



Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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Security camera captures one of the suicide bombers on the morning of July 7.

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An In-Depth Look at the London Bombers

By Paul Tumelty

Terrorist attacks on civilians in the heart of London have long been considered inevitable by the UK's police and intelligence services. For them, the London bombings represent the ultimate security nightmare: young men from Britain's 1.6 million strong Muslim community willing to kill themselves and their fellow citizens in the country in which they were born. All but one of the men involved in the July 7 attacks were of Pakistani extraction, the other being a Muslim convert of Jamaican descent.

The West Yorkshire Scene

The bombers and their support network hailed from in and around the city of Leeds, West Yorkshire. Leeds lies at the heart of the industrial north of England and like many UK cities with an industrial past, has instituted regeneration programs over the last decade that, on the surface at least, have revitalized its image as a center of culture and business. However, within the Pakistani community – the city's largest minority group – in excess of 40% possess no qualifications and unemployment is double that of the white population. The city, with its population of 715,000, hosts more than 70 nationalities and one of its most culturally diverse communities is Beeston, an area in the southwest. [1] It is from there that western Europe's first suicide attacks were planned.

Pakistanis constitute 11 per cent of Beeston's population and are the largest non-white group in the area. The district is visibly deprived and has 7.8 per cent unemployment against a city average of 3.3%. [2] However, it is not a "sink estate" but a working class

district typical of northern England's industrial cities, with its tight streets and rows of terraced redbrick houses. The area has three mosques, which attract worshippers from all over south Leeds. Beeston, and Leeds in general, has a history of peaceful cross-community relations. This stands in contrast to those in the nearby city of Bradford, and a number of other northern towns, which have experienced race riots involving disaffected Pakistani youths in recent years. The invasion of Iraq and the onset of the "war against terrorism" have challenged members of the wider Muslim community and their disparate and often divided leadership with fundamental questions concerning issues of identity, representation and religious interpretation.

The Terrorist Cell

Mohammed Siddique Khan, a mentor by profession, is regarded by the security services as the senior, dominant figure with operational command over the bombing team – a common attribute of terrorist cells. He was responsible for identifying, cultivating and supporting the three younger men. Khan also took charge of liaising with contacts outside the area and in Pakistan, including the alleged "mastermind". He was employed as a "learning mentor" at a local primary school between March 2001 and December 2004. Dedicated to his job, he was perceived as a father figure to the disenfranchised young men of Beeston. In a chance interview given to a national newspaper in 2003, he described with disdain how the deprivation in Beeston remained untouched by the city council's "regeneration" strategy. [3]

The thirty-year old Khan lived with his pregnant wife and 18-month-old daughter and had studied at Leeds University. He had been off work on sick leave since September 2004 and resigned from his job last December. Khan had recently relocated from Beeston to Dewsbury, a small town near Leeds. [4] Back in February 2000, he established a gym with local government money under the rubric of the Kashmiri Welfare Association, which was associated with the Hardy Street mosque in Beeston. [5] The group aimed to keep youths off the streets by involving them in weightlifting. He continued his voluntary youth support activities following his appointment at the local school. However, in the past 18 months he was expelled from the mosque on suspicion of preaching extreme interpretations of Islam to young people. [6]

In 2004, he set up a second gymnasium on Lodge Lane in Beeston in the name of the youth program of the nearby Hamara Centre charitable foundation. [7] In the two months prior to the bombings, the building was closed for

renovations, but locals have reported its continued use. All of the bombers are known to have frequented the Lodge Lane building. [8]

Shahzad Tanweer, 22, was a successful sportsman who received good grades at school before going on to study Sports Science at Leeds Metropolitan University. Son of a successful local businessman, Tanweer's family was relatively prosperous and well respected, though he was effectively unemployed. [9] In November 2004, Tanweer and Mohammed Siddique Khan took the same flight to the Pakistani port city of Karachi. Tanweer had gone to the country, according to his uncle, to learn the Qur'an by heart. Their precise movements upon arrival cannot be confirmed, except that Tanweer traveled to his family's home village in rural Faisalabad and spent most of his two-month stay there. He studied the Qur'an in the local mosque and spent the majority of his time indoors as he did not feel welcomed as a Briton. His aunt confirmed that his only visitor during his stay was Khan. [10]

They flew back to the UK together in February of this year. At this stage, Tanweer's relatives noted that he had become more religious; he now had a beard and prayed five times a day. According to his family, Tanweer despaired of UK policy in Kashmir, Iraq and Afghanistan, and he idolized Osama bin Laden. [11] Upon his return from Pakistan, he worked intermittently for his father and both he and Khan volunteered in an Islamic bookstore in Beeston, which also acted as a local drop-in center for youths. [12]

Eighteen-year-old Hasib Hussein left school in July 2003 after five year's education with no formal qualifications. [13] A keen sportsman, he was unemployed and frustrated by both his lack of options and local facilities to pursue his love of football. He smoked marijuana with his friends and got into occasional fights with white youths. Hussein had performed the Hajj and had become increasingly devout, but remained normal to his friends, although he had shaved his beard prior to the attacks – a common preparatory act amongst Islamists. His father, a devout Muslim who suffered from poor health and had been unable to hold down full-time work, had expressed concern at his relationship with Khan. [14]

Jamaican born 19-year-old carpet fitter Germaine Lindsay recently relocated to his English wife's hometown of Aylesbury in the south of England. He grew up in West Yorkshire, in the small working class town of Huddersfield, close to Leeds. Lindsay lacked a father figure and converted to Islam following his mother's relationship with a Muslim. School friends portray him as an intelligent young man

“fascinated by world affairs, religion and politics” who changed markedly after his conversion during the summer of his final year at school. Lindsay’s deepening religiosity became increasingly obvious: he studied Urdu, wanted to be known as Jamal, and condemned those who drank alcohol. His sister said that “he was not my brother anymore.” Lindsay’s young wife, also a convert to Islam, was 8 months pregnant with their second child. [15]

A local politician stated that “we know Lindsay used to travel, because the local mosques were too moderate for him.” Lindsay, who was a fitness fanatic, is believed to have met his fellow bombers while attending one of the gyms set up by Khan. Moreover, his best friend revealed that he “had been going to a mosque in London and spoke of the teachings of someone down there.” [16]

Terror Connections

According to various reports, Khan’s name had emerged following a foiled plot to detonate a truck bomb in London in 2004. However, the intelligence services did not further investigate as he was only indirectly linked to one of the alleged plotters. In addition, Israeli reports have alleged that Khan spent a day in Israel in February 2003, leading to speculation that he was linked to the suicide attack perpetrated that April by two British born Pakistanis. An unnamed acquaintance of Khan told a local newspaper that he had traveled abroad frequently. [17]

Two other individuals linked with the investigation have been named as Haroon Rashid Aswad and Majdi al-Nashar, but their alleged roles remain unconfirmed. On July 21, it was reported and later denied that Aswad, 30, who was originally from Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, had been arrested by Pakistani authorities in Islamabad. Police allege that he is the mastermind of the operation and is said to have made around 20 phone calls to the bombers Khan and Shehzad Tanweer in the months leading up to the attacks before flying out of London before July 7. [18] Aswad’s family stated that he had not lived in the family home, nor had they had contact with him, for around ten years. He is believed to reside in London. [19] One local press report said that he is a former aide to the radical London cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri. [20]

Egyptian national Majdi al-Nashar is linked to a flat in which the homemade explosives were manufactured. A devoted Muslim, he headed the Islamic Society at Leeds University, though one of its members said that he did not propagate extreme views. [21] The Islamist community in both Egypt and London also stated that they had never heard of him following his arrest in Cairo. [22] Although suspicion

initially fell upon Al-Nashar, who was awarded a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Leeds University this year, he claims to have let the flat out to someone from London. This may have been Germaine Lindsay, whom he knew through attendance at a central mosque in Leeds, or Aswad, who local press allege visited the Yorkshire area after entering the country from abroad in the weeks before the attacks. [23]

Islamists and Counterterrorism

The attacks were claimed in two separate statements, one by the hitherto unknown Secret Group of Al-Qaeda of Jihad Organization in Europe and another by the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades, who have previously threatened European states. Occurring as they did on the day of the G8 summit, the bombers would have wanted to convey their fury at UK and U.S. policy in Iraq. This makes the first statement more credible. Yasser al-Sirri of the Islamic Observation Centre in London discredited this claim as “it contradicts the language and literature of al-Qaeda” with its poor Arabic, misquotations of the Qur’an and its use of terminology. [24] Yet these very elements of the posting, which are usually written in the erudite Salafi-Jihadi language of al-Qaeda, indicate that even at the planning stage, and although there are connections with Pakistan, this was an all-British affair. On top of this, the claim stated that Britain is on fire in its “northern, southern, eastern and western quarters” reflecting the bombers intended direction on the London Underground, before Hasib Hussein discovered the Northern Line was temporarily suspended and took a bus. [25]

The reaction to the blasts among the UK’s Islamist community has reflected the fact that the attacks will severely affect their future status in this country. Hizb ut-Tahrir condemned the bombings, as did Yasser al-Sirri, who stated that the goal was “illegitimate” and that “God says if anyone wants to do something [against a country] he must leave that country and fight them outside. He can go to Iraq and fight the American forces there, or British forces, but he shouldn’t kill [British civilians].” [26] Other prominent London-based figures refrained from comment, though the website of Muhammad al-Masari’s Islamic Renewal Organization later posted one of the claims of responsibility and was promptly disrupted.

The only tacit endorsements came from Anjem Choudary, former UK secretary of the now defunct al-Muhajiroun – whose spiritual leader recently claimed that the “covenant of security” between Islamists and the British state had expired – when he refused to condemn the attacks, and from Hani al-Siba’i, Director of the Al-Maqrizi Centre for Historical Studies. Hani al-Siba’i stated on al-Jazeera television that if

al-Qaeda was responsible for the attacks, which he did not believe was the case, than “it would be a great victory for [al-Qaeda] and it would have rubbed the noses of the heads of eight countries [G-8] in the dirt.” [27]

The UK’s counter-terrorism policy is now under heightened scrutiny with demands for robust action. In response to the attacks, the government has announced an extra £10 million for the police, who will increase the number of Special Branch officers. MI5, the domestic intelligence service, had already been steadily increasing its numbers back to Cold War levels before the attacks and may receive an additional monetary injection, particularly following some well-calibrated comments to the press. It recently established a Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre to smooth cooperation between the different intelligence services after the debacle over intelligence related to the Iraq WMD claim. It is has also launched an Urdu language version of its website and, in recognition of the threat, is in the process of establishing eight regional offices, including one in Leeds, which it hopes will attract young Asian recruits. [28]

Current UK anti-terrorist legislation is already rigorous and controversially allows the detention of terrorism suspects without trial. High court judges regularly review such cases and suspects can now be released and made subject to “control orders” that limit their movements and contacts. In the wake of the London attacks, a global list of terrorism suspects has been proposed and new counter-terrorism laws aimed at further squeezing the Islamist community in London and its communications network are being drawn up for fast-tracking in the upcoming parliamentary session.

Intelligence officials admit that they are at the same “level of penetration” amongst the Muslim community now as they were with the Irish republican community in the early 1970s, when the Provisional IRA acted with impunity. It took twenty years to effectively infiltrate the IRA, but that was a structured organization supported by a tiny community with distinct and realistic political goals. Now the potential pool of recruits is massive and the enemy is young British Muslim “clean skins” who are engaged in what appears to be a global struggle.

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Notes:

1. Leeds City Council Website, 23 July 2005

2. Ibid.

3. Interview reproduced from *The Times Educational Supplement*, 14 July 2005

4. Ibid, 14 July 2005

5. Leeds City Council website, 23 July 2005

6. *Yorkshire Post*, 16 July 2005

7. Leeds City Council website, 23 July 2005

8. *Yorkshire Post*, 16 July 2005

9. Leeds City Council website, 23 July 2005

10. BBC News report, Faisalabad, 24 July 2005; *Yorkshire Post*, 20 July 2005

11. BBC News report, Faisalabad, 24 July 2005; *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 21 July 2005

12. *Yorkshire Post*, 16 July 2005

13. Leeds City Council website, 23 July 2005

14. *Yorkshire Post*, 16 July 2005; *Observer*, 17 July 2005

15. *Huddersfield Examiner*, 16, 18 July 2005

16. *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 18 July 2005

17. *Yorkshire Post*, 16 July 2005

18. *Yorkshire Post*, 21 July 2005

19. *Dewsbury Today*, 22 July 2005

20. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 22 July 2005

21. *Yorkshire Post*, 15, 16 July 2005

22. *Al-Misri al-Yawm*, 16 July 2005

23. *Yorkshire Post*, 19 July 2005

24. Lebanese satellite television, 7 July 2005

25. None of the bombers could speak fluent Arabic

26. AP, 11 July 2005

27. Al-Jazeera Television, 8 July 2005; British Channel 4 News, 20 July 2005

28. www.mi5.go.uk

* * *

The Jihadist Movement after London: Diverse Backgrounds, Common Ideology

By Cerwyn Moore and Murad Batal al-Shishani

Few events have provoked such contradictory assessments as this month’s bomb attacks in London. Until recently, the majority of research on terrorism since 9/11 has focused on militants who may have had experience fighting in Afghanistan, thus linking them directly to al-Qaeda. But, the attacks in London suggest that a new generation of Salafi-Jihadists is emerging which do not belong to any recognizable networks and are not necessarily rooted in specific countries. There are two contentions here: first,

unlike the earlier generation of Salafi-Jihadists, many of the new generation of terrorists may not have the extensive experience of fighting in Algeria, Chechnya, Afghanistan or Bosnia; second, the attacks on London present further evidence that it is the Salafi-Jihadist movement, rather than organizations such as al-Qaeda, which draws upon a slightly different network of support, that constitutes the current threat in Europe. Although many of these points have recently been made in the *Security, Terrorism and the UK Report* (July 2005) published through Chatham House, it is further argued here that the newly-emergent terrorist networks are neither organized nor inspired by al-Qaeda. [1]

A series of events, marked at the outset by the bomb attacks in Casablanca, followed by the Madrid train attack and the detentions in Spain thereafter, the murder of Theo van Gogh and finally the attacks in London, highlight how a functional or even organizational reading of the current terror threat is misleading.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the series of attacks in Europe and North Africa were largely overshadowed by the reporting of the war in Iraq. Thus, this instantaneous and wide-ranging coverage of the attacks in London has added to the analytical confusion. Indeed, most analysis on the UK attacks seems to be distorted by the assumption that those involved in the incidents are part of homogenous groups and linked to particular causes in specific countries.

Implications: Morocco and Madrid

In a series of arrests in Europe earlier this year, authorities are reported to have detained a number of militant operatives. In April, Spanish authorities detained twelve suspected terrorists including six Moroccans, three of Syrian origin, an Egyptian, an Algerian and a Palestinian. More recently in June, and again in Spain, at least a further sixteen suspected extremists were detained. Significantly, almost all of the detained suspects were described as extremists rather than al-Qaeda operatives. Many of those detained appear to be loosely linked to the Zarqawi network, which automatically differentiates them from a generation of recognized al-Qaeda leaders such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

Analyzing the events in London in this context indicates a number of issues and two of these are highlighted here; on the one hand, those in control of operations in Iraq and Europe, and those who have orchestrated the wave of attacks since the Casablanca bombings appear to be linked to the Salafi-Jihadist movement, and on the other hand, these incremental events and the jihadists associated with them are drawing

extensively upon links with North African militants. In the case of the first attacks in London on July 7, even though the attackers appear to be British-born Muslims (three of whom are of Pakistani origin), some reports suggest that there are links between handlers, clerics and bomb-makers associated with North African militants.

British newspapers reported that British “police had asked European counterparts for information on Moroccan Mohammed al-Garbuzi, who lived in Britain for 16 years before vanishing from his north London home last year”. [2] Initial reports also pointed to links with known terrorists. As one newspaper report noted: “[F]ollowing detailed examination of the timings of the explosions and early forensic analysis of the four blast scenes... links between the terrorists and the Continent are being actively pursued.” [3] Similarly, a newspaper report published soon after the attacks on July 7 highlighted that “there are at least two distinct groups of people involved in planning the attacks in the UK: British-born young men...who may have volunteered for training in Afghanistan and who are prepared to risk jail or death to carry out an attack; and foreign citizens, including a number from north Africa, who see Britain as the next most important target after the US and use false identities to avoid detection, blending in with existing immigrant communities.” [4]

This linkage with North Africa is brought into sharp focus by looking at the foreign volunteers involved in the Iraqi insurgency. On the June 20, the London based Arabic newspaper *al-Hayat* published a report, drawing on points made by U.S. forces in Iraq, which noted that one in every four suicide bombers in Iraq are either Moroccan or from the North Africa region. [5] Although it is clear that a large number of Arab volunteers – perhaps as much as 80% according to some sources – involved in the Iraqi conflict are from neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait and Jordan, a considerable percentage do appear to be moving into Iraq from North Africa.

Saudi Arabia, Iraq and London

In the last year there has been an upsurge of violence in Iraq. While it is clear that the influx of Arab volunteers into Iraq is in some ways part of a different phenomenon, it is still worthwhile looking at the recently published Saudi most wanted list of suspected terrorists (announced on June 29) which illustrates that those involved in the Jihadi movement do appear to be from a younger generation. [6] In fact, the average age of the new list is 26.8, while the previous list’s average was 28.4. Most of those named in earlier reports had the experience of fighting or were involved in the Afghan-

Taliban wars, while many of those mentioned on the new list do not have this experience. This hints that, following the increase in clashes between Saudi forces and jihadis over the past two years, a new generation of militants is emerging. This new generation of militants, which is being produced in every place where there is conflict between the state (or in the case of Iraq, an occupying army propping up a new regime) and radicalized Muslims, illustrates how the global terrorist landscape is being transformed.

Of course, many groups have claimed responsibility for attacks in the past, insofar as such atrocities promote their own organizational aims and agendas. However outside of the Iraqi theatre, the traditional response to spectacular terrorist attacks is one of a quick, unequivocal and credible statement, from a recognized source, timed to maximize the impact of the attack. But, in the case of the London attacks this did not occur. This is yet another indication of the emergence of a “new wave” or new generation of committed militants, inspired by Salafi-Jihadism, and not linked to any recognized networks. In this sense, it appears that many of the new generation of jihadis are not known militants from recognized extremist movements, but individuals with multiple allegiances.

Conclusion

The Casablanca attacks in 2003 signified the emergence of a new generation of Salafi-Jihadi cells which draw on different networks from those associated directly with al-Qaeda. The proposed legislation and policy changes following the attacks in London seeks to limit the activities or prosecute those supporting or advocating terrorist groups and ideologies. However as recent reports (such as the Chatham House paper) illustrate, one characteristic of the current terror threat stems from “no-warning coordinated suicide attacks.” It is increasingly clear that many of those involved in the new terror networks do not recognize either the legal or the political frameworks associated with known terrorist organizations. Therefore, what is being proposed by some UK government officials and influential media circles runs the very real risk of being – at best – irrelevant to the real issues.

The UK authorities would be better served by paying closer attention to three factors which are compounding the existing threat: first, the use of different tactics – such as the failure to immediately claim responsibility and the use of home-grown bombers; second, the importance of networks aiding trans-boundary movement and implicitly aiding recruitment by appeals to non-territorial forms of identity; third, the connections with North African militants, suggesting that the

terror threat in Europe is morphing, creating a new Salafi-Jihadist generation which is no longer in the al-Qaeda orbit.

Dr. Cerwyn Moore is a Lecturer in International Relations at Nottingham Trent University. Murad B. Al-Shishani is a Jordanian-Chechen writer.

Notes:

1. Frank Gregory and Paul Wilkinson, ‘Riding Pillion for Tackling Terrorism is a High-risk Policy’, Security, Terrorism and the UK, available at: <http://www.riia.org/pdf/research/niis/BPsecurity.pdf>
2. David Williams “London bombing was precise attack”, at http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=244992&area=/london_terror/london_news/
3. Antony Barnett, David Rose, Jason Burke and Jo Revill, “Police target Europe terror cell as London toll tops 70”, The Observer, July 10, 2005.
4. Richard Norton-Taylor and Duncan Campbell “Intelligence officials were braced for an offensive - but lowered threat levels”, The Guardian, July 8, 2005.
5. Rasheed Khashanah, *Estshhadeon Magharbeon*, al-Hayat Newspaper, June 20, 2005
6. Murad Batal Al-Shishani, The Future of Salfi-Jihadists in Saudi Arabia, al-Ghad Jordanian daily, July 7, 2005, <http://www.alghad.jo/?news=32017>.

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Securing the Northern Front: Canada and the War on Terror, Part II

By Hayder Mili

This is the second in a two part series on Canada and the war on terror.

The information provided by Ahmed Ressam since his arrest in December 1999, sentenced yesterday to 22 years in federal prison for plotting to bomb the baggage area of the Los Angeles International Airport, ultimately led to the exposure of the Montreal network and, more importantly, proved just how active Jihadists have been in Canada. As the Canadian Security and Intelligence Services (CSIS) have warned since the early 1990s and the public has now become well aware of, Canada was being used as a financial and logistical base for international terrorists seeking to attack the United States. Moreover, far from being limited to Montreal, other Jihadi

networks have been active in the country; from Ontario and Alberta, to the westernmost province of British Columbia where, in 1999, Ressay had attempted to cross over into the U.S.

Following 9/11, United States security officials looked across the border, towards Montreal, Québec where Ressay alleged that over 60 trained Jihadists remained. Of particular concern were two Tunisian-born Canadians, Abderraouf Jdey [1] and Faker Boussora [2]. The two had settled in Montreal in the early 1990s, and like a number of local militants, had also attended the Assuna mosque. There, they most likely met with Ahmed Ressay's recruiter and fellow Tunisian, Raouf Hannachi, before being sent to train in Afghanistan. Jdey was subsequently chosen by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to pilot an airliner in a second wave of suicide attacks supposed to take place following 9/11. [3]

The Al-Kanadi Family

Apart from the Montreal group, there was another major network in Canada headed by an Egyptian-born Canadian man with strong ties to Egyptian Jihadi groups. Killed in a shootout with Pakistani security forces in Waziristan in October 2003, Ahmed Said Khadr funded the deadly November 19, 1995 Egyptian embassy bombing in Islamabad. Khadr, also known as Al-Kanadi (the Canadian), was a high ranking Canadian member of al-Qaeda who had fought the Soviets alongside Osama Bin Laden and personally knew most of al-Qaeda's command structure, including Ayman Al-Zawahiri and Abu Zubayda.

An integral part of bin Ladin's inner circle, Khadr ran his own training camp in Afghanistan, while his family lived in the al-Qaeda leader's compound in Jalalabad. In Canada, the Khadr family was at the heart of a recruitment and forged documentation network based in Toronto for prospective Canadian jihadists. One of his sons, Abdurahman Khadr, has since returned to Canada where he has cooperated with both Canadian and U.S. authorities.

Intersecting Networks

The Al-Kanadi network can be regarded as a branch of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ – led by Ayman al-Zawahiri). In Canada, the network which had been in place since the early 1980s provided assistance and shelter to members of Egyptian Salafi groups like alleged EIJ member and director of an Islamic school in the Toronto area, Jaballah, who was arrested in August 2001. Jaballah had links to the perpetrators of the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and kept close contacts with fellow Canadians

and EIJ members Essam Hafez Marzouk and Mohamed Zeki Mahjoub. The latter had apparently been involved in Osama bin Laden's construction and agricultural projects in the Sudan in the mid-1990s.

According to the CSIS, Jaballah also knew other Canadian Salafis, including al-Takfir wa al-Hijra (Excommunication and Exile) member Kassem Daher, who is currently imprisoned in Lebanon. [4] Based out of Alberta [5], the network coordinated with a cell in Florida and had been operating cross-border recruitment and financing operations for the international jihad movement since 1993. United by ideology, the Montreal group and the Al-Kanadi network were also operationally interconnected. An Ottawa man of Algerian origin by the name of Mohammad Harkat, who was arrested in December 2002, is linked to and identified by Ahmed Ressay as a fellow member of the GIA. Harkat, who arrived in Canada in 1995, is connected to the Khadrs (whom he admits meeting) as well as with al-Qaeda lieutenant Abu Zubayda, the latter having also identified him. [6]

Exporting Terror

Canadians have been involved in major terrorist operations across the world. For instance, the aforementioned Egyptian-born Canadian Essam Marzouk, who allegedly ran a training camp in Afghanistan, is imprisoned in Egypt for plotting to attack the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan. Another Canadian, Abdurrahman Jabarah, was part of an operational cell in Saudi Arabia involved in the 2003 attack on a Western housing complex in Riyadh. While Abdurrahman Jabarah was later killed in a gun battle with Saudi security forces, his brother Mohammed Mansour Jabarah [7], a (Catholic) school graduate from Toronto, was allegedly in charge of significant al-Qaeda operations in Southeast Asia. He is accused of plotting the bombing of U.S. and Israeli Embassies in Singapore [8] and may have had foreknowledge of the Bali bombing. Native Kuwaitis, they are believed to have been personally recruited by Kuwaiti al-Qaeda spokesman, Suleyman Abu Ghaith. Another Kuwaiti and Afghan "alumni" is Vancouver resident Ahmad El-Maati. The alleged al-Qaeda operative is said to have planned the hijacking of an airliner in Canada in order to strike an undetermined target in the U.S.

The attacks in London by what appears to be a largely British-Pakistani cell hold many similarities to an earlier plot by Pakistani jihadists based both in Britain and Canada. In March 2004, a joint operation by British and Canadian law enforcement uncovered a transatlantic cell involving a computer engineer, Canadian-born Mohammed Momin Khawaja. [9] The suspect is said to have had a direct and

“pivotal” role in plotting, along with nine other suspects, large-scale terrorist attacks in London. According to reliable reports, Khawaja had extensive links to Pakistani Islamist groups and the plot itself may be connected to the Zarqawi network.

The Next Generation

The disturbing trend involving radicalized second generation Muslims can be attributed to the role of extremist and often self-proclaimed Salafi Imams who spread the jihadist doctrine while doubling as recruiters. Both Raouf Hannachi and the Mauritanian Mohamed Ould Slahi had preached jihad at Montreal’s Assuna mosque, all the while recruiting heavily for Afghanistan and Chechnya. Tunisian Nizar Ben Mohammed Nasr Nawar, the suicide bomber involved in the attack on a synagogue in Tunisia and linked to a German cell in Duisbourg [10], had probably met the Duisbourg-based Mohamed Ould Slahi in Montreal.

Recently, allegations have been made against Sheikh Younus Kathrada of Vancouver’s Dar Al-Madinah Islamic Center for his role in sending a young Sudanese-Canadian, Rudwan Khalil Abubaker to fight and die in Chechnya. Russian authorities have tagged Abubaker as an al-Qaeda linked explosives expert, a claim denied by Chechen guerrilla leader Shamil Basaev, who nonetheless confirmed the Canadian’s death. [11] Two other Canadians, Moroccan-Canadian Kamal Elbahja and Azeri-Canadian Azer Tagiev, both close friends of Rudwan Abubaker have also gone missing and are thought to have traveled with him to Azerbaijan before reaching Chechnya.

In a similar case, Hassan Farhat, the director of the Salahaddin Islamic Centre in the Toronto area is thought to be one of the leaders and ideologues of Ansar al-Islam, and the alleged mastermind of a suicide bombing cell. [12] Arrested by the Kurds in Northern Iraq, he may have recruited a number of other men in Toronto including Said Rasoul and his brother Masoud Rasoul who have both gone missing in Iraq.

Cross-Border

Taking into account al-Qaeda’s long term planning as well as the recent arrests of a number of suspected and confirmed jihadists, it is logical to assume that sleeper cells remain in the U.S. and that some have links to groups or individuals based in Canada. According to the CSIS, Mohammed Harkat was arrested after making phone calls to suspected al-Qaeda members in the United States. Another suspect, the Somali-born Canadian Mohammed Abdullah Warsame successfully crossed over into the United States before

settling in Minnesota. Under indictment in the USA for providing material support to al-Qaeda, Warsame had trained in Afghanistan in 2000-2001 and subsequently traveled to Minneapolis where he was enrolled in a community college. [13] Furthermore, since the early 1990s cross-border contacts had been established between Essam Marzouk and fellow EIJ member Abu Mohamed al-Amriki, a U.S. citizen directly linked to bin Laden and involved in the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa. [14]

Conclusion

Islamist networks comprised of Canadian-based or linked individuals are composed of three types of sub-structures: 1) a financial and logistics cell which supports operations overseas through the forging of documents, fund-raising and the sheltering or transport of militants; 2) radical Imams/ ideologues who often take over mosques and use the premises to spread the jihadist ideology and to recruit future terrorists; 3) operatives, ready and willing to undertake attacks, including suicide missions. Finally, all three structures may easily overlap and all are united by the same ideology. This “triple-threat” has been understood and is being actively countered by both American and Canadian security services, which are cooperating on an unprecedented scale with their European counterparts to battle an adaptable and determined enemy which shows no signs of retreating.

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Notes:

1. Exposé du directeur service canadien du renseignement de sécurité pour le sous-comité de la sécurité publique et nationale, 22 février 2005, www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/fra/miscdocs/director20050222_f.html.
2. Eric Leser “Deux ans de traque n’ont pu réduire la menace terroriste d’Al-Qaida”, *Le monde*, 9/10/2003.
3. In a bizarre twist, a report from a Canadian source claims that a captured al-Qaeda operative, Canadian Mohammed Mansour Jabarah told Canadian intelligence investigators that Abderraouf Jdey was responsible for the November 13, 2001 crash of American Airlines flight 587 over Queens, New York, using a shoe bomb similar to the one used by Richard Reid.
4. National Post, Feb. 9, 2002.
5. Randy Boswell, “Former Alberta Man Charged in Plot to Wage Worldwide Jihad”, *Edmonton Journal*, March 30, 2005.
6. The CSIS case against Mohamed Harkat, *CBCnews*, Dec 18, 2002.

7. Jim Gomez, Philippines intensifying security over report of new al-Qaida threat, Associated Press, September 9, 2002.
8. Stewart Bell and Michael Friscolanti, Dozens of Canadians join Jihad terror camps: Immigrants recruited, RCMP says, *The National Post*, October 25, 2003.
9. Robert Fife, with files from Richard Starnes, Spy agency says it can tie Ottawa man to British plotters, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Friday, April 02, 2004.
10. Yann OLLIVIER, Djerba: l'enquête sur la piste d'une nouvelle cellule Al Qaïda en Allemagne, AFP, 20 April, 2002.
11. <http://chechenpress.com/news/2004/10/31/03.shtml>
12. Michelle Shephard, Mosque founder tied to terror group, *Toronto Star*, September 9, 2005.
13. Minnesota man hit with new aiding Al-Qaeda charge, Somalilandnet, June 22, 2005, <http://www.somalilandnet.com/news/pressreleases/news.shtml>
14. Estanislao Oziewicz And Tu Thanh Ha, Canada Freed Top Al-Qaeda Operative: Mounties Released Him After Call To FBI, *The Globe and Mail*, November 22, 2001.

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North and West Africa: The Global War on Terror and Regional Collaboration

By Peter Chalk

Terrorism is not new to North and West Africa. The region as a whole has been affected by a range of ethno-nationalist and religious conflicts, a number of which have been accompanied by highly destructive campaigns of terrorism. The civilian carnage wrought by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria is one of the more graphic examples, although more limited campaigns have also been associated with the Christian/Muslim communal conflict in Nigeria, Tuareg insurgent violence in Mali, the Cassamance struggle in Senegal and, to a certain extent, the POLISARIO secessionist struggle in the Western Sahara. While much of the terrorist violence in the region revolves around specific catalytic events (such as the annulment of the Islamic Salvation Front's electoral victory in Algeria in 1992 and the institution of Shari'ah law in Nigeria's northern states in 2000), institutional weakness, autocratic governance and economic marginality have all provided an environmental context that is highly conducive to political violence and extremism.

These various manifestations of terrorist violence have had a notable impact on stability throughout the region. At the national level, it has played a prominent role in polarizing sub-national ethnic and religious identity, leading to highly divisive societies that have been unable to forge institutional structures for peaceful communal coexistence. Nigeria provides a graphic case in point, suffering over the last decade from an increasingly serious Christian-Muslim gulf borne of what is rapidly becoming an entrenched culture of extremist sectarian mobilization and violence. Equally as indicative is Algeria, where viscous campaigns waged by the GIA, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and associated splinter groups over the last two decades have torn and, arguably destroyed, much of the underlying social fabric holding the country together. Economically, terrorism has discouraged foreign investment and tourism as well as necessitated the re-allocation of scarce resources away from productive uses.

Just as critically, the rhetoric of counter-terrorism has frequently been co-opted by regimes to legitimate draconian internal security measures and institute all-embracing anti-opposition crackdowns, which have had a highly damaging impact on human rights and notions of responsible and responsive civil governance. The combined effect has been the emergence of states lacking most, if not all of the prerequisites for viable socio-political development.

Regionally, terrorism and terrorist-infused armed campaigns have also had a marked impact, complicating bilateral interstate relations and often negatively interacting with other transnational threats to stability. The POLISARIO struggle in the Western Sahara, which has involved documented, albeit sporadic attacks against civilian Sahrawis, has been a major factor in heightening tension between Morocco and Mauritania as well as undermining the prospects for the development of a wider economic community in the Maghreb. External terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda are strongly suspected of having forged mutually beneficial links with West African crime networks, particularly in Nigeria, paying syndicates to facilitate everything from document forgery to people, weapons, diamonds and drugs trafficking. Finally, the integrity of borders between neighboring countries has periodically been called into question as a result of population displacements and illicit commodity movements connected to, if not directly caused by extremist activity and/or repressive internal security drives.

Although for the most part terrorism in North and West Africa has manifested itself as a local phenomenon, there have been exceptions. The Algerian GIA, for instance, has carried out numerous attacks in France, benefiting from the

overseas assistance of various diaspora communities scattered throughout southern Europe. More seriously and with particular salience to post-9/11 threat contingencies, the region has been directly connected to the global anti-western jihadist ambitions of Bin Laden. Al-Qaeda is known to have made logistical inroads into West Africa, seeking to radicalize regional Islamist sentiment, benefit from the pervasive influence of organized criminality that infuses states such as Nigeria and exploit the weak, porous borders and institutional structures that are characteristic of states throughout the Sahel and Maghreb. [1]

Moreover, there is increased evidence of North African Muslim involvement in the insurgency in Iraq where security officials fear they are gaining critical training and combat experience that could be used to inflame local jihadist sentiment in much the same way that occurred following the anti-Soviet mujahideen campaign in the 1980s.

It is this extra-regional dimension that is currently informing the threat perceptions of Western governments and intelligence analysts. In the United States there is a growing appreciation that terrorism in North and West Africa could pose a serious long-term threat to American national security interests. Economically, the region remains important, both with regards to oil – roughly 17 percent of Washington's non-gulf petroleum imports come from the Central/West African basin – as well as in terms of overall trade and investment on the continent. Outbursts of extremist political violence obviously hold direct implications for ensuring the protection of these strategic energy supplies and otherwise providing a safe and stable environment in which to conduct macro-economic business. Just as importantly, the Bush Administration has become concerned that the combination of autocratic governance, economic degradation, political corruption and disregard for human rights will radicalize Islamic sentiment in West Africa and possibly avail the emergence of a new al-Qaeda front that could be used as a base from which to plan and execute future attacks on American global interests. The steady depletion of its regional diplomatic and intelligence capacities over the last several years has further heightened misgivings in the U.S., not least because it has translated into a weakened grasp of quickly evolving trends on the ground and created acute vulnerabilities that could be brutally exploited in the same manner as the 1998 bombings of Washington's embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

Apart from the United States, both France and the United Kingdom have exhibited a keen interest in dampening the potential for terrorism in North and West Africa. London and Paris retain substantial economic and political ties to

many states in the region, which they do not want to see jeopardized as a result of extremist ethno-nationalist or religious violence. Moreover, by virtue of their past colonial relationship, the two countries continue to share an unwritten obligation for maintaining stability in this part of Africa by actively working to dampen cross-border and transnational influences such as terrorism. On a more practical level, the proximity of conflict-ridden states such as Algeria has galvanized concerns about imported extremism into Europe. France has already been severely affected by GIA hijackings of its commercial airliners – including a thwarted 1994 plot to fly an Air France jet into the Eiffel Tower – and during the summer of 1995 was hit by a wave of devastating subway bombings in Paris. Since 9/11, there have also been growing fears that al-Qaeda has effectively exploited the so-called Maghreb-southern Mediterranean backdoor to implant operational and sleeper cells in major metropolitan cities stretching from Rome to London. [2]

International concerns have been further galvanized by the endemic culture of transnational organized crime (TOC) that exists throughout West Africa, much of which is carried out by loosely organized networks based in Nigeria. These entities are known to have engaged in a variety of illicit pursuits including, notably: gem, people, drugs and weapons trafficking; document forgery; and advanced fee fraud (which essentially involves the creation of bogus business proposals that promise the recipients substantial financial rewards for participating). Algerian Islamists linked to the al-Qaeda network are widely suspected of using false passports and fake credit cards supplied by Nigerian syndicates to gain entry into France, Italy and Britain, while Bin Laden, himself, is alleged to have exploited the underground West African diamond trade to hide terrorist assets to the tune of at least \$240 million.

As in many parts of the world, regional counter-terrorist structures and policies remain nascent or have yet to be developed. The reasons for this are complex, although most relate to one or more of the following eight considerations:

- The inherent tension between state sovereignty and the common will upon which regional cooperation is founded – namely that effective collaborative action necessarily requires individual member countries to cede some of their national independence to the wider group collective.
- The highly personalized nature of governance and politics in Africa, which has not only hindered the development of institutionalized forms of cooperation but also made these efforts contingent on the nature of the individual relationships that exist

- between what are often overly powerful presidents.
- The proliferation of regional groupings with overlapping memberships and/or mandates, which has resulted in duplication of effort, wastage of resources and conflicting spheres of jurisdiction. Moreover in several instances it has led to highly problematic institutional confusion, much of which has arisen from the pursuit of contradictory policies that have been instituted by countries belonging to more than one organization.
- A general lack of stakeholder involvement – particularly in relation to those constituencies most affected by regional security cooperation and related decision-making processes.
- Differing perceptions of the terrorist phenomena and the specific threat that it is seen to pose.
- A general absence of integrated national counter-terrorist structures through which to channel and direct wider regional responses.
- Insufficient national resources – both technical and human – to invest in counter-terrorism strategies commensurate with the rhetorical missions and designs adopted at the international level.
- The frequent use of proxy sub-state actors to undermine and destabilize bordering states.

The challenge for Africa in terms of counter-terrorism and security cooperation is first to undertake an honest assessment of the current threat environment confronting the continent; second to utilize the lessons regional governments have garnered from previous efforts at multilateralism; and third, to determine realistic policies for addressing cross-boundary challenges and influences. The stakes are high, as evidenced by a recent statement by Major General Richard P. Zahner, Chief intelligence officer for the United States' Eastern Command: “[It is clear that] al-Qaeda is assessing local [North and West] African groups for franchising opportunities. I am quite concerned about that.” [3]

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Notes:

1. See, for instance, Timothy Docking, “Terrorism’s Africa Link,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 14, 2001 Congress, 2002); and John Mackinlay, “Osama Bin Laden: Global Insurgent,” *African Security Review* 10/4 (2001).
2. Interview, New Scotland Yard, London, June 2003.
3. Major General Zahner, cited in Schmitt, “As Africans Join Iraqi Insurgency, US Counters with Military Training in Their lands,” *The New York Times*, June 10, 2005.