestyles".

Mr Rowley said: “In recent months we’ve



seen a broadening of that, much more plans to attack Western lifestyle, and obviously the Paris attacks in November. Going from that narrow focus on police and military as symbols of the state to something much broader.

Mark Rowley: 'IS has big ambitions for spectacular attacks'

"And you see a terrorist group which has big ambitions for enormous and spectacular attacks, not just the types that we've seen foiled to date."

He warned that ISIS was now attempting to get supporters who have received military training in Syria into northern Europe to stage attacks.

The counter-terror boss said the "shared effort to look for any possible links of those networks or other networks that have reached the UK is obviously a massively high priority".

Earlier this year, Scotland Yard Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe announced plans for a large scale increase in the numbers of armed police in London because of the increasing concerns about the possibility of a Paris-style marauding gun and bomb attack.

Authorities are also now launching a push to alert the public to official "Run, Hide, Tell" advice in the event of such an attack.

Scotland Yard is urging members of the public to sign up to the force's Twitter Alerts service.

Mark Rowley said the alerts would be activated in the event of a marauding attack and give members of the public vital, quick information on where an incident is unfolding and the best options to try to remain safe.

Over the last three years the number of terror-related arrests has risen by 57% compared to the previous three years.

Around half lead to a charge. Last year just over three-quarters (77%) of those arrested were British nationals, 14% were female and 13% were aged 20 and under.

Scotland Yard has seen more than 20 families and around 50 young people go through family court proceedings over concerns about radicalisation in the past year.

The Narco-terror Trap

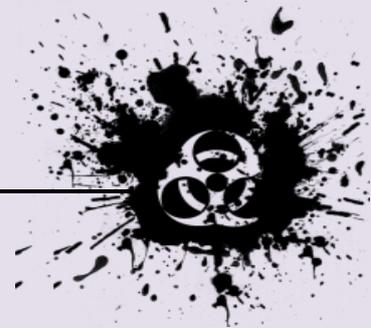
By Ginger Thompson

Source <https://www.propublica.org/article/the-dea-narco-terror-trap>

Mar 07 – In December 2009, Harouna Touré and Idriss Abdelrahman, smugglers from northern Mali, walked through the doors of the Golden Tulip, a hotel in Accra, Ghana. They were there to meet with two men who had offered them an opportunity to make millions of dollars, transporting cocaine across the Sahara. Touré wore a dashiki, and Abdelrahman had on tattered clothes and a turban that hid much of his face. They tipped the guards at the entrance and then greeted Mohamed, a Lebanese radical, in the lobby. Mohamed took them up to a hotel room to see David, a drug trafficker and a member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. "Hola, Colombiano," Touré said, as he entered the room. Abdelrahman tried to call David "007" in Spanish, but said "477" instead. David, who was dressed in a short-sleeved pullover and Bermuda shorts, laughed and offered his guests bottles of water.

Touré and Abdelrahman came from Gao, a parched and remote city in northern Mali which has long been used as a base for smuggling of all kinds, from immigrants to cigarettes. In recent years, the surrounding region has also been the scene of conflict between violent bands of nomadic insurgents, including members of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). During months of meetings and phone calls, David and Mohamed had told Touré that the FARC had some 30,000 fighters at war with the United States, and that it wanted to work with al-Qaida, because the groups shared the same enemy. "They are our brothers," Mohamed said. "We have the same cause." Touré had explained that he had connections to the organization: he ran a transport company, and, in return for safe passage for his trucks, he provided al-Qaida with food and fuel.

Still, David remained skeptical. He needed assurances that Touré's organization was up to the task. The FARC had a lot of money riding on the deal and was willing to pay Touré and Abdelrahman as much as \$3,000 per kilo, beginning with a 50-kilo test run to Melilla, a Spanish city on the North African mainland. Loads ten times that size would follow, David said, if the first trip went well.



“If you’re done, I’m going to speak,” Touré said. He told David and Mohamed that he was tired of all the “blah, blah, blah.” He had operatives along the smuggling route, which stretched from Ghana to Morocco. Abdelrahman, whom Touré had introduced as the leader of a Malian militia, said that he had hired a driver with links to al-Qaida. They had also bribed a Malian military official, who would help them cross the border without inspection.

David was reassured. “I want us to keep working together, because we’re not doing this for the money — we’re doing this for our people,” he said.

Two days later, Touré and Abdelrahman went back to the Golden Tulip to collect their initial payment. Oumar Issa, a friend from Gao who was also involved in the plan, waited at another hotel to receive his portion. Instead, the smugglers were met by Ghanaian police officers. David and Mohamed, it turned out, were not drug traffickers but undercover informants for the United States Drug Enforcement Administration. Within days, Touré, Abdelrahman, and Issa were turned over to the DEA, put on a private jet, and flown to New York, where they were arraigned in a federal courthouse. They were charged under a little-known provision of the Patriot Act, passed in 2006, which established a new crime, known as narco-terrorism, committed by violent offenders who had one hand in terrorism and the other in the drug trade.

In announcing the charges, Preet Bharara, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, said, “As terrorists diversify into drugs, they provide us more opportunities to incapacitate them and cut off funding for future acts of terror.” The case marked the first time that the narco-terrorism provision had been used against al-Qaida. The suspects appeared to be precisely the kind of hybrid whom the law, which does not require that any of the targeted activities take place in the U.S., had been written to catch. Michele Leonhart, the DEA administrator at the time, said, “Today’s arrests are further proof of the direct link between dangerous terrorist organizations, including al-Qaida, and international drug trafficking that fuels their activities.”

As the Malians’ case proceeded, however, its flaws became apparent. The defendants emerged as more hapless than hardened, childhood friends who believed that the DEA’s informants were going to make them rich. “They were lying to us. And we were lying to them,” Touré told me from prison. Judge Barbara Jones, who oversaw the final phases of the case, said, “There was no actual involvement by the defendants or the undercovers ... in the activities of either al-Qaida or the FARC.” Another judge saw as many problems with the statute as with the merits of the case. “Congress has passed a law that attempts to bind the world,” he said to me.

The investigation continues to be cited by the DEA as an example of its national-security achievements. Since the narco-terrorism provision was passed, the DEA has pursued dozens of cases that fit the broad description of crimes under the statute. The agency has claimed victories against al-Qaida, Hezbollah, the Taliban, and the FARC and established the figure of the narco-terrorist as a preeminent threat to the United States.

With each purported success, the DEA has lobbied Congress to increase its funding. In 2012, Michael Braun, who had served as the DEA’s chief of operations, testified before Congress about the link between terrorists and drug traffickers: “Based on over 37 years in the law-enforcement and security sectors, you can mark my word that they are most assuredly talking business and sharing lessons learned.”

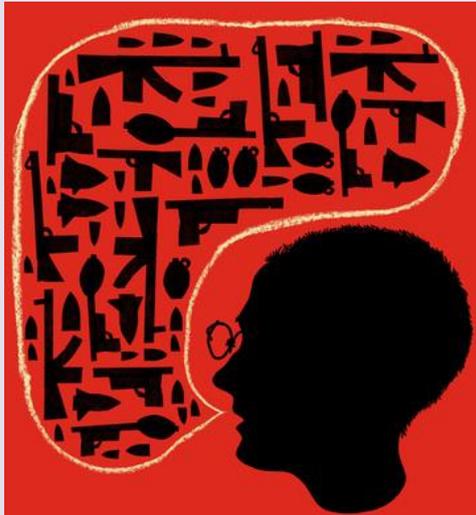
That may well be true. In a number of regions, most notably Colombia and Afghanistan, there is convincing evidence that terrorists have worked with drug traffickers. But a close examination of the cases that the DEA has pursued reveals a disturbing number that resemble that of the Malians. When these cases were prosecuted, the only links between drug trafficking and terrorism entered into evidence were provided by the DEA, using agents or informants who were paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to lure the targets into staged narco-terrorism conspiracies.

The DEA strongly defends the effectiveness of such sting operations, claiming that they are a useful way to identify criminals who pose a threat to the United States before they act. Lou Milione, a senior official at the agency, told me, “One of the things the DEA is kind of in the business of is almost all of our investigations are proactive.” But Russell Hanks, a former senior American diplomat, who got a firsthand look at some of the DEA’s narco-terrorism targets during the time he served in West Africa, told me, “The DEA provided everything these men needed to commit a crime, then said, ‘Wow, look what they did.’” He added, “This wasn’t terrorism



— this was the manipulation of weak-minded people, in weak countries, in order to pad arrest records.”

On Sept. 11, 2001, when American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, DEA agents were among the first to respond, racing from their headquarters, less than half a mile away. A former special agent named Edward Follis, in his memoir, “The Dark Art,” recalls how he and dozens of his colleagues “rushed over ... to pull out bodies, but there were no bodies to pull out.” The agency had outposts in more than 60 countries around the world, the most of any federal law-enforcement agency. And it had some 5,000 informants and confidential sources. Michael Vigil, who was the DEA’s head of international operations at the time, told me, “We called in every source we could find, looking for information about what had happened, who was responsible, and whether there were plans for an imminent attack.” He added, “Since the end of the Cold War, we had seen signs that terrorist groups had started relying on drug trafficking for funding. After 9/11, we were sure that trend was going to spread.”



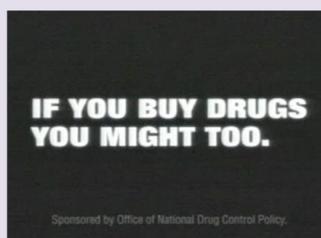
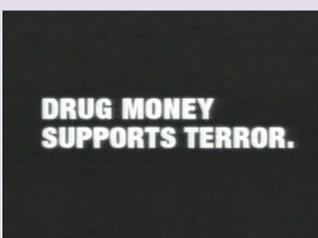
Melinda Beck, special to ProPublica

But other intelligence agencies saw the DEA’s sources as drug traffickers — and drug traffickers didn’t know anything about terrorism. A former senior money-laundering investigator at the Justice Department told me that there wasn’t any substantive proof to support the DEA’s assertions.

“What is going on after 9/11 is that a lot of resources move out of drug enforcement and into terrorism,” he said. “The DEA doesn’t want to be the stepchild that is last in line.” Narco-terrorism, the former investigator said, became an “expedient way for the agency to justify its existence.”

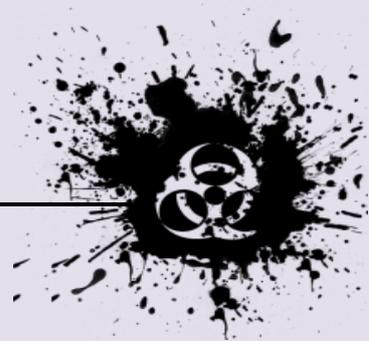
The White House proved more receptive to the DEA’s claims. Juan Zarate, a former deputy national-security adviser, in his book, “Treasury’s War,” says that President George W. Bush wanted “all elements of national power” to contribute to the effort to “prevent another attack from hitting our shores.” A few months after 9/11, at a gathering of community anti-addiction organizations, Bush said, “It’s so important for Americans to know that the traffic in drugs finances the work of terror. If you quit drugs, you join the fight against terror in America.” In February 2002, the Office of National Drug Control Policy turned Bush’s message into a series of publicservice announcements that were aired during the Super Bowl. Departing from the portrayal of illegal narcotics as dangerous to those who use them — “This is your brain on drugs” — the ads instead warned that getting high helped terrorists “torture someone’s dad” or “murder a family.”

In the next seven years, the DEA’s funding for international activities increased by 75 percent. Until then, the agency’s greatest foreign involvement had been in Mexico and in the Andean region of South America, the world’s largest producer of cocaine and home to violent Marxist guerrilla groups, including the FARC, in Colombia, and the Shining Path, in Peru. Both groups began, in the 1960s and early ‘70s, as peasant rebellions; before long, they started taxing coca growers and smugglers to finance their expansion. The DEA saw the organizations as examples of how criminal motivations can overlap with, and even advance, ideological ones.



Months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Bush administration reframed the drug war to make it a part of the global war on terror. It spent some \$4 million to produce these public service announcements that aired during the 2002 Super Bowl.

Now the agency was focused on



Afghanistan, which had been one of the largest opium producers in the world until 2000, when the Taliban declared poppy cultivation un-Islamic and banned it. Almost as soon as the Taliban were forced from power, the country's farmers began replanting their poppy fields; the DEA warned that the new crops could become a source of revenue to finance attacks by al-Qaida. "DEA has received multi-source information that bin Laden has been involved in the financing and facilitation of heroin-trafficking activities," Asa Hutchinson, the DEA administrator, said during a hearing on Capitol Hill in March 2002. Hutchinson cited insurgency groups in drug-producing countries around the world, including the FARC, the Shining Path, and the Kurdistan Workers Party, in Turkey, which had historically been a significant narcotics transshipment point. And Hutchinson mentioned evidence collected by the DEA that the tri-border area of Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina — home to a large and thriving Arab business community — had become a source of financing for Hamas and Hezbollah.

With support from Congress, the DEA set up the Counter-Narco-Terrorism Operations Center, a clearinghouse for any terrorism-related intelligence that its agents picked up around the world. The agency reopened its office in Kabul, which had been closed since the Soviet invasion, in 1979. And it brought together law-enforcement officials from 19 countries in Asia and Europe to participate in an intelligence-sharing project known as Operation Containment, which was aimed at cutting off the flow of Afghan heroin and opium.

By 2004, al-Qaida had largely fled Afghanistan, and the DEA turned its attention to the Taliban, which agents believed would follow the same guerrilla-to-drugs trajectory as the FARC. The DEA cobbled together informant networks and undercover operations aimed at traffickers linked to the insurgents. The agency had never played that role in a war zone, and it required support from the military, which wasn't forthcoming. Edward Follis, the former DEA agent, told me that most American combat commanders showed the DEA a "blatant and willful disregard." He said that the Pentagon "couldn't get beyond the idea of capturing or killing enemy combatants."

Later that year, the DEA took its case to John Mackey, a Republican investigative counsel for the House International Relations Committee. Mackey, a former FBI agent, handled counter-narcotics for the committee's chairman, Henry Hyde, a prominent Republican from Illinois. Current and former congressional staffers recall that Hyde didn't have a deep interest in anti-drug matters, allowing Mackey to take the lead. "You know how Congress

works," one former staffer said. "There are all these unknown and unelected people who wield enormous influence over obscure topics. Mackey was one of them."

Melinda Beck, special to ProPublica

Under Mackey's direction, Republican legislators pressured the Pentagon to support the DEA's operations in Afghanistan. Follis said that the DEA received tens of millions of dollars in additional funding, allowing it to increase the number of agents in the country from two to more than 40,

and to develop its own special-forces units, known as FAST

teams, which carried out raids on opium bazaars and heroin labs. The agency also identified a high-value Afghan target, Haji Bashir Noorzai, an opium trafficker with close ties to the Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar. In 2004, President Bush put Noorzai on a list of the world's most wanted drug kingpins. But, because most of Noorzai's opium and heroin exports went to Eastern Europe and not to the U.S., it was difficult for the DEA to go after him. Mackey made numerous trips with the DEA to Afghanistan, and warned Congress that people like Noorzai "are going to fall through the cracks unless we broaden our thinking about them."



In early 2005, Mackey helped to draft a statute that would give the DEA the authority to chase drug traffickers anywhere in the world as long as the trafficking was connected to terrorism. When Hyde introduced the legislation, he made a point of drawing his colleagues' attention to its reach: "This bill makes clear that, even without direct U.S. nexus, if these drugs help support or sustain a foreign terrorist organization, the producers and traffickers can, and should, be prosecuted for material support of terrorism, whether or not the illicit narcotics are ever intended for, or enter, the United States."

The statute was passed in 2006. But questions among Justice Department officials about how to enforce it delayed implementation for another year. Some authorities worried that overzealous prosecutors might be tempted to use the narco-terrorism statute against teenage addicts caught with Afghan heroin. Follis, half-joking, told me, "The law was so wide open you could indict a bologna sandwich." But, when officials from the Justice Department proposed adding language to the statute that would more narrowly define terrorism, Mackey balked. "There's no need to spell out what we mean by terrorism," he said. "You know it when you see it."

In the next few years, the DEA lured two of the most wanted arms dealers in the world, Monzer al-Kassar and Viktor Bout, into drug-related conspiracies before arresting them, in Spain and Thailand, respectively. A former senior DEA official told me that, although Kassar and Bout were not charged with narco-terrorism, the agency's expanded investigative license gave it more tools with which to pursue them. David Raskin, a former senior prosecutor in the Southern District of New York, hailed the arrests. "They were not pure drug smugglers," Raskin said of Bout and Kassar. "But they were clearly bad people. And the DEA was pushing the envelope."

By 2008, the DEA was part of the so-called Intelligence Community, the military and civilian agencies that are the U.S.'s foremost espionage resources. Michael Braun, who is widely considered the architect of the agency's Afghanistan program, told reporters, "I have briefed more three- and four-star generals over the past 18 months than the agency has in the last 35 years." He added, "We are seeing more and more unequivocal connection with respect to al-Qaida being involved in drug-trafficking activities."

Some of the DEA's investigations took the agency to Africa. With large swaths of ungoverned territory, long histories of civil conflict, and ascendant jihadist groups, including Boko Haram and AQIM, the continent was viewed by the Defense Department as the next front in the war on terror. The DEA had identified West Africa as a major transshipment point for South American cocaine. As in Afghanistan, most of the drugs were flowing to Europe. But the DEA argued that money from that trade was ending up in the hands of terrorists. Lou Milione told me that Colombian drug traffickers who had been arrested in Eastern Europe had confessed to moving drugs through the Sahara with the help of Arab smugglers, along routes that overlapped with areas that had been occupied by AQIM. "If anything was moving through that region, AQIM had to be involved," Milione said. At the end of 2008, Derek Maltz, who led the DEA's special-operations division, was invited to a gathering of senior leaders of the Pentagon's newly established Africa Command. "I didn't want these guys thinking I was just another DEA agent coming to talk to them about drugs," Maltz told me. "I was there to talk to them about a matter of national security. And I wanted them to know from the start that it was personal."

Maltz, who is bald and strapping, began his presentation with a series of photographs. The first showed the Twin Towers in flames. The second was a picture of his brother, Michael, a former member of an Air Force pararescue team, waving triumphantly. The third showed a line of helicopters parked on an airfield in Afghanistan. There was a gap, where one helicopter was missing — Michael's. He had been



killed on duty, in 2003. "You guys are trained to go out and drop bombs on the enemy," Maltz told the assembled officers. "But sometimes you can't drop bombs. And that's where the DEA comes in. We have other ways of taking bad guys off the playing field." Harouna Touré (photo), was born in a small Malian farming village called Bamba, the youngest of nine children. The family lived in a one-room shelter made of wood and mud. His father was a day



laborer, who built houses and dug wells, and raised goats. Harouna attended school for only a few years before he joined his father at work. As soon as he was tall enough to drive, Touré, who is broad-shouldered and has dark, expressive eyes, moved to Gao. There he began working with his eldest brother, Almatar, who ran a small trucking company that transported goods and people across the Sahel, a semi-arid region that divides southern Mali from the north, where the Sahara begins. The area has bustled with unregulated trade since the 15th century. Roads are minimal, and driving 40 miles can take an entire day. “And by the time the trip is finished you will be sore from your head to your feet,”



Touré told me. But he loved it. “For me, it was fun, because every day was different,” he said. “I was able to see new people and new places.”

Gao is a seedy city of about 100,000 people on the Niger River, the region’s primary thoroughfare during the rainy season. Running a business in the Sahel, Touré told me, is by definition a quasi-legal activity. He and his brother transported food, fuel, construction materials, cigarettes, and Bangladeshi workers — most of which came into the country without proper inspection or paperwork. Drivers travelled in armed convoys to protect themselves and their loads from bandits. They also paid off various military units, tribal authorities, and ethnic militias, who controlled the territory along the way. Touré told me that he never encountered al-Qaida or its operatives during his travels, but that he did cross the territory of other armed groups. “Sometimes you had to give them money, or food, or fuel,” he said. “If you didn’t, you were going to have problems.”

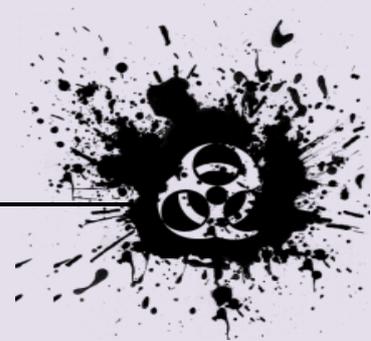
For a while, Touré thrived. He started a construction business that took on small projects in communities

along his truck routes. He employed dozens of people, and made enough money to travel to Paris and to take his mother on the hajj. “I was moving so fast people used to call me the mayor,” he said. But he took on new jobs before being paid for old ones, and fell into debt. By the end of 2008, he had a wife and two children. And he was paying for treatment for Almatar, who had developed diabetes and had to have one of his feet amputated.

By then, the DEA had begun to plan operations in West Africa. Among the agency’s targets was AQIM, which had recently bombed a United Nations office in Algiers and regularly kidnapped foreign tourists, diplomats, and journalists for ransom. But working on the ground in West Africa wasn’t anything like working in Latin America, where the DEA had employees in territory ranging from Tijuana to Tierra del Fuego. African operations were overseen largely from Rome. The narco-terrorism unit covering the region was based in Chantilly, Virginia. And the DEA had so few agents of color who spoke African languages that it was forced to rely on informants, who were paid only if their work resulted in prosecutions. (Spokespeople for the DEA denied that informants were paid according to whether their intelligence led to prosecutions, and that its conduct in Africa was substantially different from that on other continents.) “We had significant gaps in our knowledge,” a former DEA official who did intelligence work said. But, he added, “after we began putting money on the streets we went from zero to 60 in no time.”

One of the paid informants was Mohamed, whom agents described to me only as a Lebanese businessman with ties to Arab communities in South America and West Africa. He was eventually paid more than \$300,000 for his work on the Mali case.

In September 2009, an investigation into an unrelated plot led Mohamed to Oumar Issa, a compact Malian man with an easy smile and angular features, who worked as a day laborer and a driver at the port in Lome, Togo, another West African smuggling center.



Mohamed told Issa that he was looking for someone who could help a group of wealthy Colombians move large loads of drugs from Ghana, through Mali, to Spain.

Issa said, "I have people who have a foothold in the bush." He went to Mali to fetch Touré. The two had been friends since they were teenagers, but when Issa approached Touré about the drug deal Touré initially refused. Issa had strayed from Islam, and was known to drink too much. Touré didn't want anything to do with drugs, mostly for religious reasons. And he didn't think that he could pull off the kind of operation Mohamed wanted. Touré's contacts did not stretch all the way across the Sahara. As for al-Qaida, Touré told me, "I could never work with them. They treat black people like slaves."

But Touré says that Issa pleaded with him to reconsider. "I thought if I could just make that money everything would be fine," Touré told me. "I could start fresh." He enlisted Idriss Abdelrahman, who sold used auto parts at an open-air market in Gao. Together, Touré says, the three men concocted a scheme as elaborate as the DEA's. While the informants pretended to be FARC operatives, Touré, Issa, and Abdelrahman pretended to be part of a criminal network with links to al-Qaida. The plan, Touré said, was to get the traffickers to pay them a portion of the money up front and then disappear into northern Mali. It was clear that the traffickers had never been to Mali, Touré said, so it wasn't difficult to fool them.

On Oct. 6, 2009, Touré and Mohamed met for the first time, in a hotel room in Ghana. According to a DEA video recording of the meeting, Mohamed, a tall man, with a belly that hung over his belt, pulled out a map and proposed a route. Touré took it from him, and proposed another.

Touré told Mohamed that the trip wasn't going to be cheap. "There are Islamists, bearded guys — they're in the bush," Touré said. "You gotta give their chiefs something."

Mohamed called the Islamists "our brothers," and said, "Let them take as much as they want to fuck the Americans." He added, "You pay al-Qaida, right?"

Touré nodded. "You pay all that."

Mohamed asked for more proof. He told Touré that he would invite a commander from the FARC to join them in Ghana, if Touré would bring a representative from al-Qaida. The DEA flew in Walter Ramirez, a convicted drug dealer from the Detroit area who had been working as an informant for the agency for nearly a decade, to play the role of the FARC commander, David. Touré brought in Abdelrahman, who played a militia leader with links to al-Qaida.

The DEA maintains that, in the meetings that followed, the Malians offered ample testimony of their al-Qaida connections. The transcripts are hard to follow. It is clear, however, that the subject of al-Qaida came up repeatedly, and that it was often raised by the informants, in order to elicit incriminating statements.

On one occasion, Mohamed instructed the targets to talk in a bellicose fashion if they wanted to persuade David to move forward. "I have told him you are warriors," Mohamed said. "Let it come from your mouth so that I can repeat it. You understand?"

David waved a wad of cash. "You told me you needed to buy a truck — isn't that right?" he asked Touré. "Hey. \$25,000 so you can buy your truck." Mohamed suggested that David's show of trust deserved one in return.

"You have to know our power," Touré said. "You have to know our networks."

"That's it," Mohamed said. "That's what he wants." Later, he asked the Malians if they really had "power in the desert."

Abdelrahman chimed in: "We have cars, the power, and the weapons." Touré added, "We have crews. We have bases. We have weapons. We have everything."

On Dec. 18, 2009, when Touré, Abdelrahman, and Issa arrived in New York for their arraignment, the city was anticipating a major snowstorm. The three Malian men had never been so cold, or surrounded by so much concrete. They didn't understand what a cocaine deal in West Africa had to do with the United States, much less with terrorism. And they were skeptical of their court-appointed lawyers, who were employed by the same government that had ordered their arrest. "There were a lot of people, a lot of cameras, a lot of papers, a lot of talking, and no air," Touré recalled. "I couldn't think. I couldn't breathe."

The three men were housed in the Metropolitan Correctional Center, in lower Manhattan. An Arabic-speaking psychologist met with them to evaluate their emotional state, but since Arabic was not their first language — they spoke Songhay — neither Touré nor Issa



understood much of what she was saying. Abdelrahman had learned some rudimentary Arabic as a child, as a servant in the homes of wealthy Algerian families, but he didn't understand the psychologist's role. "She's asking if we want to kill ourselves," Abdelrahman told Touré and Issa. "Maybe what's coming next is so bad that we will prefer to die."

Later that day, the men made their first appearance in court. Julia Gatto, an attorney in the federal public defender's office, said of Abdelrahman, "When the judge called his name, he fell on his knees, and cried, 'I swear. I swear.'" Gatto said, "All I could think was, 'What kind of terrorists are these?'"

Gatto was assigned to represent Issa. "Usually when I meet a client in his circumstances he understands what it is to be arrested, or who a judge is, or what bail means," Gatto said. "There were basic concepts and words that he didn't understand, because he had never been here. He had never been in the system; he had never seen an episode of 'Law & Order.'"

The Malians' lawyers warned them that, under the terms of the narco-terrorism statute, the government's case was entirely winnable, and urged them to negotiate a plea. "When a jury hears 'al-Qaida,' it stops listening to everything else," Gatto said.

Touré thought that his lawyers either had given up on him or were plotting with the prosecution. It seemed absurd that his improvised boasts to David and Mohamed could be enough to convict him. He asked his relatives in Mali to sell his home and to finish a pending construction project, so that he could hire a private attorney. The relatives sent him \$30,000, enough only for a retainer. When the money ran out, the attorney quit. Touré then asked the judge to reappoint his original public defenders, and he immersed himself in the case. He spent nights listening to audio recordings from the sting operation, pointing out discrepancies in how the conversations were translated. Because he was illiterate, he asked his lawyers to read him all the documents filed in court, so that he would know what arguments were going to be made.

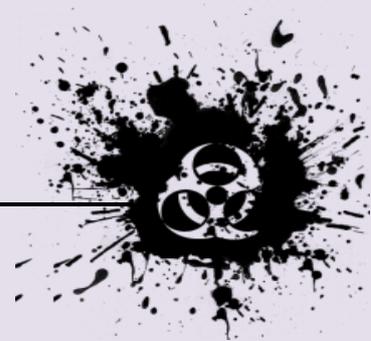
In early 2012, after the Malians had been in prison for more than two years, prosecutors announced that they had decided not to call Mohamed to testify. Abdelrahman's attorney, Zachary Margulis-Ohnuma, saw it as a breakthrough. "The government's whole case relied on Mohamed's credibility," he told me. By not calling Mohamed to testify, he believed, the prosecutors would throw his credibility into question. "I really believed we were going to win," Margulis-Ohnuma said.

On the eve of the trial, prosecutors brought up a seemingly unrelated piece of evidence: the story of an American missionary named Christopher Leggett, who had been killed by AQIM in 2009, the year that Touré, Abdelrahman, and Issa were arrested. Leggett, a 39-year-old father of four, had been shot near a school that he ran in a poor neighborhood in Mauritania. Prosecutors shared photographs showing groups of dark-skinned, turbanned men waving rocket launchers and automatic rifles over the heads of kidnapping victims — all of them white, all visibly terrified. The prosecutors argued that the murder demonstrated why terrorist conspiracies in Africa posed a threat to the United States. "It shows jurisdiction," Christian Everdell, one of the prosecutors, said.

"If you look at the people in those pictures, and you look at me and Idriss, you would think we are the same," Touré said. Margulis-Ohnuma said that he felt "sandbagged." As far as Touré was concerned, the fight was over. The government agreed to drop the narco-terrorism charge, and Touré, Abdelrahman, and Issa pleaded guilty to charges of providing material support to a terrorist organization, the FARC.

But Abdelrahman's allocution, the procedure meant to assure the judge that he understood the charges against him and accepted his guilt, was unconvincing. "I still continue to believe that I am totally innocent," Abdelrahman said. "But I have been scared by what I heard yesterday — yesterday people were talking a lot about al-Qaida and the pictures." Judge Jones advised Abdelrahman that she could not accept a plea if he did not think he was guilty, and suggested that perhaps the case should proceed to trial. Everdell, the prosecutor, proposed increasingly watered-down versions of what Abdelrahman was pleading guilty to. "I think what the defendant is protesting is that he didn't think, or in his mind he didn't think, that he was a terrorist, or this word 'terrorism' is causing a reaction, which I think is perfectly understandable," he said.

"I'm really confused about this whole plea issue," Abdelrahman said. "Accepting this plea means to accept things I did not do, which I find very difficult." He added, "Is that what the plea is, or is there something else?"



Jones told Abdelrahman that he would have to admit that he knew he was involved in a conspiracy that would have provided support to the FARC. Abdelrahman shook his head. “I didn’t know about that,” he said. “I was just helping Harouna. I wasn’t helping anyone else.”

Finally, Everdell allowed Abdelrahman to avoid mentioning the FARC, or even the word “terrorist.” “It’s not necessary that he knows the actual name of the organization,” he said.

The prosecution asked the court to sentence the men to 15 years in prison, five years short of the 20-year mandatory sentence for narco-terrorism. But Jones sentenced Abdelrahman to slightly less than four years, and Issa and Touré to five years. The sentences included the three years the men had already served. “This was a government sting operation,” Jones said. She added that she did not believe Touré was a member of al-Qaida. He was “motivated primarily, if not entirely, by money, not the desire to influence a government, in this case anti-American ideology, or for any political reasons.”

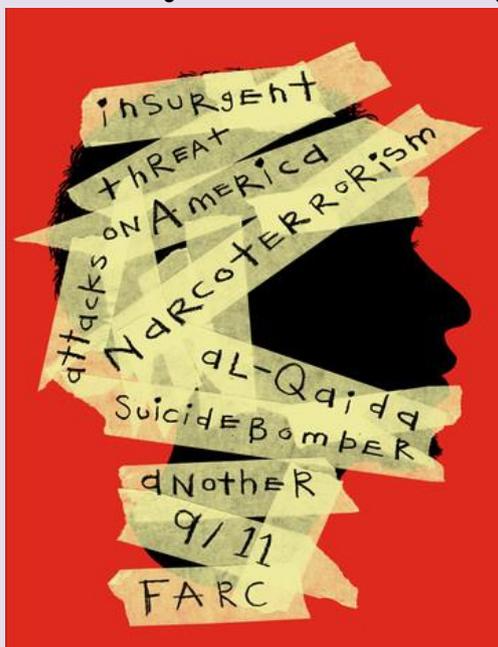
A month later, despite the reduced plea, the DEA’s deputy administrator, Thomas Harrigan, mentioned the case to the Senate as an example of the national-security threats that the agency had thwarted in West Africa: “It was the first time that members of al-Qaida ... admitted members — we had them on video and audio recording acknowledging that they were members of AQIM — providing services for what they presumed were members of the FARC to transport cocaine.” In a speech last year, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, cited the case in arguing against provisions that would reduce sentences for drug-related crimes. He said that the proposal “puts our national security at increased risk.”

The DEA continues to pursue similar cases. In September, two Pakistani men were extradited to the U.S. for selling drugs and weapons to DEA informants who posed as members of the FARC. Mark Hamlet, who succeeded Maltz as head of the DEA’s special-operations division, told the press that the Pakistani defendants “illustrate once again that drug trafficking and terror conspiracies often intersect.”

Neither the DEA nor the Justice Department would provide me with a complete list of alleged narco-terrorists who have been captured since 9/11. But last May the DEA’s Counter-Narco-Terrorism Operations Center published a report highlighting its achievements. The report notes that, of the State Department’s 58 officially designated foreign terrorist organizations, 23 have been linked by the DEA to “some aspect of the global drug trade,” including al-Qaida, Somalia’s Al Shabaab, Pakistan’s Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Nigeria’s Boko Haram. It also gives brief descriptions of more than 30 investigations

involving defendants captured around the world. Some have been charged under the narco-terrorism provision of the Patriot Act. In other cases, the DEA used the expanded authority it had been given under the law more as an investigative license. After the agency brought the defendants to the United States, they were charged with different crimes.

[Melinda Beck, special to ProPublica](#)



Most of the arrests resulted from sting operations, in which the connection between drug trafficking and terrorism was established in court as a part of conspiracies that were conceived by the DEA. An Afghan named Taza Gul Alizai sold heroin to an undercover DEA agent, and then, according to his lawyer, was lured onto a plane to the Maldives by the promise of a visit to a licensed dentist. In his case, the connection to terrorism came from the testimony of a DEA informant, who arranged the deal and pretended

to represent the Taliban.

Among those caught in the narco-terrorism stings are government officials such as Bubo NaTchuto, a former head of Guinea Bissau’s navy, who was arrested for drug smuggling in 2013, after an operation led by two DEA informants posing as members of the FARC. The same year, Dino Bouterse, the son of the president of Suriname, was arrested for



conspiring to import drugs. The investigation involved a group of DEA informants who posed as Mexican drug traffickers with connections to Hezbollah.

In a New York courtroom last year, Bouterse pleaded guilty to participating in a conspiracy to support Hezbollah. Not long afterward, however, Judge Shira Scheindlin said that the plea did not make the defendant a terrorist, much less a threat to the United States. “There’s no evidence that this defendant was actively looking for an opportunity to become involved with any terrorist organization,” she said, during sentencing. “Nor is there any evidence that he had any interest in attacking Americans, prior to the approach of these agents.”

Most of those accused under the narco-terrorism statute negotiated plea deals, but the three defendants who chose jury trials were convicted. Among them were an alleged Taliban sympathizer named Khan Mohammed, who was found guilty of plotting to fire rockets at an American airfield, and an Afghan opium dealer, known as Haji Bagcho, convicted of selling drugs and using the proceeds to pay the Taliban. Both men were given life sentences.

The case that may come the closest to representing the vision that gave rise to the narco-terrorism statute involved a Colombian trafficker allied with the FARC named José María Corredor Ibage, who was arrested in 2006 and convicted under the Patriot Act provision. Juan Manuel Santos, Colombia’s defense minister at the time, applauded the arrest, which did not occur as part of a sting operation. But, when asked whether he considered Corredor Ibage a terrorist, Santos told reporters that he was “more of a drug trafficker than a guerrilla.”

Referring to the DEA, Margulis-Ohnuma, the lawyer who represented Abdelrahman, said, “What’s happening is that they’re using techniques they’ve used to fight organized crime, because they’re familiar with them. Those techniques might work to infiltrate money-making groups. But they don’t work with terrorists. That’s not how we caught bin Laden. That’s not how we caught Awlaki.”

The DEA argues that there is much more to its narco-terrorism cases than what is presented in court. Before every sting, the agency uses wiretaps and its network of sources to investigate targets for links to drugs and terrorism. Once the connections are established, it stages a sting to capture the targets before they can do more harm. In order to protect the secrecy of its investigative methods, the DEA says, it withholds much of the evidence collected previously, unless it’s necessary to make a case. Most of the time, officials say, it’s not. Under U.S. law, the statements and activities recorded during stings are usually sufficient for prosecutors to file some combination of federal charges.

But the fact that the narco-terrorism cases, when brought to court, rely almost entirely on evidence gleaned from sting operations has fuelled debate among some security experts about the degree to which the alliances that they target pose a threat to the U.S. Benjamin Bahney, of the Rand Corporation, who is a leading expert on the financing of al-Qaida and ISIS, told me, “The national-security community has had a laser focus on this question for a long time, and the fact that there are no clear examples of it that have bubbled to the surface says to me that there’s no there there.”

ISIS, currently the foremost terrorist threat, is funded by oil revenues, taxes, and extortion but not by drug trafficking. Though al-Qaida is listed by the DEA as a drug-trafficking organization, the 9/11 Commission found “no substantial evidence” to support that characterization. Its report said, “Although there is some fragmentary reporting alleging that Bin Ladin may have been an investor, or even had an operational role, in drug trafficking before 9/11, this intelligence cannot be substantiated and the sourcing is probably suspect.” The Senate Foreign Relations Committee came to the same conclusion in August, 2009. “A lot of people have been looking for an al-Qaida role in drug trafficking, and it’s not really there,” one State Department official told committee members.

In the Afghan drug trade, the Taliban may be the least of the culprits. In 2009, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that the Taliban earned an estimated \$125 million from narcotics each year, about four percent of the estimated \$3.4 billion generated in Afghan opium sales. The bigger problem, according to Barnett R. Rubin, who served as an adviser to the late Richard Holbrooke, the U.N. Ambassador, might be America’s allies. “The empowerment and enrichment of the warlords who allied with the United States in the anti-Taliban efforts, and whose weapons and authority now enabled them to tax and protect opium traffickers, provided the trade with powerful new protectors,” he has written.

Brian Michael Jenkins, a counterterrorism expert at Rand, recently wrote that alliances between drug traffickers and terrorists “create dangers for both.” Terrorists understand that



criminal activities can “turn religious zeal into greed, transform political causes into for-profit enterprises, corrupt individuals and tarnish the group’s reputation.” For the drug traffickers, “When law enforcement problems morph into national security threats, the rules of engagement change,” Jenkins wrote. “Drone strikes could replace arrests and prosecutions.”

Skepticism about the extent to which terrorists engage in the drug trade also runs deep among numerous counterterrorism and national-security officials I spoke to at the FBI, the Pentagon, the White House, and the State and Treasury Departments. “In all these years, there’s never been a smoking gun in any of the cases I’ve seen,” Rudy Atallah, a former counterterrorism adviser at the Pentagon, told me. A former official at the Treasury Department who has investigated terrorist financing in Africa said that DEA agents posted there often scolded the intelligence community for not taking seriously the links between drug trafficking and terrorism. But, when pressed for proof, the agents said that the information was privileged or part of an ongoing investigation. “There was no corroborating evidence that senior terrorist leaders of Hezbollah, AQIM, or any other African groups had decided to get involved in the drug trade,” the former official said.

Lou Milione, who oversaw many of the investigations listed in the DEA’s narco-terrorism report, and Mark Hamlet, the head of the DEA’s special-operations division, acknowledged that other national-security agencies, including the CIA and the FBI, didn’t necessarily see a link between drugs and terror. “I have lunch with those guys all the time,” Hamlet said. “They look at our cases and say, ‘Interesting work, but I wouldn’t put it in my terrorism box.’ And I say that’s fine.”

Milione strongly defended the agency’s operation against the Malians. He said that while there may not have been evidence to corroborate Touré’s links to al-Qaida, nothing indicated that those links didn’t exist. He said that the DEA could have spent more time conducting surveillance against Touré in the hope of obtaining evidence to corroborate his statements about being affiliated with al-Qaida. But agents worried that an opportunity to infiltrate al-Qaida could have slipped away, with potentially disastrous consequences. “I was in New York when the towers were hit,” Milione said. “I often wonder

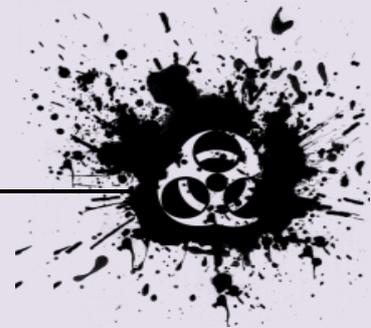
would we be better off if we had used a sting to try to get inside that group before the attack.”

[Bamako, the capital of Mali, has recently been the scene of attacks by Islamic extremists linked to al-Qaida. \(Jane Hahn for ProPublica\)](#)

Last October, about a month after Touré was released and returned to Mali, I went to see him. He suggested that we meet in Bamako, the capital, since Gao has become dangerous. In 2012, Mali’s

President, Abdoulaye Toumani Touré, resigned as a result of a military coup, and left the country. Gao, along with all of northern Mali, was attacked by a loose coalition of Tuareg tribesmen, extremists, and AQIM. Touré’s wife and sons fled the city to live with relatives in Bamako. The new President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, who was elected after he promised that he would have “zero tolerance” for corruption, promptly used \$40 million in public funds to buy an airplane. Poor harvests have caused serial food crises, and increasing poverty has pushed Mali close to the bottom of the U.N.’s Human Development Index.

The north, which covers two-thirds of the country but contains less than 10 percent of the population, has been hit the hardest. When Touré returned, tourism and trade, the most significant sources of income for people in the region, had dried up. Hotels, restaurants, and night clubs were either closed down or protected by armed guards who imposed strict



curfews on the guests, mostly journalists and diplomats. Rocket attacks and gun battles have killed dozens in recent months. Touré said that his homecoming was less than joyous. There was nothing left of his business. He found his wife distant. His sons, who were six and eight, were undernourished and were uncomfortable around him. The boys, he said, are so frightened of anything related to terrorists that he can't tell them that he was accused of being one. "I'll wait until they are a little older," he said. "First, I need to find a job."

Abdelrahman, after getting out of prison, moved with his mother and four children to Bamako. He had lost both of his wives; one had left him for another man after his arrest, and the other died shortly after he returned home. "She got sick when I was in America," Abdelrahman said. "It was very hard for her. A woman with children and no husband in Mali—sometimes she had to beg for food." He added, "She stayed strong, I think, because of the children, and because she wanted to see me one more time. Then she died."

Touré told me that he was thinking about leaving Gao, too. He even admitted that there were things he missed about the United States, or, at least, the version he had seen in prison. He remembered working out in the gym every day, and the English classes he took in the afternoon. Most nights, he said, he and other inmates would gather around a television set to watch basketball. He recalled that, after the Miami Heat lost the 2014 NBA championship series to San Antonio, he didn't sleep for several nights.

Since returning to Mali, he had felt himself sliding back into the same uncertainty that had landed him in trouble. Starting over with a terrorist charge on his record wasn't easy. "The name Touré has respect in Mali," he told me. "Just to say that I have been involved in this is a big shame for my family. People ask am I really Muslim, or am I just playing with God."

The more time I spent in Mali, the less I saw of Touré. But one day he showed up at my hotel neatly shaved, wearing a charcoal-colored pin-striped suit, a magenta shirt, and polished, square-toed alligator shoes. We sat in the restaurant of my hotel on the Niger River, drinking tall glasses of water. Touré explained that a friend from prison had bought him the suit for the trip back to Mali. He was about to meet with a member of parliament who had previously helped him get work with international aid organizations that needed goods transported across the Sahel.

"I know it's going to happen," he said, about securing employment. "I just wish I knew when." When asked about the gap in his work history, Touré had begun telling people that he had gone to the United States to work for a few years. "There are many people with the name Harouna Touré in Mali," he said. "Even if people know what happened, I can say that wasn't me."

I asked whether he saw the irony in his plan — lying about his identity was what had got him into trouble. "If I'm lying to find a job, God won't punish me," he said. Then he looked up with a smile, and said, "If I don't find a job, maybe I'm going to have to join al-Qaida for real."

Ginger Thompson is a senior reporter for ProPublica. A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Thompson was previously a national and foreign correspondent for the New York Times.

Airplanes, shadows worry national counterterrorism chief

Source: <http://wtop.com/j-j-green-national/2016/03/exclusive-airplanes-shadows-worry-national-counterterrorism-chief/>

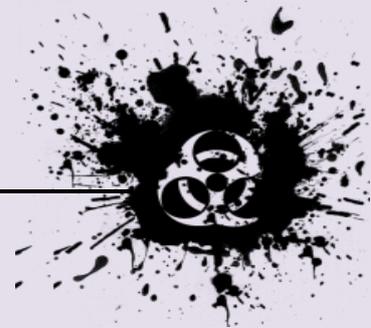
Mar 07 – As a result of withering attacks by the U.S.-led military coalition in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is "in a defensive crouch," according to U.S. military officials.

But the U.S. intelligence community's view is that ISIL still has two big advantages: numbers and the element of surprise.

"Two things keep me up at night," U.S. National Counterterrorism Center Director Nicholas Rasmussen told WTOP in an

exclusive interview. "Both are directly related to ISIL's proven ability, using the Internet to radicalize and instruct people, here inside the U.S., to launch attacks."

"One is that the possibility of an attack here inside the homeland by a group of networked operatives from a foreign terrorist organization who somehow may have escaped our intelligence community's collection," said Rasmussen.



According to a U.S. law enforcement official, the San Bernardino attackers who killed 14 people and wounded 22 others on Dec. 2 planned the attack while essentially living a double life.

Rasmussen's other concern is "the continued threat to our aviation sector."



"One only has to look overseas to see some of the incidents that have happened with aircraft - bombings attempted bombings -to realize, that remains a continuing and persistent vulnerability," he said.

He was referring to the downing of Metro Jet flight 9268 on Oct. 31. It broke up in-flight over Egypt's Sinai, after a bomb was detonated aboard killing all 224 passengers.

Within an hour of the crash, ISIL took responsibility. After several days, Russian and western authorities expressed certainty it was likely an ISIL-sponsored terror attack. ISIL later posted a picture of the device it claimed was used in one of its publications.

In early February, a suicide bomber was blown out of a Daallo Airlines flight leaving Mogadishu airport in Somalia. The attacker was sucked out of a hole in the plane, after detonating an explosive device inside a laptop at 11,000 feet. His body was found later on the ground. The other 73 passengers onboard survived and the crew managed to land the plane.

Authorities around the world are concerned that those successes have emboldened terrorist to outdo each other.

TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger told WTOP the agency is "paying very close attention to our processes, procedures and technologies designed to detect items that could harm an aircraft, damage an aircraft or destroy an aircraft."

Terrorism experts say that since the Metrojet crash, terrorists are becoming more skillful at creating bombs and slipping them past security. And Neffenger said the TSA has seen evidence of a developing competition among terrorists.

Neffenger said events in the past few months have made it clear that the threat to aviation in certain countries is much higher than at any time in recent years and "that competition means that the environment is a little more uncertain than it was before."

"From an intelligence perspective, we see terrorist groups continuing to aspire to carry out those kinds of attacks. And I don't envy my colleagues and partners with responsibility for aviation security because they have one of the most difficult jobs there is," said Rasmussen.

The difficulty, he said is being right 100 percent of the time.

"They can do everything right in 99.9 percent of the locations around the world where we are dealing with the traveling public, and it's that one-tenth of one percent vulnerability that keeps me up at night."

Despite his concerns, Rasmussen said the agency and the intelligence community, as a whole, have made significant progress.

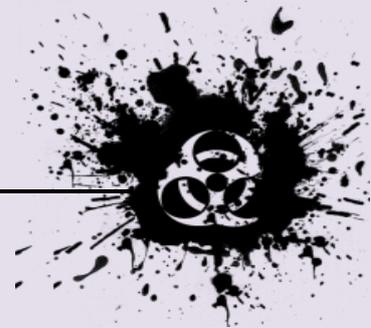
"We've had great success over time at constraining the capability of al-Qaida (as a centralized organization) to carry out large, mass-casualty attacks potentially here in the homeland. I think we've had a great deal of success shrinking the size of that potential threat."

But he acknowledged that today al-Qaida affiliates and ISIL are harder to handle.

"We have more terrorist actors coming at us from a more diverse array of places and locations around the globe. And that does affect our mission because we are stretched, I would argue."

Rasmussen said the agency estimates that 38,000 people have traveled to Iraq and Syria with the intention to join the ISIL organization. It's not clear how many of them remain because many have been killed in battle or have left the region.

The most pressing concern, he said, is the "large pool of people potentially able to carry out terrorist activities in their home areas of national origin, should they choose to



return home at some point in the future.”
 He said they are particularly concerned about “the subset of that 38,000; approximately 7,000 people who come from western countries.”
 He estimated that among them are 250 Americans who have gone to Iraq and Syria or have tried.
 Some of them he said “are on the ground fighting for one of the many extremist groups operating inside Syria right now.”

Recognizing that NCTC and other intelligence community employees are facing a grueling challenge trying to keep up with the exploding global terrorism problem, President Barack Obama paid NCTC a visit in December to applaud their efforts. Rasmussen said that visit went a long way toward attracting new people to the agency with the skills to fight what he acknowledges will be a long fight.



Danish 16-year old girl charged with planning to bomb schools

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-denmark-arrest-idUSKCN0WA1BQ>

Mar 08 – A 16-year-old Danish girl has been charged with planning a “terrorist” attack on two schools, one of them Jewish, after acquiring chemicals for bombs, police said on Tuesday.

A police press release said the girl's 24-year-old friend, who local media have said was a former fighter in Syria, had also been charged with complicity in preparing the bombs.

Danish broadcaster TV2 said the girl had recently converted to Islam. She was arrested on Jan. 13 and her friend the following day, accused of, among other things, having provided the girl with manuals for bombs. Both have pleaded not guilty. They have not been named by the authorities or media, according to Danish practice.

The Danish intelligence service said the arrests had not changed their assessment of the security threat, classified as “serious” since February 2015 when a gunman killed two people in shooting attacks on a debating event and a Copenhagen synagogue before being shot dead himself by police.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Combined with article in p.60 Denmark is placed on top European terrorist targets. Two known problems are also emerging from this article: the easiness of purchasing bombs’ ingredients from the market and availability of know-how most probably from the Internet. In addition, it is evident that schools have a primary role in early identification of students suspicious behaviours (not done here) and that families need to regain control of their children (not done here – unless been aware and supportive). It is for sure a multilevel complex problem and bears in mind the IRA spokesperson’s quota: “You have to be lucky all the times. We have to be lucky only once!”

ISIS Operative: This Is How We Send Jihadis To Europe

Source: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/mikegiglio/isis-operative-this-is-how-we-send-jihadis-to-europe#.hj0j7LvGX>

Jan 30, 2015 – An ISIS operative traveled across the Syrian border late last year, settled in a Turkish port city, and began work on a mission to sneak jihadis into Europe. It has been successful, he said, in an interview near the Turkey-Syria border: “Just wait.”

The operative, a Syrian in his thirties with a close-cropped black beard, said ISIS is sending covert fighters to Europe — as did two smugglers who said they have helped. He smuggles them from Turkey in small groups, he said, hidden in cargo ships filled with hundreds of refugees. He said the fighters intend to fulfill ISIS’s threat to stage attacks in the West. He views this as retaliation for U.S.-led airstrikes against the group that began in Iraq last summer and Syria last fall. “If someone attacks me,” he said, speaking with BuzzFeed News on condition of anonymity, “then for sure I will attack them back.”

Western governments worried even before the airstrikes that ISIS would find ways to get its battle-hardened fighters across their borders. The operative is the first ISIS member involved in these plans to discuss them with the press. He detailed a scheme that takes



advantage of the worst humanitarian crisis in a generation, which has sent 3.8 million refugees fleeing Syria's civil war, pouring more than 1.5 million into Turkey alone.

From Turkish port cities like Izmir and Mersin, many thousands of these refugees have ventured across the sea, aiming mainly for Italy. Then they often make for more welcoming countries like Sweden and Germany, turning themselves over to authorities and appealing for asylum. The operative said he worked with smugglers to slip fighters into this chaotic human tide. "They are going like refugees," he said.

Two refugee-smugglers in Turkey said they helped ISIS send fighters to Europe in this way. One put more than 10 of them on his ships, then got cold feet when asked to send more, he told BuzzFeed News last fall. Another said he'd been sending ISIS fighters for months and continues to do so. "I'm sending some fighters who want to go and visit their families," he said in an interview in southern Turkey, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Others just go to Europe to be ready."

Among his colleagues in the port city where he works, the smuggler has a reputation for transporting fighters. BuzzFeed News contacted him after meeting the ISIS operative, seeking to investigate the operative's claims. At first he denied that he smuggled fighters at all; then he said he needed "permission" to discuss the issue with a journalist. Soon after he revealed that he worked for the ISIS operative, who confirmed this and allowed the interview.

The smuggler said some fighters were Syrian. He could tell from their accents that others hailed from elsewhere in the Middle East, while still others spoke Arabic poorly, or not at all. Some told him they were from European countries, he said, and a few claimed to be from the U.S.

Despite crackdowns from Turkish authorities, ISIS continues to move its fighters across a porous, 565-mile border that has long been a transit point for jihadis traveling to and from Syria's war. Those who need them are given fake Syrian passports, the smuggler said, which can be relatively easy to obtain. After he receives the fighters, the smuggler said, he puts them up in a hotel, waiting for the passenger list for the refugee ship to fill and the weather to be right. They leave Turkey like any refugees: on small boats that steal them away to cargo ships anchored in international waters. The smuggler said he had 10 fighters waiting in one port city, "and we will send them on the next ship."

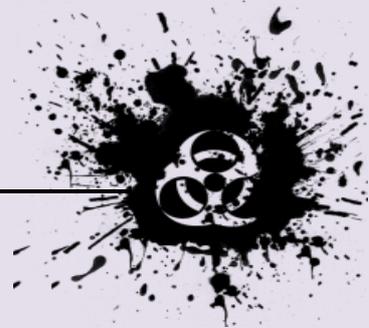
The ISIS operative said this method of moving fighters was important to the group because Western governments, along with Turkish authorities, have stepped up efforts to track jihadis returning from Syria, which makes plane travel from Turkey risky. The scrutiny promises to increase as Western capitals work to prevent terrorist attacks like those that struck France this month, leaving 17 dead. ISIS has more than 20,000 foreigners in its ranks, according to one recent estimate, with more than one-fifth of them citizens or residents of Western European countries. If these jihadis return to Europe in refugee ships, they can travel home via open land borders that receive far less scrutiny than airport security. The ships could also land Syrian or other Middle Eastern fighters in Europe amid the confusion of a refugee crisis that worsens by the day.

Two senior members of the U.S. Senate told BuzzFeed News they had knowledge that ISIS is smuggling fighters to Europe on refugee ships — the first confirmation from U.S. Congressmen that this scenario is underway. "I think it's safe to say that that goes on. To what degree, I'm not sure we know," Senate Intelligence Chairman Richard Burr said in an interview on Tuesday.

"We've heard that," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, adding that as the war in Syria grinds on, refugees and ISIS fighters alike will continue to use Turkey to transit in and out of the region.

"If you don't stabilize Syria, you'll never get a handle on this," Graham said. "You're going to have this dilemma of how do you tell a legitimate refugee versus a jihadist going someplace else."

The ISIS operative, a former member of the Syrian security forces, joined the opposition early in the civil war and led a rebel battalion under the banner of the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA). He pledged himself and his men to ISIS a year ago, compelled by its vision of building a hardline caliphate. He continued to work as a commander, battling both rebels and the regime, before moving to a role he described as "security," which involved assassinations. In Turkey, he said, he monitors rival rebel groups along the border in addition to his work sending fighters overseas. "It's our dream that there should be a caliphate not only in Syria but in all the world, and we will have it soon, God willing," he said.



He is a wanted man among his former rebel allies. One FSA commander said he had been hunting for the operative, echoing the details of his defection to ISIS and providing photos of the operative to confirm his identity. “He has killed a lot of FSA leaders,” the commander said.

The operative agreed to be interviewed at the urging of a former rebel who fought alongside him early in the war. Sitting at a restaurant in southern Turkey, he had two associates monitor the entrance from a car outside and received calls on his cell phone at 30-minute intervals to confirm that he was safe. He said he had received permission for the meeting from his superior in ISIS — an official referred to internally as an “emir.” “There are some things I’m allowed to tell you and some things I’m not,” the operative said.

Reached later by an intermediary with established connections to ISIS officials, the emir declined to speak with BuzzFeed News but confirmed that he had approved the meeting with the operative.

At the restaurant, the operative claimed that ISIS had sent some 4,000 fighters to Europe. Given international efforts to clamp down on the group, the number seemed improbably high, and he may have cited it as an attempt to boost the group’s stature and spread fear. His other comments suggested a more modest effort in which ISIS struggled to keep ahead of Turkish and Western authorities. “We need to smuggle them quickly,” he said of the fighters. But smugglers insisted on waiting until their ships filled well past capacity, the operative said, sometimes with as many as 700 people. “We can’t pay for all the refugees just to have enough to send the ship,” he said.

The operative said he was forced to move his work from city to city in response to Turkish efforts to crack down on refugee-smuggling. And he worried about being caught. He said he had been advised by his emir to pose as a refugee while in Turkey and to consider finding a regular job as a front.

He said several times that “the whole world” is fighting ISIS, in reference to the international coalition involved in the airstrikes, and said he hoped ISIS attacks in the West would break the coalition’s resolve, getting the strikes to stop. He also said he believed any attacks would target Western governments, not civilians — though even if he was sincere, it’s something over which he would have no control.

An official with the Turkish foreign ministry said in an emailed statement that authorities were working to combat refugee-smuggling generally. He pointed out that Europe accepts relatively few refugees through legal channels — a fact that likely increases the demand for smuggling. “Illegal migration has been an important issue and Turkey is effectively fighting against it,” said the official, who declined to be named. “Of course the most effective way to put an end to all these problems would be immediate action by the international community to solve the Syrian conflict.”

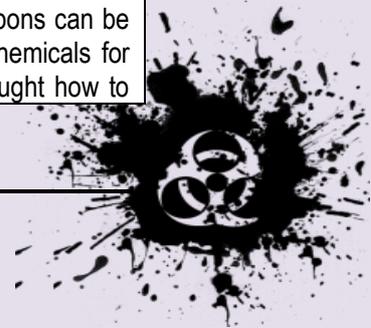
The official said Turkey’s government was unaware of ISIS smuggling fighters to Europe in refugee ships. “We do not have that particular intelligence,” he said.

He added: “Turkey has been taking very tight measures against [ISIS] with all the capabilities the government has.”

A prominent refugee-smuggler based in the coastal city of Antalya, who said he did not deal with jihadis, told BuzzFeed News that Turkish authorities had recently questioned him on the subject.

The same smuggler who said he works with ISIS fighters now said authorities grilled him about it too. “I told them no,” he said. “All the intelligence agencies around the world are following us and trying to catch us. But if someone asks me if I send fighters, I will say no, I only send refugees to help them find a better life.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: This is a January 2015 article. It could be just a propaganda movement on behalf of Islamic State. In 2016 many European security agencies (i.e. EUROPOL) warned that thousands of jihadists returned to their homelands. What the worst case scenario would be? There are some options – all of them bad: (1) Single attack against a European capital city; (2) Multiple attacks in a capital city; (3) Multiple attacks in various cities within the same country-target; (4) Single or multiple attacks against cities and towns not included in the high risk lists; and (5) Single or multiple attacks in major cities in different European countries. Weaponry might be a problem but recent Paris attacks proved that European borders are not that concrete as advertised. Non conventional weapons can be used such as knife and hatchets (remember similar attacks in China?). Nevertheless, chemicals for bomb construction are still freely available in the market and for sure they have been taught how to



make use of them (IEDs). Composition of attack teams: terrorists always based on the mighty element of surprise not in numbers. Five to 10 men (or women) would do the job and hostages would be the main objective (just keep in mind that terrorism is not about killing people; it is about spreading the message “you are next!” In addition to the above, state security forces do not have the manpower for 24/7 surveillance of all those into their “black lists” as proved by recent terrorist incidents. And here lays a very important problem identified (but not lesson learned). Even a single police officer can make the difference and break the chain of an attack if only following SOPs and be well informed about what is happening not only in his/her territory but also nationwide (also not done in many terrorist incidents). Finally it is us – the citizens! We must stop sending SMSs while walking in the street and start looking around and report any suspicious activity noticed. This is a very complex threat but be aware that even your own beloved cat will attack you if cornered without a possibility to escape!



Global Risks 2015 - 10th Edition

World Economic Forum

Source: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risks_2015_Report15.pdf

ISIS registration forms list names, contact info for 22,000 jihadists

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/03/10/isis-registration-forms-list-names-contact-info-for-22000-jihadists.html>

الإدارة العامة للحدود		
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام الإدارة العامة للحدود بيانات مجاهد		
لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله		
1	NAME	Junaid Hussein
2	FIGHTER NAME	Abu Hasayn Al Britani
3	MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME	Sharani
4	BLOOD TYPE	-
5	DOB AND NATIONALITY	1994/5/8 British
6	MARRIAGE STATUS	Married
7	ADDRESS & PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Birmingham
8	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	Secondary
9	LEVEL OF SHARIA UNDERSTANDING	Basic
10	PREVIOUS JOB	Electronics Specialist
11	COUNTRIES TRAVELLED THROUGH	Turkey - Pakistan - Syria
12	AREA ENTERED FROM	Jarabulus
13	WHO RECOMMENDED HIM?	Abu Al Taj - Tel Abyad
14	DATE OF ENTRY	-
15	HAVE THEY FOUGHT BEFORE?	He was with the army of Al Farqaan
16	WHAT ROLE WILL THEY TAKE?	Fighter
17	ANY SPECIAL SKILLS?	-
18	CURRENT PLACE OF WORK	-
19	SECURITY DEPOSIT	-

Mar 09 – Tens of thousands of documents, containing 22,000 names, addresses, telephone numbers and family contacts of Islamic State jihadis, have been obtained by Sky News.

Nationals from at least 51 countries, including the U.K., had to give up their most personal information as they joined the terror organisation. Only when the 23 question form was filled in were they inducted into IS.

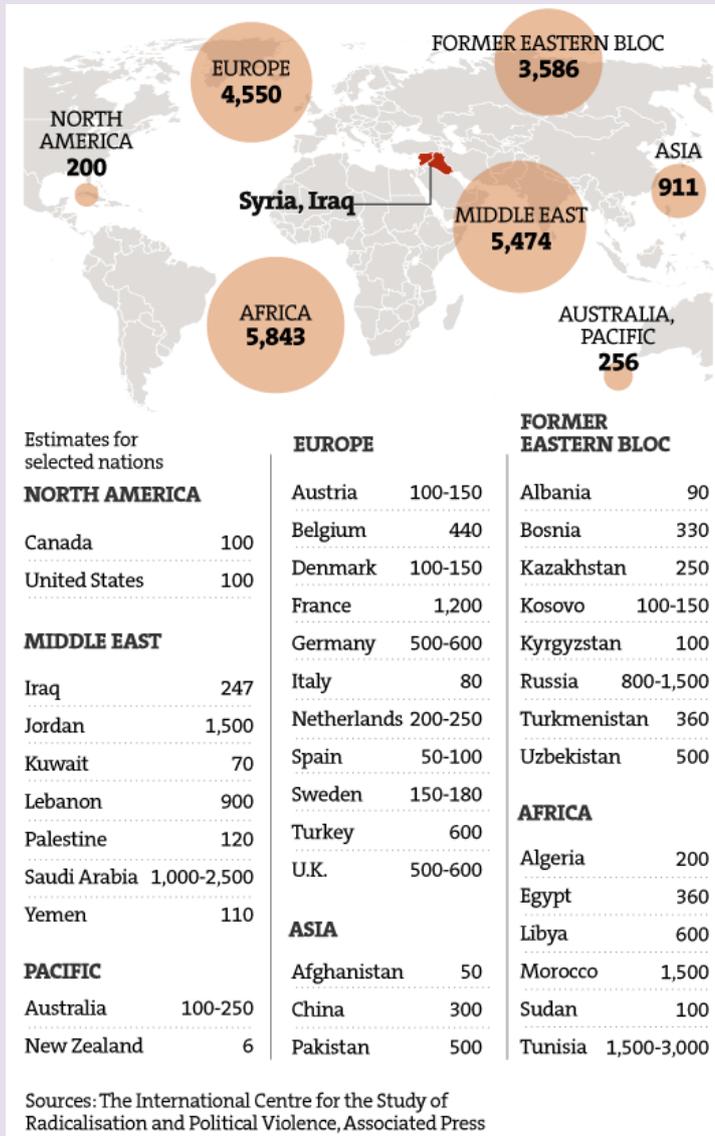
A lot of the names and their new Islamic State names on the registration forms are well known.

Abdel Bary, a 26-year-old from London joined in 2013 after visiting Libya, Egypt and Turkey. He is designated as a fighter but is better known in the U.K. as a rap artist. His whereabouts are unknown.

Another jihadi



named in the documents, now dead after being targeted in a drone strike, is Junaid Hussain, the head of Islamic State's media wing who along with his wife, former punk Sally Jones, plotted attacks in the U.K. Her whereabouts are unknown.



Reyaad Khan from Cardiff, who also entered in 2013, is also among those found among the registration forms. He was well known for appearing in a highly produced Islamic State propaganda video. He was later killed.

But the key breakthrough from the documents is the revealing of the identities of a number of previously unknown jihadis in the U.K., across northern Europe, much of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in the United States and Canada.

Their whereabouts are crucial to breaking the organisation and preventing further terror attacks.

Many of the men passed through a series of jihadi "hotspots" - such as Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, Pakistan and Afghanistan - on multiple occasions, but were apparently unchecked, unmonitored and able to both enter Syria to fight and then to return home.

One of the files marked "Martyrs" detailed a brigade manned entirely by fighters who wanted to carry out suicide attacks and were trained to do so.

Some of the telephone numbers on the list are still active and it is believed that although many will be family members, a significant number are used by the jihadis themselves.

The files were passed to Sky News on a memory stick stolen from the head of Islamic State's internal security police, an organisation described by insiders as the group's SS. He had been entrusted to protect the organisation's core secrets and he rarely

parted with the drive.

The man who stole it was a former Free Syrian Army convert to Islamic State who calls himself Abu Hamed.

Disillusioned with the Islamic State leadership, he says it has now been taken over by former soldiers from the Iraqi Baath party of Saddam Hussein.

He claims the Islamic rules he believed in have totally collapsed inside the organisation, prompting him to quit.

I met him in a secret location in Turkey, and he said IS was giving up on its headquarters in Raqqa and moving into the central deserts of Syria and ultimately Iraq, the group's birthplace.

He also claimed that in reality Islamic State, The Kurdish YPG and the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, are working together against the moderate Syrian opposition.

Asked if the IS files could bring the network down he nodded and said simply: "God willing".

From the attacks in Tunisia and the Bataclan massacre in Paris it is clear that IS is refocusing its base of operations abroad and is intent on carrying out high profile attacks in Western countries, something that security chiefs across Europe are warning about right now.



Algeria army recovers Stinger missiles from slain fighters

Source: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/170371/algeria-army-recovers-stinger-missiles-from-slain-fighters>



Mar 11 – Algerian troops recovered six Stinger shoulder-fired ground-to-air missiles in an operation near the Tunisian border in which three suspected extremists were killed, the defence ministry said on Friday.



The missiles, made famous by their use by the mujahedeen against Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s and Washington's subsequent multi-million dollar programme to buy them back to stop them falling into the hands of Al-Qaeda, were seized along with an array of other weaponry.

They included suicide belts, rocket-propelled grenades and 20 Kalashnikov assault rifles, the ministry said. The operation took place in the Guemar district of El Oued province, around 600 kilometres (375 miles) southeast of Algiers, on Thursday evening.

At least five dead as gunmen attack Ivory Coast beach resort

Source: <http://news.yahoo.com/hotel-under-attack-ivory-coast-beach-resort-witnesses-152247451.html>

Mar 13 – At least 16 people were killed (4 Europeans) on Sunday when heavily-armed gunmen opened fire in the Ivory Coast resort town of Grand-Bassam, leaving bodies strewn on the beach. "At the moment there are five dead," a military source said on condition of anonymity after the assault in the resort popular with Westerners.

An AFP photographer said he saw seven bodies on the **beach** and another in the **Etoile du Sud (Southern Star) hotel**, one of the establishments that came under attack in the country's former French colonial capital.



The assailants, who were "heavily armed and wearing balaclavas, fired at guests at the L'Etoile du Sud, a large hotel which was full of expats in the current heatwave," one witness told AFP.



It was not immediately clear who was behind the shooting in the resort, which lies on the Gulf of Guinea around 40 kilometres (25 miles) east of the commercial hub Abidjan.

Another witness told AFP: "The shots took us by surprise and now we are staying holed up."

A crowd of several hundred people had gathered at the entrance to Grand-Bassam's French quarter at the edge of the old town, where a dozen ambulances were on standby.

An AFP journalist saw around a dozen people, including an injured Western woman, being evacuated in a military truck.

Military vehicles carrying heavy machine guns were also heading to the scene, along with armed traditional hunters known as

Dozo.

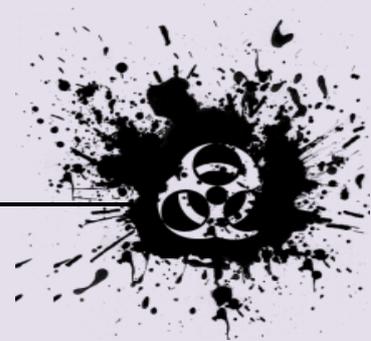
Attacks in recent months on luxury hotels in the capitals of neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso have left dozens of people dead, leaving West African nations scrambling to boost security in the face of a growing jihadist threat.



Weapons used by terrorists in Ivory Coast

Analysts have voiced fears that Islamist attacks could spread to countries such as Ivory Coast and Senegal, and the region's US-led Flintlock military exercises that wrapped up recently focused on the need to counter jihadism.

In Burkina Faso and Mali, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for deadly attacks on hotels popular with foreigners in November 2015 and in January this year.



The Mali attack in November left 20 people dead, while gunmen killed 30 people in the assault on a top hotel in Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou in January.

Ivory Coast is the world's top cocoa producer. Its former president Laurent Gbagbo is currently on trial at the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity over deadly violence that followed the disputed 2010 election.

More than 3,000 people were killed in five months of unrest after the presidential polls, when Gbagbo refused to concede defeat to Alassane Ouattara.

Ouattara was re-elected for a second presidential term late last year, hoping to turn the page on the violence and revive Ivory Coast's conflict-scarred economy.

Home to some 80,000 people, **Grand-Bassam holds UNESCO World Heritage status** thanks to its elegant colonial-era facades. The town has several hotels frequented by expatriates.

UNESCO describes Grand-Bassam as a late 19th and early 20th century colonial town that "bears witness to the complex social relations between Europeans and Africans, and to the subsequent independence movement".

"As a vibrant centre of the territory of French trading posts in the Gulf of Guinea, which preceded modern Cote d'Ivoire, it attracted populations from all parts of Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean Levant," the UN cultural agency says on its website.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Just another proof that the unexpected can happen anywhere, anytime! Also notice the "gunmen" in the title of this Yahoo article! Too much political correctness is bad for citizens' health! Unless it is endless fear... (read also: "Armed attackers" /Mirror – UK; "Attackers scream 'Allah Akbar" – Daily Mail – UK). Terrorists are advised to leave their ID behind because they confuse Western main stream media and their readers! This was a copy cat attack similar to the June 2015 terrorist attack against Imperial Marhaba Hotel in Sousse, Tunisia – were British, German and Belgian tourists were executed and the more recent (Jan 2016) attack against Splendid Hotel and the nearby Cappuccino cafe in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso – were French, Swiss, Dutch, and Canadian visitors were also executed. **(UPDATE 14/3):** AQIM claimed responsibility for the attack.

Murder of Uruguay Jewish Man Spurs Warning of Islamic Terrorism's Arrival to Latin America

Source: <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/335787/murder-of-uruguay-jewish-man-spurs-warning-of-islamic-terrorisms-arrival-to/>

Mar 13 – **The murder of a Jewish businessman in Uruguay marks the arrival of Islamist terrorism from the Middle East to Latin America,** a Jewish group said.

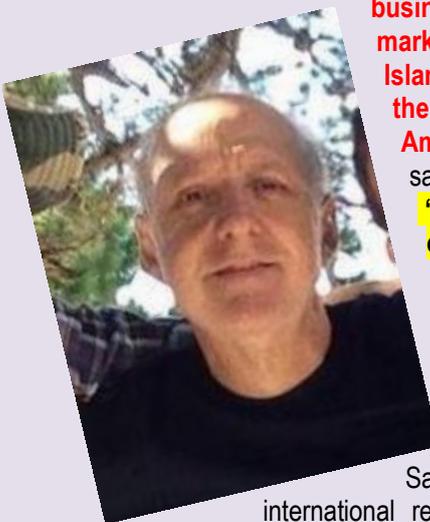
"The murderer's cry of 'Allahu Akbar' (God is Great) points to the transplantation of Islamist terrorism from the Middle East to Latin America," Shimon

Samuels, the director of international relations for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said in a letter to Uruguay's president, Tabare Vazquez.

Samuels also wrote: "From the knife to the bullet to the bomb is the terrorist route exposed by the assassinated AMIA Prosecutor, Alberto Nisman." He added that "Gaza has no place in Uruguay."

David Fremd, 55, was murdered in the small town of Paysandu on March 8. His alleged killer, an Uruguayan named Carlos Omar Peralta Lopez, 35, is under arrest. Lopez, who adopted the Islamic name of Abdullah Omar, told authorities the day after the murder, "I killed a Jew following Allah's order," according to El Observador newspaper.

On Saturday, a demonstration in memory of Fremd was held in Paysandu. France, through its embassy in Uruguay, condemned the attack, as did the Uruguayan Catholic Church.



According to a Wiesenhal Center representative in Latin America, Ariel Gelbung, “a hemispheric approach is necessary to keep



the Middle East out of the Americas.”

This kind of anti-Semitism “is uncharacteristic for Uruguay,” according to Dina Siegel Vann, director of the American Jewish Committee’s Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs. “The violent attack demonstrates again that vile hatred of Jews transcends borders. AJC stands with our Uruguayan Jewish

partners, who, together with government authorities, must now be ever more vigilant in ensuring Jewish security and safety.”

The attack by an individual comes in a region that has seen deadly bombings in Buenos Aires, Argentina, of the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and the AMIA Jewish center in 1994. Iran through the Hezbollah terrorist group has been accused of plotting those attacks, though no one has been brought to justice. Nisman charged that the Argentine government was involved in covering up Iran’s role in the AMIA bombing. He was found shot to death in January 2015 in his Buenos Aires apartment; the official cause of death has yet to be determined. The new modality of anti-Semitic attack is expected to be included on the agenda when more than 400 global Jewish leaders meet in Buenos Aires at the Special Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress from Tuesday to Thursday in conjunction with a meeting of the WJC Executive Committee.

“What happened on Tuesday has become an alert situation not only for the Jewish community of Uruguay, but for the Jewish world as a whole,” Claudio Epelman, executive director of the Latin American Jewish Congress, the regional branch of WJC, told JTA.

Israel Is Building a Secret Tunnel-Destroying Weapon

Source: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/10/israel-is-building-a-secret-tunnel-destroying-weapon-hamas-us-gaza/>

Mar 10 – Bassem al-Najar has been homeless

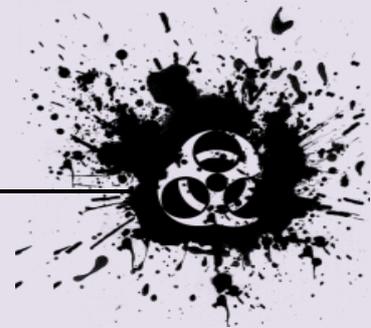


since August 2014, when Israeli warplanes demolished his house during the 50-day conflict that killed more than 2,000 Gazans and 72 Israelis. Najar lost his brother in the war, and for the next four months, he lived in a U.N.

school with his wife and four children, along with 80 other families. They moved into a prefabricated hut, resembling a tool shed, in December 2014, where they expected to live for just a few months until their home was rebuilt. Today, he is still one of an estimated 100,000 Gazans who remain homeless.

Yet while much of Gaza still lies in ruins, what has taken less time to rebuild is Hamas’s subterranean tunnel network, the very thing Israel entered Gaza to destroy.

During Operation Protective Edge, the name used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for the 2014 war, the military uncovered



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – March 2016

and destroyed 32 cross-border tunnels that snaked for miles beneath Gaza and reached into Israeli territory. Many of them, according to the IDF, began inside homes and mosques in Gaza and ended inside or on the edge of Israeli border towns.

During the 2014 war, Hamas fired more than 4,800 rockets and 1,700 mortars at Israel, according to Amnesty International. Thanks to the Iron Dome, a first-of-its-kind anti-rocket system developed by Israeli engineers with the help of nearly \$1 billion from the U.S.

government, many of them were shot out of the sky before they could reach civilian towns and cities. The Iron Dome explains the extremely low number of civilian deaths on the Israeli side. But there is no Iron Dome-type system that has proved as effective at thwarting Hamas's tunnel network.

Although they are still waiting for their homes to be rebuilt and are living with just a few hours of electricity a day and barely any potable tap water, Najar and other Palestinians are not angry with Hamas for rebuilding the tunnels, which could lead Israel to wage another war to destroy them.

"What angers me is that the occupation is still imposing a siege on Gaza, which prevents the building process," he says.

In fact, since the cease-fire between Israel and the militant Islamist group Hamas, more than 3 million tons of construction material have entered Gaza through Israel's Kerem Shalom border crossing, according to Israeli figures. The first major tunnel attack occurred near that same crossing in 2006, when 19-year-old Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured by

Hamas militants. Hamas held Shalit in Gaza until 2011, when Israel exchanged him for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners. The prospect of capturing another Israeli soldier, and concluding another prisoner exchange, is one reason the tunnels are so valuable to Hamas. According to experts in Palestinian politics, there is actually a surplus of cement and other construction materials in Gaza, leading to a black market that has enabled Hamas to easily repair the tunnels that Israel destroyed in 2014 and build new ones.

"It's no secret that Hamas has its ways of getting these construction materials," says Mkhaimar Abusada, a professor of political



Hamas has made no secret of its efforts to fortify its labyrinth of tunnels, which have emerged as the group's most powerful weapon — far more effective than its rocket arsenal. In just a handful of tunnel attacks over the course of that summer, Palestinian militants managed to kill 11 Israeli soldiers and capture the bodies of several soldiers in the hope of arranging a future prisoner exchange, in which Israel would trade Palestinian prisoners for the return of soldiers' bodies.

"The resistance continues on its path of liberation of the land," Ismail Haniyeh, a political leader of Hamas and former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, told a crowded mosque in Gaza City in late January.

science at Al-Azhar University in Gaza. “There are some Palestinians who buy cement to rehabilitate their homes at the fixed price of 560 NIS (new Israeli shekels) per ton [roughly \$143] but sell it on the black market for 800 NIS [roughly \$205]. This is part of the problem. Some of the Palestinians aren’t using the cement to rebuild their homes.”

While Israel struggles to prevent the construction material it is allowing into Gaza from ending up in Hamas tunnels, it is developing a secret military weapon designed to eradicate the problem.

According to intelligence officials, Israeli engineers are working tirelessly to develop what’s being called the “Underground Iron Dome” — a system that could detect and destroy cross-border tunnels. According to a report on Israeli Channel 2, the Israeli government has spent more than \$250 million since 2004 in its efforts to thwart tunnel construction under the Gaza border.

The United States has already appropriated \$40 million for the project in the 2016 financial year, in order “to establish anti-tunnel capabilities to detect, map, and neutralize underground tunnels that threaten the U.S. or Israel,” said U.S. Defense Department spokesman Christopher Sherwood. While the majority of the work in 2016 will be done in Israel, Sherwood added, “the U.S. will receive prototypes, access to test sites, and the rights to any intellectual property.”

Contrary to reports quoting the Israeli Defense Ministry, which claimed that the United States had already earmarked \$120 million for the project, Sherwood said that appropriations are done annually, thus there is no guarantee that an additional \$40 million will be appropriated in 2017 and 2018.

Among the Israeli companies working to develop the new anti-tunnel mechanism are Elbit Systems and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, the same company that developed the Iron Dome rocket defense system. Both companies declined to provide any details due to security reasons, as did the IDF and other Israeli officials, who fear that such information could play into Hamas’s hands. Yet according to intelligence sources who spoke with Foreign Policy on the condition of anonymity, the system involves seismic sensors that can monitor underground vibrations.

IDF Chief of Staff Gen. Gadi Eizenkot hinted at these efforts in February. “We are doing a lot, but many of [the things we do] are hidden from the public,” he told a conference at Herzliya’s Interdisciplinary Center. “We have dozens, if not a hundred, engineering vehicles on the Gaza border.”

Yaakov Amidror, a former national security advisor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former head of Israel’s National Security Council, told FP the confidential new system is not yet operational, but it is “in a testing mode.” Since the beginning of 2016, nearly a dozen Hamas tunnels have collapsed on the Palestinians who were building them, killing at least 10 of the group’s members. While winter rains have been blamed as the culprit, the wave of collapses has led many here to wonder if Israel’s new secret weapon is already at work.

Asked by the Palestinian *Maan News Agency* in February whether or not Israel was behind recent tunnel collapses, the coordinator of government activities in the Palestinian territories, IDF Maj. Gen. Yoav Mordechai, responded, “God knows.”

Hamas, too, is paying close attention to Israeli attempts to thwart its tunnel network. Haniyeh, the senior Hamas official, told Gazans at Friday prayers on Feb. 19 that the Islamist group had “discovered an underground vehicle on which were installed cameras and sensors to monitor tunnels and fighters.”

Even if Haniyeh’s claim is true, Israel still appears unable to completely counter Hamas’s subterranean advantage. And if the development of the Underground Iron Dome is any indication, it could be several years before Israel is able to employ an effective anti-tunnel system.

In the meantime, Israeli residents of Gaza border towns are growing frustrated with what they perceive as a government that lacks any vision beyond fighting a war with Hamas every two or three years. Israel has fought three wars with Hamas since it withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005 — 2008’s Operation Cast Lead, 2012’s Operation Pillar of Defense, and 2014’s Operation Protective Edge. While border residents wish the government and military would do more to protect them from Hamas’s tunnels, many of them also want



the government to help the people of Gaza. “Gaza is a pot that’s about to boil over, and unless something changes there, nothing is going to change here,” says Adele Raemer, who lives a mile from the Gaza border in Nirim, an Israeli settlement. “People can’t live like that without exploding. They are going to go underground and build tunnels if that’s how they are going to make a living.” “People can’t live like that without exploding. They are going to go underground and build tunnels if that’s how they are going to make a living.” According to veteran Israeli journalist Avi Issacharoff, the former Arab affairs correspondent for *Haaretz*, digging tunnels is one of the best ways to make a living in Gaza. Tunnelers typically earn about \$400 a month, says Issacharoff. It’s a decent salary by Gaza standards, where unemployment is among the

world’s highest, at 38 percent, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

“It’s a two-pronged problem,” says Raemer, a New York native and mother of four. “On the one hand, we have to protect ourselves, but on the other hand, we have to make it livable on the other side. I believe the people in Gaza want the same things we want here: security, safety, the ability to put food on the table for our children. It’s just complicated when you have Hamas ruling there. They’ve held us and the people of Gaza hostage.”

Raemer ends our conversation with a lament: “We’re worse off now than we were before Operation Protective Edge, because Gaza is getting worse. Operation Protective Edge was supposed to protect me.”

It’s a feeling echoed by many Israelis living along the Gaza border, who would like to see a long-term solution to the problem that is Gaza, not just the symptom that is the tunnels.

U.K. to destroy biometric information of 45 terror suspects due to botched paperwork

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160311-u-k-to-destroy-biometric-information-of-45-terror-suspects-due-to-botched-paperwork>

Mar 11 – **British security agencies will have to destroy fingerprints and DNA of forty-five terror suspects because the police retained the biometric samples longer than the law allows.**

New figures show that the U.K. counterterrorism database holds the biometric details of nearly 8,000 individuals.

The law does allow the police to keep biometric information of terrorism suspects indefinitely, but certain paperwork must be completed within a certain period of time to allow that, and if the paperwork is not completed, the samples must be destroyed.

The *Telegraph* reports that the administrative error means that vital forensic evidence will be lost.

A new [report](#) by Alastair MacGregor QC, Commissioner for the Retention and Use of Biometric Material, revealed for the first time that the number of terror suspects whose biometric information is now being held in Britain has reached 7,800. The number is higher than what has previously been reported.

Informed sources told the *Telegraph* that the biometric information that must be destroyed is of suspects who have been arrested by police but never charged.

The law mandates that biometric material from suspects who were not charged must be destroyed or deleted within six months of being collected.

The police can request that the biometric materials be held indefinitely if they apply for a “national security declaration,” or NSD.

MacGregor said police had told him “urgent steps” were now being taken to “procure the speedy deletion” of biometrics that had remained on the counterterrorism databases beyond their lawful retention date.

“I understand that by October 31 2015 handling and other delays had led to a situation in which the statutory retention periods in respect of the biometric records of at least some 450 individuals had expired before NSDs could be or had been made in relation to them,” said MacGregor in his annual report.



“Although it seems unlikely that NSDs would have been applied for and made in relation to more than a small proportion of those records, I also understand that in about 10 percent of those cases it is possible that NSDs would have been applied for.

“Indeed, in at least three of those cases such applications had in fact been made and approved.”

MacGregor’s report also revealed that the U.K. national counterterrorism databases hold material on 7,800 suspects, up from 6,500 two years ago.

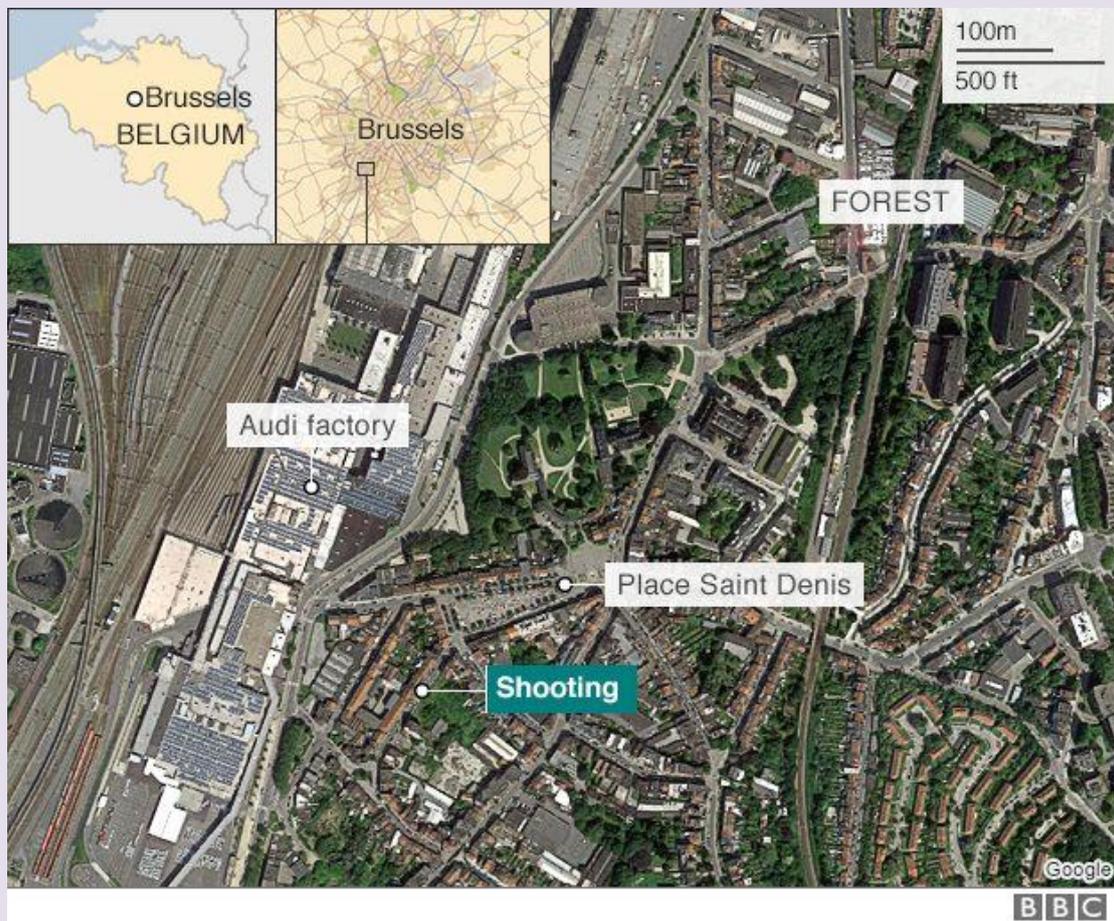
About 55 percent of the latest total, or 4,350 individuals, have never been convicted of a recordable offense.

— Read more in [Biometrics Commissioner: annual report 2014 to 2015 \(Gov.uk, 11 March 2016\)](#).

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Please do that just to prove how right Einstein was (on stupidity)!

Brussels manhunt after gunfire in raid 'on Paris suspects'

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35809974>

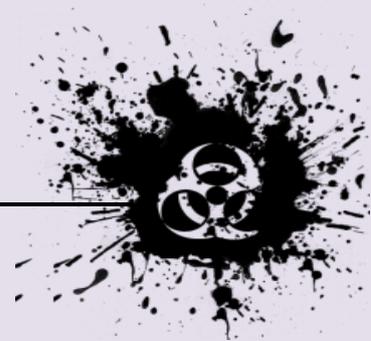


Mar 15 – Belgian security forces are hunting for at least two men after shots were fired at police during a counter-terrorism raid in the capital, Brussels.

Three officers were reportedly hurt, one of them seriously. Streets in the suburb of Forest have been sealed off.

A BBC reporter at the scene says there has been more gunfire subsequently.

The raid is linked to the Paris attacks which killed 130 people last November. Islamic State (IS) militants have claimed responsibility for the attacks.



After Tuesday's incident, police said they were pursuing at least two suspects who had escaped over rooftops.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: When you make a "raid" you also cover all routes of possible escape – roofs included (unless there was no time for make plans). **Also the photo below** (from the same incident reveals three important things and stress the fact that we never learn from previous problems



identified: (1) modern police forces need to have weaponry/firepower similar to that of the terrorists (pistols vs. AK-47); (2) it is time that all police personnel should wear helmets during field operations;



and (3) bullet proof vests are not long enough to protect the full torso – it is not only heart and lungs that preserve life!

Belgian police arrest two suspects linked to November's Paris terror attacks

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160316-belgian-police-arrest-two-suspects-linked-to-november-s-paris-terror-attacks>

Mar 16 – Two suspects have been detained by Belgian police in connection with Tuesday's shooting during a house raid in Brussels, in which another suspect was killed. The operation is linked to investigations into November's Islamist attacks in Paris.



Belgian VTM TV reported Wednesday that police had been searching for two suspects who fled after officers killed an unidentified armed person Tuesday, during a firefight which erupted during what officers had expected to be a routine search.



Bloomberg reports that the shootout began on Tuesday afternoon in Brussels' southern neighborhood of Forest. A suspect armed with a Kalashnikov rifle was killed during the operation. He was identified as Mohamed Belkaid, a 35-year old Algerian man illegally residing in Belgium. Belgian federal prosecutor Thierry Werts said that an ISIS flag, a Salafist Muslim book, and a Kalashnikov assault rifle were found beside his body.

Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel said that the search was continuing, adding that it was "linked to the attacks in Paris."

Three police officers were wounded during the Tuesday firefight, while a fourth was hit by gunfire during the police mobilization which followed.

Justice Minister Koen Geens said that a French policewoman, who had been helping in a joint French-Belgian investigation, was among the three officers wounded in the initial exchanges.

Michel convened a security and intelligence chiefs' emergency meeting Wednesday.

Michel told RTL radio Wednesday that the police plan additional operations in the coming days. "The threat remains," he said. He added that Belgium would review its level of alertness and consider possible extra measures during the day.

DW reports that Belgian security forces have been searching for suspects and associates of the militants involved in the November 2015 Paris attacks. One of the prime suspects, 26-year-old Brussels-based Frenchman Salah Abdeslam, is still on the run. He left Paris hours after his brother blew himself up outside a cafe.

Abdeslam stayed for three weeks after the Paris attacks in an apartment in the Schaerbeek district in north Brussels. Ten people who have been arrested in the months since the attacks, mostly for helping Abdeslam, are in police custody. Since Tuesday, there has been an increase and police and military presence on the streets of Brussels.



Death of ISIS's most senior military leader confirmed

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160315-death-of-isis-s-most-senior-military-leader-confirmed>



Mar 15 – **A senior ISIS leaders, Omar the Chechen, has died after being seriously injured in a U.S.-led coalition strike in northeastern Syria**, the Pentagon confirmed Monday.

The Pentagon's announcement clears up the fate of Omar al-Shishani a week after a U.S. official said the most-wanted militant had been targeted in a 4 March attack on the jihadist's convoy.

"We believe he subsequently died of his injuries," Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, told AFP.

On Sunday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said



Shishani had been “clinically dead” for several days.

Daily Beast reports that Shishani, whose real name was Tarkhan Batirashvili, was one of the most-wanted ISIS leaders, and the United States put a \$5 million reward on his head.

He was a Chechen who grew up in the Pankisi Gorge, a mainly ethnic Chechen region of the former Soviet state of Georgia.

In May 2013, when ISIS began moving into Syria from Iraq, he was appointed the group’s military commander for the north of the country.

Richard Barrett of the New York-based Soufan Group has described him as ISIS’s “most senior military commander,” adding that he had been in charge of key battles.

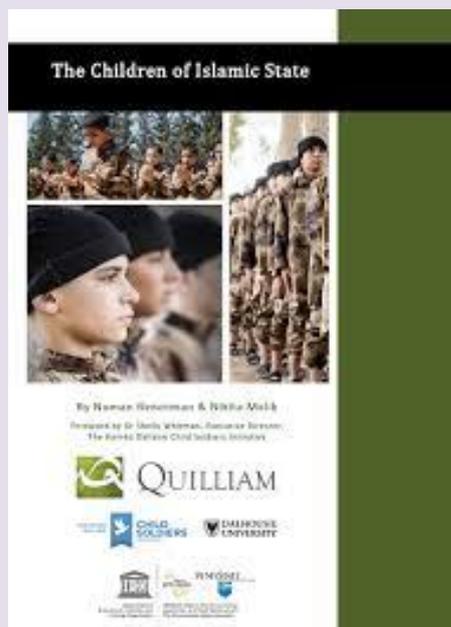
Shishani was not, however, a member of ISIS’s political leadership.

Islamic State schools army of child soldiers in terrorism

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/islamic-state-schools-army-of-child-soldiers-in-terrorism-1.2565121>



Mar 08 – Thousands of children living in areas controlled by Islamic State are being indoctrinated and trained to perpetuate the terrorist group’s ideology, impose its rule and fight its enemies, according to a new report.



The **Children of Islamic State**, published by the [Quilliam Foundation](#), a London-based counter-extremism think tank, also finds women are being treated as vessels by the jihadist group for the production of new generations.

The foundation says it hopes the report will “shed light on one of the gravest situations for children on earth” and encourage governments, international organisations and human rights agencies to defeat Islamic State, also known as Isis, and deal with the trauma of its most vulnerable victims.

Child soldiers

The report was produced in partnership with the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative and UNESCO.

It says **there are 31,000 pregnant women in areas under Islamic State control** and lists several



categories of children living in the so-called “caliphate”: children of foreign and local fighters, abandoned and abducted children and forced or voluntary recruits.

While girls are compelled to cover themselves completely from head to toe and remain at home learning household tasks, boys are formed into “Cubs of the Caliphate” through “socialisation, schooling, selection, subjugation, specialisation and stationing,” the report says.

Through a survey of Islamic State propaganda, the report’s authors found videos of children employed in combat, suicide bombings and executions, and attending training camps and military schools.

Schooling included religious education, while training involved “normalisation to violence” by “threatening and playing with weapons and watching public executions and punishments”.

Islamic State was portrayed as a “‘utopia’, free from the immorality of the West”. The report argues that the “role of children in the ‘caliphate’ represents a culmination and



acceleration of broader trends in the child soldier phenomenon”.

Islamic State recruitment of children “mirrors the practices of the Ottoman Empire”, which seized Christian children in the Balkans for military and administrative duties, the report says.

Training camps

During 2014-15, the terrorist group abducted hundreds of Yazidi and Turkmen boys, some as young as eight, and sent them to training camps where they were taught the Koran and “the use of weapons and combat tactics”. Kidnapped girls and women became household or sex slaves. Girls can be married at eight or nine, or at the latest, by 16 or 17. “In Islamic State, the woman’s role is ‘building the

Ummah [society] producing men, and sending them out to the fierceness of battle’,” the report states, citing Islamic State’s own propaganda.

“Recruiters for armed groups see children as assets because they are able to perform multiple combat and non-combat roles. They are a crucial resource in times of war, given their ready availability in most conflict zones,” the report says.

“Children have been used as soldiers, human shields, messengers, spies, and guards, not to mention the forced marriage and rape that girls are subjected to. Children are considerably cheaper in comparison to adults, because they consume less food and do not need as much pay, while the immaturity of young recruits is beneficial to their recruiters.”

‘Next generation’

Islamic State leaders pay particular attention to children in their territory because “the future of any state lies with the next generation”, argues the report.

Consequently, Islamic State relies on indoctrinating children with its “extremist ideology as early as possible” to make it seem “normal” and ensure children defend it. “Not only can children help meet the present needs of the ‘caliphate’, once they grow up, they will continue to propagate its existence and expansion, thus securing its long-term survival,” the report states. In a section titled “Executioners”, the report states: “Children are used to execute those who do not comply with Islamic State ideology. By forcing young children to participate in executions, Islamic State normalises these atrocities and further indoctrinates children. “Some children assist in executions by handing adult fighters knives, while other children carry out executions themselves.

“Moreover, children are taught that execution is a privilege and an honour – and in one case, a prize.”The report adds that in a recent video from Islamic State’s Kheer province, for example, six young children are “awarded the opportunity” to execute Syrian prisoners.

“The children run through a maze and celebrate after finding and killing the captives.

“A child states that they ‘have been raised to conquer East and the West and we will restore Al-Aqsa and Al-Andalus.”



Canada – Islamist terrorism is real and it's here

Source: <http://www.torontosun.com/2016/03/15/islamist-terrorism-is-real-and-its-here>

Mar 15 – Major Richard Silva makes a statement in front of the building at 4900 Yonge St in North York where a stabbing attack with terror implications occurred at a Forces recruitment centre on Tuesday



March 15, 2016. Michael Peake/Toronto

Sun/Postmedia Network

Canadians aren't being "Islamophobic" when they worry Monday's attack on an armed forces recruiting centre in Toronto during which two soldiers were stabbed -- thankfully, not seriously -- might be linked to Islamist terrorism.

Not when Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders tells them the accused said: "Allah told me to do this. Allah told me to come here and kill people."

Not when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau rightly tweets in response to the attack that: "Canadians -- and the @CanadianForces -- will not be intimidated by terror & hate. May the CAF members injured yesterday make a full recovery."



We leave it to our justice system to determine whether Ayanie Hassan Ali, 27, the man police have in custody charged with multiple offences in connection with the stabbings, is guilty of any crimes, or what his mental state may have been.

Obviously, there will be an investigation by our security agencies to determine whether the accused, a Canadian citizen with no criminal record, is affiliated with any terrorist organizations, acted under their influence, or as a so-called "lone wolf".

In that context, we understand why Chief Saunders issued a warning against "Islamophobia nonsense" in the wake of this incident. We agree with him.

We must never hold all Muslims responsible for what one individual, who may not be a Muslim for all we know, is accused of doing.

But at the same time, we should not, out of fear of being accused of "Islamophobia", avoid stating the obvious.

That is, Canadians have a legitimate concern about Islamist terrorism.

This given that an Islamist terrorist stormed Parliament Hill on Oct. 22, 2014, after fatally shooting Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, before being shot to death by security officers.

That two days earlier, another Islamist terrorist fatally injured Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, by ramming him with his car in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, before being shot dead by police.

We know Islamist terrorists have planned deadly, coordinated attacks on Canada ever since the 2008 trial of the Toronto 18, who wanted to storm Parliament and behead then Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Calling these incidents what they are -- Islamist terrorism -- and recognizing they are not conventional crimes that can be countered solely by traditional policing methods, is not Islamophobia. It's common sense.





What is terrorism?

By Michael Rubin

Source: <https://www.aei.org/publication/what-is-terrorism/>

Turkey continues to reel in the aftermath of the latest bombing in Ankara. For many Turks, this one struck close to home. Whereas the first Ankara bombing struck a political rally, and the second targeted the military, this latest bombing was at an intersection through which tens of thousands of Ankara residents pass each day. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's president, has sworn vengeance. "It's not only the person who pulls the trigger, but those who made that possible who should also be defined as terrorists," he declared.

Erdoğan is right to suggest definitions matter, but the problem isn't the definition of terrorist, but rather of terrorism.

A quarter century ago, Western governments and security agencies used 100 different definitions of terrorism; today, according to *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, more than 250 definitions are in play.

Many countries embrace an à la carte approach to terrorism: They will condemn it so long as it's not for a cause with which they agree. Hence, Erdoğan has repeatedly labelled as terrorists both Kurdish insurgents inside Turkey and Syrian Kurds fighting the Islamic State, but he has embraced and enabled Hamas, a group whose charter calls for the eradication of Israel, rants against Jews more broadly, and celebrates random attacks on civilians. The Islamic Republic of Iran dismisses accusations of their terror sponsorship by arguing they are instead supporting "resistance," no matter that such resistance acts by kidnapping journalists, and bombing kindergartens and crowded markets.

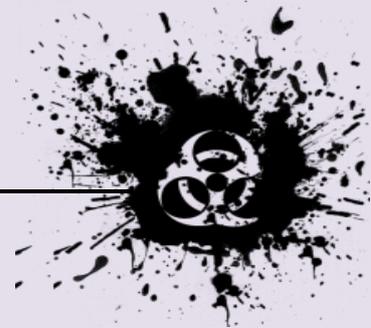
Western countries can be guilty of the same moral compromise. In 1975, the British journalist Gerald Seymour coined the phrase, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," in his novel *Harry's Game*, set during the height of the British conflict with the Irish Republican Army. Abdel Bari Atwan, editor of *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, accused the United States of similar hypocrisy. "If you are with the Americans, you are a legitimate fighter, you are

a hero, but if you are fighting against a country supported by America, then you are a terrorist," he explained.

When Muammar Qadhafi came in from the cold in 2003, the State Department allowed him to bypass his commitment to forswear terrorism by not clarifying a definition. As the Libyan leader traveled through Europe on his first trip to the continent in fifteen years, he threatened to return to violence should he not get his way diplomatically. "We do hope that we shall not be obliged or forced one day to go back to those days where we bomb our cars or put explosive belts around our beds and around our women," he told a Brussels audience. There followed both a plot to assassinate Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and the dispatch of suicide bombers into Iraq.

Forget compromise and forget footnotes or exceptions. Terrorism really should be a black and white issue.

It's time to stop allowing countries to define themselves out of responsibility for terror sponsorship and to achieve a single, clear definition. **The United Nations has, for seven decades, been powerless to do so and that won't change.** Here, US unilateralism can work: The United States provides counterterrorism assistance to dozens of countries, including some like Pakistan and Turkey which by any honest standard should be considered state sponsors of terrorism themselves. It's time to attach to all such assistance the condition that recipient countries accept a single, standard definition embraced by the US government. Something clear, concise, and simple would work best, for example, "Terrorism is the deliberate targeting of civilians for political gain." If Turkey wants to suggest that Hamas' ends justify its means, then Turkey should not get a single penny of American assistance, nor have access to US intelligence or counter-terror technology. Likewise, Pakistan should not receive any assistance so long as it sponsors terrorist groups targeting Indian hotels and tourism centers. If three dozen countries all work off



the same page on what terrorism is, then more will follow or risk ostracism.

Diplomats may believe it sophisticated to tweak definitions to rationalize bad behavior; it's not,

however. Forget compromise and forget footnotes or exceptions. **Terrorism really should be a black and white issue.**

Michael Rubin is a former Pentagon official whose major research areas are the Middle East, Turkey, Iran and diplomacy. Rubin instructs senior military officers deploying to the Middle East and Afghanistan on regional politics, and teaches classes regarding Iran, terrorism, and Arab politics on board deploying U.S. aircraft carriers. Rubin has lived in post-revolution Iran, Yemen, both pre- and post-war Iraq, and spent time with the Taliban before 9/11. His newest book, "[Dancing with the Devil: The Perils of Engaging Rogue Regimes](#)" examines a half century of U.S. diplomacy with rogue regimes and terrorist groups.

How to counter the ISIS threat in the Balkans

By Fatmir Mediu

Source: http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/how-to-counter-the-isis-threat-in-the-balkans-_3593.html



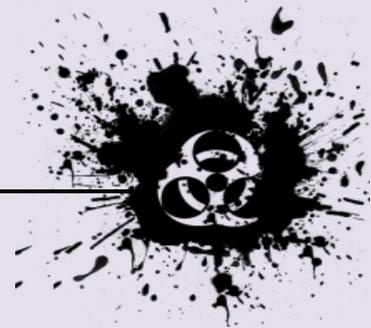
Mar 16 – The refugee crisis in Europe is just one of a series of problems confronting the Balkan states. The decision of some EU states to close their borders, accompanied by bitter internal fighting, has undermined confidence in the EU among political leaders and citizens in the Balkans. The confused and fractured EU response only underlines to us that the Euro-Atlantic perspective is now unclear, while the economic prospects for the region remain uncertain. Furthermore, geopolitics centred on big power rivalry is once again stoking tensions in this region: Russia has clearly declared an interest in keeping the Balkan countries out of NATO, while Turkey has become more assertive in promoting its interests.

With all of these issues creating great uncertainty, the plague of ISIS is not getting the full attention of EU and Balkan decision-makers. **They should ask themselves: Are we prepared to deal with these challenges? Do we have a real understanding about the threat and complexity of ISIS?** It is clear that despite some improvement there is an urgent need for better regional cooperation, especially in intelligence sharing, as well as more reciprocal communication and cooperation

between security institutions of states in this region.

The US and EU are concerned about the ISIS capacity to organize and launch terrorist attacks in Europe (Paris) and the US (San Bernardino). Still, it is clear that terrorism is a global threat to all states. The Balkans have a special role in combating this threat, being a major route into Europe and a bridge for ISIS funding, supplies and recruitment, and for other radical terrorist groups. Unfortunately with Europe and the US distracted by other issues - the attacks in France and other western states; the ongoing global economic instability; the war in Syria; and the flood of refugees and migrants into Europe - this has reduced support and understanding for the gravity of the terrorist threat in the Balkans.

The facts on the ground in the region confirm the need for immediate action to curb ISIS and deal with home grown terrorist "lone wolves". ISIS cells and networks are infiltrating our societies, but more importantly they are securing their strategic position in Europe with an eye on America as the ultimate target.



Recent arrests and trials in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo of fighters returning from Syria and Iraq, highlight the real problem of terrorist-trained and battle-tested individuals to regional security. The appearance of ISIS flags in Bosnian villages, involvement of individuals from the region in foiled terror plots in Sweden, Germany and Austria (for example the case of four Bosnian nationals and an Arab trying to smuggle a bomb from Bosnia into Sweden); and more importantly the links to actual attacks in Spain, France and in the region itself (such as those on a police station and the military in Bosnia) all point to the urgency in increasing regional efforts to contain and eliminate this threat.

According to some media and intelligence sources, the Balkans have become one of the largest recruiting grounds for ISIS. **No one really knows how many fighters from the region have made their way to Syria and Iraq, but estimates range from 700-850 or more.** The volunteer flow from the region continues despite local efforts to prevent recruitment. These fighters are determined to join ISIS, regardless of the risks and legal punishments they may face. Many have already been killed in combat in Iraq and Syria and some have made propaganda videos revealing their identities. All of this shows the extent of their radicalization and commitment to the ISIS cause. Once returned, they represent grave threats to our societies. Most of them have passports which allow them access to the EU because of visa liberalization and the Schengen agreement, extending the geography of the threat.

Radical Islamic indoctrination over the last two decades has not only created shelters, indoctrination centres, training hubs and safe transit routes but it has also destabilized the Islamic tradition of the region, known for its secular character, historic tolerance and cultural integration. Now a foreign, radical and heretical interpretation of Islam has taken root and is destabilizing the region already troubled by ethnic and national strife.

The Balkans are especially vulnerable for several reasons. Our diverse ethnic and multi-religious region has seen a number of historic conflicts, some still simmering, others dormant, which can be ignited by this new seed of radicalism. Most of the states in the region have very unstable political situations, weak

governments and security institutions, stretched thin by economic crisis, war, political infighting, corruption and the increasing numbers of refugees and migrants trying to get to the EU. Prolonged economic crisis and high unemployment have alienated many, exposing youth especially to radicalization. The increasing return and presence of fanatical fighters trained in Syria, Iraq and Libya also creates a serious and immediate threat.

The communist legacies of inefficient governance, bloated bureaucracies and public sectors have created a serious impediment to responding to this and other threats. The legacy of large militaries and recent wars have left large quantities of weapons, explosives and ammunition that have filtered into the black market through corruption and organized crime networks. The slowing EU expansion and lack of will to receive new members in the near future have diminished hope and optimism among citizens, creating more opportunities for radicalization, and undermining political will for reforms and enhancement of regional security. There is also a widespread feeling among the region's peoples that the terrorist threat and the new migrant crisis are EU problems that have been dumped on the Balkans.

How can regional leaders more effectively and decisively address these challenges and how can they contain and eradicate ISIS? Despite all of the problems and factors of instability that besiege this region a response is possible and it begins with increasing cooperation and communication.

I believe the following initiatives would create a better foundation for dealing with ISIS and other terrorist threats to the Balkans:

- A Balkan Intelligence Coordination and Cooperation Centre must be established, that will better coordinate the collection and sharing of vital information between states and can make a better contribution to building cooperation with EU and US intelligence services and Europol.
- A database (clearing house) system must be built that begins a more serious and comprehensive screening of refugees and migrants traveling through the region. This system must combine all aspects of intelligence acquisition that is more easily accessible to



states in the region and that will help identify potential ISIS infiltration in a more timely and efficient manner.

- Regional leaders and institutions must cooperate in developing an immediate reaction and proposals for resolving the issue of refugees on a regional basis.
- States should, with support and expertise from NATO or the EU, immediately start investing and working in developing a more adequate cyber security strategy, addressing ISIS propaganda and communication.
- The EU must provide a clear strategy for Euro-Atlantic integration of the countries in the Balkans. This would eliminate uncertainty, fear and frustration within regional states and would allow them more space for addressing the ISIS and refugee challenges in a more confident and efficient manner.
- A more open and serious discussion about the ISIS threat to our nations must begin and a coordinated effort of states in the region should be made in better informing citizens through education and building

better cooperation with local religious leaders that would close public space for recruitment and indoctrination by ISIS activists.

- Greater effort should be made with religion communities, especially with the Islamic community to identify the groups and mosques that are out of their control or are under the influence of extremists.
- A coordinated strategy should be developed for dealing with returning foreign fighters and their families.

These steps would not only build a better foundation for dealing with the ISIS threat in the Balkans but it would also bring broader benefits to the region. Greater cooperation would contribute to peace and stability, while at the same time it would help the EU better deal with their own challenges tied to the refugee crisis. The states of the region will need greater support from the EU and the US, but it should be recognized that any investment in building institutional capacity and regional cooperation will also improve the security of the EU and the US. The time to act is now.

Fatmir Mediu is the head of the Republican Party of Albania. He is a former Defense Minister and Minister for the Environment. He was a Member of the Albanian Parliament for four consecutive terms, and served at various times as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Stability Pact and European Integration, and as a member of the Parliamentary Committees on Foreign Affairs, Security, and Legal Issues. He has lectured at a number of prestigious international academic institutions on international politics, diplomacy and international security. He is also a member of Parliamentarians for Global Action (New York) and of the Executive Committee of the East-West Parliamentary Practice Project (Netherlands).

Increased terror threat in Bali blamed for cruise ship cancellation

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/warnings/increased-terror-threat-in-bali-blamed-for-cruise-ship-cancellation/news-story/1269d31b7982619d86198422086822ba>

Mar 10 – **Two more cruise ships have cancelled scheduled port calls to Bali, because of Australian and UK travel advisories warning of the potential for terrorist attacks.**

Days after Celebrity Solstice gave Bali a miss, Royal Caribbean Cruises has announced Radiance of the Seas and Celebrity Millenium will also leave the island off their itineraries.

Celebrity Millenium was due to overnight in Bali on March 16, and Radiance of the Seas was scheduled to visit the following day.

Radiance of the Seas departs Fremantle on Saturday on a 16-night cruise to Sydney, and Celebrity Millenium is travelling from Singapore to Sydney.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – March 2016

Instead Celebrity Millenium will spend an extra day in Singapore and another in Darwin, and

Celebrity Solstice gave Bali a miss on Monday despite the port of Benoa being promoted as



Radiance of the Seas will remain at sea for an additional day.

part of the Celebrity Cruises' ship's 17-night voyage from Fremantle to Sydney.



In a statement, Royal Caribbean Cruises apologised for the impact on guests' cruises. "Our guests' vacation time is precious and we did not take these decisions lightly. "The safety of our guests and crew is always our foremost concern," read the statement.

"We will continue to monitor the security situation in Indonesia and will notify guests or their travel agents if there are changes to future sailings that visit Indonesia."

A Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesman said they were not aware of the reasons for the Celebrity Solstice's change in schedule.

DFAT issued advice on February 25, urging Australian visitors to Indonesia to exercise a high degree of caution due to advanced plans for terrorist attacks.

"The travel advice for Indonesia is aimed at assisting Australians to make their own safe travel decisions," said the spokesman.

"The advice represents the best assessment of the risks - it is kept under constant review and is updated as required."

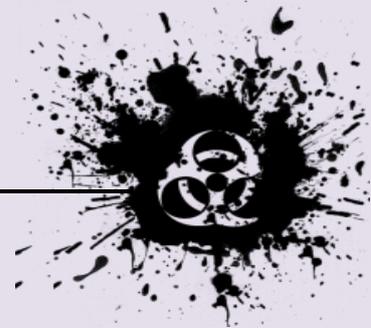


In a letter to the 2850 mostly Australian passengers on board, **Captain Yannis Berdos** (photo) said "the most recent information received in the past few days indicates that the possibility of an incident has increased".

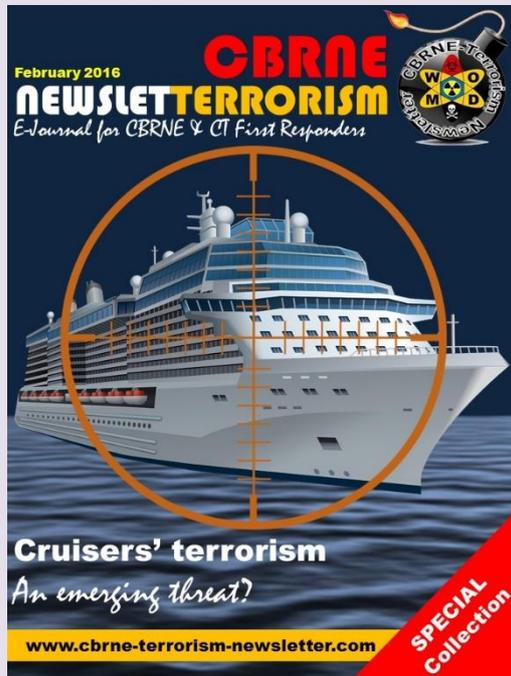
"Also the Balinese New Year is on March 9th, and recent past advisories has named this date as one that would be targeted by terrorists," said Captain Berdos who teamed up with Foreign Minister Julie Bishop in 2013 for the launch of the Smartraveller campaign.

"Based on all of this information we have gathered from various sources, and in discussion with our Global Security team in Miami, we have made a decision to cancel our call to Bali."

Instead the ship cruised on to Darwin, leaving passengers and Bali tourist operators surprised and disappointed.



Cindy Lugten, who coordinates tourism marketing portal Bali.com, said on March 9 the island was shut down with no planes or ships allowed to enter.



“There will be nobody on the street except for the special Pecalang men also known as the village police, making sure people are staying inside their houses, villas or hotel,” said Ms Lugten.

“It’s a bummer that we miss the opportunity to show the people on board Celebrity Solstice the beauty of Bali and lose out on the money that could have been made.”

‘Death to the infidels!’ Why it’s time to fix Hollywood’s problem with Muslims

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/mar/08/death-to-infidels-time-to-fix-hollywoods-problem-muslims>

Mar 10 – “Great convo w studio execs in LA. Good to hear their perspectives & ideas of how to counter #Daesh narrative,” tweeted John Kerry on 16 February, along with a photo of himself in a Hollywood meeting lounge with executives from Universal, Warner, Fox, Disney, Sony, Dreamworks and other big players – overwhelmingly middle-aged white men in suits.

One can’t help imagining there were some awkward moments to this “great convo”,

Royal Caribbean’s Radiance of the Seas is the next ship due into Bali on March 17, and yesterday a spokeswoman said they were “continuing to monitor the security situation in Indonesia”.



Read also the Special Collection of CBRNE-Terrorism Newsletter ([Feb. 2016](#)) at newsletter’s website.

“As far as I’m aware a decision hasn’t been made on Radiance of the Seas’ upcoming call to Bali, scheduled for 17 March,” she said.

The Sun Princess is also due to call on Benoa on March 28, and again a month later but Princess Cruises did not respond to queries yesterday about whether the visits would go ahead.

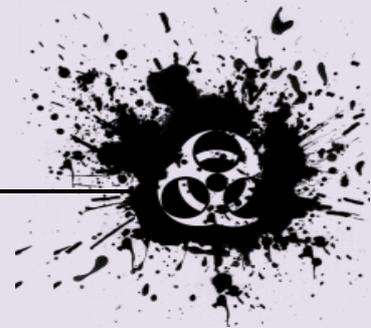
Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade issued an advisory for Indonesia last month warning that terrorists may be in the advanced stages of preparing attacks.

Visitors were urged to exercise a “high degree of caution” but not advised against travelling to Indonesia.

Despite the January 14 terrorist attack in Jakarta, record numbers of Australians visited Indonesia in the month.

Australian Bureau of Statistics’ data showed 101,000 Aussies travelled to the country and predominantly Bali — 14.3 per cent more than in January 2015.

though. Especially if Kerry queried what Hollywood had done to counter the “#Daesh narrative” so far. Even more so, if he asked what juicy counter-terrorism stories they had coming down the pipeline. Looking at the current output, such as **Whiskey Tango Foxtrot**, **Rock the Kasbah** and **London Has Fallen**, you could easily get the impression that Hollywood is part of the problem, rather than a potential solution.



If you accept the notion of a “war of narratives”, it’s an area where the extremists have done most of the running. Still ringing in Washington’s ears and heading its PowerPoint presentations is the declaration the al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri made in 2005: **“We are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.”** Isis/Daesh has been sending a steady stream of video content on to that media battlefield, the relative sophistication of which has filled western commentators with a mix of horror, concern

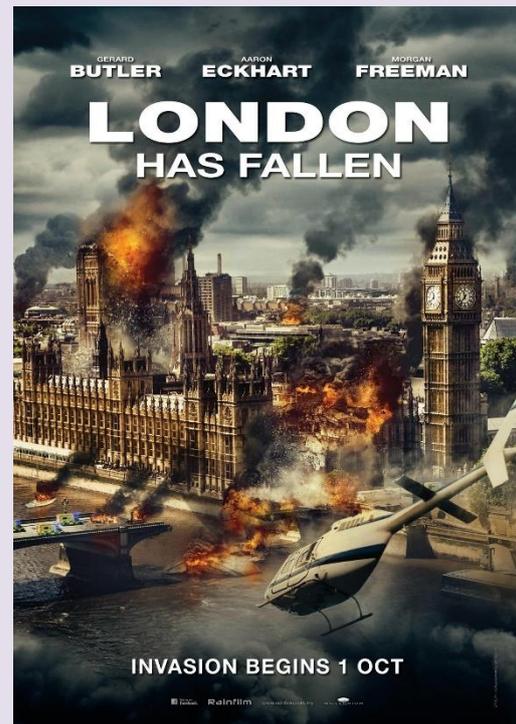
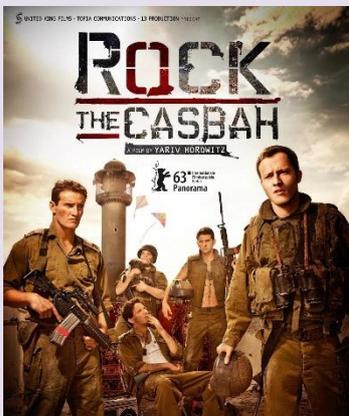
and admiration. The US and its coalition partners have floundered over how to respond. Kerry’s visit to Hollywood comes a month after the State Department revamped its Countering Violent Extremism programme. Since 2010, that role had been performed by the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC); its counter-messaging often leaned towards counter-productive messaging. One of its strategies, for example, was to engage directly with Isis jihadists on Twitter, but that only served to legitimise their voices. The CSCC also put out a parody recruitment video, repurposing Isis’s violent propaganda footage and broadcasting it under the seal

of the State Department. “Run, do not walk to Isis land,” ran the text of the ad. “Travel is inexpensive because you won’t need a return ticket!” As the TV satirist John Oliver remarked: “You are banking a lot on any potential militants understanding that that is sarcasm.”

“If our message is that Daesh is a criminal organisation that represents a distorted view of Islam, the US government is not the best conveyor of that message,” says Richard Stengel, undersecretary for public diplomacy and public affairs in the State Department. “The best conveyors are local people and Muslims and clerics and NGOs. So, rather than be in

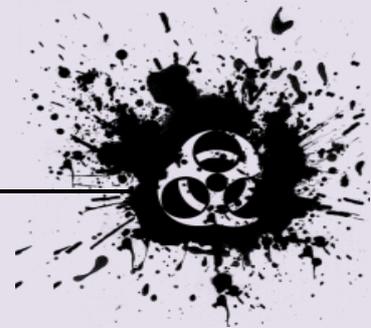
the business of doing tit-for-tat tweets with Daesh, we realised that we have an expertise in funding and messaging. What can we do to empower, amplify, and optimise the messaging that’s out there already? That’s the central paradigm shift.”

This is by no means the first time in the 21st century that the White House has turned to Tinseltown. Just a month after 9/11, George W Bush’s top adviser, Karl Rove, convened a similar council of movie execs for a counter-terrorist pitching session, although it apparently



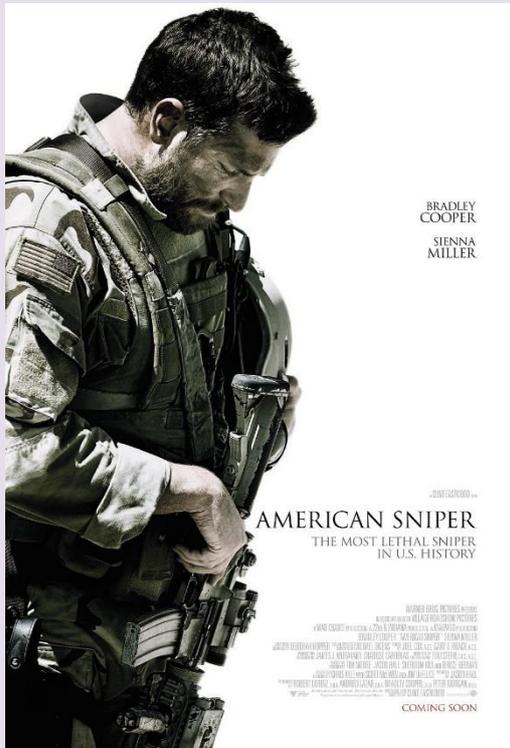
came to nothing. There was no discussion of putting government propaganda into movies, it was reported. “Content was off the table,” said Jack Valenti, then head of the Motion Pictures Association of America.

Content was also off the table at Kerry’s Hollywood trip, it appears. “It wasn’t about asking them to make an Islamic Harry Potter,” says Stengel. “It’s not like the cold war, trying to insert positive narratives into movies. It’s connected in the largest possible way to defeating Daesh. It was an opportunity to talk to these people who shape content around the world, who shape the American brand around the world. An opportunity to go to them and say: ‘What can you do to help?’ in what [Kerry] has called the generational struggle of our time.”



But if Hollywood has any meaningful role to play here, content is arguably exactly what should be on the table. Throughout its history, American cinema has employed a lamentably narrow set of stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims. “They’ve been the most vilified group in the history of Hollywood,” says the academic and author Jack Shaheen. His book **Reel Bad Arabs** surveys some [1,200 depictions of Arabs and Muslims in the movies](#). By his estimation, roughly 97% are unfavourable, coloured by orientalist myths, racist demonising and xenophobic paranoia. “At most, three dozen or so had balance, or what I would call positive images. In the rest of them, Arabs are either terrorists or shady sheikhs or people you would not want to associate with. Those images continue to pervade our psyches.”

There are too many egregious examples to list. Selected highlights would include True Lies (Arnold Schwarzenegger versus fanatical yet incompetent Palestinian terrorists, who

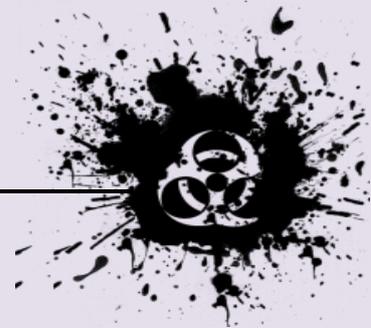


detonate a nuclear device in Florida), Protocol (Goldie Hawn becomes concubine to a lecherous oil-rich sheikh, so that the US can build a military base in his country), Network

(“The Arabs are simply buying us,” rails Peter Finch’s rebel presenter), and 1998 thriller **The Siege** (in which Arab-Americans are rounded up after a New York terrorist attack. The critic Roger Ebert wrote: “The prejudicial attitudes embodied in the film are insidious, like the antisemitism that infected fiction and journalism in the 1930s”). And special mention must go to William Friedkin’s 2000 thriller **Rules of Engagement**, in which Samuel L Jackson’s marine goes on trial for massacring a crowd of Yemenis, but is exonerated when it turns out they were all gun-toting evildoers, even the women and children.

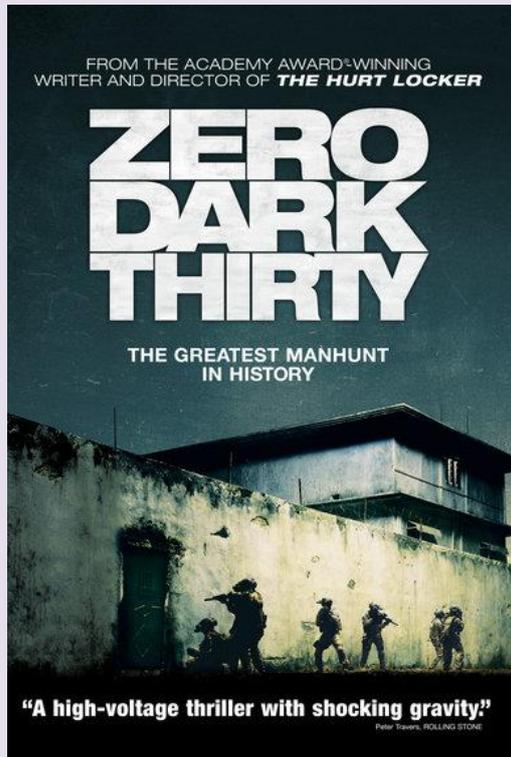
Rules of Engagement was “probably the most racist film ever made against Arabs by Hollywood”, protested the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee at the time. But then 9/11 happened and things became even worse. Old-fashioned Islamophobia is still thriving, as demonstrated by current release London Has Fallen, in which Gerard Butler saves the world from yet another brown-skinned, detonator-happy terrorist with an Arab-sounding name, and dispatches evildoers with lines such as: “Get back to Fuckheadistan, or wherever you’re from.” Meanwhile, counter-terrorism-themed TV series such as 24, Homeland, Sleeper Cell and NCIS reiterate the “all Muslims are potential terrorists” notion, with the added point that they’re on American soil now. “Hollywood and television have created an even more dangerous precedent by vilifying American Arabs and American Muslims in particular,” says Shaheen. “They’ve blended the old stereotypes from ‘over there’ with new stereotypes from ‘over here’.”

When Hollywood has made attempts to address the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts directly, the casualty list has been high: **Lions for Lambs**, **The Messenger**, **Stop Loss**, **Green Zone**, **In the Valley of Elah**, **Grace Is Gone**, **Redacted** – all of them flopped at the box office. Even **The Hurt Locker**, with its Oscars and all-round acclaim, was greeted with widespread



indifference by the American public, taking just \$17m (£12m).

Only a handful of Afghanistan/Iraq films have struck a chord with US audiences: **Zero Dark Thirty**, detailing the hunt for Osama Bin Laden, made \$95m domestically; Afghanistan action thriller Lone Survivor made \$125m; and



overshadowing them all is Clint Eastwood's **American Sniper**, based on the real-life Navy Seal Chris Kyle, who holds the record for the most kills in US military history. It took more than \$350m, making it the highest grossing movie of 2014 in the US.

When viewed through the prism of “countering the #Daesh narrative”, these movies make uncomfortable viewing. Zero Dark Thirty took a relatively nuanced approach to the war on terror, but controversially depicted Arabs being tortured. Both American Sniper and Lone Survivor narrowly focus on US military personnel and their efforts to kill nameless, faceless “bad guys”. Wider questions about American foreign policy, or how ordinary Afghans and Iraqis felt about being invaded, are sidestepped in favour of heat-of-the-battle immediacy. In its opening minutes, American Sniper gets in the “all Muslims are potential terrorists” trope, as Kyle guns down a woman and a child who both try to attack US troops (the attack did not happen in real life). It gets

worse from there on in. Not that the reality was much better. In his autobiography, Kyle wrote: “I only wish I had killed more. Not for bragging rights but because I believe the world is a better place without savages out there taking American lives.”

These are the narratives the US has been sending out on to this ideological battlefield. Shaheen is not alone in wondering what role they have played, not just in the rise of Isis, but in the decisions to invade Iraq and Afghanistan in the first place, not to mention the manner in which those wars were conducted, from the high levels of civilian casualties to atrocities such as those at Abu Ghraib. And how can these mythologies not play into the increasingly Islamophobic climate back home? Republican presidential nominees are presently engaged in an arms race of anti-Muslim rhetoric, against a background of vandalised mosques, threats, shootings and general discrimination. Isis's own atrocities have contributed to this climate, of course, but homespun narratives seem to be fanning the flames. The release of American Sniper triggered a reported three-fold increase in anti-Muslim and anti-Arab threats.

“When you create this fear and it manifests itself in hate crimes, bias and bullying, then it alienates people,” says Humera Khan, the founder and executive director of Muflehun, a counter-violent-extremism thinktank. “Society is telling you: ‘You don’t belong.’ It is reinforcing what Isis is telling them.” **Islamic extremists represent, at best, 100,000 people out of a worldwide Muslim population of 1.6 billion**, Khan points out, but with the exception of the occasional token “good Muslim”, these are overwhelmingly the ones we see on our screens. She offers an analogy: “Imagine if you introduced someone to white people only by way of the Ku Klux Klan, but then said afterwards, ‘Oh, by way, there are some good white people out there, too.’”

In stereotyping Arabs and Muslims, the US also reinforces stereotypes about itself, Khan adds. Muslims around the world watch Hollywood movies, too – in greater numbers than Americans. “When these movies play in majority Muslim countries, the assumption is, ‘Look: they’re misrepresenting us again.’ So for the average person who’s not interested in Isis, the impression is: ‘America doesn’t like us.’ When you think about



Isis's message, that this is 'a war against Muslims', that's exactly what they're showing." Mirroring Washington's recent shift in counter-messaging, Hollywood also seems to be taking a different tack: it is now coming at the Afghanistan/Iraq wars by way of comedy. Perhaps the studio bosses looked at their casualty list of box-office bombs and wondered if all that death, torture and moral complexity wasn't putting people off. Having repeated the history as tragedy, Hollywood is repackaging it as farce.

Rock the Kasbah is an all-too-literal example of this. The movie, which is released in the UK this week, draws on the true story of Setara Hussainzada, a Pashtun teenager who bravely tested post-invasion waters by entering Afghanistan's new X Factor/Pop Idol equivalent, Afghan Star (women singing or dancing was strictly forbidden under Taliban rule). Hussainzada was already the subject of a 2009 documentary, also titled **Afghan Star**, but in Rock the Kasbah, she's discovered in a cave by Bill Murray's jaded rock promoter. He puts her into the spotlight with the aid of some fellow Americans: a twitchy soldier, two corrupt arms dealers and a sympathetic prostitute, who operates out of a trailer on the edge of town. From a "#Daesh narrative" perspective,

they could represent the horsemen of the apocalypse, but the comic tone places the gruesome realities of war well in the background. As one review put it: "Rock the Kasbah gives the impression that the nation's ideological rebirth would have been impossible without the gumption of a hasbeen music manager learning to shed his cynicism."

It's a similar story with Whiskey Tango Foxtrot, which opened in the US this weekend. Again, the plight of war-ravaged Afghanistan is largely window-dressing for the journey of our war-reporter heroine, Tina Fey, a fortysomething singleton who is pitched into the battlefield and the hard-partying expat "Kabubble". One character lets the cat out of the bag by describing it as "the most American-white-lady story I've ever heard". A few Afghani characters do get speaking parts in Whiskey Tango Foxtrot. One is a clownish local

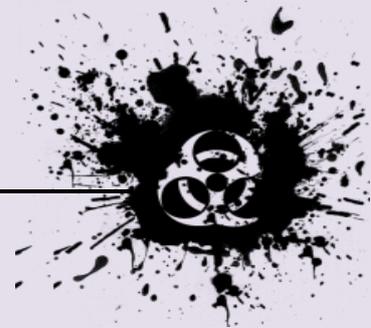
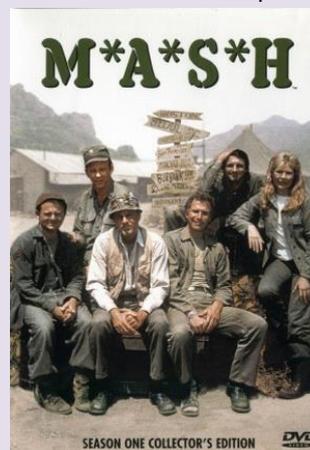
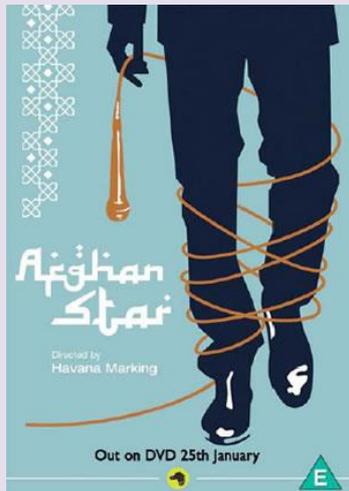
politician, basically a standard-issue "lecherous Arab", played by the British actor Alfred Molina. The other, Fey's Afghani helper, Fahim, is that rarest of things: a male Muslim movie character who is intelligent, educated, empathetic and not the slightest bit lecherous. That bad news is he's played by an American actor, Christopher Abbott, best known as Charlie out of Girls.

There's more of this to come. Such as War Dogs, formerly titled Arms and the Dudes, about two real-life Miami stoners who made a fortune illegally exporting arms to Afghanistan with US approval – directed by the guy who made The Hangover. It sounds like a cross between The Wolf of Wall Street and Pineapple Express. Then there's **War Machine**, in which Brad Pitt plays General Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of US forces in Afghanistan, who famously talked himself out of a job in a profile for Rolling Stone magazine, by expressing his contempt for Barack Obama and his administration. It could be a great satire – and there is certainly a place for those in cinema, when you think back to movies such as **Catch-22**, **M*A*S*H**, **Dr Strangelove**, or even **Three Kings** or **Team America**. There have been a plethora of fine American

documentaries chronicling this era, too. But again, what does it mean for the battle of narratives? For Hollywood, it can look like a case of "damned if we do, damned if we don't". Either they take a purely US-centric point of view and dehumanise Arabs and Muslims – which

plays right into the #Daesh narrative. Or they take a critical look at the US's military and foreign policy failings – which also plays into the #Daesh narrative. What are they supposed to do?

A good start, says Shaheen, would be to stop perpetuating the same blinkered, divisive rhetoric as our enemies. It wouldn't take much. "There really needs to be a couple of blockbuster films that squash these stereotypes, as well as



some responsibility on the part of our political leaders, who are encouraging voters to hate their fellow Americans. It has to come from the top.” He cites the way Hollywood cleaned up its act with regard to racist depictions of African-Americans, Jews and LGBT characters.

Khan agrees: “If they were just more responsible in their portrayal of Arabs and Muslims that would actually help the environment on the ground.” What happens on the ground, in Syria and Iraq especially, is obviously paramount if anything is to change, but movies absolutely have a role to play. “Is any narrative going to be sufficient? No. Is this a necessary part of this landscape of needs? Yes.”

Just as the US likes to think of itself as the world’s policeman, it is also unquestionably the world’s storyteller. That narrative supremacy comes with certain responsibilities, now more so than ever.

In the meantime, we can take comfort from the fact that even jihadis can’t resist a good movie. On the day of Robin Williams’s death in August 2014, a self-professed online “diplomat for Isis” named Abdullah (AKA @Mujahid4Life), tweeted: “#RobinWilliams is dead? Weird. Grew up watching his movies.”

Another user replied that he liked Jumanji.

“Good movie,” Abdullah replied. “Loved it as a kid.”

ISIS committed genocide, crimes against humanity: U.S.

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160317-isis-committed-genocide-crimes-against-humanity-u-s>

Mar 17 – **The slaughter of Christians, Yazidis, and other ethnic groups by ISIS should be designated as genocide, Secretary of State John Kerry has said.**

“In my judgment, Daesh is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control, including Yazidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims,” he said, using the Arabic name for ISIS.

The Islamist terror group is guilty of “crimes against humanity,” he added.

CNN reports that Kerry’s declaration comes after the House of Representatives voted 393-0 on a nonbinding resolution calling the atrocities committed by ISIS genocide.

Experts note that this is the first time the United States has declared genocide since Darfur in 2004.

Kerry’s declaration does not obligate the United States to take further action against ISIS, but the House resolution was part of a broader effort to put pressure on the Obama administration to commit more resources to fighting to terrorist organization.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: How long does it take to declare a genocide? How many dead needed to declare a genocide? What is the importance of declaring a genocide? What civilized world have to do to stop a genocide? Why Secretary of State declared the genocide? What do you answer to these questions? I know you know that I know what you know but still these questions require concrete answers deep from heart!

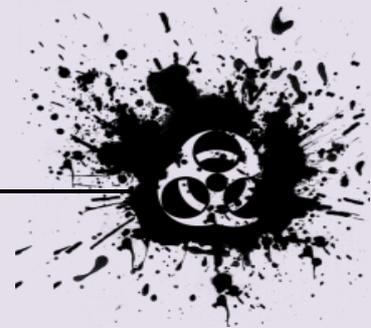


ISIS has lost almost 1/4 of its territory in 15 months: Report

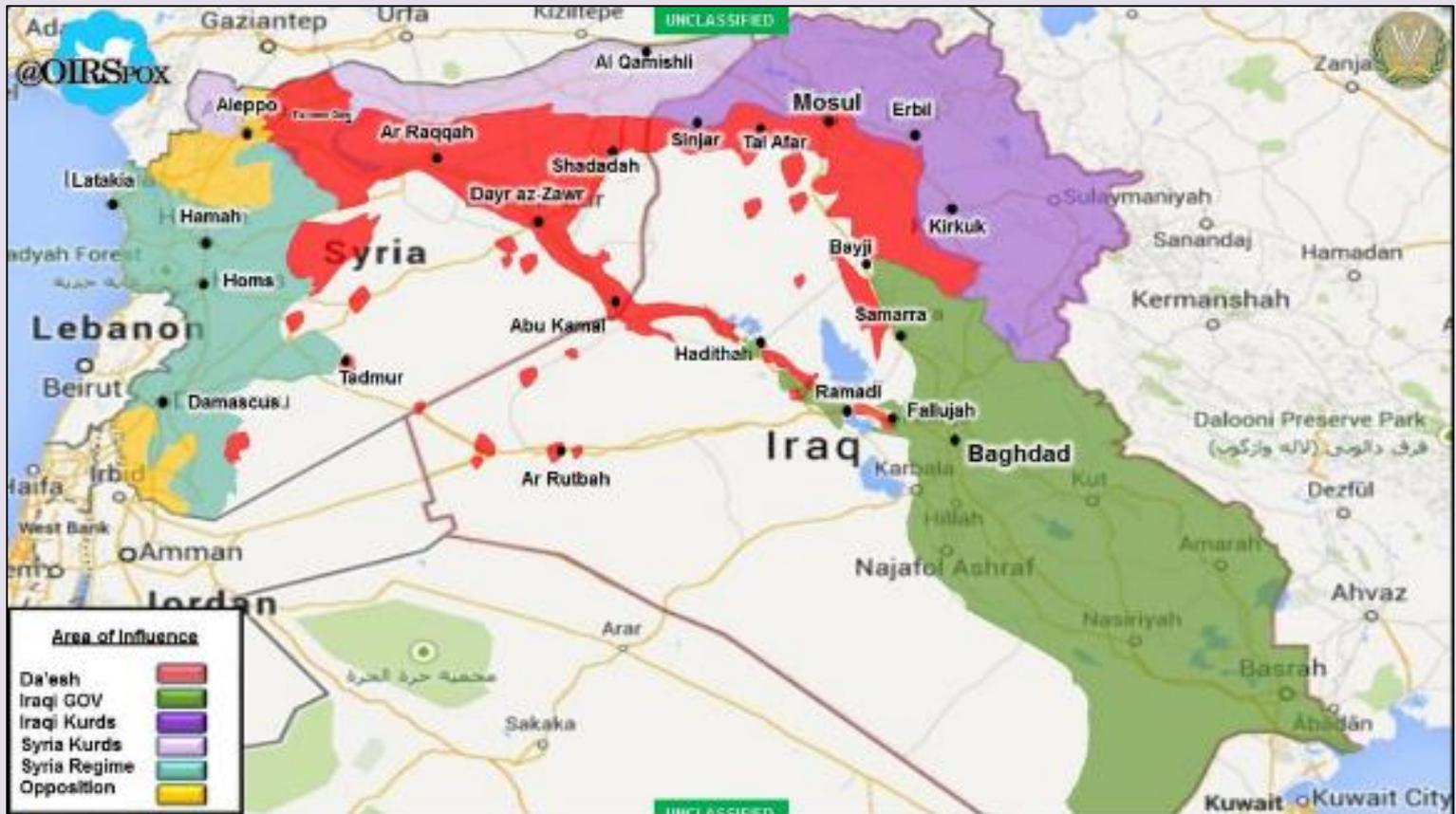
Source: <http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-isis-has-lost-almost-14-of-its-territory-in-15-months-2190505>

Mar 18 – **Cash-strapped Islamic State has lost almost a quarter of its territory in the last 15 months and the dreaded terror group is increasingly isolated and on the decline,** according to a new study.

Data published by **IHS Jane's 360** has shown that since January 2015 the militant group has **lost 22% of its territory in Iraq and Syria and 8% of the losses were in the past three months.**



"The tide of the war is turning against the Islamic State, and it is now pinned the Islamic State back, it said. "Isolation



Islamic State. Between January 1 and December 15, 2015, the Islamic State lost control of 14% of its territory. New analysis indicates that in the last 3 months, the Islamic State has lost a further 8% of its territory," the report said

"In 2016, we have seen major losses in the north-east extend south towards Raqqa and Deir al-Zour as the mixed- sectarian Kurdish and Sunni Syrian Democratic Forces advance under the cover of US and Russian airstrikes," it said.

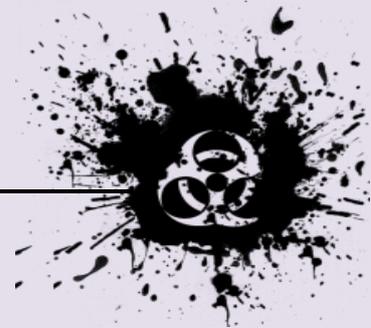
The monitoring group attributes these defeats to a changing strategic landscape. The loss of the pivotal Syrian border crossing of Tal Abyad took out one of the Islamic State's chief access points for smuggling in weapons, material and new fighters. Tighter Turkish border controls also have thinned out cash flows, as well as the numbers of foreign recruits seeking to join the group, the The Washington Post reported citing the report.

Airstrikes by the US-led campaign and an ongoing Russian mission in Syria have

and further military defeats will make it harder for the Islamic State to attract new recruits to Syria from the pool of foreign jihadis," writes Columb Strack, a Middle East analyst at IHS.

"The Islamic State is increasingly isolated, and being perceived as in decline. This plays into the hands of its main rival, al-Qaeda's Jabhat al-Nusra, which despite sharing the same ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate, has criticised the Islamic State for prematurely declaring it," the IHS report said.

Local smuggling channels still operate, the report said but noted that the risk of detection, and therefore the associated costs have skyrocketed. "But the demise of the Islamic State is hardly a foregone conclusion. As a separate report from the Institute for the Study of War points out, the threat posed by the extremists is not limited by geography. Even as the group suffered defeats in Iraq and Syria, its proxies carried out brazen attacks from Jakarta to Paris and numerous other places in between," the US daily said.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: It would be of interest to read in numbers which alliance achieved the best results in both Syria and Iraq at strategic, operational and tactical level. Or what would the current situation would be if only one alliance operated in these areas of interest. This map and similar maps of 2015 (last months) dictates that there is a long way to achieve elimination of IS. There is still contact with Turkish borders and certain areas are still compact strongholds. There is also no doubt that airstrikes of any kind and intense are not enough. On the otherhand no alliance is willing to set boots on the ground and we all know what this means. Syrian army, Kurdish army and Iraqi army are not strong enough to conduct operations (either alone or joint) and all three are fighting for deferent own reasons.

Canada Must Address the Threat of Jihad

By Tarek Fatah

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5912/canada-must-address-threat-of-jihad>



Mar 15 – By now, most of us are familiar with the sullen-looking face of Ayanle Hassan Ali, who, according to Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders, said he was inspired by Allah to kill infidels in

his name.

What may be the latest chapter in Canada's brush with Islamist extremism happened around 3:00 pm Monday. According to Saunders, Ali, 27, entered a military recruitment centre in a Department of National Defence building in Toronto, pulled out a knife and stabbed a uniformed officer at the front desk. He then tried to get past the desk but was tackled by a group of military officers.

One soldier was cut while stopping the suspect, according to Saunders. The two people injured suffered non-life-threatening injuries and were treated in hospital.

Toronto's police chief said this incident would have been far more serious had it not been for a group of soldiers who stepped in and grappled the attacker to the ground.

Even though the alleged attacker was arrested and witnesses told police they heard him say Allah had told him to kill, authorities were initially reluctant to release the name of the attacker or the precise words used in the attack.

The fact the alleged attacker was likely a Muslim Canadian gave it a political dimension and, like the rest of the world, the police seemed uneasy about mentioning this.

It took a number of hours before police released the alleged attacker's name and the Islamic dimension to the incident.

Saunders told a press conference on Tuesday that Ali said in the wake of the attack, "Allah told me to do this, Allah told me to come here and kill people."

This is not the first time we've heard reports of invoking Allah to justify murder. Earlier this month, a Muslim woman in Moscow beheaded a child in her care and told police Allah had asked her to behead the child. What is common in such incidents is that governments, police, and media are reluctant and hesitant to call a spade a spade.

Last week, I was in Delhi attending the World Global Conference where prominent former world leaders spoke, but not one publicly recognized the elephant in the room. From former prime minister of France Dominique de Villepin, to former president of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, every aspect of international affairs and trade was addressed, but not the threat international jihad poses to humanity.

De Villepin criticized military attempts to defeat Islamic State and other terrorists, claiming the fault was with Western nations. He told the conference: "The western world is dominating the planet. One of the most important problems of today is the imbalance of power."

This "blame the West" narrative came up at another session of the conference, where municipal officials from the Netherlands and Belgium gave no hint of the jihadi terror brewing across Europe.

I was in a state of shock at the ostrich-like attitude of Europe's leaders. When my turn to speak came, I reminded the audience and my fellow speakers the threat posed by jihadis seeking Islamic



supremacy was real and will not go away. It was as if I had touched a raw nerve in the audience as they cheered my suggestion Western elites seem to have lost the will to defend Western values.

I was mobbed on stage by young men and women who thanked me for setting aside political correctness. We must do so in Canada as well.

Tarek Fatah, a founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress and columnist at the Toronto Sun, is a Robert J. and Abby B. Levine Fellow at the Middle East Forum.

Paris terrorist attacks' mastermind captured

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160318-paris-terrorist-attacks-mastermind-captured>



Mar 18 – **The Belgian police captured Salah Abdeslam, the 26-year old French national who was the mastermind behind the 13 November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris which killed 130 people. The police said he was injured during the firefight which preceded his capture, but that the injuries are not serious.**

"We got him," the Belgian justice minister declared after confirming that Abdeslam had been captured during the operation in the Brussels' neighborhood of Molenbeek.

Another man has been arrested and a third is reportedly "holed up" in a building *Derniere Heure* reported.

Belgium's public broadcaster RTBF reported that two people have been injured in the raid — Abdeslam and another being a police officer,.

Le Monde reports that Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel left a European Union summit on the refugee crisis early as the raid unfolded.

Earlier today, Belgian federal prosecutors confirmed they found Abdeslam's in a Brussels raid on Tuesday,

Abdeslam, who was supposed to blow himself up in the 13 November attacks, was captured on a Paris train-station CCTV removing his suicide vest, before calling friends in Brussels to come and pick him up.





The French police say that Abdeslam is one of two Paris terrorists to escape alive. The second terrorist, Mohamed Abrini, is still wanted by police.



Should ISIS have the Right to Recruit on US Campuses?

Source: <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/should-isis-have-right-recruit-campus>

Mar 20 – Representative Martin Daniel (R-Knoxville) was speaking in favor of the “[Tennessee Student Free Speech Protection Act](#)” (which he sponsored) when he was asked by Rep John DeBerry Jnr (D-Memphis) whether he supported the right of ISIS to recruit on campus.



"Yes," Daniel replied. "So long as it doesn't disrupt the proceedings on that campus. Yes sir. They can recruit people for any other organization or any other cause. I think it's just part of being exposed to differing viewpoints."

DeBerry challenged Daniel, arguing that students are not ready to handle such dangerous ideas.

"There are young people who are not ready yet," he said "they're half-baked, half-cooked — who are recruited to work against their own parents, their own nation, and I would be concerned as a parent and as a citizen."

The bill was brought forward to challenge a



wave of restrictions on free speech which have come into being on campuses across America and which are the subject of much controversy in the media.

Free-speech advocates hold that free speech is only meaningful if it applies to one's political enemies as well as one's friends.

This is not to downplay the problem of Islamist extremism. It is vitally important to challenge the Islamist ideology wherever possible and act to prevent radicalization. Yet free speech is one of the cornerstones of a flourishing democracy. To give it up in order to combat Islamism – an ideology that wishes to dismantle our way of life - would be to forget what we are fighting for.

Daniel's stance that even ISIS should be allowed to speak may be in breach of existing laws, which prohibit incitement to violence, although such laws are very tightly defined. Since ISIS is a group which carries out violent attacks against Americans around the world, it can be considered to be a security risk to allow it to openly recruit on college campuses.

Nevertheless, the ideology of Islamism is shared by ISIS and non-violent groups such as Hizbut Tahrir or the Muslim Brotherhood. They too wish to establish a global Islamic caliphate and implement sharia law as state law, they just don't support the use of violent means to do so.

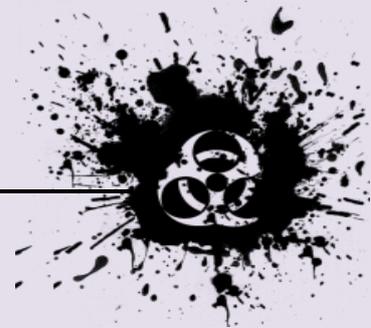
[Should this ISIS propaganda picture be allowed on campus?](#) (Photo: ISIS propaganda)

Those people must be allowed to speak.

Clarion Project has opposed blasphemy codes that prevent criticism of religion and we have supported the campaign to free the blogger Raif Badawi who is a prisoner of conscience in

Saudi Arabia. But we have also interviewed UK-based Islamist Anjem Choudary, in order to show our readers the truth about Islamism. For the same reason we provide our readers with an opportunity to read the Islamic State's propaganda magazine *Dabiq* on our website.

In denying free speech to Islamists, we would not only betray our own values, but also undermine our struggle. Preventing Islamists from speaking would allow them to claim the mantle of victimhood, while preventing those who are attracted to the ideology from accessing all the counter-arguments against it. We also open ourselves up to accusations of hypocrisy, which would be deserved.



It is only in allowing them to air their views and robustly countering them, in speech, in print, in media and in debates, that the Islamist

ideology will be shown up for the regressive and totalitarian worldview that it is and confined to the dustbin of history where it belongs.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: USA – the land of the “big” of everything! Including the specific value that Einstein characterized as “infinite”!

Female suicide bombers now disguise in men's cloth

Source: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/200406-female-suicide-bombers-now-disguise-mens-cloth-nigerian-military-says.html>

Mar 20 – Nigerian Military authorities Friday said Boko Haram terrorists, in a bid to continue to set off explosives, had now resorted to hiding their true sex identity.

The Defence Headquarters said in a statement by Rabe Abubakar, its spokesperson, that female bombers now dress in men's attire to have unhindered access to mosques to detonate bombs.

“The latest suicide attack in the mosque at Molai Umurari village in Borno State is instructive in this regard,” Mr. Abubakar, a Brigadier General, said in the statement.

Two female suicide bombers recently attacked a Mosque in Molai, a suburb of Maiduguri during the early morning prayers, killing 13 persons and injuring many.

The defence headquarters advised members of the public “to be wary of suspicious persons, irrespective of sex, at worship places, markets and public entertainment centres.”

The statement said having been effectively dislodged and decimated, “the splinter cells of the remnant Boko Haram terror group still engage in some systematic isolated attacks, mainly on soft targets in their desperation to remain relevant”.

The Defence Headquarters urged citizens to constantly be on alert to this latest terrorist tactics and to report promptly any suspicious persons or objects to the nearest security agency.



The joke of the month!



Paris attacks: Salah Abdeslam 'to sue French prosecutor'

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35855032>

Mar 20 – Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam's lawyer says he plans to take legal action against a French prosecutor for breach of confidentiality.

The Paris prosecutor told reporters that Abdeslam had admitted he wanted to blow himself up during the attacks on 13 November but then changed his mind.

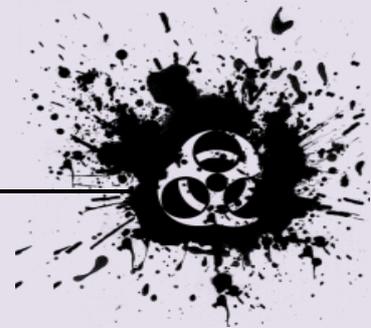


Why a fashion photographer thought a terrorism-inspired shoot would be great?

Source: <http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-03-19/why-fashion-photographer-thought-terrorism-inspired-shoot-would-be-great>

Mar 19 – **When it comes to errors in judgment and taste, Peruvian fashion photographer Rodrigo Diaz's latest creation may be hard to beat.**

Apparently oblivious to the still-open wounds he was thrusting a metaphorical knife into, Diaz this week used his Facebook page to unveil his latest shoot “inspired by terrorism.”



Specifically, he was **“inspired”** by the bloodbath unleashed by the Marxist rebels of the Shining Path, who kicked off a civil war in Peru in the 1980s and 1990s that claimed 69,000 lives.

The Andean nation’s official truth and reconciliation report directly blames Shining Path for 31,333 of those deaths.

Diaz unveiled the photo collection with the words: “Incredible clothes by the designer Valdez Pablo, the beautiful model Giu Weston and the excellent work of Make Up & Hair by Paloma Diaz.”



Here is one of those shots, featuring Weston looking gaunt in front of a ruined building. The setting, and her designer threads, appear to emulate the suffering of the mainly poor, frequently indigenous victims of the Shining Path in remote rural areas of Peru:

It is left up to the imagination what traumatic terrorist experience the model has endured. Based on Peru’s historical realities, as detailed in the reconciliation commission report, the possibilities include a car bombing, the murder of her baby with an axe or the public dynamiting of a family member’s corpse.

Needless to say, the reaction was swift, with numerous Facebook users attacking the treatment of Peru’s collective trauma.

One [posted](#) a link to a database of victims and atrocities at Peru’s Place of Memory, Tolerance and Social Inclusion, a recently inaugurated museum dedicated to the conflict.

He wrote: “That way you can properly inform yourself before trivializing and banalizing such a painful and traumatic experience for our country. Regrettably, your project has been, to say the least, an insult to the tens of thousands of victims of the two decades of violence and the very historical memory of Peru, which is costing so much effort to preserve.”

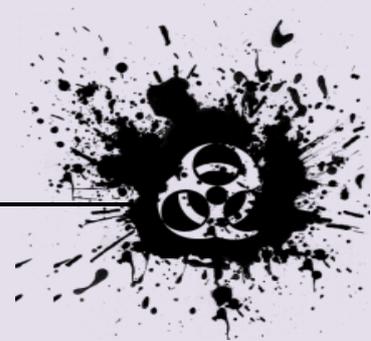
Meanwhile, Peruvian news website El Utero also got involved, with its [own article](#) headlined: **“Fashion inspired by terrorism? It’s not Zoolander III. It’s sad Peruvian reality.”**

And the Pamphlet, Peru’s equivalent of the Onion, used satire to make a deadly serious point about the deep racial divisions that plague Peru.

It ran [this tongue-in-cheek article](#) headlined “They launch ‘TerrorChic,’ a clothing line inspired by the era of terrorism but without cholos.”

“Cholo,” a Spanish term with many layers of meaning, can be summed up as referring to a dark-skinned person of indigenous descent.

Diaz did not respond to requests for comment, but he did pull the original Facebook post, and replace it with a long [apology and explanation](#). In that, he blamed his own clumsy



introduction for causing offense and said that instead of saying the shoot was “inspired by terrorism” he should have noted its name: “Scars,” although the original post included an image with the slogan “I don’t forget, nor forgive.”

That might go some way to soothing the raw feelings. But even when well-intentioned, is a fashion shoot ever an appropriate vehicle for creative expression about such terrible events?

The furor could hardly be timelier.

The Shining Path was eventually crushed by the 1990-2000 administration of President Alberto Fujimori. But the tactics used remain controversial, including illegal death squads targeting terror suspects, some of whom turned out to be unconnected to the armed rebels.

Fujimori is now serving a 25-year jail term for ordering those killings and for massive corruption. But his daughter, Keiko Fujimori, is the frontrunner by almost 20 points in upcoming presidential elections.

For many Peruvians, the misdeeds of the Shining Path and Alberto Fujimori go hand in hand, and the renewed debate about that controversial decade is stirring up more painful memories.

The Global Threat of Terrorism: Perspectives from China

By Wang Yizhou

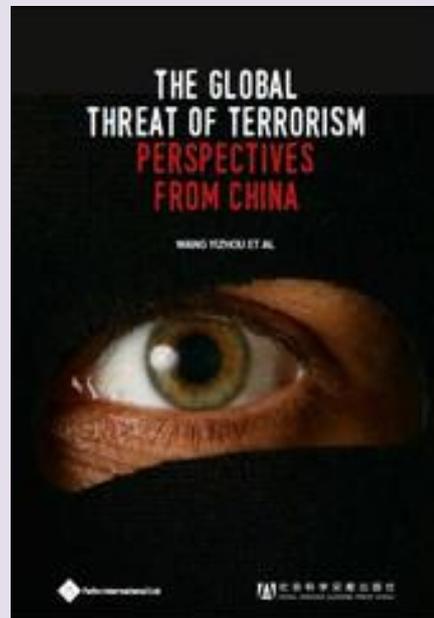
Contributions by: Zhang Yidan

Publication Date: 1/31/2016

ISBN: 9781844644643

Source: <http://isbs.com/products/9781844644643>

The rise of terrorism has become a major factor in the destabilization of global structures since the end of the Cold War. Large-scale, highly impactful terrorist attacks have occurred nearly every year and even every month since the 1990s. Many countries, regardless of their stability or volatility, have been hit by this new wave of terrorist tactics. The book analyses the underlying conflicts in the current international regime and argues that eliminating terrorism requires new security thoughts and strategies. The book aims to deepen the current debates on international terrorism and inspire new thoughts. It comprehensively includes leading Chinese scholars' readings and interpretation on international terrorism. [Subject: Security Studies, Terrorism, Politics]



EDITOR'S COMMENT: A more “Chinese EYE” would be more suitable for the cover of the book! ☺

Brussels 22/3: What We Can Learn From Today's Attacks

By Elliot Friedland

Source: <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/three-takeaways-brussels-attacks>

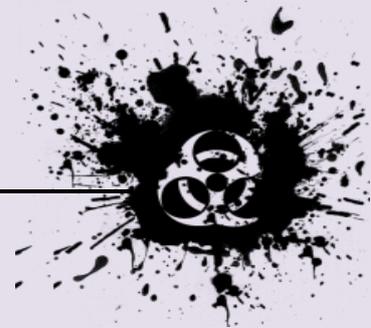
Mar 22 – Europe is reeling from the latest terrorist attacks, this time against Brussels, now confirmed to be a terrorist attacks. Three blasts have been reported so far, two in the Zaventem airport and one at the Maelbeek metro station some 500 meters from the European Parliament.

Here are three takeaways from this most recent tragic attack.

1

This Fight Impacts Everyone

The attack in Brussels follows Saturday's attack on Istanbul by an Islamic State suicide bomber that killed four. Countries attacked so far this year by Islamist terrorist either working for groups or in lone wolf attacks (and remember it's only March) include:



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – March 2016

- [Afghanistan](#)
- [Belgium](#)
- [Cote D'Ivoire](#)
- [Chad](#)
- [Turkey](#)
- [Israel](#)
- [Iraq](#)
- [Somalia](#)
- [France](#)
- [India](#)
- [Libya](#)
- [Pakistan](#)
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- [Syria](#)
- [Nigeria](#)
- [Saudi Arabia](#)
- [Mali](#)
- [Russia](#)
- [Philippines](#)
- [Thailand](#)
- [Uruguay](#)
- [Canada](#)

That's attacks on 26 countries across North America, South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and East Asia in just three months. This is a problem everywhere. It is no longer possible to argue it doesn't impact you or that there is nothing you can do about it.

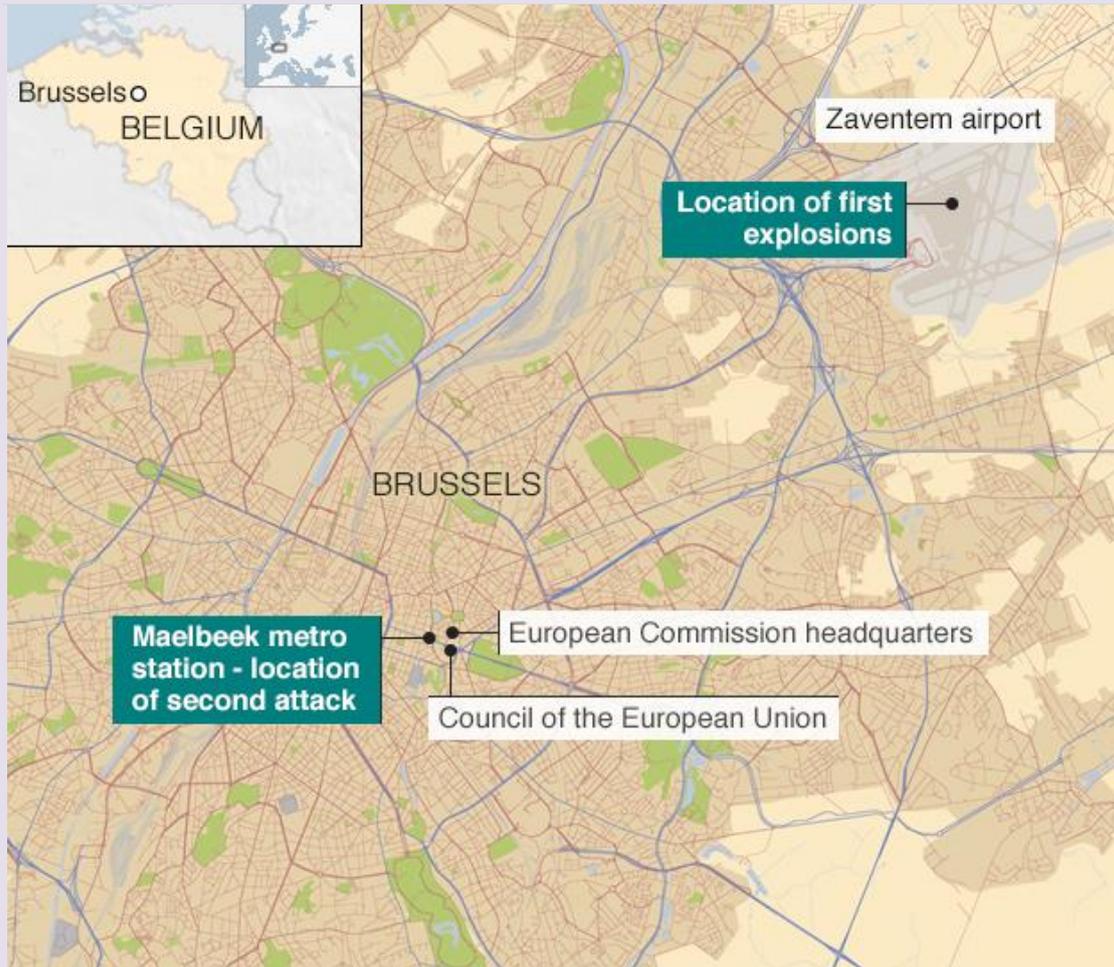


2

Terrorism Works If You Let it

This one is difficult to internalize. Terrorism operates by creating an outsized reaction to a highly publicized event. It works to create "terror" in a population by stripping citizens of their feeling of safety, inculcating an atmosphere where people feel they can be attacked anywhere and at any time.





BBC



Societies respond with security measures designed to protect the citizenry and these can at times be heavy handed and worsen community relations, driving more people into the arms of terrorist groups. Public confusion and panic exacerbates the problem. One of the aims of groups like the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) is to create a backlash of anti-Muslim bigotry and thus instigate a war between Muslims and everyone else. Chaos, hatred and confusion is the favored



working environment of terrorists and Islamists since it enables them to advance their goals under the cover of the fog of war.

Muslim and non-Muslim groups working together against terrorism and the Islamist ideology which spawns it (as distinct from the religion of Islam) in a firm, calm and unified manner is therefore essential to a counter-extremism strategy in civil society.



3

This will not stop until the ideology is defeated

The countries that have been attacked do not share a cohesive foreign policy platform or common causes except being opposed to the ideology of Islamism.

This Islamist ideology, which seeks to conquer the world and implement *sharia* governance under a theocratic Islamist caliphate gives people who are drawn to acts of violence an outlet for their grievances and an opportunity to justify crimes on an international scale.

Two of the terrorists?



In addition to the military steps needed to tackle violent groups, an international civil society effort to correctly label, deconstruct and intellectually discredit the underlying ideology that justifies such heinous acts will bring an end to the international wave of violence committed in its name.

Elliot Friedland is a research fellow at Clarion Project.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Apart from above theoretical lessons learned (or better problems identified) it has long been notified that the check in area of international (and national) airports is a very attractive terrorist target. There is no control on who is entering there and why and there is always a big number of people at almost any given hour of the day and night. Perhaps this new bloodshed will provoke new design methodologies that will help avoid similar incidents in the (near) future. Will it happen again? Usually unique plans are not repeated given the additional security measures taken. But this might also be a challenge and a repetition might happen somewhere in the world – even sooner than expected.

