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Profile Emerges of a Suspect in Attack on Train to France

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/08/profile-emerges-of-suspect-in-attack-on.html>

The young man who emerged from a Thalys train bathroom on Friday with a Kalashnikov, pistol and box cutter is believed to be Ayoub El Kahzani, 26, of Moroccan origin, who was known to the Spanish and French security services and is reported to have traveled to Syria last year.

With the man under interrogation by French antiterrorism authorities, who can hold him without charge for up to 96 hours, French officials cautioned that many details of his life, and even his identity, had yet to be confirmed. But if the outlines of his profile prove correct, in particular that he had already been identified by officials as a potential threat, the case may once again underscore the challenges European authorities face as they try to keep track of several thousand people in Europe who have circulated to and from Iraq and Syria to join jihadist groups.

The French interior minister, Bernard Cazeneuve, said that if the suspect is who he says, he is a Moroccan citizen who had lived in Spain and Belgium, and according to Spanish officials, also lived in France and may have traveled to Syria from there. The Spanish authorities notified the French intelligence services in February 2014 that the man had joined "the radical Islamist movement," Mr. Cazeneuve said. Spanish officials also notified Belgium.

The French then marked the man down as a security threat, assigning him an "S" profile, Mr. Cazeneuve said, intended to alert the border police. The man lived in Spain in 2014 and then this year in Belgium, Mr. Cazeneuve said. According to Spanish officials, the man lived for about one year in Algeciras, a city in southern Spain that is a major transit port between Spain and Morocco, but left the city in March 2014. He had been kept under surveillance by the Spanish police during his time in Algeciras because of past criminal activities linked to drug trafficking; the Spanish police then shared that information with their French counterparts, according to a Spanish official involved in antiterrorism efforts who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Spanish officials told the newspaper El País that the suspect moved to France in 2014 and traveled from there to Syria before returning to

France, details that Mr. Cazeneuve, a careful lawyer, did not mention in his statement.

Belgian authorities opened their own antiterrorism investigation on Saturday. The Belgian newspaper Le Soir reported that "if his identity is confirmed, this man would have been identified by the Belgian services as related to the terrorist networks recently dismantled in Belgium in the wake of the dismantling of Verviers network."

On Jan. 15, about a week after the Jan. 7 killings at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris, the Belgian police killed two people and arrested a third during a counterterrorism operation in Verviers, a town considered a hub for Islamist radicalization. Belgian authorities said then that the radicals singled out in the operation were "about to launch terrorist attacks on a grand scale."

But some officials and experts also recommended caution about the Thalys train episode, suggesting that the suspect was wrongly equipped to shoot up a narrow train and appeared to have been poorly trained as well, because his Kalashnikov jammed and his pistol was improperly loaded.

They also questioned the symbolic value of a train attack, compared with the carefully chosen symbolism of the attacks at Charlie Hebdo, which was denounced by many Muslims for its spoofing depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, and at a kosher supermarket in Paris. Altogether, 17 people were killed.

"A Thalys train is not Charlie Hebdo," said François Heisbourg, a defense and security analyst at the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris. "And I don't know what they taught him in Syria if he was ever there. You don't want to use an assault rifle in a place you can barely turn around."

Mr. Heisbourg suggested that if the train and its passengers had been the main target, stun grenades and pistols would have been more effective weapons. "It gives the impression that the man was acting on the spur of the moment, seeing a target of opportunity, perhaps," he said. "My hunch is that he was bringing hardware from Belgium, gun running, and then maybe decided to do it on the train



instead of shooting up Gare du Nord," the end of the line in Paris.

But it is also possible, he said, that, like many foreigners trained by or attracted to Islamist radicalism and jihad, the man was told "to go home and do your worst, to act on initiative," and perhaps told only where to pick up a gun. The suspect in the train attack, like Mohammed Merah, who shot French Army personnel and Jews in Toulouse in 2012, or the Kouachi brothers who were instrumental in the Charlie Hebdo killings, were all on watch lists kept by French security services, which Mr. Heisbourg called "a recurring pattern that is very disturbing." The good news is that the security services were following the right people, he said, but "the bad news is that this knowledge served little purpose."

France has about 5,000 people on the "S" list, according to Agence France-Presse, but it is unclear how many are active or how the list may have grown over the years. In 2014, France reorganized its intelligence and security services, creating the D.G.S.I. — General Directorate for Internal Security— largely separate from the police and the larger D.G.S.E. — General Directorate for External Security — to modernize its internal security and make it less of a police culture.

While the reorganization was needed, it may yet be too early to judge the results, Mr. Heisbourg said, and more resources are likely to be needed.

Belgium is not only known for its homegrown Islamist radicals but for being a distribution center for illegal arms for decades, for both criminal gangs and terrorist groups. The weapons used in the Charlie Hebdo killings, for instance, were traced to Belgium, where they could easily be moved to other countries within the European free-travel zone, and particularly to neighboring France, normally without any screening if traveling by train, bus or automobile.

The Belgian Prime Minister, Charles Michel, on Saturday called the train episode "a terrorist attack" and proposed "an urgent meeting of transport and interior ministers from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands to reinforce antiterrorist measures, notably identity and baggage controls," his office said. Attacks like this one, combined with Europe's difficulties this summer with a surge of migrants and asylum seekers from Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Libya and other countries, have made some officials question the open borders allowed by the Schengen Agreement, which allows free movement without border controls across much of the European Union. Even the German interior minister, Thomas de Maizière, has suggested a new examination of that agreement because of the large flow of migrants to Germany and other northern countries from entry points in Greece, Italy and Hungary.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT: I just love the deep operational knowledge of François Heisbourg, a defense and security analyst at the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris. Is that a paid job or just volunteer academic? And again is there a specific modus operandi to be followed to be characterized as "terrorist" and "terrorism"?

Is airport-style security **now** needed for train travel?

Source: <http://www.euronews.com/2015/08/22/is-airport-style-security-now-needed-for-train-travel/>

Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel has called for urgent talks with other European governments to seek more security on cross-border railway services.

The suspected Islamist militant involved in what Michel called a "terrorist attack" on a high-speed train from Amsterdam to Paris on Friday, boarded the service in Brussels.

"The Prime Minister proposes an urgent meeting of transport and interior ministers from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands to reinforce anti-terrorist measures, notably identity and baggage controls," said Michel's office, after a meeting of his security council.

Security measures will now be stepped up in Belgium but should full airport-style checks now be put in place across Europe?

The question was raised by Michael, a passenger travelling from Brussels Midi Station to Paris.



“Will international trains organise a metal detection system as for planes? I don’t know but I hope that



my trip will be okay and for the other passengers too but what can we do? It is not in our hands but there are certainly things to be done.”

A female passenger in Brussels, also travelling on Saturday, said: “Well, when we first heard the news, the first reaction is: ‘Oh, I’m so glad I was not

on that train’ but then I got a little bit nervous because we are coming this way and we were heading over to the UK.

“But at the back of our mind, we have seen so much security that we really didn’t feel as though we had anything to be very frightened about so we are going to keep travelling.”

On Eurostar trains between Paris, London and Brussels, passengers’ luggage is screened and identity checks are made.

Reacting to Friday’s incident, European Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc said that passengers’ safety is the first priority and that security procedures for train travel will be **reassessed**.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: "Now", "reassessed" – yeah! Sure! Did Madrid's train bombing tought nothing to responsible security authorities? Always "post-emptive"; NEVER "pro-emptive"!

Defeating Terror on a Train: What the U.S. Heroes Proved

Source: <http://time.com/4007527/france-train-terrorist-attack/>



Francois Mori—AP From left: Anthony Sadler, a senior at Sacramento University in California, U.S. Airman Spencer Stone, and U.S. National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos pose with Jane D. Hartley, U.S. Ambassador to France, before a press conference held at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris, on Aug. 23, 2015.

What does it tell us that three unarmed men—including a pair of U.S. military personnel—won the latest battle in 21st Century warfare?

The heroics of three California buddies may offer an insight into the evolution of war. No one is arguing that state-on-state warfare has gone the way of the cavalry, but Friday’s clash

aboard a train in Belgium should lead to some questions about continuing investments in high-tech, high-cost weapons and counter-terrorism efforts.

The U.S. military increasingly finds itself battling poorly-trained, barely-equipped militants armed with little more than will and ideology. Too often, it seems, will and ideology



trump GPS smart bombs and laser-guided missiles fired from fleets of unmanned drones and fifth-generation warplanes.

As Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone, National Guard Specialist Alek Skarlatos and Anthony Sadler detailed how they took down Moroccan native Ayoub El Khazzani on Sunday at the U.S. embassy in Paris, the Pentagon issued its daily press release detailing the latest air strikes against targets in the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria.

The contrast between futility and utility was bracing. The Pentagon's target list was the latest in a year-long series of sorties that—despite Pentagon protests to the contrary—shows little signs of progress. In contrast, the train takedown represented a quick victory that won congratulations from around the globe.

"Airman Stone and Specialist Alex Skarlatos are two reasons why—on duty and off—ours is the finest fighting force the world has ever known," Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said in a statement. "These men are heroes," added Air Force General Philip Breedlove, the top U.S. military officer in Europe. President Obama telephoned the men to thank them, and French President Francois Hollande will reportedly present them with the country's *Legion d'Honneur* medal on Monday.

The three were aboard a Paris-bound train packed with more than 500 passengers late Friday when an armed Khazzani stormed into their car, after firing a shot in another carriage.

"I turned around and I saw he had what looked to be an AK-47, and it looked like it was jammed or wasn't working," Stone said.

"He clearly had no firearms training whatsoever," said Skarlatos, 22, who has just finished a tour in Afghanistan. "If he knew what he was doing, or even just got lucky...we would have all been in trouble and probably wouldn't be here today—along with a lot of other people."

The fumbling proved the undoing of Khazzani, 25. "Alek just hit me on the shoulder and said 'let's go' and ran down, tackled him," Stone said. "We hit the ground." Stone, 23, put the attacker in a chokehold, who responded by slashing Stone in the neck and hand with a box-cutter, the same weapon used by the 9/11 hijackers. The three, aided by Briton Chris Norman, ultimately subdued Khazzani. He is now in custody; one of his lawyers says he claims to be a would-be robber, not a terrorist.

Armed with the AK-47, nine clips of ammo, a pistol and the box cutter, Khazzani could have killed dozens of train passengers. More strikingly, he was able to get aboard the train with his arsenal despite appearing on the terrorism warning screens of three countries—Belgium, France and Spain—as a possible risk. French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said Saturday that Khazzani was believed to have been a member of "the radical Islamic movement."

The brief battle illustrates a few lessons:

- ✓ The hundreds of billions of dollars the West's militaries and counter-terrorism agencies have spent since 9/11 to combat radical Islam (or radical Islamists masquerading as train robbers) can't defeat an ideology. So long as a few Islamic leaders incite their followers to attack Western targets—and some do so—no investment can do that.
- ✓ If Islamic militants are determined to launch lone wolf attacks that threaten everyone in the West, everyone in the West is on the front lines. The solution isn't to put undercover soldiers wherever the public gathers, or to arm every civilian. Instead, it simply requires donning a new mindset. Ever since the 9/11 attacks, airline passengers have no longer been willing to give strangers the benefit of the doubt if they appear threatening. Such an attitude will become more common, in more places, so long as such attacks persist. Importantly, as Friday's outcome shows, attackers are not invincible. "Basically, in times of crisis...do something," Sadler, 22, said.
- ✓ A balance needs to be struck between those attacking and those who talk about attacking. Even as the trio conducted their press conference, U.S. and allied warplanes were flying bombing runs against targets in the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria. The West will never be able to kill all of those eager to declare their willingness to kill Westerners. Continuing Western attacks against such targets could do more, in the long run, to spur Islamic recruits to launch more attacks. The West, and the greater Islamic community, must do more to wean Muslim fanatics from violence without fanning their fervor.
- ✓ Industrial warfare—where nation-states produce tanks, ships and aircraft (as well as youth) in an effort to defeat one another—is ebbing. That's happening because of U.S.



supremacy on the battlefield, and greater economic interdependence among nations. Industrial warfare isn't going away, but it looks increasingly like terrorism will remain atop the national-security to-do list for the foreseeable future.

- ✓ —Any deliberate move away from industrial warfare will have powerful opponents, including those who produce the armaments found on the modern battlefield, and those who have spent careers training young warriors how to use them.
- ✓ Friday's fight on the high-speed Amsterdam-to-Paris train can be viewed a miniature version of the clash of civilizations that some fear may now be unfolding. If so, Sadler, Skarlatos and Stone stepped up to the plate. "He seemed like he was ready to fight to the end," Stone said of Khazzani. "So were we."

Thwarted train attack in France highlights U.S. rail vulnerability

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150824-thwarted-train-attack-in-france-highlights-u-s-rail-vulnerability>

Aug 24 – Airports are protected by several layers of security, but railroad stations have minimal, if any, protective measures, and there are no security checks through which those who take the train must pass.

The attempted attack on the high-speed train from Brussels to Paris, an attack foiled by the quick courageous action of three Americans and Briton, only highlights the vulnerability to attack of U.S. rail.

The *New York Times* reports that larger stations have armed Amtrak police officers, some with bomb-sniffing dogs. At some rail hubs – Union Station in Washington, D.C., for example, and Penn Station in New York – passengers and baggage are randomly searched. At Union Station messages are appear on larg-screen monitors urging passengers who spot suspicious activity to report it. A small number of military personnel patrol Penn Station.

"Passengers failing to consent to security procedures will be denied access to trains," Christina E. Leeds, an Amtrak spokeswoman, told the *Times* in an e-mail Saturday.

Major European train stations have greater presence of security personnel, but in Europe, too, security at train stations is far behind security measures implemented in European airports.

The *Times* notes that Amtrak has a police force of about 500 officers, and that smaller commuter rail services have their own security officers, who randomly patrol passenger cars, especially on special occasions such as concerts or sporting events.

DHS and TSA have made rail security a priority since the Madrid rail bombing in 2004 and the London underground bombing in July 2005

(see "Terrorists shift focus of attacks from air transportation to rail systems," [HSNW, 4 March 2015](#); and "Concerns grow about attacks on rail systems by domestic terrorists," [HSNW, 19 January 2015](#)).

In December 2005 the TSA has set up security teams called [Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response](#), or **VIPR squads**, and they have been assigned to patrol ground transportation hubs such as train and bus stations. TSA says that the teams work with local and state and transportation officials to thwart terrorist attacks.

TSA says the teams include security inspectors, behavior detection officers, and explosives experts. The agency says there are thirty-one teams in operation, and that in 2014 they conducted more than 7,000 operations, including security patrols at train stations.

Security experts say, however, that trains remain vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Professor Arnold Barnett of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management, who analyzed terrorist attacks over a 30-year period from 1982 to 2011, writes that **terrorists have shifted their focus in recent years away from attacking airlines to attacking subway and rail systems**. In his study — *Has Successful Terror Gone to Ground?* — Barnett writes that statistically significant evidence points to a growing focus of terrorist attacks against ground mass transit. The deadliest attacks in the decade 2002-2011 were against subway and commuter rail systems, taking 200 lives apiece.

Barnett notes that the statistical risk posed to travelers by criminal/terrorist acts against air and rail are minuscule, but he



argues that successful acts of terror have ramifications beyond their immediate consequences. For example, many observers believe that the Madrid commuter-train bombings in 2004 changed the outcome of the Spanish national election shortly thereafter. Barnett argues that "if terrorists give weight to demonstrated success," then the vulnerabilities illustrated by recent rail bombings from Great Britain to Sri Lanka could be precursors to further attacks. Because there is little evidence that attacks on rail systems can be thwarted while in progress, the greater terrorist interest in railroads "heightens the urgency" of intercepting terror plots in advance. Barnett concludes by noting that a planned 2009 New York subway attack was thwarted by good intelligence work, not by security measures at Times Square or Grand Central Station.

The idea of implementing screening measures, similar to those at airports, at train stations has been debated by security experts and lawmakers, but it did not go anywhere because of budgetary considerations and passengers' objections (but it was implemented in some train stations in China; see "China implements airport-like security checks at crowded train stations," [HSNW, 3 June 2014](#)).

Amtrak officials told the *Times* that before the company's high-speed train, the Acela, began service in 2000, and airport security screening tightened in 2001, Amtrak carried only one-third of travelers between New York and Washington. Amtrak's share of that traffic is now 75 percent. The officials say that one reason for the growth in the number of passengers choosing Amtrak is the time-consuming airport security screening.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: It seems to me that mass transportation authorities on both sides of the

THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS FOR MAJOR SUCCESS ARE: FIRST, BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, AND SECOND, DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

ocean were secretly wishing for such an incident to happen in order to have an excuse for delaying more advanced security measures in train transportation industry. The big question is "why do we always need a "bloody" excuse to do things that we should have done well in advance just in case something similar to Frensch train shooting happens?" Is it bad intelligence analysis? Is it the global WNHTU (will not happen to us) virus? Is it just the "wrong peopk, right position" misfortune? All the above? Something new and invisible? In all instances we have to explore first why we always follow

terrorism a step behind and then take proper actions. And we have to do this internal analysis today because a much more incident will happen tomorrow and one of us might be directly involved!

Mission impossible? Stopping terrorism in Europe

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/23/europe/europe-terror-threat/>

Aug 24 – The bravery of a few passengers aboard the express train from Amsterdam to Paris on Friday evening may have averted horrendous bloodshed. But their courage made up for another failure of surveillance and detection. And the incident showed once again that protecting Europe from terror attacks is an almost impossible job.

There are plenty of reasons why: jihadi networks hiding among the millions of Muslim immigrants living in Europe, travel by would-be jihadists to and from the killing fields (and training grounds) of Syria and Iraq, as well as easy movement within Europe. Flights may be secure, but rail and other transport hubs in Europe are not. There are plenty of targets. And ready access to weapons such as AK-47s make basic acts of terrorism (rather than ambitious bomb plots) easy to plan and carry out.



In addition, cooperation among European intelligence services -- while improving -- is not as thorough as it should be. It also remains extremely difficult to foresee who among the many thousands of radicalized individuals will cross the line from thought to action -- monitoring them all would require massive resources and a level of surveillance that's difficult to reconcile with democracy.

There's now another worry: are groups like ISIS trying to smuggle operatives into Europe among the tens of thousands of migrants crossing the Mediterranean? One prominent ISIS follower, Abu Arhim al-Libim said in February that even if the migrant exodus from Libya was "partially exploited and developed strategically, pandemonium could be wrought in southern Europe."

Ayoub el Khazzani is still being questioned in France by the DGSJ -- the domestic intelligence and

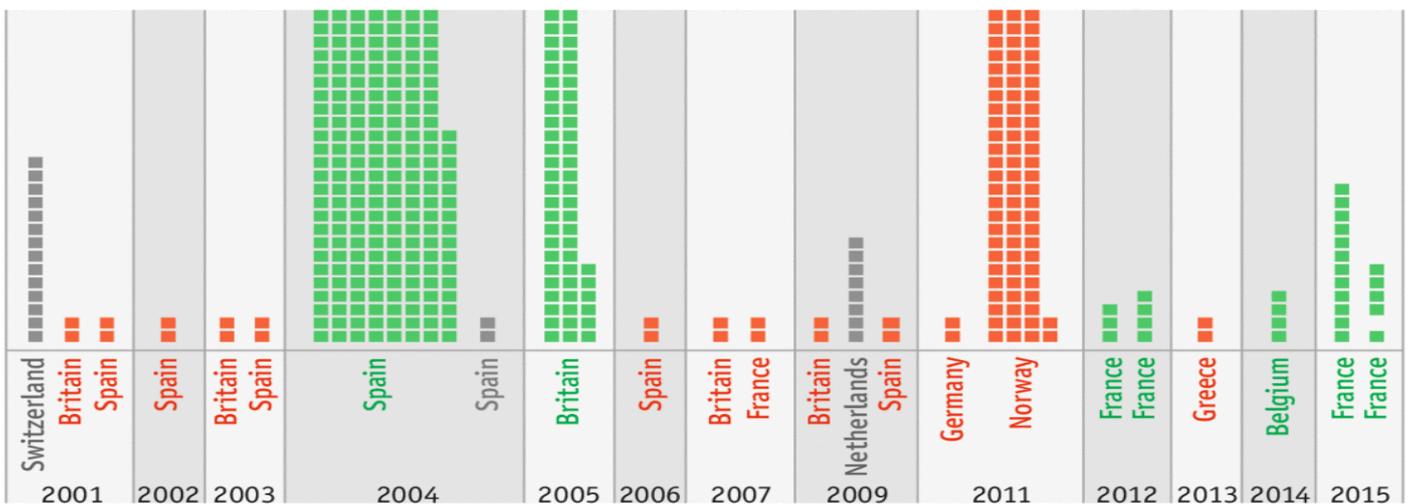
13 years of terror in western Europe

Political violence in western Europe
September 10th 2001-January 15th 2015

Attacks causing two or more deaths □ =1 death
Perpetrators: ■ Islamist ■ other ■ unknown affiliation

Attacks causing one death, cumulative total

Austria	1	Ireland	2
Belgium	1	Italy	3
Britain	14	Netherlands	3
France	4	Spain	9
Greece	5	Sweden	1



Sources: Global Terrorism Database, University of Maryland; press reports; *The Economist*

security service. He has not been charged. But what's emerging about his past illustrates many of the problems European intelligence agencies face.

Large marginalized population

According to Spanish officials, the Khazzani family moved to Spain in 2007. They were originally from Tetouan, a town of high youth unemployment on Morocco's Mediterranean coast and long a recruiting ground for jihadist groups. It was then very common for Moroccans and other foreigners to be granted residency and work permits in Spain. The number of migrants living in Spain increased from less than 2% of the population in 1999 to more than 12% a decade later.

The family later moved from the capital, Madrid, to the port city of Algeciras just 10 miles across the Mediterranean from the Moroccan coast. They lived in the neighborhood of El Saladillo, which suffers from poverty, high crime and drug trafficking. In April of this year, for example, Spanish police

intercepted 850 kilograms of Moroccan hashish being unloaded at El Saladillo's harbor.

Khazzani was arrested at least twice on drug-related charges in Madrid, according to Spanish accounts of his background. His father, interviewed by the Daily Telegraph Sunday, said his son's first arrest was in 2009. He appears to have survived on odd jobs and occasional petty crime, much like Mohammed Merah -- who went on a shooting rampage in Toulouse, France in 2012, killing seven people -- and Mehdi Nemmouche, who returned from Syria and carried out a gun attack against a Jewish museum in Brussels in May 2014.

The link between petty crime or drug addiction and then redemption through militant Salafism -- a literalist approach to Islam that seeks what its followers



consider a return to the true values of the religion -- has surfaced time and again in terror investigations, with prisons frequently the incubator for such transformations. European governments are grappling with the problem of combating radicalization in prisons. After the January attacks in Paris, the French government doubled the budget for Muslim chaplains in prisons. But the task is daunting: more than half the male population of French jails is Muslim. Amedy Coulibaly, who attacked a Jewish supermarket in Paris in January, told police after a previous arrest that he had met many terrorists in prison.

Intel disconnect

Ayoub el Khazzani began attending a mosque in Algeciras after he reunited with his family in 2012 and, according to locals in El Saladillo quoted in Spanish media, became more devout. What he did to attract the attention of the Spanish authorities is unclear. But according to French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, the Spanish police alerted the French that Khazzani was preparing to travel there early in 2014. Beyond that, there appears to be disagreement between French and Spanish sources about who knew what and when and what was communicated.

Close cooperation among intelligence services is all the more critical because of free movement within the European Union's Schengen Area, which allows for passport-free travel between 26 countries. Speaking of Khazzani, Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel said "this was someone who clearly traveled around Europe." Khazzani's lawyer, Sophie David, said he had visited Germany and Austria as well as France and Belgium.

Such travel patterns are not uncommon: terror groups have learned to use Europe's open borders to their advantage. The French commentator Gabriel Robin wrote Sunday that "the utopia of a world without frontiers or national identities, or more simply without different nations, has become our nightmare." In suggesting more identity checks, Michel said Schengen was important for "freedom of movement for those who have good intentions, but this freedom is also used in order to harm." German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere has suggested Schengen may be at risk because of the refugee crisis unfolding at its borders. But the agreement would be very difficult to unravel, and European Commission

President Claude Junckers has said it is irreversible. To him and others, Schengen's failure would be a defeat for democracy and an open Europe, whether inflicted because of terrorism or Europe's inability to share the refugee burden.

Weapon of choice

Khazzani had an AK-47 when wrestled to the floor of the train. Sid Ahmed Ghlam, a 24-year-old Algerian arrested in Paris in April after killing a woman, had several in a vehicle. The weapon was allegedly supplied to him by a cell with links to jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria -- and prosecutors contend he was planning terror attacks against one or more churches. Amedy Coulibaly also used an AK-47, as did his accomplices -- the Kouachi brothers -- who attacked the Charlie Hebdo offices (and also had a Skorpion submachine gun) the previous day.

Such weapons are not difficult to come by in industrial cities on either side of the Franco-Belgian border, according to intelligence analysts, nor in other big cities such as Grenoble and Toulouse. Many are smuggled from the Balkans, after being stolen or bought from corrupt officials. Some of the world's largest weapons and ammunition manufacturers are based in the region, which was flooded with guns during the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

According to a recent European Union report, "large amounts of powerful military grade weapons have since the mid-1990s reached the EU from the Western Balkans and former Soviet Bloc countries, often trafficked in small quantities and hidden in vehicles like long-distance coaches to avoid detection."

Another report estimated that in 2011 there were 100,000 tons of ammunition stockpiled in Bosnia alone.

Who To watch?

Sid Ahmed Ghlam was on the radar of the DGSI, having been cautioned by police after returning from Turkey. He and Khazzani -- and several thousand others -- were included in what's known as the 'fiche S' by the DGSI. This huge and fluid list categorizes individuals according to 16 levels of assessed threat to national security. But many who have spent time on the list have gone



on to commit terror attacks: Nemmouche, Coulibaly and the Kouachi brothers among them. Mohammed Merah was interviewed several times by the security services before he launched his attacks in Toulouse. Yassin Salhi, accused of beheading his employer in June, had been removed from the fiche S in 2008.

But constant surveillance of all those moving in militant circles or perceived as a potential threat is impossible, as is predicting which among them may go 'operational.' There may be as many as 5,000 individuals in the fiche S. Security experts say that full-time surveillance of just one individual can involve 25-30 agents.

And some suspects appear to "go straight" for a time in an effort to shake off surveillance, or use wives or partners to communicate by phone (a ploy used by Coulibaly and one of the Kouachis.)

Investigators will now be focusing on whether and when Khazzani might have traveled to Syria or Iraq, or even Turkey. His actions on the train, as reported by witnesses, do not suggest a highly-trained assassin. But security services are perennially anxious that ISIS may seek to expand its war by training and sending some of its foreign fighters back to Europe to wreak havoc.

Lone Wolf Terror In Europe? The Same Denial

By Arie Egozi

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/08/lone-wolf-terror-in-europe-the-same-denial/>



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Aug 24 – Europe has learned from Israel and is also treating recent terror attack as “Lone wolf terrorism”. Europe prefers to delude itself that isn’t something organized but rather people waking up in the morning and wanting to take revenge on any who isn’t Muslim.

Well, Europe is also intentionally or innocently wrong. The young man who committed the last terror attack was also a suspect but was not under constant surveillance. The writing is on the wall, but either the eye sight is poor or the eyes are just closed.

Last week a young Moroccan opened fire on a train between Holland and France. The young

man, armed with a Kalashnikov and knives, wounded three people, two of them severely. U.S. marines on vacation managed to apprehend the attacker and prevented a slaughter on the train. Defense officials: “Acted out of sympathy for ISIS”.

France is in high alert these days, an alert that began since the terror attack which killed more than 20 people in the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, as well as the attack in the Jewish convenience store Hyper Kasher in Paris on January.

In another attack on June this year an employee has

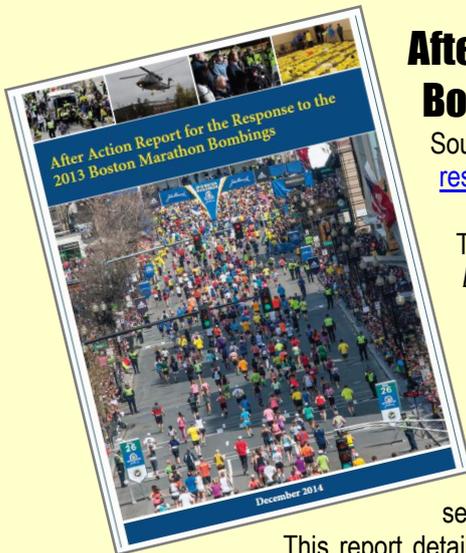


decapitated his employer and tried to blow up a gas facility in south of France. Prosecution said that his actions were affected by ISIS's radical ideas. All these, according to the French and Europeans in general, are lone wolf terror attacks, but a group of Israeli experts is refusing to acknowledge this claim, same as they refuse to acknowledge the Israeli statement that attack in the West Bank are lone wolf terrorism and is claiming that countries in Europe have been, for a while now, under a constant terror attack.

And as if to justify these Israeli experts, it was published last weekend that Muhammad Emwazzi, known as Jihadi John, who was shown in countless ISIS videos to decapitate heads, is threatening Europe, saying that he

will continue to behead people and will return to Britain with the Chalipate's leader. The west estimates that ISIS's head beheader has escaped to Libya.

A reminder and proof of how much Europeans don't understand what is happening in their own countries – Emwazi was wanted by MI5 – the British security service – as early as 2011 since his name was tied with several terror acts across the sea as well as in Britain itself. British press states that MI5 has tried to recruit him several times as a spy while, at the same time, including him in the agency's terror list which was supposed to prevent him from leaving Britain. Obviously, this did nothing to stop his escape to Syria.



After Action Report for the Response to the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/mema/after-action-report-for-the-response-to-the-2013-boston-marathon-bombings.pdf>

The *After Action Report for the Response to the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings* reflects the findings of an after action review of response and recovery activities of public safety, public health, and medical personnel related to the April 15 bombings, the care and support of those impacted by the events in the following days, and the search and apprehension of the bombing suspects. The after action review was coordinated by a multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional project management team consisting of key organizations involved in response activities, with the support of a private sector, third-party vendor.

This report details best practices, lessons learned and recommendations for the purpose of assisting public safety, public health, and medical personnel involved in the response in further developing actions that went well, and taking corrective measures to address areas needing improvement. The majority of these agencies and organizations implemented a number of the recommendations identified in this report prior to the 2014 Boston Marathon.

In addition to providing assistance to response agencies and organizations, the best practices and lessons learned identified through this after action process can hopefully provide insight to other agencies, jurisdictions and organizations across the nation and assist them in better preparing for potential incidents in the future.

► Read the full report at source's URL.

With 5% of world's population, U.S. had 31% of the world's public mass shooters in 1966-2012

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150825-with-5-of-worlds-population-u-s-had-31-of-the-world-s-public-mass-shooters-in-19662012>

Aug 25 – **Despite having only about 5 percent of the world's population, the United States was the attack site for a disproportionate 31 percent of public mass shooters globally from 1966 to 2012**, according to new research presented at the 110th Annual



Meeting of the American Sociological Association (ASA), taking place in Chicago 22-25 August.

The United States, Yemen, Switzerland, Finland, and Serbia are ranked as the Top 5 countries in firearms owned per capita,

according to the 2007 Small Arms Survey, and my study found that all five are ranked in the Top 15 countries in public mass shooters per capita," said study author Adam Lankford, an associate professor of criminal justice at the University of Alabama. "That is not a coincidence."

The ASA reports that Lankford's study, which examines the period 1966-2012, relies on data from the New York City Police Department's 2012 active shooter report, the FBI's 2014 active shooter report, and multiple international sources. It is the first quantitative analysis of all reported public mass shootings around the world that resulted in the deaths of four

or more people. By definition, these shootings do not include incidents that occurred solely in domestic settings or were primarily gang-related, drive-by shootings, hostage taking incidents, or robberies.

"My study provides empirical evidence, based on my quantitative assessment of 171 countries, that a nation's civilian firearm ownership rate is the strongest predictor of its number of public mass shooters," Lankford said. "Until now, everyone was simply speculating about the relationship between firearms and public mass shootings. My study provides empirical evidence of a positive association between the two."

As part of his study, Lankford explored how public mass shootings in the United States differed from those abroad. He found that public mass shooters in other countries were 3.6 times less likely to have used multiple weapons (typically multiple guns, but occasionally a gun plus another weapon or weapons) than those in the United States, where more than half of shooters used at least two weapons.

"Given the fact that the United States has over 200 million more firearms in circulation than any other country, it's not surprising that our public mass shooters would be more likely to arm themselves with multiple weapons than

foreign offenders," Lankford said. "I was surprised, however, that the average number of victims killed by each shooter was actually higher in other countries (8.81 victims) than it was in the United States (6.87 victims) because so many horrific attacks have occurred here."

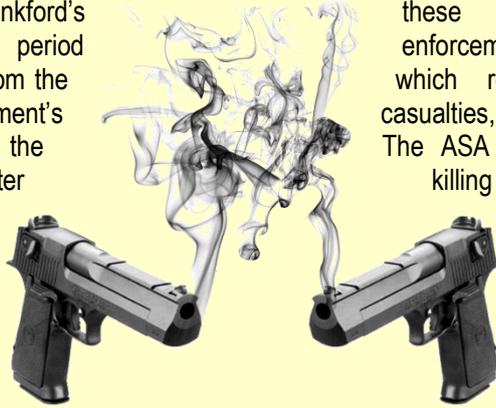
The side-effect of America having experienced so many mass shootings may be that our police are better trained to respond to these incidents than law enforcement in other countries, which reduces the number of casualties, Lankford suggested.

The ASA notes that in addition to killing fewer people and using more weapons, U.S. public mass shooters were also more likely to attack in schools, factories/warehouses, and office buildings than offenders in other

countries. Compared to U.S. shooters, however, attackers abroad were significantly more likely to strike in military settings, such as bases, barracks, and checkpoints.

While Lankford's study revealed a strong link between the civilian firearm ownership rate and the large number of public mass shooters in the United States, he said there could be other factors that make the United States especially prone to public mass shooting incidents.

"In the United States, where many individuals are socialized to assume that they will reach great levels of success and achieve 'the American Dream,' there may be particularly high levels of strain among those who encounter blocked goals or have negative social interactions with their peers, coworkers, or bosses," Lankford explained. "When we add depression, schizophrenia, paranoia, or narcissism into the mix, this could explain why the United States has such a disproportionate number of public mass shooters. Other countries certainly have their share of people who struggle with these problems, but they may be less likely to indulge in the delusions of grandeur that are common among these offenders in the United States, and, of course, less likely to get their hands on the guns necessary for such attacks."



In terms of the study's policy implications, Lankford said, "The most obvious implication is that the United States could likely reduce its number of school shootings, workplace shootings, and public mass shootings in other places if it reduced the number of guns in circulation."

There is evidence that such an approach could be successful, according to Lankford. "From 1987 to 1996, four public mass shootings

occurred in Australia," Lankford said. "Just twelve days after a mass shooter killed thirty-five people in the last of these attacks, Australia agreed to pass comprehensive gun control laws. It also launched a major buyback program that reduced Australia's total number of firearms by 20 percent. My study shows that in the wake of these policies, Australia has yet to experience another public mass shooting."

France Terrorism 2015: After Train Attack, Charlie Hebdo, French Try To Step Up Anti-Terror Efforts But Brace For More Violence

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.com/france-terrorism-2015-after-train-attack-charlie-hebdo-french-try-step-anti-terror-2069789>



French soldiers patrolled in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Jan. 7, 2015, after gunmen shouting Islamist slogans stormed the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and fatally shot 12 people. Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

For much of the past two decades, French domestic security has been hailed as the gold standard in European defense circles. Where some neighboring nations experienced deadly terrorist attacks, such as the 2005 London subway bombing that killed 52 people, France's offices, streets and subways remained largely devoid of high death tolls and terrorism.

"[France] had a strong reputation for the simple and striking fact that there had not been any major terrorist attack between 1986 and 2012," said Frank Foley, a professor at King's College

in London who specializes in counter-terrorism. "People looked to that and said, 'What are the French doing?'"

France's reputation for keeping its citizens safe from terrorism took a major hit in 2015 -- first with the Charlie Hebdo massacre in January that left 12 at the satirical magazine dead in Paris, then days later with two shootings at a suburban kosher market and again Friday, with the attempted attack on a Paris-bound high-speed train that resulted in terrorism charges for one man.



Heated debate among French officials and security analysts has raged throughout the year over the effectiveness of the country's security mechanisms. While some counter-terrorism experts in France have urged the country's leadership to take a more aggressive approach toward fighting terrorism by expanding the "Sentinelle" surveillance system and special task forces within the national police, other defense experts said they feared all the vigilance in the world could not prevent the inevitable: another terror attack in the near future.

"At the end of the day, no matter how much you improve, the nature of terrorism is that

some individuals are able to slip through the cracks" said Foley. Though a large-scale terrorist attack on par with 9/11 was unlikely to happen, he said, when it comes to frequent, small-scale attack attempts, "This is something that society will have to get used to."

The first re-evaluations of the French domestic security approach began in January after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. In addition to the deaths of 12 people in that instance, four more people were killed two days later in a related hostage situation by a friend of the Charlie Hebdo attackers. The violence rocked not just France but all of Europe, inciting fear across the continent of similar attacks.



Members of French police special forces walked in Corcy, northern France, Jan. 8, 2015, as they searched for the armed gunmen who opened fire on the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, killing 12. Since the Charlie Hebdo attacks, French defense authorities have continually reassessed their approach to counter-terrorism. AFP/Getty Images

French citizens' wariness of Muslims was further heightened after last week's attempted train attack, which was staged by a Moroccan national suspected of having links to the Islamic State militant group. Those fears were already well established following the Charlie Hebdo incident, which was perpetrated by two self-identified Islamists, and worries of another Islamist attack have since grown considerably. "There is a lack of discernment," said Antoine Sfeir, a Franco-Lebanese journalist who has written several books on Muslims in the West. "The French are convinced that the entire Arab

population is Muslim and that all Muslims are possible Islamists," Sfeir said, adding that most of the Muslim population in France has embraced a secular lifestyle.

France has one of the largest Muslim populations in Europe, estimated at around 1 million people. Many Muslim families in France have lived there for more than half a century and feel completely integrated into broader society. A portion of the Muslim population, however, has said they feel marginalized by certain French laws and



traditions, such as a 2010 law that banned all religious symbols in schools, including the hijab, or Muslim headscarf.

"We talk too much about Muslims," said Fateh Kimouche, a French activist and practicing Muslim. "When a Muslim is a criminal, we punish him for his Muslim-ness, not his crime." The French government, the ministry of the interior and the ministry of defense have responded to fears of another attack through several new counter-terrorism measures instituted in January as well as a revamped anti-terror task force. "We must prepare for other attacks," French President François Hollande said Monday in a statement following Friday's foiled train attack.

As part of the upgrades to and expansions of its national security programs, the country's defense ministry put an emphasis on heightened surveillance of suspicious individuals. The "Sentinelle" program, a government-run surveillance system that has existed since the 1980s, hired hundreds more analysts and put an emphasis on aggressive monitoring of possible extremists. There are estimated to be at least 10,000 police or agents who patrol the streets, surveying train stations, suspicious individuals and religious sites.

Highlighted among the revamped details in 2015 was the GIGN, or the National Gendarmerie Intervention Group, a specialized task force within the French national police that is trained to respond to emergency attack and hostage situations. The intervention group has existed since 1975, but it was repurposed to focus more specifically on counter-terrorism. GIGN does not do any surveillance, however, as they are strictly an intervention team.

After the attempted train attack Friday, when a potential bloodbath was averted by three off-duty U.S. servicemen and several bystanders

who wrestled a heavily armed gunman to the ground while being shot and stabbed in the process, French security experts again re-evaluated security measures. Some argued for increased security checks on trains, especially those that cross national borders.

But heightened security in public places would not be a practical solution, said Axel Dyevre, a private security consultant and former French military officer. "You can't police a train; it's impossible," he said. "Think about how it would be if you went into the subway and you had to pass through airport security."

Dyevre, like many of his colleagues said he believed surveillance, rather than increased security, was the best way to pinpoint terrorists before they struck. "In order to protect ourselves from terrorism, it's more a question of intelligence," he said.

Given that the assailant in the train attack, Ayoub El-Khazzani, was on several watch-lists, certain analysts have said that surveillance needs to include mandatory intervention and interrogation. Khazzani had for many months been flagged by the French government as a "Fiche S," or State Security Risk. Individuals are categorized as "Fiche S" as a result of committing crimes of varied natures, ranging from banditry to terrorism, but the categorization does not require further attention or surveillance, according to French newspaper Libération. **As of June 2015, more than 400,000 people were on that list.**

There were only about 30 individuals on the terror watch list who France should immediately detain and question, according to Christian Harbulot, a French intelligence and defense expert.

"It's nice to know who's thinking about attacking French soil," said Harbulot, but "surveillance alone can accomplish nothing at all."

Whose baby Daesh really is?

Source: <http://www.arabnews.com/columns/news/797921>

Many western commentators have been raving about Barack Obama's twin foreign policy triumphs in the last lap of his presidency. The best take came from Maureen Dowd of the New York Times.

Having trashed him in June as the 'lame duck whose chickens have come home to roost' for his inaction in the face of mounting challenges including those on the Middle East front, Dowd

now suggests that Obama may be a lame duck, but his bolder side, the one that got him elected, is rising.

By striking the nuclear pact with Iran and the once unthinkable rapprochement with Cuba's last commies, Obama may have succeeded in saving his legacy just in time. While the normalization of ties with Cuba



after nearly six decades of hostilities was perhaps inevitable considering the irrepressible Fidel Castro is out of action, the import of what Obama has delivered on the Iran front in the face of resistance from Israel and genuine concerns of Arab allies is overwhelming to fathom.

With one stroke of pen, he has changed the geopolitical contours and power equations in the region. The ayatollahs may still insist on principled opposition to the 'Great Satan' and pretend as if nothing has changed. But we all know the ground has shifted.

While Obama's legion of fans may be forgiven for concluding that the last burst of brilliance of their hero, coupled with the success on health care and gay rights, would perpetuate his legacy, two of the biggest disappointments of the Obama presidency also happen to be on the foreign policy front.

Obama's betrayal of the Palestinian people and dithering on the Syrian front may have cost thousands of precious lives and directly contributed to the outbreak of cancer called Daesh, or the so-called Daesh. After those stirring words championing the Palestinians' right to liberty and dignity and reaching out to the Muslim world, Obama dropped them like proverbial hot potatoes when confronted by the Israeli lobby.

His chicanery and inaction on Syria have destroyed one of the oldest and peaceful civilizations in the world with nearly half of the country's population being uprooted. More than 200,000 lives have been lost.

Between August 2011 when Obama first called on Bashar Assad to leave and August 2014 when the US forces finally "intervened" in Syria to bomb the Daesh targets, the Baathist regime in Damascus has killed, bombed and maimed hundreds of thousands of Syrians. The blood of thousands of Syrians is not just on the hands of Assad and his thugs. World leaders are equally guilty. For while the US and its allies have publicly called for Assad to step aside, their actions have quietly and actually helped the regime dig in its feet.

As Omer Aziz put it in his Al Jazeera piece, in true Arab nationalist form, Assad portrayed



himself as the only man standing between the West and the terrorists. This image — or mirage — won over many western "realists," turning reality on its head. The West and its Israeli friends have never really wanted Assad's fall, fearing the unimaginable specter of an Islamist takeover of Damascus. Whether those fears are justified or not, can there be anything worse than the mindboggling mess that stares us all in the face right now?

While the Baathist cowards unleash daily hell on utterly defenseless civilians, trapped in the remains of their towns and cities, the Daesh devils have turned the territory under their tyranny into a ghoulish laboratory where daily experiments are conducted in inflicting maximum ignominy and cruelty in the name of Islam.

We are running out of epithets and words to define the increasingly sickening depravity and spine-chilling pornography of violence. Look at the obscene killing of Palmyra's 82-year old retired Antiquities chief. Dr. Khaled Al-Assad had spent 50 years in the service and protection of Palmyra's ancient Roman ruins, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

He had refused to leave when Daesh swarms descended on Palmyra ignoring warnings from his friends and family. He was tortured for a month apparently for the location of the Roman city's priceless artifacts before being beheaded. His headless corpse kept hanging from a lamppost in the town center. It is perhaps just as well that Dr. Assad did not live to see the destruction of the 2,000-year old Roman temple at Palmyra within days of his killing. Something that even the Crusaders and Mongol hordes did not touch has been destroyed by the folks who claim to "liberate" the Middle East and Muslim world. Who are these crazed bigots then? Who is pulling their strings? I hate conspiracy theories. But it's clear as daylight that whatever the factors that may have helped spawn Daesh — the US invasion and destruction of Iraq and disbanding of Iraqi Army



and police, the rise and tyranny of Shia militias and their persecution of Sunnis, and above all, the failure to rein in Assad and his band of killers — Daesh now appears to be completely controlled and manipulated by forces that have long plotted the destruction of Muslim lands. Every action and atrocity inflicted by Daesh in the past one year — from beheadings and mass killings to rapes and mindless destruction of priceless heritage as Palmyra — all in the name of Islam of course appears calculated and designed to evoke and arouse maximum horror and revulsion worldwide. No wonder Muslims around the world, especially those in the West, find themselves increasingly unwelcome. Daesh had to come along just when the world was getting ready to move on from the shock and awe of 9/11. So Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi may not be a Zionist as many in the Arab world suspect but the fingerprints of Mossad and our other benefactors are all over this baby. Even old Middle East watchers like Robert Fisk are coming around to the idea.

In his latest piece, the veteran British journalist wonders: “Why does Isis never attack Israel — indeed, why does its hatred of Crusaders and Shias and Christians and sometimes Jews rarely if ever mention the very word “Israel”?” (So) It's not the violence in Isis videos and Dabiq (Daaesh magazine) we should be concentrating on. It's what the Isis leadership

don't talk about, don't condemn, don't mention upon which we should cast our suspicious eye. If we failed after 9/11 — when the political reasons behind this crime against humanity would have necessitated an examination of US Middle East policy and our support for Israel and dictators — we've sometimes held our ground when it comes to 'terror'." In these last few months in the White House, Obama may not have much time left to save the world. But he could at least ask his security and intelligence honchos some pertinent questions like whose baby Daesh really is and how come all those US-made weapons have ended up in the hands of the terror army?

Why do young men and women, born and brought up in Western lands, are rushing to join Daesh? Also, how do we solve a problem called Bashar Assad? What has kept him hanging on to power all this while and with whose support when his more powerful fellow travelers have all departed?

Obama may have chosen to do 'nothing' over Syria in order to avoid 'another Iraq,' as he once put it. But if Syria is in total ruin today, it is also chiefly because of what the US visited on Iraq. America cannot run away now from its responsibility, before clearing the mess it has made of the region.

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New anti-terror approach needed after France train attack

By Claude Moniquet

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/08/viewpoint-new-anti-terror-approach.html>

The failed attack against the Amsterdam-Paris Thalys train on Friday is a clear reminder for all of us: jihadist terrorism is the biggest security threat Europe has faced for decades. But it is also a sign that something is wrong with counter-terrorism.

One of the main characteristics of attacks since the Mohamed Merah case in March 2012 is that the perpetrators were all "well known" to the intelligence services. And in France, some were the subject of a special file kept when a person is considered to be a threat to the security of the state.

Obviously, the fact that people known to be potentially dangerous were able to commit terrorist attacks is worrying. Especially when you realise that about half the Europeans who went to Syria or Iraq were not known to these same services before being "spotted" in the field - if police and intelligence cannot stop a known terrorist what happens when an unknown one decides not to go to Syria but to attack in France, Belgium, the UK or Germany?



But there's a bit of confusion going on here. The public probably think that if someone is known to the authorities and the subject of a special file, they are under surveillance. However this is not the case.

Radical extremists

Some 6,000 Europeans are or were involved in the fighting in Syria (they went there, they were killed in action, they are still in IS camps, they are on their way there or their way back.)

If you have 6,000 "active" jihadists, that probably means that if you try to count those who were not identified, the logistics people who help them join up, their sympathisers and the most radical extremists who are not yet involved in violence but are on the verge of it, you have something between 10,000 and 20,000 "dangerous" people in Europe.

To carry out "normal" surveillance on a suspect on a permanent basis, you need 20 to 30 agents and a dozen vehicles. And these are just the requirements for a "quiet" target.

If the suspect travels abroad, for instance, the figure could go up to 50 or 80 agents and necessitate co-operation between the services of various countries. Work it out: to keep watch on all the potential suspects, you'd need between 120,000 and 500,000 agents throughout Europe. Mission impossible!

So counter-terrorism must adapt if it is not to be overwhelmed. One way this can be done is to use new legislation. An intelligence law passed in France this spring which allows the intelligence services to conduct massive digital surveillance of suspects (heavily criticised by human rights organisations) is probably a good step.

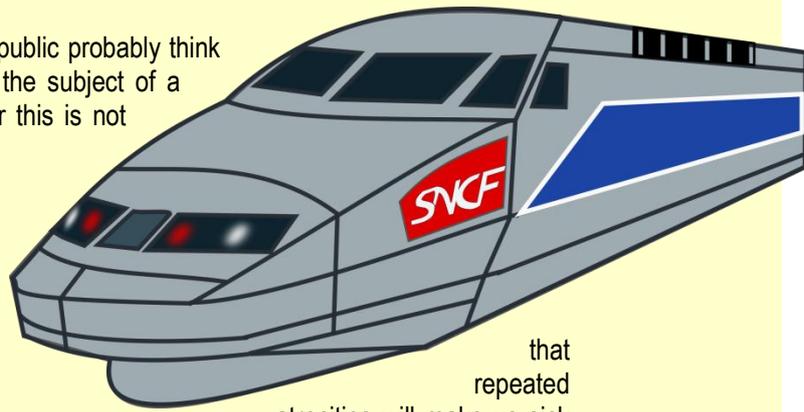
Innocent blood

It enables the authorities to keep an eye on the communications and virtual contacts of would-be jihadists and to detect any sign or radicalisation that could precede commitment to action.

But it is not enough.

Our societies must accept the very fact that we are at war with an enemy which counts dozens of thousands of "soldiers", has an international presence (including inside our own borders), could at any moment attack any target in any country and is not afraid to shed innocent blood.

Actually, this enemy wants to shed innocent blood because he thinks (or perhaps knows)



that repeated atrocities will make us sick of Middle Eastern affairs and give up trying to fix the region's problems. Which is exactly what they want: to be left alone in a confrontation with their own rulers and governments so they can overthrow them and achieve power. This situation requires a new approach. We should probably decide to strengthen the laws and stiffen the penalties for terrorism-related offences (including financing, spreading propaganda, travel to "jihad territories" etc.). And we should probably devise additional penalties: for instance why not make a convicted terrorist wear an electronic surveillance device or tag for some years after his release?

Strengthening surveillance

Of course, as with phone-tapping, electronic surveillance would be under the strict control of judges or an independent commission and subject to regular re-assessment.

The whole debate about strengthening surveillance on trains is going nowhere - unless it is decided to post armed guards or police officers on those trains, like in the United States, which could be a sort of deterrent.

Trains go from point A to point B with some (or lots) of stations in between. Can you imagine each station having scanners and checkpoints? Can you imagine turning up at train stations one or two hours before departure, like at airports? Of course not! And even if it did happen, the threat could switch to other targets: buses, tramways, underground, stores, theatres, restaurants, bars, churches and sporting events. Could we equip all these places with scanners and checkpoints? The answer is obvious.

The only way to protect society against the terrorist threat lies in strengthening intelligence and laws.



Claude Moniquet worked 20 years for the French DGSE (external intelligence) as a field agent. In 2002, he co-founded the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC: www.esisc.org). His next book, Jihad: From al-Qaeda to Islamic State - understanding and fighting terrorism is to be published in September 2015.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: There is no doubt that the problem is huge. And it is huge because we let it grow uncontrolled under the European politically motivated multiculturalism. And it will become vast in the years to follow due to the massive illegal immigration flow gone through the EU "gates" – Italy and Greece (and Hungary). A second problem is the inability to connect the dots – we know that they are "jihadists to be" but we do not know "when". And when we identify them we try to re-radicalize them upon return... A third problem is that we play by the book the moment that they play without a book – we need to adjust and stop following. It is progressively evident that too much civilization is bad for our citizens' health. Even in the last minute we have to leave theoretical approaches behind and trust field responders/experts



like CM to be actively involved in countering the problem – because they know the street reality first hand! At the same time we have to ask our citizens what they really want:"the present [and future] situation or safety and security? Their answer will define future actions. A fair question consistent with our democratic values and civilization.

Bangkok bombing: Who are the Turkish terrorist group the Grey Wolves?

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/08/bangkok-bombing-who-are-turkish.html>

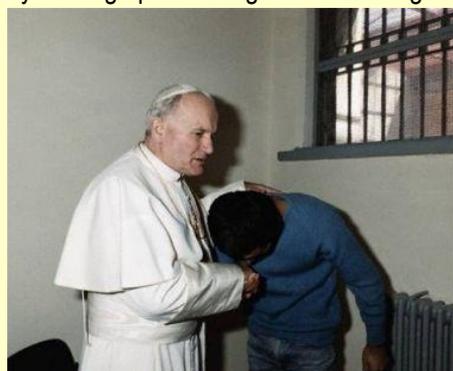
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Neo-fascists from a Turkish terrorist group called Grey Wolves have emerged as key suspects in the Bangkok bombing after the arrest of a man believed to be Turkish in the Thai capital with bomb making material.

The group's death squads have stalked Turkey since the 1960s, murdering left-wing and liberal activists, university students and journalists and engaging in street battles and attacks.

They gained international notoriety in 1981 when Mehmet Ali Agca, one of their collaborators, shot and nearly killed Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square.

The Grey Wolves are known for their distinct hand sign, which represents a wolf head, made by holding up a forefinger and little finger.



The group's ideology centres on the glory days of Turkish history, seeking to unite Muslim Turkic peoples from the Balkans to Central Asia in a pan-Turkish extension of the Turkish nation-state.

Pope John Paul II lies seriously wounded in his open car moments after he was shot by Mehmet Ali Agca in St Peter's Square on May 13, 1981. *Photo: Reuters*

The group extended operations in the early 1990s into post-Soviet states with Turkic and Muslim populations, including the Nagorno-Karabakh

war in Azerbaijan and Chechen conflicts.

The group is believed to have ties to Turkish crime gangs that operate in Bangkok that could have provided logistical support for their attack, security analysts say.



Thai police have been searching for Turkish nationals who arrived in Thailand in the 15 days before a blast tore through foreign tourists and Thais at the Erawan shrine on August 17, killing 20 people and injuring more than 120 others in an unprecedented attack.

But their breakthrough in the investigation came when residents of a predominantly Muslim district of Bangkok on Saturday reported to police the suspicious activities of a non-Thai speaking man renting five rooms in a seedy, four-storey apartment block.

After more than 100 police surrounded the building they found a man believed to be 28 years old in a room with a stack of false passports and bomb making equipment similar to that used in the shrine bombing, including ball bearings, pipes and fuses.

The bearded man with short cropped hair has been charged with possession of bomb making material and is being held in a Thai military base pending further investigation.

Anthony Davis, a respected Bangkok-based security analyst with IHS-Jane's, said last week the Grey Wolves were likely to be behind the bombing because they had both motive and capability, although he did not rule out other possibilities. "They are violent and operate below the radar," he said.

Mr Davis said the group had "latched on to in a big way" Uighur Muslims in western China who claim they have suffered years of persecution from Beijing.

Thailand infuriated the Uighur movement in July when the country deported to China 109 Uighur men who had been separated from their wives and children. Ethnic-Chinese tourists appear to have been targets of the shrine bombers.

Mr Davis described the Bangkok attack as potentially the nightmare that has worried security agencies, a link-up between terrorism and organised crime.

British Forces Hunt for Jihadi John in 'Combat Burqas'

Source: <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/british-forces-hunt-for-jihadi-john-in-combat-burqas-1212522>

British Special Forces are reportedly using



stealth clothing dubbed as "combat burqas" in their hunt for feared Islamic State executioner Jihadi John in Syria.

SAS and other elite snipers are wearing the suits which keep them hidden from sophisticated surveillance systems used by Islamic State extremists in Syria.

Branded the "combat burqa", it is believed the outfits were funded with a 1.1 billion pounds war chest unveiled last year by Prime Minister David Cameron in the campaign against terror, the Sunday Mirror reported.

SAS teams are also wearing the black fatigues of Islamic State and using Toyota pick-up trucks to avoid suspicion from locals, the report said.

To combat the risk of so-called "friendly fire", they attach the Union Jack to their vehicles when they return to coalition strongholds.

The specialist suits are also being used by units deployed on reconnaissance missions, a source was quoted as saying.

"It is difficult to wear, but when you're within range of radar it is a life-saver. It reflects infrared as well as disrupting the human signature so the enemy cannot see us on their radar. We know they captured some very advanced equipment from the Iraqis which the US donated to them," the source said.

"The clothing certainly has the capability to allow us to operate



as 'ghosts', which has a major psychological impact on the enemy, who know we're there but cannot see us," he said.

The suits contain technology which disrupts electronic pulses used by surveillance systems to scan open desert and identify a "human signature".

"It will both save lives and help capture some of the kingpins in Islamic State. Soldiers are actively searching for those behind a string of horrific beheading videos and they won't stop until the job is done," an insider was quoted as saying.

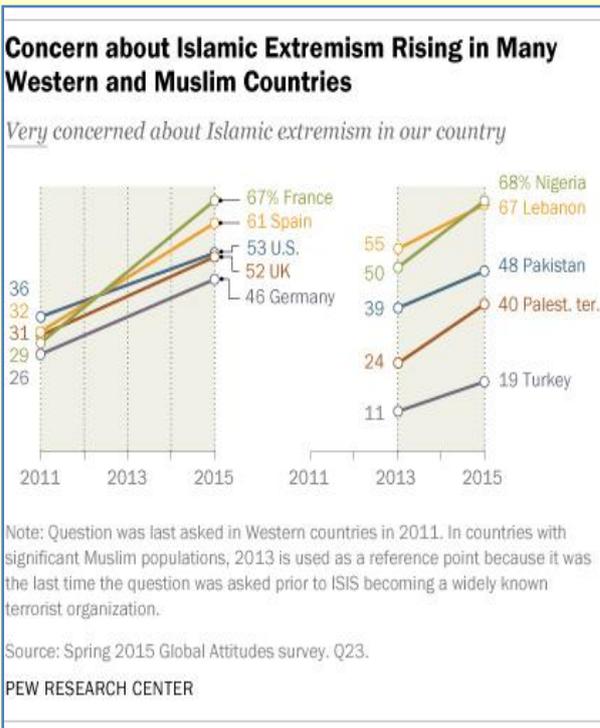
The SAS, special reconnaissance soldiers and other units are currently conducting hi-tech operations inside Syria and Iraq, which they hope will lead to the capture of extremists, including Jihadi John whose real name is Mohammed Emwazi.

Prime Minister Cameron last week ordered Britain's intelligence network and special forces to redouble their efforts to kill or capture the London-born Islamic State terrorist referred to as 'Jihadi John', days after he warned to return to the UK to continue "cutting off heads".

Nine countries more afraid of Islamic extremists than countries with Islamic extremists

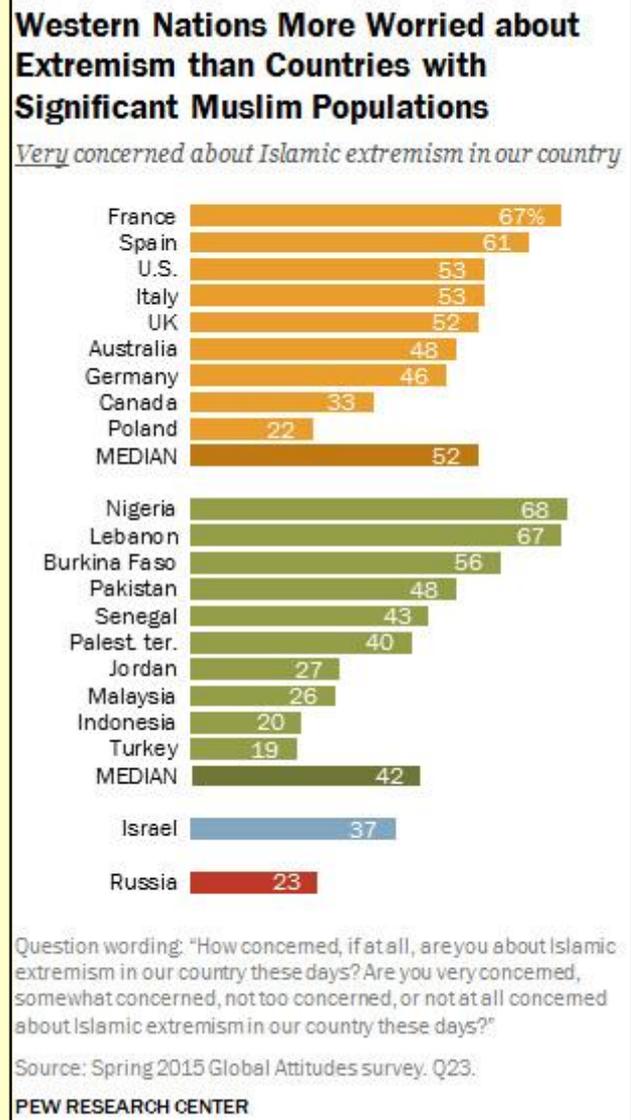
Source: <http://www.albawaba.com/loop/nine-countries-more-afraid-islamic-extremists-countries-islamic-extremists-737042>

Aug 30 – The rise of Daesh (ISIS) has placed a limelight on Islamic viewpoints, and it's not the kind of publicity Muslims were hoping for. Nations around the world are instigating counterterrorism programs and cracking down on Islamic extremism, in ways that sometimes lead to discrimination.



Concern for Islamic extremism rose exponentially around the world after 2011, the year of the Arab Spring. There were some extremist groups heavily involved in evolutions across the Middle East.

On the right it is the list of the top nine Western countries most concerned about Islamic attacks, compared with countries with significant Muslim populations. In France and Spain especially, fears are especially high.

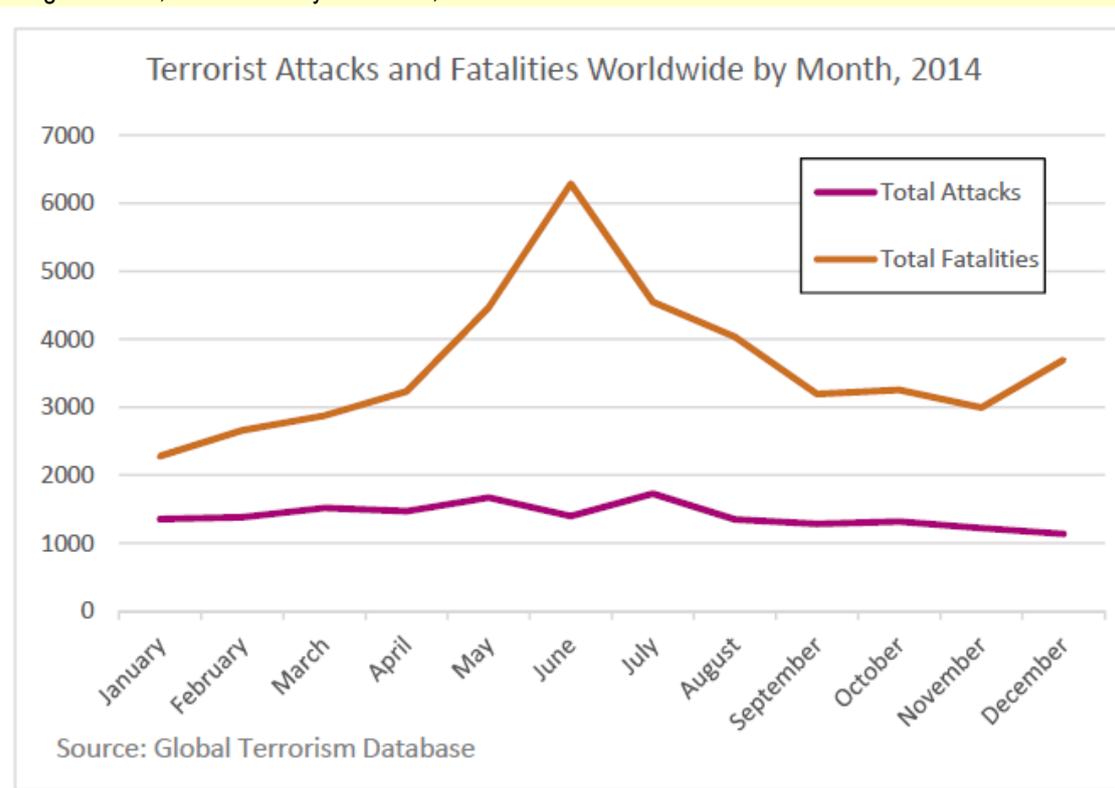


Overview: Terrorism in 2014

Source: http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_GTD_OverviewofTerrorism2014_Aug2015.pdf

In 2014, more than 16,800 terrorist attacks took place worldwide, causing more than 43,500 deaths and more than 40,900 injuries, including perpetrator casualties. More than 11,800 people were taken hostage in terrorist attacks in 2014. This report provides a brief overview of patterns of terrorism in 2014, highlighting trends from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

The total number of attacks each month ranged from a minimum of 1,137 in December 2014 to a maximum of 1,729 in July 2014. The total number of fatalities caused by terrorist attacks worldwide ranged from 2,280 in January 2014 to 6,287 in June 2014.



Worldwide patterns of terrorism in 2014 were heavily influenced by conflicts in key locations. Although terrorist attacks took place in 99 countries, nearly half of all attacks (47%) took place in Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Likewise, more than half (60%) of all fatalities took place in Iraq, Nigeria, and Afghanistan.

In addition, worldwide trends in casualties caused by terrorist attacks reveal several noteworthy developments. First, nearly one quarter (24%) of all fatalities that resulted from terrorist attacks in 2014 were perpetrator fatalities. This is by far the highest proportion of perpetrator fatalities recorded in the GTD, compared to an annual average of 5 percent of all fatalities between 1970 and 2013. Second, 28 attacks in 2014 caused more than 100 total fatalities, compared to an average of 3.7 such mass-fatality attacks each year between 1970 and 2013.

Several of the most active perpetrator organizations, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) experienced extreme increases in frequency and lethality of terrorist attacks in 2014. New perpetrator organizations—including the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic—emerged in Ukraine, carrying out hundreds of deadly attacks against both combatant and non-combatant targets.

Finally, patterns of terrorism in 2014 were marked by a dramatic increase in the number of hostages taken—11,821—more than four times as many as the annual average from 1970 to 2013.

► Read the full paper on source's URL.



A Twist on Psychological Warfare Against Wavering Islamist Jihadists

By Godfrey Garner

Source: <http://www.hstoday.us/industry-news/general/single-article/analysis-a-twist-on-psychological-warfare-against-wavering-islamist-jihadists/70c1e14e1b1fd7342977566406f9b9e0.html>

Aug 31 – **Those in charge of developing and executing strategy in America's war on terror are beginning a new phase based on a counseling philosophy. The idea is that individuals prone to joining in terrorist attacks on the West might be encouraged through the use of psychology and associated counseling techniques to change their minds.**

It's difficult to fault any attempt to defeat terrorism, but this latest tactic must be well thought out before resources are diverted in its pursuit. And though this seems a highly unique turn in our efforts in the war on terror, lessons may in fact be learned from similar, previous attempts to change the mindset of our enemy. As a matter of fact, Saudi Arabia has, since shortly after 9/11, engaged in a somewhat softer approach in tackling radical ideologies.

Indeed. As *Homeland Security Today* recently reported, terrorist organizations and criminals, particularly gangs, have become extremely adept at exploiting social media to reach disenfranchised individuals who are receptive to radicalization. Individuals looking for purpose and importance are lured by all the propaganda that promises to make them feel like they matter -- or could even become a hero.

According to Professor Michael Fagel, an expert on disaster preparedness and response, social media opens a window to the world in milliseconds. No longer bounded by large oceans, the information age has given terrorists the opportunity to make the entire world their audience.

Religious fanaticism and extremism, although as old as humanity itself, has reached unprecedented levels in Saudi Arabia in recent years, resulting in untold loss of life and damage to property. After the Riyadh compound bombing in May 2003, Saudi Arabia's fight against Islamist extremism entered a new phase; one not dissimilar to that proposed here in America.

The strategy is to change hearts and minds by tackling radical ideologies that foster violent extremism through the use of individual counseling those on the verge of

succumbing to the siren call of radical jihad and terror.

In Saudi Arabia, as well as other Muslim countries, today's extremists often adopted Al Khawarij theology based on the concept of Al hakimiyah, which is a narrow interpretation of the Quran and Hadiths. This interpretation led to ideologies such as takfir and a version of jihad dominated by violence and terrorism. These extremists often take advantage of a jihadist atmosphere to develop close ties with young Islamic men in order to convince them to embrace the terror philosophy.

The Saudi's strategy is designed to confront thoughts with thoughts and to confront the appeal of extremist ideology by presenting a different interpretation of shariah principles and promoting the true values of the Islamic faith and tolerance. The program adopts a series of measures designed to undermine extremist views and disrupt the activities of those who promote violent extremism through a counseling program and a religious campaign. A media campaign using a national solidarity theme against terrorism and development of a

public education program seeks to literally change the minds of youth leaning toward embracing a philosophy of extreme jihad.

Few today -- other than Vietnam vets -- remember a similar program that was put in place during the Vietnam War that was designed to do the exact same thing.

The Chieu Hoi program launched in 1963 was an initiative designed to encourage defection by the Viet Cong and their supporters to the side of the government during the war. The name Chieu Hoi is difficult to translate literally

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into English, but a rough translation means “open arms” or “welcome back.” The Chieu Hoi symbol was the white dove. The Vietnamese believe the dove always returns home to its nest. The theme song of Chieu Hoi, (yes, it had a theme song) translated, “Bird Fly Home to Your Warm Nest.”

The objective of Chieu Hoi campaign was simple; to entice Vietcong members to surrender. Their reward was a warm bed, hot food, tobacco, a little beer and, in many cases, the opportunity to enjoy the opposite sex (prostitutes were later included in the reward package to increase the numbers). Chieu Hoi compounds were open facilities with few guards and no fences, keeping with the theme of trust and a welcoming atmosphere.

Unlike the South Vietnamese soldier, the VC (Vietcong) and NVA (North Vietnamese Regulars) endured extremely harsh living

jihad failed to consider one important thing. The basic motivation of the VC in Vietnam and, in this case the Islamic terrorist, is such that simple counseling and logical thought-based therapy will never work.

So, the point is, battles and, ultimately, wars, are never won by politicians and policy makers. They’re never won by the leaders. They’re not even won by the greatest of generals. They are won by the lowest ranking soldier who comes face to face with the enemy. The question is, why that soldier is on the battlefield to begin with. Why does that soldier put himself in a position from which he may not return?

There are really only two reasons impacting enough to bring that soldier to the battle and assure he will stand and deliver, whatever the outcome. They are “God and country.” Nothing else provides the impetus and inspiration the soldier needs to do what must be done.

Convincing a warfighter fighter not to do what he is doing means providing a message strong enough to negate that of God and country. If the soldier fights for both, and has the conviction to step on to the battlefield because of both, the greatest counselor in the world will not disaffirm that conviction.

Virtually all those who commit themselves to violent jihadism, including acts of martyrdom, have just such a conviction.

Convincing them to turn their backs on their convictions is tantamount to convincing a Christian to turn his back on Jesus. It is highly unlikely a counseling program, regardless of its merits, can do this.

That said, there are a few young people who are straddling the fence between the types of Islamic conversion that may lead to jihadist acts of terror, and, therefore, there may be hope for them through such a counter-conversion program. But committing valuable resources to doing so, when those resources could produce much better results elsewhere, is simply not realistic.

Islamic jihadists don’t kill us because they hate us. They kill us because they are directed to do so by their God, and that message is a difficult message to overcome.



conditions, often living underground and subsiding on a small handful of rice each day while fighting intense battles. The principle of Chieu Hoi was that one simply had to raise his hand and surrender and all the amenities of the program would be made available to them immediately. An analogy would be transcending at the snap of your fingers from living in a dumpster to sleeping at the Waldorf.

Chieu Hoi met some success initially until the program directors realized participants were staying for a few days or weeks then blending back into the jungles to rejoin their comrades. It seems that the program had been coopted by VC and NVA leaders as a convenient R&R (rest and relaxation) for their beleaguered soldiers. Just like those who conceived the Chieu Hoi program, those who developed the public education program to try and change the minds of youth considering



Godfrey Garner is a veteran special operations counterintelligence officer who retired from US Special Forces in 2006. He served two military tours and six civilian government related tours in Afghanistan. His work there most recently was as a counter-corruption analyst. Garner previously wrote about jihadi groups' unification in his Homeland Security Today report, The Potential that Jihadi Groups will Unify ... and With it, More Savagery. Garner also is author of, Danny Kane and the Hunt for Mullah Omar, and, The Balance of Exodus.

Sovereign Citizens Leapfrog Islamic Extremists as America's Top Terrorist Threat

Source: <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2015/08/sovereign-citizens-leapfrog-islamic-extremists-america-top-terrorist-threat>

Aug 31 – Who do actual law enforcement officers see as the biggest terrorist threats in America? Surprise! It's not Islamic radicals:

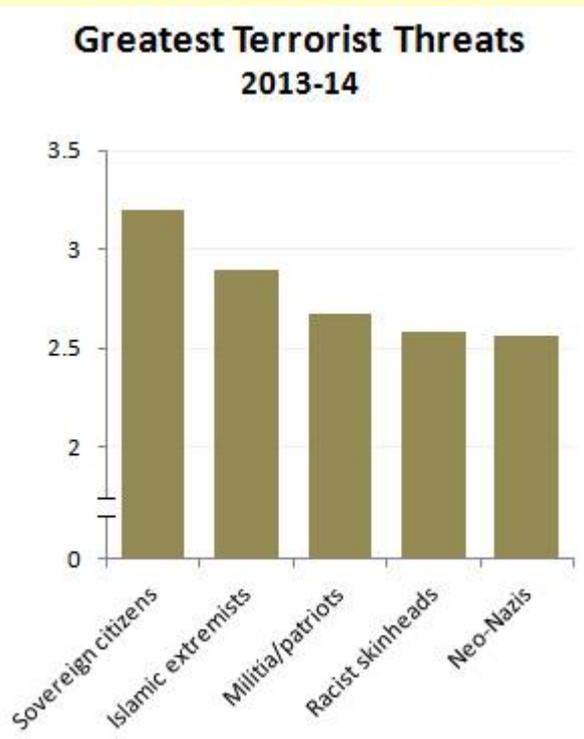
Approximately 39 percent of respondents agreed and 28 percent strongly agreed that Islamic extremists were a serious terrorist threat. In comparison, 52 percent of respondents agreed and 34 percent strongly agreed that sovereign citizens were a serious terrorist threat.

...There was significant concern about the resurgence of the radical far right [following the election of President Obama], but it appears as though law enforcement is, at present, less concerned about these groups.

That's odd. The authors of this report apparently don't consider the sovereign citizens part of the radical right. But their roots are in the Posse Comitatus movement, and they identify strongly with both the white supremacist Christian Identity movement and the anti-tax movement. That's always sounded like the right-wing on steroids to me.

I'm not trying to foist responsibility for these crazies on the Republican Party, any more than I'd say Democrats are responsible for animal rights extremists. Still, their complaints seem like preposterous caricatures of right-wing thought, in the same way that animal rights extremism bears a distant but recognizable ancestry to lefty principles.

In any case, this comes via Zack Beauchamp, who explains the sovereign citizens movement in more detail for the uninitiated.



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A surprising chart of terrorist threats to America, as ranked by law enforcement

By Zack Beauchamp

Source: <http://www.vox.com/2015/8/31/9208015/terrorism-chart-ranked>

If you asked law enforcement professionals which extremist movements most threaten America, what would you expect them to say? If you expect their most common answer would be Islamic extremists, it turns out you'd be wrong — though not by much.

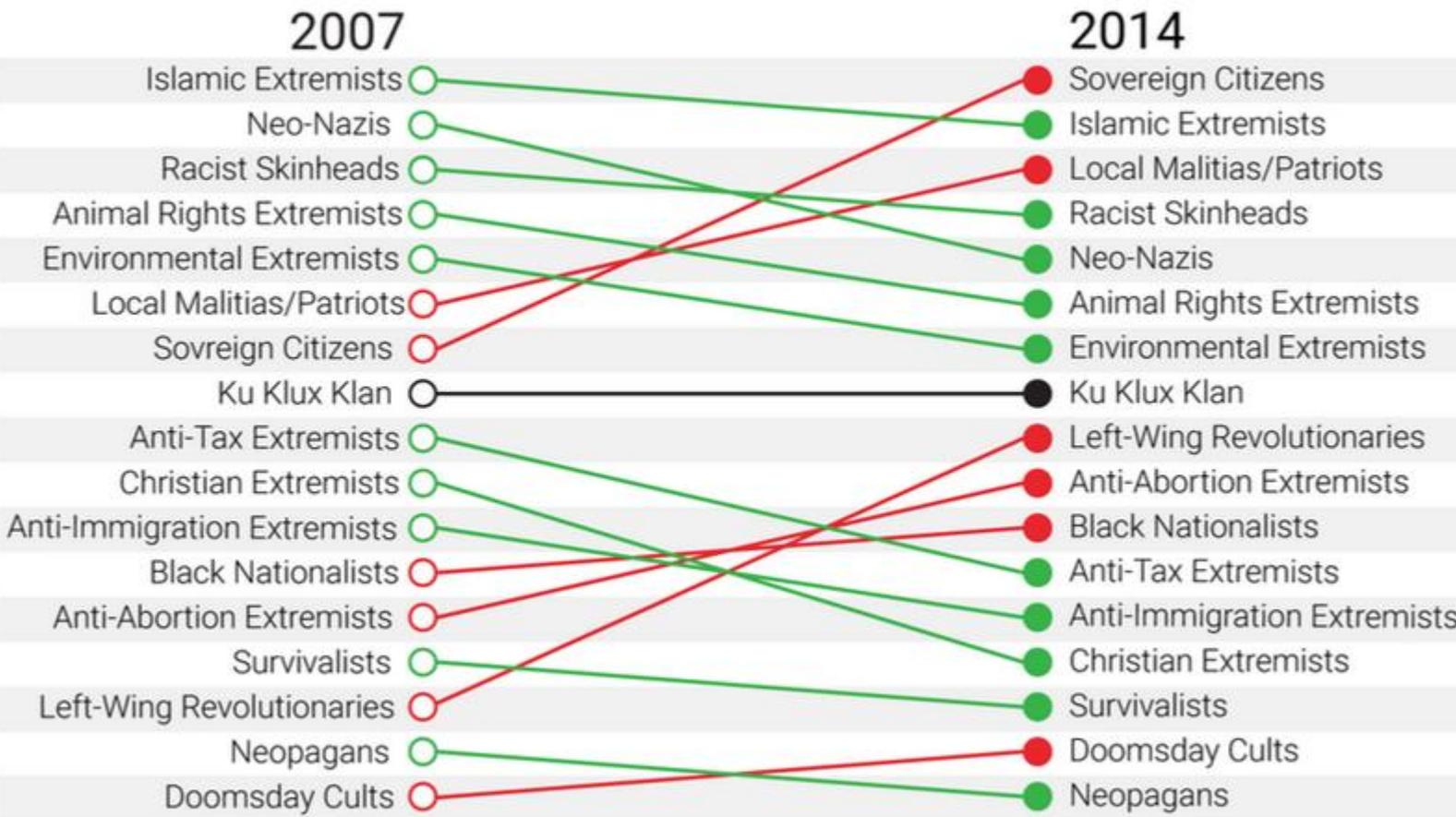
In a 2014 survey, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) surveyed hundreds of law enforcement personnel at the state and local level, all of whom had training in intelligence gathering or counterterrorism. They



were presented with a list of radical groups and asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 4, how much they agreed that this group posed a terrorist threat to the US.

The folks at Dadaviz put together a chart of the results, as well as the results from a 2007 version of the same survey. It shows, on the left, the groups that law enforcement professionals in 2007 most viewed as terrorist threats, with the results from 2014 on the right. One of the interesting changes was for Islamic extremists, which dropped from the No. 1 to No. 2 spot — replaced by the anti-government "sovereign citizen" movement, which climbed up from No. 8:

Groups Who Are Perceived As The Highest Threat To America According to law enforcement officers



The officers were asked to rank these groups from "most threatening" to "least threatening", both in 2007 and 2014. This graph display the groups' change in rank between the two data sets.

Note: "Militia" is misspelled as "Malitia." (START/Dadaviz)

One important caveat: The survey was released in July 2014, one month after ISIS swept northern Iraq. It's unlikely the results take into account ISIS's rise since, which means that if the survey were taken today, you might see different results.

But regardless, the findings are striking. It's possible that the Islamic extremism decline was a blip, though it makes sense given the ebbing of the "war on terrorism" after the Bush



presidency. But there's no way that increase in concerns about the sovereign citizen movement is random. Clearly, something happened to alarm the law enforcement community.

Who are the sovereign citizens?

To understand what, you need to understand a little about sovereign citizens, as they're not like other anti-government extremists. Sovereign citizens believe in a weird conspiracy theory that says, essentially, that your citizenship is not real. Either the 14th Amendment or the move off the gold standard, depending on which "sovereign" you talk to, stripped Americans of their rights; all so-called citizenship rights accorded today are fake.

Sovereign citizens conclude from this that they are under no obligation to obey any laws enforced by our "illegitimate" government. They are, themselves, sovereign under true American law — and thus cannot be bound by the agents of the impostor state. Usually, their actions are limited to bizarre legal maneuvers: They'll file an overwhelming number of injunctions to avoid paying speeding tickets, file absurd liens against prosecutors' homes, or fabricate driver's licenses from fake Native American tribes. These tactics, sometimes called "paper terrorism," hardly amount to an al-Qaeda-level threat. But the number of sovereign citizens appears to have swelled since the late 2000s as part of a general rise in anti-government sentiment. Reliable estimates are really difficult, as the movement doesn't have any formal structure, but the Southern Poverty Law Center guesses there are somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 sovereign citizens in the US.

And occasionally, they've been violent. In 2010, a father-son duo named Jerry and Joseph Kane killed two police officers with an AK-47 during a traffic stop, and wounded two others before being killed themselves. According a 2012 Anti-Defamation League report, there's a "growing tide of sovereign citizen activity and violence across the country ... if the movement's growth is allowed to continue unchecked, further acts of violence are inevitable, putting government officials, law enforcement officers, and private citizens all at risk."

And that, perhaps, is why law enforcement officials are growing so alarmed. Sovereign citizen ideas have been around for decades, but sovereign citizens traditionally aren't violent. An increase in size coupled with high-profile violence would mark a new, and disturbing, direction for the movement — especially since their ideas incline them to target police, prosecutors, and other government agents.

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Terrorist attacks involving firearms cause more fatalities than attacks using explosives

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150901-terrorist-attacks-involving-firearms-cause-more-fatalities-than-attacks-using-explosives>

Sept 01 – New background report examines use of firearms in terrorist attacks. The report finds that even though the use of explosives has the potential to cause exceptionally high numbers of casualties, in general, attacks involving firearms were more likely to be lethal.

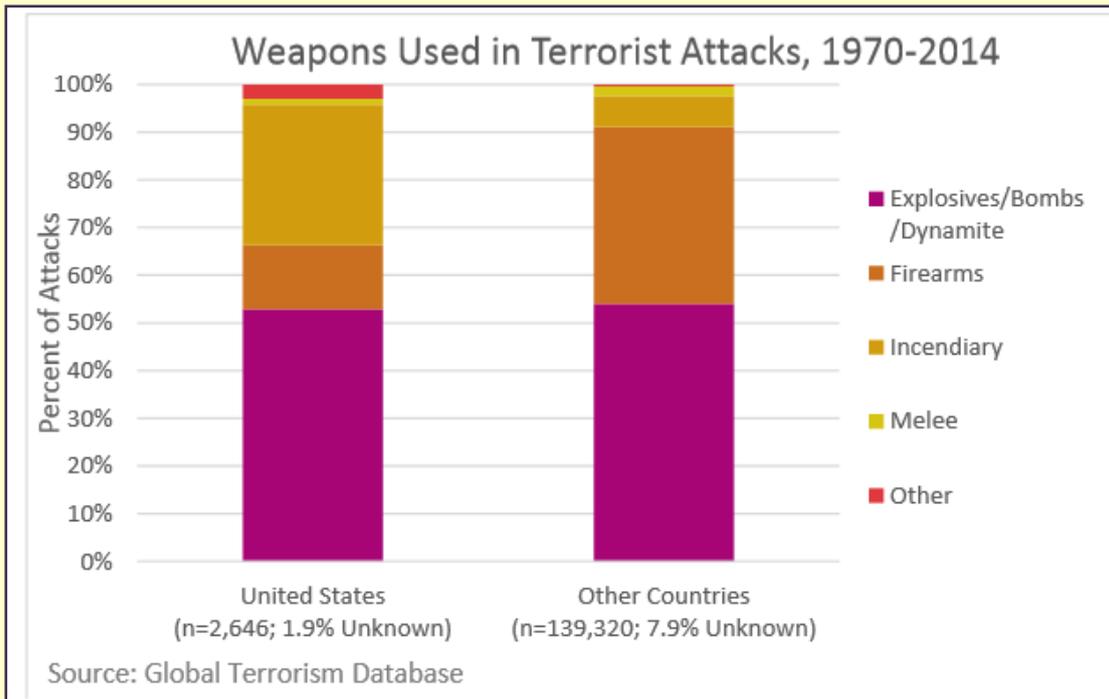
Despite the potential for terrorist attacks involving explosives to cause exceptionally high numbers of casualties, in general, attacks involving firearms were more likely to be lethal, according to a new background report by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). START researchers examined the use of firearms in terrorist attacks in the United States and abroad.

For example, while attacks involving arson or explosives may be intended to cause only property damage or human casualties, firearms are more often used in attacks aimed at causing human casualties.

START says that other findings of the background report include:

- In the United States between 1970 and 2014, the average percentage of terrorist attacks that were lethal was 4.3 percent if the attack did not involve firearms and 40.2 percent if the attack did involve firearms.
- In other countries, the difference was somewhat less pronounced; on average 28.4 percent of attacks that did not involve firearms were lethal, while 70.4 percent of attacks that did involve firearms were lethal.





MOST COMMON LOCATIONS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS INVOLVING FIREARMS	NUMBER OF ATTACKS, 1970-2014
CALIFORNIA	65
NEW YORK	60
PUERTO RICO (COMMONWEALTH)	30
ILLINOIS	23
TEXAS	14
VIRGINIA	13
FLORIDA	12
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	12
NEW JERSEY	12
OHIO	10

SOURCE: GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE

The background report also examines U.S. terrorist attacks, weapons used, locations of attacks involving firearms, and perpetrators of attacks involving firearms.

— [Read more in Use of Firearms in Terrorist Attacks in the United States 1970-2014 \(START, August 2015\)](#)

Mass shootings: why more than one per day?

By Robert J. Gould

Source: http://qctimes.com/news/opinion/mass-shootings-why-more-than-one-per-day/article_aaedadef-3f72-5a01-8038-634651c49946.html

The Business Insider reports: “As of August 26, the U.S. has had 247 mass shootings in the first 238 days of 2015. For those keeping track, that's an average of more than one shooting per day.” Why?



No doubt there are many reasons — many causes. First, let's be clear on the metrics here. The statistic, above, is for mass shootings, not mass murders. Mass shootings are defined by the Mass Shooting Tracker as a "shooting spree in which four or more people are shot ... This differs from the FBI definition in which an event only qualifies as a mass shooting if four or more are killed."

What would possess a person to open fire on a group of people? I suppose we can imagine what might make a person so angry, so enraged, and so full of hate, that they shot one specific person in an inexplicably deep fury. But a whole group of people?

Donald Trump has taken this occasion to say that America does not have a gun problem, but rather a mental health problem. We have both. And add to that a media and video game problem that glorifies gun violence. And add to that a gun culture that arms up, anticipating the need for self-defense against criminals, the mentally ill, government agents trying to disarm them, police officers with prejudice in their eyes, angry ex-spouses, fanatics, white people, black people, bad drivers, immigrants. This list would make me consider arming up, but I believe that we can settle our differences through nonviolence, civil dialogue, conflict resolution, and meaningful trust-building.

What priority does our nation place on these approaches? After all, we are a country at perpetual war against an endless stream of terrorists. We use the weapons of terror on the designated terrorists—carefully targeted drone strikes that rain death on terrorist targets, with scores of surrounding non-terrorists maimed

and killed in government-sanctioned mass shootings/mass murders.

At any time of the day, you can see mass shootings/mass murder on a cable channel of your choice, the video game of your choice, and the news channel of your choice. Who's really to blame? Look in the mirror? As the old Pogo comic strip warns us: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

What do we do? First, as an ethicist, I urge us to resist finding a single, simple cause; it's much more complicated than that. It does little good to argue that "people kill people, not guns" against "guns are needed for mass shootings and mass murder."

America is not going to disarm overnight. Background checks may help, but they won't stop the rage that potentially dwells in all of us. We need to begin to reinvent ourselves as a people. We could start by using proven techniques of trust-building, diplomacy, nonviolence, and conflict resolution in our everyday lives — with everyone we know and everyone we meet. For starters, read or reread *Getting to Yes*, and see how finding mutual underlying interests leads to constructive conflict management, where the ceaseless battling of positions leads to hatred, injustice, and violence.

Investing in education that teaches our children smarter methods of managing conflict is a long, slow process, but one that can save them. We need weapons of mass instruction, not mass destruction, in order to slow, stop, and reverse the tragic mass shootings that plague our country.

Robert J. Gould, Ph.D., is an ethicist, writes for PeaceVoice, and directs the Conflict Resolution Program at Portland State University.

European Security After the 2014 Watershed

By Andreas Wenger

Source: <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/CSSAnalyse177-EN.pdf>

The year 2014 marked a watershed in European Security. The simultaneous nature of the crises in the East and South constitutes a challenge to the vision of an integrative and liberal security order. The realignment of this order must take place in the field of tension between West, East, and South. European Security will return to a more transatlantic format in which European ambitions are scaled down and which will be more national and unilateral in practice.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.



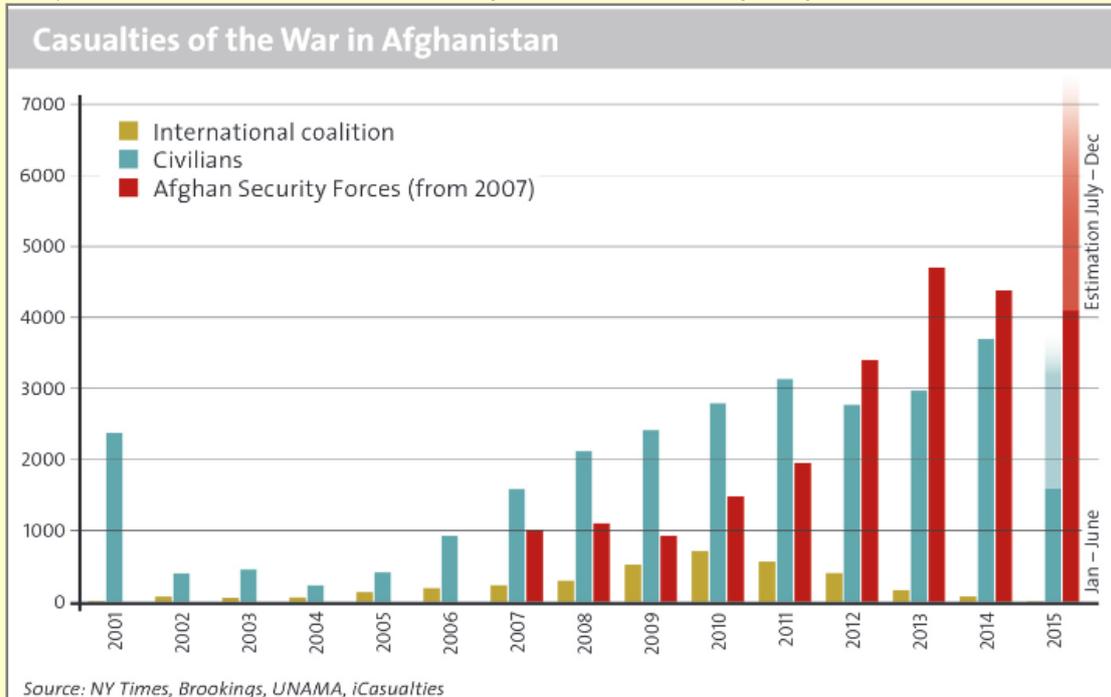
Prof. Dr. Andreas Wenger is Professor of International and Swiss Security Policy at ETH Zurich and the Director of the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich.

Afghanistan: Back to the Brink

By Prem Mahadevan

Source: <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/CSSAnalyse178-EN.pdf>

The year 2015 has been the bloodiest in Afghanistan since the beginning of the US-led war in 2001.



Fourteen years of combat have not made either the country or the West safer, although the global terrorist network known as al-Qaida has been weakened. This undeniable success, however, might amount to a Pyrrhic victory if the so-called “Islamic State” moves in as the West withdraws.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Dr. Prem Mahadevan is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich and a member of the CSS Think Tank team “Global Security”. He specializes in the study of jihadist terrorism in the Indo-Pacific region.



Islamic State Terrorists Caught Crossing Into Europe Posing As Refugees

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/09/01/islamic-state-terrorists-caught-crossing-into-europe-posing-as-refugees/>

Sept 01 – Bulgarian authorities near the Gyueshevo border checkpoint detained the five men, aged between 20 and 24, late on Wednesday, Bulgarian broadcaster NOVA TV reported.

The men were stopped by a border guard, who they attempted to bribe with a “wad of dollars.” However, they were searched and Islamic State propaganda, specific Jihadists

prayers and decapitation videos were found on their phones.

In a move that suggests how seriously authorities are taking the case, the Bulgarian State Agency for National Security (DANS) has now taken control of the investigation under the supervision of the regional prosecutor’s office in Kustendil.



The men chose to cross in a wooded area, local media have reported, and took a car from an accomplice who had crossed legally from FYROM with the vehicle.

Bulgaria has recently completed a 15-foot high razor wire clad fence along 50 miles of its south-eastern border with Turkey to control the mass movement of migrants from the Middle East and Asia into Europe via the so-called Balkans route.

However, the Gyueshevo border checkpoint where the men crossed sits on Bulgaria's western border with FYROM. It is likely the men chose to enter there to avoid the new strict border controls on the other side of the country.

Following the recently foiled terror attack on an Amsterdam-Paris train, where the heavily armed terrorist was able to travel freely, European governments have been considering amending the Schengen border code, which

eliminated systematic border controls across most of Europe.

In February, the Turkish intelligence service warned police in an internal memo that **up to 3,000 trained jihadists are seeking to cross into Turkey from Syria and Iraq, who could then travel through Bulgaria and Hungary into Western Europe.** And in May, a Libyan government adviser warned Islamic State operatives were being "smuggled to Europe in migrant boats."

At the time of the comments, UKIP leader Nigel Farage warned: **"When ISIS say they want to flood our continent with half a million Islamic extremists they mean it, and there is nothing in this document [Common European Asylum Policy] that will stop them. I fear we face a direct threat to our civilisation if we allow large numbers of people from that war torn region into Europe."**



No they are not summer tourists in a Greek island! They are illegal immigrants in the Island of Lesbos – thousands of them – transferred to Athens; and then WHAT??? (Aug 2015)

EDITOR'S COMMENT: What a surprise! They got 5 out of thousands invading Balkans on daily basis. It will come a day that we will pay for EU "open borders" but it will be too late to reverse reality and what comes with that...



AR-15 'Crusader' Billed As Rifle 'Muslim Terrorists Won't Touch'

Source: <http://patch.com/florida/newportrichey/ar-15-crusader-billed-rifle-muslim-terrorists-wont-touch?>



Sept 02 – A new AR-15 assault rifle model made in Apopka is being billed as one that would “never be used by Muslim terrorists.”

The **Spike's Tactical Crusader** is a standard AR-15 by design, but this particular model has undergone a few cosmetic modifications to make it reportedly offensive to those of the Muslim faith. The Bible verse, Psalm 144:1 has been laser etched into the rifle. It says, “Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my

Shooting standard .223 or 5.56 ammunition, the rifle may be modified further with the change of a barrel. The new design retails for \$1,395, but comes with a lifetime warranty.

The Crusader's manufacturer, Spike's Tactical, was launched on Sept. 10, 2001, by Mike and Angela Register. The company is family owned and employs more than 40 people, according to a press release on the Crusader's launch.

“Right now and as it has been for quite some

time, one of the biggest threats in the world is and remains Islamic terrorism,” said Ben “Mookie” Thomas, spokesman for Spike's Tactical, who is a former Navy Seal and former Blackwater security contractor. “We wanted to make sure we built a weapon that would never be able to be used by Muslim terrorists to kill innocent people or advance their radical agenda.”

Thomas told Patch the

reasons behind the new model are two-fold. Spike's Tactical wants to prompt an open discussion about the threat extremists pose to the world. Secondly, the gun manufacturer wanted to create a model that would be unlikely to end up in the hands of Muslim terrorists.



hands for war, my fingers for battle.”

The AR-15 also includes a few other tweaks, including a laser-etched shield and cross. The safety selector features the words “Peace,” for the safe setting, “War” for the semi-automatic mode, and “God wills it.” The reverse site of the safety selector bears the Latin translations of those words and phrases.



The idea for the Crusader model was born, Thomas said, as he was driving into work one morning listening to NPR on the radio, hearing about “ISIS and the inhumanity of their behavior.”

As a former military man and security contractor in the Middle East, Thomas said he understands well that many of the weapons used by terrorists are made in the United States and paid for by others.

“I know many Muslims, they are good people,” he said. “But, radical Muslims are destroying the world.”

The hope is the new model will get people talking openly about the threat, Thomas said, rather than labeling any discussion “offensive and off the books.”

“There’s a holocaust happening over there and America is at Starbucks,” he said.

Thomas understands the rifle’s launch is likely to raise controversy, but insists it’s not a publicity stunt or a bigoted maneuver.

“We just wanted to make a statement that in America right now any sensitive subject that’s important is immediately halted in discussion,” he said, adding the company wanted to take “ownership of our product.”

Patch also reached out to the Council on American-Islamic Relations Florida chapter for comment.

“Americans have tragically witnessed over 250 mass killings in 2015 alone, which amounts to more than one per each day,” Ali A. Kurnaz, communications coordinator told Patch. “Only one of those killings involved a self-proclaimed Muslim. Sadly, this manufacturer’s fancy new

gun won’t do anything to stop the real threat in America: the escalating problem of gun violence. This is just another shameful marketing ploy intended to profit from the promotion of hatred, division, and violence.”

CAIR Florida is currently embroiled in a legal battle with another member of Florida’s gun industry. In July, the owner of Florida Gun Supply declared his Inverness store a “Muslim-free zone.” The action, CAIR has alleged in a federal lawsuit, violates civil rights afforded to all Americans by the U.S. Constitution.

“CAIR Florida has gone above and beyond to amicably reach a resolution outside of court with Florida Gun Supply regarding its discriminatory policies,” Thania Diaz Clevenger, Civil Rights Director of CAIR Florida, was quoted in a media release about the complaint as saying. “We want to make the law crystal-clear to any businesses elsewhere contemplating the implementation of such policies that religious discrimination is still illegal in the United States of America and that American Muslims are just as much entitled to their rights as every other American is.”

CAIR is America’s largest Muslim civil liberties group.

As the lawsuit looms, the gun shop’s owner, Andy Hallinan and George Zimmerman have formed a partnership to sell prints of one of Zimmerman’s Confederate flag paintings to raise money for legal defense. Prints are still available on the gun shop’s website. It is unclear how soon the court will take up the lawsuit.

ISIS Burns Alive Four Prisoners in Grisly Revenge Flick

Source: <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/isis-burns-alive-four-prisoners-grisly-revenge-flick#>

Aug 31 – The Islamic State has released a chilling new video showing the execution of four Shiite prisoners by burning in Iraq.



The four men are accused of being members of the Shiite Popular Resistance Committees. They are forced to confess for the camera before the execution. They are suspended from a frame with ropes and a fire lit underneath. Islamic State music accompanies the executions. The killings are



believed to be revenge attacks for a video circulated last week of a Shiite militia roasting a fighter accused of allegiance to ISIS over an open pit.

The video is entitled *Punish Them with the Same Harm They Have Caused You*, a verse from the Quran alluding to vengeance.

As the video was released news broke that ISIS blew up the Temple of Bel in Palmyra. It was considered to be the most important temple at the site and was the second to be destroyed, following the destruction of the Temple of Baalshamin last week.

► You can watch the related video (if still available) at source's URL.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: So what is next? Perhaps on-line execution with chemical weapons in death chambers? Or exposure to unshielded radiological sources until they die or melt? How sick are they? But also how desensitized we have been after the decapitation shock?

Foreign Terrorist Organizations

Bureau of Counterterrorism

Source: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

Delisted Foreign Terrorist Organizations		
Date Removed	Name	Date Originally Designated
10/8/1999	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine -Hawatmeh Faction	10/8/1997
10/8/1999	Khmer Rouge	10/8/1997
10/8/1999	Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front Dissidents	10/8/1997
10/8/2001	Japanese Red Army	10/8/1997
10/8/2001	Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement	10/8/1997
5/18/2009	Revolutionary Nuclei	10/8/1997
10/15/2010	Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	10/8/1997
9/28/2012	Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)	10/8/1997
5/28/2013	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)	10/11/2005
7/15/2014	United Self Defense Forces of Colombia	9/10/2001
9/3/2015	Revolutionary Organization 17 November (17N)	10/8/1997

Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) are foreign organizations that are designated by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended. FTO designations play a critical role in our fight against terrorism and are an effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities and pressuring groups to get out of the terrorism business.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Last terrorist organization delisted is the "17 November" activated in Greece. Why?

Settling Gitmo Detainees in the U.S., Still Unsettling

By James Blair

Source: <http://chcer.net/settling-gitmo-detainees-in-the-u-s-still-unsettling/>

Aug 30 – The prospect of a movement of Gitmo prisoners to alternate locations in the U. S. has again raised its ugly head, as seen in this [article](#). This action whether based on political or economic interests is one which must be carefully considered. Some years ago I wrote some [articles](#) on the dangers associated with such a move.

At one point in my military healthcare career, I was assigned to the Military Disciplinary Barracks (USDB) in Leavenworth KS. and subsequently assigned to the Army Hospital on that Military Post. The area is also the home of a high-profile Federal Prison Facility, between the two are



housed some of the most dangerous criminals in the nation and for generations work in these prisons has been a major source of revenue for the community.

To our knowledge, there have been no recent escapes from Leavenworth Lock-ups. One would think that this community would welcome an increase in numbers for their thriving enterprise. The community is occasionally challenged by clusters of prisoners' relatives and assorted miscreants who follow some of their most celebrated guests. Serious attempts to free the incarcerated did not exist. The community's faith in the prison system is unshakable. Keeping terrorist detainees behind bars and was not in question.



Their concern is/was the specter of large groups of family and potential terrorist living among them appears to have squelched any related potential for economic gains. The idea of a Gitmo-North in Manhattan received a similar cool reception. The same reaction to a Gitmo-Mid-America (which we understand now has been purchased by the Federal government) poses the same set of concerns expressed by the Good Citizens of Leavenworth KS.

Our immediate concern relates to the Public health and Healthcare sector's lack of preparedness for the additional threats which accompanies such moves. Hospitals and healthcare locations have long been considered soft and desirable places to use as escape routes. As the healthcare industry scramble to reduce "costs" the reduction of physical safety and security is a target. Violence in the healthcare workplace is four times as great as other service related venues. Threats go up, and physical safety and security go down. Movement of Gitmo detainees to any location in the United States is an "additional self-inflicted risk."

The Fort Leavenworth USDB Policies and Practices for the transfer of hardened criminals from prison site to hospitals and healthcare sites is the world's best. At the time, everyone was convinced that the hospital had all their bases covered for any event. The hospital's prison ward was a virtual fortress.

Reinforcement security personnel at the USDB were 5 minutes away. Emergency management protocols for the movement of hospitalized inmates called for a two-on-one

prison guard to a prisoner when evacuating (in the case of tornado) to the hospital's basement. When the tornado alert sounded, there were two prisoners in the prison ward and two guards. An anxious call to the USDB for extra guards met with a response that the tornado had resulted in downed trees, and other debris blocked access to the hospital. Fortunately, there were two USDB guards who were recovering from illnesses in the hospital and were physically able to act as escorts.

Most prisons have limited healthcare delivery capabilities, and it is common practice for local hospitals to contract for the care of inmates when their health condition exceeds the prison's healthcare capacity. Pre/Post 911, elaborate plots to free incarcerated high profile terrorists have been uncovered and thwarted. Hospitals are soft on security and criminals take advantage of the vulnerabilities in the system to escape. One of the lessons learned in the 2009 "Novel Flu" event was that those Hospitals and Healthcare organizations located in proximity to prisons had underestimated the impact of their contract responsibilities to care for these populations and the potential drain on their community health assets. Prison populations are extremely vulnerable to pandemic-like events. A Large number of inmates have multiple disease exposures (HIV, TB, etc.) which with make them at greater risk to evolving infectious diseases than the population in general. During 2009 "Novel Flu" event, prisoners in some jurisdictions were given a higher priority for limited vaccines, over local school districts.

And it is not as if "accidents" do not happen around these facilities. An explosion at the Escambia jail in Pensacola, Florida last year, left two dead, dozens injured and happened on the heels of a twelve-inch downpour, stretching emergency management and healthcare capabilities during the



flooding. The resulting damage left a large hole in the wall of the facility, through which many could have potentially escaped, three inmates

who were missing in the chaos, were later accounted for.

The Finnish Foreign Fighter Contingent in Syria and Iraq

By Juha Saarinen

Source: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=44333&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=26&cHash=237832d97b47a14b71c7df1e850dc483#.VesgcZc42z-](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=44333&tx_ttnews[backPid]=26&cHash=237832d97b47a14b71c7df1e850dc483#.VesgcZc42z-)

By August 2015, at least 70 individuals from Finland had travelled to Syria and Iraq ([Suomen Uutiset](#), July 30). [1] According to an Interior Ministry report from August 2014, the vast majority intended to join “radical opposition groups” operating in the conflict zone. [2] The latest figures underline the continuing flow of fighters from Finland to Syria, and to a lesser extent, Iraq, to join jihadist groups operating in the conflict zone, particularly the Islamic State organization ([Verkkouutiset](#), November 29, 2014).

For Finnish policymakers and security officials, the mobilization of jihadist foreign fighters has been as alarming as it has been unprecedented. Historically, cases of Finnish Muslims travelling abroad to join the caravan of global jihad have been few and far between. In the case of Syria’s protracted and brutal civil war, however, Finland has been one of the most significant Western contributors of war volunteers (and likely jihadist foreign fighters) relative to the size of its small Muslim population of approximately 60,000-65,000 ([CNN](#), September 1, 2014). [3]



Mobilization

The flow of Finnish fighters to the Syria and Iraq region came to widespread public attention when Sayid Hussein Feisal Ali (a.k.a. “Abu Shuayb al-Somali”)—a Finnish jihadist of Somali descent—appeared in an Islamic State propaganda video in August 2014 ([Helsinki Times](#), August 17, 2014). However, mobilization had in fact begun at least two years earlier. In August 2012, for instance, radical Finnish converts had reportedly travelled to Syria, and joined opposition groups operating in the north of the country ([Turun Sanomat](#), August 30, 2012). Initially, the contingent included a range of individuals with various motivations. In addition to jihadist foreign fighters, who joined groups like Kataib al-Muhajireen (later known as Jaysh al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar), Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State, humanitarians, mercenaries and non-jihadist foreign fighters also travelled to the war-torn country ([MTV Uutiset](#), March 5, 2014). As a result, by March 2014, over 30 individuals from Finland had found their way into Syria, although only around half could be described as foreign fighters, in the sense of individuals committed to Islamist ideologies ([CTC Sentinel](#), March 26, 2014).

The dynamics of this mobilization, however, had begun to change by summer 2013, with the vast majority of individuals arriving in the

region now seeking to join jihadist groups, particularly Islamic State ([Verkkouutiset](#), November 29, 2014). During the last 12 months in particular, Syria and Iraq seem to have attracted nearly exclusively jihadist foreign fighters. [4] Indeed, since the Islamist State entered the Syrian civil war in force, most individuals traveling to the conflict zone from Finland have sought to join the group, going on to fight in its ranks on both sides of the Iraqi-Syrian border.

Despite the conflict appealing to an increasingly narrow group of individuals, i.e. young radicalized Sunni Muslims, the flow of volunteers from Finland has continued unabated, highlighting the monumental impact that the conflict in Syria, and the rise of the Islamic State, has had on the militant Islamist landscape in Finland. [5] Demonstrating this, between September 2014 and July 2015 alone, the number of known Finland-originated individuals in Syria (and to a lesser extent, Iraq) grew from at least 44 to at least 70 ([Ministry of Interior](#), September 10, 2014; [Suomen Uutiset](#), July 30). [6]

The Contingent

Among the Finnish contingent fighting in Syria and Iraq, at least 19 different ethnic backgrounds are represented ([Suomen](#)



[Kuvalehti](#), August 7). This includes Somalis and Finnish converts (both groups are strongly represented among the contingents' jihadist foreign fighters), few individuals of Arab descent, a Turk, a Pakistani, a Bangladeshi, a Finnish-Namibian and a Finnish-American. These demographics reflect the diverse ethnic character of Finland's Muslim population and also highlight the extraordinary resonance of the conflict among Sunni Muslim communities across the globe. Despite their ethnic diversity, the majority of individuals identified by government authorities are "homegrown," and they were either born in Finland or lived there since childhood. Subsequently, most of them are Finnish citizens ([Suomen Kuvalehti](#), August 7).

The age range of the departed varies from 18 to 50 ([Ministry of Interior](#), September 10, 2014). However, there have also been reports of several under-aged children in the conflict zone, who have either travelled to the region with their parents or have been born there ([Iltasanomat](#), January 10). Unsurprisingly, however, the majority of the individuals are young men in their late teens and mid-twenties. Around one-fifth of the contingent, however, are women. At least 13 women have travelled from Finland to Syria or Iraq, some with their partners and some alone ([Iltalehti](#), July 22; [Iltasanomat](#), December 20, 2014). The majority of the women are either Somalis or Finnish converts, who support the Islamic State.

Geographically, there have been departures from across Finland. However, most foreign fighters originate from larger cities and suburban areas in southern and western Finland ([Ministry of Interior](#), September 10, 2014), mainly the Helsinki metropolitan region and Turku.

Current State of the Contingent

It is not entirely clear how many Finland-originated individuals are currently active in Syria and Iraq. From the approximately 70 confirmed cases that have travelled to the conflict zone, at least 8-11 are believed to have died ([Kouvolan Sanomat](#), April 6). [7] In addition, around 20 individuals have been confirmed to have returned from the conflict zone. ([Helsingin Sanomat](#), June 2). This last estimate, however, has remained the same since late 2014, although there is some evidence that suggests there have been new returnees since ([YLE](#), October 13). A minimum

estimate would therefore be that around half of the 70 or so Finland-originated individuals are still in the conflict zone, mostly if not nearly exclusively in areas controlled by the Islamic State. While it is exceedingly difficult to confirm the role and activity of these individuals, the vast majority of the men likely are, or seek to become, jihadist foreign fighters while several women seem to have adopted propaganda and recruitment roles to support the group's social media activities. [8]

Will the Mobilization Continue?

The flow of individuals from Finland to Syria, and to a lesser extent Iraq, will likely continue as long as both the conflict in Syria and the Islamic State group attract foreign fighters.

There are also two domestic issues that increase the likelihood of further Finnish jihadists travelling to the conflict zone.

First, the domestic militant Islamist landscape in Finland has grown significantly and become more organized during the last two years in particular, increasing the likelihood of radicalized individuals either travelling abroad for foreign fighting or encouraging others to do so ([Verkkouutiset](#), November 29, 2014). According to the officials, there have been signs of emerging multi-ethnic radical social networks in Finland ([MTV Uutiset](#), March 5, 2014). Likewise, online social networks seem to have played a significant role in the mobilization to Syria and Iraq, although more research on social networks is required ([The Ulkopolitist](#), March 10).

Secondly, the Finnish authorities have only limited means to effectively prevent or discourage individuals from traveling to the conflict zone, as neither foreign fighting nor joining jihadist groups classified as terrorist organizations have been criminalized. Although the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (FSIS) have actively sought to discourage people from leaving for the conflict zone by talking with those individuals suspected of planning to leave, there have only been a few cases where such efforts were successful. One such case occurred in 2013, when the FSIS was able to discourage "Abdullah"—a former Islamic State online cheerleader better known through his former twitter account @Mujahid4Life—from travelling to Syria to join Jabhat al-Nusra ([Newsweek](#), June 5). However, with only limited means to tackle



emerging mobilization, cases like that of “Abdullah” will likely be few and far between,

while the contingent of domestic radicals and of fighters in Iraq and Syria continues to grow.

Notes

1. The actual number of individuals who have travelled from Finland to Syria or Iraq is likely higher as not everyone who travels to the conflict zone is known to the authorities. There have been speculations that over 100 individuals from Finland have left for the conflict zone ([YLE](#), March 20).
2. “Violent extremism in Finland – situation overview 2/2014,” (Helsinki: Interior Ministry, Internal Security Programme, September 10, 2014).
3. It should be mentioned that CNN relied on inaccurate data. First, while there are no official statistics available, Finland’s Muslim population is estimated to be around 60,000-65,000, not 42,000. Second, at the time, over 40 individuals had gone from Finland to the conflict zone, although not all who had travelled to Syria could be considered jihadists ([Iltasanomat](#), March 5, 2014; [CTC Sentinel](#), March 26, 2014). However, considering the estimated size of Finland’s current Muslim population and the approximate number of Finland-originated jihadist foreign fighters, their overall assertion is accurate.
4. In addition, an unknown number of individuals from Finland who have travelled to the conflict zone to fight against the Islamic State ([Talouselämä](#), August 26).
5. While there are no official, openly available reports on the size and structure of militant Islamist scene in Finland, the number of radicalised individuals with connections to known radicalised individuals, terrorist networks, or groups operating abroad, and who are actively under surveillance by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (FSIS), has grown from a mere handful in late 2010 to approximately 300 in early 2015, the majority of whom are radicalized Sunni Muslims ([YLE](#), December 12, 2010, [Savon Sanomat](#), February 20).
6. However, it is not clear whether the latter estimation includes individuals who had travelled to the region earlier, but who were only identified after September 2014.
7. Only three casualties have been reported in Finnish media, Abu Salamah al-Finlandi in June 2013, Abu Anas al-Finlandi in February 2014 and Abu Mansour al-Somali in June 2014 ([YLE](#), August 1, 2013; [Helsingin Sanomat](#), February 22, 2014; [Helsingin Sanomat](#), June 9, 2014).
8. Research by this author suggests that at least six of the thirteen women who have travelled in the conflict zone have either openly identified as the Islamic State supporters online, or have shared the group’s message in social media or discussion forums.

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Piracy embers still aglow in Somalia

Source: <http://www.mareeg.com/piracy-embers-still-aglow-in-somalia/>

Until relatively recently, Somali pirates were the scourge of East-West trade, operating in a huge swathe of the Indian Ocean and hijacking vessels with fearsome, and often drug-induced, zeal. Looking back to March 2009 when there were near-daily attacks, the pirate threat was eventually driven back in 2013 by the assembled brawn of heavily armed private security personnel, onshore security forces, and Combined Naval Task Forces 150 and 151.

Last week, a foray by the BBC into Eyl, the now de-throned global piracy capital, highlighted serious challenges for the country, including widespread poverty and joblessness, and a nascent legal system.

Various documentaries, news coverage and the big-budget Captain Phillips have shown the world that these men are not hardened

criminals but indeed something far more dangerous – out-of-work teachers and fishermen, faced with a chance at leaving behind a lifetime of abject poverty for riches beyond their wildest dreams.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) theorises that there are four mitigating “pillars” currently staving off successful hijackings, explains secretary general Peter Hinchliffe. These include compliance with Best Management Practices 4 (BMP4) for vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden and beyond; the presence of warships in the area; and armed security on board vessels.

But everyone agrees that the most important of the four pillars is capacity-building on shore. This takes time, and Somalia is not there yet. **With the current**



mandate for NATO and EUNAVFOR intervention set to expire in 2016, shipping is getting understandably nervous.

"The military tell us that there are still probing attacks on a fairly regular basis," says Hinchliffe. "The potential and capacity for pirate attacks is still there. Our belief is that if you take away those pillars without thinking of the consequences, piracy can re-emerge. The ICS advice to its members hasn't changed."

ICS, along with a number of other organisations like the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), specialist branch of the International Chamber of Commerce, is lobbying to secure a new and equally tough mandate from 2017 onward. "Only a handful of the pirates have been caught and tried," assistant director at IMB Cyrus Mody explains. "There appears to be a reduction, but we have to put that down to the naval deterrents, to the BMPs, to the armed guards. There is definitely a possibility that the business model from 2008-2010 can be revived if there is complacency, or if the presence of the navies and armed teams is reduced. This has always been a concern in the industry."

Indeed interviews with individual Somalis confirm that shipowners are not the only ones with piracy on their minds. "It's just now coming from the other [Somali] side, which is giving it a bit more momentum," says Mody.

Morten Glamsø, senior adviser at the Danish Shipowners' Association (DSA), is measured in his responses. "From the very beginning we have said that a holistic approach needs to be taken," he explains. "Ships need to be prepared and protected, but we also need to address the root causes. It is important that there are alternatives for the Somalis than fishing, because a lot of fishing resources in these waters have been depleted.

"[The DSA] are monitoring the situation and our members are conducting a full risk assessment every time they are navigating these waters. We are also emphasising the importance of maintaining the naval presence under operation ATALANTA and the NATO-led operation. And of course all the independent nations in the area have been doing good work."

The fact that not enough naval support is currently available for the still-growing migration crisis in the Mediterranean will not help matters, but Glamsø remains optimistic. "We are aware that defence budgets are

stressed, and we have other crises, like in the Mediterranean. Our impression is that the EU-led operation is under pressure but they have a reasonable force – it's more concerning the development of the NATO led operation."

Some progress has been made. In 2012, Seatrade reported on a number of proposals put forward by the IMB and ICC to create jobs and bolster Somalia's economy, including the establishment of an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to protect the country's fishing from illegal foreign trawlers. Speaking at IMO in May of that year, Jean-Guy Carrier, secretary general of the ICC, along with Potengal Mukundan, director of IMB, said: "Before the civil war there were successful fish processing businesses on this coast producing fish products which were exported. It is a natural, sustainable resource which can be easily exploited for economic growth. If this can be revived, it would give local employment to the youngsters in this area. Local communities and fishing villages would not then need to depend upon the pirates for sustenance and would turn away from them. Without the support of the local community the pirates would not be able to bring hijacked vessels to this area. Without the space and impunity to hold the vessels, the Somali pirate model simply could not work."

Later that year democratic elections were held in the Somaliland and Puntland regions, from where many of the pirates embark, and some are hailing these as the beginning of the end for a period of civil unrest which has blighted the country since 1991.

"After the elections in 2012, Somalia has literally been reborn," says Mody. "Now, that governance structure has to be supported so they can develop the judicial system and law enforcement – and bring Somalia together, a very large and complex task. It is going to take a lot of time, and a lot of international investment, and a lot of patience."

"Capacity building is not just about building prisons," Hinchliffe continues. "It's about trying to establish some kind of job-creation infrastructure, whether it's re-establishing the local fishing industry or turning the local fishing into more of a revenue-earning structure. Those are things that are hopefully going on because a lot of money is being poured into Somalia.

"The pirates do their own risk assessment. They will balance the profit from a successful



pirate attack against the stability of regular employment.”

As long as that balance continues to tip in favour of piracy, then neither shipping, nor

Somalia itself, can be safe from the scourge. As is almost always the case with international politics, the right thing to do is also going to be the hardest.

Survey: 72% fear Islamic attack, 73% back assassination of terror leaders

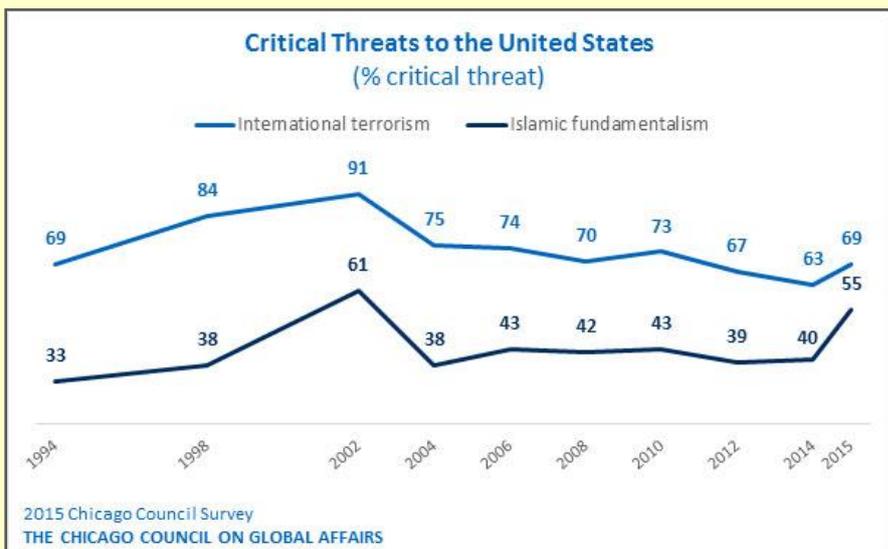
Source: <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/survey-72-fear-islamic-attack-73-back-assassination-of-terror-leaders/article/2571619>

Concern among Americans about Islamic fundamentalism is at its highest level since just after the 9/11

attacks, with seven in 10 fearing a terrorist attack and an equal amount supporting assassinations of key leaders in order to protect the country, according to a new survey.

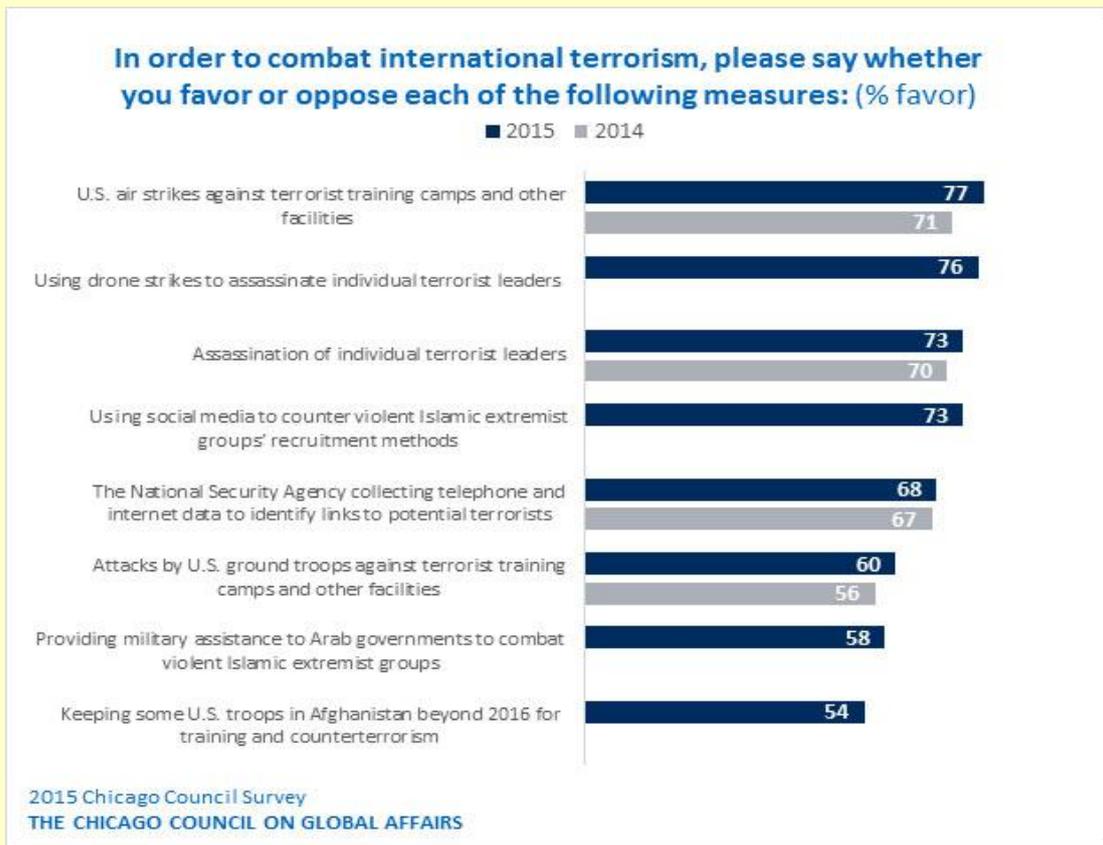
The Chicago Council on Global Affairs found that concerns about terrorist attacks from Islamic fundamentalists has surged past worries about fears of Iran's nuclear program, computer hacking and international terrorism.

The findings come amid a media focus on ISIS and their policy of butchering women and beheading men and the flood of Syrian refugees into Europe as they flee the Islamic State.



Among the key findings:

- The percentage of Americans who perceive a "critical threat" from Islamic fundamentalism has



increased 15 percentage points in just a year, to 55 percent, the highest level since 2002.

- The top threat seen by Americans is an attack in the U.S. by Islamic extremists. Some 72 percent called that a "critical threat."
- Americans are ready to fight back; 77 percent support U.S. airstrikes; 76 percent back drone attacks; 73 percent endorse assassinations of terrorist leaders; 60 percent support ground troops and just 58 percent back military assistance to Arab nations.
- 73 percent expect a war with ISIS to last longer than three years.

A first: U.K. drone strike kills Briton in Syria

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150908-a-first-u-k-drone-strike-kills-briton-in-syria>

Sept 08 – **British Prime Minister David Cameron revealed that a U.K. drone strike, which he had authorized, has targeted and killed Reyaad Khan, 21, a U.K. citizen who was a senior prominent member of**



Islamic State. It was the first targeted killing of a British citizen by U.K. drone. Another British citizen who was an ISIS member, Ruhul Amin, 26, was in the car carrying Khan and was also killed in the attack.

Cameron said that three days later, a U.S. drone strike, carried out in coordination with the United Kingdom, killed a third British citizen — Junaid Hussain, 21.

Speaking to the Commons on its first day Parliament is back from its summer break, Cameron justified the strikes on the grounds that Reyaad Khan represented a "clear and present danger."

The prime minister told MPs: "In an act of self-defense and after meticulous planning Reyaad Khan was killed in a precision airstrike carried out on 21 August by an RAF remotely piloted aircraft while he was travelling in a vehicle in the area of Raqqah in Syria.

"In addition to Reyaad Khan who was the target of the strike, two [ISIS] associates were also killed, one of whom — Ruhul Amin, has been identified as a U.K. national. They were [ISIS] fighters and I can confirm there were no civilian casualties."

The prime minister said that both Hussain and Khan were involved in actively recruiting ISIS sympathizers and "seeking to orchestrate specific and barbaric attacks against the west." He added: "We should be under no illusion. Their intention was the murder of British citizens."

The Obama administration has said that only one American citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, was taken out in a targeted killing. Al-Awlaki, a New Mexico-born Islamic preacher, was one of the ideological leaders of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and the founder of the organization's glossy English-language magazine *Inspire*. Another American was killed in the Hellfire missile attack in Yemen in September 2011 which killed al-Awlaki, but he was not the target of the attack.

Two weeks after al-Awlaki was killed, his 16-years old son was killed when U.S. drones struck an AQAP formation in the mountains east of the Yemeni capital Sanaa.

U.K. government sources say that Khan had progressed from jihadist incitement through the Internet to directing potential attacks on commemorative events in the United Kingdom this summer, especially the VE celebrations presided over by the Queen at Westminster Abbey on 10 May, and a ceremony to mark the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich on Armed Forces Day on 27 June.

The *Guardian* reports that U.K. intelligence had him in their sights for a while, and when, on 21 August, he was observed travelling in a vehicle



near Raqqa, the unofficial capital of ISIS, with two other ISIS members — Amin and a third, non-Briton – Cameron authorized the strike.

Experts note that about 90 percent of the intelligence the United Kingdom relies on comes through interception of communications by the U.S. NSA and its U.K. counterpart, GCHQ, rather than by the old-fashioned human intelligence.

The specific operational instruction to take Khan out was given within minutes of the intelligence information becoming available, but this decision could have been quickly made because the National Security Council, the U.K. agency which coordinates the work of the country's various intelligence agencies, had approved Khan as a target for killing months earlier in a meeting attended by Cameron. The attorney general, Jeremy Wright, also attended the meeting and advised that a strike would be legal on the grounds of self-defense.

The operational authorization was given by Defense Secretary Michael Fallon, who issued a firing order to the RAF crew in control of the Reaper drone.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense did not provide details of the operation, but the RAF 39 Squadron crew firing the drone was located either at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire or

operating from the U.S. air base at Creech, Nevada.

The RAF has been conducting drone strikes in Iraq as part of the U.S.-led international coalition against ISIS. Without parliamentary authority to expand airstrikes to Syria, the U.K. military activity in Syria was initially limited to surveillance flights. In the spring of this year, however, it emerged that RAF pilots embedded with the U.S. air force were participating in airstrikes in Syria.

Numbers collected by *Drones War UK* show that the lack of a parliamentary authorization notwithstanding, the number of U.K. drones flown over Syria has risen dramatically in the past few months. In January, only 10 percent of drones operating in the skies over Syria were British. In May, 40 percent of drones operating in Syria were U.K. drones.

Michael Clarke, director-general of London-based Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), told the *Guardian* that the government would be open to charges of jumping the gun, given that a government parliamentary motion to authorize the extension of air operations into Syria was expected within weeks. "It now looks as if it has decided to create a momentum to action that might be unstoppable," Clarke said, though he added the risk for the government was that it might backfire.

Was it lawful for UK forces to kill British Isis fighters in Syria?

By Joshua Rozenberg

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/07/lawful-uk-forces-british-isis-fighters-syria>

Can it ever be lawful for British forces to kill would-be terrorists, as David Cameron today confirmed has happened in the case of two Britons fighting with Islamic State in Syria? Surely the rule of law demands that suspects be arrested, tried and imprisoned if found guilty by a court?

English law allows a person to use such force as appears reasonable in self-defence or for the defence of others. And pre-emptive force may be used to ward off an imminent attack. So it would be lawful for the police or armed forces to shoot terrorists in London if that was the only way of stopping them setting off a bomb.

But what if the terrorists are abroad?

Reyaad Khan was in the Raqqa area of Syria when he was killed in an RAF drone strike on

21 August. As the prime minister told MPs, he and Junaid Hussain – who was killed in an American air strike three days later – “were British nationals based in Syria who were involved in actively recruiting Isis [ISIS] sympathisers and seeking to orchestrate specific and barbaric attacks against the west, including directing a number of planned terrorist attacks right here in Britain”.

There was, said Cameron, no other way of preventing Khan's planned attacks.

The attorney general, Jeremy Wright, will have advised Cameron that article 51 of the United Nations charter preserves the “inherent right of individual ... self-defence if an armed attack occurs against” a member state. Measures taken under this provision must be



reported to the Security Council “immediately” – a requirement that seems to have been interpreted by the government as meaning “after two weeks”.

Was the UK under an armed attack?

Cameron said “there was clear evidence of the individuals in question planning and directing armed attacks against the UK”. In English law, you don’t have to wait for the aggressor to shoot first – and the same principle is accepted in international law. The government does not seem to be relying on the more questionable doctrine of anticipatory self-defence or pre-emptive strikes.

All states agree that self-defence must be necessary and proportionate. These requirements can be traced back to the Caroline incident in 1837, which involved a pre-emptive raid by British forces in Canada on a steamboat manned by Canadian rebels who were planning an attack from the US. Cameron was at pains to point out that the attack on Khan and his Isis associates was timed to avoid any civilian casualties.

Even so, two other people who were travelling in the same vehicle as Khan were killed at the same time. One was Rahul Amin, who was a UK national. The other has not been named. Cameron said that both were Isis fighters though – unlike Hussain – they were not accused of planning specific attacks.

It is obviously harder to justify the attacks on the two men travelling with Khan than it is to justify killing Khan himself. On the other hand, if they were Isis fighters then they should have known that Khan was a likely target and that they would be at risk by travelling with him. If Khan had been hiding in a village or even a large compound, it would have been

disproportionate to bomb the entire area. But attacking a vehicle containing Isis fighters would be seen by many as a proportionate response to the threat Khan posed.

Critics say that Cameron should have sought parliamentary approval before launching air strikes. Clearly, that would have jeopardised the operation, even if parliament had been sitting in August. Though there may now be a convention that parliament is consulted ahead of military action, it is not a legal requirement – whether or not the potential targets are UK citizens.

On the facts as we know them, this unprecedented attack on British would-be terrorists in Syria appears to be within the law.

The attorney general, we are told, “was clear there would be a clear legal basis for action in international law”. We are unlikely to see the full text of his advice because some of the details are likely to be highly classified. But we are entitled to expect the government to publish a summary, not least because the convention that legal advice on such matters is confidential seems no longer to be observed by ministers themselves.

So the only remaining question is whether the drone strike on Khan and those with him was morally justified. On this, I am with Cameron. As he said, his first duty is to keep the British people safe. “There was a terrorist directing murder on our streets and no other means to stop him,” the prime minister said.

And I don’t suppose that Khan himself would have disagreed. If he was waging war on British troops and civilians, he can hardly complain the UK’s armed forces were one step ahead of him.

Joshua Rozenberg trained as a lawyer before becoming a legal journalist and was the BBC’s legal correspondent for 15 years. He is now a freelance writer, commentator and broadcaster and presents the BBC Radio 4 series Law in Action.

How Dangerous is ISIS to Israel?

By Efraim Inbar

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5473/israel-isis>

Sept 07 – ISIS, a radical Islamist group, has killed thousands of people since it declared an Islamic caliphate in June 2014, with the city of Raqqa as its de facto capital. It captured tremendous international attention by swiftly conquering large swaths of land and by

releasing gruesome pictures of beheadings and other means of executions. In Israel, concern is increasing as ISIS nears Israeli borders.

Yet, several analyses of the threat ISIS poses to Israel seem to be



unnecessarily alarmist. ISIS is primarily successful where there is a political void.



Although the offensives in Syria and Iraq showed the Islamic State's tactical capabilities, they were directed against failed states with weakened militaries. When and where ISIS has met well organized opposition by non-state entities, such as that posed by Kurdish militias, the group's performance has been less convincing.

The attack on an Egyptian town in the Sinai Peninsula conducted by the local ISIS branch with several hundred fighters – an item well covered in the Israeli media – is not an exception to this assessment. ISIS has shown tactical ability in employing large numbers of militiamen in an area where, for several years, the Egyptian army has encountered problems in enforcing state sovereignty.

Nevertheless, the Egyptian army eventually succeeded in repelling the attack and in killing hundreds of attackers. A determined Egyptian regime put up a good fight against the terrorists in Sinai. Despite the fact that the Egyptian army is not well-trained in scenarios posed by groups like ISIS, and despite the army's preoccupation with the delta region (the threat in Sinai is considered peripheral), the Egyptian army is still likely to be successful in containing the ISIS challenge.

The difference between a real army and the forces in Syria and Iraq that ISIS has encountered should be recognized. Generally, non-state actors are less dangerous than states. Only states can develop nuclear weapons. Non-state actors usually do not possess airplanes, heavy artillery and tanks that can cause great damage. Since they are Iranian proxies, Hizballah and Hamas are not

an exception to this rule because they have been endowed with destructive capabilities, such as missiles, by a state. Moreover, they have secured almost exclusive control over a piece of territory.

Many Arabs are concerned less by the nature of ISIS atrocities than by the fact that they aren't committed primarily against Israelis.

Similarly, the success of ISIS is partly the result of the role played by Turkey. Ankara allows overseas volunteers to flock to ISIS training camps in Iraq. The same Turkish route is used by foreign experts that operate the oil infrastructure captured by ISIS. It is Turkish territory that is used to resupply ISIS and to treat its wounded. It is money from Gulf States that subsidizes ISIS activities. Even the recent Turkish formal agreement to join the coalition against ISIS does not change much. Ankara's primary targets are the Kurds and evidence shows that ISIS still receives Turkish limited support.

This means that it is misplaced to view ISIS as posing an independent serious strategic challenge. It is true that ISIS has ignited immense passion among many young and frustrated Muslims all over the world and the Caliphate idea has a great appeal among the believers, but the relevant question is: What can ISIS do without outside support? ISIS on its own is capable of only limited damage. The magnitude of the threat has been greatly exaggerated, while the states that help it need to be treated adequately.

The American administration has good reasons to inflate the threat from ISIS. It is using the grand threat of ISIS to legitimize Iran as a "responsible" actor (that will, supposedly, fight ISIS) in Middle East affairs. This has been part of the Obama administration's rationale for its nuclear deal with Iran.

ISIS might eventually carve an area of control along Israel's borders, particularly on the Golan where the Syrian state is disintegrating. In a worst case analysis, Syria could yet become another "Hamastan." But it is important to note that Israel has been successful in containing Hamas in Gaza. In fact, Israel has



refrained from a more muscular response to Hamas only because it has an interest in perpetuating the divide between the Hamas in Gaza and the PA in the West Bank. Such restraint would not apply to a future ISIS entity. Indeed, due to less global support for ISIS than for Gazans, Israel's freedom of action against ISIS is obviously much greater.

Jordan, an important buffer state and strategic partner of Israel, also has the military capability to withstand an ISIS onslaught. Its security

services probably can also manage for the time being the radical Islamist threat from within.

Suggestions that ISIS may constitute a bigger threat to Israel than Iran are ridiculous. The Israeli army and the ISIS militia are in different leagues. As long as ISIS behaves in a most unconventional bestial way, many in the world will be happy to see Israel doing the dirty work on their behalf, dealing ISIS blow after blow, if the opportunity and necessity arises.

Efraim Inbar, a professor of political studies at Bar-Ilan University, is the director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and a fellow at the Middle East Forum.

More than 1,500 anti-terrorism troops to guard Rio Olympics

Source: <http://sports.yahoo.com/news/more-1-500-anti-terrorism-troops-guard-rio-192919176--oly.html>

Sept 10 – Brazil will deploy 1,549 soldiers exclusively on anti-terrorism duties during next year's Rio Olympics, a high ranking officer said Wednesday.

The country is not generally considered at risk of terrorism, but the high-profile event will change that, General Mauro Sinott Lopes said.



Athletes, politicians and others visiting Rio de Janeiro "could be the object of a threat," Lopes, who heads the Special Operations Battalion and will oversee an anti-terrorism center during the Games, told journalists.

"The event will be attractive for these kinds of activities, given the delegations taking part," he said. "We are ready to respond as necessary."

In addition to the army troops detailed on anti-terrorism there will be an undisclosed number of

police and intelligence agency officers, he said. The military says it has consulted with more than 90 countries more familiar with terrorism.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: "The country is not generally considered at risk of terrorism" – really? What makes a country attractive to terrorism? And what makes a country "immune" to terrorism? Friendly people, beautiful beaches, saba dancing or tropical jungles? And again: not one world on CBRNE preparedness...

Abu Ibrahim al-Almani: First Polish-born suicide bomber dies fighting for Islamic State

Source: <http://mlm.jamestown.org/feature-single/>

On August 12, media in Poland—a country that self-identifies as 90–95 percent Roman Catholic—announced the first ever case of a Polish suicide bomber fighting for the Islamic State. TVN24 broke the story by reporting that the Polish Internal Security Agency's Counterterrorism Center had conclusively determined one of the four suicide bombers who died in a deadly June 13 attack in Baiji,

Iraq, and who went by the *nom de guerre* Abu Ibrahim al-Almani (i.e. "the German"), was in fact 28-year-old Jacek S., who was born and grew up in northwest Poland but had lived in Germany for the past decade ([TVN24](#) [Warsaw], August 12). [1] Though Jacek S. lived abroad when he was radicalized, news of Poland's first suicide bomber has



reignited a debate about Polish society's resiliency to extremist foreign propaganda as well as questions pertaining to the



government's ability to deal with the situation.

The man who would eventually willingly kill himself for the cause of the "caliphate" was born in the town of Miastko, in Poland's Western Pomeranian *voivodeship* (province), but he and his family lived in the nearby village of Kamnica, where they struggled financially. According to their former neighbors, Jacek's father, who was of German descent, worked in the logging industry and moved the family to Germany in search of steady employment. Jacek's mother was a seamstress by trade, but she did not work outside the home. Residents of Kamnica vaguely recall what Jacek S. was like as a youth, but remember him as essentially a "normal" boy who never seemed particularly religious ([TVN24](#) [Warsaw] August 12; [Polskatimes.pl](#), August 12; [Dziennik Bałtycki](#) [Gdańsk], August 12).

Jacek and his family, in 2005, permanently emigrated to Göttingen, Germany, where he acquired German citizenship. Soon, Jacek fell into self-destructive behavior. He did not complete further schooling and was unable or unwilling to hold a steady job. When employed, he worked in fast food establishments, but he eventually settled for accepting state welfare. He had some minor legal trouble over drug possession and driving without a license—though never over matters related to ideological extremism. Fed up with his son's lifestyle choices, Jacek's father apparently threw him out of the household ([TVN24](#) [Warsaw], August 12; [Polskatimes.pl](#), August 12; [Dziennik Bałtycki](#) [Gdańsk], August 12; [TVN24](#) [Warsaw], August 13).

In 2014, Jacek S. converted to the Muslim faith, changed his name on social media sites to Ismail Slo and began to post pro-jihadist messages online. At this point, he started being exposed to recruitment messages from Islamic State-affiliated websites. Friends and family members recall that when he came to visit his

hometown of Kamnica that summer, he had grown a beard and was particularly animated about his recent conversion to Islam; it was all he would talk about and could become rather aggressive in discussing its merits. By April 2015, Jacek S. disappeared from home and made his way, via Turkey, to Syria where he joined up with Islamic State and took on the jihadist name Abu Ibrahim ([TVN24](#) [Warsaw] August 12; [Polskatimes.pl](#), August 12; [Dziennik Bałtycki](#) [Gdańsk], August 12).

Upon enlisting in the militant group, Jacek S. trained as a suicide bomber and killed himself on June 13, in a battle over the strategic north-central Iraqi city of Baiji. He, along with three other international jihadist fighters from the United Kingdom, Kuwait and Palestine, drove vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) onto the grounds of the country's largest oil refinery and blew themselves up. The suicide attack killed 11 individuals and injured 27. Due to the presence of the refinery in Baiji, and the city's strategic position 250 kilometers north of Baghdad, Islamic State fighters have engaged, for months, in continual battles with the Iraqi military and Shiite militias for its control. Islamic State's use of foreign fighters as suicide bombers in such battles fits into the organization's overall strategy. As Tomasz Otłowski, a terrorism expert at the Warsaw-based Amicus Europae Foundation, points out: the influx of foreign fighters, who lack training and tend to be lousy fighters, leaves the Islamic State with a dilemma of how best to utilize them. Hence their use as suicide bombers. In addition, the organization can then publicize their existence and radical zeal in propaganda messaging ([Göttinger Tageblatt](#), June 16; [Wirtualna Polska](#) [Warsaw], August 12).

Unlike many countries in Western Europe, Poland lacks a significant Muslim minority and receives hardly any migrants from the Middle East or North Africa; as a result Poland has, to date, not been at the forefront of Islamic State's recruitment efforts. Nevertheless, the radicalization of Jacek S. was not an isolated incident. Although he represents the first ethnic Pole to have killed himself in a suicide attack for an Islamist cause, Polish authorities estimate there may be an additional 15 or so co-nationals currently fighting for Islamic State in the Middle East. Moreover, earlier this year,



the media was inundated with stories connected to Karolina R., a 26-year-old Polish radicalized convert to Islam, from Bonn, Germany, who was arrested for collecting money for jihadist causes in March 2014, while her Muslim husband, and convert brother were fighting for Islamic State in Syria ([Gazeta Wyborcza](#) [Warsaw], February 5). These individuals, such as Jacek S. and Karolina R., seem to be undergoing radicalization pretty much exclusively abroad—mainly in Germany and the UK. This is probably due to the limited number of mosques inside Poland that could

come under extremist ideological influence. Poland's security agencies say they are effectively monitoring all such cases and cooperating with their security agency counterparts abroad, and are confident that in all cases, these Poles were living and radicalized outside the country and have no continuing ties to Polish society ([TVN24](#) [Warsaw], August 12; [Polskie Radio](#) [Warsaw], August 12). However, the case of Jacek S. has shaken some into realizing that the war in far-off Syria may increasingly have reverberations at home ([Głos Pomorza](#) [Słupsk], August 13).

Note

1. Jacek S.'s given last name is not publicly available, because media in Poland are legally barred from releasing the full names of individuals accused of a crime or of criminals who have died in order to protect the privacy of their living family members.

9/11 Anniversary: How has terrorism changed in the past 14 years?

By Tim Lister CNN

Source: <http://www.krtv.com/story/30005928/911-anniversary-how-has-terrorism-changed-in-the-past-14-years>

Sept 11 – In the 14 years since the 9/11 attacks, the face of terrorism has changed out of recognition. To many experts, the threat of Islamist terror is in some ways greater and in some ways diminished. It is geographically more diverse and organizationally more divided, and leverages social media and the internet in a way impossible in 2001.

In the West, Islamist terrorism is often more inspired than organized and directed. Its menace is also more fluid and unpredictable than it was on that bright autumn morning in 2001, but the tools to combat it are also more plentiful, from ever more sophisticated and accurate drones to financial intelligence and algorithms for chewing terabytes of data in the pursuit of suspicious communications.

The likelihood of an attack on the scale of 9/11 has receded. but the probability of more frequent though less devastating attacks has increased.

Who's in charge?

As if on cue, al Qaeda has just released a 45-minute lecture by its leader Ayman al-Zawahiri that illustrates just how much has changed. Fourteen years ago, al Qaeda was the undisputed heavyweight among jihadist groups, even more so after the 9/11 attacks. Today al-Zawahiri, who succeeded Osama bin Laden in 2011, is struggling to fend off the new pretender, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

In his latest message, he launches a broadside against ISIS and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. "We do not acknowledge this Caliphate, and we do not see it as Caliphate on the prophetic method; instead, it is an emirate of taking over without consultation," complains al-Zawahiri.

Al Qaeda has always seen its campaign as a generations-long struggle toward the glorious day when a Caliphate could be declared -- based on Islamic prophecies. Then -- in 2010 and 2011 -- al-Baghdadi rebuilt ISIS from the ashes of al Qaeda in Iraq, extended its field of operations to Syria (2012), and declared himself the Caliph of all Muslims (2014.)

And so battle is joined between two heavyweights of the jihadist movement in a way unimaginable 14 years ago. Both have their MVPs.

Al Qaeda has the brilliant bomb-maker in Yemen, Ibrahim al Asiri, and a commander in Afghanistan called Farouq al Qahtani who is regarded as smart and charismatic. ISIS has a whole raft



of potential contenders should the unthinkable happen to al Baghdadi.

It would seem that two jihadist groups battling each other would be good news, and al-Zawahiri makes no attempt to camouflage his loathing for al-Baghdadi in his latest speech. But right at the end of it, he says this: "Despite these grave mistakes, were I in Iraq or in Sham [Syria] I would cooperate with them [ISIS] in fighting the Crusaders, the secularists, the Nusayris, and the Safavids, despite my not acknowledging the legitimacy of their State, not to mention their Caliphate, because the matter is bigger than me and their claim of establishing a Caliphate."

An olive branch? An attempt to win over rank and file ISIS members? Muddled thinking? No wonder intelligence professionals find the current landscape more difficult to analyze than that of a decade ago.

Controlling territory

Similarly unimaginable 14 years ago is that a jihadist group -- a "nonstate actor" as the academics say -- could control a huge amount of territory. Al Qaeda was the guest of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and after 9/11 was dispersed to mountain camps in Pakistan. Al-Shabaab, for a while, controlled parts of central and southern Somalia; al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb briefly held some towns in Mali.

But these groups never had the trappings of a "state" in the way ISIS has Sharia courts, basic social services and now even a currency. And any form of safe haven allows for greater and more ambitious planning.

Nick Rasmussen, the director of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, says "access to resources, both personnel and monetary resources; control of territory, which allows for the creation of a safe haven -- those are the ingredients that we traditionally look at as being critical to the development of an external operations capability."

Interviewed in the Combating Terrorism Center's latest edition of the Sentinel, Rasmussen says there is a "watching brief" on whether ISIS is planning to open a new front in Europe and the United States. But as the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan winds down, he says that the NCTC is also trying to assess "what level of risk we may face over time that al Qaeda may regenerate, find renewed safe haven, or be able to restore lost capability."

Geographical metastasis

On 9/11, al Qaeda had its camps in Afghanistan; there was a jihadist presence in Algeria and the Caucasus and some budding militancy in the Arabian Peninsula. Now jihadist groups from Indonesia west to the African shores of the Atlantic declare their allegiance to either al Qaeda or ISIS.

Former CIA Acting Director Mike Morell says that al Qaeda's "great victory has been the spread of its ideology across a large geographic area" from northern Nigeria across Africa and into Yemen" as well as to Iraq and Syria.

Writing in the latest edition of the Combating Terrorism Center's Sentinel, Morell says that "all told, some 20 countries now have terrorist groups within their borders espousing the jihadist ideology."

And ISIS has created "provinces" beyond Syria and Iraq at warp speed.

There are countless more "no-go zones" in the world than there were on 9/11:

-- Britain tells its holidaymakers to avoid Tunisia.

-- Parts of Kenya and Egypt are off-limits, as is almost all of Libya.

-- Boko Haram has turned much of northern Nigeria into a battlefield (as well as some areas of neighboring states.)

-- Yemen was never the easiest place to navigate but has imploded in the past four years, becoming yet another theater in which al Qaeda and ISIS compete to kill the most Shiites.

And in Syria, a regime once regarded as the most unshakeable in the Middle East, has lost control of much of its territory, with millions of its citizens displaced.

Rasmussen says "the array of extremist terrorist actors around the globe is broader, wider and deeper than it has been at any time since 9/11."

"It's fair to say that we face more threats, coming at us from more places, involving more individuals than we have at any time since 9/11," he says.

Inspired, motivated or directed?

The nature of the threat has also changed. According to former al Qaeda insiders, the planning for the 9/11 attacks by Abu Hafs al Masri and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed began fully two years beforehand. The



resources devoted by the United States and its allies since 9/11 to deterring attacks on the homeland -- everything from enhanced airport screening to no-fly lists to a massive increase in the amount of data collected and analyzed -- makes another such spectacular attack more unlikely.

But so diffuse is the threat now, and so much greater the appeal of ISIS to some who live in (or have left and then returned to) Western countries, that a stream of smaller but still deadly attacks has become the norm. This year alone, terrorist attacks in France and Tunisia have killed more than 70 civilians.

That's a function of -- for want of a better word - - devolution by terror groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS to individual supporters, often known as lone wolves or cells of two or three. There is now a somewhat blurred spectrum from the inspired and self-radicalized at one end to the attack planned and directed by a group's leadership at the other. And the results are mixed.

The Kouachi brothers, who attacked the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo in January, had been with al Qaeda in Yemen four years previously, but they made all the operational decisions themselves, with deadly effect.

The attempted attack on an exhibition of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in Dallas also appears to have been encouraged by an ISIS "cheerleader" but was poorly planned and left only the two assailants dead.

Even so, Rasmussen says that "the "flash to bang" ratio in plotting of this sort is much quicker and allows for much less time for traditional law enforcement and intelligence tools to disrupt or mitigate potential plots." And that, he says, is a great challenge.

The terrorist diaspora

It's a challenge heightened by the sheer numbers of individuals from Western countries who have slipped into Iraq and Syria in the past few years.

Mike Morell predicts that an attack in Europe or the United States directed by ISIS (as opposed to inspired) will eventually occur. It might be small-scale "but over time the Islamic State's capability to conduct a more complex attack will grow."

That's not least because of the estimated 5,000 Westerners who have gained battle experience and skills with bombs and weapons after joining ISIS. Al Qaeda always attracted a few

from the West, such as the American Adam Gadahn and a number of British citizens of Pakistani origin. But not on the scale of ISIS, which may have attracted as many as 25,000 foreign nationals to Iraq and Syria.

Rasmussen says that following the break-up of a terror cell in Belgium earlier this year, there is concern that ISIS operatives in Iraq and Syria may be pivoting toward directing attacks in Europe. For now, the group appears largely focused on consolidating the Caliphate, drawing fighters in rather than sending them out. But Western counterterrorism officials know that could change.

Social media and communication

In the run-up to and years immediate after 9/11, occasional pronouncements from al Qaeda would emerge via television networks such as Al Jazeera. The occasional statement from Osama bin Laden would be scrutinized for any clues as to his health, location or strategy. Now ISIS has a full-blown propaganda machine in several languages, releasing video, photographs and daily news bulletins. Production is of high quality, dissemination wide through Twitter accounts and jihadist websites. A large number of ISIS supporters use Twitter, whether to incite attacks overseas, lure jihadist 'brides' to the Caliphate or relay news and photos of military operations.

It also has IT experts capable of what's called end-to-end encryption. Talking to the Sentinel, Rasmussen says one of the great worries today is "terrorist groups' innovative and agile use of new means of communicating, including ways which they understand are beyond our ability to collect."

The long run

One thing perhaps has not changed since the aftermath of 9/11, and if anything, it has become clearer. Western intelligence officials used to speak of the task of degrading al Qaeda over a number of years. Now the same language is used of both al Qaeda and ISIS -- except that officials speak in terms of decades or a generation rather than mere years.

And the prescriptions for combating these groups in a war of ideas also sound remarkably similar. Morell says the West "must address the issues that create terrorists in the first place.

...We must undermine the jihadist appeal to young Muslims."

It's been difficult. Many of the same problems that afflicted the Arab world in 2001 are still



present and have been aggravated by the upheavals of the Arab Spring. The outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, speaks of "pervasive instability, disenfranchised groups, ethnic conflict, [and] religious conflict in the Middle

East and North Africa that will take a decade or more to resolve."

Morell concurs.

"We are likely to look back at the last 14 years as only the opening salvo in what will be a very long war."

The Islamist Menace Shadowing This Sept. 11

The terror threat is growing, but our nation's leaders are even deeper in denial than they were 14 years ago.

By Rudolph W. Giuliani

Source: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-islamist-menace-shadowing-this-sept-11-1441929416>



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Sept 11 – The anniversaries and other reminders of the Islamic extremist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, stir a torrent of thoughts and emotions. But we should try to focus on those most relevant today.

A sensitive and appropriate 9/11 museum has now been built. A new tower has emerged as a great work of architecture adding to the world's most-iconic skyline. Lower Manhattan, specifically the immediate vicinity of the World Trade Center, which many of us feared might be abandoned in the wake of these attacks and constant threats of future attacks, has more than doubled in population.

It has gone far beyond the goals we set in 1994 when we secured passage of a law allowing the use of many of the older buildings and sites in the area for residential as well as office and commercial uses. All of this is a good sign that New Yorkers have not only met but exceeded the challenge I gave on the evening of Sept. 11, 2001: that New Yorkers should become stronger as a result of the attack.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that 9/11 is now simply a part of the nation's history, like Pearl Harbor. Because there is one big difference. The causes and hatreds that created 9/11 are still with us, and the terrorists have enlisted members who are even more diverse, cunning and determined. The Islamist terrorist war against us continues. This is not a matter of history but of current and future threats.

Remember, this war against us did not start that September day in 2001. It had been going on for a long time. The plane hijackings and killing of innocent people by Islamist terrorists, and their murderous attack on the Israeli Olympic team in Berlin, occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the late 1970s, Iran's theocratic rulers began killing hundreds of thousands of their own people and took American hostages that the regime held for 444 days. In 1985, Leon Klinghoffer, an American citizen in a wheelchair, was shot



and thrown into the Mediterranean from a cruise ship by Islamist terrorist hijackers merely because he was Jewish. They were acting on the orders of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat, later a Nobel Peace Prize recipient (so much for the Nobel organization's legitimacy).

The same World Trade Center in New York was attacked by Islamist terrorists in 1993. The bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the attack on the naval vessel the USS Cole, which in prior administrations would have been considered an act of war, all happened in the late 1990s.

All of this should have suggested to America's leadership that war was being waged against us. In case there was any uncertainty about the intentions of these people, Osama bin Laden clarified it by declaring war on us in the late 1990s. Instead of treating these incidents as part of a war, we treated them as discrete, individual crimes. All of these horrendous terrorist acts, and bin Laden's declaration of war, shared one objective: destruction of the infidel. They were all undertaken in the name of an extremist interpretation of Muhammad's call to jihad.

But America was in denial.

Now, once again, the terrorist attacks under the banner of jihad are increasing and diversifying. With so many such attacks and thwarted attacks over the past five or six years, we must recognize that "they"—those who want to destroy civilization—are continuing the war against us.

Yet those running our government seem to be in an even greater state of denial than the nation was in during the period before Sept. 11. Now, instead of bin Laden, Iran's supreme ayatollah has declared that he wants to destroy Israel, to continue to kill Americans and to establish an Islamic empire including Iraq, Syria and Yemen—and the terrorist groups Iran supports. At the same time, the group known as Islamic State, or ISIS, has declared a caliphate seeking the destruction of Christianity and other infidels, and now occupies key areas of Iraq and Syria.

As we reflect on the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, we must remind ourselves that all the wickedness underlying those attacks still exists and has expanded. We may very well be in

more jeopardy now than before 9/11. Attacks such as those at Fort Hood, the Boston Marathon and similar incidents in Europe and around the world reveal that many enemies, not just one, are united in purpose: the destruction of our way of life. Each of these attacks may be more limited than the coordinated terrorist assault on Sept. 11, but they are frequent and hard to anticipate, causing widespread fear, the ultimate goal of terrorism.

We must acknowledge this war being waged against us, increase the military's capacity to deal with it and, most important, train police to recognize the precursors of terrorist acts. U.S. military and intelligence capacity must not be drastically cut as proposed by this administration. It should be quantitatively increased and strategically improved.

The Obama administration appears likely to get its nuclear deal with Iran—even though it gives the ayatollahs access to hundreds of millions of dollars that will be used to sponsor terrorist acts against us and our allies, and puts the regime on the road to becoming a nuclear power. The deal makes war, either conventional or nuclear, more likely.

But there are alternatives to war. The Iranian regime to this very day maintains a two-dimensional approach to us: negotiate with us while maintaining policies on the destruction of Israel, death to Americans and supporting Islamist terrorism. The American leadership should be at least as shrewd, using a two-pronged counter approach: While attempting to reach an agreement assuring a nonnuclear Iran, we should also recognize and support the Iranian resistance movement. It is absurd that we supported regime change in Egypt, a U.S. friend, and regime change in Libya, a neutered country that had abandoned its weapons of mass destruction, and yet have done nothing to support it in Iran.

On this 14th anniversary of the worst foreign attack on U.S. soil, let us honor our fallen on Sept. 11 and in Iraq and Afghanistan by pursuing a policy reflecting America's true purpose—to offer hope for the future of mankind and, in particular, for the freedom and dignity of people who have lived under deadly intimidation for decades.

Mr. Giuliani is the former mayor of New York.



France to offer courses to prevent Islamists from radicalization

Source: http://www.laprensasa.com/309_america-in-english/3327786_france-to-offer-courses-to-prevent-islamists-from-radicalization.html

Sept 09 – **The Tribunal of Mulhouse in the Alsace region of France has decided to offer courses starting this month to prevent the radicalization of people charged with Islamic fundamentalism to stop terrorist acts**, Le Parisien paper revealed on Wednesday.

This initiative taken by the prosecution of Colmar, northeast of France, has been supported by the justice ministry, and could be extended to the whole country if it is effective.

The de-radicalization courses will not have any religious dimensions, and Muslim imams or clergymen will be not included.

The courses will last for a period ranging from two to three months according to each case.

Jean-Francois Thony, Attorney General of Colmar, said that the religious aspect is not central to the phenomenon of radicalization, especially among young people, but the "process of sectarianism" dominates in these cases.

The Attorney General pointed out that the crux of the problem is not the faith itself, but rather the lack of references, while the gap is filled with new values of radical Islam.

The **program** includes four stages starting with the diagnosis of the social, family and psychological conditions through holding individual interviews.

Then the program aims to distance people from the influence of radical groups and restore other social ties, such as family activities.

To get rid of radical discourse, there will be meetings with the victims of terrorism or people who have left extremist organizations, in addition to holding workshops to explain the methods used by extremists to convince young people, especially in social networks.

Judges may use these courses at any stages of the legal proceedings of juveniles as an educational measure.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Keep on spending public money for programs that will not work no matter what! Unless you will use future technologies of mind rebooting that we are not aware of! In the mean time, too much civilization is harmful for citizens' lives!



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Every September 11, I Remember This Surprising Story About Steve Buscemi

Source: <http://magazine.good.is/articles/steve-buscemi-september-eleventh-fdny>

Steve Buscemi, the veteran actor with the one-in-a-million face, known for his depictions of weirdos and gangsters, inspires a lot of creative description: The Guardian referred to him as a "strangely attractive shoelace" and one critic recalled Buscemi as "pale, almost pallid—as if he'd been reared in a mushroom cellar." The *Independent* once suggested an "unvarnished ordinariness" was the heart of Buscemi's appeal. He has been said to look like Don Knotts, John Waters, and Angelina Jolie.

Less frequently noted, though, than the *Boardwalk Empire* star's fascinatingly famous features are the details of his life before acting, when he worked as an FDNY firefighter in downtown Manhattan. That's right, Mr. Pink used to pull people out of burning buildings for a living.

And in September 2013, a post on the Brotherhood of Fire Facebook page informed the world that the actor regrouped with his old engine company in the days after 9/11, lending a hand when it was needed the most. Beneath a picture of Buscemi, it read:

Do you recognize this man? Do you know his name?

Lots of people know he's an actor, and that his name is Steve Buscemi.

What very few people realize is that he was once one of New York's Bravest.



In 1976 Steve Buscemi took the FDNY civil service test when he was just 18 years old. In 1980 Steve Buscemi became a New York City Firefighter. For four years, Buscemi served on one of FDNY's busiest, Engine Co. 55 in Manhattan's Little Italy. He later left the fire service to become a successful actor, writer and director.



After 9/11/2001... Brother Buscemi returned to FDNY Engine 55. On September 12, 2001 and for several days following Brother Steve worked 12-hour shifts alongside other firefighters digging and sifting through the rubble from the World Trade Center looking for survivors. Very few photographs and no interviews exist because he declined them. He wasn't there for the publicity. In 2003 he also gave a speech at a union rally supporting higher wages for firefighters and to stop fire houses from closing. He got arrested along with other firefighters. Also not very well known is that in 2012 Brother Buscemi showed up in Breezy Point, NY and quietly assisted in the clean-up efforts of the damage and mass destruction left by Super Storm Sandy. Once a brother, always a brother! Just so we're clear... this guy is a Badass!!! Tip of the helmet Brother Steve!



In a world of Kardashians and Charlie Sheens, it's always great to hear inspiring stories like this about successful people in film and television. And those of us who were in New York the morning the planes hit remember the chaos and fear; every set of capable hands was needed. But even "notable" stories like Buscemi's contribution after the attack are just the tip of the heroic iceberg, an introduction to the amazing narratives of selflessness and courage that define the experience of our active firefighters and emergency service workers. That's why in 2014 Buscemi hosted the HBO documentary *A Good Job: Stories of the FDNY*, presenting "behind-the-scenes footage and firsthand accounts" of what it's



like to work as a firefighter in New York. According to the film’s official description, it captures, “camaraderie and the bonds formed around firehouse kitchen tables, the cumulative effect of trauma, both physical and mental, and the stories—the good, the bad and the exciting.”

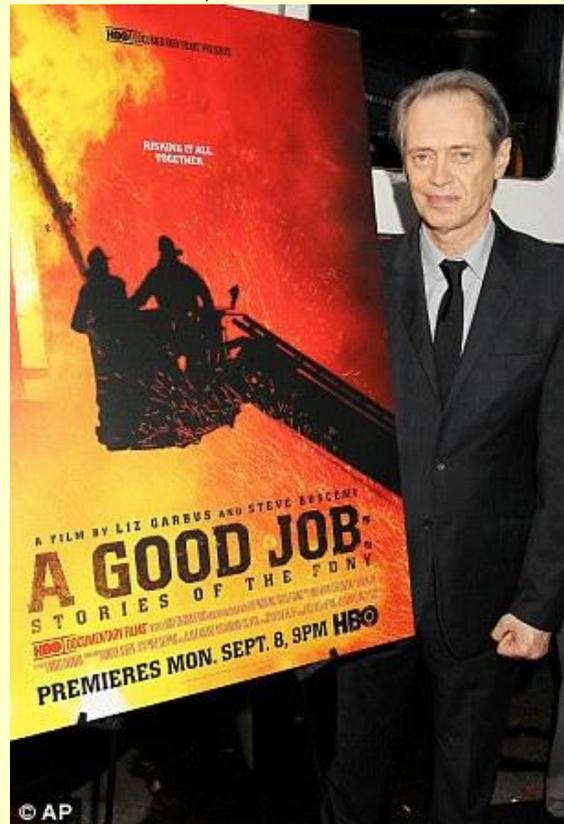
In the September 11 attacks and their aftermath, 343 firefighters from 75 firehouses gave their lives to protect and rescue others and many FDNY personnel are still suffering from illness, injury, and trauma.

“Firefighters are great at helping others,” Buscemi told *CBS News* last year. “They’re great at helping each other. But they’re not always—they don’t always know that they, themselves, are in need ... Their first reaction would be, ‘Oh, the next guy has it worse, you know?’”

Buscemi, who grew up on Long Island and now resides in Brooklyn, also serves on the Board of Advisors for Friends of Firefighters, an organization that looks out for the welfare of New York City’s firefighters and their families. Beyond fundraising and publicity, though, it seems the personal bonds and sense of responsibility he formed at the Department were strong enough that 20 years after he served he was still willing to throw himself physically into the fray.

“It was a privilege to be able to do it,” Buscemi said at the time of his efforts at ground zero. “It was great to connect with the firehouse I used to work with and with some of the guys I worked alongside. And it was enormously helpful for me because while I was working, I didn’t really think about it as much, feel it as much.”

He continued, “It wasn’t until I stopped that I really felt the full impact of what had happened. It would have been much harder for me to get through it if I hadn’t been able to do that.”



Intel analysts: U.S. assessments on ISIL were altered by Obama officials

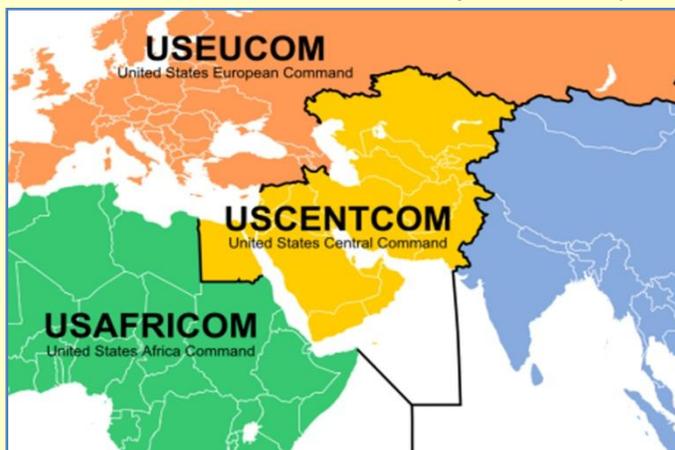
Source: <http://www.worldtribune.com/intel-analysts-u-s-assessments-on-isil-were-altered-by-obama-officials/>

Sept 10 – Senior Obama administration officials altered reports from intelligence

analysts at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to make Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and other terror groups seem weaker than the analysts believed.

According to a report by *The Daily Beast* on Sept. 9, **more than 50 analysts had supported a complaint to the Pentagon that the reports had been changed.**

FoxNews.com reported that the Defense Department’s inspector general was investigating the initial complaint, which was reportedly made by a



civilian employee of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

The assessments were prepared by the intelligence analysts for several U.S. policymakers, including President Barack Obama.

According to The Daily Beast report, several of the analysts raised concerns as early as October 2014 that their reports were being altered to suit a political narrative that ISIL was being weakened by U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria.

“The cancer was within the senior level of the intelligence command,” the report quotes one defense official as saying.

Some of the analysts also claimed that key elements of intelligence reports were removed while others said senior leaders at CENTCOM created a work environment where giving a candid opinion on the progress of the anti-ISIL campaign was discouraged, with one analyst describing the tenor as “Stalinist.”

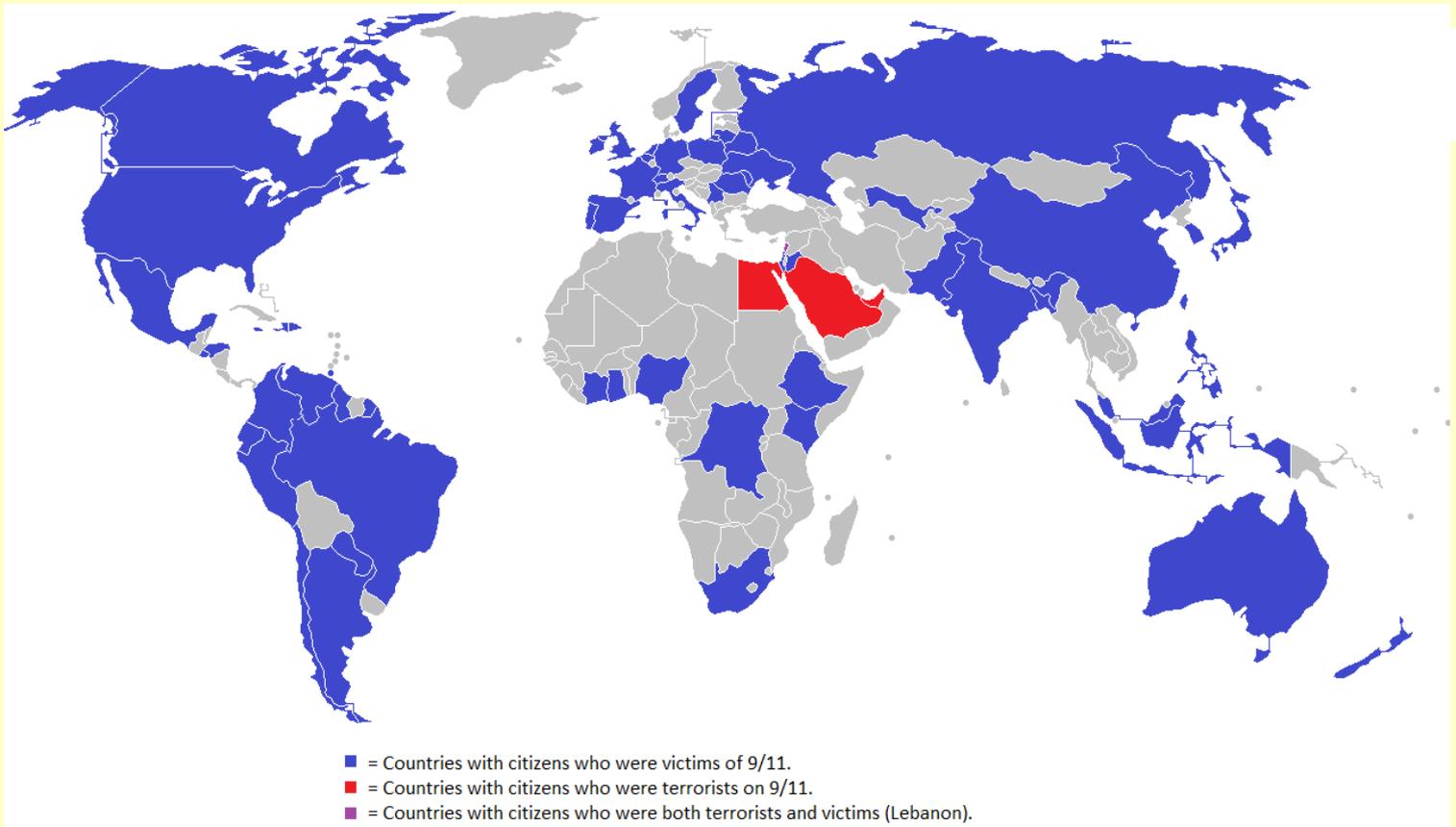
Some of those who complained were urged to retire, and did while other analysts were driven to the point of self-censoring their reports, according to The Daily Beast.

The House and Senate Intelligence Committees have been advised of the complaint.

CENTCOM spokesman Col. Patrick S. Ryder said on Sept. 9 that “while we cannot comment on ongoing investigations, we can speak to the process and about the valued contributions of the Intelligence Community (IC). However, it is ultimately up to the primary agency or organization whether or not they incorporate any recommended changes or additions. Further, the multi-source nature of our assessment process purposely guards against any single report or opinion unduly influencing leaders and decision-makers.”

Countries That Lost Citizens On 9/11

Source: <http://brilliantmaps.com/9-11-victims/>



9/11 was by far the worst terrorist attack in American history with 2,977 victims (excluding the 19 perpetrators). While the attacks were aimed at the United States, 372 foreign nationals from 61 countries were also victims.



Here's a list of casualties by country based on data from Wikipedia:

1. United States 2,605	22. Peru 5	42. Paraguay 2
2. United Kingdom 67	23. Portugal 5	43. South Africa 2
3. Dominican Republic 47	24. Argentina 4	44. Sweden 2
4. India 41	25. France 4	45. Switzerland 2
5. South Korea 28	26. Lebanon 4	46. Belarus 1
6. Canada 24	27. Romania 4	47. Belgium 1
7. Japan 24	28. Brazil 3	48. Chile 1
8. Colombia 18	29. Ethiopia 3	49. Honduras 1
9. Jamaica 16	30. Guyana 3	50. Indonesia 1
10. Philippines 16	31. Malaysia 3	51. Ivory Coast 1
11. Mexico 15	32. Bermuda 2	52. Kenya 1
12. Trinidad and Tobago 14	33. China 2	53. Lithuania 1
13. Ecuador 13	34. D.R. Congo 2	54. Moldova 1
14. Australia 11	35. El Salvador 2	55. Netherlands 1
15. Germany 11	36. FR Yugoslavia 2	56. Nigeria 1
16. Italy 10	37. Ghana 2	57. Russia 1
17. Bangladesh 6	38. Haiti 2	58. Spain 1
18. Ireland 6	39. Hong Kong 2	59. Taiwan 1
19. Pakistan 6	40. Jordan 2	60. Ukraine 1
20. Poland 6	41. New Zealand 2	61. Uzbekistan 1
21. Israel 5		62. Venezuela 1

Of the 19 terrorists, 15 came from Saudi Arabia, 2 from the UAE and one each from Egypt and Lebanon. Note none came from either Iraq or Afghanistan.

9/11 is also notable for not only being the worst terrorist incident for the US, but also for UK nationals. More British citizens lost their lives on 9/11 than any single terrorist attack during the troubles, the 2015 Tunisia attacks (30 victims), Lockerbie bombing (43 victims) or 7/7 (52 victims).

It's also likely the worst terrorist attack for nationals from many other countries on the list where terrorism is not common.

Most extensive picture yet of ISIS' mysterious and reclusive leader

Source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-isis-profile-2015-9>



The world knows little of the Islamic State terror group's brutal leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but a new article from counterterrorism expert Will McCants provides one of the most extensive accounts yet of his background.

McCants, director of the Project on US Relations with the Islamic World at the Brookings Institution, wrote an upcoming book on the Islamic State — aka ISIS, ISIL, and Daesh — and researched Baghdadi's life to explain his rise to become one of the most wanted terrorists in the world.

Since Baghdadi became the self-proclaimed "caliph" of ISIS in 2014, he has only appeared in public once, at a mosque in Mosul, Iraq. He was rumored to have died in an air strike earlier this year, but ISIS subsequently released a statement from him

along with proof that he was still alive.

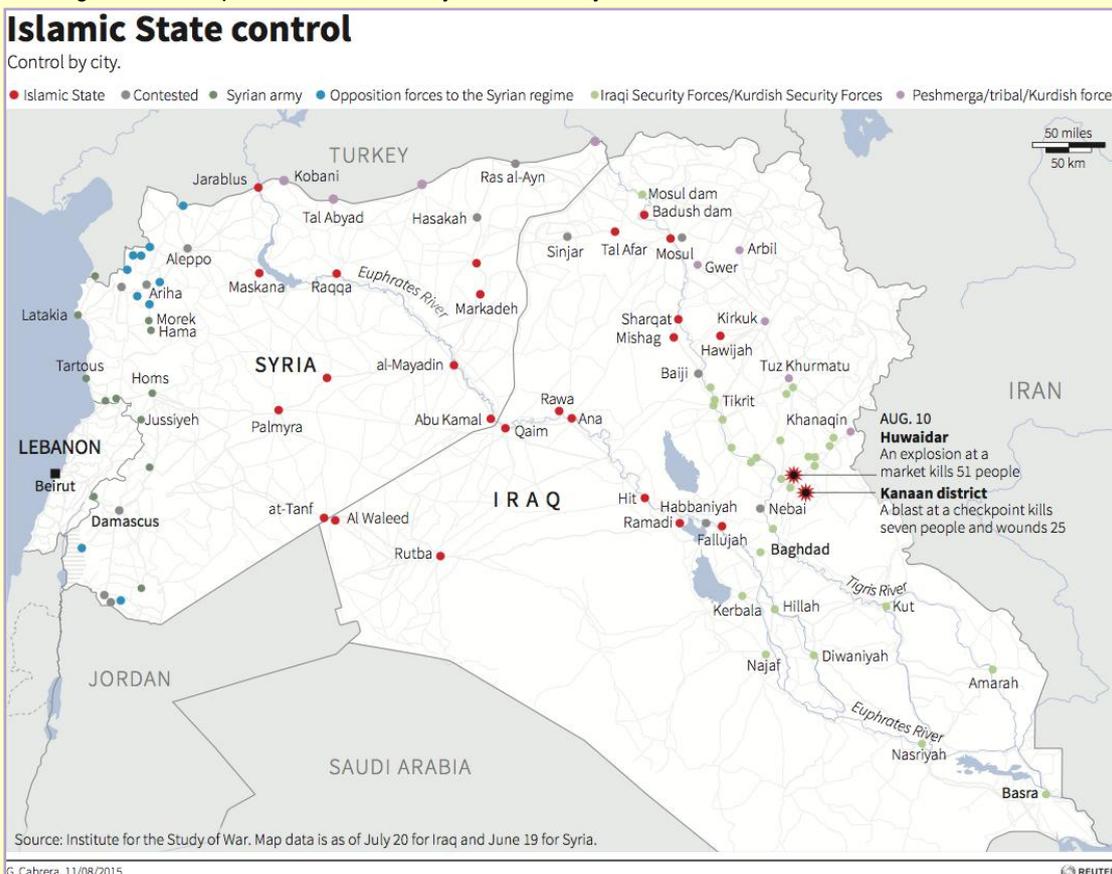
Even with new information about his life trickling out in the press, Baghdadi — aka Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Al-Badri — remains a mysterious and reclusive figure.

Here's what we know now about his background, as laid out by McCants in his Brookings essay:

- Baghdadi was raised in a lower-middle-class family in Iraq. His relatives claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.



- His father taught at a mosque. When Baghdadi was a teenager, he led neighborhood children in Quran recitations.
- Baghdadi's family had ties to late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. Two of his uncles were involved with Saddam's security services, and two of his brothers served in the military under Saddam. One died during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.
- Members of Baghdadi's family were also thought to be Salafis, who follow a strict form of Islam that has been associated with ISIS' extreme interpretation.
- Baghdadi was thought of as a quiet type, but when he read the Quran, his "quiet voice would come to life" and he would pronounce "the letters in firm, reverberating tones," according to McCants.
- He was also known for having a temper. Once, when he saw women and men dancing together at a wedding, he got upset and forced them to stop.
- Even in his youth, Baghdadi developed a reputation for being pious and following a strict interpretation of Islam. His nickname was "The Believer," and one of his brothers told McCants that Baghdadi "was quick to admonish anyone who strayed from the strictures of Islamic law."



- Baghdadi wasn't a strong student in high school, but he went on to earn a doctorate degree in Quranic studies. He reportedly wanted to study law for his undergraduate degree, but his grades weren't good enough, so he studied the Quran instead.
- He became a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, a group that seeks to establish Islamic states across the Middle East, but his views were more extreme than those of many of the others in the group. Baghdadi was reportedly drawn to the extremists, including his older brother, who wanted to overthrow un-Islamic rulers.
- Outside his religious studies, Baghdadi was fond of soccer. He was the star of a soccer club at a mosque at which he taught, and people compared him to the famous Argentinian player Lionel Messi. (This fits with an interview published earlier this year with a man who said he knew Baghdadi before he became ISIS' "caliph.")
- Baghdadi is thought to have two wives and six children. McCants reports that the caliph's first wife, Asma, was the daughter of Baghdadi's maternal uncle.



- He was initially involved with al-Qaida, which sent him to Syria after he was released from his detainment at the US-run Camp Bucca in Iraq in the early 2000s. There, he was tasked with "ensuring that AQL's online propaganda was in line with its brand of ultraconservative Islam," according to McCants. Today, ISIS is known for its online propaganda that's highly effective at recruiting young people to join the terror group.

- After ISIS broke away from al-Qaida, he was put in charge of religious affairs in some areas of Iraq. He became valuable to ISIS because the group needed religious scholars to establish legitimacy.

This telling of Baghdadi's background suggests that his radicalization began long before he was imprisoned at Camp Bucca in the early 2000s. Although he was captured as a "civilian detainee" while he was visiting a friend who was wanted by American authorities, it's clear Baghdadi had already begun forming his extremist ideology by this point.

These details water down the notion that Baghdadi was radicalized while in American detention. And Baghdadi likely knew what he was doing.

"For the ten months he remained in custody, Baghdadi hid his militancy and devoted himself to religious instruction," McCants wrote.

He was also able to meet and befriend ex-Baathists who would later join him in ISIS. The group's leadership is now thought to be made up largely of former Saddam loyalists, but that doesn't mean Baghdadi isn't devout or that he's just a religious figurehead for the organization.

McCants concluded: "The bare facts of Baghdadi's biography show an unusually capable man. ... Although the New York Times recently reported that he himself is making arrangements for a succession in the event of his demise by devolving many of his military powers to subordinates, his blend of religious scholarship and political cunning won't be easily replaced."

And so It begins...ISIS Flag Among Refugees in Germany Fighting the Police

Source: <http://www.terrorismwatch.org/2015/09/and-so-it-beginsisis-flag-among.html>



The Syrian operative claimed more than 4,000 ISIS gunmen had been smuggled into western nations – hidden amongst innocent refugees.



The ISIS smuggler, revealed the ongoing clandestine operation is a complete success. Islamic State is believed to be actively smuggling deadly gunmen across the sparsely-guarded 565-mile Turkish border and on to richer European nations, he revealed. Well, with this new Leaked picture, everything is confirmed.

Is a terrorist attack imminent in South Africa?

Source: <https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/is-a-terrorist-attack-imminent-in-south-africa>

Sept 18 - **On Tuesday 8 September, the United States (US) Diplomatic Mission to South Africa issued a rare security message entitled Terrorist Threat to US Interest in South Africa. The alert warns citizens about a potential attack on US interests and facilities, and advises US citizens in the country to be vigilant and take appropriate steps to enhance personal security.**

The alert came as a surprise to many South Africans and was met with mixed reactions. Some questioned the credibility of the information and the feasibility of a potential attack on the continent's most advanced liberal democracy, which has been relatively stable since 1994. Conspiracy theories have also emerged, describing the alert as part of a strategy to destabilise South Africa and weaken its economy by creating panic.

In Washington, State Department Spokesperson John Kirby confirmed that the warning was based on 'information indicating a potential terrorist threat'. He also praised the embassy's action, stressing that it is 'what we're supposed to do. So the system worked.'

This is the first such warning for South Africa since the travel alert that the US government issued in May 2010, which warned citizens to be aware of increased terrorism risks during the World Cup. Prior to that, the US Embassy in Pretoria and its consulates around the country had closed for a number of days in September 2009. This followed a warning in which officials claimed there was a specific terror threat against US government targets in South Africa.

None of these threats ever materialised, but their political and economic implications were felt. As a result, some South Africans have become suspicious of such warnings, which they view as a political tool.

The practice of issuing security alerts has a long history in the American government. Its systematic application, however, only began in March 2002, six months after the tragic attacks

on 11 September 2001, when then president George W Bush signed the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 3, creating the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS).

The embassy alert was issued [pursuant to a new Directive \(ICD 191\)](#). Adopted in July this year, it specifically requires the intelligence community to provide warnings regarding threats of intentional killing, serious bodily injury and kidnapping. **The alerts or warnings are colour coded to indicate the level of risk:** green for low, blue for guarded, yellow for elevated, orange for high and red for severe or imminent risk. There are also three types of security advice: travel warning (orange), travel alert (yellow, issued for short-term security threats) and security messages (no colour code).

South Africa is not the only country to have been issued a terror alert this year. Indeed, the US government has issued more than [40 travel alerts and warnings](#) in 2015, of which **at least half are in African countries.** Tanzania is the only country in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to have been subject to a travel alert. Other African countries include Tunisia, Nigeria, Algeria and Kenya. Surprisingly missing from the list are Egypt and Ethiopia. South Africa does not, in fact, appear on the US State Department's official list of HSAS. Also interesting is that the US had to raise its own security status to 'elevated,' which calls for global caution.

Terrorist attacks on US interests in South Africa are not uncommon. In the post-apartheid era, a number of incidents alleged to have been carried out by **PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs)** towards the end of the 1990s raised some red flags. These include a bomb blast at the Planet Hollywood in Cape Town; a blast at a Wynberg synagogue in 1998; a petrol bomb attack at a Kentucky Fried Chicken branch in Athlone in 1999 and a pipe bomb planted (which was defused) outside the



New York Bagels and Sitdown in Seapoint in 2000.

Other attacks were also carried out against South African targets frequented by Americans, including restaurants and nightclubs. Since the saga of the so-called 'Muizenberg cell,' and the alleged confession of Feroze Abubaker Ganchi and Zubair Ismail of alleged plots to attack sites like the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Union Buildings, Sheraton Hotel and US Embassy in Pretoria in 2004, South Africa has not faced any serious terrorist threat domestically.

This does not, however, mean that the country is immune from the threat of terrorism, and the US Embassy warning should be taken seriously. The global threat of terrorism is always high around the anniversary of the 11 September attacks, given that terrorist groups might also 'commemorate' the attacks. This happened in 2012, in Libya, where a US ambassador was killed along with three other US citizens in an attack at the embassy in Tripoli.

The threat is also heightened by the ongoing international efforts to defeat the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups that have vied to attack the US and its interests anywhere in the world. Some of these groups are believed to have used South Africa as a safe haven. Al-Shabaab has been associated with South Africa in a number of ways, including through the infamous **'White Widow'** (Samantha Lewthwaite), who reportedly resided in a Johannesburg suburb for at least two years.

Some members of these groups may also be carrying South African passports, which give them easy access to the country. A reported increase in the number of South Africans being recruited to join the Islamic State also points to the growing radicalisation of some youths. It also lends credence to intelligence reports that terrorists are trying to establish sleeper cells in South Africa and elsewhere in the region.

Whether South Africa faces an immediate terrorist threat beyond the perceived global menace is not clear, and the US security message did not provide detailed information.

Responding to the security message, the South African Minister of State Security, David

Mahlobo called for calm and cautioned people not to panic. He indicated that based on his department's assessment, 'there's no imminent threat that we can confirm that can befall anyone who is actually residing in the Republic.'

Barely a week following the alert, a commuter bus was petrol-bombed in Cape Town, killing two people and injuring 32 others. Although authorities are investigating it as a murder and attempted murder case, the incident raises more questions about South Africa's vulnerability to terrorism.

While there is no cause for overreaction, there is also no harm being especially vigilant and security conscious, as recommended in the alert. Security agencies should be extra alert and do more to protect the country – particularly vulnerable sites such as malls, restaurants and other social and public places. There is also a need for increased collaboration among the intelligence agencies of the two countries, and for an institutional mechanism to manage such alerts, which are likely to be more frequent in the future.

The South African government is capable of dealing with any potential threat of terrorism if it were to fully utilise its resources. Reports about continuing corruption and the politics surrounding the fight against terrorism could, however, hamper efforts to decisively deal with terrorism.

The government must intensify its counter-terrorism actions, which may include putting in place rapid reaction capabilities and augmenting border control and surveillance. It should also prioritise the implementation of the 2004 Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorism and Related Activities Act and other relevant legislation by investigating and prosecuting offenders.

This should include recruits travelling to join, train or provide any form of support to any terrorist group. The government may also consider strengthening regional cooperation on counter-terrorism. And finally, the SADC Special Forces for counter-terrorism should be elevated to function like the African Union's Nouakchott Process.



Are Muslims Fatalists?

By Daniel Pipes

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5478/are-muslims-fatalists>

"According to God, your age is written on your forehead."

An Arabic proverb

"Sit on a beehive and say this is fate."

Another Arabic proverb[1]



Despite repeated deadly stampedes and other disasters during the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, every year, thousands continue to make the journey. Many critics say that the Saudi government should do more to prevent such tragedies, but Saudis have often responded by referring to "God's will."

61

After a building crane fell into Mecca's Grand Mosque on Sep. 11, 2015, killing 114 and injuring 394, the mosque's Imam Abdul Rahman Al Sudais visited the injured and, as he met each one, told them, "This is God's will." [2]

Likewise, in February 2004, after a stampede killed at least 244 *hajjis* (pilgrims) in Mina, a town near Mecca, Saudi hajj minister Iyad Madani oxymoronically responded: "All precautions were taken to prevent such an incident, but this is God's will." [3]

And, when in July 1990, pilgrims fell from a bridge over the crowded al-Mu'aysim Passageway, a panic ensued, and about 1,400 *hajjis* lost their lives, King Fahd (r. 1982-2005) neither assumed responsibility for the bridge's faulty construction nor apologized to the families. Instead, he attributed the event to "God's irresistible will." [4]

Saudi and Iranian Views

These Saudi leaders responded as fatalists—meaning those who wait for change to take place "without doing anything to bring about such change" or believing that what will be must be, regardless of what a person does about it. They precisely fit the Muslim belief in *maktub* (Arabic for "It is written") and *qisma* (Arabic for "fate foreordained by God" [5] or "the portion of fate, good or bad, specifically allotted to and destined for each man"). [6]

It bears noting that fatalism is mainly used negatively, only explaining what is un-wished for. "It is written" justifies farmers failing to

prepare for drought, parents for polio, or merchants for fire. However, Saudi officials do not invoke God's will to explain, say, the abundance of inexpensive-to-extract oil reserves on their territory.

But official Saudi fatalism does not end the story. Iran's no less pious leaders dismissed this fatalism with bitter scorn. "This is not the will of God," President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani responded to Fahd; yes, an earthquake fits the description of "God's irresistible will" but not the collapse of a man-made bridge. [7] The head of



Iran's judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammed Yazdi, mocked Fahd's statement while Iranian media competed in scoffing at the Saudi authorities. Kayhan International pointed to criminal intent behind the event, calling it "not an accident but a pogrom,"[8] and asked whether the tragedy was the will of God or that of the Great Satan (i.e., the U.S. government).[9] An editorial in the newspaper Resalat, echoing traditional Shiite resentment of Sunnis, ridiculed the whole notion of fatalism:

Fahd has attributed an incident stemming from his impiety, incapacity, and inefficiency to "divine will," saying that "they were very fortunate to have died in this holy place, for their hour had come and they could have died in an unholy place (?!)." This reminds one of the "fatalism" in the philosophy concocted by the clergymen of the royal courts to justify the crimes perpetrated by corrupt Muslim leaders throughout 1,400 years [of Muslim history].[10] In the Iranian leadership's reading, then, fatalism is a tool concocted by self-interested Muslim despots, not something inherent to the religion.

Responding to these attacks, a Saudi government spokesman feebly retorted: "Has any human being since the creation been able to prevent a time of death willed by God and engraved on the eternal tablet? It was God's will. His judgment and decision cannot be warded off." [11] The Saudis even asserted that those seeking a human explanation for the bridge disaster "do not believe in God's will." [12]

This antagonism among two Muslim-majority countries with Islamist rulers raises a broader question: Are Muslims recognizably more fatalistic than non-Muslim? Or is fatalism just a convenient excuse, as Tehran claims, "to justify crimes"? Or perhaps, it is an Orientalist stereotype?

Philosophical and Theological Debate

The question of man's control over his destiny has been a topic of philosophical debate since ancient Greece. The dilemma goes like this: If humans have the ability to make decisions, this diminishes God's universal powers. But if God makes all decisions, humans have no responsibility for their own deeds, negating such concepts as justice and punishment.

This controversy flourished in the classical Islamic period when leading philosophical and theological minds took it up.[13] Two main

Islamic schools of thought emerged: the Qadariya arguing for free will and the Jabriya holding that God acts through man, and the individual has no say.[14] In its most radical form (forwarded by an early sect named the Jahmiya), the latter approach holds that humans act "only metaphorically, as the sun 'acts' in setting." [15] The historian Bernard Lewis reprises this argument with an analogy: In the great debate among medieval Muslim theologians on the question of predestination or free will, [chess and back-gammon] sometimes served as symbols and prototypes. Is life a game of chess, where the player has a choice at every move, where skill and foresight can bring him success? Or is it rather backgammon, where a modicum of skill may speed or delay the result, but where the final outcome is determined by the repeated throw of the dice?[16]

Researcher As'ad Abu Khalil notes that "there never was a monolithic view of predestination and free will in Islam. In fact, this very question regarding the responsibility of God and of people for actions lies at the heart of many schisms in Islamic thought." [17]

This debate continues today,[18] spawning a substantial secondary literature. For example, one book analyzes the narrow topic of "the concept of fate in the Arab world as reflected in modern Arabic literature." [19] But this dispute is not the topic here. Rather, the question is: Are Muslims more fatalistic than non-Muslims?

Finding Fatalism

Many modern non-Muslims observed that Muslims believe in an unchangeable destiny mapped out in advance. Some distinguished examples:

In 1810, Louis de Corancez, a French traveler to Arabia, wrote that Orientals "are always content with their present state" due to their quality of "absolute resignation," which he found to be the "distinctive quality" of their character.[20] Writing in 1836, the great English ethnographer of Egypt, Edward Lane, found something similar:

Influenced by their belief in predestination, the men display, in times of distressing uncertainty, an exemplary patience, and, after any afflicting event, a remarkable degree of resignation and fortitude, approaching nearly to apathy. ... While the Christian justly blames himself for every untoward event,



which he thinks he has brought upon himself, or might have avoided, the Muslim enjoys a remarkable serenity of mind in all the vicissitudes of life. ... The same belief in predestination renders the Muslim utterly devoid of presumption with regard to his future actions, or to any future events.[21]



The British found belief in predestination so distinctively Muslim that a word of Arabic-Persian-Turkish origins, *kismet*, was first adopted in English in 1849 to mean "fate, fortune." The 1953 Broadway musical *Kismet*, set in a fictional Baghdad, tells of poets and caliphs. The lyrics of one song lament: "Fate! Fate can be a trap in our path/ The bitter cup of your tears/Your wine of wrath."

So distinctively Muslim did the British find belief in predestination that a word of Arabic-Persian-Turkish origins, *kismet*, was first adopted in English in 1849 to mean "fate, fortune." [22]

The magisterial *Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1907-12 explained that the Muslim concept of God, plus the "Oriental tendency to belittle the individuality of man," led to an Islamic "theory of predestination approximating towards fatalism." It asserted that orthodox Islam holds that "all good and evil actions and events take place by the eternal decrees of God." [23]

Later British soldiers and administrators dealing with Muslims perceived fatalism as a fact of life and factored this into their actions.

- Winston Churchill, reflecting his experience in Sudan, wrote in 1899 that Islam involves a "fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live." [24]

- T.E. Lawrence, the British hero of World War I and author of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, found that Arabs "had accepted the gift of life unquestioningly, as axiomatic. To them it was a thing inevitable, entailed on man, a usufruct, beyond control." [25]

- The British Foreign Office drew up a memorandum in 1951 to explain why Iranians insisted, against all reason, that their oil industry should fall under Iranian control. The memo explained: "Often, after finding the world does not answer their dreams, they relapse into indolence and do not persevere in any attempt to bring their ideas into focus with reality. This tendency is exaggerated by the fatalism of their religion." [26]

Americans who ran the Saudi oil concession, a near-colonial setup in its mid-twentieth-century heyday, also discerned fatalism, as echoed by the historian Anthony Cave Brown: "These Arabs were lured to work for Aramco not through any desire to improve their destinies. They believed their lot in life was already determined by Allah." [27]

Specialists before 1980 or so concurred. Hilma Granqvist, a Finnish anthropologist, wrote in 1947 that Muslims believe that in "small things as in great, man is absolutely subject to Fate." [28] G.E. von Grunebaum, the great orientalist, put the same idea in his orotund Germanic style:

the Muslim deeply feels man's insignificance, the uncertainty of his fate, and the omnipotence of the uncontrollable power above him. Therefore, perhaps, he is more readily prepared than the Westerner to accept the accomplished fact. [29]

Morroe Berger, an American social scientist, generalized that Arabs acquiesce "in what has been ordained by God and cemented by tradition." [30] Raphael Patai, an Israeli anthropologist, explained: "Whatever man is or does and whatever happens to him is directly willed by Allah"; as a result, "Muslim fatalism ... makes people averse to any effort directed toward seeking betterment." [31]

Self-identified Christians continue to espouse this view. Pat Robertson, the media mogul and one-time candidate for U.S.



president, finds "tremendous fatalism in Islam, that in a sense Allah set things up and let them go. And the whole concept of Kismet or fate or it's the will of Allah ... You've got flies in your face; it's the will of Allah. A child is hungry; it's the will of Allah." [32] David B. Burrell, a Christian theologian, is impressed by Muslims' palpable sense of the presence of God:

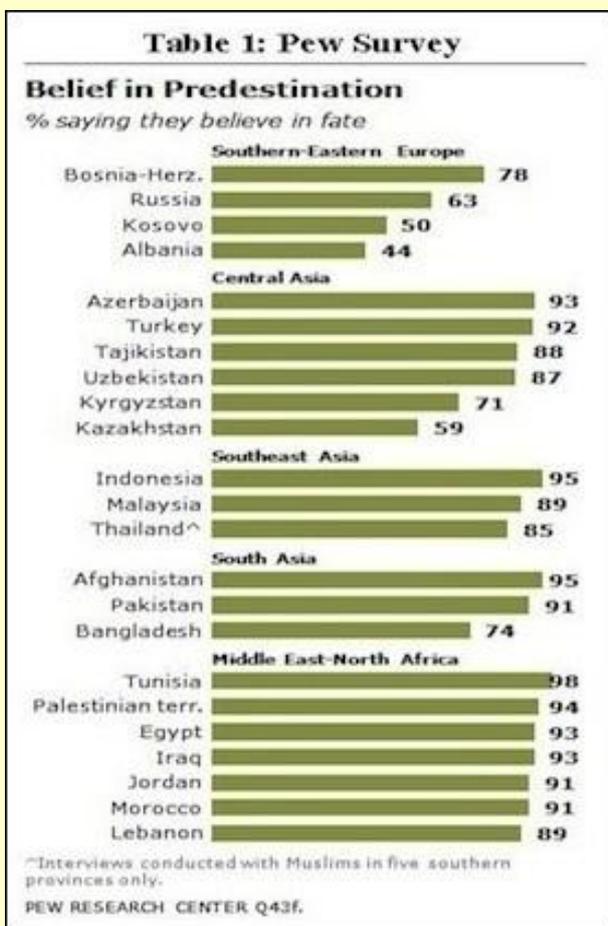
God the Provider, to whom we are enjoined to give thanks by our actions on behalf of others. We are never to forget that our life comes forth each moment from the hand of God, and our destiny as well. This latter can easily spawn a form of 'fatalism,' where the ubiquitous phrase 'in sh'Allah' ('God willing') be-comes an excuse for taking no initiative whatsoever. [33]

Western popular culture occasionally references Muslim fatalism. Famed mystery writer Agatha Christie lived for years in Iraq with her archeologist husband and, in a 1951 novel, described the Iraqi disposition: "Not to worry over the chances of success or failure ... throw responsibility on the All Merciful, the All Wise." She also noted "the calmness and the fatalism" that results. [34] The 1953 Broadway musical *Kismet* tells of poets and caliphs. A

Seattle-based music group calls itself *Maktub*. [35]

Middle Eastern Christians discern fatalism among their Muslim neighbors. Henry Habib-Ayrou, a Jesuit and anthropologist, observed in 1952 that Egypt's peasant mentality "is of a fatalistic and static order" and permits the peasant not to be active. [36] The sociologist Sania Hamady observes that "the Arab manifests a dominating belief in the influence of predestination and fatalism." She draws direct implications from this for daily life since "human responsibility for failure and success is relegated mainly to God, the individual does not feel impelled to work in order to obtain his worldly aims." As a result, she concludes that "the average Arab has an outlook on life that is utterly improvident." [37]

Some Muslim scholars also perceive fatalism. Iranian economist Jahangir Amuzegar discerns a "fatalistic streak in the Persian psyche" and historian Homa Katouzian writes of Iran's "unimaginable fatalism." [38] Kanan Makiya, an Iraqi social scientist, finds that an "extreme fatalism ... may be a characteristic of Islamic culture generally." [39]



Survey Research Finds Fatalism

Survey research confirms these views. In a poll of 347 American Muslims, 33 percent agreed with the statement, "Everything in life is determined by God"; 38 percent with "God allows man to have some free choice in life"; and only 29 percent with "God gives man total free choice." [40] The Pew Foundation in 2012 asked Muslims in twenty-three countries ranging from Bosnia to Indonesia, "Do you believe: in predestination or fate (Kismet/Qadar)?" and found widespread fatalism:

Predestination, or fate, is ... widely embraced by Muslims around the globe. In 19 of the 23 countries where the question was asked, at least seven-in-ten Muslims say they believe in fate. [41]

In four of the five regions where the question was asked, a median of about 90 percent believe in fate. (See Table 1.)

In another study, a 2004 World Values Survey questionnaire shows Muslims to be more fatalistic than Christians though only marginally more so than the Greek Christian



Orthodox but much more so than Protestants. (See Table 2 below).

Muslims Express Fatalism

Plenty of Muslims express fatalistic views. A few documented instances:

When an unkempt Saddam Hussein was captured by U.S. troops in December 2003 in an underground hole, a local supporter, Dhaif Rayhan Mahmoud, commented bitterly: "We Muslims only believe in fate. It was God's will." [42] At the end of 2004, asked about the persistent, random violence wracking his city, a Baghdadi money changer also offered a fatalistic approach: "We must continue to live normally because our destiny is in God's hands. God alone will decide." [43]

Table 2: 2004 World Values Survey*

National Religion	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	N
Muslim	4.02	4	2.807	19,726
Muslim (E. Europe)	3.90	4	2.771	3,912
Greek Orthodox	3.84	4	2.547	8,857
Catholic	2.86	3	2.288	32,640
Protestant	2.53	2	1.845	7,303

* Survey's results summarized by sociologist Gabriel A. Acevedo

Decades of water mismanagement left the Shatt al-Arab, the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, an ecological disaster; among other problems, salt water from the Persian Gulf reaches further up the river than ever before. As the *New York Times* explains, this "has ravaged fresh-water fisheries, livestock, crops and groves of date palms that once made the area famous, forcing the migration of tens of thousands of farmers." And how did the Iraqi government respond to this man-made catastrophe? "We can't control what God does," said the deputy director of water resources in Basra, sounding rather like an insurance appraiser. [44]

Fatalism, not surprisingly, is widespread in war conditions. An American Muslim about to join the mujahideen in Bosnia announced: "All our destinies are already written. Our time of death is already written as well." [45] The conductor on an Algerian train often attacked by Islamist rebels when asked if he feared for his life replied: "We Muslims believe in destiny. So whether we die in our beds or on this train, it's all the same in the end." [46] Fatih Çoban, 33, a private security guard, was riding a subway in Istanbul when a metal rod, probably from a construction site, seriously injured him, piercing

his body and spearing his hips. The family will not seek a legal remedy against the subway authorities because, his father explained, "This is God's will. Whatever is written in your fate will happen to you." [47]

Fatalism has obvious allure for those engaged in shameful or embarrassing activities. A Muslim salesman for a beer factory in Egypt is asked how he reconciles his work with his religion: "What can I do? Everything is written in advance, and God assigned me to work here." [48] Few Muslim homosexuals take seriously the threat of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, one learns; their usual thinking is, "We don't care. Life and death are in the hands of God." [49] "Heroin is written in my fate," said a Pakistan addict, a needle in his arm and a prayer cap on his head. "No one can change the decree of fate." [50]

Muslims living in the West also express these sentiments. A Turkish student in Paris casually refers to herself as a "fatalist." [51] In the aftermath of an EgyptAir crash off New York, Imam Ghazi Khankan of the Islamic Center of Westbury, N.Y., said that as Muslims, "We are ordered to be patient as much as possible from the moment we are born. God knows when we are going to die. It is not a punishment, it is fate." [52] Whereas Christian prisoners in Switzerland, reports Fr. Alain René Arbez, try to understand what landed them in jail, Muslims "usually respond in a fatalist way because everything that happens is wished for by God." [53]

Scholars Do Not Find Fatalism

Despite this bulk of evidence, contemporary scholars of the Middle East overwhelmingly disagree with the notion of Muslims being disproportionately fatalistic. The historian R. Stephen Humphreys disparages those "European commentators in the early twentieth century" who dwelled on the resignation and passivity of Muslim societies, the dispirited effort simply to maintain the institutions and values essential to an Islamic way of life, which they perceived among Muslim peoples. Absurd as it now seems, for many decades the most influential foreign "experts" asserted that Islam was inherently a religion of



fatalism and lethargy, though of course it might be punctuated with unpredictable, brief, and irrational outbursts of violence.[54]

A survey conducted by Hani Fakhouri in Egypt in the mid-1960s may have been the first blow: He found 90 percent of peasants believed a person's social position "is dependent on his own efforts" and only 10 percent thought it "the result of God's will." [55] Marcia C. Inhorn, an anthropologist who studied Egypt's urbanites, finds that

just because life is "written," human beings are not passive creatures, devoid of volition and will. God expects human beings to exercise their minds and to make choices, including decisions about how to lead their lives.[56]

Olivier Roy writes about the ordinary Afghan:

Far from being imprisoned within the narrow confines of a religion shot through with a sense of fatalism, the peasant finds in this same religion [Islam] a useful tool of analysis, a means of comparing one thing with another and of making sense of his own personal universe.[57]

Islam: Gary S. Gregg, a professor of psychology, shreds the very notion of Islamic fatalism and its effect of breeding inaction and stalling development. He attributes this notion to Western diplomats and administrators in Muslim-majority countries who vent their frustrations with the pace of progress at religious "fatalism," which they view as a deep-seated cultural or psychological trait. At almost any capital city cocktail party or Peace Corps beer bash, a voice or two will rise above the murmur of chat and pronounce: "These people are so used to sitting around waiting for God to do things that they won't get up and help themselves."

In other words, Gregg contends, Westerners wrongly interpret the "saturation of daily life with God's power," something unfamiliar to most of them, as fatalism. He finds this alleged characteristic irrelevant to underdevelopment:

As most scholars recognize, Islam is remarkably flexible, and, like "honor," it takes diverse forms within a region, a village, or even a single family. Like other religions, Islam can be invoked to advocate or oppose modernization, to justify or condemn violence, to indict an oppressive government or cloak it in legitimacy. Whether it mobilizes initiative or counsels resignation appears to depend mainly on the presence or absence of real opportunity. Gregg concludes that fatalism

plays no larger role in Islam than it does in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, or Christianity; nor is it any more a trait of Arabs than of any other peoples. And it no more retards development in the MENA [Middle East and North Africa] than it has in Asia.[58]

History: Gabriel A. Acevedo, a sociologist, complains that "Islam has long been associated with a specific brand of extreme fatalism that is too often depicted as irrational and fanatical" and seeks to disprove this connection. He approaches the topic indirectly, asking if it is "possible to predict that the amount of Western influence on a country would affect levels of fatalism in that nation"; in other words, does fatalism go down under increased Western influence? He looks for answers in a couple of major polls; in his reading, they show an absence of correlation between modernity and fatalism. For example, Indonesian Christians show more fatalism in daily life than do Indonesian Muslims; the more Western-influenced population of Turkey is as fatalistic as the less Westernized population of Saudi Arabia. More broadly, he finds that, other than India, all countries "show no statistically significant effects of being Muslim when compared to other religious groups in that particular country."

From this, Acevedo concludes that no connection exists between fatalism and Islam. He offers two different (and conflicting) explanations: "What is mistaken for 'Islamic fatalism' may be best interpreted as a greater acceptance of central authority and a relinquishment of life's outcomes to an omnipotent deity." He concludes with a jargon-laden observation:

there is a need to re-conceptualize fatalism as a multidimensional cognitive orientation that includes both feelings of perceived personal control as well as culturally influenced orientations that look to cosmological forces as sources of mastery over life's outcomes.[59]

In other words, what gets labeled "fatalism" results not from faith but from political circumstances and a deep religious sensibility. Each is connected to overwhelming power: that of God over man or that of despots over subjects.

Islamic Religiosity as Cause

Poetry of the time indicates that the environment in which Islam developed contained strong



elements of fatalistic thinking.[60] The concept of things being "written" existed before Muhammad's time,[61] and poetry contained allusions to the allotment that God makes to each human.[62]

The Qur'an contains many fatalistic passages[63] as do many more *hadith* (statements and actions attributed to Muhammad).[64] A Qur'anic sampling:

Nor can a soul die except by God's leave, the term being fixed as by writing. (3:145). All people have a set term, and when the end of that term approaches, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor can they speed it up. (7:34)

Nothing will happen to us except what God has decreed for us. (9:51)

Those who believe, God will strengthen with a firm word, in this world and the hereafter; but the unjust he leads astray [in this world and the hereafter]. God does what he will. (14:27)

God guides those He pleases to guide. (28:56)

If We had willed it, We could have brought every soul its guidance. (32:13)

God allows to stray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. (35:8)

No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a book before We bring it into existence. (57:22)

But you do not will, except as God wills; for God is full of knowledge and wisdom. (76:30)

The German sociologist Max Weber perceived a direct connection between the Islamic emphasis on God's omnipotence and His direct control over humans: "The Islamic belief in predestination easily assumed fatalistic characteristics in the beliefs of the masses." [65] The Pew survey finds a correlation between Muslim piety and fatalism: Belief in fate varies by level of religious commitment. In seven of the 23 countries where the question was asked, those who are more religiously committed are more likely to believe in fate. The prime example is Kosovo, where 59% of those who pray several times a day believe in predestination, compared with 36% of those who pray less often. [66]

Other Qur'anic verses, however, contradict a fatalistic outlook by calling for personal responsibility:

God does not wrong people at all, but it is the people themselves who do wrong. (10:44)

God does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is in their souls. (13:11)

Do not the believers know, that if God pleased, He would guide all men? (13:31)

Similarly, Arabic proverbs often suggest a spirit that is anything but passive:

"Whoever toils will achieve."

"He who does not sow does not harvest."

"First think things out, then rely on God."

Islamists represent a supremely activist type of Islam. Of course, they vociferously oppose any connection between Islam and fatalism that might impede the actions of revolutionaries, jihadis, martyrs, and suicide terrorists. Muzammil Siddiqi, a Los Angeles-based imam, explains:

We do not use the word "fate" in Islam. The word "fate" means "the power that determines the outcome of events before they occur." Some people believe in fate as an independent and invisible power that controls their destinies. Such people are called "fatalists." A Muslim is not a fatalist person. Muslims believe in Allah and only Allah has the power to predetermine anything. [67]

In all, the Qur'an, other Islamic writings, and folk wisdom tilt toward fatalism but offer an inconsistent message.

Despotism as Cause

The Iranian statement about fatalism being a "philosophy concocted by the clergymen of the royal courts to justify the crimes perpetrated by corrupt Muslim leaders" has some truth, for rulers have exploited the fatalistic theme for their own ends: By discouraging initiative, fatalism makes their rule easier to maintain. Along these lines, the *American Colliers Encyclopedia* explains that fatalism results from "the theological emptiness that overtook Muslims in the wake of social and political decadence." [68]

Fatalism was espoused by the first Muslim dynasty, the Umayyads, for whom it had the handy implication of discouraging rebellions against their authority. And so it stayed through the ages as rulers hoped that fatalistic notions would engender political passivity with regards to the challenges of life and the decisions by rulers. Abu Khalil



observes how "attempts by Muslim/Arab leaders in the past and in contemporary Arab history to rationalize defeats and failures through resorts to pure *Jabriyah* has become typical to the point of predictability." [69]

Their support gave this interpretation of the Qur'an enough momentum to prevail. Reviewing the history of fatalism, Abu Khalil notes, "While the history of Islamic thought witnessed a struggle between those who believed in free will and those who believed in the inescapability of fate ... the latter school become dominant by virtue of the political support it received from the various Islamic governments." [70]

Kismet came to denote in the Ottoman Empire, reports C.E. Bosworth in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*,

a general attitude of fatalism, the resigned acceptance of the blows and buffetings of destiny. ...The climate of popular belief in fate and chance is well seen in many stories of the *Thousand and One Nights* and in much of the Perso-Turkish moralistic literature. [71]

Modern rulers have found the language of fatalism no less useful, and they frequently invoke it. Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt regularly dismissed unpleasant developments as inescapable destiny even as he associated his own decisions with inescapable fate, so as to encourage acceptance to the one and discourage resistance to the other. In the aftermath of Israel's routing of the Egyptian armed forces in June 1967, he resorted to an Arabic proverb ("Precaution does not change the course of fate") and homely analogies ("Like a man who was hit in the street by a car"). [72] With this, Nasser sought to absolve his government of blame and signal that it could have done none other than what it did. Likewise, after his defeat in 1967, King Hussein of Jordan remarked to his subjects,

If you were not rewarded with glory, it was not because you lacked courage, but because it is Allah's will. [73]

When Saddam Hussein's conquest of Kuwait in 1990-91 ended in similar ignominy, he also reverted to such language, dramatically reversing decades of boisterous, secular assertions of control over one's destiny. [74] He apologetically explained why his diplomacy failed so badly and Iraqi forces faced so wide a coalition: "We may seem fatalistic in our view of many leaders in the world because we do not expect anything good from them in terms of

humanitarian standards." [75] His spokesman Tariq Aziz described the outlook of Iraq's leadership (read: Saddam Hussein) as "fatalistic," suggesting even that this attitude might have been sincere. [76]

Husni Mubarak responded in 2006 to the sinking of an Egyptian ferry boat, *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* and the drownings of more than a thousand of its approximately 1,400 passengers and crew by reminding Egyptians that they accept the hand of God. He also asked the Almighty to accept the drowned as martyrs. [77] The military ruler of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, exhibited "an Islamic fatalism," and he routinely replied to questions about his intention to stand for election with the statement, "It is in God's hands." [78]

If these examples point to an instrumental use of fatalist rhetoric by leaders, other signs suggest they are sincere. This is highlighted especially in discussions of their own deaths: Saudi King Faisal believed, according to David Holden and Richard Johns, that "his death was preordained to the exact second the day appointed by Allah. That partly explained his contempt for security arrangements in general. He was irritated by guards whom he looked upon as an unnecessary encumbrance." [79] This lack of protection enabled his assassination by a relative in 1975.

Interestingly, this attitude can also extend to a Middle East Christian such as Boutros Boutros-Ghali, then Egypt's minister of state for foreign affairs. Warned in August 1979 that Palestinians would try to kill him, he replied by asserting his belief that "the date of a man's death is written," and he could do nothing about it. [80] Yasser Arafat used similar language when speaking about his death: "When my turn will arrive, no one can stop it. This is part of my religion." [81]

If rulers sometimes use fatalism as a tool, at other times they seem to believe in it.

Muslim Activism

The historical record shows that rulers who expect Muslim political passivity are often in for a rude surprise: Muslim masses have often acted very actively.

After World War I, Western administrators assumed that Turks would submit to Allied domination with what one British Foreign Ministry official termed "sulky fatalism." But they assumed wrong: "The war was



not over as far as the leaders of the CUP [i.e., the Young Turks] were concerned," and they fought hard (and successfully) to keep the Europeans out.[82]

The last shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, believed in the fatalism of his subjects. According to John Stempel, a U.S. diplomat stationed in Iran, "The tendency of most Moslems to take a fatalistic view of life ... was neatly woven into the Shah's philosophy of government, which regarded the leader as active ... and the people as passive." [83] He learned his mistake the hard way in 1978-79, when he lost his throne to country-wide revolution. Surprisingly, Amuzegar made his observation about a "fatalistic streak" in a book about that same revolution.

The Arab-Israeli conflict also rebuts clichés about fatalism. Israel's forces defeated their Arab foes on the field of battle in 1948-49, in 1956, in 1967, in 1970, and in 1982, then again in 2006, 2008-09, 2012, and 2014. Yet the Arabs, impervious to the apparent message of these defeats, have continued their struggle against the Jewish state. This record over three generations hardly suggests a people who accept whatever fate metes them out.

In Egypt, an increase in the price of bread in 1977 led to food riots. In Iraq, as soon as the brutal rule of the Saddam Hussein regime was momentarily lifted in 1991, rebellions erupted throughout the country. The Arab upheavals that began in late 2010 rapidly overthrew rulers in four countries—Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen—and led to a civil war in Syria.

Saudi authorities may have blamed hajj calamities on fate, but at other times, they solved problems in a no-nonsense way. They did not respond to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait by mumbling about "God's will" but invited half a million foreign troops to defeat the Iraqi tyrant. The nephew who assassinated King Faisal of Saudi Arabia claimed to carry out God's will, but the judges had him beheaded for "willful and premeditated murder." [84] A steep drop in the price of oil in late 2008 found the Saudis energetically organizing fellow exporters to cut back on production. The double threat of the Iranian nuclear buildup and American fracking in 2014 found the Saudi leadership keeping production high to reduce energy prices. In 2015, the new Saudi king went to war in Yemen. Such examples can be multiplied a hundred-fold, and

each of them refutes the notion of passivity and acceptance of one's lot.

Finally, two outstanding examples: A far larger percentage of the population participated in the Iranian revolution than in the French, Russian, or Chinese revolutions. The demonstration across Egypt against Mohamed Morsi in June 2013 was the largest single political event in human history, involving millions of protestors.[85]

Accounting for Activism

If this record of activism refutes a reputation for fatalism, adherents of this explanation can cleverly account for hyperactivism; they do so by seeing it as a safety valve. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* explains that a "lethargic and indolent [tendency] in respect to the ordinary industries of life" contrasts with a "recklessness in danger which has proved a valuable element in the military character of the people." Iraqi analyst Kanan Makiya finds, "The idea of submission to the will of God is the passive counterpart of the quest for martyrdom in His cause." [86] Abdel-Halim Qandil, an Egyptian columnist, says of his fellow citizens:

There is a deeply rooted conviction among Egyptians that politics is outside their range of interests. True, Egyptians silently endure oppression for long spells of time. But when they have had enough, they erupt like a cyclone.[87]

Conversely, Gary Gregg tells about "one of the more progressive men" in a Moroccan town who built up a café for tourists, only to have it appropriated by a government official. After venting his fury but realizing he could not win, the would-be café owner gradually resigned himself, bitterly muttering, "Maktub, maktub." Gregg concludes from this that "the opening of opportunity breeds a kind of achievement-oriented, 'Muslim ethicist' religiosity; the closing of opportunity breeds resignation in the solace of religious fatalism." In other words, resignation crept in when opportunity closed.

This definition of fatalism, however, allows one to have it both ways: Muslims are fatalistic whether quiescent or not, whether passive or active. This renders the thesis of Islamic fatalism adaptable to all eventualities and means it cannot be disproven.

This is not scholarship nor social science. Rather, it is a semantic trick. If fatalism can mean itself and its opposite, its utility as an



analytical tool disappears. A fatalistic people passively accepts its lot and suffers whatever tyranny or brutality is its fate. By definition, a people that rises up is not fatalistic.

Conclusion: Fatalism and Its Opposite

Fatalism coexists with powerful currents of Muslim activism, energy, and enterprise. Von Grunebaum noted this dual heritage:

the Muslim usually acquiesces in impositions backed by superior force. He is aware of the transient character of human power and is apt to minimize its ultimate influence. On the other hand, one glance at the countless rebellions in Muslim lands will show that the believer's acquiescence had very definite and rather narrow limits. However often disappointed in its expectations, the populace was ever ready to fight for a cause instead of patiently waiting for the pre-ordained outcome. So it seems highly doubtful whether "fatalism" can be actually described as a retarding power in politics.[88] Or, as this author wrote in 1983 about pre-modern life:

Although Muslim subjects were often referred to by the Arabic term *ra'iya* (tended flock), indicating their passivity, it would be more apt to see them as cattle which, normally placid and complacent, sometimes turned against authorities and stampeded them. Rejection of the [traditional order] happened rarely, usually at moments of extreme crisis, but often enough to keep Muslim rulers apprehensive.[89]

"Fatalism," in short, is a simplistic reduction of a complex Muslim reality. Yes, there is a disproportionately fatalistic inclination (the Pew polls establish that); social science skepticism notwithstanding, fatalism does appear to be more prevalent among Muslims than among other peoples. But so too is there a contradictory record of hyperactivism (as symbolized by the Iranian and Egyptian cases). Their mix is unpredictable. Seeing only half the picture distorts the whole. Fatalism does not help explain Muslim life. The term should be retired from analysis.

► References are available at source's URL.

Daniel Pipes is president of the Middle East Forum. The author thanks Lenn E. Goodman for his comments on this article.

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Selected Articles: State-Sponsored Terrorism, American Imperialism, Refugee Crisis

[Refugees as Weapon – and Germany shifting Alliances?](#)

By Peter Koenig, September 17, 2015

Turkey has eagerly opened her gates to two million refugees to house them in refugee camps which were funded with up to 6 billion US dollars – not for reasons of altruism, but to use them jointly with the US, NATO and the EU as a geopolitical weapon.

[‘US Seek to Control the EU Elites via Refugee Crisis’](#)

By Andrew Korybko, September 17, 2015

Interview given by Andrew Korybko to the Iranian FARS News agency on the origins of the Syrian war, refugee crisis in the EU and the US interest in making radicals infiltrate Europe.

[The Unspoken Truth: Obama’s “Responsibility to Protect” the Islamic State \(ISIS\). The Objective is to “Degrade and Destroy” Iraq and Syria](#)

By Stephen Lendman, September 16, 2015

Obama’s so-called war to degrade and destroy [the Islamic State] is a complete fabrication. Defeating it is simple. Stop recruiting, arming, funding, training and directing its elements. Stop using terrorists as US proxy foot soldiers. Wage peace, not war.

[The Western Coalition and ISIS: Benign State Violence vs. Barbaric Terrorism](#)

By Matt Peppe, September 17, 2015

Seven months ago, UK Prime Minister David Cameron lamented the “sickening murder” of Jordanian pilot Moaz al-Kaseasbeh by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)...The



killing was seen by the Western coalition and allied Arab monarchies fighting ISIS as a symbol of the evilness of their enemies, which necessitated their own righteous military intervention.

Fortress Europe: Tear Gas on the Hungarian Border

By Binoy Kampmark, September 17, 2015

Like water, the refugee flow is finding a way to detect any imaginable breach across the borders of Europe. One is Romania, though it is plagued by poor road connections and a Hungarian promise to reinforce its part of the border with razor wire.

US Pastor Talks Down Islamist Gunman While Saving Flock

Source: <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/us-pastor-talks-down-islamist-gunmen-while-saving-parishers>



Rasheed Abdul Aziz. Insets show the gear he wore and the weapon he carried. (Photos: Smith County Sheriff's Office)

Sept 17 – **A potential tragedy was prevented in Texas this week when a man carrying a gun was talked down from an attack on a church congregation by the pastor. Rev. John D. Johnson III is a former parole officer trained in verbal de-escalation, crisis prevention and dealing with mentally ill criminals.**

Rasheed Abdul Aziz, 40, entered the Corinth Missionary Baptist Church in Bullard Texas hours after the regular Sunday morning service and asked to see the pastor. Church members had stayed behind to plan an upcoming festival. The pastor's 17 year-old son was in the conference room with him.

As Aziz was shown into the conference room, "Every hair on my neck just stood up," said Rev. Johnson, 45. "It was almost like you could

just like feel the presence of just negative energy."

Aziz was dressed in camouflage fatigue pants and boots, a black T-shirt and a tactical vest. He was sweating heavily.

As Johnson extended his hand, Aziz began yelling about being a "man of Islam" and how his god said he was authorized to take the lives of infidels. He specifically mentioned killing Jews and Christians because their doctrine was contradictory to Islam.

Johnson noticed the outline of a gun in Aziz's pocket. "Immediately, just like clockwork," Johnson said his training "kicked in." Johnson currently works fulltime as a student services intervention specialist in the Tyler Independent School District.



After asking Aziz to calm down, he offered to get him a cold drink and pray for him. Johnson positioned himself in between Aziz and the door.

He asked Aziz to sit down, which he did. Johnson then patted Aziz's shoulder while at the same time leaning over to get a glimpse of what kind of weapon Aziz was carrying.

"I never gave him the power of feeling that he was in control, that I was frightened," Johnson said. "I just continued to engage, but I was very cautious not to raise my voice or make any quick moves."

Aziz was becoming more and more angry. Johnson appeased him by saying he would take care of him but told him that he first needed to attend to his children. At that point, Johnson left the conference room and whispered to his wife and another member there, "We got a problem. Get everybody out of the church." Someone called 911.

Johnson, his family and the rest of the congregation then sped away.

Shortly after, Aziz also fled. He was arrested later that evening, sporting the same clothes and with the gun in his pocket and was initially charged with the illegal possession of a firearm, a felony crime.

Before he was arrested, however, Aziz returned to the church and left the following note: "My name is Rasheed You helped me at a time of need This house is blessed by God & all faiths Muslim Jews & the Christian shall all gather here in Peace & Justice for God as a while For the betterment of mankind as a whole I thank you. My title is special Ranger harbinger Aziz I be around to ... [sic]"

The note was found by a church deacon the next day.

Johnson said if he could share one thing with other pastors, it would be, "Please put security measures" in place. Do not get caught thinking that this only happens in other places, in big places."

The stories of Islamic State defectors

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150922-the-stories-of-islamic-state-defectors>

Sept 22 – Much has been written about the young men and women who join the Islamic State. We are familiar with their biographies and pathways, backgrounds and motivations.

But virtually nothing is known about those who quit: the "defectors" who did not like what they saw, abandoned their comrades, and fled the Islamic State. Yet their stories could be key to stopping the flow of foreign fighters, countering the group's propaganda, and exposing its lies and hypocrisy.

For a short paper, the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (ICSR) collected all published stories about people who have left the Islamic State and spoken about their defection. ICSR discovered a total of fifty-eight – a sizable number but probably only a fraction of those who are disillusioned or ready to leave.

The defectors

They are a new and growing phenomenon. ICSR says that of the fifty-eight cases, nearly two thirds of the defections took place in the year 2015. One third happened during the summer months alone.

The defectors' experiences are diverse. Not everyone has become a fervent supporter of liberal democracy. Some may, in fact, have committed crimes. They were all, at some point, enthusiastic supporters of the most violent and viciously totalitarian organization of our age. Yet they are now its worst enemies.

The quality of their testimony varies, and the precise circumstances and reasons for leaving IS are not always clear. What convinced ICSR

that, as a whole, their stories are credible is how consistent their messages were.

The narratives

Among the fifty-eight defectors, ICSR found four narratives that were particularly strong:

1) One of the most persistent criticisms was the extent to which the group is fighting against other Sunni rebels. According to the defectors, toppling the Assad regime did not seem to be a priority, and little was done to help the (Sunni) Muslims who were targeted by it.

Most of the group's attention, they said, was consumed by quarrels



with other rebels and the leadership's obsession with "spies" and "traitors." This was not the kind of jihad they had come to Syria and Iraq to fight.

2) Another narrative dealt with the group's brutality. Many complained about atrocities and the killing of innocent civilians. They talked about the random killing of hostages, the systematic mistreatment of villagers, and the execution of fighters by their own commanders. None of the episodes they mentioned involved minorities, however. Brutality did not seem to be a universal concern: it was seen through a sectarian lens, and caused outrage mostly when its victims were other Sunnis.

3) The third narrative was corruption. Though none believed that corruption was systemic, many disapproved of the conduct of individual commanders and "emirs." Syrian defectors criticized the privileges that were given to foreigners, for which they claimed was no justification based on the group's philosophy or Islam in general.

While many were willing to tolerate the hardships of war, they found it impossible to accept instances of unfairness, inequality, and racism. "This is not a holy war," said a defector from India, whom the group had forced to clean toilets because of his color of skin.

4) A fourth narrative was that life under the Islamic State was harsh and disappointing. The defectors who expressed this view were typically the ones who had joined the group for

"selfish" reasons — and who quickly realized that none of the luxury goods and cars that they had been promised would materialize.

For others, their experience in combat did not live up to their expectations of action and heroism. One of them referred to his duties as "dull" and complained about the lack of deployments, while another claimed that foreign fighters were "exploited" and used as cannon fodder.

Why this matters

These stories matter. ICSR says that the defectors' very existence shatters the image of unity and determination that the group seeks to convey. Their narratives highlight the group's contradictions and hypocrisies. Their example may encourage others to follow, and their credibility can help deter wannabes from joining.

ICSR urges governments and civil society to recognize the defectors' value and make it easier for them to speak out. Where possible, governments should assist them in resettlement and ensure their safety. They also need to remove legal disincentives that prevent them from going public.

"Not every defector is a saint, and not all of them are ready or willing to stand in the public spotlight," ICSR says. "But their voices are strong and clear: 'The Islamic State is not protecting Muslims. It is killing them.' They need to be heard."

— Read more in Peter R. Neumann, *Victims, Perpetrators, Assets: The Narratives of Islamic State Defectors* (ICSR, 2015)

Guess where?

