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## I. Articles

### Al-Qaeda's Response to the Arab Spring

by Donald Holbrook

#### *Abstract*

*The Arab revolutions, often referred to collectively as the 'Arab Spring', posed, and continue to present, a considerable challenge for Al-Qaeda. This article assesses how Al-Qaeda's senior leadership, as well as affiliates and associates, have responded to the Arab Spring, by analysing media material and public communiqués issued in the aftermath of the uprisings. The first section discusses the impact of the Arab Spring on Al-Qaeda. The second section explores the Al-Qaeda core leadership response to the revolutions, especially the ways in which Ayman Al-Zawahiri has chosen to frame the events. The third section examines the way Al-Qaeda's affiliates and associates have responded to the revolutions, including contributions to the English-language Inspire magazine. Overall, The article describes how Al-Qaeda has sought to interpret the events in its favour and how it hopes to exploit the current turmoil in the wake of the Arab revolutions.*

#### *The Arab Spring and Al-Qaeda*

On 17 December 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor from Sidi Bouzid, a city in central Tunisia, set himself alight to protest against police brutality and the widespread corruption that prevailed under the presidency of Zine El Abidine. Ben Ali. Bouazizi's self-immolation initially triggered local protests that quickly turned to national upheaval against decades of misrule, abuses of power and corruption. This uprising inspired scores of protesters elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East to rise up against their authoritarian rulers.

These seminal events are often referred to as the 'Arab Spring'. To date, they have resulted in the overthrow of the Tunisian, Egyptian, Yemeni and Libyan regimes. A bloody civil war has broken out in Syria as the Assad regime struggles to quell a rebel uprising, whilst further protests continue to take place elsewhere in the region. Meanwhile, the post-revolution countries are undergoing a volatile period of transition from the old system.

The Arab Spring appears in many ways to be bad news for Al-Qaeda. The foundational core of the group consists of Arab Islamist extremists, many of whom had dedicated most of their adult lives to fighting against the secular 'tyrants' of the Middle East and North Africa. Yet, as many observers have noted, the events did not unfold as Al-Qaeda had envisaged and appeared to undermine core tenets of the Al-Qaeda doctrine. Five key points seem particularly significant.

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Firstly, the regimes fell without Al-Qaeda playing its envisaged leadership role for the *ummah*. The groups of youths that took to the streets in Tunisia and Egypt did not do so in response to any initiative from Al-Qaeda. The anti-Gaddafi rebels, moreover, were not fighting an Al-Qaeda-inspired jihad, and even accepted help from Al-Qaeda's arch rivals in the North Atlantic Alliance. [1] "A core argument of Al-Qaeda", James Forest argued, "has been that corrupt, Western-backed regimes can only be changed through the use of terrorist attacks to mobilize the *ummah*. But in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, change has taken place without any meaningful involvement whatsoever by Al-Qaeda." [2]

Second, the chosen form of activism – including popular mass uprisings that were largely peaceful in Egypt and Tunisia and a NATO-supported armed revolt in Libya – clearly contradicted Al-Qaeda's assertion that violent jihad led by a righteous vanguard was the only appropriate method for change. "That change has finally come to Egypt and Tunisia [...]", Alex Wilner noted, "as a result of popular and generally peaceful movements is an embarrassment to Al-Qaeda, whose entire script has been predicated on the idea that violent overthrow is the only way forward." [3]

Third, as Wilner, N. Lahoud and others have noted, the removal of the secular dictatorships left a large gap in the rhetoric of the Al-Qaeda leadership, which has relied on the unpopularity of these regimes to promote alternative forms of governance based on its interpretation of Islamic law. With the Arab Spring, therefore, Al-Qaeda lost a powerful component of its rallying call to disenfranchised Arab publics. [4].

Fourth, some argued Al-Qaeda, particularly its central leadership, had been slow in reacting publicly to such seminal events affecting the core of its potential 'constituents.' Weeks passed from the initial Tunisian uprising, and even after the protests spread further, before the Al-Qaeda leadership addressed those living in the region through statements distributed online [5]. The rapidity with which images, footage and accounts from the unfolding events surrounding the Arab Spring were distributed via social networks and online forums appeared to accentuate Al-Qaeda's slow response.

Fifth, the ideas that appeared to drive many of the activists at the heart of the Arab Spring, and the essence of subsequent political developments following successful revolutions, contradicted the fundamental values of the Al-Qaeda doctrine. This relates in particular to the importance of democratic self-determination and symbols of nationalism that have been the focus of attention in academic and journalistic discourse concerning the events. These are anathema to the Al-Qaeda leadership. [6]

However, despite all these challenges that seem to expose the weakness and marginalisation of Al-Qaeda, the Arab uprisings presented opportunities that some elements of Al-Qaeda may be able to exploit.

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Many commentators have observed that great upheaval is inevitably followed by great disappointment and disillusionment. Juan Zarate, for instance, has warned:

The chaos and disappointment that follow revolutions will inevitably provide many opportunities for Al-Qaeda to spread its influence. Demographic pressures, economic woes and corruption will continue to bedevil even the best-run governments in the region. Divisions will beset the protest movements, and vestiges of the old regimes may re-emerge. [7]

“The greater the level of post-revolution optimism is among Arabs and Muslims,” Wilner observes, “the greater the risk of exceptionally high levels of disillusionment, resentment, and anger if and when things go sour on the ground.” [8]

The current turmoil may, in some regions, develop into more prolonged ethnic or civil strife and violent clashes between opposing forces seeking to fill the vacuum left by the toppled dictators. This is something Al-Qaeda could exploit rhetorically, as well as more directly, through affiliates. Indeed, the removal of dictators and their apparatuses of control and subjugation, has also ushered in a period of lawlessness in some parts, which makes trafficking arms and moving fighters easier. [9] Recently, for example, the director of the British Security Service warned that as a result of the disorder, parts of the Middle East and North Africa might “once more become a permissive environment for Al-Qaeda.” [10]

Of particular concern, at the moment, is the increasingly bloody civil war in Syria, where militant Islamists are playing some role in the fighting. Proportionately, the number of jihadi fighters and Al-Qaeda sympathizers in Syria appears to be very small. Yet, a recent article in the *New York Times* warned that “Syrians involved in the armed struggle say it is becoming more radicalized: home-grown Muslim jihadists, as well as small groups of fighters from Al Qaeda, are taking a more prominent role and demanding a say in running the resistance.” Islamist extremist web forums now frequently distribute images showing armed ‘*mujahideen*’ taking part in fighting in Aleppo and elsewhere, displaying the black ‘Prophet’s banner’, which has been used by Al-Qaeda in Iraq. [11] Some, of course, may use the label without being sympathetic towards the jihadi cause. For others, however, “jihad has become a distinctive rallying cry.” [12] A particularly prominent jihadi group to emerge out of the current turmoil in Syria is *Jabhat An-Nusra*, which has been active in key areas of the conflict and particularly prolific in disseminating communiqués. These messages, in turn, have been translated into several languages, including Russian and English, in what could be seen as an attempt to recruit ‘foreign fighters’ from abroad. [13].

Aside from the on-going war in Syria, moreover, Islamist militants are increasingly prominent in other domestic conflicts, especially in northern Mali. Series of attacks have taken place in the Sinai on the Egyptian-Israeli border, which authorities have blamed on ‘jihadists’. [14] Meanwhile, clashes with Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist militants continue in Yemen, especially in the Abyan Governorate, where in August 2012 a suicide bomber killed 45 members of a tribe loyal

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to the regime. [15] Not all of these militants will be Al-Qaeda loyalists, of course, but it would be wrong to suggest the Arab Spring has ushered in the demise of Islamist-inspired violent extremism in the region.

The Arab revolutions, therefore, presented Al-Qaeda with significant problems but also potential opportunities. This article will explore the nature of Al-Qaeda's response to these events through analysing media communiqués distributed online. The focus is on material available in English, including most of Ayman Al-Zawahiri's output dedicated to the topic, much of which has been translated by Al-Qaeda activists and sympathisers themselves. The analysis is divided into two sections: the first explores the nature of the core leadership's response (this relates primarily to Zawahiri's statements on the matter) and the second discusses some additional media efforts by Al-Qaeda's affiliates and sympathisers.

### ***The Core Leadership's Media Response***

The core leadership of Al-Qaeda always valued the importance of engaging with the media or disseminating indigenous media output. In the post-9/11 period, this activity has become a central preoccupation of (what is left of) this core group. This review of the leadership's media response to the Arab Spring focuses in particular on the timing and nature of statements addressing these developments, but also on their content. In terms of the latter, emphasis is placed on exploring the way in which the Al-Qaeda leaders (primarily Zawahiri) presented the Arab revolutions to their audiences in the Middle East and elsewhere. In this regard, four major features emerged. First, Muslims were urged to see the revolutions as merely the first step in an on-going struggle for greater social justice. Second, the leaders purported to have a clear understanding of what the Arab publics genuinely wanted. Third, the masses were warned of the dangers that lay ahead if they strayed off the path prescribed by Al-Qaeda. Fourth, the messages reiterated Al-Qaeda's vision for the future as an alternative to whatever other forces might tempt or influence the Arab masses.

### ***The Nature of the Al-Qaeda Leadership's Media Response***

As noted above, the Al-Qaeda leadership's response to the initial events of the Arab Spring has been described as surprisingly slow. Although the Al-Qaeda leadership never came close to matching the almost instantaneous flow of information from the grassroots protests, As-Sahab, Al-Qaeda's chief media network, did publish a message from Ayman Al-Zawahiri less than a month after the Egyptian uprising began, which formed part of his on-going series of statements to the participants of the Arab revolutions. This series, which the Global Islamic Media Front translated as 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our Fellow Muslims in Egypt' (even though Zawahiri does not only address Egyptians) reached its tenth instalment in July 2012 and

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constitutes, what Lahoud called, “the most comprehensive response to the events in the Middle East by a leading jihadist figure.” [16] Leaders of Al-Qaeda affiliates and other Al-Qaeda leaders, such as Abu Yahya Al-Liby, also eventually responded to the revolutions, addressing Arab publics in specific geographic locations.

Perhaps aware of the criticism concerning the time it took the Al-Qaeda leadership to address the Arab masses, Zawahiri – in the fifth instalment of his ‘Hope and Glad Tidings’ series – struck an unusually humble tone in his appeal to Muslims in the region, asking them to be patient and appreciate the pressures the Al-Qaeda leadership was under from America and its allies:

My Muslim brothers, I ask your permission today to continue my talk, which might be long, because the events are occurring and changing rapidly, and I hope that our Muslim brothers realize that our speeches might be delayed a little or have longer intervals between them because of the fierce war in which the Mujahideen are clashing with the Americans. [17]

Overall, therefore, the delay in Al-Qaeda’s response to the Arab Spring does not appear to be particularly problematic, especially when justified in light of the on-going struggle against America. When compared to the Al-Qaeda leadership’s response to other seminal events affecting the *ummah*, its reaction to the Arab revolutions appears relatively quick. For example, the leadership’s initial response to the publication of the Muhammad caricatures, which sparked widespread protests throughout the Muslim world, came six months after the cartoons were originally published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005 and three months after they were printed elsewhere, by which time the issue had become well known. Eventually, the Al-Qaeda leadership called for economic boycott of goods from Denmark and elsewhere, long after such initiatives had already been launched by others. [18]

### *The Revolutions are Only the First Step*

Osama Bin Laden had issued only one public communiqué concerning the Arab Spring, before he was killed in Pakistan on 2 May 2011. His message, apparently written in April that year, was repackaged and published three weeks after his death. In the statement, Bin Laden congratulated those who had participated in the uprisings on their achievement, but warned them to “beware of dialogue”. The revolutions were merely an “opportunity for advancing the Ummah and becoming liberated from serving the whims of the rulers, manmade laws, and Western domination”. “The revolution was not one of food and clothing”, bin Laden argued, “but one of dignity and defiance, a revolution of sacrifice and giving”. Failure to grasp this opportunity and “establish justice and faith” after the revolution would be a great sin. [19]

Zawahiri has sought to frame the revolutions in the same way. He has emphasized that the work is far from complete. The *ummah* may have managed to topple the unjust rulers, but it must now ensure that a proper form of governance takes their place. Otherwise, everything will be lost.

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“The Egyptian people’s revolution succeeded in removing the tyrant”, Zawahiri remarked, “and then what? And this is the dangerous question and the big challenge”. [20] In a more recent instalment of the ‘Hope and Glad Tidings Series’, Zawahiri appealed to Egyptian Muslims:

My Muslim brothers in Egypt, a corrupt ruler has been overthrown, but the corrupt governance is still ruling. The desired goal is not to come to power either with a free, strong government or a limited, weak one, but the aim is to rule by Islam. And wasting efforts by coming to power without ruling by Islam is disaster, but the greatest disaster is coming to power and then ruling by anything except Islam. [21]

So far, therefore, Egyptians had achieved only “partial gains” but risked “losing the basics.” [22] The same applied to the other “noble and freeborn Muslims”. They “must not suffice with merely removing the tyrant whose removal is an obligation, but rather they must continue their Jihad and struggle until an Islamic government is established which guarantees justice, freedom, and independence.” [23] At this crucial juncture for the *ummah*, therefore, Zawahiri has made the case that further guidance is needed – which Al-Qaeda will provide – in order to steer the Muslim publics in the right direction.

#### *What Prompted the Events according to Al-Qaeda?*

Furthermore, like bin Laden, Zawahiri identified a set of grievances and prompters that he insists motivated those who took to the streets. Unsurprisingly, the issues mentioned reflect the core values of Al-Qaeda. “The hopes of the Muslim ummah”, Zawahiri argued, were to establish an Islamic state that would liberate Palestine, “guard morality” and end corruption. [24] Zawahiri further insisted “the removal of the Israeli embassy is the main goal in the Egyptian revolution” [25] and that:

The popular Arab uprisings proved to have an Islamic orientation in its greater part, and they rose up and raged against America’s agents who wasted their lives in suppressing the Islamic orientation of their people under the guidance, support, and planning of America and those who have turned their countries into stations of torture, detention, and persecution within the Zionist-Crusader system. [26]

Whatever the facts on the ground, therefore, the Al-Qaeda leadership has identified a set of issues it argues contributed to the Arab revolutions that thus constitute the benchmarks of its success. An important component of this narrative is a complete rejection of alternative forms of governance and society to the version espoused by the Al-Qaeda leadership. As Nelly Lahoud noted in her analysis of the first five ‘Hope and Glad Tidings’ statements, there is a particular focus on the ills of democratic rule and secular governance. [27] References to the fallacy of democracy are, of course, an ever-present feature in the discourse of the Al-Qaeda leadership. These allusions, however, became particularly acute in the aftermath of the initial Arab uprisings.

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*Warnings of the Dangers that Lie Ahead*

Zawahiri's warnings against democracy, moreover, appear to have evolved in his statements regarding the Arab Spring. Initially, he appeared to seek to nip any grassroots enthusiasm for democracy in the bud. Zawahiri then took to condemning some of the election results following successful revolutions and the course the new government appeared to be taking.

Although the Al-Qaeda leaders always voiced their animosity against democracy, the issue became particularly prominent in the leadership statements at the dawn of the Arab revolutions. Arabs were warned democracy was necessarily a *secular* form of governance [28] that “worships one idol, which is the wishes of the majority, without abiding by any religion, standards or ethics”. [29] Any concessions towards a democratic form of government or consultation in this regard were also directly tied to the sacrificing of Islamic cultural prescriptions and proliferation of vice and degradation. “It is inconceivable for a fair and above board state to be established in Egypt”, Zawahiri argued, “and yet accept the continuation of the use of impermissible wealth to freely trade the dignity and honour of Egyptians and turn Muslim and Arab Egypt to dissolute satellite channels, night clubs, gambling casinos, and nude beaches”. [30] After all, “the truth about democracy [is that] it allows everything regardless of it being degrading or contradictory, as long as the majority agrees with it.” [31]

In more recent communiqués, after successful elections, particularly in Tunisia, Zawahiri has reiterated his warnings against democracy and expressed his dissatisfaction with the results. The victory of *Ennahda* in Tunisia, appears to be of particular concern. Zawahiri condemned the mildly Islamist party as a “symptom of a modern day disease”, accusing its leaders of “inventing” a version of Islam that would please the US Department of State, the European Union and the Gulf elite. This was “an Islam according to demand” which would allow “gambling, nude beaches, usurious banks, secular laws, and submission to international legitimacy”. It was an Islam “without jihad”. [32] In the message, entitled ‘Oh People of Tunisia, Support Your Sharia’, Zawahiri expressed his dismay over seeing “the leadership of a group that relates itself to Islam and then says it does not advocate ruling by it”. [33]

Zawahiri's response to *Ennahda*'s victory in Tunisia may, perhaps, be indicative of how he plans to approach further consolidation of power by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, whose leadership he once accused of having “abandoned pursuing legitimate Muslim government in place of the current [secular] governments”. [34]

As well as delivering warnings of the ‘dangers’ Islam supposedly faces in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, Zawahiri placed emphasis in his communiqués concerning these developments on elucidating the pious alternatives he felt the *ummah* should embrace. These conveyed the same bedrock principles the Al-Qaeda leaders have communicated in the past, but perhaps with a greater sense of urgency.

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*Al-Qaeda's Agenda for Change*

"Be extremely cautious," Zawahiri warned, "that your sacrifices are not stolen, that your suffering is not used by others, and that outer appearances change, but injustice and servitude continues to exist." [35] Egyptians, in particular, would have to "restore to Egypt its leading role" as a "fortress of Islam", [36] lest all their efforts be for nothing. There were internal and external challenges, Zawahiri argued, that the *ummah* would have to address in order to ensure the uprisings ultimately brought positive benefits. Internally, there would have to be "legislative and judicial reforms," [37] with the Egyptian constitution for example being amended with the clause: "Islamic Shariah is the sole source of legislation, and all the articles of the constitution and the law which opposed it are null and void." [38] The amendments would also ensure only men could become heads of state. Furthermore, these legislative reforms would rid the region of what Zawahiri saw as a sinful society that permitted the production of alcohol and the running of nightclubs. [39] To respond to external challenges, Muslims were urged to embark upon a jihad against Israel and support the *mujahideen* fighting elsewhere in order to "free every inch of Palestine" and all the other Muslim lands. [40]

By citing these 'external challenges', Zawahiri sought to establish a connection between the localized Arab uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa with wider efforts involving Islamist insurgencies elsewhere and ultimately the United States and Western alliance. The Arab Spring, according to this interpretation, thus formed part of the global jihad being led by Al-Qaeda. In his message confirming the death of bin Laden, Zawahiri announced:

We confirm to all the Muslim people that we are their soldiers, and we will not spare any effort, Allah willing, to liberate them from the occupiers in Kashmir, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, and Palestine. And we support their blessed uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. We are fighting a single battle with them against America and its servants. [41]

Seemingly conscious of the general consensus that the Arab Spring did not conform to Al-Qaeda's agenda, Zawahiri emphasized in his forth message of 'Hope and Glad Tidings' that "your brother Mujahideen are with you [the participants of the Arab uprisings], confronting the same enemy." [42] During the revolutions, Zawahiri felt compelled to remind Muslims that the *mujahideen* were part of the *ummah* and "were not alienated from its suffering." [43] In a more recent instalment of 'Hope and Glad Tidings', Zawahiri even seemed to revisit the notion that Al-Qaeda was indeed the *ummah's* pioneering vanguard, despite its absence during the Arab Spring: "Your sons, the mujahideen, are paving the way for the heralded change with their blessed strikes against the Global Crusader Alliance that has started to stagger due to their impact." [44]

The internal and external challenges that Zawahiri mentioned, therefore, could only be met if the *ummah*, under the leadership of Al-Qaeda and the *mujahideen*, continued to fight "until we see

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the land of Islam all freed from the outer invasion and inner corruption, and united under the shadow [of] one Khilafa.”[caliphate] [45] Focusing on Egypt, Zawahiri mentioned particular ‘milestones’ that needed to be fulfilled on the path towards holistic reform. These involved, first, the establishment of “shari’ah governance” since rule by shari’ah was key to “reforming politics, society and the economy”. Second, Egyptians needed “freedom from foreign domination” and particularly from US and Western political and military subordination, to repudiate the peace treaty with Israel and help Palestinians by establishing “official offices in Egypt for all the jihadi movements whose activities are directed against Israel”. Third, Egyptians needed to solve the “problem of poverty and social injustice”, eliminate pay discrepancy and respect minimum wage. [46]

How could Al-Qaeda’s supporters fight to see through these changes? Zawahiri, of course, used his ‘Arab Spring’ messages to reiterate the perceived importance and efficacy of Islamist militancy and terrorism in neutralizing enemies and disrupting the status quo. In addition, however, he urged further street gatherings and popular protests in order to confront obstacles to change.

Thus, Zawahiri urged Tunisians to take to the streets once more: “rise up to support your Shariah. Incite your people on a popular uprising to support the Shariah and affirm Islam and rule with the Qur’an”. [47] Dissatisfied with Abd Rabbuh Mansur Al-Hadi, Ali Abdullah Saleh’s former vice president, taking over as president of Yemen, Zawahiri appealed to Yemenis: “Oh, free Yemeni people and its honourable youth: there must be a popular, rising, aware, continuous movement against corruption which remains ruling.” [48] Others, meanwhile, were urged to follow the example of the Arab revolutionaries and rise up against the government in a popular protest. Zawahiri appealed to Pakistanis, asking them to “rise up as did your brothers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Shake off the dust of humiliation, and cast off those who sold you in the slave market to America”. [49] The people of Saudi Arabia were criticized for “not moving” in the wake of the Arab uprisings and asked: “why don’t you follow the example of your brothers in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Ash-Sham?”[Syria] [50]

What is interesting here is Zawahiri’s clear endorsement of popular uprising rather than an exclusive focus on armed jihadi groups as a force for change. Indeed, in the past, Zawahiri had dismissed popular protests as being useless.

In his 2006 statement “Realities of Conflict Between Islam and Unbelievers”, for instance, Zawahiri insisted the only way to topple the ruling hierarchy would be violent jihad, anything less would be like “treating cancer with aspirin.” [51] Addressing the situation in Egypt specifically, Zawahiri argued in a book he published in 2008 that there could be no peaceful solution to the problems of Egypt, especially after the authorities banned public protests after demonstrations by the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo in February 2007. Instead, Muslims would have to focus on carefully planned attacks, seek funding and weapons in order to orchestrate

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coordinated strikes and prepare martyrdom operations. Mere public protests were useless. [52] In a 2009 message to Palestinians, Zawahiri warned that “protests do no good in the face of bombs,” Muslims must therefore take more “effective steps”. [53] Revisiting the situation in Egypt that same year, Zawahiri insisted, “the system in Egypt and in most of the Arabic and Islamic countries cannot be removed except by force.” [54]

Thus there exists a sharp contrast between Zawahiri’s support for public protest in his most recent messages and his prior rhetoric where he dismissed such methods as futile. This inconsistency could seriously undermine the impact of this message from the Al-Qaeda leadership. Indeed, as James Forest discussed, efforts have already been made to compare the events during the Arab Spring with Zawahiri’s denunciation of street protests. The Centre for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, situated within the US Department of State, for instance, produced a video, which it posted on YouTube, showing footage of Egyptian protesters celebrating Mubarak’s resignation which was edited together with excerpts from one of Zawahiri’s addresses where he stated “there is no hope to remove the corrupt regimes in Muslim countries except by force” and that no examples could be cited to prove him wrong. [55]

Interestingly, the wider network of Al-Qaeda sympathizers appears to have been engaging in its own damage control efforts in order to represent Al-Qaeda’s stance as having always been supportive of public uprising and protests and presenting Al-Qaeda as a noble and righteous defensive vanguard protecting the interests of the Muslim *ummah*. These affiliates and media outlets have effectively been trying to catch up with events whilst presenting the way in which they unfolded as conforming to Al-Qaeda’s worldview and agenda.

The next section discusses some of the efforts made by Al-Qaeda affiliates, associates and sympathizers to respond to the Arab Spring.

### ***Damage Control: Broader Media Efforts by Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates***

One prominent example of these efforts by the wider community of Al-Qaeda loyalists is the fifth issue of Al-Malahem’s *Inspire* magazine, which became available in spring 2011. The issue is largely dedicated to the Arab Spring, but also to efforts designed to dispel some of the criticism and ‘counter-narratives’ against Al-Qaeda that emerged after the Arab uprisings. [56]

For instance, the ‘Letter from the Editor’ by ‘Yahya Ibrahim’ sought to counter notions that “the revolts are bad for al Qaeda”. “This is not the case,” the editor insisted. “Why would the freedoms being granted to the people be bad for al Qaeda? If freedom is so bad for al Qaeda,” he asked, “how come the West has been practicing a restriction on the freedoms of expression when it comes to the message of the mujahidin?” Responding to accusations Al-Qaeda had previously dismissed the efficacy of public protests and the ability of the Arab publics to force through change peacefully, the letter argued: “Another line that is being pushed by Western leaders is that

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because the protests in Egypt and Tunisia were peaceful, they proved al Qaeda – which calls for armed struggle – to be wrong. That is another fallacy.” Al-Qaeda is “not against regime changes through protests but it is against the idea that change should be only through peaceful means to the exclusion of force”, the editor argued. To support his case, he cited both the conflict that ensued in Libya (ignoring the support rebels received from NATO) and Zawahiri’s support for “the protests that swept Egypt back in 2007” where the latter “alluded to the fact that even if the protests were peaceful, the people need to prepare themselves militarily.” [57]

As if in an attempt to rewrite its own history, perhaps hoping not many remembered Zawahiri’s prior denunciation of public protests as a method for regime change, *Inspire* republished an excerpt from one of his communiqués from 2007 (entitled ‘The Advice of One Concerned’ at the time) under the heading ‘The Short & Long-term Plans after Protests’. In the statement, Zawahiri urged Egyptians to “rise up and demonstrate” against police brutality and unlawful arrests, suggesting people could “besiege the police station” in question or “take to the streets in mass protests” to force the government to give in. [58]

Although clearly endorsing public protests, the context for Zawahiri was an immediate grassroots response to a specific grievance, not regime change. For the latter, even in this statement, Zawahiri still called for groups to attack “Crusader-Jewish interests”, asking – in the long term – for greater public support for the “Islamic mujahid movement”, lead by Al-Qaeda, as a force for change. [59] The inclusion of this statement thus appears to be part of an effort by the editors of *Inspire* to gloss over Zawahiri’s unequivocal dismissal of public protests as a force for fundamental change and removal of regimes.

Other contributions to the ‘special’ section on the Arab Spring in the fifth issue of *Inspire* reiterated the point made by Zawahiri in his ‘Hope and Glad Tidings’ messages, insisting Arabs had only completed the first stage of a long process towards holistic reform. The essential next step would be to sever links with the West and Israel, counter their influence through force and implement shari’ah law as the governing principle of state and society. The late Samir Khan, for instance, who created *Inspire*, warned Egyptians that the revolutions were not the “end goal” [60] whilst Ibrahim Al-Rubaish (of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) thought the revolutions would bring “slight reforms like some aspects of freedom and increases of income” but that all would be lost if man-made laws were not abrogated and rule by *shari’ah* not implemented. [61] Interestingly, the excerpt from Al-Rubaish’s address (which was first published February 2011 under the title ‘Ben Ali and Ibn Saud’) that featured in *Inspire*, left out the part of his statement where he endorsed Al-Qaeda affiliates and allies as leaders in the Arab uprisings. Al-Rubaish, in his original address, asked that power be handed to “the likes of the Mujahid, [Afghan-Taliban leader] Mullah Muhammad Umar, [Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader] Abu Umar Al Bahghdadi and other similar Muslim leaders” who could implement God’s law. In this respect, he suggested Al-Qaeda’s affiliate Al-Shabaab in Somalia was the correct example for Arabs to follow in the post-revolution societies. [62]

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Other Al-Qaeda affiliates, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), followed this common thread that various components of Al-Qaeda developed in reaction to the Arab Spring. A communiqué from AQIM addressing Tunisians issued in February 2011, for instance, reminded them that they “should not think that they have won the battle with Kufr [infidelity] and transgression. The battle is a long one and is still in its early stages. Whatever they have gained is only the first round. There are many rounds left. This included tackling, what AQIM argued was the “root cause” of their problems, the pervasive influence of the Crusader West. [63]

As well as seeking to convince Muslims and Arabs that the uprisings were only the first step, *Inspire 5* contains some remarkable attempts to re-write history by suggesting that Al-Qaeda was not caught off guard during these seminal events and that the group was, in fact, at the helm of the broader revolutionary movement. Abu Suhail suggested that: “If this Egyptian revolution has taught us anything, it has taught us that sitting and waiting for tyrants to fall is not practical; mobilization of the people is necessary for the tyrants to give in.” “This,” Suhail insisted, “is what your brothers in the al Qaeda Organization and other jihadi organizations have been working for.” The Arab Spring had, in fact, “proved that al Qaeda’s rage is shared by the millions of Muslims across the world whether they are in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Yemen or elsewhere.” [64]

Anwar Al-Awlaki’s attempts to present the Arab uprisings in a positive light for Al-Qaeda were more sophisticated. His essay, titled ‘The Tsunami of Change’, reminded readers of the close relationship the West had had with the toppled dictatorships and how quickly Western leaders had abandoned their former allies once they appreciated the scale of the protests. Rejecting suggestions the events were bad for Al-Qaeda, Awlaki insisted: “We do not know yet what the outcome would be, and we do not have to. The outcome doesn’t have to be an Islamic government for us to consider what is occurring to be a step in the right direction.” To begin with, the system of total oppression and control had been dismantled, giving the *mujahideen* more space to manoeuvre. [65] Indeed, as noted at the beginning of this article, some areas in the region have seen heightened jihadi activity as a result of turmoil and reduced levels of government surveillance and control.

Whereas *Inspire* and other Al-Qaeda-linked outlets have sought to convince its public that the Arab Spring fully conformed with Al-Qaeda’s strategy and that the group remains at the pinnacle of resistance against corruption, subjugation and vice, other Al-Qaeda ‘spokespersons’ have adopted a different approach, recognizing the challenges the uprisings present for Al-Qaeda, almost excusing the group’s absence during these events. For example, ‘Sheikh Atiyyatullah’ (Jamal Ibrahim Ishtaywi al-Misrati), a veteran of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, issued a communiqué on behalf of Al-Qaeda in March 2011 in response to the on-going events of the Arab Spring where he admitted: “It is true that it [the Arab Spring] is not the best and not exactly as we had hoped, but the removal of some evil or much evil is something which pleases to all people. We hope that this is a good step ahead for even more good in the future”.

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Regarding criticism of Al-Qaeda's inability to see through change as envisaged in its rhetoric, Atiyyatullah reminded people that "Al-Qaeda does not have a "magic wand" as they say." "Al-Qaeda is only a small part of this striving and Mujahid Ummah," Atiyyatullah continued. "Do not overestimate it. We should all know our abilities, and let us aid each other in piousness, righteousness and in making Jihad in the way of Allah." [66]

Looking towards the future, a publication by 'Abdullah bin Mohammed', entitled *Valuable Collection for the Strategic Memorandum Series*, sought to assess the impact of the Arab Spring on the region and on Al-Qaeda. This collection of essays was published in the spring of 2011 by Al-Ma'sada Media Publications. Touching upon a number of issues, the author argued the Arab uprisings presented tremendous opportunities that Al-Qaeda could exploit. He compared the events to the Battle of Bu'ath in 617, when two Arab tribes from Yathrib (Medina) fought each other, resulting in heightened tensions and mutual animosity that preceded the prophet Mohammed's *hijrah* to the city and the advent of Islam. [67] After the Battle of Bu'ath, Abdullah bin Mohammed argued, "the balance of power in Medina was upset to open the way for any young power that could lead and would be able to fill the vacuum." The same was happening in the Middle East and North Africa today. The "exceptional state of solidarity" that emerged during the uprisings themselves was dissipating and anarchy was looming. The "small and scattered" jihadist movement had to become united, Mohammed argued, in order to exploit this period and pursue a "common purpose". [68]

What was needed, therefore, was a comprehensive alliance of jihadi movements in order to exploit the vacuum and turmoil in the wake of the Arab Spring. For Al-Qaeda to be successful in this endeavour, however, Muhammed argued the group would have to alter its image, in part due to its association with excessive targeting and killing of Muslims (from which Zawahiri himself has sought to disassociate Al-Qaeda in his recent messages). Muhammed wrote in one of his essays in the series:

Since the discussion has led us to alliances that could serve us during the upcoming phase, I have been wondering since the outbreak of the Arab revolutions if it is good for us to continue with the name al-Qaeda or will the next phase require a new name? The answer came from al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula when it entered into tribal alliances and changed its name to Ansar al-Shariah in order to acclimate and benefit from the new circumstances. For the sake of any expansion we want to achieve, we must forsake any cloak that others cannot wear. I add to that, if we don't want to avoid reality, we should acknowledge that this name has been tarnished by unprecedented disinformation campaigns through all these years alongside the gains and support that it had accomplished in the Islamic street. In order for us not to gamble the chances of our success in the coming phase because of the existence of old ideas in the minds of some, and in order to cut off the means of those who want to exploit these old ideas to turn the masses of people away from us, we must enter this phase under a new inclusive name.[69]

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### ***Conclusions***

The Arab Spring presented immense challenges for Al-Qaeda, to which it has sought to respond in various communiqués and media initiatives. These initiatives have attempted to present a version of the events that conforms to Al-Qaeda's strategy and broader agenda, whilst leaving plenty of scope for further strategic direction from Al-Qaeda leaders in the future. Desperate to seem relevant to those who took to the streets in protest against the ruling regimes and eager to exploit inevitable disillusionment following the Arab Spring, the Al-Qaeda leadership and affiliates continue to issue communiqués appealing to Arab publics.

Both the leadership and various affiliates and sympathisers have argued that the revolutions merely constitute the first step in a long process towards reform. Dismissing notions that the uprisings proved Al-Qaeda's tactical prescriptions to be irrelevant, Al-Qaeda has tried to present guidelines to the post-revolution societies regarding the next steps.

Conscious of the current turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa, various components of Al-Qaeda hope to be able to consolidate amid the lawlessness and power vacuums that have emerged in some regions following successful revolutions and in areas experiencing on-going conflict. Equally aware, however, of Al-Qaeda's increasing marginalisation, the group's media publications continue to strive to present jihadism as the most appropriate way to protect collective interests, eliminate adversaries, eradicate vice and establish a zealously pious social order.

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### **Notes**

[1] See e.g. Jason Burke (2011) *The 9/11 Wars*, Allen Lane, London, p. 485.

[2] James J.F. Forest (2012) 'Perception Challenges Faced by Al-Qaeda on the Battlefield of Influence Warfare' in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, March, p.18.

[3] Alex S. Wilner. (2011) 'Opportunity Costs or Costly Opportunities? The Arab Spring, Osama Bin Laden, and Al-Qaeda's African Affiliates' in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 5, Issues 3 - 4, September, p. 55.

[4] A.S. Wilner (2011), op. cit.; Nelly Lahoud (2011) 'Ayman al-Zawahiri's Reaction to Revolution in the Middle East' in *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 4, No. 4.

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- [5] J. Burke (2011), op. cit., p. 486; Analysis Intelligence (2011) 'Al-Qaeda's Democratic Conundrum' (17 March), see, <http://analysisintelligence.com/tag/yemen> [as of 2 August 2012].
- [6] See e.g. J. Burke (2011), op. cit., p. 485; Fawaz A. Gerges (2011) *The Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, Oxford University Press, pp. 4 - 5; Rob Crilly (2012) 'Osama bin Laden's death put al-Qaeda in irreversible decline', *The Telegraph* (1 August).
- [7] Juan Z. Zarate. (2011) 'Al Qaeda Stirs Again' in *The New York Times*, 17 April.
- [8] A. Wilner (2011), op. cit., p. 57.
- [9] Ibid.
- [10] Nick Hopkings (2012) 'MI5 warns Al-Qaeda regaining UK toehold after Arab spring', in *The Guardian*, 25 June.
- [11] See e.g. the 'Defender of the Lands' blog <http://defenderofthelands.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/the-land-of-patience-and-jihad-battle.html> [as of 2 August 2012].
- [12] Neil MacFarquhar and Hwaida Saad (2012) 'As Syrian War Drags On, Jihadists Take Bigger Role' in *The New York Times*, 29 July.
- [13] At the time of writing (Dec. 2012), approximately 60 statements from Jabhat An-Nusra were available on Islamist extremist websites.
- [14] See e.g. BBC (2012) 'Egyptian police killed in attack on Israeli border', 6 August; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19142882> [as of 6 August 2012].
- [15] *The Guardian* (2012) 'Yemen Suicide Bombing Kills 45 at a Village Funeral', 5 August; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/05/yemen-suicide-bombing-funeral?newsfeed=true> [as of 6 August]
- [16] N. Lahoud (2011), op. cit., p. 4.
- [17] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 5'; distributed by As-Sahab (14 April), translated by Global Islamic Media Front, available from Islamist extremist web forum.
- [18] The first of the Al-Qaeda leadership's responses to the cartoon issue was Zawahiri's message 'The Alternative is Da'wa and Jihad' (March 2006), the matter was dealt with in a few subsequent communiqués, including bin Laden's 'Oh, People of Islam' (April 2006) and Zawahiri's 'Bush, the Vatican's Pope, Darfur and the Crusades' (September 2006).
- [19] Osama Bin Laden (2011) 'The Last Speech of the Martyr of Islam - as we see him - "To The Muslim Ummah"', published by As-Sahab (19 May), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.
- [20] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 5'.
- [21] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt, Part 9: Why did we Rebel Against Him?', distributed by Al-Fajr Media Center (19 February), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.
- [22] Ibid.
- [23] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt Part 4', distributed by As-Sahab (4 March), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.
- [24] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 3', distributed by As-Sahab (27 February), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.
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[25] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt ;part 8: And what About the American Hostage Warren Weinstein', distributed and translated by As-Sahab and Al-Masadh Media (December).

[26] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt Part 9: Why did we Rebel Against Him?'

[27] N. Lahoud, op.cit. (2011).

[28] See e.g. Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad tidings to our people in Egypt: Part 1,' published by As-Sahab (19 February), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.

[29] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 4'.

[30] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt; Part 9: Why did we Rebel Against Him?'

[31] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt; Part 5'.

[32] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'Oh People of Tunisia, Support Your Sharia', distributed by As-Sahab (10 June), transcript available from Flashpoint Partners.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Zawahiri, A. Al (1991) *The Bitter Harvest: The Brotherhood in Sixty Years*, translation in R. Ibrahim (2007) *Al Qaeda Reader*, Broadway Books, New York and G. Kepel & J.P. Milelli (2008) (ds.) *Al Qaeda in its Own Words* (2008). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

[35] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 3'.

[36] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 8: And what About the American Hostage Warren Weinstein'.

[37] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 6'; distributed by As-Sahab (21 May). English transcript available from the NEFA foundation.

[38] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad tidings to our people in Egypt: Part 7', distributed by As-Sahab (9 August), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.

[39] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 6'.

[40] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'Move Forward, O Lions of Sham', distributed by As-Sahab and Al-Fajr (12 February), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.

[41] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'The Noble Knight Dismounted', distributed by As-Sahab (8 June), translated by the Global Islamic Media Front.

[42] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 4.'

[43] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'Do Not become Weak nor Grieve', distributed by As-Sahab (15 August), transcript available from the NEFA foundation.

[44] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'A Message of Hope and Glad tidings to our people in Egypt: Part 7'.

[45] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Part 8: And what About the American Hostage Warren Weinstein'.

[46] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'A Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt; Part 9: Why did we Rebel Against Him?'.

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- [47] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'Oh People of Tunisia, Support Your Sharia', distributed by As-Sahab (10 June).
- [48] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'Yemen: Between a Fugitive Puppet and his new Replacement', distributed by As-Sahab (15 May), transcript available from Flashpoint Partners.
- [49] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2011) 'The Noble Knight Dismounted'.
- [50] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2012) 'To Our People in the Place of the Revelation and the Cradle of Islam', distributed by As-Sahab (18 May), translated by Fursan Al-Balagh Media.
- [51] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2006) 'Realities of the Conflict Between Islam and Unbelief' ; published by As-Sahab (22 December), available from IntelCenter (2008); Words of Ayman al-Zawahiri Vol. 1. Tempest Publishing, Alexandria, VA
- [52] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2008) *Exoneration: A Letter Exonerating the Ummah of the Pen and the Sword from the Unjust Allegation of Feebleness and Weakness*, advertised by As-Sahab early in 2008.
- [53] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2009) 'The Massacre of Gaza and the Siege of the Traitors,' published by As-Sahab (6 January), translated by Global Islamic Media Front.
- [54] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2009) 'The Realities of Jihad and Fallacy of Hypocrisy,' published by As-Sahab (4 August), secured from Islamist web forums. Transcript also available from the NEFA foundation.
- [55] James J.F. Forest, (2012), op. cit.
- [56] Subsequent issues of *Inspire* (issues 7 and 8) moreover advertised a forthcoming interview with Adam Gadahn titled 'The Arab Intifada: Hopes, Concerns & Dangers'; however, it was not included in the ninth and final issue of the magazine.
- [57] Yahya Ibrahim (2011) 'Letter from the Editor: Protest Focus Spring 2011', published in *Inspire*, by Al-Malahem Media, distributed online in spring 2011: page 5.
- [58] Ayman Al-Zawahiri (2007) "The Advice of One Concerned", republished in *Inspire*, I 5, Spring 2011; published by Al-Malahem.
- [59] Ibid.
- [60] Shamir Khan (2011) 'The Egyptian', published in *Inspire* , Issue 5, Spring 2011, p. 45.
- [61] Ibrahim Al-Rubaish (2011) 'Al-Saud: Lodging a Criminal' in *Inspire*, Issue 5, Spring 2011, p. 47.
- [62] Ibrahim Al-Rubaish (2011) 'Ben Ali and Ibn Saud', published and translated by Al-Malahim Media (26 February).
- [63] Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (2011) 'To Our Fellow Muslims in Tunisia: The Taghoot has Fled, but the Infidelic and Taghooti System Remains',;statement issued online in February 2011.
- [64] Abu Suhail (2011) 'The Way Forward' in *Inspire*, Issue 5, Spring 2011, p. 43.
- [65] Anwar Al-Awlaki (2011) 'The Tsunami of Change' in *Inspire*, Issue 5, Spring 2011, pp. 50-53.
- [66] Sheikh Atiyyatullah (2011) 'The People's Revolt... the Fall of the Corrupt Arab Regime... the Demolishment of the Idol of Stability... and the New Beginning', communiqué distributed online in March, translated by Ansarnet.
- [67] e.g Michael Lecker (2003) 'King Ibn Ubayy and the Qussas', in Herbert Berg (Ed.) *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*. Leiden: Brill, p. 40. See further on consequences of the Battle of Bu'ath (pp. 39-48).
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[68] Abdullah bin Mohammed (2011) *Valuable Collection for the Strategic Memorandum Series*, published by Al-Ma'sada Media Publications, distributed by Ansarnet: quotes from first essay, 'Strategic Memorandum [1]'.

[69] Ibid: taken from 'Strategic Memorandum [3]'.

## The State as a Terrorist: France and the Red Hand

by Thomas Riegler

### *Abstract*

*The present article explores a less well-known episode in the history of terrorism: The Red Hand (La Main Rouge). During the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962) it emerged as an obscure counterterrorist organisation on the French side. Between 1956 and 1961, the Red Hand targeted the network of arms suppliers for the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) and executed hits against rebel emissaries both in Western Europe and in North Africa. Today, there is consensus among scholars that the Red Hand had been set up by the French foreign intelligence service in order to strike at the subversive enemy. This makes the Red Hand a telling example of state terrorism and its capacity for unrestricted violence in 'emergency' situations. Since the Red Hand's counterterrorist acts ultimately proved to be futile and due to the repercussions caused in France as well, the case study also highlights the limits of this type of counter-terrorism.*

### *Origins of the Red Hand*

In 1959, a member of the mysterious Red Hand gave an interview to the British newspaper *Daily Mail*. According to him, the mission of *La Main Rouge* was to give the FLN a taste of its own medicine:

‘The Red Hand is neither cranky nor a racist organisation. It emerged because of the existence of terrorism. (...) Although up to now no French official has dared to admit our existence, the newspapers and the public have recognised us as the authors of numerous counterterrorist exploits. We are not fanatical about violence. We claim the distinction of having to put an end to the activities of certain arms traffickers.’[1]

Although this journalistic scoop was later revealed as being part of a deception plan, the main message was correct: The Red Hand had been specifically created to destroy the lifeline of the FLN and to sow terror in its ranks. But contrary to what the *Daily Mail* interview suggested, the Red Hand was not an autonomous organisation; it had been specifically created within the realm of the French security state to wage war in the shadows.

The Red Hand's chosen symbol was a deliberate allusion to the ‘hand of Fatima’, a symbol of luck for Muslims, which was usually reproduced in black or gold. Now it stood for acts of terrorism and became a frightening symbol for unrestricted violence.[2] Already in 1959 an inquiry by West German authorities had established, that certain murders were committed by ‘a secret organization called The Red Hand, which works in co-operation with the French *Deuxieme Bureau*, or is given a free hand by it.’[3] This foreign intelligence service had been

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renamed in 1945 and became the *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage* (SDECE). While contemporary reports often hinted at a form of collaboration between the secret service and outside elements, more recent research has established that the Red Hand was only a front for the SDECE and its operational branch, the *Action Service*. For example, in 1985, French journalists Roger Faligot and Pascal Krop claimed: 'Today we can disclose that the 'Red Hand' was purely an SDECE creation. 'We guided this affair by remote control from the beginning to end', stated a former director, 'We had given *Action [Service]* branch the job of playing the part.' [4] Furthermore, despite the fact that there is still no official confirmation, several key officials involved acknowledged in the meantime that all operations of the Red Hand had been approved at the highest political levels of France's Fifth Republic. [5] As researchers Jim House and Neil McMasters have pointed out: 'The heads of government had no moral or political compunction against the use of illegal killings in the 'war on terrorism', rather their main concern was that such assassinations should never be traceable back to them and that 'deniability' should be maintained at all costs.' [6]

Allegedly, the origins of the Red Hand can be traced to certain vigilante groups set up by the French settler community in the Maghreb during the 1950s. Organisations like *La Main Noire* [the Black Hand] in Morocco or *La Main Rouge* in Tunisia had aimed at preventing the decolonisation process by striking against outspoken advocates of self-government. [7] The killers got official assistance through the law enforcement agencies looking the other way and through the active co-operation of the Secret Service. [8] In the case of the Tunisian trade union leader Ferhat Hached, who had been gunned down in 1952, a former member of *la Main Rouge* confirmed the responsibility of his group in 2009: 'I believe what I did was legitimate, and I would do it again if I had to,' Antoine Melero said. 'Hached's assassination was definitely committed by *La Main Rouge* in agreement with French government officials in Tunisia.' [9] In 1955, the vigilante groups claimed another prominent victim: The director of the Lesieur oil company and newspaper editor, Jacques Lemaigre-Dubreuil; he was murdered in Casablanca – obviously, because he had been a supporter of an independent Morocco. [10]

In the wake of the independence of Tunisia and Morocco in 1957, the vigilantes were fully committed to protect *L'Algérie française* as the last French colonial possession in the Maghreb. But, as historian Mathilde von Bülow has pointed out, the Red Hand's alleged record of assassinations and sabotage was 'too spectacular and often too professional to be the work of mere amateurs, even the ones with semi-official support.' [11] In fact, the actions of the Red Hand were a major part of France's clandestine and paramilitary war effort against the Algerian rebels. According to a 'Plan for the Protection of North Africa against the Cold War' conceived in 1955, which had been obtained by Von Bülow, the objectives of French special services included efforts 'to destroy [détruire] the leaders of enemy networks', 'to annihilate [anéantir] the clandestine communications means [of the enemy]', and 'to destroy [détruire] the traffic,

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transit, and supply of armaments and other war materiel for the benefit of the North African rebellion'. These efforts were to be conducted both at home and abroad.'[12]

### ***The Terrorist Campaign of the Red Hand***

As outlined in the 1955 plan, the Red Hand served two major objectives: Disrupting the FLN's supply line and to assassinate rebel cadres as well as their supporters even outside the actual war zone. This escalation of the French struggle in Algeria on to an international level had been prompted by the increasingly successful attempts of the rebels to get logistical support and war materials from abroad. Whereas the French had successfully thwarted an earlier effort to obtain arms from Western Europe, by 1956/57 the FLN had turned to international arms traders in order to acquire more modern equipment.[13] A major hub of these supply lines was the Federal Republic of Germany, where legal loopholes rendered the detection and prosecution of illegal arms trafficking very difficult. As long as these gaps were not closed, Western Germany was 'a happy hunting ground for the dealers.'[14]

Furthermore, since the government in Bonn was keen to establish diplomatic links to the Arab world, Algerian nationalists could move freely in the country under the cover of diplomatic immunity. Therefore the Red Hand focused its activities especially on Western Germany. Starting in September 1956, there were at least four attempts against the life of arms manufacturer Otto Schlüter over a period of two years. When the last bomb attack accidentally claimed the life of his mother and wounded his daughter, Schlüter finally retired from business.[15] Another target was the arms dealer Georg Puchert in Frankfurt he had been contracted in 1958 by the FLN to supply *Wilaya 5*, one of its operations zone situated in West-Algeria. Initially, the French used sabotage to deter Puchert: Frogmen of the *Action Service* scuttled his freighter 'Atlas', which had been loaded with Norwegian dynamite for the FLN, in Hamburg's harbour.[16] Then, in September 1958, Puchert's Swiss associate Marcel Leopold was killed in Geneva by means of a poisoned dart shot into his neck, ejected from a kind of bicycle pump gun.[17] Since all of these efforts had failed in discouraging the arms dealer, the Red Hand went in for the killing stroke: on March 3, 1959, Puchert died when a limpet bomb attached under the driver's seat of his Mercedes detonated when triggered by an inertia-based mechanism. Filled with ball-bearings, it did relatively little damage to the car, but left Puchert's riddled body slumped over the steering wheel.[18] During the following two years four more German businessmen with contacts to the FLN were also targeted: One of them was killed outright, another severely wounded; in two cases the attacks failed.

In addition, The Red Hand's campaign of terror struck also at the strong FLN presence in West Germany: in 1958 lawyer Ali Ahcene was gunned down in front of the Tunisian embassy in Bad Godesberg. Abd el-Solvalar met a similar fate in front of Saarbrücken's train station in 1959. During the same year, a business partner of Puchert, Abdelkader Nousari, lost his arms when a

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parcel bomb exploded. A shooting in Cologne on 22 October 22 1959, claimed yet another Algerian victim while two others were wounded. In this case, the killers belonged to a rival group of the FLN, the *Mouvement National Algérien* (MNA), which collaborated with the French against its common enemy. But according to a police document from 1961, obtained by this author in the Swiss Federal Archive, not all terrorist strikes during this time had been really orchestrated by the Red Hand – the Swiss report claimed that some explosions had been the work of left-wing extremists, backed by the Soviet Union, in order to influence public opinion in West Germany. The Swiss police report mentions a visit of a certain agent of the East German intelligence service in a Munich based firm; it was targeted - allegedly by the Red Hand - only weeks afterwards.[19]

However, not only Cold War rivalries influenced the secret struggle; there was also cross-national cooperation behind the Red Hand's activities: in 1996, Constantine Melnik, who had served as security advisor to Prime Minister Michel Debre (he was involved in setting up the Red Hand), emphasised in an interview with a German weekly: 'There are situations, where enemies of the state have to be liquidated. Back then as well as today.' Since the Federal Republic of Germany had been the main supply source for the FLN's weapons, something had to be done: 'We could not tolerate this' – even if it meant sanctioning terror attacks in a neighbouring state, that was also a key NATO partner. But Melnik also stated that the French had, in fact, received implicit assistance from the Western German intelligence service in the form of information on FLN movements. Because of this, the Red Hand was able to operate 'precisely'. [20] While this claim remains unsubstantiated, historian Matthias Rizi has pointed out, that the government of chancellor Konrad Adenauer at least played a double-cross game: on the one hand, it supported Algeria's claim to independence in order to enhance its image in a post-colonial North Africa, on the other hand, it gradually restricted the freedom of movement of FLN emissaries in Germany, while turning a blind eye towards French intelligence operations on its territory.[21] Furthermore, it was reported that the Federal Criminal Police had suppressed investigations into the matter of the Red Hand.[22]

The Federal Republic was not the only theatre of Red Hand operations in Western Europe: in Belgium, activist Akli Aïssiou and two FLN advocates, Georges Laperches and Pierre Le Greve, were murdered in 1960.[23] The Red Hand was also implicated in the assassinations of Auguste Thuveny in Rabat (1958) and Ould Aoudia [24] in Paris (1959) – both lawyers by profession. In addition, it was as well responsible for the attempt on the life of FLN-representative Tayeb Boularouf in Rome (1959).[25] In 1960, Felix Moumie, a political leader from Cameroon, got a dose of thallium slipped into his drink in a Geneva restaurant. The assassin, a French secret service agent, had posed as a journalist interested in African politics.[26] On his deathbed, Moumie is said to have accused the Red Hand of his murder. In 1961, Switzerland witnessed yet another murder connected to the Red Hand: businessman Paul Stauffer was cut down by five bullets in the centre of Zurich.[27]

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There may also have been an internal role for the Red Hand in France: in their analysis of the struggle between the FLN and the security services in Paris in 1961, Jim House and Neil McMasters concluded that ‘during September and October well over 120 Algerians were murdered by the police in the Paris region’.[28] Small mobile teams seized suspected FLN activists at night, bundled them into unmarked cars, and murdered them in isolated locations. The killers allegedly originated mainly from ‘ultra’ elements in the police force, *harkis* (native Algerians armed units under French command) or came from the right-wing *Organisation de l’Armée Secrete* (OAS), which fought for a continuation of *Algérie Française*. Yet, as House and McMasters put it, there may have been also ‘a very discreet cooperation or ‘convergence’ in operations’ between the Paris police and the SDECE (and subsequently the Red Hand). The bodies of some Algerians, who had been interrogated and murdered in Paris, were allegedly cemented in concrete inside of oil drums and then dumped from airplanes into the Mediterranean. [29]

The main killing fields of the Red Hand are said to have been situated in North Africa and the Middle East, the main strongholds of the FLN. However, unlike the events in Western Europe, activities in these theatres of covert action are less well documented.[30] While there are no reliable figures for the overall number of victims, Constantine Melnik has stated that the ‘secret killing machine’ claimed 135 lives in 1960 alone.[31]

In conducting its operations, the Red Hand had quickly reached notoriety: Its arsenal and tactics were indeed worthy of a spy novel – booby-trapped cars, letter bombs, abductions, sabotage of cargo-ships as well as assassinations by pen-shaped pistols or by blowpipe.[32] But not only the means were extraordinary, the rank and file of the Red Hand proved to be a ‘wild bunch’: For example, the outfit that killed Georg Puchert consisted of four men: Jean Viari, a former secret agent in Morocco also known as ‘The Killer’; a man nicknamed ‘Pedro the scarface’; Roger (Christian) Durieux, a former agent with a long criminal record in Germany, and Jean Baptiste von Cotten, ‘supposedly’ a member of the French foreign intelligence service – according to a Western German prosecutor.[33] The man who pulled the strings was exposed as SDECE-Colonel Marcel Mercier, a former member of the *Résistance in the Second World War* and later an alleged expert in combating ‘communist subversion and Arabian nationalists’.[34]

From the outset, gangsters and thugs from the criminal underworld had been recruited for the Red Hand - men like Jo Attia from Tangiers. But his mission to assassinate a Moroccan nationalist by blowing up a hotel in Tetouan in January 1956 went wrong and he had to be extradited at the cost of publicity. From then on, according to Faligot and Krop, only small specialised teams from the *Action Service* were authorised to act: Either they had to conduct ‘*Arma*’ operations (against FLN supply lines) or ‘*Homo*’ (homicide) missions.[35]

The unusual choice of weapons and the methods of killings (e.g. drive-by shootings), all gave the Red Hand a sinister, cloak-and-dagger style image. This deflected attention away from its real

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origins and purpose. In April 1960, even a press conference was hosted in a Versailles Villa: a one-armed colonel with ‘ice grey’ hair, allegedly a veteran of the French war (and defeat) in Vietnam (1954), informed selected journalists about a secret organisation called *Catena* (‘The Chain’), created ‘to prevent the Christian West being engulfed by the Barbarians!’[36] *Catena* was then identified as the ‘centrepiece’ of the Red Hand in West German press reports.[37] However, according to Faligot and Krop, it did in reality not exist – like the propagated myth of a vigilante force running loose, the ultra-secretive *Catena* had been yet another public relations stunt to obscure the true background of the Red Hand.[38]

### ***Outcomes and Consequences***

With regard to the consequences of the Red Hand’s terror campaign, there is consensus among scholars that this form of covert warfare achieved only limited results. Although it caused havoc amongst FLN’s supply lines [39], this success also led to a redirection of the flow of arms towards the Eastern bloc. As Mathilde von Bülow has pointed out, the effective campaign of sabotage and assassination ‘forced the Algerian nationalists to rely increasingly on the Soviet bloc for aid. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the People’s Republic of China replaced German (and other) arms traffickers as the FLN’s principal purveyors, providing weapons in exchange for hard currency. Occurring behind the Iron Curtain, these transactions were much more difficult for SDECE to track and kill on the spot. Intelligence on arms trafficking thus became ‘more rare’, ‘less precise’, ‘more delayed’, and hence less actionable.’[40] In the same vein, Douglas Porch argues that the French terror campaign had ultimately been counterproductive: first, by opening of a European front in the conflict, the French unintentionally persuaded its allies that the Algerian conflict had to be settled. Second, the terror of the Red Hand thwarted the outrage over the FLN’s own usage of terrorism. Even president Charles de Gaulle is said to have complained that his agents were using methods ‘unworthy’ of gentlemen.[41]

Finally, the Red Hand proved to be a creation that eventually took on its own master: in order to prevent Algeria’s secession from France, existing networks in the French security- and defence establishment formed the *Organisation de l’Armée Secrete* (OAS) in 1961. The OAS tried to stop the political negotiations leading to a resolution of the war by widespread acts of sabotage and terrorism – and this not only in Algeria but also in mainland France. In 1962, the OAS even made several attempts on the life of president de Gaulle. There appear to have been strong connections between the OAS and the Red Hand. Contemporary author Joachim Joesten even equated both organisations: ‘Putting it in a nutshell, the OAS is the Red Hand, but minus official (governmental) support. The other ingredients are the same.’[42] While this claim cannot be substantiated, it is well established that a high percentage of officers from the SDECE and *Action Service*, including the head of the later outfit, sympathized with the OAS and provided it with assistance during 1961.[43] Colonel Yves Godard, a key OAS leader, had built an intelligence

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network for his organisation by exploiting his wide circle of friends and contacts with senior officers in the police, army, and the SDECE: 'They provided him with detailed and sometimes remarkably recent information about FLN agents and sympathizers, [...].'[44] Without being able to rely on these 'old boy networks', the OAS would not have survived for long.[45] Another factor that benefitted the OAS was that its former comrades in the intelligence services simply refused to join the fight against the OAS. In 1961, General Grossin objected to the deployment of his *Action Service*: 'I'm against the OAS. But I don't want to hunt down officers like ourselves. That's the cops' job, not ours. We mustn't make the 'firm' blow itself up.'[46]

### ***The Red Hand as a Showcase for State Terrorism***

The term 'terrorism' is usually applied in a very narrow sense to refer to certain types of political violence carried out by non-state actors. The question remains whether a certain type of violence committed by state forces can be also constitute 'terrorism'. This topic is highly controversial in the academic field – many researchers dismiss the label 'state terrorism' outright. This author argues strongly in favour of the proposition that there is such a thing as 'state terrorism'. Use of the term, of course, has to be restricted to the violent conduct of conflicts in which regular state agents imitate a terrorist or irregular enemy and use the same dirty tactics through parallel structures of clandestine, paramilitary forces who apply 'terror to fight terror'. 'State terrorism' can thus be defined as certain uses of extra-judicial violence by government forces in an irregular or unconventional conflict. In this situation all traditional rules are suspended and the subversive enemy is placed outside of the protection of the law. This is exactly what happened in the case of the Red Hand.

According to Hannah Arendt large-scale terror is the 'essence' of a totalitarian order; it aims to establish and keeping in place a system of total domination. However, extra-judicial violence may be a constant potentiality of all state systems, including liberal and democratic governments, especially during national emergencies such as war or in the face of a perceived threat to the security of government and the people.[47] As the example of the Red Hand clearly demonstrates, a democratic government orchestrated a policy of state-sanctioned murder. In this particular French case, state terrorism was constituted by the following characteristics:

- Red Hand terrorism had a strong ideological foundation: According to the doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire* which was shaped by the French army in its postcolonial campaigns in East Asia and the Maghreb, Western civilisation itself was under attack by global communism. The new forms of guerrilla warfare and terrorism perpetrated by organisations like the FLN amounted to a deadly challenge that had to be fought on its own terms.[48] As Colonel Roger Trinquier put it in his influential study *La Guerre Moderne* (1961): '[...] it is certainly not methods of traditional warfare we should employ. Attacked on our own territory with the methods of modern warfare, we must
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carry the war to the enemy with the same methods.’[49] This is exactly what happened in the case of the Red Hand: The SDECE imitated its enemies by establishing a clandestine, paramilitary death squad, to carry out extra-legal assassinations and sabotage – even operating in sovereign nations friendly to France.

- The secret struggle was not only endorsed by the political establishment - the SDECE got its directives from the very top of government. The perceived different nature of the struggle against the FLN seemingly legitimated the abandonment of normal rules of domestic and international law. Eventually, as the case of the OAS demonstrates, this sort of illegitimate violence eventually turned against the state that had exploited and encouraged it.
- The campaign of the Red Hand was not proportionate, on the contrary it claimed many innocent victims. With many official records still classified, the exact toll of the Red Hand cannot be determined even half a century later.
- The example of the Red Hand also demonstrates that unconventional strategies often wield negative results: As Andrew Silke has pointed out, terrorist organisations are able to endure harsh measures, ‘not because the people and resources lost are not important, but because the violence works to increase the motivation of more members than it decreases, and works to attract more support and sympathy to the group than it frightens away.’[50]

### **Conclusion**

In 2010, movie director Rachid Bouchareb presented his film *Hors-la-loi* (Outside the Law)[51]. It is a story about three very different brothers, brought together in their fight for Algeria’s independence. One of them is already a political activist and mobilises other activists for the FLN from among the migrant workers’ community in Paris. In addition, they begin to target police officers who have interrogated some of their colleagues and who made suspected FLN sympathisers ‘disappear’. To suppress this growing challenge, Colonel Faivre (Bernard Blancan), organizes a clandestine organisation, called the Red Hand - like its real-life counterpart. He argues: ‘We must fight terrorism on its own terms. To do so, we’ll found a covert organisation with the appearance of a criminal society. The Minister of Justice and Chief of Police guarantee us immunity where our work is concerned. Its name: The Red Hand. Its goal: terrorize the FLN supporters and eliminate its leaders.’ The movie then depicts Algerians being gunned down with silenced pistols, car bombings, and explosions in the migrant shantytowns outside of Paris.[52]

Bouchareb’s film reminded the French public about a forgotten and suppressed chapter in the country’s recent history. Yet the example of The Red Hand also works on a general level: it illustrates how far even democratic authorities are prepared to go in so-called ‘emergency

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situations'. In the history of counterterrorism, there are many examples of states crossing lines deliberately: In Latin America during the 1970s, many right-wing dictatorships actually copied the French model of counterinsurgency in order to defeat leftist guerrillas.[53] In 1975, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil jointly created an international terrorist arm – known as Operation Condor. It engaged in cross border-operations to hunt dissidents down as far away as the United States and Europe: 'Special teams of assassins from member countries were formed to travel worldwide to eliminate 'subversive enemies.'"[54]

Great Britain is still trying to come to terms with the legacy of its own 'dirty war' against the Provisional IRA. In the early 1980s, elements of the security services and Special Branch colluded with loyalist death squads: The loyalist killers received intelligence on IRA suspects, who were then attacked and often brutally murdered. The majority of victims were just ordinary Catholics who had become identified as backing the Republican side in the conflict. Obviously, the strategy aimed at weakening the IRA's core support by creating a climate of fear and insecurity.[55] In Spain, between 1983 and 1987, the *Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberacion*, the Anti-Terrorism Liberation Groups (GAL), targeted and killed members of the Basque separatist group ETA. Like in the case of the Red Hand, it was first thought that vigilantes had turned against the terrorists. But investigations of the judiciary, conducted between 1988 and 2000, clearly established that the nucleus of these death squads had been formed inside the Spanish state apparatus.[56] Certain elements in the repertoire of contemporary US counterterrorism operations - like the rendition of suspects and the use of 'harsh interrogation techniques' - highlight the fact that the United States too acted 'sort of the dark side', as former Vice-President Dick Cheney had announced in 2001. In her book on neo-colonial conflict, sociologist Marnia Lazreg judged the US 'war on terror' also to be a 'war of terror': 'Just like the French officers who decided to turn the army into guerrilla bands to 'counter' the FLN guerrillas operating day and night, the U.S. military feels free to arrest, interrogate, and torture anyone it deems suspect anywhere in the world.'[57]

The French example is of course very different from these other contexts: The Algerian war of independence was one of the longest and bloodiest decolonization struggles of the 20th century. Because of the conventional superiority of the French army, the FLN relied on asymmetric guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics. To defeat this threat, the French security forces adopted some of the methods of their enemy: 'Like them they had to be utterly ruthless.'[58] It became a war fought with utmost methods and was perceived as a fundamental conflict of values, fuelled by the colonisation process. The French political and military establishment was determined not to abandon a settler population of 1.000,000 people; it did not want to cede a territory that was perceived as integral to France – especially after a long series of earlier setbacks both in Indochina and the Maghreb.[59] 'This war, we must win it', Prime Minister Debre had said. [60] In the light of this, the emergence of the Red Hand does not appear to be an anomaly; rather it

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was a deliberate choice in the evolution of an ever more aggressive attempt to stamp out a rebellion that threatened both many French citizens and France's prestige as a major power.

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### Notes

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- [3] Richard Deacon, *The French Secret Service*, London: Grafton 1990, p. 185.
- [4] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit., p. 160
- [5] Mathilde von Bülow, 'Myth or Reality? The Red Hand and French Covert Action in Federal Germany during the Algerian War, 1956-61', *Intelligence and National Security*, 22:6, 2007, pp. 787-820.
- [6] Jim House, Neil McMaster, *Paris 1961. Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 178.
- [7] M. von Bülow, op. cit, p.789.
- [8] Joachim Joesten, *The Red Hand. The sinister account of the terrorist arm of the French right-wing ultras in Algeria and on the Continent*, London: Abelard-Schuman, 1962, p. 19.
- [9] Tunisia urged to reopen Hached case, [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com), 27. 12. 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2009/12/20091227135724498458.html>
- [10] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit, p. 158.
- [11] M. von Bülow, pp. 789-790.
- [12] M. von Bülow, op. cit., p. 801
- [13] M. von Bülow, op. cit, pp. 793-794.
- [14] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace. Algeria 1954-1962*, London: Macmillan, 1977, p. 262.
- [15] 'Der Tod kommt mit der Post', *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 10/1960, pp. 38-50.
- [16] Bernt Engelmann, *Meine Freunde, die Waffenhändler. Kleine Kriege, große Geschäfte*, Bergisch Gladbach: G. Lübbe, 1964, pp. 27-44.
- [17] The circumstances of Marcel Leopold's death remain controversial: According to some reports, he had, in fact, been murdered by the FLN, after he had stolen from them a large sum of money (see also Joesten, op.cit., p. 147).
- [18] A. Horne, op. cit., p. 263.
- [19] Swiss Federal Archives, (245)/1/42 Rote Hand, Nationalistische Bewegungen 1960-1966, Notiz, 8. 6. 1961.

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- [20] Josef Hufelschulte, Genickschuss am Bahnhof, *Focus*, Nr. 5/1996, [http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/geheimdienste-genickschuss-ambahnhof\\_aid\\_158196.html](http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/geheimdienste-genickschuss-ambahnhof_aid_158196.html)
- [21] Matthias Ritzl, Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, *Im Schatten des Dritten Reichs, Der BND und sein Agent Richard Christmann*, Berlin: Ch. Links, 2011, p. 193.
- [22] Peter F. Müller, Michael Mueller, Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, *Gegen Freund und Feind: der BND, geheime Politik und schmutzige Geschäfte*. Berlin, 2002, p. 304
- [23] As Joachim Joesten reports on the Red Hand's activities in Belgium, on one occasion in 1959, an assailant left a note with the address and telephone number of a certain captain Serrano in Lille. The officer in question turned out to be a member of the French intelligence service (see Joesten, op. cit., pp. 161-165).
- [24] Aoudia was shot on the doorsteps of his office – he belonged to a collective of lawyers representing Algerian nationalists. In an interview for the documentary *Terror's Advocate* (2007), a former officer of the secret services declared: 'We were told to kill them, starting with attorney Aoudia.' When the interviewer inquires on whose orders, the agent responds: 'Mr. Debre. The Prime Minister.' In fact, Aoudia remained the only victim among the eight lawyers (see: 'Toi aussi', *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 24/1959, p. 46).
- [25] 'Der Tod kommt mit der Post', *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 10/1960, pp. 38-50.
- [26] Richard Belfield, *Terminate with extreme prejudice. An expose of the assassination game, its killers and their paymasters*, London: Robinson, 2005, p. xxii.
- [27] J. Joesten, op. cit, pp. 156-157.
- [28] Jim House and Neil MacMasters. *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*. Oxford: University Press, 2006, p. 167.
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- [32] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit, p. 166.
- [33] J. Joesten, op. cit., p. 116.
- [34] 'Der Tod kommt mit der Post', *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 10/1960, pp. 38-50.
- [35] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit., pp. 163-164.
- [36] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit., pp. 158-159.
- [37] 'Der Tod kommt mit der Post', *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 13/1960, pp. 55-62.
- [38] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit., pp. 159-160.
- [39] According to R. Faligot & P. Krop, one Action Service officer alone could take credit for having sunk 14 yachts, freighters and coasters, destroying 2,000 tons of arms intended for the FLN (see p. 166).
- [40] M. von Bülow, op. cit., 809.
- [41] Douglas Porch, *The French Secret Services. From the Dreyfus Affair to the Gulf War*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995, pp. 370-372.
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- [42] Joesten, op. cit., pp. 193-194.
- [43] J. House & N. McMasters, op. cit., pp. 176-177.
- [44] Paul Henissart, *Wolves in the City. The Death of French Algeria*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970, p. 174.
- [45] Alexander Harrison, *Challenging De Gaulle. The O.A.S. and the Counterrevolution in Algeria 1954-1962*, St. Petersburg: Hailer Publishing, 2005, p. 93.
- [46] R. Faligot & P. Krop, op. cit., p. 171
- [47] J. House & N. McMasters, op. cit., pp. 29-30.
- [48] J. House & N. McMasters, op. cit., p. 26
- [49] Roger Trinquier, Modern Warfare, *cgsc.army.mil*, <http://www.cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/trinquier/trinquier.asp>
- [50] Andrew Silke, 'Fire of Iolaus', in: Tore Bjorgo (Ed.), *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways forward*, London 2005, p. 254.
- [51] Before *Hors-la-loi*, the story of the Red Hand had been adapted for screen mainly in the 1960s: Kurt Meisels *Die rote Hand* (1960) re-imagines the organisation as an international gangster outfit. Jean Luc Godard's *Le petit soldat* (1960) depicts French agents targeting a journalist in Geneva because of his pro-Algerian leanings. One of them is abducted by FLN activists and subjected to torture.
- [52] *Outside The Law*, Optimum Home Entertainment, 2011.
- [53] Marie-Monique Robin, 'Counterinsurgency and Torture,' in: Kenneth Roth (Ed.), *Torture. Does it make us safer? Is it Ever OK? A Human Rights Perspective*, New York and London: The New Press, 2005, pp. 44-54.
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- [57] Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire. From Algiers to Baghdad*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 269.
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## Radio as the Voice of God: Peace and Tolerance Radio Programming's Impact on Norms

by Daniel P. Aldrich

### ***Abstract:***

*Observers have argued that radio programming can alter norms, especially through hate radio designed to increase animosity between groups. This article tests whether or not radio programming under the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policy framework can reduce potential conflict and increase civic engagement and positive views of foreign nations. Data from surveys of more than 1,000 respondents in Mali, Chad, and Niger illuminate the ways in which peace and tolerance programming changed perspectives and altered behavior in statistically significant ways. Results show that individuals exposed to multi-level U.S. government programming were more likely to listen to peace and tolerance radio. Further, bivariate, multivariate regression, and propensity score matching techniques show that individuals who listened more regularly to such programs participated more frequently in civic activities and supported working with the West to combat terrorism (holding constant a number of potential confounding economic, demographic, and attitudinal factors). However, higher levels of radio listening had no measurable impact on opposition to the use of violence in the name of Islam or opposition to the imposition of Islamic law. Further, data indicate that women and men have responded to programming in measurably different ways. These mixed results have important implications for current and future “soft-side” programs for countering violent extremism.*

### ***Introduction***

Radio programming has incited hatred and catalyzed violence in well-documented ways. Created in Rwanda in 1993 by Hutu residents, the station *Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines* (“Free Radio-Television of the Thousand Hills,” abbreviated as RTLM), played a strong role in inciting the horrific 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 people[1]. RTLM featured a “stream of commentators...exhorting violence, playing provocative songs, and even reading out the names and locations of those who must be killed” [2]. Announcers at the station pushed for a “final war,” regularly referring to Tutsis as “cockroaches” (*inyenzi*) and declaring that “We will kill you!”[3]. Post-genocide tribunals held in Arusha, Tanzania, found the managers of RTLM guilty of incitement, but radio stations in Bosnia, Serbia, and Kenya have similarly spewed hatred against ethnic groups and encouraged violence since these troubling events [4]. As a result of the power of these broadcasts some commentators have referred to radio as the “voice of God” due to the authority accorded to broadcasts and the power that radio may hold over its listeners [5].

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Given radio's ability to influence violence and inflame hatred, a pressing question is whether radio programming can reduce conflict, facilitate cooperation, and alter norms in listening populations in a positive way [6]. This is especially important because various Western governments have adopted new strategies for countering violent extremism through local radio programming within the defense, diplomacy, and development approach to terrorism [7]. Planners across the world have recognized that military strategies alone cannot "defeat" violent extremist organizations (VEOs) such as Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Hamas in the Middle East, Lashkar-e-Taiba in Southeast Asia, and Al-Shabab in the Horn of Africa. Rather, decision makers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia have pursued "soft" strategies to counter violent extremism (CVE) around the world. In the United States, for example, both the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) in 2010 and the Department of Defense's new Concept Plan (CONPLAN) 7500 stressed non-military approaches to containing terrorism. Strategies include norm messaging, the provision of vocational and educational opportunities to populations vulnerable to VEO recruitment, and the strengthening of local NGOs and civil society. Many of the counter-VEO programs under the management of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department use radio broadcasts to alter the norms and behaviors of listeners.

USAID has an extensive history of behavior change communications and distance learning through radio in development settings across nations in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America since the end of World War II. For example, the Agency provided assistance to Radio Sutatenza in Colombia (which began programming in 1947), trained Swaziland radio producers in the mid-1980s [8], promoted radio programs in El Salvador more than two decades ago [9], and helped spread knowledge of reproductive health through radio programming in Bolivia since 1998 [10]. The newest generation of tactics for countering violent extremism rest on best practices in social marketing developed over years of health and education programming around the world.

Although it appears increasingly likely that Africa, Southeast Asia, and other "hot spots" for extremism will be populated by Internet and cell phone users, radio already serves as an existing, trusted framework for communication. Scholars have estimated that there are more than 20,000 radio stations and 2 billion radio receivers in the world, and they are a low-cost, high-yield infrastructure for information diffusion and norm messaging. Radio remains "the dominant mass-medium in Africa with the widest geographical reach and the highest audiences compared with television, newspapers and other information and communication technologies" [11]. While many residents in nations such as Mali, Niger, and Chad lack regular access to electricity, cannot afford televisions in their homes, and cannot read, radios have penetrated households and become fixtures for social meetings. In Mali, for example, two-thirds of the nation has never

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watched television; instead, more than three-quarters of the people receive their information from radios.

U.S. government planners hope to take advantage of the low-cost and ubiquitous nature of radios and have worked to develop both the physical infrastructure for radios (assisting with the construction of new stations and broadcasting towers and the distribution of hand-cranked and solar-powered radios) and the content of radio programs (helping train local residents as reporters and producers and providing workshops on effective radio programming). A number of ongoing projects continue USAID's use of radio programming as a distribution channel for messages which increase civic engagement, deepen knowledge, and influence local communities. USAID has supported new radio networks in Pashto-language in south and southeast Afghanistan [12] along with similar programs to support vulnerable girls in Mozambique, Botswana, and Malawi [13]. In Afghanistan, USAID has partnered with the NGO Internews to build more than 40 radio stations associated with the *Salam Watandar* ("Hello Countrymen") network, which reaches 10 million listeners [14]. These channels provide platforms by which important messages and often unheard voices (such as moderate imams, NGOs, and health workers) can reach large numbers of rural residents.

Radios have served as the main delivery mechanism for several programs designed by the State Department and USAID in Africa to counter violent extremism. The Pan-Sahel Initiative (created in 2002) began as a security-focused initiative and became the more holistic, interagency approach known as the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP, created in 2005). The Peace through Development (PDEV), started in 2008 and now operating as PDEV II) program, represents USAID's largest contribution to the overall TSCTP programs. Alongside these programs USAID has run a number of smaller-scale programs for countering violent extremism; USAID's CVE programs in Mali, for example, are not within the PDEV framework, while those in Chad and Niger are. TSCTP – the largest of the programs focused on the often ungoverned spaces of northern Africa – targeted "youth empowerment, education, media, and good governance" [15]. Qualitative analyses of the program have argued that, through radio programs, PDEV has strengthened local civic culture, improved information flow, and strengthened moderate voices in the region [16].

This article looks closely at radio programming through a two-level analysis. Initially, it investigates whether multi-vectored U.S. programming in African communities - such as educational, vocational, and capacity-building programs - motivated individuals to listen more regularly to peace and tolerance radio. Then, it shows how higher levels of peace and tolerance radio listening altered four outcomes among the population: civic engagement, support (or opposition) for their host nation working with the West to fight terrorism, support for (or opposition to) the use of violence in the name of Islam, and support for (or opposition to) the imposition of Islamic law. Through this investigation, the article makes several contributions to

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the growing literature on the “soft” side or development approach to countering violent extremism.

First, critics regularly point out that the field of counterterrorism and countering violent extremism lacks objective, quantitative assessments of the influence of existing programs [17]. One review of more than 100 articles focused on countering violent extremism found that less than 10 percent used quantitative analyses [18]. This article provides a large-N, quantitative analysis of norm and behavior change based on U.S.-sponsored radio programming in Africa, using bivariate analyses, ordered probit regression models, and propensity score matching with average treatment effect (ATE) analytical techniques. With consistent results across multiple types of analyses, this article can make more robust claims about the causal connections between variables and outcomes of interest.

Next, this article seeks to test past arguments that broad-vectored U.S. programming in nations such as Mali, Chad, and Niger has increased rates of listening to peace and tolerance channels. That is, using differences between control and treatment groups in three African nations, it confirms past studies that have posited that multiple channels of interventions can increase levels of peace and radio program listening [19]. At the same time, it moves one step beyond previous studies to show how higher levels of listening impact norms and behaviors, such as a willingness to work with the West to fight terrorism and involvement in local community decision-making processes. Through a quasi-experimental design and the transformation of an observational data set into a more matched, experimental one using propensity score matching, this article demonstrates the power of radio to alter listeners’ choices and attitudes. It also shows the limits of radio programs, as the same programs had little influence on other, higher level beliefs in the listening population.

Finally, this article adds to the discussion of the role of mass-media channels, such as radio, in altering norms toward outcomes that increase local and international cooperation. While radio has indeed served as a “voice of God” in past horrors, catalyzing violence and activating inter-group hatreds, it also holds the potential to deepen local civic culture, increase positive feelings towards the United States and other countries, and make vulnerable areas more resilient to recruiting by VEOs. These results support the move by Western governments away from reliance on military-based tactics such as drone strikes and covert operations teams toward softer, development-based strategies [20]. Yet the mixed results of the analysis also underscore that radio is neither a “silver bullet” nor a panacea, as several attitudes remained unchanged even among populations with very high levels of peace and tolerance listening. While the effects of radio programming may require a longer time horizon and more consistent application of resources than shorter term strategies such as missile attacks or battlefield operations, their impact, while limited, is indeed measurable.

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*Theory*

Strong evidence from qualitative and quantitative studies in the developing world shows that media programming more generally and radio programming in specific can positively alter norms and behavior in listeners and their communities. Using interviews and focus groups with 182 respondents in the nations of Chad and Niger, for example, one scholar argued that USAID-sponsored radio programming in these nations led to positive individual and community-level changes. Through radio-club discussions about issues such as domestic violence and environmental awareness, residents held more conversations on tolerance and good governance and then mobilized collectively to improve their communities [21]. Similarly, in the nation of Benin, a survey of more than 4,000 households in 2009 showed that radio programming changed behaviors regarding the purchase of anti-malarial bed nets. Households exposed to health-related programming on the radio were more likely to purchase bed nets than similar, non-exposed households [22]. Bed net use has become a pillar in the anti-malarial campaigns conducted by international institutions, NGOs, and host nation governments, and these results supported mass-media campaigns to reduce the incidence of the disease.

Radio programming alters norms and behaviors through several mechanisms. First, radio serves as one of the few widely available media channels in societies with high rates of illiteracy. As a result, large numbers of listeners envision the information on radio programs as highly legitimate; studies in Mali, for example, have shown that the majority of Malians rely on local radio as their primary source of trusted news. Because of these high levels of trust and illiteracy, critics have argued that listeners find it difficult to refute claims made on the air [23]. In this sense radio programming remains a double-edged sword; should extremists use radio broadcasts to diffuse their messages, they can catalyze existing hatreds. As mentioned in the introduction, a number of massacres, such as those in Rwanda, were catalyzed by the use of radio programming to largely illiterate audiences. At the same time, positive messages about inter-ethnic and international cooperation may have a measurable impact on listening populations.

Further, in communities with limited access to outside sources of information, radio programs allow information to bypass “information brokers” in villages such as imams (religious leaders in Islam) and village chiefs who “choose how to shape the information for dissemination in the village once it arrives”[24]. Where Western listeners may have access to hundreds of radio channels, thousands of television stations, and millions of hours of YouTube videos, many residents of developing countries have far fewer channels for new information. Rather than receiving messages that have been filtered through religious or traditional leaders, radio allows listeners can hear the ideas directly and seek to evaluate them for their merits. Scholars have illuminated the ways in which radio programs create “generative loops” in which listeners discuss new concepts in their social network, contact producers and reporters to provide their own opinions on the subject, and then hear their own voices broadcast to society at large [25]. The democratic nature of radio programming adds to its legitimacy and impact.

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Finally, mass-media broadcasts can alter widely held norms through habituation and exposure. Simply hearing of an alternative lifestyle or a new approach to a pressing social or health problem can provide listeners with a new set of options in their own lives. A study of *Rede Globo* telenovellas on Brazilian television, for example, showed that while the characters in these shows remained relatively unfaithful to their partners between 1965 and 2004, the rate of divorce among the viewing population rose as their access to the programs rose. The authors found that “exposure to modern lifestyles as portrayed on TV, to emancipated women roles, and to a critique of traditional values was associated with increases in the share of separated and divorced women across Brazil’s municipal areas” [26]. Through regular viewing of popular, divorced characters many Brazilian women altered their beliefs about the necessity of remaining in marriages and advocated for divorce. Radio listeners in Africa exposed to new ideas about inter-group cooperation, civic engagement, and positive views of the West may similarly be influenced to change their own views and behaviors.

I now turn to the data to see how broader programming impacted rates of radio listening, and then how those rates of listening changed norms and behaviors.

### ***Data***

The responses from more than 1,000 African residents analyzed in this article come from in-person surveys carried out in the nations of Chad, Mali, and Niger by U.S. government-sponsored teams and local survey organizations between October 24, 2010 and December 20, 2010. Limiting surveys to a month-long period better controlled for potential effects from (then) current events which could impact on respondents’ answers, such as terror attacks, drone strikes, or government activities. Data from Niger was collected in the village of Gabi, the city of Maradi, and the neighborhoods of Yantala and Lazaret in the city of Niamey. Data for Chad was collected in the neighborhood of Diguel in N’Djamena and in the cities of Moussoro and Massakory and for Mali in the cities of Diré and Timbuktu.

Figure 1 provides a map of the nations and communities sampled for this dataset.

Figure 1: Map of the communities under study



Note: Jeremy Chevrier assisted with the creation of this map

Trained enumerators carried out face-to-face surveys in local languages in Niger and Chad; in Niger, for example, while many residents in the nation speak French, evaluators used Hausa in a number of communities to ensure comprehension. Similarly, in Mali, some surveys were administered in Sonrai, where appropriate. Due to security concerns at the time, the *Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel* (AMSS, a survey institute) administered surveys in Mali in Timbuktu and Diré. Evaluators surveying the local population in all three countries were, whenever possible, citizens of that country and did not mention connections to the U.S. government to avoid potentially biasing responses and for security (for respondents and evaluators alike). Enumerators selected homes randomly, and went on to nearby houses if respondents did not answer their knocks or refused to answer questions. Responses to the survey were recorded on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with the highest values given to responses seen as in alignment with the goals of the United States. For example, for the question, “What is your



opinion of the United States?” the response “very favorable” was coded as 5 while “very unfavorable” was coded as 1. Similarly for the question, “Do you support or oppose the implementation of Sharia (Islamic law)?” opposition was coded as 5 while support was coded as 1.

A dummy variable captures whether or not the respondent lived in a community in Africa exposed to several years of multi-vectored U.S. government programming through USAID. U.S. government-sponsored programs active in these three countries during the period before these surveys included micro-loan frameworks, educational and vocational training, capacity-building for NGOs, and workshops on improving governance. Labeled in the dataset as *treatment or control*, this indicated whether or not U.S. government records showed active programming in the area. In Niger, the neighbourhood of Lazeret had no TSCTP-programming and was classified as a control community, while Yantala had several years of exposure and was a treatment community. The village of Gabi had no TSCTP activities, while Maradi did. Chad’s Diguel and Moussoro received TSCTP focused programming, while Massakory had not. Finally, U.S. planners had focused on Timbuktu for five years, while Diré had not received any programming.

Table 1 summarizes the different levels of exposure to government programming found in the sampled control and treatment cities in Mali; the treatment and control communities in Niger and Chad also had strong differences in their levels of interaction with U.S. programs.

Table 1: Differences in Exposure to U.S. Programming in Mali

| Program                                   | Timbuktu (Treatment) Presence                                      | Diré (Control) Presence       | Details                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Radio for Peace Building in Northern Mali | Yes (2 radio stations)                                             | No                            | Technical training, infrastructure assistance, program production      |
| Road to Reading (PHARE)                   | Yes (10 medersas)                                                  | No                            | Improve instruction of reading and writing in French                   |
| Pro-Mali Nord                             | Yes (10 trainees)                                                  | Partial (1 trainee)           | Promote market driven employment through small enterprises             |
| Capacity building for local government    | Yes (multiple sites across Timbuktu)                               | No                            | Improve efficiency, transparency accountability of officials           |
| Micro-finance “Trickle up”                | Yes (13 local agencies)                                            | Partial (one NGO shortlisted) | Microenterprise development with a focus on women, disabled, and youth |
| Walaikum                                  | Yes (9 communes, multiple workshops, 4 imams, and 1 radio station) | No                            | Conflict mitigation and peace building for 2000 people                 |

Note: Table adopted from Aldrich, forthcoming article in *Terrorism and Political Violence*

The survey sought to capture socioeconomic conditions for respondents, asking about both *views on the economic situation* and *satisfaction with available services*. Respondents who saw their economic situation as untenable might be more likely to feel animosity toward ethnic groups whom they believe are doing well and less likely to want to cooperate with Western nations that may have little control over, or interest in, local economic conditions. Further, dissatisfaction with available services may turn citizens away from engaging with their town councils and local decision-making bodies out of frustration, or, alternatively, may motivate them to become more involved in the decision making process.

The questionnaire sought to understand the degree of civic engagement and connection to local political institutions through questions about the *degree of participation in local decision making*, beliefs about whether *youth associations make positive contributions*, and the respondents’ *satisfaction with decision making processes*. Further, the survey asked if the respondents believed that their *opinions were respected by community leaders*. These questions tested the level of efficacy held by the respondents and whether they believed that they – or others in their community, such as youth associations – could improve the quality of life for the

community. Those who believe that their voices do not matter may not seek to engage in legal or formal channels when they have grievances, or they may be more likely to find common cause with radicals who seek to use violence to make their points. Many studies have underscored that higher levels of civic participation reflect deeper ties to the community and more trust in existing institutions [27].

The survey asked broadly if respondents regularly *heard messages about peace and tolerance* from any source and then more specifically if they *listened to radio programs about peace and tolerance*. These questions captured the degree to which the respondents lived in communities where they might be exposed from multiple sources, including social networks, educational settings, or mass media diffusion to messages about cooperation and tolerance, and more specifically the intensity with which they listened to peace and tolerance radio programs. Levels of radio listening may be a function of the degree of exposure to broader U.S. programming [28], and higher levels of radio listening can in turn alter the listener's attitudes and behaviors.

Many violent extremist organizations have pushed narratives in which the West is seen undermining Islamic principles, damaging historical social relationships, and eroding sacred traditions. To better understand how respondents envisioned Western nations and the United States in particular, evaluators asked about their *opinion of the United States*, if *their government should work with West to fight terror*, and *whether the United States was fighting Islam or terrorism*. These variables seek to understand the respondents' vision of the United States, if they saw the United States, United Kingdom, and other Western nations as partners, and if they believed that United States truly sought to end terrorism, or instead focused on encircling Islam.

The next block of survey questions focused on higher level cultural beliefs, such as *whether violence serves as effective problem solving method*, *whether the use of violence in the name of Islam is justified*, *whether Al Qaeda's violent activities are permitted under Islamic law*, and *support (or opposition) for the implementation of Islamic law*. In many countries in northern and western Africa, traditional religious norms are more syncretic and based on pre-existing animist traditions than the strict Wahhabi and Salafist fundamentalism taught by clerics trained in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Recently, for example, Islamic militants of Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith) have damaged the shrines and infrastructure of historic and sacred areas in Timbuktu, Mali, arguing that local religious leaders have deviated from core traditions. More generally, these survey questions seek to probe respondents' feelings about stricter forms of Islam and the use of violence in the name of Islam.

The poll controlled for demographic characteristics such as the *sex* and *age* of respondents. Scholars have long argued that sex strongly determines behavioral and cognitive outcomes, with some arguing that women and men display differences due to intrinsic biological factors and others arguing for the role of education and socialization [29]. Whatever the reasons, analyses in Mali have shown broad differences between women and men in the areas of education, health

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care, governance, and economic growth [30], and thus controlling for sex is critical. Another critical factor to take into account is age, as many attitudes develop through exposure, life experience, and education [31]. Additional controls in the dataset include dummy variables by country to control for any differences across respondents from Chad, Niger, and Mali.

Finally, I created a new dichotomous variable to capture if respondents had an *above average rate of peace and radio listening*. By doing so, I could better structure the propensity score matching and average treatment effects analyses, as they require dummy variables [32]. This variable was set at 1 if the levels were above the average level of listening and 0 if below. Table 2 below provides descriptive statistics about the dataset.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

| Variable                                                  | Observations | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------|-----------|-----|-----|
| Community exposed to U.S. government programming          | 1064         | 0.64 | 0.48      | 0   | 1   |
| Views on economic situation                               | 859          | 2.93 | 1.03      | 1   | 5   |
| Satisfaction with available services                      | 1059         | 3.01 | 1.05      | 1   | 5   |
| Degree of participation in decision making                | 1054         | 2.76 | 1.37      | 1   | 5   |
| Youth associations make positive contribution             | 857          | 2.69 | 1.37      | 1   | 5   |
| Satisfaction with decision making process                 | 853          | 2.97 | 1.14      | 1   | 5   |
| Opinions respected by community leaders                   | 859          | 2.60 | 1.37      | 1   | 5   |
| Violence as effective problem solving method              | 839          | 4.29 | 1.14      | 1   | 5   |
| Hearing messages about peace and tolerance                | 852          | 3.66 | 1.22      | 1   | 5   |
| Listen to radio programs about peace and tolerance        | 1058         | 3.62 | 1.26      | 1   | 5   |
| Opinion of the United States                              | 1038         | 3.66 | 1.14      | 1   | 5   |
| Should our government work with West to fight terror      | 1037         | 3.54 | 1.62      | 1   | 5   |
| Use of violence in the name of Islam is justified         | 1052         | 4.24 | 1.22      | 1   | 5   |
| Al Qaeda's violent activities permitted under Islamic law | 1008         | 4.40 | 1.10      | 1   | 5   |
| Support for implementation of Sharia law                  | 1055         | 2.06 | 1.65      | 1   | 5   |
| U.S. fighting Islam or terrorism                          | 1045         | 3.96 | 1.44      | 1   | 5   |
| Sex                                                       | 1042         | 0.66 | 0.47      | 0   | 1   |
| Age (by group)                                            | 1057         | 2.98 | 1.42      | 1   | 5   |
| Chad                                                      | 1064         | 0.49 | 0.50      | 0   | 1   |
| Niger                                                     | 1064         | 0.32 | 0.47      | 0   | 1   |
| Mali                                                      | 1064         | 0.19 | 0.39      | 0   | 1   |
| Above average rate of peace and radio listening           | 1058         | 0.55 | 0.50      | 0   | 1   |

***Methodology***

This analysis takes place in two steps. In step one, I seek to understand the relationship between the control and treatment groups, that is, between African communities and cities (not) exposed to U.S. government programming and the outcome variable of listening to peace and tolerance programming, using bivariate plots and chi-squared statistics. In the first stage of the analysis, the dependent variable (that is, the outcome of interest) is the level of peace and tolerance radio program listening. Then, in the second stage, I explore exactly how higher levels of listening to peace and tolerance programming may have influenced various norms, using bivariate, multivariate, and propensity score matching analysis. In the latter stage, I look closely at four outcomes of interest (working with the West to combat terrorism, participation in decision making, support or opposition to the use of violence in the name of Islam, and support or opposition to the imposition of Sharia) to see if they were influenced by independent variables such as higher levels of radio listening, age, sex, socioeconomic conditions, and so forth.

The initial analyses rely on the bivariate technique of chi-squared analysis, which uses statistical expectations about the distribution of variables to estimate whether the null hypothesis is supported or not. While this hypothesis test remains among the most popular, when used with two variables it is unable to control for potential confounding factors (such as age, gender, socioeconomic conditions, higher order norms, and so forth). Therefore, after setting up the likely existence of a relationship between the variables of interest using bivariate analyses (and graphing the results using box-and-whisker plots), I move on to more sophisticated, multivariate approaches. When carrying out maximum likelihood regression analyses, ordered probit analysis is most appropriate when dealing with the ordinal dependent variables found in this dataset, such as those generated from Likert-scaled questions. That is, these dependent variables are ranked, clearly ordered, and bounded (in this case, made up of integers from 1 to 5) with outcomes indicating gradations or steps. In cases involving bounded intervals, a standard regression analysis (such as ordinary least squares, or OLS) is inappropriate due to nonlinear parameters.

While the initial data collection process for the surveys resembled a quasi-experiment, in that it involved control and treatment groups, these communities were not chosen at random. Because of the deliberate selection of communities with and without U.S. government programming, the dataset remains strongly observational, and thus more susceptible to biased estimators. For example, the assignment of individuals to the treatment or control groups may have been deliberate; certain communities may have been selected based on a belief that their responses would support programmatic goals. To handle this problem, propensity score matching and average treatment effects allow us to make stronger arguments for a causal relationship between variables by paring away unlike observations and, in a sense, recreating a smaller, but more experimental dataset on common support. Pre-processing creates a twin study-like dataset where both the new treatment and control groups were equally likely to have received the treatment, thus making them more comparable [33].

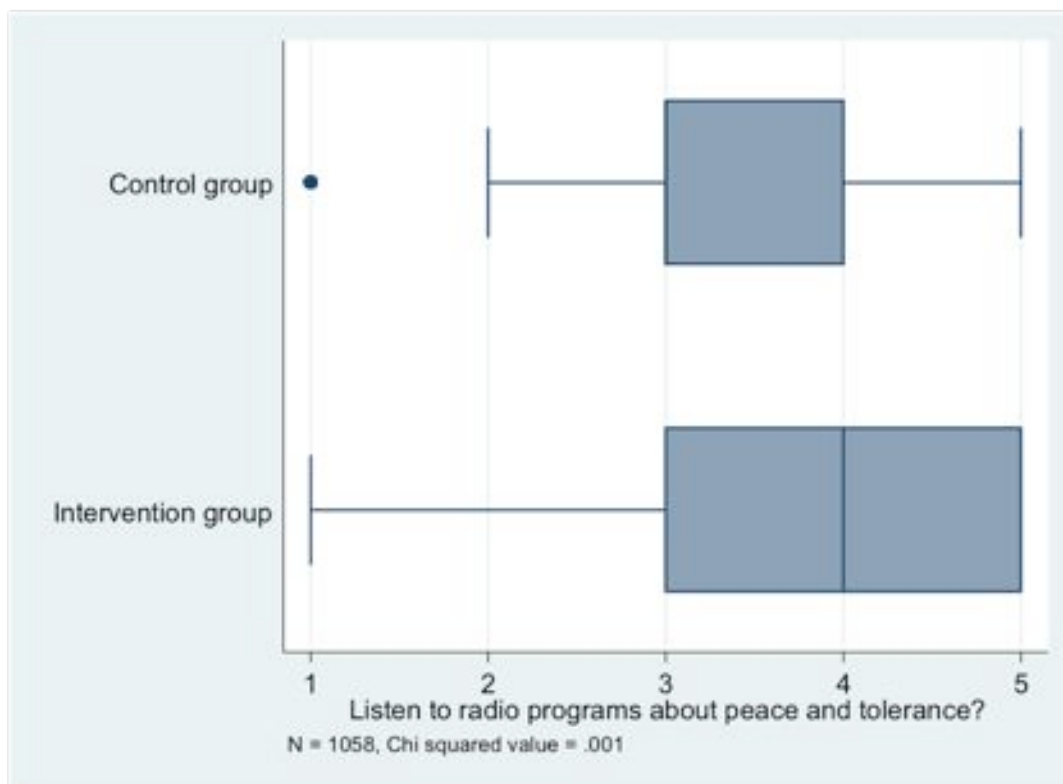
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By matching a resident who had higher levels of radio listening to a resident who listened less (or not at all) but was equally likely to have listened based on covariates such as age, gender, socioeconomic conditions, attitudes toward the West, and so on, we can better evaluate the differences between the two in terms of our four outcomes of interest. Unlike standard regression analyses, which may compare apples and oranges (people who listened to radio programming more often may have covariates quite different than those who did not), matching seeks to reduce the discrepancies created by non-experimental data collection methods. Further, once the propensity score matching has been completed and the respondents on common support compared to one another, we can simply measure the difference between them in terms of the quantity of interest. We call this outcome the average treatment effect (ATE), and, as it involves no further manipulation of the data or belief that we have properly structured the model (as there is no modeling in this procedure), it is simultaneously easier to understand than most regression-based approaches and based on more fewer – and more believable – assumptions [34].

### ***Results***

I begin with an investigation of the relationship between exposure to broader U.S. programming and levels of radio listening. Figure 2 displays the differences in outcomes between control and intervention groups in Mali, Chad, and Niger, with a noticeably higher level of listening for residents of the treatment communities in these countries. The difference between the control group which lacked this exposure and the control group which received it, is statistically significant, with a chi-squared score of .001 (with more than 1000 observations). There is clearly a strong correlation between the two, but without additional controls it is difficult to make claims about a causal relationship.

Figure 2: Differences in outcomes between control and intervention groups in Mali, Chad, and Niger (higher values indicate more regular listening)



To deepen the investigation of the relationship between the control and treatment communities and radio listening levels, I ran an ordered probit analysis with the dependent variable of levels of listening to peace and tolerance radio and controlling for a large number of factors beyond exposure to U.S. programs (or lack thereof). Table 3 provides the estimated coefficients for the model; it is important to note that the coefficient for treatment/exposure is large and positive (the largest of the estimated coefficients, and because the variables all sit on the same scale we are able to compare coefficients across variables) and the P-value is less than .0009, meaning that exposure has a large, statistically significant influence on levels of radio listening.

Table 3: Estimated regression coefficients for an ordered probit model on listening to peace and tolerance radio

|                                                           | Coef. | Std. Err. | z     | P>z   | Low CI | High CI |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| Community exposed to U.S. government programming          | 0.33  | 0.09      | 3.52  | 0.000 | 0.14   | 0.51    |
| Views on economic situation                               | -0.02 | 0.06      | -0.27 | 0.789 | -0.13  | 0.10    |
| Satisfaction with available services                      | 0.14  | 0.06      | 2.52  | 0.012 | 0.03   | 0.25    |
| Degree of participation in decision making                | 0.10  | 0.04      | 2.32  | 0.020 | 0.02   | 0.18    |
| Youth associations make positive contribution             | 0.07  | 0.04      | 1.95  | 0.052 | 0.00   | 0.15    |
| Satisfaction with decision making process                 | 0.08  | 0.05      | 1.71  | 0.087 | -0.01  | 0.17    |
| Opinions respected by community leaders                   | 0.04  | 0.04      | 0.96  | 0.338 | -0.04  | 0.11    |
| Violence as effective problem solving method              | -0.10 | 0.04      | -2.43 | 0.015 | -0.19  | -0.02   |
| Opinion of the United States                              | 0.31  | 0.04      | 7.54  | 0.000 | 0.23   | 0.39    |
| Should our government work with West to fight terror      | 0.06  | 0.03      | 2.25  | 0.024 | 0.01   | 0.12    |
| Use of violence in the name of Islam is justified         | 0.02  | 0.04      | 0.53  | 0.597 | -0.06  | 0.10    |
| Al Qaeda's violent activities permitted under Islamic law | -0.04 | 0.04      | -0.94 | 0.347 | -0.13  | 0.05    |
| Support for implementation of Sharia law                  | 0.01  | 0.03      | 0.38  | 0.703 | -0.04  | 0.06    |
| U.S. fighting Islam or terrorism                          | -0.10 | 0.03      | -3.31 | 0.001 | -0.16  | -0.04   |
| Sex                                                       | -0.18 | 0.09      | -2.01 | 0.045 | -0.35  | 0.00    |
| Age                                                       | 0.05  | 0.03      | 1.63  | 0.103 | -0.01  | 0.11    |
| /cut1                                                     | 0.28  | 0.32      |       |       | -0.35  | 0.91    |
| /cut2                                                     | 0.65  | 0.33      |       |       | 0.01   | 1.29    |
| /cut3                                                     | 1.74  | 0.33      |       |       | 1.10   | 2.39    |
| /cut4                                                     | 2.42  | 0.33      |       |       | 1.77   | 3.08    |

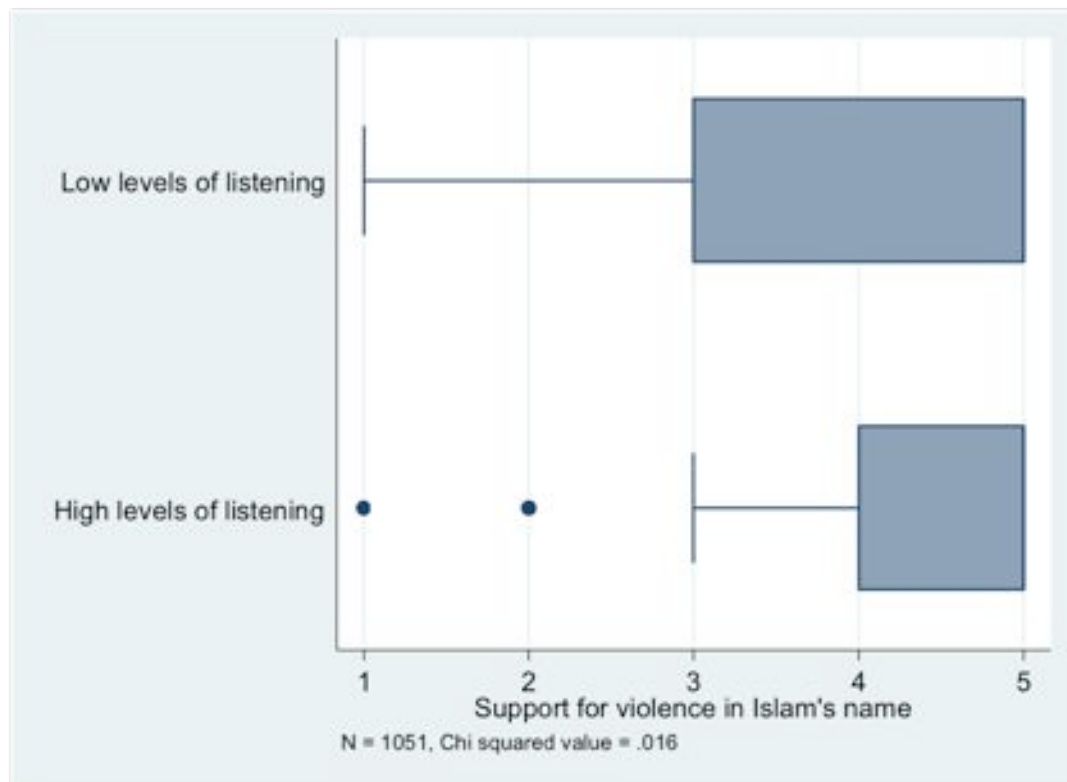
Note: N=733; model uses robust standard errors

While other variables, including opinion of the U.S. and sex, are also significant correlates with levels of listening, this first section has reinforced past findings that communities with over-time exposure to U.S. educational, vocational, and capacity-building programming are more likely to listen to peace and tolerance radio programming holding constant other factors.

I now move on to explore the relationship between higher levels of programming and norms and behaviors. The degree to which higher levels of listening alter levels of support (or opposition) to the use of violence in the name of Islam is displayed in Figure 3. With more than 1,000 responses, the chi-squared value for this analysis is .016, which is within the realm of the somewhat arbitrary range of “statistical significance.”



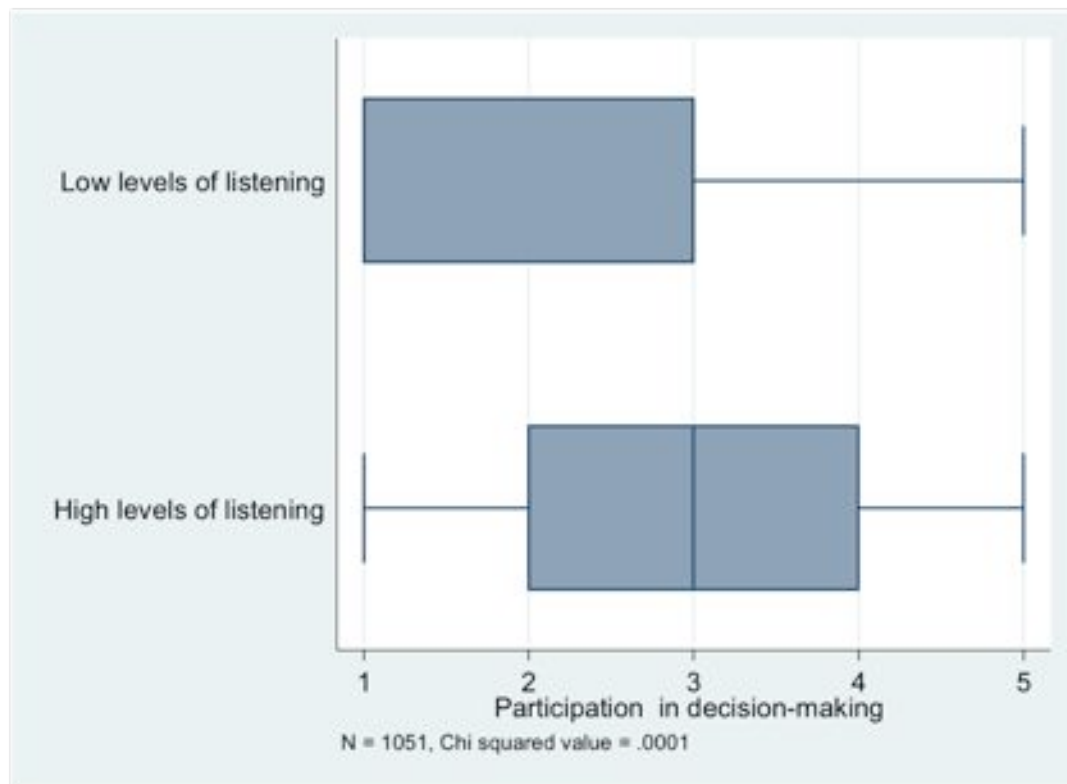
Figure 3: Differences support for violence in the name of Islam by level of peace and tolerance radio program listening (higher values indicate less support)



Without additional variable controls, we cannot definitively resolve whether individuals listening to more peace and tolerance radio are more likely to oppose the use of violence under the banner of religion. Resolving the question of the actual strength of this relationship will require a more sophisticated analysis that controls for other factors.

I now look at the connection between levels of peace and radio listening and the behavior of civic engagement. Figure 4 displays the differences in level of civic engagement by level of peace and tolerance radio programming. With more than 1,000 respondents, and a chi-squared value of .0001, this initial analysis shows a deep relationship between the two.

Figure 4: Differences in level of civic engagement by level of peace and tolerance radio program listening (higher values indicate more participation)



Individuals who listened to more peace and tolerance radio programming were more likely to report deeper levels of civic engagement in their communities. Having set the stage for these relationships, I now investigate the connections between our dependent and independent variables using ordered probit analyses and propensity score matching.

I seek to understand if there is a measurable relationship between levels of listening to peace and tolerance radio programming and support (or opposition) to working with the West to combat terrorism. The estimated regression coefficients for an ordered probit model on working with the West to combat terrorism are displayed below in Table 4.

Table 4: Estimated regression coefficients for an ordered probit model on working with the West to combat terrorism

|                                                           | Coef. | Std. Err. | z     | P>z   | Low CI | High CI |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| Views on economic situation                               | -0.12 | 0.06      | -2.07 | 0.038 | -0.23  | -0.01   |
| Satisfaction with available services                      | 0.14  | 0.06      | 2.32  | 0.020 | 0.02   | 0.25    |
| Degree of participation in decision making                | 0.06  | 0.04      | 1.41  | 0.158 | -0.02  | 0.14    |
| Youth associations make positive contribution             | 0.12  | 0.03      | 3.34  | 0.001 | 0.05   | 0.19    |
| Satisfaction with decision making process                 | 0.17  | 0.05      | 3.37  | 0.001 | 0.07   | 0.26    |
| Opinions respected by community leaders                   | -0.10 | 0.04      | -2.60 | 0.009 | -0.18  | -0.03   |
| Violence as effective problem solving method              | -0.01 | 0.05      | -0.31 | 0.757 | -0.11  | 0.08    |
| Listen to radio programs about peace and tolerance        | 0.10  | 0.04      | 2.57  | 0.010 | 0.02   | 0.18    |
| Opinion of the United States                              | 0.25  | 0.04      | 5.46  | 0.000 | 0.16   | 0.33    |
| Use of violence in the name of Islam is justified         | 0.12  | 0.04      | 3.07  | 0.002 | 0.04   | 0.19    |
| Al Qaeda's violent activities permitted under Islamic law | 0.05  | 0.04      | 1.13  | 0.259 | -0.03  | 0.13    |
| Support for implementation of Sharia law                  | -0.09 | 0.03      | -3.29 | 0.001 | -0.15  | -0.04   |
| U.S. fighting Islam or terrorism                          | 0.05  | 0.03      | 1.76  | 0.078 | -0.01  | 0.11    |
| Sex                                                       | -0.30 | 0.09      | -3.27 | 0.001 | -0.49  | -0.12   |
| Age                                                       | 0.05  | 0.03      | 1.53  | 0.125 | -0.01  | 0.11    |
| /cut1                                                     | 1.86  | 0.33      |       |       | 1.206  | 2.52    |
| /cut2                                                     | 2.08  | 0.34      |       |       | 1.422  | 2.74    |
| /cut3                                                     | 2.52  | 0.34      |       |       | 1.853  | 3.18    |
| /cut4                                                     | 2.99  | 0.34      |       |       | 2.312  | 3.66    |

Note: N=733, robust standard errors

A number of variables had statistically significant relationships with this outcome, including sex, attitudes about violence in Islam's name, opinion of the United States, efficacy measures, and views on the economic situation. As shown through the initial analysis, and most important here, the variable of listening to peace and tolerance radio was statistically significant (a p-value of .01) and had a coefficient in line with the effects of other variables (estimated at .1). Holding other factors equal, there is a measurable connection between radio listening and support for international collaboration.

Next, Table 5 shows the estimated regression coefficients for an ordered probit model with the outcome of participation in decision-making. A number of independent variables, including satisfaction with available services, a belief that youth associations make a positive contribution, satisfaction with the decision-making process, and believing that one's opinions were respected by community leaders were statistically significant and had a positive relationship on decision making. Most importantly, the variable of listening to peace and tolerance radio also was

statistically significant (with a p-value of .016) and had a positive estimated coefficient, meaning that higher levels of listening were associated with higher levels of decision-making, holding other factors constant.

Table 5: Estimated regression coefficients for an ordered probit model on participation in decision-making

|                                                           | Coef. | Std. Err. | z     | P>z   | Low CI | High CI |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| Community exposed to U.S. government programming          | -0.16 | 0.10      | -1.59 | 0.112 | -0.35  | 0.04    |
| Listen to radio programs about peace and tolerance        | 0.10  | 0.04      | 2.40  | 0.016 | 0.02   | 0.19    |
| Views on economic situation                               | -0.06 | 0.06      | -1.04 | 0.300 | -0.17  | 0.05    |
| Satisfaction with available services                      | 0.22  | 0.06      | 3.74  | 0.000 | 0.10   | 0.33    |
| Youth associations make positive contribution             | 0.24  | 0.04      | 6.42  | 0.000 | 0.17   | 0.32    |
| Satisfaction with decision making process                 | 0.23  | 0.05      | 4.46  | 0.000 | 0.13   | 0.33    |
| Opinions respected by community leaders                   | 0.23  | 0.04      | 5.65  | 0.000 | 0.15   | 0.31    |
| Violence as effective problem solving method              | -0.08 | 0.04      | -1.85 | 0.064 | -0.16  | 0.00    |
| Opinion of the United States                              | 0.01  | 0.04      | 0.12  | 0.903 | -0.08  | 0.09    |
| Should our government work with West to fight terror      | 0.05  | 0.03      | 1.55  | 0.122 | -0.01  | 0.11    |
| Use of violence in the name of Islam is justified         | -0.06 | 0.04      | -1.60 | 0.109 | -0.14  | 0.01    |
| Al Qaeda's violent activities permitted under Islamic law | 0.02  | 0.04      | 0.37  | 0.714 | -0.07  | 0.10    |
| Support for implementation of Sharia law                  | -0.01 | 0.03      | -0.22 | 0.828 | -0.06  | 0.05    |
| U.S. fighting Islam or terrorism                          | 0.01  | 0.03      | 0.44  | 0.658 | -0.05  | 0.07    |
| Sex                                                       | 0.02  | 0.09      | 0.19  | 0.849 | -0.16  | 0.19    |
| Age                                                       | 0.01  | 0.03      | 0.47  | 0.639 | -0.04  | 0.07    |
| /cut1                                                     | 1.78  | 0.38      |       |       | 1.04   | 2.51    |
| /cut2                                                     | 2.19  | 0.38      |       |       | 1.44   | 2.93    |
| /cut3                                                     | 3.21  | 0.40      |       |       | 2.43   | 3.98    |
| /cut4                                                     | 4.02  | 0.40      |       |       | 3.23   | 4.80    |

Note: N=733, robust standard errors

Due to space considerations, repetition, and a lack of statistical significance, I have omitted the coefficient tables for the remaining two outcomes of interest: support for violence in the name of Islam and support for implementing Sharia. Radio listening did not have a statistically significant relationship with either of these two outcomes, with a p-value of .954 for violence in Islam's name and .735 for implementing Islamic law.

Finally, I turn to the results of the propensity score matching and average treatment effect analyses. Given that ordered probit maximum likelihood analysis found evidence that only two of the four outcomes of interest – civic participation and support for working with the West – were connected to higher levels of peace and tolerance radio listening, I display the results only

for these two outcomes. Table 6 demonstrates that, using nearest neighbor matching with replacement, individuals with higher levels of radio listening were more likely to participate in decision-making activities and more likely to support working with the West to combat terrorism.

Table 6: Propensity matching score average treatment effect outcomes for high and low levels of peace and tolerance radio listening

| Outcome of Interest                        | Matching method                                                                      | Coef. | Std. Err. | z    | P>z  | Low CI | High CI | N   |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|------|------|--------|---------|-----|
| Participation in decision making           | Nearest neighbor matching with replacement, standard average treatment effect (SATE) | 0.25  | 0.11      | 2.27 | 0.02 | 0.03   | 0.46    | 764 |
| Working with the West to counter terrorism | Nearest neighbor matching with replacement, standard average treatment effect (SATE) | 0.29  | 0.13      | 2.17 | 0.03 | 0.03   | 0.54    | 757 |

Note: Matching on: community exposed to U.S. government programming (control/treatment), views on economic situation, satisfaction with available services, youth associations make positive contribution, satisfaction with decision making process, violence as effective problem solving method, opinion of the United States, should our government work with West to fight terror, use of violence in the name of Islam is justified, U.S. fighting Islam or terrorism, sex, and age.

Matching on a large number of potential confounding factors, including age, sex, views on the economic situation, satisfaction with services, belief in the power of youth associations, opinion of the United States, whether the United States is fighting terror or Islam, and whether violence is an effective way of solving problems, these outcomes are statistically significant (notice the p-

values of .02 and .03 for decision making and working with the West, respectively). Further, the results are not small: the average difference between individuals with high listening and those with low listening was around .25 on a 5-point scale for both of these outcomes.

### **Discussion and Future Directions for Research**

This article has used a variety of techniques to better understand the relationship between ongoing U.S. government projects in Mali, Chad, and Niger in the field of countering violent extremism through radio programming. While the structure of the initial interventions did not meet the “gold standard” of randomized, double-blind experiments, nonetheless this article has been able to extract critical information from the interviews with more than 1,000 respondents across Chad, Niger, and Mali. Beginning with bivariate analyses, and progressing through multivariate regression and propensity score matching, I have sought to transform a quasi-experimental dataset into a more experimental structure to better make causal arguments about the relationships between factors. The data showed that residents of communities with ongoing, multi-vectored programming were more likely to engage in peace and tolerance radio listening, and then that heavier listeners had measurably different behaviors and norms than their less-tuned-in counterparts.

While this article has focused primarily on the role played by U.S. government programs and radio listening, other variables regularly showed up as important, including sex. Women and men had noticeably different patterns of listening to the radio and in terms of their belief that their nation should work with the West to combat terrorism. Results from the regression analyses indicate that men are less likely to listen to peace and tolerance radio (p-value of .045), less likely to support working with the West to combat terrorism, and less likely to support both violence in the name of Islam (p-value of .0001) and the implementation of Sharia (p-value of .0001) at statistically significant levels. These data shed additional light on anecdotal reports that women are more likely than men to listen to programming in radio clubs [35] along with recent fieldwork in Mali which found that women, more than men, grouped together to listen to program to radio in shared, covered areas [36].

More broadly, observers have pointed out that many policy-makers have ignored the ways in which counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency approaches overlook differences in their effects on women and men. [37] U.S. government agencies have emphasized the need for better understanding of the role of gender as both a brake on and driver of violent extremism [38]. The data analyzed here support efforts to distinguish between women and men when thinking about their involvement in and response to programming. If women are already more likely to engage in social listening to radio programs, and hence listen more often to peace and tolerance radio programming, then future efforts should seek to deliver programming to men in different ways.

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Further, while significant resources went into the acquisition of data for this article, the weaknesses of this study should guide the agenda for the next wave of studies. Future research on development-based CVE policies should seek to carry out randomized, double-blind field experiments to ensure that we can better measure the impact of interventions and treatments. The best field studies from Africa subject-matter experts have used completely randomized studies to better ensure absence of bias [39]. Next, while listeners self-reported the level of listening to peace and tolerance radio, their answers may not reflect empirical reality; for example, respondents may have underestimated or overestimated their levels of listening. Some have overcome this problem by controlling access to media and directly providing the radio programming to the treatment communities [40].

Finally, social networks may have a strong impact on the perception of social norms [41], and these surveys were not designed to take such conditions into account. It is possible that some individuals in a community may have been influenced by social pressures and local norms alongside the effects of the radio programming. Finally, rather than relying on a side-by-side comparison of listeners and communities alone, future studies should undertake a longitudinal study of interventions, beginning with baseline measurements in both the control and treatment communities and moving on to confirm individual-level exposure to relevant messages. By establishing baseline parameters in the treatment and control communities, the study could be structured along a “difference-in-difference” framework that has been quite successful in economic research.

### ***Conclusion***

Many observers have argued that the U.S. military should take a back seat to USAID, the State Department, and other civilian-led government agencies in ongoing countering violent extremism efforts around the world [42]. This study supports calls for increased USAID presence in overall CVE programming as ongoing soft-side efforts in developing nations in Africa have generated measurable, statistically significant results. The data show that residents of communities where the United States has run educational, vocational, and capacity-building projects, such as Timbuktu in Mali, are more likely to listen to higher levels of peace and tolerance programming than similar, nearby communities such as Diré. Higher levels of listening, in turn, have altered the norms and behaviors of listeners in ways that will connect them more firmly to the governance structures of their communities and make them more favorable to pursuing alliances with the West against terrorist groups.

Recent developments in Mali have underscored the gaps between the violent extremist groups attacking indigenous forms of religious practice and those seeking to implement strict forms of justice under the aegis of Islam. Refugees from northern Mali have described how the messages from groups such as Ansar Dine have not resonated with local communities, and how such

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groups have relied on intimidation and force in their rise to prominence. In Mali, USAID projects and U.S. government programming more broadly have perhaps helped to reinforce native tolerance and drive a wedge between residents and well-armed outsiders seeking to impose their will on the local population.

The low-cost nature of radios and their broad reach should make them an attractive mechanism for Western governments seeking to carry out norm messaging in Africa. With the development of hand-cranked and solar radios, community radio broadcasts provide a relatively expensive, scalable, and sustainable approach to information diffusion. Studies have shown some variability in the costs (and revenues) of radio stations in Africa [43]. For example, one study estimated the cost of necessary equipment for 20 100-watt radio stations which can reach up to 25,000 people are less than \$20,000, while others argued that “[a] small FM station, with a 40-watt transmitter, mast, and basic studio equipment can be bought for about US\$3,000, excluding shipping and customs duties” [44]. These financial requirements are drops in the bucket when compared with the massive amounts of military spending in Africa by the West.

It is important to recognize that simply increasing the availability of radios and peace and radio programming in developing nations will not serve as a panacea for economic and social ills. This study showed how two of the four outcomes of interest were unaltered by higher levels of listening. Past studies using randomised experiments in Rwanda have found similar mixed outcomes, where “[t]he reconciliation radio program did not change listeners’ personal beliefs but did substantially influence listeners’ perceptions of social norms” [45]. That is, radio-transmitted norm messaging had specific, limited effects. Further, there may be negative social network externalities resulting from the diffusion of new media into traditional villages. One study of 600 villages in East and Central Java, Indonesia, showed that increased reception of TV and radio signals resulted in less trust and lower levels of involvement in voluntary organizations. More specifically, “[e]ach additional channel of television reception is associated with 7 percent fewer social groups existing in the village, and with each adult in the village participating in about 4 percent fewer types of groups over a 3 month period” [46]. It is also important to recognize that women and men responded to the programming in different ways, with men less likely to engage peace and tolerance programming from the start. Hence authorities should ensure that they anticipate likely variation between the sexes in their responses and seek to alter their programming accordingly.

Despite its limitations, this research has shown the promise that comes with radio programming. Where radios have served in past conflict as a “voice of God” and encouraged schism and violence, they also hold the potential to reduce conflict and increase cooperation. Future attempts to curtail violent extremist groups around their world should deepen their connections to soft-side and development-based tactics and use social science-based methods to measure their impact.

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### Notes

- [1] The name of the station refers to Rwanda's nickname as "the land of a thousand hills." Radio programming catalyzed a number of existing factors including the Belgian colonial practices that used socio-economic indicators to label Rwandans as Tutsi or Hutu, years of scapegoating of Tutsis during crises, anti-Tutsi violence in the 1950s and 1960s, belief that the Tutsi were foreign invaders, and the formation of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda under Paul Kagame. The RPF's invasion of Rwanda in 1990 and the shooting down of President Juvénal Habyarimana's plane at the Kigali airport were also among the many layers undergirding the massacres. For a full discussion of this topic, see Darryl Li. 2004. Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda. *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1) 9–27; Jean-Pierre Chretien, et al., (Eds). 1995. *Rwanda, les medias du genocide*. Paris: Karthala; Lee Ann Fujii. 2004. Transforming the moral landscape: the diffusion of a genocidal norm in Rwanda. *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1), pp. 99–114; and E. Elizabeth, 2009. Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol. 96, No. 3, pp. 574–587.
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## II. Research Notes and Resources

### Research Note: Single Actor Terrorism: Scope, Characteristics and Explanations

by Petter Nesser

#### *Abstract*

*This Research Note does three things. First, it takes a critical look at definitions, conceptualizations and empirical observations within the field of individual terrorism. Second, it presents and problematizes empirical surveys of so-called “lone wolf terrorists” and individual jihadist terrorists in Europe. Third, it discusses alternative theoretical arguments regarding the scope, characteristics and possible increase of single actor terrorism. Existing research indicates that single actor terrorism is likely to remain a relatively marginal phenomenon, but that attacks may become more sophisticated and deadly due to contagion and tactical diffusion via the Internet, mass media and social networks. Regardless, the analysis presented in the following reveals an acute need for clearer operationalizations and better data in the study of individualized terrorism.*

#### *Introduction*

The attacks by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway and Mohammed Merah in France demonstrated that single terrorists may cause devastating effects. The attacks also taught us that it is highly difficult for law enforcement to prevent such attacks. What is single actor terrorism? What is the scope of single actor terrorism? What drives single actor terrorism? Is single actor terrorism more dangerous than other types of terrorism? Is the phenomenon a growing trend? While individual terrorist attackers have received considerable media attentions over the last couple of years, academic research on the topic remains relatively sparse.

#### *Background*

Terrorism is usually defined and understood as a group phenomenon. Organisation and group dynamics are seen as important conditions for violent radicalisation and features distinguishing political terrorists from lunatic killers. In the terrorism research literature, terrorist attacks by single actors are usually portrayed as “lone wolf terrorism” (Spaaij 2012), “leaderless resistance” (Kaplan 1997) or “solo terrorism” (CTA 2011).[1] There is no consensus regarding the definition of these concepts, something that constitutes an analytical obstacle. Leaderless resistance is perceived as a military strategy by terrorist organisations under pressure. The strategy is characterized by asymmetric warfare and terrorist attacks by horizontal networks of

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small cells, or individuals who minimize interaction with organisational entities and a central command. Lone wolf terrorism is usually understood as terrorist attacks undertaken by individuals operating independently from organised groups. We will get back to the term solo terrorism.

The strategy of leaderless resistance is usually traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchists who staged political assassinations and bombings under the slogan "propaganda by deed" (Woodcock 1962). [2] Many of these terrorist attacks were perpetrated by single individuals. After World War II, ideas about leaderless resistance gained ground among American anti-Communists as a means of fighting Soviet allies in Eastern Europe and Latin America.[3] Then, during the 1980s and 1990s American white supremacists revived ideas of leaderless resistance, when the U.S. government cracked down on domestic racist movements. For example, Ku Klux Klan leader Louis Beam (1992) prescribed a strategy of small "phantom cells" or individuals guided by a common ideology and operating without any form of central command, as the only way for American "patriots" to prevail against the Federal Government's "tyranny".[4] Under the pseudonym Andrew McDonald, the American Neo-Nazi William Luther Pierce (1978, 1989) wrote fictional books portraying future terrorist campaigns by ideologically driven terrorist cells and individual terrorists against foreigners, pro-immigration spokespersons, and government targets.[5] In the same vein white supremacist Tom Metzger introduced the term "lone wolfism" to popularize the image of the lonesome, "patriotic" warrior.[6]

In the late 1990s, one of Al-Qaeda's strategic thinkers, Abu Musab al-Suri, presented a military theory for the jihadist movements bearing striking similarities to the concepts developed among anti-Communists and white racists. Al-Suri called upon jihadist movements under pressure and not controlling territories to engage in leaderless guerrilla warfare and "individual terrorism jihad" while awaiting conditions in which "open front" insurgency and military campaigns could succeed.[7] For al-Suri such a strategy was suboptimal, but necessary, and implied shadowy "cell builders" representing the movement and preparing small cells or individuals for operations, but disappearing before attacks were launched.[8] In recent times, an Al-Qaeda organisation facing tremendous pressures has called for individual attacks by sympathizers worldwide in statements by its leadership as well as in the *Inspire* magazine issued by its Yemen branch. This magazine has led a campaign recommending solo terrorism and providing operational advice.[9] Coinciding with a renewed focus on "individual terrorism jihad" among Al-Qaeda and affiliates, from around 2008 onwards there has been a marked increase in international terrorist attacks by individual jihadists.

While a number of studies have addressed the ideational and strategic foundations of leaderless resistance by anarchists, right-wing racists, jihadists and other extremist camps (Kaplan 1997, Borum 2005, Sageman 2008) [10], there is a small but growing body of research (Spaaij 2010 and 2012, Bakker & de Graaf 2010, Pantucci 2011) focusing more on operational and

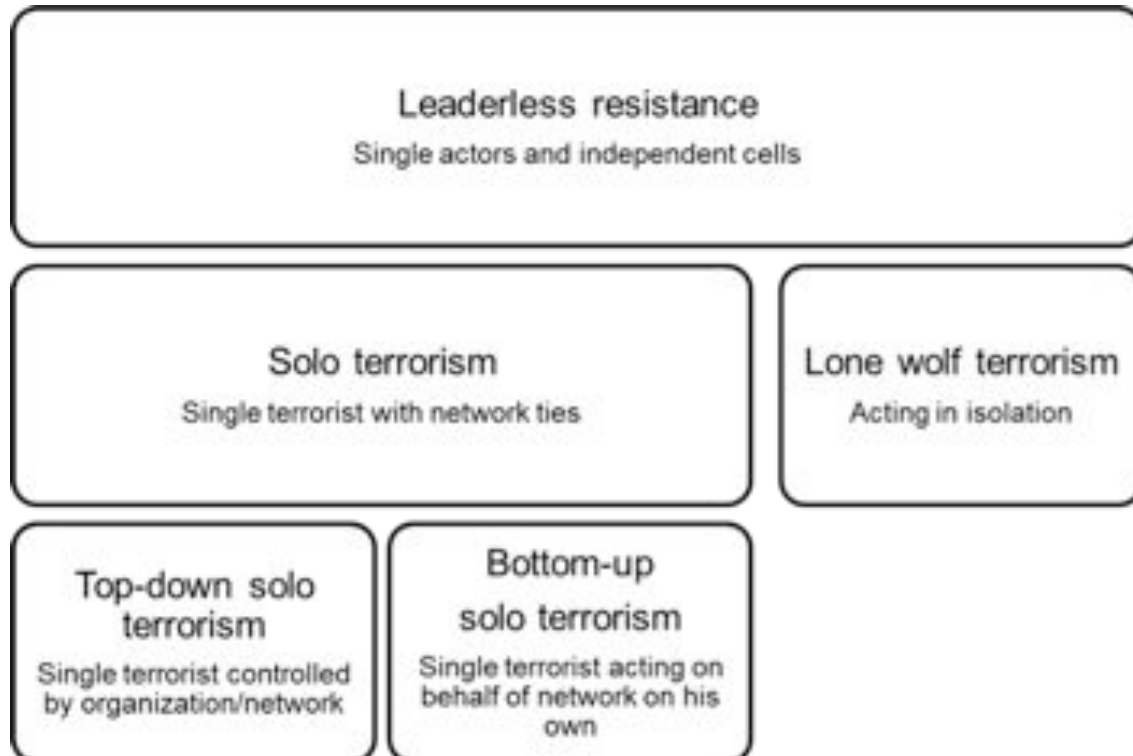
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motivational aspects of terrorism by single individuals or lone wolves.[11] However, there is considerable confusion with regards to definitions and operationalizations.

Lone wolves are mostly defined as individual terrorists operating in isolation from organised networks (Spaaij 2012; COT 2007). Yet, at other times lone wolves are defined more widely as terrorists executing attacks on their own, but having various types of contacts with organised extremists during the radicalisation process. The nature of such contacts is poorly specified, as is the level of organisation required for there to be an organisational link.

The analysis unit of the Danish Police Intelligence service, CTA, introduces a distinction between lone wolves and solo terrorists, the former operating in isolation and the latter having ties to violent extremist or terrorist networks. CTA further differentiates between bottom-up and top-down solo terrorists, the former implying self-recruited individuals connecting with organised networks for assistance and inspiration, and the latter implying individuals recruited, trained and controlled by terrorist networks. The CTA does provide some, albeit vague clues on how to distinguish true single actors from those operating in group contexts. Pantucci (2011) offers the widest definition of lone wolves, even including small terrorist cells consisting of two or more persons acting independently from organisations.[12]

Below is an attempt to illustrate the relationship between categories of individualized terrorism:



This lack of mutually exclusive categories and clear operationalizations makes it hard to draw firm conclusions from empirical research on single actors; are we talking about a distinct phenomenon or a variant of group terrorism? The lack of coherent coding to produce reliable micro-level data further complicates the matter. The author will exemplify.

### *Scope and characteristics*

We now turn to empirical patterns of single actor terrorism. A 2012 study by Ramon Spaaij offers the most comprehensive empirical survey of lone wolf terrorism to date. He collects data from the Terrorism Knowledge Database (TKB) and Global Terrorism Database (GTD) on single actor terrorist attacks in selected Western countries between 1968 and 2010.[13] Spaaij identifies 88 lone wolves responsible for 198 attacks. The study presents general statistics based on 88 cases and five in-depth case studies of well-known cases.[14] Spaaij acknowledges that GTD and TKB data imply methodological pitfalls. The study employs a strict definition of lone wolf terrorism and excludes individuals linked to organised networks. Spaaij admits that, given the data, the distinction is difficult to draw in practice.

He mentions Timothy McVeigh who bombed a government building in Oklahoma in 1995 and Richard Reid who tried to down a trans-Atlantic airliner in 2001 as examples on cases left out. McVeigh received assistance from his comrade Terry Nichols and had ties to organised white supremacists, whereas Reid was acting on orders from Al-Qaeda. Spaaij also acknowledges that many of the cases included in his survey involve obscure circumstances, and that closer investigations could reveal types of interaction with organised actors that could affect his incident count. According to Spaaij's statistics, lone wolves are behind 1.8 % of the total number of 11.235 terrorist attacks in the selected countries, constituting a marginal trend. He identifies a marked prevalence of the phenomenon in America compared to Canada, European countries and Australia. [15] The study further identifies an overall, gradual increase in lone wolf attacks. The increase is more pronounced in Europe than America, and there were spikes in the overall occurrence of attacks during the early 1980s, early to mid-1990s and early 2000s.

With regards to ideological motivation, the survey attributes 17% of lone wolf attacks to right-wing racists, 15% to Islamists, 8% to anti-abortion extremists, and 7% to national-separatists. [16] More than 30% of the cases were categorized as "other" or "unknown" in terms of motivational drivers. The prevalence of right-wing militancy and Islamism stands in contrast to longitudinal surveys of terrorist trends, in which nationalist-separatist terrorist groups dominate the picture.[17] Spaaij's survey further finds that lone wolves typically attack soft civilian targets (58%), officials and politicians (13%), health personnel (10%), and that they (just like group terrorists) seek to maximize symbolism. As for weapons, most employed firearms (43%), 28% utilized explosives, 16% conducted armed hijackings and 6% committed arson.

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The use of firearms was more prevalent in the United States and Spaaij indicates U.S. gun laws and the popularity of the leaderless resistance strategy among American racists as possible explanations. He compares lone wolves' use of firearms to terrorist groups, who employ explosives in 65-75% of cases registered in databases. According to Spaaij's statistics lone wolf terrorism is not very lethal, only resulting in 0, 6 deaths per incident. The lethality does not increase significantly in the time period surveyed. Of the five in-depth case studies undertaken by Spaaij, three utilized bomb devices and two used guns. Two targeted politicians whereas three attacked specified groups of civilians such as immigrants or random victims.

Based on micro-level analysis of well-known cases, Spaaij observes that lone wolves' radicalisation processes tend to involve interaction with broader ideologies and movements, and a particular mix of personal frustrations and ideology, in which subjects use the latter to explain the former.[18] He also emphasizes how mental problems and social disabilities appear to be overrepresented among lone wolves, showing how they struggle with fitting to group environments and tend to isolate themselves.[19] Sociologically, Spaaij finds that lone wolves come from a variety of backgrounds, but tend to be well-educated and self-taught with regards to extremist ideology and terrorist tactics.

While Spaaij's lone wolf study is an important contribution, some comments are in order. First, the databases used almost exclusively register successfully committed attacks. Given the fact that terrorist plots often fail or get thwarted, and that this may apply disproportionately to single actors, failed plots should also be taken into consideration. Furthermore, as acknowledged by Spaaij, several of the cases in the study may appear as lone wolf terrorism while in fact having substantial network ties. Also, the inclusion of failed and thwarted terrorist plans, as well as the recent attacks in Norway could seriously affect prognoses regarding lethality of lone wolf attacks and reveal greater variance in operational patterns. Moreover, the study does not compare the level of lone wolf terrorism to variations in the totality of incidents across time. Last, the observations regarding psychological and social profile seem to rest profoundly on five out of 88 cases, - cases that appear to involve more clear-cut lone wolves than the other sample cases, something that raises questions about validity.

For comparison, this author conducted a survey of single actor jihadists in Western Europe between 1995 and present. [20] The following outlines the main findings from that survey before discussing alternative explanations for the occurrence of single actor terrorism. Incidents were drawn from an open source chronology of planned, prepared and executed terrorist attacks by jihadists in Western Europe, which has been maintained by the author since 2003.[21]

Out of a total of 105 of planned, prepared and executed terrorist plots by jihadist actors between 1995 and 2012 (based on the latest count), as much as 15 (14%) cases involved individual attackers. The cases included:

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1. “Shoe-bomber” Richard Reid’s attempt to down a trans-Atlantic jet in 2001.
2. An Iraqi sending toxic letters to the prime minister’s office and the U.S. and Saudi embassies in Belgium, 2003.
3. Dutch-Moroccan Mohammed Bouyeri’s assassination of Theo Van Gogh in 2004.
4. “Wannabe” jihadist Nicholas Roddis’ 2007 bomb plans and hoax in the UK.
5. British convert Andrew Ibrahim’s 2008 plan to bomb a shopping center in Bristol.
6. British convert Nicky Reilly’s 2008 attempt to bomb a restaurant in Exeter.
7. Libyan Mohammed Game’s 2009 attack on a U.S. military base in Milan.
8. Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab’s attempt to down a trans-Atlantic jet in 2009.
9. Danish-Somali Mohammed Guele’s attempt to assassinate Kurt Westergaard in Denmark, 2010.
10. Bengali Rajib Karim’s plot to down a trans-Atlantic jet in 2010.
11. British-Pakistani Roshonara Choudry’s 2010 attempt to assassinate British MP Stephen Timms.
12. Chechen Lers Doukaiev’s 2010 plan to bomb Jyllands-Posten newspaper in Denmark.
13. Swedish-Iraqi Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly who launched an unsuccessful suicide bombing in Stockholm, 2010.
14. Kosovar Arid Uka who shot and killed two U.S. soldiers at Frankfurt airport in 2011.
15. French-Algerian Mohammed Merah who killed French soldiers and attacked a Jewish children’s school in France, 2012.

My survey did not distinguish between lone wolves and solo terrorists, but I found that four out of the 15 cases appeared to be disconnected from organisations and identifiable networks of extremists. [22]

Furthermore, I found that only three of the 15 cases preceded 2008, making the phenomenon almost non-existent before that time, and the relative increase compared to the total number of terrorist plots between 2008-2012 significant (2008: 2/8 incidents, 2009: 2/5 incidents, 2010: 5/13 incidents, 2011: 1/3 incidents, 2012:1/4 incidents).[23]

In terms of operational patterns, approximately 50% of the cases involved mass casualty bomb attacks against civilians, three of them suicide missions against airplanes. Three cases involved assassinations of public figures (such as the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, British MP Stephen Timms and Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh) with handgun, knife and axe. Three cases involved attacks on soft military targets using handguns or explosives. [24]

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My survey thus found that there was a higher occurrence of single actor attacks among jihadists than in the broader population surveyed by Spaaij, and that jihadist loner attacks were potentially more deadly. Although most of the jihadists in my sample seemed connected to extremist environments and received assistance, encouragement or instructions, I found some support for Spaaij's observations about motivations and socio-psychological profiles. In my sample, one person was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome and several had mental health issues or behavioral disorders. [25]

Also people like the shoe bomber Richard Reid and the Chechen Lers Doukaiev who tried to launch a bomb attack in Denmark avenging the Mohammed caricatures came from troubled family backgrounds and had dropped out of the educational system. Furthermore, in several cases, personal frustrations appear to have been an important factor behind the ideological radicalisation as suggested by Spaaij's lone wolf research. For example, it has been alleged that Mohammed Bouyeri's failure to fulfill the dream of establishing a youth club for immigrants played a central part in his radicalisation process.[26]

The author's survey of individual jihadists encountered the same definitional challenges as the lone wolf study, but due to the limited scope of the study (one type of actor, limited time period), and the magnitude of updated press information about jihadist terrorism, the survey is based on more, and more reliable data, and may, with a relatively high level of precision, determine the relationship between single actor and group terrorism by jihadists in Europe.

Whether my findings have validity beyond the jihadism in Europe case is another question. To reach more valid and generalizable knowledge about single actor terrorism, there is definitively a need for better data sets which include both successful and foiled terrorist plots by diverse ideological trends. We also need to find better ways to distinguish clearly between those few true lone wolves who operate in total isolation and single actors operating on behalf of organised groups. Despite definitional obstacles and weaknesses of empirical data, the existing research does provide a sound basis for discussing alternative hypotheses regarding the scope and nature of single actor terrorism, which we will turn to now.

### ***Explanations***

#### *Ideology*

Studies of lone wolf terrorism hypothesize that the occurrence of the phenomenon varies according to trends in ideologies and strategic thinking. Spaaij identified peaks in the occurrence of lone wolf terrorism in the 80s when American right-wing thinkers focused on leaderless resistance and "lone wolfism," and in the early 2000s after jihadists picked upon similar ideas during the late 1990s, as exemplified by Abu Musab al-Suri's strategic writings.

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The thesis is backed by anecdotal evidence that Timothy McVeigh and several other right-wing terrorists possessed writings by William Pierce's and acted according to advice in American rightwing fanzines.[27] Similarly several jihadists who plotted individual attacks in Europe and the U.S. appear to have been influenced by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) ideologue Anwar al-Awlaki and the group's propaganda outlet *Inspire* magazine (e.g. aforementioned Roshonara Choudry and Jose Pimentel, a Dominican American jihadist involved in a New York bomb plot during 2011).

### *Repression and Counter-terrorism*

An alternative or supplementary explanation offered is state repression and counter-terrorism. It is important to bear in mind that ideological and strategic thinking on leaderless resistance emerged as responses to intensified crackdowns or disruption of extremist movements and terrorist groups; in particular the U.S. government's crackdown of the white supremacy movement and the targeting of Al-Qaeda's central organisation in the Af-Pak region and other Al-Qaeda strongholds - especially the increased use of drones against training camps and leading figures. Therefore, in terms of establishing causality one must ask what comes first, ideology and strategy, or tactical adaptation to a dire security environment. In this respect it is important to note that the afore-mentioned Al-Qaeda strategist Abu Musab al-Suri started writing about leaderless resistance in the 1990s, but that the popularization of his texts and the increase in individual jihadist attacks emerged only after Al-Qaeda came under severe pressures. As mentioned, a similar dynamic was seen among American white racists.

### *Psychological and societal factors*

Besides ideology and adjustment to counter-terrorism regimes, other explanatory models emphasize psychological and societal factors. Whereas, generally, terrorists tend to be psychologically normal (Crenshaw 1981), mental difficulties seem to be over-represented among single actors.[28] Spaaij found lone wolves to have "greater propensity to suffer mental health issues", and I found most jihadist loners to be either mentally or socially troubled, or both.[29] Another important observation by Spaaij is that lone wolves tend to mix personal frustrations and extremist ideologies, externalizing their own problems, blaming them on the hostile "Other," be it immigrants, multiculturalism, or the Jewish-Crusader imperialist alliance.

Broader societal tendencies towards individualization and social fragmentation and alienation may intensify such radicalisation processes. Alienated and socially isolated persons could drift into a world of online extremism and violent computer games, and in rare instances they could end up being exploited by terrorist organisations, or radicalise and embark on violent rampage on their own, a case in point being school massacres. However, while there have been observed

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similarities between perpetrators of school massacres and terrorists[30], and while there is evidence that many lone terrorists have radicalised online, explanations emphasizing the Internet and social changes do not account for historical patterns of single actor terrorism (such as the 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchists). In addition, the fact that most single actor terrorists had, or wanted to have ties to group environments largely invalidates individualism as a driver in its own right.

### *Tactical Diffusion/Contagion*

A more general explanation for terrorist violence is the effect of contagion (Midlarsky et al 1980; Schmid & de Graaf 1982).[31] Terrorism research has solidly documented that terrorists tend to emulate each other's operational methods. Globalisation and Internet-based mass media and social media accelerate and intensify such processes (Nacos 2009).[32]

It was the Lebanese Shia-militia Hizbullah that introduced suicide bombings that later were employed by Palestinian terrorists, Tamil Tigers and Al-Qaeda; IED expertise from Iraq spread to other theaters of war and insurgency, and the Dutch-Moroccan jihadist Mohammed Bouyeri killed and tried to decapitate filmmaker Theo Van Gogh on the streets of Amsterdam, shortly after a kidnapping and decapitation campaign executed by Al-Qaeda in Iraq during 2004.

The Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik explained in detail how he gained tactical inspiration from Al-Qaeda when aiming to launch a martyrdom solo terrorist attack in Oslo, and now security services worry that other terrorists in turn could learn from Breivik. While both strategic-tactical considerations and socio-psychological factors apparently influence the occurrence single actor terrorism, in the Internet age it is important not to underestimate the contagious nature of extreme violence, and the potential for spread among terrorist networks and copycat killers.

### *Conclusion*

Existing research indicates that single actor terrorism is a marginal phenomenon and less dangerous than group terrorism. However, worldwide attacks over the last couple of years suggest that single actor terrorism is on the rise and becoming more deadly. Available studies of terrorist attacks by individual perpetrators suffer from a lack of coherent definitions and sound operationalizations, while utilizing poor data. Although studies have produced well-founded knowledge about single cases or clusters of cases, there are serious questions regarding the validity of findings and generalization. Because the research does not distinguish accurately between lone terrorists and network agents it is difficult to know when and how we may perceive single actor terrorist attacks as a distinct phenomenon or as a tactical variant of group terrorism.

At the end of the day it is crucial to make this distinction in order to understand variations in the occurrence of individual terrorist attacks. Do single actor attacks occur when terrorist groups

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face troubles and adapt their tactics, or do broader societal changes account for a recent increase in this type of terrorism, or both? A main challenge ahead for the research community is to operationalize connections and affinity between a lone attacker, networks and ideological communities. How much and what types of contacts between a lone attacker and a broader social entity is needed to distinguish between political terrorists and lunatic killers?

Also, how 'political' must a violent attacker be to qualify as a single actor terrorist? When social grievances and psychological problems overshadow political messages there is indeed a fine line between terroristic violence and other types of random violence, such as school massacres.

Several studies of single actor terrorism are currently in the pipeline. Hopefully they will rely on more complete and accurate data than is currently available. For example, recent observations concerning the scope and lethality of the phenomenon could be altered substantially if well-documented thwarted and failed terrorist attacks were included in the databases. Also there is a need for cross-comparison between single actor attacks within different ideological camps. Closer investigations could, for example, reveal important differences between actors, methods and motivational drivers within the right-wing, jihadist or anarchist realms. Despite data problems and analytical pitfalls, what seems to be a robust finding in the existing research is that single actor terrorism appeals to a special kind of person - people of unusual psychological complexity.

Another feature worth noticing is the relatively low lethality in Spaaij's historical data material. Moreover, my survey of jihadist loner attacks in Europe showed a low success rate in terms of destruction and fatalities, indicating that single actors face substantial operational challenges compared to groups and that they tend to make mistakes. However, the terrorist attacks in Oslo, the shootings at Fort Hood and Mohammed Merah's terrorist campaign in France constitute a worrisome trend of successful attacks, which could be linked to contagion and diffusion of tactical advice via Internet outlets and social media. The recent massacres in America, the Batman shootings by a schizophrenic madman and the Nazi attack on a Sikh-temple further demonstrated the operational effectiveness of lone attackers armed with handguns.

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## Notes

- [1] Ramon Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism* (Melbourne: Springer, 2012); Jeffrey Kaplan, "Leaderless resistance," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 9:3, 80-95; Center for Terroranalyse (CTA) "The threat from solo terrorism and lone wolf terrorism," 5 April, 2011, URL: [https://www.pet.dk/~media/Engelsk/the\\_threat\\_from\\_solo\\_terrorism\\_and\\_lone\\_wolf\\_terrorism\\_-\\_engelsk\\_version\\_pdf.ashx](https://www.pet.dk/~media/Engelsk/the_threat_from_solo_terrorism_and_lone_wolf_terrorism_-_engelsk_version_pdf.ashx)
- [2] George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*. Cleveland & New York: Meridian Books, 1962.
- [3] See e.g. COT - Instituut voor Veiligheids- en Crisismanagement, "Lone Wolf Terrorism," Report, The Hague: COT, 6 July 2007 <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/Lone-Wolf%20Terrorism.pdf> and Martin Durham, *White Rage*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- [4] Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, Issue 12, February 1992, URL: <http://www.louisbeam.com/leaderless.htm>
- [5] Andrew McDonald "The Turner Diaries," 1978; -----, "Hunter," 1989, accessed via *JR's Rare Books and Commentary*, URL: <http://www.jrbooksonline.com/>
- [6] Tom Metzger, "Begin With Lone Wolves," URL: <http://www.resist.com/Articles/literature/BeginWithLoneWolvesByTomMetzger.htm>
- [7] Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- [8] Ibid.
- [9] Inspire magazine is available on a number of jihadist websites, and may also be accessed via the blog *Jihadology*, URL: <http://jihadology.net/>
- [10] Jeffrey Kaplan, "Leaderless Resistance," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 80-95, 1997; Randy Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism* Tampa: University of South Florida, 2004; Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- [11] Ramón Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2012, Edwin Bakker and Beatrice De Graaf, "Lone Wolves: How to Prevent This Phenomenon?," report, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, November 2010; Raffaello Pantucci, "A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists", report, *International Center for the Study of Radicalisation* (ICSR, 2011).
- [12] He suggests a typology distinguishing between the loner (individual acting on his own inspired by ideology), the lone wolf (individual acting on his own inspired by ideology and linked to extremist networks), something he calls lone wolf pack (small group acting on its own inspired by ideology), and the lone attacker (individual dispatched by terrorist group); see Pantucci, "A Typology of Lone Wolves".
- [13] The 15 countries surveyed include UK, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Croatia, Portugal, Russia, Australia, Canada and the U.S.
- [14] Cases include the "Una-bomber" Ted Kaczynski (operating between 1978 and 1995), Austrian xenophobic serial killer Franz Fuchs (operating between 1993 and 1997), Jewish extremist Yigal Amir who killed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, right-wing terrorist David Copeland who attacked foreigners and gay people in the UK during 1999 and the Dutch environmental extremist Volkert Van der Graaf who killed the liberal politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002.
- [15] 45 % of the 198 attacks took place in the U.S.. Germany was the second most exposed country in the data material, having experienced eight lone wolf attacks in the period surveyed.
- [16] Remaining categories include black militancy terrorism, left-wing terrorism, Eco-terrorism, animal liberation terrorism, Spaaij (2012).
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[17] See for example Jan Oskar Engene's study, *Terrorism In Western Europe: Explaining The Trends Since 1950*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004; he shows that separatists have been behind the vast majority of terrorist attacks in European countries since World War II. See also statistics presented in Brynjar Lia with Katja Skjølberg, "Causes of terrorism: An Expanded and Updated Review of the Literature," FFI Research Report No.2004/04307, p 14, URL: <http://rapporteur.ffi.no/rapporteur/2004/04307.pdf>, showing a similar tendency based on RAND-MIPT terrorism incident data.

[18] For example, Franz Fuchs' racism and xenophobia seemed to involve considerable levels of self-hate and Yigal Amir's radicalisation process appeared to accelerate in connection with a broken relationship with his girlfriend.

[19] For example, only one out of the archetypical lone wolves studied by Spaaij was in a relationship.

[20] For a preliminary analysis, see Petter Nesser, Petter Nesser, "Individual Jihadist Operations in Europe: Patterns and Challenges," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, January 2012, URL: <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Vol5-Iss13.pdf>. For the purpose of the current analysis several additional cases were included, see full list in body text.

[21] Petter Nesser, "Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe 1994-2007: Planned, Prepared, and Executed Terrorist Attacks" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 31, No. 10 (2008), and Nesser "Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe Update 2008-2010," FFI (2010), available on URL: <http://www.ffi.no> and further updates for 2011 and 2012 with author.

[22] These cases included: the Kosovar Arid Uka who killed two U.S. soldiers and wounded two others at Frankfurt airport in 2011; the Pakistani female student Roshonara Choudry who stabbed a British MP during 2010; an Iraqi behind toxic letter attacks in Belgium during 2003 (see e.g. BBC News, "Belgium holds Iraqi over toxic letters," 5 June 2003, URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2967376.stm>), and the mentally unstable Dutch-British jihadist "wannabe" Nicholas Roddis, who gathered bomb-materials and staged a bomb hoax in the UK during 2008. The circumstances of all these cases were vague, but clear links to well-known networks seem to be absent - at least to this author's knowledge.

[23] The three cases that preceded 2008 included: "shoe-bomber" Richard Reid, Mohammed Bouyeri, who killed the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, - and the toxic letters' case in Belgium.

[24] Attacks on soft military targets included: Arid Uka's shooting of U.S. soldiers in Frankfurt, the Libyan Mohammed Game's explosives attack at the gate of a U.S. military base in Milan, and Mohammed Merah's assaults on French soldiers before attacking a Jewish school.

[25] Young Nicky Reilly who tried to bomb a restaurant in Exeter suffered from Asperger and "Emo-kid" Andrew Ibrahim who planned to bomb a shopping center in Bristol struggled with behavioral transgressions, as did Theo Van Gogh's murderer Mohammed Bouyeri. 23-year-old Nicholas Roddis who was fascinated with jihadism and staged a bomb-hoax in Britain also suffered from mental problems.

[26] Albert Benschop, "Chronicle of a Political Murder Foretold: Jihad in the Netherlands," online report, University of Amsterdam, 2005.

[27] Such as Tom Metzger's call for "Lone Wolfism" in "Begin With Lone Wolves," URL: <http://www.resist.com/Articles/literature/BeginWithLoneWolvesByTomMetzger.htm>

[28] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 379-399, 1981.

[29] Ramón Spaaij (2012), p 50.

[30] Adam Lankford and Nayab Hakim, "From Columbine to Palestine: A comparative analysis of rampage shooters in the United States and volunteer suicide bombers in the Middle East," *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, Volume 16, Issue 2, March-April 2011, pp. 98-107.

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[31] Midlarsky et al, "Why Violence Spreads," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Jun., 1980), pp. 262-298; Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf. *Violence and Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media* London: Sage, 1982.

[32] Brigitte L Nacos, "Revisiting the Contagion Hypothesis: Terrorism, News Coverage, and Copycat Attacks," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol 3, No 3 (2009), URL: <http://terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/73/html>; Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, op. cit.

## Research Note: Inside an Indonesian Online Library for Radical Materials

by Muhammad Haniff Hassan and Zulkifli Mohamed

### *Abstract*

*This Research Note provides a review of an Indonesian online library for radical materials. The objective of this review is to compile data and information that will contribute to the understanding of the online radicalisation phenomenon as well as the extremists themselves. Based on data found on the online library, this Research Note reports findings on the influence of Al-Maqdisi's website; the emphasis on translation work of Arabic materials to Indonesian language by radicals and the value of Arabic materials to them. It also covers influential thinkers and ideologues and the use of the Wikipedia modus operandi to hasten the development of the website and effect mobilisation and recruitment, among others things. Based on the data found, this Research Note concludes that ideas matter to radicals.*

### *Introduction*

Radicals need to reach out to the public in order to spread their extremist ideology. The Internet has been an important platform for this purpose due to its open character and the tough restrictions imposed by some authorities on conventional media. In conjunction with the proliferation of radical materials on the Internet, self-radicalisation cases have emerged in many parts of the world. This has raised concerns within civil society and among governmental agencies.

To better understand this issue, studies have to be carried out on radical materials and the activities of extremist groups on the Internet in order to find the right solution to the problem. One such way is to study the data found on radical websites, as this can provide insights into the online radicalisation phenomenon. From the compiled data, a better understanding of the problem and solutions can be found. When pieced together with other relevant data, this information can be used to provide a larger and clearer picture of the phenomenon.

This Research Note takes a small step towards reaching that goal. It examines a radical website known as *Maktabah Al-Tauhid Wal Jihad* [1] (MTJ). It was created to be an online library that compiles ideological materials related to radical Islamism in the Indonesian language.

Admittedly, there are many radical websites in the Indonesian language. However, MTJ's focus on radical Islamist materials makes it relevant for researchers interested on the Indonesian radicals' treatment of, and sense of importance towards ideological materials and the role of radical ideology in radicalisation – a phenomenon that is being investigated in this Research Note. In comparison, many other websites are mixed with non-ideological materials.

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To arrive at the goal, this research note takes a single-case study approach to analysing MTJ. This approach is defined as a study of a single case unit which will shed light for understanding of a phenomenon when combined with a larger class of similar units.[2] Due to space constraints facing the authors, this Research Note will not venture into a comparative analysis with other similar units.[3]

This Research Note regards MTJ as one of many pieces of the mosaics that makes up the larger phenomenon of militant Islamism. It provides the relevant details that can be picked up by other scholars or be used in future research endeavours together with studies on other, similar units. There are many scholars out there who are more interested in the detailed data of research than the insights generated from a single case study.[4] This approach is not uncommon in the field of terrorism research. The field has produced numerous single-unit case study materials pertaining to individual profiles of terrorists, terrorist incident and terrorist group in various databases projects. Each approach can be used for an analysis that addresses the larger picture. Also, a single-unit case study is a recognised research methodology. Many scholars have defended this methodology and responded rigorously against its opponents.[5] Bent Flyvberg, a strong believer of the case-study research, argues that the case study approach is important research tool in two respects:

“First, it is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process, and in much theory. Second, cases are important for researchers’ own learning processes in developing skills needed to do good research. If researchers wish to develop their own skills to a high level, then concrete, context dependent experience is just as central for them as to professionals learning any other specific skills. Concrete experiences can be achieved via continued proximity to the studied reality and via feedback from those under study. Great distance to the object of study and lack of feedback easily lead to a stultified learning process, which in research can lead to ritual academic blind alleys, where the effect and usefulness of research becomes unclear and untested.”[6]

Like any research methodology, one just need to ensure that the researcher does not fall into its pitfall which is using data from a single unit to generalise without corroborating it with other similar units. Thus, it must be mentioned at the onset that insights generated at the end of the Research Note should not be regarded as a general phenomenon unless corroborated with other types of evidence.

This Research Note is divided into two parts: (i) a review of the data and information found on the website; and (ii) insights into the data and information collated achieved from the website.

**Overview of the Library**

The library's Arabic name, *Maktabah Al-Tauhid Wal Jihad* (MTJ) which means "Tauhid and Jihad Library" in English, clearly highlights its function and focus. MTJ was, when this research was done located at [www.jahizuna.com](http://www.jahizuna.com). [7] The actual meaning of "*jahizuna*", an Arabic word, depends on how it is spelt in Arabic letters. However, an image of the word written in Arabic posted on the website informs us that the word is composed of a command verb (*fi'il amr*), *jahhiz* (O you, equip / prepare), and a pronoun, *na* (us). It is not clear when exactly MTJ was created in the Internet; the earliest posting we found was on 28 Rajab 1432H (Islamic calendar) or 30 June 2011. It can be assumed that MTJ was founded in June 2011.

MTJ sets out to collect any material on the Islamist ideology and jihad practice so that it can be freely accessed and re-circulated in the Internet, with the objectives of (i) educating Muslims in what it considers to be the true understanding of Islam and (ii) defending Islam from attempts (presumably from enemies of Islam) to distort it, with the hope that these efforts will contribute to the establishment of Islam in Indonesia as understood by MTJ's founders.

Although it is not explicitly stated, the website's name and function points to the influence of Al-Maqdisi's website, popularly known as *Minbar Al-Tauhid Wa Al-Jihad* (Tauhid and Jihad Pulpit), which functions as the largest online repository for radical and jihadist materials. It is also clear from its name - the word chosen for the website's URL address - that the website is bent towards radical and jihadist ideology, seeking to propagate it online among Indonesian Muslims.

MTJ has four main components: (i) a repository of radical materials in Indonesian language, (ii) an online study/tutorial of Islam from their perspective, (iii) forums, and (iv) links to various other radical online sites in various languages. The repository hosts textual, audio and video materials, accessible to anyone for online reading and download. However, certain materials are restricted to those who have an account with MTJ. To register, a person needs to submit his username and e-mail, and state whether he is willing to volunteer for translation work for MTJ through an online form. He will be given a password for his account upon approval. The content of these materials are diverse: treatises on jihad and Islamic creed, media statements from various radical groups, biographies, analyses of current affairs, and creative writing related to jihad.

It must be noted here that MTJ is not the first Indonesian library for radical Islam, nor is it the pioneer in translation works of radical materials to Indonesian language. There was an attempt with a similar purpose in the form of an Indonesian language version of Al-Maqdisi's *Minbar Al-Tawhid Wa Al-Jihad* prior to the founding of MTJ. It involved translation of materials found in Al-Maqdisi's original Arabic site. [8] However, this fact does not devalue MTJ's research importance. MTJ is clearly quantitatively and qualitatively superior to Al-Maqdisi's Indonesian language mirror site, being both more current and more active.

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For comparison, the latter hosts only 13 translated books, 1 online magazine and 5 articles. Authors related to the materials are:

- Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi (7 books and 1 article)
- Ali Al-Khudhair (2 books)
- Abdullah Azzam (1 book)
- Abu Mus`ab Al-Zarqawi (1 book)
- Osama bin Laden (1 book)
- Inspire magazine (November 2010)
- Hussein Mahmoud (1 article)
- Abu Yahya Al-Libi (1 article)
- Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1 book)
- Abu Saad Al-Amili (1 article)
- At-Tawbah Forum translation team (1 article)

As for MTJ, the following sections will describe in detail its superior contents (both qualitatively and quantitatively) with a focus on its repository features.

Data retrieved from Al-Maqdisi's Indonesian mirror site also indicate that it is largely dormant compared to MTJ. The oldest post found in the former was in October 2009. There were only 4 posts in 2009, none in 2010, 4 in 2011 and less than 11 for 2012. Total post of all materials (all in just on single webpage) is only 19 for a period of 3 years.[9] This figure pales when compared with MTJ that has managed to arrive at its current state (described below) in less than a year (at the time of writing this article). The prolific character of MTJ in terms of materials offered and activity outputs means that it is in a better position to provide more information for better insights on Indonesian radical activities online.

### ***Textual Materials***

Textual materials make up the largest content in MTJ. They come in the form of articles and books written by prominent and radical leaders, scholars, ideologues and activists, with affiliations to different radical groups and from different nationalities. This is in line with MTJ's declared policy to be non-partisan to any particular radical group. Materials written by non-Indonesians and in foreign languages are translated to the Indonesian language. MTJ does not post textual materials in non-Indonesian languages. There are about 350 textual materials from more than 160 individuals and 10 group entities to be found on the website.[10] Although most

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of the individuals' countries of origin are not known, several can be traced to 13 different countries.[11]

The following are the top 10 individuals (with their country of origin in brackets) based on the amount of materials hosted by MTJ

| <i>Name</i>                                               | <i>No. of items</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz [12] (Egypt)                    | 23                  |
| 2. Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi [13] (Jordan)                  | 17                  |
| 3. Abu Mus`ab Al-Suri [14] (Syria)                        | 13                  |
| 4. Abu Mus`ab Al-Zarqawi [15] (Jordan)                    | 12                  |
| 5. Abdul Mun`im Mustafa Halimah Abu Bashir [16] (Unknown) | 11                  |
| 6. Urwah [17] (Indonesia)                                 | 11                  |
| 7. Abdullah Azzam [18] (Palestine)                        | 8                   |
| 8. Ali Ghuftron [19] (Indonesia)                          | 7                   |
| 9. Abu Sulaiman Aman Abdurrahman [20] (Indonesia)         | 6                   |
| 10. Yusuf Al-`Uyairy [21] (Saudi Arabia)                  | 6                   |

This list reflects, to certain extent, the popularity of certain individuals among the visitors. It can be deduced that these visitors are largely Indonesians because of the official language of MTJ. Due to the nature of the content, it can also be concluded that the visitors are sympathisers or supporters of jihadism and radical Islamism.

MTJ does not provide a count for the materials read or downloaded. Due to this, we cannot gauge the most read or downloaded items to corroborate the popularity of the listed individuals. The list corroborates the MTJ jihadist leanings because the majority of these writers are well-known individuals in jihadist circles, except for Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz, who has renounced his previous jihadi ideas and has become a strong critic of Al-Qaeda. However, none of his revisionist materials are translated and uploaded in MTJ. All of the 23 materials are from his pre-revisionist period. Interestingly, the large majority of the textual materials belong to contemporary individuals. Classical works total fewer than 10. They belong to Ibn Taimiyah, Ibn Nuhas and Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jauziyah.

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**Audio Materials**

MTJ's library features 39 audio materials, all in the Indonesian language. The list of the individuals and the number of their audio contributions are as follows:

| <i>Name</i>                           | <i>No. of items</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Abu Bakar Ba'ashir [22]            | 14                  |
| 2. Abdullah Sungkar [23]              | 6                   |
| 3. Abu Sulaiman Aman Abdurrahman [24] | 6                   |
| 4. RDSFM [25]                         | 4                   |
| 5. Urwah [26]                         | 3                   |
| 6. M. Natsir [27]                     | 2                   |
| 7. Aris Munandar [28]                 | 1                   |
| 8. Abu Umar [29]                      | 1                   |
| 9. Abu Baruudah [30]                  | 1                   |

**Links**

Like other radical websites, MTJ also provides its visitors with links to similar extremist websites. MTJ posted links to 35 Indonesian sites that were categorised as follows:

- News (4 links)
- Jihad forum (2 links)
- Monotheist *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) and resistance websites (5 links)
- Monotheist *da'wah* and resistance blogs (22 links)
- Resistance groups (2 links)

MTJ also recommends to its visitors 11 non-Indonesian websites, namely:

- Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan website [31] (in Arabic)
  - Al-Shomud Islamic magazine [32] (Arabic / Taliban news)
  - Kavkaz Center [33] (English / news on Chechnya)
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- Shumukhul Islam Network [34] (Arabic / forum)
- Al-Fidaa Islamic Network [35] (Arabic / forum)
- Ansar Mujahidin Network [36] (Arabic / forum)
- Ansar Mujahidin English Network [37] (in English / forum)
- Minbar Al-Tawhed Wa Al-Jihad [38] (in Arabic / online library)
- Nukhbah Media [39] (in Arabic / jihad news)
- Al-Maqreze Centre [40] (in Arabic, a London based research and study entity)
- Jihad archive website [41] (in Arabic / archive of jihad materials)

Again, the nature of the links corroborate MTJ's jihadist leaning.

### ***Online Study / Tutorial***

MTJ offers free study and tutorial materials, in Indonesian language, for individuals who are interested to learn about their interpretation of Islam. Students learn about Islam for free because they are granted a MTS' "study scholarship". This does not mean MTJ is awarding a sum of money to selected applicants to study Islam. Rather, applicants will receive free tutorials and lessons on a particular extremist interpretation of Islam or on any course offered by MTJ recognised "scholars". Applicants who received this scholarship are required to log into the class as scheduled or instructed by MTJ or course facilitator until the completion of the course.

MTJ offers two types of online learning:

1. "Synchronous e-learning" or real-time learning, where the instructor and the student are in a virtual classroom at the same time. MTJ makes use of Internet chat rooms to facilitate this.
2. "Asynchronous e-learning", where the instructor and the student interact in a virtual classroom but not simultaneously at the same time. The study and tutorial is carried out in a modular format, using e-books, videos and a discussion forum as tools.

Interested individuals only have to be computer literate, have access to a computer and Internet connection, be it personal or through Internet cafés, using the Mozilla Firefox browser. The study is open to either gender, as long as the person is sincere in his or her intention, i.e. willing to please Allah. MTJ guarantees that all its instructors are of the Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah (Sunni) sect and adhere to Salafism.

MTJ claims that it uses a facilitative competency-based model to effect learning for its students, where the instructor only facilitates the learning with the help of multi-media platforms. Students - the learning subjects - are guided to play key roles to generate knowledge of Islamist ideology

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themselves in a flexible manner. The learning approach is task-based. According to MTJ, students are given task-based activities with real examples for immediate application to achieve learning objectives. What this really means in actual learning experience and practice is not clear because the writers of this article were not privileged to access the course themselves.

The information provided by MTJ informs us that this online learning and tutorial service is designed to promote better a understanding of MTJ's interpretation of Islam. However, at the time of writing, MTJ was conducting three modules (PR1101, PR1102 and PR1103), based on an announcement they had made in the website, that were related to computer skill. PR1101 offered the participant a lesson in the basic principles of staying anonymous on the Internet through the use of a proxy. It has 11 registered participants. PR1102 and PR1103 offered the same content as PR1101 for other batches of participants. These two modules had 15 and 11 participants, respectively. No module relating to Islam itself has been announced and conducted yet, based on the information released by MTJ itself.

The nature of the actual learning process and experience, as well as the popularity of this service among MTJ's visitors, are not known as no information is available to ascertain its effectiveness and impact on radicalisation. Nevertheless, the approach taken points to the radicals' creativity and inventiveness in pursuing their mission and agenda of promoting their extremist ideology in an effort of recruiting more followers. MTJ is the first radical Indonesian website that offers online learning for visitors. Although there appears to be a glitch at the implementation level i.e. the number of courses is limited and restricted to computer skill, instead of Islamic learning which are of more important to MTJ's mission, the initiative still points to the extremists' continuous attempt of exploring new methods of propaganda.

### ***Translation***

Two hundred of 350 written materials—comprising thousands of pages—in MTJ are translated from other languages into the Indonesian language. A large portion of the translations is from Arabic, with only a handful coming from English. The top 10 personalities whose works have been translated and uploaded can be seen in the above section on Textual Material). What is interesting to note from MTJ's translation initiative, as part of its effort to create an online library, is that it is done through volunteers. MTJ's administrators emulate the *modus operandi* of Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia, which also grew to its present size thanks to voluntary contributions from members of the public. The administrators upload a list of materials that require translation and editing work and invite MTJ's visitors and account holders to perform the task voluntarily. Apart from that, the website administrators also invite those who have translated suitable materials out of personal initiative to submit their works to them so that the materials can be considered for incorporation into MTJ's library.

Many Indonesian radical websites thrive on materials contributed voluntarily by visitors. They share news, audios, videos, images etc. at forum threads, comment sections and guest books. However, only the MTJ website thus far has deliberately mobilised its visitors for the purpose of populating its library with relevant materials and translation of materials predetermined by its administrator. These invitations generally receive good responses from visitors and members. Based on the information gathered from the site, there are at least four individuals and two groups engaging actively and responding frequently to the invitation.

Although translation work and the dissemination of translated materials online are not new, MTJ has brought the initiative to a higher level. By incorporating Wikipedia's modus operandi into this effort, MTJ has succeeded in four ways:

- Quick production of translated materials, as can be deducted from the amount of translated material in the MTJ library in less than a year of operation;
- Mobilisation of skills and energy for the purpose of radicalisation;
- Effecting radicalisation at many levels, i.e. new recruits, sympathisers and hardcore activists;
- Sustaining extremist ideology and the radicalisation process in the society.

This demonstrates again the ingenuity and inventiveness of the MTJ administrators, as does its online study/tutorial initiative.

### ***Forum***

Unlike other radical websites, MTJ's forum is inactive. There is no thread or posting. There is a possibility that the forum was under maintenance at the time of our review or that it is restricted and accessible only to selected individuals. Nevertheless, MTJ has received many notes from visitors, as recorded in its visitors' book section and comments and in its Yahoo Messenger chat box.

### ***Insights***

A search on militant ideology in the *Militant Ideology Atlas* identifies Al-Maqdisi as the most influential living jihadist, second only to Sayyid Qutb among all jihadist theorists.[42] It also lists Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz (described as "one of the most influential Egyptian jihadi theorist" whose works "have been used by jihadi groups like those of Zarqawi to justify a number of attacks"), Abdullah Azzam and Yusuf Al-'Uyairi, among the most influential modern jihadist thinkers.[43]

It must be noted that Al-Maqdisi, Abdul Aziz, Azzam and Al-`Uyayri are listed in the above top 10 individuals with the most materials hosted by the MTJ list. As mentioned earlier, these individuals are ranked based on the number of their materials translated and uploaded by MTJ's contributors and administrators and not the quantity of their output. There must be reasons for MTJ contributors and administrators' decision to translate and upload materials belonging to a particular individual; these reasons indicate preference and interest. It is logical to assume that a radical who contributes translation work to MTJ will not put make such an effort if the translated material does not interest him or is not in line with his own understanding of Islam. The list thus infers the importance and influence of these individuals among radicals. It also correlates with the findings made in the *Atlas* on the importance and influence of these individuals among radicals. This provides an important reference point of study and analysis for the purpose of counter-radicalisation works.

Much has been said about the role of ideas in radicalisation. One way to ascertain the centrality of counter-ideology in countering jihadist terrorism is to assess the importance of ideology to the jihadists themselves through their words and deeds. Vigorous efforts have been put up to run MTJ, including translation and online study, pointing to the fact that ideas indeed matter very much to radicals. Not only are ideas valued for their personal benefit, they are also important for winning the sympathy of people and recruiting new members. The extremists behind MTJ would not have spent such huge resources and efforts on ideational materials—as those seen in MTJ—if these materials were not important to their agenda and did not serve their cause or if there was no demand for them.

Although data coming from MTJ represent only a small segment of the Indonesian radical community, it correlates with the larger Muslim radical community. At the local level, the popularity of jihadist publications in Indonesia, as reported by the International Crisis Group (ICG), points in the same direction. In its conclusion, the ICG report noted, "As top leaders argue for consolidation and rebuilding, it is clear that recruitment of new members is critical—and publishing, dissemination and discussion of texts on jihad can play an important part in that effort." [44] Also, the ideological work of the first Bali bombers is another good example. Imam Samudra, the operational leader of the 2002 bombing, published a book detailing his worldview and theological justification for his action. [45] Despite being incarcerated, he and his two accomplices, Mukhlas and Amrozi, have managed to deliver a constant supply of their ideas through their writings. Each member of the trio published a book to promote their ideology just before their execution. [46]

At the international level, Al-Maqdisi's website, [47] which functions as the largest repository of jihadist intellectual materials and inspires MTJ, points in the same direction. These materials are not mere narratives or stories about the world to win people over. There are hundreds of materials that cover not only all matters of jihad but also the more important jihadist worldview that underlies their actions as well as *fatwas* on various theological issues. The importance of this

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website and its contents is underscored when compared to the above-mentioned *Militant Ideology Atlas*.<sup>[48]</sup>

It has been indicated (under the section on Textual Materials) that MTJ is inspired by Al-Maqdisi's website. Thus, it can be argued that MTJ's attempt to replicate Al-Maqdisi's website in the Indonesian language represents a form and an example of online radicalisation, i.e. copy one original initiative and expand it further. Indeed, MTJ not only seeks to duplicate Al-Maqdisi's website but also provides improvement by adding new features such as an online study and a video repository that includes bomb making instructions.

The MTJ initiative highlights the fact that radical groups are dynamic and creative. They continuously strive to overcome challenges and take good advantage of any opportunity that comes along to achieve their objectives more effectively. Counter-radicalism works must hold the same traits to succeed. They need to observe the changes in the radical landscape and modify their response. Failure to do so will result in formulating policies that become ineffective due to counter-action by radicals.

The huge efforts put into operating MTJ and populate it with hundreds of materials and translated works within a year since its creation would not have been possible without a sizeable pool of radicals who continue to contribute to sustain and maintain it. It provides good data on the high level of their commitment and determination. If other Indonesian online radical sites, as those listed in the MTJ links, are brought into the picture, it becomes evident that the radicalism problem may have reached a worrying level. This means there is still more to be done in fighting radicalism in Indonesia, despite the hundreds of extremists already captured and imprisoned.

MTJ's translation works highlight the fact that resources in the Arabic language hold great value and influence among local Indonesian radical groups. In this regard, the translation of counter-radical materials from Arabic to Indonesian should be considered, especially the revisionist works of the leaders of the Egyptian *Al-Jamaah Al-Islamiah* and Sheikh Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz, a.k.a. Dr. Fadl, who are now the biggest critics of Al-Qaeda. It is worthwhile to note here that radicals are still distributing the old writings of Sheikh Abdul Qadir, while ignoring his recent ones. To date, these revisionists (former jihadists) have produced more than 25 volumes of texts to explain their past ideological flaws and condemn Al-Qaeda. These writings have contributed to the effort of de-radicalisation, which has made a number of radical group members turn over a new leaf in Egypt, Algeria and Libya. The spread and distribution of these materials from disenchanted jihadists can pose big challenge to the radicals' efforts.

Critics among the radicals dismissed these revisionist works by highlighting that they were made while the turncoats were in prison and under the watchful eyes of the authorities. Thus, their credibility has been questioned. However, the credibility of revisionist works has been studied and ascertained by many independent researchers.<sup>[49]</sup> In this regard, Amr Hamzawy and Sarah Gebrowsky comment:

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“... the fact that many of the prominent revisionist voices in al-Jama`at al-Islamiya and al-Jihad were or are still imprisoned in Egypt does not diminish the credibility of their renunciation of violence or their refutation of extremism.... their new ideas and views have evolved genuinely and cannot be reduced to a simplistic, conspiracy theory driven, extortionist explanation.”[50]

Hamzawy and Gebrowski then noted that *al-Jama`a al-Islamiya* has upheld its commitment to the revised ideology since 1997 and has abstained from violence for the last ten years.[51] In addition, the released revisionist leaders had the opportunity to take advantage of the chaotic period following the Tahrir revolution in Egypt when the authorities were weak, and could, once free, have abandon their revisionist positions for their old ideology and return to the advocacy of a violent jihad. However, none of this has happened. Instead, Dr. Fadl and his colleagues remain steadfast in their revisionist stand. In fact, they were so cautious that they refused to join the revolution - to the disappointment of some of the youth in Tahrir Square. Similarly for leaders of revisionist trend in Libya, they refused to engage in indiscriminate attacks and suicide bombings that are the hallmark of Al-Qaeda and its associates when participating in armed fighting against the Gaddafi's forces.

### ***Closing Remarks***

Although MTJ's presence in the virtual world poses the risk of a spread of radicalism in Indonesia, it also provides useful data for researchers who are seeking to understand the phenomenon and who try to find a solution to the problem of extremism in the name of religion. Data found on the MTJ website have been useful to provide information about people behind it and those who frequented it: their ideas, behaviour, level of commitment, skill and creativity, in relation to their mission and environment have become clearer. Studies on other online radical websites can uncover more such information. These studies can be put together to generate insights that will improve our understanding of the problem of online radicalisation in Indonesia. However, a word of caution is warranted here: one must not be quick to make a linear conclusion about offline activities based only on online indicators because activities online do not automatically translate into offline behaviour. What people say and what people do are two different things, although they are related.

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### Notes

- [1] All information about the websites in this Research Note was, unless stated otherwise, valid as of late February 2012.
- [2] See John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2, May 2004, pp. 342 and 344.
- [3] Ibid, pp. 347-248.
- [4] Bent Flyvbjerg, "Five misunderstandings about case-study research", *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 2, April, 2006, pp. 429-432.
- [5] For an example of strong defence for case study research against its opponents, see *ibid*.
- [6] Ibid, p. 422.
- [7] The IP address of the website is 173.245.61.43. Its ISP is CloudFlare and it is hosted in the United States. See <https://www.cloudflare.com/>. This information is provided by <http://whatismyipaddress.com/ip-lookup>.
- [8] This page is located at <http://www.tawhed.net/c.php?i=42> (as of 13 September 2012).
- [9] The date of posting is an as estimation. It is determined from the date that appeared in the Zip file when a file is retrieved for online reading or downloaded for saving.
- [10] The 10 group entities whose materials can be found on the MTJ website are:
- The Unjustmedia (English jihad-related news website);
  - Arrahmah.com (Indonesian website);
  - Forum Islam Al-Tawbah (Indonesia online jihad forum);
  - Global Islamic Media Front (Al-Qaeda media front);
  - Saveabb.com (website dedicated for the release of Abu Bakar Baasyir);
  - Jihad Megz (Indonesian jihad magazine);
  - Inspire (Al-Qaeda English online magazine);
  - Al-Shamikhah (Arabic jihad magazine);
  - Al-Shumud (Taliban online magazine).
- [11] The countries are Indonesia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, Yemen and the United States.
- [12] His real name is Sayyid Imam Al-Sharif, a.k.a. Dr. Fadl. He is the former leader of the Egyptian *Tanzim Al-Jihad* and mentored Ayman Al-Zawahiri. He was a respected jihadist ideologue until he publicly renounced Al-Qaeda's ideology in 2007 in his writing titled *Tarshid Al-'Amal Al-Jihadi Fi Misr Wa Al-'Alam* [Rationalising Jihad in Egypt and the World]. Hed has since then become a strong critic of jihadist groups.
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[13] His real name is 'Isham Muhammad Tahir Al-Barqawi. He is a prominent and respected jihadist scholar. A website dedicated to him by his followers can be found at [www.tawhed.ws](http://www.tawhed.ws). The website is widely recognised as the largest repository of radical Arabic materials.

[14] His real name is Mustafa Setmariam Nasar. He is a well-known jihadist strategist who popularised the idea of networked or leaderless jihadist resistance in his book, *Da'wat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyah Al-'Alamiyah* [The Global Islamic Resistance Call]. It was reported recently that he had been released from his imprisonment in Syria but he has not surfaced in public.

[15] His real name is Ahmad Fadil Al-Nazal Al-Khalayilah. He is the late leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

[16] Not known.

[17] Not known.

[18] He is known as 'Father of Jihad' because of his role in mobilising Muslims all over the world to participate in jihad against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He founded *Maktab Al-Khidmat* [Mujahidin Services Office], which metamorphosed to Al-Qaeda. He was assassinated in November 1989.

[19] He was one of the three key figures found guilty of executing the Bali bombing in 2002 and was executed for this crime in November 2008.

[20] He was sentenced to nine years in prison in December 2010 for his involvement in Aceh training camps.

[21] He was the first leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and was killed during an encounter with Saudi security forces in June 2003.

[22] He co-founded the Indonesian *Jemaah Islamiyah* with Abdullah Sungkar. He was its leader after the death of the latter. He founded Jamaah Ansar Al-Tauhid and is its current leader. He is serving a 15-year prison term for his involvement in plans of terror and illegal militant training camp in Aceh.

[23] He was the first leader of the Indonesian *Jemaah Islamiyah*. He died of a heart attack in October 1999.

[24] He was sentenced to nine years in prison in December 2010 for his involvement in Aceh training camps.

[25] Not known.

[26] Not known.

[27] He was a prominent Islamic scholar and politician. He became the fifth Prime Minister of Indonesia, running on the ticket of the Indonesian Masyumi party. He also founded *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah* Indonesia. He died in February 1993.

[28] He was a senior member of *Jemaah Islamiyah* and an aide to Abu Bakar Ba'ashir. He was listed in the UN list of individuals and entities associated with Al-Qaeda.

[29] Not known.

[30] Not known.

[31] See <http://shahamat-arabic.com/> (29 February 2012).

[32] See <http://alsomod-ica.info/> (29 February 2012).

[33] See <http://kavkazcenter.com/eng/> (29 February 2012).

[34] See <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb>, <https://www.shamikh1.info/vb>, <http://180.235.150.135/~shamikh/vb>, <http://180.235.150.136/~shamikh/vb>, <https://180.235.150.135/~shamikh/vb> (29 February 2012).

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- [35] See <https://www.alfidaa.org/vb/>, <https://www.alfidaa.biz/vb/>, <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb/>, <http://www.al-fidaa.com/vb/>, <https://112.137.166.232/~fa/vb/>, <http://112.137.166.232/~fa/vb> (29 February 2012).
- [36] See <https://as-ansar.com/vb/>, <https://as-ansar.org/vb/>, <http://202.71.103.132/vb> (29 February 2012).  
<https://202.71.103.132/vb> (29 February 2012).
- [37] See [www.ansar1.info](http://www.ansar1.info), <https://www.ansar1.info> (29 February 2012).
- [38] <http://www.mtj.tw>, <http://www.tawhed.net>, <http://www.tawhed.ws>, <http://www.alsunnah.info>, <http://www.almaqdese.net>, <http://www.abu-qatada.com> (29 February 2012).
- [39] See <http://www.nokbah.com> (29 February 2012).
- [40] See <http://www.almaqreze.net> (29 February 2012).
- [41] See. <http://www.jarchive.net/index.php>, <https://www.jarchive.net/index.php> (29 February 2012).
- [42] William McCants, *Militant Ideology Atlas – Executive Report*. Westpoint, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Center, November 2006, pp. 6 & 8. Available at: [http://www.army.mil/professionalWriting/volumes/volume5/january\\_2007/1\\_07\\_3.html](http://www.army.mil/professionalWriting/volumes/volume5/january_2007/1_07_3.html) (29 February 2012).
- [43] Ibid, p. 8.
- [44] “Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah’s Publishing Industry”, International Crisis Group, *Asia Report* No. 147, February 2008, p. 16.
- [45] See Imam Samudra, *Aku Melawan Teroris*. Solo: Jazera, 2004.
- [46] See Imam Samudra, *Sekuntum Rosela Pelipur Lara*. Jakarta: Ar-Rahmah Media, 2009; Ali Ghufuran (Mukhlis), *Mimpi Suci Di Balik Jeruji Besi*. Jakarta: Ar-Rahmah Media, 2009; Amrozi bin Nurhashim, *Senyum Terakhir Sang Mujahid*. Jakarta: Ar-Rahmah Media, 2009.
- [47] The website can be found at <http://www.tawhed.ws> (29 February 2012).
- [48] William McCants, *Militant Ideology Atlas – Executive Report*, op. cit., p. 7.
- [49] One important work pertaining to jihadist revision initiatives is Omar Ashour, *The De-radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- [50] Amr Hamzawy and Sarah Debrowski, *From Violence to Moderation: Al-Jama’at al-Islamiya and al-Jihad*, Carnegie Research Notes, Carnegie Middle East Center, no. 20, April 2010, p. 4.
- [51] Ibid.
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## **Research Note: Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: Mali, Mauretania, and Algeria: What START's Quantitative Data (1970-2011) Can and Cannot Tell Us**

by Richard J. Chasdi

### ***Introduction***

The murder of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stephens and three American support personnel in Benghazi, Libya, happened on September 11, 2012, presumably to commemorate the looming calamity of September 11, 2001 events [1]. Plainly, that terrorist assault and the riots in Cairo, Egypt that followed, brings into sharp relief the underlying threat of Al-Qaeda and other Sunni Islamic revivalist extremists in Northern Africa - collectively referred to as Salafis. To be sure, recent threats by Al-Qaeda chieftain Ayman al-Zawahiri to assault Western interests abroad against the backdrop of the “Arab Spring,” coupled with effective and sustained efforts by Al-Qaeda and its “affiliates” in parts of Africa to create new “safe-havens,” appears to signal a new phase of transition in the global jihad. [2] Empirical analysis might provide some insight into new “post-bin Laden era” terrorist assault trends.[3]

This Research Note serves to provide a longitudinal picture of broader terrorism threats in the sub-region over the past forty-one years in order to place contemporary threats into historical perspective. What seems significant here is that “contextual factors” that characterize regions and specific countries have an enormous capacity to influence terrorist assaults outcomes. This longitudinal presentation should illuminate research areas for further study.

The data used were compiled by *the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)* at the University of Maryland. Supplementary data are from Yonah Alexander's, “Special Update Report: Terrorism in North, West, & Central Africa: From 9/11 to the Arab Spring” and the “Country Reports on Terrorism 2011” published by the US Department of State. [4] These additional materials make it possible to capture certain more recent Al-Qaeda and affiliate terrorist trends to augment the time interval of 1970-2011 that is covered by START's “Global Terrorism Database.” The framework for discussion involves a preliminary analysis of terrorist assault trends in three nation-states found in North-western Africa, namely Mali, Mauritania, and Algeria, with a comparison of similarities and differences in trends for those specific countries.

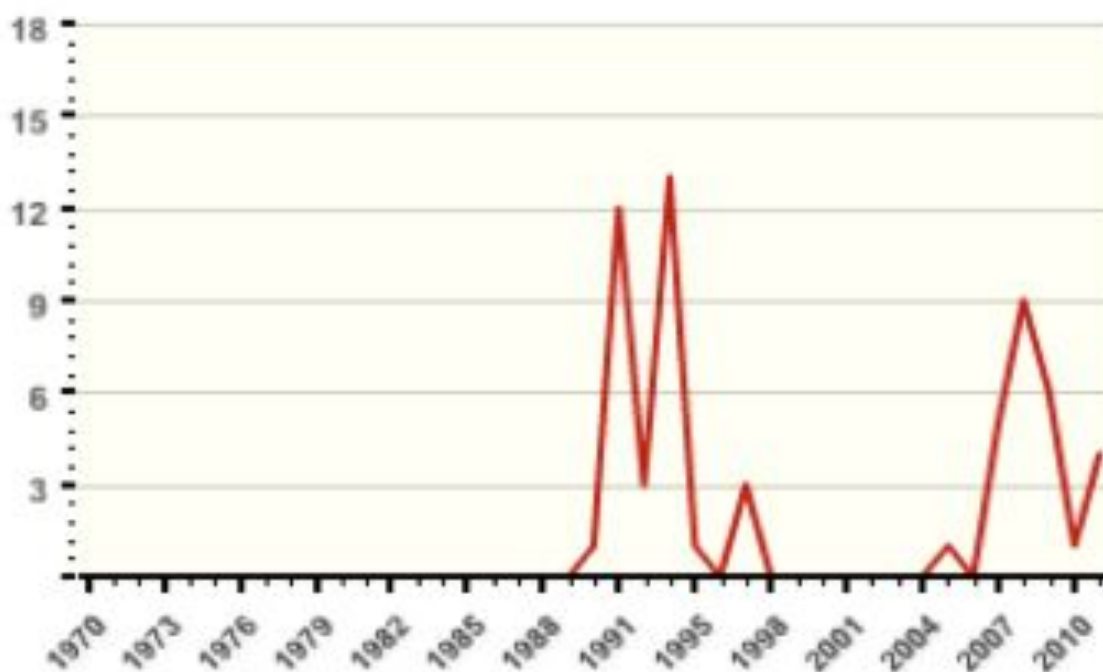
### ***Mali***

In the broader sense, the “Global Terrorism Database” produced by START, offers a set of baseline comparisons of broader terrorism trends that are, inter-alia, broken down by year of event, target-type, and weapons used to carry out terrorist assaults. From the start, it is clear that

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terrorist assault patterns conform to the “cyclical pattern” of “peaks” and “troughs” that scholars such as Eric Im, Jon Cauley, and Todd Sandler have written about to illustrate the dynamic nature of terrorism [5]. The discernible breaks in cycles with no terrorist assaults chronicled are likely to reflect incomplete data for those years or inchoate terrorist actions that went unrecorded. In ways that closely parallel findings for Algeria, there were no terrorist assaults chronicled by START for Mali from 1970-1990.

For Mali, “peak” years are 1994 with 13 incidents, 1991 with 12 events, and 2008 with 9 terrorist assaults. In comparison, “trough” years include 1990 and 1995 with one terrorist event chronicled for each year, 1992 and 1997 with 3 acts each, and 2005 with one recorded terrorist assault. There were also no chronicled terrorist assaults in the GTD database for Mali from 1998 until 2005. On the other hand, Yonah Alexander informs us that in a ten year period between September 11, 2001 events and 2011, Mali experienced a total of 49 terrorist assaults with 11 events in 2008, 2 attacks in 2009 and 8 incidents in 2011[6].

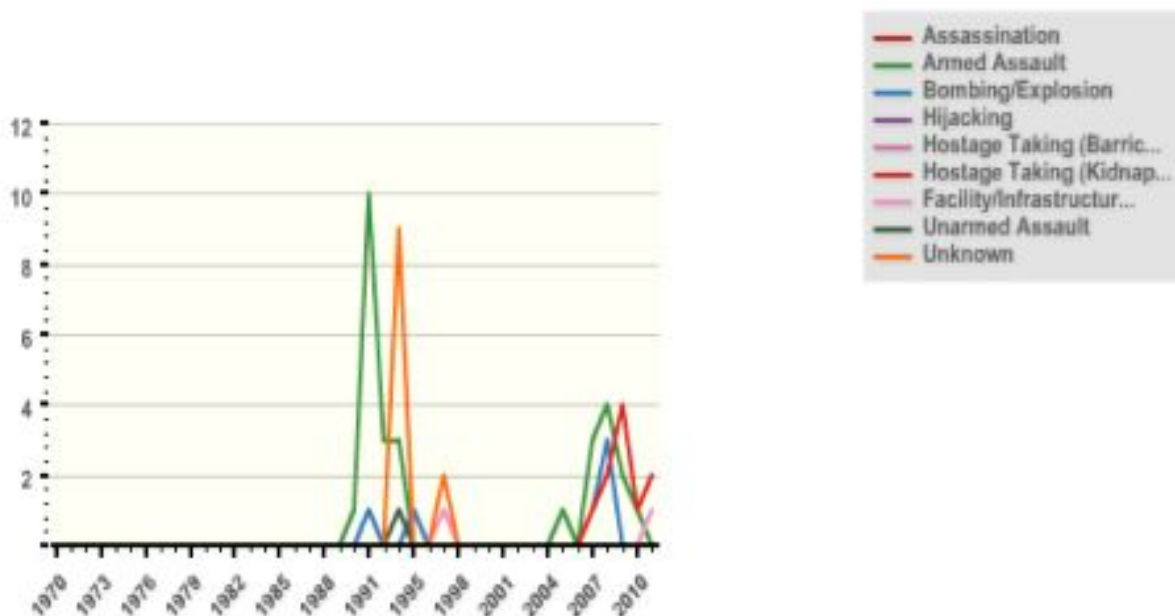


*“GTD Search Results” – “Incidents Over Time” Country: (Mali)”*

For Mali, with  $n=59$  events and in terms of frequency of terrorist assaults by year, the range spans from one incident to 13 incidents in 1994. When “peak” year acts are considered, it is found that that 75.0% of violent acts chronicled in the GTD database for 1991 were carried out

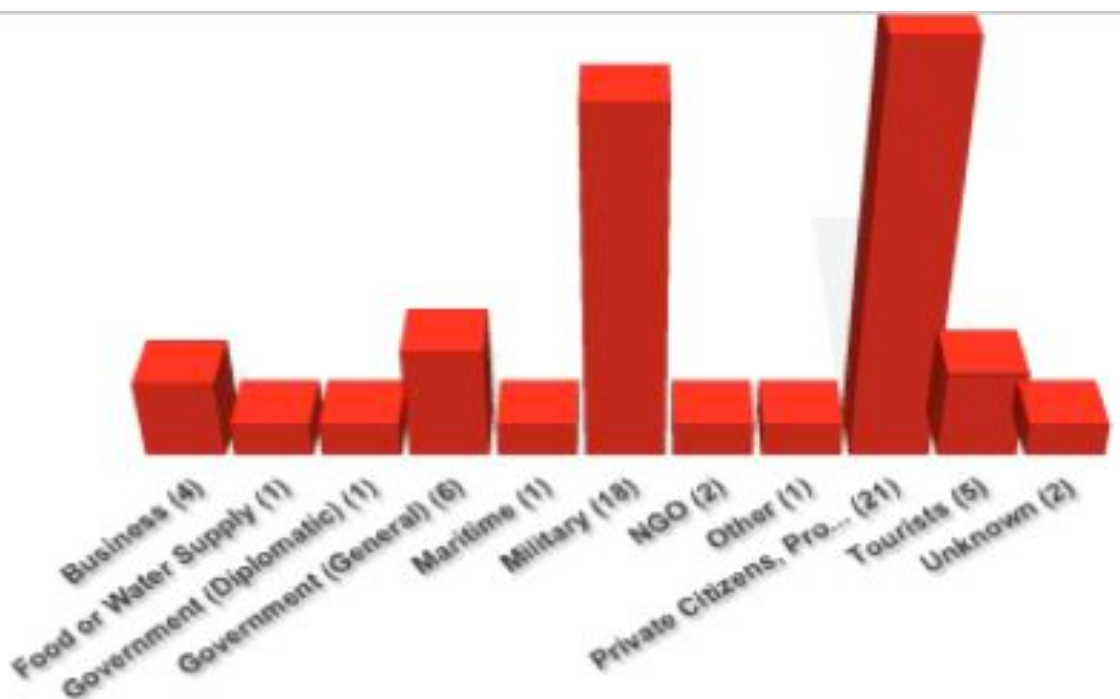
by “Tuareg” activists, by contrast to three (3) acts that were non-attributable or anonymous events [7]. In a similar vein, some 61.5% of such assaults in Mali (8/13 acts) in 1994 were carried out by “Tuareg” activists, 15.3% (2/13 acts) acts were committed by the Islamic Arab Front of Azawad (FIAA), while the Black African Vigilante (1 act or 7.6%), and the Association of Students and Pupils in Mali (AEEM) (1 act), and Ganda Koi (1 act or 7.6%) carried out one terrorist assault each [8].

The predominance of assaults carried out by “Tuareg” activists in Mali continued in 2008 with 5/9 acts (55.5%), by contrast to what GTD calls two “unknown” and two “other/suspected” attacks [9]. From 2010- 2011, GTD data chronicle five terrorist assaults that happened in Mali: three (3) events were attributed to, “Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM) (suspected),” one (1) event attributed to “Al-Shabaab (suspected)” and one (1) event was coded as “Unknown”[10]. What seems significant is that the frequency of these events, when compared to the frequency of terrorist assaults and related activities carried out by other Al-Qaeda “affiliate” groups such as Al-Qaei’da in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) for example, seems somewhat incongruent with the importance Republican nominee Governor Willard “Mitt” Romney placed on potential threats of terrorist assaults from Mali in the second presidential debate of 2012. At the same time, it is regrettable that GTD data for Mali do not code for “urban” and “rural” distinctions thereby in effect precluding some impressionistic conclusions about possible relationships between geographical locale and terrorist assault attributes.



“GTD Search Results” “Attack Type” “Line Chart” “Country: (Mali)”

When the START data are sorted out for the time interval under consideration by relative frequency of “attack type,” the data appear sketchy and incomplete. Terrorist assaults with unidentifiable attack methods comprise 18.6% of those data (11 /59 cases) with 1994 (9acts) as the “peak” year. For Mali, the frequencies of certain assault methods are clustered in specific time intervals. For example, the 27 “armed assault” events chronicled that constitute 45.7% of the total, have “peak” years found towards the end of that time interval with some 10 terrorist incidents in 1991, by contrast to 4 events recorded for 2008. A much smaller “peak” year for “armed assault” incidents is 2005. It involves the only “armed assault” – and terrorist event attributed to the Salafi Group for the Call and Combat (GSPC), the Algerian terrorist group that evolved from GIA and mutated later into the core element of Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM) [11]. In contrast, the “peak” year for “hostage taking (kidnappings)” is 2009 with 4 events, while 2008 is the “peak” year for “bombing/explosions” with 3 events. In comparison, “assassination” is found to be very rarely used in Mali’s political landscape with only one “unknown” terrorist incident that happened in 1991.



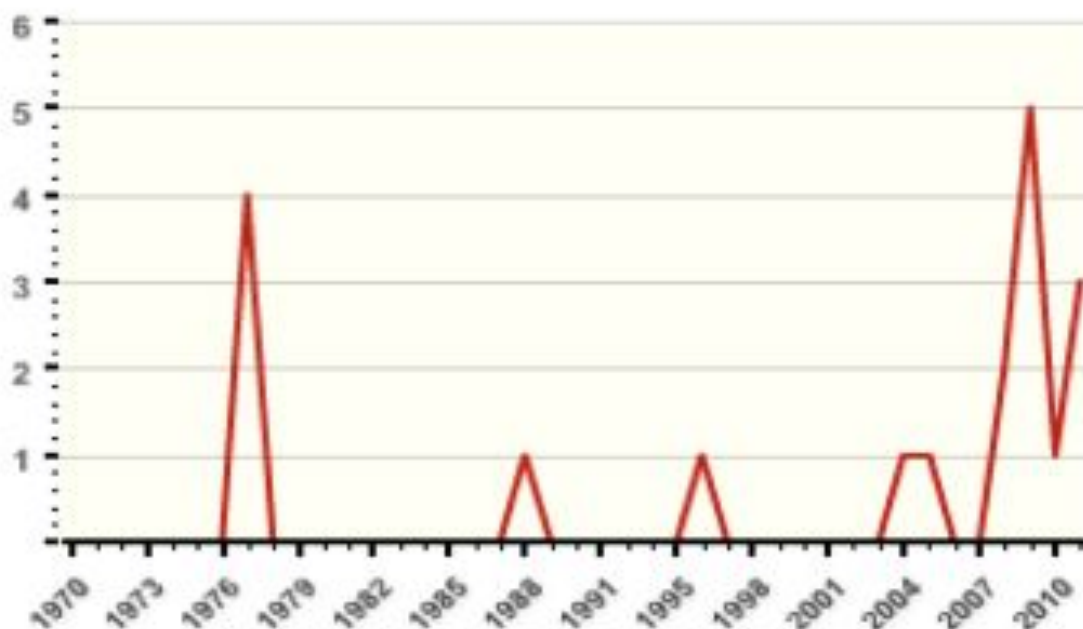
*“GTD Search Results” – “Target Type” “Bar Chart” “Country: (Mali)”*

When the GTD data for Mali are parsed by “target-type,” the emergent reality is that one-third of all armed assaults in Mali from 1970-2011 revolved around “private citizens & property” targets (21/62 acts), while “military” targets accounted for 29% of the total (18/62 acts). [12] In comparison, assaults that involved “government (general)” targets comprised 9.7 % of the total

with 6/62 acts. Seen from a different angle, only one assault chronicled by GTD involved a “food or water supply” target while one terrorist assault focused on a “government (diplomatic)” target such as an embassy, “mission” or consulate [13]. By contrast, terrorist assaults in Mali for that time period under consideration targeted non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) in two cases while “tourists” were targeted in five instances. The two terrorist assaults that targeted NGO’s include attacks against the “U/I Swiss Project” by “Tuareg” activists in 1994 and an assault in 2009 by AQLIM (suspected) directed at the CEO of a “local NGO.”[14] It looks like Mali will become a battleground for American and West European counterterror agencies because Northern Mali, after a military coup and subsequent military retrenchments to Bamako, fell under the control of Salafist and Tuareg militants. Elements of the latter, now grouped in the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), not only fought for the Qaddafi regime and returned with many weapons from Libya, but also work to maintain a powerful set of interconnections to the Ansar Dine, another Turaeg organization with more direct connections to AQLIM.[15] Mali appears to become another front in the battle with Al-Qaeda affiliated local and transnational groups which are now active in Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as other zones of conflict.

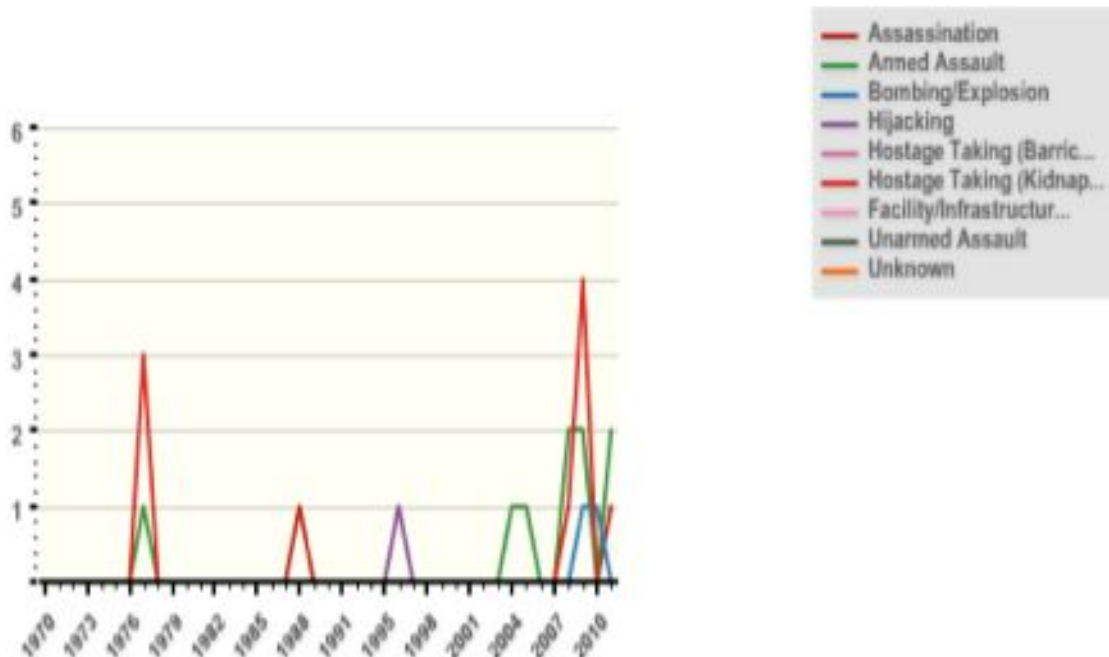
### *Mauritania*

When the longitudinal data produced by START for Mauritania are considered, it is clear that with n=19, there was very little political terrorism chronicled. The range of terrorist events spans from one annual terrorist event to five per year. As in the case of Mali, cycles of terrorism appear characterized by “peaks” and “troughs” with distinct breaks in cyclical activity from around 1978-1987, for several years in the 1990’s, and in the early 2000’s. It remains unclear if that finding reflects makeshift or incomplete data or a paucity of terrorist assaults - probably both. What stands out here is some indication of political instability and social unrest because of an increase in terrorist assault frequency from 2008 (2 acts) to 2009 (5 acts), an almost equally pronounced decrease in terrorist assault activity in 2010 (1 act), and finally, an increase in terrorist assault activity to three (3) events in 2011. In addition, the 2.5% increase in terrorist event frequency in Mauritania from 2008 (2 acts) to 2009 (5 acts), where almost all assaults were carried out by Islamic revivalist extremists, contrasts sharply with a one-third decrease in Mali’s terrorist assault frequency from 2008 (9 acts) to 2009 (6 acts). Based on another dataset than GTD, Yonah Alexander reports that in the ten year interval from September 11, 2001 events to 2011, a total of 27 terrorist assaults happened in Mauritania with 4 acts in 2008, 6 acts in 2009, 2 acts in 2010, and 7 acts in 2011[16].



*GTD Search Results”- Incidents Over Time” “Country: (Mauritania)”*

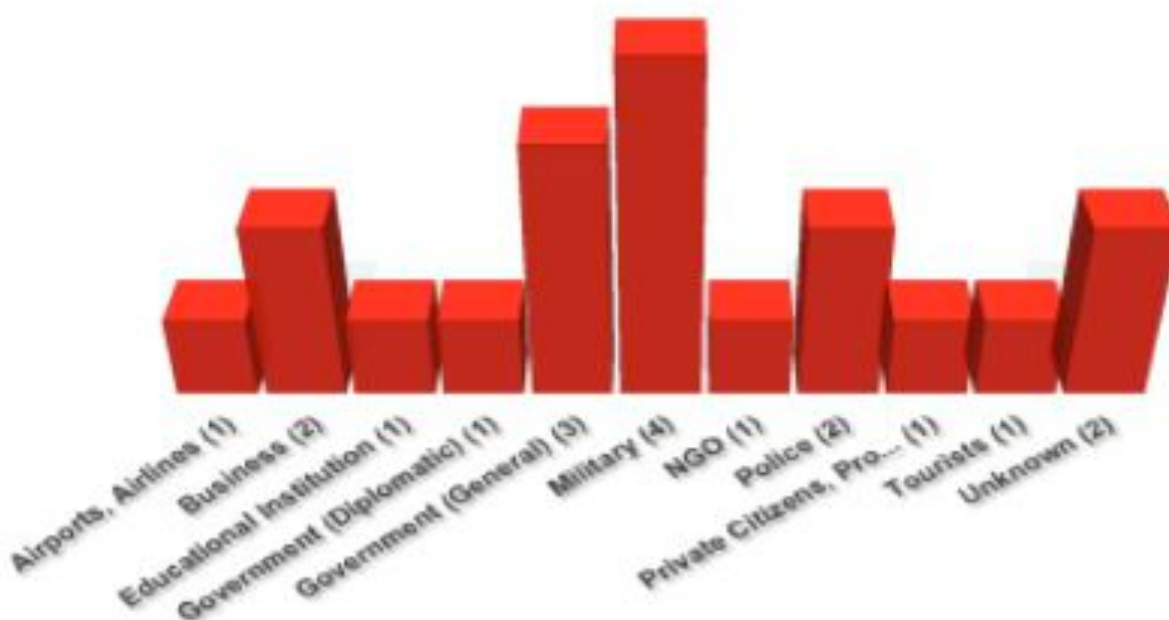
In the case of terrorist “attack type,” the GTD analysis illuminates that “hostage taking (kidnapping)” is the most predominant method of terrorist assault for Mauritania with 8/19 cases or 42.1% of the total. The “peak” year for “hostage taking (kidnapping)” is 2009 with four events, preceded by another “peak” year in 1977 with three events. In comparison, terrorist incidents that utilized “armed assault” comprise 31.5% of the total with 6 out of 19 cases, and “peak” years for such attacks were in 2008 and 2009 with two acts in each year. In turn, 10.5% (2/19 acts) of the total in 2010 and 2009 involved “bombing/explosion” methods while 10.5% (2/19 acts) of the total revolved around “assassination” in 2011 and 1988. There was one “Air Mauritania” aircraft commandeered by terrorists in 1996 [17].



*“GTD Search Results” – “Attack Type” “Line Chart” “Country: (Mauritania)”*

Turning to the matter of target preference over Mauritania’s terrorism landscape, it is found the majority of terrorist assaults were dispersed across “military” and “government (general)” targets with four events and three events respectively. For Mauritania, terrorist assaults that revolved around those types of targets comprised a full 36.8% of the total or 7 out of 19 events. Those seven incidents include three terrorist assaults that involved “government (general)” targets, two directed at “police” targets, and two aimed at “business” targets. By contrast, several different types of targets were outliers with one terrorist assault each: “airports, airlines,” (1 act), an “educational institution,” (1 act) “governmental (diplomatic)” (1 act), a “non-governmental organization” (1 act), “private citizens/&property” (1 act), and “tourists” (1 act).

In turn, there were two terrorist assaults with “unknown” targets for that interval in Mauritania. In comparison to Mali, where the rate of armed assaults against “military” targets is 29.0% of the total (18/62 acts), the percentage rate of assaults against “military” targets in Mauritania is very comparable at 21.0% or 4/19 acts. At the same time, there is enormous distance between percentage rates of terrorist assaults that involved “private citizens & property” when those two contiguous countries are compared: the rate for Mauritania is 5.3% (1/19 acts), by contrast to a full one-third or 33.8% for Mali (21/62 acts).



*“GTD Search Results” – “Target Type” “Bar Chart” “Country: (Mauritania)”*

Given the fact that there were so few incidents in the country, breaking them down the way it is done here provides only very limited insights. For a better picture, we would also need data on political violence other than terrorism as well as on acts of violent repression by the government. Furthermore, violent incident data ought to be juxtaposed also to violent crime data and socio-economic data such as those referring to youth unemployment, migration, government corruption, social inequality, population pressure, food prices and the like.

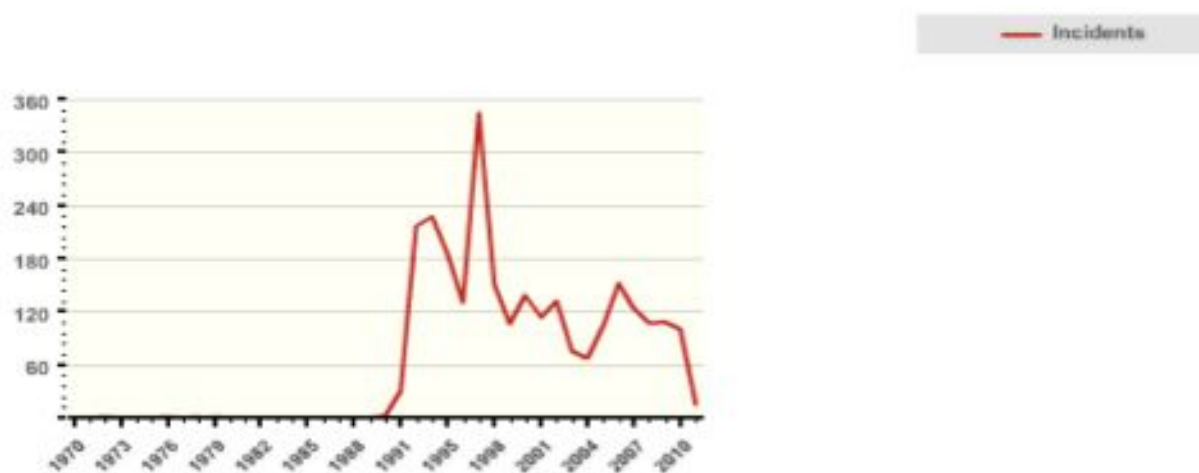
### ***Algeria***

When analysis of the GTD data turns to Algeria, it is clear from the start that with  $n = 2,630$ , the overall frequency of terrorist assaults for this forty one year interval is of an altogether different order of magnitude. As previously mentioned, data trends that parallel results for Mali, but contrast sharply with trends for Mauritania are found for Algeria prior to the 1990s: there are only five terrorist assaults for Algeria chronicled by START between 1970 and 1990, namely one



assault by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in Algiers in 1972, three attacks carried out by “unknown” activists, and one (1) terrorist event perpetrated by “Muslim fundamentalists” in Blida in 1990 [18]. The increase in Algerian terrorism traces an arc to the early 1990’s when the Islamic Salvation Front, otherwise known as the FIS, was on the verge of winning national elections after having won decisive political victories in local elections. Instead, that watershed event with its seemingly ineluctable conclusion, was overruled by the military backed government of President Chadli Benjadid which in turn led to the rise of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) with its campaign of large-scale massacres and the ruthless military counter-insurgency campaign.[19]

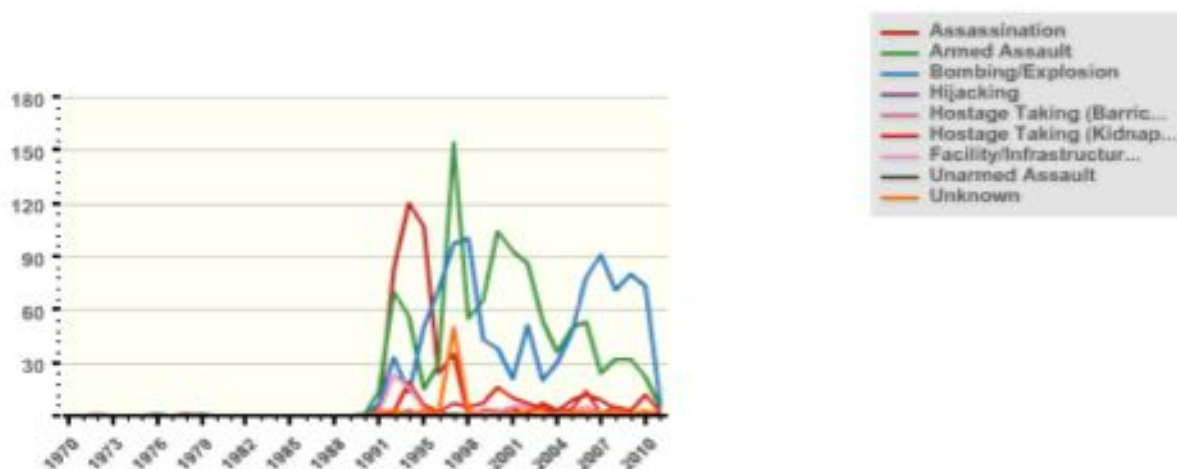
What seems significant here is the substantial increase in terrorist assaults that appears to begin in 1991 with 30 acts - plainly corresponding with the start of what both Michael Collins Dunn and Luis Martinez call the Algerian “civil war” in 1990 [20]. As mentioned above, the Algerian military had annulled an election outcome that favored a victory of Islamists. This, in turn, drove the rebels to the recourse of arms. Again the data trends are characterized by “cyclical activity” but by contrast to results found for Mali and Mauritania, those “cycles” of terrorist assaults are essentially unbroken (i.e., continuous) from 1994 - 2011. To be more specific, the “peak year” is 1997 with almost 360 incidents, followed by 1992 with some 227 events. In the ten year interval from September 11, 2001 events to 2011, Alexander reports data somewhat more intensive in frequency: a full 1,102 Algerian terrorist assaults occurred, with 185 terrorist assaults in 2009, 168 events in 2010, and 164 acts in 2011.[21]



*“GTD Search Results” – “Incidents Over Time” “Country (Algeria)”*

When the analysis turns to “assault type,” it is clear that the Algerian terrorism experience from 1991 to 2011 is characterized by a variety of armed assault methods [22]. When those data are

broken down by year, it is found the frequency of “armed assault” incidents is highest in 1997 with 150 events, while the second highest rate of “armed assault” events happened in 2000 with some 102 events. Across “assault type” categories, GTD analysis recorded “assassination” around 1993 as the second highest “peak” of assault type method with some 120 events, followed by a sharp decline of “assassination” terrorist incidents into 2011, but then marked with a small increase to 35 events in 1997. In turn, the “peak” years for “bombing/explosion” events are 1998 with some 100 events and 2007 with some 90 events. Terrorist assaults that revolved around “hostage taking (kidnapping)” were comparatively rare events in the 1990’s and early 2000’s and terrorist events that involved “hijacking” aircraft in the 1990’s were even less frequent occurrences. In contrast, terrorist assaults against “facility/infrastructure” targets peaked in 1992 with 32 events.

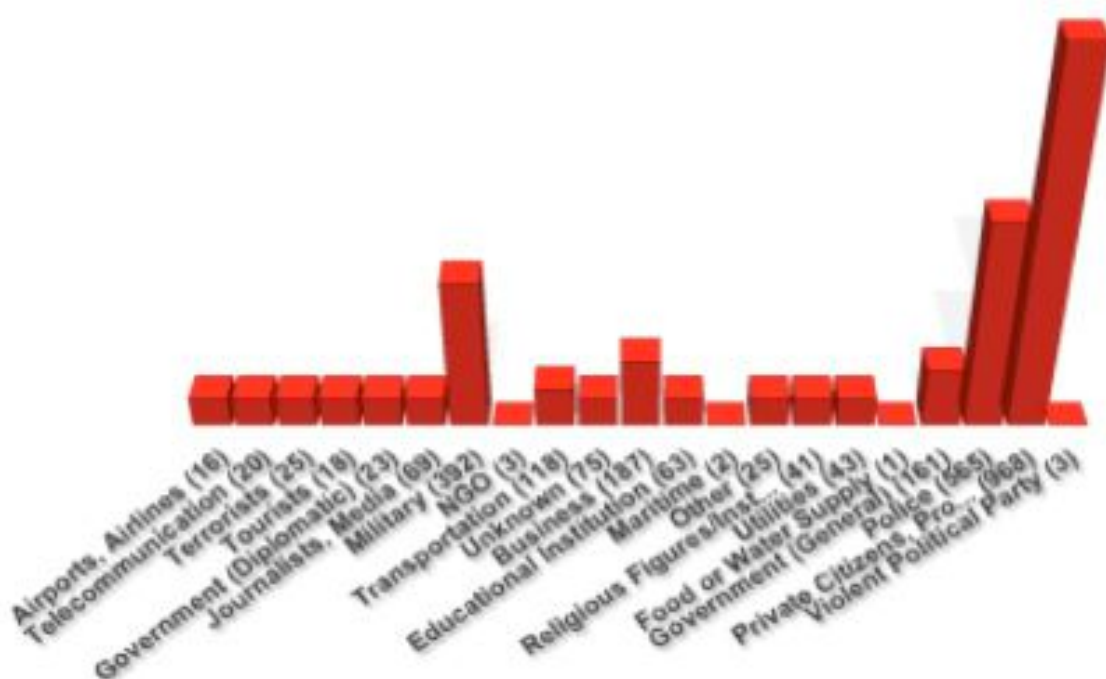


*“GTD Search Results” – “Attack Type” “Line Chart” “Country (Algeria)”*

When the GTD analysis turns to the types of targets involved in Algerian armed assaults, a difference between the number of chronicled targets (2,818) and the n set of “2,630 incidents” suggests that several terrorist attacks over the Algerian political landscape revolved around “multiple targets.” A breakdown of “target type” reveals the single most predominant target for the forty-one year interval under consideration is “private citizens & property” with 968/2,818 (34.3%) or about one-third of the total. Seen from a slightly different angle, such attacks against Algerian “private citizens & property” is virtually the same as the 33.8% rate found for Mali but over six times the rate found for Mauritania.

In turn, Algerian assaults focused attention on “police” targets in 565 out of 2,818 cases or some 20.0% of the time. Indeed, in the GTD data, “private citizens & property” and “police” targets account for over one-half of all armed assaults chronicled over forty years for Algeria with 1,533/2,818 acts or 54.4% of the total. The Algerian “military” were targets of Algerian armed

assaults 13.9% of the time (392/2,818 acts); by contrast to 181 “business” targets and 161 “government (general)” targets. It should be noted that the frequency rate for “business” targets in Algeria (187) contrasts sharply with the total number of such acts recorded for Mali (4) and Mauritania (2). In contrast, there were several “target types” that constituted outliers: the number of assaults chronicled in the GTD against “food or water supply” (1 act), the number of assaults against “maritime” targets (3 acts), attacks against “violent political parties” presumably in Algeria (3 acts), terrorist actions against “non-governmental organizations” (3 acts), and terrorist assaults practiced against other “terrorists” (25 acts).



*“GTD Search Results”- “Target Type” “Bar Chart” “Country: (Algeria)”*

Since the START data only chronicle the terrorist part of political violence of one side and not the violent repression of the government and might also include false flag operations by the regime, their value in explaining the course of events since 1990s is very limited. The confrontation between Islamist terrorists and the military has sometimes been termed a civil war. However, civilians were most of the time only involved as victims of terrorist massacres and counter-terrorist blind government repression without the civilian population taking an active part on either side like taking up arms. The START data presented here probably also reflect mainly what happened in urban areas and less so what happened in the countryside (though some of the massacres there were publicised by the government for propaganda purposes). To get a

dynamic picture of the course of the conflict between terrorists and government security forces, we would need annual data on how many terrorists were arrested, killed or wounded, how many civilians were victimised, how many security forces were killed and wounded and how many deserted on either side or went abroad.

### ***Conclusion***

In the broader sense, a comparison of these three contiguous countries in Northwestern Africa suggests that “contextual factors” specific to particular operational environments can have important effects on terrorist event outcomes. Even when the Northwest region of the African continent is controlled for, there are pronounced differences in overall frequencies of terrorist events and other “attributes.” For example, results illuminate low levels of terrorist assaults in Mauritania, somewhat higher levels for Mali, and much higher levels in Algeria. The late 1980’s and early 1990’s appear to signal a structural shift in terrorist assault patterns for Mali and Algeria, while terrorism seems more evenly distributed over the years in the case of Mauritania with some increase in 2011 noted in Yonah Alexander’s data.

There are other underlying differences in trends linked to these three countries: for example, “cyclical patterns” of activity differ in shape and are sometimes marked by “continuity” as in the case of Algeria, and sometimes by what appears to be breaks in patterns of terrorist activity as in the case of Mali and Mauritania. For example, the data results suggest that “multiple target” terrorist assaults are more frequent in Algeria than in Mali, and more likely in the Algerian context than in Mauritania. Across these three countries, there are also significant differences in terrorist action frequencies and percentage rates with respect to what START defines as “private citizens & property” targets. In the case of “business” targets, similar trends were also found.

A hallmark of Algerian terrorist assaults is the underlying emphasis on “police targets” and that contrasts vividly to terrorist assault patterns in Mali where there are no actions against “police” chronicled by GTD. Differences in trends across countries held with respect to methods used to carry out terrorist assaults. Based on the GTD analysis, “armed assault” appears as a predominant method for terrorism in certain years for both Algeria and Mali in the middle and early 1990’s respectively. At the same time, the percentage rates of terrorist assaults against the “military” are somewhat comparable (Mali: 18/62 or 29.0%; Mauritania: 4/19= 21.0%; Algeria 392/2,818= 14% ). However, this raises the question why assaults against the military should be categorised under “terrorist” to begin with. It stretches the term terrorism over and beyond attacks on civilians and similar war crimes which is problematic.

What the foregoing suggests – albeit indirectly – is that counterterror approaches that are “multifaceted” in nature to account for the continuously evolving dynamics of terrorist group and “lone assailant” actions are preferable to “cookie-cutter” counterterror approaches that work to conflate or ignore outright the crucial subtleties and intricacies in context that are the hallmarks

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of various operational environments.[23] Such nuances can however, only be investigated by also applying qualitative methods of research. There is a limit of what can be known with a mere quantitative approach. This is especially true for Africa where the quality of quantitative data is worse than for any other region of the world – mainly due to underreporting (but partly also due to false flag operations).

What will the future bring? Algeria which in the 1990's experienced both massive terrorism and massive state repression has managed to constrain and control most terrorism on its soil in recent years. It has not been touched by the "Arab Spring" – mainly due to its well known potential for effective repression if not state terror. Mali will be the battleground in the year to come when a combined African-Western force will assist the Mali government under an UNSecurity Council mandate to regain control of the land that fell into the hands of the Tuareg separatists and – of greater concern – Salafi Jihadists in the wake of the collapse of the neighbouring Qaddafi regime. Whether Mauritania will experience major spill over effects from this confrontation is, at the moment, anybody's guess.

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## Notes

[1] International Institute for Counter-Terrorism. 2012. "ICT Database Report: September 2012." International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) (<http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/DatabaseReports/tabid/380/Articlsid/1122cur...>). 6.

[2] Adam Nossiter. 2012. "The Whiff of Conflict in Mali." *The New York Times*. 24 October, A-4, A-6.

[3] *The Washington Post*. 2012. "Middle East: Al-Qaeda leader urges kidnappings." *The Washington Post*. 28 October, A-11; Robert F. Worth. 2012. "Al-Qaeda Inspired Groups, Minus the Goal of Striking U.S." *The New York Times*. 28 October, 6, 10.

[4] In the case of the *Global Terrorism Database*, data is acquired from the "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) (2012) (<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>) by means of searches for "country," "incidents over time," "attack-type," and "target-type" criteria; Yonah Alexander. 2012. "Special Update Report: Terrorism in North, West, & Central Africa: From 9/11 to the Arab Spring - January 2012." Washington D.C., International Center for Terrorism Studies, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, January, pp. 1 - 52, ([morocconthemove.files.wordpress.com/2012-specialupdate-report-full-report-terrorism-in-africa-from-9-11-to-arav-spring-icts-potomac-2Feb2002.pdf](http://morocconthemove.files.wordpress.com/2012-specialupdate-report-full-report-terrorism-in-africa-from-9-11-to-arav-spring-icts-potomac-2Feb2002.pdf)); United States Department of State 2012. "Country Reports on Terrorism 2011- July 2012" ( <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization195768.pdf> ), pp. 18-20.

[5] Eric Iksoon Im, Jon Cauley, and Todd Sandler. 1987. "Cycles and Substitutions in Terrorist Activities: A Spectral Approach." *Kyklos* 40: pp. 238-255; Walter Enders, Gerald Parise, and Todd Sandler 1993. "A Time Series Analysis of Transnational Terrorism: Trends and Cycles." *Defense Economics* , 3; pp. 305-320; Richard J. Chasdi. 2002. *Tapestry of Terror: A Portrait of Middle East Terrorism, 1994-1999*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 53 - 54.

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[6] Y. Alexander (2012), p. 27.

[7] GTD Database “Search Results” – “Mali.” – (1) an “Unknown” event, # 199101110003, “Date: 1991-01-11; (2) an “Unknown” event, #199105120009, “Date: 1991-05-12,” (3) an “Unknown” event, # 199104060007, “Date: 1991-04-06.”

[8] A hand count of GTD “Search Results” – “Mali” for 1994 included: – (1) an “Association of Students and Pupils in Mali (AEEM)” event, # 199405060001, “Date: 1994-05-06”; (2) a “Tuaregs” event, #19940612001, “Date: 1994-06-12”; (3) a “Tuaregs” event, # 199406120002, “Date: 1994-06-12”; (4) an “Islamic Arab Front of Azawad (FIAA)” event, # 199407200001, “Date: 1994-07-20”; (5) an “Islamic Arab Front of Azawad (FIAA)” event, #199407250001, “Date: 1994-07-25”; (6) a “Ganda Koi” event, # 199407300001, “Date: 1994-07-30”; (7) a “Tuaregs” event, # 199408300001, “Date: 1994-08-30”; (8) a “Tuaregs” event, #199410040001, “Date: 1994-10-04”; (9) a “Tuaregs” event, #199410200001, “Date: 1994-10-20”; (10) a “Tuaregs” event, #199410220001, “Date: 1994-10-22”; (11) a “Black African Vigilantes” event, # 19941024001, “Date: 1994-10-24”; (12) a “Tuaregs” event, # 199411170001, “Date: 1994-11-17”; (13) a “Tuaregs” event, # 199411200007, “Date: 1994-11-20.” It should be noted that for “target-type” event # 2, #3, #12 are coded by GTD researchers as “military” which would not qualify as terrorist assaults in most circumstances based on more narrow definitions of terrorism. In reality, in the Northwestern African context, terrorists often conduct assaults that would fall under “insurgency” or forms of political violence other than terrorism, and insurgents in turn, often also use attacks that are not only targeting security forces. Still other attacks of both guerrilla-type insurgents and terrorists come close to tactics of organized crime – kidnapping for ransom would be an example.

[9] A hand count of GTD “Search Results” – “Mali” for 2008 included: – (1) an “Other (suspected)” event, # 200803200006, “Date: 2008-03-20”; (2) an “Other (suspected)” event, #200803210002, “Date: 2008-03-21; (3) a “Tuaregs” event, # 200803220010, “Date: 2008-03-20”; (4) an “Unknown” event, #200805060008, “Date: 2008-05-06”; (5) a “Tuaregs” event, # 200805060016, “Date: 2008-05-06; (6) an “Unknown” event, #200805220008, “Date: 2008-05-22; (7) a “Tuaregs (suspected)” event, #200807190003, “Date: 2008-07-19”; (8) a “Tuaregs” event, #200812210008, “Date: 2008-12-21”; (9) a “Tuaregs (suspected)” event, #201004040016, “Date: 2008-04-03.” In this case, event # 1, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #9 are coded in the GTD database as “military” targets.

[10] GTD Database “Search Results – Mali” – (1) an “AQLIM (suspected)” event # 201111240026, “Date: 2011-11-24”; (2) an “AQLIM (suspected)” event, # 201101050006, “Date: 2011-01-05”; (3) an AQLIM (suspected)” event, #201008100009, “Date: 2010-08-10 (4) an “al-Shabaab (suspected)” event, #201111250020, “Date: 2011-11-25”; (5) an “Unknown” event, #201106280011, “Date: 2011-06-28.”

[11] Richard J. Chasdi (2002). *Tapestry of Terror: A Portrait of Middle East Terrorism, 1994-1999*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 78 - 80, 83, 85, 110, 71; Ahmed S. Hashim, Gregoire Patte and Nathan Cohen (2012). “The Geography of Terror in the Sahel.” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis* 4(5) May: pp. 11 - 17 (<http://www.pvtr.org/pdf/CTTA/2012/CTTA-May12.pdf>).

[12] Presumably, certain terrorist assaults chronicled by START had multiple target-types for n=59 incidents where the total number of target-type= 62. For example, see event# 201008100009, “Date: 2010-08-10” with its “military, government (general)” targets.

[13] GTD “Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables” (START, October 2012), pp. 27-28.

[14] GTD Database “Search Results” – “Mali.” a “Tuaregs” event #199410040001, “Date:1994-10-04”; an “al-Qa’ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM) (suspected)” event # 200911250008, “Date: 2009-11-25.”

[15] Y. Alexander (2012), 21-22; Hashim, Patte, and Cohen (2012), 12-13; U.S. Department of State 2012, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2011” – “Mali”, pp. 18 - 19.

[16] Y. Alexander (2012), 27; U.S. Department of State 2012, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2011” – “Mauritania”, p. 20.

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[18] GTD Database “Search Results” – “Algeria.” (1) a “Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)” event# 197210060001, “Date: 1972- 10-16;”(2) a “Muslim fundamentalists” event # 199001160005, “Date: 1990-01-16.

[19] R.J. Chasdi (2002), pp. 68-73.

[20] Michael Collins Dunn (1994). “Algeria’s Agony: The Drama So Far, the Prospects of Peace.” *Middle East Policy* 3 (3): 147-156; Luis Martinez. (2000). *The Algerian Civil War, 1990-1998* .Jonathan Derrick, Trans. New York: Columbia University Press; Y. Alexander 2012, 16; R.J. Chasdi, 2002, pp. 8, 107-118, 132, 135, 137, 139, 221, 233-235, 413-414. There are two (2) GTD chronicled terrorist events in 1990.

[21] Y. Alexander 2012, p. 27.

[22] GTD Database “Search Results” – “Algeria”- “Attack Type.”

[23] Richard J. Chasdi. 2012. *Counterterror Offensives for the Ghost War World: The Rudiments of Counterterrorism Policy* .Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

## **Review Essay: Twenty Important Journal Articles on Radicalisation to, and De-Radicalisation from, Terrorism**

by David Hofmann

Keeping up-to-date with new research on terrorism can be challenging for both academic and non-academic researchers, with a multitude of books, articles and reports of varying degrees of quality being produced continuously. Andrew Silke noted that the publication of books on terrorism nearly jumped tenfold after 9/11, from 150 titles in 2000 to 1108 the following year, and 1767 in 2002 [1]. If one searches for books on terrorism with [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) one decade later, one gets over 30,000 results and the sub-genre ‘radicalisation’ already produces in excess of 300 books. Research on radicalisation took off in 2004 in response to the blowback from the American intervention in Iraq the year before. The London bombings in 2005 generated further interest in the phenomenon of “homegrown terrorism”, where apparently self-starting cells of radicalising individuals mobilized against their host countries with little or no material support from foreign terrorist entities. This has created a whole new field of empirical inquiry.

Wading through the sea of literature can be daunting. As a starting point for those interested in studying radicalisation processes, this review essay covers twenty articles and reports that are, in this writer’s opinion, particularly helpful for a better understanding of the phenomenon. No books are discussed here as this would expand this text beyond the patience of most readers. A bibliography subsequent to this review lists, however, books as well. Terrorism Studies is an interdisciplinary field and the present review of articles covers texts from anthropology, psychology and political science. This selection leans toward articles and reports that have some degree of synergy with this writer’s own discipline – sociology.

The approach taken in reviewing the selected articles and reports is akin to a miniature literature review or an annotated bibliography. Its purpose is to provide the reader with a concise summary of the content of each article/report that goes beyond a cursory glance an abstract can offer. The most salient arguments and aspects of each article or report are highlighted, and occasionally supplemented, with this reviewer’s opinions on the importance and impact of the item under review. As so often in the social sciences, there is no consensus on the definition of radicalisation in these articles. However, the following definition by Alex P. Schmid captures many elements that can be found in them:

*Radicalisation*: an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict diad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, various forms of political violence other than terrorism or acts of violent extremism in the form of

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terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.[2]

The twenty articles and reports selected for review here are listed in alphabetical order:

- **Ashour, O. (2010). Online de-radicalisation? Countering violent extremist narratives: Message, messenger and media strategy. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 4 (6), 15-19.**

With the Internet playing a crucial function in homegrown terrorist radicalisation, it has become an increasingly important security issue to devise strategies to counter jihadist online narratives. To this effect, Omar Ashour outlines a three-pillared strategy for the implementation of online counter-narratives. The first pillar is *the message*, which requires the creation of multi-layered and attractive counter-messages to terrorist group ideology that are tailored to individual groups (e.g. a counter-narrative for a Right-Wing terror group like Kahane Chai would not be congruent for the IRA, and vice-versa). The second pillar focuses on *the messengers*, who must appear to have some sort of legitimacy or credibility with the target group. Ashour notes that there is currently a critical mass of former jihadist militants to tap into as a resource for delivering counter-narrative messages. The third and final pillar is *the media*, which requires careful publication and dissemination of the counter-narrative message.

- **Atran, S. (2003). Genesis of suicide terrorism. *Science*, 299, 1534-1539.**

Anthropologist Scott Atran's article on the genesis of suicide terrorism is now somewhat dated but it touches upon some crucial elements of terrorist radicalisation. The article asserts that the most effective way of defending against future suicide attacks is combating the process of radicalisation which is capitalised upon by suicide-bomber recruiting organisations. Notably, the radicalisation and recruitment of suicide bombers is identified as an institutional-level phenomenon. Atran argues that preventing radicalisation of potential suicide bombing recruits requires macro-level solutions, such as applying the right amount of pressure and inducements to undermine communal support for suicide bombing, empowering moderates, and addressing grievances and humiliation in the Muslim community. Elements of Atran's conclusions are evident in subsequent theories of terrorist radicalisation, and this short but informative article serves as an ideal starting point for those interested in exploring root causes of radicalisation.

- **Barlett, J., & Miller, C. (2012). The edge of violence: Towards telling the difference between violent and non-violent radicalisation. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24 (1), 1-21.**

In this article focused on homegrown terrorism, Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller report the findings of a two-year fieldwork study in the UK, Canada, Denmark, France and the Netherlands. Their research is divided into two parts. The first is focused on addressing a gap in the current literature: the lack of studies that simultaneously look at control groups. This article does so by comparing “permissive factors” between radicals who become terrorists, and radicals who do not engage in violence. The second part of the article examines the process of radicalisation, and differentiates between types of radicalisation that escalate to violence and those that do not. The authors identify four elements of radicalisation that are often overlooked, but have the potential to help understand how radicalisation can lead to violence for some, but not others: (1) the emotional pull to act in the face of injustice, (2) thrill, excitement, and coolness, (3) status and internal code of honour, and (4) peer pressure.

- **Borum, R. (July 2003). Understanding the terrorist mindset. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 72 (7), 7-10.**

This FBI report outlines forensic psychologist Randy Borum’s four-stage heuristic model of terrorist radicalisation. Borum’s model begins with the recognition by the pre-radicalised individual or group that an event or condition is wrong (“It’s not right”). This is followed with a framing of the event or condition as selectively unjust (“It’s not fair”). The third step occurs when others are held responsible for the perceived injustice (“It’s your fault”). The final step involves the demonization of the ‘other’ (“You’re evil”). While somewhat dated and replaced by newer and more complex theories, Borum’s model is a very good example of an early heuristic attempt at systematising and understanding processes of terrorist radicalisation.

- **Crone, M., & Harrow, M. (2011). Homegrown terrorism in the West. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23(4), 521-536.**

Manni Crone and Martin Harrow’s article takes an interesting position by attempting to address certain ambiguities surrounding the definition of homegrown terrorism. They suggest that homegrown terrorism can be reduced to two dimensions: *belonging* and *autonomy*. Within these dimensions, the authors propose four ideal types of Western homegrown terrorism: (1) internal autonomous, (2) internal affiliated, (3) external autonomous, and (4) external affiliated. Four illustrative cases of Danish homegrown terrorists are used to highlight the characteristics of each ideal type. This is then followed by a quantitative analysis of Islamist terrorism from 1989-2008, examining whether Western terrorism has seen a shift towards homegrown attacks. The authors find that since 2003 there has been a rise in both internal and autonomous acts of terrorism, but that most internal attacks have some form of external affiliation.

- **Dalgaard-Nielsen, A. (2010). Violent radicalisation in Europe: What we know and what we do not know. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33, 797-814.**

In her review of the current state of literature on violent radicalisation in Europe, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen identifies three major research trends: French sociology, social movement/social network

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theory, and empirical case studies. She summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in order to qualitatively assess the state of the literature on radicalisation. While the summary of the identified major research trends on radicalisation is helpful, the strength of this article lies in its critical examination of the state of radicalisation research. Dalgaard-Nielsen echoes the often-repeated criticism that radicalisation research lacks a solid empirical foundation, advocating for the increased use of control groups to properly account for changes in radicalisation. She also points out that despite an increasing trend of focusing on leadership figures in terrorist radicalization processes, there is a paucity of data on their motivations and on what separates them from other terrorists in the organization or cell. The author concludes with pertinent and useful suggestions on how to circumvent such gaps in gathering empirical data on terrorist radicalisation.

- **Dawson, L. L. (2010). The study of new religious movements and the radicalisation of home-grown terrorists: Opening a dialogue. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22 (1), 1-21.**

This article by Lorne Dawson, a sociologist of religion, focuses on the conspicuous and somewhat puzzling lack of dialogue between research on homegrown radicalisation to terrorism and joining sects of new religious movements (NRMs). Dawson begins the analysis by stating the reasons why opening lines of communication between NRM and terrorism research would be fruitful, why it never came to pass, and the grounds with which to begin this dialogue. He notes and delineates three primary points of contact between both subject areas: (1) who, how and why people join NRMs and terrorist groups, (2) how both types of groups maintain and intensify member commitments, and (3) why some NRMs become violent. Dawson's article concludes with six 'lessons learned' from this preliminary comparative analysis between joining NRMs and terrorist radicalisation, which can serve as basis for future collaborative research into ideologically charged groups of a religious or political nature that capture their members and try to cut them off from the rest of society.

- **King, M., & Taylor, D. M. (2011). The radicalisation of homegrown jihadists: A review of theoretical models and social-psychological evidence. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23 (4), 602-622.**

In this article, psychologists Michael King and Donald Taylor review five major radicalisation models, highlighting their commonalities and the discrepancies. The authors identify and discuss three common elements found to be important to the process of radicalisation that appear in each model: the phenomenon of relative deprivation, struggles over identity, and the presence of certain personality characteristics. Among the discrepancies, King and Taylor point out the differing formats and portrayals of the radicalisation process (emergent vs. linear progression) across the five models. They then carry the analysis further with discussions on the role of extremist organizations in fomenting radicalisation and the role of individual characteristics in

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the radicalisation process. The article concludes with three major suggestions for avenues of future research related to the common elements they found in the models, namely, more research on: (1) the affective reactions to group relative deprivation, (2) the management of identities, and (3) the relevant personality characteristics.

- Kirby, A. (2007). The London Bombers as “Self-Starters”: A case study in indigenous radicalisation and the emergence of autonomous cliques. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30, 415-428.

The London bombings of 2005 caused a partial shift in radicalisation research from the external threat of Al-Qaida, to the internal issue of homegrown terrorist radicalisation. In a case study of the London Bombers, Aidan Kirby argues that previous conceptions of terrorist radicalisation which framed radicalisation as a series of networks connected to a formal and organized jihad is not nuanced enough to explain the dynamics of self-starting homegrown terror cells. To further his argument, Kirby points to the analytical confusion that emerged after the London bombings as to whether the perpetrators were connected formally with Al-Qaida, or acted on their own. Kirby draws heavily on Marc Sageman’s *Understanding Terror Networks* [3] in his argument that new paradigms focused on social dynamics are necessary in order to understand how homegrown terror cells emerge autonomously. He concludes his argument by highlighting the importance of the Internet as a tool allowing for self-starting homegrown terrorism cells to radicalise and obtain operational knowledge. Since the article was written, evidence has surfaced that the London bombers (especially those involved in the failed attempt of 21/7) were not as autonomous as originally thought, given the links found to Al-Qaeda Core in Waziristan.

- Kleinmann, S.M. (2012). Radicalisation of homegrown Sunni militants in the United States: Comparing converts and non-converts. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35 (4), 278-297.

This article addresses an important question that has been overlooked in the research on terrorist radicalisation: is the radicalisation process the same for converts and non-converts to Islam? Scott Matthew Kleinmann’s research focuses on Sunni homegrown terrorism in the US from 2001 to 2010, and his data were coded to examine individual, group, and mass factors influencing radicalisation. The research findings show that individual/internal forces play a greater role in the radicalisation of Sunni converts, and group level processes (e.g. ties of kinship and friendship) affect both Sunni converts and non-converts in a similar fashion. Kleinmann’s findings provide a unique insight into differing radicalisation processes and he identified an important sub-category for comparative analysis – the convert who is under pressure to show his commitment to the new cause more than the non-reborn believer.

- McCauley, C., & Moskalenko, S. (2008). Mechanisms of political radicalisation: Pathways toward terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20 (3), 415-433.
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At the time of the writing of this review, psychologists Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko's article on the mechanisms of political radicalisation was the most frequently accessed online article in the leading journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*. This article served also as a basis for *Friction: How Radicalisation Happens to Them and Us* [4], an influential book on radicalisation written by the same authors. In the article, the authors identify twelve mechanisms of radicalisation across three levels of analysis: individuals, groups and mass publics. Of the twelve identified mechanisms, the authors note that only two are autonomous, while the remaining ten are reactive. This leads them to make an important argument that current research on radicalisation is focused too much on the individual actors, and not enough on the dynamics of inter-group conflict.

- **Moghaddam, F. M. (2005). A staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration. *American Psychologist*, 60 (2), 161-169.**

Fathhali M. Moghaddam's article is a good example of a theory that treats radicalisation as a linear process that progresses along a pathway leading to extreme violence. Moghaddam explains radicalisation as a metaphorical ascent up a narrowing staircase from a ground floor to five higher floors each with different levels of commitment. Individual perceptions of injustice, relative deprivation, and morality are central to his explanation of why certain people ascend the staircase right up to the top floor (representing terrorism) while millions of others experiencing more or less the same starting conditions do not progress very far towards the top. His metaphor begins with a ground floor from which those individuals suffering acutely from feelings of relative deprivation ascend to the first floor of radicalisation. The first floor is populated by all those who seek greater justice for conditions of injustice, relative deprivation and shame. Individuals climbing further up on the staircase are those who feel that in the existing political system their upward social mobility is blocked as their voices of protest are silenced and they are allowed no participation in public decision-making - they ascend to the second floor. On the second floor, Moghaddam explains, one can find those who are inclined to believe leaders who redirect feelings of anger and aggression onto an external enemy. Having been radicalized in mosques or other meeting places they will climb to the third floor where they will disengage from society and are drawn towards a moral engagement with a terrorist creed. The fourth floor involves the concretization of a dualistic world-view of "you are either with us or against us". Those who rose so far begin to be incorporated into the structures of terrorist organisations. Some are recruited to take the last steps on the staircase and commit acts of terrorism; they have reached the top floor. For those interested in further reading, Moghaddam expands upon this article in his book *From the Terrorists' Point of View* [5].

- **Mullins, S. (2012). Iraq versus lack of integration: understanding the motivations of contemporary Islamist terrorists in Western countries. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 4 (2), 110-133.**
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Sam Mullin's article is a review piece that covers some of the important 'driving forces' behind home-grown terrorist radicalisation. While Mullins offers little innovation on the subject, the article's strength lies in its concise coverage of some of the major 'hot' topics surrounding research on Western homegrown terrorism. More specifically, he reviews the research on: (1) psychological abnormality, (2) individual adversity, (3) Western material and political conditions, (4) comparative conditions between the US and Europe, (5) identity crises, (6) Western foreign policy in Iraq, (7) the influence of Islamism, (8) the role of religion, and (9) social motives. Mullins does a fair job covering each topic, and his article is a good place for the reader interested in quickly absorbing some of the major issues and debates surrounding research on homegrown terrorism. The article concludes with a discussion on theoretical and counter-terrorism implications surrounding the state of current research on homegrown terrorism.

- **Rinehart, C. S. (2009). Volatile breeding grounds: The radicalisation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32(11), 953-988.**

This case study on the radicalisation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood addresses an often-overlooked factor in the radicalisation process: the dynamics of leadership within the radicalisation process. Christine Sixta Rinehart argues that there are three major factors which contributed to the radicalisation of the Brotherhood: (1) the influence of a charismatic leader, (2) the radicalisation over time of the Brotherhood's leadership, and (3) frustration at the failure of the Brotherhood to radicalise the population at large. Rinehart's research utilizes theories like frustration-aggression and Weber's work on charismatic authority as the basis of her analysis. She concludes that when combined, the three aforementioned factors are what motivated the Brotherhood to commit acts of terrorism.

- **Silber, M. D., & Bhatt, A. (2007). Radicalisation in the West: The homegrown threat. New York: NYPD Intelligence Division.**

This influential and often-quoted report by two members of the NYPD Intelligence Division puts forth a model for explaining the home-grown terrorist radicalisation of Islamic jihadists. Written in a terse and explanatory style for law enforcement practitioners, the NYPD report focuses on a comparative study of five international cases of home-grown jihadi terrorist groups and attempts to create a conceptual framework explaining the home-grown radicalisation process. The authors describe a four step process: (1) pre-radicalisation – focusing on the environmental and social factors promoting terrorism; (2) self-identification – marking the beginning of the exploration of the Salafi Islamist worldview, due to some personal crisis or cognitive event; (3) indoctrination – involving an intensification of radical beliefs and a belief in action to further the Salafist cause; and (4) jihadization – the self-identification of members of a group as holy warriors, and the commencement of operational planning for a terrorist attack. Among their findings, the authors present a number of key implications which continue to influence the study of home-grown terrorism, such as Al-Qaeda's inspirational role, the failure to adequately integrate 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

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generation immigrants, the futility of profiling home-grown terrorists, and so on. Readers might also wish to look at one of the author's volume: Mitchell D. Silber. *The Al Qaeda Factor. Plots Against the West*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

- **Silke, A. (2008). Holy warriors: Exploring the psychological processes of Jihadi radicalisation. *European Journal of Criminology*, 5 (1), 99-123.**

The aim of Andrew Silke's article is to review and assess the quality of psychological research evidence on jihadi radicalisation. Before systematizing the available literature, Silke begins by criticizing the lack of primary research and the overreliance on newspaper reports and secondary material in current psychological research. Adopting the general view that terrorist radicalisation is a gradual process, Silke identifies and discusses a number of common but complex inter-meshing factors found in the backgrounds of terrorists: (1) age and gender, (2) education, career and marriage, (3) social identity, (4) marginalization and discrimination, (5) catalytic events and perceived injustice, (6) status and personal rewards, and (7) opportunity and recruitment. Silke concludes with a discussion of how these common factors go against the common perception of the terrorist as "mentally-ill", stressing how radicalisation occurs in small groups of like-minded individuals who gradually commit themselves more and more to a radical cause. He argues that the focus for psychologists of terrorism should be on small-group dynamics and psychological processes, and less on the psycho-pathological or crime-like aspects of terrorist radicalisation.

- **Taylor, M. & Horgan, J. (2006). A conceptual framework for understanding psychological process in the development of the terrorist. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18 (4), 585-601.**

As the title suggests, this article presents Max Taylor and John Horgan's conceptual framework for understanding and addressing the psychology of terrorism. Much like the main argument in Horgan's book, *The Psychology of Terrorism* [6], the authors argue an important point – that radicalisation and engagement in terrorism is a gradual, step-by-step process, which cannot be explained by reverting to theories about a psycho-pathological state of mind. The article continues with a discussion of pathways into and out of terrorism, where three critical process variables are identified: (1) setting events, (2) personal factors, and (3) social, political and/or organizational contexts. The authors conclude that future research should focus on understanding factors such as decisional contexts, individual choices and the implications of involvement in terrorist activities.

- **Thompson, R. L. (2011). Radicalisation and the use of social media. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4 (4), 167-190.**

Robin Thompson's article is a policy piece that focuses on explaining how and why social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) are effective radicalisation tools. She argues that the use of social media in terrorist radicalisation is not a transient phenomenon, and it can pose a real threat to national security by encouraging homegrown terrorism. The article presents its case with three

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observations: (1) the ubiquity and reach of social media, (2) arguing that social media is the “perfect voice” for radicals trying to rally supporters to a cause, and (3) an analysis of how social media played a role in the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. The article concludes with policy suggestions aimed at implementing a response to the potential radicalisation effects of social media. Notably, Thompson argues that the intelligence and the national security communities need to become more involved in social media themselves in order to better understand its potential as a medium for radicalisation.

- **Useem, B. & Clayton, O. (2009) Radicalisation of U.S. prisoners. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 8 (3), 561-592.**

Bert Useem and Obie Clayton’s article addresses a still understudied aspect of terrorism research: the radicalisation of prisoners. In interviews with 210 American prison officials and 270 American inmates, the authors set forth to gauge whether the social environment in correctional institutions is conducive for radicalisation into jihadi terrorism. While there are a number of methodological issues with the sample that hinder obtaining comprehensive results, the authors conclude that there is a low level of radicalisation among US inmates. They identify four reasons why this might be: (1) the increase of order in prisons, (2) institutional boundaries between inmates and outside radical communities, (3) anti-radicalisation initiatives executed by agency leadership, and (4) the low levels of education of inmates in comparison to other terrorists. The authors conclude by arguing that prison life has a very low level of effect on whether or not an American inmate will become radicalised to jihadi terrorism.

- **Vidino, L. (2009). Homegrown jihadist terrorism in the United States: A new and occasional phenomenon? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32 (1), 1-17.**

Lorenzo Vidino’s main argument in this article is that homegrown terrorism has a long history within the US, despite the widespread view that it is mainly a recent and mostly European phenomenon. Vidino points to violent acts by African American Muslim organizations, the 1993 Landmarks plot, travelling jihadi fighters in the 1990’s, the post 9/11 boom, and a number of lone wolf terrorists as examples of this long tradition of homegrown US terrorism. He argues that the failure to recognize this situation stems from a ‘delayed awareness’ in the pre-9/11 days because intelligence communities had greater legal and cultural impediments to monitoring internal terrorist threats. The London bombings in 2005 further catalyzed the interest of US authorities in detecting and neutralizing homegrown terrorist threats. Vidino continues by identifying four reasons why there is a divergence between the comparatively low levels of homegrown radicalisation amongst Muslims in the US than in Europe: (1) better economic conditions, (2) geographic dispersion, (3) immigration patterns, and (4) tougher immigration policies. The article concludes with a brief analysis of the history of the US government’s response to homegrown terrorism.

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### Notes

- [1] A. Silke (2008). "Research on Terrorism: A Review of the Impact of 9/11 and the Global War on Terrorism", in: H. Chen, E. Reid, J. Sinai, A. Silke and B. Ganor (Eds.) *Terrorism Informatics: Knowledge Management and Data Mining for Homeland Security*. New York: Springer, pp. 27-49.
- [2] Alex P. Schmid. Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: where do Terrorism Studies stand in Understanding Mobilisation to, and Demobilisation from, Islamist Violent Extremism and Jihadist Terrorism? The Hague: International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT), 2012 (Unpublished Literature Review), p.17.
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## **Selected Literature on (i) Radicalization and Recruitment, (ii) De-Radicalization and Dis-Engagement, and (iii) Counter-Radicalization and Countering Violent Extremism**

**Compiled by David C. Hofmann and Alex P. Schmid**

### **I. Bibliography on Radicalization and Recruitment**

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**N.B.:** With thanks to Eric Price as this bibliography has partially borrowed from and expanded upon Eric Price and Alex Schmid's "Selected Literature on Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation: Monographs, Edited Volumes, Grey Literature and Prime Articles Published since 1970". *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 4 (2), pp. 58-76.

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## Literature on Victims of Terrorism: Monographs, Edited Volumes, Non-conventional Literature and Prime Articles & Book Chapters

Compiled by Eric Price

*NB: some of the items listed below are clickable and allow access to the full text; those with an asterix [\*] only provide clickable access to a table of contents.*

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***Resources on the Internet:***

The European Commission [The EU stands by the victims of terrorism]

[[http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/terrorism/terrorism\\_victims\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/terrorism/terrorism_victims_en.htm)]

Target: Israeli children

[<http://www.education.gov.il/children/index.html>]

US Office for Victims of Crime, US

[<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/welcome.html>]

Victims of Terrorism [Beirut, Lebanon, October 23, 1983]

[<http://victimsofterrorism.net/index.php>]

*Violence and Victims* [Journal]

[<http://www.springerpub.com/product/08866708>]

World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition

[<http://www.wtcsitememorial.org/index.html>]

***About the Compiler: Eric Price*** is a Professional Information Specialist and worked for the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna until his retirement. Currently he is an Editorial Assistant of *Perspectives on Terrorism*.

### III. Book Reviews

**Andreas Wenger and Alex Wilner (Eds.). *Deterring Terrorism: Theory and Practice***

**Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2012), 352 pp; ISBN: 9780804783477; \$29.95.**

**Reviewed by Joshua Sinai**

Can terrorist groups (or lone wolves) be deterred and can deterrence theory be systematically applied to upgrading the capability of governments' combating terrorism campaigns? During the Cold War, after all, deterrence theory formed the cornerstone of the United States government's national security and proved highly effective in deterring the Soviet Union from launching nuclear weapons attacks against the U.S. and its allies. Can the same theoretical principals be applied to deterring terrorism? Following Al-Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attacks, however, as Alex Wilner and Andreas Wenger, the editors of this important volume point out, it was generally believed that terrorist organizations and extremist fanatics could not be deterred, with governments shifting their focus to "combating" terrorism rather than "deterring" it (p. 3).

This highly important question in combating terrorism studies forms the basis for this innovative collection of papers. Together, they represent a significant contribution not only to the discipline of deterrence theory in international relations, but also to the theoretical literature on "combating" terrorism as well (with "combating terrorism" serving as an umbrella concept for defensive "anti-terrorism" and offensive "counter-terrorism").

Why is a deterrent capability important? As Wilner and Wenger point out in the volume's introduction, if it can become possible to "deter" terrorists from embarking on their attacks in the first place, governments will then be able to embark on "pragmatic strategies for confronting and containing the threat of terrorism" (p. 3), for instance, by blending coercive and conciliatory response measures against their terrorist adversaries that are able to resolve such conflicts for long term peace and stability.

What is deterrence? In its dictionary definition, it is process in which a state possesses the overwhelming determination and destructive capability to inhibit an adversary's behaviors and activities through the threatened use of punishment and reprisal in order to *discourage* it from carrying out potential attacks. It relies on two basic conditions: (i) the ability of a state to retaliate after a surprise attack against it must be perceived by the aggressive adversary as credible, and (ii) such retaliation must be perceived as an imminent possibility, if not a certainty.

Successful deterrence, as explained by Wilner and Wenger, "is a bargaining tactic that emphasizes the use of threats to manipulate an adversary's behavior and hinges on offering an adversary a way out." (p. 4) In the case of terrorist groups, they point out, their warfare calculations will be influenced by whether they assume that their government adversaries are seeking their "eventual annihilation" or granting them "survival." (p. 4)

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This edited volume is the product of a conference organized in November 2009 by the Center for Security Studies (CSS) of the ETH Zurich (Federal Institute of Technology), in Switzerland, which brought together leading experts on the study of terrorism and deterrence to discuss theoretical and empirical issues involved in deterring terrorism. Specifically, they sought to investigate two themes: (i) can the traditional tenets of deterrence theory be applied to counterterrorism and (ii) what is the role of deterrence in counterterrorism strategy? This was further broken down into investigating whether some terrorist organizations are more predisposed than others to deterrence, are there “stages within the terrorism process [that] are most susceptible to deterrence and compellence,” is it possible to distinguish between offensive and defensive counter-terrorism measures, and are there metrics “for measuring the success and failure of...counterterrorism deterrent policies and strategies?” (p. 7)

To investigate these issues, the book’s twelve chapters are organized in three parts. The first section assesses the feasibility of linking deterrence theory to the terrorism threat environment, including whether the “absolute deterrence success” expected during the Cold War’s nuclear strike confrontation could be replaced by expectations of “marginal success” in deterring terrorism. Here, of particular interest is Jeremy W. Knopf’s discussion of three approaches to deterring terrorism. These involve (1) deterrence that is “indirect in nature, intended to pressure third parties who facilitate terrorism rather than terrorist operatives themselves,” (2) “deterrence by denial,” in which terrorists are denied the opportunity and capability to carry out attacks, and (3) deterrence that is “nonmilitary in nature, such as ‘deterrence by delegitimization’” of one’s adversary. (p. 22)

Also especially noteworthy is Paul K. Davis’s discussion of influence strategies in counterterrorism, which is accompanied by highly useful diagrams. One diagram, for example, examines the root causes of terrorism, where the author points out that deterrence can be used to influence terrorists’ motivations “positively.”

Frank Harvey and Alex Wilner’s chapter on counter-coercion raises the important theoretical prerequisite of deterrence/compellence by governments in the form of “defining and communicating unwanted behavior in a credible and resolute manner” to the terrorist adversaries that identifies “relevant capabilities” that “terrorists fear most.” (page. 110)

The book’s second section focuses on the feasibility of deterring terrorism employing chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. Brian Michael Jenkins’s chapter, in particular, discusses how deterrence can be employed to prevent nuclear terrorism. To acquire such a deterrent capability, Jenkins observes, it is important to understand how terrorists “perceive the utility and risks of acquiring and using nuclear weapons,” with such insights likely to be “gained from captured documents and interrogations and also...from what they do *not* say.” (p. 119) Finally, to deter terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons, Jenkins points out that the actors that might provide terrorists with such a capability, such as state sponsors, corrupt

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officials, criminal syndicates, weapons dealers, and smugglers, are most vulnerable to be deterred since they desire to survive and avoid retaliation. (p. 130)

The final section presents case studies that attempt to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of certain governments' deterring terrorism campaigns. In his chapter on Israel's campaign to deter Palestinian terrorism, Shmuel Bar discusses how Fatah and Hamas, in particular, threaten Israel, whether Israel has a clear policy of deterrence against them, including how such policies were communicated to the terrorist organizations, and how the Palestinian groups interpreted Israel's deterrent capability and willingness to retaliate against such threats. Bar finds that while Israel achieved a *strategic* deterrence vis-à-vis its hostile neighboring Arab states through its high-end conventional military capabilities on the ground and the air and with its possession of [perceived] nuclear capabilities, it is a completely different matter to deter its terrorist organization adversaries. This is due to the fact that while Israel's strategic interstate deterrence is based on the *perception* of its military capabilities rather than the actual use of these capabilities, since, for example, no full-scale interstate war has occurred since the October 1973 Arab-Israel War. In deterring terrorist organization adversaries, on the other hand, response measures are generally *tactical* in nature, taking the form of "day-to-day actions" against them. (p. 207) These include preventive security measures such as impeding terrorist movement and communications in their areas of operation, bolstering defensive security at potential target sites in Israel, imposing travel restrictions on Palestinians, closing passages to Gaza, erecting roadblocks between Palestinian and Israeli crossings, and the construction of the extensive security fence between the Palestinian communities and Israel. (p. 209) The second component of deterrence includes proactive security measures, such as targeted killings of key Palestinian terrorist leaders and operational planners, arresting terrorist suspects within their communities, and large-scale military actions against terrorist strongholds. (p. 210). These deterrence measures, the author concludes, succeeded in substantially reducing the frequency and lethality of Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel.

While Bar's examination of Israeli deterrence against Palestinian terrorism is comprehensive and detailed, it misses several important issues. First, while it is true that Palestinian terrorist attacks have been substantially reduced, they have merely shifted their tactics and weaponry to firing rockets and mortars from Gaza against Israeli communities. Second, effective deterrence is also dependent on a government's capability to address and resolve a conflict's underlying root causes, but Israeli decision-making is stalemated over the measures that would be required to reach a political settlement with its Palestinian adversaries (although the Palestinians themselves are also stalemated over their commitment to reaching a peaceful accommodation with Israel).

The other empirical case studies (all excellently written) cover the Turkish and Iranian campaigns to deter Kurdish terrorist attacks, the efforts by the U.S. military to deter Al-Qaeda's chlorine attacks in Iraq, and the U.S.-led efforts to deter Iranian and Libyan sponsorship of terrorism. The efforts to curtail Libya's sponsorship of terrorism, however, were also linked to

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curtailing its WMD program, which is not discussed by the chapter's author, including the successful penetration of the AQ Khan nuclear smuggling network, which at the time was considered crucial in persuading Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi to give up terrorism and WMD and enter into diplomatic relations with the U.S.

In conclusion, the contributors to this important volume highlight the role of deterrence as a precursor to the need by governments to embark on the defensive and offensive components of a combating terrorism campaign, although the relationship between these elements still needs to be better clarified and delineated in the theoretical literature. This volume, as its editors acknowledge, is a first step in building the theoretical literature on this important subject.

***About the Reviewer:** Dr. Joshua Sinai is a Washington, DC-based consultant and educator on counterterrorism studies. His latest publication "Active Shooter – Handbook on Prevention" was published by ASIS International in December 2012.*

**Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC).**

Published online at < <http://www.trackingterrorism.org/> > by the Beacham Group LLC.  
Priced from US \$ 350.- upwards, depending on type of user (individual, organization, government)

Reviewed by Alex P. Schmid

There are a great number of reference resources available to terrorism researchers in the public domain - whether free of cost in academia [like START from the University of Maryland ([www.start.umd.edu](http://www.start.umd.edu))] and in government [like the US National Counterterrorism Center (<http://www.nctc.gov/>)] or, subscription fee-based in the commercial sector [like Jane's Intelligence ([www.janes.com](http://www.janes.com))]. Where does the new, subscription fee-based Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC) fit in? On the face of it, TRAC seems to offer much. According to its own advertisement

- it holds one of the world's largest databases with analyses of some 3,850 groups that have been known to aid and abet political violence and terrorist organisations;
- it claims to rely on the input of a team of "nearly 3,000" consortium member experts;
- it claims to provide original, commissioned in-depth analyses of seminal terrorism topics;
- it claims to offer profiles of vulnerable regions and cities most likely to attract terrorist incidents.

In addition, TRAC also promises to offer a "Live intelligence repository" and "Chatter control" news from multiple sources, "under the radar commentary" and Internet links to some 2,900 think tanks, government agencies, universities, police academies and research centers.

TRAC has been in the making for eight years before going public in late February 2012. Is this indeed the comprehensive one-stop shop of choice for the serious terrorism researcher or government analyst? Based on temporary access this reviewer was provided with, there are some doubts in place.

How well does TRAC stand up to its claims? If we look, for instance at a "comprehensive analysis" on Salafists in Germany, written, strangely enough, by a Beirut-based TRAC contributor (now in the USA), we find that much of its structure and even the exact wording and endnotes replicate a publicly accessible article on Salafist Jihadism in Germany, written by F.W. Horst in 2011 and published by the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism ([www.ict.org.il](http://www.ict.org.il)) which is not even cited in the TRAC bibliography.

As one wanders through TRAC's terrorist group profiles, one experiences more such 'déjà vu' sensations. Much of the materials presented under "Groups" appear to derive from the US State Department, the National Counterterrorism Center or from the now dormant RAND/MIPT

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database hosted by START. There is usually some rephrasing and reshuffling done with the original information but relatively little appears to come from TRAC's own consortium members. Many group descriptions are poorly written and/or offer limited information. In terms of depth and quality, therefore, TRAC's profiles can never even come close to those of Jane's or the U.S. Department of State's annual reports on global terrorism.

TRAC admits in a disclaimer that it "...cannot and does not warrant the accuracy of the entries in its database". This points to a quality control problem. It is admittedly very difficult to get the facts right when it comes to clandestine underground organisations. It is here, however, where TRAC's many consortium expert members should come in and act as country- and group-specialists and fact-check each entry before it goes online to safeguard TRAC against the propagation of in-accurate or outdated information. If one goes through the published list of members of the consortium (which appears to be somewhat shorter than the number of experts associated with TRAC originally claimed), one finds, next to reputable scholars, many third rate contributors who have few credible claims to specialist status. While TRAC encourages its own readers to submit contributions, without a solid peer-review system in place, this is a dangerous way of increasing the volume of materials made available to subscribers. That volume, according to TRAC, now consists of over 6,000 webpages. If we take that a webpage is roughly of the same length as a book page, this means that this is about equivalent to the content of thirty books of 200 pages each. That does not really make it, as advertised, "one of the world's most comprehensive terrorism research centers".

If one wants to cover 3,850 terrorist and extremist and related groups (a high number to begin with), that alone would allow for less than two webpages per group. In fact most groups do get far less than that. Take, for instance, the entry on the African National Congress (ANC) which, in addition to the activities of its guerrilla arm and its political activities also engaged for a while in terrorism (more than 600 incidents between 1976 and 1996 according to the Global Terrorism Database of START to which TRAC provides a link). We learn little more than that the ANC was "founded in 1912", (1923 would have been a more accurate date), began "terrorist activity" in 1961 and is currently "inactive" after having "perpetrated terrorist attacks against government facilities." Not a word about the ANC's post-1994 career as ruling party of South Africa. Rather than offering a full group description of its own, TRAC often refers to descriptions of others, providing links to them, including Wikipedia, START and the NCTC. This might be a makeshift solution as long as one does not have in-house capacity - but it raises some questions what the eight years of preparation before TRAC went public were used for.

While the TRAC webpages are often visually attractive and generally user-friendly and interspersed with pictures and video-links, the quality of the texts is very uneven and quite often not up to scholarly standards. Reproducing and reprocessing much information taken freely from open source data providers and then market it as a password-protected, subscription fee -based commercial reference resource, raises some interesting questions about current web business

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practices. Who are the people behind the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium? TRAC's Editorial Director is Ms Vryan Khan. In her own words, she is "in control of all of TRAC's content including new TRAC article titles, TRAC's Publishing Center, TRAC Terrorist Group Profiles and TRAC's Chatter Control" (< [www.linkedin.com/in/veryankhan](http://www.linkedin.com/in/veryankhan) >). The TRAC website further lists as Chief Contributing Editor Dr Arabinda Acharyal, a Research Fellow at Singapore's International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at Nanyang Technological University. The third person is Walton Beacham, founder of the Beacham publishing enterprise, a former professor of English Literature. Beyond these figureheads it is not clear what the contribution of the majority of the consortium members is. A few of them have contributed some, usually quite short, entries and articles; many have produced no visible input.

All this would be pardonable if the TRAC product had not been marketed in such exalted terms. A February 28, 2012 press release from the Beacham Group announced that "TRAC combines expertise from nearly 3,000 terrorism specialists with real-time intelligence" and lauded TRAC, as already mentioned, as "one of the world's most comprehensive terrorism research centers". Clearly it is not. Nevertheless, the basic idea of an expert-run consortium that pools its know-how is a sound one. The problem is how to get more of the real experts involved, assure quality control and combine that with a viable business model. TRAC will have to address these issues if it wants to live up to its ambitions.

***About the Reviewer:** Alex P. Schmid is a Visiting Research Fellow of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (The Hague) and Editor-in-Chief of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'.*

## IV. News from TRI's National Networks of PhD Theses Writers

### Report from the Dutch-Flemish Network

by Renee Frissen

On October 4, 2012, the recently revived **Dutch-Flemish Network of Terrorism and Radicalisation Researchers** (which fused with the Dutch TRI network) organized its first meeting. This network of junior researchers discussed current and future ethics and practices of studying terrorism and some of the resulting dilemmas. In this meeting, network participants focused on the subject of 'secrecy'. *Jelle van Buuren*, member of the organizing committee, introduced the topic with a short statement on a fundamental paradox of secrecy: it is both a legitimate, necessary aspect for the defense of a resilient democracy but, at the same time, it can pose a threat to the fundamental values of democracy. According to *Van Buuren*, terrorism researchers need to focus more on the 'logic of practice' to adequately address this paradoxical field of study - rather than solely studying institution-produced policy documents. Yet, how to find creative ways to surmount or circumvent the 'wall of secrecy'? The more 'practical' you get, the more you appear to become involved in issues that are politically touchy and charged.

In a challenging lecture, professor *Bob Hoogenboom* used analytical tools from sociologists Georg Simmel and Gary T. Marx to address this issue. He claimed that there are too many 'middle of the road' studies and that the new generation of researchers should engage in more ground-breaking and border-transcending research. We should, he said, look for the 'hard and dirty data' (as Gary T. Marx called them); we will not find these by simply obeying the rules as these exist today. Some of the young researchers recognized the need for unconventional research, but were at the same time hesitant to step on the toes of the recognised leaders in this field of research, especially when this takes the form of a confrontation with their own thesis supervisors. Another difficulty addressed by participants dealt with the question: how to scientifically process unconventionally acquired data? *Liesbeth van der Heide*, member of the organizing committee, concluded the day by discussing the future of the network. The members all agreed that a semi-annual meeting with researchers from different universities is very useful, especially when dealing with the larger issues of our field. For more information on the network and future meetings, check: <http://www.campusdenhaag.nl/ctc/nvnt/> (in Dutch)

- Report by Renee Frissen (TRI coordinator of the Dutch-Flemish network).

## V. Notes from the Editor

### About Perspectives on Terrorism

PT seeks to provide a platform for established scholars as well as academics and professionals entering the field of Terrorism, Political Violence and Conflict Studies. It invites them to:

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

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

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

### Editorial Team of Perspectives on Terrorism:

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

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

**Joseph J. Easson**, Associate Editor

**Tim Pippard**, Assistant Editor

**Eric Price**, Editorial Assistant

**Legal Note:** *Perspectives on Terrorism* (PT) hosts articles that reflect a diversity of opinions. The views expressed therein, and the empirical evidence cited in their support, remain the sole responsibility of the contributing authors; they do not necessarily reflect positions and views of the journal's Editorial Team and Editorial Board or PT's parent organization, the *Terrorism Research Initiative*.