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JIHAD IN DENMARK

AN OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF JIHADI ACTIVITY
IN DENMARK 1990-2006

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Contents

Abstract	2
Introduction.....	3
Methodology and sources.....	4
The Egyptian network.....	8
The North African Network.....	21
Algeria to Guantanamo.....	29
Isolated incidents	34
The war in Iraq.....	40
Non-aligned Jihadists	43
A rumour of Jihad.....	51
Jihad in perspective.....	54
Developments 1990-2006.....	54
Radicalisation and recruitment.....	61
Assessing the impact of the Jihadists.....	73
Notes	76

Abstract

This working paper presents an overview of Jihadi related cases in Denmark between 1990 and 2006. The first part contains a summary of the known and verified cases and incidents and, furthermore, provides brief background information on international linkages. The second part attempts to answer three questions, all based on the empirical evidence presented:

Which trends can be traced from the early 1990s to the present? What may have changed in the composition of the Jihadi environment in terms of ideological alignment, strategic perspectives and interaction with other Jihadists internationally?

How did the radicalization processes take place? How did Danish citizens or residents become involved in Jihadi activities? Can one or more patterns of radicalisation be identified?

To what extent were the Jihadists successful? Have they acquired a larger following? Did they have any actual impact on the battlefields?

Jihad in Denmark – An overview and analysis of Jihadi activity in Denmark 1990-2006

MICHAEL TAARNBY JENSEN

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 15 years the Danish media has provided a steady flow of factual accounts of the relatively few instances of a Danish connection to Jihadi activities, inside as well as outside of Denmark. Yet, in the same period no academic analysis or research report of these events has been produced. In the view of the authors this shortcoming is related to two circumstances. While the media have been quite successful in uncovering details of a very closed community, this factual information has never been assembled in a single analysis. As a result, significant relationships and changes in the Jihadi milieu have largely gone unnoticed. The academic environment specialising in terrorism studies is extremely small, and before 11. September 2001 it consisted of a handful of individuals; if that. The study of terrorism was a non-existing field during the 1990s in Denmark. An increased focus on Islamism and terrorism has stimulated an interest among university students from diverse academic fields, and resources are available that one could only dream of just a few years ago. The field is gradually expanding; but has yet to reach a satisfactory level and a diverse range of participating disciplines.

This report attempts to present an overview of significant events and personalities and furthermore to highlight developments in Jihadi circles strictly focussing on Danish relationships. Being the first of its kind, and given the necessary limitations inherent in a project of such scope, only a number of central topics have been included. The paper concerns itself with the Danish Jihadi movement, not its relations with mainstream society, Muslim or otherwise. Therefore this report will not examine the government's response to the varying degrees of threat posed by the Jihadists. The policies and actions of the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Integration or the Interior have also been excluded. In order to elaborate on these issues in a meaningful analysis substantial archival research and follow-up interviews would be necessary, and this was beyond the scope of the resources available. Another exclusion of this study is the absence of secular, nationalist or left-wing terrorism cases with a connection to Denmark. The defining criteria for inclusion in this study was a relation to a radical Islamist organisation or ideology and that alone.

In spite of intensive media coverage and concern it is impossible not to conclude that the actual Jihadi environment was, and still is, very small. The amount of media attention it receives is out of proportion to the real numbers involved. Out of the approximately 180.000 Muslims residing in Denmark only a few dozen, if that, have actually crossed the line and chosen to engage in illegal or violent activities. However, their impact on domestic politics and societal cohesion cannot be underestimated. The central research questions guiding this paper are related to an assessment of 15 years of Jihadi activity. In particular, the following questions are asked:

- Which trends can be traced from the early 1990s to the present? What may have changed in the composition of the Jihadi environment in terms of ideological alignment, strategic perspectives and interaction with other Jihadists internationally?
- How did the radicalization processes take place? How did Danish citizens or residents become involved in Jihadi activities? Can one or more patterns of radicalisation be identified?
- To what extent were the Jihadists successful? Have they acquired a larger following? Did they have any actual impact on the battlefields?

However, in order to answer the questions it is necessary to have at least a rudimentary understanding of specific events, timelines, individuals and connections. While a chronological presentation of the case studies may have been preferable this however was not possible because of simultaneously occurring events. Instead the report is organised thematically and this will hopefully make it somewhat easier to assess the factual information presented. The empirically guided part of this paper part may seem voluminous compared to the later analysis, but this reflects a deliberate strategy and is intended to provide the reader with sufficient background information to pose critical questions and to consider alternative interpretations to those presented.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Regarding data collection it was decided from the outset that empirical data was indispensable in presenting the reader with the basic facts in order to acknowledge or reject the following conclusions. In terms of methodology a few basic criteria for inclusion were established. This paper has drawn on open sources exclusively; at no point did the author have access to classified information of any sort. As the intention of this paper is to provide the specialist and the general reader alike with a view to what we know, every piece of information utilized had to be verifiable and available. Even if the opportunity had existed to include classified material this would have been rejected. Besides compromising the standards of scientific research, such material could not

be identified in the published version, thus making it impossible for the reader to verify specific pieces of information.

The actual data collection process involved the systematic gathering of open-source material. News articles, court proceedings, academic journals, websites and academically rigorous books related to the subject matter. Published material has been supplemented by a number of personal interviews, most of which have been included in order to identify additional sources or to gather independent opinions.

Data collection is one thing, the process of verification quite another. Considering the subject matter the verification process was further complicated by difficulty accessing primary sources. The Jihadists themselves are quite elusive, and not a few of the individuals mentioned in this paper are in prison either abroad or in Denmark, have disappeared without a trace or died a violent death. They were not available for questions. Attempts were made to contact a small group of those still living in Denmark, both directly and through intermediaries, but this approach attracted no interest.

Verifying information obtained from published sources is difficult at best and sometimes impossible. This author is not aware of any factual misinterpretation in the present paper; however, this is not the same as saying that there are no flaws. Attention to detail and the cross-checking of references have been guiding the entire research process. Considering the fact that several thousand pages have been collected, some mistakes and omissions are unavoidable, though regrettable.

A number of rumours surfaced during the course of this research project and a few of them have been included at the end of the empirical section of the paper. In none of these instances was it possible to obtain either positive or negative verification. While they have no scientific value, they serve to illustrate the complexities in sorting fact from fiction in this particular field of research. Such cases have naturally not been included as reliable references in the analysis.

This is not the final word on Jihad in Denmark, nor does it claim to be. The present research report on Jihadists in Denmark does not represent the full story. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the reader should acknowledge that the puzzle is missing some pieces. A number of case studies have been excluded from this study because of the lack of verifiable information, but the author is quite certain that there have been more cases than those presented here. Several

choices had to be made before data collection was initiated in December 2005. These choices were related to the specific research design, or, more specifically, the historical period to be covered, definitions of a *Jihadist*, and finally a threshold for including specific case studies.

Regarding the time-frame covered in this exercise, the choice of the post Soviet-Afghan war may appear arbitrary; however, this limitation does entail some logic. An undisclosed number of Danish citizens or residents travelled to Afghanistan in the 1980s to participate in the Jihad against the Soviet occupiers. The number remains unknown, and speculation from a multitude of sources has revealed that while sympathy and vocal support was very high, very few indeed actually travelled to the frontlines. Moreover, none of those who went resurfaced directly as Jihadists later on, either in Denmark or elsewhere. The very few exceptions involving Afghan veterans were people who were stranded for political reasons, most often in Pakistan, and who later made their way to Denmark. They had no prior affiliation with Denmark. The Global Jihad did not begin in 2001, although it did instantly become visible at that point. The build-up to the culmination on 11 September 2001 took at least a decade, and the 1990s were instrumental in the message of Jihad being spread, alliances being forged and in training and planning.

Arguably, Jihad has been the single-most abused and misinterpreted phenomenon over the past five years specifically. This is not the place to elaborate on this debate, but the deliberate use of the term "Jihadist" requires a definition. Not all Danish Muslims are politically active; quite the contrary. Most of those who are take an interest in various forms of democratic activity and participation. In short, while they may disagree with the policies of the Danish government, and other governments for that matter, their political involvement occurs within the boundaries of democracy; both in spirit and action. Opposed to this type of political activity are the Islamists, whose political agenda emphasizes the centrality and universality of Islam as a faith and political system. Islamists mix religion and politics deliberately and because of the sacred sources inspiring their agenda, primarily the Holy Quran, very little is open to negotiation. Since their foundation is a divine revelation, this cannot be compromised; otherwise they would be disobeying the message of the Quran. Thus, the call for the implementation of Sharia in all types of societies, as some hardliners would argue, is not open to discussion or negotiation and therefore fundamentally opposed to democratic principles. The majority of Islamists are at odds with the central defining features of any Western democracy, yet they do not sanction the use of violence to further their political agenda. This is either due to a specific religious doctrine of non-violence or to the outcome of a strategic analysis that concludes that armed action is pointless if the aim is to change society. Some Islamists disagree. In their view the changing of the socio-political order according to an Islamist ideology cannot be achieved by peaceful means. In their analysis of the current state of affairs the Muslim community, the Ummah, will never rise to defend Islam or its

honour. This can only be achieved through a very small and equally dedicated vanguard of individuals who have declared war on the infidels, defined as those who disagree with Islamist ideology. Believing that they are acting out God's will and that the current struggle must be won at all costs changes their perspective from political participation or opposition to armed resistance. In their own words this is a Jihad, a holy war, and they are the righteous warriors of Islam.

Following this reductionist approach, the Danish Muslim community consists of four disparate groupings in terms of their views on political ideology: the non-political group, those abiding to democratic principles, the non-violent Islamists and finally the Jihadists. It is only the last group which will be examined in the present report.

In order to improve our understanding of the development of Jihad in Europe, hopefully this paper will inspire others to undertake similar studies of this phenomenon across Europe. This is by no means an easy task. To complete a survey of Jihadism in the United Kingdom alone, resulting most likely in a multi-volume series of monographs, a substantial team of researchers would have to be assembled and adequately endowed with funding and with plenty of time. However challenging, it is the view of the author that a study of this kind would be immensely insightful, allowing us to track the developments of Jihadism in Europe and, hopefully, to outline likely scenarios for the future, scenarios which are primarily based on speculation and inadequate information at present.

Last, but certainly not least, the author wishes to extend his gratitude to a considerable number of people who provided tremendous assistance during the research phase of this project. More than fifty interviews have been conducted, others have shared documents from their personal archives yet others have generously spent their time translating key documents. The truly international nature of Jihad was reflected amply during the research phase of this study. In order to track down certain rare documents, the insights of professionals and the like we contacted friends and colleagues from Cairo, Sarajevo, Dubai, Washington, Tel Aviv, Oslo, Beirut, London, Madrid, Stockholm and Rome, just to mention the most frequently used ones. Without the generous support of our international network there would have been more questions than answers and this study would have remained yet another interesting project on the to-do list.¹

THE EGYPTIAN NETWORK

The foundation of the radical Islamist environment in Denmark dedicated to the Jihad is unquestioningly linked to the presence of a number of Egyptians who have either visited or lived in Denmark. Although this Egyptian group was always quite small, it was instrumental in radicalising others and made good use of its extensive international contacts. While its principal persons originated in Egypt, it was not an exclusively Egyptian phenomenon. Others with a background in the Middle East or in North Africa were also attracted to this setting.

Denmark was generally considered a safe haven and although some discretion was needed, the Jihadist connections were maintained and to some extent strengthened. The significance of a few Egyptian Jihadists in Denmark lies in their external relations, and the first phase of the globalisation of the Jihad occurred gradually during the early 1990s, linking Denmark with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Italy, Bosnia, Egypt and other localities.

The 1993 World Trade Center bombing

A seemingly trivial case of arson took an interesting turn when the Danish police uncovered several links between the three accused Egyptians residing in Denmark and the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya in the early 1990s. More specifically, the circumstantial evidence indicated a close relation between the Egyptians, known terrorists and the first World Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993. The trial transcripts provide a glimpse into the Islamist and Jihadi scenes in Denmark in the 1990s, and while none of the suspects were ever charged on a terrorism-related offence, this particular case deserves a closer look.

The trial started on 20 February 1996 at the Western District Court in Aarhus, it lasted almost eight weeks and 95 witnesses were called to testify. The three accused were Abdel-Hakem Mohamed Atia Soliman, Mohamed Shaaban Mohamed Hassanein and Mohamed Abdel Halim Mohamed Fahim. From the very first day the trial took an unusual turn when Hassanein refused to verify his identity to the court. He made several remarks and displayed threatening behaviour towards the other accused while his charges were read to him. He was subsequently expelled from the courtroom. The following day Hassanein was back in court and declared himself willing to answer questions if he could make a statement of ten words, which went like this

“He is proud of being Muslim. Everybody else in the courtroom is an infidel and he cannot accept being tried by infidels.”²

Hassanein, also known as Abu Omar, originated from a Bedouin tribe near Alexandria in Egypt. He described himself as originally an infidel atheist who later returned to Islam, which was the start of his humiliation started. He would not compromise on anything nor allow anyone to cheat him. When asked by the court if he was a member of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, he denied this and stated that his faith was much stronger than that of the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. His lawyer claimed that Hassanein was mentally ill and the court asked that he receive a mental examination at the psychiatric hospital in Aarhus.

Fahim also came from Egypt. After attending high school, he earned a degree in accounting. Afterwards he gained employment in the field of management at an American hotel in Egypt. In 1980-81 he worked at a hotel in New York, but was expelled from the United States in 1981 because his residence permit expired. He first travelled to Jordan and then on to Iraq where he got another job in accounting, also at a hotel. It was here that he met a Danish girl, Ulla. He applied for a visa to Denmark and visited her in 1982 for a few months. Ulla, however, had not yet been divorced from her husband and she was later sent to a psychiatric hospital, and therefore could not maintain the relationship with Fahim. He returned to Iraq where he worked until 1984 at which point he left again, this time for Cyprus, and then on again to Romania, Hungary and East Berlin. He was reunited with Ulla in 1985, however, he later married another girl, Karima in 1986. Fahim applied for asylum and claimed he had been a member of an extremist Islamist group. This was not the truth according to Fahim's own testimony, and his request for asylum was denied. Eventually he received his Danish citizenship in 1992. During the trial he denied any form of membership of the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.

The searches of his home on 2 and 24 February 1994 uncovered some 50 videotapes featuring Abu Talal and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, both prominent members of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. Fahim claimed that while he was in detention he received death threats that sounded like this: "- if Abu Talal is imprisoned you will be killed". His acquaintance with Abu Talal dated back to around 1992, where he visited Fahim in his apartment. It was Ishaq Dwiri, also called as a witness, who introduced Fahim to Abu Talal and they met on three or four other occasions afterwards. Dwiri he knew from Cairo where they met in 1989, and the other two defendants Soliman and Hassanein he would later meet in Denmark in 1993.

Soliman, also known as Abu Barraah or Khaled el-Masri, had been working in the Egyptian Air Force, where he received training in chemistry before settling down in Aarhus, Denmark in early 1993. Soliman was affiliated with the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya in 1982, instructing other members

of the organisation in the use of automatic weapons and pistols. He was attached to its armed wing because of his military experience.³

According to his own testimony, he relocated to Pakistan where he worked as an accountant for a Muslim non-governmental organisation involved in emergency relief. He claimed never to have been to Afghanistan, nor to have had anything to do with militant activity during this period. Soliman also denied having known Hassanein while he was in Pakistan. The first time they met was at Sandholmlejren, a holding facility for asylum seekers in Denmark. He never met anyone from his time in Pakistan afterwards in Denmark. He had heard about Abu Talal while in Pakistan but never met him, nor had he been in contact with him. He did not know if Abu Talal was in Pakistan while he was there. Abu Talal's tapes were available in the mosques in Denmark, and he may have been in possession of some of them. He also denied having met Omar Abdel Rahman or seen videos of him at Fahim's apartment. Nor did he ever meet or talk to Abu Talal. When asked about the telephone number of Abu Talal in Copenhagen, 31173183, which was found in his possession, Soliman stated that he may have received the number from some brothers at the mosque. The names Ramzi Youssef and Mohamed Ajjaj didn't mean anything to him. Their numbers were given to him by some friends while he was in Pakistan, and Youssef and Ajjaj were friends of Soliman's acquaintances. The numbers in the United States would come in handy if Soliman needed a work permit in the US one day. A map of Copenhagen was found in his possession, with phone numbers and the names Youssef and Ajjaj. According to Soliman, these were added to the map while he was in Denmark, and no significance should be attached to the map, numbers or names. A couple of phone numbers in Pakistan scribbled in Solomon's notebook attracted attention during the trial. Soliman explained that 42272 was the number of an NGO located in Peshawar and the number 42311 was for a meeting place for Arabs living and working in the Peshawar area.

The list of chemicals found in his possession was intended for his future chemical export business to Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, Tanzania and Uganda, all countries where he had friends. Asked about a number of terms such as "black powder, plastic explosives and ordinary dynamite" written in his notes, he explained that they were all quite harmless, and were meant to alert his brother who was working at the university about the danger of working with these substances. Whatever the intention of Soliman's notes, a chemistry expert from the Technical University of Denmark testified that the list of chemicals found at Soliman's residence indicated that whoever made the list did so with the manufacture of explosives in mind. Soliman denied having been to Afghanistan, but acknowledged that he went by the name of Abu Barrah while in Pakistan. He first met Dwiri at the Islamic Cultural Center, which he frequented, and in Denmark he was married to a Danish woman introduced to him by Fahim.

Witness testimonies

A considerable number of witnesses were called upon to testify, one of whom would eventually stand trial on terrorism charges himself. By cross referencing the testimonies, the connection of the accused to the al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya can be somewhat elaborated on, although the exact extent of cooperation remains uncertain.

Maher Taglass had overheard his friends talk about a certain Abu Barraah while living in Pakistan in the late 1980s. But whether this Barraah was identical to Soliman he couldn't say, however, Barraah was praised for his assistance to the Afghan Mujaheddin fighting against the Soviet army at the time. Taglass had met Abu Talal in Pakistan. Being wanted by the Pakistani authorities, he was in hiding and could not return to his native Egypt. He talked to Abu Talal about the possibility of gaining asylum in a European country. Abu Talal arrived in Denmark shortly after Taglass and they had since met each other again in Aarhus.

Ishaq Dwiri, a Jordanian educated as a building engineer and a resident of Denmark since 1989, made a journey to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the spring of 1992. Around 20 March, he visited Pakistan and Afghanistan so as to form his own opinion about what was going on since he was considering joining the Mujahedin. On the same flight to Pakistan was Abu Jaffer. Dwiri divided his time between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Inside Afghanistan, he spent time in a camp at the front with units fighting the infidels and the communists, this was in Khost. It was in this camp that he met Soliman, but he called himself Khaled at the time and functioned as a firearms instructor. Dwiri never saw Soliman giving lessons in explosives or demolition, but he heard Soliman state that he knew everything about explosives and that he could manufacture a bomb made of urine and a certain chemical. Later, back in Denmark, Dwiri became involved in a domestic dispute with Soliman, whose wife had left him for Dwiri. This situation led Soliman to accuse Dwiri of kidnapping her, and Dwiri's house was set afire as an act of retribution. Dwiri was afraid that Fahim, whom he knew from Cairo, and Soliman were about to set him up, and to prevent this from happening he reported them to the police.⁴

Susanne Kirsten Jensen was introduced to Soliman by Fahim with the intent to marry him. She was told that Soliman had been sentenced to death in Egypt and that he could not return. She had the impression that Soliman had been to Afghanistan. He was very strict in his faith, and wanted a society ruled according to Islamic laws. Soliman talked a lot about doing things for Islam and considered Muslims living in Denmark to be much too passive. She later regretted the marriage because he was a virtual stranger to her. Once Soliman asked if it wouldn't be a good idea if he trained her, so she could go to Egypt to shoot Mubarak.⁵ This proposal was declined with a comment about women and fighting after which the topic was not brought up again.

Jihad Samsam went on the same trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan as Dwiri. The group consisted of Samsam, Dwiri, Taglass and Ahmed Younes Najjar. They spent the first two or three days in Pakistan together, and afterwards Samsam, Dwiri and Najjar left for Afghanistan. Maher Taglass stayed behind in Pakistan. Inside Afghanistan they visited a Mujahedin camp where they received training in the use of AK-47 automatic rifles to prepare them for the upcoming battle in Kabul. Their instructor, called Khaled, personally taught them how to use AK's and RPG's. In his Afghan diary, Samsam explained that Soliman was identical to Khaled el-Masri. The camp was located about a six-hour drive from the Pakistani-Afghan border. Samsam had since met Soliman a few times in Denmark however in Denmark Samsam was told his name was Abu Barrah.⁶

Ahmed Younes Najjar was also called to testify, but he denied ever having been to Afghanistan. He had joined the others on the trip, but was simply visiting orphanages and relief organisations in Pakistan. Adding to the confusion was the following testimony by Malik Ahmed Mohammed al-Batran who basically retracted his previous statement to the police from 16 June 1994. Now he didn't know about Soliman's visit to Afghanistan, that he was a member of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya that he had fought with the Mujaheddin and that Soliman knew two persons in Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman's inner circle. He didn't know Abu Talal, and had never claimed that Abu Talal knew Fahim and Soliman. Reda Hassan Ali, however, was able to confirm his previous statement to the police. To his knowledge, Soliman communicated with groups in Egypt from Denmark. Soliman knew about attacks before they happened and he sent bomb-making instructions to the Islamist groups.

Karima, Fahim's wife, knew that Dwiri was in Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1992. At the time there were rumours that Soliman had fought in Afghanistan. Another rumour said that there were more people in Sandholmlejren, the facility for asylum seekers, who had fought in Afghanistan.

Imam Ahmed Abu Laban, at the time Imam of the Mosque in Copenhagen, stated that he met Hassanein at his mosque. Abu Laban had the impression that Hassanein suffered mentally in some way. He had never been introduced to Soliman and didn't even know what he looked like however, Abu Laban had talked with Soliman on the phone on matters related to Soliman's marital problems. Said Mansour, a Moroccan active in Islamist circles, explained that he personally hosted Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman on his visit to Denmark in December 1990. Sheikh Rahman returned to Denmark about six months later, but only to Copenhagen. Mansour was acquainted with Abu Talal, who had visited him on several occasions, once in the company of Abu Laban.

Expert testimonies

Some of the details contained in the above mentioned testimonies are indeed confusing and contradictory at times, and a number of investigators involved in the case were called upon to clarify the relationship between the defendants and the Egyptian al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.

Jan Aagaard Pedersen, from the Danish security service, stated that Soliman personally knew Sheikh Rahman, and also people from Rahman's immediate circle. One of his interviewees was afraid to testify himself because he considered Soliman to be a religious fanatic. In his interview with Najjar, it was acknowledged that he had been to Afghanistan and there had met Soliman who was a leading figure in the camp - indeed Soliman was his instructor.

Jørn Steinbring Jensen from the Danish police explained that the evidence collected in this particular investigation contained at least 14 phone numbers identical to numbers found in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing case. The drawing found in Soliman's possession bore some resemblance to the Israeli embassy in Copenhagen. In the opinion of the witness, the possession of the telephone numbers for Youssef and Ajjaj were quite damaging.

According to the senior police officer heading the investigation, Klaus Munk Nielsen, the FBI and the prosecutor's office in New York had reported that Soliman and Hassanein's fingerprints were found on material discovered by the police in relation to the World Trade Center investigation. Furthermore, Nielsen noted that there was a high degree of similarity between the bomb construction notes found at Soliman's residence and those discovered in New York. These manuals were not identical to commonly available instructions; the urea-bomb in particular was quite rare. This was the type of explosive device used in the World Trade Center bombing, which also featured a mercury detonator. In the US investigation, an unexploded device was retrieved from a basement in New Jersey which weighed a considerable 350 kg. Its technical specifications matched those found at Fahim's residence. According to the Nielsen's professional opinion, this case and the WTC bombing shared the following commonalities: the fingerprints of Soliman and Hassanein, the presence of Youssef and Ajjaj's phone numbers and a link to al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.

The international aspects of the investigation

The testimonies of the defendants and witnesses did highlight a connection between like-minded individuals in Denmark, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These links are worth noticing because they constitute a window into a closed community. The commonalities between a small group of Egyptians residing in Denmark and the terrorists responsible for the World Trade Center

bombing require an elaboration. As the senior investigator of the Egyptian case pointed out, there were a number of elements in the cases that coincided; furthermore one could add the apparent significance of the Afghan training camps in the acquisition of professional bomb making skills and the forging of alliances. The two Pakistani phone numbers in Soliman's possession are of interest in this context.

The phone number in Peshawar, 42311, which was discovered in Soliman's notebook, was allegedly the number to a meeting place for Arabs in Afghanistan. This was certainly true, but Soliman did not give further details about this very special place. This particular number is well known and was distributed widely in the late 1980s as the number to call for aspiring Mujahedin once they had arrived safely in Peshawar. Whoever called this number would be picked up by a Mujahedin, who would take the new Jihadist volunteer to one of the famous guest houses in Peshawar. In a sense, this is the first original point of contact for what would later become Al Qaeda, though it was not yet Al Qaeda proper, which was still in its early stages. The simplicity of this procedure is of course related to the widespread support for the Mujahedin, from both Western and Muslim countries. All one had to do to join was to travel to Peshawar, dial 42311, and then somebody would take care of the rest.

The reference to this particular recruitment procedure to the Afghan Mujahedin first surfaced in the widely circulated booklet "*Join the Caravan*", by the late Abdallah Azzam, the original founder of the concept of "The Firm Base", or Al Qaeda in Arabic.⁷ This significant document is a call for all Muslims to perform their religious duty of joining the Jihad in defence of Islam. The first four parts outline why the Jihad is legitimate, necessary and obligatory, and the conclusion provides practical advice for those interested in joining the Mujahedin in Afghanistan. Five different phone numbers are provided, including the one mentioned above, and also a postal address. Mail enquiries are directed to Peshawar University, P.O. Box 977, Peshawar, Pakistan. Prospective Mujahedin could blend in as religious students enrolling at courses, at Peshawar University.⁸

That Afghanistan was the primary destination for interested Jihadists in the early 1990s is indisputable. Ramzi Youssef, the organiser of the World Trade Center bombing, was probably in Peshawar in the spring of 1992. Mohammed Ajjaj began travelling to the Khalden camp in April 1992 and finally arrived in June of that year in order to learn how to construct bombs.⁹ This is the same period when Taglass, Dwiri, Najjar, Samsam and Soliman were there. It is not known whether they met or not.¹⁰ This appears unlikely, but the possibility underlines the importance of the Afghan camps.

An interesting appendix to the Danish court case details the identical phone numbers retrieved from Youssef and Ajjaj's possessions and those found in Soliman, Hassanein and Fahim's personal documents. An unlikely place, the "Big Five Hamburger" restaurant in Balch Springs, Texas, apparently played a significant role, most likely as a relay station for dispersed Jihadists.¹¹ Other numbers in Texas are listed, but the significant link between the US cell and the Egyptians in Denmark went through Peshawar and Islamabad in Pakistan.

Both groups of Jihadists listed 42311 as "House of the Supporters" or "Beit al-Ansar". The number 43708 referred to the "Services Office of the Martyr Abdallah Azzam Foundation" or just as the "Service Office" in the Danish case. The same number was listed for those who needed to contact the "Martyr Azzam Press Center" for information about events in Afghanistan. Apparently someone in Denmark needed just that; however, the recipient's name is illegible handwriting on a standard form from the Service Office. The letter to the Danish recipient specifies the nature of the enclosed videotape bearing the title "Fath al-Futouh" – Victory of Victories – which contains combat footage shot during the battle of Khost. The sender, Abu Adel Azzam, encourages the recipient to show the video to as many as possible in the hope that it will increase sympathy for the cause. He also mentions fundraising, and that any funds collected should be directed to M/S Maktab al-Khadamat, FCA no. 366 Habib Bank, Peshawar, Pakistan.¹²

More examples could be listed here, but they might add nothing but confusion to an already complex web of individuals, movements and offices. One link nevertheless deserves mentioning between this case and the following one, the Pakistani number of 810455, the phone number retrieved in Denmark for the office of the newsletter called *al-Murabitoun*.

The al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya connection

Two very important figures representing the leadership of the Egyptian terrorist group al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya viewed Denmark as an expedient rear base for their activities. These two individuals were Talal Fouad Qassim and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman. Talal Fouad Qassim, who was known as Abu Talal in Islamist circles, was the spokesman for the al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya and fled Egypt in 1990. The al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya was an extremely violent Jihadi organisation during the period of interest to this study. Its activist core consisted of university students, especially from Upper Egyptian universities, such as Menya, Beni Suef, Suhaj, Assyut, Qena, Aswan and also some from Cairo. Abu Talal was among the leadership.¹³

In 1982 Abu Talal was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in Egypt for his alleged role in the assassination of the Egyptian president, Anwar el-Sadat. He escaped during a prison transfer in 1989 and made his way to Pakistan. Shortly after, he linked up with the Afghan Mujahedin and through them met a number of people who had travelled to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. However, his primary affiliations remained with the Egyptian Islamists. He was personally acquainted with Mohammed al-Islambouli and Ayman al-Zawahiri, both senior figures in Egyptian Jihadi circles.

An Egyptian court had sentenced Abu Talal to death in absentia in 1992. At the time, Egypt was putting pressure on Pakistan to extradite a number of Egyptian Islamists wanted in connection with terrorist activity. Many of those fearing extradition fled and Abu Talal ended up in Denmark. He was granted asylum while simultaneously increasing his political activities. His sermons were well known in Copenhagen and drew large crowds and he even hosted a television programme on Saturdays. Abu Talal served as the editor of al-Murabiton, a radical Islamist newsletter with an interesting co-editor. For readers with enquiries, they were kindly requested to forward their questions to Ayman al-Zawahiri to the mail address of al-Murabiton in Copenhagen. Abu Talal was also a very active preacher during his three years in Copenhagen. He used to conduct sermons at Abu Laban's mosque which at the time was located on Vesterbrogade before it moved to Dortheavej.¹⁴

His work on the al-Murabiton newsletter was praised posthumously by fellow Jihadists and attracted considerable attention and respect. An appreciation of Abu Talal's dedication written by Sheikh Abu Ithar is available online. A brief excerpt from it illustrates Abu Talal's standing:

"From Afghanistan came the first roving magazine which was written in the name of the Jama'a Islamia. Abu Talal chose for this magazine the name "Al-Murabeton." He would write most of it, he would give it with his blood beautiful eloquence, his writing had a secret which made it reach the hearts and made it readily acceptable to them.

When the situation changed in Afghanistan, Abu Talal felt compelled to leave. He stopped by several countries looking for a base for his message until he settled in Denmark, where he obtained political asylum. Through his presence, he began to expand his call until he became the most recognised scholars there, despite the fact that there were others there who had preceded him in these efforts. Through a clever manoeuvre, this ambitious man was able to produce the first Islamic television program through which he was able to put forward the ideology of the Jama'a

Islamia in Egypt. Through this program Sheikh Abu Talal was able to clarify the outlook of the Jama'a and its reformative programs in their purity without the fabrications of the official media which had given it a bad name."¹⁵

The relations between Copenhagen and Milan were apparently quite good in the early 1990s. Abu Talal was a close friend of Anwar Shaaban of the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan. It was presumably through this connection that Abu Talal took a personal interest in the Bosnian conflict. According to documents seized at the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan on 24 April 1993, it was Abu Talal who convened the first meeting of the Shura Council of the European Union in Copenhagen. This little-known organisation had a distinct radical and militant agenda and the first item on the agenda was to develop the Shura Council as an independent function to "coordinate and make decisions". The second item involved a debate over how to increase aid and assistance to armed Islamist groups across North Africa. Finally, Abu Talal wanted to explore new opportunities in order to manipulate humanitarian organisations and charities for the cause.¹⁶ Present at the meeting, besides Abu Talal, were a number of senior Islamists connected to the Egyptian terrorist movements. Sheikh Anwar Shaaban was evidently present as well as Abu al-Fadhl Mahmoud Taha, who was known to be an Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiyya operative from Egypt.¹⁷

The disappearance of Abu Talal

Apparently, Abu Talal felt secure enough to risk some foreign travel, and in accordance with the contents of his sermons it was the plight of Bosnian Muslims that attracted his attention. In spite of protests from Egypt and an Interpol arrest warrant, Abu Talal was granted asylum in 1995.¹⁸ In Denmark, he had changed his name to Ebrahim Ezzat for security reasons.¹⁹ This was the identity he used when he entered Croatia on 12 September 1995. According to Abu Talal's wife, who lives in Denmark with their six children, he intended to write a book about the conflict between Croatia and Bosnia and had decided to visit both countries to do research.

He never reached his intended destination in Bosnia, as he was arrested by security officials in Zagreb on 13 September 1995. Croatian authorities detained Abu Talal for six days and ordered him deported for not registering upon arrival. What then happened remains a mystery, but according to various reports Abu Talal was handed over to US intelligence operatives. The US had a specific interest in Abu Talal due to threats circulating that the al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya were planning to assassinate President Clinton.²⁰ He was subsequently questioned for two days aboard a US ship in the Adriatic Sea and then handed over to Egyptian authorities. The hand-over allegedly took place on 22 September 1995, and Egyptian Islamists have claimed he was taken to

the intelligence headquarters of al-Mansoura and transferred to Cairo in October later that year. The family's lawyer, Montasser al-Zayat, who has defended numerous Egyptian Islamists, has been unable to proceed in the case of Abu Talal's disappearance.²¹ Egyptian officials were pleased with the disappearance of Abu Talal and as one official put it,

"His arrest proves what we have always said, which is that these terror groups are operating on a worldwide scale, using places like Afghanistan and Bosnia to form their fighters who come back to the middle east...European countries like Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, England and others, which give sanctuary to these terrorists should now understand it will come back to haunt them where they live."²²

The loss of Abu Talal came as a severe blow to the al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya yet while he was gone, presumably for good, he was not forgotten. His status in Jihadi circles ensured that the events in Croatia would be avenged to discourage further disappearances. The response came in the form of a car bombing in Rijeka, Croatia on 20 October 1995. The bomb practically destroyed the police headquarters and damaged several nearby buildings including a bank and a primary school. John Fawzan, holder of a Canadian passport, detonated 70 kg of TNT packed in his Fiat Mirafiori thereby achieving the dubious distinction of carrying out the first successful suicide operation in Europe on behalf of an Islamist organisation.²³ Only the bomber himself was killed, but 29 people were injured, two of them seriously. Shortly afterwards al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya claimed responsibility for the attack in a message faxed to news agencies in Cairo. That the communiqué was intended to be taken seriously can be seen from excerpts from the message. It said that the bombing was meant,

"- to prove that the case of Sheik Talaat Fouad Qassem... will not pass but will bring cascades of blood bleeding from Croatian interests inside and outside... You Croats will be mistaken if you think that this matter will go peacefully... Release Sheik Qassem and apologize formally through the media... Close the gates of hell which you have opened upon yourselves... otherwise you will be starting a war the end of which only Allah knows".²⁴

Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman

Said Mansour testified that he had hosted Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman in late 1990 on his brief visit to Denmark. Rahman did return on at least one occasion, and a little background information is relevant in order to highlight the presence of Egyptian Jihadists in Denmark.

Born in 1938 and blinded by diabetes in early childhood, Rahman proved his dedication and perseverance through his study of the Braille version of the Quran. Inspired by Ibn Taymiyah and Sayyid Qutb, he became a well-known and distinguished scholar, recognised for his knowledge of the Quran. He received his degree in Quranic Studies from al-Azhar University in Cairo and became the spiritual leader of the al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya in 1980 after several smaller splinter Jihadi groups aligned themselves with the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. This coalition led directly to the assassination of the Egyptian president on 6 October 1981. Rahman was arrested along with hundreds of Islamist activists but would eventually be acquitted.²⁵ Unwanted in Egypt, he made his way to Afghanistan and this exile was to prove instrumental in several ways.

In the mid-1980s he joined his former university professor Abdallah Azzam in Afghanistan. Rahman and Azzam became leading figures in the Jihadi environment in Peshawar during the 1980s. Members of Rahman's group were in contact with safehouses in Peshawar, the infamous guesthouses.²⁶ Thus, the professionalisation and internationalisation of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya increased over the years.

Rahman travelled extensively all over the world for five years trying to attract new volunteers for the Afghan Jihad, but could not return to Egypt since he had been sentenced in absentia by an Egyptian court in 1989 for plotting to overthrow the state. However, Rahman had numerous friends willing to help out. Italian investigators found a letter in 1995 at the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan from Abu Talal to the Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The letter urged Hekmatyar to shelter Rahman.²⁷ That the letter would be located in Milan was no coincidence, since the leading figure at the Islamic Cultural Institute, Anwar Shaaban, virtually directed the Mujahedin efforts in Bosnia. Both Rahman and Abu Talal were ardent supporters of the Jihad in Bosnia and were acquainted with Shaaban.

Considered an enemy of the state, he went to Sudan in 1990, but this visit was to be shorter than expected due to an unanticipated invitation. In spite of the fact that he was on the terrorist watch list, in Khartoum he applied for a US visa, which was granted, courtesy of the CIA. US intelligence officials recognized Rahman's substantial role in the Afghan Jihad, and moreover, the CIA also had an interest in being on friendly terms with the Sheikh just in case the political situation in Egypt deteriorated.

He settled in New York and immediately acquired a small but dedicated following that was familiar with his political views and his position in the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. The circle around Rahman was to be instrumental in the subsequent 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, conducted with the blessing of Rahman.

The investigation in 1993 was indeed difficult for the FBI which had no experience working against Islamist radicals. As it turned out, one of the more important findings, the one linking the conspirators was an unremarkable Mosque above a toy store in New Jersey. At this makeshift Mosque, Rahman presented his views of the world in no uncertain terms.²⁸ Informants working for the FBI quickly identified Rahman as a source of inspiration for the attack, but also linked him to several unsuccessful bombings in the New York area.²⁹

Before his arrest, the FBI managed to listen in on Rahman's endorsement of further violence. The plan called for five near-simultaneous bombs directed at the United Nations building, the Statue of Liberty, the Holland and Lincoln tunnels and the George Washington Bridge.

After the arrest of prospective bombers at a warehouse in Queens, New York, Rahman took refuge in the Abu Bakr mosque in Brooklyn in the company of a number of his supporters. Political pressure eventually led the FBI to arrest Rahman on 2 July 1993. He was tried for his role in the World Trade Center bombing and sentenced to life imprisonment in October 1995.

As in the case of Abu Talal, the loss of Rahman did not go unnoticed in Jihadi circles; quite the contrary: Rahman was mentioned by Osama bin Laden in his famous "*Declaration of Jihad*" from 1996, where bin Laden curiously stated that the US was to blame for the killing of Rahman, although he was very much alive at the time.³⁰ In 1997 CNN's Peter Arnett asked Osama bin Laden about his views on Rahman and whether they had ever met. His less-than-direct answer did indeed praise Rahman as a famous Muslim scholar unfairly treated by the US only to please the Egyptian government. The case against Rahman was built on fabrications, he claimed, and the allegations were baseless.³¹ Even after 11 September 2001, Osama bin Laden had not forgotten about Rahman, although he presumably had other things on his mind. In his sermon-like speech from February 2003, he asked God to secure the release of Rahman from the hands of his American captors.³² Rahman, writing from his prison cell in the US, had apparently not changed his ideological perspective, and the following quote aptly sums up his views:

"The Jews and Christians are the ones that are fighting every Muslim resurrection in the whole world, they act to spread prostitution, usury, and other kinds of corruption all over the land. Oh, Muslims everywhere! Cut the transportation of their countries, tear it apart, destroy their economy, burn their companies, eliminate their interests, sink their ships, shoot down their planes, kill them on the sea, air, on land. Kill them when you find them, take them and encircle them, paralyze their every post. Kill those infidels... Allah will torment by your hands those who wish to kill you; Allah

will put shame upon them, he will blow wind in the chests of the believers and show the anger of their hearts.”³³

THE NORTH AFRICAN NETWORK

First, it must be emphasized that no North African Jihadist network has ever existed in Denmark. What has existed is a loose network of individual Islamists and Jihadists living in Denmark with a common interest and affiliation with a number of terrorist organisations active in North Africa. Not all of these individuals have their origin in a North African country, nor are they all acquainted, but their support for the GIA, GSPC or the GICM shows that they share a specific worldview.

The North African Jihadi groups, not to be confused with the Egyptian ones mentioned previously, do not form a unified entity with a command structure and common goals; they have most certainly experienced their share of doctrinal differences. What their programmes share is the legitimisation of political violence, justified as Jihad. Interestingly, these doctrinal differences often become blurred over distances. Sympathizers residing in Europe may support all of these groups at the same time, without an awareness of the differences between them. The superficial knowledge of the ideological differences cannot be said to obstruct activism; on the contrary; being ill-informed about the historical developments and current realities on the ground in North Africa was unfortunately never a deterrent.

The significance of the internet in distributing Jihadi ideas and manifestos is a fairly recent development; this virtual network was barely developed in the early 1990s. Instead, individual European Jihadists relied on personal contact, phone calls or written propaganda pamphlets to disseminate their ideas. The internalisation of a violent ideology appears to be less rigorous than previously assumed. Neither a degree in Islamic jurisprudence, nor detailed background information on specific Jihadi movements is necessary in order for someone to align himself with a Jihad.

Jihadi propaganda

The dissemination of radical Islamist propaganda material was well under way during the 1990s. Certainly the most active individual in this effort was Said Mansour. Originally from Morocco, Mansour came to Denmark in 1983, and in 1986 he opened the al-Nur bookshop in the

Vesterbro district of Copenhagen. The bookshop closed in 1992 after six years of slow business, but it was still possible to obtain Islamist literature through Mansour.

An online discussion on the Nida'ul-Islam forum in 1998 about the writings of Sheikh Abu Muhammed al-Maqdisi, the spiritual mentor of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, stated that those interested in learning more were invited to order Arabic editions of the books through al-Nur Islamic Information, Vesterbrogade 208, Box 276, 1800 Frederiksberg C, Copenhagen, Denmark; phone and fax numbers were also provided.³⁴ Mansour has admitted in a pre-trial hearing that he knew al-Maqdisi personally, but had not spoken to him for more than 15 years. In the mid-1990s Mansour travelled to Bosnia to meet some of the Mujahedin who were documenting the exploits of the fighters. He is quite active in the Muslim communities in Copenhagen, where he present himself as mediator, and his activism has also prompted him to arrange a number of study groups.³⁵

In the 1990s Mansour was an ardent supporter of the Algerian GIA terrorist group and was involved in the distribution of its publication Al Ansar. There was a close affiliation between Mansour and Abu Qatada in London due to their interest in the Algerian cause and they were both aligned with the GIA faction led by of Hassan Hattab.³⁶

Mansour's role was questioned in several Jihadi cases in Europe before his arrest in Denmark in 2005. Spanish and Belgian prosecutors have identified Mansour as the "spiritual leader and propagandist of the Mujahedin movement."³⁷ According to European intelligence sources Mansour is said to be the spiritual leader of a group called "Allah's soldiers". His phone was tapped for years by the Danish security service and this ongoing investigation established a connection to Abu Qatada in London. He has been labelled as one of the important ideologues on the European Jihadi scene and is also suspected of providing forged documents.³⁸ Mansour is currently awaiting trial in Denmark on charges related to incitement of violence. Searches at Mansour's residence revealed a substantial amount of Jihadi propaganda, including thousands of CDs intended for distribution. Some of the CD covers bore the caption

"We are terrorists. Terror is our duty. Both the east and the west must know that we are terrorists. We are fearsome."³⁹

Mansour's international acquaintances are worth mentioning in this regard as they represent a who's who of the Jihadi scene. Besides Abu Qatada in London and hosting Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman in 1990, Mourad Trabelsi from Milan and Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas from Madrid deserve mention. Mansour personally hosted Yarkas in Copenhagen in December 1997.

According to an eyewitness, a black mini-van pulled up in front of Mansour's semi-detached house in Brønshøj. Five or six Arabic-looking men, led by Yarkas, got out. The men carried a lot of luggage and stayed at Mansour's house for about a week.⁴⁰ Apparently, Mansour also had a close relationship with Imam Trabelsi who has been charged with running a terrorist cell linked to Al Qaeda. Searches in Italy in 2005 revealed a considerable quantity of Mansour's propaganda material.⁴¹

Mansour's trial is scheduled for late 2006, and contingent on his cooperation, it should shed more light on his propaganda activities. At a pre-trial hearing he refused to rise before the judge, who happened to be a woman, explaining that it was forbidden according to his religious convictions. The court thought otherwise, and four police officers helped him to his feet.⁴²

A most unfortunate man

Omar Maarouf was sentenced to death on 12 July 2003 by a criminal court in Casablanca for his membership of an Islamist group known as Salafia Jihadia.⁴³ According to Maarouf's interpretation of events, he is the victim of a series of very unfortunate coincidences.

Maarouf was born on 27 September 1965 in Casablanca. He arrived in Denmark in 1988 in the company of a Danish woman, whom he married and later divorced. Maarouf remarried in 1991, a Moroccan this time, and together they have four children. He received his Danish citizenship in 1997. He became a practising Muslim after meeting Abu Talal at a mosque in Copenhagen in 1993.⁴⁴ In particular it was Abu Talal's sermons on the necessity of Jihad, especially in Palestine, Afghanistan and Bosnia that appealed to Maarouf. Inspired by these sermons, Maarouf travelled to Bosnia in 1995, where he ostensibly worked in emergency relief services. According to the Moroccan indictment from 2003, Maarouf received military training in Bosnia and fought against the Serbs. He returned to Denmark afterwards.⁴⁵ In 1996 he became acquainted with one of the leading figures of the Salafia Jihadia movement. Maarouf gave an interview from his Moroccan prison to the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* in September 2003.

"I have lived almost 15 years in Denmark and I feel like a Dane. I feel that the Danes are supporting me and I don't know how to thank them. This has given me a completely new perspective on Denmark. So please greet the Danes and tell them that I am not a terrorist but an ordinary person who has never done anything wrong."⁴⁶

During the interview Maarouf again reiterated his innocence but conceded to his sincere religiosity. Given the choice, Maarouf declared that he would rather support Osama Bin Laden than George Bush. He had never experienced any problems in Copenhagen and had recently felt more Danish than ever.

“I am an Islamist, but I respect the Danes and other people. I came to Denmark because I got married to a Danish girl. I have never been violent and have never experienced any problems with the Danes. I don’t care if people eat pork, for instance. My religion tells me something different but I don’t live in an Islamic country.”⁴⁷

However, Maarouf’s imprisonment and subsequent death sentence in Morocco are preceded by events which casts his alleged sympathy for Danish society in a rather different light. Maarouf had actually been apprehended before, that time in Brussels by the Belgian police in 1998.

According to Maarouf in an interview with the Danish newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* in 2004 he realised it did not look that good on paper, but he just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.⁴⁸ On 5 March 1998 he coincidentally happened to be in an apartment filled with weapons, explosives, forged passports, Jihadi videos and bomb-making instructions. Equally interesting was the discovery of Islamist literature intended for distribution in radical mosques in Belgium. Two documents attracted particular attention at the time of the arrests: a description of a new Moroccan branch of the GIA and a manifesto by the GICM.

Maarouf arrived in Brussels on 4 March 1998 in the company of Raho Moussa, an unemployed Algerian from Oran residing in Belgium. Maarouf and Moussa had in their possession a quantity of radical Islamist literature, which was intended for distribution in Belgium. This material originated from Said Mansour, whom the court files mistakenly identify as being Swedish.⁴⁹ Moussa, however, was connected to a group of GIA sympathizers in Lund in Southern Sweden, and had previously been apprehended in 1993 on the German-Austrian border carrying a forged Danish passport in the name of one Moulay Abderrahmane. It was while grocery shopping in a Brussels neighbourhood that Maarouf ran into a Moroccan friend. This friend invited him to stay overnight at his apartment instead of going to an expensive hotel. The night turned out to be anything but a quiet meeting of old friends, and, after a nine-hour stand-off it ended with the help of the special intervention team of the Belgian gendarmerie. Shots were fired and the police decided to storm the apartment and eventually all the suspects surrendered. Maarouf denied any knowledge of the activities of the inhabitants and was released after a period of detention. The Belgian investigators revealed that Omar Maarouf was known to the French security service

under the name of Abou Hamza, and that the French considered him a GIA affiliate. Maarouf offered no plausible explanation for the entry in his diary of the mobile number of Jalal Ait Sassi, another one of the accused in the Belgian case.

The Brussels cell was comprised of GIA members.⁵⁰ According to Belgian court documents, Maarouf was in possession of his diary at the time of his arrest. One of the entries named a certain Zin-Elabidin in the Belgian translation, otherwise known as Zayn al-Abidin Mohammed Husayn and more than thirty other aliases. This person is identical to Abu Zubaydah, who in 1998 was among the top five people in Al Qaeda.⁵¹ How Maarouf had acquired Abu Zubaydah's number has never been explained satisfactorily.

At the time, in the late 1990s, Abu Zubaydah had successfully organised Bin Laden's return to Afghanistan through the MAK organisation. MAK, or Makhtab-e Khidamat al-Mujahedeen - meaning the "Mujahedeen Services Office" - served throughout the Afghan war during the 1980s as the primary venue for foreign fighters. He had risen to be among the top five Al Qaeda leaders and remained head of external operations until his capture in Faisalabad in March 2002. He replaced Mohammed Atef after the latter was killed, and for a short time became one of the most senior Al Qaeda leaders. Before 11 September 2001, Abu Zubaydah was the person that recruits needed to speak to in order to be allowed into the training camps in Afghanistan; he was literally Al Qaeda's chief recruiter. It is not known what other names were in Maarouf's notebook.

Maarouf was released by the Belgian authorities because of lack of evidence, and he remained a free man until 26 February 2003. On his way home from a visit to his father in Casablanca, Maarouf was arrested by Moroccan plainclothes police. Along with 31 other suspects who were apprehended, he was charged with membership of the Salafia Jihadia. All confessed to the charges, but 27 detainees later retracted their statements in the presence of a judge.⁵²

Maarouf's relationship with the Salafia Jihadia remains ambiguous. According to the Moroccan authorities Maarouf met Abu Rasheed at the Heimdalsgade mosque in Copenhagen, where they discovered they had a mutual friend in Morocco. This friend was Mohammed Damir, who was present at Abu Rasheed's wedding in Tangier, and it was Damir who introduced Maarouf to the Salafia Jihadia.

Armed fundraising

At 14:25 on 2 July 2001 three masked and armed men entered a branch of Jyske Bank on Falkoner Alle in Copenhagen. The employees handed over 103,600 Danish kroner to the

robbers, who fled in a stolen VW. The police were alerted to the incident and a description was broadcast over the radio. A police patrol identified three men who fit the description and decided to pull them over for questioning. As the suspect's car came to a stop, one of the men drew a pistol, turned around and fired at the police car. One of the officers was hit in the thigh and his partner decided to abandon the chase after returning fire with his service weapon. The first robber was arrested only 20 minutes after the robbery, whereas the other two men boarded a train for Aarhus. The plan was to use an apartment in Aarhus to meet up in case they became separated. Both men were eventually apprehended after a few days. All three were tried and found guilty of armed robbery, and two were also accused of attempted murder. These last two were given 10-year sentences while the other one was sentenced to 4½ years. All were to be expelled from Denmark after serving their sentence.

What appeared to be a simple, yet violent, armed robbery took a different twist in the subsequent investigation. Even if the actual affiliation to a specific group can be difficult to ascertain, it is beyond question that the purpose of the robbery was to raise money for arms purchases for one of the Algerian terrorist movements, most likely the GSPC.

Athmane Mehiri was born on 9 September 1957 in Algeria and came to Denmark in 1995 because he had experienced problems in Algeria due to his membership of FIS. He was granted asylum after four years. In Denmark he became acquainted with Ismail Debboub, who came from the same area in Algeria.⁵³ Mehiri had owned a small restaurant in France, which he sold in 1993. At the time he had no problems with the French authorities. When he returned from a trip to the UK he was told that he had been wanted since 1994. Apparently, he didn't know why he was wanted. Mehiri had lived in Denmark for eight years with his wife and six children, yet he did not speak or understand Danish.⁵⁴

Mehiri was charged with the planning of the robbery and the procuring of weapons, a 9mm FN automatic, a .38 revolver, and a .45 automatic, and also with providing a hideout for the others. Mehiri was acquainted with Ahmed Mohammed Abdel-Ghani, also known as Abu Rached. They met in the Mosque on Grimhøjvej to pray. Abu Rached was called to testify because his apartment on Janesvej in the Aarhus suburb of Brabrand had been searched by the police in connection with the investigation. Abu Rached had no knowledge of the robbery and was not aware that anyone had stayed in his apartment without his knowledge. In the days preceding the robbery he was visiting a friend in Auning, Mohammed Alyousif.⁵⁵

Another witness called to testify was none other than Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane, to be elaborated on shortly. He acknowledged that he knew Mehiri from the mosque in Aarhus and

that he had served as courier for Mehiri on trips to Algeria. The money transfers took place on two occasions, in July and November of 2000, and the money was handed over to a certain Ahmed.⁵⁶ Abderrahmane stated that he sympathised with the Algerian FIS, but that he had never been a member of the organisation. His third visit to Algeria occurred in February 2001, and he was arrested and charged with belonging to the GSPC. For the record, Abderrahmane stated that he was not a member of the terrorist organization, but sympathised with their cause.

Mehiri was the only Danish resident among the accused, and the three men who carried out the robbery all lived in France. Ismail Debboub had fled Algeria because he was a member of FIS, later settling in France. He had a previous record of armed robbery. Debboub was on loan from France for the Danish trial, to be transferred back to France afterwards. After serving the rest of his sentence in France he was to be expelled to Algeria. This situation prompted Debboub to comment on his expulsion. This was problematic, according to Debboub, because he had received a death sentence in his native country. Debboub was sentenced on 22 January 1999 for the same offences as Bettayeb: possession of weapons and explosives, possession of forged documents and being affiliated with a terrorist organisation. Debboub was given six years and extradited from France never to return, in particular because he had a previous conviction for attempted murder.⁵⁷ Debboub admitted his FIS connection and stated to the police on 21 August 2002 that the armed robbery was designed to raise 5 million Danish kroner to buy arms for the FIS. Debboub later declined to comment or outline the aspects of this motive in court. When questioned about his role in the shootout with the police, Debboub was certain that he did not aim directly at the police car; - *he had been to war and was an experienced shot.*⁵⁸

The second robber, Mohammed Bettayeb, had been sentenced to seven years in prison on 26 May 1999 by the French Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris, for his involvement in a criminal organisation and participation in planning an act of terrorism. Bettayeb, a French citizen, was a fugitive from the French police when he was arrested in Denmark. He had previously been connected with groups supplying arms to Algerian terrorists. The third man, Thierry Civelli, was also a Frenchman, but did not appear to be connected to any Jihadi group. A petty criminal, his role in the robbery was limited to supplying technical expertise.

This incident proved the international dimension of the Islamist networks within Europe. A number of aggressive armed robberies occurred in France during the 1990s for the purpose of raising funds for the Jihadi groups, in particularly in relation to the struggle in Algeria. The robbery in Copenhagen, as well as other incidents in Denmark, was similar in its method and purpose to the French cases. Denmark was seen as an easy target with less security. It should be noted that statements of affiliation or sympathy with the FIS can be confusing. Judging by the

actions and ideology of those involved in the North African circles it seems much more likely that their real allegiance was with the GSPC or the GIA, not the FIS. Their actual ideological alignment however, remains unclear.

Violence as a defensive mechanism

The following case can only be described as indirectly linked to the Jihadist circles in Denmark, but has been included because it serves as an important window into the mindset of a single, yet very dedicated Islamist who became violent in trying to protect the sanctity of his religion. On 8 December 2002 Mohammed Alyousif stabbed Hussein Jabar Khalil Al-Hamdani to death at Al-Hamdani's apartment in Auning. According to the medical examiner's report, the victim was stabbed at least 15 times and his body bore visible signs of a violent struggle. The cause of death was a single cut across the throat from left to right, and the victim was alive when this occurred. The murder took place between 17:00 and 19:00, and afterwards Alyousif took the time to visit a friend who worked at a restaurant in Randers. He arrived at 21.30, had a cup of coffee and left after ten minutes. He was a bit more quiet than usual, according to his friend, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Alyousif arrived in Denmark in February 1998 and requested asylum, which was denied in September 1999. Married with two children, he experienced psychological problems shortly after settling in Denmark. He had arrived from Jordan, where he had a small tailor shop. He still had relatives in Amman whom he visited in the summer of 2001, he also intended to deliver some things to a person there of interest to the Jordanian security service. According to Alyousif, he struck a deal with the Jordanian security service which he did not honour and so he could not return. In court he explained that if he was to be expelled to Jordan he would be convicted for giving money to a dangerous man. After his prison term he would further be expelled to his native Syria where he would again be arrested for his membership of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Alyousif was a very devout Muslim and went to the mosque in Aarhus for Friday prayers, since the closest one in Randers was frequented by Turks and Bosnians and he did not appreciate their religious interpretations. According to a number of witnesses called to testify, Alyousif had become increasingly radical. His views on Islam had hardened considerably and he expressed solidarity with Osama bin Laden and the Chechen rebels. Alyousif was known and feared among other Arabs in the community. From the police investigation it appears that Alyousif became highly radicalised in the six months leading up to the murder. The change was visible in his appearance, behaviour, daily routines and most importantly in his worldview.

According to rumours in the immigrant community, al-Hamdani was responsible for the death of four people, yet this remains unknown. A witness called in the trial explained that al-Hamdani had problems with a Jihadi group in Iraq, but could not provide any details. Another witness had been told by al Hamdani that the people threatening him were located in the Iraqi part of Kurdistan and that they were members of Ansar al Islam.

The motive of the killing was perhaps explained by Alyousif himself before his arrest. He actually went to al Hamdani's funeral, where he remarked to the astonishment of the other mourners that al Hamdani shouldn't denigrate Islam.⁵⁹ Alyousif was sentenced to 12 years and to be deported after serving his term.⁶⁰ A mental evaluation was carried out that concluded that he was not insane, but emotionally disturbed. The report stated that he was immature and had difficulties in relating to other people's emotions. Furthermore, he reacted impulsively and aggressively when stressed. Alyousif's defensiveness regarding his religion was expressed literally by al-Hamdani's grave, *I told you that you mustn't provoke Islam – this is your destiny.*⁶¹ Apparently unshaken in his belief, Alyousif shouted out *Allahu Akbar* three times when the judge read out the verdict.⁶²

The case of Alyousif appears to be the act of a disturbed individual acting impulsively, which might very well have been the case. However, it is interesting to note that the police would later link Alyousif to Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane and Algerian Islamists residing in Denmark; they all seemed to move in the same circles.⁶³ Entry into and acceptance by these circles is described below in what is probably the best-documented case. While it can be argued that Alyousif might be inappropriately categorized as a Jihadist, his worldview and violent response when challenged provide a glimpse of an otherwise closed network.

ALGERIA TO GUANTANAMO

A single case needs a little more attention than the others, not because of the vast amount of publicity it has received in Denmark, but because there is a clearly identifiable link between previous forms of Jihad and the current rise of a global dimension of Jihad. From the 1980s and into the 1990s, the majority of Jihadists maintained a national focus in the sense that their particular origin influenced their choice of Jihad. While there were plenty of conflicts that the aspiring Jihadist could affiliate himself with, the prevalent pattern dictated that Algerians identified with Algerian movements such as the GIA or GSPC. Much the same can be said for the Egyptians, Palestinians or Saudis. The gradual shift from the local to the global occurred over the 1990s and is significant in the sense that individual Jihadists chose to affiliate themselves with a conflict which cannot be described as theirs; they had no personal stake in any of those

conflicts. The previous limited crossover between movements accelerated, and proved to be fertile for the growth of Al Qaeda.

The person described in the following example personifies the change in focus from the local to the global; the implications of this change will be discussed later on. Two journalists from the Danish daily *Politikken* interviewed Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane in April 2004 over the course of a week after his release from Guantanamo. The interviews resulted in an autobiography and this rare firsthand account has provided much of the following information.

Abderrahmane was born on 5 August 1973 in Roskilde, Denmark to an Algerian father and a Danish mother, and though his father was Muslim religion played a very small role in his childhood and upbringing. Abderrahmane considered his background to be quite like that of other Danish children. When he was seven, the family moved to a small farm outside Randers, in Jutland. Only a year later they decided to relocate to Algeria, a country that Abderrahmane had only visited once when he was two years old. His father wanted the children to have some relationship to his country of origin, but they did not plan to stay in Algeria for good. When the family arrived in Algiers in 1981 none of the children spoke any Arabic. Abderrahmane's grandmother became his introduction and guide into Islam and the importance of her role increased after his mother left for Denmark after less than a year.

Abderrahmane experienced how the Algerian youth became more religiously oriented during the 1980s. Colonialism was best forgotten, and socialism had turned out to be a disappointment. During these times of uncertainty he continued in high school, and at 15 joined his fiends in the riots throwing stones at the police. When the FIS became a reality, Abderrahmane was an ardent supporter. Later on, when the GIA emerged, he perceived the group much like the Danish resistance movement during the Second World War. He looked for a group to join but it never amounted to anything. In his own words, he had lost faith in a dictatorship like the Algerian one, and decided to leave for Denmark, which was possible because of his dual citizenship. In April 1993 he flew to Copenhagen, but had forgotten his Danish. After moving in with his mother again, he started a language course and settled down. A year later he moved into his own small apartment in Randers to continue his education which he never completed in Algeria. Through new friends he became interested in techno music. He joined his friends in partying, but continued to follow an Islamic lifestyle. He still prayed five times a day and never touched alcohol.

After completing his courses successfully he applied for a two-year university entrance course in Aarhus. He graduated in 1997 with average grades and wanted to go on to study mathematics at

the university. A career as a high school teacher seemed probable at the time, but nothing had been decided at that stage. His interest in music continued unabated, and along with some friends he arranged a number of parties in Aarhus and was known as DJ Hollie. Abderrahmane seriously considered making a career in music, preferably as a producer and concert organiser. He had enrolled at the university in Aarhus but dropped out in 1998, his interest in music having surpassed his interest in mathematics.

The turning point came in October 1999 in front of the TV. The indiscriminate bombings of Grozny shocked him into action. He had been touched before by the images of the Serbian offensive in Kosovo and had actually considered joining the UCK, but hadn't followed up on his plans. According to Abderrahmane, he began to ask himself some very fundamental questions.

“Who are we? Are we just someone that anyone can kill? First Bosnia and Kosovo, and now this. I told myself, enough is enough”.⁶⁴

Abderrahmane's plan was to ask some older Muslims for advice on how to get to Chechnya. He started to look for an Arab mosque.

“It is only Arabs who have that kind of contacts. So it couldn't be the Turkish mosque in the centre of the city. The Turks would never know anything about this”.

He looked around and found the mosque on Grimhøjvej in a suburb of Aarhus. His mosque attendance there began in early 2000, but the Imams told him they did not have these kinds of contact. He fell into conversation with a man at the mosque and talked about his desire to go to Chechnya. “Come to the mosque more often”, was the advice given to him. His interest in music declined and finally disappeared, and he gradually withdrew from his previous circle of friends. Through an internet café in the centre of Aarhus he checked out a Jihadi webpage; the link had been on the message board of the mosque. At the mosque he met several political refugees from Algeria and they inspired him to study the GSPC. He liked the idea of a strict interpretation of Islam, like that which guided the GSPC.

In the summer of 2000 Abderrahmane travelled to Algeria for the first time in seven years. In his possession was an envelope with money to be delivered to a member of FIS. Before his departure from Denmark a name had been given to him. The handover took place at a café on Place de Martyr in Algiers. Abderrahmane wanted to join the GSPC, but no one he knew could help in making contact. Going into the mountains alone without a proper introduction would be too dangerous. Somewhat disappointed he again turned his attention to Chechnya and informed

his father about his intentions. He was not too pleased but let the matter go. Afterwards he returned to Aarhus.

Back in Aarhus, in February 2001 he was approached by officials from the security service who asked him about his associates and his relationship to the GSPC. This came as a surprise to Abderrahmane, but instead of being deterred he decided to maintain a lower profile. The same month, he went on his third and last trip to Algeria as a courier. He stopped in London on the way and had time to visit the mosque in Finsbury Park. The day he visited, it was not Abu Hamza, but a Bangladeshi Imam who led the prayer. He was fully aware of the reputation of the Finsbury park mosque, and considered asking someone for assistance in joining the Jihad. But it was difficult without a proper introduction.

He continued his trip to Algeria and was arrested by the security services shortly after and taken to the army barracks in the Ben Aknoun neighbourhood. The Algerian security service was convinced that Abderrahmane was connected to the GSPC. He denied this and was subsequently subjected to water torture. Released after two days detention, he abandoned his plan of returning to Denmark; now he knew that both the Danish and the Algerian security services were interested in his activities. Abderrahmane decided on London. In London he lived with a friend in Fulham and deliberately avoided Finsbury Park because of its intense surveillance. Some of his friends knew of his interest in fighting, but he still needed the contact. Eventually his name was mentioned to one of the Jihadi groups, which, unknown to Abderrahmane, proceeded with a background check. He was given the address of a London mosque where he would meet his contact. The conversation lasted 15 minutes, where he was informed that the road to Chechnya went through Afghanistan and the training camps. Somewhat surprised, he nevertheless accepted this as a necessity. A few days later he met the same unidentified man who told him to go to Tehran, then from there eastwards to Mashhad and further on by taxi to Ttayyabad on the Afghan border. Once across the border he only had to ask for the nearest Taliban office. All the Taliban needed to know was that Abderrahmane had to speak to someone known as "the Algerian", who was the one in charge of the training camp.

Iran was a disappointment, it being a bit too un-Islamic for Abderrahmane. After a few frustrating attempts to cross the border, which Abderrahmane interpreted as God testing his will, he managed to cross at Zabol. The Taliban at the border were most helpful, and sent him onwards to Kabul to meet the Algerian. After a few days at a guesthouse for foreign Mujahedin in Kabul, in the company of young men from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen and Syria, the Algerian showed up on his own. He welcomed Abderrahmane, but informed him that there was a problem. All the training courses had already begun and new ones would start in about a

month. The Algerian suggested that he spend his time on religious studies in a madrasa in Jalalabad until the training began. The purpose of the training was to prepare for the frontline in Chechnya. He continued his studies in Jalalabad up until 11 September 2001, when they all heard the news and everyone turned quiet. He called his family on 13 September 2001 and told them not to worry. He placed the call from abroad and stated that it was best if they didn't know where he was.⁶⁵

In Abderrahmane's own version of the events that followed, the Algerian told the religious students that there would definitely be fighting, but it was up to each of them if they wanted to join. Abderrahmane rationalised that this situation would turn into Afghan infighting and decided to flee to Pakistan with a number of other students. A long and arduous journey followed that took the group through the Tora Bora mountains and into Pakistan. The journey lasted almost a month, and once they reached safety in Pakistan, they were disarmed and imprisoned in Kohat. After ten days of detention under medieval conditions, Abderrahmane was handed over to the Americans.

Assigned prisoner number 293 he was flown to Kandahar, which served as a temporary detention center for illegal combatants. The stay at Kandahar lasted a month, and he was flown to Cuba on 8 February 2002. Interned at Camp X-ray, his new identity number was DK/00323. His time at Guantanamo resembles the stories told by other released prisoners and he was eventually released on 24 February 2004.

This sequencing of events reflects the narrative offered by Abderrahmane himself; however, a few issues remain uncertain. The security service suspected that Abderrahmane was in London on 11 September 2001, basing its scepticism on phone intercepts. Moreover, the preferred route to Afghanistan before 11 September was through Pakistan and not Iran.⁶⁶

It was reported in early 2002 that Abderrahmane was closely affiliated with the Hizb ut-Tahrir in Copenhagen.⁶⁷ This has never been proved, however, and it seems that his preferred circle of associates was located in Aarhus. Athmane Mehiri and Abderrahmane knew each other quite well and it was Mehiri who gave Abderrahmane money on several occasions to deliver to a certain Ahmed on his trips to Algeria in 2000 and 2001.⁶⁸ Mehiri was sentenced for his role in the armed robbery in July 2001, and the money was intended for an Algerian terrorist group.⁶⁹

ISOLATED INCIDENTS

It is important to achieve a proper understanding of the complexity of the Jihadi puzzle. Specifically, it is imperative to avoid fitting a piece of the puzzle into the wrong place. The members of the aforementioned Egyptian network had, to some degree at least, shared a number of characteristics and were linked in many ways. However, a few incidents have been impossible to place within the framework of a specific group or network. They should be presented separately in order to underline the diffuse nature of Jihad in Europe.

Mohammed Abdel Wahhab Abdel Aziz was granted asylum in Denmark in 1992 and was quite possibly the most notorious of the Danish Jihadists until his death in Russia in 2002. He lived in Brønshøj, a suburb of Copenhagen with his wife and two children and received social welfare benefits. Those who met him in the mosque in Copenhagen knew Aziz as a quiet and introverted man.⁷⁰ Born on 7 September 1959 in Mosul, Iraq, (though some claim he was of Palestinian origin),⁷¹ he later moved to Baghdad where he became very religious. His religious position made him an enemy of the ruling Ba'ath party and he fled Iraq around 1983. He ended up in Saudi Arabia via Jordan and settled in Medina, where he studied Islamic jurisprudence at the university. Later on he moved to Germany, and sometime in the late 1980s he travelled to the Afghan border area in Pakistan allegedly to assist Afghan refugee children. A relative has later claimed that Aziz knew Abdullah Azzam, and that he personally fought the Soviet troops in Northern Afghanistan.⁷² When the war ended he left for Jordan and further travels with his new wife. Eventually he wound up in Denmark, claiming to have been persecuted and imprisoned in Iraq for three years.

From 1996 to 1998 he was on numerous trips abroad, primarily to Muslim countries, and this in spite of having a very modest income. Among his destinations were Turkey, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, Georgia, Pakistan, Sweden and Romania. Baku was visited on several occasions in 1997 and 1998, at the time a hub for Islamists in general and Al Qaeda in particular. The purpose of Aziz's extensive travelling has never been revealed and he never offered any explanation himself.

Aziz eventually left for Chechnya in 1998 through the well-established Turkey-Georgia-Chechnya route. He was apprehended on 16 March 2000 by Russian forces in possession of a Kalashnikov and two grenades. According to the Russian prosecutor, Aziz was a deviant who received young girls, including minors, as gifts from fellow Chechen rebels. The girls were kept as sex-slaves, raped and beaten. He was convicted to 12 years imprisonment for kidnapping, rape of minors, violent assault and illegal possession of firearms. The sentence was relatively lenient, at least from

a Russian perspective, as Aziz could have received the maximum sentence of 46 years. Only because he had underage children in Denmark was the sentence moderate.⁷³

Aziz's diary

A copy of Aziz's diary was obtained for this study but cannot be described here in detail; there is sufficient material for a separate publication. Aziz was a meticulous note keeper and given the nature of some of the entries it must be assumed that the diary was never intended for anyone but himself. There are endless notes on transportation details, a driver to be paid, construction materials to be bought and continuous problems with an old car that constantly needed attention.

A translation of the diary would exceed 40 pages, so it is not possible to convey all the entries in this study. Instead, a number of themes have been identified which are useful for a portrait of Aziz's role in his Chechen environment. The same individual who was described as quiet, polite and religiously inspired by people in Denmark who had met him comes across as absolutely uninhibited in his views on the proper conduct of Jihad. It is clear that Aziz enjoyed considerable respect among the Chechen rebels due to his religious education and knowledge of the Sharia. On numerous occasions Aziz was asked to produce a fatwa on matters related directly to the conduct of the insurgency.

The status of women

A young woman named Aisha appears to have been Aziz's housekeeper in Chechnya; however, on 23 April he explicitly states that he slept with Aisha at Yasser's house. That a marriage was not intended becomes clear from an entry from the following day when Yasser and someone called Hamza venture out to inspect a girl for Aziz to marry. Aziz's peculiar views on the role and status of women become quite apparent between 4 and 5 May. He explicitly refers to Aisha as his slave and sends her to clean Hamza's house. That his use of "slave" is to be taken in the most literal sense is evidenced by a visit from a certain Gharib, who ask for a fatwa, a legal ruling, on the taking of slaves for intended resale in the Gulf States. Aziz was able to provide a video cassette with a fatwa on the issue, legitimizing the slave trade. The following day Aziz asked Khaled whether or not Aisha should be released from captivity. Either way, it didn't matter to Khaled. However, five days later Aziz received a visit from two apparently senior figures of the Chechen rebels who wanted clarification on the slave-taking issue. Aziz then refers to a false fatwa concerning the taking of Muslim Chechen women, and his answer apparently satisfied the two Chechens. Aisha would eventually be set free and allowed to return to her family in early June.

On 7 June Abu Mujahid dropped by and asked for a fatwa on the killing of Russian women in Grozny. This license to kill was granted by Aziz on the spot. His views on the status of women can best be described as simplistic in the extreme. On 20 July Aziz was summoned to act as the judge in a local trial concerning an attempted rape of a Chechen girl. After making his enquiries and listening to the victim and the rapist, the offender was sentenced to death by decapitation, the verdict appears to be Aziz's.

Hostage taking

Aziz had no problems with the issue of hostage taking; indeed, he appeared to have played a prominent role in this business. His diary is remarkably frank in this particular regard, perhaps because it was also to serve him as a memory aide. The entries related to hostage taking and the treatment of prisoners clearly cast Aziz in a central role as the one to consult when in need of advice.

The first entry is dated 19 May 1999 and states that Aziz handed over \$200 to an unknown group of kidnappers. The same kidnappers returned to Aziz a week later to give him an operational update. This information prompted Aziz to consult an individual called Arabi and Aziz's central concern appears to have been the financing of the operation. Aziz suggested a loan from Arabi to the order of \$5000, and as security he offered his own car. The money was needed for a safe house for a hostage.

An intriguing entry dated 4 June details a meeting with the judge Abu Seddiq and a certain Adlan. The topic was a fatwa concerning the killing of four Russian engineers who had been kidnapped earlier. It is not clear from Aziz's notes if he was expected to deliver the fatwa or if the meeting concerned a more theoretical discussion about an already accomplished deed. Continuously busy, Aziz was approached again on 6 June by an Emir called Umar. Umar needed a legal opinion on the kidnapping of an infidel. Apparently Aziz was unable to deliver a clear verdict just then, but promised to consult the literature. If Aziz could find justification in the scriptures he promised to deliver a fatwa on the matter. Umar was back on 13 June and this time he needed an opinion on the permissibility of taking a prisoner of war and handing him over to Radwan the latter now being identified as one of the kidnappers. Aziz answered that this could not be done because the prisoner was somebody else's property.

13 June was unusually busy. Abd al-Rahman Sayf al-Umma came to see Aziz for advice on his marital problems. Aziz duly advised him and suggested to al-Umma that he should support the Jihad outside Chechnya by kidnapping Jews and Christians. On 11 July a certain Mansour

returned from an unknown but apparently dangerous mission. Aziz was relieved to see him again and was updated on the latest developments concerning a hostage taking. After discussing the current situation they both agreed to amputate an unspecified part of the hostage if the other side tried any tricks or stalling negotiations.

Advisory services

It was in the field of advisory services that Aziz truly excelled. The diary is a curious mix of endless concern for the reconstruction of his house: poor plumbing, new floor tiles and the purchase of a refrigerator kept him busy. However, never too busy to attend almost daily meetings or host visitors who needed advice on the operational side of the Jihad in Chechnya. Aziz comes across as someone clearly in his element who was settling down, in a literal sense, in his capacity as advisor and mediator. His circle of fellow Jihadists shows that he was personally involved in high-level decision making on the future of the Jihad. Whatever the true extent of his previous involvement in the Jihad, he was clearly a much respected figure in Chechnya.

Shortly after settling in a war zone he participated in meetings in the Chechen Shura Council, the Sharia court in Urus Martan and various military committees. His immediate concern upon arrival, it seems, was the dissemination of Islamist ideas. Aziz specifically called for a program for Da'wa within Chechnya.

The senior rebel leaders, Khattab and Shamil Basayev, were personal acquaintances of Aziz. Both individual Jihadists can be credited with virtually running the rebel side of the two Chechen wars. Khattab joined the fight in Afghanistan as a teenager in 1987 and was wed to the Jihad until his death in 2002. Due to his experience from Afghanistan and Tajikistan he was able to establish himself as a Mujahedin commander in Chechnya. Khattab's outfit, though never larger than a few hundred fighters, attracted a high proportion of dedicated Wahabis from the Middle East and his native Saudi Arabia. The results of Khattab's exploits on the frontlines may have been overblown by various observers of the conflict, but he should be credited with introducing the austere form of Islam, represented by Wahabism, into Chechnya. Shamil Basayev can probably best be described as an independent Chechen warlord responsible for a significant part of the insurgency against Russian forces. Until his death in July 2006 he had achieved international status in the world of Jihad because of his uncompromising attitude and reckless style of fighting Russia. Basayev can be personally credited with masterminding or personally participating in the siege at Budyonnovsk in 1995, the invasion of Dagestan in 1999, the siege at a theatre in Moscow in 2002 and the school siege in Beslan in 2004, to mention a few but well-known cases.

The first recorded meeting with them took place on 15 March, and many more were to follow. It would seem that Aziz and Basayev enjoyed an uneasy relationship, Basayev apparently being the senior and feared figure. They were nevertheless to meet on several occasions, and this is perhaps the best testimony to the importance of Aziz's services. On a later occasion, 28 April, Basayev came to see Aziz in Urus Martan. Basayev needed advice on the permissibility of taking weapons from an officer in the Chechen security service and handing them over to the rebels where they would be put to good use. Apparently, Basayev needed to reinforce his artillery, specifically mortars and rocket launchers. Aziz did not write down his reply, but it seemed very inadvisable to turn down Basayev.

A strategic meeting between Khattab and Aziz took place late at night on 15 April. On the agenda were Mashkadov's problems with Basayev and the power structure of the Shura Council. Khattab returned a month later to ask for Aziz's help in sorting out a problem with the brothers, meaning fellow Jihadists, in his camp. Somebody had apparently not honoured an agreement and the episode caused some friction within Khattab's camp which he was unable to sort out on his own.

Abu Mujahed, an ever popular name in Jihadi circles, visited Aziz on 7 June to ask for a legal ruling on the kidnapping of a Russian reporter. Aziz's answer was not written down, but was more than likely positive since Abu Mujahed also returned from the meeting with Aziz's blessing to kill Russian women in Grozny.

Three days later, a group of five senior Chechen rebels wanted to know what the Sharia had to say about detonating a car bomb in a residential area. Aziz had a remarkably clear and specific answer to this unusual question stating that "what must be done, must be done." Assassinating the occupants of the car was not a problem, however, it would be preferable if the operation could be executed in a way which would not endanger innocent Muslims.

Very little information has surfaced about Aziz's activities in Denmark between 1992 and 1998. He was apparently very well connected before entering the country and may not have seen any use in acquiring a local following as his primary interests were clearly located abroad. It has been suggested that Abderrahmane knew Aziz, and also that Aziz was a frequent visitor to Abu Laban's mosque in Copenhagen. Even if these relationships were to be confirmed it would seem that Aziz preferred his own company.

In spite of the information available on Aziz for this study, his Chechen diary in particular, he is still an enigma. Although he was clearly an experienced Jihadist with extensive international

connections there are more questions than answers as to his motivations and specific activities. The “knowns” about Aziz have been described above, but perhaps equally interesting are the remaining “unknowns”. The information reveals an extraordinarily busy individual with extensive contacts. Based on known travel patterns and important localities of the international Jihad, it seems fair to assume that Aziz was a significant player on the international Jihadi scene during the mid- to late 1990s. No other known Danish Jihadist displayed such a level of international activity during this period; Aziz’s example simply deviates from the pattern. Whereas other Jihadists travelled abroad, as minor operatives linked to a specific cause, Aziz followed the Al Qaeda trail at the time. This does not necessarily imply that Aziz was part of Al Qaeda, only that his behaviour followed a different pattern from that of other Danish Jihadists.

Hezbollah and the Ittihad al-Islami

Ayad Achouah travelled to Lebanon in July 2004 for a three-week stay, with the intent to visit his brother who lived in a refugee camp south of Beirut. Upon meeting his brother, Achouah was informed that Hezbollah was interested in a meeting. He went to a cafe in Beirut to meet with a Hezbollah representative who introduced himself as Abu Ahmed. The recruiter asked Achouah to assist Hezbollah by visiting Israel. The mission was to photograph military installations and to recruit militants on behalf of Hezbollah among Israeli Palestinians. Achouah did not commit himself immediately and returned to Denmark. Shortly afterwards his brother called him and asked for Achouah’s consent and he accepted the proposal.

A certain Rasan, who claimed to be Abu Ahmed's brother, visited Achouah personally in Denmark and handed him \$2000 to cover his expenses. Travelling with a new passport, as instructed, Achouah took Turkish Airlines to Israel on 29 December 2004. During his stay in Israel Achouah stayed at his uncle’s house in the village of Tal-Shikha. On 6 January 2005 Achouah boarded a train for Tel Aviv. During the trip he was constantly videotaping the scenery, which aroused suspicion and he was reported to the police on arrival in Tel Aviv and arrested.

According to the verdict, Achouah had conspired against the security of the state. Since the actual assignment was the first contact between the accused and Hezbollah, he was given a light sentence because he admitted and regretted his actions. It appeared clear from the proceedings that Achouah did not subscribe to Hezbollah’s ideology, and he had accepted the mission hesitantly.⁷⁴ Achouah was released from prison in October 2006 and subsequently returned to Denmark.

A Somali resident was under investigation by the Danish security service in 2005. He had been on a trip to Somalia in early 2003 with the purpose of receiving training in explosives. The acquired expertise would then be taught to Islamists in Denmark. The suspect was alleged to have had a close affiliation with the Somali terrorist group Ittihad al-Islami. He was also involved in procuring passports for other Islamists connected to both Ittihad al-Islami and Al Qaeda.⁷⁵

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Perhaps the earliest connection between Denmark and Jihadi activities in Iraq was not linked to armed actions at all, but to the provisions of forged documents. Subsequent investigations, primarily by the German Bundes Kriminal Amt (BKA), revealed an extensive and efficient al-Tawhid network already in place in Europe, a network which had materialised after 11 September. A passport factory was discovered in Hørsholm, organised by a 45-year-old Lebanese former artillery officer in the PLO known as Abu Khaled. Among the materials discovered was computer software used in the forging process, insignas and stamps. According to the prosecutor, the Lebanese man had manufactured at least 40 passports,⁷⁶ though it was suspected that the real number ran into the hundreds.

It would seem that the quality of the passports was renowned throughout Europe, and had attracted the attention of a Tawhid cell in Germany. Real passports, primarily stolen Danish ones, were altered by means of advanced software, and new pages and photos were added. The forged pages were then professionally laminated into the passport.⁷⁷ The cell which was uncovered in Germany was in possession of the forged passports from Hørsholm. The accused forger apparently did not have any terrorist ties. The passports were one of a wide range of business interests: human smuggling, drugs trafficking and the forging of multiple-ride bus passes.

This Tawhid cell was quite busy at the time. Besides planning attacks within Germany on Jewish or Israeli targets, its primary occupation was providing logistical support to fleeing Al-Qaeda members who needed to escape Afghanistan inconspicuously. The leader of the cell, Abu Ali, was experienced in getting people in and out of difficult places, and there have been indications that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi intended to relocate to an unknown destination in Europe. For this move Zarqawi needed new documents. The assignment was handed over to Abu Ali to make the necessary arrangements.⁷⁸ Abu Khaled allegedly received 600000 Danish kroner for supplying 30 forged Danish passports according to French investigator and author Jean Charles Brissrad.⁷⁹

The circumstances surrounding the first Danish Jihadist casualty of the war in Iraq are still not entirely clear. Two versions of this episode exist and both perspectives will be presented. If nothing else, the contradictory stories serve to show the difficulties in sorting fact from fiction.

Thayir Naif Osman travelled from Denmark to Iraq to fight the U.S.-led coalition forces in 2003. According to relatives, Osman was killed in an air strike by an Apache helicopter gunship while travelling on the road to Baghdad. His remains were identified by his Danish documents retrieved by Red Cross workers by the site of a destroyed bus some 200 km inside Iraq. Osman's corpse was returned from Syria for burial in Lebanon. He was given a martyr's funeral in the Beirut suburb of Burj el-Baranej, with hundreds of mourners vowing to take his place as they fired Kalashnikovs into the air.

The 29-year-old Palestinian left behind his wife and their 3-year-old son, Fadi. According to Osman's brother, Nidal Shihadi, the young couple had experienced difficulties in their marriage. Nidal expressed surprise that Osman would volunteer for Jihad, no one in the family having any idea that he intended to fight. In Denmark, Osman had been known as a non-practicing Muslim who loved to party, and he had lived most of his life in Denmark. He had arrived with his family in 1987, and they were granted asylum on humanitarian grounds.⁸⁰

The second version states that Osman never actually made it inside Iraq, nor did he intend to. According to this version he died of a drug overdose at his hotel room in Damascus two days after his arrival.⁸¹ People who knew Osman from his time in Denmark have insisted that he had a serious drug problem and an unhappy life. They could understand that he went to the Middle East to die one way or the other. Moreover, ostensibly dying as a martyr in combat looked infinitely better than a drug-induced suicide.

On a few occasions Iraqi officials have mentioned the capture of Danish Jihadists in Iraq, often adding to the confusion more than informing the public. For example, on 10 October 2005 the Iraqi foreign minister was quoted as saying that a man with a Danish passport was among the foreign fighters detained by Coalition Forces. Danish authorities were somewhat perplexed since they had not been informed of this incident. After some confusion the Danish embassy in Baghdad was happy to report that the story originated in a misinterpretation by journalists interviewing the foreign minister.⁸² The uncertainty as to the real number of Danish Jihadists in Iraq cannot be clarified definitively in this context and further confusing cases are listed in the section on rumours.

So far the only confirmed Danish Jihadist casualty of the war in Iraq was Mustafa Darwich Ramadan, known in Jihadi circles as Abu Mohammed al-Lubnani. According to the usually well-informed daily *Al-Hayat*, Ramadan was a former Lebanese military officer an ethnic Kurd from Beirut with a personal history of alcohol abuse and unruliness. He married a woman from the conservative Sunni part of Mejdal Anjar in the north of Lebanon in the late 1980s and from here the family left for Denmark.⁸³

Ramadan was involved in a robbery of an armoured car in Copenhagen on 4 April 1997 along with three other accomplices. Three armed men held up the bank employees while the fourth was waiting in the getaway car. The robbers got away with two million Danish kroner but their luck ran out when a witness took down the license plate number. The Volvo was registered to Ramadan and he was arrested the following day. When the police entered the apartment they found plane tickets for Amman for departure the following day and more than half a million Danish kroner sewn into the children's clothes. An additional 350000 kroner was discovered at the residence of Ramadan's brother, but the rest of the money was never recovered. The police suspected that the money was destined for an undisclosed Islamist group in Lebanon, but this has never been proven. Ramadan was known to the authorities and had been under surveillance suspected of illegal activities on behalf of an Islamist organization. In November 1997 Ramadan was sentenced to 3½ years in prison, his wife and brother to 10 months for their role. As the judge read out the verdict, Ramadan became furious and had to be restrained. The remaining three robbers were not caught.

Within a month after Ramadan's release in 2001 he assaulted the employees at a small shop that handled international money transfers with a pepper spray. He got away with 100000 kroners and fled to either Jordan or Lebanon, presumably aided by his contacts across Europe which he had developed during his stay in Denmark.⁸⁴ Shadi Abdallah, a Tawhid operative, returned to Germany in August 2001 on behalf of Zarqawi. He was arrested and began to cooperate with the German authorities, identifying a number of Tawhid cell leaders in Germany, Britain, the Czech Republic and in Denmark. Whether or not Ramadan was identical to the identified cell leader of al-Tawhid in Denmark remains unknown.⁸⁵

Ramadan returned to Lebanon sometime in 2002 as a dedicated Salafi and spoke in favour of the Jihad. In Mejdal Anjar he managed to recruit a few fighters and together they set off for Iraq via Syria. In the small group was his 16-year-old son, Muhammed.⁸⁶ In Iraq, Ramadan apparently reached a prominent position rather quickly, ostensibly operating as the one of Zarqawi's chief aides, presumably as the coordinator of the Baghdad cell comprised of about 40 Mujahedin. According to intelligence reports, Ramadan was first identified in 2003 in Iraq when he started to

work with Zarqawi's al-Tawhid network. Ramadan was known as the military emir, a title signifying his status.⁸⁷ The exact nature of his activities remains unknown, but it appears likely that he was killed in the heavy fighting around Falluja. His son Muhammed died shortly before he did. Muhammed had been brought to Iraq for the sole purpose of waging Jihad.⁸⁸

On 15 February 2005, on the al-Ma'sada website forum, the participant identifying himself as al-Utaybi1 listed the members of al-Zarqawi's group who had been killed recently. In a few instances a short commentary accompanied the name of the deceased Jihadist. Ramadan, listed as Abu Muhammad al-Lubnani, was referred to as the most senior emir who joined the group a few months after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. The posting confirmed that Ramadan and his sons were both killed in battle.⁸⁹

Mustapha Darwich Ramadan's wife was not able to provide any further information on the fate of her husband. They had been married for 14 years and had four children; moreover, she was pregnant when he left her for good. When asked by a journalist, she denied ever having heard the name Ansar al Islam before. She did not consider Ramadan her husband anymore, whatever his fate, because he had left her without any notice.⁹⁰

Wild speculation has connected Ramadan to the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, allegedly operating on behalf of Al Qaeda. However, no evidence has been presented to support this theory. While the end of Mustafa Darwich Ramadan is known in detail, his beginnings are not. His earliest known involvement in Jihadi activities can be dated back to 1997; however, it must be assumed that he was active prior to going operational.

NON-ALIGNED JIHADISTS

Unlike the previously mentioned Jihadists the following group of individuals is noticeably different in the sense that they did not have specific and identifiable ties to any known terrorist or Jihadi group. The current term in use to describe this fairly recent phenomenon is non-aligned Jihadists, and it appears to be remarkably fitting in this context. This term came into existence after 11 September 2001 when a few individual Jihadists appeared with no discernable links to any of the known Jihadi groups. Judging by the information available, it seems that this group was not ordered to carry out an operation by anyone and their links to established Jihadists can only be described as tenuous at best. In spite of their lack of experience, technical proficiency and connections, their amateurishness was substituted by perseverance. The available documentation suggests that they had progressed quite far in their planning. The lack of an experienced Jihadi

network to draw on does not mean they acted in isolation; quite the reverse. There are links between Denmark, Bosnia, Sweden and the UK that signal an increased militant activism across a European Jihadi map devoid of borders. The appeal of Jihadi ideology, whatever the form and message, has become truly transnational and attracts a different audience than that of the 1990s.

Glostrup case

At the time of writing several cases are still pending trial in the Danish judicial system. This situation considerably reduces the factual information available; however, it is possible to establish a rudimentary picture of the working of a suspected non-aligned Jihadi network. The primary persons of interest are Abdulkadir Cesur, a Danish resident and Turkish national, and Mirsad Bektasevic, a Swedish national of Bosnian origin, also known as Maximus. Cesur was born in November 1985 in Frederiksberg, Denmark. Before his arrest he was living in Hvidovre, a suburb of Copenhagen. The Bosnian indictment described him as a labourer, single and unemployed.⁹¹

Bektasevic left Gothenburg, Sweden for Bosnia on 27 September 2005, and Cesur left from Copenhagen a few weeks later on the 14 October. According to the Bosnian indictment, the purpose of the journey was to conduct a terrorist attack in Bosnia or another European country at an undisclosed target. Also according to the indictment there must have been previous contact with persons in Sarajevo and the suspects prior to their arrival. About six weeks before their arrival Bajro Ikanovic knew that “two brothers” were coming soon.⁹² The attack was intended to force a withdrawal of European forces in Iraq or Afghanistan. In Sarajevo, they contacted a number of Bosnians to procure explosives, which they did. Bektasevic and Cesur then proceeded to mould and place the explosives into a homemade suicide belt. This was done at their apartment on Poligonska Street in Sarajevo's Butmir district. During their stay in Sarajevo a number of phone calls were made between individuals in Denmark and Bektasevic and they indicated the extent of the coordination. An intercepted conversation from 7 October 2005 between Bektasevic and an unnamed individual in Denmark revealed the following statement:

“I have spoken with Turkey and he will come here if God wills... We need money, because if we acquire the things and arrive, then we will, if God wills it, have our money back... Try to see if we can have more money, because I have, dear brother, praise to God, found some really good things, you know.”⁹³

At 15:55 on 19 October 2005 members of the counterterrorism unit of the Sarajevo police had rung the bell at the ground floor apartment on Poligonska Street and Bektasevic answered the

door. When the police officers identified themselves and showed Bektasevic their search warrant, he tried to block the door and to push an officer out against the staircase, while saying, "How dare you search my home, you scum". Bektasevic was unable to expel the officers and was eventually overpowered as the police forced their way into the apartment. Cesur had remained quiet in another room and was soon discovered by the Bosnian police officers. He was sitting on the sofa with his left hand under his jacket hidden from view. An officer removed his jacket and discovered that the suspect was holding a loaded automatic pistol fitted with a silencer, and that his finger was on the trigger. Cesur was overpowered and relieved of his firearm.⁹⁴

Searches at the apartment revealed a number of unusual items among them: 19,842 kilos of explosives, detonators, a silenced 7.65mm Browning automatic pistol, a timer, communications equipment and a Sony videotape.⁹⁵ On the videotape the following statement was pronounced:

"Allah is the greatest. Our brothers are preparing themselves for an attack. They are showing us the things they will use in the attack. Our brothers are ready to attack, and if Allah wills, they will strike the infidels who are killing our brothers, the Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya and in other countries. This weapon will be used against Europe, against those whose forces are in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our two brothers have dedicated their lives to please Allah, to help their brothers and sisters. They are Muslim. Their time will come. They are ready to strike, so don't believe we have forgotten you. We are here, and we are planning and we are ready. This message is for you."⁹⁶

Police officials have connected Bektasevic with a website advocating support for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian who headed al Qaeda in Iraq until his death in 2006. Bektasevic operated under the code name Maximus and kept in touch with a group of at least three men in Britain arrested in October 2005, one of whom was Younis Tsouli.⁹⁷ This particular case represents a textbook example of how virtual networks emerge, communicate and become operational in Europe. British security officials have established a link between Bektasevic and Younis Tsouli, who communicated through hotmail accounts and mobile phones. It is not known if the two ever actually met or if their relationship was of a virtual nature. Until his arrest Tsouli was a legend in the world of online Jihad with a direct link to the terrorists groups operating in Iraq. Known under the name irhabi007, meaning terrorist 007, Tsouli not only distributed vast amounts of Jihadi propaganda, but apparently also served as relay between interested parties. He kept contact with terrorist suspects in Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Bosnia, the US, Iraq and presumably other locations as well.⁹⁸

- The arrests in Sarajevo sparked a wave of arrests in Denmark of persons linked to Cesur and Bektasevic. On 27 October 2005 Danish police arrested four young individuals aged 16, 17, 19 and 20 all of whom had been under surveillance for some time.⁹⁹ Because of the ongoing investigation the identities of the four cannot be revealed by court order. A few sketchy details are known about the background of the suspects, named in the following by a capital "S" and an identification number from one to four.
- S1: A 20-year-old man from Brøndby. Studying at the time of his arrest at the Technical School of Copenhagen where he specialised in industrial technology. A Bosnian by origin he came to Denmark in 1993 with his family. He had become increasingly radicalised to the concern of his family.
- S2: A 16-year-old minor, also from Brøndby. He had a Palestinian background and was raised in Denmark. Characterized as very intelligent and known as a good, but quiet student. Apparently the most active of the four, he was preparing to join up with Bektasevic in Sarajevo. However, when his father became aware of his plan he took his passport and forbade him to go anywhere. Cesur would become S2's replacement.
- S3: 19-year-old young man from Frederiksberg in central Copenhagen. He was studying at the time of arrest and worked at the telecompany TDC. Started to take an interest in Islam during his second year in high school. Reported to have visited Syria in 2005.
- S4: A 16-year-old minor from Nørrebro. Still at school and living with his parents at the time of arrest. Moroccan background, but grew up in Denmark

Two days later an additional two suspects were arrested, a man from Uganda and his girlfriend from Georgia. The couple, in their early 20s, had lived in an apartment owned by a sister of one of the previously arrested four youngsters. Both suspects had voluntarily approached the police, but were arrested due to the information disclosed at the interview. The couple would eventually be released without charges on 29th November. On 1 November a 7th suspect was arrested. This was a 22-year-old man connected to the persons already detained. He appears to have had a marginal role, if any at all, but was convicted for sending a death threat by mail to a political organisation. He voluntarily submitted himself to psychiatric treatment due to personal problems.

Over the summer of 2005 the four had all been in regular contact with Cesur and Bektasevic, but had attracted the interest of the security service as far back as 2004.¹⁰⁰ Three of the four suspects had participated in a study trip to London where they paid a visit to Omar Bakri. Bakri began his Islamist activities in Syria in 1982 as a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and via Saudi Arabia ended up in the UK in 1985. The founder of the radical Islamist movement al-Muhajiroun, Bakri's statements became more pronounced and increasingly radical after September 2001 when he praised Al Qaeda. The British government was concerned about Bakri's inflammatory

speeches and his uncompromising stance directed against the West, however, he disbanded al-Muhajiroun before it was banned. Its successor, sharing the same ideological foundation, is called al-Ghurabaa and is directed from Lebanon by Bakri who went into self-imposed exile in August 2005.

They all attended the same mosque at Nørrebro in Copenhagen. People at the mosque said they felt an immense hatred towards society, which according to the Imam, Abu Laban, had made them introverted. Also the al-Tawhid study circle, where Abu Ahmed spoke against democracy and integration, was frequented by the suspects. This message was accepted, but even Abu Ahmed was considered a moderate, because he was not doing what he was preaching.¹⁰¹

The four currently detained are awaiting trial which has been set for late 2006. While little information has been made available about the alleged terrorist activities, the prosecutor's office has stressed that the four young men had a very close relationship with one another.¹⁰² The lengthy investigation has been complicated by the volume of internet chat and emails where different names and call signs have been used. Searches at the residences of the four suspects disclosed 200000 Danish kroner in cash and a substantial collection of Islamist propaganda material.¹⁰³

The real significance of this group of suspected Jihadists is not their possible terrorist activities but their interest in the global Jihad. Whatever the outcome of the upcoming trial, it will be the actual radicalisation process of this group of young Danes that should stimulate further research. These circumstances will be examined more closely below in the section on radicalization and recruitment.

Vollsmose group

As the present study entered the final editing phase during early September 2006, and was almost ready for publication at the end of the month, it was overtaken by events on the ground. Yet another suspected Jihadi cell was discovered, this time in Vollsmose a suburb of Odense. A decision was made to postpone publication and to see what details would emerge from the latest case, knowing in advance that information would be sparse. Only a sketchy outline of the alleged cell and the suspects is available at the moment, but the inclusion of this case serve one purpose only, and that is to confirm the changes in relation to previous known patterns. The implications of this development will be discussed in a later section.

In the early hours of Monday 5 September 2006, Danish police raided several residences in the Vollsmose neighbourhood in Odense and nine suspects were arrested. A police spokesman commented that the decision to take action was made after a prolonged investigation and uncertainty about how advanced the plans of the suspects were. Later that day the Danish Minister of Justice, Lene Espersen, was able to clarify that the arrested were planning one or several terrorist attacks against undisclosed targets within Denmark.¹⁰⁴ The Minister further characterized the plot as “the most severe ever in Denmark”. According to the director of the security service the suspects had acquired materials for the construction of explosive devices in preparation of an act of terrorism.¹⁰⁵ Government and security officials were apparently quite concerned and made it clear in their comments that this incident was very serious.

After preliminary questioning two of the suspects were released in the afternoon on 5 September 2006. The remaining seven were detained accused of planning one or more bombings in Denmark or abroad. The presiding judge issued a court order specifying that the case would be closed to the public, including names of the individual suspect, which explains the lack of details of this particular case.

Their ages at the time of arrest were 18, 18, 21, 27, 32, 32 and 33 and six of them were Danish citizens.¹⁰⁶ A mixed lot indeed, the group was composed of a pair of Iraqi brothers; one Kurd, five Palestinians and a Danish convert to Islam. All were known as devout and peaceful Muslims who observed the five daily prayers.¹⁰⁷ Three or four of the suspects had been travelling together across Denmark to engage other young Muslims in debate about Islam. None of them had a criminal record.

Local residents who were familiar with the suspects were resigned to the fact that their neighbourhood would be stigmatized as a terrorist nest. One resident told reporters that the suspects were member of a Da’wa group which he knew as a large and peaceful movement engaging in active proselytizing. Another resident who knew all of the suspects personally offered his views on the incident in no uncertain terms. According to him,

“the ones arrested knew nothing about terrorism. The five youngsters aged 16-17 don’t know a shit, and the old ones aren’t capable of detonating a firecracker”.¹⁰⁸

It seems that the security service had a different take on the situation, which to some extent was confirmed by various effects discovered during searches. An undisclosed quantity of ammonium nitrate, metal splinters and a bottle containing TATP (triacetoneperoxide) explosives was discovered at various locations. Ammonium nitrate is the staple component of fertilizer bombs, a

device sometimes supplemented by metal pieces that will act as lethal shrapnel when detonation occurs. The metal splinters had been brought home by one of the suspects, in job training at a metal workshop. According to his father there was absolutely nothing unusual about the presence of the metal pieces, it was to be used for decorating flower pots apparently so as providing wonderful reflections when the sun shone upon them.¹⁰⁹ Concerning the TATP, the exact amount is unknown; however a small amount was sent to analysis where the substance was positively identified. The remainder was destroyed by EOD experts because of the extreme state of instability of the compound.¹¹⁰ Personal computers were also confiscated, but the contents of the hard drives remain unknown.

Little of significance can be added to the above mentioned case. Unsurprisingly, the Danish press had a field day and numerous assumptions, background information and plain speculation has been offered to the public. This material could not be verified independently and was not included in this study. When the Vollsmose case has been placed in this section on non-aligned Jihadists it is because the absence of any clear linkage between an identified Jihadi terrorist group. Further investigation may very well reveal links to Jihadists in Europe or abroad, but so far not even informed speculation has materialised. Whether or not the Vollsmose suspects received guidance, logistical support or direct orders from established Jihadists could be the most interesting aspect of this case.

From Copenhagen to Yemen

On 16 October 2006 the Yemeni authorities launched a counter terrorism operation against a specific Al Qaeda cell operating within Yemen.¹¹¹ All together, 12 suspected Jihadists were arrested of whom six were believed to have been part of a terrorist cell in Sa'na. The Sa'na cell was assigned a car bomb attack against the capital's international airport, according to the confession by one of the cell members, Ibrahim Abdullah al-Sinhi, also known as Abu Dujana al-Misiki.¹¹²

The exact details of those arrested are slightly confusing or contradictory, however it has been reported that among those arrested were three Australians, a German, a British national, a Yemeni, a Somali and a Dane. The Australians and the Dane were accused of smuggling weapons from Yemen to Somalia. The four of them had all studied at the Iman University in Sa'na, an educational institution run by Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani. Said institution is of interest in this context since it is well-known as a focal point of radical activity and has attracted a number of international alumni who later joined a Jihad somewhere.

Al-Zindani is has been listed by the U.S. as an Al Qaeda supporter and has a long history of involvement in Jihadi activities. Al-Zindani studied in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s and it was here he became actively involved in support for the Jihad in Afghanistan. It was also in Saudi Arabia where he met Osama bin Laden, but al-Zindani has always been ambiguous in describing the exact nature of their relationship. He has however, claimed to have acted as a religious guide to bin Laden. What is more certain is al-Zindani's central role in dispatching thousands of Saudi and Yemeni fighters to join the Afghan Mujahedin during the 1980s.¹¹³

How a 23-year-old Danish convert ended up in a counter terror raid in Yemen is not known, and it does not necessarily label the Dane as a Jihadist. However, a few things are worth noticing in this regard. The choice of Yemen is extremely unusual for a European Islamist. The only well-documented connection was between Abu Hamza from the mosque in Finsbury Park in London who enjoyed close relations with the Aden Abyan Islamic Army. The Iman University is a curious venue for religious studies and being arrested after two months in Yemen suggests that the Dane was associating with the wrong kind of people.

Danish reporters have provided a brief description of the young Dane, whom they identified by his initials, KS. He has since changed his name after his conversion to Islam and now bears an Arabic name. The primary source of background information on KS is his uncle who expressed his frustration in an interview on 26 October 2006. According to his uncle, KS's father died when he was only five years old. His mother was not capable of caring for her child due to an illness and KS settled in at his uncle's family who raised him as their own child. When KS turned 18 he became attracted to radical Islam and this caused considerable friction in the family. The uncle tried to intervene because he considered KS's increasing radicalisation as a serious problem. He was of the firm conviction that it was KS's circle of friend, which included the members of the Glostrup cell, who had brainwashed him and turned him into a different person. Eventually they lost contact and had not spoken for a long time at the time of his arrest.

KS persuaded his girlfriend to convert, which she did, and the couple moved into their own apartment a few years ago. Here they settled down and had two small children but still no contact with KS's family. Two months before his arrest the couple travelled to Yemen with their children.¹¹⁴ He had no criminal record but was known to the police for his obstructive behaviour at the hearings in the Glostrup case. The arrested were friends of his and when the judge extended the period of detention his protest against this decision was vociferously.¹¹⁵ On several occasions police officers had to calm him down because of his disorderly conduct.

These most recent cases are of particular interest in tracking possible developments in the Jihadi environment within Denmark. A dozen young men are currently awaiting trial, and while the outcome of the trials is unknown, all have been arrested and indicted in relation to terrorist activities, either in Denmark or in Yemen. The exact nature of their activities remains obscure and there are more questions than answers to these specific cases.

A RUMOUR OF JIHAD

As mentioned in the introduction, a considerable number of rumours surfaced during the research phase of this study. Because none of these could be verified, they have no value in the empirical basis necessary for analysis; however, a brief description of a few rumours does serve an analytical purpose. But first it is necessary to be acquainted with the nature of the rumours.

The most persistent rumour concerns the case of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al Qaeda. According to continuous press reporting al-Zawahiri was offered asylum in Denmark in 1991. When officials from the Danish Ministry of the Interior refused to comment on individual cases this was taken as confirmation.¹¹⁶ Not only was al-Zawahiri supposedly granted asylum, he actually lived in Denmark for a while in the early 1990s, or so the story goes.

Abu Mujahed, a terrorist closely associated with bin Laden, fled from Lebanon to Denmark in 2000 after the Lebanese army attacked his Jihadi unit. From Denmark he maintains contact with Al Qaeda cells. The source of this claim is a young Lebanese by the name of Daniel Ahmed al-Samarji, arrested in October 2001 in Tripoli in Northern Lebanon.¹¹⁷ Al-Samarji and his accomplice Bilal Ali Othman were charged with setting up a terrorist group called the Sharia Army, which allegedly had planned an attack against US interests in the Middle East. The financing of the group ostensibly came from Abu Mujahed in Copenhagen and was intended for the purchase of arms and to improve terrorist training.¹¹⁸ A former member of Asbat al-Ansar, Samarji had trained in the Dinniyeh camp in Lebanon in 2000, but was expelled from the group. Disgruntled, he travelled to Denmark where he met Abu Mujahed, who took him on Al Qaeda's payroll and sent him back to Tripoli. Samarji was apparently inspired by the events of 11 September 2001 and wanted to start his own armed group.¹¹⁹ There has been speculation that Abu Mujahed knew Abdul Aziz Wahhab, who went to Chechnya.¹²⁰

According to press reports originating in Germany, Al Qaeda had great plans for the 2006 soccer championships. No fewer than 47 women had been recruited as suicide bombers in order to wreak havoc on the festivities. Citing a Turkish Jihadi website, which appears to have been

remarkably well-informed, one third of the suicide bombers had been recruited specifically in Belgium and Denmark.¹²¹ Italy won the finals and no single suicide bomber materialised. Both events should be considered as predictable developments.

In the beginning of 2002 there was some confusion about the actual number of Danish citizens or residents taken captive by US ground forces in Afghanistan. At some point, at least three captives claimed to be Danish, but only one has ever been properly identified, Abderrahmane. Because of the difficulties in establishing the correct identity of the inmates, it was not unusual for the prisoners to claim Dutch or Danish citizenship in the hope of securing better treatment and legal assistance.¹²²

Said Mansour added to the confusion in 2002 when he talked about a certain Hassan Maimouni who had left Denmark for Afghanistan to fight the Americans. In Mansour's view, Maimouni did so not because was a member of Al Qaeda but because he listened to the call of God.¹²³ This story was picked up by the Danish media and elaborated on. According to sources, up to five Danes had travelled to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban, among them was Hassan Maimouni. Four of them were Danish citizens of Moroccan origin and the last one originally came from Algeria but became a Danish national. All of them came from the radical environment in the Copenhagen district of Nørrebro. All were said to be between 20 and 30 years old, and Maimouni was allegedly captured by US forces in Afghanistan.¹²⁴

An unknown number of Danish Jihadists travelled to Bosnia in the 1990s and volunteered for frontline service with the foreign Mujahedin already present in the Balkans. This group did not include the abovementioned individuals known who chose this particular destination. Likewise, an unknown number of young second-generation Danes of Pakistani origin have gone to Pakistan for religious education in one of the numerous Madrassas. A few allegedly travelled on to Kashmir to join one of the Jihadi groups in the area.

In relation to the war in Iraq, it has surfaced that between five and ten Danish Jihadists are currently operating with various insurgent groups. One of the abovementioned groups of Mujahedin is rumoured to have killed 12 Shia's in a suicide operation which occurred in Baghdad sometime in 2005.¹²⁵

These examples illustrate the difficulties involved in researching the phenomenon of Jihad in Denmark. In all probability, most, if not all, these rumours should be discarded as being mere rumours. However, they do have an indirect impact on Danish society and the Islamist milieu in particular. Uncritical reports in the press, specifically on the legions of female suicide bombers

homing in on Germany distort the public perception of the actual threat level posed by the Jihadists. Sensational reporting obscures a number of real and imminent threats. Tracking this particular case to its source was particularly revealing but time-consuming.

On another level, the use of war stories by radical Islamists to recruit a young and gullible audience serves as an important tool. The sharing of confidential information about Jihadists currently involved in fighting in Iraq is meant to inspire others to cross the line from sympathy to violent action. These stories cannot be verified independently by young members of an informal study group in a private apartment. Asking for verification of these fascinating and daring exploits outside this environment would be considered a breach of trust and is thoroughly discouraged by radical leaders. The indirect impact of rumours such as those mentioned should not be underestimated. They circulate within the Muslim communities and tend to exacerbate an already complex problem of growing radicalisation.

Jihad in perspective

Denmark has rarely been associated with the international dimension of Jihad, and rightly so. As the previous case studies indicate there has been a modest number of Danish Muslims involved in illegal or violent activities connected to various Jihads internationally. To study Jihadism in Denmark is a manageable task since the actual number of cases known is modest, and usually evolved around specific milieus and related individuals.

The case studies are interesting in themselves, but what do they tell us about the nature of Jihad in Denmark? The previous sections have provided a fragmented picture of this Jihad and while this overview is considered indispensable it does not interpret the broader trends and developments of the phenomenon. This indeed is the real purpose of the present study. So far this paper has not dealt with the developments over the past 15 years, the processes of radicalization and recruitment nor the impact of the Jihadists; within and outside Denmark. This second part of the study draws on the empirical cases already mentioned in an attempt to outline a number of key findings according to the three principal research questions.

DEVELOPMENTS 1990-2006

The data provided here in detail indicates quite clearly that over a period of 15 years only a few dozen Muslims residing in Denmark have chosen to align themselves with one form of Jihad or another. However, it is safe to assume that not all Jihadi activities have come to the surface and that the number of individuals mentioned in this study is not conclusive. Even if the real number of Jihadists should turn out to be twice the size of the group already identified, then this increase is out of proportion to the terrorist scare and is actually surprising. While sympathy for militant Islamist groups is present within the Muslim communities, and rising, very few crossed over to the other side. If the number of Muslims residing in Denmark, estimated at around 180,000, is considered reliable, then the numbers clearly outline the proportions.

These few Jihadists cannot in any way be considered representative of the sentiments and actions of Danish Muslims. On the contrary, they appear to be an isolated group whose views on Jihad have marginalised them from their original immigrant communities. More than a few of the Jihadists were well-known for their views in their respective Danish settings and some indeed were feared. Their isolation was sometimes self-imposed, Abderrahmane abandoning his former circle of friends, or, as in the case of Alyousif, someone who was to be avoided.

Radical Islamist groups have been very active propagating their particular views on religion and politics over more than a decade, but with mixed results. While their successes are fairly well-known, and often visible, their failures have received little attention. A few examples are needed to illustrate the other side of the coin.

Omar Bakri announced in 2002 that the notorious al-Muhajiroun would open an office in Denmark.¹²⁶ At the time, Bakri claimed to have about 50 active members in Denmark and his vision for a small Scandinavian kingdom was quite illuminating:

“We will change law and order in Denmark, and that is a long-term project”.¹²⁷

According to sources consulted during this study, the al-Muhajiroun never made a breakthrough in Denmark. It appears that the ideological struggle between the al-Muhajiroun and the local branch of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir fell out in the latter's favour. The Hizb-ut-Tahrir has in turn been locked in an intractable struggle with the Salafis in essence fighting over the same small pool of candidates. While the ideological differences can be difficult to identify from the outside, it is the small differences that matter. According to many Muslims familiar with this struggle there is absolutely no love lost between the Hizb-ut-Tahrir and the Salafis. A unification of some sort between the Islamist groupings is not up for discussion since the differences are considered unbridgeable.

The Islamist leadership, if indeed this is the right term, has fractured, and the radical scene is a mosaic of personalities who seem to spend a lot of time fighting each other. Instead of a structured leadership there have been a number of well-known individuals enjoying a position of status within Islamist circles over an extended period of time. Personal charisma and past experience come across as the principal factors when speaking of leading characters - particularly in the case of Abu Talal. It has not been possible to identify an heir apparent to Abu Talal in the period after his disappearance.

As a curiosity, Mansour was forced to close the Al Nur bookshop in 1992. After six years the business had dried up.¹²⁸ Still, he continued to distribute of Jihadi propaganda out of his home afterwards, but primarily to interested parties across Europe.

Origin and common cause

In spite of the small group of individuals involved in the Jihadi circles, a certain trend is worth noticing, especially as this trend in particular may provide indications of future developments.

Deliberating on nationality and ethnic background may appear as the usual socio-anthropological obsession – i.e. an insistence on the significance of irrelevant matters. However, a closer look at the formation of cultural relations within the Jihadi milieu reveals that the original near-monopoly of a specific group based on shared nationality has been complemented or even transgressed by other, ultimately diffuse groups. Focussing on the role of cultural formations and patterns of identity as one element of the analysis provides an entry point for understanding the extremely important transformations that the radical milieu has undergone in Denmark over the past decade, and especially since 11 September 2001. This observation should not be confused with a single-issue explanation. National origin in itself does not explain why individual Muslims become radicalised; this would amount to a simplification of a complex issue. It does, however, show that a common background is of a diminishing significance in the radicalisation process.

The first generation was almost exclusively Egyptian, and more often than not they came to Denmark because their presence was undesired in Egypt or elsewhere in the Muslim world. The prime movers of this group came with extensive experience in clandestine political activity or were otherwise quite well-connected. Denmark served as a convenient sanctuary and their political activities continued unabated, even increasing in some cases. The connection to the Afghan Jihad should not be underestimated, as it influenced quite a few people by offering them a common cause.

The radical milieu was gradually enlarged by the emergence of North Africans who had become active in the mid-1990s. Equally dedicated to the Jihad, their cause, however was different than of the Egyptians. Sympathy was channelled towards North African terrorist groups: the GIA, GSPC, GICM and Salafia Jhadia. They all attracted the attention and activism of first- or second-generation Muslim immigrants in Denmark. It is known that Omar Maarouf, for instance became radicalised through his acquaintance with Abu Talal at a mosque in Copenhagen; his story is a prime example of the link between disparate groups.

The globalization of Jihad

The latest trend is much more confusing, and this is why it is all the more important to understand. This period actually has a specific timeline: 11 September 2001 in the early afternoon Danish time, and up until the present. This date marks the beginning of the growing interest of young Danish Muslims in the global Jihad, and a decline of the primacy of national liberation struggles. The Glostrup cell would never have emerged without the so-called Awakening.¹²⁹ The field of potential recruits has been opened wide to a degree unimaginable five years ago, and particular international events since then have been used as evidence of the need to defend the

Umma, the community of Muslims worldwide. The unfortunate situation in Iraq cannot be said to constitute the only catalyst; it is one among several circumstances feeding the myth of an attack against Muslims worldwide.

The Glostrup cell is a remarkable example of the transformation of the Jihad and how a global phenomenon has acquired a local following - in a suburb of Copenhagen to be precise. The composition of the cell is markedly different from other cells that have been unravelled throughout Europe since 2001. Two issues mark the departure from previously established patterns of cell formation; the very young age and the national origin of the suspects. As remarked by Magnus Ranstorp, this composition is quite unusual and very worrying.¹³⁰ The individuals from Glostrup and Vollsmose signify a break from the pattern of the 1990s; apparently it is now possible to radicalise and recruit very young Muslims in much more diverse settings than previously.

In particular the question of the religious awakening of the suspects, Bektasevic and Cesur in particular, requires an in-depth enquiry to the extent that this is possible. The fact that a dedicated Jihadist, and potential suicide bomber, would choose "Maximus" as his *nom de guerre* is remarkable. The past 20 years have produced legions of aliases, usually with the title Abu and followed by either a first name like Ali, Mohammed or Rasheed. Alternatively, historical or topically associated names have been used, as for instance; Abu Mujahed or Abu Jihad; Maximus is unprecedented and a quick search reveals its non-Islamic origin, which is most unusual. According to what is known about the religiosity of non-aligned Jihadists, they appear to be less rigorous in their studies, meaning that their knowledge about Islam is often quite superficial. Instead they emphasize strict adherence to ritual, like prayers or dress code, often attracting attention because of their obvious religiosity.

The trend appears to be clear. There has been a gradual expansion of the sphere of interest from national struggles to a global Jihad. And as the struggle has changed its focus, so too has the background of its adherents. The conflict has widened in tandem with a broadening of the pool of candidates. National liberation struggles, in Palestine or Chechnya, for instance, are certainly still of interest in Islamist and Jihadi circles. But there has been a subtle yet important change in how these conflicts are viewed. These conflicts involving Muslims are presented as pieces of a puzzle, illustrating a Western conspiracy against Muslims - if not Islam itself. Any claim to the contrary is interpreted as ignorance or siding with the enemy. Single issues, which might appear to be of a relatively minor importance, now take on a new meaning in this altered context. Wearing a head scarf to work is not just a matter of company dress code; to Islamists it is a

question of identity. The very identity they see as being severely threatened by Western civilization.

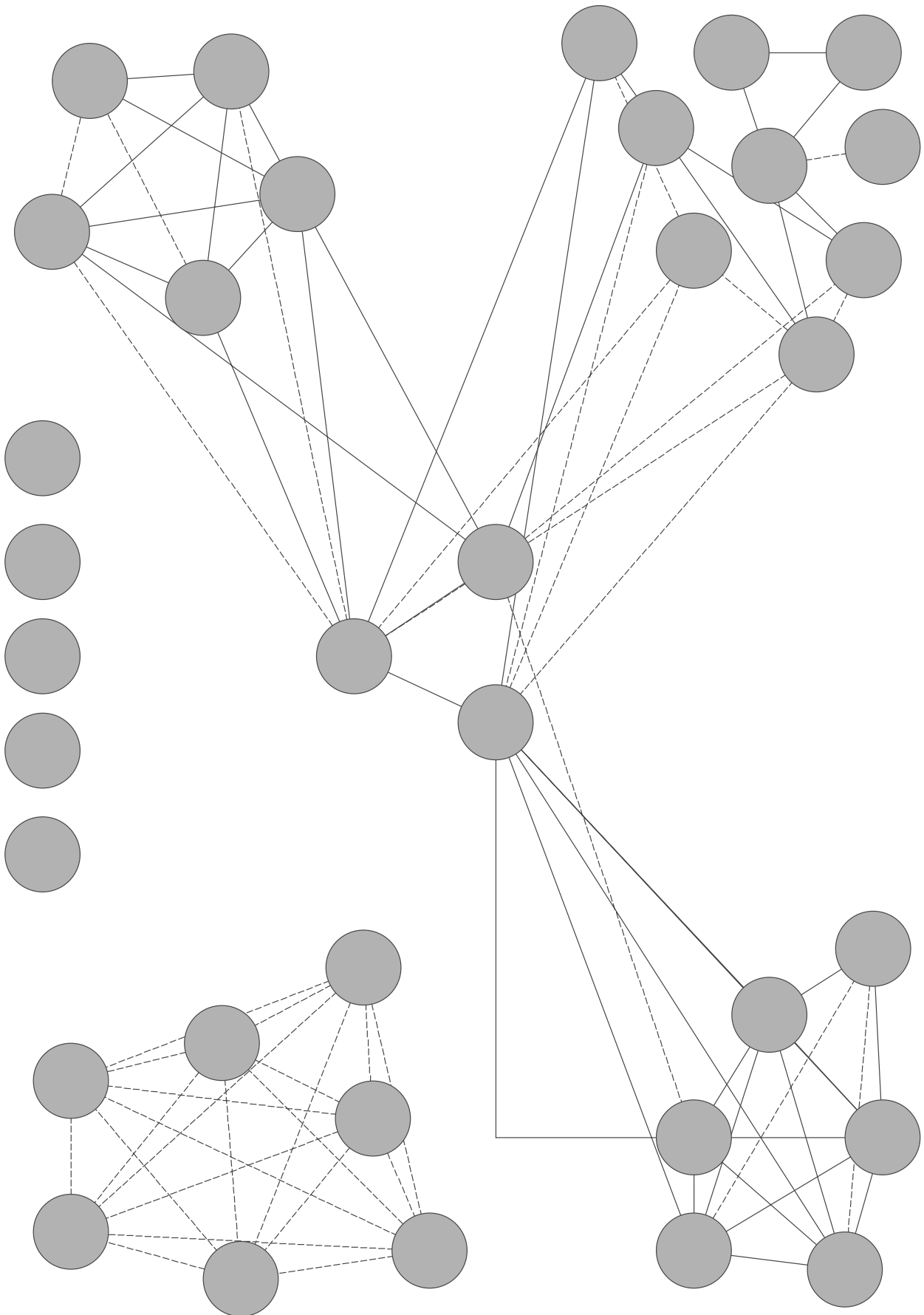
Who knew whom?

One means of understanding the internal dynamics of the radical milieu is studying the patterns of association. This perspective has its shortcomings, especially in relation to the temporal dimension. It was obviously not possible for the younger Jihadists to have been acquainted with individuals killed years ago. By the time Abu Talal, disappeared the youngest suspects from Glostrup were still in diapers. Yet, while this approach is not perfect it does entail a possibility of verifying or discarding the idea of the importance of personal acquaintances with other Jihadists. Network theory offers a basis for understanding these patterns and has been used by Marc Sageman to design one of the most encouraging explanatory models for entry into the world of Jihad.¹³¹

In a modest attempt to test the validity of network theory, a matrix was created for the present study. The matrix concerns the internal relations of the Danish Jihadists with one another. Court testimonies were used as the primary source of information and to cross-reference the information. Some links were obvious, others were not. The more difficult ones to ascertain were either categorized as “unaffiliated” or “suspected link”. The suspected links could not be verified and a conservative approach to labelling meant that an extremely likely link was downgraded to a possible one.

Utilising basic network terminology only three elements need concern us in this context and they are nodes, links and hubs. Given the modest number of nodes, meaning individual Jihadists, to connect with one another, the construction of an elaborate model seems out of proportion to the task at hand. If the individual nodes interacted with one another, these relationships are termed links. Finally, as in all types of networks, a disproportionate number of interactions pass through critical nodes, called hubs. The hubs function much like switchboards, in the sense that due to their considerable number of contacts they have the ability to serve as central points and thus connect disparate individuals. The figure below illustrates the extent of verified and suspected interaction in Danish Jihadi circles.

Figure: Verified and suspected interaction in Danish Jihadi circles



Unsurprisingly the figure clearly identifies several relatively self-contained networks connected through a few hubs. The hubs are represented by propagandists, spiritual leaders and charismatic figures. Not only were they all very well connected within Denmark, but they also maintained long-lasting and important relationships with senior figures on the international scene. This finding will be elaborated on separately below. The hubs have also served in a crucial capacity in a temporal perspective: they alone have connected several generations of Jihadists.

What is perhaps less anticipated is the number of isolated nodes bereft of any direct connection to the general network. It must be stated again that the information available for this study is not conclusive, and in a few instances a connection is strongly suspected, but has never been described anywhere. More interesting are the few remaining isolated nodes without even a suspected link to anyone. The scarcity of information does not allow an explanation of this phenomenon, not even speculation.

It would seem that the application of network theory in particular holds some promise in explaining patterns of interaction, identifying important personalities and visualising complex relationships. However, any resulting figure is in need of interpretation based on the original material, and this looping effect should ideally lead to the formulation of new research questions, but this time of a more qualified nature.

The role of external relations

Danish Jihadi circles have not existed in a vacuum, quite the contrary. What has recently been termed the Global Jihad is founded on close, personal relationships between Jihadists across the world. Al Qaeda would never have materialised without being able to attract members and sympathisers who “knew someone”. This is not to say that there is an organisational structure where each Jihadist or suspect can be placed. The strength of a network founded on a non-hierarchical structure has proven its worth over the past five years. Without it, Al Qaeda would have been eliminated long ago.

To quantify the Danish Jihadi milieu is fairly easy; it is another matter to try to understand its significance. To this end, the author has chosen to highlight the personal contacts between Danish Jihadists and well-known international terrorists or Jihadi ideologues. Viewed from this perspective, the small group of Danish individuals takes on a very different significance. While it can be concluded that their activity and the impact of the various Jihadi battlefields have been negligible, if not irrelevant, their access and acceptance into a truly global group should not be underestimated.

Most Danish Jihadists are unknown outside Denmark, with a few exceptions. However their affiliations included figures such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Zubaydah, Abu Qatada, Maqdisi, Abu Dahdah, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, Shamil Basayev, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Hassan Khattab just to mention some of the most prominent ones, with whom verified contact has been made over the years have been listed. The external dimension has been included to underline the fact that the developments did not occur in a closed environment; a proper analysis of these relations would require a separate study.

These relations have been exploited for a number of reasons. A shared ideology appears as to be the most obvious one. However, this shared ideology has been the foundation for more practical activities such as: the dissemination of Jihadi propaganda, which was primarily conducted by Mansour and Abu Talal, and fundraising, as in the case of the North African network, the funds were to be channelled into the armed struggle, and Abderrahmane presumably acted as a willing courier.

RADICALISATION AND RECRUITMENT

Radicalisation

The group of Danish Jihadists can effortlessly be divided into two distinct entities with respect to their radicalisation: those who were radicalised before they came to Denmark and the others who became radicalised through their Danish experience. Radicalisation, in this context, is understood as a process during which people gradually adopt views and ideas which may lead to the legitimization of political violence. This division serves to outline where the radicalisation took place so as to identify whether this is an imported or home-grown phenomenon. It is possible to state with certainty that both instances have occurred over time, but also that the pattern has changed considerably.

Almost all of the original Jihadists had a previous record of radical activity before entering Denmark, the Egyptians in particular. Some were militant activists, some had fought or trained in Afghanistan, others had been declared undesirable in their home countries, and finally some were wanted for specific crimes. They became role models for a small group of Danish Muslims and for some of those concerned their reputation preceded their arrival. Their harsh criticism of the regimes in the Middle East and North Africa was mostly based on first-hand experience and a realistic appraisal of the political instability of their home countries. However, they chose to advocate armed resistance as a solution to these problems, which in the beginning was almost exclusively directed at the governments of their home countries.

If this group of people can be said to comprise the first generation of Jihadists in Denmark, then their heritage must be acknowledged. For example, it appears that Mansour inspired the young men who would eventually be associated with the Glostrup cell, and Mansour himself was inspired by Abu Talal. According to material related to the trial in Morocco, Abu Talal was Maarouf's primary source of inspiration. Especially his sermons at the mosque in Copenhagen where he propagated the virtues of Jihad inspired Maarouf to take action himself.¹³² In this sense several generations interacted and served to ensure continuity in what became their common project. Based on these observations and the previously mentioned dense network of personal acquaintances, it would not be surprising if the Vollsmose group turned out to have had some sort of contact with other known Jihadists. If this is not the case, it would indeed signal a new direction in the milieu.

- One of the better models for explaining why and how young European Muslims join a radical Islamist group is offered by Quintain Wiktorowicz.¹³³ Based on his fieldwork among members of the Al-Muhajiroun in London in 2002, he identified four key processes critical to joining. They are as follows:
 - A cognitive opening. An individual becomes receptive to new ideas and worldviews.
 - Religious seeking. Meaning is sought through a religious lens.
 - Frame alignment. The ideas offered by the radical group attracts interest
 - Socialization. Through direct interaction, for instance in study groups, the individual gradually absorbs the values and identity of the radical group.

This interpretation appears to resemble the actual processes as they have occurred in Denmark with regard to the second generation of Jihadists. Moreover, it significantly shifts focus from the role of the radical movement itself to the changes apparent among European Muslim youth. At the general level, the model is applicable across Europe, but has had varying degrees of impact. The reason behind these differences is not known, but appears to be a crucial element in understanding future developments within Europe's diverse Muslim communities.

Recruitment

Actual recruitment differs from radicalisation in the sense that it involves practical steps towards inclusion in a specific group that advocates political violence. Radicalised individuals hold very strong and simplistic views and may support the use of violence, but once recruited, illegal activities are practised. The actual recruitment process is often loosely based, in the sense that aspiring Jihadists have made the personal decision to become directly involved in Jihad and proceeded to actively seek out a violent group.

According to the Danish Minister of Justice, Lene Espersen, the Danish Security Service is aware that recruitment to the insurgency in Iraq is taking place within Denmark.¹³⁴ The extent of this recruitment is unclear, but it is indisputable that many Danish Muslims are vigorously opposed to the war in Iraq. In 2004, Abdul Latif, the spokesman for Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Denmark, distributed a flyer exhorting Muslims to

“go help your brothers in Falluja and exterminate your rulers if they block your way.”

Abdul Latif, a Palestinian who grew up in a refugee camp in Lebanon before moving to Copenhagen in 1986, said the call to arms was aimed at fighters in the Muslim world; not to Muslims in Denmark.¹³⁵ Dr. Ahmad Abu Matar, a Palestinian academic residing in Oslo identified Said Mansour as someone who distributed cassettes among Danish Muslims encouraging them to join Al-Zarqawi in Iraq.¹³⁶ In an interview in 2005, Said Mansour said that he believed Muslims had the right to kill Americans in Iraq because;

“This is war; it’s not a picnic.”

At the time he had been downloading and distributing CDs of internet videos depicting beheadings in Iraq and speeches by Abu Musab Zarqawi.¹³⁷ These statements exemplify an increased level of radicalisation in which Muslims are encouraged to take up arms, but cannot be described as actual recruitment.

Speaking of recruitment in this context only makes sense when we look at those who became involved in Jihadi activities after their arrival in Denmark. Popularly speaking, the first generation had already been recruited and considered itself part of the al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya or aligned with the Afghan Mujahedin.

Perhaps the most interesting indication of a changing Jihadi environment is the pattern of radicalisation of the members of the Glostrup cell. All were younger than 22 years old at the time of their arrest in October 2005, making them a very young group indeed. Regarding nationality, there is a clear absence of a pattern of national affiliation known from the Jihadi networks of the 1990s. This time, however, they all had a Danish background. This is of significance because this particular change has been observed across Europe in recent years. Incidents from France and the UK, for example, evolved around groups of very young second-generation Muslims who had grown up in Europe.

According to the Danish authorities' assessment, the cell members had met each other at various Mosques and Islamic institutions in the Copenhagen area. However, the radicalisation occurred through Islamic study groups organised by self-proclaimed Imams.¹³⁸ Instead of being the usual suspects they were not known to the police. Quite the reverse, in fact, they were introverted young men who were very dedicated to their religion, as was evident from their style of dress, behaviour and participation in religious activities. In at least two cases the families had become concerned over the young men's increasingly religious lifestyle. These changes occurred to the bewilderment of their families, some of whom were secular rather than practising Muslims. The radical changes simply did not make any sense to their friends and relatives.¹³⁹

Perhaps the most striking example of the division within the family is the reaction of the father of S2. According to press reports, his father became extremely upset when he suspected his son was about to leave, possibly for a suicide operation, and prevented him from going anywhere. This commendable act of counterterrorism on a small but crucial scale speaks volumes about the cultural and generational distances within the Muslim immigrant communities.¹⁴⁰

Equally interesting is the fact that the four young men generally came from well-integrated families oriented towards achieving success in Danish society through education and a career. As one media report phrased it, the suspects did not originate from the bottom of society but the top. Their families were well-educated and known in the immigrant communities as positive examples, practicing Muslims but certainly not associated with extremism in any way.¹⁴¹

Many questions remain unanswered regarding the actual process of radicalisation. It is nevertheless prudent to ask if they had any known association with identified radicals who in some way or other have contributed to their own radicalisation. The study trip to London in 2004 which included a visit to Abu Bakri appears significant.¹⁴² It seems inconceivable that they were unaware of Bakri's reputation, and anyone seeking his views on Islam would know his answers in advance. Phone intercepts revealed that the suspects rejoiced after the London bombings.¹⁴³ The choice of mentor or religious institution is not arbitrary. Abderrahmane and the Glostrup members met people in London and KS, who travelled to Yemen, ended up at the Iman University.

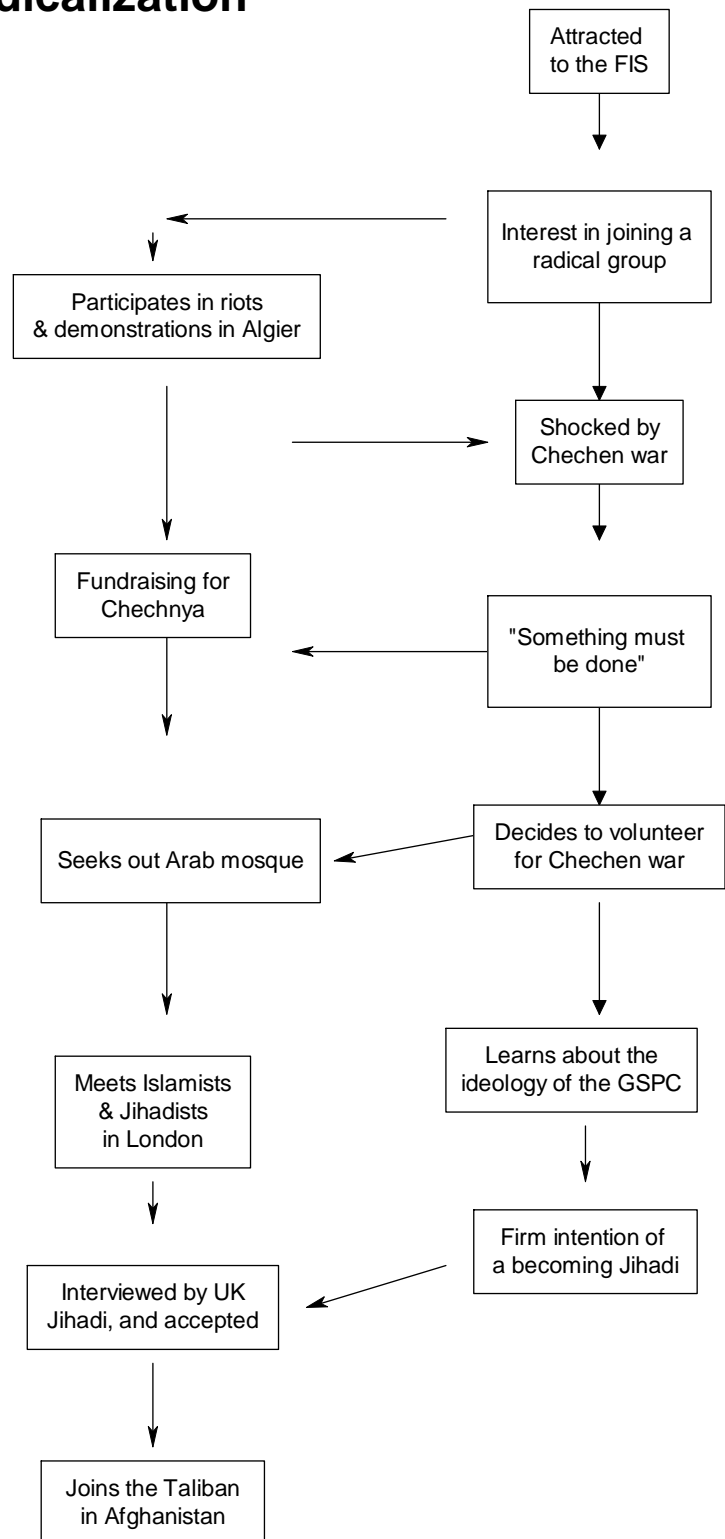
At the domestic level, Said Mansour was well-acquainted with the four suspects. Their relationship dates back to at least August 2005 when Mansour became embroiled in a street fight in Heimdalsgade in Copenhagen. The dispute allegedly concerned a difference of opinion between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, and when the police arrived to calm the participants the four suspects were also present apparently summoned as reinforcements by Mansour. Mansour and

the suspects have also corresponded, though the extent and nature is currently unknown. This has led to the assumption that Mansour acted as a spiritual guide for the young members of the Glostrup cell.¹⁴⁴

The radicalisation process

Abderrahmane's biography provides the most detailed description of the process of radicalisation and is worth a closer look even though it is only one example among many. No definite conclusion about the radicalisation process and recruitment into Jihadi circles can be reached from a single case study; the lack of background information available precludes this. To avoid speculation, Abderrahmane's own interpretation is significant.

Abderrahmane's Radicalization



Abderrahmane did not recognise himself in the often encountered interpretation of an identity crisis as the reason for his radicalisation. He spent his formative years in Algeria, and the transition to a different environment went fairly smoothly. In the words of his stepfather, Abderrahmane was a nervous youngster when he arrived in Denmark after his childhood in Algeria. He was a little naïve perhaps, and very impressionable, but there were no problems whatsoever, and he was full of energy and enjoyed soccer. He was certainly not violent in any way.¹⁴⁵

His friends noticed a complete change in his personality in the year 2000. He abandoned his previous friends and interests and talked about the Muslim struggle for freedom and justice. A friend of Abderrahmane, a Danish convert, who joined him for prayers at the mosque said that recruitment to Jihad was conducted more or less openly. In the atmosphere before 11 September 2001 no one thought much of it. It was obvious to Abderrahmane's convert friend that some of the people at the mosque had fought. There was no pressure on the worshippers to enlist for Jihad, but the opportunity was there if you desired.¹⁴⁶

Abderrahmane - and this is important to underline - was not recruited; he volunteered. Perhaps amateurish at first, but through sheer perseverance he made his way into Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. After being released from Guantanamo, he appeared to have no regrets and was still in favour of Jihad, but was disappointed about the slow progress towards the Khalifate as the ultimate objective. He still maintained the view that in recent time only Taliban-ruled Afghanistan came close to his idea of a model society.

The very modest success of the first generation of Jihadists in generating interest for their ideologies, let alone in recruiting new members, should then be explained not through an organizational perspective but rather through a societal one. This has tremendous implications for future radicalisation within Denmark, because the baseline activity and interest have expanded and widened dramatically over the past five years. Translating Wiktorowicz's insights into a contemporary Danish context identifies an increase in cognitive openings coupled with newfound religiosities and an active interest in radical movements. A previous study on recruitment processes in Europe by the author a similar model involving several stages was outlined.¹⁴⁷ While the general theoretical foundation of the study appears to have retained its validity, the empirical cases seem obsolete. Only a few years later it seems that the pool of young European Muslims attracted to radical Islam, violent or not, is continuously metamorphosing.

Madmen

Two popular explanations concerning the motivations for voluntary entry into the world of Jihad revolve around notions of religious fanaticism and clinical insanity. Their level of popularity is only matched by their incorrectness, an argument that requires some qualification.

The alleged insanity of Jihadists prompted a closer examination of this hypothesis based on the known life histories of individuals identified in this study. In two instances, both related to criminal trials, psychiatric evaluations were deemed necessary by the court: Hassanein's bizarre behaviour and Alyousif's extremely violent and fatal attack.

Hassanein's deliberate show of disrespect for the court and his threatening behaviour made his solicitor plead for insanity. Hassanein refused to verify his identity to the court and made several remarks and displayed threatening behaviour towards the other accused while his charges were read out to him. He was expelled from the courtroom. The following day Hassanein was back in court and declared himself willing to answer questions if he could make a statement of ten words. He basically stated that he was proud of being a Muslim and that all others were infidels. No evidence of a diagnosable mental illness surfaced afterwards and it seems more than likely that his actions, behaviour and choice of rhetoric fit squarely into the category of Salafism, especially the propensity to designate others as Takifiri's (unbelievers). A Danish audience can be forgiven for mistaking the uncompromising stance of a dedicated Salafi with a mental patient, and his behaviour in court is eerily similar to the tumultuous scenes from trials in Cairo in the 1980s.

During Alyousif's murder trial a mental evaluation was also ordered and the conclusions make for interesting reading. Alyousif was not insane but emotionally disturbed. The expert witness classified him as immature, with difficulties relating to other people's emotions. He would react impulsively and aggressively when pressed. This was apparently the case on the night of the murder.

No further evaluations exist, since they were either considered irrelevant or specific cases were never brought to trial. One individual, nevertheless deserves to be mentioned in this context. If the Russian sources are considered credible, then Aziz completely lost all sense of decency and restraint during his brief tour in Chechnya. Allegations of solicitation of murder, torture, systematic rape and paedophile activities reveal an uninhibited individual deriving pleasure from inflicting pain on randomly selected civilian victims. Aziz's diary has to some extent confirmed these allegations and no trace of remorse is to be found. The specific entries resemble a ledger more than a personal account.

Even in these few cases it cannot be decisively concluded that they all suffered from a diagnosable mental illness, but in at least three cases the Islamists stood out as being radically different in terms of their moral foundation and to have a propensity for violent behaviour. Their stark opposition to the fundamental values of Western democracy has apparently confused some observers and led them to assume that the abysmal differences in worldview have their roots in insanity. The evidence available, however does not support this claim.

The role of radical Imams

There has been much speculation about the role of Danish Imams in terrorist-related activities, especially since the cartoon controversy began in early 2006. To this date, no Imam has been convicted, or even tried, for a criminal offence in Denmark. This situation makes it prudent to ask why public attention has recently focussed intensely on the role of the Imams and why they have been explicitly connected with terrorism.

A recent estimate is that between 50 and 60 Imams are active at any time in the Danish mosques, representing a wide variety of Muslim congregations and denominations. To consider this group a homogenous entity would be misleading to the extreme. There are major theological, cultural and political differences within the group of Imams, and this is reflected directly through their influence and popularity. That the latter is subject to change could be seen in October 2006 in the mosque environment in Aarhus. Sheikh Raed Hlayhel, a Wahabi scholar with a bachelor's degree from the Sharia Faculty in Medina, became involved in a local dispute in connection with the latest round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006. During Friday prayer at the Grimhøj mosque, Sheikh Hlayhel criticised the Shia Muslim Hezbollah militia and condemned the local Danish support for the movement. This message was particularly unpopular among the substantial numbers of Palestinian and Lebanese origin who regarded Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance movement, regardless of its religious foundation. As a result of the dispute, Sheikh Hlayhel left the Grimhøj mosque and recently became affiliated with a smaller mosque catering to Somalis.¹⁴⁸ This was not to last for very long, and in November 2006 Sheikh Hlayhel left Denmark for good and returned to his native Lebanon

As this paper is only concerned with Jihadi activity, only the few individuals whose names keep appearing in the public debate will be mentioned. This narrow focus reduces the group considerably to two individuals. The role of the above-mentioned Imams who have been labelled as radicals is important in this context.

For the purpose of this study a radical mosque is defined as a place of worship and social gatherings where the sermons are founded on an Islamic interpretation diametrically opposed to the fundamentals of Danish society. Democracy, secular law, gender equality and religious rights are popular themes in these sermons and discussions. The radical mosques in Denmark do not serve as terrorist recruitment centres in a direct sense. Instead they draw a crowd of worshippers who are curious, but often know exactly which interpretation of Islam they want to hear. Abderrahmane's case is typical of those willing to travel a longer distance to listen to a confirmation of their own worldview. In spite of active proselytising by spiritual leaders, it is more a process of self-selection. Those wanting a radical view will eventually seek out one of the radical mosques, since the moderate ones have different views on Islam - and Jihad in particular.

It is true that some of the Jihadists met fellow Islamists at the mosques, and a few have stated explicitly that they were inspired to fight. However, most joined the militant circles outside the mosque environment; in study groups, in private homes and elsewhere. More significantly, some aspiring Jihadists were initially fired up by inclusion in an Islamist circle but came away disappointed because in the end it was all talk and no action. What they had wanted at the mosque wasn't there. This situation appears to apply to the young men of the Glostrup cell. The radical mosques thus appear more like a stepping stone into Jihad than an actual recruitment centre. The Al-Tawhid study group is an example of the change of setting. It has attracted teenagers, including at least one of the Glostrup suspects. Their former homepage provided links to Zaraqawi's propaganda.¹⁴⁹ It is in the privacy of these smaller groups that Jihadi ideology can be discussed freely.

Abu Laban

The single most prominent individual in this context is Imam Ahmed Abu Laban, associated with the Muslim Society located on Dortheavej in Copenhagen. The number of citations concerning Abu Laban in connection with the cartoon controversy presumably exceeded those referring to the Danish prime minister. So much has been written on Abu Laban in 2006 alone that the following summary can only be described as a brief introduction to the relationship between Jihad and Abu Laban.

Imam Ahmed Abu Laban was born in Jaffa in 1946, and prior to his arrival in Denmark in 1984 he had lived and worked in Egypt, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Nigeria. He was undesired in both Egypt and the UAE because of his Islamist leanings and asked to leave. He was invited to serve as Imam by two Danish converts.¹⁵⁰ Abu Laban is obviously inspired by the

ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially Hassan al-Banna, a fact which can be established from his statements and through discussions.¹⁵¹

When Abu Talal disappeared in 1995, it was Abu Laban who led a few hundred protesters in the demonstration. In September 2001, Abu Laban expressed his support for the Taliban at Friday prayers.

“Taliban, a helpless group, is trying to reconstruct a suffering and devastated country, so it is absolutely incomprehensible if the United States is ready to undertake an unjustified military attack, then we will retaliate, believe me”.¹⁵²

The following spring, in a Friday sermon in April 2002, Abu Laban encouraged Danish Muslims to die for the Palestinian cause.¹⁵³

No other incident however, than the cartoon controversy which evolved into a full-blown crisis during early 2006, propelled Abu Laban onto centre stage. In numerous interviews, Abu Laban repeated his views on the nature of the dispute. A typical statement ran like this:

“We are being mentally tortured. The cartoons are an insult against Islam, an attempt by right-wing forces in this country to get a rise out of the Muslim community and thus portray us as against Danish values”.¹⁵⁴

Abu Laban’s personal role in the cartoon controversy resulted in instant infamy and a full-scale rejection by Danish politicians and the general public in particular. In achieving the rare position of being the most undesirable person in Denmark, closely rivalled by his former spokesman Ahmed Akkari, speculation became rampant over his involvement in Jihadi activities. The allegations have led nowhere, though the intense interest in Abu Laban highlighted an extensive web of international Islamist contacts, primarily associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁵⁵

Abu Rached

While Abu Laban is probably the most outspoken of the Danish Imams, the other person of interest in this context has only given a single extensive interview. Abu Rached gave a rare interview to a Danish newspaper in March 2004 in order to clear his name of any affiliation with terrorism. The following is primarily based on this interview and Abu Rached’s own words.

Abu Rached was born in 1961 and joined an oppositional group in Syria in his home town near Aleppo in 1979. He participated in demonstrations and outspoken criticism of the Syrian regime, but Abu Rached insisted that it was unarmed opposition. An arrest warrant was issued against him in 1980 and he fled to the mountains. His flight continued, this time to Iraq, where he spent a month in prison. Travelling to several other countries in the Middle East, he eventually turned up in the Syrian mountains again. In August 1983 he was captured by the Syrian security forces and imprisoned. He escaped from prison in October 1984 along with two dozen other prisoners, most of whom were shot while fleeing. Only six of them made it to safety in Jordan, where once again they were imprisoned. Released after five months, he travelled to Pakistan on a forged passport provided by the Syrian opposition. In all, Abu Rached spent five years in Pakistan studying at an Islamic university. He acquired another forged passport which he used to travel to Denmark in 1991, where he requested asylum. In Denmark he has lived in Aarhus, where he led Friday prayers for some time at the Grimhøj mosque.¹⁵⁶

Abu Rached's background resembles that of many Middle Eastern asylum seekers who came to Europe during the 1980s and 1990s, yet the Spanish authorities have specifically identified Abu Rached as someone closely connected to Al Qaeda in Europe. It must be stressed that Abu Rached has never been charged with a criminal offence in Denmark however, the allegations coming from other European countries are worth mentioning in this context. The Spanish concern centres on a specific and proven relationship between Abu Rached and Imad Eddin Yarkas, better known as Abu Dahdah. The latter was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in Spain for conspiracy to commit terrorist attacks and an additional 12-year sentence for leading a terrorist organization.

Abu Rached acknowledged a long relationship with Abu Dahdah going back to their mutual activities in the Syrian opposition. Abu Dahdah fled as well and ended up in Spain, he contacted Abu Rached upon his arrival in Denmark. Much to the concern of the Spanish authorities, Abu Dahdah visited Abu Rached in Denmark. They have also spoken together on several occasions and these calls were monitored by the Spanish security service.

According to phone intercepts listed in the voluminous Spanish indictment, Abu Rached called Abu Dahdah on 11 September 1996. During the conversation, Abu Rached asked for the number of Abu al-Hareth, a well-known Al Qaeda operative based in London. He could not get through and Yarkas informed him that he had the old mobile number to London and provided Abu Rached with the most recent one. Abu al-Hareth is a crucial individual in Al Qaeda's consolidation period between 1996 and 1998. During this period he received no less than 200 personal calls from Osama bin Laden made from his satellite phone in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁷

Spanish authorities had been aware of Abu Rached since 1996. According to Spanish investigators, Abu Rached has been in London to visit Abu Qatada and Abu al-Khareth, both known Al Qaeda sympathisers with direct access to the senior leadership of the terrorist organisation.¹⁵⁸

Abu Rached has been suspected of encouraging and recruiting young Danish Muslims to participate in Jihads in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Bosnia. It has been alleged that he personally recruited Abderrahmane, an accusation Abu Rached denied in the 2004 interview. According to him, he didn't even know Abderrahmane, having only seen him at the mosque a few times.

Two conclusions can be deducted from this information. Firstly, that Abu Rached has never been charged in connection with Jihadi activities in Denmark. Secondly, that his circle of associates has included some of the most prominent Islamists, particularly in Spain and in the United Kingdom.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE JIHADISTS

An analysis of Danish Jihad would be incomplete without an assessment of the impact of the activities of this group of Islamists. This is indeed a difficult endeavour and caution is required in drawing conclusions on a very elusive group of people. This author believes that the impact should be assessed on several different, though interrelated, levels.

Battlefield impact

The impact on the various battlefields associated with this or that jihad can only be described as negligible. No important field commanders or senior leaders have emerged from Denmark to have a visible impact on any front. In spite of actual fighting or close support of a fighting unit in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq and elsewhere, the only individual who may be relevant in this respect is Ramadan, but the exact nature of his activities in Iraq up until his death remains unknown. Aziz also played a significant role as a spiritual guide during his short tour in Chechnya. The number of people killed abroad by Danish Jihadists remains unknown but is assumed to be very, very low. Ramadan's alleged involvement in car bombings in Iraq may change this figure, but the exact circumstances may never be revealed. It is an interesting fact that no Danish citizen has ever been killed by a Danish Jihadist; however, this situation is subject to change. In spite of many death threats issued from Danish Islamists, peaking at the time of the cartoon controversy in the spring of 2006, none has actually been effectuated.

Recruitment and propaganda

In spite of considerable efforts, the Danish Jihadists have not been significantly successful in attracting new recruits. Instead there has been a rather steady flow of volunteers with a few periods of increased recruitment directly related to external circumstances rather than a specific recruitment drive. To put it rather bluntly, new Jihadists have entered the circuit in times of international crisis, not because of the recruiter's persistence. It would appear that the pool of candidates for Jihad has always been very small and this trend continues to this day.

The apparently very limited appeal of Salafist militancy was perhaps best illustrated in a recent documentary by the French journalist, Mohammed Sifaoui, which was aired on Danish television in the spring of 2006.¹⁵⁹ In a videotaped conversation between Sifaoui and a member of the Islamic Society recorded without the knowledge of the latter, the complaint was voiced that the Danish Muslim community was split into 60 different factions. This assessment certainly comes from an authoritative source, and clearly illustrates the incompatibility of militant Salafism with current notions within the Muslim communities. While Danish Muslims express their concern or anger over immigration, integration, employment and cultural issues, not to mention their opposition to the war in Iraq, there is a clear line between expressing dissatisfaction and taking up arms. Very few indeed have chosen to cross the line. This is quite encouraging and proves that Danish Muslims have overwhelmingly chosen peaceful and democratic means of expression and political action.

On the other hand, some will choose to align themselves with the Jihad in the future as well. According to Claude Moniquet, writing in 2005, we are now awaiting the emergence of a new generation of terrorists in Europe, boys who were between 12 and 15 on 11 September 2001 whose radicalisation process has been condensed to a few years. The same process which took the first generation of Jihadists a decade or more. The incidents in Glostrup and Vollsmose may have proven Moniquet's point.¹⁶⁰

Concerning the propagation of the virtues of Jihad, this is quite another matter. The combined efforts of individuals like Abu Talal, Said Mansour and others in minor roles have not only served to connect disparate Islamist groupings, within and outside Europe, they have also attracted new recruits to the cause. It is on the propaganda front where the Danish Jihadists have been the most active and successful. In terms of fundraising, this aspect is notoriously difficult to estimate. The few figures that have been made public do not represent the actual flow of money from Denmark to various militant Jihadi factions. It seems safe to assume that the vast majority of funds collected and distributed have been earmarked specifically for the various armed Palestinian groups.

Societal impact

Perhaps the most significant impact of the Jihadists has not been on the frontlines, in international terrorism, in propaganda activities or spectacular recruitment drives, but on Danish society. In spite of their small numbers they have managed to wedge themselves between the Muslim communities and mainstream Danish society. Their success in polarising Denmark has been completely out of proportion to their real numbers. The only area where the Jihadists have had a visible impact is in the area of societal cohesiveness. The fruits of this achievement must be shared with the groups of non-violent Islamists, but this area remains unexplored and underestimated.

If the future will to some extent resemble the past, Denmark need not worry too much about militant Islamists. Even in the eventuality of a bombing that causes fatalities, the real victim will be societal cohesiveness. While damaged trains can be repaired, insurance paid out and so on, the distrust between communities is not easily eliminated. These changes in communal relations are exceedingly difficult to quantify or verify, but this central issue is in need of very careful analysis. What is verifiable is the fact that previous fringe Islamist movements, like the Hizb ut-Tahrir, now have a much larger audience and have gradually left the shadows. The at times very harsh debate in relation to the drawings of the Prophet Mohammed revealed a proportion of Danish Muslims unwilling to engage in dialogue, people with nothing but contempt for Danish law. The most recent arrests of young, often very young, Danish second-generation Muslim immigrants also demonstrate that radicalisation patterns have changed.

At the height of the cartoon crisis, when Danish embassies were being torched in the Middle East, there was a very real concern about domestic bloodshed. One remark in particular summed up the current state of division between Danes and Muslims. It was uttered by a very amicable middle-aged housewife with no known prior propensity for extremist views:

“Now I understand why people kill their neighbours.”

Notes

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