

# PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

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## Welcome from the Editors

*Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 8, no. 4 (ISSN 2334-3745)

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume VIII, Issue 4 (August 2014) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* at [www.terrorismanalysts.com](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com). Our free online journal is a joint publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), headquartered in Vienna, and the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies (CTSS), headquartered at the University of Massachusetts' Lowell campus.

Now in its eighth year, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has over 4,300 regular subscribers and many times more occasional readers worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while its Research Notes, Resource and Book Reviews sections are subject to internal editorial review.

We begin this issue by announcing Dr. Tricia Bacon as the winner of the competition for the "Best Dissertation on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism published in 2013". The Jury's report also provides the honorable mention of authors whose theses were judged second and third best. A summary of Dr. Bacon's thesis is provided as the first research article in this issue, in which she examines alliance behaviour among terrorist networks and the vulnerabilities that come with alliances. This is followed by an article by Stephen McGrath and Paul Gill examining the relationship of terrorist groups' attack patterns and participation of front organisations in democratic electoral contests. Next Arie Perliger shows in his article how a sympathetic, supportive community is essential for a terrorist network's durability.

Our Research Notes section begins with insights from Tom Keatinge on the various sources of financing that are sustaining the conflict in Syria. This is followed by a *Special Research Notes Section*, assembled by guest editor Bart Schuurman of the Center for Terrorism and Counterterrorism (CTC) in the Netherlands. He and his colleagues provide four case studies of jihadist-related terrorism that draw heavily from primary source materials. Three of these focus on homegrown jihadist groups in the Netherlands, Germany and Australia, while the fourth examines the backgrounds of Dutch jihadists who travelled to Syria as "foreign fighters".

Dr. Judith Tinnes has compiled an extensive bibliography on Islamist narratives and Western counter-narratives, and Eric Price has compiled a bibliography on state-sponsored terrorism and assassinations. Book reviews by Jeff Victoroff and Jacqueline Bates-Gaston can be found in Section IV of this issue. Finally, our book reviews editor, Joshua Sinai, presents summary reviews of 47 new publications in the field of terrorism and counterterrorism.

The current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* was prepared at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. The October issue will be assembled by Editor-in-Chief, Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid.

Sincerely,

Professor James J.F. Forest

Co-Editor, *Perspectives on Terrorism*

## Report of the Jury on the TRI Award Competition for “Best Ph.D. Dissertation on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism completed in 2013”

Over the course of the preceding academic year, the Directors of the Terrorism Research Initiative received and reviewed 29 valid entries (academic theses in the field of Terrorism Studies either completed or defended in 2013) for this annual competition. The final deadline to submit entries for this year’s competition was 31 March 2014.

While the gender distribution was practically even—14 of the 29 dissertations were written by female scholars—the country distribution was more uneven. The scholars submitting their theses to the competition came from eleven countries—Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Pakistan, Poland, Switzerland, United States, and United Kingdom. This less than global spread can partly be explained by the fact that one of the requirements was that the thesis had to be submitted in (or translated into) English. Except in one case where a Ph.D. supervisor submitted a doctoral thesis, all other dissertations were submitted by the authors themselves.

The jury used six criteria for the evaluation, the most important being these:

- Is it the product of in-depth research?
- Does it show originality in terms of introducing new data, theory or methodology?
- Does it show novelty/uniqueness in its findings?

The topics ranged from *State Sponsored Terrorism to Socio-psychological Profiles of Terrorist Leaders in Israeli Prisons*, and from *The Potential Terrorist Threat of European Converts to Islam to Terrorised into Compliance: Why Countries Submit to Financial Counterterrorism*. Many of the dissertations were of almost equal quality, which made it difficult for the jury to rank them. Notably, the five top-ranking dissertations were all written by female scholars. After several rounds of evaluations, three finalists were selected by the jury, and from these the winner.

The winner of the TRI Best Thesis Award 2013 is **Dr. Tricia Bacon**. She is currently a Professorial Lecturer at American University in Washington D.C. Her thesis, which was defended with distinction at Georgetown University, is titled *Strange Bedfellows or Brothers-in-Arms: Why Terrorist Groups Ally*. An article based on parts of her dissertation has been included in this issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism*. A book-length volume based on her nearly 800-pages long text will be published by Pennsylvania University Press later this year. The Jury noted with appreciation the wide range of primary sources utilized by the author (including archival information, declassified documents from the Harmony database on Al-Qaeda, groups’ statements, interviews and trial transcripts) and the amount of field research conducted in North Africa, the Near East and South Asia. The combination of quantitative methods resulting in the testing of hypotheses with a series of historical case studies led Dr. Bacon to reach findings that contradict the widely held assumption that terrorist groups easily form alliances. On the contrary, she found that—for lack of trust and other reasons (which she details in her article in this issue)—alliances are rare, with less than one percent of terrorist attacks over a period of more than a quarter century being conducted by more than one terrorist group. Only very few armed groups manage to become what she terms “alliance hubs” like al-Qaeda. As readers of *Perspectives on Terrorism* will recognise, there is a considerable need for excellent research on the organisational behaviour and decision-making of terrorist groups. The winner in our competition has significantly expanded our knowledge in this area. The jury was impressed by Dr. Bacon’s command of the materials studied, the elegant style in which the thesis was written and the convincingly argued chief finding

that contradicts conventional wisdom. For her ground-breaking work the Jury gave her the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual TRI Thesis Award of U.S. \$1,000.-

A close second in the competition for the TRI Thesis Award 2013 was the dissertation submitted by **Dr. Virginie Andre** from Monash University, Australia. Based on many months of field work, her dissertation *Framing Separatist Terrorism in Southern Thailand: Collision, Collusion and Convergence*, utilises interviews with insurgents and non-insurgents alike while also making excellent use of locally collected leaflets and online materials. Digging deep into the history of the conflict (which has its roots in Siam's conquest of the region in 1906) and using quasi-anthropological methods of investigation, she explains how an originally ethno-nationalist movement without a charismatic leader transformed into what she terms a 'glocal neojihadist struggle'. The rapid expansion of jihadist ideologies from Middle Eastern terrorist groups to other regions of the world becomes more understandable in the light of her penetrating analysis. Dr. Andre has already received several awards for her sophisticated dissertation and we hope that an academic publisher will soon make her work more widely known.

The third finalist in the TRI Thesis Award competition is **Dr. Donna G. Starr-Deelen**, a lawyer by training and now an Attorney practicing in Kensington, Maryland. She received a Ph.D. degree in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford (UK) for her thesis on *United States Use of Force against Terrorism and the Threat of Terrorism*. While also utilising interviews to gather information (though far fewer than the other two finalists), the author draws mainly on a careful analysis of open source materials on the administrations of U.S. Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. She uses as an 'explanatory lens' a pattern of foreign policy making first noted by Harold Koh in his book *The National Security Constitution* – a pattern in which presidential actions in foreign affairs are characterised by 'executive initiative, congressional acquiescence, and judicial tolerance'. The post-9/11 'power grab' by George W. Bush and Dick Cheney is attributed to the combination of three factors: (i) the special dynamic of terrorism in which a frightened public demands action after a major attack while accepting high levels of government secrecy; (ii) a lack of congressional incentives and political will to practice effective oversight of the executive when it uses force against international terrorism; and (iii) the tendency of American courts to defer to the executive branch when it comes to national security decisions. A monograph titled *Presidential Policies on Terrorism*, based on Donna Starr-Deelen's dissertation, has just been published by Palgrave Macmillan (New York, May 2014).

The Jury wishes to congratulate the finalists and offer our thanks to all participants who submitted their thesis for the TRI thesis award competition. Given the positive response of the research community to our first call to participate in this 2013 competition, the Terrorism Research Initiative has decided to make the TRI Thesis Award an annual feature of its portfolio of activities. In the next round, **the award competition deadline for submitting a thesis completed or submitted in 2014 is 31 March 2015**. We look forward to reviewing another great collection of entries.

The Jury: Alex P. Schmid (Chair), Robert Wesley, James J.F. Forest

## I. Articles

### Alliance Hubs: Focal Points in the International Terrorist Landscape

by Tricia Bacon

*International terrorist alliances pose a threat in that they provide opportunities for groups to bolster their operational effectiveness, range, and efficiency as well as enhance their legitimacy and stature. However, they remain rare because alliances expose partnering organizations to serious vulnerabilities, and terrorist organizations are ill-suited to forge these kinds of commitments. When alliances do occur, they tend to cluster around a small number of groups, termed alliance hubs, which demonstrate an aptitude for forging partnerships. The prevailing notion that terrorist groups with shared threats or ideologies will naturally gravitate toward hubs mischaracterizes the nature of relationships among these illicit, clandestine, and violent organizations and predicts that alliances should occur more frequently than they do, and that alliances should form where none exist. Rather than precipitating alliances, shared ideology and enemies act as identity features that guide partner selection. Hubs function as focal points by fulfilling organizational adaptation and learning needs for groups that lack self-reform capacity. This offers under-utilized opportunities to exploit and disrupt these relationships.*

**Keywords:** Group decision-making, organizational behavior, collaboration

#### Introduction

*As for the answer to your question, why did we join Al Qaeda? We say, why shouldn't we join Al Qaeda? God ordered us to be united, to be allied, to cooperate and fight against the idolaters in straight lines.... We are a jihadi ancestral community.*

–Abelmalek Droukdal, leader of al-Qaida of the Islamic Maghreb, formerly the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), on his group's 2006 alliance with al-Qaida

By 2005, the predominant Algerian Sunni terrorist group, the GSPC, was a shadow of its former self. After two amnesties and more than a decade of conflict, its decimated ranks were pursuing a cause that no longer resonated with the war-weary Algerian public. Once an existential threat to the state, the jihadist insurgency operated largely as a law and order problem relegated to the outskirts of the country. Newly radicalized Algerian militants gravitated to the insurgency against the United States in Iraq, rather than join the discredited cause at home.[1] Surrendering members reported that the group's fighters struggled to survive on rations and lived in desolate conditions.[2]

Then, on the five-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaida appointed the GSPC as its affiliate in North Africa. Shortly thereafter, the newly minted al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) unleashed a violent campaign that shattered the Algerian Government's claims that the insurgency was on the verge of defeat. AQIM adopted al-Qaida's modus operandi of suicide operations, which increased the lethality and reach of its attacks. It struck high profile targets, like the United Nations building in the heart of the Algerian capital, a locale considered secure against the group's traditional bombings and ambushes.[3] AQIM expanded its safe haven and smuggling activities in the Sahel region, and members outside its traditional Algerian base joined the group.[4] Significant credit for AQIM's rejuvenation went to its alliance with al-Qaida.[5]

AQIM's post-alliance transformation reflects the fact that allying with another terrorist organization creates opportunities for groups to bolster their operational effectiveness, range, and efficiency as well as enhance their legitimacy and stature; sometimes it even allows them to re-invent their image.[6] Like the increased



destruction produced by AQIM's adoption of the tactic of suicide operations following its alliance with al-Qaida, terrorist groups with allies conduct more deadly attacks, resulting in a higher average number of fatalities and injuries to both victims and attackers alike.[7] In addition, alliances increase terrorist groups' longevity and make them more resilient. For example, terrorist organizations with allies are 50 percent less likely to disband or collapse following leadership decapitation than those without them.[8]

Terrorist alliances clearly pose a threat; however, they remain rare.[9] For example, the apex of cooperation—a joint operation involving allied groups—occurred in less than one percent of terrorist attacks between 1970 and 2007.[10] The paucity of alliances reflect the hurdles that terrorist groups face when attempting to forge credible commitments.[11] All entities allying in an anarchic environment face obstacles, but terrorist groups' secretive and illicit nature exacerbates them and thereby makes alliances more difficult. Terrorist groups also face additional barriers because of their strong in-group identification and insular qualities.[12] As a result, terrorist organizations struggle to form alliances.

These obstacles shed some light on why terrorist alliances occur infrequently, but fail to explain the puzzling distribution of terrorist alliances. Terrorist alliances tend to form in closely-knit clusters or cliques of cooperating organizations with a small number of groups acting as focal points.[13] Such alliance hubs are, in essence, an anomaly among anomalies. Hubs exhibit an unusual propensity to overcome the collaboration hurdles that stymie most groups. In addition, their activity accounts for a disproportionate number of these dangerous relationships. But why are alliance hubs so effective at forming these partnerships? Why do other groups seek hubs as partners?

Counterterrorism officials and terrorist groups themselves, i.e. the GSPC's justification of its relationship with al-Qaida, often attribute alliance behavior to shared ideologies and common enemies.[14] Alliances are indeed strongly correlated with both.[15] However, the rarity of terrorist group alliances is inconsistent with these ideational or instrumental motives. If ideological solidarity or common enemies stimulated alliances, they should occur more frequently, and alliances should form where none exist. In addition, neither explanation can account for the timing or duration of terrorist alliances. For instance, the GSPC shared an ideology as well as enemies with al-Qaida for years before "God ordered" them to unite.

Given the danger posed by alliance hubs, governments need to better understand what causes them. Overall, the dearth of well-developed theories that explain international terrorist alliance behavior, particularly compared to intra-conflict or inter-state alliances, has stunted efforts to disrupt and prevent these dangerous relationships. Not surprisingly, governments have had little success against international terrorist alliances, even though disrupting them has been a priority for over a decade. Government action has not severed any of the alliances involving the premiere contemporary alliance hub, al-Qaida, even though as early as 2003, the U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy asserted: "[t]he interconnected nature of terrorist organizations necessitates that we pursue them across the geographic spectrum to ensure that all linkages between the strong and the weak organizations are broken, leaving each of them isolated, exposed, and vulnerable to defeat." [16] For example, the public break between al-Qaida and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) earlier this year was caused by internal disagreements about the scope of ISIS's mission and its tensions with another al-Qaida ally, al-Nusra Front. Though the ISIS-al-Qaida alliance was plagued with problems from the outset, governments proved unable to exploit these fissures.[17] If governments understand alliance hubs' appeal and their vulnerability, they can better identify when alliances may occur and more effectively intervene.

This article provides an excerpt of the findings in my dissertation "Strange Bedfellows or Brothers-in-Arms: Why Terrorist Groups Ally," forthcoming with the University of Pennsylvania Press. In it, I propose a theory of international terrorist alliance formation and sustainment based on a combination of organizational



theory and constructivism. Using qualitative methods, including within-case comparisons, cross-case comparisons, and process tracing of nine international terrorist dyads between 1968 to 2011 and two hubs' alliance behavior, I argue that organizational learning and adaptation needs motivate alliance searches, while identity, particularly ideology, constrains partner selection and helps partnering groups to build trust. Furthermore, I find that alliance sustainment hinges on organizational need fit between partners, the nature of the organizational needs driving the alliance, as well as partners' ability to forge a shared identity.

This article focuses more narrowly on my dissertation's findings on alliance hubs, specifically why these organizations attract numerous partners. It begins by discussing the obstacles and benefits to terrorist alliances. It then defines international terrorist alliances and situates them within the alliance literature. Next, it delves into what constitutes an alliance hub—groups that demonstrate anomalous success in attracting partners and forging alliances, thereby increasing the terrorist threat. It proceeds by discussing how existing theories offer little insight into their behavior before proposing an alternative explanation for why terrorist alliances cluster around hubs. In the interest of space, this article selectively draws on the dissertation's alliance hub case studies to illustrate its arguments, rather than providing the full case studies. Instead of being a product of common ideology or shared threats, alliance hubs acquire their positions because of their willingness and ability to fulfill others' organizational adaptation and learning needs as well as by possessing identity traits that make them acceptable partners to numerous other groups. The article concludes by discussing follow-on research on alliance hubs and the implications that flow from these findings.

### *Defining International Terrorist Alliances*

International relations scholar Ole Holsti contended that “[a]lliances are apparently a universal component of relations between political units, irrespective of time and place.”[18] As fundamentally political actors, this applies to terrorist groups. However, beyond agreement on its political dimension, terrorism is a notoriously difficult concept to define, and debates persist about the appropriate use of the term.[19] At a minimum, an act of terrorism generally contains three components: 1) political aims and motives; 2) violence or threats of violence; and 3) intended psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target.[20] Terrorist organizations include entities that consistently employ such violence with some defined membership, chain of command, command and control mechanisms, and in-group identity.

Alliances consist of relationships of security cooperation between terrorist groups that involve mutual expectations of coordination or consultation in the future.[21] Such relationships are distinct from the more prevalent forms of low-level collaboration between individuals who do not represent organizations or ad hoc organizational cooperation without shared expectations for future cooperation. While these other forms of cooperation pose fewer hurdles and thus may be more common, alliances offer opportunities for deeper and more sustained exchanges, and therefore, can pose a greater threat.

International alliances refer to partnerships between terrorist groups that emerge from political markets that cross state and/or conflict boundaries. After the internationalization of terrorism, terrorist groups increasingly forged alliances with one another within the anarchic international system.[22] While international terrorist alliances have received less scholarly attention than intra-conflict or inter-state alliances, they have produced some of the most prolific terrorist attacks and defined the terrorist threat for the past decade. Beyond al-Qaida's abundant alliances, notorious examples include the Japanese Red Army's attack on Lod Airport in Tel Aviv in 1972, as well as the coordinated kidnapping and hijacking in 1977 by the Red Army Faction (RAF) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Significantly, the PFLP, JRA, and RAF were not rivals within a shared conflict, so they did not compete in

the same primary political and resource market. Well-known examples of intra-conflict relations include the perpetual jockeying between Afghan *mujahidin* factions after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the constantly shifting alliances among militant Palestinian factions. International terrorist alliances differ from intra-conflict relations among violent non-state actors in important respects that necessitate separate theorizing and empirical work about the causes of their alliance behavior. A shared political market creates a competitive dynamic, particularly as groups proliferate over time due to group fractionalization. Competitor terrorist organizations thus constantly maneuver for primacy, and this affects their behavior, including alliances, in a variety of ways.[23] For example, competition influences the tempo and scale of violence as well as the tactics that competitor groups employ, such as suicide attacks.[24] In competitive situations, groups increase the pace or broaden the scope of their attacks, as Kydd and Walter claim that, “outbidding should occur when multiple groups are competing for the allegiance of a similar demographic base of support.”[25]

Rival groups operating within a shared conflict seek to acquire their share of resources, power, and position at the expense of one another, thus engaging in cooperation selectively, carefully, and briefly. While not all conflicts involving multiple terrorist groups reach the threshold of a civil war, Fontini Christia’s work on alliance behavior within multiple party civil wars parallels what occurs in many conflicts with multiple terrorist groups. Alliances within a conflict fluctuate based on groups’ assessments of relative power position vis-à-vis one another.[26] Unless one group is powerful enough to win outright or has a monopoly in the conflict, the within-conflict alliance terrain constantly shifts in response to changes in power, including defections, betrayals, group fracturing, and losses on the battlefield, detentions or targeted killings. Alliances thus tend to be tactical and temporary, governed by a desire to acquire the maximum resources as part of the smallest-winning coalition, as long as the risk of exploitation by stronger parties in that coalition is manageable.[27] In other words, power considerations trump all others. Power calculi not only subsume identity considerations, group leaders and elites actively manipulate identity narratives to suit their instrumental needs.[28]

In contrast, my research focuses on relations among dyads of terrorist organizations that operate in different primary conflicts and political markets, where relative power considerations do not readily apply.[29] While some scholarship distinguishes between domestic and international terrorist attacks, much of the work on terrorist alliances does not differentiate between these two types of alliances.[30] However, objectives such as creating alliances to establish the smallest-winning coalitions or determining relative power position do not transfer to non-competitive, international relationships.[31] Because they do not compete in the same political market, non-competitors can share assets, even members, funds, and safe haven, without the same concerns that doing so will negatively affect their position relative to one another. They need not worry that resources or skills shared today will be used against them tomorrow. Rather than vying for the same resources in a zero-sum environment, resources among non-rivals can have a positive-sum value. As a result, theories must account for these differences in order to understand international terrorist alliances and alliance hubs in particular.

### ***Impediments and Benefits of Alliances***

Even though terrorist groups can accrue benefits through alliances, they struggle to forge credible commitments, an essential ingredient for alliances. By design, most terrorist organizations are insular, secretive, and lack the requisite transparency to assure their partners that they intend to honor future promises and obligations.[32] With uncertain and often short lifespans, few have the requisite shadow of the future to make attempting cooperation worth the risk.[33] To compound these problems, terrorist

groups often lack reputations as trustworthy partners.[34] Terrorist groups cannot overcome mutual distrust by creating institutions to bind themselves to agreements, as states do. Nor can they enter into contracts enforceable by an outside institution, like a firm. Thus, both sides have incentives to use cooperation opportunistically to improve their own security and then defect before reciprocating. Meanwhile, adversaries seek to exploit these fears to undermine cooperative relationships and weaken partnering organizations.[35]

At least four other major hurdles compound these problems. First, terrorist groups can be particularly leery of the security-autonomy tradeoff, in which an organization exchanges some independence for the improved security offered by the alliance partner. For groups with strong in-group identities, relinquishing autonomy can provoke internal dissension and thereby create instability within the partnering groups.[36] Second, partnering with another terrorist organization sometimes generates additional counterterrorism pressure as adversary governments respond to the threat posed by the alliance.[37] Third, groups risk discrediting themselves in the eyes of their real or perceived constituents, which can range from the international community to local support bases, with their ally choices or if their allies engage in behavior unacceptable to key audiences.[38] Lastly, and of the greatest concern to terrorist organizations, alliances increase the possibility of betrayals or leaks as they expand the circle of people with knowledge of groups' activities and members.

The obstacles to alliances discussed raise the question: what could groups acquire through an alliance that would warrant undertaking such risks? In a RAND study on terrorist interactions, Kim Cragin et al. explained that "interactions allow terrorist groups to elevate the threat that they pose to state governments by sharing 'best practices' and therefore multiplying their own efforts with the knowledge and know-how from other militant groups." [39] Alliances offer avenues for groups to acquire new capability, expand their capacity or conduct activities more efficiently.[40] Groups can train one another in new skills and teach one another improved techniques. An ally may improve its partner's ability to acquire resources and materiel, like weapons or documents. For instance, the West German Red Army Faction approached Fatah in 1970 primarily to access weapons that were not readily available in West Germany.[41] Allies can offer facilitation or logistical assistance to allow their partners access to previously denied areas or more secure routes where they currently transit.

Allied groups can also help one another to withstand counterterrorism pressure and regroup after losses. Groups that control territory or have unfettered access to a sanctuary can extend safe haven to their partners—a particularly coveted resource during rebuilding phases. Without its allies in Pakistan, it is unlikely that al-Qaida could have survived the United States' invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent fall of the Taliban. Under some circumstances, alliances offer intangible benefits, such as improved credibility, legitimacy, and prestige, which can translate into assets like recruits or funds. Groups can project themselves as part of a broader movement by allying with another terrorist organization, a particularly valuable asset when the resonance of the original cause begins to wane.

In sum, by allying with another organization, groups can access assets that may otherwise be unavailable. Under some conditions, the potential benefits warrant the risks. For some groups, the resources and skills acquired through an alliance can be the difference between survival and extinction or between victory and defeat.

### *Alliance Hubs*

Rather than being evenly distributed among dyads, terrorist alliances often form closely-knit clusters with a group or groups operating at the center of each cluster.[42] In that respect, terrorist groups' alliances bear

similarities to businesses and military innovation patterns. Strategic blocks refer to firms that “are tied to each other more densely” than most businesses and rooted at the center of networks.[43] Similarly, critical nodes operate at the center of military innovation networks.[44] Likewise, alliance hubs act as focal points for terrorist partnerships around which other groups and relationships orbit.

This phenomenon—alliance hubs—has previously been observed among terrorist organizations, though it has not been explicitly identified and studied as such. Following the internationalization of terrorism in 1968 and accompanying proliferation of terrorist ties across national boundaries, some speculated that this collaboration was a state-driven phenomenon, a conspiracy hatched by the Soviet Union and the allied Communist bloc to coordinate terrorist groups’ efforts against the West.[45] While the Soviet Union sponsored some terrorist groups—including one of the most influential alliance hubs in the 1970s, the PFLP’s Special Operations Group, discussed below—it did not manage relationships among them.[46]

Instead, alliance hubs, particularly the PFLP and Fatah, operated at the epic center of the enhanced cooperation. In his quantitative examination of terrorist relationships in 1979, scholar Kent Layne Oots concluded that some groups acted as “major powers” providing aid and resources to others, primarily those of “similar ideological orientation.”[47] Similarly, in his trenchant examination of al-Qaida, journalist Jason Burke likened the group’s alliance behavior to a great power. He argued that al-Qaida acted similarly to the United States or Soviet Union during the Cold War in terms of its alliance behavior within the Sunni Islamic militant milieu.[48] Alliance hubs act as focal point organizations around which numerous alliances orbit and to which other terrorist groups are drawn. They demonstrate an exceptional ability to work closely with numerous partners and to maintain those relationships.

Alliance hubs can operate on a regional level or an international level. Regional-level hubs ally with fellow terrorist groups that are concentrated in a geographically contiguous area or in a grouping of countries with some overarching shared historical, cultural or linguistic qualities. For example, Hezbollah has acted as a regional alliance hub in the Middle East, more specifically in the Levant. A regional-level alliance hub often has the advantage of proximity, a common language or overarching shared ethnic identity. A regional hub may have relationships outside of the region, but it serves as a focal point of a regionally-based cluster. An international-level hub’s relationships are not limited to any particular region; instead, they are transnational, drawing in groups from various states and regions. Fewer bases for a common identity exist, as do linguistic and cultural barriers as well as informational and access hurdles. International hubs are, not surprisingly, quite rare and extremely influential, when they do occur.

Alliance hubs’ existence poses a puzzle in light of the obstacles to cooperative relationships. Alliances are the exceptions. Generally, terrorist groups struggle to form international alliances due to structural, organizational, and ideological hurdles, not to mention the geographic distance. Yet some organizations forge a disproportionate number of alliances. Hubs are, in essence, an anomaly of an anomaly; their alliance success defies expectations about the rarity of such partnerships and obstacles to them. Alliance hubs are by definition deviant cases in that they show a surprising propensity to form alliances.[49] Their existence raises a host of questions, central among them: why do they attract other terrorist organizations as partners?

One component of my dissertation involved delving into this question by conducting comparative case studies involving two alliance hubs: al-Qaida and the PFLP. Much of the scholarship on al-Qaida’s experience as an alliance hub focuses on its unique characteristics in ways that do not shed light on the broader phenomenon.[50] Moreover, this overlooks the fact that al-Qaida is not the first alliance hub, nor will it be the last. Given the rarity of alliance hubs, the threat they pose, and the need to move beyond correlations to determine the causal pathways, my dissertation employed a qualitative methodological approach to this

puzzle. Quantitative research demonstrates, for example, a strong correlation between alliances and both common ideologies and shared enemies, but does not illuminate the causal process by which these variables produce alliances or alliance hubs.[51]

Hubs with international reach, as opposed to regional hubs, are simultaneously the rarest and the most difficult to explain theoretically, given the obstacles to cooperation and the propensity for relationships to form between proximate groups.[52] Therefore, I employed a cross case comparison coupled with within case process tracing in order to engage in both theory building and testing.[53] As mentioned earlier, in order to forge a broader theory of international terrorist alliance formation and alliance sustainment, my dissertation also examined nine terrorist dyads involving alliance hubs, selected based on their variation on the independent variables discussed below. This article focuses on a sub-component of the dissertation: determining the how and why of alliance hubs.

I conducted comparative case studies of two international alliance hubs—the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and al-Qaida—selected based on their variation on three independent variables discussed below: threat, ideology, and organizational structure. The two groups' alliance hub tenures did not overlap and they operated under different international systems, as the PFLP was a hub from 1969 to 1979 during the Cold War bi-polar system, while al-Qaida's time as an alliance hub began in the early-1990s and occurred under the unipolar, United States-dominated system. While both defined their enemies expansively, they faced different threats, as al-Qaida insisted that the United States was its primary threat, while Israel posed the greatest threat to the PFLP. In addition, they hailed from different ideologies. The PFLP was a Marxist, leftist organization with a clear ethno-nationalist streak, while al-Qaida adhered to a Sunni jihadist ideology and sought to transcend nationalism.

Lastly, in contrast to the conventional explanations that point to ideology and enemies, this article proposes an organizational theory-based explanation for alliance hubs. Therefore, I selected hubs with organizational variation, including size and structure, as a proxy for the organizational needs theory discussed below. Al-Qaida[54] operated solely as a terrorist group with a few hundred members, while the PFLP's complex organizational structure included a political party and non-terrorist functions as well as thousands of followers.[55] Thus, the two selected hubs exhibited variation on each of the independent variables discussed in the next section, which offered an opportunity to test which theories elucidate how they developed into alliance hubs.

### ***Theoretical Frameworks and Findings***

To date, much of the work on international terrorist alliances assumes the groups' motives for allying. The existing literature and prevailing wisdom frequently assert that common enemies or shared ideologies motivate relationships, yet remain silent on the many instances when these factors exist, but do not produce an alliance. For example, in a monograph examining technology transfers between terrorist organizations, "Sharing the Dragon's Teeth," Cragin et al. justified their selection of three dyads of international terrorist cooperation: 1) Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and other Sunni Islamist groups in Southeast Asia; 2) Hezbollah and Palestinian militant organizations; and 3) the Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) as follows:

*JI shares an ideological worldview and overarching objective with other Islamist militant groups in Southeast Asia. We therefore expected that JI's rationale for engaging in technology exchanges would be ideologically driven. Hizballah and most Palestinian militants, however, derive from different, albeit Islamic, ideologies. With regard to Hizballah's rationale, we therefore estimated that it would*



*be driven more by its enmity toward Israel than by religious ideology. Finally, we expected that PIRA and FARC would represent the most disparate ideological worldviews, exchanging technologies exclusively for profit.[56]*

Their goal was to select relationships that stemmed from different motives to test their theory on technology transfers. In so doing, they assumed the relationship motives post hoc based on shared characteristics. This example is not intended as a criticism of these authors or their work, which was not focused on explaining alliances, but to illustrate the tendency even for scholars to assign the reasons for these relationships, rather than to explore them.

Moreover, the processes by which these frequently cited variables produce and sustain alliances are rarely articulated. What constitutes shared ideologies or enemies is frequently applied in an elastic way, fitted to explain the presence or absence of a partnership on a case-by-case basis with little consistency or predictive accuracy. It remains unclear how common enemies and threats should be weighed or what level of ideological compatibility is necessary for organizations to ally. It is even less clear how these variables would produce an alliance hub. Therefore, after exploring the inadequacy of these theories, this article offers an alternative framework for understanding alliance hubs, rooted in organizational theory and coupled with constructivism.

### *Responding to Threat*

Like intra-conflict alliances, the robust inter-state alliance literature offers little insight into understanding international terrorist alliance behavior. Much of the dominant realist paradigm's emphasis on relative power does not apply to international terrorist alliance dynamics, for the reasons discussed above. However, the main existing work that proposes a theory of international terrorist alliances draws on a variation of neo-realism: balance of threat theory. Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory proposes that states ally to balance in response to threat, defined as offensive power, aggregate power, geographic proximity, and perceived aggressive intentions.[57] Ely Karmon built on Walt's theory and proposed that terrorist groups in the international arena unite when they feel threatened and share a perception of the nature of a threat from the international system.[58]

Terrorist groups, including alliance hubs, sometimes invoke this rationale to explain their alliance behavior, and quantitative research demonstrates that groups with a shared target have a higher probability of working together.[59] The idea that the "Crusader-Zionist" threat required unity underlain bin Laden's numerous exhortations to Sunni terrorist groups to ally with al-Qaida.[60] The GSPC's declaration of its alliance with al-Qaida also alluded to the need to ally with a hub to balance against a shared threat.

*The destruction of war, the difficulty of the present situation, and the unified coalition of our enemies against us make it necessary for us to confront this coalition with our own coalition, their alliance with our alliance, face their unified forces against our unified forces... The United States of America will only be defeated by a United States of Islam... [I]t became clear to us that our brothers in Al-Qaida organization under the lead of Mujahid Shaykh Usama Bin Laden—may Allah protect him—are the best ones in this era to unify the scattered Muslims against their enemies and to lead them in their present war.[61]*

By extension, this theoretical framework would posit that alliance hubs emerge to form a counter-balancing coalition in response to threat. From a balancing perspective, this makes intuitive sense. Terrorist groups operate at a power disadvantage vis-à-vis their enemies and thus seek partners to help balance against the threat. Groups feeling similarly threatened by the distribution of power in the international system should



then flock to hubs.

In the case of al-Qaida, this theory predicts that the threat from the United States' hegemony encouraged its emergence as an alliance hub and attracted terrorist groups that shared its perception of the threat from the United States.[62] However, an examination of al-Qaida's alliance hub experience as well as that of the PFLP quickly reveals deficiencies in this theory. Following the United States' deployment of forces to Saudi Arabia in 1991, the nascent al-Qaida shifted its attention from Communist forces and identified the United States as its greatest threat. This corresponded with the Soviet Union's downfall and the emergence of a unipolar international system with the United States as the sole super power. As al-Qaida burgeoned as an organization and an alliance hub simultaneously, it propagated the view that the United States was the primary threat to prospective allies.

However, few fellow Sunni terrorist organizations shared this perception when al-Qaida developed into an alliance hub, as most focused on nationalist causes and the threat posed by their respective governments. [63] Like al-Qaida, they opposed the United States and the world order under its hegemony, but the United States was not the primary threat, or in some cases, a direct threat at all. For example, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Egyptian Islamic Group saw Cairo as their greatest threat.[64] Likewise, the Algeria Armed Islamic Group faced a clear threat from Algiers, a conflict in which the United States played a minimal role and thus posed no threat.[65] Yet all three groups allied with al-Qaida in the early 1990s, helping to elevate it into an alliance hub.[66] Therefore, al-Qaida developed into an alliance hub during a period in which most of its allies did not share its threat perception.[67]

Moreover, it cooperated only temporarily with groups that shared its perception of the threat from the United States during the early 1990s, to include Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed and Hezbollah, but did not forge full alliances with these actors.[68] Threat cannot explain this failure to ally or the short duration of their cooperation. More importantly, if threat motivated al-Qaida to become an alliance hub and attracted partners, its coalition would have included these groups, which shared its threat perception. Instead, its alliance network predominantly included fellow Sunni jihadist groups with differing threat perceptions.

In addition, 9/11 and the United States' response to it precipitated a convergence of threat against terrorist organizations to a degree previously unseen. Al-Qaida essentially created a situation whereby the United States posed the threat to terrorist groups, particularly to Sunni terrorist organizations, that al-Qaida long claimed that it did. Yet al-Qaida's alliance position did not commensurately change following this significant threat escalation. For example, immediately following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan—a clear shared threat for all resident groups—both the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and Jund al-Sham declined to ally with al-Qaida. A few years later, Jund al-Sham agreed to ally with al-Qaida and became al-Qaida in Iraq, now known as ISIS and a faction of LIFG merged with al-Qaida.[69] But in the face of a clear shared threat to both groups in Afghanistan, they opted to flee rather than ally with al-Qaida, contrary to what threat-based theories would predict. Post-9/11, al-Qaida added a different type of alliance—the affiliates—but this did not flow from a change in threat. As will be explained below, this reflected the shift in the assets al-Qaida could provide its partners.

Threat's limited explanatory power becomes even more apparent when examining the PFLP case. Israel posed the greatest threat to the PFLP throughout its time as an alliance hub, yet none of the PFLP's international allies faced any direct threat from Israel. Many opposed Israel on ideological grounds, but did not actually experience a threat from it, let alone view it as their greatest threat. Only the PFLP's competitors shared this threat and, as discussed earlier, different dynamics governed their alliance behavior. While the PFLP and its international allies shared a perception that the "imperialist" international system was an underlying cause

of their respective threats, numerous organizations that did not ally with the PFLP also held this view. Thus, threat provides minimal insight into the PFLP's ability to develop into or operate as an international alliance hub.

One problem with the threat-based theory is terrorist groups constantly view themselves as threatened by implacable foes. Yet alliance hubs remain rare, as do alliances. In other words, theories of shared threat over predicts the frequency of alliance hubs and international terrorist alliances in general. Similarly, as discussed, both alliance hubs opposed the international system and viewed it as threatening. But this did not differentiate them from most groups operating during their respective eras. Many terrorist groups focus on parochial threats, but they also often see the international system as partially culpable for their grievances. Moreover, the international system configuration does not frequently change and thus the threats posed by it to terrorist groups fail to explain the timing or duration of alliance hubs, including the termination of the PFLP's alliance hub position in 1979, or their relationships.

#### *Ideology: Causing Alliances or Shaping Alliance Behavior?*

In addition to threat, shared ideology is also frequently invoked in explanations of terrorist group alliance behavior, with good reason. Quantitative research established that organizations with a shared ideology tend to ally, regardless of ideological orientation.[70] In addition, terrorist groups frequently attribute their alliance behavior to their ideological convictions. To return to the GSPC example, when asked why the GSPC decided to ally with al-Qaida, the GSPC's leader responded that: "[w]e rely on legitimacy (from religion) before anything else as a base of our decisions.[71]

Ideology serves as a lens through which groups view and interpret their environment and is what separates terrorist groups from profit-motivated criminals and other illicit non-state actors.[72] Terrorism expert Daniel Byman described the role of ideology as explaining "the world's conditions and offering a blueprint for action. Ideology helps individuals formulate, consider and respond to political problems." [73] In her analysis of left-wing terrorism in Italy, Donatella della Porta similarly found that "[i]deologies operate as facilitating factors, resources or constraints in the formation of actors and in their definition of strategies." [74] However, the way in which ideology would theoretically function to produce alliances, let alone alliance hubs, remains unclear. No comprehensive theory exists that clearly specifies how ideological solidarity or compatibility causes terrorist alliances, despite the widespread perception that ideology influences terrorist group alliance behavior.

Like the contention that shared threats produce alliance hubs, the inchoate idea that common ideologies produces alliances or hubs faces a number of shortcomings. First, it suggests that alliance hubs should occur far more frequently than they do, as groups often share ideologies, while alliance hubs and alliance writ large remain rare. Like threat, ideological solidarity predicts that alliance hubs should form where they do not exist. Neither can account for the variation in cooperation among different dyads that share comparable levels of common threats or ideological solidarity. Threats and ideology do not often shift significantly during most groups' lifespan, so they cannot readily explain alliances or hubs' timing or duration. Overall, existing theories and conventional wisdom struggle to explain alliances and alliance hubs.

Ideology functions as an integral feature of terrorist groups' identities and thereby shapes alliance behavior. As constructivist scholar Michael Barnett argued, "a 'natural' security partner cannot be derived from material forces alone, for the degree of naturalness is highly dependent on familiarity and identity." [75] Instead of functioning in the primary causal role that terrorist groups like the GSPC attribute to it, ideology operates as part of identity criteria that guide partner selection and contribute to alliance hubs' appeal as

partners. For terrorist organizations in particular, identity ensures organizational loyalty and cohesion. Identity refers to “the understanding of oneself in relationship to others.”[76] Collective identity consists of both an internal and an external component; it binds terrorist groups together and situates them with respect to others. Collective identity provides a “set of norms and narratives that sustain “we-ness” through time.”[77] It functions as the glue binding terrorist groups together.[78]

Identity affinity guides partner preferences and delineates the boundaries of acceptable alliance partners. [79] Affinity refers to a sense of mutual identification among groups based on shared identity traits. Groups use identity affinity to evaluate the worthiness and desirability of prospective partners. Identity conditions thinking such that a group seeking an alliance will limit its search to other organizations with which it shares identity traits, primarily ideology, but potentially other identity characteristics, such as enemy narrative or ethnic affinity as well. Groups weigh affinity, either consciously or unconsciously, when they are deciding whether to enter into an alliance. In essence, in order to enter into a partnership, prospective allies must satisfy an identity threshold.

This identity threshold facilitated both alliance hubs’ positions because they possessed salient identity features in their respective eras, and thus numerous other groups viewed them as acceptable partners. In particular, they adhered to ideologies that defined the terrorist landscape during their time. During the PFLP’s tenure as an alliance hub, fellow militant leftist organizations were active in every hemisphere, identified as the third wave of modern terrorism by David Rapoport.[80] For its part, al-Qaida emerged from the broader Islamist revival and the militant Sunni offshoots of that movement, particularly following the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s. Thus, they had numerous ideological brethren, accepted many as partners, and conversely, these groups tended to view them as suitable allies.

While terrorist groups’ identities consist of more than just their ideologies, al-Qaida and the PFLP both used ideology as their primary criteria to determine identity affinity. This is consistent with terrorist groups’ use of their ideology to reduce the information required to act and to simplify the environment.[81] Ideology serves as an integral component of terrorist groups’ identity features in that it provides both the historical narrative and vision that binds terrorist organizations together.[82] An ideological platform helps to readily divide the world into dichotomous categories of “us” versus “them.” These binary categories reinforce in-group solidarity and identities.[83] They also inform friend-enemy distinctions, including determinations of who is a potential ally and who is an unacceptable partner.[84] However, ideology alone was not sufficient to produce an alliance, as both hubs also failed to ally with groups with which they shared ideologies, including some of their closest ideological brethren.

Each terrorist group defines its identity parameters for alliances, including the degree of ideological compatibility necessary to meet the identity threshold. Ideologies do not come neatly pre-packaged to fit all circumstances. Instead, groups act as the interpreter and filter of their ideologies and adapt them to their conditions.[85] The resulting identity affinity parameters depend on groups’ ideological disposition, their ideological flexibility or rigidity, and the overall ideological landscape.

Both alliance hubs defined their identity parameters broadly enough to include numerous potential partners—a perk of their adherence to an ideology with resonance in their environment—but narrowly enough to maintain a cohesive in-group identity among its allies. Al-Qaida defined ideological affinity as fellow Sunni jihadist groups.[86] Thus, its affinity criteria expanded beyond its narrower Salafist sect to include Deobandi groups, but excluded non-Sunni Muslim groups, such as Shia, Sufis or Barelvi organizations or Sunni entities that eschewed violence in favor of political participation. For example, al-Qaida’s cooperation with Hezbollah early in its organizational life proved short-lived in part because it

strained its identity affinity parameters.[87] Some contend that Marxist actors struggle to form alliances.[88] Yet the PFLP—a group admittedly more “tinged with red” than doctrinaire in its adherence to Marxism—defined its identity parameters expansively to include most fellow leftist groups and successfully forged numerous allies.[89] It also had an ethno-nationalist streak that provided a basis for affinity with other groups seeking “self-determination,” though its leftist affinity proved far stronger.[90]

Al-Qaida and the PFLP also propagated expansive enemy narratives. All terrorist groups construct narratives that identify their enemies and the victims. Groups’ enemy and victim narratives explain why the enemy is the enemy and the plight of the victims they purport to represent. A terrorist group can describe its enemy in different terms at various times in order for its narrative to remain relevant with the perceived disposition of its constituencies.[91] Significant overlap in groups’ narratives creates a sense of identity affinity between groups. When a common enemy/victim construction exists, a corresponding sense of “them” as opposed to “us” can also be present. This can complement ideological affinity or operate alone. In the hub case studies, narrative affinity buttressed ideological affinity. Al-Qaida’s opposition to the United States, Israel, their allies, as well as so-called “apostate” regimes provided numerous avenues for narrative affinity with fellow Sunni jihadist groups. Likewise, the PFLP held the “imperial system” responsible for Israel’s perpetuation and the Palestinians’ plight, thus its narrative included opposition to any states considered part of the United States-led imperialist bloc.[92] The international orientation of their narratives added to a sense of identity affinity with many of their ideological brethren. Thus, the materiel interests derived from having a common enemy do not stimulate hubs; instead, hubs have expansive enemy or victimization narratives that overlap with others’ narrative and thereby make them acceptable partners to them.

Lastly, identity affinity serves as a cue that it is safe to attempt to build trust. In intra-conflict relations, identity affinity narratives have limited staying power and groups often have histories of interactions that make trust untenable. However, in the international environments where information is more limited, identity affinity signals trustworthiness. Alliances do not work without trust, and yet it is exceptionally difficult for terrorist groups to develop it. Identity affinity acts as an early indicator to prospective partners operating in the international realm that it is safe to try to build trust, especially when personal ties have not yet formed or reputations are not well established. Trust is essential for alliances to form and sustain; alliance hubs must be seen as trustworthy by their partners and vice versa. Their identity characteristics help to cultivate trust. Identity affinity cannot substitute for trust, yet without it, prospective allies are less apt to seize opportunities to build trust.

### *Organizational Needs*

Identity affinity helps to explain alliance hubs’ appeal; it does not explain why hubs become alliance magnets. While pursuing political aims, terrorist groups, like other organizations, seek their own survival and organizational well-being, which they see as integral to achieving their goals. To survive and thrive, they must possess the organizational knowledge, skills, and assets appropriate in their operating environment. When organizational learning needs and adaptation requirements arise that cannot be addressed through self reform, groups’ alliance searches will lead them to alliance hubs, in particular hubs that meet their identity affinity parameters. In short, alliance hubs emerge as desirable partners because they are both well positioned and willing to fill other groups’ organizational learning and adaptation needs.

Terrorist groups negotiate a constant organizational tension: a bias towards action and a need to secure their survival.[93] When violence becomes necessary for internal satisfaction, a group’s activities can become less connected to their political aims and more about affirming the organization’s viability to satisfy existing

members and draw in new ones.[94] Essentially, the means by which the group seeks to achieve political change, i.e. terrorism, and the perpetuation of the group become ends onto themselves, irrespective of their actual efficacy in achieving broader strategic aims.[95] As a result, over time, the need to preserve the group gradually determines many decisions.[96] This helps to explain why some groups persist even after many of their goals have ostensibly been accomplished or when their demands are no longer relevant to the environment.[97]

The perpetuation of the group depends in part on the adequacy of its knowledge base. Terrorist groups' knowledge base is the product of their organizational learning and adaptation processes. Organizational learning refers to groups' acquisition of new knowledge and skills to apply to future actions and decisions. [98] Relatedly, organizational adaptation involves groups adjusting their existing knowledge, understandings, and processes to changed circumstances.[99] This knowledge base includes everything from their philosophical understanding of the problems that gave rise to their existence to the tactical requirements for day-to-day operations.[100]

Terrorist groups must continually question, verify, and re-define how their knowledge base interacts with their environments. Organizations misaligned with their environments experience instability, decline, and even death.[101] Conversely, groups appropriately aligned with their environment function more competitively, effectively, and innovatively.[102] Therefore, terrorist organizations must constantly learn, anticipate, and adapt in order to endure and prosper. Discrepancies between a group's knowledge, skills or resource base and its environment generate organizational learning and adaptation needs.

When organizational learning or adaptation needs become acute or significant, groups have a choice whether to: 1) continue without addressing the shortfall; 2) undertake self-reform; or 3) seek an alliance. The first option will lead to decline, potentially even an organization's demise, if the deficiencies become substantial enough. Most groups should prefer self-reform, given the risks involved in an alliance, but this may not be possible or successful, depending on the need, their existing knowledge base, and the environment. If a group both recognizes and chooses to address the need, but remains unable or unwilling to undertake self-reform, it may look for an ally. Therefore, groups seek alliances with hubs when hubs can provide access to the knowledge, resources or assets others need to remain competitive in the prevailing and the anticipated conditions.[103] In other words, hubs acquire their position by addressing other groups' organizational learning needs and adaptation requirements.

Indeed, al-Qaida and the PFLP both possessed extensive resources and knowledge bases that they used to address other groups' organizational learning and adaptation needs. In the PFLP case, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the PFLP's alliance hub activities were concentrated in its international terrorist wing, the PFLP-SOG. For much of al-Qaida's tenure and all of the PFLP-SOG's time as a hub, they offered valuable assets to other terrorist groups, including training, safe haven, logistical assistance, and operational guidance, not to mention money and materiel. How did they acquire this ability? Part of it stemmed from the freedom afforded by their permissive state sponsors. These sponsors did not act as third-party arbiters or enforcers, but they offered both hubs sanctuary as well as extensive latitude within that haven, which was critical because al-Qaida and the PFLP-SOG both operated in exile. The PFLP-SOG ran training facilities from its haven in South Yemen and to a lesser extent in Lebanon, as did al-Qaida in its sanctuaries in Sudan and Afghanistan. Thus, in the wake of losses, such as when the Red Army in Japan sought training and revolutionary experience and the RAF needed training in hostage-taking operations, they sought an alliance with the PFLP-SOG.[104] Both hubs also extended their safe haven to allied groups when their partners needed breathing room. In addition, both groups enjoyed substantial treasuries, al-Qaida's derived in large part from Usama bin Laden's wealth and the PFLP-SOG's from its



blackmail, hijacking and hostage-taking operations.[105] They each had transnational reach with supporters in numerous countries, which they used to help partners with facilitation or logistics needs. Both hubs possessed operational sophistication and thus could provide guidance to partners on how to conduct attacks. Overall, both hubs could fulfill an array of tangible organizational learning and adaptation needs for other groups.

In addition, allying with the PFLP-SOG and al-Qaida also conferred cachet upon their partners, an intangible asset coveted by groups struggling to maintain relevance or support. As part of the Palestinian cause—revered in the late 1960s and 1970s as a premier revolutionary liberation struggle—working with the PFLP-SOG bestowed prestige on partners.[106] Al-Qaida's transnational agenda offered fellow Sunni terrorist groups with declining resonance another cause to pursue in order to survive, a particularly valuable asset in the late 1990s following the defeat of many nationalist jihadist groups.[107] This intangible benefit expanded the pool of groups that could fulfill their organizational needs through allying with these hubs.

The two hubs' operational capability also improved their alliance appeal. The PFLP-SOG's high profile and innovative hijacking attacks, which ushered in the international era of terrorism, advertised a sophisticated operational capability that attracted allies.[108] Shortly after al-Qaida's name became synonymous with the largest terrorist attack in history, it lost many of the assets that made it an alliance hub, such as training facilities and haven. Thus, it no longer attracted partners that sought to fulfill those needs. Instead, groups seeking to associate with al-Qaida's image, cause, and capability, such as the GSPC, gravitated to al-Qaida and adopted its moniker.

But why would groups use their assets to fulfill other groups' needs? Hubs expend resources that they could use internally. Even sharing intangible assets imposes costs on hubs and can damage their reputations. [109] The two hubs shared an international orientation to their ideologies, narratives, and opposition to the international order, albeit based in different ideologies. More importantly, their alliance posture largely derived from perpetual organizational needs that stemmed from that disposition. Al-Qaida's motives evolved over time. Al-Qaida's well-known organizational desire to be the vanguard of an international Sunni jihadist movement in part motivated its early alliance receptivity, as it used alliances to bring groups under its rubric and guide their activities. The gap between its resources, its political and organizational goals, and its environment created a perpetual organizational deficiency that motivated its hub activities.[110] In the changed environment post-9/11, al-Qaida used alliances as a way to signal its continued viability in the face of constant losses and, in a reversal of fortunes, also needed allies to find haven and protection.

For the PFLP-SOG, allies played an integral role in the small, covert unit's ability to execute transnational attacks, its sole mission. Unable to strike in Israel, the group viewed international attacks as the only way to punish those it viewed as responsible for the Palestinians' plight. As it grew more difficult for its Arab operatives to conduct operations, allied operatives helped the hub evade enhanced security measures.[111] In addition, its allies' visible role in its attacks signaled that the Palestinian cause had international support that extended beyond the Arab world and garnered extensive media attention.[112] In the wake of the French withdrawal from Algeria, Palestinian militant groups became convinced that such international attention was essential to victory.[113] Moreover, the PFLP-SOG's motive was not selfless; it charged trainees to come to its camps and when it assisted with operational plans involving hostages and demands, it required a cut of the ransom money.[114] In other words, allies fulfilled the perpetual organizational needs of a small unit executing a transnational campaign from exile.

In sum, hubs acquire their positions by possessing knowledge, skills, and assets in demand to address others' organizational needs in the prevailing conditions and a willingness to share these with those groups that



met its ideological affinity criteria because of their own perpetual organizational needs. When groups seek an ally to fulfill their organizational needs, this search tends to lead to hubs with shared identity traits. Over time, hubs become magnets for partners with shared identity qualities when organizational needs arise. Hubs choose to adopt this position because they possess ongoing organizational needs that require alliances as well and adhere to ideologies or narrative that prescribe or at least support working with their identity brethren.

### *Follow On Research and Implications*

On July 10 2014, a Pakistani terrorist group calling itself Tehreek-e-Khilafat declared fidelity to ISIS's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.[115] The gesture by the shadowy and relatively unknown Pakistani group raises the question: will ISIS emerge as an alliance hub in its own right, particularly as al-Qaida's alliance hub position weakens? Al-Qaida's remaining asset, its name, has continued to lose its cachet, and even al-Qaida leaders have contemplated a name change.[116] In the absence of an international alliance hub, alliances within the Sunni jihadist movement may devolve into alliances linked through regional alliance hubs. Groups like the GSPC/AQIM have the ability and willingness to provide mobile training and haven at that level, as it has reportedly done for Boko Haram and other local jihadist elements.[117] Or another international alliance hub may emerge, such as ISIS, if it is willing and acquires sufficient operating space or status to address other groups' organizational needs.

Subsequent research supports these findings on alliance hubs. Two brief examples help to illustrate. First, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT)—a group with sufficient organizational capability to become an alliance hub—has opted not to adopt this role because it lacks the requisite organizational needs that motivated the PFLP-SOG and al-Qaida's willingness. The Pakistani Sunni terrorist group operates numerous training facilities from its extensive haven in Pakistan, where it enjoys the long-standing tutelage of the Pakistani Army. While it has trained foreigners in its camps and has a smattering of allies, it has not adopted an alliance hub position because its organizational knowledge base remains well aligned with its environment; thus, it lacks ongoing organizational needs for allies to address. It primarily conducts operations in India and Afghanistan, though it has sought plausible deniability to these attacks in recent years.[118] For example, one of its allies, Indian Mujahidin, fills an important organizational adaptation need: access to India for operations and a veneer or deniability.[119] So it does not eschew alliances altogether, but its organizational needs remain insufficient for it to invest its resources in becoming a hub. In other words, LT has the capability, but not the desire to become a hub. Should this change, LT may have the potential to function as a regional or potentially even international alliance hub.

Second, the West German leftist group, the RAF endeavored to become an alliance hub in the 1980s. It appealed to numerous fellow European leftist groups, including the French Direct Action (AD), the Belgium Communist Combatant Cells (CCC), and the Italian Red Brigades, in an effort to become a regional hub. The RAF's efforts produced brief alliances with these groups, first AD and CCC and later, the Red Brigades. But all proved unstable and short-lived.[120] Soon thereafter, its "Euro-terrorist" coalition collapsed. The RAF's alliance hub efforts relied on ideological affinity to court partners, but its prospective allies faced periods of weakness and declining relevancy. They needed an alliance hub that could help them adapt because in the changing environment, leftist groups were quickly becoming "hopeless anachronisms." [121] But the RAF did not possess the requisite assets that could realign these groups with the changing environment. In other words, the RAF had the desire; however, it lacked the resources to fulfill the pressing organizational needs of its partners. As a result, its alliance hub effort soon faded out.

Although international terrorist alliances pose a clear threat, to date no country has developed or executed

a clear and effective policy to disrupt them. While no silver bullet will eradicate alliance hubs, this research highlights the reality that terrorist groups seek them as partners because of organizational weakness, often when they cannot undertake self-reform. Hubs increase the threat because they help fellow terrorist groups to fill organizational needs that, left unaddressed, would cause their decline and possibly even demise.

Therefore, counterterrorism policies should focus on degrading the assets that attract groups and disrupting their service provision capacity. Al-Qaida and the PFLP-SOG depended on unfettered safe havens to offer their partners resources like training, consultation, and sanctuary as well as to provide a venue to build trust. Targeting safe havens in particular will help prevent the emergence of alliance hubs and reduce the efficacy of existing ones. The hubs' quasi-state characteristics, including their havens, depended on supportive governments, and this offers yet another reason to sanction and punish state sponsors, particularly those that support alliance hubs. Even after al-Qaida lost its state sponsors and sanctuaries, the foundation Sudan and Afghanistan provided helped al-Qaida to sustain its position for years. In addition, both al-Qaida and the PFLP-SOG benefitted from reputations as operationally sophisticated organizations, which increased their appeal as partners. To counter this, governments should emphasize hubs' operational failures and mistakes, especially when they contribute to their partners' shortcomings and missteps. Their hub positions also depended on their robust treasuries, so measures to degrade their finances will help erode their ability to assist other groups. More specifically, disrupting financial transactions when hubs have committed to fulfilling partners organizational needs at critical junctures will harm relationships and damage hubs' reputations overall.

Counterterrorism efforts should also target figures within alliance hubs who manage, facilitate, and encourage alliances. In particular, leadership decapitation may damage alliance hubs' position and functioning. While they had vastly different leadership styles and skills, from an early point, Haddad and bin Laden saw alliances as a way to address their organizations' needs, were inclined to use their resources to assist other groups, and were involved in all aspects of their groups' alliances. They embedded alliances into their organizations' problem-solving processes and cultures from the outset. In the PFLP-SOG case, the loss of Haddad spelled the end of the group's time as an alliance hub. While bin Laden's death did not have as decisive of an impact on al-Qaida's ability to act as an alliance hub, it further degraded al-Qaida's weakened alliance position. Moreover, replacement leaders may not be as effective or as receptive to alliances as their predecessors—this has been the case with Ayman al-Zawahiri. In addition to the central role that leaders played in hubs' development and sustainment, both groups depended on key figures to act as liaisons for partner groups. Targeting those individuals disrupts alliance interactions and can erode trust and affinity between hubs and their partners.

Admittedly, many of these recommendations are already part of U.S. counterterrorism strategy. Therefore, more effective alliance disruption efforts do not necessarily require new initiatives. Rather they require more focused and enhanced measures against hubs as well as well-timed interventions. Keeping in mind the dynamic nature of an alliance, governments can corrode alliances by putting pressure on the partnering groups' identity affinity and hubs' appeal. Coordinated and consistent messaging on real or potential points of identity fissures may pressure alliance cohesion and force hubs to limit their parameters in order to maintain a cohesive in-group identity within the alliance cluster. Pointing to relationships, cooperation or actions inconsistent with hubs' professed identity will help erode their appeal. When governments label groups as compatible or emphasize traits that other groups share with hubs, they inadvertently help foster a sense of affinity and reinforce hubs' positions. Instead, governments should emphasize ideological differences, conflicts in groups' narratives, and cultural differences that differentiate a hub from its partners. In particular, highlighting actions that constitute violations of their shared identities can help weaken alliances.

In addition, government interventions that foster the impression that cooperation failed due to the hub's inability or unwillingness to fulfill other groups' needs will damage the hub's desirability and stunt individual relationships. Alliance hubs' relationships tend to be particularly vulnerable during the early, trust-building phase. Therefore, early interventions that cause cooperation failures will signal to the prospective allies that the hub cannot fulfill needs. Propaganda efforts that cast doubt on a hub's ability to address organizational needs—such as training that did not prepare a partner for an operation or contributed to an operational failure—will also diminish their appeal.

In general, counterterrorism efforts to prevent and disrupt alliances should capitalize on the obstacles groups already face when they attempt to ally. Governments can focus on undertaking measures that both increase the costs of alliances and stoke the concerns that hinder them. Rather than emphasizing groups' commonalities, messaging in forums where the groups acquire information should highlight allying groups' differences and the risks that alliances pose. For example, given terrorist organizations' difficulties forging credible commitments, governments should highlight instances when hubs fail to honor promises or attempt to use cooperation opportunistically. In addition, because alliances sometimes sow internal divisions, governments can take advantage of this by emphasizing the ways alliances cause partnering groups to deviate from their primary goals and lose their autonomy. Opportunities also exist to damage ties by pointing out when groups' actions alienate their partners' constituents. Counterterrorism policies that treat alliances as static or prematurely label a relationship as an alliance inadvertently reduce the costs incurred by the partnering groups, as concerns about an increase in counterterrorism pressure can help deter alliances. Conversely, once an alliance occurs, affected governments should work together to increase the pressure on both groups, including through measures such as sanctions. More than any other obstacle, stoking fears about infiltration and betrayal has the potential to damage alliance hubs' appeal and disrupt specific alliances. In other words, each of the obstacles that alliances face offer exploitation opportunities for governments.

These findings are significant because the conventional (albeit underdeveloped) wisdom that ideology and enemies precipitate terrorist alliances suggests that government intervention will be ineffective. Governments cannot often change terrorist groups' ideology or enemies. Moreover, the notion that shared threats cause alliance hubs infers that governments' cooperation against terrorist groups will cause them to unite in response, creating a disincentive to build counterterrorism coalitions. However, understanding that an organization's willingness and ability to fulfill others' needs makes them an attractive partner offers unexplored avenues to prevent and disrupt these dangerous relationships. It also can help governments to identify when alliances are more apt to occur, specifically when groups experience and identify acute or significant organizational needs that they cannot address on their own. Therefore, the United States can devise a better strategy to prevent hubs' emergence and diminish their effectiveness when they do occur. This strategy should focus on the role of organizational needs and identity in alliance behavior as well as exploiting the obstacles that hinder all alliance efforts.

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## An Exploratory Study on the Impact of Electoral Participation upon a Terrorist Group's Use of Violence in a Given Year

by Stephen McGrath and Paul Gill

### *Abstract*

*Recent studies seeking to understand the determinants of terrorism tend to focus upon situational, rather than structural measures. Typically these studies examine the interaction of terrorist attacks and repressive state actions. However, we know very little about other situational measures that may impact upon a group's scale of violent activity within a particular year. This preliminary study analyses terrorist attacks committed by both the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and ETA and the electoral performances of the groups' political wings, Sinn Fein and Batasuna, from 1970 to 1998 and from 1978 to 2005 respectively. More specifically, this paper examines whether the nature and content of terrorist attacks differ in the build-up to that group's political-wing participating in elections. In other words, this article is a preliminary study of the influence of electoral participation on attack frequency and target selection. Results suggest that PIRA significantly decreased their attacks in an election year and this had a positive impact upon Sinn Fein's electoral performance. On the other hand, ETA significantly increased its attacks in an election year and this had no significant impact upon Batasuna's electoral performance.*

**Keywords:** *Terrorism, election, violence, target selection*

### *Introduction*

Historically, the analysis of the quantity and quality of terrorist attacks has typically focused upon correlations with 'root causes'. These 'root causes' include (but are not necessarily limited to) factors like educational attainment, [1] economic performance [2] and regime type. [3] The relatively easy availability of such measures makes them suitable for large-scale, cross-country comparative approaches. The aggregate nature and relative inflexibility of these measures (e.g. propensity to change from one year to another) makes them unsuitable for single-case study approaches where the dependent variable varies substantially from year to year.

More recently, studies seeking to understand the determinants of terrorism tend to focus upon situational measures that are likely to fluctuate across the time period under consideration. Typically these studies examine the interaction of terrorist attacks and repressive state actions in diverse cases such as Northern Ireland, [4] Palestine, [5] Chechnya, [6] Egypt, [7] Pakistan [8] and Iraq [9]. Apart from blue-team/read-team interactions, we know very little about other situational measures that may impact upon a group's scale of violent activity within a particular year. This lack of focus is worrying considering the fact that such situational measures are far more malleable to counter-terrorism policies than 'root-cause' measures that are usually deeply entrenched.

Given the seeming consensus that terrorism is often deployed to impact upon the political process, it is odd that there have been relatively few quantitative examinations (apart from studies of regime type and regime structure) [10] of how the shifting political sphere impacts upon levels terrorist activity. Newman's cross-national study illustrates that terrorist violence increases closer to an election date. [11] Bali and Park disaggregated terrorist attacks into domestic and transnational types. [12] They found that while transnational attacks decline prior to elections, domestic attacks increase. Both studies make no

differentiation between groups who are participating in these elections (through their political wing) and those who are not. De la Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca, on the other hand, take the case of ETA and highlight how its violent activity impacts upon its political support. [13] The evidence suggests that ETA's political wing, *Batasuna*, loses support when ETA kills members of the security forces and non-nationalist politics; while support increases when ETA kills informers and drug dealers. The de la Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca article highlights the importance of (a) quantitative and longitudinal studies based on a single case and (b) disaggregating across target type. Finally, Berrebi and Klor examine how the electorate are sensitive to terrorism. Basically, they conclude that victimized groups become ideologically polarized. [14] Admittedly, their focus is upon the electoral behavior within the victimized group, but it is not a big leap to suggest that it could also impact upon the voting behaviour of the constituency that the terrorist group claims to represent.

In this preliminary study, we analyze the cases of two terrorist groups that also had political wings participating in electoral politics. We analyze terrorist attacks committed by both the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and ETA and the electoral performances of the groups' political wings, *Sinn Fein* and *Batasuna*, from 1970 to 1998 and from 1978 to 2005 respectively. More specifically, we are interested in examining whether the nature and content of terrorist attacks differ in the build-up to that group's political wing participating in elections. In other words, this article is an exploratory study of the influence of political participation on attack frequency and target selection. We are interested in answering the three questions: Does political participation in a given year impact upon attack frequency? Does political participation in a given year impact upon attack frequency equally across different targets? Does targeting impact upon electoral results?

ETA and PIRA are a natural duo to compare given their similar ethno-nationalist goals, period of operation and types of violence deployed. Indeed, many studies have compared these groups along factors such as: their social background, [15] levels of public support, [16] strategic orientation, [17] target selection, [18] individual motivations for joining, [19] tactical choice, [20] structure, [21] and legitimisation strategies. [22]

### **Data**

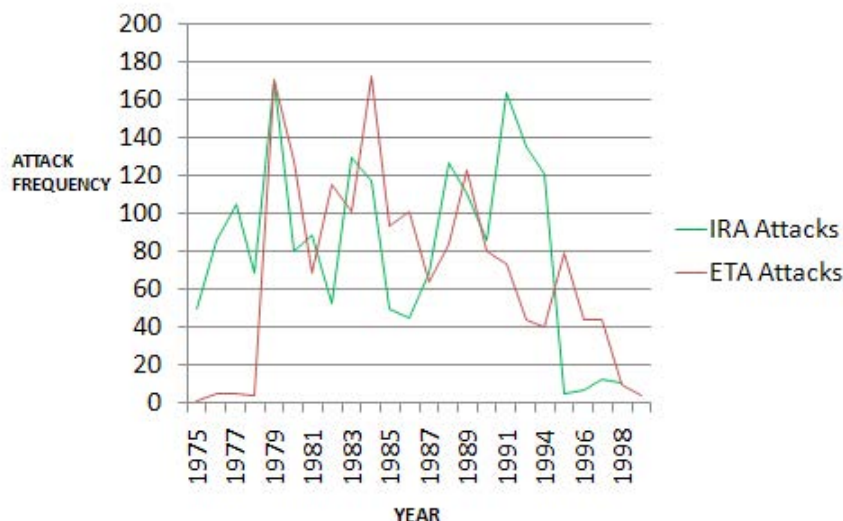
We measured aggregated terrorist attack frequency year-on-year against the electoral participation of the group's political wing. In both cases, the analysis totaled eight years of electoral activity and twenty years of non-electoral activity. We stratified terrorist attacks according to the Global Terrorism Database's classification. We also evaluated associations between political vote gains and target choice by correlating all target selections with *Sinn Fein* and *Batasuna* electoral performance.

Voting records (both District and Parliamentary) were obtained from the Northern Irish "ARK" political research database [23] and the Basque government official website.[24] Data regarding terrorist attack frequency and target selection from Northern Ireland (N = 1874) and Spain (N = 1916) were supplied by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD, START), which consequently provided the disaggregation of attacks into their respective target selections. GTD data was aggregated with vote count and percentage share data acquired by the government election records in the same dataset. A control group was formed in order to measure the attack frequency on non-election years: neutral years within the time period of 1970-2005 were selected provided they did not feature political activity. In the Spanish case study, election years were: 1979, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1991, and 1994, crossing Municipal (District) and Assembly cases. The election years selected for the Northern Irish elections were: 1982, 1985, 1989, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2003, crossing District and Assembly cases, as well as one European case (1994). We were unable to utilise local 1993 voting data because GTD possesses no data for that year. The decision was made to use the 1994 European election results for *Sinn Fein* and the corresponding attack frequency instead.

**Results**

Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of IRA and ETA attacks from 1975 to 1999. It highlights general fluctuations in both the Northern Irish and Spanish case studies, while an overall decline in attacks is observed towards the late 1990s in both cases.

*Figure 1 – Attack frequency of the IRA and ETA (1975-1999)*



First we test whether the levels of terrorism experienced were affected (either positively or negatively) by electoral participation in a given year. We conducted an independent t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference in the mean number of attacks in election and non-election years for both cases. Both cases reflected drastically different results. PIRA engaged in a (partially) significant lower number of attacks within election years than non-election years. Indeed, Table 1 illustrates that PIRA engaged in almost 50% fewer attacks in election years (45 attacks vs. 84 attacks). On the other hand, ETA engaged in significantly more attacks in electoral years than non-electoral years (94 attacks vs. 45 attacks). Table 2 highlights the fact that ETA engaged in more than double the number of attacks in electoral years.

*Table 1 – Independent t-test of attack frequency against (District and Parliament) electoral participation–Northern Ireland*

<i>Electoral Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-Stat.</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tail)</i>
<b>YES</b>	8	45.25	47.43	-1.957	.061*
<b>NO</b>	20	84.70	48.44		

\*Significant at the 0.1 Level



Table 2 – Independent t-test of attack frequency against (District and Parliament) electoral participation - Spain

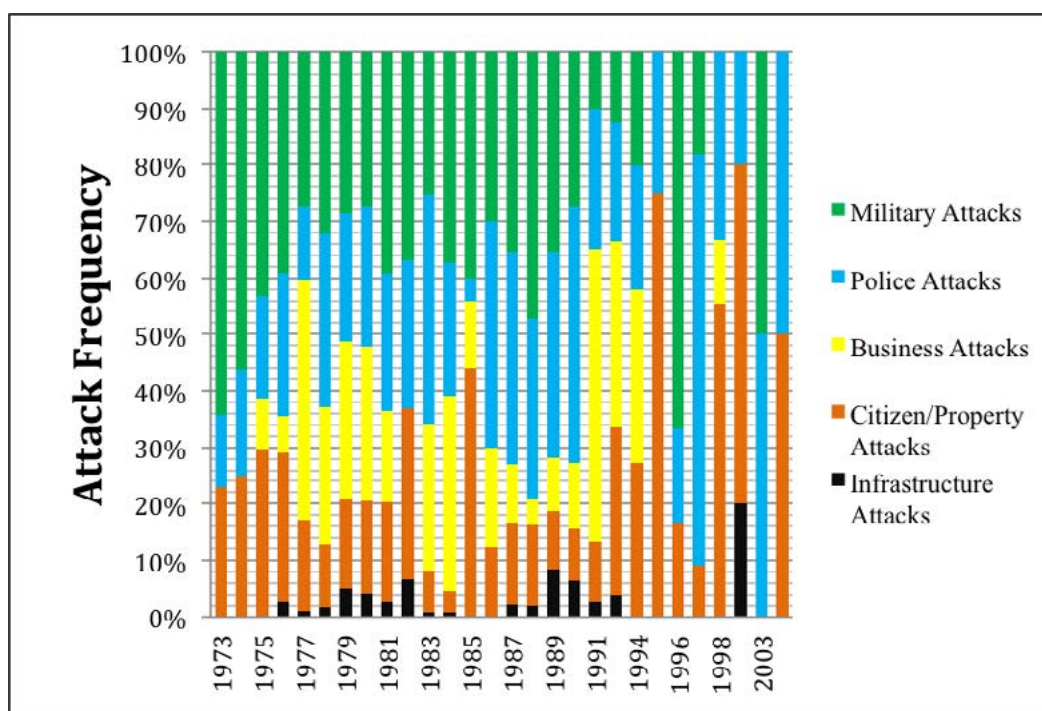
<i>Electoral Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-Stat.</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tail)</i>
<b>YES</b>	8	94.38	40.49	2.762	.010***
<b>NO</b>	20	45.45	43.00		

\*\*\*Significant at the 0.01 Level

Together the results suggest that the violence conducted by both groups were significantly different in election and non-election years although the effects were entirely different. Next we test whether this difference remained consistent across all target types or whether some targets were attacked significantly more (in ETA’s case) or less (in PIRA’s case). In other words, we tested whether the established increase/decrease in attack methods was disproportionately due to an increase/decrease in attacks on one type of target or whether it was a general trend.

Figure 2 illustrates PIRA’s relative target selection across the time period under consideration. The results reflect the changing picture of target selection with certain strategies fluctuating consistently with overall attacks (Military Attacks), and others taking on more unpredictable patterns (Business, Citizen Attacks).

Figure 2 – IRA target selection over time (1973-2001)



We then conducted a series of Independent t-tests to analyze the frequency of attacking these targets in election and non-election years. The results demonstrate that while all target types are attacked less in election years, this effect is particularly prominent and statistically significant with regards to both attacks on businesses and attacks on the military.

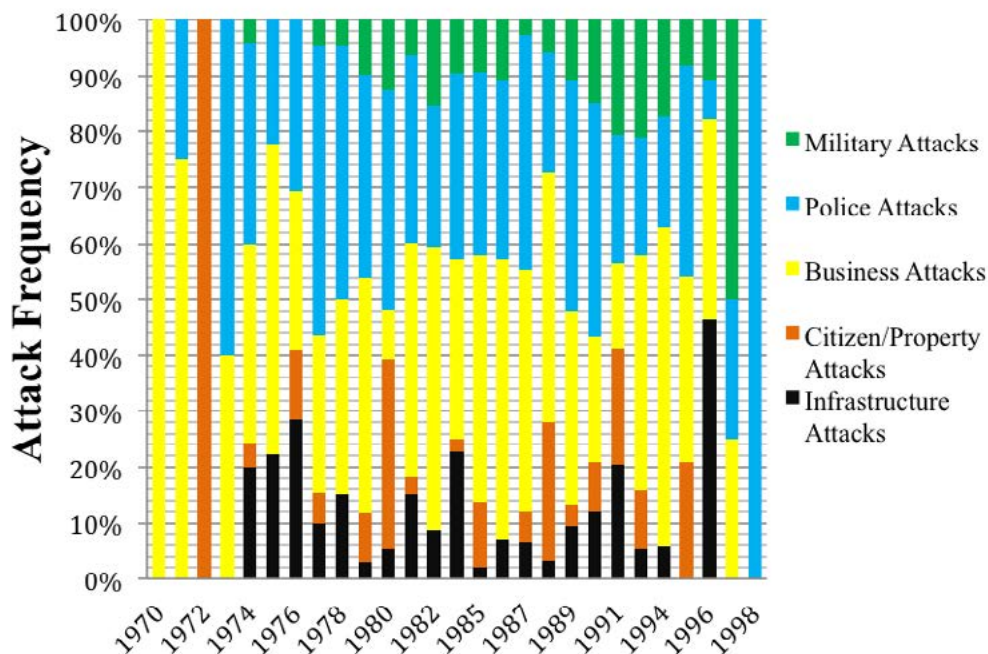
Table 3 – Independent t-test for selected targets against electoral participation

IRA Target	Electoral Year	N	Mean	t-Stat	Sig. (2-tail)
Infrastructure Attacks	(YES)	8	1.38	-.408	.687
	(NO)	20	1.75		
Citizen/Property Attacks	(YES)	8	9.13	-.857	.399
	(NO)	20	12.40		
Business Attacks	(YES)	8	6.00	-1.799	.086*
	(NO)	20	17.30		
Police Attacks	(YES)	8	10.75	-1.665	.108
	(NO)	20	19.75		
Military Attacks	(YES)	8	11.38	-2.270	.037**
	(NO)	20	24.10		

\*\*Significant at the 0.05 Level; \*Significant at the 0.10 Level

Turning to the case of ETA, we applied the same procedures. Figure 3 illustrates the strong focus on targeting businesses and police throughout the time period analysed. Attacks on citizens and infrastructure are inconsistent chronologically and do not appear to establish any general trends.

Figure 3 – ETA target selection over time (1970-1999)



The series of Independent t-tests illustrate that ETA's increased use of terrorist attacks in electoral years was predominantly carried out against business, police and military targets.

Table 4 – Independent t-test for selected targets against electoral participation

<i>ETA Target</i>	<i>Electoral Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>t-Stat</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tail)</i>
<b>Infrastructure Attacks</b>	(YES)	8	6.75	.697	.492
	(NO)	20	5.00		
<b>Citizen/Property Attacks</b>	(YES)	8	4.13	-.077	.952
	(NO)	20	4.30		
<b>Business Attacks</b>	(YES)	8	32.75	3.100	.005***
	(NO)	20	13.50		
<b>Police Attacks</b>	(YES)	8	29.50	2.603	.015**
	(NO)	20	12.90		
<b>Military Attacks</b>	(YES)	8	8.88	4.848	.000****
	(NO)	20	2.85		

\*\*\*\*Significant at the 0.001 Level; \*\*\*Significant at the 0.01 Level; \*\*Significant at the 0.05 Level

We also tested whether these differences were apparent both a week before and after the election and a month before and after the election. No significant differences were apparent. Evidently, the two groups engaged in significantly different tactical practices in election and non-election years, but not months or weeks. This may reflect long-term strategic planning (in terms of the increase/decrease in attacks occurring much earlier) and/or the level of time it takes for strategic plans to be put into force (in terms of the increase/decrease in attacks occurring much later after the election).

The above results suggest that in Northern Ireland, target selection decreases universally with particular reference to business and military, whilst in Spain, these same targets (in addition to the police) are affected in a significant positive direction. This may be due to a number of reasons including opportunity costs, counter-terrorism practices, and target hardening. It could also be due to the impact of targeting practices on electoral performance, an aspect which we turn to next.

To explore the relationship between voting patterns and attack strategy, we utilised a Pearson’s product-moment Bivariate Correlation, in which the vote counts for *Sinn Fein* and *Batasuna* (indicated as “1” in the matrix) were correlated with each target choice in turn. General assumptions were met prior to the undertaking of the test, including the normal distribution of the variables. Table 5 outlines the results for PIRA.

Table 5 – Matrix of target selection and vote quantity (PIRA)

<i>Matrix (Votes and Target Selections)</i>	<i>SD (Standard Deviation)</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.Votes</b>	94889.88					
<b>2.Infrastructure</b>	1.91	-.322				
<b>3.Citizens/Property</b>	10.27	-.876***	.443**			
<b>4.Business</b>	14.91	-.720**	.381	.580***		
<b>5.Police</b>	18.00	-.678	.594**	.470**	.645***	
<b>6.Military</b>	17.23	-.782**	.489**	.406	.376	.782**

\*\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level; \*\*Significant at the 0.05 level.

It is important to clarify that all associations are negative; the less a particular target is attacked, the higher vote tally *Sinn Fein* achieved in that year. In other words, the results suggest that the more discriminate PIRA was in its use of violence, the greater the benefit for *Sinn Fein*. The fact that the comparison of means test (above) illustrated a negative downturn in attacks (by almost a half) in electoral years and that these downturns corresponded with Sinn Fein gaining electoral points, suggests that more was at play than more sensitive counter-terrorism practices in the immediate build-up to the election itself. The significant downturn in attacks against businesses and the military also reflect PIRA’s strategic orientation of improving their political position impacting upon day-to-day tactical operations. The results also run contrary to the large-N analyses conducted by Newman [11] and Bali and Park [12] who found that terrorist attacks increased when elections are held.

Table 6 outlines the results of the same test applied to the ETA case. Again, the associations are all negative. The more ETA engaged in attacks on all targets (apart from citizens) the less *Batasuna* achieved in the election although none of these associations displayed significant scores. While ETA engaged in significantly more attacks on particular targets in election years, there is no evidence to suggest that this resulted in greater political support. In other words, PIRA’s strategy paid off while ETA’s made no discernible difference at all.

Table 6 – Matrix of target selection and vote quantity (ETA)

Matrix (Votes and Target Selections)	SD (Standard Deviation)	1	2	3	4	5
1.Votes	173542.38					
2.Infrastructure	6.78	-.443				
3.Citizens/Property	5.78	.304	-.294			
4.Business	25.83	-.528	.274	.227		
5.Police	22.39	-.329	.500**	.117	.717***	
6.Military	6.78	-.431	.120	.141	.423	.315

\*\*\*Significant at the 0.01 Level; \*\*Significant at the 0.05 level.

The results differ from the de la Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca [13] findings, outlined above, for a couple of reasons. First, it must be pointed out here that the category of ‘citizen’ utilized by GTD is quite all-encompassing and includes informers and drug dealers – two categories of target that they showed significantly increased *Batasuna’s* vote. Second, de la Calle and Sanchez Cuenca measured the number of people killed as opposed to our measure of number of attacks committed.

**Conclusion**

The contrasting results highlight the utility of examining both situational drivers of terrorist activity as well as longitudinal quantitative case studies. Despite their structural, ideological and aspirational similarities, PIRA and ETA displayed markedly different behaviours in years that their political wing engaged in elections. PIRA’s violent attacks significantly declined while ETA’s significantly increased. While PIRA’s strategy paid dividends politically, ETA’s did not. PIRA’s propensity to reduce the frequency of their attacks on both businesses and the military may have been driven by a need to avoid negatively impacting their constituency during the build-up to the election, either by disturbing their routine activities or provoking a military backlash. Interviews with former militants and other qualitative research may be helpful for validating this.

It would also be interesting to see how these dynamics play out in a non-European setting. Both ETA and PIRA were relatively discriminate compared to some Middle Eastern groups many of whom possess multiple rivals vying for political and social support. Focusing on Middle Eastern groups would add further layers of complexity to our understanding of the link between political participation and the frequency of terrorist attacks, although relatively few of those groups have put forward a political wing to participate in electoral processes. Additionally, further studies necessitate factoring in the potential impact of a government's counterterrorism efforts, and also accounting for the geographic distribution of potential targets in relation to both groups' constituency base. [14]

One thing is for certain however; engaging in electoral politics in a given year corresponded to a change in both ETA and PIRA's violent output on both an aggregate level (against all targets) and a disaggregated level (against specific targets). Such results reflect organizational behavior and strategy of terrorist groups, and can help feed into security decisions concerned with risk assessment of particular targets in the build-up to an election. The same is true for directing finite resources toward protecting targets that may be particularly valued by a terrorist organization in a given context. The results also illustrate the importance of context when making policy-making decisions. While large-N, comparative and aggregated studies can help elucidate general trends, they may miss some of the subtlety, nuance and case-specific drivers of behaviours.

Our exploratory study is just a minor step in what seems a general trend toward this kind of analysis. [22] Its main finding is that despite the fact that PIRA and ETA are very similar organisations, with both of them having 'democratic' political parties, their attack and targeting strategies seem to be related electoral to cycles, but in divergent ways, necessitating very different counter-terrorism strategies and practices.

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## Terrorist Networks' Productivity and Durability: A Comparative Multi-level Analysis

by Arie Perliger

### *Abstract*

*Terrorist networks, similar to the more traditional terrorist organizations, employ violence in order to promote political and social changes. By utilizing a unique dataset of 18 terrorist networks the current study contributes to the growing body of literature on terrorist networks by examining the factors that determine network productivity and durability. The findings illustrate how effective networks generally operate within supportive and homogeneous communities, tolerant of the violent struggle. The findings also suggest that while funding and operational knowledge/training are not strong predictors of operational success, they seem to be potential preconditions for the formation of the networks, and for a network to shift from the ideological radicalization stage into the operational/behavioral stage. Finally, when looking at the structural characteristics that differentiate successful from less successful networks, it seems that the most important elements are the ability of the successful networks to effectively balance between cohesiveness and flexibility while preserving their dynamic nature.*

**Keywords:** *Terrorist networks, organizational behavior*

### *Introduction*

The term 'new terrorism' entered academic discourse during the 1990s as researchers reported an unprecedented rise in the number of victims, the use of new and highly destructive tactics, and a preponderance of fanatical supra-national religious groups carrying out the terrorism.[1] Furthermore, the structure of the "new" groups, it was assumed by many, was fundamentally different from that of more traditional terrorizing groups (e.g., IRA, ETA, Fatah). While the latter—termed "terrorist organizations"—were characterized by clear lines of authority, a formalized hierarchy and a set of organizational functions and decision-making bodies (such as central committees, headquarters, etc.), many of the "new" groups—termed "terrorist networks"—assumed a horizontal flat structure, based on non-formal social relations and a high level of interdependence among the different actors comprising the group.[2] As the academic community began to pay more attention to these networks, new methods were developed for deciphering the processes and social dynamics within them.[3] Less attention was given to the differences in the ways these groups end—or more accurately, to their different levels of operational success (in carrying out attacks) and durability. Why, for example, were Hamas networks (active in the West Bank during the early 2000s) able to produce long-term campaigns of violence, while others—e.g., many of the Jihadist networks active in Europe— could have been described as "one-hit wonders", or were dismantled before even being able to initiate their first significant attack?

The current article contributes to the growing body of literature on terrorist networks by looking at the factors determining network productivity and durability. The next two sections will conceptualize the 'terrorist network' and will detail a theoretical framework identifying the potential factors influencing network operational characteristics. This is followed by a methodological section and an empirical analysis seeking to test the proposed theoretical framework. The concluding section will assess the remaining theoretical gaps and the main implications of the findings.

*Between ‘Terrorist Organization’ and ‘Terrorist Network’ – Defining the Research Population*

Defining the research population of this study is not an easy task. While most scholars of terrorism acknowledge that a growing number of terrorist groups are better analyzed from a network-centric perspective rather than from a classic organizational outlook,[4] limited attempts have been made to draw a clear line between the two forms of terrorist groups. Most studies refer to small social networks that possess a dynamic structure and limited hierarchy, without attempting to provide a wider framework of analysis to distinguish them from the “old” traditional, formal and hierarchical terrorist organizations.[5] Outside the realm of political violence studies, it seems that both political scientists and sociologists tend to emphasize the absence of formal and clear lines of authority and/or distribution of functions within flat networks in comparison to the formal organizations which “...possess a role structure distinct from their actual membership, are clearly bounded, and internally differentiated both in a horizontal (functional) and vertical direction (differential distribution of rights and duties).”[6] These criteria have been utilized in typologies dealing with social coordination and governance,[7] and typologies dealing with different types of economic organizations.[8]

In order to clearly define the research population of this study, and to conceptualize the “terrorist network,” a deductive analysis of network literature has been utilized, looking into the various characteristics ascribed by the literature to “new” terrorist networks in comparison to the traditional “older” organizations. The findings have assisted in constructing the classification presented in Table 1.

*Table 1 – Terrorist Networks versus Terrorist Organizations*

Type	Hierarchy	Size	Communication	Boundaries
<i>Network</i>	Inherently leaderless. While some members have more “social power” than others, there are no formal mechanisms which institutionalize the status gaps between members, nor are there formal routines and protocols that manifest the division of power within the network.	Size is limited by the non-hierarchal structure, few individuals to several dozen.	Informal, not regulated or influenced by the functional role of the actors, their formal power or other organizational features. Based on social relations that are a product of primordial and previous social ties.	Elusive borders. Entrances and exits are in general less costly and dynamic.
<i>Organization</i>	Hierarchal structure, identifiable leadership. Division of power is relatively stable.	The formal and hierarchal structure allows expansion of the group from few dozens to several hundred and more.	Communication tends to correspond with organizational lines of authority and regulated according to the organizational protocols.	Tend to establish clear identifiable boundaries via different mechanisms, including formal and standardized training and recruiting procedures.

Four main criteria (level of hierarchy, size, internal communication patterns and boundaries) have helped to conceptualize the ‘terrorist network’ and to distinguish it from the more “conventional” and “traditional” terrorist organization. The first is the level of hierarchy. Networks tend to be inherently leaderless. While some members have more “social power” than others, especially those with a high level of centrality and/or closeness (access to a large number of the network’s members, or those located in a central position within the group’s social network), there are no formal mechanisms which institutionalize the status gaps between members, nor are there formal routines and protocols that manifest the division of power within the network. [9] Moreover, while division of power within organizations is relatively stable, in networks the situation is more dynamic, and central figures today could quickly become marginal actors tomorrow.[10]

The absence of a clear and stable hierarchy is associated with the size of the group. In general, the larger the group’s size, the more difficult it is to distribute tasks consensually without a high level of hierarchy and formalization of authority (even in organizations where decisions are generated bottom-up).[11] Large groups usually display at least some hierarchical features, which foster formalization of group norms and practices, as well as institutionalization. Hence, the flat nature of terrorist networks eventually limits their ability to expand. Indeed, the size of most terrorist networks does not exceed several dozen members while the more traditional terrorist organizations usually have included between several hundred and several thousand members (e.g., the BR, PLO, IRA and others).[12]

The third criterion refers to patterns of internal communication. In networks, communication between members is informal, and not necessarily regulated or influenced by the functional role of the actors, their formal power or other organizational features. Social relations, which are a product of primordial and previous social ties, have more influence on the patterns of communication within the network. In contrast, within organizations the communication tends to correspond with organizational lines of authority (hence limiting communication between members not sharing the same status or functional role) and is regulated according to the organizational protocols or routines.[13]

Networks and organizations also differ in the way their boundaries are constructed and regulated. Organizations tend to establish clear identifiable boundaries via different mechanisms, including formal and standardized training and recruiting procedures.[14] Networks, in contrast, have more elusive borders, and entrances and exits are in general less costly and more dynamic. In many cases, even the network members themselves, including central ones, have limited knowledge about the exact size of the network, or the identity of all of its members.[15] Moreover, since there is no formal recruiting procedure, the members have a freer hand in engaging in ad-hoc recruitment for specific operational needs.[16] Having recognized the uniqueness of social networks involved in terrorism it is now possible to examine how these characteristics determine their operational capabilities and durability.

### ***Operational Success: A Theoretical Framework***

Terrorist networks employ violence and propaganda in order to promote political and social changes. However, the realization of these changes depends on various factors, many of them unrelated directly to the nature of the group’s actual violent campaign.[17] These include government structure and characteristics; the country’s specific history of violence; various social, demographic and cultural characteristics; the state’s counterterrorism capabilities; and the strength and type of response of opposing ideological factions. Hence, even in cases where political changes are visible following the terrorist group’s actions, in many cases it seems difficult to determine the extent to which the violence initiated by the group contributed to the decision of the government to modify its policies or to promote changes in the socio-political order. This problem is even

more predominant when analyzing the actions of violent networks, many of them active for relatively short periods of time, and lacking political and/or civilian wings which frame the political goals of their struggle.

An effective analogy is to a “firm” that could be highly successful in terms of producing excellent services or products, but generates limited income as a result of various non-related factors, many of them beyond its control. In order to bypass the “measuring success” methodological obstacle, this study will evaluate the group’s operational success and resiliency in terms of its ability to survive and to generate a continuous and systematic campaign of violence; or more specifically, its durability and productivity. Both of these, rather than its ability to bring about desired political changes, appear more related to the group’s characteristics (for more on the distinctions between “effectiveness” and “success,” in the framework of terrorist groups, see Crenshaw, 1981).[18]

What are the factors that are associated with these two dimensions of operational success? The terrorism literature and network-oriented studies provide two sets of variables to consider. The first are the environmental features, involving the relations between the network and its surroundings. These include communal support, access to materials and to operational and human resources, as well as the government’s attitude towards the violent campaign.[19] The second are structural characteristics. The networks’ level of hierarchy, its density, the existence of subgroups and the way they are tied and structured, the number of hubs or the network free scale structure,[20] among other attributes, are expected to be associated with its operational output.[21] The following sections will elaborate on these two sets of factors and the rationale associating them with a network’s durability and productivity

### *Environmental Factors*

The terrorism literature traditionally tends to address the interactions of the terrorist group with its environment in three main contexts: first, in terms of recruitment and mobilizing support[22]; second, in the context of funding (and relations with sponsoring states)[23]; and finally, in the operational context of being able to utilize popular sympathy for the group’s cause in order to facilitate the armed struggle.[24] The latter provides a more comfortable operational environment (access to safe houses, popular logistical assistance, enhancing members’ morale and more). In the current study, these three dimensions have been expanded to portray a more nuanced and context-specific picture of the type and level of intensity of the relations between the network and its environment. As seen in Table 2, five variables are assumed to be associated with the type of environment within which the network operates: (a) the type of relations with the surrounding community; (b) the political authorities’ attitude to the group’s goals and actions; (c) access to funding; (d) access to recruitment resources; and (e) access to operational knowledge. The extent to which each of these environmental resources or characteristics was accessible to, or supportive of, the terrorists’ activities, was evaluated and coded based on a three level scale – *optimal*, *challenging* and *hostile*.

An *optimal* environment includes cases in which: (O1) the majority of the surrounding community is supportive of the network’s violent activities; (O2) the political authorities promote permissive policies—i.e., the government is tolerant or even empathetic to the group’s goals and violence (and as a result does not employ any meaningful counterterrorism measures); (O3) there is stable and continuous access to multiple recruitment sources (social frameworks whose nature and population characteristics lend themselves to recruitment, such as educational, cultural or communal institutions that promote, or are tolerant of the network’s militant views); (O4) access to significant and continuous funding resources (such as sponsoring states, international charity foundations or criminal initiatives that provide substantial revenues to the network or to some of its members); and (O5) access to operational and military knowledge via multiple



members in the network with military or operational experience.

When some of the above conditions are missing or less accessible, the terrorists will have to confront more challenging conditions, and will encounter more difficulties in terms of producing violence and survivability. A more *challenging* environment is thus defined by (C1) a clear division within the surrounding community regarding the network's activities—while it is not clear if the whole community opposes the violent struggle or terrorist activities, it is clear that these are not supported by large parts of the community and that there is significant opposition to violence (in other words, participating in the violent activities provides limited social capital within the community for the network's members); (C2) active CT efforts—while the government is not supportive of the network's activities/goals, limited CT measures are employed as a result of limited capacity or underestimation (or unawareness) of the significance of the threat; (C3) recruitment limitations—the network has access to just one recruitment resource, or random and non-continuous access to multiple recruitment resources; (C4) funding source limitations (e.g., funding is based on one time financial assistance from an external actor; and (C5) operational knowledge limitations—e.g., knowledge is based on the military experience or training of a single member, or based on short-term specific training of several members (mostly for specific scenarios or operations).

Finally, a *hostile* environment is characterized as one in cases in which (H1) the surrounding community is not supportive of the violent campaign of the network; (H2) the government perceives the network's actions or terrorism as a significant threat, and thus employs its full CT capabilities; (H3) the network is based exclusively on self-funding (and the members have no exceptional financial capacities); (H4) there is no significant access to sources of recruitment (thus, recruitment is based solely on the members' close social networks, including extended family and peers); and (H5) the network has no members with previous military or operational knowledge, nor access to training.

The empirical section of this study will examine the role of different types of environments, as well as each of these environmental components, in determining a network's productivity and durability.

### *Structural Factors*

Thus far, attempts to understand the association between the structure of terrorist networks and their operational outputs has yielded limited theoretical insights. Two main methodological tendencies are deemed responsible, beginning with the lack of diversity in the research population of most studies in terms of the groups' structure, origin, ideology and level of success. The usage of relatively small samples (and sometimes just one case study) of networks, originating mostly from one geographical arena or ideological stream, has prevented the utilization of a classic "control" group that would allow effective comparative analysis.[25] The second is the tendency to exclude contextual information about the actors comprising the network from the network analysis itself or vice versa. Hence, many studies rely solely on qualitative analysis of the network's social dynamic and characteristics,[26] or on structural analysis,[27] rarely combining the two in order to obtain a more insightful understanding of the network's nature. The utilization of a relatively large dataset of networks, as well as an amalgam of social network and contextual analysis, will hopefully enable the current study to provide an improved understanding of the relation between networks' structure and their output.

To understand the ways in which the structure of a terrorist network impacts its productivity and durability, we must first determine what attributes we expect the structure to provide in order to facilitate operational success. To begin with, a network should aim to maximize secrecy, thus allowing minimum exposure of its members following an attack. At the same time, the structure should allow the network to maximize its human resources, enabling effective coordination and communication. Finally, we would expect the

structure to have a high level of resiliency to external attacks on the group. Hence, even elimination of some members should not lead to the overall collapse of the network or to significant diminishing of its operational capabilities.

The need to accomplish these objectives has led many to assume that clandestine, illegal networks must balance between “efficiency” (high level of group centrality,[28] i.e., a strong hierarchy and a low number of redundant ties) and robustness (high density,[29] i.e., a high number of redundant ties, low levels of “betweenness”[30] among most actors, and a flat structure).[31] The former minimizes the chances of the network’s exposure because of the limited familiarity and ties between most of the group’s members (i.e., the capture or elimination of one actor should have a limited effect on the overall network). This also enables the formulation of a more coherent operational vision, since the “hub” has effective control of most communication channels (and an extremely high level of betweenness). However, the robustness and high density ensures survival in cases when an actor with a high level of centrality is eliminated, since alternative ties allow the network to maintain operational capabilities and coordination. Moreover, it seems that high robustness facilitates effective indoctrination, a crucial element in the radicalization and socialization of network members.[32]

The association between networks’ density, centrality and their outputs are examined in this study, as well as the association with the network’s tendency to adopt what some have suggested is the way (successful) terrorist networks balance between centrality and density, i.e., adopting a structure that includes a clear division into subgroups that maintain a minimal number of ties between them while having high levels of density within (subgroups oriented structure), resulting in an organizational structure that minimizes chances of entire group exposure (in many cases, the hub’s subgroup serves as a barrier between the different subgroups in order to prevent the creation of unnecessary redundant ties). The terrorist network’s survivability is increased without harming its ability to engage in effective indoctrination and high quality attacks (which involved several subgroups). The fact that the subgroups in the terrorist networks are relatively “independent” also allows the network to overcome internal ideological conflicts more easily, since each subgroup has the prerogative to decide in which operations to participate or which targets to attack.[33]

But is the number of subgroups also important? And since, in some cases, this is a reflection of network size, does the size of the network correlate with its productivity and durability? Potentially, a network’s size and the number of subgroups influence its ability to initiate parallel attacks or sophisticated ones, reflect recruitment potential, and in general, affect operational and logistical flexibility. A particularly high number of cliques (subgroups within the network where every member knows every other member) is associated with higher levels of cohesiveness as well as facilitating coordination and resiliency when the network suffers from elimination of actors (the higher the number of cliques, the higher the chances the surviving members will have enough close and meaningful ties in order to preserve some of the network capabilities). On the other hand, the bigger the network, the more points of contact it has with the environment and external elements, thus augmenting chances of exposure. The association between the number of actors and subgroups and a network’s productivity and durability will be tested to ascertain whether an optimal size (which balances these) can be detected.

If compartmentalization is important for the group’s survival, it seems logical to assume that its effectiveness depends on exactly who the actors are that are being divided. For example, effective separation between the operational actors and the leaders, planners, and coordinators seems to have strong benefits in terms of durability. It makes the latter less vulnerable, less guided by irrelevant considerations (peer pressure), and ensures continuity even if operational failures lead to losing some “operational” actors. On the other hand, concentration of all leaders in one subgroup can potentially harm the long-term survival of the network

since— if it is exposed and removed—the remaining members of the network are left with only attacks already in the “pipeline” and without long term planning capabilities.

Finally, network science—and especially the unique contributions of Laszlo-Barabasi and his associates[34]—have led some scholars[35] to assume that the number of “hubs” as well as free-scale structure may be associated with the network’s survivability. Scale-free structure ensures the resiliency of the network in cases of a random attack, since the chances of elimination of highly connected actors is relatively low, and a high number of hubs ensures that even if eventually one of the hubs has been targeted, other hubs will be able to continue to coordinate the network’s violent efforts.

To conclude, the universe of ideas regarding the ways that structure influences the operational output of networks seems populated with contradicting perceptions regarding the importance of most structural characteristics, as well as limited empirical evidence. The following empirical analysis will strive to provide a more coherent understanding of the association between organizational structure and operational outputs.

**Dataset and Methodology**

The research hypotheses for this article were tested using a dataset containing “social network mapping” and contextual data of 18 networks that were active during the years 1980-2006 in various political, cultural and geographical settings.

*Table 2 – Networks’ Characteristics*

Types of Groups	Durability (Months)	No. of attacks (attacks/durability)	Region	Ideology
<i>Jewish Underground</i>	46	4 (11.5)	Israel/West Bank	Religious/Radical-right
<i>Morocco (late 1990s-2000)</i>	44	22 (2)	Morocco	Religious
<i>Istanbul</i>	25	4(6.25)	Turkey	Religious
<i>Samaria</i>	25	12(2.08)	PNA/West Bank	Religious/Nationalist
<i>Jenin</i>	24	15(1.6)	PNA/West Bank	Religious/Nationalist
<i>Hebron</i>	24	11(2.18)	PNA/West Bank	Religious/Nationalist
<i>Yemen</i>	18	1(18)	Yemen	Religious
<i>Bat Ayin</i>	16	11(1.45)	Israel/West Bank	Religious/Radical-right
<i>9/11</i>	15	3(5)	US	Religious
<i>Jordan (2000)</i>	14	1 (14)	Jordan	Religious
<i>1993 NY network</i>	13	0	US	Religious
<i>Nablus</i>	12	4(3)	PNA/West Bank	Religious/Nationalist
<i>1993 Twin Towers network</i>	12	1(12)	US	Religious
<i>Hofstad</i>	11	0(0)*	Netherland	Religious
<i>Amir Network</i>	9	1(9)	Israel/West Bank	Religious/Radical-right
<i>London</i>	9	1(9)	UK	Religious
<i>Madrid</i>	7	1(7)	Spain	Religious
<i>Morocco (mid 2000s)</i>	6	1(6)	Morocco	Religious

\* The killing of Theo van Gogh, by one of the network’s members, was more an individual act rather than part of the long-term plots of the group. Even if we consider this event as an attack by the group, the latter will be still ranked at the bottom in of the list in terms of productivity.

Table 2 provides basic information regarding the networks included in the dataset. As can be seen, seven of the networks were active in the West Bank and Israel. Four were Palestinian networks and the other three were Jewish ones. While active in the same region, they were not operating in fully similar environmental

conditions and were functioning during different time periods. Four other networks were active in European countries, three in Western Europe and one in Turkey. The other networks were active on American soil (three networks), other Middle Eastern countries (two networks) and Africa (two networks). The composition of the dataset was based on information extracted from three main sources. The information regarding the Jewish networks is based on two years of field research conducted between 2004-2005 in the West Bank. This led to the creation of a “Jewish terrorism dataset,” which included mapping of the social relations within the Jewish terrorist groups. Several recently published works[36] deciphering the dynamic and social structures of these groups have already made use of this dataset. The Palestinian networks data is based on the NSSC’s (National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa) “Palestinian Terrorism Dataset”.[37] Finally, the data on the other networks was gathered in the framework of a two-year project funded by the ISF (Israel Science Foundation), intended to analyze the operational and structural dimensions of suicide bombers’ networks worldwide (ISF Grant 827/06). In all these three sources, both the contextual information and the mapping of the networks was based on information extracted from an amalgam of open sources including governmental reports, relevant news and academic articles, judicial proceedings, relevant books, interviews with members of some of the groups, policymakers and representatives of law enforcement forces.

Table 2 also includes measures of the networks’ productivity and durability. Since productivity refers to the capacity of the network to produce violence consistently and frequently, it was measured by the networks’ lifespan divided by the number of attacks it perpetrated. The question of durability however is more complex. While traditionally the tendency of most terrorism datasets is to use the groups’ first attack as the starting point for measuring their life spans as terrorist groups,[38] this could be somewhat deceiving. Social networks are a byproduct of social settings; they are formed naturally in the workplace, between individuals sharing residential areas and in familial frameworks. Under some conditions, these networks become “motivated networks,” when the members agree on identifiable shared goals. Thus, terrorist networks do not become ones during or after perpetrating their attacks, but when the members are beginning to move actively towards accomplishing their goal of producing violence. In other words, the social network’s radicalization at some stage is reflected in the shift from ideas to practical activities leading to engagement in violence; at that point, it is no longer a social network per se, but a motivated group with the goal of perpetrating terrorist attacks. Based on this rationale, the durability of the networks was measured between the point in time its members began actively planning and/or preparing their violent attacks until most of its members were arrested or eliminated by the security authorities, or decided to end the network’s violent campaign. As can be observed in Table 2, there is some compatibility between the two variables. Of the six networks which survived two or more years, four showed relatively high levels of productivity (one attack per 2-4 months), and the rest were capable of producing multiple attacks. Of the four networks surviving less than a year, none produced multiple attacks and all needed between half to a full year at least for producing their single attack. In the following sections, a comparative analysis will explore whether high or low productivity and durability are a result of specific environmental or structural characteristics.

### ***Findings: Environmental Factors***

Table 3 provides a summary of the environmental conditions under which the different networks operated, as well as their productivity and durability. To facilitate the analysis and the observation of trends in the data, the networks were organized in descending order based on their productivity. As illustrated here, the most important environmental factor influencing the networks’ operational output seems to be communal support for the network’s activities. Seven of the eight most durable networks and the top five networks in terms of

productivity were active within supportive communities.

Table 3 – Environmental Factors

Network	Durability	Productivity	Government's tolerance – CT Measures	Community	Access to funding	Access to operational knowledge	Access to potential recruitment sources
Bat Ayin	16	11(1.45)	O-C	O	C	O	O
Jenin	24	15(1.6)	H	O	O	O-C	O
Morocco (late 1990s-2000)	44	22(2)	C	O-C	O	O	O
Samaria	25	12(2.1)	C-H	O	O	O-C	O
Hebron	24	11(2.18)	H	O	O	O-C	O
Nablus	12	4(3)	C	C-H	O	C	C
9/11	15	4(3.75)	C-H	C-H	O-C	O-C	O-C
Morocco (mid 2000s)	6	1(6)	C	C-H	C	O	C
Istanbul	25	4(6.25)	H	C-H	C	O	O-C
Madrid	7	1(7)	C-H	C-H	O	C	C
Amir Network	9	1(9)	C	C-H	H	O-C	O-C
London	9	1(9)	H	H	C-H	C	C
Jewish Underground	46	4(11.5)	O	O	C	O	O
1993 Twin Towers network	12	1(12)	C- H	C- H	O-C	O-C	C
Jordan (2000)	14	1-3(4.6)	O-C	C-H	C	O	C
Yemen	18	1(18)	O-C	O-C	O	O	C
1993 NY network	13	0	C- H	C- H	C	C-O	O-C
Hofstad	11	0(0)	H	C- H	C-H	C-O	O-C

O – Optimal; C- Challenging; H-Hostile

Looking specifically at the differences between networks active within the same arena further supports this conclusion. The three Palestinian networks active during the years 2000-2004 in the West Bank (Jenin, Samaria, Hebron; for more in-depth information about the networks see also Pedahzur and Perliger, 2006) [39] operated during the Second Intifada, within a highly dense Palestinian population that greatly supported the suicide attacks’ campaign initiated by these networks. While the data are not always consistent over time, public opinion polls show that 60-70% of the Palestinian population supported a violent struggle, believing that it was more efficient in ending the Israeli occupation than peaceful negotiations. Moreover, attacks against settlers and soldiers were supported by almost 90% of the Palestinians, and in general, around 80% rejected any punishments for activists in terrorist networks.[40] Similar findings were obtained when the polls inquired about the level of support for specific suicide attacks initiated by the Palestinian networks (for example, 75% supported the suicide attack at Maxim Restaurant initiated by the Jenin network).[41] In some cases the popularity of the suicide attacks transformed them into prominent mobilization mechanisms in the competition for popular support among the different networks.[42] In accordance with the theoretical logic presented earlier, the only Palestinian network which operated in a much less supportive environment (the “Nablus Network”, which was active in the city of Nablus in 1996), was also significantly less durable and productive in comparison to the aforementioned three other Palestinian networks. In Nablus itself, the base of operations of the network, less than 30% of the population supported any kind of violent anti-Israeli operations.[43] Furthermore, we can find in 1996 a high level of support for the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) (75%), and for the peace processes in general (68%). Even after the victory of the Israeli right in the May 1996 Israeli general elections, and the appointment of Benjamin



Netanyahu as Prime Minister, the support for violent attacks did not exceed the 40% mark.[44]

The case of the Jewish networks further provides support for the importance of communal support. The two more durable (especially the “Jewish Underground”) and productive (especially the “Bat Ayin” network) Jewish networks enjoyed significant support from within the settler community (both networks were based in West Bank settlements) as well as from their representatives in the political system. This was reflected not only by the supportive response of large parts of the settler community during and after the exposure of the networks—including mass demonstrations, rallies and petitions against any attempt to assume harsh punishments against the networks’ members[45]—but also in surveys conducted during the periods of the networks’ activity showing strong support in the settlers community for violent acts of “self-defense” by Jews and for the release of the networks’ members (60% among the entire Jewish population and 75% among the settlers)[46]. This support and understanding for the networks’ actions is illustrated effectively by the words of an Israeli settler after one of the “Jewish Underground” attacks (as he was quoted by an Israeli journalist): “Since the attack, you can feel the joy here [in the settlements]...it’s about time that the Arabs were repaid for their deeds.”[47]

In contrast, the Amir network, which was neither particularly productive nor durable, was mostly situated geographically in a more neutral area (the city of Herzliya, one of the more liberal and secular cities in Israel). [48] Moreover, the ideological core ideas of the network, which focused on the need to eliminate the Israeli Prime Minister, were much less consensual than the type of ideology and attacks initiated by the two previous networks.[49] Essentially, the Amir network was interested in assassinating an Israeli, who was practically a war hero, and although he was despised by many on the Israeli right, there are indications that very few supported the actual assassination.[50] This was reflected in the inability (or difficulty) of the network to obtain a spiritual approval for its plans from the settlers’ religious leadership,[51] or to expand beyond its core founding clique, although some members had access to significant recruitment resources (such as the students union at Bar-Ilan University).[52] In contrast, the other two networks targeted Palestinians, direct adversaries of the settlers’ population, and acted during times of violent clashes between the two communities (the early 1980s and the second Intifada).

Besides the networks operating in the West Bank/Israel, two other networks showed high levels of durability (the “Istanbul” network) and productivity (Morocco 1998-2002). Both were active in relatively challenging, but not completely hostile communal environments within moderate Muslim countries (Morocco and Turkey). The Moroccan network, lasting for almost four years, was based mainly in the orthodox “Hay El Oulfa” neighborhood of Casablanca, which is known for its poverty, lack of governmental presence and hostility towards authorities. Moreover, one of the network’s leaders, Mohamed Damir, was a prominent figure in the neighborhood (basically a social leader).[53] Hence, while not an optimal environment like those mlieus enjoyed by the Palestinian or Jewish groups, it still provided a relatively safe haven for the network, which was not hesitant about eliminating governmental representatives who challenged its control of the neighborhood.[54] Furthermore, the relatively low-key nature of the network’s operations—mainly assassinations against those who showed Western tendencies and non-Islamic behavior or crime-related activities—facilitated more supportive attitudes from the immediate surrounding environment of the network, and contributed to the limited and delayed governmental response. The Istanbul network was not highly productive, but it was durable. It seems that there are a few elements that can explain the ability of the network to overcome the relatively challenging communal environment. The first is the external logistic and financial support, which limited the need to resort to communal support, as well as the fact that for significant periods of time members of the group were not physically present in Istanbul.[55]

In contrast, governmental attitude seems to have limited influence on the operational capabilities of the

networks. Some of the more durable and productive networks have confronted a hostile regime (Hebron, Samaria, Jenin, Istanbul) while some of the networks active in more convenient environments in terms of governmental response or awareness (Nablus, Yemen, Amir Network, Jordan) were not really productive or particularly durable. Nonetheless, government response has some influence on the durability of networks; none of the networks enjoying permissive political environments was categorized in the lower third in terms of durability.

Lastly, findings regarding the association of operational success and access to funding, recruitment resources and operational knowledge are less consistent. Of the three, access to recruitment resources seems most associated with operational success. This is not surprising as it is somewhat correlated with the level of communal support. Eight of the ten most durable networks and seven of the ten most productive networks had “optimal,” or close to optimal access to recruitment resources. However, two-thirds of the networks included multiple members with military training (although not always of the highest quality, and one was not engaged in operations which demanded military training), while the other third included at least one actor with such expertise. Hence, it seems that operational knowledge is more a pre-condition for the emergence of the network than a factor influencing its durability or productivity. Lastly, funding appears to be associated on some level with durability; six out of the ten most durable networks enjoyed “optimal” funding, and four of the five least durable suffered from limited funding. This tendency is somewhat less prominent when looking at productivity; while six of the seven more productive networks enjoyed “optimal” funding, a high level of funding could also be found in some of the less productive networks.

### ***Findings: Structural Factors***

Naturally, the size of the dataset prevented the use of advance statistical analyses. Nonetheless, some trends are detectable when looking at the association of structural characteristics with the operational success of the networks. In the theoretical framework, the need for clandestine networks to balance between centrality and density was emphasized. Escalating to extreme levels of either one can potentially decrease the network’s survivability and productivity. Indeed, the analysis of the networks’ social structure provides some support for this hypothesis (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Structural Characteristics

	Network's Centrality	Network's Density	Clustering Coefficient	Size	No. of Hubs	Free Scale (%)	No. of Cliques	Size/ No. of Cliques
<i>Bat Ayin</i>	30.667	1	0.622	16	0	40	12	1.333
<i>Jenin</i>	21.209	1.122	0.705	49	3	48.5	118	0.415
<i>Morocco (late 1990s-2000)</i>	13.737	1.296	0.713	24	2	56	5	4.8
<i>Samaria</i>	32.435	1.107	0.991	36	4	50.6	24	1.5
<i>Hebron</i>	33.088	1.64	1.06	36	2	31.6	75	0.48
<i>Nablus</i>	21.013	1.173	0.997	22	1	32.3	8	2.75
<i>9/11</i>	36.565	2.782	1.04	20	0	37.7	0	
<i>Morocco (mid 2000s)</i>	25.271	1.414	1.121	41	4	46.3	10	4.1
<i>Istanbul</i>	39.369	1	0.659	28	6	49.7	13	2.154
<i>Madrid</i>	8.031	1.903	1.23	69	15	52.3	18	3.833
<i>Amir Network</i>	52.381	0.767	1.385	8	1	42.1	2	4
<i>London</i>	19.407	1.274	0.739	16	1	38.3	6	2.667
<i>Jewish Underground</i>	36.097	2.763	2.038	29	4	45.8	14	2.071
<i>1993 Twin Towers network</i>	59.439	2.688	1.844	15	1	40.6	5	3
<i>Jordan (2000)</i>	20.333	1.708	1.343	11	0	35.4	3	3.667
<i>Yemen</i>	31.556	1	0.465	16	0	40.6	4	4
<i>1993 NY network</i>	66.272	2.625	1.901	14	1	36	6	2.333
<i>Hofstad</i>	12.628	1.464	1.017	29	6	48.7	15	1.933

All of the more productive networks except for one (eight of the nine networks that produced multiple attacks, as well as the mid-2000s Morocco network) have a group centrality level of 20-40%, some of them very close to the overall sample average level of centrality (31.08). When looking at the networks that were “one-hit wonders” the picture is significantly more varied. The less durable networks tend to slide into the extremes of very low network centrality (Madrid, Hofstad) or very high network centrality (1993 WTC network, Amir Network). More specifically, the first group of networks’ average centrality is 28.1 with a standard deviation of 8.37 (29.7%) while in the second group the average centrality is 34 with SD of 21.11 (62%). This trend is visible also when looking at durability. The variance in group’s centrality among the ten less durable networks (21.6) is significantly higher than the variance among the nine most durable networks (8.10). This supports the view that “successful” networks balance between the need to develop some level of centralization (mechanism which allows them to preserve a cohesive vision and consensus around the network’s goals, as well as for coordination), and the need to prevent it from becoming an obstacle to organizational flexibility and a potential vulnerability (in cases of penetration and/or elimination of central actors or subgroup).

The findings are less consistent when examining networks’ density. In general, however, density is lower among the more durable and productive networks. The nine more productive networks (those that produced multiple attacks and the mid-2000s Morocco network) had an average density level of 1.39 (.56SD) and only

one of them had a density level higher than 1.7. The findings are similar when examining the association between networks' density and durability. The density of seven out of the eight more durable networks was under 1.7, while five out of the other ten (less durable networks) had a density higher than 1.7. The former group of networks' average density was 1.3 (.60SD), in comparison to 1.7(.70SD) in the latter group. The findings might reflect that in the dilemma between inflating the number of redundant ties (in order to foster resilience) and, on the other hand, the need to create a more compartmentalized structure with limited redundant ties, the latter structure is more effective in enhancing operational success.

As indicated earlier, some students of terrorist networks perceive the subgroups oriented structural formation as a preferable solution for overcoming the contradictory needs of clandestine networks, and for balancing between robustness (density) and centrality. The findings do not provide support for this contention but actually seem to support the opposite view. In order to assess the closeness of the networks to subgroups oriented structure, the weighted overall clustering coefficient [56] of each network was measured. In general, the more durable and productive networks showed lower levels of clustering. Except for the Jewish underground network, all the eight "leading" networks in terms of durability possessed clustering coefficients of below 1 or close to it, while in the eight less durable networks all but one possessed clustering coefficients of above 1, and some close to 2. This tendency is more prominent when looking at the association between clustering coefficient and productivity; all of the networks perpetrating multiple attacks held clustering coefficients of between 0.62 and 1.22 (average of 1.1), while seven of the nine "one hit wonders" (and the Hofstad group) had a clustering coefficient level higher than one (average of 1.5).

However, while subgroups-based structure is not optimal in terms of durability and productivity, this does not mean that the existence or number of sub-groups are not an important factor in determining the network's operational success. The findings suggest that the relative (to the group's size) number of cliques within a network is highly associated with both durability and productivity. Among the nine more productive networks (as defined earlier) the average level of clique proportion (number of cliques divided by the network size) was 1.94 (the smaller the number, the higher the proportion of cliques in terms of network size) in comparison to 3.05 among the less productive networks. While the sample size is not optimal, ANOVA analysis confirmed the statistical significance of the gap between the two groups ( $F=3.158^*$ ). The same finding, although somewhat weaker, could be seen when viewing the relationships between durability and number of cliques (2.09 level of cliques proportion among the durable networks—i.e., surviving more than a year—versus 2.89 among the less durable networks).

Finally, while no visible association was found between tendencies toward scale-free structure or number of hubs and operational success, it seems that size is important. The more productive and durable networks include more than 20 members (except for the Bat-Ayin network). Among the less productive networks (the "one-hit wonders") we can find a relatively high portion of networks with fewer than 20 members (Amir network, London network, Jordan network, Yemen, and both 1993 NY networks; the Hofstad and the Madrid networks are the exceptions).

### ***Conclusion***

Homegrown and relatively independent terrorist networks do not survive for long. Just two of the networks analyzed in this study survived in practice for more than two years, and none of them exceeded the five-year mark. Nonetheless, some of the networks were clearly more successful than others. Is it possible to portray the main characteristics of a successful terrorist network? The findings presented above provide at least a starting point for discussion. To begin with, the operationally effective networks generally operate within

supportive and homogeneous communities, tolerant of the violent struggle. Under these conditions, the social frameworks of the community become effective and accessible recruitment resources. Hence, while in most of the networks, the core subgroup is based on family ties or other primary social ties, the operational capabilities and longevity of the networks are determined by their success in expanding the core primordial social network and using the recruitment resources to expand the network, build potential new subgroups (in most cases these subgroups are social networks which were formed within the original recruitment resources, such as educational institutions, religious establishments, residential neighborhood and others) and recruit potential perpetrators (in the case of the more durable suicide attacks' networks, using mostly marginal actors for operational reasons; see more in Pedahzur and Perliger, 2006).

Less encouraging is that the findings suggest that the level (and types) of counter-terrorism measures employed by the state do not have a consistent impact on the productivity or durability of networks. Nonetheless, since the networks operated in different time periods and in different regions, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the findings regarding the current capabilities of Western democracies in countering homegrown networks. In addition, the findings of course do not consider the many networks which never materialized as a result of counter-terrorism policies or operations. The findings also suggest that perhaps the answer is in focusing counter-terrorism measures on prevention of proliferation of material and operational "capital." While funding and operational knowledge/training are not strong predictors of operational success, they appear to be potential preconditions for the formation of the networks and for network's shift from ideological radicalization stage to the operational/behavioral stage.

When looking at the structural characteristics that differentiate the successful from the less successful networks, it seems that the most important elements are the ability of the successful networks to balance effectively between cohesiveness and flexibility while preserving their dynamic nature. Successful networks obtain enough hierarchy (level of centrality) to ensure effective coordination and cohesive operational vision, and on the other hand, provide enough freedom and flexibility to its members and subgroups—a practice which ensures survival when some parts of the network become dysfunctional. Successful networks are also potentially highly dynamic. They have a relatively high portion of overlapping cliques, and each member is affiliated to several cliques. Thus, when the network is under strain, even if some complete subgroups have been eliminated or isolated, the remaining members have the potential to form alternative subgroups. This also explains the absence of "small world structure" among the successful networks, as this actually limits the number of potential subgroups or cliques the single member can be affiliated with. Moreover, the existence of a high portion of overlapping cliques reflects the capability of a successful network to effectively integrate the subgroups recruited from the different recruitment resources.

The current study represents an exploratory attempt to provide some insight into the factors influencing terrorist network's durability and productivity, by looking at the structure and characteristics of a relatively high number of networks originating and operating in different settings. While this study is one of the first to implement a comparative approach for the investigation of terrorist networks, some limitations should be kept in mind when evaluating the findings. First, some of the networks analyzed could be seen as "sleeper cells" rather than "authentic" independent or homegrown networks, mainly the 9/11 and the Yemen networks. Although these two networks included "local" members, it could be argued that their success or failures were related to their type and nature of ties to AQ central. Nonetheless, even the omission of these networks could not have significantly changed the main findings. Another problem is a great difficulty in assessing the exact level of support for the different networks within the surrounding community. This is especially true when dealing with networks that existed for short periods of time. Finally, mapping the social networks of the different terrorist networks is based on a static "snapshot" of the network's structure.



Although in some of the networks, there is evidence that limited changes occurred over time (e.g., the Amir Network, or Palestinian networks), it could be assumed that this was a limitation in some of the more dynamic networks structure-wise.

The current research points out several promising paths for future research. These include more deeply studying the interplay between environmental and internal factors contributing to the productivity and durability of terrorist networks and looking at indicators of dynamic structure as potential predictors of durability. Another important future path for research is extending the theoretical framework on productivity and durability to a new spectrum of violent groups to include cults and networks that are part of a larger social movement (e.g., ELF, Neo-Nazi groups etc.). Finally, and perhaps most important, there is a need to consider the role of ideology in the outputs of terrorist networks. To illustrate, can we identify specific relationships between operational patterns and ideological objectives, which eventually also impact on the durability and productivity of terrorist networks? Are some ideological goals actually more prone to short term campaigns and limited violence? The answers to these questions can clarify whether or not maximizing productivity and durability are constant across ideological lines or not.

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[26] Vidino, 2007.

[27] Krebs, 2002.

[28] Degree centrality of an individual actor is the ratio of each actor's actual ties to his potential ties (Freeman, Roeder and Mulholland 1980), or simply put, the level of is connectedness to other actors. The concept of group centrality in this article reflect the tendency of the group to adopt a "star network" in which the

majority of the actors are connected to one member (hub) while have limited ties between themselves (Wasserman and Faust, 1994 chapter 5).

[29] Density is usually defined as the sum of the values of all ties divided by the number of possible ties. That is, with valued data, density is usually defined as the average strength of ties across all possible (not all actual) ties within the network (Freeman, Roeder and Mulholland 1980).

[30] “Betweenness” assists in identifying those actors who connect between subgroups or lone actors within the network (Borgatti 2005:59-60).

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[39] Pedahzur and Perliger, 2006.

[40] See for example: <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2001/p3b.html>; <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2002/p5a.html>; NSSC datasets. In some surveys two questions were presented – support in terrorism and support in armed attacks. Naturally, the latter enjoyed higher levels of support, reflecting that while refusing to call it terrorism, still the majority supported the armed struggle.

[41] See <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2003/p9a.html>.

[42] See Bloom, 2004; Pedahzur and Perliger, 2006.

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[44] See <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll22b.html>; <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll24b.html>; <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll25a.html>.

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## II. Research Notes

### The Importance of Financing in Enabling and Sustaining the Conflict in Syria (and Beyond)

by Tom Keatinge

#### *Abstract*

*The availability, sources, and distribution of funding are critical issues to consider when seeking to address an on-going conflict such as the one we are witnessing across Syria and Iraq. In the Syrian case, whilst funds from states such as Russia, Iran, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Qatar support various elements, a key factor to consider in addressing extremist groups is funding provided by private donors, some of whom are attracted by the concept of 'jihadi finance', seeking the honour and reward of waging jihad by proxy. This article reviews the importance of financing for insurgent groups, focusing in particular on the highly influential enabling role played by private donor financing in the current conflict in Syria, as well as the sustaining role of the war economy as the conflict spreads. Finally, it considers whether, in its fourth year, this conflict can still be influenced by targeting sources of financing.*

**Keywords:** *Terrorism finance, Syria*

#### *Introduction*

The Syrian conflict has drawn support in the form of weapons, spare parts, supplies, and fighters from across the globe. But most importantly, the conflict has been enabled by the ready and generous supply of financing provided by a broad array of states and private individuals and it is sustained by the development of a highly lucrative war economy. It is thus not an exaggeration to say that financing is extremely important to all parties in the conflict, and that the availability of financing has substantially influenced the course the conflict has taken thus far.

Perhaps more so than in any other recent conflict, financing from private individuals, believed to run into the 'hundreds of millions of dollars,'[1] has played a major role in support of rebel groups, shaping their actions, alliances, and agendas. Private donor financing is attractive for rebel groups as it often comes with limited associated conditions beyond the need to espouse an appealing and attractive ideology often tending toward the more extremist. This financing is particularly important for groups with no access to the largesse of those Middle Eastern and Western states that have chosen to back the less extreme elements amongst the rebel forces. And as long as the Assad regime receives supplies of fighters, weapons, spare parts, and finance from Russia and Iran,[2] the level of financial support received by the rebel groups needs to balance that if they are to have any chance of prevailing.

Furthermore, as the conflict matures and spreads across the border into Iraq, and as regional governments and international agencies seek to control and restrict external sources of financing, the emergence of the war economy is playing an important supplementing role. Taxation and trade, such as the sale of oil, allows groups—particularly the newly-styled Islamic State (IS)—to establish a significant level of self-reliance and financial autonomy. Thus, regardless of the source of the financing that fuels the conflict, as it grinds through a fourth year, its outcome will be substantially determined by the continuing supply of funding.

In assessing the importance of financing in both sustaining and restricting the conflict in Syria, this Research

Note will first review the importance of raising finance in any armed conflict, a process that has become more challenging for non-state actors in the past 25 years since the end of the Cold War. This discussion will then examine the sources of support and financing for the Syrian conflict with a focus on the significant contribution of private donors, including the key enabling role played by Kuwait along with the critical motivational factor of ‘financial *jihad*’. As the shape of the conflict has evolved and as the battle has matured and extended across the border into Iraq, the importance of the ‘war economy’ as a sustaining factor has increased. It is thus essential to consider this development as a key element in the financial balance between the various warring factions. And finally, this Research Note will consider whether disrupting or controlling the flow of finance can have a material impact on the shape and direction of a conflict that has no discernible end in sight.

### ***The Importance of Financing***

The belief that financing is an important ingredient of any struggle is certainly not new – in his series of Philippic speeches the Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) observed that ‘The sinews of war [are] a limitless supply of money.’[3] Since the end of the Cold War the extent to which groups seeking to mount a meaningful armed struggle have had to raise funding themselves rather than rely on benevolent state sponsorship has markedly increased. With the notable exception of Hezbollah through its connection with Iran, organisations seeking to progress from a hand-to-mouth existence to a more planned and organised model must now work much harder to acquire the income required to source arms, build recognition, and sustain support.[4] Even those groups that have enjoyed a measure of state sponsorship have had to be financial managers as well as military experts. For instance, in the mid-1970s the Italian Red Brigades had an annual funding need of US\$ 8-10 million, equivalent at that time to the turnover of a medium-to-large-sized company operating in Northern Italy,[5] whilst the PLO established itself as a quasi-state, levying taxes and earning as much as US\$ 600 million per year by the mid-1980s.[6]

Finance is an existential determinant of success as it creates the ‘enabling’ environment that allows states to arm themselves and opposition groups to mount a credible, threatening, planned, and organised strategy. The importance of funding can be seen in the extent to which financing and fundraising capabilities are at the heart of the operations of insurgent and opposition groups as they closely protect their key financiers, roles often held by fighters who are ‘imported’ or who have notable international experience. Their significance is also reflected in the effort put into apprehending or eliminating these individuals by security agencies.

Well-funded groups in the Syrian conflict share key characteristics. They can generally act independently, progressing their own or their donors’ ideology and developing patronage networks, particularly across the Middle East. They can more easily attract fighters, particularly those who are unemployed and without money. Finance may also allow them to poach fighters from less well-funded groups. Thus, well-funded groups are able to benefit from a reinforcing cycle that gives them the strength of numbers and weapons to target and control financially strategic hubs in order to maximise their benefit from the war economy, leading to further benefits as they increase their financial resources. And, perhaps of greatest concern to international security services, well-funded groups most often espouse a hard line ideology.[7]

In short, financing has played a dominant role in shaping and sustaining the Syrian conflict, as state-sponsorship from Iran and Russia maintains the Assad regime, while external financing determines the *modus operandi* of rebel forces, driving alliances, splits, and ideologies. Furthermore, the availability and sources of financing impact on strategy. Forces are deployed to target or protect revenue opportunities such as oil fields, key arterial roads and centres of commerce: for example, witness the tactical success of IS and its



rapid territorial gains. The conflict in Syria has lasted over three years because of the availability of financing, so restricting these funds is a major key to ending the conflict. Certainly President Obama was of this view when he noted in his January 2014 *New Yorker* interview that ‘...our best chance of seeing a decent outcome at this point is to work with the state actors who have invested so much in keeping Assad in power – mainly the Iranians and the Russians – as well as working with those who have been financing the opposition...’[8]

### *Sources of Financing (and Support)*

The key sources of rebel financing and support include state sponsorship from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, the West, and Israel, strongly supported by private donors from across the Middle East.[9] Saudi Arabia and Qatar are the main financiers, with Qatar also providing payments to defectors as well as significant media support via al-Jazeera.[10] Although Turkey’s previously robust support for the overthrow of Assad is fading, fighters, weapons, and supplies continue to cross its border into Syria, with oil and other products sold to finance the rebels coming the other way.[11] This apparently liberal approach to border security has had a particular impact on the growth of the number of foreign extremist fighters in Northern Syria. Contrast the state of affairs in the northern border regions of Syria with the picture in the south where tighter border control is maintained by the Jordanians and the prevalence of extremist rebel groups is far more limited.[12] One (perhaps less expected albeit limited) provider of financing is Israel, which funds certain groups out of practical expediency, paying for information and intelligence on extremist groups operating near its border. [13] In addition to the intentional supply of finance and weapons, countries supporting the opposition also provide a good flow of regional and Western foreign fighters, displaying a mixed ability and willingness to control this flow. In turn, as is well known, Iran and Russia provide the Assad regime with significant support, all of which is critical to the regime’s survival but some of which, particularly aircraft spare parts, and perhaps most importantly fighting experience and tactical support, ensures that the regime will be able to resist all but the most co-ordinated of rebel attacks.[14]

### *Finance and ‘Proxy’ Jihad*

In considering the role played by finance in the Syrian conflict, in particular the contribution of private donations to rebel groups, it is important to illuminate one of the key motivations for private financial donations, namely ‘financial *Jihad*’.[15] The Qur’an provides motivation, emphasising the importance of giving generously to the cause of *Jihad*, linking voluntary, charitable contributions to a war effort.[16] The most common method of contribution is ‘*Tajheez al-Ghazi*,’ simply defined as fitting or arming a soldier. This allows those who cannot, or will not, join the *Jihad* physically for whatever reason, to achieve the honour and heavenly reward of waging *Jihad* by proxy. Donations and sponsorship are encouraged, for ‘Whoever arms a *Ghazi* then he would be considered a *Ghazi*, and whoever looked after the family of an absent *Ghazi*, he will too be considered a *Ghazi*’ (Bukhari 2630). Today, more popular than shields, armour, and horses is money, which is paid to individuals aspiring to make their way to *jihadi* theatres.

An example of this process in action, linked to the Syrian conflict, is the *Ramadan Campaign* conducted in Kuwait in 2013. It involved 19 leading public, religious, and political figures and aimed ‘to prepare 12,000 jihadists for the sake of Allah.’[17] The campaign posters promised that a donation equivalent to US\$ 2,500 would prepare one fighter for battle. One evening event in the campaign raised US\$ 350,000. Further examples include: the campaign reported by the *New York Times* and run by a Syria-based Saudi sheikh close to al-Qaeda, called ‘Wage Jihad With Your Money’ in which donors were told that they would earn ‘silver status’ by giving US\$ 175 for fifty sniper bullets, or ‘gold status’ by giving twice as much for eight mortar

rounds;[18] and as reported by the *Washington Post* pitches for the US\$ 2,400 needed for the travel, arming, and training of foreign fighters.[19] The importance of financial *Jihad* encourages rebel groups to emphasise their Islamic credentials, thus shaping these groups' strategies to maximize their appeal to those for whom the ideology of the recipient is so important. In this regard, Kuwait has played a key aggregation and channeling role as those who coordinate the raising and transferring of private donations seek a favourable environment in which to operate.

### ***Private Donors, Kuwait, and the Syrian Conflict***

In light of the significant role private donors have played in enabling the conflict, it is worthwhile considering this source of funding more closely. In the first instance, it is important to acknowledge that the generosity of these regional donors is primarily driven by their desire to support the humanitarian work underway in Syria. Yet a substantial portion has clearly been used to establish and support armed groups. The creation of these armed groups was arguably motivated initially by the noble desire to shorten the war and thus end suffering, but the actual result has been to 'super-empower' radical groups,[20] exacerbate sectarianism, and undermine much of the state-sponsored efforts to influence the conflict's outcome. As one analyst has put it, this funding is helping create 'a self-sustaining dynamic that is totally independent of all the strategic and diplomatic games that are happening and being led by states.'[21] In the context of the flow of private donations to Syria, it is important to take a moment to consider why Kuwait is such a popular origin and conduit for private donor funding. One critical reason is the condition of the country's illicit finance regulatory regime.

At the heart of the global effort to counter illicit finance is the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), founded in 1989 by the G-7 to inform and guide the global effort to combat money laundering by the criminal narcotics industry. Following 9/11 when President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13224 launching 'a strike on the financial foundation of the global terror network' to 'starve terrorists of funding,'[22] FATF was the natural vehicle to use. It quickly produced 9 Special Recommendations to supplement the existing forty,[23] and over the following years organised regular evaluations to determine the extent to which countries complied (or not) with these 49 Recommendations.

In 2010, Kuwait underwent its most recent FATF mutual evaluation. It revealed 'many shortcomings,' particularly in relation to countering terrorist finance, including a complete lack of the criminalisation of terrorist financing, no established national Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), and no implementation of the relevant UN terrorist-financing conventions and Security Council resolutions.[24] Of FATF's 49 Recommendations, Kuwait was 'partially' or 'not compliant' with 37, a 75% failure rate. In contrast, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain were 'partially' or 'not compliant' in 19 and 25 categories respectively.[25]

Kuwait's shortcomings at that time were underlined in leaked U.S. State Department cables from late 2009 which revealed frustration at a lack of inclination to 'take action against Kuwait-based financiers and facilitators,' noting that 'groups continue to exploit Kuwait both as a source of funds and as a key transit point.'[26] Although Kuwait finally introduced more internationally acceptable terror-finance legislation in 2013,[27] some believe Kuwait is less than serious about delivering on its commitment, exemplified by the appointment in January 2014 of the Salafist and former MP Nayef al-Ajmi as Justice Minister and Minister of Islamic Affairs and Endowments. Al-Ajmi openly confirms on Twitter that the struggle in Syria is a legitimate Jihad and appears to be associated with fundraising for extremist rebels and others in Kuwait such as fellow clan member Shafi al-Ajmi, who espouse support for the ideology of these extremist groups.[28] FATF also remains to be convinced of Kuwait's genuine progress, noting at its plenary meeting in February, and again

in June, that ‘certain strategic Anti-Money-Laundering /Countering Financing [of]Terrorism (AML/CFT) deficiencies remain’ in Kuwait’s standards and procedures, placing it in uncomfortable company alongside Afghanistan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.[28] These remaining deficiencies are considerable, and were almost certainly at the core of comments in March 2014 by David Cohen, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the U.S. Department of Treasury, when he said ‘Our ally Kuwait has become the epicenter of fundraising for terrorist groups in Syria.’[30]

This statement is supported by the comprehensive December 2013 Brookings report *Playing with Fire* by Middle East journalist Elizabeth Dickinson.[31] The report chronicles the broad range of fundraising activities undertaken by a number of high profile Kuwaiti clerics and politicians in an environment where charities are either autonomous or only lightly regulated. As highlighted by the report, although fundraising is now more covert, during the first two years of the conflict campaigning for funds was undertaken publicly via social media. Bank account details were often freely and openly displayed online, and fundraising events were held by tribes and public figures using typical NGO target tactics to encourage donations for specific goals such as weapons and fighter costs. Thus, although Kuwait–unlike regional neighbours–does not publicly back arming rebel groups, it has appeared reluctant to interfere with those individuals who choose to do this despite the recent introduction of its new counterterror finance law.

### ***The Role of the War Economy: A Sustaining Factor?***

Whilst sovereign and privately-sourced funding has allowed Syria’s conflict to flourish and persist, the maturity of the conflict means that the establishment of a viable war economy risks providing a sustaining source of finance that the international community is far less able to control or influence. The expansion of territory controlled by IS across Syria and Iraq is indicative of the power that groups can derive from the war economy as they control key financial nodes such as arterial roads, business districts, and oil fields.

Syria’s economy has been set back generations by the conflict. The UN describes how the ‘wholesale de-industrialisation of the economy has precipitated a destructive restructuring of the economy’ as the country’s core industries of mining, manufacturing, construction, internal trade, transport and communications, and finance and real estate services have been destroyed.[32] It is estimated that 40% of the country’s GDP has been eliminated. For example the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that Syria now produces a mere 25,000 barrels of oil per day, down from 400,000 before the conflict began.[33] Every economic measure tells a story of destruction and loss: the currency has devalued by 75% and national foreign exchange reserves have been reduced from US\$ 20 billion to US\$ 5 billion as the Assad regime seeks to continue to finance as much of the state as it can whilst income to its coffers dries up.[34]

Yet perversely, the longevity of the conflict is helping the development of the war economy, creating sources of revenue that may replace state and private funding that is discouraged or interrupted. Some activities, particularly oil extraction and agriculture remain operational to a limited extent. These activities are divided across territory controlled by the various fighting factions and thus the spoils and revenues benefit different groups. This division of assets creates some unexpected liaisons of convenience. For example in Northern Syria, both Jabhat al-Nusra and IS have captured and control oil fields but not refineries, meaning that to profit from the oil they either transport it out of the country or sell it to the regime which still controls and operates refineries and needs this fuel to continue to support what little of the economy is still functioning. [35]

Furthermore, new businesses are being established to meet the need to import goods previously produced domestically – the lack of foreign exchange combines with this import need to create a profitable foreign

exchange black market. International sanctions placed on the banking sector also encourage valuable business opportunities for barter, smuggling, and other trade outside formal corridors.[36] Local taxation schemes have been established in areas controlled by rebel forces, and the government has diverted to the war effort funds that are saved from no longer needing to provide services such as schools and salaries to many government employees, particularly in areas no longer under government control. The government can also save money on food imports, as the exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries means that the regime has three million fewer citizens to feed and in many areas can leave the provision of food and basic services to aid agencies.[37]

And for the Assad regime, the war economy brings a further benefit as it creates division amongst the fighting factions as groups struggle with each other for control of lucrative business rather than uniting to fight the regime. For example it is reported that ‘criticism accompanied the...creation of the Syria Revolutionaries’ Front (SRF) which was decried as nothing more than a collection of thieves with some rebel leaders apparently dedicating as much of their energies to kidnappings, robbing food convoys, and smuggling as to the fight against the regime.’[38]

Ultimately, national economic collapse has created for some, a profitable, informal, rent-seeking opportunity much of which is based on criminal enterprise and an economy of violence, but which has brought stability to many areas albeit at the hands of crony businesses. To underline the extent to which the war economy is the ‘new normal,’ the currency, although significantly devalued, has experienced prolonged periods of stability in 2014.[39]

### ***Can Disrupting Financing Restrict the Conflict?***

Whilst some hope that the economic restrictions and sanctions applied by various members of the international community—such as the European Union, US, and Arab League —might force the government to negotiate, in reality it would seem that the economic support of allies such as Iran and Russia (for example a US\$ 3.6 billion credit line from Iran for the import of oil and medicine) will sustain the regime.[40]

So what can be done? On top of the existing sanctions regimes in place, specific steps have been taken by various countries with the aim of restricting the flow of funds into the Syrian conflict. Kuwaiti authorities introduced a new law on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism in 2013: terrorist financing is now criminalised and terrorist assets can now be frozen. Furthermore a fully independent Financial Intelligence Unit has been established. Measures have also been put in place to control the activity of *Hawala* and cash courier networks by requiring the declaration of currency and negotiable financial instruments upon leaving Kuwait.[41] Saudi Arabia has issued a royal decree promising harsh prison sentences in order to counteract clerics that urge the giving of support in the form of funds and fighters to extremists in Syria[42] while the UAE has recently introduced tough penalties, including death, for those found undertaking, supporting, or financing terrorist acts.[43] Yet these measures are directed against terrorism, not against jihad and as long as the borderline between these two concepts has not been drawn clearly, they are likely to remain of doubtful value.

Beyond the Middle East, authorities are seeking to restrict and control financial flows to the conflict. Charities in countries such as the U.K. are under greater scrutiny[44] and the U.S. Department of Treasury regularly designates and sanctions entities and individuals it believes to be funding designated terrorist organisations or facilitating the circumvention of sanctions applied against the Syrian regime.[45] These flows can be considerable as demonstrated by the U.S. Department of Treasury designation of Abd al-Rahman bin ‘Umayr al-Nu’aymi in December 2013, accused of funnelling US\$ 600,000 to al-Qaeda in Syria.[46] More

generally, international authorities can also use 'off-the-record' means to restrict financial flows by indicating to banks that certain of their clients are being investigated for facilitating the conflict – as a result, clients subject to such suspicions may quickly find that banking services are withdrawn, and in some cases, accounts closed. And finally, humanitarian assistance can be collected through state-sponsored or state-recognised channels such as the UK's Disasters Emergency Committee, negating the need for private gatherings and distributions.

But will these steps have an effect? Whilst financial arm-twisting has been used on the rebels previously to secure attendance at the Geneva 2 talks in January 2014,[47] the ability of the international community to influence the direction of the conflict via financial means will need a much greater level of co-ordination. Even then, it is likely that the glacial pace with which the financing issue has been addressed has significantly reduced the possible effectiveness of future action as an increasing proportion of these groups' financing comes from sources such as the war economy, beyond the reach of the international community. Furthermore, supporters of the opposition are seemingly unable to agree on an escalation strategy, and are in conflict with each other,[48] while Russia and Iran are apparently willing to continue their level of financial and material support. Unless diplomatic efforts can reduce this input, restricting rebel finances will merely tilt the battle in favour of the Assad regime.

Whilst the importance of financing as an enabling and sustaining factor remains, the apparent failure of the international community to grasp this importance in a timely fashion means that its ability to influence the course of the conflict via restricting and disrupting financing has become severely reduced.

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**Special Research Notes Section: Bart Schuurman, Guest Editor****Using Primary Sources for Terrorism Research: Introducing Four Case Studies****by Bart Schuurman**

Several years ago, Magnus Ranstorp lamented the paucity of publications that critically assess the state of the art in the study of terrorism.[1] A glance at the books and articles published since 9/11 does indeed reveal that such assessments are relatively few in number.[2] These however, are often damning in their critique. Emblematic in this regard is the oft-encountered quote attributed to Michael Howard, a *doyen* of the study of terrorism, who once commented that the field had ‘been responsible for more incompetent and unnecessary books than any other outside ... of sociology. It attracts phoneyes and amateurs as a candle attracts moths’.[3] More recently, Marc Sageman, one of the leading contemporary terrorism scholars, has argued that terrorism research was in a state of ‘stagnation’; despite all the funding that had become available since 9/11 and despite the massive increase in books and articles published on the subject, our understanding of the phenomenon has failed to make significant strides forward.[4] While other internationally-renowned scholars, like John Horgan, Jessica Stern, Alex Schmid and Max Taylor have countered with several examples of evidence-based research that have indeed advanced our understanding of terrorism, Sageman’s polemic at the very least raises some important issues.[5]

One of the problems that Sageman addresses is academics’ lack of access to reliable and detailed data on terrorism. Government agencies frequently possess such information but security concerns prevent them from sharing it, leaving researchers to rely too often on much less detailed and reliable open sources such as newspaper articles.[6] The problem of overreliance on secondary sources of information has been one of the longest-standing issues to affect the study of terrorism.[7] Despite signs of a trend away from reliance on secondary literature and a greater use of primary sources[8], and notwithstanding the encouraging finding that the secondary data problems does not appear to affect all aspects of terrorism research equally[9], much remains to be done. One of Sageman’s suggestions is to produce ‘thick descriptions’; primary sources-based accounts of terrorist groups and incidents that can function as a foundation on which to build and from which to test hypotheses empirically.[10] It is towards this goal that the four Research Notes in this issue hope to make a modest contribution.

The first three articles present rich and detailed descriptions of homegrown jihadist groups in Western countries. These are the Dutch ‘Hofstadgroup’, the German ‘Sauerlandgruppe’ and the large Australian network that became the focus of ‘Operation Pendennis’—that country’s biggest terrorism investigation to date. The fourth article looks at a very contemporary phenomenon, describing the backgrounds of Dutch jihadists who travelled to Syria as “foreign fighters”. All four pieces rely strongly – but not exclusively – on a detailed examination of primary source material. The Hofstadgroup case study utilises police files and interviews with both government stakeholders involved in the investigation and some former group participants. The piece on the Sauerlandgruppe builds on the German court verdict while the Research Note on Operation Pendennis utilises the minutes of courtroom proceedings, court verdicts and interviews with public prosecutors. Exploring the background of Dutch foreign fighters was done on the basis of interviews with several individuals who had observed with their own eyes the changes that these aspiring jihadists went through before journeying to Syria.

The process of gaining access to the primary sources used in these four articles was instructive in several ways. To begin with, the process was distinctly time-consuming. Another problem was that the terms of use

stipulated by the data's owners (usually a government) were sometimes restrictive to an unfortunate (and in our view, unnecessary) extent. This is most apparent in the article on the Sauerlandgruppe, where the author had access to a considerable amount of data gathered by the German police but was ultimately not allowed to use them directly in the Research Note presented here. Despite such setbacks, it was encouraging to realise how much was possible with persistent attempts to gain access. Although it was not always a straightforward process nor was it always clear how and where to apply for permission to use certain files, and although finding interviewees and convincing them to cooperate was especially challenging, patience, perseverance and a portion of good luck more often than not led to a positive outcome.

On behalf of all the authors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals involved in facilitating our access to the sources mentioned above. A special word of thanks goes out to the interviewees for their time and willingness to help. We hope that readers will find these pieces useful as resources for their own studies on contemporary homegrown jihadism and the foreign fighter phenomenon. Finally, we would like to thank the editors of *Perspectives on Terrorism* for providing us with the opportunity to put together this special Research Notes section.

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## A History of the Hofstadgroup

by Bart Schuurman, Quirine Eijkman and Edwin Bakker

### *Abstract*

*This Research Note provides a chronological overview of the most important events that occurred during the 2002-2005 existence of the Dutch Hofstadgroup. This group is frequently cited as a leading example of the 'homegrown' jihadist threat that arose in Europe from 2004 onwards. Despite this status in the literature, a detailed and above all primary sources-based account of the main developments of this group has so far been missing. With this contribution, the authors hope to provide fellow researchers with a useful resource for their own work on the Hofstadgroup and homegrown jihadism more broadly.*

**Keywords:** *homegrown, jihadism, the Netherlands, Hofstadgroup*

### *Introduction*

There is an ongoing need within the field of terrorism studies for rich, detailed and primary-sources based descriptions of terrorist groups and incidents.[1] The value of such accounts is twofold; they provide precise and reliable insights into a particular group, individual or event and those same qualities make them valuable for use as building blocks in other scholars' research. This Research Note provides a thorough chronological description of a well-known example of European 'homegrown' jihadist terrorism by focusing on the Dutch Hofstadgroup's activities during its 2002-2005 lifespan. Ultimately, the authors hope that this description can become a useful resource for other scholars interested in the Hofstadgroup in particular and homegrown jihadism in general. Four specific arguments are advanced for this contribution's relevance.

First of all, numerous publications take the Hofstadgroup or elements thereof as a case study but most do not provide more than a cursory glance at the group's activities and development.[2] Secondly, while some of the studies that do present detailed accounts of the Hofstadgroup are enlightening and informative, the accuracy and reliability of even the best accounts is marred by a reliance on newspaper articles as sources or by a lack of references altogether.[3] Although newspaper articles are a necessary staple in terrorism research as they are frequently the only readily available sources, media reports may be biased, often offer only brief descriptions of events and can be inaccurate.[4] Thirdly, some accounts of the Hofstadgroup betray a less than objective approach to the subject matter.[5] Finally, many existing publications are in Dutch, leaving room in the English literature on homegrown jihadism for a detailed description of this group.[6]

In a more general sense, even though almost ten years have passed since Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Hofstadgroup participant, the group is still a worthy subject of investigation because many aspects of this phenomenon remain contested. The most notable of these concerns the very nature of this group. Although frequently presented as a key or even 'quintessential' example of homegrown jihadist terrorism, closer examination reveals it is more accurately described as an amorphous collective of radicalised young Muslims centered around a hardcore of extremists.[7] Although these extremist elements underwent an organisational and ideological development towards a jihadist terrorist network, this process was never fully completed. Essentially, the arrests of 2004 and 2005 decimated the Hofstadgroup, forestalling its maturation into a full-fledged jihadist terrorist network.[8]

The Dutch police files on the various investigations into the Hofstadgroup are the most important primary sources used in this Research Note.\* Additional information is taken from five semi-structured interviews;

two with former Hofstadgroup participants and three with Dutch government officials who were involved in the Hofstadgroup investigation in some capacity. Although extensive and detailed, these sources also have several drawbacks that must be acknowledged. First of all, both contain their own biases. The police files predominantly document findings that can be used to prosecute the suspects and may therefore underexpose exculpatory evidence. The interviewees might spin stories to present themselves in a more favorable light or they may simply have forgotten relevant facts due to the passage of time.[9] A second drawback is that these sources are not publically available, making it difficult for readers to comparatively assess the present study against others. Thirdly, the conditions for the use of both types of sources stipulate complete anonymity, which means that none of the participants in the Hofstadgroup can be named here—although some of their names are in the public domain. While this decreases the readability of the narrative, this downside is outweighed by the benefits in terms of reliability and detail that these sources accord.

### ***A Clarification of Premises***

Several assumptions underlying this analysis need to be clarified. First of all, the name ‘Hofstadgroup’ is inherently misleading as it was coined by the Dutch secret service, the AIVD, and was not used by the group’s participants.[10] This relates to the second point alluded to earlier, namely that whether or not a recognisable group ever existed, let alone a *terrorist* organisation or network, is a matter of ongoing debate.[11] The use of the ‘Hofstadgroup’ designation is upheld here because it has become the accepted name for this group in the literature. Thirdly, based on the authors’ estimates, the Hofstadgroup encompassed approximately 38 individuals. Included in this number are all of the persons arrested in conjunction with the various criminal investigations linked to Hofstadgroup and those who participated in group meetings at least twice. Naturally this definition of ‘participation’ is contestable, but it provides a suitable starting point for the following discussion. Finally, because space constraints prohibit an exhaustive reconstruction of events, the focus is on the key participants and the most important developments. Topics such as the court cases or descriptions of day-to-day life in the group are not discussed here.

### ***2002: The Hofstadgroup’s Initial Formation***

The earliest references to the Hofstadgroup stem from 2002. Approximately halfway through the year, the group managed to attract the AIVD’s attention, although the intelligence service only labeled them as the ‘Hofstadgroup’ from October 2003 onwards.[12] Little is known about the group’s activities at this point in time, but it appears that group meetings were taking place by the end of 2002. A middle-aged Syrian asylum seeker took a prominent role during these so-called ‘living room meetings’ as a religious instructor.[13] He does not appear to have spoken of the use of violence or participation in jihad directly, yet his teachings conferred a dogmatic and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. This formed a fertile base for some participants’ subsequent radicalisation into a decidedly extremist, pro-violence, interpretation of Islam based primarily on Salafi-Jihadist principles.[14]

These meetings were held in various locations, with an internet café in Schiedam and the residence of Van Gogh’s to-be murderer in Amsterdam being used regularly.[15] A first hint that elements of the group were developing extremist views manifested itself towards the end of the year. In November, one person who would feature prominently in the group’s extremist core supposedly spoke out in favor of a mass-casualty bombing attack.[16] It is interesting to note that initial group formation appears to have been based primarily on pre-existing ties of friendship and not, as some authors have claimed, on active recruitment.[17] Many participants had grown up in the same neighborhoods, attended the same schools or knew each other

through their local mosques.[18] In the words of one former participant, the Hofstadgroup was a 'circle of acquaintances'[19]

### ***2003: Would-be Foreign Fighters and International Connections***

At the start of the year, a prominent Hofstadgroup participant and a friend of his attempted to join Islamist rebels in Chechnya. They were arrested by local authorities just after they crossed the border with Ukraine and were sent back home after questioning. Upon return to the Netherlands they were interrogated further by both the Dutch police and the AIVD.[20] That summer, two other Hofstadgroup participants separately undertook travel to Pakistan where they allegedly met each other for the first time at a Quran school. However, chat messages written after their return and intelligence information paint a different picture; these imply that both underwent or at least sought paramilitary training in Pakistan or Afghanistan. That this trip was more than an opportunity to study Islam abroad is underlined by a farewell letter one of the two young men left for his family, in which he expressed his desire to remain in the 'land of jihad'.[21] The group's 2003 activities underline the importance of contextual factors; principally the 2001 intervention in Afghanistan, the 2003 war in Iraq and, more locally, the example set by two young Dutch Salafists who in 2002 traveled to, and were killed in, Kashmir.[22]

#### *September – October 2003*

These two men returned from Pakistan separately in September. Later that month, AIVD intelligence revealed that one of the Pakistan-goers may have returned on the instigation of an unnamed 'emir' who tasked him with 'collecting balloons'. According to a fellow Hofstadgroup participant, this particular traveler had returned to 'play a match' before Ramadan that year (which began on the 27th of October). Around the same time it was also discovered that this individual, together with the person who tried to reach Chechnya and a third participant in the Hofstadgroup, were in contact with a Moroccan man living in Spain who was sought by the Moroccan authorities for his involvement in the 2003 Casablanca bombings.[23]

The Hofstadgroup participant who had been tasked by the unknown emir, traveled to Barcelona in the first week of October to meet the Moroccan man. While there, he also met an acquaintance of the Moroccan suspect who Spanish authorities believed had ties to the Iraqi terrorist organization Ansar al-Islam. Another Hofstadgroup participant communicated with the Moroccan man via telephone from the Netherlands and apparently received instructions to procure 'a notebook' and 'credit'. Other topics of conversation were 'shoes class 1 and class 2' and 'things that come from Greece or Italy'. The Moroccan suspect also mentioned that he would send a man from Belgium to meet the participant he had been phoning with. Whether this meeting occurred is unclear, although two of the participants who were in contact with the Moroccan individual traveled to Belgium on the 15th of October 2003 for unknown purposes.[24]

On the 14th of October, the Spanish authorities arrested the Moroccan suspect. A day later, the AIVD informed the Dutch public prosecutor's office about the travels to Pakistan/Afghanistan and the Spanish connection. The police arrested five Hofstadgroup participants on the 17th of October. These included the three individuals who undertook travel abroad, two of whom were in contact with the Moroccan man, another person who was also in contact with the Moroccan individual and the middle-aged Syrian religious instructor. House searches turned up books, tapes and digital materials espousing an extremist interpretation of Islam, study notes on martyrdom, an unknown (at that point) person's will expressing a desire to die as a martyr and, in the case of one of those arrested, materials suggestive of an interest in constructing an explosive device. All of the suspects were released at the end of October for lack of evidence.[25]

The police were thus unable to substantiate the possibility that the suspects were planning a terrorist attack or assisting foreign groups or individuals in doing so. Given that two of those arrested had in September and October been trying to encourage other young Dutch Muslims to travel to Pakistan, a likely explanation for the 'emir's' task is that it was to inspire others to make the trip. The communication with the Moroccan suspect in Spain is harder to explain, although possibly the Hofstadgroup participants were providing logistical assistance with acquiring a passport ('notebook') and money ('credit'). What the other terms referred to, and what type of 'match' was to be played before Ramadan remains unclear.

#### *December 2003*

On the very last day of 2003, one of the Pakistan travelers undertook a second journey to that country, this time accompanied by a fellow Hofstadgroup participant. Scarcely more than a week later, on the 9th of January 2004, both of them returned to the Netherlands. The sources provide three different explanations for this rapid return. In the first one, recounted by one of the travelers, the two men visited an Islamic school some forty to fifty kilometers from Islamabad for an 'intake' interview. Once there, they were warned that they could be arrested which prompted the duo to leave the country. The second explanation stems from the two-time Pakistan traveler, who allegedly told witnesses that they were detained by American soldiers in Afghanistan and sent back to the Netherlands. The third explanation comes from a witness, who said that one of the travelers had told him they were detained by unknown persons and given the choice of leaving immediately or being handed over to the local Pakistani authorities.[26]

#### *2003 and the Radicalisation of Van Gogh's To-Be Murderer*

Judging by the tone and contents of his writings and translations, 2003 also saw the man who would murder Van Gogh in November 2004 rapidly embrace more radical and fundamentalist views.[27] This process was accompanied by a withdrawal from 'mainstream' Dutch society; he quit his job, stopped volunteer work for his local community in June and distanced himself from non-religious old friends. Around the same time he adopted the clothing, facial hair style and convictions of a fundamentalist Muslim, leading him to become known as 'the Taliban' among youths in his Amsterdam neighborhood. Of particular interest is the finding that he travelled to Denmark in October. The sources do not reveal what the Hofstadgroup participant did there, but it is possible that he visited a Syrian preacher who lived there. The preacher was a friend of the Hofstadgroup's Syrian religious instructor and occasionally travelled to the Netherlands to visit him.[28]

#### **2004: Individualistic Plots and the Murder of Theo van Gogh**

With the exception of the short second trip to Pakistan, the Hofstadgroup appears to have undertaken very few, if any, communal activities during 2004. Whereas burgeoning collective efforts involving at least parts of the group could be identified in 2003, such as the contacts with the Moroccan suspect and the attempts to encourage other Dutch Muslims to travel to Pakistan, 2004 was characterized by distinctly individualist initiatives. Although the reasons for this change were manifold, including a lack of organizational structure and clear leadership, the importance of the October 2003 arrests in this regard cannot be overlooked.[29] A former participant described the arrests as resulting in an acutely heightened sense of paranoia and a preoccupation with personal safety. This was debilitating to the point that the interviewee designated the Hofstadgroup as being effectively crippled by early 2004.[30] In 2004, the Dutch contribution to the war in Iraq and the terrorist attack in Madrid proved to be important sources of inspiration for the group's most extremist participants to begin considering the possibilities of waging violent jihad in the Netherlands.[31]

*January – March 2004*

While the realization that they were under surveillance dampened group-based activities, a small number of individuals were not deterred. Peters' analysis of the writings of Van Gogh's to-be killer, shows that this participant moved from radical (i.e. not necessarily violent) convictions to distinctly extremist (i.e. clearly pro-violence) ones around March 2004.[32] His ongoing radicalisation into violent extremism would lead him, around the summer of that year, to embrace the view that blasphemers ought to be killed.[33] This provided him with both the motive and the justification for murdering the writer and filmmaker Van Gogh, who was very outspoken in his criticism of Islam and Muslims and often presented his arguments in a coarse fashion.

*April 2004*

Several other notable developments took place before that time, however. On the 8th of April a supermarket in Rotterdam was robbed by two men armed with automatic weapons. Although the suspicion could not be substantiated by concrete evidence, the robbers likely received help getting into the store from one of its employees—the Hofstadgroup participant who tried to reach Chechnya a year earlier. Minutes after the robbers got away with approximately 700 Euros, one of them was arrested and later confirmed as an acquaintance of the store's Hofstadgroup employee.[34] Several Hofstadgroup participants have since claimed that the second robber was also involved in the group and only managed to 'evade' the police because he was in fact an AIVD informant.[35]

*May – June 2004*

On the 18th of May, the police received information which raised the possibility that the supermarket employee was involved in preparations for a terrorist attack. Several weeks later, on the 7th of June, that same individual was captured on security cameras walking around the AIVD's headquarters in Leidschendam, apparently measuring distances by taking equally spaced steps. These events contributed to his second arrest, on the 30th of that month. Among the items encountered in the ensuing house search were photographs, maps and directions, downloaded from the internet, that described the AIVD headquarters, but also the nuclear reactor in Borssele, the House of Representatives, the Ministry of Defense, Amsterdam Schiphol airport and the barracks of the Dutch commando's in Roosendaal. Other finds included a bullet proof vest, firearm components that could be fitted to the weapons used in the supermarket robbery (two magazines and a silencer), electrical circuits, night-vision goggles, household chemicals, fertiliser, documents espousing an extremist interpretation of Islam, jihad 'handbooks' and a hand-written will in the suspect's name.[36]

While indicative of an interest in improvised explosive devices (IED), it should be noted that the electrical circuits and chemicals were everyday, over-the-counter items that had not (yet) been combined into an explosive device or its precursor components. It should also be emphasised that the particular type of fertiliser found turned out to be unsuitable for making an explosive substance.[37] Hence, the suspect does not appear to have had the capacity to construct an actual bomb at that point in time.

Also in June, two other Hofstadgroup participants were found to have inquired about fertiliser at a garden store. Whether this had anything to do with interest in constructing an IED remains unclear. However, it is noteworthy that the individual arrested on the 30th was found in possession of a list of addresses of that particular chain of stores.[38] Secondly, on the 6th of June, two different Hofstadgroup participants, in the company of two acquaintances who do not appear to have been directly involved in the group, traveled to



Portugal.

Following a tip-off likely provided by the AIVD, in which the possibility was raised that the goal of this trip was to commit a terrorist attack during the European soccer championships or to kill former Portuguese Prime Minister Barosso, the four travelers were arrested by the Portuguese police on the 11th and their whereabouts searched. No evidence was uncovered to substantiate any of the terrorism related hypotheses or a later claim by a witness that the trip's goal was to acquire weapons. In light of the lack of incriminating evidence, it may simply have been the case that the Hofstadgroup participant who came up with the idea for the trip in the first place, an illegal immigrant from Morocco, was telling the truth when he stated that he had wanted to benefit from a Portuguese amnesty for asylum seekers. Similarly, there is little to contradict his companions' claim that they went along to enjoy a holiday.[39]

Despite the lack of incriminating evidence, all four travelers were handed over to the Portuguese immigration police on the 14th of June for 'visa irregularities' and sent back to the Netherlands several days later. Upon his arrival at Schiphol airport, the trip's initiator was questioned by the Dutch police. One particularly interesting aspect of this conversation is that he warned the police of a friend of his who, he claimed, spoke a lot of jihad, adhered to the ideology of 'takfir' (declaring other Muslims apostates [40]) and who wanted to join the jihad in Chechnya. This friend would later commit the murder of Van Gogh.[41] What motivated the person being questioned to divulge such information is unknown.

Two other developments round off this overview of the eventful month of June 2004. On the 14th, the mother of two Hofstadgroup participants filed a statement with the police declaring that she and her daughters felt threatened by her two sons' extremist and violent behaviour to the point that they moved out of their own home.[42] Investigations conducted later in 2004 also revealed the 14th of June to be the first day on which an AIVD interpreter leaked confidential information to two Hofstadgroup participants; one of them received a 'weekly report' on the group in June and the other a wiretap in August. The leak was discovered in September 2004 when a Dutch newspaper faxed a part of the weekly report to the AIVD. The interpreter was a prior acquaintance of one of the group's participants, for whom the AIVD employee had bought a travel ticket from Al Hoceima (Morocco) to Amsterdam in May 2003.[43] Why he leaked this information and what, if any, effect the files had on the Hofstadgroup remains unknown.

#### *August 2004*

On the 29th of August, the Somali-born Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali appeared for an in-depth interview on the TV-program 'Zomergasten' (summer guests). As part of the show, a short Islam-critical film she had recently made with Van Gogh called 'Submission, part 1' was broadcast.[44] The film, which contains fragments in which Quranic verses are projected on semi-naked women, was met with either disgust or indifference by the Dutch Muslim community.[45] But among the Hofstadgroup the film evoked some particularly strong reactions, which is perhaps unsurprising as having renounced her Muslim faith, Hirsi Ali was already a particularly hated public figure in Islamist circles.[46]

On the 30th, a message appeared on MSN Group 'Muwahhidin De Ware Moslims' (Muwahhidin The True Muslims[47]). This website was administered and frequented by Hofstadgroup participants, e.g. for the purposes of propagating the increasingly extremist texts written by Van Gogh's to-be killer. It was also used to get in touch with other young Dutch Muslims who held similar ideas or could be persuaded to do so. The message, titled 'The unbelieving diabolical mortada [apostate], Ayaan Hirsi Ali', was posted by an individual on the group's edges. In it, the author claimed that the 'Muwahhidin Brigade' had uncovered Hirsi Ali's residence, proceeded to publish that presumed address in full and also posted a picture of Van Gogh.[48]

A second message followed on the 4th of September and was openly threatening. Writing of Hirsi Ali, the author claimed that 'wherever she hides, death shall find her!'[49]. The messages' author was arrested on the 14th of September.

#### *September 2004*

On the 15th of September, the Dutch police received an anonymous e-mail warning them that two individuals were potentially preparing a terrorist attack. The anonymous source had supposedly been asked by two 'terrorists' to commit attacks in the Netherlands, with the House of Representatives and Amsterdam's red light district as possible targets. Unfortunately, the available sources divulge no further information on this potential terrorist plot.[50] Interestingly, however, one of the two supposed terrorists was an active participant in the Hofstadgroup. In September, he responded affirmatively to a question posted on the website 'TawheedWalJihad' inquiring whether it was a Muslim's duty to kill those who insulted the prophet Muhammad. To substantiate his argument, the Hofstadgroup participant relied on a translation of Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya's argument to this extent. The translation of the influential 14th century Salafist scholar's writings on this subject had been the work of Van Gogh's future killer. The individual acting as an 'online helpdesk' on extremist matters was arrested on the 8th of November because he had issued death threats to Dutch politician Geert Wilders using the aforementioned website.[51]

#### *November 2004*

On 2 November 2004, the Dutch filmmaker and writer Theo van Gogh was murdered while cycling to work in his hometown of Amsterdam. The killer cycled up alongside Van Gogh, shot him several times with a pistol and then tried to decapitate the dead or dying victim with a kukri knife. Without having accomplished this task, he decided to pin a prepared note to the dead man's chest with another knife in which he threatened Hirsi Ali with death. Calmly reloading his HS model 95 firearm, the killer then walked towards a nearby park where a shoot-out with police officers ensued. After running out of ammunition and being shot in the leg, Van Gogh's murderer was arrested. Three other people were also hit by the gunman's bullets; one bystander in the leg, another in the heel of her foot and one police officer in his bulletproof vest. Upon being taken into custody, the killer was told that he was lucky to be alive; he responded that he had hoped to die.[52]

Nine witnesses later reported having seen the killer at different locations along the route Van Gogh usually travelled to work between early October and the day of the murder. Two witnesses, independently of each other, claim to have seen the killer on the 1st of November standing with his bike along Van Gogh's usual route, observing passing cyclists. This implies that Van Gogh's attacker had carefully chosen where to strike and perhaps even that the second of November was not his first attempt to kill the filmmaker.[53]

There has been considerable speculation about the rest of the group's involvement in or knowledge of this premeditated murder. Yet the available evidence indicates that the murder was planned, prepared and executed solely by the attacker himself.[54] Based on his explanation in court, he appears to have been primarily driven by a sense that it was an individual believer's duty to behead those who insulted Allah and his prophet, as Van Gogh had allegedly done with his movie and writings. He took full responsibility for his actions and claimed that he would have done exactly the same had the blasphemer been his brother or father. [55]

Van Gogh's murder was the only actual terrorist attack carried out by a Hofstadgroup participant. By leaving a message threatening Hirsi Ali on his victim's body, and through six other 'open letters' that were to be

published by his compatriots, the killer made clear that his goal was not just to kill the filmmaker, but to use his death to send messages to several audiences; threatening ones to unbelievers and 'apostate' Muslims and inspirational calls to action to what he dubbed the 'Muslim youth'.<sup>[56]</sup> As such, it falls clearly within Schmid's definition of terrorism and cannot be labeled as 'simply' a murder.<sup>[57]</sup>

The authorities responded to the murder by arresting most of the known members of the Hofstadgroup on the day of the murder. Two, however, managed to evade apprehension. One was the middle-aged Syrian man who had provided religious instruction to the group. Aided by several acquaintances, he left the day that Van Gogh was killed, traveling via Belgium and Greece and entering Syria illegally via Turkey. Despite the striking coincidence, the police investigation was unable to ascertain with any degree of certainty whether or not the Syrian man was aware of the murderer's plans. The second participant who got away was a member of what could be dubbed the group's extremist core and who featured earlier as the initiator of the trip to Portugal. Where precisely he went after evading arrest has remained unclear. He may have travelled back to his family in Morocco in November 2004 and spent a considerable amount of time until his arrest in June 2005, probably living in Brussels or possibly in Luxemburg, from where he would occasionally travel to the Netherlands.<sup>[58]</sup>

The most dramatic episode in the arrests of suspected Hofstadgroup members occurred during the early hours of the 10th of November 2004. As a police arrest squad tried to force the door on the apartment of two suspects in The Hague around 02:50 in the morning, they found that it had been barricaded from within and could only be partially opened. The suspects had prepared for the police's arrival and discussed beforehand how to respond to it. Mere moments after the squad's attempt to force entry to the apartment, one of its occupants threw a hand grenade through the crack between door and doorframe, which passed the officers standing on the landing and bounced down the outdoor stairwell to the street where it exploded on the pavement. Moments after realizing a grenade had been thrown at them, one of the police officers fired twice at their attacker, both shots hitting the wall just beside his head. The grenade's explosion injured five policemen, one of them seriously.<sup>[59]</sup>

The arrest squad was forced to pull back and a stalemate ensued that was only ended by the deployment of a military special forces unit at the end of the day.<sup>[60]</sup> Until that time, the two suspects made various phone calls to friends and family, announcing their imminent martyrdom, hastily wrote wills and made several prank calls to the emergency services asking for the police to come and rescue them from the 'masked scary men' surrounding their home.<sup>[60]</sup> They also threatened to blow up the entire street with twenty kilograms of explosives, provoked the officers to shoot them and were seen waving a sword and firearm that would later turn out to be a fake. Towards the end of the afternoon, the special forces operators went into action. After 18 tear gas canisters were fired into the apartment through its windows, the two suspects clambered over their own barricades onto a balcony. Special forces soldiers in an opposite building then ordered them to raise their hands. When one of the suspects appeared unwilling to comply, a warning shot was fired. The suspects were then told to undress and descend into the garden via a ladder. As the unresponsive suspect was observed reaching into his jacket pocket, he was shot in the shoulder. Subsequently, both suspects complied with the soldiers' orders, climbed down to the garden and were taken into custody. No explosives were found in the apartment, but the suspects' pockets did contain three additional hand grenades.<sup>[61]</sup>

### ***2005: From Hofstadgroup to 'Piranha'***

The November 2004 arrests ended what could be called the 'first generation' Hofstadgroup. Yet no more than a couple of months later, from approximately April 2005 onwards, a small group re-emerged that, with regard

to its participants, ideological convictions and practical intentions, was a direct successor to the 2002-2004 Hofstadgroup. This 'second generation' has become known under the name of the police investigation into its activities, i.e. the 'Piranha' group. Despite the separate investigations and court cases, the Piranha group was essentially a continuation of the Hofstadgroup and is treated here as such.

The group's 2005 resurgence was made possible by three factors. First of all, the individual arrested in June 2004 after snooping around the AIVD headquarters was acquitted and released in April 2005. Thus, one of the more extremist individuals in the Hofstadgroup was able to continue his activities. Secondly, another member of the Hofstadgroup's extremist core had evaded arrest in November 2004 and remained at large until his apprehension in June 2005. During this interval, he contributed to the radicalisation of several young women on the Hofstadgroup / Piranha group's edges and strengthened the new group's operational capabilities by procuring three firearms. These two men appear to have formed the new group's main protagonists. Of the remaining nine individuals ultimately earmarked as suspected members of the Piranha group, all but two had been on the original Hofstadgroup's edges. The arrest of most of the original participants seems to have brought these peripheral individuals forward into positions of increased prominence.[62]

From its April 2005 starting point, the Piranha group displayed some interesting differences from its predecessor. Most importantly, there appeared to be a burgeoning sense of hierarchy, tenuous indications of a return to more *group-based* efforts and, importantly, clearer signs that these efforts were in the service of *terrorism related* goals.[63] Under the overall guidance of the individual released in April 2005, some of the participants in the Piranha group appear to have become involved in the development of three potential terrorist plots. The first appears to have been focused on several Dutch politicians, with particular interest shown in Hirsi Ali. The second one had as its target an El Al airliner, while the third envisioned a double strike; first at the AIVD headquarters and then at several Dutch politicians.

#### *April 2005*

One of the first things the individual released in April 2005 did was to approach an old acquaintance, someone who had been in contact with Hofstadgroup participants from approximately the end of 2003. During the trial against the Piranha suspects, this person claimed to have been coerced and threatened by the group's two ringleaders, for instance into renting a house for the group in Brussels and occasionally supplying participants with money.[64] In contrast, the other suspects in the Piranha case have claimed that this individual was in fact very radical, not at all involuntarily associated with them and purely motivated to give incriminating testimony in court to avoid being sentenced.[65] Although the currently available data do not allow these conflicting claims to be convincingly resolved, it should be noted that this was one of the witnesses whose testimony a Dutch court qualified as unreliable.[66]

Police intelligence from early April 2005 indicated that the individual recently released from detention had gathered a new group around him, that he wanted to die as a martyr and that he was driven to rectify the '1-0' in the unbelievers favour.[67] This latter point indicates that he was at least partially motivated by a personal desire for revenge for his arrest and incarceration. This motive also appears in various writings by and about this individual, which highlights his experience of poor treatment by the Dutch justice system and police and, especially, his adversarial relationship with the AIVD.[68]

*May 2005*

The Piranha ringleader who had been a fugitive since November 2004, allegedly told two other participants that he had a CD-ROM with instructions on how to make a suicide vest and that the required components could be bought in Germany. In the same period, this individual turned up in possession of three firearms; a Czech 'Skorpion' version 61 submachine gun (also referred to as a 'baby Uzi'), an Agram 2000 submachine gun with a separate silencer and a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. In May, he also instructed a participant to visit the group's other leader, the man released from custody in April, to pick something up. This turned out to be a piece of paper printed in an internet café which listed the names, addresses and telephone numbers of several Dutch politicians.[69]

*June 2005*

June was a particularly interesting month with several noteworthy developments. On or around the 15th, the fugitive and a companion took two other participants to a large park in Amsterdam to fire one of the submachine guns at a tree.[70] Several days later, on the 20th, the aforementioned companion phoned a family member who worked at a pharmacy in The Hague. The companion asked for the addresses of the politicians who frequented it and was particularly interested in Hirsi Ali's, but was not given any such information.[71] The next day, police officers conducting surveillance in The Hague recognised the fugitive they had sought since November 2004. At the time, he had been staying with an acquaintance, someone who appears to have been pressured into providing shelter and transportation.[72]

This was also the case a day later, on the 22nd of June, when the acquaintance was instructed to drive the fugitive and a companion to Amsterdam. Both of them seemed tense and the fugitive made their driver take evasive maneuvers twice, in an apparent attempt to shake off any possible tails. Upon arrival in Amsterdam, he took over the wheel and drove towards the train station Amsterdam Lelylaan, where he and his companion got out. Upon reaching the platform, both were apprehended by a police special intervention unit. At the time, the fugitive was carrying the loaded Agram 2000 in his backpack. In the driver's home, the police found a handwritten and coded note listing the addresses of four Dutch politicians that appears to have belonged to the two people who had just been arrested. Their interest in the whereabouts of Dutch politicians and Hirsi Ali in particular, something corroborated by the statements of two inmates who met them in prison, raises the possibility that they planned to assassinate one or more of these individuals.[73] Their arrest marks the end of this first potential terrorist plot.

Two days after the arrests, on the 24th of June, the group's remaining ringleader phoned one of his imprisoned Hofstadgroup friends. He mentioned being unable to sleep since the arrests, that 'the earth is very warm at this moment' and that there was a story which had not yet made the newspapers and which would astound his friend.[74] The next day he phoned again and cryptically talked of a 'soup' that was still boiling but would make it onto television soon.[75] On the 29th of April, just after this person's release from prison, the police had begun an investigation into the network surrounding him called 'Paling' (eel). After these mysterious phone calls and the other events of June, the police suspected that the individual in question was plotting terrorism related crimes. Indicative of the investigation's changed focus it was renamed 'Piranha' on the 28th of June.[76]

*July 2005*

Approximately a month later, just after midnight on the 26th of July, police officers observed the Piranha



group's main protagonist enter a park in The Hague in the company of an unknown male. Not much later a bang was heard. Its source has never been discovered. Another interesting July development occurred two days later, when the AIVD informed the police that they had indications that the group's remaining leader was involved in terrorist activities.[77]

#### *August 2005*

Starting in early August, the second potential terrorist plot attributable to the Piranha group began to manifest itself. Police intelligence reports indicated that a group of young men of Moroccan descent in Amsterdam West, including two Piranha participants, were working on a plan to shoot down an El Al plane at Schiphol airport, possibly using some type of Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG). The reports raised the possibility that one individual had been tasked with conducting a reconnaissance of a particular area of Schiphol airport and that the plot was being funded by a levy on criminal proceeds of acquaintances of the Piranha ringleader in Amsterdam and The Hague. The intelligence information, however, could not be determined to be 'reliable'.[78] Subsequent police investigations were unable to substantiate the intelligence information and thus raise the possibility that no such plot existed to begin with.[79]

In contrast to the 'first generation' Hofstadgroup, 'living room meetings' did not feature as prominently in the 2005 Piranha continuation. While various participants did visit each other and although some individuals provided religious instruction, relatively large-scale group meetings such as those that were held at the house of Van Gogh's killer were not noted in the available sources. A likely explanation is that the Piranha group had developed a much more acute sense of operational security and was wary of indoor gatherings. Several meetings were held outdoors in public places, such as on the 24th of August in The Hague, when four Piranha participants were observed together, on the 7th of September in Amsterdam, when two individuals met and exchanged a package, and on the 11th of October when five suspected members of the Piranha group met in The Hague.[80]

#### *September 2005*

In September 2005, the Piranha group's principal protagonist met a Belgian national of Moroccan descent at a train station in The Hague. According to police information, the Belgian man declined the protagonist's request to participate in a 'kamikaze operation' on the grounds that he was already planning something in Morocco.[81] A different take on the episode is given by Groen and Kranenberg, who describe the Belgian man as a cousin of a participant of the 'original' Hofstadgroup and as supposedly offering three female suicide bombers to his Piranha contact, who these authors claim declined the offer because he wanted men only. The Belgian man was arrested in Morocco in November 2005 on charges not related to the Piranha case. The available data offer no further information on the incident and the Belgian man later retracted his statement about the meeting, making it impossible to determine precisely what was discussed.[82]

#### *October 2005*

The third and final potential terrorist plot came to the fore in October. AIVD information dated earlier that month indicated that the Piranha group's participants were, to differing degrees, involved in preparations for a terrorist attack in the Netherlands. This potential attack was to occur before the 31st of October, the date set for the main protagonist's appeals hearing. The plot was thought to consist of two parts; one group of attackers would target politicians while the second would force entry to the AIVD headquarters and blow it

up. None of the perpetrators expected to survive the attacks. However, the AIVD information also indicated that the Piranha ringleader was looking for additional weaponry; ten AK-47 assault rifles, two silenced pistols and ten suicide vests containing eight kilograms of explosives each. The individual in question apparently expected a call from someone to discuss delivery of these goods. Phone intercepts revealed that a meeting between a possible supplier and the ringleader was arranged for the 12th of October. However, despite agreeing to the time and place over the phone, the Piranha participant did not show up.[83]

The next day, the police received additional information from the AIVD that precipitated the suspects' arrest. Most important was a videotaped will in which the group's main protagonist, seated next to the Skorpion submachine gun, threatened the Dutch state and its citizens for, among other things, its involvement in the Iraq war. Until the Dutch 'left Muslims alone and chose the path of peace' the 'language of the sword' would reign.[84] He also appeared to bid his family farewell by stating that he 'commits this deed out of fear for the punishment of Allah'.[85] In addition, he called upon other Muslims to rise up in defense of oppressed co-religionists worldwide and spoke out in support of several arrested Hofstadgroup participants.[86] Just how the AIVD got its hands on this video has remained unclear. One possible explanation, provided by the Piranha participant in question, is that an AIVD informant assisted with the recording and then supplied it to the AIVD after staging a burglary as cover for the tape's disappearance.[87]

Acting on the above information, the police arrested the remaining Piranha suspects on the 14th of October without incident. Among the items found during the ensuing house searches were three gas masks, several balaclava's, radical and extremist materials and, notably, a document made by one of the suspects called 'lessons in safety' which reflected the Piranha group's greater awareness of and concern for the authorities' interest in them.[88] The remaining two firearms – the Skorpion and the revolver – were, however, not recovered at this time. They were found on the 28th of August 2006 in the cellar of one of the Piranha suspects' home by plumbers called in to address flooding on the premises.[89] The October 2005 arrests effectively put an end to the Hofstadgroup.

### **Conclusion**

This Research Note presented a primary-sourced based overview of the most important developments in the 2002-2005 existence of the Dutch Hofstadgroup, a group that is frequently cited as one of the leading examples of the 'homegrown' jihadist threat that arose in Europe from 2004 onwards. By virtue of the sources used, this contribution is distinguished from existing chronological accounts of this group in terms of the level of detail provided and the reliability of that information. It thereby offers a valuable resource for other researchers interested in the Hofstadgroup or the broader phenomenon of homegrown jihadism. Although the overview presented here is unique in terms of descriptive detail and use of primary sources, many open questions for future research remain. Most importantly, while the present Note goes some way towards explaining *what* happened, *why* or *how* these events occurred are questions that have so far not been addressed in a systematic and empirically-grounded fashion. Hopefully, the near future will see greater use of primary sources-based research to answer the why and how questions raised by the Hofstadgroup.

\* The authors received written permission from the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice to use these sources on 8 March 2013. In accordance with the terms of use, they are utilized solely for a PhD thesis and related articles on the rise and development of the Hofstadgroup.

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## Notes

[1] Marc Sageman, "The Stagnation in Terrorism Research," *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 26, No. 3, September-October 2014: 8.

[2] The Hofstadgroup has been studied from numerous perspectives. Several authors have looked at the role of women in and around the group: Janny Groen and Annieke Kranenberg, *Women Warriors for Allah: An Islamist Network in the Netherlands* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Beatrice De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke Vrouwen: Tien Militante Vrouwen in Het Vizioer* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012), 249-40. Others have looked at how broader societal factors influence the attitudes of young Muslims in the Netherlands and set some of them on a path towards radicalization: Frank J. Buijs, Froukje Demant, and Atef Hamdy, *Strijders Van Eigen Bodem* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006). Some scholars have looked specifically at the Salafist movement in the Netherlands and how its development helped bring about the Hofstadgroup: Martijn De Koning and Roel Meijer, "Going All the Way: Politicization and Radicalization of the Hofstad Network in the Netherlands," in *Identity and Participation in Culturally Diverse Societies*, ed. Assaad E. Azzi, et al. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 220-38. Several studies focus primarily on the backgrounds and motives of individual participants of the Hofstadgroup: Ruud Peters, "Dutch Extremist Islamism: Van Gogh's Murderer and His Ideas," in *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences*, ed. Rik Coolsaet (Farnham / Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 145-59; Martijn De Koning, "Changing Worldviews and Friendship: An Exploration of the Life Stories of Two Female Salafists in the Netherlands," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London / New York: Hurst, 2009), 372-92; Marion Van San, Stijn Sieckelinck, and Micha De Winter, *Idealen Op Drift: Een Pedagogische Kijk Op Radicaliserende Jongeren* (The Hague: Boom, 2010), 44-53; Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007); Arjan Erkel, *Samir* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2007); Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 85-88. Another set of studies has focused on multiculturalism and the problematic integration of Muslim immigrants in Dutch society as causal factors: Paul Cliteur, "Religieuze Terrorisme En De Lankmoedige Elite," in *Gaat De Elite Ons Redden? De Nieuwe Rol Van De Bovenlaag in Onze Samenleving*, ed. Krijn Van Beek and Marcel Van Ham (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2007), 207-35; Bart Jan Spruyt, "'Can't We Discuss This?' Liberalism and the Challenge of Islam in the Netherlands," *Orbis* 51, no. 2 (2007): 313-30; Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2005): 120-35; Rob De Wijk, "The Multiple Crises in Dutch Parallel Societies," in *Between suicide bombings and the burning Banlieues: the multiple crises of Europe's parallel societies*, ed. Rob De Wijk, Samir Amghar, and Amel Boubekeur, ESF Working Papers (Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies, 2006), 7-14; Geert Mak, *Gedoemd Tot Kwetsbaarheid* (Amsterdam / Antwerp: Atlas, 2005); Abigail R. Esman, *Radical State: How Jihad Is Winning over Democracy in the West* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010). The Hofstadgroup has featured prominently in analyses of the role of the internet and the influence of a militant Salafist ideology on radicalisation processes and it has been the subject of social network analyses: Frazer Egerton, "The Internet and Militant Jihadism: Global to Local Re-Imaginations," in *Cyber-Conflict and Global Politics*, ed. Athina Karatzogianni (Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2008), 115-27; Frazer Egerton, *Jihad in the West: The Rise of Militant Salafism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12, 18, 29-36, 48, 75-83, 97-125, 29, 45-51; Renée Van der Hulst, "Terroristische Netwerken En Intelligence: Een Sociale Netwerkanalyse Van De Hofstadgroep," *Tijdschrift voor Veiligheid* 8, no. 2 (2009). Finally, the Hofstadgroup is one of the anonymised cases in a study on jihadist terrorism in the Netherlands: C.J. De Poot et al., *Jihadi Terrorism in the Netherlands: A Description Based on Closed Criminal Investigations* (The Hague: Boom Juridische Uitgevers / Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum, 2011).

[3] Petter Nesser, *Jihad in Europe: Patterns in Islamist Terrorist Cell Formation and Behaviour, 1995-2010* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2012), 332-58; Marc Sageman, "Hofstad Case & the Blob Theory," in *Theoretical Frames on Pathways to Violent Radicalization*, ed. Scott Atran, Marc Sageman, and Rogier Rijkema (ARTIS Research & Modelling, 2009), 13-29, 82-99; Lorenzo Vidino, "The Hofstad Group: The New Face Terrorist Networks in Europe," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 7 (2007); Beatrice De Graaf, "The Van Gogh Murder and Beyond," in *The Evolving Global Terrorism Threat: Cases from 9/11 to Osama Bin Laden's Death*, ed. Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 144-87; Security & the Rule of Law Project Transnational Terrorism,

- “The ‘Hofstadgroep,’” in *TTSRL Contextual Papers* (The Hague: TTSRL, 2008); Albert Benschop, “Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold,” Sociosite, [http://www.sociosite.org/jihad\\_nl\\_en.php](http://www.sociosite.org/jihad_nl_en.php).
- [4] Roberto Franzosi, “The Press as a Source of Socio-Historical Data: Issues in the Methodology of Data Collection from Newspapers,” *Historical Methods* 20, no. 1 (1987): 6-9; Frederick Schulze, “Breaking the Cycle: Empirical Research and Postgraduate Studies on Terrorism,” in *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures*, ed. Andrew Silke (London / New York: Frank Cass, 2004), 163; Tom Quiggin, “Words Matter: Peer Review as a Failing Safeguard,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 2 (2013): 73-76.
- [5] Vermaat’s account is informative and based on some interesting sources. Unfortunately it suffers from the author’s lack of an objective approach to the subject matter. Emerson Vermaat, *De Hofstadgroep: Portret Van Een Radicaal-Islamitisch Netwerk* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2005). Wessels’ less than objective approach asserts itself in the first pages of his book, where he assumes the Hofstadgroup’s suspects’ guilt and criticizes the public prosecutor’s chosen strategy even though the court cases were still ongoing at that point in time. M. Wessels, *De Radicaal-Islamitische Ideologie Van De Hofstadgroep: De Inhoud En De Bronnen* (The Hague: Teldersstichting, 2006), 2-3.
- [6] Several Dutch journalists have provided well-researched accounts of the murder of Van Gogh and the events surrounding the Hofstadgroup: Siem Eikelenboom, *Niet Bang Om Te Sterven: Dertig Jaar Terrorisme in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2007); Jutta Chorus and Ahmet Olgun, *In Godsnaam: Het Jaar Van Theo Van Gogh* (Amsterdam: Contact, 2005); Sanne Groot Koerkamp and Marije Veerman, *Het Slapende Leger: Een Zoektocht Naar Jonge Jihad-Sympathisanten in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Rothschild & Bach, 2006); Erkel, *Samir*.
- [7] Vidino, “The Hofstad Group,” 579.
- [8] Bart Schuurman, Quirine Eijkman, and Edwin Bakker, “The Hofstadgroup Revisited: Questioning Its Status as a ‘Quintessential’ Homegrown Jihadist Network,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Forthcoming): 1-23.
- [9] John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 15.
- [10] Commissie van Toezicht betreffende de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, “Toezichtsrapport Inzake De Afwegingsprocessen Van De Aivd Met Betrekking Tot Mohammed B.,” (Commissie van Toezicht betreffende de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, 2008), 8.
- [11] Schuurman, Eijkman, and Bakker, “The Hofstadgroup Revisited,” 1-20.
- [12] J.P.H. Donner and J.W. Remkes, “Kamerstukken 2, 2004-2005, 29854, Nr. 3,” (The Hague: Sdu Publishers, 2004), 5, 18.
- [13] General Intelligence and Security Service, “Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat,” (The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service, 2006), 37.
- [14] Police Files Hofstadgroup, VERD: 19480, 705-706, 747; 01/17: 4095; NCTV, “Personal Interview 1,” (The Hague 2012), 2; Public Prosecutor 1, “Personal Interview 1,” (The Hague 2012), 8.
- [15] Police Files Hofstadgroup, 01/18: 89-90.
- [16] Ibid., AHA02/19: 100.
- [17] Leiken, “Europe’s Angry Muslims,” 125; Emerson Vermaat, “Samir a[.] -a Terrorist in the Making or a Real Terrorist?,” *Militant Islam Monitor.org*, 23 November 2005, 2.
- [18] Police Files Hofstadgroup, VERD: 19444, 59, 675, 717, 858-860, 877, 916, 980, 994, 20079, 112, 115, 174; GET: 18215, 312-313, 374-375, 414, 20348; 01/17: 4176; AHA03/20: 1227; Erkel, *Samir*, 78-79.
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## The German Sauerland Cell Reconsidered

by Quirine Eijkman

### Abstract

*This Research Note examines the Sauerland terror plot, which is considered the most important homegrown jihadist threat to Germany. It provides an in-depth description of the backgrounds of key associates of the cell, their role in preparing the intended attacks and how the plot itself evolved between 2005 and 2007. The author aims to provide readers with a primary-sources based case study that can inform their own research on the Sauerland cell and European homegrown jihadism more generally. This piece also highlights the challenges researchers can face when attempting to obtain permission to use judicial documents in academic publications.*

**Keywords:** *homegrown, jihadism, Sauerland cell, Germany*

### Introduction

In 2007, German police arrested four men suspected of preparing one or more terrorist attacks in Germany. They have since become known as the ‘Sauerlandgruppe’ (Sauerland cell), a reference to the region in mid-western Germany where the four had been attempting to construct an explosive device in a holiday home. The plot had its origins in a training camp run by the al-Qaeda linked Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)[1] on the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan where the four conspirators had travelled in 2006. Initially, German nationals Fritz Gelowicz, Daniel Schneider and Attila Selek, together with Adem Yilmaz, a Turkish/German national who had grown up in Germany, had undergone paramilitary training with the aim of joining the jihad in Afghanistan. However, the IJU convinced them to return to Germany instead, where they began preparing their intended attacks by assembling explosive devices. It was during this period that they were discovered, as the United States’ National Security Agency (NSA) noticed veiled communications between the IJU and unknown individuals in Germany.[2] The NSA alerted its German counterparts, who promptly deployed a surveillance team code-named ‘operation Alberich’. Before three associates of the cell could use their 26 military detonators and 12 barrels of hydrogen peroxide—the same chemicals also used for the 2005 terrorist bombings in London—German law enforcement officials intervened. The fourth associate, Adem Selek, was arrested later in Turkey.[3]

This article provides an in-depth description of the backgrounds of the four key associates of the cell, their role in planning and preparing attacks, how the plot was conceived and how it evolved between 2005 and 2007. There exist various academic accounts of the Sauerland cell, some of which have a similar focus as the present Research Note.[4] Where this contribution differs, is in its attention to the group’s origin and evolution, made possible by the author’s access to significant primary source materials. As such it has a clearly different perspective than Stefan Malthaner’s recent study on the cell’s immediate social environment[5] or Guido Steinberg’s focus on the internationalisation of German Islamist terrorist groups.[6]

This Research Note also reflects some of the challenges that terrorism researchers face when attempting to access, and especially to publish on, primary sources-based material. The present has been able to study the Sauerland cell based on an the extended version of the German judicial verdict.[7] This source contains considerable details of the events and the suspects, basing itself in large part on information from German police files. Unfortunately, this extended version of the verdict is not in the public domain and permission to cite it as a source in this Note was not granted. Instead, the shorter and less detailed but publically available version of the judgment is relied upon as the most important primary source.[8] This material is

complemented with information contained in existing academic articles and media reports.[9] While the use of media sources raises questions of accuracy and reliability[10], the restrictions on using the full verdict necessitated looking for alternative sources. However, as the author was able to review the extended version of the judicial verdict, she was able to select those media reports that are most accurate and reliable.

As a summary of the most important aspects of the case against the Sauerland cell suspects, the abbreviated judicial verdict is a useful resource. However, some drawbacks of working with this publicly available version of the judgment must be acknowledged. First of all, it is focused on the four chief suspects, whereas in reality many more people were to a greater or lesser extent involved in the plot. Secondly, even though three of the key associates were caught in the act of mixing the ingredients for an explosive device, one can never be sure that they would have actually committed a terrorist attack. Last but not least, the activities of foreign or German intelligence and security services are hardly mentioned in the judgment, whereas several media reports suggest that there was cooperation with the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Turkish secret service.[11] In short, this particular source should not be utilised uncritically. Nevertheless, the abbreviated judicial verdict provides a solid foundation on which to base this analysis.

### ***An Overview of the Criminal Case, 2007-2010***

On 4 September 2007, three young men were arrested in Germany's Sauerland region by the Federal Criminal Police (*Bundeskriminalamt, BKA*) because they were suspected of preparing one or more terrorist attacks. A fourth arrest followed on 6 November 2007 in Turkey. The authorities, who with the involvement of more than 600 agents had kept tabs on the men for months, code-named the case 'operation Alberich'. However, this article will continue to refer to the group by the more commonly used designation Sauerland cell or group. Its plot was considered by the German National Prosecution Services (*Bundesstaatsanwaltschaft*) to be one of the most important homegrown jihadist terrorist plots.[12]

Two months after the criminal trial had begun at the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court on 22 April 2009, the suspects decided to confess. Thereafter the defense strategy changed from challenging (among other issues) the state's surveillance practices, to cooperation with the federal prosecutor. The suspects' testimony led to an additional 1,100 pages being added to the 521 folders of evidence that had been collected by law enforcement officials during their 10-month long surveillance.[13] As the men's confessions matched the findings of the extensive criminal investigation, the court judged the information to be generally trustworthy. [14] Additionally, the testimony sheds further light on the period when the suspects stayed and trained in Pakistan and detailing how the terrorist plot evolved. After a nine month long trial, the suspects were convicted on 4 March 2010. They were sentenced to between five and 12 years imprisonment for, among other charges, membership of a foreign terrorist organisation and conspiracy to commit murder.[15]

### ***The Sauerland Cell's Key Associates***

The leader of the cell was Fritz Gelowicz (born in Munich, 1979). After his parents' divorce in 1992, Gelowicz lived with his father, an engineer.[16] His conversion to Islam began in the year he turned 16, in a period defined by his rebellious behaviour. Under the influence of the older brother of a Turkish friend, Gelowicz gravitated towards Islam. Although he adopted the Arab name Abdullah as part of his conversion in 1994 and was later circumcised, his religious views were initially moderate.[17]

These views gradually changed after the attacks of 9/11 and because of Gelowicz's growing interest in the

armed struggle in Chechnya. He dropped out of school and lived on the dole. His views started becoming more clearly radical in the summer of 2002, when he began attending radical sermons at a multicultural community centre '*The Multi-Kultur-Haus*' in Neu-Ulm, which at the time was one of the main Salafist centres in Germany.[18] Later in 2005 this centre was closed by the authorities because it was believed to have played an important role in sending youngsters on a path of violent jihad. For instance, the Centre clearly sympathised with the armed struggle of fellow Muslims in Chechnya and Iraq.[19] It was during this period that Gelowicz embraced a fundamentalist, orthodox interpretation of Islam.[20] Not much later, around 2004, Gelowicz also began to pursue his desire to join Islamist insurgents abroad. He was particularly inspired by the case of Thomas "Hamza" Fischer, a German convert who was raised close to Ulm and whom he had known personally. Fischer and others had gone to Chechnya to fight and die there between 2002 and 2003.[21] Finally, late 2003 was an important moment because it was around that time that Gelowicz met at Ulm's multicultural community centre his future Sauerland co-conspirator Atilla Selek.

Atilla Selek, a German national with Turkish parents, was born in Ulm in 1985. His parents were conservative Muslims, but for many years he practised his religion only superficially and with little regularity.[22] Like Gelowicz, Selek came to reorient himself on Islam through a friend. Selek also started attending the radical sermons that were held at the multicultural community centre in Ulm. There he became friends with Fritz, whom he came to see as his mentor.[23] Under Gelowicz's influence, Selek became more interested in Islam, started praying daily and attending the mosque regularly. His behaviour also changed: he became quieter and more withdrawn in his work as a car painter.[24] Selek developed a growing interest in violent jihad; he read the literature Gelowicz gave him and started downloading videos of beheadings. When Gelowicz suggested that they try to join Islamist militants as foreign fighters, Selek readily agreed. In September 2004, Selek gave up his job, telling his employer that, for religious reasons, he could no longer work alongside women. He too lived on government benefits from then on.[25]

The third associate of the Sauerland cell was Adem Yilmaz, who was born in Turkey in 1978 and holds both Turkish and German citizenship. He moved to Germany to join his father in 1986. In the summer of 2001, he met an older co-religionist and developed a more intense interest in Islam.[26] He followed media reports and debates with other Muslims on the internet and his religious convictions became stronger. He took an interest in publications by jihadist ideologues and in jihadist songs. In October 2002 he gave up his job as a ticket inspector for the German Railways, for 'religious reasons'. He lived on the dole, aside from one brief period, until his arrest in September 2007.[27] By the end of 2002, the American 'War on Terrorism' motivated him to join Islamist militants and help them in their struggle against all those who were using violence against Muslims.[28] Yilmaz decided to take part in the armed jihad in October 2003 and intended to go to Chechnya, but he initially took no action. He met Gelowicz in January 2005, while both were making their pilgrimage to Mecca. On the same trip he also encountered Selek, who was an old acquaintance of Yilmaz. During their Hajj, the relationship between the three men became closer and they decided to join the armed jihad in Chechnya or Iraq together.[29]

The fourth associate of the core Sauerland cell arrested in 2007 was Daniel Schneider, born in 1985. His parents got divorced when he was eleven. Furious rows with his mother led Schneider to move in with his father in November 2001. Initially he did well in school, but then dropped out of secondary school with one year to go. He had begun to challenge authority at school, was convicted of various crimes and experimented with alcohol and drugs. Starting at age thirteen, Daniel developed a strong interest in philosophical and religious subjects. By the time he was sixteen, however, he had become an atheist. He spent some time in the Amazon region, explaining that this enabled him to avoid contributing to the worldwide destruction of nature.[30]



Another change in his worldview took place at the end of June 2004, when he converted to Islam after having developed earlier an interest in the religion under the influence of an older Muslim friend.[31] He adopted the Islamic name Jihad and sometimes prayed uninterruptedly at the mosque for several days at a time. He also broke off his old friendships; all his new friends were Muslims. Influenced by media reports from conflict zones around the world, he became interested in violent jihad.[32] In January 2005 he was called up for German military service. He followed a three-month course in which he learned (among other things) how to handle explosives.[33] In October 2005, he met Selek while attending a mosque in Germany, and found him to be a kindred spirit. Two months later, he met Yilmaz through a mutual friend. Reports on the abuse of inmates by American wardens in the Iraqi prison Abu Ghraib prompted Daniel to take action. He decided to go abroad and to try to reach a jihadi training camp, with the aim of preparing himself for the armed struggle.[34] His stay in Egypt to learn Arabic, from February to the end of May 2006, consolidated these intentions.

### ***Preparing for Armed Jihad Abroad***

In the course of 2004 and 2005, these four core members of the Sauerland cell had developed a desire to take part in armed jihad. They were also eager to undergo thorough preparation in a training camp. Their initial attempts to reach such a camp were unsuccessful, but their efforts finally bore fruit at the beginning of April 2006. Through a contact they had previously met in Syria in August 2005, Gelowicz and Yilmaz were escorted to the Waziristan region on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. There they joined the IJU, an Uzbek terrorist organisation with links to Al Qaeda.[35] Almost immediately after their arrival, both men embarked on a course of paramilitary training. At the beginning of July 2006, Selek and Schneider also arrived in Waziristan for training. It was there that Gelowicz and Schneider met for the first time.[36]

It soon became clear to them that they were not being trained by the IJU to fight in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Instead, the purpose of the course was to equip the group with the knowledge and skills required to carry out acts of terrorism in Germany. Although that was not why they had gone to Pakistan, all of the men eventually accepted this assignment.[37] Selek was put in charge of liaison between the cell in Germany and the IJU leadership. The IJU leadership issued the following guidelines for their operations in Germany: kill a large number of Americans, include an Uzbek target on account of that country providing Germany with airfields from which German troops in Afghanistan could be resupplied, and choose a target that sends a clear, intimidating signal to the German population.[38]

### ***Back Home: The Evolving Terror Plot***

Selek returned to Germany in August 2006, Gelowicz and Yilmaz came back a month later while Schneider did not make the journey home until February 2007.[39] As a result, Schneider missed the start of operational preparations, which began in December 2006. Schneider's return had been delayed due to his detention in Iran.[40]

Although all four associates eventually made it back to Germany, the cell was essentially compromised from October 2006 onwards. At that point in time, the NSA had intercepted veiled communications between the IJU in Pakistan and at that point not yet identified individuals in Germany. This prompted the NSA to alert the German authorities.[41] This was also the period when Gelowicz was trying to implement his plans for committing a terrorist attack. In the weeks following his arrival, at the beginning of October 2006, he made as many as 216 visits to 68 phone shops in 12 cities. The goal was to conduct secure e-mail consultations with the IJU leadership in Pakistan and to search online for ways of purchasing large quantities of hydrogen

peroxide, which was to be used as main ingredient for an explosive device.[42] From December 2006 until the arrests in September 2007, these internet searches led to the purchase of 12 barrels of chemicals, which Gelowicz transported in a rented vehicle with false licence plates, most of the time under a false name and in disguise, to a rented storage site.[43] In December 2006 Gelowicz also divided up tasks within the cell. Yilmaz was put in charge of financial affairs, while Gelowicz and Selek were to bear joint responsibility for purchasing and storing the required precursor chemicals for bomb making.[44]

On 31 December 2006, a government surveillance unit witnessed a car with Selek, Gelowicz and two others driving back and forth several times past American barracks in Hanau. A few days later, one of the other passengers purchased a digital alarm clock, adhesive tape and batteries. The police and the security service concluded that the men had been snooping out a possible target and they expanded their surveillance operation. On 6 January 2007, the police searched the homes of Selek, Gelowicz and the latter's father, but did not find anything significant.[45] This made it abundantly clear to Gelowicz and Selek that they had attracted the German authorities' attention.[46]

On 20 April 2007, the American embassy in Germany issued an official warning, urging heightened vigilance. The warning was prompted by the interception of a coded message from Pakistan that 'the Kurds' were coming, although the authorities were not yet aware that 'Kurds' was a code word for detonators.[47] At the same time, German magazine *Spiegel Online* reported that 'the Kurds' should be regarded as belonging to the circles of the IJU and that those concerned must have undergone military training in Pakistan.[48] In June, the German Ministry of the Interior issued a public warning about young German men who had been trained in Pakistan and then returned to Germany, and it was reported in the media that the BKA was investigating an Islamist cell in the Rhine-Main region that was planning attacks on American targets.[49]

Despite the fact that the Sauerland cell had attracted considerable attention from the authorities and increasingly from the media too, Gelowicz did not see any reason to modify his plans or to temporarily suspend the preparations.[50] In fact, he was so confident of the cell's capabilities that he even gave a telephone interview to the magazine *Stern* on 13 July 2007 which clearly reveals he was aware of the authorities' interest in him and his colleagues. In the interview, Gelowicz complained that he and others had been baselessly labelled as *Gefährder*[51], i.e. elements posing a threat to the state, and were being harassed by the authorities because of their religion. He claimed that he posed no threat at all and asked to be left in peace.[52]

A week later, on 20 July 2007, while Gelowicz and Yilmaz went to purchase chemicals, they made several important operational arrangements. Yilmaz was to take over responsibility for communicating with the IJU and one more order was to be placed for hydrogen peroxide.[53] The German investigative and security services, which were by then well informed of the cell's communications and activities, went into action once the purchases had been made. They secretly replaced the barrels containing 35% strong hydrogen peroxide which the cell had bought with barrels containing the chemicals in a concentration of only 3%, too thin to serve as basis for an explosive device.[54]

At the beginning of August, Gelowicz acquired six detonators through a criminal contact while the IJU consignment of another twenty detonators finally also arrived at the end of the month.[55] On 3 September the men purchased the materials needed to make the explosives and the bombs in which they would be used.[56] In addition, Gelowicz went to an internet café where he printed out the bomb-building notes he had made in Waziristan. The three men agreed that they would choose a target once they had carried out a successful trial detonation.[57] In spite of their IJU handlers' order that an Uzbek target had to be included, the cell appears to have settled on the idea of attacking three American targets.[58]

On the way back from making their purchases in early September, the men happened to be stopped by German traffic police. One officer who went back to his car to check their personal details remarked, in a voice that carried to the three men, that they were known to the German federal police. After this check, the men were allowed to go on their way. It is striking that the men did not decide, given what they had just overheard, to stop or postpone their preparations for the attacks.[59] Thus, on the morning of 4 September, Gelowicz, Yilmaz and Schneider started boiling the hydrogen peroxide in order to raise the concentration to a level suitable for bomb-making.[60] Because the German police had swapped the chemicals, this did not lead to the expected results. The suspects thought that the problem must be due to rusty pans and decided to buy new ones. However, they did not have time to do so since all three were arrested by a special police squad that afternoon. This brought the Sauerland group's preparations for terrorist attacks to an abrupt end.[61]

### **Conclusion**

This Research Note focused on the Sauerland cell, considered the most significant homegrown jihadist terrorist threat to Germany to date. A case, moreover, that reflects an interesting mixture of the local and the global; while the decision to prepare for attacks in Germany was made by the cell's contacts in the Waziristan-based IJU, the cell's members themselves were in many ways exemplary of the homegrown jihadist phenomenon.

The writing of this Note illustrates some of the difficulties that an author can face when trying to utilise state-owned primary sources for research on terrorism. In this case, the author was able to consult the extensive judicial verdict on the Sauerland cell but not allowed to cite from it. Instead, she had to rely on a considerably less detailed public version of the verdict as well as media reports and academic publications. While state agencies' privacy and national security concerns are valid, the more detailed and robust research on terrorism that access to such sources enables can also work to their benefit. It is therefore to be hoped that the future will see more opportunities to work with the rich primary sources on terrorism that state agencies frequently possess.

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### **Notes**

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## Operation Pendennis: A Case Study of an Australian Terrorist Plot

by Bart Schuurman, Shandon Harris-Hogan, Andrew Zammit and Pete Lentini

### **Abstract**

*This Research Note article provides a case study of a major Australian terrorist investigation, code-named Operation Pendennis. Drawing primarily from publicly available court transcripts, this study seeks to expand upon the growing literature within terrorism studies which utilises primary source materials. Its aim is to provide a detailed overview of Operation Pendennis that might serve as a resource for other scholars. The work also aims to add to existing knowledge regarding how terrorists prepare their attacks and react when under surveillance. This is done by providing a descriptive account of two cells' preparations for an act of terrorism, and their unsuccessful attempts to evade authorities.*

**Keywords:** *homegrown, jihadism, Australia*

### **Introduction**

Given the ongoing need for detailed and primary sources-based accounts of terrorist incidents, this Research Note provides a case study of *Operation Pendennis*. [1] Operation Pendennis was Australia's longest running terrorism investigation, culminating in the arrest of two self-starting militant Islamist cells in late 2005. This account primarily uses information drawn from publicly available court transcripts of the associated prosecutions and interviews with two public prosecutors involved in the Pendennis case. Drawing from such sources allows for the creation of a more accurate account of events than those currently provided by news and media sources, which are often marred by errors or may uncritically accept claims made by either the prosecution or defence. Rather than detailing the radicalisation processes of the individuals involved, which are addressed elsewhere [2], this analysis specifically focuses on the participants' activities to further their plot, and their attempts to evade state surveillance. The primary source material provides unique insights into how these terrorists acted both to maintain operational security and to advance their operation.

Islamist terrorism has been a small but persistent threat in Australia. Prior to Pendennis, Australia experienced an unsuccessful al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah-guided conspiracy to bomb Israeli and Jewish targets during the 2000 Sydney Olympics while a Lashkar e-Toiba (LeT) guided plot was foiled in Sydney in 2003. A Melbourne-based self-starting cell which had planned to attack Holsworthy Army Barracks was foiled in 2009. In addition, militant Islamists from Australia have participated in training or combat overseas, mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan between 1999 and 2003, Lebanon throughout the 2000s, Somalia from 2007 onwards, and more recently in Yemen and Syria. [3] However, of the 23 people who have been convicted in Australia for Islamist-related terror offences, 18 were arrested in Operation Pendennis. Moreover, several subsequent terrorism-related investigations in Australia have involved the family, friends and associates of the Pendennis men [4]. Given the significance of this operation, Pendennis provides a useful case study into the broader phenomenon of Islamist terrorism in Australia.

### **A Brief Overview of Operation Pendennis**

Operation Pendennis was a joint Victoria Police, New South Wales Police, Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) investigation which began in 2004. The operation resulted in a series of arrests between November 2005 and March 2006, which led to terrorism charges being

brought against thirteen suspects in Melbourne and nine in Sydney.

In Melbourne nine men were ultimately convicted on a range of terrorism offences, with two pleading guilty and seven found guilty at trial. These nine men had an average age of 26 at the time of their arrest, with the eldest member (Abdul Nacer Benbrika) aged 45 and the youngest member just 20.[5] Most of the cell was new to Islamist militancy, with the exception of one who had trained in al-Qaeda's al-Faruq camp in Afghanistan in 2001, though he did not play a leading role in the cell's activities.[6] Only two of the men had completed secondary education, while two others were known to have a previous criminal record. Seven of the men were of Lebanese origin, while Benbrika hailed from Algeria.[7] The other man (Shane Kent) was a Caucasian Australian who was also the only convert within the cell.[8] However, the group's radicalisation was certainly a 'home-grown' phenomenon; seven of the nine were born in Australia, while another immigrated as a child. Seven were married at the time of their arrest whilst four also had children.[9] Indeed, it has been noted that this level of family commitment impacted the amount of time several members were able to dedicate to the cell.[10] Court documents describe Benbrika as very much the leader and religious authority of the cell, whose teachings centred upon the *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance* written by Abu Musab al-Suri.[11] Aimen Joud and Fadl Sayadi fulfilled important roles as his deputies.[12]

By 2010, all nine Sydney men were convicted, with four pleading guilty and five found guilty at trial. In contrast to the Melbourne cell, the Sydney group was far older and more experienced. The average age of the cell was 29 with only one member aged below 24 at the time of their arrest.[13] There are also indications that up to four members of the Sydney cell had previously trained in Lashker-e-Toiba camps in Pakistan between 1999 and 2001, though only one case was proven in court.[14] Like the Melbourne cell, only two men had completed secondary level education and two also held a previous criminal record. Once again like in the Melbourne cell, eight of the nine Sydney cell members were married and all but two had children. Five of the Sydney men also shared a Lebanese background, while the four others were of Bangladeshi, Bosnian, Jordanian and Anglo-Indonesian background.[15] Born in Lebanon and raised in Australia, Mohammed Elomar was described in court as the 'puppet master' of the Sydney cell. His leadership role was explicitly stated by the judge as the reason for sentencing Mohammed to the longest term of incarceration of any of the men from either cell.[16]

The 18 men convicted in total were members of two distinct terrorist cells which planned to carry out violence against the Australian government, motivated primarily by Australia's participation in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. They were inspired by al-Qaeda and its narrative, with their leader citing 'terrorist acts committed by mujahideen around the world, including the bombings in New York and Washington, Bali, Madrid, Jakarta, London and Iraq, as exemplars to be admired and emulated'.[17] The relatively high number of individuals from or with links to Lebanon is an interesting feature of the Operation Pendennis suspects and reflects a broader feature of militant Islamism in Australia.[18]

The Sydney cell was the more advanced of the two groups, having amassed firearms, ammunition, detonators, chemicals, laboratory equipment and bomb-making instruction manuals. When sentencing five members of the cell, the judge noted that 'absent the intervention of the authorities, the plan might well have come to fruition in early 2006 or thereabouts. The materials were to hand and recipes for the construction of explosives were available'.[19]

By contrast, the Melbourne cell's activities were less directly operational and largely supportive in nature. Their actions involved fund-raising (including through fraud and theft), acquiring bomb-making instructions and other extremist materials, attempting to acquire firearms, exploring the acquisition of explosives, undertaking training and bonding trips, and cooperating closely with the Sydney cell on a range

of activities.[20] Members of the Melbourne cell were convicted for knowingly forming a group 'directly or indirectly engaged in preparing or fostering the doing of a terrorist act'[21], not for planning a specific attack themselves.

The Melbourne cell had been formed under the guidance of the aforementioned Benbrika, a 'sheikh' without any formal religious education.[22] The Sydney cell was formed independently of the Melbourne cell, but from at least August 2004 onwards the two groups were in regular communication. Benbrika frequently visited Sydney members, becoming the religious authority for both of the cells, and individuals from the Sydney cell also spent time in Victoria.[23] However, while the Melbourne cell was predominantly made up of newly-radicalised individuals drawn towards Benbrika, several of the Sydney men were associated –

sometimes directly and sometimes through friends and family – with terrorist activity in Lebanon or with earlier plots in Australia (including the 2000 Roche plot and the 2003 LeT plot).[24] This distinction would come to influence the progress of the plot and different practices of the two cells.

### *Practical Preparations*

Up until the beginning of 2005 the Melbourne cell's activities were largely confined to gathering propaganda and instructional material, and acquiring income for the group's *sandooq* (literally 'coffer' or [war]'chest'). Although all members of the cell were expected to make regular contributions towards the *sandooq*, the group mainly generated income through stealing cars and selling off the parts. The practical preparations for terrorist activities were predominantly undertaken by the Sydney cell.

The Sydney cell appeared to have had a basic understanding of the materials required to construct explosives, but faced difficulties acquiring precursors. While some of this material was acquired relatively easily, including railway detonators and instructional material (they possessed step-by-step instructions for manufacturing TATP and HMTD), laboratory equipment and chemicals proved more difficult to procure. [25] Throughout early 2005 members of both the Sydney and Melbourne cells, using false names, attempted to acquire laboratory equipment via a Victorian based supplier. However, fearing possible police surveillance, they did not collect the goods. Despite this setback, in July 2005 the Sydney cell did manage to obtain a small consignment of glassware.[26]

From June 2005 onwards, the Sydney cell also tried to purchase several of the chemicals required to build explosives. However, several merchants were suspicious of their intended purchases and either dissuaded them from attempting to make the purchases or informed authorities of customers whose interests in their wares alarmed them. Yet the group eventually obtained many litres of distilled water, acetone, hydrogen peroxide and hydrochloric acid.[27] In October, one of the suspects also tried to steal a large quantity of batteries and clocks (to be used as timers) but was foiled by store security.[28]

During 2005, members of the Sydney cell also purchased large quantities of 7.62mm ammunition, totalling nearly 20,000 rounds. Although the cell's operational leader, Mohamed Ali Elomar was legally in possession of several firearms, only one (a bolt-action rifle) was capable of firing 7.62 mm ammunition. When sentencing Elomar, the judge noted that the ammunition 'was to have been used in other automatic or semi-automatic weaponry'.[29] The group was never found to be in the possession of such weaponry, but prosecutors suspected that the Sydney suspects managed to hide one or more AK-47s before their arrest.[30] The group also attempted to construct improvised explosives, using gunpowder from rifle cartridges.

As previously noted, the Melbourne cell had only a limited operational role, and primarily concerned itself

with support activities. Though Benbrika's immediate inner-circle hoped to use their *sandoog* to purchase materials, they abandoned this plan because of lack of funds. Indeed, the group largely proved amateurish and acquired little material of practical use beyond their vast collection of propaganda and bomb-making manuals.[31] One of the group's members was arrested for credit card fraud, and on multiple occasions senior members of the cell lamented that many of the members did not demonstrate sufficient discipline and that this threatened the cell's existence and prospects. A planned team-building weekend failed when they arrived at the location late, disturbed local residents, and had to cancel the event and return to Melbourne. [32] When several Melbourne members attended a weekend organised by the Sydney group in March 2005, the contrast in progress and professionalism was stark. Sydney members had organised weapons and ammunition for large-scale shooting practice, and the police later found evidence of possible experiments with explosives.

Indeed, following this exposure one member of the Melbourne cell suggested Benbrika move to Sydney to further the group's progress.[33] However, Benbrika's main focus remained on completing the religious 'education' of the Melbourne men, imparting his understandings of jihad and martyrdom. Following a series of police raids in Sydney (in June and August) and in Melbourne (June) Benbrika came to believe that his arrest was imminent. This prompted him to speed up his dissemination of the ideas in al-Suri's book and he began to advise the more trusted members of the group to be willing to act independently of him.[34]

#### *No Clear Target*

Despite media speculation on the subject, there remain no strong indications that the Melbourne cell had selected any specific targets. Although one of the suspects stated at trial that Benbrika was interested in attacking major sports events, no significant evidence was found to corroborate this. Moreover, the judge noted that this suspect had a track record of making false claims. During a police raid in November 2005 police did recover the floor plans of several government buildings in Melbourne, but it remains likely that no specific target was ever selected.[35]

Similarly, there is no direct evidence that the Sydney cell had selected a specific target. However, there are indications that the group may have explored the possibility of attacking the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor. These suspicions derive from an investigation into the theft of a number of rocket launchers from the stockpiles of the Australian Army. During the separate trial of a man named Taha Abdul-Rahman (who was later convicted for his role in selling the stolen weapons) a police statement alleged that he sold five of the rocket launchers to Sydney cell leader Mohamed Ali Elomar. The statement claimed Elomar had stated an intention to "blow up the nuclear place".[36] Moreover, three members of the Sydney cell were intercepted within the restricted area surrounding the facility.[37] However, at no stage during the Sydney trial did the prosecution contend a specific target had been chosen and the rocket launchers allegedly sold to Elomar have never been recovered.[38]

From the sources available, it can be concluded that the two cells did not progress beyond attempting to acquire the materials required for an act of terrorism to the selection of a specific target.

#### *The Role of the Infiltrator 'SIO39'*

One early component of the Pendennis investigation involved the infiltration of Victoria Police Special Intelligence Officer 39 (SIO39) into the Melbourne cell.[39] Posing as a Turkish man named 'Ahmet Sonmez', SIO39 began attending Benbrika's religious classes in May 2004.[40] By September 2004 he had gained



the confidence of the sheikh to such a degree that he was invited into his home. During this encounter SIO39 feigned regret concerning his ownership of Coca-Cola shares, and casually referred to his purported experience using explosives while working in the construction industry. Benbrika's response was to explore SIO39's views regarding jihad and inquire about the idea of using SIO39's knowledge of explosives to 'do something' in Australia.[41]

In October of that year, Benbrika accompanied SIO39 to a nature reserve to the north of Melbourne where SIO39 detonated a small quantity of explosives in a demonstration to Benbrika. Benbrika then asked SIO39 what quantity would be necessary to destroy a building, and the pair discussed the practical and financial aspects of obtaining the materials to make bombs of this kind.[42]

However the undercover officer's role ended shortly afterward. By late 2004, several core members began expressing suspicions regarding SIO39, with Benbrika coming to share their view. This led Benbrika to make a number of statements to wrong-foot the Australian authorities and SIO39, announcing that he had changed his mind and that jihad in Australia was not permissible after all.[43] However, when sentencing Benbrika the judge noted that, 'if Benbrika was cautious in his dealings with SIO39, this was in complete contrast to his open encouragement of the members of the group to engage in terrorism'.[44]

#### *Concealment Activities*

The Melbourne cell's suspicions that they were under police surveillance somewhat stifled their planned activities. Fundraising slowed significantly following a series of police raids which uncovered stolen cars, propaganda, bomb-making manuals and several thousand Australian dollars.[45] Over time cell members also began to suspect that their phones were being tapped, and constantly discussed their concern that they might be arrested for what they were planning. There was also great concern among the group regarding potential informants within the local Muslim community, although Benbrika repeatedly refused requests to subject suspected informants to ill-treatment.[46]

Despite the group's compromised position, the Melbourne cell did continue their activities and preparations (albeit in a more limited fashion). One member even tried to purchase firearms on the black market. This continuation may have been related to the fatalistic views of Benbrika, who preached that the group's actions would either manifest in a successful attack or continue from prison. Notably, Benbrika did exercise patience in his movements towards this goal, pushing back against group members who were constantly pestering him about when the cell was finally going to do 'something'. Some threatened to split from the group in order to speed up activities. At the end of October 2005 Benbrika appeared to want to pause the group's activities in order to lessen the attention placed on them by authorities, but this proved impossible due to the impatience of group members.[47]

The Melbourne cell also made some limited efforts to implement operational security measures. However, their execution of these was amateurish at best.[48] While they often used code words because they feared their phones were tapped, on one occasion one member openly exchanged an SMS message with an arms dealer about a prospective weapons purchase, possibly unaware that SMS messages could be intercepted. The group's system of code words for communicating via telephone was also compromised on several occasions when members of the cell either did not understand the words, or forgot to use them. Despite being aware that the group was under surveillance, Benbrika even agreed to be interviewed on national television, later declaring triumphantly that he had fooled the interviewer.[49]

In contrast, the Sydney cell's counter-surveillance efforts were implemented with more professionalism. They

used a range of disposable mobile telephones registered under false names, ordered goods under fictitious names, and whispered whenever discussing anything particularly incriminating.[50] The group also often switched the cars used to pick up equipment, and registered the vehicles under other people's names.[51] It was the implementation of counter-surveillance measures, coupled with an imminent fear of potential arrest that created difficulties for the group when attempting to obtain laboratory equipment and chemicals.[52] However, these countermeasures did not prevent police searches conducted in June and August of 2005 from uncovering firearms, large quantities of ammunition, extremist literature and bomb-making manuals.

### *Arrests*

Fearing imminent arrest, in October 2005 the Sydney cell commenced attempts to erase any tracks of what they had been planning. To this end members purchased hollow PVC tubes for the storage of goods underground. The suspicion that the cell buried a range of incriminating materials and weaponry is somewhat reinforced by the fact that one member made enquiries with a large number of estate agents regarding remote pieces of land in October. Two other men also rented powerful metal detectors, possibly used to test whether they would be able to retrieve the concealed items. Prosecutors also believed that the Sydney group possessed a remote 'safe house'.[53] The cell members' fears of arrest proved well-founded, as the plotters were arrested in a series of raids on 8 November 2005. During one arrest, there was an exchange of gunfire between the police and the suspect which resulted in both the suspect and a police officer suffering gunshot wounds.[54]

### *Conclusion*

This Research Note provided a brief case study of a major terrorist plot within Australia. Drawing primarily from publicly available court transcripts, the case study sought to expand the growing literature within terrorism studies that is based on primary source material and act as a resource for other scholars. The case study also sought to add to knowledge of how terrorists prepare for prospective attacks and react when under surveillance, by providing a descriptive account of the two cells, their preparations and their unsuccessful attempts to evade authorities. It showed how the two cells operated under the guidance of a single spiritual leader who influenced members towards preparing for an attack targeting the Australian government. Their preparations and security precautions were unsuccessful and often amateurish, particularly in the case of the Melbourne cell. While the Sydney cell progressed much further in their practical efforts, neither cell reached a point where an attack could be considered imminent, due to their incompetence as well as a result of effective pre-emptive actions by authorities.

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## Who Are They and Why Do They Go?

### The Radicalisation and Preparatory Processes of Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters

by Daan Weggemans, Edwin Bakker and Peter Grol

#### *Abstract*

*How do European Muslim men and women become involved in a violent jihadist struggle abroad? After the sharp increase in the number of European jihadist foreign fighters in Syria since 2012, this has become a pressing question for both academics and policymakers. Concrete empirical examples of radicalisation processes and preparations for engaging in the violent jihad in Syria can help to increase our understanding of these processes. In this article we will discuss the main elements of five Dutch jihadist foreign fighters' radicalisation and preparatory acts. This information is derived from interviews with persons who had been in the direct environment of these jihadists during their radicalisation phase and the time they were preparing their travel to Syria. The findings are brought together and presented in the form of two composite stories of fictional Dutch foreign fighters—'Daan' and 'Driss'—that can be regarded as typical for a number of other Dutch cases.*

**Keywords:** *the Netherlands, Syria, foreign fighters, jihadism*

#### *Introduction*

The phenomenon of European foreign fighters is not a new one.[1] There are many examples of groups and individuals that, for a variety of motives and from various ideological backgrounds, have joined an armed struggle abroad. The phenomenon of jihadist foreign fighters is not new either. In the past two decades, European Muslims took part in the civil war in Bosnia or went to fight in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and other parts of the wider Islamic world. In the case of Syria, the phenomenon of foreign fighters emerged after the nonviolent protests in March 2011 turned from riots into a full-blown civil war in the summer of 2011. At an early stage, the conflict drew fighters from other parts of the world, including persons from EU member states such as the Netherlands.

The presence of jihadist foreign fighters in general and that of European foreign fighters in particular has raised worries in many of the countries where these people originate from. Authorities in Europe fear that individuals who participate in the fight in Syria may become further radicalised, become trained in the use of weapons and explosives, and then return to Europe as part of a global jihadist movement.[2] Moreover, with the ever rising numbers of foreign fighters in Syria who may some day return, European countries are heading for a serious security problem as most countries do not have the capacity to track or pursue all possible returnees.

As a consequence, in many European countries a strong emphasis has been placed on the prevention of potential jihadists leaving for Syria. However, the legal tools to do so are limited. In addition, it is not always clear what to look for and what to do if there are signs of radicalisation or preparation for travel to Syria. It requires a great deal of capacity and experience, and the necessary manpower, as well as excellent coordination and cooperation between authorities and other relevant stakeholders to at least have a chance to stop potential jihadists from departing via Turkey to Syria. One of the main obstacles for early detection and intervention is a lack of knowledge among front line social workers and police officers about radicalisation and the foreign fighter phenomenon. In addition, limited experience with, and available means for

countering radicalisation can lead to a situation in which signals are observed but are not linked to the jihad in Syria. Moreover, individual signs of radicalisation and preparation often do not provide a complete picture of the situation. Yet even when different pieces of the puzzle are combined, their interpretation often remains difficult. ‘Something’ is going on, but what? It remains unclear what exactly friends and family members or the authorities need to worry about. Many young people change their behaviour and attitudes during teenage years or in their early twenties, but what developments point in the direction of radicalisation and finally to heading for Syria?

Concrete empirical examples of radicalisation processes and preparations for engaging in a violent jihad can increase the awareness and understanding of these processes among potential first line responders (teachers, social workers, community police officers) and parents, friends or acquaintances of potential jihadists. From a more academic perspective these empirical examples are essential for gaining a thorough understanding of a process like radicalisation.[3] This brings us to an apparently fundamental problem of (counter-)terrorism and radicalisation studies.[4] Silke and Sageman, for instance, have stressed that although the number of publications in this field has expanded rapidly since 9/11, only a small percentage of them presents new empirical information and digs deep enough.[5] A substantial part of the literature on terrorism consists of literature reviews and conceptual work.[6] Notwithstanding the inherently complicated nature of obtaining primary-sources based data, this poses a significant obstacle for ‘moving terrorism research forward’.[7]

Against this backdrop, the authors conducted an exploratory study that aims to contribute to our understanding of jihadist foreign fighters from the Netherlands by presenting the ‘biographies’ or life stories of five Dutch jihadist foreign fighters who went to Syria.[8] The data for this Research Note were collected through interviews with eighteen persons who had been in the direct environment of five Dutch jihadists during their radicalisation phase[9] and during the time they were preparing[10] their travel to Syria. The five life ‘biographies’ were ‘translated’ into two condensed life stories that contain the key observations regarding the radicalisation period and the preparation phase. Using a focus-group discussion with twenty-five experts (frontline professionals and policymakers) who deal with radicalisation and (returning) foreign fighters, we compared these key observations with their experience in working with these youngsters or the stories they had been told by the friends and families of foreign fighters originating from the Netherlands. Thus we attempted to address the following two questions: a) what does the radicalisation process of a foreign fighter in the Netherlands look like and b) what do their preparations for travelling to Syria look like?

In the remainder of this Research Note we will first give a general introduction to the problem of jihadist foreign fighters from the Netherlands on the basis of the publications of the General Security and Intelligence Services (AIVD) and the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) who were the first to report on this phenomenon. Subsequently our research approach and methodology will be discussed before presenting the two condensed life stories that synthesise crucial elements of the ‘biographies’ of the five researched Dutch jihadist foreign fighters. In the conclusion we will reflect upon the key elements of these life stories.

### ***Jihadist Foreign Fighters from the Netherlands***

In December 2012 and the first months of 2013, Dutch authorities observed a rapidly growing number of Dutch citizens and residents going to Syria to join the fight against the regime of Bashar al-Assad on the side of jihadist groups. Initially, the authorities were taken by surprise by the flow of persons from the Netherlands that participated in the jihad in Syria. For years, the terrorism threat level in the Netherlands (*Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland*; DTN) had been ‘limited’. However, the DTN report of December 2012 remarked that

the conflict in Syria was becoming 'a new jihadist 'magnet' [...] drawing jihadists from the Arab world but also from Europe'.<sup>[11]</sup>

In January 2013, the AIVD decided to bring this potentially threatening new development to the attention of the general public. In an interview on television, the head of the AIVD stated that many of the foreign fighters join the jihadist group Jabath al-Nusra (JaN).<sup>[12]</sup> A few months later, the country's official threat level was raised to 'substantial', the second highest. One of the reasons was the significant increase in the number of jihadists travelling to countries in Africa and the Middle East, especially Syria.<sup>[13]</sup> In April, the AIVD explained why the phenomenon of travelling jihadists was a source of concern to the Netherlands. According to its Annual Report 2012, 'when abroad, these jihadists acquire combat and other skills and contacts, and may also return in a traumatised condition'.<sup>[14]</sup> It noted a large increase in the number of jihadists travelling to Syria at the end of 2012, pointing at the extensive media and internet attention for the conflict in Syria, and the easy accessibility of the country.<sup>[15]</sup>

The first wave of jihadist travellers to Syria was composed of members of activist radical Islamist movements, such as Behind Bars and Shariah4Holland.<sup>[16]</sup> During 2012 the dividing line between radicalism and jihadism was blurred as these movements created an environment – living room meetings, outdoors events, websites, etc. – in which radical ideas developed into jihadist views. This resulted in the rapid radicalisation of many individuals and a rise in actual attempts to participate in the jihad in Syria.<sup>[17]</sup> Today, many of the 'members' of these and other activist radical Islamist groups have gone to Syria or constitute the core of a 'scene' that is still fervently promoting the jihad in Syria, either on the streets of Dutch cities or on the Internet. Quite openly, they express support for, and display loyalty to groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the earlier mentioned Jabhat al-Nusra.<sup>[18]</sup>

Today, the terrorism threat level in the Netherlands continues to be 'substantial' given the on-going threat posed by the above mentioned groups and the increasing number of those returning from Syria. In February 2014, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) spoke of more than twenty returnees.<sup>[19]</sup> In April, this number had grown to about thirty.<sup>[20]</sup> These returnees are part of a group of more than one hundred Dutch citizens and residents who have travelled to Syria. The assessments of May 2014 speak of more than seventy persons that are in Syria, at least ten who have died there, and of about thirty returnees.<sup>[21]</sup> In 2014, the fight in Syria also seemed to have attracted new groups of potential foreign fighters, including an increasing number of women.<sup>[22]</sup> Against this background it is obvious that there is no standard Dutch foreign jihad fighter. However, although there is no clear profile of these foreign fighters, there are a number of general observations that can be made based upon what is communicated by Dutch intelligence and security services. The group of Dutch foreign fighters is comprised of mainly male youngsters, and persons with various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Moreover, according to the AIVD, the average age of those who travel to Syria is decreasing.<sup>[23]</sup> The majority of the Dutch foreign fighters has a jihadist agenda and has joined either ISIL or JaN.<sup>[24]</sup> All of these individuals have been active in jihadist circles for various lengths of time, in the virtual or real world.<sup>[25]</sup> The fact that most Dutch foreign fighters have joined jihadist groups is one of the main reasons why the authorities are worried and the threat level has remained 'substantial'.

According to the AIVD several fighters have returned to the Netherlands, 'frequently bearing alarming baggage: they are trained, traumatized or radicalised even further'.<sup>[26]</sup> To limit the potential threat, the authorities aim to contain the flow of persons travelling to Syria and are further developing a strategy to deal with those returning. Policies related to returnees range from 'soft' assistance programs by local authorities to 'hard' criminal investigations and persecution efforts by the public prosecutor's office. The various security partners involved are asked to remain alert to radicalisation and possible signs of preparation for travelling to

Syria.[27]

To that end, the NCTV provides advice to practitioners and promotes the development of expertise, for instance by offering or supporting security awareness training. However, this is easier said than done. As mentioned earlier, recognising the radicalisation process and the preparation phase of those that want to join the jihad in Syria is very difficult. For instance, this process can sometimes be very short.[28] There are several cases of youngsters who, seemingly out of the blue, became foreign fighters within a few weeks or months. Even many parents were taken by surprise, let alone teachers, social workers, community police officers and local authorities who make up the second ring of possible observers of changes in attitudes and behaviour among these youngsters.[29] Sometimes certain signals were observed, but did not provide a clear and complete picture, as a result of which follow-up actions were postponed.[30] Even when different signals are brought together it is still difficult to make a proper assessment as there is limited material to compare with. Some signals about changes in attitudes and behaviour provide reasons to worry, but to worry about what? Youngsters at the age of most of the foreign fighters show all kinds of changes in attitude and behaviour, but which ones indicate a process that leads to becoming a foreign fighter? To answer these highly relevant questions, we need more empirical research. We need more concrete examples that can help to give an overview of the puzzle in order to a) recognise signals or information, and b) to put the pieces of the puzzle together and assess the situation.

### ***Research Approach and Methodology***

This Research Note aims at getting a better picture of Dutch jihadist foreign fighters. With this explorative study we hope to gain some preliminary insights on this phenomenon by reconstructing the radicalisation and preparation processes of a small number of Dutch jihadist foreign fighters who left for Syria. We studied the life stories of five young men who participated in the struggle against the Assad regime between summer 2012 and fall 2013. In this article we will present two abstracted stories consisting of the main elements of these five cases.

The five cases were selected, to the extent information was available, in such a way as to represent the larger population of at least one hundred Dutch jihadist foreign fighters in terms of age, ethnic background, percentage of converts to Islam, social economic background and region of residence. However, accessibility of sources, especially access to persons who were close to our research subjects during their radicalisation phase and the preparation for leaving for Syria, proved to be an important factor for our case selection as well. It was, as expected, not easy to find respondents who agreed to an interview. Feelings of shame and sorrow or fear that talking with researchers would lead to repercussions, such as intimidation by members of the Dutch jihadist scene or trouble with the authorities, formed important obstacles. These obstacles proved bigger in relation to persons of Moroccan descent than in relation to Dutch converts. As a result, the share of converts from ethnically Dutch families, two out of five, is inflated.

For each case three to seven people were interviewed (a total of eighteen respondents of whom seven were interviewed regarding multiple cases) between November 2013 and April 2014. The semi-structured interviews were based on a set of topics to be discussed in depth.[31] These topics were related to the following categories: questions about character or personality, family situation, social network, meaning of life and religion, political ideas, personal experiences. We asked our respondents to focus on the following time periods in the life of the foreign fighters: childhood, adolescence, adult life (if applicable), year before going to Syria and last weeks before travel.

All interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting. The interviewees included friends and family

members as well as employers, social workers and local police officers and persons connected to mosques. The respondents were in the direct environment of our research subjects during their radicalisation and while engaging in preparatory acts for leaving for Syria. We argue that this makes them valuable respondents for our study as they possess important, first-hand, knowledge on how these processes unfolded and because they are able to reflect upon potential (missed) signals of a forthcoming departure.[32]

The interviews were supplemented, when available, with open source information on the five cases. This resulted in five biographies of Dutch jihadist foreign fighters that describe their lives before leaving for Syria and the subjective interpretations of their radicalisation and preparation phase by the interviewees. Considering the sensitivity of the matter at hand, all personal data in the five life stories has been anonymized (different names and places have been used as well as hobbies and other personal characteristics have been feigned). This, however, has no consequences for the scope and meaning of these biographies. We named the persons Erik, Tarik, Faysal, Elmir and Steven.

Erik and Steven are two boys who were raised in ethnically Dutch families and converted to Islam after finishing their high school education. Tarik and Elmir on the other hand were raised in immigrant families. Tarik was raised in a traditional and religious Turkish family while Elmir's family is from the West Indies and converted to Islam when he was 18 years old. Faysal was born to a Iraqi-Kurdish father and a Dutch mother and converted to Islam during his last years of high school.

The life stories of these five individuals encompass different elements of the development towards becoming a foreign fighter in Syria; personal, ideological, political and social. The elements that were most often encountered in the interviews or in open source information on the five cases were extracted from these five biographies and comprised into the 'fictive' life stories of Daan and Driss. Due to the limited length of this Research Note, we opted for this type of presentation, instead of, for instance, producing a list of observations or possible relevant factors or indicators, as it gives more opportunity to highlight the complexity and the importance of context with regard to the radicalisation and preparation phases of the Dutch foreign fighters. [33] This presentation also corresponds with the explorative nature of this study. Moreover, using compressed stories allows for comparing these cases with the experiences of practitioners and experts in the field in focus group meetings (see below). In the end, all radicalisation processes are to a certain extent idiosyncratic. It is therefore impossible to speak of a single 'typical' radicalisation pathway. However, some elements or themes stood out in the cases we looked into. By combining the recurrent elements and themes from multiple cases into two condensed stories, we aim to provide a grounded insight into these recurring elements of the radicalisation processes whilst acknowledging their inherent complexity.

We opted for two composite stories to be able to present and discuss a number of key contrasts or dissimilarities that recurred in the five researched cases: uncertain/self-confident behaviour, follower/leader types, of Moroccan background/of other ethnic background, and of Muslim background/convert. These contrasts or differences are partly interrelated and can be translated into two stories that reflect recurring or typical elements of the cases we studied. The story of Daan shows the development of a somewhat uncertain teenager who converted to Islam. He could be described as a 'follower'. Driss' story is one about a popular, rather self-confident young man of Moroccan background with many friends in his neighbourhood. He is more a 'leader-like type'. The key elements that constitute the basis of the life stories of Daan and Driss include, amongst others, traumatic experiences in (family) life, difficulties at school or work, confrontations with charismatic persons, personal disappointments, trouble with the authorities, a change of home address, developments at school, (new) friendships, and an increased interest in religion.

In a workshop with a focus group panel of twenty-five professionals (frontline workers, representatives of



local NGOs, community police officers and local policymakers who deal with the issue of radicalisation and foreign fighters) we presented the two condensed life stories. In that version, we underlined the most recurring and most typical elements in the 'biographies' of Daan and Driss. In group discussions, we compared these key observations with their experiences in dealing with radicalisation and returning foreign fighters. There appeared to be very much overlap between the outcome of our earlier interviews and their translation into the life stories of Daan and Driss and what the members of our focus group had been confronted with. In fact, they regarded both stories as rather typical for the cases they had been confronted with. Based on the input from the focus group we only altered the wordings of some of the key observations in the stories of Daan and Driss. They related to traumatic experiences in life, such as the death of a close family member and not knowing what to do with one's life. In this way we designed the two composite life stories presented below.

### *Composite Life Story # 1: Daan*

Daan grew up in a middle-sized town in the west of the country in a family of four; father mother and an older brother. The neighbourhood in which they lived had a bad reputation because of problems with youngsters from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Unlike most other kids in the neighbourhood, Daan started the second highest level of secondary education and initially managed without any problems to progress in class from year to year. Both in the neighbourhood and at school he was a bit of an outsider. He found it difficult to connect to other children who regarded him as a bit weird; always reading and studying instead of playing sports, playing on the streets and crossing the line into criminal activities every once in a while. He was known as a silent goody-goody. When Daan was sixteen, his family was confronted with a very serious illness of his father. For a long time, Daan was not told about the seriousness of the disease; talking about it was taboo. At school, his grades went down and he started missing classes. His mother did not really know his whereabouts at this time. 'We were so preoccupied with the disease of his father that I hardly knew where Daan was in the months before his dad died.'

Around that time, Daan increasingly began to hang around with two brothers of Iraqi descent that lived in the same neighbourhood. These boys were slightly older than Daan and had been 'in contact with the police' (as a Dutch euphemism goes), but subsequently had found structure and meaning in life through Islam. They took Daan to a mosque in another part of town. A few weeks after the death of his father, he converted to Islam. He kept it hidden for a while from his brother and mother. She was very surprised when she saw her son among other boys dressed in a traditional *djellaba*.<sup>[34]</sup> She was initially pleased when Daan explained to her why he had converted, that he had found brotherhood and that it helped him to deal with the death of his father. This feeling of relief quickly passed away when he suddenly started calling everything *haram* <sup>[35]</sup> at home and did not want to join them for dinner when the food was not *halal*.<sup>[36]</sup> Especially Daan's brother, Robert, took offense from this behaviour. This led to quarrels that occasionally became very heated. 'After a particularly fierce argument Daan suddenly grabbed a bag and he was gone', said the mother. 'I regret I did not report him as missing ... but he was 17 and I thought he will simply come home after few days'.

The mother was somewhat reassured the next day, when Daan sent a loving text message in which he said he was sorry and that he was staying with friends. After that, he came home only occasionally to pick up some stuff and to chat with his mother. She noticed that he often talked about politics and how wonderfully Islam protected weaker members of society. She found it hard to talk to him about such matters. Around that time, Daan stopped having contact with the few friends he had at high school, despite the fact that he went to school regularly again and even started having quite good grades. From then on, he became even more an outcast at school: the silent convert without any friends.

He did have friends outside school. According to a community police officer from another part of the city, Daan was a member of a group of radical Muslims who often came together to talk about religion and politics. This particular group was banned from several mosques after confrontations with other visitors. Youth workers knew several of them from the time they were younger and were causing many problems. According to the imam of a mosque where they were no longer welcome, '[t]hey intimidate our mosque attendants and feel that they alone represent the true Islam. I don't know. The misery in Syria hurts us all, but their hatred against Shiites and the West is way over the top. I am so worried about this.' The community police officer was aware of these concerns, but because the confrontations at the mosque had stopped, it was felt that no further actions were necessary. A rumour that two brothers from the radical group were fighting in Syria was seen as little more than bragging. Two days later, after their desperate parents had reported them missing, it was clear that they indeed had left for Syria—together with Daan.

### *Composite Life Story #2: Driss*

Driss grew up on the streets of a large city in the Netherlands. As the third child in a family of eight his playroom was outdoors, especially the soccer field behind the flats of the bad neighbourhood in which they lived. Like most of his neighbours, he was of Moroccan descent. He had a hard time at school. His language deficiency – his mother could hardly speak any Dutch – he managed to overcome. During his high school years (at the lowest secondary education level) he was a locally well-known rapper who incorporated alleged discrimination against young immigrants into his sharp texts. This made him popular at school and in his neighbourhood. His Dutch teacher had always hoped Driss could have become a role model as a successful rapper. He was also generally regarded as a sympathetic and cheerful boy. He had once been caught during a burglary, but otherwise stood out positively among the rest of his friends and other kids in the neighbourhood. Unlike most of his friends he had a job as a general assistant in a supermarket. However, he lost this job when it appeared that he had been an accomplice of a robbery at the same store by opening a backdoor at about closing time to let in his criminal friends. As a consequence, he came into contact with the law, but eventually was sentenced only to community service. During this difficult period, he managed to finish high school. After that, he enrolled in an upper level vocational training program 'Trade & Enterprise' in a nearby town. After the first weeks he hardly showed up in class. He also seemed to have given up on rapping.

At that time, he made an exasperated and restless impression, according to a social worker from his neighbourhood. 'He did not manage to deal with that thing with the robbery and the transition to a new school in a new town. Also his group of friends gradually fell apart. Some went to other schools, some had problems with the law and Driss did not seem to know what he should do with his life.'

A part of the group of friends that continued to hang around in the neighbourhood started to get an interest in religion after the arrival of a charismatic figure in a mosque in an adjacent part of town. Initially Driss met them only occasionally. When the discussion was becoming more political in nature, however, Driss' interest was aroused. With the same verve as from the time he was rapping, he emerged as a gifted speaker at the living-room meetings and on public squares in the neighbourhood. 'They performed *dawah*[37] and went up to youngsters who caused trouble to say something about their behaviour', said a community police officer. Driss stood out from the rest because he did not change his dress. 'He flourished again and that positive attitude of his attracted a lot of other people. Because of him, I then too started to study Islam for a while', said one of his neighbours. Driss became one of the key figures of an activist Islamist group. He and his fellow activists also went to demonstrate a number of times in The Hague against the burqa ban. By that time he had grown a thin beard.

When it was known that three members of the group had travelled to Syria, his parents were informed about this by acquaintances. They knew about the radical ideas of their son, but were not particularly negative or worried about it, though they did not like him being involved in demonstrations. Moreover, at home he hardly talked about politics or religion. In fact they were glad that Driss was interested and positive about something again. His father remembered that Driss told them he wanted to continue his studies and that he had a job at an Islamic butchers shop. 'When we heard that some of his friends had gone to Syria, we were shocked at first, but when Driss told about all his plans, we were just very relieved. To us this was proof that he would not go to Syria and that his future was here.' The parents were very upset and bitter when they learned two weeks later that Driss was in fact in Syria. 'Why did the secret police not warn us and stop him! Why had they not arrested him at that demonstration!'

### **Conclusion**

In this Research Note we looked into concrete cases of Dutch jihadist foreign fighters. We argued that more empirical data is needed to gain a better understanding their motivations. Based on interviews with eighteen individuals who were in the direct environment of five persons who had joined the struggle against the regime of Bashar al-Assad and supplemented with other available open source materials we reconstructed their life stories. Next we translated these five 'biographies' in two condensed life stories. These were compared with the experience of a focus-group of more than twenty experts in the field of radicalisation and foreign fighters and their observations and experiences were incorporated. The final versions of these two condensed life stories aim to address issues related to the radicalisation process of a foreign fighter in the Netherlands and his preparation before traveling to Syria.

Before we reiterate the key observations of our exploratory study, we would like to remind the reader that the two condensed life stories cannot possibly provide a complete picture of the phenomenon of Dutch jihadist foreign fighters and their radicalisation process and preparation phase. Here as elsewhere, radicalisation is foremost characterised by complexity and dissimilarity.[38] It goes without saying that the small number of cases that were studied prohibits us from drawing any general conclusions. The study limits itself to providing a set of often recurring elements in the life stories of five foreign fighters and a few preliminary assumptions that need further testing. Keeping this in mind, we present the following key observations of our study:

- Based on the publications of the AIVD and the NCTV it would appear that the Syrian conflict has attracted jihadist fighters from different ethnic backgrounds and from various parts of the Netherlands. The AIVD also stressed the virtual glorification of Dutch jihadist foreign fighters and regards this as one of the causes for the rise in jihadists traveling to Syria. However, during our interviews and from the expert panel we consulted, it did not emerge that the internet played a decisive role in the radicalisation of our research subjects and their decision to leave for Syria. Although some of them visited radical websites, this was not regarded by our interviewees as a very important reason for their radicalisation.
- Based on our interviews and the workshop with the expert panel, the group of Dutch foreign fighters consists mostly of individuals under the age of 25, with middle and low education levels, originating from lower or lower middle class socio-economic backgrounds. They were raised in relatively bad neighbourhoods in both traditional religious immigrant and Islamic families as well as in ethnically Dutch families.
- Some interviewees observed strong frustrations among our five research subjects in the years before they left about their own societal position in the Netherlands or that of their ethnic groups. Only in

some cases were frustration and concerns expressed about the Syrian conflict.

- We found in our sample that some of our research subjects had been exposed to traumatic experiences, such as the loss of a loved one or experiencing difficulties at school or work and trouble with the authorities, in the period before joining a violent jihadist group in Syria.
- During the radicalisation and preparatory processes, our research subjects increasingly isolated themselves from society. This manifested itself in two ways: the radicalising individual cuts the ties with his former social environment (for instance with old friends or family members) or the social environment expels the radicalising individual (for instance when individuals or groups are being banned from mosques).
- In the researched cases individuals were confronted with, and shared their radical ideologies or ideas about, Syria via radical networks. Sometimes these networks consisted of old friends (often from the same neighbourhood) who had radicalised collectively. In other cases, a change of home address or school brought them in contact with new friends who belonged to radical groups or they encountered charismatic persons. In our cases, these charismatic persons were not religious authorities or former jihadi foreign fighters. Their role can be the articulating and disseminating of a radical agenda or the sharing of specific knowledge about how to become involved in the Syrian jihad. In addition, in most cases, other persons within the social networks of the five studied foreign jihadist fighters had preceded them in joining Syrian jihadist groups.
- Among our research subjects we found feelings of apathy and lack of meaningfulness in their lives in the period before they left for Syria. In these cases participating in the Syrian conflict seemed to provide them with a sense of purpose and fulfil their need to belong.
- The five persons studied showed an increased interest in religion in the period before they left for Syria. This manifested itself in visiting (different) mosques, changing eating habits, entering into religious debates, and visiting certain websites or online forums.
- Almost everyone near the individuals who radicalised and prepared for travelling to Syria, were caught by surprise when they found out that these individuals had actually left. Political statements of those who left for Syria were often escaping their attention since these were not made at home or in public. Preparatory acts were concealed from family members, who, in a number of cases, were deceived.

Our key observations and preliminary assumptions show a complex and diverse picture of the Dutch Muslim foreign fighters and their radicalisation process and preparation phase. Much more empirical research is needed to be able to arrive at a set of well-defined factors, circumstances or dynamics that will help us to understand this phenomenon. With the two condensed life stories we hoped to provide some empirical insights that can be used by other scholars who study the phenomenon of foreign fighters as a means of comparison and validation.

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## Notes

- [1] Edwin Bakker, Christophe Paulussen and Eva Entenmann, "Dealing with European Foreign Fighters in Syria: Governance Challenges & Legal Implications," *ICCT Research Paper* (International Centre for Counter-terrorism – The Hague, 2014); Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2011): 53–94; Barak Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters—Recent Trends," *Orbis*, vol.55 no.2 (2011): 189–202.
- [2] See for instance: Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst (AIVD), "Annual Report 2013," (AIVD, 2013); National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), "Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme 35," (NCTV 2013); EUROPOL, "TE-SAT 2013: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report," (EUROPOL 2014).
- [3] Bart Schuurman and Quirine Eijkman, "Moving Terrorism Research Forward: The Crucial Role of Primary Sources," *ICCT Background Note* (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2013): 1.
- [4] As Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman stated already in 1988: 'There are probably few areas in the social science literature in which so much is written on the basis of so little research'. Alex Schmid, Albert Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 179.
- [5] Andrew Silke, "The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol.13, no. 4 (2011): 5; Andrew Silke, "Contemporary Terrorism Studies: Issues in Research," in Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning (eds.), *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda* (New York / London: Routledge, 2009), 34-48; Marc Sageman, "The Stagnation of Terrorism Research," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Forthcoming 2013): 1-16.
- [6] Neumann and Kleinmann showed that secondary academic literature remains the single largest source of evidence in radicalisation studies and the 'overall balance between [the use of] primary and secondary sources (54 percent versus 45 percent) demonstrates that researchers (...) [in this field strongly rely] on secondary sources for making their arguments'. Peter Neumann and Scott Kleinmann, "How Rigorous Is Radicalization Research?," *Democracy and Security*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2013): 372.
- [7] Schuurman and Eijkman, "Moving Terrorism Research Forward".
- [8] We define these jihadist foreign fighters as those who regard it their duty to participate in what they believe to be a jihad of the sword against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and its Shiite allies, and who join local or foreign groups with a jihadist political agenda. The term jihad refers to the so-called violent or lesser jihad. A person who engages in this type of jihad is called a jihadist. Their actions are claimed to be in furtherance of the goals of Islam. These goals may include the establishment of a (pan) Islamic theocracy and their restoration of the caliphate. See: Edwin Bakker, "Characteristics of Jihadi Terrorists in Europe (2001-2009)," in Rik Coolsaet (ed.), *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 2.
- [9] We adopt Neumann and Rogers' definition of radicalisation as 'the changes in attitude that lead towards sanctioning and, ultimately, the involvement in the use of violence for a political aim'. See: Peter R. Neumann and Brooke Rogers, "Recruitment and Mobilisation for the Islamist Militant Movement in Europe," (King's College London, 2007), 11.
- [10] In this paper we define preparatory acts as the initial acts of a person who has conceived the idea of leaving for Syria to join the violent jihad. Examples of preparatory acts include raising money for travel expenses, gaining knowledge on the best way to enter Syria or how to join a specific jihadist group, obtaining military equipment, announcing the intent to leave or saying goodbye to loved ones.
- [11] National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), "Summary DTN 31," (NCTV, 2012). See: [english.nctv.nl/Images/summary-dtn-31\\_tcm92-476955.pdf?cp=92&cs=65038](http://english.nctv.nl/Images/summary-dtn-31_tcm92-476955.pdf?cp=92&cs=65038).
- [12] Bertolee, R. (2013);AIVD waarschuwt voor jihadgangers. *Nieuwsuur* 07-02-2013.
- [13] National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), "Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme 32," (NCTV, 2013).
- [14] AIVD, "Annual Report 2012," 21.
- [15] Ibid.
- [16] Ibid.
- [17] Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst (AIVD), "Annual Report 2012," (2013), 21.



[18] AIVD, "Annual Report 2013," 11; NCTV, "Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme 35".

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ronald Plasterk, "Press conference presentation AIVD annual report," (The Hague, 23 April 2014).

[21] AIVD, "Annual Report 2013," 9; Plasterk, "Press conference".

[22] AIVD, "Annual Report 2013," 3.

[23] Ibid., 3.

[24] Ibid., 9.

[25] NCTV, "Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme 35".

[26] AIVD, "Annual Report 2013," 3.

[27] NCTV, "Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme 35"; Interviews with local policy makers and NCTV officials (March 2013 – June 2014).

[28] Interviews with local policy makers and NCTV officials (March 2013–June 2014).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Our semi-structured interviews consisted of multiple topics that related to our five cases on which the respondent was asked to reflect upon. Per answer the interviewer could ask for an elaboration (a probe). This kind of qualitative interviewing offers researchers the opportunity to ask respondents about underlying motivations, thoughts and ideas and collect detailed information.

[32] It is important to stress that the perceptions of respondents on the course of events may differ. Therefore multiple sources were used to describe the radicalisation process and preparatory acts of our research subjects. Moreover, there is the risk of subjectivity and the problem of asking all kinds of questions in hindsight about processes and phases these persons might have wanted to prevent.

[33] The five initial cases can be requested from the authors.

[34] Berber traditional long robe.

[35] Arabic term meaning sinful.

[36] Permissible according to Islam.

[37] Proselytizing or preaching of Islam.

[38] See also Alex Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-radicalisation Counter-radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review," *ICCT Research Paper*, (International Centre for Counter-terrorism – The Hague, 2013); Coolsaet, *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge*.

### III. Resources

#### Bibliography on Islamist Narratives and Western Counter-Narratives (Part 1)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Bibliographic Series of Perspectives on Terrorism–BSPT–JT–2014–4]

##### **Abstract**

*This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on narratives employed by terrorists and their opponents. It mainly focuses on Islamist terrorism. While more recent publications have been prioritised during the selection process, the bibliography is not restricted to a particular time period and covers publications up to mid-July, 2014. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to expand the search.*

**Keywords:** *bibliography, resources, literature, narratives, counter-narratives, alternative narratives, Islamists, Jihadists*

*NB: All websites were last visited on 21 July, 2014.–See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.*

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## Bibliography on State Sponsored Terrorism and Assassinations Abroad; with Special Emphasis on the Assassination of 28 July 1914 that Triggered World War I

[BSPT-EP -2014-4]

Selected and compiled by Eric Price

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**See also resources on the Internet:**

The Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/comment/sarajevo.html>

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## IV. Book Reviews

**John Horgan**, *The Psychology of Terrorism* [Revised and updated second edition]. New York, NY: Routledge: 2014. 184 pages, US\$170.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-69800-9; US\$42.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-69802-3.

Reviewed by Jeff Victoroff

Less than a decade ago, to read the entire unclassified English language literature on the psychology of terrorism was entirely doable. Now it's not. So what should one read? John Horgan's new book is an authentically excellent point of departure.

First, two disclaimers: I am a biologist in spirit. Biology explains the mechanisms and ultimate causes of animal behavior. In contrast, psychology focuses on emergent abstractions such as "happiness" or "internalization." Candidly, notions such as "fundamental attribution error" are interesting to talk about, but it is not immediately apparent how they will help Bostonians keep their legs. Still, a disciplinary framework may be unimportant. As Hippocrates said, what works is good. The discipline of psychology has indeed offered many ideas that prove valuable for enhancing human security. Second, I like John Horgan. We share a ferocious devotion to empiricism. Entirely apart from his exceptional capacity for clear thinking and writing, I think he's a great guy who truly wants to figure out the truth.

Prof. Horgan is a senior scholar in the field of psychology, and Director of the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. His new book, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, is a revised and expanded second edition. It is better than the first (published in 2005), and, leaping to a recommendation, deserves sharp attention from both scholars and "practitioners" (a term that describes a loose conglomerate of leaders, policy makers, diplomats, police, war fighters, and hard working spooks). Horgan mostly confines his attention to substate group terrorism, even stating "it is clear that terrorism is a group process" (p. 105). This leaves out some pieces of the pie, but is a sensible focus for a short book.

The author declares his priorities up front. He distinguishes between dated efforts to understand "the terrorist mind" and recent efforts to uncover exploitable facts about the psychosocial development, engagement, and disengagement of people attracted to the terrorist lifestyle. What Horgan derogates as the "mentalist" strain of terrorism studies refers to the main goal of earlier scholarship. There was a decades-long quest to answer the question "what makes terrorists psychologically different?" It is entirely possible that someday empirical research will make progress in answering that question—not by identifying a profile of the typical terrorist, but simply by identifying psychological or cognitive traits that are statistically more prevalent among terrorists than among matched non-terrorists with similar backgrounds. For instance, perhaps someday high quality studies will show that a need for cognitive closure is observed more frequently among adolescents who go on to become terrorists compared with those who don't.

But what would such studies yield, beyond discussions at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)? Like philosophy, such studies would be fun, but what profit is gained toward the interests of national security? Dr. Horgan is interested in meaningful results. He clearly cares about whether advances in psychological knowledge might save lives: "...a real urgency is upon us now to develop a straightforward and unambiguous understanding of the process whereby individuals and groups turn to terrorism, and . . . how policy makers might employ that knowledge in the development of counterterrorism initiatives"(p. 77).

The first 76 pages of this 184-page book comprise a critical review of earlier research on the psychology of



terrorism. This bare-bones introduction is surely among the most compact and useful of such overviews; it will help beginners appreciate the awkward fits and starts of these early studies. Experts will need to hang in there until later in the text, when Horgan begins to fulfill his promise of discussing recent, meaningful advances. The author emphasizes several points that distinguish his approach from that of others. First, it is very important to acknowledge dissimilarity/heterogeneity. Empirical evidence tends to debunk any single model of why people get involved with terrorism. For example, recent research by Dyer and Simcox (2013) suggested five different categories of involvement among 171 al-Qaeda members. Second, the poorly defined term *radicalization*—the focus of much attention after 2005—may be a red herring. The danger comes not necessarily from radicals, but from terrorists. For instance, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals arguably stake out radical positions, but they do not typically use violence. The Animal Liberation Front, in contrast, commits acts of terror. Which group should we study and counteract? Horgan suggests that excessive attention to radicalization, which is just a part of the spectrum of opinion that challenges the status quo, distracts from the life-saving work of reducing terrorism.

Third, Horgan strongly emphasizes his distinction between involvement in terrorism as a *state* and involvement as a *process*—a progression of “lots of little steps” toward affiliation with a terrorist movement, pursued for any number of reasons, to play any number of roles, but in part to attain status. Fourth, he states that so-called “root causes” of terrorism are not root causes. Social injustice, for example, may be a *precondition* for the emergence of terrorism, but it hardly determines that result. Indeed, there is far more social injustice in the world than terrorism. Fifth, Horgan agrees that very few people exposed to conflict become terrorists. This is the indisputable fact that suggests, contrary to those who deny it, that terrorists are indeed different. But that hardly means all of them are different in the same way or to the same degree. Horgan characterizes the tiny subset who become involved as exhibiting the nonspecific quality he calls “*openness to engagement*.” In the absence of empirical data suggesting a common trait, his amorphous concept of openness to engagement is about as good as it gets in defining the mysterious and diverse combinations of innate, developmental, and social factors that explain why widely varying individuals get involved.

Overall, Horgan urges us to set aside the “why” of terrorism studies and devote more attention to the “how,” since knowing how terrorism emerges seems more likely to empower life-saving security responses. His book is densely supplied with excellent examples of “how” plots evolve from contemplation through execution, offering some startling insights into a potpourri of banal pragmatics (what do I say when I want to rent a farm to practice blowing things up?) and elaborate logistics (how many months of surveillance will prepare us to plant the photo-electric cell such that only the target’s car triggers it?) that characterize past attacks. He strongly emphasizes that the search for a terrorist profile or inner mental risk factors is fruitless, whereas the search for the behaviors associated with terrorism is promising: “identifying the behaviors associated with . . . becoming involved, ‘being’... involved, and engaging in terrorist events and disengaging.” (p 159) This focus verges on the Skinnerian objection to psychodynamics: it is to never mind where the box came from (and never mind about the gears in the box), just look at what goes in and pops out—which Horgan calls “the behaviors themselves and the ways in which they develop.” I am a little more open to the possible value of “why” research. It’s clearly useful to know that an internal combustion engine turns gas into rotary motion, but it might be equally useful to know why such engine exists: the human eagerness for superhuman power.

On occasion, Horgan detours into disciplinary over-reckoning. Only an academic psychologist (or Federal prosecutor) would state, “a clear answer to the question of what it means to *be involved* in terrorism is perhaps one of the most important research questions since 2001” (p. 104). That is not a research question. No yardstick, clinical trial, or mathematical formula will answer it. It is a semantic—or, as Horgan correctly



says, “definitional”—issue that will be argued long after the closing of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

Perhaps paradoxically, one of the most courageous and insightful contributions of this excellent text is to point out our failures as a scholarly community. One such failure is the sorry dearth of high quality data—combined with both our failure to share data (often due to academic competition or restrictions on government-based research grants) and our failure to understand what the data reveal about the “how” of terrorism.

Even more importantly, in his last chapter Horgan finally tackles the elephant in the room: the psychology of counterterrorism. The author boldly proposes that we can no longer shy away from analyzing how many counterterrorists have interfered with, rather than advanced, the very cause they claim to champion. Never mind the assumedly rational design of counterterrorism policy or initiatives based on falsifiable theory. We are not even accomplishing trial-and-error, thus policy choices are not informed by deep study of costs versus benefits of what we do (for instance, targeted killing). Do we know how many people have turned to militant jihad because of drones? Without having made a serious effort to answer such a question, buzzing around Yemen in crop-dusters with Hellfires is a foolhardy invitation to blowback.

Why do we continue to act in a vacuum of outcomes-based research? A psychological examination of involvement in counterterrorism exposes the embarrassing gaffes of both practitioners and scholars. First, we face a gargantuan structural issue: leaders, policymakers, politicians, law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies are responsible for counterterrorism. Absent solid knowledge, and subject to political whims, they may be dubiously qualified to select the best counterterrorism approach, and are often compromised by pursuit of personal agendas. Compare this with the way we fight cancer, where doctors and researchers collaborate extensively, and information derived from clinical trials are shared widely. Surely, a complex, life threatening world problem like terrorism deserves a post-enlightenment approach involving unbiased study of what works and what doesn't. The prioritization of counterterrorism initiatives should at least be influence by those who employ evidence-based and outcomes-based approaches. Yet, despite a lot of research funding and a lot of communication between researchers and policymakers, the policymakers tend to nod and shake hands with the experts—and then follow their gut instincts.

Second, academics are hardly immune from bias. Scholars of terrorism (myself included) believe in their hearts that the world would be safer if only leaders followed their advice. Maybe one of them is right, but the very idea is presumptuous given the pitiable paucity of outcomes-based research.

The bottom line: no one knows how to do counterterrorism better because (a) the right research has not been done and (b) even if unbiased scholars figured out what seems to work, practitioners—disabled by cognitive bias and personal agendas—may not listen. Horgan admits that this might seem depressing, but his candor is uplifting. It's high time to expose and overcome the structural, political, and psychological underpinnings of our continued homeland insecurity. Ultimately, the conclusion of this excellent book is a dignified call for new thinking on terrorism and how to counter it with increasing sophistication and success.

*About the Reviewer: Dr. Jeff Victoroff is Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology and Psychiatry, University of Southern California.*

**Andrew Silke (Ed.)**, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 312 pages, US\$ 150 .00 [Hardcover], US\$ 45.95 [Paperback], ISBN-13: 978-0415810371.

**Reviewed by Jacqueline Bates-Gaston**

This edited volume is a timely and much needed response to the interests of policy makers, government officials, academics and research students in building knowledge and understanding of current international developments in the management and treatment of those convicted and imprisoned for offences that relate to violence in a nationalist, ideological or religious context. The focus of the contributors to this volume is on those who advocate the use of violence to promote extreme political/religious views against specific victims in order to influence future political directions or intentions. It critically examines the importance of the meanings and definitions of words that we now use every day—like terrorism, extremism, radicalisation, de-radicalisation and disengagement. Andrew Silke, the volume's editor, makes the point that, although most of those who are convicted of politically motivated offences are incarcerated, our current understanding of terrorists and extremists in prisons is limited while general research into terrorist-related activities after 9/11 has greatly increased. This book helps address the deficits in our knowledge on developments that occur during their incarceration.

While the book has five parts, the themes interlink and comparisons and learning across the international spectrum and different cultural contexts are evident. The scene is set with a discussion by Colin Murray on critical issues regarding prisons and a perspective on the imprisonment strategy taken within the UK. The potential processes of prison radicalisation in the United States are examined in Joshua Sinai's chapter's innovative research into the development of a seven phase model which outlines the elements involved. This model has connections with extremist risk assessment factors discussed later in the book. Another chapter, by Liran Goldman, reviews experiences of US prison radicalisation with perspectives on the process, the relevance of violent gang culture and reference to "Prislam" or jailhouse Islam, religion and the potential impact of leadership role models, in particular, with insecure and needy prisoners. The author suggests that prison may only set the foundation for radicalisation and that post prison experiences of unmet reintegration support needs are equally important. This point is taken up again later in the book.

The chapter by Marisa Porges analyses the underlying psychological processes and implications of the counselling/communicative aspects and possible consequences, of state led de-radicalisation tactics in the Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The fine, psychological balance between persuasion and resistance to change are explored. The successes and challenges of these communicative approaches to de-radicalisation in similar and other cultural prison contexts are revisited in later chapters in the volume including the chapter by Christopher Dean on individual and group work in the UK, National Offender Management, and Healthy Identity Intervention. Within the de-radicalisation debate a further chapter by John F. Morrison explains the importance of IRA prisoners in the evolution and politicisation of the movement in Ireland towards the ballot box rather than the bullet, with the emphasis on the long journey towards a peace process.

The point is made that even in countries where there have been no formal de-radicalisation approaches, re-offending rates for terrorist offenders have been remarkably low compared to other types of offending. The controversial and contested area of risk assessment of violent extremist prisoners is thoroughly addressed in two chapters with comprehensive explorations of the factors which contribute to risk in this context. Silke observes that, following extensive literature reviews relating to terrorism, there is agreement and some

overlap of risk factors in two recent developments, the NOMS, Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG22+, 22 factors +where relevant) and the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment protocol (VERA 2, with 31 items) including beliefs and attitudes, context and intent, history and capability, commitment and motivation in both the tools with additional protective factors in the latter. The chapter by D. Elaine Pressman and John Flockton on VERA 2 provides extensive detail about the development, research, theoretical underpinning and applications of the tool. The authors have addressed the need for an offence-specific, utilitarian and relevant risk assessment tool which is now being trialled in various jurisdictions. As further research is required, neither of these risk assessment protocols claims to predict future risk of re-offending in a terrorist context but do offer a well researched, structured, clinical judgement approach to assessment. These assessments have developed a comprehensive and systematic approach to considering a range of dynamic factors known through research, to be associated with violent terrorist behaviours. Such an approach is extremely valuable to law enforcement and risk management agencies that require defensible and practical mechanisms.

Using interviews with eighteen leaders of the most active and audacious terrorist groups in Israel – Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad – the unique “security prisoner” experiences in Israeli prisons is provided in the chapter by Sagit Yehoshua. The management of prisoners in this jurisdiction is influenced by the size of the population and collective resistance demonstrated by Palestinians who “construct a whole new community inside the prisons, under a new social space, through the concepts of identity and collectivism, into fully formalised institutions” which influences “the life and identity of the prisoners as well as Palestinian society.” (p. 145) Potential radicalisation and de-radicalisation pathways are discussed through examination of the roles of education, leadership opportunities and length of time spent in prison. Parallels are drawn with paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland as described in other chapters in the book.

Using key case studies, the volume also draws on expert research and experiences of radicalisation and de-radicalisation from different contexts across the world (England, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Indonesia, Germany and Spain) to explore critical issues which are important to professional practice and to the individual offender’s human rights, to prison management policies and interventions, rehabilitation and impact on recidivism.

Finally, the chapter by Neil Ferguson looks at the post release experiences and influence of those convicted of terrorist related offences in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The messages underline the importance of increasing the attention and investment in rehabilitation programmes at post release stages while not ignoring the lessons learned in Northern Ireland on the impact that prisoners can have on future peace processes. The strength of the edited volume is that it draws on current research, experiences and practice across international boundaries using different approaches and sources. It highlights the variety of different, experimental and sometimes contradictory approaches that have been tried to manage and intervene with violent terrorist offenders from a wide spectrum of cultures and contexts.

It is recognised that further evaluations and research into the various rehabilitative and assessment approaches are needed. However, given the dire situations in Israel and Palestine and other countries today, the book offers current, expert research and experience into what might work in some contexts which can inform all those interested in a safer global society.

***About the Reviewer: Dr. Jacqueline Bates-Gaston, a Chartered and Registered Forensic Psychologist, is Chief Psychologist, The Northern Ireland Prison Service.***

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**“Counterterrorism Bookshelf”:****47 Books on Terrorism & Counter-terrorism Related Subjects****by Joshua Sinai**

This column consists of two parts: capsule reviews of six books published by various publishers, and, continuing the series begun in previous columns, highlighting books by publishers with significant publishing programs in terrorism & counterterrorism studies, providing this time capsule reviews (with the authors listed in alphabetical order) of 41 books published by Routledge. Please note that while most of these books were recently published, several published over the past few years deserving attention were also included.

**Note:** Future columns will review books by publishers such as Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, Stanford University Press, and the University of Chicago Press.

**General Reviews**

**Yael S. Aronoff**, *The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard Liners Opt for Peace*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 248 pp., US \$ 29.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 9781107669802.

In this highly interesting and innovative account of the political psychology of six Israeli Prime Ministers, the author draws on the academic literature on the psychology of political conversion to examine how such political leaders approached, whether through conciliation or intransigence, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Based on the book's six case studies of Yitzhak Shamir, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, Yitzhak Rabin, Ehud Barak, and Shimon Peres, the author finds that those who rejected full-blown peace processes tended to be “those leaders who are emotionally attached to and focus on a violent conflict-ridden past...because they are less able to forge a new image of a past opponent as a partner,” while “risk tolerant leaders” are more likely to make peace. (p. xvi). A highly useful conceptual framework in the form of a matrix is provided to examine the ideology and cognitive style of such political leaders regarding their propensity to engage in potential peace processes. This is broken down into factors such as their adherence to a particular ideology, cognitive flexibility, risk propensity, emotional intelligence, and whether their advisers expressed diverse views. This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on counterterrorism with its focus on the challenges involved in resolving terrorism-related conflicts. The author is a professor in Israel studies and international relations at Michigan State University.

**Robert J. Bunker and John P. Sullivan** (Eds.). *Crime Wars and Narco Terrorism in the Americas: A Small Wars Journal – El Centro Anthology*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse LLC, 2014. 544 pp., US \$ 31.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1491739556.

The contributors to this important anthology examine the magnitude of threats presented by the evolution of narco-trafficking criminality, and corruption at all levels of the Mexican state into a full-scale narco-terrorist insurgency that threatens the security of the Mexican state, and has seen its violence spill over into its United States neighbor. The volume's chapters cover topics such as a framework for analyzing criminal national security threats, a review of Mexico's counter drug policy and related security measures, the possible benefits of creating a paramilitary force in Mexico to counter such threats, the spillover of Mexican criminal violence into America's border states, armed tactics employed by the drug cartels, the involvement of the Anonymous hacktivist group in targeting the Los Zetas drug cartel, an assessment of the American defense department's military measures against such transnational organized crime, the relevance of Colombia's counter-drug

and counterinsurgency campaigns to the Mexican area of operations, and future trends in Latin American narco-criminality and terrorist warfare. The anthology's chapters were originally published in the *Small Wars Journal*. Dr. Bunker is adjunct faculty, Division of Politics and Economics, Claremont Graduate University and a Senior Fellow with Small Wars Journal-El Centro, and Dr. Sullivan is a career police officer in Los Angeles and a Senior Fellow with Small Wars Journal-El Centro.

**Frank Foley**, *Countering Terrorism in Britain and France: Institutions, Norms and the Shadow of the Past*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 352 pages, US \$ 99.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 9781107029699.

A highly detailed and authoritative account of the similarities and differences in the way the liberal democracies of Britain and France conduct counterterrorist policies and operations against their respective adversaries. The book's chapters cover topics such as the nature of the Islamist-based terrorist threats facing France and Britain, the history and evolution of their counterterrorist organizations, how both countries coordinate intelligence, police and prosecution in their counterterrorism responses, how they manage the judicial frameworks for prosecuting suspected terrorists, and how both countries tackle Islamist terrorism and its supporting communities. One of the author's conclusions, based on his analysis of the British and French cases, is that "if [liberal democratic] norms and institutions play a crucial role in shaping counterterrorist policy, then states in certain circumstances are constrained from making an overly repressive response to terrorism." (p. 327) The author is a research fellow at the Centre for Political and Constitutional Studies in Madrid and a Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of War Studies at King's College London.

**Jeff M. Moore**, *The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency*. Charleston, SC: A Muir Analytics Book, 2014. 476 pp., US \$ 18.00 [Paperback] ISBN: 978-149395701.

This is a highly comprehensive and insightful account of Thailand's counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign's strategies, operations, and tactics from 1965 to the current period. Beginning with a valuable theoretical discussion of the differences between terrorism and guerrilla insurgencies, the author proceeds to discuss the components of effective counterinsurgency, which he terms the "COIN Pantheon" because not only does it involve "force applications based on quality intelligence, but also lasting social and economic programs, counterpolitical warfare, political remedies for the disenfranchised, and government acceptance of previously ignored cultural realities." (p. xiv) Based on these crucial criteria, the author finds that the Thai way of COIN is generally effective in several areas, such as in the security, political and economic realms, with the government military forces often "achieving the upper hand." (p. 372) In other areas, however, the author writes that the Thai way of COIN "is also, unfortunately, self-hindering due to turf battles, rivalries, corruption, and egos." (p. 372) The author is director of Muir Analytics, LLC, which advises clients in reducing exposure to risks in conflict areas.

**Andrew Silke**, *Terrorism: All That Matters*. London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd/New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2014. 160 pp., US \$ 14.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1444163315.

This is a concise, highly engaging and authoritative introductory overview of terrorism in all its dimensions, starting with a history of terrorism, how to define terrorism, terrorists' motivations, strategies and tactics, the root causes of terrorism, the nature of terrorists' mindsets, how individuals become radicalized into terrorism, the characteristics of suicide terrorism, the components of effective counterterrorism, and future trends in terrorism. Although intended as a 'quick read,' this well-written book nevertheless is filled with numerous insights. It discusses the 1st century Sicarii as well as 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian anarchists to illustrate the history and evolution of terrorism. In assessing the effectiveness of terrorist warfare, the author points



out that five key areas determine a group's capability: quality of leadership, quantity of members, quality of members, availability of weapons, and their financial base. (p. 38) Effectiveness in counterterrorism, in the author's formulation, involves deterring terrorists and their supporters through penalties and punishments, increasing the ability of the security forces to identify and thwart terrorists, reducing the vulnerability of potential targets, tackling the underlying grievances and root causes that give rise to terrorism, and increasing the public's resilience in the face of terrorist attacks. (p. 102) The author is a Professor at the University of East London, where he also serves as the program director for terrorism studies.

**V.S. Subrahmanian, Aaron Mannes, Animesh Roul, and R.K. Raghavan, *Indian Mujahideen: Computational Analysis and Public Policy*. New York, NY: Springer, 2014. US \$ 109.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-3-319-02817-0.**

This is a highly innovative application by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists, law enforcement experts, and scientists of computational techniques to examine the targeting techniques and attack patterns of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorist group. The book begins with an examination of the history and evolution of IM's terrorist campaign against the Indian state, the nature of its organization and membership, areas of operation, and links to other South Asian Islamist groups. It then transitions to a discussion of the conceptual framework's "syntax and semantics of Temporal Probabilistic (TP) behavioral rules" that technologically compute the IM's attack and targeting behaviors. (p. 49) This chapter will be of particular interest to the computational academic community – and, as per the authors guidance, those readers who are not familiar with such computational algorithmic techniques "may skip this chapter without any loss of relevant material." (p. 49) The succeeding chapters provide valuable and rich data about the IM's tactics, such as bombings, simultaneous and timed attacks, and targeting patterns, such as attacking public sites, as well as the total deaths caused by such attacks. Especially innovative is the chapter on computing policy response options, which are based on the overall conceptual framework's "methodology and algorithm that are used to automatically generate policy options" in the form of a "mathematical definition of a policy against IM" that has a "high probability of significantly reducing" most types of its attacks. (p. 107) The book's final chapter presents a recommendation to establish an Indian "National Counter-Terrorism Center," because, among other reasons, a major operational problem in India's counterterrorism campaign is its "lack of a coordinated authority or even a central database of all arrested individuals, suspects, or ongoing operations." (p. 133) The appendices describe the study's overall methodology and use of various classes of variables as sources for data collection, as well as a chronological listing of IM's terrorist attacks. V.S. Subrahmanian is a professor of computer science at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he also serves as Director of the Laboratory for Computational Cultural Dynamics ([LCCD](#)), where Dr. Mannes serves as a research associate. Animesh Roul, and R.K. Raghavan are prominent India-based researchers on terrorism.

### ***Routledge Publications***

**Javier Argomaniz, *The EU and Counter-Terrorism: Politics, Polity and Policies After 9/11*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 208 pages, US\$150.00 [Hardback], US\$39.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-72406-7.**

An insightful and comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Union's response to terrorism, explaining how its numerous institutions conduct counterterrorism in the post-9/11 era, including its attempts to coordinate its member-states' policies, legislations and threats-related intelligence information sharing. The author's research is based on a qualitative methodology that draws on numerous interviews, policy documents and secondary literature.

**Claude Berube and Patrick Cullen, (Eds.) *Maritime Private Security: Market Responses to Piracy, Terrorism***

*and Waterborne Security Risks in the 21st Century*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 272 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 39.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-72424-1.

The contributors to this edited volume, which is one of the first to comprehensively discuss the issue of maritime private security, examine its historical origins and evolution as a private sector contribution to countering piracy, terrorism, and other security-related maritime threats around the world, where governments require the private sector to support and augment their own countermeasures in these spheres.

**Tore Bjorgo** (Ed.), *Terror From the Extreme Right*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1995. 332 pp., [Re-issued] US \$ 57.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-7146-4196-6.

When this edited volume was published in 1995, it represented one of the first times that the subject of far right-wing terrorism in democratic societies was discussed in a systematic manner, making it a classic in the field of terrorism studies at the time. It is still highly pertinent to the current era. The volume's contributors discuss subjects such as the role of "split delegitimization" among extremist right-wing groups, and right-wing violence in North America, Scandinavia, Germany, Italy, South Africa, and Japan. The volume's papers were originally presented at a workshop supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin in August, 1994.

**Anna Cento Bull and Philip Cooke**, *Ending Terrorism in Italy*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 348 pp., US \$ 130.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-60288-4.

An innovative and up-to-date examination of the processes that brought about the end of more than four decades of left-wing and right-wing terrorism in Italy. The book's chapters cover topics such as the roles of Italian legal institutions, anti-terrorist legislation, and prison reform, as well as conflict resolution measures such as conciliation and reconciliation, in ending terrorism. Other chapters discuss the perspectives of former terrorists and victims on these issues. The concluding chapter places the case of Italy in comparative perspective.

**Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer**, (Eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 488 pp. US \$ 225.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 54.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-66472-1.

The contributors to this comprehensive handbook examine significant components in security studies including theoretical approaches to studying security issues (such as realism, liberalism, critical security studies, post-structuralism, and feminism), contemporary security challenges (such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, state failure, energy security, public health breakdowns), and regional security challenges (such as China's regional ambitions, conflicts in the Korean peninsula, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Western Balkans), as well as future security challenges (in the form of alliances, deterrence, coercive diplomacy, peace operations, humanitarian intervention, global governance, and crisis management).

**Ryan Clarke**, *Crime – Terror Nexus in South Asia: States, Security and Non-State Actors*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 232 pages, US \$ 150.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 39.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-72403-6.

A detailed and well-researched examination of the links between criminality and terrorism in South Asia, focusing on the activities of terrorist actors that operate in Indian-held Kashmir (particularly Indian and Pakistani proxies) and Pakistan (particularly Lashkar-i-Taiba, the Taliban, and al Qaida). The concluding chapter discusses the challenges facing Pakistan's ineffectual management of the terrorist and criminal groups

that operate on its country and the spillover effects into the neighboring countries.

**Richard Clutterbuck**, *Terrorism in an Unstable World*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1994 [Re-issued in 2006]. 235 pages, US\$180.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0415103404.

Considered a classic when it was first published in the mid-1990s, this is a well-written and comprehensive examination of the nature of the terrorist threat during the immediate post-Cold War period by a military man turned academic. The volume's chapters cover topics such as the nature of conflict in the post-Communist world, technological developments in terrorist weaponry and targeting, the role of intelligence in counterterrorism, the nexus between terrorism and criminality, including narco-terrorism, the nature of rural and urban guerrilla warfare, airport and aviation security, and the roles of civil liberties and the rule of law in counterterrorism.

**Gillian Duncan, Orla Lynch, Gilbert Ramsey and Alison M.S. Watson**, (Eds.). *State Terrorism and Human Rights: International Responses Since the End of the Cold War*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 200 pp., US \$ 155.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 42.95 [Paperback], ISBN: ISBN: 978-0415629072.

The contributors to this important volume examine the use of terrorism by certain states since the end of the Cold War. The volume's chapters present an historical overview of state terrorism, including current trends, obstacles to international responses against the use of state terror, as well as case studies that focus on Saddam Hussein's use of terror against the Kurds, Indonesia's use of terror against the East Timor separatists, genocidal terror in Rwanda, and the components of an effective international response to state terror. The concluding chapter discusses the contribution of Paul Wilkinson's notion of state terror to understanding the use of such coercive methods in the current period.

**Laura C. Ferreira-Pereira and Bruno Oliveira Martins**, (Eds.), *The European Union's Fight Against Terrorism: The CFSP and Beyond*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 160 pp., US \$ 145.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-84241-9.

The contributors to this edited volume examine the European Union's (EU) management of counterterrorism in all its dimensions in the post-9/11 era. The chapters cover topics such as the external dimension of the EU's counterterrorism policies, the United States' influence in the construction of the EU's counterterrorism policies and programs, the challenges to the EU's counterterrorism policies presented by the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice, the EU as a 'global counterterrorism actor,' and future trends in the EU's counterterrorism campaign. This volume was originally published as a special issue of the *European Security* journal.

**Joshua Alexander Geltzer**, *US Counter-Terrorism Strategy and al-Qaeda: Signalling and the Terrorist World-View*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 228 pp., US\$150.00 [Hardcover], US\$49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415664523.

A conceptually interesting examination of the ineffectiveness of the communicative components of the Bush administration's counter-terrorist policies towards al Qaida. The author's conceptual framework on communicators and audiences is applied to examine America's counter-terrorist communications vis-à-vis al Qaida's own world-view. The concluding chapters assess whether the right lessons were learned and provide the author's recommendations for improving the communications components in US counterterrorism against groups such as al Qaida.

**Joseph Heller**, *The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics and Terror, 1940-1949*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1995/2006.

392 pp., US\$210.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-7146-4558-2.

This is a reissue of the author's masterful 1995 account of the Stern Gang (also known as the Stern Group or Lehi), the right-wing Jewish terrorist group that operated during Israel's formative pre-state period. The volume's chapters discuss the group's revisionist ideology, its split from the larger Irgun terrorist group, its organizational formation, its terrorist activities, including political assassinations, and its political activities following independence in the nascent Jewish State.

**Brian Hesse (Ed.)**, *Somalia: State Collapse, Terrorism and Piracy*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 128 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415828932

The contributors to this edited volume examine significant challenges facing Somalia in terms of the fragile nature of its government and the twin threats to its stability presented by terrorism and piracy. Also discussed are proposals how the international community can help stabilize the situation in Somalia, the influence of Kenyan Somalis in Somalia, as well as several areas where Somalia has achieved a certain degree of success, such as in communications and banking. The volume was originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*.

**Clive Jones and Ami Pedahzur**, Eds.), *Between Terrorism and Civil War: The Al-Aqsa Intifada*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005. 176 pp., US \$ 170.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415434539.

The contributors to this volume examine significant aspects of the al Aqsa intifada (uprising) by the Palestinians against continued Israeli rule in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which began around September 2000. The chapters provide conceptual frameworks on the linkage between terrorism and civil war, the causes of Jewish settler vigilante terrorism against the Palestinians, the attitude among Palestinians towards political reform, the role of the peacekeeping force in Hebron in attempting to prevent conflict escalation, attitudes towards the intifada by Jordan and Egypt, the role of Hizballah as a 'shadow actor' in the intifada, and an assessment of the intifada's political and military effectiveness. The volume was originally published as a special issue of the journal *Civil Wars*.

**Naim Kapucu**, *The Network Governance in Response to Acts of Terrorism: Comparative Analysis*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 281 pp., US \$ 140 [Hardcover], ISBN: 9780415500111.

A highly interesting comparative analysis of the use of what the author terms "network governance" to effectively and comprehensively respond to and recover from catastrophic terrorist incidents. The author uses the cases of major terrorist incidents in New York, Bali, Istanbul, Madrid, London, and Mumbai to illustrate how a networked response system could have vastly improved the responses by the authorities in mass-casualty emergency situations.

**George Klay Kieh and Kelechi Kalu**, (Eds.) editors, *West Africa and the U.S. War on Terror*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 224 pages, US\$130.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0415539425.

The contributors to this important edited volume assess the effectiveness of the United States' counterterrorism assistance to West African states. The volume's chapters cover topics such as a general overview of U.S. counterterrorism, Sub-Saharan Africa as an additional front in U.S. counterterrorism, how West Africa perceives U.S. counterterrorism, the implications of the crisis in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, the Mauritanian military and U.S. counterterrorism, West Africa regional security and U.S. counterterrorism, and the consequences of U.S. counterterrorism for West Africa.

**Peter Lehr**, (Eds.), *Violence at Sea: Piracy in the Age of Global Terrorism*. New York, NY: Routledge/Lloyd's

Marine Intelligence Unit, 2007. 272 pp., US \$ 165.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 54.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415953207.

The contributors to this highly authoritative edited volume examine the full magnitude of the threats to global security and commerce presented by maritime piracy within the broader context of international terrorism. The chapters discuss issues such as the major 'hot spots' of piracy in Somalia, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Straits of Malacca-South China Sea, and the militant groups that engage in maritime piracy, as well as international legal and naval responses to the threats of piracy. The concluding chapter assesses future trends in the evolving threat of maritime terrorism.

**James M. Lutz and Brenda J. Lutz**, *Global Terrorism*. [Third edition]. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 392 pp., US \$ 145.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 44.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415539456.

This well-organized and well-written textbook provides a comprehensive overview of terrorism in all its dimensions. The chapters cover topics such as the history and evolution of terrorism, defining and classifying terrorism, terrorists' strategies, tactics, weapons, and targets, the roles of state sponsors and other supporters of terrorism, religious, ethnic, nationalistic, left- and right-wing bases of terrorism, prominent terrorist groups, countries with multiple crises of terrorism, the components of counterterrorism, and future trends in terrorist warfare.

**Claire Macken**, *Counter-Terrorism and the Detention of Suspected Terrorists: Preventive Detention and International Human Rights Law*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 232 pp., US \$ 150.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415859219.

A highly authoritative and balanced examination of the relationship between preventive detention of suspected terrorists and international human rights law within the broader context of counterterrorism. The volume's chapters cover topics such as defining preventive detention, examples of the use of preventive detention in the United Kingdom in general and Northern Ireland in particular, the right to personal liberty in international human rights law as a legal framework for the consideration of state preventive detention laws (including in a state of emergency), and legitimate and illegitimate purposes of preventive detention. The concluding chapters present a model law for the detention of suspected terrorists within a criminal law framework, including a discussion of instances in which preventive detention can be used for legitimate purposes.

**Nicola McGarrity, Andrew Lynch and George Williams**, (Eds.). *Counter-Terrorism and Beyond: The Culture of Law and Justice After 9/11*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 243 pp., US \$ 150.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 44.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415631396.

The contributors to this edited volume examine what they term the 'culture of control' that has been instituted in several democratic countries as part of their counterterrorism campaigns. The chapters cover topics such as the roles of pre-emptive policing and the use of intelligence in counterterrorism, the creation of a 'culture of suspicion' in community surveillance, the use of extraordinary measures in legal proceedings, and how the media may be used as information 'proxies' for government authorities. Australia and the United States are employed as case studies to illustrate the contributors' arguments. The concluding chapter discusses best practices in protecting human rights during periods of emergency for counterterrorism campaigns.

**George Michael**, *Confronting Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in the USA*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 304 pp., US \$ 180.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 54.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-62844-0.

In this paperback edition of the originally published 2003 book, the author examines the state of far right-



wing extremism at the time, including the effectiveness of the U.S. government's response to this threat. Far right-wing extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the militias, American Renaissance and White Aryan Resistance are profiled. This book's assessments are still pertinent in light of the resurgence of far right-wing extremist groups in the current era.

**David Miller, Jessie Blackbourn, Rani Dhanda and Helen Dexter** (Eds.), *Critical Terrorism Studies Since 11 September 2001*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 156 pp., US \$ 145.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0415838528.

The contributors to this edited volume are critical of what they term the 'orthodox' terrorism studies approach, which they claim uses 'shoddy' research and lacks academic independence because it is sometimes closely identified with government counterterrorism agencies. To remedy these perceived shortfalls, the volume's chapters cover topics such as an assessment of their own findings since 9/11, the roles of drones in counterterrorism, the reliance on 'false positives' in the UK's preemptive counterterrorism measures, an assessment of the UK's attempts to reach out to 'suspect communities' (e.g., the British Irish and Muslim communities), and a concluding discussion of whether the category of 'terrorism' improves or impedes our intellectual understanding of a certain type of violence (p. 121).

**Andrew Mumford and Bruno C. Reis**, (Eds.), *The Theory and Practice of Irregular Warfare: Warrior-Scholarship in Counter-Insurgency*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 176 pp., US \$ 150.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-83690-6.

The contributors to this edited volume assess the contributions of 'warrior-scholars' who had developed significant theories that shaped the doctrine and practice of counter-insurgency (as well as counter-terrorism) over the years. These 'warrior-scholars' include Charles E. Callwell, David Galula, Roger Trinquier, Moshe Dayan, Frank Kitson, David Kilcullen, and David Petraeus.

**Peter R. Neumann and M.L.R. Smith**, *The Strategy of Terrorism: How It Works, and Why It Fails*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009. 140 pp., US \$ 158.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415545266.

An insightful account of how terrorism, even in its nihilistic variety, is a strategy by a weaker group as a violent means to achieve its objectives. Thus, in the authors' view, even relatively small-scale attacks that are able to inflict a psychological impact on their targeted audiences can be considered to be successful from the terrorists' idiosyncratic perspective. The authors note, however, that true success for a terrorist group involves 'gaining legitimacy' for their cause by "exploit[ing] the emotional impact of the violence to insert an alternative political message in order to seek to broaden support, often through the media and political front organizations." (p. 95) The authors conclude that effective counterterrorism, as a result, requires identifying their terrorist adversary's motivations, intentions and modus operandi in order to respond to them with specific and tailored countermeasures, including effectively incorporating civil liberties into such campaigns.

**Colin Murray Parkes**, (Ed.), *Responses to Terrorism: Can Psychological Approaches Break the Cycle of Violence?* New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 280 pages, US\$170.00 [Hardcover], US\$53.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415706247.

The contributors to this highly interesting edited volume draw on the discipline of psychology to explain the origins of extremism and terrorism, the nature of governments' responses to terrorist attacks, and how to break the cycle of terrorism through effective utilization of conflict resolution approaches. The chapters cover topics such as the psychology of extremism, group identity and the roots of terrorism, the roots of the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Rwanda, and the roles of schools, universities, the media, leaders, and others in helping to break the cycle of terrorist violence. The concluding chapter synthesizes the findings and

offers recommendations for new thinking on these issues.

**Suvendrini Perera and Antonio Traverso**, (Eds.). *Living Through Terror: (Post) Trauma, (Post) Conflict and the South*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 176 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0415614474.

The contributors to this edited volume examine how the phenomenon of terrorism impacts the daily lives of its affected populations, many of whom become internally displaced refugees. What makes this volume special is its focus on the impact of terrorist conflicts on the populations outside the West, in particular the Philippines, South Africa, East Timor and Aceh (Indonesia), and Fiji, although it also covers some Western theatres of terror such as Italy.

**Mark Phythian** (Ed.) *Understanding the Intelligence Cycle*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 184 pp., US \$ 135.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0415811750.

The contributors to this innovative volume in intelligence studies examine the history and evolution of the intelligence cycle, including alternative ways of conceptualizing the intelligence process. The volume's chapters cover topics such as the move from the intelligence cycle to Internet-based intelligence, and using the intelligence cycle in the corporate world and in intelligence-led policing. The concluding chapter discusses applying intelligence theory to broaden the focus of the intelligence cycle, for instance in being able to use intelligence methods not only to identify and thwart impending terrorist plots but to "help focus work to prevent radicalization and enhance community cohesion." (p. 143)

**Kacper Rekawek**, *Irish Republican Terrorism and Politics: A Comparative Study of the Official and the Provisional IRA*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 208 pp., US \$ 150.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 48.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-13-882544-4.

A highly interesting account of the history of the two primary Irish republican terrorist groups, and the impact of certain developments in their histories on how their differing political beliefs and armed militancy evolved over the years.

**David C. Rapoport**, (Ed.). *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science – Volume I: The First or Anarchist Wave; Volume II: The Second or Anti-Colonial Wave; Volume III: The Third or New Left Wave; Volume IV: The Fourth or Religious Wave*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006. 2,376 pp., US \$ 1,530.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 9780415316507.

This is one of the most comprehensive and indispensable collections of academic scholarship, bringing together seminal analyses published on the history of modern terrorism. The collection's 85 chapters are organized around the editor's widely adopted notion of the 'four historical waves of modern terrorism' (which is discussed in Chapter 64 in Volume IV), with the four volumes corresponding to each of the successive four waves. As explained by the editor, "A number of recurring themes are examined, such as the rise and fall of organizations, changes in purposes and tactics, counter-terrorism, civil liberties, international contexts and geographies" (Vol. I, p. xxvii). With so many new developments occurring since the collection's 2006 publication in terrorism, counterterrorism and the academic literature on these issues, it is hoped that a fifth volume will eventually be published that will cover the fifth historical wave of terrorism. The compiler is the founder and principal editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*, the most highly regarded journal in the field of terrorism studies. The only drawback to this series of four volumes is its astronomical price which places it beyond the budget of students who would profit most of it.

**Anthony Richards, Pete Fussey and Andrew Silke**, (Eds.), *Terrorism and the Olympics: Major Event Security and Lessons for the Future*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 272 pages, US\$150.00 [Hardcover], US\$49.95

[Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415532426.

The contributors to this edited volume comprehensively examine all the significant issues that need to be addressed in securing an Olympic event from potential terrorist attacks. The volume's chapters discuss the history of terrorist threats against Olympic games, beginning with the 1972 Munich Olympics, the types of terrorist threats that need to be considered by security planners, al Qaeda's possible intentions to attack an Olympic event, and understanding terrorist target selection, as well as the response measures that need to be considered, such as securing the transport system, implementing an effective surveillance security system, the role of the private security industry in securing such sites, the challenge of inter-agency coordination in managing all aspects of security, and future trends in terrorist threats against the Olympic games. The volume was written with an eye on the Olympic summer games in London in 2012, where security was both costly and effective.

**Peter Romaniuk**, *Multilateral Counter-Terrorism: The Global Politics of Cooperation and Contestation*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 240 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 35.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415776479.

An account of the effectiveness of multilateral responses to terrorism by international organizations such as the United Nations, and the conditions that facilitate or hinder individual states to cooperate in defeating the terrorist threat. With the introductory chapter laying the groundwork by defining and analyzing the nature of multilateral counter-terrorism, the book's chapters discuss issues such as historical precedents for such cooperation, which began with the League of Nations' cooperation in countering anarchist terrorism, and its evolution in the form of the United Nations from 1945 to 2001, and then following 9/11 to the present day. The concluding chapters discuss future trends in multilateral counter-terrorism, including possibly moving beyond the UN.

**Ben Sheppard**, *The Psychology of Strategic Terrorism: Public and Government Responses to Attack*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009. 262 pp., US \$ 155.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415578103.

A highly original, conceptually innovative examination of the psychological impact of terrorism on its intended victims, particularly a targeted society's civilian population. Also discussed are how such targeted publics respond to the terrorist attacks and the measures governments need to adopt to build up their populations' resilience to terrorism. The chapters present an overview of the various disciplines utilized in the study of international relations, psychiatry and psychology. They also analyze case studies of Israel and the Scud missile attacks during the 1991 Gulf War, Aum Shinrikyo's March 1995 Tokyo sarin attack, al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks, the September 2001 anthrax attacks, and Israel and the Second Palestinian Intifada. The final chapter discusses the study's key assumptions, evidence from two further cases, the contribution of the study's findings to key fields, and policy recommendations.

**Asaf Siniver** (Ed.), *International Terrorism Post-9/11: Comparative Dynamics and Responses*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. 256 pp., US \$ 150.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415622189.

The contributors to this edited volume examine the effectiveness of counterterrorism campaigns by governments around the world in the post-9/11 era. The chapters cover topics such as responses to radicalization into violent extremism and terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa, and the counterterrorism campaigns by America, Australia, India, Israel, Russia, the United Kingdom, as well as various Southeast Asian governments.

**G. Davidson Smith**, *Combating Terrorism*. [Routledge Revivals] New York, NY: Routledge, 1990/2011. 324

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pp. US \$ 145.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 42.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0415615310.

First published in 1990 when it became a classic in the field of counterterrorism studies, it remains an indispensable analysis on how to understand the terrorist threat and the components that constitute effective counterterrorism. The volume's chapters discuss the nature of the terrorist threat in terms of its motivations, aims and strategies, and the components of counterterrorism in terms of the philosophical foundations for the use of force, counterterrorism's direct (active) and indirect (passive) measures, the resources and capabilities that need to be assembled to counter terrorism, and the factors required for effective decision-making and crisis-management. Numerous case studies are provided, such as a comparative survey of counterterrorism campaigns by the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

**Andrew T.H. Tan** (Ed.), *The Politics of Terrorism: A Survey*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011. 288 pp., US \$ 305.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 67.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-85743-579-5.

First published in 2006, this comprehensive handbook consists of essays written by academic experts in the field on various aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism, an A-Z glossary of major terrorist groups and incidents, maps of terrorist conflict zones, statistics on different types of terrorist incidents (by region, target and tactic), and a select bibliography. Although now dated, the handbook remains indispensable as a reference resource with its essays on the history of modern terrorism, the evolution of terrorist weapons and tactics, ethnic-based terrorism, left- and right-wing terrorism, religion and terrorism, state terrorism, and counterterrorism.

**Edgar B. Tembo**, *US-UK Counter-Terrorism After 9/11: A Qualitative Approach*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014. 176 pp. US \$ 135.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-64378-8.

A conceptually innovative comparative examination of the effectiveness of counterterrorism campaigns by the United Kingdom and the United States in the post-9/11 era. The volume's chapters focus on three policy instruments in their counterterrorism campaigns: the use of intelligence, law enforcement and military measures.

**Mattia Toaldo**, *The Origins of the US War on Terror: Lebanon, Libya and American Intervention in the Middle East*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 214 pp., US \$ 130.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-68501-6.

A highly interesting account of the formative origins of United States' counterterrorism during the Reagan administration in the 1980s. The volume's chapters discuss significant milestones in the development of U.S. counterterrorism, beginning with the 1979 Iranian revolution's mobilization of Lebanese Shi'ite elements, which eventually led to the U.S. involvement in the Lebanese civil war, the formation of the influential Bush Task Force on Combating Terrorism, and America's pre-emptive strikes to counter the Libyan regime's engagement in terrorism. The concluding chapter assesses the legacies of some of those counterterrorism policies with current American campaigns.

**Harmonie Toros**, *Terrorism, Talking and Transformation: A Critical Approach*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 256 pp., US \$ 135.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-415-68392-0.

Drawing on the author's extensive field research, this is an important conceptual and empirical account of the crucial role of negotiating with terrorists as a way of transforming terrorist violence into more constructive non-violent ways to achieve their objectives. The case studies of talking to terrorists in Northern Ireland and in Mindanao are employed to demonstrate the author's thesis.

**Stephen Vertigans**, *The Sociology of Terrorism: People, Places and Processes*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

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226 pp., US \$ 165.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 52.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-57266-8.

This book is an innovative application of sociological research to examine terrorism in all its manifestations. The volume's chapters discuss how the sociological approach contributes to the study of the origins of terrorism, the violent 'dispositions' that create terrorists, the roles of groups in mobilizing individuals into terrorism, the processes of group dynamics that sustain terrorist groups, the rationale behind terrorist attacks and targeting, and how terrorism ends either through defeat or disengagement by a group's members from terrorism. Numerous case studies examine these issues.

**Martin I. Wayne**, *China's War on Terrorism: Counter-Insurgency, Politics and Internal Security*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2008. 206 pp., US \$ 158.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 49.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-54518-1.

Although published in 2008, the recent escalation of the domestic terrorist threat in China's Xinjiang region makes this book's comprehensive, authoritative and detailed analysis highly relevant to the current era. The volume's chapters discuss the nature of the Islamist insurgency in Xinjiang, the components of China's counterterrorism campaign, including its waging of the 'war of ideas' to reshape society in Xinjiang, and an assessment of the strategic and tactical effectiveness of China's overall response measures.

**Leonard Weinberg**, *Democracy and Terrorism: Friend or Foe?* New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 136 pp., US \$ 152.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 39.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-77034-7.

A highly insightful and original account by a veteran academic analyst about the relationship between democratic governments and the origins and management of politically-motivated terrorism that threatens them. The volume's chapters discuss the history of terrorism against democratic states beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as during the 'third wave' from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, the use of terrorism in the Arab Spring, which began in 2011, and the relationship between terrorist violence and democratic governments' rule of law, which is posed as a question of "If democracies are vulnerable to terrorist violence, what changes, if any, do they have to make in order to cope with this danger?" (p. 79) The author's conclusion is pessimistic: "terrorism in the first-wave democracies may approach something like the 'cost of doing business,' while terrorism in the more recent democracies may be symptomatic of serious problems that place the democratic order itself in jeopardy" (p. 103).

**David J. Whittaker**, *The Terrorism Reader*. [Fourth Edition] New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 368 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], US\$45.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-68732-4.

This is a comprehensive and authoritative introductory overview of terrorism and counterterrorism, drawing its material from a variety of sources. This updated and revised edition is divided into three parts: characteristics of terrorism (e.g., defining terrorism, motivation for terrorism and terrorist conflicts around the world), significant terrorist conflict zones (e.g., jihadi insurgents, the United Kingdom, Israel, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Spain, Algeria, Germany, and Italy), and the components of counterterrorism (e.g., ethical and legal issues, campaigns and strategies).

**Mark P. Worrell**, *Terror: Social, Political, and Economic Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 78 pp., US \$ 10.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-415-52032-4.

Part of the publisher's new series of concise "thinking frames" on significant current issues, this monograph discusses the sociological basis of terrorism, the nature of counterterrorism, what the author terms 'the business of security' (i.e., the ever-growing 'counterterrorist-industrial complex') and the 'terror of empire and the empire of terror.' Although one may not agree with some of the author's assumptions, the critical



issues that are raised are worth considering.

**About the Reviewer:** **Dr. Joshua Sinai** is the Book Reviews Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He can be reached at: [Joshua.sinai@comcast.net](mailto:Joshua.sinai@comcast.net).

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## V. News

### News from the National and Regional Networks of Ph.D Thesis Writers

Two new local networks of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) have come into existence:

Pakistan: Country Coordinator: Muhammad Feyyaz (<[fayzi68@terrorismanalysts.com](mailto:fayzi68@terrorismanalysts.com)>)

Nigeria: Country Coordinator: Adebayo Wale (<[adeboyewale@terrorismanalysts.com](mailto:adeboyewale@terrorismanalysts.com)>)

Post-graduate students in/from Nigeria and Pakistan working on a Ph.D. thesis on terrorism, counter-terrorism, political violence and armed conflict are invited to contact the country coordinators of TRI.

TRI now has a dozen national networks of Ph.D. theses writers. Those completing their doctoral dissertation in 2014 are invited to submit their thesis for the competition “Best Ph.D. Thesis on Terrorism and Counterterrorism 2014”. The deadline for the submission of a Ph.D. thesis is 31 March 2015. The winner of the TRI Thesis Award will receive a prize of US \$ 1,000.

Submissions should be sent, together with a cover letter explaining the merits of the thesis, to the chairman of the jury, Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid (<[apschmid@terrorismanalysts.com](mailto:apschmid@terrorismanalysts.com)>). Participation is open to authors of doctoral dissertations submitted or defended in 2014 at any recognised academic institution—not just those from the twelve countries currently in a TRI national network. The theses have to be written in English or have to be translated into English.

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## VI. Notes from the Editor

### *About Perspectives on Terrorism*

*Perspectives on Terrorism* (PT) is a joint publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies (CTSS), headquartered at the Lowell Campus of the University of Massachusetts, United States of America.

PT is published six times per year as a free peer-reviewed online journal available at [www.terrorismanalysts.com](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com). It seeks to provide a platform for established scholars as well as academics and professionals entering the interdisciplinary fields of Terrorism, Political Violence and Conflict Studies. The editors invite readers to:

- present their perspectives on the prevention of, and response to, terrorism and related forms of violent conflict;
- submit to the journal accounts of evidence-based, empirical scientific research and analyses;
- use the journal as a forum for debate and commentary on issues related to the above.

*Perspectives on Terrorism* has sometimes been characterised as ‘nontraditional’ in that it dispenses with some of the traditional rigidities associated with commercial print journals. Topical articles can be published at short notice and reach, through the Internet, a much larger audience than subscription-fee based paper journals. Our free on-line journal also offers contributors a higher degree of flexibility in terms of content, style and length of articles – but without compromising professional scholarly standards.

The journal’s articles are peer-reviewed by members of the Editorial Board as well as outside experts. While aiming to be policy-relevant, PT does not support any partisan policies regarding (counter-) terrorism and conflict-waging. Impartiality, objectivity and accuracy are guiding principles that we require contributors to adhere to.

#### *Editorial Team of Perspectives on Terrorism*

**Alex P. Schmid**, Editor-in-Chief

**James J.F. Forest**, Co- Editor

**Joseph J. Easson**, Associate Editor

**Joshua Sinai**, Books Reviews Editor

**Eric Price**, Editorial Assistant

**Judith Tinnes**, Editorial Assistant

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**Members of the Editorial Board**

The Editorial Board of *Perspectives on Terrorism* currently consists of 20 experienced researchers. They are (in no particular order):

**Shazad Ali** (Karachi, Pakistan)

**Joost Augusteijn** (Leiden, The Netherlands)

**Jeffrey M. Bale** (Monterey, USA)

**Michael Boyle** (Philadelphia, USA)

**Jarret Brachman** (North Dakota, USA)

**Richard Chasdi** (Walsh College, USA)

**James 'Chip' O. Ellis** (Vancouver, Canada)

**Leah Farrall** (Massey University, New Zealand)

**Paul Gill** (University College London)

**Jennifer Giroux** (ETH, Zürich, Switzerland)

**M.J. Gohel** (Asia-Pacific Foundation, London)

**Beatrice de Graaf** (Utrecht University, The Netherlands)

**Thomas Hegghammer** (Stanford University, USA)

**Bradley McAllister** (Washington, DC, USA)

**John Morrison** (University of East London)

**Assaf Moghadam** (ICT, Herzliya, Israel)

**Sam Mullins** (Wollongong, Australia)

**Thomas Riegler** (Vienna, Austria)

**Simon Shen** (Chinese University, Hong Kong)

**Anne Speckhard** (Georgetown University Medical School, USA)

Currently there are several vacancies on the Editorial Board. Readers of *Perspective on Terrorism* are invited to submit names of possible candidates. Selection will take place on the basis of the publication record of those nominated, taking also into account their contribution to a better gender and geographical balance of the Editorial Board.

Members of the Editorial Board act as peer-reviewers for articles submitted to *Perspectives on Terrorism*. In addition, the Editorial Board relies on the special expertise of other experienced researchers. In particular we would like to acknowledge the contributions of

Dr. Dean Alexander

Dr. O. Shawn Cupp

Dr. Alessandro Orsini

Dr. Brian Philips

Dr. P. Daniel Silk

Dr. James Wirtz

### *People Behind the Terrorism Research Initiative*

The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) has three Directors: Robert Wesley (President), Alex P. Schmid and James J.F. Forest. TRI has an **International Advisory Board** (currently 11 members), a **Consortium of Participating Institutions** (currently 17 institutions and centers) as well as **Group of Individual Researchers** (currently 120) guiding and supporting its efforts. They are listed below.

### *International Advisory Board of the Terrorism Research Initiative*

**Adam Dolnik**, University of Wollongong, Australia.

**Javier Jordán** is a Professor at the Universidad de Granada, Spain, and Director of Athena Intelligence.

**Gary LaFree** is a Professor of Criminology at the University of Maryland and the Director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).

**David Rapoport** is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at UCLA, a Mellon Foundation Emeritus Fellow, Founding and Co-Editor of the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

**Marc Sageman** is a Consultant on transnational terrorism with various governmental agencies and foreign governments and the author of *Understanding Terror Networks and Leaderless Jihad*.

**Michael Scheuer** is currently a Senior Fellow with The Jamestown Foundation, prior to which he served in the CIA for 22 years where he was the Chief of the bin Laden Unit at the Counterterrorist Center from 1996 to 1999.

**Yoram Schweitzer** is a Researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies and Lecturer at Tel Aviv University.

**Michael S. Stohl** is Professor of Communication at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB).

**Jeff Victoroff** is an Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology and Psychiatry at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California.

**Peter Waldmann** is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, and a long time member of the Advisory Board of the German Ministry of Development.

**Leonard Weinberg** is Foundation Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada.

### *Consortium of Participating Institutions*

[Athena Intelligence, Spain.](#)

Center on Terrorism, John Jay College, USA.



Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism (CTC) at Campus The Hague of Leiden University, Netherlands.

(Handa) Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV), University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention (CTCP), University of Wollongong, Australia.

Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University, USA.

Defense & Strategic Studies Department, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Department of International Relations, University of Minas (PUC) , Brazil.

Global Terrorism Research Centre (GTReC), Monash University, Australia.

International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), Singapore.

Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, Syracuse University, USA.

The Institute of International and European Affairs, (IIEA), Dublin, Ireland, with a branch in Brussels.

Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), Islamabad, Pakistan.

Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS), Athens, Greece.

Research Unit, Political Violence, Terrorism and Radicalization, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Denmark.

University of the Pacific, School of International Studies, USA.

University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh Institute for the Study of Religion, Violence and Memory, USA.

### ***TRI's Individual Participants***

**Mahan Abedin** is a former editor of the Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Monitor and currently the Director of Research at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism , London. He is editor of Islamism Digest - a monthly academic journal specialising on the in-depth study of Islamic movements.

**Gary Ackerman** is Research Director at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)

**Shaheen Afroze** is Research Director and Head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Division at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

**Abdullah Alaskar** is Professor of History at King Saud University, columnist, Riyadh daily newspaper.

**Mustafa Alani** is a Senior Advisor and Program Director in Security and Terrorism Studies at the Gulf Research Center, UAE.

**Rogelio Alonso** is Professor in Politics and Terrorism at Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, where he holds the position of Ramón y Cajal Fellow in Political Sciences.

**Ramiro Anzit Guerrero** is a Senior Advisor in the Argentine National Congress and Professor at the University del Salvador and University del Museo Social Argentino.

**Victor Asal** joined the faculty of the Political Science Department of the University at Albany in Fall 2003 and is also the Director of the Public Security Certificate at Rockefeller College, SUNY, Albany.

**Omar Ashour** is Director, Middle East Studies, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies University of Exeter

**Scott Atran** is Presidential Scholar at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, Visiting Professor of Psychology and Public Policy at the University of Michigan, and Research.

**Edwin Bakker** is Professor of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies at the Campus The Hague of Leiden University and Director of its Center for Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. He is also a Research Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in The Hague

**Daniel Baracskey** is a full-time faculty member in the Department of Political Science at Valdosta State University, where he also teaches public administration courses.

**Michael Barkun** is professor of Political Science in the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

**Shazadi Beg** is a Barrister in the United Kingdom and an acknowledged expert on Pakistan.

**Gabriel Ben-Dor** is Director of the School of Political Sciences and Head of the National Security Graduate Studies Program at the University of Haifa, where he teaches and conducts research in the fields of political violence, civil-military relations and national security.

**Eddine Benhayoun** is a Professor of Cultural Studies and Director of the Research Group on Culture and Globalisation, Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tetuan, Morocco.

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