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# A systematic analysis of Islamist terrorism in the USA and UK: 2001-2008

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***‘A Systematic Analysis of Islamist Terrorism in the USA and  
UK: 2001-2008’***

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

The University of Wollongong

by

Samuel John Mullins (MA., MSc)

Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention, Faculty of Law

2010



### **Certification**

I, Samuel John Mullins, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, at the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged below. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Samuel J. Mullins

August 25, 2010

(Re-submitted following minor corrections, November 11, 2010)



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### **List of Terms and Abbreviations**

Fatwa	Religious edict.
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Mecca.
HGIT	Home-grown Islamist terrorism (see chapter 2).
Islamist/Islamism	This is used here to refer to Sunni Muslims following a politicised version of Islam which underpins Islamist terrorism. Although there are a wide variety of beliefs held and not all Islamists are violent, they share the fundamental desire to incorporate Islam as the basis for political and legal systems.
Jihad	Although this has a wider meaning, referring to striving to fulfil God's will, it is used here as Islamist terrorists understand it- to refer to violent jihad; violence in the name of Islam.
Jihadi/jihadist	One who subscribes to militant Islamism and accepts that jihad involves violence. This term is used interchangeably with 'militant', 'mujahid' and 'terrorist'.
Jihadisation	A distinct and by no means inevitable extension of radicalisation that involves accepting violent jihad as one's personal responsibility.
Militant	Here this refers to Islamist jihadis, mujahedin or terrorists.
Mujahid (pl. Mujahedin)	One who takes up violent jihad in the name of Islam. A self perceived soldier of Islam. Also see jihadi/ militant/ terrorist.



Radicalisation	The process of developing increasingly extreme and intolerant beliefs. In the context of Islamist terrorism this involves coming to accept that a) Islam is under attack from Western and Western influenced powers b) The world is divided into Muslims and non-Muslims (‘us’ and ‘them’) and c) Jihad is necessary violence against these oppressors of Islam.
Terrorism	The use/attempted use, and/or subsidiary involvement in, politically/religiously justified violence, often against non-combatants by sub-state individuals/groups/organisations (see chapter 2).
Terrorist	The meaning of this term is discussed in more detail in chapter 2. It is used throughout to refer to individuals included in the sample and to those involved in perpetrating or supporting violence in the name of Islam (although of course not all terrorists are Islamists). Also see jihadi/ militant/ mujahid.
Ummah	A perceived global Muslim community.



## **Abstract**

Since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 Islamist terrorists increasingly spread to Western countries and although they were initially focussed on overseas Muslim regimes and conflict zones, they gradually turned their sights onto the West as legitimate targets for attack. After the attacks in the US on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 a global ‘war on terror’ was launched, which destroyed much of the organisational infrastructure in Afghanistan and resulted in further transformation of the movement into an amorphous network. Islamist militants in the West have increasingly been described as ‘home-grown’, since they are now often long-term residents and citizens of these countries and numerous plots to carry out attacks on the domestic stage have been uncovered each year. Large-scale successful attacks were perpetrated in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005.

Despite massive increases in national security budgets and a general fascination with Islamist terrorism there has been little in the way of systematic empirical research. This study addresses that gap by examining Islamist terrorism involving people living in, or from, two key countries in the war on terror- the United States and United Kingdom.

There has been much speculation about the different experiences of Islamist terrorism in these two countries and it is has generally been accepted that the problem in the US is far less severe, but without comprehensive study such observations remain vague. In seeking to clarify this issue the following overarching research question was posed: *‘What have people living in, or from, the United States and the United Kingdom been doing to support or advance violent jihad –either at home or abroad- from 2001 to 2008, and what differences are apparent between these two countries?’* The aim was thus to offer a sound historical account of how Islamist terrorism has developed in each country and to create an empirical record of as many Islamist terrorism cases as could be found, relying on open source materials, for the US and UK from 2001-2008.

Firstly, a review of the relevant literature was conducted in order to identify variables of interest (chapter 2) and to establish a solid understanding of how Islamist terrorism has developed over time and how and why individuals become involved (chapters 3, 4 and 5). Next, a more focussed review of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK was conducted in order to determine specific patterns of development (chapters 6 and 7) which may help explain contemporary differences. In particular, it is highly



relevant that the UK played a more significant role in foreign terrorist operations during the 1990s. A preliminary comparison of the two countries based on existing accounts was then conducted, with the aim of clarifying the posited disparities and identifying flaws in these accounts (chapter 8). It was established that without in-depth and exhaustive examination of Islamist terrorism cases the true nature and extent of differences cannot be reliably determined.

Hence -relying primarily on press reports and freely available legal documents- it was attempted to identify as many Islamist terrorism cases in the US and UK as possible, according to sampling criteria outlined in chapter 2. The US sample consists of 46 cases involving 91 individuals while the UK sample includes 51 cases (112 individuals). Chronological accounts of each case were constructed (see Appendices A and B part 2) and each individual’s data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet according to the predetermined variables of interest. Results for the US and UK are presented separately in chapters 9 and 10. Then, in accordance with George and Bennett’s method of structured, focussed, comparison, the two countries were systematically compared in order to identify similarities and differences (chapter 11).

The findings confirm that the rate of Islamist terrorism cases in the UK is 1.5 times that in the US relative to Muslim population sizes (or 6.1 times relative to overall population size). Cases in the US have been more geographically dispersed while in the UK they are mainly confined within 3 hotspots of activity. Demographic profiles of the two samples are more similar than different (mostly consisting of males aged 30 or under, most of whom have citizenship or permanent residency rights). However a key difference is that the UK sample is more heavily dominated by individuals of Pakistani heritage, which has played an important role in the continued ability of British militants to make contact with terrorists in Pakistan. Although relying on relatively sparse data, it is tentatively suggested that there is also an overall difference in levels of ideological commitment- with more individuals in the US being classed as socially motivated or ‘wannabe’ terrorists. These findings are in accordance with the ‘social transmission hypothesis’ (discussed in chapters 8-11), which postulates that the presence of greater numbers of –or highly influential- terrorists in a given location increases the likelihood of terrorism in or near that location over time.

Differences in behavioural patterns were also found: 63% of the US sample was found to be preparing for, or actively pursuing, violence compared to 43% in the UK



and while 24% in the US were classed as ‘offering their services’ by reaching out to organised militants, 25% in the UK were involved in promoting or encouraging jihad. These findings appear to relate both to posited ideological differences and to disparate approaches by law enforcement in that promoting jihad generally involved some level of ideological commitment while fewer individuals classed as preparing for or pursuing violence in the UK is reflective of a preference for early intervention and prosecution for lesser offences (supported by the fact that the average prison term in the UK overall is less than half that of the US).

The final major difference was that individuals living in or from the US maintained a much stronger focus on jihad overseas rather than at home and more often travelled abroad in relation to these aims. Hence 54% of the US sample was focussed on jihad abroad and there was a corresponding percentage that involved international operations. By contrast only 25% of the UK sample maintained a purely overseas focus and 67% were operationally based in Britain.

Despite these differences, there was also general similarity on many of the other variables including offence date ranges, processes of radicalisation, group characteristics, the role of the Internet and stated motivations (as well as a shared underlying fascination with violence and sense of social bravado).

Both samples were also assessed according to pre- vs. post-Iraq generations and there was also more similarity than difference in terms of changes over time. Findings lend support to observations made by Sageman, which indicate that the average age of jihadis has decreased and that educational attainment and occupational standing have declined (although differences were generally fairly small). Results here also support general observations about the nature of home-grown Islamist terrorism in that contact with foreign terrorists has become relatively less common in both countries over time.

It is acknowledged that this report relies on open source material that is of questionable reliability and validity and is often lacking information. However, it is nevertheless one of the few relatively large empirical studies of terrorism and thus represents an important ‘database’ of information and a significant contribution to the field. In closing, it is emphasised that this is a snapshot of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK over a particular period in time and as new events unfold the picture will change.



### **Acknowledgements**

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We need the jihad- the jihad does not need us.  
-Dhiren Barot.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction Part 1: Working Definitions**

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## **Overview**

Islamist militants are more commonly referred to as ‘terrorists’, but anyone who studies terrorism is well aware of the issues surrounding this label. Here, the complexity of defining ‘terrorism’ is briefly delineated, while stipulating that the term is defined by the current sample being studied.

Islamist terrorism is defined as that which adheres to a militant Sunni-Islamist world-view (dividing the world into believers and infidels, believing that Islam is under attack from the West, and seeing *jihad* as necessary violence against the perceived oppressors of Islam). Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, individuals driven by this ideology have become a primary threat to national security in the West. Moreover, a major concern has been the rise of ‘home-grown’ Islamist terrorism (HGIT) involving long-term residents and citizens of Western democracies.

The present study involves an inclusive, systematic examination of individuals prosecuted for Islamist terror-offences in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) from 2001 to 2008. In so doing it seeks to clarify the nature of the threat in each country and thereby strengthen the knowledge-base that forms of the core of counter-terrorism.



## **1. Working Definitions**

### **1.1 Terrorism**

‘Terrorism’ is a notoriously difficult term to define. A multitude of academics and governmental bodies continue to struggle to come up with a definition that will universally satisfy objective analytical and legal requirements.<sup>1</sup> Although definitions touch on recurring themes they vary immensely in the amount of detail incorporated as they strive to avoid being overly or under-inclusive. An example of a brief definition is as follows:

“Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role.”<sup>2</sup>

This can be compared to Schmid and Jongman’s definition:

“Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby -in contrast to assassination- the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat -and violence- based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main target (audiences(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.”<sup>3</sup>

In between these extremes there is an almost limitless number of variations and it is prudent to take a pragmatic approach to this issue. The following, relatively straightforward description is representative of core definitional elements that are addressed in the literature:<sup>4</sup>



*The threat or use of violence by sub-state groups or organisations of varying size with political and/or religious ideologies, intended to seriously harm or endanger non-combatant members of society and/or influence government policies and a wider audience through the use of intimidation.*

British and American formal definitions are detailed below for comparison in figures 1 and 2. Note that although the US continues to make the distinction between international and domestic terrorism, the acts involved are the same. Likewise, other than minor differences in specific terminology, the two definitions are highly congruent.

**Figure 1.1.** Definition of terrorism according to the UK Terrorism Act (2000),<sup>5</sup> maintained in the Prevention of Terrorism Act (2005).<sup>6</sup>

- 1.—**(1) In this Act “terrorism” means the use or threat of action where—

  - (a) the action falls within subsection (2),
  - (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and
  - (c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

(2) Action falls within this subsection if it—

  - (a) involves serious violence against a person,
  - (b) involves serious damage to property,
  - (c) endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action,
  - (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
  - (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

(3) The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of firearms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection (1)(b) is satisfied.



**Figure 1.2.** Definition of terrorism according to the United States Code (as of 19/1/04).<sup>7</sup>

(1) the term "international terrorism" means activities that -  
(A) involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State;  
(B) appear to be intended -  
(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;  
(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or  
(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and  
  
(C) occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum;...  
...  
(5) the term "domestic terrorism" means activities that -  
(A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;  
(B) appear to be intended -  
(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;  
(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or  
(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and  
  
(C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

Part of the reason why such definitions cannot be reliably applied is because the term ‘terrorism/terrorist’ is laden with negative connotations and is generally inseparable from the political values of the user. Hence, the list of terrorist organisations maintained by the EU and UN has been described as “totally arbitrary” by the Council of Europe,<sup>8</sup> and it is rare for perpetrators of acts of terror to refer to themselves as terrorists.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, ‘terrorism’ involves much more than simply the perpetration of acts of violence. The daily activities of ‘terrorists’ do not routinely involve planting bombs in public places or hijacking airplanes, and these types of operation are only made possible by way of dedicated fund-raising and logistical support activities, involving various forms of licit and illicit behaviour. Terrorist organisations and



networks are also routinely involved in manufacturing and distributing propaganda in order to attract supporters and new recruits.

It is therefore often very difficult to objectively classify *what* constitutes terrorism and *who* is a terrorist, or to be able to reliably draw the line between terrorists, their supporters, and sympathisers. Legally speaking, such difficulties are often compounded by the fact that there is a heavy burden of proof in determining the *intent* behind peoples' actions, especially in cases where law enforcement efforts have prevented any planned violent action from taking place. This is reflected in the fact that many cases which begin as prosecutions for terrorist offences frequently result in charges or convictions under 'ordinary' criminal law instead.<sup>10</sup>

However, instead of endlessly pontificating on definitional issues, which would be "an inefficient use of time and energy,"<sup>11</sup> it is more productive to simply be aware of the fact that such issues exist, and to clearly define the current sample. By describing exactly who and what will be the subject of research, the applicability of the label of 'terrorism' may be assessed by the reader without affecting the integrity of the work. More importantly, issues of generalisability and comparability can also be accurately assessed, determining the degree to which the present sample is relevant to other samples and populations. Hence it is necessary to utilise a certain degree of 'common sense' and to assess each case individually to see whether it is germane to the questions at hand. Validity then, is the product of the methodology that is employed and the generalisations that are made.



## **1.2 Islamist Terrorism**

The ‘Islamist’ terrorism concerning this report is that which is justified through reference to fundamentalist Sunni, Salafi/Wahhabi<sup>12</sup>, Islamic doctrines,<sup>13</sup> as popularised most notably by al-Qaeda<sup>14</sup> and also commonly referred to as *jihadi* terrorism.<sup>15</sup> Salafists (also known to ‘outsiders’ as ‘Wahhabists’<sup>16</sup>) believe in *tawhid* or the oneness of God, and view all developments and innovations in Islam since the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (*salaf*) as heretical.<sup>17</sup> All human behaviour must be guided by following a strict interpretation of the Quran and Sunna (the traditions of the Prophet) and there is no tolerance for worshipping of saints or for any pluralism within Islam- hence a prevailing disdain towards Sufis and Shia Muslims in particular, sometimes erupting in sectarian violence.<sup>18</sup> Salafists are not all politicised though and Wictorowicz divides them into three broad categories- *purists*, who are apolitical and emphasise religious teaching, *politicos*, who are politically informed and thus believe they are better suited to apply Salafism to the modern context, and *jihadis*, who advocate the use of violence to establish ‘true’ Islamic states.<sup>19</sup> The latter two categories can both be considered Islamists due to their interest in world politics. Indeed, there is a great deal of diversity within Islamism and most Islamists are non-violent.<sup>20</sup> What these various groups and individuals share is the fundamental belief that political and legal systems should be based upon Islamic doctrine, and specifically, it is those who advocate violence with whom we are concerned here.

Hence, the ideologies Islamist terrorists adhere to tend to advocate literal application of *sharia* Islamic law, dictating rigorous observation of religious behaviours and intolerance of other beliefs, although terrorists will themselves not always abide by such rules in order to avoid drawing attention to themselves. This is in accordance with *takfir*<sup>21</sup> ideology, which essentially allows Islamists to condemn Western or immoral behaviour while simultaneously engaging in it to meet their aims, based upon the grounds that the (stipulated) ends justify the means. Nevertheless, Islamist justifications for attacks are usually very evident, as when groups make explicit claims of responsibility.

It is important to recognise though, that Islamist doctrines do not by themselves *cause* people to turn to terrorism (see chapter 4). Perhaps the most important contribution of Islamist ideology in this context is that it promotes a very strong sense of perceived Muslim identity. This gives rise to feelings of empathy for Muslims around



the world, leading to moral outrage<sup>22</sup> at injustices and suffering of members of the perceived *Ummah*.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Islamist terrorists' actions are subsequently facilitated at the ideological level by coming to accept a radical belief system involving three basic tenets:

- That Islam is under attack from Western, and Western-influenced, powers.
- That the world is divided into 'us' ('real' Muslims) and 'them' (infidels).
- That *jihad* is necessary violence against the oppressors of Islam in order to defend Muslims.

Beyond sharing these perceptions of the world, Islamist militants may differ considerably in their routine activities, their *modus operandi*, choice of targets for attack, and their stated justifications. Hence jihadis in different areas of the world and at different points in time may be more or less motivated by local, regional, and/or global factors.<sup>24</sup> They may essentially want and do different things, depending upon their particular circumstances and ideological standpoint. At the same time they are bound by a basic, Islamist worldview and identity that often enables extensive transnational social networking and cooperation. As a result of massive counter-terrorism efforts in the aftermath of 9/11, command and control capabilities of groups such as al-Qaeda have been severely disrupted, and large, centralised organisational structures can no longer function efficiently. These structures have been replaced by a proliferation of smaller, more autonomous groups of militants, many of whom are long-term residents of the Western countries that they choose to attack.<sup>25</sup> It is these 'home-grown' militants in the United States and United Kingdom that are the focus herein.



### **1.3 ‘Home-grown’ Islamist Terrorism**

To a large extent, Islamist terrorism in the West is now considered to be ‘home-grown’. Generally speaking, the term ‘home-grown’ is only vaguely conceptualised and rarely elaborated upon.<sup>26</sup> The following implications of this term have been outlined as requirements of stricter definitions of home-grown Islamist terrorism (HGIT):<sup>27</sup>

That attempted/successful terrorists:

- Were born and/or spent most of their lives in the West (North America/ Europe/ Australia)
- Were radicalised within their Western home countries
- Have trained and achieved attack-capability in their Western home countries
- Have planned/carried out attacks in their Western home countries
- And are lacking direct foreign (non-Western) international support or control

Research suggests that radicalisation has been taking place in the West over the past two decades, and that there has been an increase in the number of terrorists holding legitimate Western passports.<sup>28</sup> As chapter 3 describes, the West also quickly emerged as a target for attacks, while in the post-9/11 period efforts have been made to train and carry out campaigns of terror, sometimes independently of any formal terrorist organisation. These ‘home-grown’ characteristics (attacks against the West by Western residents with questionable organisational affiliation) have become more apparent since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.<sup>29</sup>

However, it still remains to be seen the extent to which groups typically fulfil each of the above criteria. Instead the manifestation of Islamist terrorism today may include “a whole spectrum of realities, positioned according to the level of autonomy of the group.”<sup>30</sup> Along these lines Hoffman<sup>31</sup> identifies four levels of al-Qaeda: 1) the remaining core central staff (who still represent the biggest potential threat); 2) various organisational affiliates; 3) ‘al-Qaeda locals’ who have established links to al-Qaeda; and finally, 4) the ‘al-Qaeda network’ with no organisational links. For Hoffman, ‘home-grown’ terrorists are defined by their lack of organisational ties and so are designated part of the wider al-Qaeda network only. However, use of the term more generally has been liberal and has not been confined to a single (difficult to discern) dimension.



‘Home-grown’ remains a piece of heuristic terminology, which centres upon the country of residence and radicalisation<sup>32</sup> of terrorists in relation to the country they choose to attack; it implies in a general sense that home-grown terrorism is that which is committed by long-term –if not life-long- residents of the targeted country, with limited external involvement. Active supporters of terrorism who did not ‘come from abroad’ may also be considered home-grown.

Within the current study, references to home-grown terrorism/Islamist militancy refer simply to Islamist terrorist activity within Western Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia, involving residents of respective countries. This permits analysis of the entire range of activity based on relatively straightforward criteria, without being limited to problematic or self-limiting assumptions or time-frames and staying true to the fundamentally defining feature of HGIT, that is that the terrorists ‘come from within.’

The aim of the current study is to describe and compare Islamist militancy in the US and UK in order to clarify understanding of how exactly the threat is manifest in each country, which in turn will have implications for counter-terrorism policy.



## **Chapter 1 Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> See e.g. Beril Dedeoglu “Bermuda Triangle: Comparing Official Definitions of Terrorist Activity” (2003) *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 15:3, 81-110; Christopher Greenwood “International Law and the ‘War on Terrorism’” (2002) *International Affairs*, 78:2, 301-317
- <sup>2</sup> Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur & Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, “The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism” (2004) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16:4, 777-794, 786.
- <sup>3</sup> Alex Schmid & Albert Jongman, *Political Terrorism* (1988) New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 28, cited in Weinberg, Pedahzur & Hirsch-Hoefler, “The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism” 780.
- <sup>4</sup> For a more thorough dissection of definitions of terrorism see Michael Stevens ‘What is Terrorism and Can Psychology Do Anything to Prevent It?’ (2005) *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 507-526
- <sup>5</sup> Terrorism Act (2000) Chapter 11, Part 1
- <sup>6</sup> In the words of Hanlon, “The 2001 [Anti-terrorism, Crime, and Security] Act used the definition of ‘terrorism’ set out in section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and the 2005 [Prevention of Terrorism] Act does the same. It goes on to state that terrorism-related activity can be ‘the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism, conduct facilitating or encouraging these or intent to do so’. It also includes rendering support or assistance to those known or believed to be involved in terrorism-related activity. It is immaterial whether the terrorism-related activity comprises specific or general acts of terrorism” (Laraine Hanlon, “UK Anti-Terrorism Legislation: Still Disproportionate?” (2007) *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 11:4, 481-515, p.500).
- <sup>7</sup> United States Code, Title 18, Part 1, Chapter 113B, Section 2331  
<[http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cascode/uscodes/18/parts/i/chapters/113b/sections/section\\_2331.html](http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cascode/uscodes/18/parts/i/chapters/113b/sections/section_2331.html)> at December 21, 2008
- <sup>8</sup> “Totally Arbitrary: Marty Slams EU, UN Terror Blacklists” *Spiegel Online International*, November 13, 2007 <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,517043,00.html>> at November 13, 2007
- <sup>9</sup> A notable exception is the case of Ramzi Yousef, who, after receiving a sentence of 240 years for bombing the World Trade Centre in 1993, defiantly declared, “I am a terrorist, and I am proud of it!” (See Rex Hudson *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?* (1999) Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 18
- <sup>10</sup> Gary LaFree & Laura Dugan ‘How Does Studying Terrorism Compare to Studying Crime?’ in Mathieu Deflem (ed.) *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Criminological Perspectives*, Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance Volume 5 (2004), Oxford: Elsevier, 53-74, pp.57-58
- <sup>11</sup> John Horgan *The Psychology of Terrorism* (2005) New York: Routledge, 23
- <sup>12</sup> For a concise definition and history of Wahhabi and Salafi traditions, see Christopher Blanchard, *The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyah* (2008) CRS Report for Congress  
<<http://www.fas.org/srgp/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf>> at January 21, 2009
- <sup>13</sup> Note that this excludes Shia Islamist terrorism. Shia terrorists have not been as prevalent as their Sunni counterparts in Western societies in recent years, and their inclusion in the current project would detract from the analytical focus.
- <sup>14</sup> See List of Definitions & Abbreviations.
- <sup>15</sup> For a historical dissection of Islamist ideology, see Philippe Migaux “The Roots of Islamic Radicalism” in Gérard Chaliand & Arnaud Blin (eds) *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al-Qaeda*, Translated by Edward Schneider, Kathryn Pulver & Jesse Browner (2007) Berkeley: University of California Press, 255-313
- <sup>16</sup> This is in reference to Mohamed Ibn Abd al-Wahab, an 18<sup>th</sup> Century preacher who was instrumental to the rise of Salafi Islam in Saudi Arabia (Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 8-9; Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement” (2006) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:3, 207-239).
- <sup>17</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam” (2005) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 28, 75-97; Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement”.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid; ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement”.
- <sup>20</sup> See International Crisis Group, *Understanding Islamism* (2005) International Crisis Group Report No. 37 <[http://ics01.ds.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/2325/understanding\\_islamism.pdf](http://ics01.ds.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/2325/understanding_islamism.pdf)> at October 21, 2010.
- <sup>21</sup> *Takfir* translates into ‘excommunication,’ as in al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra (‘Excommunication and Exile’) an Egyptian Islamist group originally spawned in the 1960’s under the name Jamaat al-Muslimin (Society of Muslims); today, takfir/takfiri appears to have come to represent the paradoxically un-Islamic lifestyle,



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and willingness to achieve goals by any means necessary, of many Islamist terrorists (Hayder Mili, "Jihad Without Rules: The Evolution of al-Takfir wa al-Hijra" (2006) *Terrorism Monitor*, 4:13

<[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=822&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=181&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=822&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=181&no_cache=1)> at January 21, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 72-75

<sup>23</sup> An idealised, united Muslim population.

<sup>24</sup> See Petter Nesser "Jihadism in Western Europe After the Invasion of Iraq: Tracing Motivational Influences from the Iraq War on Jihadist Terrorism in Western Europe" (2006) *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29: 323-342

<sup>25</sup> For example, Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*

<sup>26</sup> See Sam Mullins "Home-Grown Islamist Terrorism: Issues and Implications" (2007) *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 1:3

<[http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php?option=com\\_rokzine&view=article&id=12](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php?option=com_rokzine&view=article&id=12)> at June 23, 2008

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> For example, AIVD *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat*; Robert Leiken & Steven Brooke "The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration: An Initial Exploration" (2006) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18:4, 503-521; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*

<sup>29</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 48-49; Petter Nesser, "Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe 1994-2007: Planned, Prepared, and Executed Terrorist Attacks" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2008) 31:10, 924-926

<sup>30</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, "Current Trends in Jihadi Networks in Europe" (2007) *Terrorism Monitor*, 5:20, 8-11, p.9

<sup>31</sup> Bruce Hoffman, "The Global Terrorist Threat: Is Al-Qaeda on the Run or on the March?" (2007) *Middle East Policy*, 14:2, 44-58

<sup>32</sup> The process of coming to accept radical ideology, and adopting a congruent social identity.



**Chapter 2**  
**Research Questions and Methodology**

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### **Overview**

The research questions are identified, as well as goals and justification of the project. This is followed by a more detailed description of the methodology employed, outlining the variables of interest, sampling criteria and method of analysis. Care is taken to draw attention to limitations of the data, which must be borne in mind at all times, especially when evaluating the reliability and validity of conclusions.



## **2. Research Questions and Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Questions**

The overarching research question for this project is:

*What have people living in, or from, the United States and the United Kingdom been doing to support or advance violent jihad –either at home or abroad- from 2001 to 2008, and what differences are apparent between these two countries?*

In other words, how has ‘home-grown’ Islamist terrorism manifest itself in the US and UK? This constitutes a number of sub-questions, which have been identified as a result of reviewing the existing literature:

1. *Historically, how has Islamist terrorism developed in America and Britain?*  
-This is a necessary pre-requisite for beginning to understand how it is manifest today.
2. *What is the average demographic ‘profile’ of terrorists in each country today?*  
-Who is being drawn to Islamist terrorism? This has been the focus of previous studies by Sageman<sup>1</sup> and Bakker.<sup>2</sup>
3. *What patterns of radicalisation and operational activity can be identified?*  
-Are the data from the American and British samples in accordance with existing accounts of these processes? What exactly are people in each country doing, and is there anything unique to the US or UK?
4. *What group characteristics can be identified? (For example, average group size, leadership or other roles)?*  
-Previous research has identified operational leaders, protégés, and spiritual sanctioners<sup>3</sup>- to what extent is this confirmed in the current samples?
5. *What are the stated motivations?*  
-Foreign policy, religion, domestic issues, other?
6. *What role does international communication and travel have to play?*  
-A key concern has been the extent to which Islamist terrorism has become indigenous to countries in the West, and whether groups or



individuals can develop significant capabilities without external assistance.

7. *What has been the contribution of jihadi organisations or foreign terrorists?*

-A related concern has been the extent to which Western jihadis are autonomous, or whether there is an element of direction or control.

8. *How significant is the Internet for i) propaganda ii) group formation iii) gathering information for intelligence or attacks iv) group communication?*

-The impact of the Internet is one of the most heavily emphasised developments in the global jihad. Understanding its precise role is vital.

9. *What differences exist on each of these dimensions between the two selected countries, and what implications does this have for counter-terrorism?*

## **2.2 Goals**

The primary goal of this research is to clarify the nature of the full range of Islamist terrorism in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and to determine what differences, if any, exist. In furtherance of this goal, the history of Islamist terrorism in each country is examined, and detailed case-studies have been conducted of Islamist militants from each country who were active during the period September 12<sup>th</sup> 2001 through to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. Following cross-comparison, implications for counter-terrorism efforts are considered. Ultimately this research represents an important empirical record, useful as a ‘database’ of case studies covered, and in that capacity makes a significant contribution to the terrorism literature, given a relative lack of empirical research.

## **2.3 Justification**

As Silke has noted, in the field of terrorism research there is a tolerance for poor quality research and a dearth of systematic, empirical study.<sup>4</sup> By adopting a systematic, cross-comparative approach, this research contributes towards redressing this balance. Two specific contributions are made: first, it empirically describes the range of ‘home-grown’ Islamist terrorists in the US and UK, and second, it methodically compares these two key countries.



The majority of terrorism research in recent years has focussed upon Europe or upon isolated, cursory case studies. Country-case studies are generally lacking, as are cross-comparative analyses. In terms of case selection, HGIT in the USA in particular has been under-researched, and while in the UK this may be less so, it still demands a great deal more attention. Moreover, by choosing to examine the US in comparison to a European country, it will be possible to assess whether or not purported differences between these countries correlate with differences in how terrorism occurs.

## **2.4 Methodology**

This project has commenced over 4 phases: 1. Literature review and identification of key variables, 2. Case-study selection and data collection, 3. Analysis of case-data, and 4. Cross comparison and conclusions. By utilising a systematic approach, identifying key variables to be examined within each case and then comparing the results for both countries, the methodology adheres to George and Bennett’s method of structured, focussed comparison.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.4.1 Phase 1: Literature Review and Identification of Key Variables**

The first stage, as in all studies, is to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing literature on Islamist terrorism, paying particular attention to Western countries. Indeed, this is how research questions are identified in the first place.

For answering the questions identified above, it is necessary to understand how global Islamist terrorism has developed over time, how it has spread to the West, and specifically how it has manifest itself in the US and UK. It is equally important to review theories of terrorism and consider how they apply to Islamist terrorism in the West.

The aim of the literature review is thus to: a) develop a historical understanding of the development of Islamist terrorism and how it has spread to the West, b) examine existing theoretical accounts of terrorism and how these apply to HGIT, c) outline current understanding of the threat and identify gaps in the literature, and d) provide a more context-specific account, and a preliminary comparison of HGIT in the US and UK as a way of ‘setting the scene’ ahead of detailed case-study analysis.



A review of the literature also enables identification of key variables to be examined within each case. The following variables were identified and form the basis of the case study analysis:

1. **Geographical distribution:** Where cases have occurred. Are there 'hotspots' of Islamist extremism?
2. **Demographic profiles:** Gender, age, nationality and ethnic origin, length of time in the US/UK, place of residence, education completed, occupation, faith, marital status, criminal record, mental health.
3. **Offence date range:** From start of 'offending' to conclusion of case. This is defined by the indictable offence period or the first known action taken to advance the offence for which the person or group has been convicted. Often radicalisation and related offence behaviours are reported prior to the specific offence- these are noted in the qualitative account of each case but are not incorporated into the offence period.
4. **Radicalisation:** Social vs. self-radicalised? Have social settings such as mosques and gyms been important? Have significant others played a role? Has the Internet been significant?
5. **Group characteristics:** What is the immediate group size? Is there an identifiable leader? Is there an identifiable 'spiritual sanctioner'?
6. **Operational activity:**
  - i. **Ideological commitment:**
    - a) Ideologically committed ('hardcore')
    - b) Social terrorists & 'wannabes' (show signs of being less committed)
    - c) 'Troubled' individuals (mental health issues/ personal problems)
    - d) Criminal opportunists (self-serving)
  - ii. **Behavioural classification:** Can the case be classed as
    - a) Active, personal pursuit of violence,
    - b) Preparation for violence (training),
    - c) Promoting/facilitating jihad/ recruitment (top-down),
    - d) Active support/ 'hands on' facilitation,



- e) Fundraising for others,
  - f) Offering services/ support (bottom-up),
  - g) Possession of terrorist articles and propaganda?
- iii. Focus:** Is the focus of activity domestic or abroad?
- iv. M.O:** For attacks, what targets and method of attack have been chosen?
7. **International dimensions & associations:** Has related international communication/travel occurred? If so, where to? Has there been contact with foreign, organised jihadis and if so, what has been the significance of this (Control? Influence? Support? Advice?) Additionally, has there been contact with any known domestic Islamist militants?
8. **Role of the Internet:** Has the Internet been used for:
- a) Creating/disseminating jihadi materials
  - b) Accessing propaganda/jihadi forums
  - c) Group formation
  - d) Gathering intelligence and information useful for attacks
  - e) Communication with others abroad or at home
  - f) Fundraising.
9. **Stated motivation:** Foreign policy/ domestic issues/ personal/ other.
10. **Outcomes:** How cases end (for example, arrest/ successful attacks/ death) and what legal penalties are involved (charges applied and length of sentences).

Each of these variables helps to answer the research questions (above) and each is important from a pragmatic (atheoretical) standpoint. So, for example, the geographical distribution of cases is important from a counter-terrorism (CT) perspective since the identification of hotspots facilitates appropriate allocation of resources. The more that is understood about the nature of Islamist terrorism in any given country, the more informed CT strategies will be.

Additionally, it is important to appreciate that current explanations of terrorism (see chapter 4) were also taken into account when selecting variables, and as such there are implications for theoretical understanding as well. Geographical distribution over time has implications for the social transmission hypothesis (see pp.172-173); the



examination of demographic profiles builds upon previous research, allows empirical assessment of changes over time, and provides information relevant to explanations of terrorism in terms of psychopathology, personal trauma, 'root causes' and relative deprivation; radicalisation and group characteristics are both important for understanding the types of social interaction that take place, which is vital for assessing the relevance of social explanations of terrorism; international associations help us understand the extent to which Islamist terrorism in the US and UK is truly 'home-grown'; the role of the Internet is again relevant to understanding social interaction between militants; and stated motivations help us comprehend the Islamist terrorist identity as well as relative contributions of domestic issues and foreign policy.

#### **2.4.2 Phase 2: Case Study Selection and Data Collection**

##### ***Case Study Selection***

The first stage of case study selection involved an exhaustive review of all cases of Islamist terrorist activity in the US and UK on public record. This involved reviewing in excess of 120 cases involving more than 200 individuals in both countries (over 240 cases and 420 individuals reviewed in total), and then choosing which cases to include in the analysis according to pre-defined criteria.

The criteria for inclusion/exclusion are as follows:

- Case must be classified as related to the global (Sunni) Islamist jihad. These are not limited to plans to carry out violence, but include the entire spectrum of support and propaganda activities as well.
- Cases relating specifically to Palestinian terrorist groups (e.g. Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad) are excluded, since they have not shown a demonstrable allegiance to the bin-Laden-led global jihad. This is also the case for the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) since despite declaring an affinity with al-Qaeda in November 2007, there appears to be little evidence of a tangible realisation of this 'merger'.<sup>6</sup>
- The focus is on terrorist activity from September 12<sup>th</sup> 2001-December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, therefore there must be evidence of activity during this period. Cases which



began before this period are included as long as they continued after 11<sup>th</sup> September. Cases which concluded before this period, and those which began afterwards are not included.

- Cases where criminal conduct, such as fraud or immigration violations, has occurred but where this has been prosecuted separately to any allegations of involvement in terrorism are excluded.
- Individuals who have not been charged (even if subject to control orders or similar sanctions without trial), those who have been acquitted, and those whose convictions have been quashed are all excluded.
- Individuals do not have to be convicted under terrorism statutes to be included in the sample, but their conviction (or guilty plea) must be in direct relation to terrorism offences.
- Cases that are still going through the judicial process –and as such remain at the level of allegation- are excluded.
- 4 cases that fail to strictly meet these criteria have nevertheless been included: these are Adam Gadahn and Omar Hammami from the US, and Abu Qatada and Feroz Abassi from the UK. These ‘special’ cases are included based upon individual case-assessments and are included based on the judgement that the quantity and quality of intelligence is so high that it cannot be ignored and excluding these case would represent significant omissions that would detract from the thoroughness of the study. Individual justifications are given with each case summary (see Appendices A and B).

These criteria are rather strict. As a result, numerous cases that are undoubtedly relevant to understanding Islamist militancy in both countries are excluded. For example, if a case involving possession of terrorism literature results in a conviction but is then quashed, it is not the possession of the material that is disputed, rather the legal definition of whether an offence has occurred. By maintaining a standard of inclusion that is equivalent to legal standards, the current study is focussing on cases where the most (quantitative or qualitative) evidence exists. This can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand it may represent only the most serious cases, where involvement in terrorism is so deep that the evidence is irrefutable, or where they have attracted sufficient attention from police and security services to uncover larger amounts of condemning material. A potential counter-argument to this is that only the less savvy



individuals have been inept enough to create sufficient evidence of their actions. This argument seems to have more relevance to cases involving for example fundraising activities, which can carry on undetected indefinitely. However, for plans of attack, those that escape detection will eventually surface when the attack actually takes place (at which point investigators invariably uncover large amounts of information).

Essentially there is a disparity between terrorist-offending that results in conviction, and terrorist-offending that is known about or suspected but remains at the level of intelligence (even if it results in formal sanctions such as asset-freezing or control orders, which do not require the same level of proof). By restricting the sample to the level of most certainty, the current project limits its scope but maintains a higher level of confidence in its conclusions and minimises false positives (including individuals who are not involved in terrorism).

Finally, there are criteria for inclusion of individuals within cases. Individuals were included in the sample for analysis so long as they were a resident of the country in question, regardless of where the offence was carried out. Foreign jihadis who were complicit in the conspiracy were excluded from statistical analysis of demographic characteristics, even though they are included in the qualitative description (Appendices A and B Part 2). This maintains the focus on people living in, or from, the US and UK respectively, as outlined in the overarching research question.

The end result of the selection process is a sample of 46 cases (91 individuals) from the US, and 51 cases (112 individuals) from the UK. The full details of these cases are provided in Appendices A & B Part 2 and are analysed in chapters 9, 10 and 11, whilst a list of significant excluded cases is also included (Appendices A & B Part 3). It is also worth noting that once information on the outcome of cases which are currently pending is available, the picture will change considerably. For the US this will potentially add 2 cases from 2007 (involving 2 US residents) and 12 more cases in 2009 (42 individuals). For the UK there is currently only 1 case from 2004 (2 individuals) and 1 case from 2009 (4 individuals). It is thus imperative to remember that the situation is constantly changing, and will also have to be adapted in retrospect as new information emerges.

### ***Data Collection***

As with the vast majority of terrorism research this study relies upon exclusively open source materials as no other sources are readily available (and there is no research



budget).<sup>7</sup> Primary data was not therefore collected first-hand by the researcher, nor were data sources intended for research purposes. It is thus an inescapable reality that the data on which analyses are based are of questionable reliability and validity. There will undoubtedly be missing and inaccurate data. However, the assumption (made by most terrorism researchers) is that there is enough accurate data that makes it into the public domain to ‘point us in the right direction.’ As long as the reader remains cognizant of the limitations of open source data and how it is being used, the chances of treating findings with a level of confidence that is unwarranted are reduced.

The main sources utilised are as follows:

- ‘Official’ reports including publicly available indictments and criminal complaints (only made available by American and not British authorities), various forms of press release or online information by law enforcement, justice departments and security services, and in some instances limited transcripts of court appearances;
- Press reports (the single largest source of information); and
- Other published accounts, such as academic studies and reports by non-governmental organisations

All sources of data were primarily sought and acquired online, utilising specific websites (e.g. [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com) for legal articles, newspaper websites for press reports). The search engine ‘Google’ (and Google News Archive) were also used as a means for searching the Internet for information. Although extremely broad in scope, this was useful for unearthing information which otherwise might not have been found by referring only to sites or sources already known. Most sources were free, however the news archiving service [www.highbeamresearch.com](http://www.highbeamresearch.com) was subscribed to in order to further increase the range of accessible articles. Each source was assessed in terms of reliability and validity.

All sources are prone to omissions of relevant information, and to accidental or deliberate falsification. ‘Facts’ that have been established in court are perhaps of greatest reliability and validity, since they are the product of rigorous investigation and sustained attempts by different parties to test or undermine those facts. Whilst acquiring direct access to court reports is more desirable than relying on second-hand accounts of



those reports, which adds another layer of potential distortion, this is for the most part not possible.

Press reports vary in reliability and validity. An uncorroborated report is especially doubtful, but given that information is often shared or passed on by different members of the press, even multiple accounts of the same information are not necessarily true. In assessing the worth of press reports it is necessary to: 1. Consider the source (e.g. the reputation of the newspaper, agency or even reporter) as a proxy measure of the standards of reporting. 2. Strive for sources with local access to the case at hand (e.g. British news for UK cases, American news for US cases). 3. Consider the extent to which the reported information is ‘factual’ observation or subjective judgement (the former being more reliable than the latter). Finally, other publications such as academic reports were also assessed according to the references cited, and according to the apparent validity of analyses or conclusions drawn. These sorts of publication can also serve as a useful way of discovering further relevant data sources.

The aim for each case study was to construct a coherent, chronological biography of the development and activities of the individual or group in question (establishing the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when* and *why* of each case).

### ***Limitations of the Data***

As already mentioned the data on which this report relies were not collected for research purposes. Inaccuracies are sometimes reported, which later information then clarifies and corrects. Other times speculation in the press is later refuted by authorities as their investigation progresses and more information is gleaned. And on yet other occasions convictions are sometimes overturned. It is thus necessary to continue to collect new information on cases as it arises, even if this is after the apparent ‘conclusion.’ It must also be assumed that the data set as a whole is likely to contain at least *some* erroneous information, despite the best efforts to minimise this (reading multiple accounts of the same case, following cases beyond their conclusion, striving for sources of high credibility, avoiding treating speculation or opinion as fact).

More of a problem than incorrect information though is missing (or deliberately withheld) information. The amount of information that is included for each case varies immensely- most often the more serious and high profile cases receive the most coverage, and include the most details in indictments etc. Omitted details are a serious



obstacle to being able to reliably assess each selected variable, and the somewhat deflating fact is that if the information is not there, there is nothing that can be done. However, as long as the researcher does not assume the presence of variables that are not made explicit, and avoids extrapolating beyond the information that *is* there, the project is still manageable.

A final limitation that must be mentioned relates to sampling choices. As explained, the strict criteria applied in this study limit the scope to convicted *jihadis*, hence disregarding a lot of undoubtedly relevant information on individuals not convicted but who –as far as various government bodies are concerned- are nevertheless clearly involved. A way of complementing this report in the future would be to conduct a study also including cases which remain at the level of intelligence or allegation, thereby achieving a representation of the two extremes of reliability of information.

Despite striving for the highest levels of reliability by using the sample criteria applied herein, this report is still relying upon second or third-hand reports of publicly available information. Even by focussing only on cases which have resulted in convictions, there is always a margin of doubt. This report should not be treated as anything more than a study of allegations and admissions made by others. It should not be treated as a set of fresh allegations, as an indictment or as a judgement of the individuals included in the sample (nor as an exoneration of anyone not included). It is essentially a historical document examining public accounts of certain events.

#### **2.4.3 Phase 3: Case-study Analysis**

The case-study analysis (chapters 9 and 10) involved first conducting an exhaustive review of articles and documents available for each case, then constructing a chronological (qualitative) account of what exactly (is alleged to have) happened, paying attention to the presence or absence of the selected variables (see Appendices). A database for each sample was constructed using Excel including data on the variables. A statistical (quantitative) analysis of the presence/absence of variables at the cumulative level was then conducted, giving an overall statistical ‘profile’ for each country.



#### **2.4.4 Phase 4: Cross-Comparison & Conclusions**

Cross-comparison is fundamentally necessary for answering the research questions at hand, which revolve around topical issues in the study of terrorism- namely differences between the US and UK. There is a relative lack of this approach in terrorism studies, which are overrun by one-off case studies, anecdotes and selective reporting. Cross-comparative approaches hold great potential for gaining insight into the unique manifestations of terrorism in different countries (making causal inferences possible) and also enable description of the *range* of phenomena under study, and an assessment of the generalisability of different theories.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as George and Bennett<sup>9</sup> point out, “there is a growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the combination of within-case analysis and cross case comparisons within a single study or research program.”

Cross-comparison in the current study involved comparing the statistical profiles for the US and UK to examine if any differences exist, and if so where those differences lie. The outcome of this comparative process is discussed in the context of existing discussions about the nature of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK (do the results support or undermine existing ‘wisdom’?) and in relation to counter-terrorism (do the results imply differential approaches to counter-terrorism in each country?). Conclusions drawn (although tentative, given limitations of the data discussed) are thus based on an exhaustive and meticulous approach to reviewing literature and collecting data, careful selection of relevant variables, and a systematic, empirical cross-comparison of each sample. The end result makes a highly significant contribution to our understanding of the manifestation of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK within the specified time-period.



## **Chapter 2 Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (2008) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study* (2006) The Hague: Clingendael Institute.

<sup>3</sup> Petter Nesser, “Jihad in Europe; Recruitment for Terrorist Cells in Europe” (2006) in *Paths to Global Jihad: Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terror Networks* (Proceedings from a Norwegian Defence Research Establishment seminar, Oslo, 15 March 2006) 2-21; Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (2007) New York: New York City Police Department.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Silke “The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism” (2001) *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 13:4, 1-14; Andrew Silke “An Introduction to Terrorism Research” (2004) in A.Silke, ed. *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures*, (2004) London: Frank Cass, pp.1-29

<sup>5</sup> Alexander George & Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (2005) Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

<sup>6</sup> Camille Tawil, “Libyan Islamists Back Away from al-Qaeda Merger in Reconciliation with Qaddafi Regime” (2009) *Terrorism Monitor*, 7:17

<[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=35147](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35147)> at May 25, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Where ‘exclusive’ sources of information are available they often may not be included due to reasons of confidentiality or law. They can thus detract from the credibility of the report. Other more exclusive sources include for example trial transcripts, which can be paid for. This author received a quote for transcripts for just four terrorism cases in the UK from HM Courts Service, which came to £120,000.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Bennett “Presidential Address: Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice Research: The State of Our Knowledge” (2004) *Justice Quarterly*, 21:1, 1-22

<sup>9</sup> Alexander George & Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, p.18.



### **Chapter 3**

## **Introduction Part 2: The Evolution of Home-Grown Islamist Terrorism in the West**

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### **Overview**

In order to understand how and why Islamist terrorism has developed in Western countries it is necessary to examine its historical roots. In this section the evolution of HGIT is described with reference to worldwide events of direct relevance. The actions of secular Palestinian organisations are seen to have been important to the internationalisation of terrorism at a time when militant Islam was on the rise in the Middle East, beginning in the late 1960’s. Radical Sunni Islam –both non-violent and violent forms- swelled in response to the Shia Iranian revolution, and then rallied to the call of jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviets.

Al-Qaeda was born in Afghanistan, and following the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989, gradually emerged as *the* central organisation aimed at propagating ‘global jihad’ against the United States and its allies, which were viewed as the real enemies of Islam. *Mujahedin* spread throughout Europe and the West during the 1990’s, where they were able to attract Western recruits from early on and began to formulate plans of attack against America and Europe.

During this period jihadis were inspired by ethnic-nationalist conflicts involving Muslims, which served to sustain the growing Islamist movement. The attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 then acted as an exemplary form of ‘propaganda by the deed’, striking at the perceived cause of Muslim oppression. However, as a result of the destruction of al-Qaeda headquarters in Afghanistan, the organisation was badly damaged. In accordance with al-Qaeda ideology, dispersed networks of semi-autonomous Islamists continued to attempt and to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Western interests around the world, and attempted attacks also increased in frequency within Western countries. This transformation was greatly facilitated by al-Qaeda’s transnational presence and inter-organisational connections, and the growth of the Internet.

It soon became apparent in Europe and America that many terrorists were second or third generation immigrants, who had radicalised in the West and were choosing to attack their home (‘host’) countries. Many of these ‘home-grown’ Islamists were motivated by a mix of local and global grievances, most notably the continued military presence in Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.



### **3. The Evolution of Home-grown Islamist Terrorism in the West**

The development of HGIT in the West is the culmination of decades –even centuries- of varying interactions between primarily Middle Eastern and Western individuals and countries. It can therefore only be understood by way of reference to the evolution of Islamist terrorism<sup>1</sup> more generally and to global events that have accompanied if not facilitated this phenomenon. Ongoing Arab/Israeli disputes, secular Middle Eastern terrorism<sup>2</sup>, the growth of diaspora Muslim communities, the Iranian revolution, the Soviet-Afghan war, the spread of Wahhabi Islam, the end of the Cold War, ongoing Western involvement in world politics and military presence in Muslim countries, conflicts in Algeria, Kashmir, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya and elsewhere, Western complacency, globalisation in general, and various technological advancements, are all part of the tapestry of contemporary Islamist terrorism.

Whole libraries could be filled on any one of these topics, which interact with each other and overlap in time. Here a concise, historical overview of Islamist terrorism, with reference to global events of direct relevance is presented.



### **3.1 Terror in the Middle East & the Move from Secular to ‘Spiritual’ Terrorism**

In order to understand the historical consciousness of the fathers of ‘global jihad’, it is useful to briefly review the political climate in the Middle East which immediately preceded their rise to prominence, and the transition from secular to religiously oriented terrorism. Although very few of today’s ‘global’ Islamist terrorists are Palestinians, the Arab/Israeli dispute is nevertheless relevant as a constant source of rancour, seen by bin Laden et al as confirmation of an alliance between ‘Zionist’ Jews and American ‘Crusaders.’<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the historical development of the struggle against Israel is inextricably interwoven with the growth of terrorism as a transnational phenomenon and the emergence of terror in the name of Islam.

Violent clashes between Arabs and Jews have been taking place since at least the 1920’s and intensified after the state of Israel was established in 1948. Over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees between 1947 and 1949; “[h]undreds of thousands emigrated to the Persian Gulf, Europe, and North America, [many] becoming successful in business, academic, and professional activity”.<sup>4</sup> Terrorist tactics were utilised by both sides of the Arab/Israeli dispute, but became the staple of Palestinian groups, in particular following the 1967 ‘Six Day War’, when Israel demonstrated its military superiority over its Arab neighbours and took control over what are now referred to as the Occupied Territories.

The 1967 war created feelings of military impotency in the Arab world and growing disillusionment with existing secular governments. It also created a new surge of Palestinian refugees, who fled to nearby Arab countries and elsewhere around the globe. In addition, a number of interconnected nationalist Palestinian organisations grew out of this turmoil, including the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Al-Fatah under Yasser Arafat,<sup>5</sup> the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)<sup>6</sup> and the Black September group,<sup>7</sup> an offshoot of Al-Fatah. These groups were primarily secular in nature, focussed on the establishment of a Palestinian state, and utilised terrorist tactics both at the local level against Israel and internationally to draw attention to their cause.<sup>8</sup> Notable operations included the 1968 hijacking of an El Al flight out of Rome,<sup>9</sup> the disastrous 1972 kidnapping of Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich,<sup>10</sup> and the 1975 storming of an OPEC<sup>11</sup> meeting in Vienna (led by Illich Ramirez Sanchez, aka Carlos).<sup>12</sup> At the same time the Abu Nidal group<sup>13</sup> was also active in perpetrating numerous terrorist attacks around the world in the name of



Palestinian resistance. Although distinct from the current wave of Islamist terrorism, Middle Eastern terrorists had thus already struck upon Western soil –effectively internationalising terrorism- before many of the fathers of today’s global jihadi movement had met one another. However, these secular terrorist groups failed to achieve a Palestinian state, and were largely supplanted by Islamic organisations, which rose to prominence after the first *intifada*<sup>14</sup> beginning in 1987. Hence, Islamists came to dominate one of the most compelling and protracted struggles in the Arab world, and terror in the name of Islam became a firmly established phenomenon there under the banners of Palestinian Islamic Jihad<sup>15</sup> (PIJ) and Hamas<sup>16</sup> (both with links to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood<sup>17</sup>).

Meanwhile, Islamic activists and militant groups had been on the rise in Egypt since the late 1960’s. Inspired by Sayyid Qutb’s *Milestones*, published in 1964, and lead by one of his disciples, Muhammad Abd al-Salam al-Faraj, these groups were allowed to proliferate under President Anwar al-Sadat, beginning in the late 1960’s.<sup>18</sup> The feeling that “Islam is the solution”<sup>19</sup> had flourished after Sadat’s secular predecessor, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser had lead the country to defeat against Israel in 1967, and for Faraj’s trans-Egyptian network this meant that a ‘true’ Islamic state under Sharia law must be established by way of armed jihad. The ‘Jihad Organisation’ (Tanzim al-Jihad) succeeded in assassinating Sadat (who had signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979<sup>20</sup> and whom they saw as an apostate) on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1981 but failed to take control of the country.<sup>21</sup> A great number of militants were arrested and Faraj was executed, yet the majority of the detained Islamists were released after three years. Time in prison appeared not to deter them from pursuing their goal of overthrowing the Egyptian government. But at the time many (including Ayman al-Zawahiri) chose to go to Afghanistan to assist their Muslim ‘brothers’ in the fight against Soviet occupation.<sup>22</sup>



### **3.2 The Iranian Revolution & the Afghan Jihad**

The resurgent tide of militant Sunni activism swelled in response to two extremely significant events that occurred in 1979 (by which time the United States had secured its super-power status and was the key external player in Middle Eastern politics). First, the Iranian revolution took place, overthrowing the corrupt and murderous regime that had been in power, and replacing it with an idealised (though perhaps just as murderous) Shia Islamic government led by Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>23</sup> Although fundamentally incompatible with the Sunni Wahhabi ideals of future Islamist terrorists such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, the revolution in Iran is widely accepted to have been a highly influential factor in demonstrating that Islamic revolution was indeed possible. Moreover, the new Iranian government encouraged the formation of radical Shiite groups elsewhere, most notably Hizballah,<sup>24</sup> which was formed in Lebanon in 1982 following the invasion by Israel.<sup>25</sup> Hizballah went on to become a hugely successful and influential terrorist organisation. In 1983 it was responsible for two massive suicide bomb attacks against foreign troops that killed 241 US marines and 53 French paratroopers and led to the withdrawal of foreign military from Lebanon.<sup>26</sup> Fledgling Sunni terrorists in nearby Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan thus learned that terrorism could be used effectively against the West.

The establishment of a Shia government in Iran also prompted reaction from other Arab states. Of particular importance is the fact that Saudi Arabia felt inclined to more aggressively promote their brand of Sunni Wahhabi Islam (to which most of today's Islamist terrorists subscribe).<sup>27</sup> The Saudi government thus proceeded to donate millions of dollars in setting up Wahhabi Islamic centres and mosques throughout the world, including in Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere. Hence a form of fundamentalist Islam compatible with today's terrorists' beliefs became prevalent in the West. In the following years this facilitated the travel of militant preachers to Western countries, who were able to exploit the situation to promote their cause and expand operations.

The second major event of 1979 was the Soviet (Communist) invasion of Afghanistan. This act of aggression against an 'Islamic' country inspired thousands of young Muslim men from around the globe to flock to Afghanistan in order to fight against the invaders. The Afghans themselves were organised into several different



factions, often opposed to each other as well as the Soviets. Foreign *mujahedin*<sup>28</sup> were organised in the early 1980's by Abdullah Azzam –a Palestinian-Jordanian refugee of the 1967 war who had split from the PLO's secular-nationalist stance<sup>29</sup> - assisted by his wealthy protégé, Osama bin Laden. Based in Peshawar in Pakistan, together they established the Mekhtab al-Khidemat or 'Service Bureau' in 1984, which operated in some 35 countries to raise funds and recruit volunteers for the Afghan jihad.<sup>30</sup> At the time militant Sunni activists were seen as a counter against encroaching Communism and growing Shia terrorism.<sup>31</sup> They were encouraged by Arab regimes –Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular- to go to Afghanistan, where they might prove themselves to be useful against the Soviets (and at the least would no longer be a security threat at home). This process was also supported by the Pakistani intelligence services, who in turn received support from the US.<sup>32</sup>

Afghanistan during the 1980's was the birthplace of modern Islamist terrorism. Azzam and bin Laden were soon joined by other future senior al-Qaeda leaders such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, who had been part of the network of radicals responsible for the assassination of Sadat in 1981. Together they helped organise and provide paramilitary training to thousands of volunteers to fight the occupying Soviet force. At this point in time the Islamists were focussed on repelling foreign invaders of Muslim lands, a defensive jihad that was easily justified. Anti-western sentiments had always been strong, since external involvement in Middle Eastern affairs was fiercely resented, but Western forces were not the immediate enemy. When the Soviets began their withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988 there were mixed feelings about whether and how to continue the jihad. Many volunteers returned to their home countries but others could not, due to government persecution. Among the latter, a significant number sought asylum in the West, and for those who chose to stay in Afghanistan, the debate about what to do next intensified.<sup>33</sup> Azzam, the most influential proponent of maintaining an essentially defensive stance, was assassinated in 1989, not long after conceptualising the 'Solid Base' (al-Qaeda) organisation as a means of facilitating jihad. A transitional period of relative disarray ensued. During this time the idea that the West and the US in particular were the true enemies of Islam came to be fully embraced, fuelled by a sense of outrage at the US military presence in Saudi Arabia following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.



### **3.3 The Rise & Fall of al-Qaeda & the Seeds of Home-Grown Terrorism**

If al-Qaeda was to fulfil its potential as an organisation aimed at recruiting and training volunteers for jihad, it would require a base of operations. In the years following the end of the Soviet-Afghan war, sites for training in guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics were maintained in Afghanistan and established in various other countries including Yemen, Sudan, and Bosnia.<sup>34</sup> Al-Qaeda headquarters were set up in Sudan in the early 1990's, at a time when world events colluded to further engender the idea of global jihad. Remaining Service Bureau apparatus were then used by the fledgling al-Qaeda to support and direct mujahedin to conflict zones in Kashmir and Chechnya in particular, as well as Mindanao, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Somalia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Algeria and Egypt.<sup>35</sup>

#### **3.3.1 The Jihadi Warzones**

In Kashmir, a heralded cause of many Islamists, a pattern of events akin to those in Palestine was unfolding. Mass demonstrations in 1989, inspired by the Palestinian Intifada of the same year, swiftly led to armed insurgency initially dominated by the “Muslim but secularist” Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).<sup>36</sup> By the mid to late 1990's the secularist groups were replaced by more strongly Islamist organisations, some with links to al-Qaeda,<sup>37</sup> such as Lashkar e-Taiba<sup>38</sup> (LeT) and then Jaish e-Mohammad<sup>39</sup> (JeM).

1989 also bore witness to a flashpoint in the development of conflict in Kosovo, as Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic stripped the Kosovars of independence. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged in 1993, representing the country's persecuted ethnic Albanians (mostly Muslims) and began taking action against Serbian forces. A number of Islamists were inspired by this conflict and came to participate, especially after the 1995 Dayton Accords,<sup>40</sup> which designated peace agreements in Bosnia and coincided with the ongoing growth of the KLA.<sup>41</sup>

In 1991, a year on from the start of the crisis in Kosovo, the Chechens announced their separation from Russia. The ensuing struggle in Chechnya was to become one of the most compelling sources of motivation for both experienced and aspiring mujahedin from around the globe, and as with the other jihadi destinations, the Islamists attempted, with limited success, to inject their Salafi/Wahhabi rhetoric into the



local scene.<sup>42</sup> The Chechen cause was fiercely promoted within Islamist circles and was often the first choice destination for mujahedin, (although many were unable to make it into the country).<sup>43</sup>

1992 was another eventful year in the formative years of al-Qaeda when war erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As part of the rapidly dissolving Republic of Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina was comprised of three main ethnic groups, Bosnians (who were primarily Muslim), Croats and Serbs. After a declaration of independence was rejected by the Serbs, a brutal conflict ensued, producing yet another situation where ethno-nationalist concerns could be utilised by Islamists to promote their own ideology and agenda amidst a backdrop of war crimes and atrocities.<sup>44</sup>

Even more significant in 1992 was the government cancellation of elections in Algeria in January, which prevented the Islamic Salvation Front Party (FIS) from gaining power. This decision reaffirmed the Islamists' belief that an Islamic state could not be achieved by non-violent means<sup>45</sup> and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA)<sup>46</sup> was promptly established by Algerian veterans of the Afghan war, with violence firmly in mind.<sup>47</sup>

Each of these conflicts, which intensified more or less independently of one another in the late 1980's into the 1990's, perpetuated the Islamists' belief that Muslims worldwide were falling victim to a Western conspiracy against Islam (despite the fact that intervention by the likes of NATO<sup>48</sup> often came to the aid of Muslim civilians). Wars involving Muslims became extremely influential sources of motivation for thousands of Islamist militants, many of whom might otherwise have never become involved in terrorism. These conflicts also served as vital training grounds and places where mujahedin could gain practical experience in combat (adding to the collective paramilitary experience of the movement, which could then be passed on to the next generation of jihadis and used in recruitment efforts).

Islamist ideology was by no means unquestionably adopted by respective local populaces who tended to be far less austere in their practice of Islam. However, a small minority did come to adopt militant Salafism, thereby spreading the message to more diverse populations. On a more practical level, the geographic and social networks of the Islamists were expanded. Veterans of the Afghan war maintained contact with each other –able to activate dormant social ties as and when needed- and as they spread out across the globe, the number and range of contacts increased exponentially. 'Arab-



Afghans’ who ‘set up shop’ in Europe were instrumental in sending new recruits to the jihadi battlegrounds and providing support. Sheikh Anwar Shabaan had supported the Bosnian jihad from the Islamic Cultural Institute (established 1989) in Milan.<sup>49</sup> The now infamous preachers, Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza similarly aided the Algerians, working out of the Baker St. and Finsbury Park mosques in London.<sup>50</sup> And in Chechnya, foreign volunteers were originally drawn via Afghanistan and organised in Chechnya by the Saudi, Samir Salih Abdallah al-Suwaylim, better known as Ibn al-Khattab.<sup>51</sup> The network surrounding the London-based Algerian Islamist, Abu Doha was also involved in sending recruits to the Caucasus.<sup>52</sup> Thus local conflicts were drawn into the realm of global terrorism.

Perhaps most significantly of all, the jihad was moving ever closer to the West, each warzone representing a stepping stone closer. Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo and Algeria all represented physical steps closer, and held potential to act as staging grounds for attacks against Europe. Indeed, this strategic possibility represented a key reason for involvement in the first place. High-ranking al-Qaeda members involved in Bosnia and in contact with bin Laden at the time are reported to have stated that his primary, desired objective in Bosnia “was to establish a base for operations in Europe against al Qaeda’s true enemy, the United States”.<sup>53</sup> Access to Western countries including the US was also facilitated by way of increased numbers of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, a situation which the Islamists did not hesitate to exploit. Recruits drawn from the jihadi wars (in particular those volunteers with Western passports) could often travel unhindered within Europe and elsewhere, and potentially expand the theatre of operations. Hence, the Afghan veteran networks merged with those of ‘local’ jihadis and their militant diaspora, and mutually facilitated one another’s movement into the West.<sup>54</sup> In particular this seems to have been the case with the Algerian militants, who took the jihad onto European territory as early as 1994 (see below) and who readily integrated themselves into the al-Qaeda network.

Thus, while the significance of Afghanistan as a base of operations temporarily waned in 1989, numerous ethnic/nationalist struggles involving Muslims emerged elsewhere. These served to build upon the sense of inspiration derived from the defeat of the Soviets, motivating the jihadis whilst simultaneously providing opportunity to sustain and grow their organisational capacities while reaffirming their Islamist worldview.



### **3.3.2 The First Attacks in the West**

Meanwhile, circa 1990, bin Laden had become vehemently opposed to the US military presence on Saudi Arabian soil during the Gulf War, and was disgusted with the Saudi government for allowing it. US involvement in Somalia under ‘Operation Restore Hope’ in 1992 and 1993 added to this animosity.<sup>55</sup> Bin Laden fell from favour with the Saudi monarchy after publicly expressing his discontent with them at the conclusion of the Gulf War in 1991<sup>56</sup> (going on to publish anti-Saudi propaganda via the ‘Advice and Reformation Committee’, set up in London in July, 1994).<sup>57</sup> He moved to Peshawar and then on to Sudan, where at least several hundred Afghan veterans were by then based at the invitation of Dr. Hasan al-Turabi’s National Islamic Front (NIF), which had come to power in 1989.<sup>58</sup> This effectively finalised the establishment of al-Qaeda headquarters in Sudan, where it was to remain until 1996.

Whilst bin Laden continued to narrow his focus onto the United States and its allies as a target for attack, others were advancing similar plans. February 26<sup>th</sup> 1993 marked the first significant instance of an Islamist terrorist attack in the West<sup>59</sup> when a powerful bomb was detonated in the underground car park beneath the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York City, killing six and injuring over a thousand.<sup>60</sup> Although al-Qaeda members were not far removed from the network responsible for the first WTC attack, it was not an al-Qaeda operation. However, it confirmed general sentiment that the US was the true enemy and demonstrated that it was also vulnerable to attacks at home. Islamist militants lead by Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman of the Egyptian Gamaa’ Islamiyah attempted to consolidate this move against the US at home in the following months, but the so called ‘NYC Landmarks’ plot was thwarted and the immediate network convicted and imprisoned.<sup>61</sup>

The 1993 attacks were essentially ‘imported terrorism.’ The majority of conspirators involved had come from Middle Eastern countries, had ties to a number of terrorist organisations (including Gamaa’ Islamiyah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Sudanese National Islamic Front as well as an American sect-like group called al-Fuqrah)<sup>62</sup> and had also received financial assistance from abroad.<sup>63</sup> However, it is important to note certain precursors to the ‘home-grown’ phenomenon in that several members of the Yousef/Rahman network had been resident in the US for some time<sup>64</sup> (e.g. Nidal Ayyad was a naturalised US citizen<sup>65</sup>) and there were two American-born members of the Landmarks plot (Clement Rodney Hampton-El and Victor Alvarez).<sup>66</sup>



At the same time as America was being confronted by embryonic Islamists from the Middle East, Algerian terror networks began gaining momentum in Europe. In 1993 the presence of Armed Islamic Group (GIA) support networks –established following the dissolution of the FIS<sup>67</sup> the previous year- became evident in France (which was targeted because of its enduring, post-colonial involvement in Algerian affairs); thus GIA operations, including attacks on French citizens in Algeria, were facilitated by members active on Western soil.<sup>68</sup> Then, on December 24<sup>th</sup> 1994,<sup>69</sup> four GIA members hijacked a plane bound for France at Algiers airport, eventually landing in Marseilles where they were killed by a French terrorism intervention squad.<sup>70</sup> The following July, the GIA assassinated FIS founder, Imam Abdelbaki Sahrawi at Myrha St. mosque in Paris; then from July 25<sup>th</sup> to October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1995, executed a series of bombings and attempted bombings in the Paris and Lyon regions, leaving 13 dead and over 180 wounded.<sup>71</sup>

It is significant that the networks behind these attacks involved extensive foreign elements and transnational cooperation as they were directed from Algeria and supported from ‘Londonistan’ in the UK. Rachid Ramda of the GIA had been based in London in the early 1990’s and was eventually extradited to France in December 2005 where he received separate convictions for conspiring towards and financing the 1995 bombings.<sup>72</sup> Notably, Ramda had contributed to *al-Ansar* magazine, which was run by Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza, two highly influential ideologues of the global jihad movement based in London. This period marked the integration of Algerian networks with Islamist veterans of the Afghan jihad who were settling throughout Europe.<sup>73</sup> There was sustained social contact, collaboration and exchange of ideas between North African and Middle Eastern militants engaged in propaganda, support and operational activities in the West.

The attacks in France also included terrorists who had been born and/or raised there. The alleged ‘cell leader,’ Khaled Kelkal<sup>74</sup> –who was killed in a televised shootout with police on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1995- had come to France from Algeria at the age of two and had begun his journey into radical Islam whilst in prison there, beginning in 1991.<sup>75</sup> In 1997, 40 militants were brought to trial in France charged with providing instrumental support to Kelkal’s campaign,<sup>76</sup> 36 of whom were convicted for belonging to a terrorist organisation.<sup>77</sup> Amongst them was the man who admittedly recruited Kelkal, namely Safé Bourada, who was likewise a Frenchman of Algerian descent.<sup>78</sup>



There were also French converts to Islam involved, including Joseph Jaime, David Vallat, and Alain Celle.<sup>79</sup>

European converts to Islam further demonstrated their dedication and violent potential the year after Kelkal's death. Christophe Caze and fellow French convert Lionel Dumont had formed the 'Roubaix Gang' after returning to France from fighting alongside foreign mujahedin in Bosnia in the early 1990's.<sup>80</sup> Their group performed a number of armed robberies before attempting a car-bomb attack on a G7 jobs summit in Lille in March 1996.<sup>81</sup> Thus, from its earliest days in the West, Islamist terrorism was able to attract Western citizens; their willingness to participate in violence is indicative of how quickly 'Islamism' took root and began to incorporate 'home-grown' elements.

### **3.3.3 Al-Qaeda Takes Centre Stage**

Meanwhile, the al-Qaeda organisation continued to develop as its members dispersed and Islamism took root around the globe. 1996 was a key juncture, as bin Laden et al were forced to leave Sudan, which was coming under international pressure for harbouring terrorists (bin Laden's name had come up in relation to the November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1995, bombing of a National Guard base in Saudi Arabia, and international concern deepened after an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1995).<sup>82</sup> Al-Qaeda subsequently relocated its base of operations back to Afghanistan just as the Pakistani-supported Taliban were coming to power.<sup>83</sup> From this point, up until the end of 2001, the organisation and related wider movement went from strength to strength. On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1996 bin Laden published his 'Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Lands of the Two Holy Places', in which he stated:

"My Muslim Brothers of The World: Your brothers in Palestine and in the land of the two Holy Places are calling upon your help and asking you to take part in fighting against the enemy --your enemy and their enemy-- the Americans and the Israelis".<sup>84</sup>

Although such bold, antagonistic actions caused considerable unease amongst the Taliban, the relationship on the whole remained one of protective, tolerant hosts and resourceful, outspoken, guests.<sup>85</sup> By this time planning had already begun<sup>86</sup> for what was to be al-Qaeda's first real strike against American targets, the bombing of US



embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which took place on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, resulting in over 240 fatalities (12 of US nationality).<sup>87</sup> There was little in the way of repercussions (a missile strike on training grounds on August 20<sup>th</sup>, followed by US sanctions against the Taliban in 1999) and operations –including training of new recruits and planning future attacks- continued.

The global jihad perspective had become official five and a half months earlier on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1998 with the issuing of a fatwa by bin Laden and four cosignatories<sup>88</sup> under the name of the World Islamic Front against Jews and Crusaders. In it they declared that:

“...to kill the Americans and their allies -- civilians and military -- is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim”.<sup>89</sup>

Civilians were first declared legitimate targets in Algeria in 1996 in a fatwa issued by then emir of the GIA, Antar Zouabri<sup>90</sup> and the previous attacks in America and France had of course embraced this way of thinking. Although the GIA’s move resulted in widespread loss of support, the al-Qaeda leadership were careful to restrict this to infidel, and not Muslim, civilians. Moreover, the Islamic Front fatwa galvanised the idea for Islamists around the world that attacks in the West were legitimate, and they were further encouraged by the embassy bombings in August.

### **3.3.4 The West as a Primary Target**

In the following years more and more evidence came to light that the Islamists had turned their sights to the West. Investigations of Algerian terrorists operating in France in the early 1990’s had uncovered a vast network of Islamists interspersed throughout Europe, with links to the ‘Far East’ and Canada.<sup>91</sup> The Canadian network was run by Fateh Kamel, who had fought in Bosnia and maintained links with Caze and Dumont of the Roubaix Gang.<sup>92</sup>

Kamel’s network was involved in document forgery and theft in support of Islamist mujahedin around the globe, with direct links to al-Qaeda. They had come to



the attention of the French authorities in 1996 and were also the subject of Canadian surveillance. Kamel himself was extradited to France in April 1999 where he was sentenced to eight years for charges in relation to the 1995/'96 bombings and the activities of the Roubaix gang;<sup>93</sup> however, it was not until December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1999 that the potency of the Islamist presence in Canada was realised. Ahmed Ressay of Algeria was arrested at the Canadian/US border trying to enter the United States with more than 50kg of explosives intended for detonation in Los Angeles LAX airport.<sup>94</sup> Ressay had spent some time living in France before travelling on false documents to Montreal in 1994, where he was swiftly absorbed into the militant diaspora subculture. He received paramilitary training in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in 1998/1999,<sup>95</sup> and had enlisted the help of others in Montreal before arranging to meet up with a friend-of-a-friend contact based in New York who would assist him in his mission. Ressay also maintained links to Islamists in Pakistan and London. The most significant among these contacts was Amar Makhlouf, better known as Abu Doha, an affiliate of the Groupe Salafiste Pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC) and al-Qaeda who was heavily involved in transnational Islamist activities.<sup>96</sup>

At around the same time, a plot was being developed by Algerian Islamists in Frankfurt, Germany, to most likely launch an attack in Strasbourg, France.<sup>97</sup> German intelligence had been assisted in identifying the Frankfurt cell by their counterparts in the UK, Italy and France in 2000. As was often the case, Islamists in London (again under Abu Doha, with direct links to al-Qaeda) played a significant coordinating role.<sup>98</sup> Four members of the operational terrorist cell in Frankfurt –who had met each other whilst undergoing terrorist training in Afghanistan-<sup>99</sup> were arrested on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000, and sentenced in 2002 to between ten and twelve years in prison.<sup>100</sup> Following on from the initial arrests, police in the UK raided several London flats in February 2001 and arrested nine militants, including Mustafa Labsi (who had been a close confederate in Ressay's millennium plot) and the radical cleric Abu Qatada.<sup>101</sup> Two weeks later, Abu Doha was also arrested trying to leave the country and "it became clear that the whole plot had been conceived, directed, and funded in England".<sup>102</sup> In addition to being wanted by the Germans and French for the Strasbourg plot, Abu Doha was wanted by the US for his role in the failed millennium attack. He was also implicated by the Italians regarding an aborted plot detected in January 2001 to attack the US embassy



in Rome, which involved Algerian and Tunisian terrorists with links to the Islamic Cultural Institute (ICI) in Milan.<sup>103</sup>

By the late 1990’s into the new millennium, Islamist extremists had become entrenched within European countries, which served as breeding grounds for the increasingly globalised movement. Training and combat zones such as Afghanistan and Chechnya continued to stand out as beacons of jihad to aspiring mujahedin. However, Afghanistan in particular often represented a way-station for Islamists to go to graduate to the next level in the path towards terrorist activity. Whilst training abroad in al-Qaeda-run camps, they would also ‘network’ with peers before returning to Europe to proselytise, undertake fund-raising and support activities, or plan attacks. Radical mosques denoted hives of activity within transnational, fluid networks, allowing Islamists to move between locales as necessary. Of crucial importance is the fact that fledgling terrorists were becoming radicalised within the West through contact with experienced mujahedin, and that militant networks were continually expanding.

It was within this context, beginning around 1996, that the ‘Planes Operation,’ which became 9/11, was conceived and developed by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed with the help of bin Laden and others.<sup>104</sup> Those who became the ‘muscle’ hijackers were primarily of Saudi Arabian origin and only entered the US a few months before the attack took place. However, it is now well-known that three of the four pilots, who also played vital planning roles, radicalised in Germany and came to America more than a year previously.<sup>105</sup>



**Table 3.1.** List of significant Islamist and al-Qaeda terrorist attacks/plots against Western targets worldwide, from 1993 until September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Bold type indicates al-Qaeda involvement. Red cells represent successful attacks, orange cells represent unplanned attacks or those of limited success/failure, and yellow cells represent cases where intervention occurred prior to any attack taking place.

Date	Event
Feb 1993	1st World Trade Centre attack.
<b>Oct 1993</b>	<b>Attack on US troops in Mogadishu, Somalia by al-Qaeda trained fighters.</b> <sup>106</sup>
Dec 1994	GIA Air France hijacking.
July-Oct 1995	Series of bombings of French transport system by Algerian militants.
Jun 1996	Attack on US military Khobar Towers, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.
Nov 1997	Gamaa' Islamiyah attack on tourists, near Luxor, Egypt.
<b>Aug 1998</b>	<b>Al-Qaeda bombings of US embassies in Kenya &amp; Tanzania.</b>
<b>Dec 1999</b>	<b>Al-Qaeda LAX millennium plot involving Algerian Islamists in Canada.</b>
<b>Oct 2000</b>	<b>Al-Qaeda Bombing of USS Cole in Yemen.</b>
<b>Dec 2000</b>	<b>Al-Qaeda Christmas market plot in Germany/France.</b>
<b>Sep 2001</b>	<b>9/11 Al-Qaeda attacks on World Trade Centre &amp; Pentagon.</b>

The devastation caused on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 marked a turning point in the history of al-Qaeda and Islamist terrorism in the West. Aside from being the most destructive terrorist attack in history, causing nearly three thousand fatalities, it was instrumental in popularising the jihadi cause and inviting the US-led 'war on terror.' In consequence, Westerners became conscious of al-Qaeda and its cause on a large scale, simultaneously causing widespread condemnation of their tactics but also increasing the number of sympathisers and potential recruits. At the same time, al-Qaeda's ability to coordinate and control Islamist terrorist operations around the globe was severely disrupted as a result of worldwide punitive measures, spearheaded by the United States' 'Operation Enduring Freedom' launched on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2001. The rule of the Taliban had been cruel and lacking legitimacy and as support from Pakistan was also withdrawn, al-Qaeda's ally was unable to withstand the heavy military assault against them.<sup>107</sup> Within nine weeks the Taliban regime crumbled, terrorist training camps were destroyed and many militants were captured or killed. Al-Qaeda had lost its sanctuary for the time-being.<sup>108</sup>



### **3.3.5 Al-Qaeda as a ‘Brand-Name’ & the Growth of HGIT**

The world had awoken to the Islamist threat and authorities now realised that Western countries were an integral part of the terrorists’ operations. Counter-terrorism measures were reorganised and enhanced, including legislation changes and increased surveillance of known radicals, extremist mosques and Islamist preachers, making it more difficult for the terrorists to communicate, travel and coordinate activities. Numerous al-Qaeda members and leaders were captured or killed, and governments also succeeded in freezing large amounts of bin Laden’s assets, which further debilitated al-Qaeda’s organisational capacities to fund terrorism.<sup>109</sup>

However, heightened counter-terrorism measures did not prevent Islamist extremists from attempting further attacks. To begin with, several al-Qaeda-linked plots were underway and nearing completion in the direct aftermath of 9/11. On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001 Belgian police arrested the Tunisian, Nizar Trabelsi, who was part of a cell planning to carry out a suicide attack on a Belgian US military base. Among others, Trabelsi was also in communication with French-Algerian, Djamel Beghal, later convicted of planning to bomb the US embassy in Paris, also in 2001.<sup>110</sup> Trabelsi and Beghal had both attended Finsbury Park mosque in London, where they allegedly associated with Zacarias Moussaoui (the allegedly intended 20<sup>th</sup> 9/11 hijacker) and Richard Reid, the British convert who, on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001 attempted to detonate a bomb hidden in his shoes onboard a Miami-bound flight from Paris.<sup>111</sup>

Over the coming years, there was a proliferation of Islamist terrorist activity on Western soil as a succession of plots was uncovered in numerous countries including the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Austria, the US, Canada and Australia. Moreover, it became increasingly apparent that the terrorists were very often long-term Western residents or citizens (including second or third generation immigrants and Caucasian converts to Islam) as opposed to recent immigrants from the Middle East or North Africa.<sup>112</sup> Hence Islamist terrorism was not simply an imported phenomenon- it was developing from an exogenous to endogenous or ‘home-grown’ threat.<sup>113</sup>

Table 3.2 below shows a selection of some of the most significant cases of Islamist terror plots and attacks in the West between 2002 and 2008 (42 of more than 60 are included).<sup>114</sup> 6 cases were discovered in 2002, 6 in 2003, 13 in 2004, 10 in 2005, 11 in 2006, 10 in 2007, and 5 in 2008, based in 15 different Western countries. There have



been 3 successful attacks in the West (March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in Spain; November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 in the Netherlands; and July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in the UK) as well as 4 unplanned/ limited success/failed attacks (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003; July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005; June 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007; and the May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, all in the UK). It is also important to note that attacks represent the ‘tip of the iceberg’ in terms of terrorist activity, which also includes various forms of proselytising and recruitment as well as both seemingly legal and illegal means of fund-raising.



**Table 3.2.** Selected significant Islamist terror plots/ attacks in the West, 2002-2008 inclusive. Red cells represent successful attacks, orange cells represent unplanned attacks or those of limited success/failure, and yellow cells represent cases where intervention occurred prior to any attack taking place.

Date	Country	Event
May '02	US	Jose Padilla arrested in Chicago; convicted on terrorism charges.
Oct '02	US	'Portland 7' arrested in Portland, Oregon, US; later convicted on terrorism charges.
Dec '02	France	1st 'Chechen network' arrests in Paris; thought to be developing chemicals for attacks on the Russian embassy; later convicted
Jan '03	UK	Ricin plot & murder of DC Stephen Oake by Algerian Islamists; 1 conviction (Kamel Bourgass).
Mar '03	US	lyman Faris arrested re. terrorism support & plot to attack Brooklyn Bridge; later convicted.
Jun '03	US	Virginia paintball' arrests; later convicted.
Nov '03	UK	Sajid Badat arrested for planned bombing onboard an airplane in 2001 with Richard Reid; convicted.
Jan '04	France	Arrests of 'Chechen network' French-Algerians planning chemical attacks.
Mar '04	Spain	'3/11' Madrid bombings.
Mar '04	UK	'Operation Crevice' aka 'Fertiliser bomb plot' arrests, involving links to US & Canada.
Aug '04	UK/ US	Dhiren Barot et al charged with planning attacks; later convicted.
Aug '04	US	James Elshafay & Shahawar Matin Siraj charged with plotting to attack the New York subway; later convicted.
Oct '04	Spain	Martyrs of Morocco' arrested planning terrorist attacks.
Nov '04	Netherlands	Mohammed Bouyeri murders Theo Van Gogh.
Jul '05	UK	'7/7' bombings.
Jul '05	UK	'21/7' attempted bombings.
Aug '05	US	Kevin James & 3 others charged with creating a terrorist organisation; later plead guilty.
Oct '05	Denmark/ Bosnia	Arrests of 'Glostrup cell' in Denmark, planning attacks in Bosnia; links to Islamists in Bosnia, as well as Younis Tsouli in UK.
Oct '05	UK	Younis Tsouli 'cyber jihadist' arrested; links to Bosnia & Canada; later convicted with 2 others.
Nov '05	Australia	'Operation Pendennis' arrests.
Dec '05	US	Michael Reynolds arrested, planning terrorist attacks; later convicted.

...continued...



Table 3.2 continued...

Date	Country	Event
Apr '06	US	Syed Haris Ahmed & Eshanul Islam Sadequee charged with supporting terrorists.
Jun '06	Canada	Toronto 17' arrests; planning attacks; linked to Younis Tsouli in UK.
Jun '06	US	Sears Tower' arrests in Miami; planning attacks; now facing third re-trial.
Jul '06	Germany	2 Lebanese men place faulty bombs onboard trains in Cologne.
Aug '06	UK	Aircraft plot' to blow up several planes.
Sep '06	Norway	4 arrests re. plot to attack synagogues & the US & Israeli embassies in Oslo.
Sep '06	Denmark	Vollsmose cell' arrests; planning attacks in Denmark; 3 convictions.
Jan '07	UK	Parviz Khan et arrested in plot to behead a British Muslim soldier; 5 convicted.
May '07	US	6 arrested in plot to attack Fort Dix.
Jun '07	US/ Trinidad	1 arrest in NY & 2 in Trinidad; plotting to attack JFK airport.
Jun '07	UK	Failed car bomb attacks in London + attack on Glasgow airport;
Sep '07	Denmark	8 arrests made re. attacks being planned in Copenhagen; direct links to al-Qaeda alleged.
Sep '07	Germany	Operation Alberich' arrests; plotting attacks in Germany.
Sep '07	UK	Scottish student Mohammed Atif Siddique arrested; later convicted of possessing & distributing material useful to terrorists.
Jan '08	Spain	14 arrests re. plot to assassinate visiting Pakistani President.
Feb '08	Denmark	5 arrested in plot to assassinate Danish 'Muhammad' cartoonist.
Apr '08	UK	Andrew Ibrahim arrested in Bristol re. plotting terrorist attacks.
May '08	UK	Nicky Reilly failed nail-bomb attack in Exeter; convicted.

In hindsight it is apparent that the development of HGIT in the West was an almost inevitable outcome of the sustained Islamist presence brought about by deliberate geographical expansion of terrorist networks since the late 1980's. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 then acted as a catalyst for the transformation of al-Qaeda and for the inextricably linked growth of HGIT in its present form.

The significance of the various terrorist plots in the West, as well as attacks against Western/Jewish targets by groups with links to al-Qaeda in Tunisia, Bali, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Turkey, and elsewhere, was perhaps at first poorly appreciated (the US State Department claimed in January 2004 that al-Qaeda was 70% destroyed and that its days were "numbered"<sup>115</sup>). However, following the first successful attack in the



West on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in Madrid –where a network of mostly Moroccan terrorists based in Spain bombed four trains, killing 191 people<sup>116</sup>- opinions changed. It became widely acknowledged that whilst core elements of the al-Qaeda organisation had indeed suffered in the aftermath of 9/11, the al-Qaeda ‘brand-name’ had grown in stature. Affiliated organisations and like-minded Islamists the world over were thus inspired to carry on the fight.<sup>117</sup>

In the words of Hoffman, “since 9/11, bin Laden and his lieutenants have engineered nothing short of a stunning transformation of Al Qaeda from the more or less unitary, near bureaucratic entity it once had been to something more akin to an ideology...an amorphous movement tenuously held together by a loosely networked transnational constituency rather than a monolithic, international terrorist organization with either a defined or identifiable command and control apparatus. The result is that today there are many Al Qaedas rather than the single Al Qaeda of the past. It has become a vast enterprise –an international movement or franchise operation with like-minded local representatives, loosely connected to a central ideological or motivational base, but advancing their common goal independently of one another”.<sup>118</sup>

The Madrid ‘3/11’ bombers exemplify this transition from networks that have been assembled top-down by al-Qaeda or a similar organisation, to home-grown, or “grass roots” networks that have spontaneously come together, are tactically independent and show only marginal organisational affiliation.<sup>119</sup> Members of the network were in contact with experienced jihadis with links to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group –GICM- and al-Qaeda, and claimed responsibility for the attacks in the name of ‘Supporters of al-Qaeda in Europe;’ however, the organisationally connected figures were seemingly only peripherally involved in the group, only one member was an alleged jihadi war veteran, and there is no evidence of top-down external control.<sup>120</sup>

Since 2004, there has been a significant amount of variation in the apparent levels of involvement of established terrorist organisations in terrorist plots and attacks in the West. Mohammed Bouyeri –who murdered Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam in November, 2004 for ‘insulting Islam’ - was part of a home-grown network of Islamists with seemingly no organisational affiliation.<sup>121</sup> The July 7<sup>th</sup> (‘7/7’) London bombers show a seemingly mixed profile; Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer received some terrorist training in Pakistan, however, the involvement of al-Qaeda or



any similar organisation remains unclear and the group had radicalised at home and was otherwise independent.<sup>122</sup>

In the past, continuous, concrete involvement of (foreign) 'parental' terrorist organisations had been taken for granted as a feature of plots and attacks. Since 9/11 that assumption has been increasingly eroded and replaced by the realisation that the majority of Islamist terrorists active in the West are likely to have radicalised at home and to be largely self-organised, with varying, limited organisational support.



### **3.4 Explaining the Evolution of Global Islamist Terrorism**

The spontaneous adaptation of al-Qaeda and Islamist terrorism in the face of repressive counter-terrorism campaigns is the combined result of –among other things- the unprecedented impact that 9/11 had as a form of ‘propaganda by the deed’; the continued geographical dispersion of the network (including infiltration of the West and al-Qaeda’s ‘networking’ with other organisations before and after 2001); inflammatory world events which served to mobilise new generations of jihadi terrorists; and improved media capabilities and utilisation of the Internet.

After 9/11 more people than ever before became aware of al-Qaeda and its mission, and although most of course condemned the attacks, this new exposure also instantly increased the pool of sympathisers and potential terrorists. At the same time, existing radical Islamists with varying terrorist connections and degrees of influence over others were inspired to praise bin Laden and to further promote their cause. For example, the London-based group, al-Muhajiroun had published just nine press releases from 1999 to 2001, compared to almost fifty in the next two years.<sup>123</sup> This example also illustrates the fact that radicals were still able to exploit Western commitment to human rights and freedom of speech.<sup>124</sup> Changes in the law did take place in numerous countries but Western governments on the whole were initially ill-equipped to take decisive action against the new wave of Islamism.<sup>125</sup>

The growth of al-Qaeda as a social movement and figurehead of Islamist terrorism was also facilitated by its inter-organisational world connections. Bin Laden’s organisation had been involved with localised Islamist movements from early on in its development (among them the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Gamaa’ Islamiyah -also of Egypt- the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah, or JI, the Algerian GIA and GSPC, and of course the Taliban and aforementioned insurgency groups- see ‘The Jihadi Warzones’ above). Pre-9/11, these organisations would send their operatives to al-Qaeda camps for paramilitary training, and would also receive financial aid and logistical support for operations.<sup>126</sup> Al-Qaeda used the opportunity to promulgate their agenda of global jihad and to convince others to take the fight to the US and its allies.<sup>127</sup> This influence was reflected in targets selected for attack and in proclamations of affinity with the global movement by previously nationally-focussed groups.

The Egyptian Islamic Jihad group under Ayman al-Zawahiri had been progressively integrated into al-Qaeda, culminating in a formal merger in 2001,<sup>128</sup> thus



embracing its methods and ideals. Likewise, the 1998 World Islamic Front fatwa had been endorsed by a leading member of Gamaa' Islamiyah. Al-Qaeda's influence has also persisted since 9/11. For example, there was considerable cooperation between al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (instances include the 2001/2002 plot to attack the US and Israeli embassies in Singapore involving the Canadian-Kuwaiti, Mohammad Mansour Jabarah,<sup>129</sup> the 2002 bombing of Bali nightclubs frequented by Westerners, and the 2008 alleged plot to bomb Western embassies in Manila).<sup>130</sup> Meanwhile, the Algerian GIA had been keen to align itself with the bin Laden network and ideals, as was its successor, the GSPC, which pledged allegiance to bin Laden in 2003, eventually changing its name in 2007 to 'al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb' (AQIM). Thus the GSPC became the third organisation to formally adopt the al-Qaeda name in the post-9/11 era, after Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's al-Tawhid w'al-Jihad organisation became 'al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers' (aka al-Qaeda in Iraq) in October, 2004,<sup>131</sup> followed by the formation of 'al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula' (AQAP) in Saudi Arabia in December of the same year.<sup>132</sup> Although most groups retain their own name and sense of individuality, the list of known or suspected al-Qaeda affiliates includes some 36 other terrorist organisations operating in 65 countries around the world.<sup>133</sup>

These inter-organisational relations have not been uniform across the different groups involved, and have fluctuated over time, e.g. Gamaa' Islamiyah renounced violence in 1997<sup>134</sup> and JI's appetite for the global jihad may have waned with the emergence of a more locally focussed leadership.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, even fleeting contact has been significant. Although many locally-based organisations' primary aim remains unchanged (usually to create an Islamic state in their home country) global jihad has now been publicly endorsed –and sporadically pursued- by an increasingly wide range of organisations in different countries. The spread of the al-Qaeda network and ideology has created a multitude of possibilities for communication and collaboration in terrorist activity. In actuality, the overall network of Islamist terrorists may lack strategic focus and coordination.<sup>136</sup> Yet at the same time, public declarations of affinity in combination with successful attacks, optimistic self-assessment<sup>137</sup> and the physical growth of networks have lent credence to the perception of a unified, underground Islamist ummah, lead by a ubiquitous, but ethereal al-Qaeda. The maintenance of such perceptions is likely to be crucial for attracting new recruits and to the overall longevity of the global movement.



To make matters worse, certain world events have played into Islamist rhetoric pointing to a Western conspiracy against Islam, serving to confirm the terrorists’ world-belief and to motivate a new generation of recruits. Most significant among such events was the US-led invasion of Iraq in March, 2003. This was at first promoted as being not only a blow against a murderous dictator suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) but also an opportunity to quell the tide of Islamist terrorism (as then US President George W. Bush declared “We are fighting them there so we don’t have to fight them here”<sup>138</sup>). However, such arguments have now been “patently discredited”.<sup>139</sup> The false pretences of the invasion have instead caused Iraq to become a symbolic source of outrage and “rallying point”<sup>140</sup> for terrorists.

““We thank God for appeasing us with the dilemmas in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Americans are facing a delicate situation in both countries. If they withdraw they will lose everything and if they stay, they will continue to bleed to death.” -Ayman al-Zawahiri, September 2003.<sup>141</sup>

The situation in Iraq has thus been viewed by al-Qaeda as “a means to influence and radicalize Muslim public opinion worldwide and as a magnet to draw in as many recruits as possible”.<sup>142</sup> Concomitantly, a variety of terrorist cells and networks involved in sending foreign recruits to Iraq from the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Caucasus has been discovered. As the US State Department points out, these “networks were strategically significant in their own right, because they pose an enduring threat to their parent societies after the immediate conflict in Iraq has diminished”.<sup>143</sup> This reflected fears that events surrounding Iraq may follow the same pattern as for Afghanistan, whereby veteran mujahedin were instrumental in exporting the terrorist threat after leaving the country.<sup>144</sup>

Even more importantly, the invasion of Iraq is seen as a major catalyst in the propagation of home-grown terrorism, affecting a crucial turning point in the evolution of the global jihad. Sageman contends there have so far been three waves or generations of Islamist terrorists.<sup>145</sup> The first wave consisted of mainly Egyptian veterans of Afghanistan; the second wave was dominated by Saudis and North Africans who joined the jihad in the 1990’s and trained at camps in Afghanistan; and the third wave consists of a large number of European-born and raised Muslims who joined in the jihad after



Iraq was invaded, and are unable to take advantage of the now-destroyed Afghan al-Qaeda infrastructure. Similarly, focussing on Europe, Nesser contends that there have been three stages of development.<sup>146</sup> From 1994-1996, Europe functioned as an “arena for local jihad”, i.e. a base of operations and occasional target for Algerian Islamists; from 1998-2003/4 Europe functioned as an “arena for global jihad” i.e. a base of operations for terrorists linked to al-Qaeda, targeting US and Israeli interests, and to a minor extent, France; finally in the third period, 2003/4-present, Europe has emerged as a target for global jihad, whereby Western-based jihadis “motivated principally by European participation in the invasion of Iraq”<sup>147</sup> are attacking their home countries.

Accordingly, terrorists behind attacks in the West since 2004 have cited the importance of Iraq as a key motivating factor amongst other global and local grievances.<sup>148</sup> This was most obviously the case with the Madrid bombers who specifically demanded the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, and planned a series of follow-up attacks despite Spanish acquiescence to their demands.<sup>149</sup>

There has also been speculation that the terrorists in Madrid were influenced by an online document advocating attacks against Spain as a means of pressuring withdrawal from Iraq. Plans for the attack were in fact well underway by that time;<sup>150</sup> however the growth of the Internet is nevertheless seen to be an enabling factor behind changes in media and communication which have been integral to the decentralisation of al-Qaeda and growth of the Islamist social movement. Specifically, the Internet has enabled the ‘virtualisation’ of jihad.<sup>151</sup> That is to say that “the ideological and organisational development of jihadist networks and individuals is increasingly taking place on or with the help of the Internet”.<sup>152</sup>

Existing terrorists make use of online communication and intelligence gathering, allowing dispersed networks of otherwise unconnected individuals to share information, coordinate activities and plan attacks.<sup>153</sup> The most well-known example to date is that of London-based Moroccan student, Younis Tsouli, aka ‘Irhabi [Terrorist] 007’, who was able to rise to prominence in online jihadi networks and was in communication with Islamists developing terrorist attacks in Bosnia and Canada in 2005.<sup>154</sup>

Meanwhile, Islamist propaganda has become more and more accessible via the Internet. In turn this has made the movement more inclusive, seeming to unite people from around the world, and a more diverse array of individuals are able to identify with the idea of being a global Islamic warrior. This has been instrumental to the ongoing



development of HGIT in the West, where the Internet is highly accessible and largely uncensored. Moreover, increasing Islamist use of the Internet is thought to be a crucial factor in changing jihadi profiles. Hence the fact that it is younger people (in their teens and early 20’s) who tend to spend the most time online is reflected in evidence of decreasing average age of terrorists.<sup>155</sup>

The accessibility of the Internet has also meant that more females are gradually getting involved in this traditionally, heavily male dominated arena.<sup>156</sup> Finally, the freedom of expression which the Internet allows also facilitates innovative adaptations of the Islamist, Salafi message. Al-Qaeda ideology has subsequently been combined (with no sense of irony) with hip-hop culture. Islamism has thus found a form of expression that is at once palatable to Western youth, and likely alien to the founders of the movement. As Vidino observes, “[m]any youngsters from the Muslim-majority ghettos of various European cities adopt several behaviors typical of Western street culture, such as dressing like rappers, smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol, yet watching jihadi videos and having pictures of Osama bin Laden on the display of their cell phones”.<sup>157</sup> Whether or not such developments have further ramifications (possibly ‘diluting’ the Islamist message) they are evidence of fundamentally Western contributions to the global jihad, confirming that it has become a truly ‘home-grown’ phenomenon.



### Chapter 3 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For historical overviews of the development of Islamist terrorism, see among others: Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda, Global Network of Terror* (2002) Carlton North: Scribe Publications; Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (2003) New York, Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 30-70; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 25-59; Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (2004) New York: Colombia University Press, 290-325; Gérard Chaliand & Arnaud Blin (eds) *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al-Qaeda* (2007) Translated by Edward Schneider, Kathryn Pulver & Jesse Browner; Berkeley: University of California Press.
- <sup>2</sup> I.e. terrorism focussed more upon nationalistic rather than specifically religious issues, e.g. the liberation of Palestine.
- <sup>3</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Lands of the Two Holy Places" (1996) reproduced in 'Bin Laden's Fatwa' (undated) *PBS Online NewsHour*, <[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1996.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html)> at December 15, 2007.
- <sup>4</sup> Don Peretz, *The Arab-Israel Dispute* (1996) New York, Facts On File, Inc, 45.
- <sup>5</sup> Arafat formed Fatah in the late 1950's. He went on to take over the PLO (formed in 1964) in 1967.
- <sup>6</sup> Formed December 1967, the PFLP joined forces with the PLO in 1968 ("Terrorist Organization Profile: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)" START website <[http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=85](http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=85)> at January 14, 2009.
- <sup>7</sup> An offshoot of al Fatah, formed in 1970 in response to the expulsion of Palestinian activists from Jordan on account of terrorist activity on Jordanian soil (Sean Anderson & Stephen Sloan, *Historical Dictionary of Terrorism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2002) Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 90-92).
- <sup>8</sup> Gérard Chaliand & Arnaud Blin, 'From 1968 to Radical Islam' in Chaliand & Blin (eds) *The History of Terrorism*, 221-254, p.242.
- <sup>9</sup> See Edward Mickolus, *Transnational Terrorism: A Chronology of Events, 1968-1979* (1980) Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 93-94.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, 338-343.
- <sup>11</sup> Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.
- <sup>12</sup> Mickolus, *Transnational Terrorism: A Chronology of Events, 1968-1979*, 570-573.
- <sup>13</sup> Established in 1973 by Sabri al-Banna, formerly of Fatah (see Yossi Melman, *The Master Terrorist: The True Story of Abu-Nidal* (1986) New York: Adama Books).
- <sup>14</sup> The term used to refer to widespread Palestinian rioting and civil unrest in 1987 and 2001.
- <sup>15</sup> Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami al-Filastini. Established in 1980 (see Steven Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islam in the US* (2006) New York: Prometheus Books, 236-272).
- <sup>16</sup> Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyah- 'The Islamic Resistance Movement.' Formed in 1987 (Ibid, 179-207).
- <sup>17</sup> Established in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna (Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 6-7).
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, 1-24.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, 26.
- <sup>20</sup> Joseph Wheatley and Clark McCauley, "Losing your Audience: Desistance from Terrorism in Egypt after Luxor" (2008) *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 1:3, 250-268.
- <sup>21</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 32-33.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, 33-34.
- <sup>23</sup> For an account of events 'on the ground' in the revolution, see Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East* (2005) London: Alfred A. Knopf, 92-138.
- <sup>24</sup> 'God's Party.' See Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'Allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (1997) Houndmills: MacMillan Press Ltd.
- <sup>25</sup> The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon was in fact prompted by the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London, and was directed against the Lebanese PLO headquarters (although the attack in London was later attributed to terrorists acting for Abu Nidal). See Melman, *The Master Terrorist*; Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A Gun For Hire* (1992) New York: Random House, 222-227.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid; Chaliand & Blin, 'From 1968 to Radical Islam'.
- <sup>27</sup> Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 290-325.
- <sup>28</sup> Islamic fighters.
- <sup>29</sup> Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 290-325.
- <sup>30</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda, Global Network of Terror*, 4.
- <sup>31</sup> Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 290-325.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid; Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 25-59.



- <sup>33</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 25-59; AIVD, *Recruitment for Jihad in the Netherlands: From Incident to Trend* (2002) The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service, 24-25.
- <sup>34</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 44.
- <sup>35</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda, Global Network of Terror*, 5.
- <sup>36</sup> Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (2003) Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 3-4.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Active in Indian controlled Jammu and Kashmir since the mid 1990's, LeT is the armed wing of the Pakistan-based religious organization, Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), formed in 1989 (Ibid, 295; "Terrorist Organization Profile: Lashkar-e-Taiba" (2008) START website <[http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=66](http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=66)> at January 12, 2009).
- <sup>39</sup> Formed in 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar (Ibid, 294; "Terrorist Organization Profile: Jaish-e-Mohammad" (2008) START website <[http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=58](http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=58)> at January 12, 2009).
- <sup>40</sup> As one mujahedin, Sabri Ibrahim al'Attar, stated on trial, "...after the signing of the Dayton peace agreement, we the Arabs felt that our stay in Bosnia was not desirable anymore...we were compelled to flee to Kosovo" (Evan Kohlmann, *Al Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (2004), Oxford: Berg, 200).
- <sup>41</sup> See Kejda Mulaj, "Resisting an Oppressive Regime: The Case of Kosovo Liberation Army" (2008) *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31:12, 1103-1119.
- <sup>42</sup> See Cerwyn Moore & Paul Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31:5, 412-433.
- <sup>43</sup> Perhaps the most notable figure who was unsuccessful in his attempt to join the mujahedin in Chechnya was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, 'mastermind' of the 9/11 attacks. The Hamburg pilots led by Mohamed Atta had also desired to go to Chechnya. (See The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission: Final Report of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against The United States: Official Government Edition* (2004) US Government Printing Office, 149, 165 <<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/pdf/fullreport.pdf>> at October 15, 2007).
- Reasons for difficulty in joining foreign fighters in Chechnya included tight border security and difficult terrain, as well as the vetting procedure involved; volunteers had to be deemed of appropriate military experience and training. Furthermore, foreign mujahedin were discouraged after 1999 as they were surplus to requirement (Moore & Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya").
- <sup>44</sup> It must also be stated, however, that the 'imported' mujahedin were never unanimously popular, and their presence often constituted a delicate political situation, (David Gray & Fred Tafoya, 'Bosnia's 'Jihad' and the Development of Al Qaida: Past Present, and Future' (2008) *Research Journal of International Studies*, 7: 67-81; Kohlmann, *Al Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 107-124).
- <sup>45</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 40-41.
- <sup>46</sup> Groupe Islamique Armé.
- <sup>47</sup> The GIA was supported by global mujahedin up until 1996 when support was formally withdrawn in the wake of the Algerian group's wantonly murderous tactics against their own civilian population. The somewhat more restrained Salafist Group for Preaching & Combat (GSPC) then emerged as the premier Algerian Islamist group aligned with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda (see Philippe Migaux "The Roots of Islamic Radicalism"). The GSPC went on to change its name to 'al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb' (AQIM) in January 2007 in light of its continued affinity with the 'parent' organisation and 'brand-name' (see Guido Steinberg & Isabelle Werenfels 'Between the 'Near' and the 'Far' Enemy: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb' *Mediterranean Politics*, 12:3, 407-413).
- <sup>48</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.
- <sup>49</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (2006) New York: Prometheus Books, 215-231.
- <sup>50</sup> Migaux "The Roots of Islamic Radicalism", 302-304.
- <sup>51</sup> Moore & Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya".
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid, 422; Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 172-78, 201-212.
- <sup>53</sup> Kohlmann, *Al Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 19.
- <sup>54</sup> It is also crucial to observe here that although foreign Islamists were involved in these conflicts to varying extents, their connections to al-Qaeda and bin Laden were not always direct, and local jihadis remained in charge of their respective struggles. Moreover, the influence that globally oriented Salafi volunteers have had in the context of local warzones has sometimes been overinflated (Moore & Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya"). This does not, however, detract from the symbolic and



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motivational importance of these wars, nor from the impact that veteran mujahedin appear to have had in stimulating terrorist activity in the West.

<sup>55</sup> *United States vs. Usama bin Laden et al*, United States District Court Southern District of New York, S (10) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda, Global Network of Terror*, 29-31.

<sup>57</sup> Steven Emerson, *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us* (2002) New York: Free Press, 38-39; *United States vs. Usama bin Laden et al*, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda, Global Network of Terror*, 29-31.

<sup>59</sup> The 'Islamist' element of the 1993 WTC bombing was significant enough to regard it as a direct predecessor of more recent terrorist attacks, although references to religion appear to have been far less pronounced than they are now. In a letter accredited to one of the perpetrators, Nidal Ayyad, posted to the New York Times four days after the bombing, responsibility for the attack was claimed in the name of the 'Liberation Army Fifth Battalion,' with stated demands that "the United States stop "all military, economical and political aids to Israel"; that it end diplomatic relations with Israel, and that it refrain from interference "with any of the Middle East countries interior affairs."" (Alison Mitchell, 'Letter Explained Motive in Bombing, Officials Now Say' *The New York Times*, (New York) 28 March 1993 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CEEDD1E31F93BA15750C0A965958260>> at December 26, 2007).

'Religious,' as opposed to strictly nationalistic or other motives appear to be inferred based upon the group's involvement with the 'Blind Sheikh' Omar Abdel Rahman –leader of the Egyptian, jihadist Gamaa' Islamiyah organisation- as well as their associations with several Islamist terrorist groups (see 'Liberation Army Fifth Battalion' MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4113>> at December 26, 2007).

It has also been reported that group members excluding the 'mastermind,' Ramzi Yousef, expressed religious motivations. However Yousef "appears to have been a secular terrorist who mobilized others by playing on their religious zeal" (John Parachini, "The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)" in Jonathan Tucker, (ed.) *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons*, (2000) MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 185-206, p.203.

<sup>60</sup> Dave Williams 'The Bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York City' (1998) *International Criminal Police Review*, 469-471; reproduced in *Politics of the "War on Terrorism"*; <<http://www.learnworld.com/COURSES/P72/P72.2002.Q4.ReaderOne.pdf>> at December 11, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> See *United States vs. Rahman et al*. (1999) United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 189 F.3d 88 <<http://www.texascollaborative.org/SilverblattModule/US-v-Rahman.pdf>> at December 15, 2007.

<sup>62</sup> Steven Emerson "The Other Fundamentalists" p.40 cited in Parachini, "The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)" p.196.

<sup>63</sup> Parachini, "The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)" p.197; Blumenthal et al "The Bombing: Retracing the Steps..."

<sup>64</sup> The network itself had begun to be organised in 1989 –preceding Rahman's arrival in 1990- and had come under FBI surveillance at that time (*United States vs. Rahman et al*. p.5).

<sup>65</sup> Parachini, "The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)"; Ralph Blumenthal, Robert Hanley, Alison Mitchell, Joseph Treaster & Mary Tabor "The Bombing: Retracing the Steps –A Special Report; Fitting the Pieces of Terrorism- Accounts Reconstruct Planning of Trade Center Explosion" *The New York Times* (New York) May 26, 1993 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE5DA163CF935A15756C0A965958260>> at June 6, 2008.

<sup>66</sup> See Joseph Fried "Sheik Sentenced to Life in Prison in Bombing Plot" *The New York Times* (New York) January 18, 1996 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0DE4DF1E39F93BA25752C0A960958260&sec=&pon=&pagewanted=all>> at June 23, 2008; *United States vs. Rahman et al*.

<sup>67</sup> The Algerian Islamic Salvation Front party.

<sup>68</sup> Philippe Migaux "The Roots of Islamic Radicalism".

<sup>69</sup> The same date that Ramzi Yousef, of the first World Trade Centre attack, detonated a bomb on board an aircraft flying from Manila to Tokyo, killing a Japanese passenger (Philippe Migaux "Al Qaeda" in Gérard Chaliand & Arnaud Blin (eds) *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al-Qaeda*, 314-348, p.322).

<sup>70</sup> Philippe Migaux "The Roots of Islamic Radicalism".



- <sup>71</sup> Ibid. Note, however, that the exact number of bombs and casualties varies slightly according to the source (see for example Jeremy Shapiro & Bénédicte Suzan “The French Experience of Counter-Terrorism” (2003) *Survival*, 45:1, 67-98).
- <sup>72</sup> Jon Boyle “France Convicts Algerian of Paris Bombings” *The Herald Sun* (Australia) October 27, 2007 <<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22657149-5005961,00.html>> at June 13, 2008.
- <sup>73</sup> See Philippe Migaux “The Roots of Islamic Radicalism”.
- <sup>74</sup> Kelkal was directly aided in the attacks by two Algerians, Boualem Bensaid and Smain Ait Belkacem (convicted in 1998 and again in 2002). The plot was financed by Rachid Ramda, based in London (convicted in 2006 and 2007), and some 36 others provided logistical support under Ali Touchent aka Tarek. (See Craig Whitney “40 on Trial in Paris on Charges of Aiding ‘95 Algerian Bombers” *The New York Times* (New York) November 27, 1997 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9906E6DD153AF934A15752C1A961958260>> at June 6, 2008; Alan Riding “French Court Sentences 2 for Role in 1995 Bombings That Killed 8” *The New York Times* (New York) November 1, 2002 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B06EFDD1E3FF932A35752C1A9649C8B63>> at June 13, 2008; Boyle “France Convicts Algerian of Paris Bombings”).
- <sup>75</sup> Nick Fraser “How to Kill an Arab” (1998) *Critical Quarterly*, 40:3, 2-19.
- <sup>76</sup> Whitney “40 on Trial in Paris on Charges of Aiding ‘95 Algerian Bombers”.
- <sup>77</sup> “36 Islamic Militants Sentenced in France” *The New York Times* (New York) February 19, 1998 <[http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980CEFDD123FF93AA25751C0A96E958260&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/S/Sentences%20\(Criminal\)](http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980CEFDD123FF93AA25751C0A96E958260&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/S/Sentences%20(Criminal))> at June 23, 2008; Riding “French Court Sentences 2 for Role in 1995 Bombings That Killed 8”.
- <sup>78</sup> Riding “French Court Sentences 2 for Role in 1995 Bombings That Killed 8”.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>80</sup> Craig Whitlock “Trial of French Islamic Radical Sheds Light on Converts’ Role” *The Washington Post* (Washington) January 1, 2006 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/31/AR2005123101056.html>> at June 13, 2008.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 44-45; Emerson, *American Jihad*, 127-158.
- <sup>83</sup> See, e.g. William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars* (2002) Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan; Philippe Migaux, ‘Al Qaeda’; Walter Laqueur, *No End to War*, 49-70.
- <sup>84</sup> Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Lands of the Two Holy Places”.
- <sup>85</sup> The Taliban consistently ignored requests by the United States to hand bin Laden over, incurring heavy international sanctions in 1999, ultimately, in consequence, falling from power following the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 (Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 248-250).
- <sup>86</sup> *United vs. Usama bin Laden et al.* 17-18, 21-22.
- <sup>87</sup> Edward Mickolus & Susan Simmons, *Terrorism, 1996-2001: A Chronology, Vol.1* (2002) Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 137.
- <sup>88</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, emir of the Jihad Group in Egypt, Abu-Yasir Rifa’i Ahmad Taha of the Egyptian Islamic Group, Sheikh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan, and Fazlur Rahman, emir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.
- <sup>89</sup> Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu-Yasir Rifa’i Taha, Sheikh Mir Hamza, & Fazlur Rahman “Jihad against Jews and Crusaders” *World Islamic Front Statement*, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1998 <<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>> at January 4, 2009.
- <sup>90</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam” (2005) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 28, 75-97.
- <sup>91</sup> Jean-Louis Bruguière “Terrorism: Threat and Responses” Occasional Paper Series, No.31, October 2001 <<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/brj03/brj03.pdf>> at June 13, 2008.
- <sup>92</sup> See Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 99-103.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid; Graeme Hamilton “Passport Order Infringes Rights of Former Terrorist: Court” *National Post* (Canada) March 13, 2008 <<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=2d443a84-fb4d-45ba-8afd-f11cd6bf65d3&k=30863>> at January 5, 2009.
- <sup>94</sup> For full details of Ressaam’s path into terrorism and how the ‘Millenium Plot’ developed, see Hal Bernton, Mike Carter, David Heath & James Neff “The Terrorist Within: The Story Behind One Man’s Holy War Against America” *The Seattle Times*, June 23-July 7, 2002 <<http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/news/nation-world/terroristwithin/>> at October 27, 2007.
- <sup>95</sup> Note that by this time the main Algerian Islamist terrorist organisation was the GSPC, which had been formed in 1998 following the descent of the GIA into seemingly unfocussed violence and criminality.



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The GSPC maintained links to al-Qaeda, and as always, individuals affiliated with these, and other, organisations were able to interact and accommodate each other in numerous countries around the world.

<sup>96</sup> See *United States vs. Abu Doha* (2001) United States Southern District of New York, Sealed Complaint, July 2nd, 2001

<<http://news.corporate.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/abudoha/usabudoha70201cmpt.pdf>> at January 5, 2009; Sean O'Neill "Architect of Terror Held in British Jail Cell" *The Telegraph* (London) January 9, 2003 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1418311/Architect-of-terror-held-in-British-jail-cell.html>> at January 5, 2009; John Burns "UK Releases 2<sup>nd</sup> Suspect Linked to bin Laden" *International Herald Tribune*, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 <<http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/07/03/europe/terror.php>> at January 5, 2009.

<sup>97</sup> As part of his cooperation under arrest, Ressam later claimed to know that the Strasbourg-based Algerians intended to attack US, French and Israeli targets outside Germany (Vidino *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 154).

<sup>98</sup> See Vidino *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 147-170.

<sup>99</sup> Petter Nesser, "Jihad in Europe: Recruitment for Terrorist Cells in Europe" (2006) in *Paths to Global Jihad: Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terror Networks* (Proceedings from a Norwegian Defence Research Establishment seminar, Oslo, 15 March 2006) 2-21, p.14

<<http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/testimony/41.pdf>> at May 26, 2009.

<sup>100</sup> The cell-leader, Mohammed Bensakhria, aka Meliani, was captured much later and sentenced along with nine others facing terrorism charges in December 2004 (Vidino *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 147-170).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 157-158.

<sup>104</sup> See *The 9/11 Commission Report*.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> *United States vs. Usama bin Laden et al.* 19-20.

<sup>107</sup> Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 251-283.

<sup>108</sup> More recently the Taliban has been resurgent, regaining control over areas of Afghanistan, even extending its influence into Pakistan as well. Meanwhile core elements of al-Qaeda are thought to be rejuvenating in the tribal regions of North West Pakistan, which border into Afghanistan (see Susanne Koelbl & Gabor Steingart, "Tribal Areas and Terrorists: The Battle for Control of Pakistan" *Spiegel Online International*, May 4, 2009 <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,622759,00.html>> at May 9, 2009).

<sup>109</sup> Between September 2001 and June 2002, approximately \$115 million of suspected terrorist assets had been seized worldwide, although the terrorists continue to be resourceful in raising funds ("Financing Islamist Terrorism" (2003) *Strategic Comments*, 9:10, 1-2).

<sup>110</sup> Alain Grignard "The Islamist Networks in Belgium: Between Nationalism and Globalisation" in Coolsaet (ed.) *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*, 85-93; Zachary Johnson "Chronology: The Plots" *Frontline*

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/special/cron.html>> at June 18, 2008.

<sup>111</sup> Vidino *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 190.

<sup>112</sup> For example, Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (2007) New York: New York City Police Department.

<sup>113</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat* (2006) *The Hague:*

*General Intelligence and Security Service*.

<sup>114</sup> Petter Nesser ("Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe 1994-2007: Planned, Prepared, and Executed Terrorist Attacks" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2008) 31:10, 924-926) provides a slightly more inclusive chronology of events in Europe including 20 plots or alleged plots not included here where charges were often dropped. 5 European cases resulting in convictions not covered by Nesser were included. The vast majority of significant cases have been included where there is sufficient information available to deem them credible (e.g. cases where plans appear to have been sufficiently developed, involving possession of weaponry/ explosives, materials to be used in planning specific attacks, and – especially- where convictions took place).

<sup>115</sup> Bruce Hoffman, "The Changing Face of Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism" (2004) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27: 549-560, 549.

<sup>116</sup> See Nesser "Jihadism in Western Europe After the Invasion of Iraq"; Vidino *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 291-335

<sup>117</sup> For example, Hoffman "The Changing Face of Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism"; Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 29-46.



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- <sup>118</sup> Hoffman, “The Changing Face of Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism” 552.
- <sup>119</sup> Javier Jordan, Fernando Mañas & Nicola Horsburgh “Strengths and Weaknesses of Grassroot Jihadist Networks: The Madrid Bombings” (2008) *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31:1 17-39.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>121</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, “The Hofstad Group: The New Face of Terrorist Networks in Europe” (2007) *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30:7, 579-592.
- <sup>122</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005* (2006) London: The Stationery Office, 20-21, 23.
- <sup>123</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (2005) Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 151.
- <sup>124</sup> See Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe*, 103-131.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>126</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 38.
- <sup>127</sup> It should be noted, however, that this description of relations between al-Qaeda and other terrorist organisations or movements is rather generalised and simplistic. In reality, each movement has its own set of changing internal dynamics, receptivity to global jihad has been mixed, and reasons for collaboration are not limited to ideological agreement. The nature of any exchange (of resources, ideas, etc), therefore depends upon the individual points of contact between organisations within a particular context at a certain point in time. For example, it has been suggested that from the late 1990’s until 2002/2003 the leadership of JI tended to come from the geographical region ‘Mantiqi 1’, and were enthused by the al-Qaeda ideology. However, subsequent to the arrest or inactivity of these members, a new, seemingly more locally rather than globally, focussed leadership from Mantiqi 2 has emerged (Sidney Jones, “The Changing Nature of Jemaah Islamiyah” (2005) *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 59:2, 169-178).
- <sup>128</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 51.
- <sup>129</sup> See Stewart Bell, *The Martyr’s Oath: The Apprenticeship of a Homegrown Terrorist* (2005) Toronto: John Wiley & Sons.
- <sup>130</sup> The Associated Press “Philippine Authorities Arrest Three Middle Eastern Nationals Allegedly Plotting to Bomb Embassies” *The Jakarta Post*, March 7, 2008  
<<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/03/06/philippine-authorities-arrest-3-middle-eastern-nationals-allegedly-plotting-bomb-emb>> at May 9, 2009.
- <sup>131</sup> “Terrorist Organization Profile: al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers” (2008) START website <[http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=4416](http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4416)> at January 12, 2009.
- <sup>132</sup> “Terrorist Organization Profile: al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula” (2008) START website <[http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=4470](http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4470)> at January 12, 2009.
- <sup>133</sup> “Terrorist Organization Profile: al-Qaeda” (2008) START website <[http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=6](http://www.start.umd.edu/data/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=6)> at January 12, 2009.
- <sup>134</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 46-47.
- <sup>135</sup> Jones, “The Changing Nature of Jemaah Islamiyah”.
- <sup>136</sup> Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 324-325; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 144-146.
- <sup>137</sup> In the words of one online Islamist, “We are tired of analysts who claim al-Qaeda will be terminated soon. Don’t they have a sensible man to admit that al-Qaeda won in every field of confrontation?” (see Abdoul Hameed Bakier, “Al-Qaeda Outlines its Strategy Seven Years After 9/11” (2008) *Terrorism Focus*, 5:35  
[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=5191&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=246&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=5191&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=246&no_cache=1) at January 21, 2009).
- <sup>138</sup> Cited in Hoffman, “The Global Terrorist Threat: Is Al-Qaeda on the Run or on the March?” 53.
- <sup>139</sup> Hoffman, “The Global Terrorist Threat: Is Al-Qaeda on the Run or on the March?” 53.
- <sup>140</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 91.
- <sup>141</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri cited in Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (2004) Alexandria, VA: Brassey’s, xxi; cited in Hoffman, “The Changing Face of Al-Qaeda”, 554.
- <sup>142</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005* (2006) United States Department of State publication 11324, April, 2006, 13.
- <sup>143</sup> Ibid, 14.
- <sup>144</sup> Indeed, certain as yet unconfirmed reports suggest this process has begun (see Kathryn Haahr, “New Reports Allege Foreign Fighters in Iraq Returning to Europe” (2006) *Terrorism Focus*, 3:20, 2-3).
- <sup>145</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 48-50; 125-146.
- <sup>146</sup> Nesser, “Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe 1994-2007”.



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- <sup>147</sup> Ibid, 925.
- <sup>148</sup> Nesser “Jihadism in Western Europe After the Invasion of Iraq”.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>150</sup> Jordan et al “Strengths and Weaknesses of Grassroot Jihadist Networks: The Madrid Bombings” 28.
- <sup>151</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*.
- <sup>152</sup> Ibid, 44.
- <sup>153</sup> See Emerson, *Jihad Inc*, 466-484.
- <sup>154</sup> See Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 119-120; Taarnby Jensen, *Jihad in Denmark*, 44-47; “Three Jailed for Inciting Terror” *BBC News*, July 5, 2007 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/6273732.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6273732.stm)> at July 8, 2008.
- <sup>155</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 111.
- <sup>156</sup> Ibid, 39, 47; Ibid, 111-113.
- <sup>157</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, “Current Trends in Jihadi Networks in Europe” 9.



**Chapter 4**  
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## **Overview**

Having reviewed key historical developments it is necessary to discuss how Islamist terrorism operates in more detail. This involves an overview of explanations for terrorism (why individuals choose to take part in ‘the jihad’) and an examination of key processes including radicalisation and operational functioning (covered in more detail in the next chapter).

Individual, societal, and social explanations must all be considered in trying to understand why and how terrorism occurs. Individual grievances, adversity and inequalities in society as well as peer-group dynamics are all important. Almost universally, issues of social identity underlie motivational processes. Yet even with an understanding of the range of different factors that may drive people towards joining a terrorist group, our ability to predict where and when terrorism will occur, and who will be involved, is limited.



#### **4. Explaining Terrorism**

Explanations for why terrorism occurs can be broadly grouped into three interrelated and overlapping categories: individual, societal, and social.<sup>1</sup>

#### **4.1 Individual Explanations**

##### **4.1.1 Psychopathology**

Individual explanations have been based on the assumption that there is something different about people who become terrorists in comparison to the ‘normal’ population. Such approaches have generally viewed terrorist behaviour as the result of some traumatic experience, usually during childhood or adolescence, resulting in narcissistic, paranoid, authoritarian or psychopathic personality disorders, leading to grandiose violent behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

However, terrorist activity is most often a group activity and mental illness could jeopardise terrorist groups’ need for secrecy and compromise group functioning.<sup>3</sup> Psychometric testing and interviews with terrorists have lead to the realisation that they “do not seem to be characterised by a unique set of psychological traits or pathologies”,<sup>4</sup> they are not “dysfunctional”,<sup>5</sup> and in the words of Post, a former advocate of the ‘medical model’, “[t]he concepts of abnormality or psychopathology are not useful in understanding terrorist psychology and behaviour”.<sup>6</sup>

Specifically with regards to Islamist terrorism, Sageman found that of 61 terrorists for whom there was some data within a sample of ‘global mujahedin’ only 4 showed any signs of childhood conduct disorder, and there was no evidence that their childhoods were particularly traumatic.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore there was no evidence, with one or two exceptions, of any symptoms of paranoid, authoritarian, or other personality disorders. They did not appear to be socially inept (many had strong friendships with each other) and 83 of 114 were married,<sup>8</sup> which does not rule out sexual frustration as a potentially exacerbating factor, but at least tentatively refutes this as a key motivator. Based on a sample of European-based Islamist terrorists,<sup>9</sup> Bakker<sup>10</sup> found evidence of “mental illness” in 5% -significantly higher than Sageman’s 1%- but qualified that over a third of those became ‘ill’ *after* their arrest.<sup>11</sup> Bakker also found that of 66 terrorists for whom there was available data, 47 were married or engaged (59% to Sageman’s 73%).<sup>12</sup> Overall, despite emphasising differences between the two samples (see below) Bakker concluded that “[b]asically, they seem to live ‘normal’ lives that look similar to



those of most within their communities”.<sup>13</sup> Analysis by Sageman of an updated sample of over 500 Islamist terrorists confirms that with few exceptions, individual pathologies or disorders are not present.<sup>14</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Personal Trauma**

Individual explanations for involvement in terrorism nevertheless persist in various forms. Rather than being the outcome of an innate character flaw or traumatic childhood, people may turn to terrorism as the direct result of painful experiences or personal difficulties in adulthood. For example, in a study of Chechen suicide terrorism, Speckhard and Ahkmedova found “overwhelming evidence that the experience of extreme traumas and bereavement within one’s inner circle of family and friends contributed to glaring psychological vulnerabilities to a terrorist ideology promoting martyrdom”.<sup>15</sup> Thus terrorism became a cathartic form of revenge. Nevertheless, as these authors acknowledge, most people who have experienced victimisation or loss of family at the hands of an oppressive ruling force do not become terrorists. Conversely some people who do become terrorists have not experienced trauma, i.e. this is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition. Moreover, other factors were involved. Specifically, individuals needed exposure to a legitimising ideology and to an organisation that encouraged and made acts of terrorism practically possible for them.

As already mentioned, neither Sageman nor Bakker found evidence of a great deal of personal anguish in the lives of global or European mujahedin. Sageman did find individual social circumstances to be important. 70% of individuals in the study had joined the jihad in a foreign country, cut off from family and friends, while another 14% were second generation immigrants in the West,<sup>16</sup> perhaps feeling ‘lost’, out of touch with their origins and ill at ease in their host society.<sup>17</sup> Hence he concluded that “before they joined the jihad, the prospective mujahedin were socially and spiritually alienated and probably in some form of distress”.<sup>18</sup> This is reminiscent of Post’s observation nearly twenty years earlier that “[t]he lives of the terrorist before joining [the group] were characterised by social isolation and personal failure. For these lonely and alienated individuals from the margins of society the terrorist group was to become the family they never had”.<sup>19</sup> Focussing on Islamist terrorists in Europe (these “distressed” second or third generation immigrants) Nesser states that “they come across as quite “normal”, but somehow troubled young adults,” who were often irreligious prior to



involvement with Islamists, took drugs and were involved in petty crime, and/or had experienced racism, “persecution” by authorities, or personal crises such as divorce or death in the family.<sup>20</sup> Arguably, such ‘unconventional’ lifestyles and apparent added difficulty in dealing with normal adversity in life are the result of living in the ‘cultural limbo’ of being born into a diaspora community, to which Sageman refers (see ‘Social Explanations’ below).

The fact remains, however, that of the millions of people who experience trauma, adversity, and social or cultural ‘uprootedness’, those who become terrorists represent an infinitesimal minority. At the same time, it has by no means been clearly established that *all* terrorists have suffered or are ill at ease in their country of residence. In fact many may have lived quite comfortable or even privileged lives, come from loving –and still living- families, and appear to be integrated into society. For Bakker’s European sample (mostly second or third generation immigrants) 80% radicalised in their country of residence, “not far from their families and friends, and in many ways were at home in the countries of recruitment”.<sup>21</sup> Obvious individual adversity thus appears to be a risk factor to involvement in terrorism, but it is not sufficient, and may not be necessary. Of course feelings of discontent or disillusionment with one’s life-circumstances may not always manifest themselves in outwardly noticeable ways; therefore ‘alienation’ theories may not be falsifiable.



## **4.2 Societal Explanations**

### **4.2.1 Root Causes**

Societal explanations for why terrorism occurs often highlight so called ‘root causes’ such as civil war, state oppression, restricted civil liberties, poverty, and lack of educational and occupational opportunities. According to the frustration-aggression hypothesis, these conditions, broadly speaking, constitute deprivation, which causes frustration and aggression. This formula is not universal, but appears most likely to hold true when people are deprived of *expected* sources of gratification, and when they believe that the deprivation is deliberate and *unjust*.<sup>22</sup> This at first appears to be an appealing argument. As a form of asymmetric warfare, terrorism seems to represent the poor man’s (quite possibly rational) struggle against superior might using limited resources. Terrorism has also thrived in developing countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. But in contradiction to this argument terrorism throughout history has also occurred in financially wealthy countries whilst at the same time not occurring in poorer, unstable countries that would appear to be more at risk. The advent of HGIT in the West punctuates this very point.

Moreover, at the individual level, clear relationships between experienced deprivation and terrorism have not been established. For example, Krueger and Maleckova found that public support for terrorism in the West Bank and Gaza did not decrease with higher education and living standards; participation in Hizballah in Lebanon was positively associated with living above the poverty line and having a secondary school education; and Israelis who attacked Palestinians in the 1980’s were overwhelmingly from high-paying occupations.<sup>23</sup> These authors subsequently suggest that a certain level of economic well-being and education may in fact increase likelihood of receptivity to terrorist ideology, as together they afford the luxury of being concerned with more than mere subsistence, and increase political awareness.<sup>24</sup>

Sageman’s findings for global jihadis from around the world indicate that the socioeconomic status of individuals varies geographically and temporally;<sup>25</sup> the Islamist movement was initiated in the 1980’s by mostly well-off, often highly educated individuals from upper-class backgrounds in the Middle East. It was continued by mostly middle class Saudis and Muslim expatriates, who had often begun if not completed tertiary education in the 1990’s; and since 2003 has consisted of a mix of middle and lower-class, less well educated, second or third generation immigrants and



converts based in Europe.<sup>26</sup> Bakkers’s European sample supports this: while 54% were lower class, a further 42% were middle class and only 4% were upper class; and from 48 people for whom there were data, 88% had completed secondary education and 31% had completed university.<sup>27</sup> Despite a larger contingent of lower class individuals as a reflection of the circumstances of Muslim immigrant populations in Europe,<sup>28</sup> only 15% of Bakker’s sample was unemployed, and the continued participation of a large proportion of middle class and some upper class individuals refutes the significance of absolute deprivation.

#### **4.2.2 Relative Deprivation**

*Relative* deprivation is a more robust concept for explaining terrorism, especially when combined with vicarious perceptions of deprivation or persecution.<sup>29</sup> Rather than being deprived in absolute terms, relative deprivation takes into account the importance of overall well-being in comparison to another social group or desired status. In addition, the vicarious element of relative deprivation allows for feelings of injustice on behalf of social group(s), which the perceiver feels they belong to and represent. Hence the likes of bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, who come from privileged backgrounds, are driven by the suffering of other Muslims (their ‘People’). The same motives serve to motivate Islamists the world over from all social classes, and a common theme in accounts of radicalisation (see below) involves strong emotional responses to atrocities inflicted upon Muslims, which, in the words of bin Laden, “send shivers in the body and shake the conscience”.<sup>30</sup>

Those terrorists who are less well off or deprived may at the same time feel embittered by their own state of affairs in relation to another social group. So for home-grown second generation Islamists living in Europe and elsewhere, the fact that they are of similar standing to others in their community is less important than the fact that they feel discriminated against in relation to native Europeans, and excluded from political process. Statements made by Islamists themselves have confirmed this. For example, Mohammed Bouyeri –the killer of Theo van Gogh- left a note on van Gogh’s body expressing outrage at domestic Dutch policy towards Muslims, including proposed ‘screening’ measures for Muslim immigrants, which were viewed as part of a Jewish conspiracy.<sup>31</sup>



Relative deprivation thus appears to be an important factor in beginning to explain terrorist motivations. However, it shares the same shortcoming as other societal (and indeed most) explanations for terrorism, which is that there are more exceptions to the rule than examples which seem to confirm it, i.e. many more people who experience the same conditions but do not turn to terrorism. It may be necessary but not sufficient, and is too vague a concept to have a great deal of predictive power.<sup>32</sup>



### **4.3 Social Explanations**

Individual and societal explanations are geared towards answering questions about *who* terrorists are and *why* they do what they do. Social explanations place more emphasis on studying *how* people become involved in terrorism. The level of analysis thus shifts away from the individual or society to the context of the immediate social group and the types of interaction which take place among group members. This is useful for avoiding the idiosyncrasy of individual approaches and the generality of societal approaches.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the validity of taking a social perspective is further reinforced by the fact that terrorism is “undeniably a group process”,<sup>34</sup> both as a product of the complexity of tasks, and the importance of social support systems.<sup>35</sup> Social influence, identity and structure are all examined, helping to illuminate group conditions and social circumstances which facilitate pathways into terrorism.

#### **4.3.1 Social Influence**

##### ***Brainwashing***

For most people, it is unimaginable to conceive how others can become terrorists, especially if the person is a relative or someone that they know. Because of this, it is tempting to believe that these people are coerced in some way. The most extreme versions of this hold that vulnerable young men are ‘brainwashed’ either by their own families from birth, or by insidious preachers during adolescence or early adulthood.

“‘Ask from us blood, We will drench you’ ... ‘When I wander into Jerusalem I’ll turn into a feda’ye [warrior who sacrifices himself], In battledress, In battledress, In battledress’” –Chant recited by Palestinian school children.<sup>36</sup>

Such examples of indoctrination of children for martyrdom in Palestine led Burdman to conclude that “[t]he hatred and urge to violence [there] is extremely widespread resulting from a deliberate, carefully planned, well orchestrated campaign drawing on strongly held cultural belief systems and a variety of deep-seated psychological mechanisms”.<sup>37</sup> Instances like these of early socialisation lend support to the brainwashing hypothesis. However, they are very context-specific. The assumption has been that the pathways of global Islamist terrorists (distinct to nationally-focussed



Palestinian terrorists) have been facilitated via life-long adherence to fundamentalist Islam and radical ideology. This assumption is not supported by the data. Sageman found that of 137 terrorists, only 23 (17%) had attended a religious school, and half of this number were Southeast Asians who had attended Islamic boarding schools run by Jemaah Islamiyah. The sample also included 33 'Core Arabs', many of whom grew up in Saudi Arabia where even secular schools include religious instruction; if they are included in the religious category, the figure becomes 41%.<sup>38</sup> Of the Maghreb Arabs (many of whom were based in Europe) not a single one attended a religious school. Overall, of 108 terrorists, 53 (49%) were described as religious in childhood. In the updated sample, about a quarter had been very religious when young, compared to two thirds secular.<sup>39</sup>

Bakker found similarly little evidence of religion in childhood; 14 of 50 (28%) had converted from Christianity (with one case of prior Hinduism); 25 (50%) had secular upbringings; and 11 (22%) had a religious childhood.<sup>40</sup> In terms of Sageman's waves of Islamist terrorism, about two thirds of the first wave –the founders and leaders of al-Qaeda- came from religious backgrounds; about a third of the second wave –those who joined in the 1990's while the camps in Afghanistan were still in operation- had been religious; and "only a very small minority" of the third –post-Iraq, often Western-based- wave were religious.<sup>41</sup> 97% of Sageman's original sample and 95% of Bakker's showed evidence of increased faith in Islam immediately prior to getting actively involved in terrorism.<sup>42</sup> These figures demonstrate that many Islamist terrorists have lead secular lives, and refute the idea that they become terrorists as a result of radical, religious brainwashing or lifelong socialisation. The increase in their religiousness may be more of a product of their involvement with radicals, rather than a cause of it, and in fact greater prior religious knowledge may increase the likelihood of critical assessment –and rejection- of Islamists' selective interpretation of the Quran.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Top-down vs. Bottom-up Influence***

Islamists are generally not raised into the jihad from birth, however, this does not rule out the potential importance of possibly persuasive or coercive social influence as part of the 'recruitment' process. Conventional understanding of terrorism posits that central to the growth of an organisation is a process of top-down recruitment. Hence 'vulnerable' individuals are actively persuaded and indoctrinated into the movement by



existing, experienced ‘recruiters’ on the lookout for potential new members. The recruitment process is not always so deliberate though. Both Sageman<sup>44</sup> and Bakker<sup>45</sup> found that initial involvement in Islamist terrorism was often facilitated by way of family and friends with terrorist associations.<sup>46</sup>

Friendships in general are often based on existing levels of homogeneity, which increase over time through shared knowledge and experience,<sup>47</sup> and peer groups are among the most powerful units of socialisation. Therefore, sustained contact with ‘connected’ extremists presents not only practical opportunities for involvement, but increases the likelihood that such opportunities will be desired.<sup>48</sup> In accordance with principles of differential association<sup>49</sup> and social learning theories,<sup>50</sup> pathways into terrorism can thus begin as a result of simple geographical and social proximity. The more that individuals then participate in radical social milieus, the more they become familiar with –and the more they come to subscribe to– the particular values and systems of social reward.<sup>51</sup> As highlighted by Weerman,<sup>52</sup> co-offending situations involve social exchange, and immaterial/expressive ‘goods’ can be just as important for participation in criminal groups as material/instrumental rewards. Equally this model can be applied to understanding groups of terrorists, for whom appreciation and acceptance are often significant motivations for initial and continued involvement. This makes recruitment a matter of ‘routine association’ and almost inadvertent, rather than deliberate, social influence.

“The freedom to be yourself, the freedom to be with a good friend, getting on well, a group, a tight-knit group. That was the most important thing.”

-Khaled Kelkal, leader of the group responsible for the series of bombings in France in 1995.<sup>53</sup>

Sageman<sup>54</sup> further discredited the active top-down recruitment model, presenting evidence of a bottom-up process of joining the ‘global Salafi jihad’. Small groups of friends such as the Hamburg 9/11 ‘cell’ often came together and spontaneously embraced Islamist ideology in the context of local radical mosques. Such groups seemed to become increasingly extreme in their views as a result of social isolation<sup>55</sup> and intra-group competition or ‘oneupsmanship,’ and eventually actively sought out someone in contact with a terrorist organisation needed for training and resources. Thus



potential new recruits were most crucially influenced by each other, and the deciding factor in whether they graduated to becoming terrorists was whether they encountered a terrorist ‘gatekeeper’ who could refer them to an organisation such as al-Qaeda.<sup>56</sup>

More recently, the self-reliance of Islamist terrorists has been increasingly emphasised. Since the destruction of al-Qaeda headquarters in Afghanistan it has been far more difficult for ‘wannabe’ terrorists to establish contact with a terrorist organisation. But due to the proliferation of material on the Internet such as bomb-making instructions and advice on counter-surveillance techniques, home-grown or ‘self-starting’ Islamist terrorists can now potentially develop attack capabilities in the absence of organisational support.<sup>57</sup> A good deal of current understanding of Islamist terrorism thus places far greater emphasis on bottom-up self-radicalisation versus top-down social influence.

Nevertheless, the influence of Islamist preachers, experienced mujahedin, and self-educated charismatic individuals should not be denied. The likes of Abu Hamza al-Masri and other preachers who ran radical mosques with connections to terrorist organisations have played important proselytising and facilitating roles.<sup>58</sup> These figures are often revered within radical subcultures and are likely to have fuelled the aspirations to jihad of scores of young men, whether through personal contact or via recorded media. Furthermore, studies of terrorist groups continue to highlight the importance of certain influential individuals.

Nesser identified distinct jihadi profiles or social roles amongst groups of terrorists, each with their own pathway into terrorism.<sup>59</sup> The majority of Islamists could be described as ‘drifters’ who become involved in terrorism through an almost unconscious process of social affiliation, allowing themselves to become swept along by their circumstances. ‘Misfit’ terrorists include those who are driven out of a search for salvation from troubled lives, or a sense of loyalty to friends. ‘Protégés’ are more politically minded than drifters or misfits but also tend to be young and impressionable, and greatly influenced by a mentor. Finally, mentors are described as ‘entrepreneurs’ who are generally a little older and are ideologically driven, religious, and politically minded leaders. Nesser found that entrepreneurs could be classified as active ‘recruiters’, and asserts that in their absence the jihadi movement would dwindle.<sup>60</sup> This echoes Gupta’s earlier argument (from an organisational-level perspective) that “while aspects of absolute and relative deprivation provide the necessary condition, the



presence of a political innovator provides us with the sufficient condition for producing collective movements in general, and terrorism, in particular”.<sup>61</sup>

In a study of eleven Islamist terror cells based throughout the Western world discovered between 2001 and 2006, Silber and Bhatt of the New York Police Department reached a similar conclusion.<sup>62</sup> For any group to progress to acts of terrorism, it appeared necessary for a ‘spiritual sanctioner’ to provide ideological justification, and for an operational leader to motivate, control and manage the group towards taking on a violent objective.

There remains some disagreement as to the relative importance of bottom-up and top-down patterns of influence within the world of Islamist terrorism. In reality both are likely to be important. There is clearly a large motivational drive from below in terms of individuals and groups of primarily young men absorbing propaganda and seeking involvement in jihadi warzones or terrorism at home. At the same time these people draw inspiration –either directly or indirectly- from influential figures within this subculture. Within groups, more articulate, ideologically driven members may spur their friends on, but are also likely to draw validation and encouragement from their comrades.

### ***Ideology & Behaviour***

It is important here to elucidate that just as processes of social influence are not one-directional, they are not entirely ideologically based either. The fact that there is a strong behavioural component to learning is sometimes overshadowed by an overly-cognitive focus upon ideological transformation as a basis for action. In the words of Becker, based on interviews with marijuana users, “the presence of a given kind of behaviour is the result of a sequence of social experiences during which the person acquires a conception of the meaning of the behaviour and perceptions and judgements of objects and situations, all of which make the activity possible and desirable. Thus, the motivation or disposition to engage in the activity is built up in the course of learning to engage in it, and does not antedate this learning process”.<sup>63</sup> As such “deviant motives actually develop in the course of experience with the deviant activity”.<sup>64</sup>

This reinforces the significance of social affiliation as a pathway to deviant involvement and is illustrative of mutual affect between behaviour and cognition. Sageman<sup>65</sup> also makes this point in drawing attention to the fact that terrorists are not



always aware of the main reasons for their actions: “[c]onsciousness, like solidarity and collective identity, does not always precede action, but may arise in the process of carrying out an action”.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, Horgan contends that “for the individual terrorist increasing psychological investment, or the process of becoming a more committed member, is shaped most remarkably through engagement in terrorist activities”.<sup>67</sup> Thus *thinking* often leads to *doing*, but *doing* also leads to *thinking*.<sup>68</sup> This fact is very often lost when contemplating pathways into terrorism, where the emphasis tends to be on the transfer of ideas through discussion or absorption of various forms of media. Becker’s analysis highlights how crucial it is to *interact* and get involved in discussions and activities for ideas to take hold, and is congruent with Nesser’s<sup>69</sup> contention that many, if not most people become Islamist terrorists through a process of ‘drift’ (see above).

By the same token, just as learning may be usefully conceptualised as an active process, so too may teaching and leadership.<sup>70</sup> Terrorist leaders tend to be described as calculating mentors or masterminds, who deliberately assemble groups of like-minded followers to carry out their fiendish plans.<sup>71</sup> However, mentoring and leadership at the group level in terrorism is still very poorly understood. Focussing upon the ideological influence that such figures seem to exercise, maintains a cognitive and pre-meditated interpretation of the way in which a group progresses towards acts of destruction. This may override the importance of interactive, behavioural and escalatory processes. Hence group support is vital for condoning and reinforcing leader behaviour, and advancement of group ideas and actions can be envisioned as both collaborative and cumulative. Moreover, leadership may often be characterised more as a form of behavioural instigation rather than deliberate coercion or direction. This has been observed in delinquent co-offending situations,<sup>72</sup> as well as the commission of adult armed robbery<sup>73</sup> and gang rape.<sup>74</sup> Of course the immediacy of offence circumstances is significantly different to longer-term, daily group interactions, but these observations are still relevant to any serious research into the nature of terrorist leadership.

Talk of a ‘leaderless jihad’ may make sense in terms of emphasising the lack of a formal organisational hierarchy and clearly established line of command and control. However, in terms of recognising the complexity of patterns of social influence, it seems prudent to acknowledge the significance of informal, subcultural status systems and mutual affect between players at the group level.



#### **4.3.2 Social Identity**

All terrorist groups have a distinct social identity and claim to represent a particular segment of society. For the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) it was Irish Catholics; for Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) it is the Basque people; and for Islamist terrorists it is the *Ummah* or worldwide community of (‘real’) Muslims. To class oneself as part of the represented social category is an almost universal precondition for involvement in terrorism. Being of a particular ethnic and/ or religious or social background facilitates interaction with similar others, which is the crucial first step for many eventual terrorists.<sup>75</sup> Initial identification is thus the gateway to sustained contact and socialisation. Simply put, “shared group identity...is the key to understanding the origins of shared beliefs”.<sup>76</sup>

Aspects of identity can be innate or inherited, but they are also subjective and dynamic. Hence the process of adopting a self-perceived identity that is congruent with that of terrorists is different for different people. For the original Islamists who grew up mainly in the Middle East and North Africa and became active in the 1970’s and ‘80’s, their sense of identity as Muslims fuelled their opposition with local government. Having experienced state oppression first hand, their eyes were opened to the plight of other Muslims whilst in Afghanistan. Recognition of Muslim peoples’ troubles around the world went hand in hand with the development of an increasingly globalised Islamic identity and the growing perception of an anti-Islamic identity in the ‘far enemy’ of the United States and its allies.

#### ***Identity ‘Crises’***

Taarnby<sup>77</sup> distinguishes between three types of candidates for contemporary Islamist terrorism in Europe. First, ‘outsiders’ and recent immigrants to the West from ‘Muslim’ countries are described as experiencing social isolation and a ‘crisis’ of identity; ‘cut off’ from their home and ill-at-ease in their host society, they find solace in the imagined worldwide Ummah portrayed by Islamists. These were the Islamist terrorists of the 1990’s. Today’s ‘home-grown’ terrorists fall into Taarnby’s next two categories: ‘second-generation immigrants’ are described as “superficially integrated” into Western society but in reality experience “deep resentment” against it.<sup>78</sup> Muslims born in the West who turn to Islamism reject their host culture due to experiences and perceptions of discrimination, racism and inequality.<sup>79</sup> They may also resent their



parents' apparent passivity in responding to such problems.<sup>80</sup> Islamism offers them a strong sense of belonging and an identity that enables them to fight perceived injustices.

In reality, the picture may be more complex than this. In a more thorough dissection of second-generation identity issues and terrorism, Stroink<sup>81</sup> suggests three different forms of identification. The first pattern is referred to as 'ingroup identification.' This involves second-'generationers' who in fact identify with Western culture but are seeking to 'improve' it, or are reacting against changes in Western society that they perceive to be threatening. 'Outgroup identification' characterises those who have never subjectively identified with the mainstream culture. This category includes people who are 'separated' from Western values and identify only with a 'heritage' culture into which they are socialised from a young age. Outgroup identification also includes people who do not identify with either the host or heritage cultures, and find a sense of self-esteem and stability in unambiguous and powerful radical identities. In either case, perceptions of 'identity exclusivity' or incompatibility between the different identities prevail. Finally, a pattern of 'transitional outgroup identification' is the case for second-generation immigrants who went through a phase of identifying with Western culture, but then appear to go through a process of rediscovering their ethnic/religious identity. Such journeys of rediscovery may be sparked by a need for distinctiveness, or by perceived exclusion, discrimination, or bullying.

Taarnby's final category includes 'Western converts to Islam', who make up a minority of Islamist terrorists. They tend to be 'marginalised' in some way and often show excessive zeal as a way of demonstrating their commitment.<sup>82</sup> Roy sub-divides converts into four types:<sup>83</sup> 1. 'Politicised rebels' attracted by the anti-establishment aspects of Islamism, 2. 'Religious nomads' who find Islamism through searching for the 'right' religion, 3. Former drug addicts and petty thieves who find a sense of belonging and an escape from a life of crime, and 4. Ethnic minorities who find rebuke against a racist society.



### *Theories of Identity and Terrorism*

The Islamist identity therefore has a broad appeal, offering solutions to a variety of problems (indeed it should also be emphasised that each of the ‘crises’ of identity detailed above have multiple possible solutions or outcomes- only a tiny minority find the ‘answer’ in terrorism). Beyond broad descriptions of personal circumstances, which appear to increase the likelihood of initial identification, more explicit applications of psychological theories of identity help to further explain terrorism.

Theories of identity exist in two main branches, which have traditionally been treated as being quite separate. These are ‘Identity Theory’ (IT)<sup>84</sup> and ‘Social Identity Theory’ (SIT)<sup>85</sup>. The former is concerned primarily with processes of identifying with particular social roles, which guide interaction with others, while the latter focuses on identifying with social categories or groups, and how this affects intergroup attitudes and behaviour. Very generally speaking, IT emphasises interpersonal differences, while SIT emphasises interpersonal similarity and intergroup difference. Arena and Arrigo<sup>86</sup> have argued that IT and SIT are incompatible, choosing to apply IT as their theory of choice for studying terrorism. They focus upon intragroup interactions and socialisation, highlighting the importance of adopting a ‘martial’ role (similar to della Porta’s ‘freedom fighter’ identity<sup>87</sup>), which demands violence in response to perceived subjugation.

However, to view IT and SIT as fundamentally at odds with one another is based upon a rigid interpretation of each. Their differences may be more a matter of emphasis, and in both cases processes of identification seem to be guided by motivations to maintain or enhance self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consistency, and self-regulation.<sup>88</sup> The two theories may be usefully combined in order to formulate a more comprehensive theory of self.<sup>89</sup> Hence, it is prudent to acknowledge multiple, interacting levels of identity, including individuals’ personal identity, or enduring sense of self, as well as different group- and role-related identities. Moreover, people have as many identities as roles they play or groups they belong to, all of which are likely to have subjective and dynamic elements. Each identity will be more or less salient for different people depending upon the situation and specific goals, as they strive to strike a balance between individual distinctiveness and group assimilation.<sup>90</sup> The particular level of analysis and social context will then dictate to what extent interacting group- and role-related identities are of relevance to understanding cognition, behaviour and affect.



Given this understanding, greater insight can be gained into the psychological workings of the different types of people who become involved in terrorist activity. SIT is particularly useful for specifying conditions that are likely to affect processes of group-identification, and for predicting particular types of strategy in different situations.<sup>91</sup> Since people's social identities are an important source of self-esteem (or conversely, negative affect) they adopt varying strategies in order to maintain or boost self-esteem when their identity is threatened in some way.<sup>92</sup> Individuals can feel personally threatened when their salient group identity is derogated or evaluated negatively somehow in comparison to an outgroup (i.e. a group to which the individual does not belong). Threat can also arise from perceived lack of distinctiveness and from social isolation.<sup>93</sup>

Depending on situational constraints and individual levels of commitment to a particular group/collective identity, people may respond to threats to personal and group identity in a number of ways. When group commitment is low, people often choose to distance themselves from an unwanted social identity, or if this is not possible (e.g. with ethnicity) they may seek to redefine it. Meanwhile, when commitment is high, people often choose to express that identity, to seek affiliation with similar others, or to re-affirm the value of the group, which may also involve derogating a relevant outgroup.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Theories of Identity Applied***

Radical Islamist ideology and thinking at the organisational level, as conceived by leaders such as bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, can be understood as a response to threatened social identity. Claims that the United States and its allies are attacking the Muslim world, images of a glorious Islamic past now lost, and condemnation of modernisation are all clear indicators of perceived threats to group value, morality, and distinctiveness. The response, given high group commitment, is as predicted by SIT: ingroup affirmation, outgroup derogation, and use of stereotyping. Moreover, it is vital that the actions of the outgroup are perceived to be *deliberate* and *unjust*, as well as *threatening*.<sup>95</sup> This triggers strong emotions and directly fuels justification necessary for acts of violence.

SIT further improves our understanding of those who join the cause. Table 4.1 below depicts social identity concerns for the different types of candidate for Islamist terrorism in the West. Each cell represents a dominant concern or strategy based upon



descriptions of the different candidates and upon theories of identity (as discussed above). It is important to note that due to the subjective nature of identity, different types of threat and coping response are indeed possible within the same categories. This may especially be the case for second and third generation immigrants who appear to show varying levels of commitment to different, and –for those who experience such a ‘crisis’- *competing* identities. This complexity is reflected by the use of arrows to show mixed strategies according to subjective experience. In addition, omitted horizontal dividing lines within certain columns indicate heightened relevance for all types of candidate, differences being a matter of emphasis.

**Table 4.1.** Proposed primary processes of social identification for different types of people who become involved in Islamist terrorism.

Type of candidate	Initial ingroup commitment	Situation	Role experience	Primary threat type
Recent immigrants	More secure/ high commitment	Isolation	Unsatisfactory social roles in new group	To personal self
2nd/ 3rd generation immigrants	↕	ID tension	Unsatisfactory social roles in available groups	To group & personal selves
Western converts	Less secure/ low commitment	Disillusionment	Unsatisfactory social roles in existing group	To group self

**Table 4.1** continued...

Type of candidate	Motivation	Social response	What Islamist ID offers	Situationally dependent outcome
Recent immigrants	Search for belonging (coalition)	Group affirmation	Belonging	Group bonding (radical affiliation)
2nd/ 3rd generation immigrants	Search for ID/ sense of self	↕	Strong ID	Group bonding (radical affiliation)
Western converts	Rebellion/ search for alternate self	Individual mobility (seek alternate group)	Alternative 'righteous' ID & clear worldview	Group bonding (radical affiliation)

An important feature of the Islamist identity is that it caters for different needs and is thus able to remedy a range of different identity concerns, although some form of



social affiliation is necessary. As a person categorises themselves in terms of an Islamist identity, they come to learn and to adhere to related behavioural norms.

In addition to collective identity concerns, individual motivations affected by personal and role-related identities will influence specific pathways into terrorism. Table 4.2 below depicts the proposed relationship between primary individual motivations (personal identity) and likely type of involvement in Islamist terrorism, taking into account Nesser's<sup>96</sup> prescribed terrorist social roles (see above). In reality individuals will experience a mixture of different motivations, and as depicted by the double-headed arrows, religious motivations are especially difficult to classify. Again, proposed differences are a matter of emphasis rather than distinct or mutually exclusive categories.

**Table 4.2.** Proposed relationship between individual motivations (personal identity) and involvement in Islamist terrorism.

Individual motivations	Attraction to radical Islamism	Pathway into terrorism	Likely terrorist role	Social influence exerted	Type of commitment
<b>Political</b>	More cognitive	Entrepreneurial/ deliberate	Leader	Dominance/ instigation	To the cause
<b>Religious</b>	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
<b>Social</b>	More affective	Drift/ 'accidental'	Foot-soldier	Loyalty/ endorsement	To the immediate group

Whilst broader issues of self-categorisation as delineated in Table 4.1 affect a general vulnerability or potential propensity towards militant Islam, individual identities and motivations (Table 4.2) will affect the quality or *style* of involvement.

Note that *level* of commitment to group and cause cannot be predicted based upon criteria in Table 4.2 alone. Intuitively –and in line with Nesser's analysis- more politicised motivation, combined with a more important role would seem to indicate greater commitment. Indeed, commitment to the cause implies commitment to the 'People', i.e. the wider collective, which the immediate group claims to represent. But the power of affective attachments should not be underestimated. Indeed, a combination of different motivations and satisfied social, religious, and cognitive needs would appear to instil greatest commitment. Although it may be a very idiosyncratic feature of



involvement, degree of commitment is also likely to be affected by the quality of factors experienced in Table 4.1. So for example, a deeper subjective experience of crisis, coupled with a more profound and pervasive sense of solace in Islamism may heighten ideological and social dedication.<sup>97</sup>

### *Processes of Identification*

SIT can be further employed to ‘tie together’ several psychological processes that appear to be common features of terrorist involvement.<sup>98</sup> Strong feelings of empathy inspired by ‘moral shocks’ brought about through media and rhetoric are a common experience.<sup>99</sup> Viewing footage of Muslims being killed or tortured often provokes outrage and a desire to fight back in their defence, thus representing a gateway for further involvement. Empathy can be viewed as both a cause and product of social identification, facilitating vicarious suffering and feelings of relative deprivation. In this way, empathising with Muslims around the world contributes to the development of a super-ordinate and pervasive collective identity. This collective identity is nourished and rewarded by the immediate group, which represents a self-perceived elite identity (the ‘vanguard’, fighting to save the Ummah) within the larger collective.

Raised awareness of the suffering and death of other perceived ingroup members may also increase the salience of one’s own mortality. Mortality salience in turn has been shown to increase levels of ingroup positivity and outgroup negativity.<sup>100</sup> Originally these effects were understood as a means of buffering anxiety caused by the fear of death (Terror Management Theory<sup>101</sup>). But more recently, mortality salience has been re-conceptualised in terms of inculcating a desire to form a coalition with others in order to overcome threat.<sup>102</sup> This makes sense in the case of Islamist terrorism, since by seeking involvement in armed conflict militants are increasing their chances of being killed, and where ‘martyrdom’ is sought after one’s own death is actively pursued for the sake of the collective. Furthermore, framing mortality salience effects as a response to adaptive challenges is wholly in accordance with SIT’s concern with maintaining ingroup positivity and taking action against an outgroup in the face of deliberate and unjust oppression.

The Islamist identity further exacerbates processes of social identification. By framing two primary world identities as being in direct opposition to one another (‘us’ and ‘them’, Muslims and their enemies) a tendency towards polarisation is created



(“whatever they are, we are not”).<sup>103</sup> Polarisation creates perceptions of wide disparity between groups, the ingroup being especially positive and the outgroup especially negative. Viewing each social category as internally undifferentiated (good or bad) encourages stereotyping, which is a natural feature of social identification. Stereotyping the outgroup effectively dehumanises them, helping to remove psychological barriers against violence.<sup>104</sup> Stereotyping the ingroup is likely to heighten perceptions of similarity, which facilitates diffusion of responsibility, so that individual members are less likely to feel personally responsible for harm done against the enemy.<sup>105</sup> Islamist terrorists thus psychologically maintain as much social, cultural, and moral distance between themselves and their enemy as they can. By also often maintaining ‘mechanical’ distance (use of remote killing technology such as bombs) terrorists’ dehumanisation of the enemy is maximised.

#### **4.3.3 Social Organisation**

Social structure or organisation affects how groups of people are able to function in terms of interacting and communicating with each other, and with people outside of the group.<sup>106</sup> Organisation affects patterns of social influence and formation of identity, as well as group stability and permeability (movement into and out of the group).

#### ***Structural Developments in Islamist Terrorism***

Prior to the US assault on al-Qaeda’s headquarters in Afghanistan at the end of 2001, the al-Qaeda organisation was viewed as the central coordinating body of Sunni Islamist terrorism around the globe. ‘Al-Qaeda Central’ (consisting of the figureheads and ideological and operational leaders) acted to promote their agenda of global jihad by disseminating propaganda, providing training and resources for various other Islamist organisations, and encouraging attacks against Western targets. Up until 2001, Islamist terrorism was thus characterised as an essentially hierarchical ‘wheel’ arrangement (al-Qaeda representing the hub, with various transnational ‘spokes’). However, it was undoubtedly a complex and dynamic organisational structure, changing according to specific points of contact between individuals around the world, and varying opportunities.

After the Afghan base of operations was destroyed and worldwide counter-terrorism measures tightened, the command and communication abilities of al-Qaeda



were severely debilitated. It is widely agreed that this resulted in significant changes to the social organisation of Islamist terrorism.<sup>107</sup> The role of al-Qaeda and other formal organisations diminished, and there was a proliferation of smaller, autonomous or semi-autonomous groups of Islamist militants. These groups are thought to have varying, but generally spurious links to terrorist organisations, and are therefore self-organised, self-funded and essentially independent in their actions. Islamist terrorism now exists as an even more fluid network than in the past, characterised by ‘flatter’ decision-making processes (lack of formal hierarchy) and potentially more resilient to law-enforcement efforts due to greater levels of autonomy and lack of clear structure.<sup>108</sup> It is in light of such analyses that the ‘Hofstad’ group active in the Netherlands has been described as more like a youth gang than a terrorist organisation.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, the ‘3/11’ Madrid bombers have been called a ‘grass-roots’ jihadi network,<sup>110</sup> while the ‘7/7’ bombers are described as ‘self-starters.’<sup>111</sup> All emerged from within wider radical networks, and although international travel and communication occurred, none appeared to have concrete organisational links or formal, rigid systems of internal organisation.

It is noteworthy that similar, informal, ‘fluid’ social systems have been found to occur amongst ‘ordinary’ criminals. Thus youth and adult offenders often form small groups within a wider, “loose web of affiliations,” linked to other groups via peripheral- or non-members known to the group.<sup>112</sup> This is in accordance with Granovetter’s<sup>113</sup> research demonstrating that informal human interaction is often organised as relatively small groups of people linked to others through ‘weak-ties.’ What this implies is that the social organisation of Islamist terrorism today appears to fundamentally adhere to a basic template for informal human interaction, which is then shaped according to specific demands and opportunities.<sup>114</sup>

These developments are significant, given that “probably the world’s foremost ‘jihadi theoretician’”,<sup>115</sup> Abu Musab al-Suri (aka Mustafa bin Abd al-Qadir Setmariam Nasar) is best known for advocating just such a system of organisation in “The Global Islamic Resistance Call”, a 1600 page document which was published online in 2005 under the name of Umar Abd al-Hakim, and is highly regarded among jihadists.<sup>116</sup> Al-Suri’s slogan is *nizam, la tanzim*, meaning ‘system, not organisation’, which he envisaged as being manifest through the formation of small resistance units operating independently from one another and from any centralised leadership, yet sharing a common cause.<sup>117</sup> There is an obvious correspondence between this basic prescription



and the current situation; however it has evolved organically, both as a ‘natural’ informal organisation and in response to counter-terrorism, rather than as an entirely deliberate strategy and the reality is far less effective than al-Suri had hoped for – nevertheless it is still important to note that jihadists are self-aware and in some cases are striving to turn their current situation to their advantage.

A further implication of informal organisation based upon friendships is that patterns of social influence between group-members are likely to be mutual and dynamic (collaborative effects and simultaneous top-down and bottom-up processes). The division of labour and social roles may also be loosely defined and flexible, depending on individual abilities and circumstances. Having said this, contemporary Islamist terrorism encompasses “a whole spectrum of realities, positioned according to the level of autonomy of the group”.<sup>118</sup> It is thus reasonable to hypothesise that groups with more concrete organisational affiliation and support may be more likely to utilise formalised group structures (e.g. having clearly identified leader/s), while more self-sufficient groups may be more likely to be informally organised. In either case how this affects group behaviour and factors such as resilience to law enforcement efforts may depend upon the specific group reality, e.g. the degree to which formal/informal authority is seen as legitimate and the extent to which individuals and roles are unique or replaceable.

### *Stability, Identity, & Permeability*

Group stability is likely to affect role-performance, individual and collective senses of identity, and movement into and out of the group. Stability implies consensus in the pursuit of shared goals (clear group identity) as well as stable group membership (low permeability). Sustained membership over time also increases the chances that roles within the group become routinised, that individuals may come to specialise in certain tasks, and that they may also develop a shared understanding of each other’s roles (thereby developing ‘shared mental models’, which can enhance group performance<sup>119</sup>). As a result individuals are likely to develop a clear sense of their role within the group, and a clear sense of collective identity. “Group stability is thus the mechanism by which specific identities are able to consume individuals to the exclusion of (legitimate) alternatives”.<sup>120</sup>



Processes of radicalisation and operational planning routinely involve lengthy periods of daily interaction and conspiratorial planning,<sup>121</sup> which, in light of their deadly goals and high levels of risk, create “exceptional degrees of internal pressure”.<sup>122</sup> Jihadi terrorists operating within Europe have also been seen to have clearly defined roles and tasks within the group.<sup>123</sup> Hence groups of terrorists are characterised as relatively long-lasting, highly stable and cohesive, and with low levels of permeability (as compared, for example, to criminal groups, which are generally highly transient<sup>124</sup>). Despite descriptions of highly cohesive and closed group structures, it must be reiterated that Islamist terrorists in the West are still seen as being part of fluid and dispersed social networks. This allows geographic mobility between different groups within the wider network, utilising both direct and indirect personal contacts (examples of this type of movement abound, e.g. the radical milieu centred around Finsbury Park Mosque in London played host to jihadis from all over the world<sup>125</sup>). Groups of Islamists may therefore not always be as stable and cohesive as commonly described during periods of initial engagement and planning attacks. Therefore different elements within the overall network may vary in their degree of permeability.

### *Islamist Terrorism as a Social Movement*

The decline in significance of al-Qaeda as a central organisation and the rise of (semi)-autonomous groups of militants operating within a global, amorphous network has led a number of analysts to view contemporary Islamist terrorism as a social movement.<sup>126</sup> At its most basic level this simply involves giving recognition to the fact that Islamist terrorism is not a clearly defined organisation, but a much more loosely organised and dynamic network. More specific application of Social Movement Theory (SMT) is useful for multi-level analysis and greater understanding of the dynamics of collective action (for example as per della Porta’s excellent study of Leftist-revolutionary terrorists active in Italy and Germany in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>127</sup>).

From a social movement perspective, violent groups often represent a minority component within a much larger movement consisting of a wide variety of organisations, institutions and groups, varying in degrees of formality and legality. Whilst grievances or strain are ubiquitous across societies, movements are thought to arise via an essentially rational process of entrepreneurial action, which is shaped by



available opportunity structures.<sup>128</sup> Varying movement organisations compete for available resources and adopt different strategies to attract and mobilise the target population; and key to the success of any movement organisation or group is its ability to construct a ‘frame’ or way of interpreting the world that resonates with the experiences of prospective joiners.<sup>129</sup>

Della Porta analysed how violent terrorist groups including the Red Army Faction and Red Brigades emerged from within broader movements of social protest in Italy and Germany.<sup>130</sup> She concluded that societal (macro-level) conditions –in particular each country’s overall approach to the policing of protest- were critical to initial violent developments. Both movements then escalated at the meso- (inter-organisational) level, as they clashed with the state as well as other movement organisations. Small groups specialising in violence emerged, affected by precipitating factors often linked to the threat of oppression from law enforcement. These groups were sustained through strong friendships and a shared sense of identity (the “Freedom Fighter”). They became increasingly radical as a result of social isolation, which in turn only exacerbated that isolation, depriving them of resources and weakening the groups’ grasp of reality. The development of terrorism was thus the result of continuing dynamic interactions at different levels (societal, organisational, and individual).

Likewise for Wiktorowicz, SMT provides a useful unifying theoretical framework for studying Islamic activism in general, including its more violent forms.<sup>131</sup> Thus, Islamist terrorists represent a deviant aspect of broader Islamist activism, which includes a vast array of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities, advocacy groups and so on. Using this approach, Wiktorowicz<sup>132</sup> described how the radical Islamist organisation al-Muhajiroun (AM) based in the UK was able to mobilise people into their particular brand of high-risk activism (discussed in more detail under in the next chapter). Although it did not officially perpetrate any act of terrorism, the group’s leader, Omar Bakri Mohammed, consistently advocated violent jihad. As in Italy and Germany, AM’s development was driven by ongoing, dynamic interactions at three interrelated levels. At the systemic level this involved clashes with police and government, the struggle to maintain a positive image in the media, and responses to worldwide events, especially acts of terrorism. At the organisational level there was competition with alternate groups, both fundamentalists and moderate Muslims. And at the individual level there were varying interactions between existing AM activists and



potential recruits, and particularly important personal interactions with Bakri Mohammed as a highly influential individual.<sup>133</sup> AM did not officially ‘go underground’, however the group was officially dissolved in 2004 as the climate in the UK had become increasingly restrictive and difficult to operate in, limiting the organisation’s resources and mobilisation capacity.<sup>134</sup> AM splinter groups ‘Al-Ghurabaa’ and ‘The Saved Sect’ have since been banned.<sup>135</sup>

A greater number of comparative investigations are necessary to reveal more about the dynamics of the Islamist social movement, and how specific groups emerge and decline within that movement. SMT thus represents yet another potentially useful perspective from which to study terrorism. Moreover, SMT might be combined with other theoretical approaches in a move towards establishing a comprehensive understanding of political violence.

For example, according to criteria identified by Gamson, terrorists’ rhetoric fulfils all three elements of ‘collective action frames’ necessary to effectively mobilise others in the name of a cause. These include: 1. clearly defined antagonists (us and them), 2. collectively defined roots and solutions to a problem, and 3. an emphasis on injustice, which can be righted through a challenger’s action.<sup>136</sup> Thus SMT appears to resonate rather well with a social identity perspective. Both approaches emphasise the importance of similar underlying processes in forging common bonds amongst people and motivating them towards collective and ultimately violent action. SMT and SIT are also both flexible and can be used for analysis at micro- meso- and macro- levels. Moreover they do not seem to be mutually exclusive and may in fact complement one another. Accordingly, della Porta emphasises that vital to the progression of terrorism in her samples was a shared sense of collective identity and *feeling* part of a collectivity: “[o]nly this feeling can produce the solidarity needed for collective actions”.<sup>137</sup>

### ***An Alternative Social Movement Perspective***

A rather different set of implications of Islamist terrorism as a social movement are discussed by Roy<sup>138</sup> (though he does not explicitly apply SMT). By conceptualising ‘Al Qaeda’ as a youth movement, Roy contends that the Islamist terrorism movement has far more in common with other youth-protest movements than is generally assumed, and can be understood best as part of the contemporary phenomena of violence that affects societies in general. Although Islamist militancy directly emerged from



Afghanistan, and was undoubtedly influenced by the then current local/ global historical context, it is not in Roy's eyes a continuation of Islamic or Middle Eastern history. In other words, the extent to which Islamist terrorism is about localised –Middle Eastern, North African and other- political situations has been over-emphasised, as has the role of religion and ideology.

Instead, Islamist terrorism has become an anti-establishment, anti-imperialist and de-territorialised movement, more akin to the far Left terrorism of the 1960's and '70's than to nationally-focussed forms of 'Islamic' terror.<sup>139</sup> Thus Roy suggests that disaffected youth in Western countries are attracted to al-Qaeda the social movement through a combination of disillusionment, rebellion against the parental generation, involvement in petty delinquency, and a fascination with violence. Islamist terrorism offers a powerful narrative, a heroic, noble identity that is given credence and meaning through religious and historical rhetoric, but is ultimately aimed at fighting the global order.

Various evidence supports Roy's claims, such as the lack of a concrete political agenda, continuous tensions between global jihadis and local insurgents in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, the lack of religiousness of many Islamist militants, common links to delinquent forms of crime, and –intriguingly- that “the map of radicalisation does not really fit with that of the Muslim population”.<sup>140</sup> This last point draws attention to the notion that radical Islamists are not evenly geographically distributed amongst Muslim populations (at least in France) but seem to be concentrated in regions where there has been a tradition of leftist radicalism and high youth delinquency. Of course other factors are also likely involved –such as the physical distribution of initial waves of radicals, which would be vital to the social transmission and propagation of the movement (see p.171). Geographical profiling of terrorism may yet reveal informative patterns.

In line with Roy's analysis, recent work has demonstrated considerable similarity between terrorists and 'ordinary' criminals in terms of systems of social influence, organisation, and identification.<sup>141</sup> Roy's theory also does not contradict social identity approaches (above) and further support comes from Nesser's terrorist typology.<sup>142</sup> While entrepreneurs and their protégés may be more politically motivated, intellectually minded and religious, Nesser asserts that the majority of Islamist terrorists in the West are social misfits or drifters. Accordingly, most people seem to join the



Islamist movement through a combination of personal difficulties and social affiliation as opposed to pre-existing religious or political convictions. Nevertheless, *some* degree of religious belief is often involved since it is this element which makes such high-risk activity *worthwhile* and therefore rational.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, it may be the more astute and dedicated minority that is responsible for the continuation of the movement and the ongoing construction of its narrative.<sup>144</sup> Hence Islamist terrorism may be ‘about’ different things for different people. It may have begun for different reasons than for why it persists today, and those who lead and those who follow may have quite different conceptualisations of what they are fighting for.



## **Chapter 4 Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> In assessing these arguments, quantitative analyses by Marc Sageman and Edwin Bakker will be compared (see below). It is important to note that for each dimension (e.g. occupation, educational achievement etc), percentages given are for the proportion of each sample for whom there was sufficient data to make judgements, as deemed so by the respective researchers. Generalisations made are thus subject to data limitations.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Richard Pearlstein, *The Mind of the Political Terrorist* (1991) Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Rex Hudson, *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?* (1999) Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 29, 48; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 81-83.

<sup>4</sup> Arie Kruglanski & Shira Fishman, "The Psychology of Terrorism: 'Syndrome' versus 'Tool' Perspectives" (2006) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18, 193-215, p.193.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Ruby, "Are Terrorists Mentally Deranged?" (2002) *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 15-16.

<sup>6</sup> Jerrold Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism" (2005) *Political Psychology*, 26:4, 615-636, p.616.

<sup>7</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 80-91.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>9</sup> The top 5 countries of residence in Bakker's sample included 62 UK residents, 58 in Spain, 36 in France, 15 in the Netherlands, and 13 in Belgium; the top five nationalities were Moroccan (59), Algerian (55), British (46), French (15), and Pakistani (15); the top five countries of the family of origin included Algeria (64), Morocco (64), Pakistan (24), Lebanon (7), and Ethiopia (5); and 55 people, about 20%, had dual nationality (see Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study* (2006) The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 39).

<sup>10</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad*, 42, 50.

<sup>11</sup> This seems to confirm that while some form of mental dysfunction does not often predate involvement in terrorist activity, it can be incurred as a result of the stressful terrorist lifestyle and the experience of being apprehended (David Weatherston & Jonathan Moran, "Terrorism and Mental Illness: Is There a Relationship?" (2003) *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 47:6, 698-713).

<sup>12</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 42, 50.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>14</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (2008) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 61-65.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Speckhard & Khapta Ahkmedova, "The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism" (2006) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29: 429-492, pp.484-485.

<sup>16</sup> In the updated sample, 60% were expatriates and 20% second or third generation immigrants (Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 65).

<sup>17</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 92-93.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>19</sup> Jerrold Post, "Rewarding Fire with Fire? Effects of Retaliation on Terrorist Group Dynamics" (1987) in A. Kurz (Ed.), *Contemporary Trends in World Terrorism*, New York: Praeger, 103-115 cited in Weatherston & Moran, "Terrorism and Mental Illness: Is There a Relationship?" 699.

<sup>20</sup> Petter Nesser "How Does Radicalization Occur in Europe?" (2006) Presented at the Second Inter-Agency Radicalization Conference, hosted by U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington DC, July 10, 2006 <[http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00080/DHS\\_foredrag\\_80480a.pdf](http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00080/DHS_foredrag_80480a.pdf)> at February 18, 2008, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 51.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard Berkowitz, "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis: Examination and Reformulation" (1989) *Psychological Bulletin*, 106:1, 59-73.

<sup>23</sup> Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, *Education, Poverty, Political Violence and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?* (2002) National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 9074 <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w9074>> at February 20, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 32.



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- <sup>25</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 61-98; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 47-70.
- <sup>26</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 48-50, 58.
- <sup>27</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid, 40; also see Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (2004) New York: Colombia University Press, 100-147.
- <sup>29</sup> See Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 95-96; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 48-50.
- <sup>30</sup> Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Lands of the Two Holy Places” (1996) reproduced in ‘Bin Laden’s Fatwa’ (undated) *PBS Online NewsHour*, <[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1996.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html)> at December 15, 2007.
- <sup>31</sup> Petter Nesser, “Jihadism in Western Europe after the Invasion of Iraq: Tracing Motivational Influences from the Iraq War on Jihadist Terrorism in Western Europe” (2006) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29: 323-342, pp.335-336.
- <sup>32</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 95-96.
- <sup>33</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 13-28.
- <sup>34</sup> John Horgan *The Psychology of Terrorism* (2005) New York: Routledge, 34.
- <sup>35</sup> So called ‘lone wolves’ are special cases that require additional research to understand (see Ramón Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment” (2010) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33:9, 854-870.
- <sup>36</sup> “Jihad for Kids!” videocassette produced by and available from Peace for Generations (P.O.Box 55, Union, N.J. 07083-0055, USA, [peace4gen@aol.com](mailto:peace4gen@aol.com)), cited in Daphne Burdman, “Education, Indoctrination, and Incitement: Palestinian Children on their Way to Martyrdom” (2003) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15:1, 96-123, p.98.
- <sup>37</sup> Burdman, “Education, Indoctrination, and Incitement: Palestinian Children on their Way to Martyrdom” 96.
- <sup>38</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 74-75.
- <sup>39</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 51.
- <sup>40</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 41.
- <sup>41</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 51.
- <sup>42</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 93; Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 43.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 60.
- <sup>44</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.
- <sup>45</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 52.
- <sup>46</sup> Bakker reported 43 pre-existing friendships and 49 kinship relations prior to getting involved in jihadi terrorist activities, constituting only about 35% of the total sample, compared to 87% of Sageman’s (*Understanding Terror Networks*) sample, which also included ‘discipleship’. However, the way in which Bakker conceptualises ‘joining the jihad’ is unclear since many in his sample had no formal organisational affiliation. Since the vast majority of terrorism is carried out in groups, whose members often form friendship ties, it is in reality extremely problematic to treat social affiliation and group membership as distinct.
- <sup>47</sup> Kathleen Carley “Group Stability: A Socio-Cognitive Approach” (1999) *Advances in Group Processes*, 7, 1-44.
- <sup>48</sup> While this increased likelihood may be statistically universal, it is important to clarify that it is a risk factor only and the effects of different associations are neither deterministic nor inevitable.
- <sup>49</sup> Edwin Sutherland *Principles of Criminology*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (1947) Philadelphia: Lippincott, cited in Ross Matsueda “Differential Social Organization, Collective Action and Crime” (2006) *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 46, 3-33.
- <sup>50</sup> For example, Ronald Akers *Deviant Behaviour: A Social Learning Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1977) Belmont: Wadsworth
- <sup>51</sup> See Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State* (1995) New York: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>52</sup> Frank Weerman “Co-Offending as Social Exchange: Explaining Characteristics of Co-Offending” *British Journal of Criminology* (2003) 43, 398-416.
- <sup>53</sup> Dietmar Loch, “Boyhood of a Terror Suspect” *Guardian*, October 11, 1995; cited in Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda In Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (2006) New York: Prometheus Books, 38
- <sup>54</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.
- <sup>55</sup> This was based on the generation of mujahedin who mostly joined the jihad in the 1990’s, and were primarily recent immigrants to Western countries; as a result they were isolated from family and former



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friends, increasing the importance of their newfound social group as a source of meaning and belonging (Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*).

<sup>56</sup> See Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 99-135.

<sup>57</sup> Aidan Kirby, "The London Bombers as "Self Starters": A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques" (2007) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30:5, 415-428; AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat* (2006) The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service.

<sup>58</sup> See Robert Leiken, *Bearers of Global Jihad? Immigration and National Security After 9/11* (2004) Washington: The Nixon Centre, 78-81.

<sup>59</sup> Nesser "How Does Radicalization Occur in Europe?"

<sup>60</sup> Ibid; Petter Nesser, "Jihad in Europe; Recruitment for Terrorist Cells in Europe" (2006) in *Paths to Global Jihad: Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terror Networks* (Proceedings from a Norwegian Defence Research Establishment seminar, Oslo, 15 March 2006) 2-21.

<sup>61</sup> Dipak Gupta, "Toward an Integrated Behavioral Framework for Analyzing Terrorism: Individual Motivations to Group Dynamics" *Democracy and Security*, 1, 5-31, p.16.

<sup>62</sup> Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (2007) New York: New York City Police Department.

<sup>63</sup> Howard Becker "Becoming a Marihuana User" (1953) *The American Journal of Sociology*, 59:3, 235-242, p.235.

<sup>64</sup> Howard Becker *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (1963) New York: Free, 42, cited in Matsueda "Differential Social Organization, Collective Action and Crime", 28.

<sup>65</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 75-76.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>67</sup> Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 138.

<sup>68</sup> An example of this is Bem's theory of self-perception, whereby individuals may infer a personal quality or state within themselves as a result of having behaved in a certain way (Daryl Bem "Self-Perception: An Alternative Interpretation of Cognitive Dissonance Phenomena" (1967) *Psychological Review*, 74:3, 183-200).

<sup>69</sup> Nesser, "Jihad in Europe; Recruitment for Terrorist Cells in Europe".

<sup>70</sup> Sam Mullins "Parallels Between Crime & Terrorism: A Social Psychological Perspective" (2009) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 32:9, 811-830.

<sup>71</sup> Nesser "Jihad in Europe; Recruitment for Terrorist Cells in Europe"; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.

<sup>72</sup> Mark Warr "Organization and Instigation in Delinquent Groups" (1996) *Criminology*, 34:1, 11-37.

<sup>73</sup> Louise Porter & Laurence Alison "Behavioural Coherence in Group Robbery: A Circumplex Model of Offender and Victim Interactions" (2006) *Aggressive Behaviour*, 32:4, 330-342.

<sup>74</sup> Louise Porter & Laurence Alison "The Primacy of Decision-Action as an Influence Strategy of Violent Gang Leaders" (2005) *Small Group Research*, 36:2, 188-207.

<sup>75</sup> Of course initial similarities by no means guarantee mutual acceptance between interacting actors and relationships can break down or be severed for any number of reasons.

<sup>76</sup> Alexander Haslam, "Stereotyping and Social Influence: Foundations of Stereotype Consensus" (1997) In Russell Spears, Penelope Oakes, Naomi Ellemers & Alexander Haslam (eds). *The Social Psychology of Stereotyping and Group Life*, Blackwell: Oxford, 119-143, cited in Serge Guimond, "Group Socialization and Prejudice: The Social Transmission of Intergroup Attitudes and Beliefs" (2000) *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30; 335-354, p.349.

<sup>77</sup> Michael Taarnby *Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe: Trends and Perspectives* (2005) Danish Ministry of Justice, 31-37.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> AIVD, *Recruitment for Jihad in the Netherlands: From Incident to Trend* (2002) The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Mirella Stroink, "Processes and Preconditions Underlying Terrorism in Second-Generation Immigrants" *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 13:3, 293-312.

<sup>82</sup> Taarnby *Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe*.

<sup>83</sup> Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 317-319.

<sup>84</sup> George McCall & J.L. Simmons, *Identities and Interactions* (1966) New York: Free Press. Cited in Sheldon Stryker & Peter Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory" (2000) *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63:4, 284-297; Sheldon Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role



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Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research” (1968) *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 30:4, 558-564.

<sup>85</sup> Henry Tajfel, & John Turner, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict” (1979) In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, pp. 33-47; John Turner, “Social Categorization and the Self-Concept: A Social Cognitive Theory of Group Behavior” (1985) In E. J. Lawler (Ed.), *Advances in Group Processes: Theory and Research*, Vol.2, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, pp. 77-122.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Arena & Bruce Arrigo, *The Terrorist Identity: Explaining the Terrorist Threat* (2006) New York: New York University Press.

<sup>87</sup> Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*, 165-186.

<sup>88</sup> Jan Stets & Peter Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory” (2000) *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63:3, 224-237, p.233.

<sup>89</sup> Stets & Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory”.

<sup>90</sup> Both SIT and IT acknowledge that distinctiveness is an important aspect of identity, thereby incorporating elements of Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Marilynn Brewer “The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time” (1991) *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17:5, 475-482).

<sup>91</sup> See Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, & Bertjan Doosje, “Self and Social Identity” (2002) *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53: 161-186.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid; Carlos Navarette, “Death Concerns and Other Adaptive Challenges: The Effects of Coalition-Relevant Challenges on Worldview Defense in the US and Costa Rica” (2005) *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 8:4, 411-427.

<sup>94</sup> Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, “Self and Social Identity”.

<sup>95</sup> See Miles Hewstone, Mark Rubin, & Hazel Willis, “Intergroup Bias” (2002) *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 575-604; Stephen Reicher, Clifford Stott, Patrick Cronin & Otto Adang “An Integrated Approach to Crowd Psychology and Public Order Policing” (2004) *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 27:4, 558-572.

<sup>96</sup> Nesser “How Does Radicalization Occur in Europe?”.

<sup>97</sup> Moreover, differing primary types of motivation also imply the relevance of different factors that may affect individual decisions to disengage from terrorism. This in turn suggests the utility of employing different strategies to bring about disengagement or de-radicalisation depending on these primary motivations (if Nesser’s assertion that the majority of Islamist terrorists in the West are ‘drifters’ is correct, then addressing social issues would be paramount).

<sup>98</sup> Sam Mullins, “Iraq Versus Lack of Integration: Understanding the Motivations of Contemporary Islamist Terrorists in Western Countries” (2010) *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, First published on October 19 2010 (iFirst).

<sup>99</sup> Andrew Silke “Holy Warriors: Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi Radicalization” *European Journal of Criminology*, 5:1 (2008) 99-123.

<sup>100</sup> For example, Abram Rosenblatt, Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, Tom Pyszczynski, & Deborah Lyon, “Evidence for Terror Management Theory I: The Effects of Mortality Salience on Reactions to Those Who Violate or Uphold Cultural Values” (1989) *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 57:4, 681-690.

<sup>101</sup> Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski, & Sheldon Solomon, “The Causes and Consequences of a Need for Self-esteem: A Terror Management Theory” (1986) In Roy Baumeister (Ed.), *Public and Private Self*, New York: Springer-Verlag, 189-212, cited in Navarette, “Death Concerns and Other Adaptive Challenges: The Effects of Coalition-Relevant Challenges on Worldview Defense in the US and Costa Rica”.

<sup>102</sup> Navarette, “Death Concerns and Other Adaptive Challenges: The Effects of Coalition-Relevant Challenges on Worldview Defense in the US and Costa Rica”.

<sup>103</sup> Michael Hogg, Dominic Abrams, Sabine Otten, & Steve Hinkle, “The Social Identity Perspective: Intergroup Relations, Self-Conception, and Small Groups” (2004) *Small Group Research*, 35:3, 246-276, p.259.

<sup>104</sup> Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1995) New York: Little, Brown & Company.

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<sup>106</sup> See, e.g. Stanley Wasserman & Katherine Fauss, *Social Network Analysis* (1994) Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.



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<sup>141</sup> Mullins, “Parallels Between Crime and Terrorism: A Social-Psychological Perspective”.

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## **Chapter 5**

### **Current Understanding of the Threat Part 2: The Radicalisation Process**

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### **Overview**

Moving beyond general theoretical explanations of terrorism, further insight is gained by studying existing accounts of patterns of radicalisation and operational behaviour of Islamist terrorists. This also forms the basis for selecting the criteria of interest during case study analysis.

Firstly, precipitating ‘risk factors’ which increase potential susceptibility to involvement with extremists are considered. Next, the combined importance of ideology and social support and the specific impact of small group psychology are covered. Patterns of radicalisation and operational behaviour are of particular interest from a counter-terrorism perspective. Finally, recent developments are considered, including increased autonomy, the impact of the Internet and changing demographic profiles.



## **5. The Radicalisation Process: From Initial Exposure to Going Operational**

Here we shall examine the *process* of becoming an Islamist terrorist. Processes of radicalisation are multifaceted, involving changes in thoughts, feelings and actions. To become radicalised essentially means to become increasingly committed to a particular social group and belief system, which seeks to change the status quo.<sup>1</sup> Most radical Islamist groups are in fact non-violent; however the focus here is on those radicals who pursue violent jihad or acts of terrorism.

The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) use the term *jihadisation* to refer to the process whereby radical individuals and groups mobilise themselves to carry out acts of violence in the name of their cause.<sup>2</sup> Although this particular use of terminology is not widespread, it is a useful reminder that commitment to violence represents a pinnacle of radicalisation that is by no means universal or inevitable.

It is thus more extreme levels of radicalisation that are of particular interest. “Functionally, [extreme] political radicalization is increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict. Descriptively, radicalization means change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup”.<sup>3</sup> Psychologically, radicalisation involves coming to accept Islamist ideology, aims, and method (i.e. how to achieve those aims). Behaviourally, it generally involves sustained interaction with likeminded radicals, and participation in ideologically congruent group activities. The select few who progress to terrorism are likely to feel especially ideologically and/or socially committed and must accept that it is their personal responsibility to pursue group goals by violent means.



### **5.1 Precipitating Risk Factors**

A number of factors appear to make it more likely that an individual will be susceptible to initial radicalisation. As discussed already (see ‘Individual Explanations’ - chapter 4), risk factors can include traumatic experiences or feelings of victimisation. Horgan<sup>4</sup> identifies a number of other factors, which when experienced in combination help explain why particular individuals become terrorists while others do not. These include:

- Emotional vulnerability in terms of anger, alienation, or disenfranchisement;
- Dissatisfaction with current activity and the belief that conventional political avenues are an ineffectual means of change;
- Identification with victims (oppressed Muslims);
- The belief that terrorism is morally defensible;
- Positive expectations about involvement in the movement; and
- Access to the group, especially ties of friendship or kinship (social proximity).

Taken together these individual circumstances or proclivities may represent “openness to socialisation” into terrorism.<sup>5</sup> Wiktorowicz<sup>6</sup> refers to this openness in terms of ‘cognitive openings’ whereby individuals come to question existing beliefs and become more receptive to the possibility of alternative worldviews. Cognitive openings resonate with the importance of emotional vulnerability or dissatisfaction in life and appear to be prompted by different sorts of ‘crisis.’ According to Wiktorowicz, crises “can be categorized as economic (losing a job, blocked mobility), social/cultural (sense of cultural weakness, racism, humiliation), and political (repression, torture, political discrimination). [They may also be] “personal,” since cognitive openings can be produced by idiosyncratic experiences, such as a death in the family, victimization by crime, and family feuds”.<sup>7</sup> Finally, cognitive openings can be deliberately fostered by ‘outreach’ activities where Islamist radicals draw attention to pressing issues or attempt to create ‘moral shock’ using provocative images of mutilated Muslims in places like Palestine and Iraq.<sup>8</sup>

It is quite striking that ubiquitous, almost mundane life experiences such as losing a job or falling out with family members can open people’s minds to Islamist militancy. People from all walks of life experience adversity and change in their lives every day but only the tiniest fraction of these people become terrorists. It seems unlikely that



many of those who do become terrorists will believe *apriori* that terrorism is acceptable. They may well have little in the way of expectations about participation in Islamist groups, and may not even identify particularly from the outset with Muslims around the world. More often these may be consequences of initial involvement. The key to whether or not a person is likely to adopt radical Islamist ideology thus seems to be *exposure*, especially where it involves social interaction. Although by no means sufficient or deterministic, (most people still reject militant Islam), ideological exposure is the most important, fundamentally necessary risk factor for further radicalisation. However, as already discussed (see 'Social Influence' - chapter 4) the absorption of ideology generally relies on social and behavioural mechanisms. Where ideology is also embedded in valued and sustained social exchange, radicalisation becomes far more likely.



## **5.2 Ideological & Social Progression**

The adoption of radical worldviews is incremental: a person does not instantly accept that Islam is under attack, that ‘moderate’ Muslims are all wrong, or that terrorism is the answer. Rather it seems that individuals are drawn in gradually to militant Islam.<sup>9</sup> For Wiktorowicz, cognitive openings foster receptivity to new ideas and inspire ‘religious seeking’ whereby individuals –often guided by existing radicals- explore religion as a way of explaining the world. The term ‘religious seeking’ might be better conceptualised simply as a desire for meaning, since there is nothing to indicate that a secular ideology might also prove satisfactory. The fact that Islamist activists often conceal or play down their ‘religious’ agenda in preliminary interactions with people<sup>10</sup> seems to confirm this.

As Wiktorowicz describes, individuals are often initially ‘hooked’, not necessarily by religious edicts, but through discussion of ‘real world’ issues and inequalities. By tapping into existing concerns and patterns of belief, there is a degree of perceptual common ground or ‘frame alignment’ between potential and existing radicals.<sup>11</sup> Put simply, Islamist ideology is able to strike a chord with people by drawing attention to problems that people can agree with (e.g. that Britain is a racist society, that Muslims are under-represented in government, or that atrocities have been committed against Muslims). Initial levels of agreement then pave the way for acceptance of further ideological tenets, i.e. identifying a solution to these problems in Islamist terms.

In terms of the psychology of persuasion, this parallels the ‘foot in the door’ technique, whereby agreements to smaller requests often increase the likelihood of agreement to future, more demanding requests.<sup>12</sup> Frame alignment on first contact, as well as continued receptivity to the Islamist message appears to depend not only upon ideological content (including consistency and relevance to culture and identity) but also upon characteristics of the source of information.<sup>13</sup> In the case of al-Muhajiroun a major factor affecting peoples’ willingness to listen and desire to learn more was how impressed they were by the organisational leader, Omar Bakri Mohammed. Hence –in line with the literature on persuasion- it is important for the source of a message to be perceived as knowledgeable, likeable, and free from ulterior motives. Where this is the case –especially when in comparison to other competing sources of information, and when the message-receiver’s own expertise is lacking- the message is more likely to be perceived as compelling and ultimately credible.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the greater freedom an



individual has in discovering an ideology and new way of life for themselves (lack of coercion), the greater their sense of ownership for, and commitment to those ideas. To paraphrase Bakri Mohammed, the fundamental condition of conviction is self-determination.<sup>15</sup>

Once a person has accepted basic ideological tenets and is keen to learn and interact more with radical Islamists, more in-depth socialisation can occur.<sup>16</sup>

Wiktorowicz found that this involved more intense interaction, often in more exclusive groups in more private settings. As individuals became more socially committed to Islamist activism they tended to withdraw from non-Islamist friendships and activities, resulting in progressive social isolation. This pattern of behaviour has also been observed in less formal, 'self-radicalising' groups<sup>17</sup> and may create a 'cycle of radicalisation'<sup>18</sup> whereby increasingly extreme beliefs isolate groups within society, simultaneously making group membership all the more important. Hence escalation of beliefs may be interdependent with social isolation and escalation of group commitment.



### **5.3 The Mechanism of the Group**

As group bonding intensifies, individuals increasingly view themselves in terms of the Islamist identity, affecting what social identity theorists refer to as *depersonalisation* (whereby a given collective identity becomes the primary ‘lens’ through which individuals view the world).<sup>19</sup> Identification not just with Muslims, but with extremist Muslims, goes hand in hand with ideological conviction, including the belief that violent action represents a necessary antidote to the oppression of Islam.<sup>20</sup> For many, ideological radicalisation and active social participation are thus inextricably linked. Increased acceptance of religious/political principles can even follow on from taking part in group activities (see ‘Ideology & Behaviour’- chapter 4). Behavioural participation in group activities (social inclusion) can be a very rewarding experience and the more that individuals come to like others in the group, the more their views are listened to and accepted. Behaviour may also affect changes in cognition through an ongoing process of “self-persuasion”.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, in trying to maintain a consistent self-image, people justify their own behaviour in terms of salient ideology. It is thus gradually internalised, which in turn prompts further congruent behaviour (the “slippery slope” of radicalisation<sup>22</sup>). This effect can be exacerbated by in-group competition as individuals strive to prove their worth or achieve status by becoming more extreme (affecting what is commonly referred to as “risky shift”<sup>23</sup>).

Devotion to fellow group members may further intensify under conditions of perceived threat, which is an integral part of the Islamist message (“the West is against us”) and which also increases with further radicalisation since coming under scrutiny from law-enforcement or security agencies becomes a realistic possibility. Threat and isolation affect group cohesion in terms of a strong sense of mutual interdependence, which creates pressure towards behavioural and ideological conformity.<sup>24</sup> As mentioned above, increasing extremity and isolation can create a cycle of radicalisation whereby the group becomes all-important. External social ties may lose their significance and the radical identity may be chronically activated, permeating all aspects of group members’ perception of the world. Moreover, in-group ‘love’ cultivates feelings of social obligation and represents a significant barrier to exiting the group.<sup>25</sup> Paradoxically, resultant increased costs of participation, for example, greater levels of risk or expended effort, may also decrease the likelihood of disengagement via ‘sunk-cost’ effects<sup>26</sup>



(better known as ‘chasing your losses’, continuing a line of decision-making *because* it has cost so much already).

## **5.4 Patterns of Radicalisation**

Although there is no fixed rate or pre-determined sequence of radicalisation, certain patterns of behaviour have been observed.

### **5.4.1 Joining the Radical Social Scene**

Prior to 9/11 Islamists could often operate quite freely in Western society and so the starting point for many was attendance at a radical mosque. Islamist militants now keep a lower profile but there is evidence that mosques or other social settings, such as Islamic book shops, youth clubs, or gyms still serve as important initial meeting points.<sup>27</sup> Other important locations include schools, work places, family homes, and prisons.<sup>28</sup> Increasingly so, face-to-face interaction may be preceded by autonomous Internet browsing of radical sites and chat rooms, and groups continue to use the Internet and other Islamist media resources.<sup>29</sup>

As individuals come to adopt Islamist identities, they generally associate more and more exclusively with like-minded associates and to varying extents exhibit increased religious behaviours (e.g. growing a beard, wearing traditional clothing).<sup>30</sup> Other marked behavioural changes may include refraining from ‘un-Islamic’ behaviours such as drinking alcohol or going to clubs, and instead showing increased levels of religious-oriented community activism<sup>31</sup> (though of course individuals hardly stand out in society as a result). Having said this, overt signs of radicalisation are by no means inevitable. Heightened concern for avoiding attention means that these behaviours are often kept to a deliberate minimum, whilst the doctrine of ‘necessity permits the forbidden’ in accordance with *takfir* ideology means that Western appearance and lifestyles can be maintained to fool the infidel.<sup>32</sup> More recently, youth gangs such as the ‘Muslim Boys’ of London have adopted the ‘Islamist’ identity, blending it with hip-hop culture and living resolutely criminal lifestyles.<sup>33</sup> Hence there is also a great deal of tolerance for contradictions in ideology and behaviour.



#### **5.4.2 Increasing Militancy**

In cases where groups have formed in public settings, there is often a deliberate move away from the mosque or other location to more private settings as beliefs become more extreme.<sup>34</sup> Sometimes withdrawal from the mosque is preceded by heated arguments with mosque officials deemed to be too moderate in their views.<sup>35</sup> Increasing privacy and isolation is thus indicative of the development of an increasingly exclusive and intolerant identity, as well as increased concern for security. Conversely, as the Islamist identity becomes ever-important, group members are sometimes outspoken about their beliefs, openly criticising the West and moderate Muslims alike, and declaring their desire for jihad. Further signs of increased militancy tend to include self-organised training within the country of residence in the form of activities such as martial arts, weight-lifting and fitness, and going on outdoor ‘adventure weekends’ involving obstacle courses, paintballing, or similar activities.<sup>36</sup>

#### **5.4.3 Training for Jihad**

Continuing to draw inspiration from jihadi videos and also sometimes from communication with fellow Islamists online, the decision to become actively involved in jihad is frequently preceded by international travel in pursuit of ‘real’ paramilitary training and combat.<sup>37</sup> For many (as was the case with the Hamburg 9/11 contingent<sup>38</sup>) the original intention is to participate in military struggles, such as in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq or Somalia. Even where some form of training is obtained it is often not possible to join in foreign jihadi wars as it is difficult to access these countries. Hence, as in the past before the camps in Afghanistan were destroyed, those who travel abroad in pursuit of jihad generally return home. A number of these individuals are successful in acquiring new skills and a sense of having become a ‘real’ mujahid. Some may have decided before leaving that they want to carry out acts of terrorism on return. Others decide to do this during or after training, while a further, unknown percentage<sup>39</sup> decides that violent jihad is not for them, and gives up on the pursuit of violence.<sup>40</sup>

In the post 9/11 era training with terrorist organisations has become increasingly difficult to acquire. It has not, however, stopped aspiring militants from risking exposure by travelling in search of it (going mainly to the tribal areas of North West Pakistan).<sup>41</sup> Training in the past appears to have been more easily accessible and more formally organised, consisting not only of a wide range of military skills training



(physical, weapons, intelligence, counter-intelligence) but also involving intense religious and ideological instruction in a structured, top-down system.<sup>42</sup> The foreign training that is acquired by the current generation of Western-based jihadis may vary enormously in degree of professionalism, but nevertheless represents a hugely important step in the radicalisation process that dramatically increases the level of threat posed by otherwise home-grown groups.<sup>43</sup>



### **5.5 Going Operational**

Going operational involves the –usually collective- decision to carry out an actual terrorist attack (and as discussed above may be seen as evidence of ‘jihadisation’<sup>44</sup>). This stage of development is likely to be characterised by intensified efforts to protect the secrecy of the group and its plans using counter-surveillance techniques learned via the Internet or during training. The Internet is also likely to continue to be used for communication and inspiration, but in addition may now be used for gathering intelligence on specific targets for attack.<sup>45</sup> Numerous possible targets may be visited and videotaped. If traditional Islamic dress was previously adopted, efforts to blend in with Western society may now be made (although as already mentioned this – or indeed any of the behaviours here- are far from inevitable).

By this stage if group members have not done so already, they may quit their job or studies. Financing operations in the past sometimes involved ‘seed money’<sup>46</sup> from al-Qaeda or a similar organisation, however home-grown groups now appear to be largely self-financed through a mixture of legal and illegal means. For example, the Madrid ‘3/11’ bombers were involved in drug dealing, theft and robbery,<sup>47</sup> while the London ‘7/7’ bombers appeared to mostly rely on credit cards and loans.<sup>48</sup> The former cost an estimated US\$53,000-\$70,000 while the latter cost less than £8,000 (around US\$13,000)<sup>49</sup>; thus effective operations can be carried out at varying, but relatively low cost. As the date of the operation approaches it is possible that the terrorists will miss payments on loans or credit cards, deplete their bank accounts, or show other financial irregularities,<sup>50</sup> especially where martyrdom is planned and a family may be left behind without means to support themselves.

The most common form of (planned) attack involves using home-made bombs (IEDs or improvised explosive devices). ‘Recipes’ and assembly plans may have been learned in training or potentially via the Internet. IEDs generally use volatile chemical mixtures and makeshift electronic detonators. At the stage where groups are committed to attack, they tend to buy material such as hair bleach, fertiliser and industrial/agricultural chemicals necessary to construct their bombs. The quantities required can range from a few kilos (e.g. as with the London bombings) to several tonnes (e.g. Operation Crevice<sup>51</sup>). Once chemical ingredients have been acquired, they must be mixed. ‘Safe-houses’ may be rented for this specific purpose, and an outward sign of working with chemicals sometimes includes lightening of hair due to the



bleaching effect.<sup>52</sup> Bombs are then often tested in remote areas. ‘Dry runs’ of the operation may be performed by the group, visiting the selected target/s as they plan to do on the day.

Video testimonies (martyrdom videos) are usually recorded at some point where suicide is planned as part of the operation. These tend to feature the intended *shaheed* in Islamic dress, holding the Quran and/or a gun, sometimes sitting in front of a flag or banner. Individuals offer justification for the intended attacks –referred to as if they have happened already since the videos are not meant to be discovered until afterwards- and frequently cite the Quran with an index finger raised in mimicry of bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and others. Psychologically, this may be a ‘point of no return’ as each individual commits to the plan and to each other, effectively sealing a collective pact to follow through to the end.<sup>53</sup> If suicide is not planned, videoed or written demands may be recorded to later be sent to the media, as in the case of the attacks in Madrid.<sup>54</sup>

In the final days and moments before an attack, behaviour seems in general to be unremarkable although there may be occasional cracks in the terrorists’ demeanour as the pressure mounts. In the case of the 9/11 attacks –the most professionally executed and complex operation to date- there were reports of suspicious remarks hinting to outsiders that ‘something big’ was going to happen soon.<sup>55</sup> Ziad Jarrah, one of the pilots, also received a speeding ticket just two days before the final date.<sup>56</sup> Hence despite the necessity of absolute control, there are occasional lapses in judgement or emotional control and unnecessary brushes with the law. This serves as a reminder that despite great efforts to be as professional as possible, terrorists do not always fulfil their aspirations. Throughout their development they sometimes break protocol and make mistakes.



## **5.6 Recent Developments**

Processes and patterns of radicalisation over the years share many commonalities in terms of basic beliefs and behaviours. However, there are a number of developments that may have affected significant differences between older and more recent generations of Islamist terrorists. Notable interrelated developments include increased levels of autonomy, greater use of the Internet and changes in the profiles of jihadists. Although these issues have been touched upon at various points already it is worth re-examining them with specific regard to their impact upon processes of radicalisation and operational functioning.

### **5.6.1 Increased Autonomy**

The organisational affiliation of home-grown groups tends to be questionable in comparison to groups operating in the late 1990's and early millennium. The earlier generation often included jihadi combat veterans. Many had 'formal' memberships in organisations such as the GIA, GSPC or al-Qaeda (that is to say they may have filled out application forms to attend training camps and in numerous cases had sworn allegiance to bin Laden and were fully integrated into terrorist networks, although by no means are official registers of members always kept). They were generally well trained in paramilitary-style camps (mainly in Afghanistan); there was a degree of top-down control in that they tended to receive financing for operations; and they received tactical support and advice if not direct orders. Often teams were assembled during training, or individuals were sent to certain locations to team up with local operatives for a mission.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast, home-grown groups of terrorists seem to come together spontaneously. They often appear to be self-assembled as a group, and although they may still be in contact with influential radical individuals in the community, it seems these figures are less well 'connected' than in the past. Training for jihad often begins at home in a makeshift manner and where training abroad is obtained (often in Pakistan), it is less formally organised and varies in the degree of professionalism. Training abroad is less accessible than in the past and not all group members may receive it (in which case cell leaders or 'entrepreneurs' tend to be those who go to train<sup>58</sup>). Overall, home-grown terrorists appear to have "only marginal ties to structured terrorist groups"<sup>59</sup> and are therefore more autonomous, lacking in organisational support or control.



Autonomy must not be viewed as an all-or-non variable, however. In this context it must be assessed in relation to 1) radicalisation, 2) training and 3) operational functioning. As for radicalisation, a lot has been said about the impact of the Internet (see below) and Islamist ideology and propaganda is certainly more readily available than in the past. However, it is also important to remember that the earlier generation of Islamist terrorists (recent immigrants) were also very active in their own radicalisation. They listened to preachers or mujahedin who they came in contact with and absorbed various forms of media. But they also became increasingly extreme in their beliefs through interaction with each other, and often sought violent jihad of their own accord.<sup>60</sup> As already discussed, conversion or commitment, as opposed to conformity or compliance, requires a sense of individual freedom (see 'Ideological & Social Progression' above). Hence some degree of autonomy may have always been a feature of processes of radicalisation.

The topic of training has already been covered, and here it does seem that home-grown groups are, against their desires, more independent than in the past. This feeds directly into operational functioning, in that lack of organisational affiliation means that financing, strategy and tactics all tend to be essentially up to the group. Islamist terrorists of the past, who were more clearly part of an organisation, seem on average to have enjoyed greater levels of support, and were more often instructed, or at least given a basic plan to follow. As a result they also had greater operational and technical ability and were more successful in carrying out attacks.

### **5.6.2 The Impact of the Internet**

Just as society in general has done so, Islamist terrorists have increasingly utilised the Internet as it has flourished over the past decade or so- referred to by the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) as the “virtualisation of jihad”.<sup>61</sup> Radical websites and chat-rooms have proliferated, and propaganda, videos, and information on bomb-making and other practical issues have become more readily available. Users can browse and participate in online extremist groups with low levels of risk and a sense of empowerment as their true identity remains anonymous. The Internet also facilitates networking with like-minded individuals, including international communication- potentially serving as a virtual ‘bridge’ to organised terrorists.<sup>62</sup>



Potentially, individuals can undergo the entire radicalisation process and go operational without any direct human contact. In support of this the AIVD allege that ‘Yahya K.’, an 18-year old Islamist arrested in November 2004 for posting online threats against Dutch politicians and the Security Service, and found to be in possession of home-made explosives, “had gone through the entire process of radicalisation and recruitment seated in front of the virtual world of his pc screen”.<sup>63</sup>

Use of the Internet is now a common theme in reports of home-grown terror groups. Its networking and operational-planning potential have been demonstrated most significantly in the case of Younis Tsouli, the London-based Yemeni student and ‘superstar’ cyber-jihadist who was in communication with both home-grown and organised terrorists around the globe, arrested in 2005.<sup>64</sup> There is also the case of an alleged plot in 2006 to destroy underground tunnels in New York City, involving eight people spread over six countries who had never met as a group, had never been to the US, and used the Internet to communicate and accumulate information on targets.<sup>65</sup> As Emerson remarks, “[t]he potential for “virtual” recruitment, training, and other “management functions” controlled from one part of the world while the attackers operate and plan in another, without ever physically meeting, becomes quite real”.<sup>66</sup>

However, the impact of the Internet may have been overstated. As Stevens and Neumann point out, Younis Tsouli represents an exceptional case rather than the rule.<sup>67</sup> They conclude that “[s]elf-radicalisation and self-recruitment via the internet with little or no relation to the outside world rarely happens, and there is no reason to suppose that this situation will change in the near future.”<sup>68</sup> Thus the Internet may serve as a starting point for radicalisation, and as a continuing source of inspiration and information. But generally speaking, as in the past, face-to-face interaction with fellow Islamists is sought and seems to remain the most powerful and common mechanism of increasing extremism and commitment to violence.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, based on a survey of recent cases in Europe, Nesser concludes that while the Internet was indeed of practical significance for recruitment, radicalisation and operational purposes, its role as a “virtual training camp” has been overstated.<sup>70</sup>

Pending more detailed and comprehensive examination of the role of the Internet in different groups of contemporary terrorists, it seems that the impact of the Internet *has* been significant, becoming an integral part of radicalisation, training, and operational functioning. However, its effects should not be over-exaggerated and it



should not be viewed in isolation from direct, face-to-face interactions which continue to be hugely important to terrorism as a process.

### **5.6.3 Changing Jihadi Profiles**

The term ‘home-grown’ terrorism reflects the fact that there have been changes in the average jihadi profile. Islamist terrorists in the West are now more often second or third-generation, rather than recent immigrants, and have radicalised ‘at home’. They also appear to be younger, to include more converts and females, and to have a history of involvement in crime.<sup>71</sup> Changing profiles are the consequence of the Islamist cause taking hold in the West and becoming increasingly publicised after 9/11. The involvement of younger, Western-born radicals and the continuing adaptation of Islamist messages are also both a consequence and cause of the expansion of militant Islam on the Internet.

The growth of HGIT in the West and the resultant differences in the backgrounds of terrorists may be expressed in terms of changing social identities.<sup>72</sup> As Table 4.1 demonstrates (see ‘Theories of Identity Applied’- chapter 4) different identity ‘crises’ or tensions may be felt by recent versus second or third-generation immigrants and converts to Islam. In other words the type of tension felt, and the related pathway to terrorism, is likely to be affected by each individual’s existing social identity. Terrorists of the earlier generation (many of whom had directly experienced violence or oppression growing up in the Middle East or elsewhere) were born into an identity which was congruent with the Islamist cause. By contrast, home-grown terrorists consciously reject the Western elements of their identities. Hence Roy remarks that “[t]o convert to Islam today is a way for a European rebel to find a cause; it has little to do with theology”<sup>73</sup> and Durodié has suggested that acts of home-grown terrorism are “akin to the Columbine high school massacre”,<sup>74</sup> finding their basis in cultural nihilism.<sup>75</sup>

At the same time, there may have been a change in expectations about what it means to get involved in radical and militant Islam. Silber and Bhatt claim that “there is no longer any illusion as to what the adoption of jihadi-Salafi ideology means” and that processes of radicalisation are accelerating.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, Taarnby Jensen observes that individuals drawn to radical mosques “often know exactly which interpretation of Islam they want to hear”<sup>77</sup> and Nesser asserts that Europe’s home-grown generation of



Islamist terrorists is more impatient and reckless than their predecessors.<sup>78</sup> It is thus possible to distinguish between earlier generations of Islamist terrorists and their home-grown ‘descendants’ based upon their social identities. Relatively speaking, in earlier generations an identity congruent with the cause preceded or went hand in hand with some form of frustration and desire to act, whilst in later generations ‘frustration’ precedes adoption of an identity which enables action.<sup>79</sup>

From this perspective, the radical Islamist ideology behind HGIT is more of a vehicle for expression rather than a cause of violence per se. This therefore implies, in line with Roy’s social movement analysis (see ‘An Alternative Social Movement Perspective’ - chapter 4) that in the absence of Islamist ideology groups and individuals would presumably find some alternative avenue of expression. Viewed this way, HGIT represents a ‘less real’ manifestation of the Islamist cause. Participants are often less professional than in the past, they may have a less coherent understanding of their actions, and less clearly defined goals. However, this does not rule out the need to address the religion and ideology of home-grown Islamist terrorists as they are nonetheless often deeply committed to violence and should not be underestimated.



## **Chapter 5 Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> See AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat* (2006) The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 11

<sup>3</sup> Clark McCauley & Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism" (2008) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20, 415-433, p.416

<sup>4</sup> John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism" (2008) *The Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science*, 618, 80-94; John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways: The Road to Recruitment" (2007) *Foreign Policy Agenda*, 12:5, 24-27 <<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/ijpe0507.pdf>> at February 18, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism" 85.

<sup>6</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (2005) Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield; Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Joining the Cause: Al-Mujahiroun and Radical Islam" (2004) Presented at The Roots of Islamic Radicalism Conference, Yale University, New Haven, May 10 <<http://www.yale.edu/polisci/info/conferences/Islamic%20Radicalism/papers/wiktorowicz-paper.pdf>> at February 7, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Wiktorowicz, "Joining the Cause: Al-Mujahiroun and Radical Islam" 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways: The Road to Recruitment"; Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*.

<sup>10</sup> Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Freedman & Scott Fraser, "Compliance without Pressure: The Foot-in-the-Door Technique" (1966) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4:2, 195-202.

<sup>13</sup> Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising*, 135-165.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*(2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (2007) New York: New York City Police Department; House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005* (2006) London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>18</sup> Sam Mullins & Adam Dolnik, "An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modeling the Development of Islamist Terror-Cells in the West" (2009) *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 2:1, 3-29.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Stephen Reicher, Russel Spears & Tom Postmes "A Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Phenomena" *European Review of Social Psychology*, 6:1 (1995) 161-198.

<sup>20</sup> See Thomas Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: From Conversion to Terrorism* (2007) Danish Ministry of Justice: Copenhagen <[http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Home\\_grown\\_terrorism\\_and\\_Islamist\\_radicalisation\\_in\\_Europe\\_-\\_an\\_assessment\\_of\\_influencing\\_factors\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Home_grown_terrorism_and_Islamist_radicalisation_in_Europe_-_an_assessment_of_influencing_factors_2_.pdf)> at April 14, 2009; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.

<sup>21</sup> McCauley & Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism".

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Silke, "Holy Warriors: Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi Radicalization" *European Journal of Criminology*, 5:1 (2008) 99-123; McCauley & Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization".

<sup>24</sup> McCauley & Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization".

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Hal Arkes & Catherine Blumer, "The Psychology of Sunk Cost" (1985) *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 35:1, 124-140; Mullins & Dolnik, "An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modeling the Development of Islamist Terror-Cells in the West".

<sup>27</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.

<sup>28</sup> See Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: From Conversion to Terrorism*, 32-37.



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- <sup>29</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*; House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.
- <sup>30</sup> Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 30-31.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Hayder Mili, “Jihad Without Rules: The Evolution of al-Takfir wa al-Hijra” (2006) *Terrorism Monitor*, 4:13  
<[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=822&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=181&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=822&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=181&no_cache=1)> at January 21, 2009.
- <sup>33</sup> Shiv Malik, “Special Investigation: Are ‘Muslim Boys’ Using Profits of Crime to Fund Terrorist Attacks?” *The Independent*, 14 August, 2005  
<<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/special-investigation-are-muslim-boys-using-profits-of-crime-to-fund-terrorist-attacks-502831.html>> at March 23, 2009.
- <sup>34</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*; House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*; Michael Taarnby Jensen, *Jihad in Denmark: An Overview and Analysis of Jihadi Activity in Denmark 1990-2006* (2006) Danish Institute for International Studies: Copenhagen.
- <sup>35</sup> Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 36-37.
- <sup>36</sup> Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 43-46; Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: From Conversion to Terrorism*, 32-37.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid; Ibid; Petter Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?” (2008) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:2, 234-256.
- <sup>38</sup> The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States: Official Government Edition* (2004) US Government Printing Office, 165-166
- <sup>39</sup> Human decision-making is generally biased to continue along already chosen lines; given previous radicalisation and effort expended to reach this point, experiences of training are more likely to ‘push’ individuals further along their current path of extremism (see Mullins & Dolnik, “An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modeling the Development of Islamist Terror-Cells in the West”).
- <sup>40</sup> The best known example of a group of jihadis giving up during training is the ‘Lackawanna 6’, a group of American-Yemenis convicted in the US in 2003 (see Dina Temple-Raston, “Enemy Within? Not Quite” *The Washington Post*, September 9, 2007 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/07/AR2007090702049.html>> at October 29, 2007).
- <sup>41</sup> Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?”
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.
- <sup>45</sup> Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.
- <sup>46</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.
- <sup>47</sup> Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?” 243-245; Jordan, Mañas, & Horsburgh, “Strengths and Weaknesses of Grassroots Jihadist Networks: The Madrid Bombings”.
- <sup>48</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 23.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid; Mañas, & Horsburgh, “Strengths and Weaknesses of Grassroots Jihadist Networks: The Madrid Bombings” p.30.
- <sup>50</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 23-25.
- <sup>51</sup> See “Five Get Life Over UK Bomb Plot” *BBC News*, April 30, 2007, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/6195914.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6195914.stm)> at April 7, 2008.
- <sup>52</sup> House of Commons, *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 23.
- <sup>53</sup> Ariel Merari, “Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism” (2005) In Tore Bjørgo (Ed.) *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*, New York, Routledge, 70-86.
- <sup>54</sup> Jordan, Mañas, & Horsburgh, “Strengths and Weaknesses of Grassroots Jihadist Networks: The Madrid Bombings”.
- <sup>55</sup> The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States*, 249-250.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid, 253.



- <sup>57</sup> Examples include the cases of Ahmed Ressam and Mohammad Mansour Jabarah (see Bernton, Hal, Carter, Mike, Heath, David, & Neff, James “The Terrorist Within: The Story Behind One Man’s Holy War Against America” *The Seattle Times*, June 23-July 7, 2002 <<http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/nation-world/terroristwithin/>> at March 13, 2008; Stewart Bell, *The Martyr’s Oath: The Apprenticeship of a Homegrown Terrorist* (2005) Toronto: John Wiley & Sons).
- <sup>58</sup> Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?” 250.
- <sup>59</sup> Vidino, “The Hofstad Group: The New Face of Terrorist Networks in Europe” 579.
- <sup>60</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.
- <sup>61</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*.
- <sup>62</sup> See AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*, 43-50; Tim Stevens & Peter Neumann, *Countering Online Radicalisation: A Strategy for Action* (2009) International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence <[http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/countering\\_online\\_radicalisation1.pdf](http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/countering_online_radicalisation1.pdf)> at April 16, 2009; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 109-123; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.
- <sup>63</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*, 49.
- <sup>64</sup> See Evan Kohlmann, “The Real Online Terrorist Threat” (2006) *Foreign Affairs*, 85:5, 115-124.
- <sup>65</sup> Michael Scheuer, “The New York Plot: The Impact of Bin Laden’s Campaign to Inspire Jihad” (2006) *Terrorism Focus*, 3:28 <[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=846&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=239&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=846&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=239&no_cache=1)> at April 17, 2009 .
- <sup>66</sup> Steven Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islam in the US* (2006) New York: Prometheus Books, 479.
- <sup>67</sup> Stevens & Neumann, *Countering Online Radicalisation: A Strategy for Action*, 12.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid, 13.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?”.
- <sup>71</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.
- <sup>72</sup> Sam Mullins, “Home-Grown Islamist Terrorism: Issues and Implications” (2007) *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 1:3 <[http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php?option=com\\_rokzine&view=article&id=12](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php?option=com_rokzine&view=article&id=12)> at January 10, 2009.
- <sup>73</sup> Olivier Roy, “EuroIslam: The Jihad Within” *National Interest*, March 22, 2003.
- <sup>74</sup> Bill Durodié, “Home-grown Nihilism – The Clash within Civilisations” (2007) in Phil Cornish, (Ed.) *Britain and Security*, London: The Smith Institute, 125.
- <sup>75</sup> In line with this assertion, there seems to be a rise –especially in the US- in the number of cases of ‘lone wolf’ jihadis- possibly mentally disturbed individuals acting alone against targets advocated by Islamists (see Lorenzo Vidino, “Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism in the United States: A New and Occasional Phenomenon?” (2009) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 32:1, 1-17).
- <sup>76</sup> Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 10.
- <sup>77</sup> Taarnby Jensen, *Jihad in Denmark: An Overview and Analysis of Jihadi Activity in Denmark 1990-2006*, 70.
- <sup>78</sup> Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?” 249.
- <sup>79</sup> Mullins, “Home-Grown Islamist Terrorism: Issues and Implications”.



**Chapter 6**  
**Islamist Terrorism in the USA**

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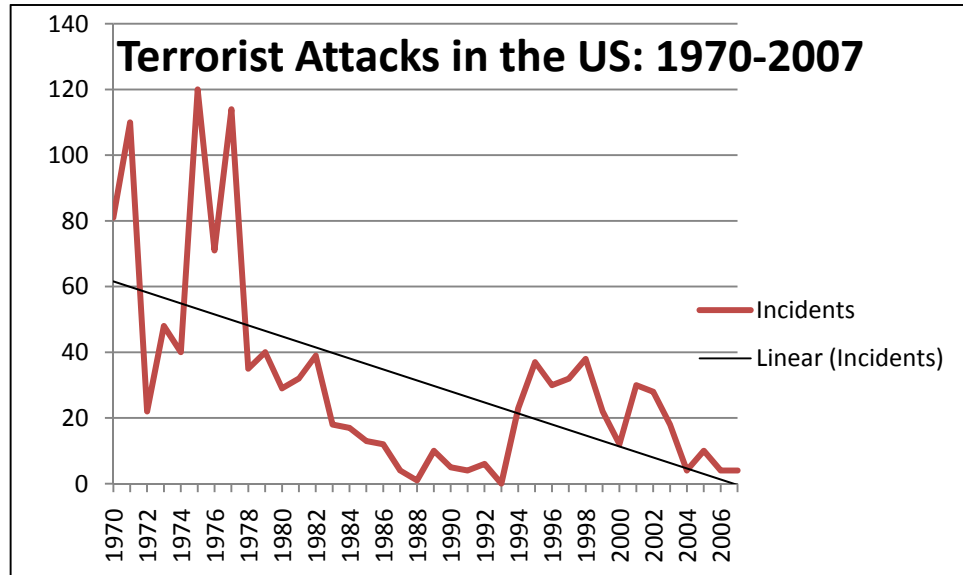
### **Overview**

There has been considerable speculation as to differences between the United States and Europe regarding rates of Islamist terrorism. It is generally agreed that the US faces a far less serious home-grown threat –quantitatively speaking and relative to its population size- in comparison to European countries. The aim of this chapter is to give a historical overview of Islamist terrorist activity in the US in order to contextualise the more detailed comparison included in the ensuing chapters.



## **6. Islamist Terrorism in the United States**

### **6.1 Historical Overview of Terrorism in America**



**Figure 6.1:** Terrorist attacks in the US, 1970-2007 (created using the START Global Terrorism Database <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=217>).

Terrorism in general and Islamist terrorist activity in particular are both often assumed to have been rare occurrences on American soil. Of course it depends upon how ‘terrorism’ and ‘Islamist terrorism’ are defined but in both cases there is a surprising amount to speak of. According to the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Global Terrorism Database, between 1970 and 2007 there were 1,347 terrorist attacks in the United States, involving in excess of 125 different groups and resulting in 3,338 fatalities (including 9/11) and 1,983 injuries.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with this, Hewitt notes that although the US has not experienced the severity of terrorism campaigns in other Western nations such as the UK, it is neither new nor trivial.<sup>2</sup> He describes terrorism in America as having a “fragmented quality”, being characterised by remarkable ideological diversity and a multitude of different organisations even within the same ideological groupings, as well as a significant number of lone individuals.<sup>3</sup>

Hewitt identifies nine overlapping waves of terrorism in the US between the mid 1950’s up until the 2000’s.<sup>4</sup> The first wave consisted of white racist violence in response to civil rights campaigns. It began in 1954, peaked in 1964 and had largely disappeared by 1970. The second wave was characterised by Black nationalist and



religious groups (including Nation of Islam affiliates and groups such as the Death Angels and the Mau Mau) which began in the mid 1960's, peaking around 1970 and ending around 1975. Revolutionary leftist terrorism by the likes of the Weather Underground began in 1969, quickly peaked in 1971 and dissipated over the next fourteen years, lasting until 1985. The fourth wave was marked by Puerto Rican nationalists (most notably the Armed Forces of National Liberation and the Macheteros) who exhibited renewed activity in 1969, peaking towards the end of the 1970's and declining into the early 1990's. The date-range for the fifth wave (Jewish terrorism) is not specified but based on an examination of the START database<sup>5</sup> this began in 1970, peaked around the end of the decade and ended in 1986. The sixth wave consisted of anti-Castro Cuban violence, much of which was in Miami, and lasted from 1968 until the early 1980's.

In addition to these historical waves of terrorism, Hewitt lists three ongoing waves.<sup>6</sup> The first of these is anti-abortionist violence, which began in 1977 and increased in 1984 and 1992. Not covered by Hewitt but perhaps as important as anti-abortionist terrorism are other 'single issue' groups concerned with animal rights and the environment, such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) respectively. Both of these groups began destructive operations around 1998 (generally targeting businesses and property, causing extensive and costly damage<sup>7</sup>) and have continued into the 2000's.<sup>8</sup> Hewitt's second ongoing wave is that of far right-wing violence, which began in 1978 and is more geographically spread and organisationally diverse than the Klan-related terrorism of the '50's and '60's; and finally, the threat from Islamist extremists, which became apparent as a direct threat to domestic security in the US with the advent of the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing.

## **6.2 Islamist Terrorism in the US**

### **6.2.1 Pre-1993**

Vidino traces early incidents of violence inspired by politicised forms of Islam back to the 1970's.<sup>9</sup> He points out that such acts mostly involved black Americans who tended to adhere more to Americanised versions of Islam and who were acting out of a mixture of motives that were distinct to those of contemporary Islamist terrorists.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Saudi Wahhabism began to gain popularity in the United States as early as the 1960's and a considerable number of African Americans travelled to Saudi



Arabia for the *hajj* or to study in Islamic universities.<sup>11</sup> Reportedly, “dozens of native-born Americans” travelled to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets during the 1980’s<sup>12</sup> but confirmed examples before 1990 are hard to come by.

As with the rest of the Western world, the encroachment of the initial wave of ‘global’ Islamist extremists into the American homeland began in the 1980’s. Not long after the Mekhtab al-Khidemat was established in Pakistan in 1984 by Abdullah Azzam, international offices were set up in the US under the name of the Al-Kifah Refugee Centre, ostensibly a charitable organisation.<sup>13</sup> The first US offices were at the Islamic Centre of Tucson (ICT) in Arizona, which published *Al-Jihad*, a magazine that called for support in the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan and that allegedly reached up to 50,000 people, around half of whom were in the US.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Emerson asserts that “[f]rom 1985 to 1989, Azzam, and his top aide, Palestinian Sheikh Tamim al-Adnani, [personally] visited dozens of American cities, exhorting recruits to pick up the sword against the enemies of Islam. They raised tens of thousands of dollars and enlisted hundreds and hundreds of fighters and believers”.<sup>15</sup> According to Bob Blitzer, who headed the first Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Islamist terrorism squad in 1994, between 40 to 50 jihadists left to go overseas from just two New York mosques during the 1990’s.<sup>16</sup> Kaplan<sup>17</sup> reports that Pakistani intelligence sources corroborate these figures and estimate that around 400 Americans trained at jihadi camps in Afghanistan between 1989 and 2001 (estimates of total numbers trained from around the world during this time-frame vary immensely, but 50,000 has been suggested as a conservative figure).<sup>18</sup>

The growing contingent of Sunni Islamist militants within the United States was driven and supported by a growing infrastructure centred around the offices of Al-Kifah and related mosques and other institutions, organised by figures who were part of the Afghan jihad network. Emerson maintains that in addition to Tucson, “dozens” more Al-Kifah offices were established in the US, including in Brooklyn (which swiftly became the headquarters in America), Jersey City, Boston, Chicago and Atlanta.<sup>19</sup> He alleges that as early as 1987 the Al-Farouq mosque in Brooklyn was involved in counterfeiting money, falsifying passports, sending explosives overseas to Hamas and recruiting and sending volunteers to foreign jihadi conflict zones.<sup>20</sup>

Certainly New York was a hive of Islamist activity in the late 1980’s into the 1990’s. The FBI had placed a group of jihadists under surveillance during July 1989.<sup>21</sup>



Among them were El Sayyid Nosair, Clement Rodney Hampton-El, Mahmoud Abouhalima, Mohammad Salameh, and Nidal Ayyad.<sup>22</sup> At the time they were observed firing AK-47 assault rifles at a shooting range and it also transpired that they were in communication with the 'Blind Sheikh' Omar Abdel Rahman of the Egyptian Gamaa' Islamiyah. Rahman then joined them in 1990 to lead what was the first operational Islamist terrorist group based in the West.<sup>23</sup>

The year that Rahman arrived two murders took place in connection to the New York network. Imam Rashad Khalifa was killed in Tucson, Arizona on January 31<sup>st</sup> 1990,<sup>24</sup> apparently due to offence caused by his interpretation of the Quran.<sup>25</sup> Although no-one was convicted for his murder, two members of Al-Fuqra, a sect-like organisation also known in the US as 'Muslims of the Americas' (and with which Hampton-El was also affiliated) were convicted for conspiring to kill him.<sup>26</sup> It was also established that Wadih el-Hage (resident in the US since the early 1980's, deeply involved in the emergent al-Qaeda network, and later convicted in relation to his extensive role in the 1998 East African embassy bombings<sup>27</sup>) had played host to an unidentified individual from New York who conducted surveillance on Imam Khalifa before his death.<sup>28</sup> El-Hage was known to have been in contact with members of the New York network including Mahmoud Abouhalima since at least 1988, and spent time in New York in 1991 visiting El Sayeed Nosair (by then in jail).<sup>29</sup>

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1990, Rabbi Meir Kahane, the founder of the extremist Jewish Defence League was assassinated during a speech at the Marriot Hotel in New York. The assassin is firmly believed to have been El Sayeed Nosair, who was convicted for firearms offences (shooting and wounding two people as he fled the scene) although evidence was insufficient to secure a conviction for murder.<sup>30</sup> A third assassination then took place in February/March 1991 when Mustapha Shalabi –previously appointed by Abdullah Azzam as the head of Al-Kifah in the US- was found with a gunshot wound to the head and multiple stab wounds.<sup>31</sup> Shalabi had reportedly been under pressure from Rahman and his followers to relinquish control of operations in America, and although no-one was ever charged with the killing, it is alleged that Rahman had issued a *fatwa* calling for Shalabi's death.<sup>32</sup>

The true impact of the New York network's endeavours was not felt, however, until the February 26<sup>th</sup> bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993, which killed 6 people and injured over a thousand.<sup>33</sup> This attack was led by Ramzi Yousef (aka Abdul



Basit Karim, nephew of the 9/11 ‘mastermind’ Khalid Sheikh Mohammed<sup>34</sup>) who had trained at the camps in Afghanistan and arrived in the US in September 1992, meeting up with members of Rahman’s network shortly afterwards. Following the attacks the perpetrators were traced via remnants of the rental van they had used to transport the bomb, and in 1994 Mohammad Salameh, Mahmoud Abouhalima, Nidal Ayyad and Mohammed Ajaj were all sentenced to 240 years in prison. Yousef had fled the country but was apprehended in Pakistan in 1995 and received the same sentence in 1997.<sup>35</sup>

After the attacks in February, Emad Salem, an informer working for the FBI resumed tape recording conversations with the remaining members of Rahman’s network and on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1993 over a dozen individuals were arrested.<sup>36</sup> Under Rahman’s supervision the group had been planning to bomb numerous New York landmarks and buildings and to assassinate Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Ten defendants including Rahman were found guilty in October 1995 and received sentences ranging from 25 years to life.<sup>37</sup>

It is quite remarkable how quickly members of the Afghan jihadi network were able to establish an infrastructure in the United States and to enlist the help of long-term American residents and citizens. This all took place as the jihadi movement as a whole was in its early stages of development and ideological issues (‘near’ vs. ‘far’ enemy priorities) were still being ‘ironed out.’ The Yousef/Rahman network itself obviously reflected the changing shift in emphasis towards the ‘far’ enemy, i.e. America and its allies, seen to be propping up hated regimes in the Muslim world. It also reflected the growing emphasis placed on religion, as evidenced by the ‘spiritual advisor’ role played by Rahman and in statements made by members of the network. Indeed by the time of the first World Trade Centre attack, the camps in Afghanistan –which incorporated intensive religious instruction<sup>38</sup> - had been in operation for a decade. However, despite the fact that Yousef had been through such camps, it appears he was “a secular terrorist who mobilized others by playing on their religious zeal”.<sup>39</sup> Justification for the attack was also expressed in purely nationalistic and political terms in a letter posted to the New York Times by Nidal Ayyad, which focussed on US support for Israel and involvement in Middle Eastern affairs.<sup>40</sup> In hindsight the events of 1993 in New York are a clear indicator of ideological developments that were taking place and are an example of the cross-over between more traditional and ‘new’ forms of terrorism.



### **6.2.2 1993-2001**

US military action overseas in the first Gulf War in 1990-'91 and in Somalia in 1992-'93 were major drivers behind the increasing focus upon attacking American targets (facilitated by the death of Azzam, who had been opposed to this changing strategy). However, the first attacks in the US were pre-emptive of bin Laden's 1996 fatwa declaring 'War against the Americans' and a more definite desire to strike against the American homeland itself. In the years 1993-2001 Western-based activities were mostly in support of operations abroad, including attacks on Americans overseas, and to otherwise maintain and spread the Islamist movement. Notable successful attacks during this period took place in Somalia in 1993, Saudi Arabia in 1996, Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and Yemen in 2000.<sup>41</sup>

The indictment filed against bin Laden and twenty-one others in relation to the August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998, bombings in Kenya and Tanzania<sup>42</sup> is revealing of the integral part that activities on US soil had to play in the developing global jihad. Two figures in particular stand out due to the fact that they were both based in the US for long periods of time beginning in the mid-1980's, both obtained US citizenship, and both played very active militant roles, becoming part of bin Laden's inner circle.

Wadih el-Hage (discussed above in relation to his New York connections) was born in Lebanon and converted to Islam in his teens. He had studied at the University of South Louisiana in 1978 before going to Pakistan to join the Afghan jihad.<sup>43</sup> He returned to the US in 1985, married and was resident in Tucson, Arizona from 1986 to 1990, before spending a year in Arlington, Texas. This was followed by a brief spell in New York after the murder of Mustapha Shalabi.<sup>44</sup> Then from 1992-1994 he was based in Sudan, along with his family, and from 1994-1997 they lived in Kenya before returning to Texas in September 1997.<sup>45</sup> El-Hage was acting as bin Laden's personal secretary since at least the early 1990's<sup>46</sup> and travelled extensively, spending time in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He played a major coordinating role in the planning of the East African embassy bombings, which began at least as early as 1993<sup>47</sup> and throughout this time up until his conviction in 2001 El-Hage was in communication with central al-Qaeda figures including the US-based Ali Mohammed.

Mohammed –originally from Egypt- was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in both the first World Trade Centre attack and in the East Africa attacks.<sup>48</sup> He also came to the United States in 1985 (preceded by Special Forces training in 1981 at Fort



Bragg in North Carolina with the Egyptian army) going on to join the US military in 1986.<sup>49</sup> Mohammed allegedly supplied military manuals and gave training to Islamist militants he met in Jersey City, including El Sayeed Nosair.<sup>50</sup> He left the military in 1989 and was based in Santa Clara, California from then on; although like El-Hage he travelled extensively, including to train *mujahedin* in the camps of Afghanistan<sup>51</sup> and in 1991 he supervised bin Laden’s move to Sudan.<sup>52</sup> In 1993 he was “asked by bin Laden to conduct surveillance of American, British, French, and Israeli targets in Nairobi [Kenya]”<sup>53</sup> and in 1996 assisted with the move back to Afghanistan. Mohammed was eventually arrested in 1998 and pleaded guilty to all charges against him in 2000.<sup>54</sup>

What is remarkable about these overlapping stories is not only that the movements of figures so close to bin Laden were facilitated by having American passports, but that they used the US as their home-base to which they would always return, and through which they would channel communications and resources. For example, in 1995 Ali Mohammed sent details regarding the trial of Omar Abdel Rahman to Wadih El-Hage in Kenya.<sup>55</sup> El-Hage visited Mohammed in California later that same year, as well as another unnamed ‘co-conspirator’ in Florida in January 1996.<sup>56</sup> El-Hage maintained communication with his contact in Florida in addition to others in Texas and Oregon, giving updates on his activities and al-Qaeda affairs overseas.<sup>57</sup> Early in 1998, Ali Mohammed also communicated with El-Hage by way of an intermediary in Arlington, Texas.<sup>58</sup> These examples demonstrate both the entrenched nature of the US jihadi contingent and its significance to the wider network.

In addition to the exchange of information, US-based contacts were also used to acquire vital equipment. For example, naturalised US citizens Ziyad Khaleel and Tarik Hamdi respectively bought and delivered a satellite phone and battery pack to bin Laden in May 1998, which was then reportedly used in connection to the embassy bombings in August.<sup>59</sup> Hence the American-based network of Islamist militants formed an integrated part of global operations aimed at attacking the US abroad.

Meanwhile Islamists in America continued to raise funds and recruit new volunteers for jihad. The Brooklyn office of Al-Kifah (the charity front set up by associates of bin Laden to spread jihadi literature, raise funds and attract recruits) was shut down following the first World Trade Centre attack and Landmarks plot, and was later named a Specially Designated Terrorist Organization after 9/11.<sup>60</sup> However, similar charitable organisations were incorporated, fulfilling many of the same



functions. Among these was Care International, established in Boston, which allegedly functioned as “an outgrowth of, and successor to, Al Kifah Boston and was engaged in non-charitable activities”<sup>61</sup> including “engag[ing] in the solicitation and expenditure of funds to support the mujahideen and promote jihad...[and] assum[ing] the activities of Al-Kifah including the publication of its pro-jihad newsletter, Al-Hussam”.<sup>62</sup> Terrorism charges were not brought in this case, although ultimately, Care International directors Emadeddin Muntasser and Muhamed Mubayyid were convicted on charges of tax-fraud in January 2008, resulting in 11 and 12 month prison sentences respectively.<sup>63</sup>

Fund-raising in America for overseas Islamist terrorist groups through mosques, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charitable fronts appears to have been extensive. Emerson<sup>64</sup> details a complex and ever-changing fund-raising network with links to numerous terrorist organisations (primarily Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as well as affiliates of al-Qaeda). Many of these companies were founded in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s and since being investigated in the wake of 9/11 it has been established that millions of dollars have been raised in America for jihad. For example, the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), part of a network of organisations combined under the heading of the Council of American Muslim Charities, is recorded to have raised more than \$17.5 million between 1993 and 2001.<sup>65</sup> BIF had its assets frozen in 2001 and was designated a terrorist organisation in November 2002.<sup>66</sup> The coordinator of BIF-USA, Enaam Arnaout is alleged to have previously worked for bin Laden in Afghanistan, and in 2003 admitted to sending significant amounts of the charity-proceeds to fighters in Bosnia and Chechnya. Arnaout was sentenced in 2006 to ten years in prison for defrauding charity-donors.<sup>67</sup>

As the former National Coordinator for Security and Infrastructure Protection, Richard Clarke, testified in 2003, “it is now widely known that every major Islamist terrorist organization, from HAMAS to Islamic Jihad to Al Qaeda, has leveraged the financial resources and institutions of the United States to build their capabilities...enjoy[ing] a significant degree of cooperation and coordination within our borders”.<sup>68</sup> Prior to 2001 Islamist activities in the United States went comparatively unmonitored and were conducted quite freely. Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden’s deputy, is even reported to have come to the US on fund-raising tours of California in 1993<sup>69</sup> and 1995.<sup>70</sup>



While Americans were both knowingly and unwittingly making financial contributions to violent jihadist operations, a smaller number of individuals and groups of young men, often centred around influential figures in their community, were becoming radicalised to the point of pursuing armed conflict. As reported by Kaplan,<sup>71</sup> young Americans had been inspired to join foreign jihadi wars since the 1980's and this continued throughout the '90's. American-born Raed Hijazi reportedly turned to radical Islam whilst attending the Islamic Assistance Organization in Sacramento, where he was influenced to go to Afghanistan by a Fijian Muslim.<sup>72</sup> Hijazi met up with numerous other suspected al-Qaeda militants who spent time in Boston and New York during the mid 1990's<sup>73</sup> and was later convicted and sentenced to death for planning attacks in Jordan in 1999.<sup>74</sup>

Another example is Kamal Derwish, a US citizen raised in Yemen and Saudi Arabia and accredited with being the instigator behind the so-called 'Lackawanna 6', the group of American-Yemeni men who radicalised on the outskirts of Buffalo after Derwish returned to the US in 1998.<sup>75</sup> Derwish had previously trained in Afghanistan and fought in Bosnia. He maintained his jihadi connections (investigators later revealed that he had been in communication with Tawfiq bin Attash, a planner of the USS Cole attack in Yemen in 2000<sup>76</sup>) and he quickly built up a group of followers around him, whom he urged to join the jihad. Six of Derwish's followers attended training camps in Afghanistan in May 2001 and returned to the US later that year before being arrested in September 2002.<sup>77</sup> Evidence suggested the men had been deterred by the experience and were not planning any form of terrorist attack, although they were still convicted on terror-related charges and were sentenced to between 7 and 10 years in prison in 2003 (Derwish was killed the year before by a Predator Drone in Yemen).<sup>78</sup>

There are numerous other examples of groups and individuals who became significantly radicalised in the US before the 9/11 attacks and then went abroad in search of violent jihad. Jose Padilla became part of a network of extremists based in Broward County, Florida that set up several Islamist charity fronts for supporting mujahedin around the world and conspired towards acts of terrorism between 1993 and 2001.<sup>79</sup> Padilla left America in 1998, trained in Afghanistan in 2000, was arrested on his return to the US in 2002, and was convicted on terrorism charges along with co-conspirators Adham Amin Hassoun and Kifah Wael Jayyousi in August 2007.<sup>80</sup> US



officials maintain that Padilla had trained with the specific intent of carrying out attacks in America.<sup>81</sup>

Individuals such as Adam Gadahn who radicalised in the US at around the same time were also part of broader networks which had a profound impact upon their lives and actively ‘plugged them in’ to the global jihad. Another convert, Gadahn had radicalised between 1996-1997 through his contact with Hisham Diab –a Bosnian war veteran- and Khalil Deek –reportedly an established jihadi with links to the Montreal network that spawned the ‘Millennial plotter’ Ahmed Ressam.<sup>82</sup> Through these contacts Gadahn left for Pakistan in 1997/1998, going on to become a media-spokesman for al-Qaeda, warning in one video that “[t]he streets of America shall run red with blood”.<sup>83</sup>

Elsewhere, in Portland, Oregon, a group who became known as the ‘Portland 7’ had come together at the local mosque and had radicalised during the late 1990’s, reportedly heavily influenced by a former veteran of the Afghan-Soviet war, Habis Abdulla al-Saoub<sup>84</sup> (killed by Pakistani forces in 2003).<sup>85</sup> By the summer of 2001 they were engaged in self-styled paramilitary training and in October that year five group members left the US seeking (unsuccessfully) to join the Taliban in Afghanistan.<sup>86</sup> Arrests were made in 2002, resulting in lengthy prison sentences.<sup>87</sup>

A similar group had surfaced in Virginia, again centred around radical figures at the local mosque, this time in the form of Ali al-Timimi, an American-born Islamic scholar educated in Saudi Arabia, and Randal Todd Royer, a former US army soldier and veteran of the Bosnian jihad in 1994.<sup>88</sup> Members of the ‘Virginia Paintball Jihad’ network trained in the US before leaving for Pakistan where they underwent training with Lashkar e-Taiba in 2000 and 2001.<sup>89</sup> As in Portland, the group had intended to join the Taliban fighting American troops but apparently were not able to do so, and although back in the US there were no clear plans to attack their homeland, they had amassed a stockpile of firearms.<sup>90</sup> Arrests were made in 2003 leading to eleven eventual convictions (although two were for firearms offences only).<sup>91</sup>

These examples (some of which are dealt with in more detail in Appendix A Part 2) demonstrate the emergence of pockets of Islamist militancy across the US built up around influential individuals, many of whom had embraced the jihadi cause whilst overseas. These figures strove to support mujahedin abroad and acted as recruiters on American soil. They tended to have impressive religious knowledge and a considerable number had prior combat experience in foreign jihadi conflicts. Ultimately they served



to spread the word of jihad inside America while forming a connection to the worldwide Islamist network.

Patterns of radicalisation in the US during the late 1980’s and through the 1990’s thus tended to show groups of young men gravitating toward charismatic individuals in their community as they wished to learn more about Islam. Discovery of religion was soon directed towards a focus on the plight of Muslims in overseas conflicts, and, often within two or three years of coming together, group members would travel abroad in search of armed jihad. The original aim was almost exclusively to take part in military battles, not to carry out terrorist attacks at home. However, many returned home after training but without having fulfilled their dream. Moreover, from the late 1990’s onwards there was an increasing intent amongst the foreign mujahedin to attack America itself and this was being encouraged in the Afghan camps.

Ahmed Ressay was an Algerian who radicalised whilst part of the diaspora community in Montreal, Canada, which featured a number of jihadi war veterans. He trained in Afghanistan between 1998 and 1999 where he became part of a plot to attack Los Angeles LAX airport, and made arrangements to be assisted by a New York-based contact, Abdelghani Meskini.<sup>92</sup> Although Ressay failed in his mission (being stopped by alert border security on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1999) his story is illustrative of the growing desire to strike within the US.

Far more significantly, the 9/11 attacks had been in preparation since 1996<sup>93</sup> and future hijackers had entered the United States as early as January 2000 for the specific purpose of learning to fly for the operation.<sup>94</sup> In fact, the plot mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed had come to the US from Kuwait in 1983, obtaining his degree in mechanical engineering at the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in 1986 before going to take part in the Afghan jihad in 1987.<sup>95</sup> One of the pilots, Hani Hanjour, had also previously spent time in the US, learning to fly during the late 1990’s while based in Arizona. “It is clear that when Hanjour lived in Arizona in the 1990’s, he associated with several individuals holding extremist beliefs who have been the subject of counterterrorism investigations. Some of them trained with Hanjour to be pilots. Others had apparent connections to al Qaeda, including training in Afghanistan”.<sup>96</sup>

Although not proven, it is thought unlikely that the other 9/11 operatives entered the country without any pre-arranged contacts. Indeed, Nawaf al-Hazmi (initially



accompanied by Khalid al-Midhar and then by Hanjour) received considerable assistance from individuals they met at mosques, notably in San Diego and Falls Church, Virginia (the latter also playing host to the above-mentioned ‘Virginia Paintball Jihad’ group and others, as well as being the site of offices of charities which have been repeatedly investigated for their ties to terrorism<sup>97</sup>). While in the US, al-Hazmi, accompanied by al-Midhar and then by Hanjour, also attended sermons by Anwar al-Awlaki, the Yemen-based extremist preacher of American citizenship who is now suspected of direct involvement in terrorist operations.<sup>98</sup>

The 9/11 attacks were a case of infiltration from abroad, although the activities of the hijackers clearly intersected at times with established radical elements in the US. When the attacks came on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 the Western world reeled in shock, yet the impact of course was felt most directly in the US. Hewitt describes a wave of panic followed by a surge in patriotism and a resounding desire for revenge (sadly resulting in several hundred known attacks against persons thought to be Muslims,<sup>99</sup> including some fatalities<sup>100</sup>). There was a massive investigative response within America in which several thousand Middle Eastern immigrants and visitors were interviewed by the FBI,<sup>101</sup> emergency powers were granted to the government, the much-criticised Patriot Act was passed and security budgets were increased exponentially.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to the domestic response there was a worldwide crackdown on Islamist militants, spearheaded by the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. At the same time as terrorist networks were being hunted down and dismantled, the 9/11 attacks had raised the profile of the Islamist cause and inspired many more people to join the jihad.<sup>103</sup> Ultimately it was a turning point in history which led to the transformation of Islamist terrorism worldwide, and a metamorphosis of the movement within Western borders.

### **6.2.3 Post-9/11**

A more thorough chronological analysis of terrorism cases since 2001 in the US and UK will be presented as the main body of research in the following chapters. Here a brief overview of recent developments is given as an introductory examination of the contemporary context and current understanding of the home-grown threat.

As described in chapter 3 global counter-terrorism measures employed after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 transformed the functioning of violent Islamist networks,



destroying much of the central al-Qaeda infrastructure and forcing disparate groups of jihadis in the West to be increasingly self-reliant. Rather than laying low though, many of those who had radicalised before September 11<sup>th</sup> were spurred on in their own pursuit of destruction. On the international stage plots were discovered during 2001 aiming to attack a US military base in Belgium, the US embassy in Paris, and a Miami-bound flight on which Richard Reid of the UK attempted to detonate an explosive device hidden in his shoe.

Cases involving Islamist militants also continued to surface in the US. To begin with, as in Europe, it was mostly people who had been involved in radical Islamist networks well before 2001. There has been a number of notable, high profile investigations of Islamic charities and related organisations, many established in the late 1980’s/ early 1990’s, suspected of providing millions of dollars for terrorist organisations overseas. However, charges relating directly to terrorism have proven extremely difficult to prove in these instances and prosecutors have tended to rely on charges of fraud, tax evasion and money laundering. This is despite the fact that several of these charities were designated financiers of terrorism and had their assets frozen after September 11<sup>th</sup>. For example, the Global Relief Foundation (GRF) was shut down and its chairman Rabih Haddad was arrested in December 2001 amidst allegations that it had provided support to al-Qaeda.<sup>104</sup> Yet Haddad was detained and later deported simply for violating the conditions of his visa and (as with Care International- above) no terror-related charges were ever brought.<sup>105</sup>

Similarly, plots to carry out attacks which were uncovered in the years 2001 to 2003 involved individuals who had radicalised much earlier, many of whom had made contact with al-Qaeda and had trained overseas (as illustrated in the Lackawanna, Portland and Virginia cases above). In some of these cases (others including Imran Mandhai and Shueyb Mossa Jokhan,<sup>106</sup> Jose Padilla, Iyman Faris<sup>107</sup> and Nuradin Abdi<sup>108</sup>) there was varying evidence of intent to carry out attacks within the US itself. However, in the years immediately following the 9/11 attacks no *significantly advanced* plots with *clearly identified* domestic targets were uncovered.

Nevertheless it gradually became apparent that a relatively small but persistent number of American residents and citizens, many of whom had no history of involvement prior to 2001, were being drawn to violent Islamist ideology and were willing to actively support the jihad if not engage in violence themselves. This became



increasingly salient after the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, which has been seen as a massive boost to the jihadist cause. Since then several cases involving US-based Islamist militants have been discovered each year. Typically these have included small groups and individuals of varying backgrounds, often with little or no organisational affiliation and limited attack capabilities (several have acquired firearms but none have independently constructed working explosive devices in America<sup>109</sup>).

Participation in overseas conflicts remains a popular goal of many 'home-grown' American Islamists (Somalia being an increasingly popular destination) but plots to perpetrate domestic attacks have also been uncovered. Many of these plots have been detected by law enforcement from a very early stage and have involved informants and undercover agents playing roles that have been integral to the development of the conspiracy. With the exception of two separate shooting sprees in June and November of 2009 carried out by lone individuals (Abdulahakim Mujahid Muhammed and Nidal Malik Hasan) no planned attacks have so far have been successful.

The closest America has come to experiencing an organised Islamist terrorist attack at home since 2001 came on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 when Umar Farooq Abdulmuttalab of Nigeria (thought to have radicalised in London)<sup>110</sup> attempted to set off explosives that had been sewn into his underwear shortly before landing in Detroit by using a syringe of chemicals to start a reaction.<sup>111</sup> After the explosives failed to detonate Abdulmutallab was overpowered by passengers and detained and it soon emerged that he had been acting on behalf of the Yemen-based contingent of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).<sup>112</sup>

Even more recently, Pakistani-American Faisal Shahzad stands accused of planting a car-bomb in Times Square in New York (which failed to explode) on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. He has allegedly admitted to undergoing explosives training in Pakistan, and was reportedly aided by members of the Pakistani Taliban.<sup>113</sup>

Casual observers could thus be forgiven for thinking that the only real threat to the United States continues to come from foreign terrorist organisations. However, the entire range of terrorist activity (including distribution of propaganda, various forms of financing and recruitment, conducting training exercises at home, liaising with terrorists overseas, travelling to conflict zones, and planning domestic attacks) continues to take place on American soil.



In fact a somewhat contradictory impression of Islamist terrorism in America has emerged. On the one hand it is apparent that US-based Islamists from abroad played an important role for the global jihad prior to 2001, and that a considerable number of United States residents have actively taken to the cause, including plans to perpetrate violence at home. On the other hand (as is examined in more detail in chapter 8) analysts have tended to minimise HGIT in the US, playing down the domestic threat in comparison to a greater danger which is perceived to emanate from European-based jihadis.

The situation is diverse, complex and often poorly understood. With the exception of a handful of case studies and comparative studies with small samples<sup>114</sup> there has been very little empirical examination of Islamist terrorism in the US since 2001. The present research addresses this shortcoming in the literature and thus gives an accurate portrayal of HGIT in America, which will dramatically improve our understanding of the contemporary terrorism-landscape.



## **Chapter 6 Endnotes**

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- <sup>1</sup> Global Terrorism Database, *United States*, START  
<<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=217>> at May 17, 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> Christopher Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda* (2003) Oxon, Routledge, 12.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, 13.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, 16-19.
- <sup>5</sup> Global Terrorism Database, *United States*.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, 18-19.
- <sup>7</sup> See Joseph McCann, *Terrorism on American Soil: A Concise History of Plots and Perpetrators from the Famous to the Forgotten* (2006) Boulder, Colorado: Sentient Publications, 256-262.
- <sup>8</sup> Global Terrorism Database, *United States*.
- <sup>9</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, "Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism in the United States: A New and Occasional Phenomenon?" (2009) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 32:1, 1-17.
- <sup>10</sup> For a history of black American Islam see Gilles Kepel, *Allah in the West: Islamic Movements in America and Europe* (1997) Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- <sup>11</sup> Vidino, "Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism in the United States", 4.
- <sup>12</sup> David Kaplan, "Made in the U.S.A: Hundreds of Americans Have Followed the Path to Jihad. Here's How and Why" *U.S. News.com*, July 2, 2002  
<[http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/020610/archive\\_021602.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/020610/archive_021602.htm)> at January 20, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> Steven Emerson, *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us* (2002) New York: Free Press, 130-131.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, 131.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, 129.
- <sup>16</sup> Cited in Kaplan, "Made in the U.S.A."
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (2004) New York: Colombia University Press, 297.
- <sup>19</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 131.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, 28.
- <sup>21</sup> *United States v. Rahman et al.* (1999) United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 189 F.3d 88, 5.
- <sup>22</sup> Nosair was later convicted for firearms offences in direct relation to the 1990 murder of Rabbi Meir Kahane. Hampton-El was convicted as part of the August 1993 plot to blow up NYC landmarks, and Abouhalima, Salameh and Ayyad were all convicted for the first World Trade Centre attack in February 1993.
- <sup>23</sup> *United States v. Rahman et al.* 4-5.
- <sup>24</sup> Brian Pederson, "Message on Wall is a Spiritual Remnant" *The America's Intelligence Wire*, July 6, 2009, <[http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary\\_0286-38340686\\_ITM](http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-38340686_ITM)> at March 24, 2010.
- <sup>25</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 136.
- <sup>26</sup> Steven Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islam in the US* (2006) New York: Prometheus Books, 278.
- <sup>27</sup> Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 33-34.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid; *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al.* (1998) United States District Court Southern District of New York, S (10) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS), 109.
- <sup>29</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 135, 137.
- <sup>30</sup> See McCann, *Terrorism on American Soil*, 170-176; *United States v. Rahman et al.*, 5-7.
- <sup>31</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 134.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid, 135.
- <sup>33</sup> John Parachini, "The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)" in Jonathan Tucker, (ed.) *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons* (2000) MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 185-206.
- <sup>34</sup> The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States: Official Government Edition* (2004) US Government Printing Office, 73, 145-150.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid, 193.



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<sup>36</sup> *United States v. Rahman et al*, 7-14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Petter Nesser, “How did Europe’s Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?” (2008) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:2, 234-256.

<sup>39</sup> Parachini, “The World Trade Center Bombers (1993)” 203.

<sup>40</sup> Alison Mitchell, ‘Letter Explained Motive in Bombing, Officials Now Say’ *The New York Times*, (New York) March 28, 1993

<<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CEEDD1E31F93BA15750C0A965958260>> at December 26, 2007.

<sup>41</sup> The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks*

*Against the United States: Official Government Edition* (2004) US Government Printing Office, 59-60.

<sup>42</sup> *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al*.

<sup>43</sup> Oriana Zill, “Portrait of Wadiah El Hage, Accused Terrorist” *Frontline*, September 12, 2001

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/upclose/elhage.html>> at October 10, 2008.

<sup>44</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 136-137.

<sup>45</sup> Zill, “Portrait of Wadiah El Hage, Accused Terrorist.”

<sup>46</sup> *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al*, 14-15.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 18-19.

<sup>48</sup> See Emerson, *American Jihad*, 59; *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al*, 12.

<sup>49</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 55-59.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*; *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*; *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al*, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Emerson, *American Jihad*, 59.

<sup>55</sup> *United States v. Usama bin Laden et al*, 22.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 26-27.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 31-32.

<sup>59</sup> Steven Emerson, “An Investigation into the Modus Operandi of Terrorist Networks in the United States: The Structure of Osama Bin Laden, Al-Qaeda, Hamas, and other Jihadist Organizations in the United States” Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, *DOJ Oversight: Preserving our Freedoms while Defending against Terrorism*, December 4,

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<[http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case\\_docs/800.pdf](http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/800.pdf)> at October 29, 2008.

<sup>60</sup> Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 437.

<sup>61</sup> “Former Officers of Care International, Inc. Indicted” US Department of Justice press release, May 12, 2005, cited in Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 437.

<sup>62</sup> “Former Officers of a Muslim Charity, Care International, Inc., Convicted” US Department of Justice press release, January 11, 2008 <<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ma/Press%20Office%20-%20Press%20Release%20Files/Jan2008/MuntasserPressRelease.html>> at October 14, 2009.

<sup>63</sup> “Sentencing Hearings Held in CARE International Case” Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) February 27, 2009 <<http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2009/vol2/116549.htm>> at October 14, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 307-465.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 327.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 328.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 328-331.

<sup>68</sup> Testimony of Richard Clarke before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, October 22, 2003, cited in Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 346.

<sup>69</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 43.

<sup>70</sup> Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 297.

<sup>71</sup> Kaplan, “Made in the U.S.A.”



- <sup>72</sup> Judith Miller, "Dissecting a Terror Plot from Boston to Amman" New York Times, January 15, 2001 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/15/world/dissecting-a-terror-plot-from-boston-to-ammman.html?pagewanted=all>> at October 14, 2009.
- <sup>73</sup> Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 115-116.
- <sup>74</sup> Miller, "Dissecting a Terror Plot from Boston to Amman."
- <sup>75</sup> James Sandler, "A Profile of Kamal Derwish, a Recruiter of the Lackawanna Cell - And a Casualty of the U.S. War against Terrorism" *Frontline*, <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/sleeper/inside/derwish.html>> at October 14, 2009.
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- <sup>77</sup> Christen Eddy & Eric Rojas, "Analysis: Officials Eradicate Domestic Terrorist Sleeper Cell" Center for Policing Terrorism, undated <[www.cpt-mi.org](http://www.cpt-mi.org)> at July 19, 2008; Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (2007) New York: New York City Police Department, 58-63.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid; Ibid.
- <sup>79</sup> *United States v. Adham Amin Hassoun et al*, Superseding Indictment, United States District Court Southern District of Florida, Case No. 04-60001-CR-COOKE, November 17, 2005.
- <sup>80</sup> "Profile: Jose Padilla" *BBC News*, August 16, 2007 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2037444.stm>> at July 4, 2008; "Padilla Convicted in Terrorism Case" ABC News, August 16, 2007 <http://abcnews.go.com/US/WireStory?id=3488260&page=1> at October 18, 2009.
- <sup>81</sup> "Remarks of Deputy Attorney General James Comey Regarding Jose Padilla" June 1, 2004 <[http://nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/azizDOJ\\_PadillaLink.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/azizDOJ_PadillaLink.pdf)> at October 18, 2008.
- <sup>82</sup> Raffi Khatchadourian, "Azzam the American: The Making of an Al Qaeda Homegrown" *The New Yorker*, January 22, 2007 <[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/01/22/070122fa\\_fact\\_khatchadourian?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/01/22/070122fa_fact_khatchadourian?currentPage=all)> at October 15, 2009.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>84</sup> Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 58-63.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid, 63.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid, 58-63; *United States v. Jeffrey Leon Battle et al*, United States District Court for the District of Oregon, Case No. CR 01-399 HA, October 2, 2003.
- <sup>87</sup> See Karen Greenberg, & Jeff Grossman (Eds) *Terrorist Trial Report Card, September 11th 2008: Appendix B* (2008) New York: The Center on Law and Security, 9, 19 <[http://www.lawandsecurity.org/publications/TTTC\\_US\\_2006\\_Appendix\\_B.pdf](http://www.lawandsecurity.org/publications/TTTC_US_2006_Appendix_B.pdf)> at April 17, 2010 .
- <sup>88</sup> "Ali Al-Timimi" *Investigative Project.org Profile*, Undated, <<http://www.investigativeproject.org/profile/104>> at October 15, 2009; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 58-64.
- <sup>89</sup> *United States v. Randall Todd Royer et al*, Indictment, The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia <<http://fl1.findlaw.com/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/terrorism/usroyer603ind.pdf>> at April 17, 2010.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>91</sup> Jerry Markon "Final Defendant Guilty in 'Va. Jihad'" *Washington Post*, June 7, 2006 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/06/AR2006060601142.html>> at July 13, 2008; "Sentences Come Down in 'Virginia Jihad' Case: Maryland in Paintball Training Sentenced to Life in Prison" *MSNBC News*, June 15, 2004 <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5218311/>> at July 13, 2008; Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*, 64; Greenberg, & Grossman (Eds) *Terrorist Trial Report Card, September 11th 2008: Appendix B*.
- <sup>92</sup> Hal Bernton, Mike Carter, David Heath & James Neff "The Terrorist Within: The Story Behind One Man's Holy War Against America" *The Seattle Times*, June 23-July 7, 2002 <<http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/nation-world/terroristwithin/>> at March 13, 2008.
- <sup>93</sup> The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission*, 148-149.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid, 159.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid, 145-146.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid, 226.
- <sup>97</sup> See Emerson, *Jihad Incorporated*, 312-313, 388-391.
- <sup>98</sup> "Profile: Anwar al-Awlaki" *BBC News*, January 3, 2010 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8438635.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8438635.stm)> at April 17, 2010.
- <sup>99</sup> Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 3-4.



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<sup>100</sup> See Edward Mickolus and Susan Simmons, *Terrorism, 2002-2004: A Chronology, Vol. 2* (2006) Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 450.

<sup>101</sup> Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 115.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Alison Pargeter, *The New Frontiers of Jihad: Radical Islam in Europe* (2008) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>104</sup> “Treasury Department Statement Regarding the Designation of the Global Relief Foundation” U.S. Department of the Treasury, October 18, 2002, <<http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/po3553.htm>> at April 17, 2010.

<sup>105</sup> Rachel Swarns, “U.S. Deports Charity Leader in Visa Dispute” *New York Times*, July 16, 2003 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/16/us/threats-and-responses-a-michigan-case-us-deports-charity-leader-in-visa-dispute.html>> at April 17, 2010.

<sup>106</sup> Sentenced to 14 and nearly 5 years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to destroy property, including possible attacks against power stations and a National Guard Armory in Florida (Richard Willing, “Pursuit of al-Qaeda Keeps Coming Back to Fla.” USA Today.com, June 15, 2003 <[http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2003-06-15-florida-usat\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2003-06-15-florida-usat_x.htm)> at February 23, 2010).

<sup>107</sup> Sentenced to 20 years in prison after pleading guilty to providing material support to terrorists, which included investigating the possibility of an attack against the Brooklyn Bridge (Eric Lichtblau, “Trucker Sentenced to 20 Years in Plot Against Brooklyn Bridge” *New York Times*, October 29, 2003 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9801E6DD1630F93AA15753C1A9659C8B63>> at February 23, 2010).

<sup>108</sup> Sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, including plans to bomb a shopping mall in Columbus, Ohio (“Ohio Man Sentenced to Ten Years Imprisonment for Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Terrorists” *US Department of Justice*, November 27, 2007 <[http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2007/November/07\\_nsd\\_944.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2007/November/07_nsd_944.html)> at February 23, 2010).

<sup>109</sup> The closest domestic example of this at present is Faisal Shahzad who placed a car-bomb in Times Square in May 2010, which ultimately failed to explode (Mark Mazzetti, Sabrina Tavernise & Jack Healy, “Suspect Charged, Said to Admit Role in Plot” *New York Times*, May 4, 2010 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/05/nyregion/05bomb.html?ntemail1=y&emc=tnt&pagewanted=all>> at May 5, 2010).

<sup>110</sup> Sean O’Neill and Giles Whittell, “Al-Qaeda ‘Groomed Abdulmutallab in London’” *The Times*, December 30, 2009 <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6971098.ece>> at April 17, 2010.

<sup>111</sup> “Nigerian Accused of Attacking US Passenger Jet” *BBC News*, December 26, 2009 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8430699.stm>> at December 26, 2009.

<sup>112</sup> Peter Baker, “Obama Says Al Qaeda in Yemen Planned Bombing Plot, and He Vows Retribution” *New York Times*, January 2, 2010 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/03/us/politics/03address.html?emc=tnt&ntemail1=y>> at January 2, 2010.

<sup>113</sup> Al Baker & William Rashbaum, “Police Find Car Bomb in Times Square” *New York Times*, May 1, 2010 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/02/nyregion/02timessquare.html?th=&emc=th&pagewanted=all>> at May 20, 2010; Eric Schmitt & Mark Landler, “U.S. to Press Pakistan on Bomb Plot Inquiry” *New York Times*, May 17, 2010 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/18/world/asia/18pstan.html?emc=tnt&ntemail1=y>> at May 20, 2010.

<sup>114</sup> For example, Silber & Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West*.



**Chapter 7**  
**Islamist Terrorism in the UK**

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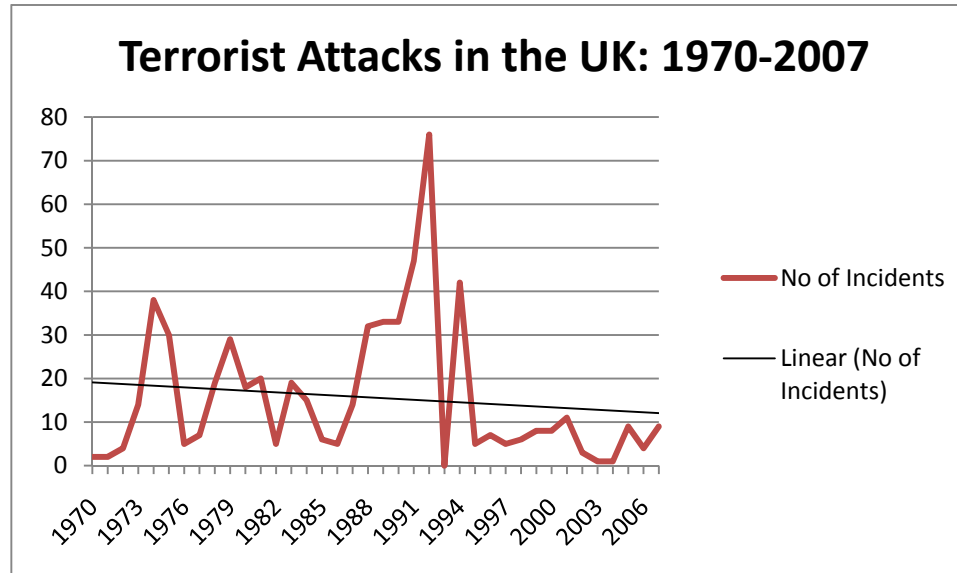
### **Overview**

As in the previous chapter, an introductory contextualisation of Islamist terrorism is outlined, this time focussing on the UK. The British experience of terrorism in general is briefly described, followed by a historical account of the development of Islamist militancy from the pre-9/11 era, ranging through to the present (‘post-7/7’). Particular attention is paid to the years preceding 2001 when significant militant networks were established in London, centred around a few high profile preachers, and featuring strong links to North Africa and Afghanistan. More detailed understanding of the period ranging from 2001-2008 will result from the analysis in the following chapters, but at least some UK-based jihadis have utilised ties to mujahedin in Pakistan, thereby achieving a level of organisation and sophistication that has not been seen in the US. Profiles are, however, varied and more will be learned from a more thorough examination of cases.



## 7. Islamist Terrorism in the United Kingdom

### 7.1 Historical Overview of Terrorism in Britain



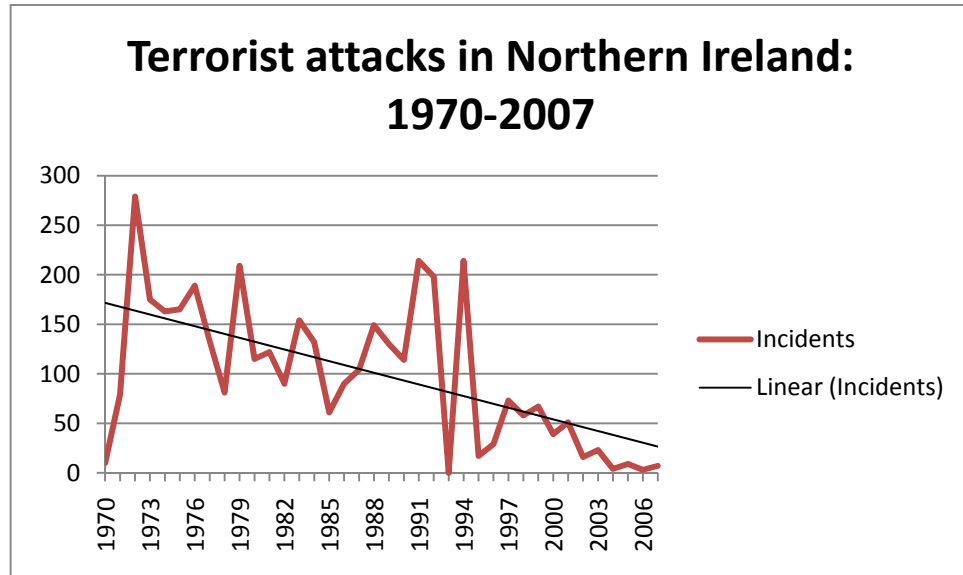
**Figure 7.1.** Terrorist Attacks in the UK –excluding Northern Ireland- 1970-2007 (created using the START Global Terrorism Database, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=216>).

Terrorism in the UK is generally thought of as synonymous with Irish terrorist activity. The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Global Terrorism Database lists 592 terrorist attacks in the UK from 1970 to 2007 (including 532 fatalities and 2,255 injuries).<sup>1</sup> Examination of this dataset reveals 57 identifiable groups responsible for these attacks (compared to 125 in the US). 303 (51%) of all UK attacks are attributed to 5 Irish terrorist groups –predominately the Irish Republican Army (IRA)- while the remainder are attributed to the other 52 identified groups as well as unknown groups and individuals. This confirms the dominance of Irish terrorism on the UK mainland.

Moreover, the British government maintained a military presence in Northern Ireland beginning in 1969, taking over responsibility for security there in March, 1972.<sup>2</sup> The START database for Northern Ireland (see figure 7.2 below) shows that between 1970-2007 there have been an additional 3,774 attacks (including 2,837 fatalities and 2,709 injuries).<sup>3</sup> The combined number of terrorist attacks for the UK and Northern Ireland thus comes to 4,366, for which identifiable Irish groups are responsible for at least 3,742 (86%) of this total. By comparison, the total number of terrorist attacks



identified in the US during the same period comes to 1,347, roughly one third (see chapter 6).



**Figure 7.2.** Terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland, 1970-2007 (created using the START Global Terrorism Database, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=233>).

Among the non-Irish groups active on the UK mainland were the Jewish Defence League (JDL- responsible for just two incidents in 1970 and 1983), Palestinian terror groups including Black September (attributed with 3 incidents in 1971-1972) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP- credited with one attack in 1973 and one in 1978).<sup>4</sup> The almost unheard-of Army for Freeing Scotland perpetrated 3 attacks in 1975, then other Scottish nationalist groups carried out a handful of attacks from 1981 to 1986 and again in 2002<sup>5</sup> (the last incident occurring on March 1<sup>st</sup> of that year when Prime Minister Tony Blair’s wife received a package from the Scottish National Liberation Army containing what was labelled as skin lotion but in fact contained a harmful substance resembling sodium hydroxide<sup>6</sup>).

Welsh nationalists also perpetrated attacks in 1980-1981 and then in a more concentrated wave from 1987-1990 (resulting in 0 fatalities and just 1 injury). Armenian terrorists were responsible for 5 attacks from 1979 to 1983, while Libyan extremists are credited with attacks in 1980, 1984 and 1988 (the latter being the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed around 270 people<sup>7</sup>). As in America, animal rights extremists have also been responsible for numerous attacks in the UK,



most involving damage to property and businesses, primarily from 1982-1990, and again from 2000-2001.<sup>8</sup> The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and associated groups continue to be sporadically active, for example, successfully putting a halt on the construction of animal testing centres in Cambridge and Oxford in 2003-2004.<sup>9</sup>

As this brief discussion reveals, it is apparent that the activities of non-Irish terrorist groups in the UK have been sporadic and short-lived as compared to the far more organised and formidable Irish groups. Irish terrorism on the UK mainland has been a sustained affair since the early 1970's, peaking from 1973-1975, peaking again in 1979, and then again from 1990-1994.<sup>10</sup> Irish terrorist attacks have declined significantly following on from the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, just 10 incidents taking place on the UK mainland in 2000 and 2001 (8 of which were attributed to the Real IRA) and no attacks recorded since then.<sup>11</sup> But whilst Irish terrorism was beginning to wind down in Britain,<sup>12</sup> Islamist extremists were gradually gathering strength.

## **7.2 Islamist Terrorism in the UK**

### **7.2.1 Pre-9/11**

Prior to 2001 the British security services remained preoccupied with Irish terrorism as the primary threat to the United Kingdom. As a country which prides itself on offering asylum to political dissidents the UK was liberal in allowing large numbers of former jihadis to settle on its shores following the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan. A commitment to freedom of speech, combined with the fact that Islamist militants were for the time being primarily concerned with events in the Muslim world, meant that they were also given free rein to do much as they pleased. At a time when politicised Islam was on the rise following the Rushdie affair of 1988, the UK thus became a hub of Islamist activism and militancy. Jihadists from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Libya and –particularly- Algeria, as well as elsewhere, were prolific in publishing propaganda, fundraising and recruitment, and in some instances, coordinating terrorist operations abroad.<sup>13</sup>

Three individuals in particular –Omar Bakri Mohammed, Omar Mahmoud Mohammed Othman, aka Abu Qatada, and Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, aka Abu Hamza- later dubbed the 'Unholy Trinity', settled in London during this period and emerged as



globally influential Islamist preachers. Syrian-born Omar Bakri Mohammed arrived in the UK in 1986 and promptly started up his own branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir<sup>14</sup> (HuT- founded in Jordan in 1952<sup>15</sup>). From its inception HuT had been banned throughout the Middle East for its subversive aims, i.e. to overthrow existing regimes in favour of its own version of Islamic rule. But in Britain it was allowed to operate freely and it swiftly developed a significant following, establishing a presence at certain mosques and on college and university campuses.<sup>16</sup> By 1990 HuT had an estimated membership of about 400 individuals in Britain and that year, after the Gulf War broke out, Mohammed made headlines by declaring in the press that then Prime Minister John Major was a legitimate target for assassination according to Islamic law.<sup>17</sup>

Although ostensibly HuT is a non-violent organisation it advocates military coups in the Middle East, it has maintained a derogatory and antagonistic stance towards Britain and the West, and propagates many of the same ideas that jihadis hold dear. According to Ed Husain, a former HuT activist during the 1990’s, “[h]ome-grown British suicide-bombers are a direct result of Hizb ut-Tahrir disseminating ideas of jihad, martyrdom, confrontation, and anti-Americanism, and nurturing a sense of separation among Britain’s Muslims”.<sup>18</sup> Husain describes a well-organised pattern of aggressive recruitment targeting young British Muslims and an ethos of confrontation and intolerance. In 1995 –in the view of Husain- this contributed directly to the murder of Nigerian student Ayotunde Obanubi, who was stabbed by an Islamist convert outside Newham college in east London in a dispute between Muslim and non-Muslim students.<sup>19</sup> The killer, Saeed Nur, was sentenced to life and an accomplice, Umran Qadir, was jailed at her majesty’s pleasure. Charges were dropped against a third man, Kazi Nurur Rahman, who later received jihadi training in Pakistan and was jailed for 9 years in 2007 for trying to buy automatic weapons and missiles with the intention of carrying out terrorist attacks.<sup>20</sup>

In fact Mohammed’s style of activism was considered too controversial for the HuT global leadership and in January 1996 he resigned, founding his own more radical group, al-Muhajiroun (AM), which advocated the establishment of an Islamic state even in Britain.<sup>21</sup> Based in London, AM also adopted an active recruitment policy and according to Mohammed, by 2004 it had spread to 30 cities and towns throughout the UK, had 170 formal members, 700 regular attendees of its lectures, and around 7,000 ‘contacts’ who were at least partially involved.<sup>22</sup>



AM cannot be considered a terrorist organisation in the sense that it did not organise attacks (until 2005 Mohammed claimed to adhere to a ‘covenant of security’ based upon Islamic doctrine,<sup>23</sup> whereby attacks against the UK were considered illegitimate as long as authorities did not interfere with their activities<sup>24</sup>) but a number of AM-affiliates became involved in violence.

Three incidents are of note prior to 9/11. On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1998 19-year old AM activist Amer Mirza threw an incendiary device at a military barracks in west London just three hours after a protest against UK troops being in Iraq.<sup>25</sup> He was later sentenced to 6 months in jail.<sup>26</sup> A little under two years later in October 2000, Iftikhar Ali (a London Underground worker) was arrested for distributing AM leaflets calling for Muslims to kill Jews and advertising an upcoming speech by Omar Bakri Mohammed. Ali was convicted in 2002 (age 33) for distributing material with the intention of stirring up racial hatred and was fined £3,000 plus court costs and ordered to do 200 hours of community service, making him the first person to be convicted of inciting racial hatred using an Islamic religious text.<sup>27</sup>

Then in December 2000 it was reported that a 24-year-old British Muslim from Birmingham, named as Bilal Mohammed or Mohammed Bilal, was responsible for a suicide attack in Kashmir on December 25<sup>th</sup> of that year, killing 6 Indian soldiers and 3 Kashmiri students.<sup>28</sup> The Pakistani group Jaish e-Mohammed (JeM) claimed responsibility, saying that Bilal had been in Pakistan since 1994.<sup>29</sup> And while the Home Office failed to confirm these reports, Omar Bakri Mohammed claimed to know the bomber and vouched for his British origin, adding “I am not surprised by his actions. He becomes a martyr and that is the wish of every Muslim in order to go to paradise”.<sup>30</sup> He claimed that as many as 2000 British Muslims had gone abroad to fight for jihadi causes.<sup>31</sup>

While the precise role of AM in relation to organised jihadi violence is difficult to ascertain, Wiktorowicz claims that from its inception it engaged in fundraising for jihadi groups in Palestine, Kashmir and Chechnya,<sup>32</sup> and it has since been reported that it was active in recruiting people to fight in Afghanistan and later Iraq.<sup>33</sup> The extent of these endeavours is impossible to gauge and similar allegations relating to AM activists did not surface again until 2003 (see below). With hindsight, the significance of Omar Bakri Mohammed and al-Muhajiroun as agents of Islamist radicalisation in British society is now widely recognised (Mohammed was deemed “not conducive to the



public good” and banned from re-entering the UK in August 2005<sup>34</sup>). However their involvement in Islamist terrorism appears to have been less direct than some of Mohammed’s counterparts.

Abu Qatada, born near Bethlehem in 1960, lived in Jordan until 1989 before fleeing to Pakistan, claiming persecution from the government. He worked as a teacher in Peshawar and allegedly met with Osama bin Laden the same year that he left Jordan. He arrived in the UK in 1993 and was granted political asylum.<sup>35</sup> From at least 1995 Qatada allegedly acted as a ‘spiritual advisor’ to terrorist organisations overseas, including the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and al-Qaeda. In that capacity –based at the Four Feathers Social Club in central London- he co-edited the GIA newsletter *al-Ansar*<sup>36</sup> and issued *fatwas* justifying all manner of violence and crime committed by these groups.<sup>37</sup> For example in March 1995, he issued a fatwa justifying the killing of wives and children of ‘apostates’ in Algeria;<sup>38</sup> in December 1996 he legitimised the killing of Jews in Britain; and in October 1999 he declared that Jewish children could also be killed, and that there was no difference between Jews, Americans and English.<sup>39</sup>

Qatada is deemed to have been highly influential and to have been associated with numerous well-known Islamist militants. For example, he is described as a former “close associate” of Abu Doha, an al-Qaeda-linked militant held in Britain and wanted by the Americans, French and Italians in relation to different terrorist plots.<sup>40</sup> He also admits being associated with Abu Dahdah –jailed for 27 years for running a Spanish al-Qaeda cell, which helped organise 9/11<sup>41</sup>- and is credited with the recruitment of Djamel Beghal, jailed for 10 years in 2005 in relation to a plan to bomb the US embassy in Paris in 2001.<sup>42</sup> Tapes of Qatada’s sermons were also later found in the home of Mohammed Atta, the operational leader of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.<sup>43</sup>

In 1997 (the year Beghal came to London<sup>44</sup>) Qatada is reported to have been actively recruiting people to attend training camps in Afghanistan and from 1999-2001 he “played a leading role in the UK in raising funds and providing logistic support and recruits for the Arab mujahedin in Chechnya”.<sup>45</sup> This involved speeches and collections both in London and other parts of the country as Qatada travelled around taking an entourage with him.<sup>46</sup> In April 1999 he was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment in Jordan for conspiracy to conduct terrorist activities, and then in September 2000 he



was sentenced again, this time to 15 years for his alleged involvement in a plan to carry out attacks in Jordan at the millennium.<sup>47</sup>

At home in the UK Qatada continued to maintain extremist associations and in February 2001 his home was raided by police as part of the investigation into Abu Doha. There was not enough evidence to press charges, but £170,000 in cash was found in mixed currencies, including an envelope containing £805 marked 'For the Chechen Mujahedin'. It was assessed that this money had been collected from Islamists around Europe and that it was Qatada's responsibility to distribute it to a mixture of Islamic charitable causes and jihadist factions.<sup>48</sup>

It was not until after 9/11 that new legislation (the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act, 2001) enabled the detention without charge of foreign nationals deemed a threat to national security, and thereby led to the curtailment of Qatada's activities.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, considerable damage had already been done given the profound impact he made on so many others. Among them was Abu Hamza, "the best student he ever had".<sup>50</sup>

Hamza first came to the UK from Egypt in 1979 on a tourist visa, married a British woman soon after and was eventually granted citizenship in 1986.<sup>51</sup> It was around that time (while studying civil engineering in Brighton) that he took a renewed interest in Islam and in 1987 he went on the hajj to Mecca. There he met Abdullah Azzam, the father of the modern jihadi movement, and from then on became increasingly immersed in militant Islamism. From 1991-1993 he and his family lived in Afghanistan, returning to the UK after he lost both hands and an eye in an explosion. This was the same year that Abu Qatada arrived in the UK and Hamza was soon taking lessons from him, memorising Qatada's interpretation of the Quran.<sup>52</sup>

In 1995 Hamza spent time in Bosnia, thereafter assuming a position at a mosque in Luton, which he used to propagate his increasingly militant messages and expand his Supporters of Sharia (SoS) group, which he founded in 1994.<sup>53</sup> But it was at Finsbury Park mosque in north London where he settled in 1997 and his infamy grew. Finsbury Park was to become synonymous with Islamist militancy in Britain and after 9/11 it transpired that a veritable who's who of terrorists had congregated there. Among them were the aforementioned Djamel Beghal, the suspected '20<sup>th</sup> hijacker' Zacarias Massaoui, shoe-bomber Richard Reid, Kamel Bourgass, later jailed for murdering a



police officer and trying to develop the deadly poison ricin, and Feroz Abassi, captured in Afghanistan with the Taliban in December 2001.<sup>54</sup>

The first real indication of terrorist activity at Finsbury Park (and for which Hamza has since been indicted for in the US) came in 1998 when a group of five Britons were detained in Yemen on December 23<sup>rd</sup> in possession of a stockpile of firearms and explosives. Among them were one of Abu Hamza’s ‘bodyguards’ Shahid Butt and his stepson, Mohsen Ghailan.<sup>55</sup> Five days later a group of Western tourists were kidnapped by a group calling itself the Islamic Army of Aden, led by Abu Hassan. It is alleged that Hassan used a satellite phone provided to him by Hamza’s recruits in order to call Hamza in London for advice on how to proceed with the hostage situation.<sup>56</sup> It is further alleged that Hamza had been sending funds to the jihadis in Yemen, and that the group of eight Britons in total (three more were rounded up, including Hamza’s son, Mohammed Mostafa Kamel) had been undergoing paramilitary training in preparation for terrorist attacks.<sup>57</sup> What is certain is that four of the hostages were killed, the Britons and the hostage takers were separately put on trial and convicted (the Britons receiving sentences ranging up to 7 years for planning a bombing campaign) and Yemen’s requests for the extradition of Abu Hamza were refused.<sup>58</sup>

The US indictments against Hamza (first issued in 2004) further accuse him of having conspired with a number of his Finsbury Park acolytes to set up a jihadi training camp in Oregon in the United States, among them US citizen Earnest James Ujaama, Swedish citizen Oussama Abdallah Kassir and UK-born Haroon Rashid Aswat.<sup>59</sup> Ujamma first travelled to the proposed site owned by one of his friends, then, leaving Britain on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1999 and arriving in the US in December, Aswat and Kassir joined him to run the camp for several volunteers Ujaama had gathered together. However, by all accounts Aswat and Kassir quickly deemed the site unsuitable and left after two weeks, the idea being abandoned. Nevertheless, whilst there they had allegedly taught how best to slit people’s throats and had distributed CDs featuring bomb-making instructions.<sup>60</sup> Ujaama would later plead guilty to charges of supporting the Taliban,<sup>61</sup> Kassir was convicted for his part in the Oregon conspiracy,<sup>62</sup> while the charges remain outstanding against Hamza and Aswat (both detained in the UK).

Finally, the US indictment also alleges that beginning in June 2000 Hamza funded and organised the travel of Ujamma and young British convert Feroz Abbasi to Afghanistan, the former taking funds for the Taliban, the latter going to undertake jihadi



training.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, it was charges relating to this to which Ujaama pleaded guilty to, while Abassi spent more than three years in Guantanamo Bay detention centre after being captured in Afghanistan in December 2001 (later acknowledging that “I actually left Britain to either join the Taleban or fight for the sake of Allah in Kashmir”).<sup>64</sup>

It is no exaggeration to assert that almost every jihadist in Europe, and many more around the world, has heard of Omar Bakri Mohammed, Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza, and has listened to recordings of their speeches. Indeed, Pantucci offers a concise overview of Islamist terrorism in the UK up until 2009 and concludes that as late as 2007 almost every terrorist plot emanating from Britain shows evidence of being ideologically influenced by Mohammed or Hamza.<sup>65</sup>

Yet these accounts barely scratch the surface of Islamist militancy in Britain prior to 9/11, which earned the capital the nickname ‘Londonistan’.<sup>66</sup> Other notable figures include Khalid al-Fawwaz, Ibrahim Eidarus and Adel Abdel Bary, who arrived in London between 1994-1997 and were collectively responsible for establishing the Advice and Reformation Committee (described as “the London office of al-Qaeda”<sup>67</sup>), sending supplies including telecommunications equipment to Afghanistan, publishing bin Laden’s hugely influential 1996 and 1998 fatwas, and the claims of responsibility for the 1998 east African embassy bombings (apparently faxed to them *before* the attacks took place).<sup>68</sup> All three were arrested in 1998 and are still fighting extradition to the US.<sup>69</sup> Others who eventually were extradited (in both cases to France) were Algerians Rachid Ramda (an associate of Abu Qatada who was sentenced separately to 10 years and then life in prison for helping to fund and organise the 1995 Paris metro bombings from London<sup>70</sup>) and Rabah Kadre (initially accused of planning attacks in Britain and sentenced to 6 years in prison in France for his part in the Abu Doha-led conspiracy to bomb a Christmas market in Strasbourg<sup>71</sup>).

The list of convicted terrorists goes on. London in particular as well as other British cities (such as Manchester) played host to a large community of Islamist militants and their sympathisers, which spanned across Europe and the globe and was dominated by several highly influential preachers. Individuals traded in false documents, engaged in fraud and other means of fundraising for jihad, openly published propaganda, exhorted new recruits to join them, and –by virtue of direct connections to terrorist organisations in North Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan- were able to facilitate jihadi training and combat abroad for those who heeded their call. There was



gathering evidence that jihadists in Britain were playing an active role in conspiracies overseas, including the attacks in Paris in 1995, the December 1999 millennial plot involving Ahmed Ressam in Canada<sup>72</sup> and the Christmas 2000 Strasbourg plot.<sup>73</sup>

What’s more, although it was not appreciated at the time, the UK itself was becoming a viable target in the eyes of Islamists living there. This transpired when Moinul Abedin and Faisal Mostafa, both of Bangladeshi origin, were arrested in Birmingham in November 2000 and police uncovered a ‘bomb factory’ where the men were manufacturing the high explosive HMTD.<sup>74</sup> A martyrdom note making reference to mujahedin was found under Abedin’s bed<sup>75</sup> and he was ultimately convicted of intending to cause an explosion and sentenced to 20 years (while Mostafa was cleared of all charges).<sup>76</sup> This has since been referred to as the first ‘al-Qaeda’ plot in Great Britain, although no evidence of organisational affiliation has been made public.<sup>77</sup> Doubts about the involvement of British Islamists with al-Qaeda, and about whether they might attack the UK, would evaporate in the years after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.

### **7.2.2 2001-2005**

After 9/11, as UK authorities joined in the ‘War on Terror’ numerous British citizens and residents were found actively supporting and pursuing violent jihad. As in the US a number of organisations and individuals had their assets frozen for suspected ties to terrorism,<sup>78</sup> and there also emerged a number of cases involving individuals who had radicalised and were preparing operations prior to 9/11. Richard Reid for example, had previously trained in Afghanistan where he most likely obtained his explosives.<sup>79</sup> Several Britons were also captured in Afghanistan and taken to Guantanamo Bay, although the truth of US-allegations against them will never be known and most were eventually released without charge.

Meanwhile there was a clampdown on Islamists at home with the introduction of ever more powerful counter-terrorism laws. For instance, Jamaican-born preacher Abdullah El-Faisal was arrested in February 2002 and later convicted for soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred in his sermons, whereas previously he had been allowed to say whatever he liked, just as Qatada and others had done. The ‘Unholy Trinity’ attracted increased scrutiny from the security services (who had made contact with these men in previous years but had underestimated their influence). Qatada went on the run in December 2001 until being detained on grounds of national security in



October the following year (making sure to use the Internet to reach out to his followers during the interim period).<sup>80</sup> Finsbury Park mosque was raided in January 2003 following an investigation into a network of Algerian extremists thought to be developing ricin for use in attacks. Inside the house of worship were found an array of knives, chemical protection suits, military and camping equipment and “hundreds” of forged documents and credit cards.<sup>81</sup> Hamza grew in infamy after being ousted from the mosque as he continued to preach in the street outside until he was finally arrested on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004, later being convicted of similar charges to his protégé, El-Faisal.<sup>82</sup>

Meanwhile Omar Bakri Mohammed utilised 9/11 as an opportunity to court controversy and draw the spotlight on himself as a means to attract new recruits. As reported by Wiktorowicz, AM had released just nine press-releases prior to 9/11, a number which shot to fifty in the next two years alone.<sup>83</sup>

In the post-9/11 period there were also increased reports of AM members being active in encouraging, if not facilitating, overseas travel of recruits in order to engage in violent jihad.<sup>84</sup> On April 30<sup>th</sup> 2003, Asif Hanif from Hounslow in London blew himself up at a bar in Tel Aviv, killing 3 people. His accomplice, Omar Khan Sharif from Derby, was found dead a few days later and it soon emerged that both men had been affiliated with AM, receiving religious instruction from Mohammed.<sup>85</sup> A year later Hamas released video footage of the two men vilifying Israel and calling on God to punish Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush.<sup>86</sup>

By 2003 AM had also established offices in Pakistan, run by Sajeel Shahid. Shahid was arrested by Pakistani authorities in late 2004 for suspected ties to al-Qaeda and was deported back to Britain after spending three months in jail.<sup>87</sup> He was later reported to have played a role in organising paramilitary training for British extremists in Pakistan, including several men –led by Omar Khyam- later convicted of planning terror attacks in the UK<sup>88</sup> (no charges have been brought against Shahid and a key figure in this plot who later turned informant, Mohammed Junaid Babar, testified that Shahid had actually dissuaded him from training in explosives at an earlier stage)<sup>89</sup>. Despite such allegations AM was not subject to any legal restrictions and when it disbanded in October 2004, it did so on a voluntary basis, with Mohammed citing disunity among Muslims as the reason.<sup>90</sup>

Akin to the situation in the US, there was very limited evidence of any plans to carry out attacks in Britain until after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, this changed



dramatically in 2004 with the discovery of Omar Khyam’s so-called ‘Crevice’ group (named after the police investigation).<sup>91</sup> Of great significance in this plot is the fact that the men maintained international links (assisted by Babar, who was a member of the – far smaller- American chapter of AM, and Canadian computer-expert Mohammed Momin Khawaja). They were also in contact with numerous British extremists out-with their immediate group (among them Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer) and had received explosives training in Pakistan in 2003. Moreover, they had amassed 600kg of fertiliser for constructing a bomb and were thought to be within no more than a few weeks of finalising a target and carrying out an attack.<sup>92</sup>

Later the same year, another serious plot was uncovered with direct links to al-Qaeda involving Dhiren Barot and seven others (who had previously carried out surveillance for possible attacks in America as well)<sup>93</sup>. Both cases involved long-term UK residents and citizens who represented realistic threats and in the case of Khyam et al had developed genuine attack capabilities.

These and other cases since 9/11 demonstrate that ‘home-grown’ jihadists from Britain have managed to continue to establish contact with organised militants in Pakistan in particular and to acquire training in explosives that has made them a more formidable threat than many of their American counterparts. The previously thriving (North-African-dominated) networks that existed prior to 2001 and that were so clearly inspired by Abu Hamza and others have been subject to multiple arrests and more restrictive security measures. And yet 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have clearly served to radicalise a new generation of jihadis in the UK (now seemingly dominated by British-Pakistanis), some of whom are committed to violence. The seriousness of this threat was made clear on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005 when four men, Mohammed Siddique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Jermaine Lindsay and Hasib Hussain, blew themselves up in London, killing 52 people.<sup>94</sup>

### **7.2.3 Post 7/7**

Having directly felt the impact of Islamist terrorism at home, the British government further hardened its resolve to combat extremism. Abu Qatada, who had been released in 2004, was re-arrested under a deportation order in August 2005.<sup>95</sup> The same month, Omar Bakri Mohammed left the UK for Lebanon and it was announced that he was not welcome back.<sup>96</sup> In February 2006 Abu Hamza –charged in 2004- was



convicted for inciting murder and sentenced to seven years.<sup>97</sup> And three months later AM offshoot organisations al-Ghurabaa and the Saved Sect, run by Mohammed's followers, were banned under new laws prohibiting the glorification of terrorism.<sup>98</sup>

Yet the problem has persisted. As quickly as the organisational offspring of AM are shut down, new groups emerge to replace them (current incarnations include Ahlus Sunnah wal Jammah and Islam4UK.com<sup>99</sup>) thus providing ideological and social mechanisms of radicalisation and demonstrating both the sustained popularity of radical Islamism and the difficulty of trying to constrain it. Even more serious are the minority of extremists who transgress legal boundaries, with numerous prosecutions taking place each year under anti-terror legislation, most seemingly involving British citizens. The profiles and activities of UK jihadis are varied. There are undoubtedly many 'wannabe' extremists who are largely disconnected from wider networks and who represent the lower end of the threat-spectrum. At the same time, these individuals cannot be discounted. The failed attacks in London and Glasgow in June 2007<sup>100</sup> show a level of zeal and commitment to carrying out attacks that if matched in future cases may result in far greater destruction. Similar lessons may be drawn from the case of Nicky Reilly, a convert who managed to detonate home-made explosives in an Exeter restaurant in May 2008.<sup>101</sup> Although in both instances the only people injured were the attackers, it is apparent that a) such individuals may be more likely to be overlooked by security services and thus carry out their plans, and b) working Improvised Explosive Devices *can* be constructed without hands-on training, and future, more powerful devices are possible.

More worrying of course are instances of well-organised jihadis with links to experienced mujahedin in Pakistan and elsewhere, who have been trained in making explosives and who are intent on committing mass murder. The most notorious example of this occurred in August 2006 when multiple arrests were made in Britain and Pakistan and a plot to bring down as many as twelve US-bound aircraft using liquid explosives was uncovered.<sup>102</sup>

In between these two extremes lies a greater number of seemingly ideologically committed extremists often in possession of large amounts of militant literature including instruction manuals on such things as bomb-making, which they actively disseminate. They sometimes also engage in paramilitary-style training at home and in a few cases have attempted to join jihadi conflicts abroad. Such individuals are clearly



important to sustaining the Islamist cause and radicalising others, although their own ultimate intentions are difficult to discern (since arrests and prosecution do not depend on plans for attack).

The domestic threat from Islamist militants in the UK is generally portrayed as being far more serious and ingrained than that in the US. Yet despite operational links overseas in several cases there still appears to be considerable autonomy among ‘home-grown’ British jihadists, and far less attention has been paid to the less dramatic cases. Overall, there has still been little systematic study that extends analysis beyond casual observation and understanding based on impressions. One report that does adopt a systematic approach has highlighted the significance of the British-Pakistani ‘pipeline’ as a source of both ideological radicalisation and operational strength-building.<sup>103</sup> However, it also adopts a rather indiscriminate sampling technique, including numerous individuals who were never charged or were acquitted of terrorism. Comprehension of the nature of Islamist terrorist activity of British residents thus stands to benefit from a more rigorous examination.



## **Chapter 7 Endnotes**

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## Chapter 8

### HGIT in the US & UK: Preliminary Comparisons

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### **Overview**

The previous chapters provided a brief, qualitative description of how Islamist terrorism has evolved in the US and UK. This chapter offers a directly comparative and more quantitative approach to understanding HGIT in these countries. Existing accounts and explanations of differential rates between the US and Europe are outlined and critiqued, and rates of Islamist terrorism involving residents of America and Britain are compared. The picture that emerges is far from clear at this stage, given a reliance on extremely problematic statistics. Nevertheless, it does appear that relative to overall population sizes, rates of HGIT have been higher in the UK than in the US and one of the variables that may help explain this is the differential historic migration of Islamist terrorists to these countries during the 1980’s and 1990’s. Moreover, the examination of cases here refers only to those including an active pursuit of violence (i.e. the most extreme in terms of behaviour). Far greater appreciation of the nature of Islamist militancy will be achieved through a more inclusive and detailed analysis of case studies, which follows in the ensuing chapters.



## **8. HGIT in the US and UK: Preliminary Comparisons**

Western, democracies have a great deal in common besides being primary targets and hosts of 'global' Islamist terrorists. However, each country is unique in terms of its history of terrorism (Islamist and otherwise), its particular political, legal and law-enforcements policies, its involvement in world affairs, the make-up of its population (both ethnic and religious), and in terms of its domestic problems. All of these factors are likely to affect the particular manifestation of contemporary Islamist terrorism.

### **8.1. 'Facts' and Figures**

A number of authors have commented on apparent differences between the US and Europe, generally agreeing that the US has had far less of a home-grown problem.<sup>1</sup> This is supported by estimated numbers of terror-related arrests reported by Sageman<sup>2</sup> who claims that there have been around 2,300 such arrests in Europe in the period from September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, up until 2008, compared to around 60 in the US. The figures quoted by Sageman have, however, been accused of being grossly underestimated for the US and correspondingly overestimated for Europe.<sup>3</sup>

An initial analysis of statistics provided in a US Department of Justice (DOJ) audit report<sup>4</sup> confirm that Sageman's figures regarding terrorism-related arrests in the US appear to be well below official reports. However, the main thrust of the DOJ report was concerned with highlighting the extremely unreliable nature of these statistics. For example, there is a huge difference between the numbers of people arrested as part of a 'terrorism' investigation, compared to those actually convicted for terrorism charges. Moreover, individuals are frequently charged under ordinary criminal law for lesser offences even when terrorist involvement is sometimes strongly suspected. Hence both arrest and conviction figures are potentially misleading.

Many investigations begin as suspected terrorism cases, but turn out not to be, or else cannot be proven. Because of this and other reasons (not least being problems of how to define a case as 'terrorism' or 'terrorism-related') official statistics are deeply problematic.<sup>5</sup> For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported 206 terrorism-related convictions for the financial year 2004, while the DOJ could only find evidence to support 141 convictions.<sup>6</sup> By comparison, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) reported 118 terrorism convictions for the same year, whilst



only 97 could be supported.<sup>7</sup> These figures are not differentiated by type of terrorism, although they potentially suggest much larger numbers than Sageman reports, given that they are for one year only, compared to his six- to seven-year period.

A perhaps more informative source of statistics for the US comes in the form of the Center on Law and Security’s ‘Terrorist Trial Report Card’<sup>8</sup>, which is based upon public records and “thousands of hours” of researching court reports. According to these researchers, there have been 693 charges in the US, which were originally billed as being in relation to terrorism from September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 to 2008. Of these, 228 were actually charged with a terrorism statute; there were 93 convictions among this number, 12 acquittals, and 25 cases that were dismissed or declared a retrial.<sup>9</sup> In addition there were a further 98 terrorism trials pending. Of the 693 cases, 88 (13%) were alleged to involve affiliation with al-Qaeda, while 405 cases (58%) had no known alleged affiliation.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, Sageman’s figures quoted for Europe are based on personal communications with Europol and the UK Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre. These cannot be confirmed, and in fact Europol did not begin collecting data on terrorism until 2007 (for the year 2006) so figures prior to then are estimates.<sup>11</sup> For Europe, excluding the UK, Europol report that during 2006 there were a total of 257 arrests in relation to Islamist terrorism, compared to 201 in 2007 and 187 in 2008.<sup>12</sup> On average this gives an arrest rate of 215 arrests per year, which would very tentatively suggest around 1,500 arrests for the period September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 to 2008 (again, excluding the UK). During 2008 there were also 190 court verdicts passed in relation to Islamist terrorism, 65 (34%) of which were acquittals, thus leaving 125 cases that ended in conviction or otherwise (details are not given).

The Center on Law and Security report that for the period September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 until the end of 2007, in the UK there were a total of 497 individuals charged under anti-terrorism law or under ordinary law but in relation to terrorism.<sup>13</sup> 288 individuals were charged specifically under terrorism legislation; 72 of whom were convicted and a further 93 were awaiting trial. The figures provided by the Center on Law and Security roughly accord with those provided by the Home Office,<sup>14</sup> which reported 1,228 terrorism-related arrests from September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 for the UK excluding Northern Ireland; 669 were released without charge, 241 were charged either with terrorism legislation exclusively, or with terrorism legislation in addition to



ordinary criminal charges. A further 195 were charged under other legislation including murder, grievous bodily harm, firearms, explosives offences, fraud, and false documents. There were 41 convictions at the time under the Terrorism Act, 183 convictions under other legislation, and 114 at or awaiting trial.<sup>15</sup> However, the UK statistics do not distinguish between types of terrorism –Islamist or otherwise- which is why they are not included in the Europol numbers.

Sageman concludes that, given his figures on numbers of arrests, and given population sizes of 300 million (including 2.35 million estimated Muslims) for the US and 340 million (including between 12 and 20 million estimated Muslims) for Europe, that “the rate of arrests on terrorism charges per capita among Muslims is six times higher in Europe than in the United States”.<sup>16</sup> Daniel Pipes<sup>17</sup> vigorously disputes this assessment, claiming that in fact the US rate of arrest is 2.5 times higher than for Europe (based on a US Muslim population of 3 million, with 527 arrests, and a European Muslim population of 21 million, with 1400 arrests). Pipes’ arrest figures are also highly questionable and the above examination of the various statistics available suggests that the US rates of arrest and charge do appear to be lower than for Europe. However, the *size* of that difference is very difficult to accurately determine and may not be as large as Sageman claims.

Focussing specifically on the UK, given a national population of nearly 61 million,<sup>18</sup> including an estimated 2 million Muslims,<sup>19</sup> the rate of arrest using the Home Office figure of 1,228 arrests, *which likely inflates the arrest rate since it also includes non-Islamist terrorism*, gives a rate that is 25 times higher than Sageman’s US figures, and 4 times higher than Pipes’ US figures. This would give an estimated arrest rate amongst UK Muslims for terrorism offences that is on average 14.5 times higher than for the US. Nevertheless it cannot be overemphasised how unreliable all of these figures are, and how rough an estimate this is. It is thus unreasonable to lay claim to a definitive quantitative analysis, which remains elusive given poor quality and lacking data. Rates of arrest alone could hardly be regarded as a sound indicator of the problem since the majority do not result in terrorism convictions, and therefore to some extent reflect differences in law and policing practice. At this point it must simply be acknowledged that available data suggests that Islamist terrorists appear to be more active on UK soil as compared to the US.



Additional data on (alleged) planned or perpetrated attacks and participation in conflict overseas adds to this discussion. Actively pursuing violent activity is only the tip of the iceberg of the broader spectrum of terrorist activity, but it does give some indication of the number of individuals who are willing to personally inflict harm and destruction. These cases also tend to be the most high profile ones in the media and are likely to drive peoples’ perceptions about the nature of the threat.

Table 8.1 below illustrates significant reported cases of Islamist terrorism from 1993 to 2010 involving residents of the US and UK who have been involved in planning or perpetrating violence at home or abroad.<sup>20</sup> This can be considered ‘terrorism at a glance’ since it does not include many less well-known cases. ‘Linked’ cases are those where either country (in fact only the US) has been targeted at home from overseas (although Richard Reid, as a British citizen, is included in the UK column).

Red cells represent successful attacks. Orange cells represent attacks that were unplanned (i.e. spur of the moment) or were of limited success/failure but were nevertheless carried out. Yellow cells represent cases where intervention occurred prior to any attack taking place, and green cells represent instances where individuals have been successful in joining an overseas conflict. Finally, writing in italics indicates that violent activities exclusively took place in, or were aimed at, an overseas (non-Western) country.

Cases excluded here are those where intent to attack has *not* been alleged, for example, domestic ‘paramilitary’ training without further action, possession of terrorist materials such as bomb-making instructions, non-violent support activities such as distribution of propaganda, and hoax bomb threats. Such cases are included in the more thorough case-study analysis in the ensuing chapters. Cases excluded both here and from the case study analysis are those where charges relating to terrorist activity were dropped or never made (Feroz Abassi would fall into this category except he admitted his actions and intentions) and attacks that cannot be considered a part of modern global Islamist terrorism. Also note that Table 8.1 generally presents cases according to the dates which they ended (e.g. an attack took place or arrests were made).



**Table 8.1.** Violent Islamist terrorism cases involving residents of the US and UK, 1993-2010. Red cells = successful attacks; orange cells = unplanned attacks or those of limited success/failure; yellow cells = cases where intervention occurred prior to any attack taking place and green cells = having successfully joined an overseas conflict.

YEAR	US	Linked	UK
1993	<b>Feb 26: WTC bombing</b>		
	NYC Landmarks plot		
1998			<b>Dec: 8 Britons arrested in Yemen. Convicted for planning attacks</b>
1999		<b>Dec: Ahmed Ressaam's millennium plot</b>	
2000			<b>Dec: Moinul Abedin: home-made explosives</b>
			<b>Dec: 'Bilal Mohammed' suicide bomb, Kashmir</b>
2001	<b>Sep: 9/11</b>		<b>Dec: Feroz Abassi captured in Afghanistan</b>
	<b>Nov: John Walker Lindh captured in Afghanistan</b>		<b>Dec: Richard Reid shoe-bomb attempt</b>
2002	<b>Feb: Mandhai &amp; Jokhan planned domestic attacks</b>		<b>Feb: Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh- kidnap of Daniel Pearl in Pakistan</b>
	<b>May: Jose Padilla et al alleged attack planning</b>		
	<b>Sep: 'Lackawanna 6' trained in Afghanistan</b>		
	<b>Oct: 'Portland 7' tried to join Taliban</b>		
2003	<b>March: lyman Faris- scouted Brooklyn Bridge</b>		<b>Jan: Ricin plot &amp; murder of DC Stephen Oake</b>
	<b>June: Abu Ali arrested- planned assassination of President Bush</b>		<b>Nov: Saajid Badat (Reid's co-conspirator) arrested</b>
	<b>June: 'Virginia Paintball' jihad training</b>		
	<b>Nov: Nuradin Abdi shopping mall plot</b>		
2004	<b>April: Mohammed Junaid Babar arrested (witness in UK Crevice trial)</b>		<b>March: Operation Crevice- fertiliser bomb plot</b>
	<b>Aug: Aref &amp; Hossain missile sting</b>		<b>Aug: Dhiren Barot et al attack planning</b>
	<b>Aug: Elshafay &amp; Siraj NY subway plot</b>		

...Continued..



**Table 8.1.** Continued...

YEAR	US	Linked	UK
2005	<b>May:</b> Ronald Grecula offered services to al-Qaeda		<b>March:</b> Abu Bakr Mansha plot to kill soldier
	<b>June:</b> Hamid Hayat trained for jihad		<b>July:</b> 7/7 bombings
	<b>Aug:</b> Kevin James et al JIS case		<b>July:</b> 21/7 failed attack
	<b>Dec:</b> Michael Reynolds offered services to al-Qaeda		<b>Oct:</b> Younis Tsouli et al online support to plotters worldwide
2006	<b>Feb:</b> Zaki Amawi et al-planning jihad in Iraq		<b>Aug:</b> Airliner plot
	<b>March:</b> Taheri-Azar N. Carolina car-attack		<b>Oct:</b> Sohail Qureshi, planning jihad abroad
	<b>April:</b> Ahmed & Sadequee- surveillance video	<b>July:</b> Overseas NY Tunnels plot	
	<b>June:</b> 'Liberty City 7' Sears Tower plot		
	<b>Nov:</b> Ruben Shumpert joins Somali jihad (later killed)		
	<b>Dec 06:</b> Derrick Shareef shopping mall attack plot		
2007	<b>Jan:</b> Daniel Maldonado captured in Somalia		<b>Jan:</b> Parviz Khan beheading plot
	<b>April:</b> Chris Paul arrested- fought abroad & trained others		<b>Feb:</b> Kevin Gardner planning attacks in jail
	<b>May:</b> Fort Dix plot		<b>June:</b> London & Glasgow failed/semi-successful attacks.
	<b>June:</b> JFK fuel lines plot		<b>Dec:</b> Hassan Tabbakh-preparing explosives
2008	<b>July:</b> Aafia Siddiqui arrested in Afghanistan		<b>April:</b> Andrew Ibrahim shopping mall plot
	<b>Nov:</b> Bryant Neal Vinas arrested in Pakistan (joined al-Qaeda)		<b>April:</b> Mohammed Abushamma- tried to join Afghan jihad
			<b>May:</b> Nicky Reilly suicide bomb attempt
			<b>Sep:</b> Ali Beheshti et al arson attack

...Continued..



**Table 8.1.** Continued...

YEAR	US	Linked	UK
<b>2009</b>	<b>May:</b> James Cromitie et al planted 'bombs' at Jewish targets	<b>Dec:</b> NW Airlines Flight 253 attempted attack	<b>Nov:</b> Munir Ahmed Farooqi et al alleged preparation for jihad
	<b>June:</b> Carlos Bledsoe Little Rock shooting		
	<b>July:</b> Daniel Boyd et al planning jihad		
	<b>Aug:</b> Minnesota-Somali jihad network uncovered		
	<b>Aug:</b> Betim Kaziu arrested in Kosovo pursuing jihad		
	<b>Sep:</b> Omar Hammami reported fighting in Somali		
	<b>Sep:</b> Najibullah Zazi et al arrested planning NYC attacks		
	<b>Sep:</b> Hosam Smadi set off (inert) VBIED in Dallas		
	<b>Oct:</b> Headley et al arrested, accused re. Mumbai & cartoonist plots		
	<b>Oct:</b> Michael Finton set off (inert) VBIED in Springfield		
	<b>Oct:</b> Colleen LaRose arrested re. cartoonist plot		
	<b>Nov:</b> Nidal Malik Hassan Fort Hood shooting		
<b>2010</b>	<b>May:</b> Times Square attempted car bombing		<b>Feb:</b> Rajib Karim planned martyrdom

Table 8.1 shows that from 1993-2010 there have been (at least) 44 significant, alleged planned/perpetrated terror attacks (including joining overseas conflicts) involving US residents/citizens. Among these, 4 attacks have been successful, 3 have been semi-successful (including 1 abroad) and 6 have involved individuals successfully joining overseas conflicts. This compares to a total of 26 cases involving UK residents/citizens during the same period. Among the UK cases, 3 have involved successful attacks (including 2 abroad), 6 have been semi-successful (including 1 abroad), and there is one instance of an individual successfully joining a foreign conflict



(although as in the US this likely represents the tip of the iceberg of such activity since we are relying here on publicised information). Table 8.2 summarises these figures for the periods 2001 to 2008 and 2001 to 2010 (pre-9/11 cases are excluded).

**Table 8.2.** Summary statistics for (alleged) violent Islamist terrorism cases involving residents of the US and UK, for the periods 2001-2008 and 2001-2010.

	US	UK		US	UK
2001-2008			2001-2010		
Successful attacks	1 (9/11)	2 (Inc. 1 abroad)	Successful attacks	3	2 (Inc. 1 abroad)
Semi-successful attacks	2 (Inc. 1 abroad)	6 (Inc. 1 abroad)	Semi-successful attacks	3 (Inc. 1 abroad)	6 (Inc. 1 abroad)
Joined foreign conflict	4	1	Joined foreign conflict	6	1
Thwarted	22	12	Thwarted	30 (Inc. 2 abroad)	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23</b>

Glancing briefly ahead to include the years 2009 and 2010 so far (which will not be analysed in later chapters since information on the outcome of these cases is still pending) it is immediately apparent that the number of cases involving residents of the US has increased dramatically. 12 American cases involving the pursuit of violence were uncovered in 2009 alone, representing a 32% increase.<sup>i</sup> On the one hand this does appear to be significant and is possibly indicative of a change in American HGIT. On the other hand it is important to note that there is a disparity between when cases actually begin and when intervention occurs or they are otherwise made public. Many of the cases publicised in 2009 in fact began much earlier (e.g. Daniel Boyd is reported to have fought in Afghanistan in 1989<sup>21</sup>). The public culmination of cases should thus be considered to be the peak in an ongoing *process* of jihadist activity, which will be unique to each case as well as each individual *within* each case. An evaluation of the true nature and significance of the apparent increase in numbers of American jihadis

<sup>i</sup> Update: As of November 2010 there have been 15 reported US terrorism cases this year, compared to 2 in the UK.



will only be possible once these more recent cases have passed through the courts and the information on them can be treated with greater certainty. For now we remain focussed on the period 2001-2008.

The figures shown in Table 8.2 demonstrate that there were quite similar absolute rates of violent Islamist terrorism in the US and UK from 2001 to 2008: there were 28 cases in total in the US (3.5 on average per year) and 21 in the UK (2.6 on average per year). Remember these numbers exclude all cases where violence has not been pursued at the point of intervention.

However, it appears that a) joining foreign conflicts is more popular among Americans, and b) semi-successful attacks on domestic soil have been more common in the UK, whilst American authorities have thwarted more cases. Focussing on domestic plots only, 6 of 18 cases in the UK ‘slipped through the net’, resulting in successful or semi-successful attacks (i.e. a 33% success rate for terrorists). The US figures show that from 2001-2008 (excluding 9/11 and foreign cases) there was just 1 semi-successful attack from a total of 23 (a success rate of just 4%). But these figures should be treated with extreme caution as there are likely to be multiple reasons for such differences, pertaining both to characteristics of perpetrators and law enforcement, and also to which cases are included. For example, numerous British cases where intervention occurred prior to plans for violence emerging are here excluded, thereby reducing the number of thwarted cases and increasing the apparent terrorist success-rate. The more inclusive analysis in the following chapters will shed more light on this.

Whether or not the preliminary figures presented in Table in 8.2 translate into significantly different rates of occurrence according to respective Muslim population sizes depends upon how these are estimated (UK figures are based on the national Census while US figures are based upon various surveys and extrapolation from Census data regarding country of origin and preferred language).<sup>22</sup> If the US Muslim population is closer to 2.35 million as suggested by the Pew Research Center<sup>23</sup> and quoted by Sageman, then the rate of incidences appears to be 1.5 times higher in the US than in the UK.<sup>ii</sup> If it is closer to 3 million, then the US rate is 1.2 times higher.<sup>iii</sup>

But given relative *overall* population sizes irrespective of religion, the problem is more endemic in the UK, being almost 3 times the rate in America.<sup>iv</sup> This supports

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<sup>ii</sup> US:  $44/2,350,000 = 0.0000187$ . UK:  $25/2,000,000 = 0.0000125$ . US/UK = **1.496**.

<sup>iii</sup> US:  $44/3,000,000 = 0.00001467$ . UK:  $25/2,000,000 = 0.0000125$ . US/UK = **1.174**.

<sup>iv</sup> US:  $44/300,000,000 = 0.00000015$ . UK:  $25/61,000,000 = 0.00000041$ . UK/US = **2.733**.



the prevailing conclusion that the US has a proportionately less severe quantitative manifestation of violent home-grown terrorism relative to its overall population size. These figures are further refined in chapter 11 when the results from the far more exhaustive analyses in chapters 9 and 10 are compared.

## **8.2 Explaining the Difference**

The apparent difference in the size of militant populations has been explained in terms of immigration histories, asylum and welfare policies, cultural identity, social and economic conditions, and policing practice. In short, Muslim populations in Europe are depicted as being far less privileged and integrated than in America, breeding feelings of resentment and increasing the likelihood that terrorism may come to represent a legitimate cause in the minds of a significant minority. Lax immigration policies in Europe allowed unskilled Muslim immigrants to enter countries like the UK under ‘guestworker’ programs, which burgeoned during the 1950’s. Then, under family reunification schemes, workers were joined by their families and Muslim communities took root.<sup>24</sup> However, integration into European societies is thought to have been limited as a result of strong, exclusionary national identities, discriminatory labour markets and generous social benefit schemes.<sup>25</sup> Combined, these factors have prevented European Muslims from succeeding in society, supported by higher unemployment rates, lower incomes and higher rates of imprisonment. For example, 61% of UK Muslims are reported to be earning less than £20,000 compared to 39% of the general population (circa 2006) whilst in the US 35% of Muslims earn below \$30,000 compared to 33% of the general population.<sup>26</sup>

These conditions have also resulted in the establishment of deprived social enclaves or ‘ghettos,’ which serve as breeding grounds for radical subcultures, as compared to the geographically “diffused” situation of America’s more affluent Muslim population.<sup>27</sup> Finally, to compound these issues, instances of heavy-handed policing have fostered distrust and further resentment (hence, Sageman is under the impression that “British police are losing the hearts-and-minds battle with their Muslim community”<sup>28</sup>).

In contrast, the United States’ more selective immigration policies have created a middle to upper class Muslim contingent able to buy into individualism and to achieve occupational success. The American population is characterised as subscribing to a



‘melting pot’ ethos, welcoming newcomers into the country, whilst ethnically representative police forces enable effective community policing.<sup>29</sup> The latter point, however, and the way in which Sageman contrasts this to the UK, seems to be a rather crudely made and unfounded observation. Police forces in both countries place a strong emphasis on the importance of building community relations in the fight against terrorism, and both countries face similar problems.<sup>30</sup> There still may be some validity to the assertion that “[i]t seems easier to be anti-American from afar than from within [and that] [t]he absence of anti-Americanism among Muslim Americans undermines the appeal of the global Islamist message”.<sup>31</sup> Yet this may also underestimate American-Muslim attitudes (see below).

A thusfar overlooked point of potential importance to the ‘Atlantic divide’ is that (as illustrated in chapters 6 and 7) it seems that more *terrorists* rather than Muslims per se immigrated and ‘set up shop’ in Europe than in America. Once established in Europe, Islamist terrorists were extremely active (it has thus been asserted that almost every Islamist terrorist attack around the world has had a vital European component<sup>32</sup>) and this is likely to be crucial to the social transmission of terrorism. It is this observation that gives rise to the ‘social transmission hypothesis’:

*The Social Transmission Hypothesis*- The presence of greater numbers of (and/or highly influential) Islamist terrorists in a given location will increase the likelihood of other violent Islamist extremists being found nearby over time as a function of localised social interaction, creating a subculture of militancy.

This is in accordance with Horgan’s observation that terrorism is “undeniably a group [i.e. social] process”.<sup>33</sup> It also congruent with Nesser’s observation that individual terrorist ‘entrepreneurs’ are crucial to the occurrence of terrorism<sup>34</sup>, and with explanations of terrorism which emphasise social interaction (see chapter 4). It involves the creation, communication and maintenance of *shared* counter-cultural values and behavioural norms via localised (often face-to-face) interaction. Given that proximity (next to similarity) is a major determinant of who interacts with whom, and that the more extreme a given counter-culture is, the less likely it will be adopted by outsiders, it follows that Islamist militancy will develop a natural ‘centre of gravity’ around its original distribution in social space. Of course individual mobility and, more



significantly, the growth of militant ideology, imagery and ‘virtual’ interaction on the Internet, mean that extremism can spread in unpredictable ways. But according to the social transmission hypothesis there will always be a greater likelihood that the spread of Islamist terrorism will be geographically bounded according to its original distribution in any given country.

This is in line with current, popular explanations, which explicitly point out that Europe’s “broad” asylum policies were exploited by veterans of the Afghan jihad, implying that the US, whilst also infiltrated this way, did not represent such an easy safe-haven (i.e. more Islamist terrorists originally came to Europe).<sup>35</sup> This is supported by figures offered by Leiken and Brooke,<sup>36</sup> who examined a data set of 373 charged, convicted, or killed Islamist terrorists active in the West in recent years (66% of whom were hosted by European countries, 25% by the US, and the remainder in Canada, Australia and elsewhere<sup>37</sup>). According to these researchers (based on 206 individuals for whom there was adequate data) 47% of British-hosted individuals entered the country by way of asylum claims -contributing to an overall rate of 29% for all of Western Europe- compared to just 8% of US-hosted individuals (having said this, the Pew Research Centre’s survey of the American Muslim population reported that 20% of those who were foreign-born came to the US fleeing conflict or persecution<sup>38</sup>). Moreover, the UK Muslim population accounted for just 12% of the total European Muslim population, yet hosted 20% of the sample of European terrorists.<sup>39</sup> Although the sample may not be representative, this suggests that numbers of Islamist terrorists active in a given country may not necessarily be proportionate to the size of the Muslim population.

Additionally, the contention that the presence of terrorists has been a vital component to differential growth-rates of terrorism is in accordance with explanations of terrorism more generally. As we have seen, relative deprivation and frustration-aggression (which underlie current justifications for the Atlantic divide) are hardly infallible, and the presence of terrorist entrepreneurs is likely to be highly significant. As Vidino points out, despite that Islamist networks have been operating in the US for the last three decades, and have been more active than is commonly assumed, “their activities cannot be compared in intensity to those operating in Europe. Although places such as Brooklyn’s al Farooq mosque or Tucson’s Islamic Center saw extensive jihadist activities in the 1990s, they pale in comparison to recruiting headquarters such as



London's Finsbury Park, Hamburg's al Quds mosque, or Milan's Islamic Cultural Institute".<sup>40</sup>

The recognition of the significance of the presence of terrorists from abroad to the emergence of home-grown terrorism is also important in order to avoid further stigmatising Muslim communities, and avoids potentially problematic assumptions. The potential for radicalisation within Muslim populations has generally so far been inferred based upon average socio-economic standing. McCauley and Scheckter<sup>41</sup> focus more explicitly on survey data relating to attitudes demonstrating a propensity to support terrorism. For example, 8% of US Muslims reported that they believed that suicide terrorism is often or sometimes justified. The corresponding percentage in Britain, France, Germany, and Spain ranged from 7 to 16% (15% for the UK<sup>42</sup>). Meanwhile, for a comparable question, 14% of Pakistanis expressed that suicide attacks were often/sometimes justified, compared to 16% of Indonesians, 35% of Moroccans, and 61% of Egyptians. Based on these and other questionnaire items, McCauley and Scheckter conclude that "American exceptionalism" is a fallacy, and that US Muslims differ little *on average* in their attitudes compared to Muslims from Europe, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia. That is to say that although there may be significant differences between particular countries, differences are often small and US Muslims do not stand out as unique amongst the world's Muslim population. This seems to be a matter of emphasis however, and would require more research using identical, rather than roughly comparable surveys in order to make more confident judgements.

Nevertheless, this work is useful for pointing out that 1) There is not necessarily any clear-cut relationship between demographic factors and attitudes in relation to terrorism, 2) Attitudes of US and European Muslims in particular may not be vastly different, despite socioeconomic differences, and 3) There are other potentially important variables to consider. These include possibly greater reach and resources of US security and law enforcement, greater willingness to cooperate with these services by those opposed to jihadi ideology, and a less *salient* Muslim population<sup>43</sup> (the latter contention resonating with assertions that the dispersed nature of the US Muslim population –versus the 'ghettoised' European situation- limits the potential for radical action).

Finally, Vidino adds that in addition to better economic situations, a lack of Muslim ghettos in the US, and tougher immigration policies, differential immigration



patterns are also important in that many American Muslims are of ethnic backgrounds that tend to espouse moderate forms of Islam, including Iranians and Indians.<sup>44</sup> That said, Arabic Muslims including the Middle East and North Africa (24%) and South Asians (18%) constitute the two largest regions of origin of the US Muslim population after those born in the US itself (35%).<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the range of backgrounds of Islamist terrorists is extremely diverse, and there is no clear relationship between ethnic origin and support for, or opposition to terrorism.

US Muslims do appear to be generally financially well off and to express low levels of support for Islamist terrorism. A lack of perceived discriminatory grievances and a dispersed community may have limited the ability of extremists to be more influential. The social transmission of terrorism would also be severely hampered by the presence of fewer terrorists, as affected by country-unique immigration and asylum histories. Yet there is also the possibility of growing alienation of US Muslims, especially amongst the second or third generation<sup>46</sup> (together constituting 35% of the Muslim population<sup>47</sup>) which could lead to the development of a “rejectionist generation”<sup>48</sup> similar to Roy’s description of Islamist terrorism as a youth movement (see chapter 4). Indeed, second and third generations appear to show considerably more dissatisfaction with their current situation, which potentially acts as a risk factor for radicalisation. Native born US Muslims (62%) were more likely than their foreign-born counterparts (49%) and the general population (50%) to rate their personal financial situation as fair/poor; they were more likely to be dissatisfied with the state of the US (77% compared to 45% of foreign-born Muslims and 61% of the general population); and they were more likely to opine that Muslims coming to the US today should try to remain distinct (38% compared to 21% of foreign-born Muslims).<sup>49</sup>

Intuitively this makes sense since presumably new arrivals may have come from less affluent circumstances, may be excited to be in a new country, or simply preoccupied with establishing a new life. Meanwhile second or third generation immigrants are likely to be far more familiar with the host country and its problems, and therefore more likely to hold grievances. Notably, only 35% of the US Muslim population is thought to be second or third generation, equating to 822,500 individuals.<sup>50</sup> This compares to 46% of the UK Muslim population in 2001.<sup>51</sup> If we assume that the percentage has changed very little, but take into account an estimated



current population of 2 million<sup>52</sup> this means that the number of Muslims born in the UK is currently around 920,000, considerably larger than in the US.

In addition to generation (foreign vs. home-grown) youth may also be a key demographic variable. Although the age-distribution of the above (sub)-populations are not reported, it is notable that 36% (850,000) of the total US Muslim population is under 18, 19% (450,000) is aged 18-29, with a further 17% (390,000) aged 30-39.<sup>53</sup> Those aged 18-29 were found to be more extreme in their views, with 15% of 18-29 year olds reporting that suicide bombings are often or sometimes justified.<sup>54</sup> In the UK, 34% of the Muslim population was under 16 in 2001, and a further 37% were aged 16-34<sup>55</sup> (assuming constant percentages these figures would equate to approximately 680,000 and 740,000 respectively in 2009). 15% of the total UK Muslim population felt that suicide bombings were often/sometimes justified,<sup>56</sup> a figure which would presumably be higher amongst younger respondents.

The last key demographic factor of interest is gender, since the overwhelming majority of terrorists are males. 54% (810,000) of the adult US Muslim population are males.<sup>57</sup> If a further 50% (425,000) of the minor population are male, this would give a total male Muslim population of 1,235,000. In the UK, 52% of the total Muslim population were males in 2001.<sup>58</sup> Maintaining the same percentage in 2009 would mean there are approximately 1,040,000 male Muslims in the UK.



### **8.3. Reflecting on Current Explanations**

In summary, the picture is highly complex and there is little that can be reliably inferred from demographic data. Amongst background information, those variables which have been shown to have a more reliable relationship to terrorism would intuitively seem to hold the most potential to be meaningful (though not necessarily useful in practical terms). Gender and youth in particular stand out. Generation (foreign-born versus home-grown) may also be significant. On these dimensions the UK and US are roughly comparable: there are more males in the US (1,235,000 vs. 1,040,000); there are similar numbers of young people (840,000 aged 18-39 in the US vs. 740,000 aged 16-34 in the UK); and there is a somewhat larger number of home-grown Muslims in the UK (920,000 vs. 822,500). Generation is of particular interest by virtue of the fact that home-grown US Muslims appear to experience relatively high levels of dissatisfaction despite overall comparable socioeconomic standing with the general population. This seems to undermine the argument that differential rates of Islamist terrorism can be explained by socioeconomic status or perceived domestic grievances alone.

The fact that the UK has a relatively large home-grown Muslim population *and* ample reason for them to be frustrated contributes towards our understanding of its high levels of Islamist terrorist activity. This is far from the whole picture though. The geographic distribution of Muslim populations remains appealing as a potential explanatory factor in that the more concentrated, ethnically bounded communities in the UK are conceivably more amenable to the spread of extremism. Perhaps most importantly though, it has been the presence of terrorists (particular individuals as well as groups) that have been most crucial to sowing the seeds of home-grown terrorism. They have been the vessels of social transmission, drawing other people around them to their cause and mobilising them. The comparative lack of such an early boost to terrorism in the US may thus explain the more limited and slower mobilisation of American residents. Now, with the spread of Islamist ideology on the Internet, and the establishment of jihadism as a counter-culture that is ‘out there’ for consumption and reinvention, it seems possible that HGIT could emerge anywhere (indeed, the US has by no means been exempt). Finally, increasing numbers of American cases over the last two years are changing analysts’ perceptions. Leiken, Hoffman and Pape have all recently noted the importance of continued American military operations in Afghanistan



and Iraq as fuelling terrorism at home.<sup>59</sup> As Leiken observes “[t]he notion of a difference between Europe and United States remains relevant...[However]...the length of U.S. involvement in these countries is provoking more Muslim Americans to react”.<sup>60</sup>

Overall, it is superficial to suggest that different forms of Islamist terrorism in Western countries can be explained solely by cursory descriptions of their respective Muslim populations. Moreover, in this chapter we have only briefly examined cases involving residents of the US and UK who have shown a commitment to actively pursuing violence. A more accurate picture of Islamist terrorism in America and Britain will be achieved in the following chapters, which entail a more inclusive and detailed examination of terrorism cases (including active supporters who did not personally take steps towards violent activity).



#### **8.4. The Need for Further Research**

We have considered a number of different explanations for terrorism, and how they relate to contemporary Islamist terrorism in the West. We have also examined the radicalisation process, from initial contact with Islamist groups to carrying out acts of terrorism. Finally, we briefly reviewed apparent differences in the severity of HGIT in the UK and US. However, the picture that has emerged is far from conclusive, and may be thought of as a preliminary introduction to HGIT in either country. In particular, what is lacking is a detailed, systematic study of the various cases that have emerged and the groups and individuals involved. There is a dearth of this type of research within the field of terrorism studies, which frequently relies upon anecdotal reporting of isolated incidents and sweeping generalisations.<sup>61</sup> Case-studies of particular countries are lacking, as are cross-comparative approaches. These methods are required in order to be able to critically assess accounts of differences between countries, and to be able to gain insight into possibly unique manifestations of Islamist terrorism. Cross-comparison also enables description of the range of phenomena under study, and assessment of the generalisability of theories.<sup>62</sup>

There are a number of specific areas of concern that demand clarification. There is the need for a more comprehensive breakdown of *who* is involved in Islamist terrorism in particular countries (including demographic backgrounds, country of origin, age, where they are based). There is a need to identify patterns of radicalisation in different countries and to systematically examine operational functioning, paying particular attention to the nature of international travel and communication, and the role of foreign, organised terrorists. The social structure of groups of terrorists is also poorly understood, especially the nature of social influence and leadership. The significance of the Internet for propaganda, radicalisation, group formation, acquiring intelligence and attack data, and for group communication must also be more thoroughly examined.

The present study aims to shed some light on each of these elements of Islamist terrorism by systematically examining groups of terrorists active in the US and UK, offering in-depth analyses of the range of HGIT in either country. By carrying out a cross-country comparison this will also elucidate whether there are differences in the manifestation and functioning of HGIT on either side of the Atlantic.



## **Chapter 8 Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Robert Leiken, *Bearers of Global Jihad? Immigration and National Security after 9/11* (2004) Washington: The Nixon Centre; Robert Leiken & Steven Brooke, "The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration: An Initial Exploration" (2006) *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18:4, 503-521; Mitchell Silber & Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (2007) New York: New York City Police Department; Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (2008) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (2006) New York: Prometheus Books.
- <sup>2</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 90.
- <sup>3</sup> See Daniel Pipes, "Which Has More Islamist Terrorism, Europe or America?" *The Jerusalem Post*, July 2, 2008 <<http://www.danielpipes.org/article/5723>> at September 3, 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> US Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, Audit Division, *The Department of Justice's Internal Controls Over Terrorism Reporting* (2007) Audit Report 07-20 <<http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/i/msnbc/sections/news/DOJreport.pdf>> at September 3, 2008.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, vi.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, x.
- <sup>8</sup> Karen Greenberg & Jeff Grossman (Eds) *Terrorist Trial Report Card, September 11<sup>th</sup> 2008* (2008) New York: The Center on Law and Security.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> A variety of other organisations were represented, including Hezbollah, FARC, Hamas, and others (Ibid).
- <sup>11</sup> Europol, Personal communication, 9/09/2008.
- <sup>12</sup> Europol, *TE-SAT: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2008* (2008) The Hague: European Police Office <[http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU\\_Terrorism\\_Situation\\_and\\_Trend\\_Report\\_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2008.pdf](http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU_Terrorism_Situation_and_Trend_Report_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2008.pdf)> at April 28, 2009; Europol, *TE-SAT: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009* (2009) The Hague: European Police Office <[http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU\\_Terrorism\\_Situation\\_and\\_Trend\\_Report\\_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2009.pdf](http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU_Terrorism_Situation_and_Trend_Report_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2009.pdf)> at April 28, 2009.
- <sup>13</sup> Greenberg & Grossman (Eds) *Terrorist Trial Report Card, September 11<sup>th</sup> 2008*.
- <sup>14</sup> Home Office, *Statistics on Terrorism: Arrests and Outcomes, Great Britain: 11 September 2001 to 31 March 2008*, London: Home Office <<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/09/hosb0409.pdf>> at May 20, 2010.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 90
- <sup>17</sup> Daniel Pipes, "Which Has More Islamist Terrorism, Europe or America?"
- <sup>18</sup> National Statistics Website, *Population* (2008) <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=6>> at 3/9/08.
- <sup>19</sup> National Statistics Website, *Religion* (2004) <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=954>> at 3/9/08; Alan Travis "Officials Think UK's Muslim Population Has Risen to 2m" (2008) *The Guardian*, April 8, 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/08/population.islam>> at 3/9/08.
- <sup>20</sup> Information obtained using open source materials, mainly press-reports.
- <sup>21</sup> *United States vs. Daniel Patrick Boyd et al* (2009) Superseding Indictment, United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, 5:09-CR-216-1-FL <[http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case\\_docs/1075.pdf](http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1075.pdf)> at May 25, 2010.
- <sup>22</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream* (2007) Pew Research Center, 9-11 <<http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/muslim-americans.pdf>> at April 29, 2009.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> See, e.g. Kylie Baxter, "From Migrants to Citizens: Muslims in Britain 1950's-1990's" (2006) *Immigrants and Minorities*, 24:2, 164-192.
- <sup>25</sup> Leiken, *Bearers of Global Jihad? Immigration and National Security After 9/11*; Leiken & Brooke, "The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration"; Silber & Bhatt *Radicalization in the West*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*; Vidino *Al Qaeda In Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad*.
- <sup>26</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 19.
- <sup>27</sup> Leiken, *Bearers of Global Jihad? Immigration and National Security After 9/11*, 73.
- <sup>28</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 93.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, 92-92.



- <sup>30</sup> See Paul Howard (Ed) *Hard Won Lessons: How Police Fight Terrorism in the United Kingdom* (2004) New York: Manhattan Institute <[http://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/scr\\_01.pdf](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/scr_01.pdf)> at May 25, 2010.
- <sup>31</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 98.
- <sup>32</sup> Vidino *Al Qaeda In Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad*.
- <sup>33</sup> John Horgan *The Psychology of Terrorism* (2005) New York: Routledge, 34.
- <sup>34</sup> Petter Nesser, “Jihad in Europe; Recruitment for Terrorist Cells in Europe” in *Paths to Global Jihad: Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terror Networks* (2007) Kjeller, Norway: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, 2006, 2-21, <<http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/testimony/41.pdf>> at December 12, 2007.
- <sup>35</sup> Vidino *Al Qaeda In Europe*; Leiken, *Bearers of Global Jihad*; Robert Leiken, *Europe’s Mujahideen: Where Mass Immigration Meets Global Terrorism* (2005) Center for Immigration Studies <<http://www.cis.org/articles/2005/back405.html>> at May 4, 2009.
- <sup>36</sup> Leiken & Brooke, “The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration: An Initial Exploration.”
- <sup>37</sup> Refer to Leiken & Brooke’s dataset, <<http://www.nixoncenter.org/reports/BrookeLeikenMatrix.xls>> at May 4, 2009.
- <sup>38</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 15.
- <sup>39</sup> Leiken & Brooke, “The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration: An Initial Exploration” 512.
- <sup>40</sup> Vidino, “Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism in the United States: A New and Occasional Phenomenon?” 12.
- <sup>41</sup> Clark McCauley & Sarah Scheckter, “What’s Special about U.S. Muslims? The War on Terrorism as Seen by Muslims in the United States, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia” (2008) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31:11, 973-980.
- <sup>42</sup> See Pew Research Center, *Europe’s Muslims More Moderate: The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other* (2006) Pew Research Center <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/253.pdf>> at May 4, 2009, 4.
- <sup>43</sup> McCauley & Scheckter, “What’s Special about U.S. Muslims? The War on Terrorism as Seen by Muslims in the United States, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia” 978-979.
- <sup>44</sup> Vidino, “Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism in the United States: A New and Occasional Phenomenon?” 12.
- <sup>45</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 7.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 15.
- <sup>48</sup> Steven Simon, Statement before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, September 12, 2006, as cited in Vidino, “Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism in the United States: A New and Occasional Phenomenon?” 12.
- <sup>49</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 2.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid, 15.
- <sup>51</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Focus on Religion* (2004) <[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_compendia/for2004/FocusonReligion.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/for2004/FocusonReligion.pdf)> at May 5, 2009, 6.
- <sup>52</sup> Travis “Officials Think UK’s Muslim Population Has Risen to 2m.”
- <sup>53</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 10, 16.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid, 6.
- <sup>55</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Focus on Religion Data: 02\_Age&SexDistribution* (2004) <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=13209>> at May 5, 2009.
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- <sup>57</sup> Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, 16.
- <sup>58</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Focus on Religion*, 3.
- <sup>59</sup> Scott Shane, “New Incidents Test Immunity to Terrorism on U.S. Soil” *New York Times*, December 11, 2009 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/12/us/12assess.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/12/us/12assess.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)> at May 22, 2010.
- <sup>60</sup> Cited in Shane, “New Incidents Test Immunity to Terrorism on U.S. Soil.”
- <sup>61</sup> Andrew Silke “The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism” (2001) *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 13:4, 1-14.
- <sup>62</sup> Richard Bennett “Presidential Address: Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice Research: The State of our Knowledge” (2004) *Justice Quarterly*, 21:1, 1-22.



## Chapter 9

### Case Study Analysis Part 1: Islamist Terrorism in the United States: 2001-2008

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### **Overview**

The sample of US cases –people from or living in the United States involved in Islamist terrorism from 2001-2008- is analysed, focussing on the ten variables of interest identified in chapter 2. This covers geographic distribution, demographic profiles, offence ranges, radicalisation, group characteristics, operational activity, international dimensions and associations, the role of the Internet, stated motivations, and outcomes. These results are further discussed in chapter 11 in comparison to results from the UK.



## **9. Case Study Analysis Part 1: Islamist Terrorism in the United States: 2001-2008**

### **9.1 Statistical Summary**

46 cases (including 91 individuals) were included in the sample of Islamist militants who were residents of the United States active between 2001 and 2008. Appendix A (Part 1) lists these individuals in chronological order according to the date range of offending behaviour. Appendix A (Part 2) gives a summary of each case in chronological order of when they began. Finally, Appendix A (Part 3) lists 51 cases (125 individuals) excluded from the sample and a brief description of the reason for exclusion. Here, the statistical analysis of the included cases is presented.

Table 9.1 below shows the number of Islamist terrorism cases -also shown as numbers of individuals- involving US residents from 2001 to 2008 (pre-2001 cases are those which began any time before then and also continued after September 2001). The top two rows show when cases/individuals began offending, while the bottom two rows show when cases/individuals ceased offending (usually through being arrested). Note that the total number of cases ended within this time-frame is less than the overall sample total because 2 cases ended after 2008 and 2 are currently ongoing. Figure 9.1 shows these numbers in graph form, minus the pre-2001 cases since they span an eleven-year period, from 1990-2000, and their inclusion is potentially visually misleading (since only those which continued after 2001 are included in the sample).

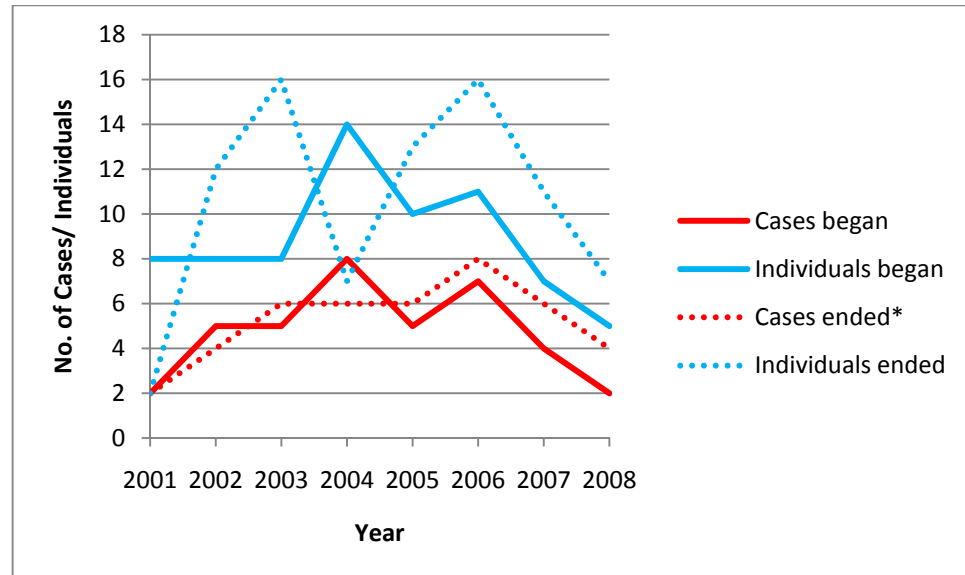
**Table 9.1.** Number of Islamist terrorism cases/individuals involving US residents/citizens from 2001 to 2008.

Year	Pre-2001	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Cases began	8	2	5	5	8	5	7	4	2	<b>46</b>
Individuals began	20	8	8	8	14	10	11	7	5	<b>91</b>
Cases ended*	0	2	4	6	6	6	8	6	4	42
Individuals ended	0	2	12	16	7	13	16	11	7	84

\*1 case (#46- Jamal Sheikh Bana et al) ended in 2009; 1 case (#44- Khalid Ouazzani) ended in 2010; & 2 cases (#11- Adam Gadahn and #39- Omar Hammami) are currently ongoing.



**Figure 9.1.** Number of Islamist terrorism cases/individuals involving US residents/citizens from 2001 to 2008.



Based on the present sample, there have been 46 cases of Islamist terrorism involving 91 individuals who were resident in the US. The average number of cases began each year is 4.75 (8.9 individuals) and the average number ended each year is 5.25. Among those offending in the period 2001-2008, 8 cases (20 individuals) began prior to 2001, constituting 17.4% of the total sample of cases (22% of all individuals).

The distribution of cases/individuals (both began and ended) varies slightly each year but overall appears to be fairly consistent. The rise in the number of cases beginning from 2001 through to 2004 can be understood as a response to 9/11 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, both of which have been seen as motivational influences and catalysts for action among Islamist extremists. The graph also gives the impression that there has been a decrease in the number of cases beginning in 2008 in particular; however this interpretation is almost certainly flawed. Many of the cases which have emerged in 2009 (currently excluded from the sample) in fact began in 2008 or even 2007. The picture will thus change as more information becomes available.

Given the significance that has been attributed to the invasion of Iraq as a global radicalising influence, it makes sense to examine the sample according to the pre- vs. post Iraq time-periods. This is defined here as pre-2004 (i.e. inclusive of 2003) and 2004-2008. The reason 2003 is included in the pre-Iraq period is because it takes time to



radicalise and then act: the majority of individuals actually offending in 2003 therefore most likely radicalised before then (and in that sense Iraq may be considered a ‘last straw’ for some already-radicalised individuals, versus a source of cognitive opening, or a direct instigator of radicalisation, for individuals who could not previously be considered Islamist extremists).

Looking at the US sample, 12 cases (24 individuals) began from 2001-2003 inclusive, compared to 26 cases (47 individuals) from 2004-2008. Of course the former is a 3 year period compared to the latter 5 year period, but the number of cases more than doubles. If we include *all* pre-2004 cases in the sample there are still more cases and individuals beginning in the 5-year period from 2004 to 2008 as compared to the 14 years spanning from 1990 to 2003 (20 cases, 44 individuals). Cases which began and ended before 2001 are excluded from the sample, but the figures are nevertheless quite striking and clearly support the hypothesis that the invasion of Iraq has played an important role in inspiring individuals living in, or from, Western countries to join the violent Sunni jihad.

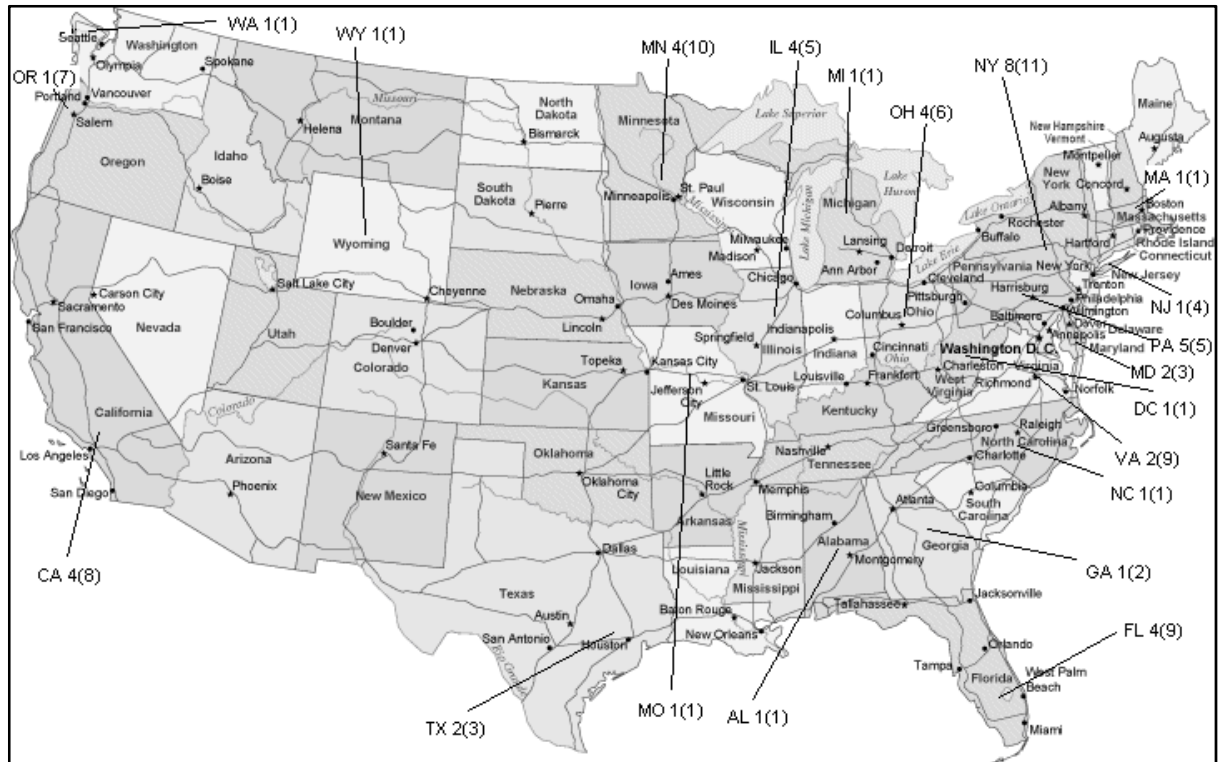
The sample will be examined in terms of pre- vs. post-Iraq generations throughout the chapter in order to further assess its impact and it should be borne in mind that the number of individuals in each category is very close (44 vs. 47) making comparison relatively straight-forward, numerically speaking. Each of the variables of interest identified in chapter 2 will now be addressed.



## 9.2 Analysis of Variables

### 9.2.1 Geographical Distribution

Figure 9.2. Geographical distribution of US Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.



Original map downloaded from <http://www.united-states-map.com/usa-map.htm>

Figure 9.2 shows the geographical distribution of cases (individuals in parentheses) of Islamist terrorism, from 2001-2008, involving people living in the US according to their last known residence before the onset of offending. It is striking that 26 out of 51<sup>i</sup> (51%) of cases are firmly located on the east coast and many of the rest are located nearby. Only 6 of 51 (12%) of cases have involved individuals living on the west coast.

Overall, 21 states are represented in the sample, numerically representing 51 cases (the actual case-total of 46 is increased due to individuals who were part of the same case living in different states). This translates into an average of 2.2 cases, or 4.3 individuals per state where people have become involved in Islamist terrorism. Table 9.2 below shows the top eleven states ranked according to the number of cases and then individuals (Oregon is included since the number of individuals is above average).

<sup>i</sup> Although the total number of cases is 46, because a few involve individuals resident in different states the geographic total is 51.



**Table 9.2.** Top eleven US states ranked according to number of Islamist terrorism cases/individuals hosted.

State	Cases	Individuals
New York	8	11
Pennsylvania	5	5
Minnesota	4	10
Florida	4	9
California	4	8
Ohio	4	6
Illinois	4	5
Virginia	2	9
Maryland	2	3
Texas	2	3
Oregon	1	7

New York has played host to the largest number of cases and individuals (16% and 12% respectively) and this is in keeping with the hypothesis that the distribution of Islamist militancy over time is to some extent determined by the original distribution of militants arriving in the West (the *social transmission* hypothesis). It is also in keeping with the fact that New York City remains a highly valued symbolic target for Islamist terrorists (or indeed, almost any other type of terrorists active in America).

Importantly, according to the American Muslim Council,<sup>1</sup> California represents the state with the highest percentage of American Muslims, although it only ranks fifth in terms of terrorism. On the other hand, most of the remaining states named in their top-ten of American Muslim populations are apparently on the east coast or nearby: New York is ranked number 2 followed by Illinois and New Jersey; Indiana, which has not so far figured in the HGIT-equation, is ranked fifth and this is followed by Michigan, Virginia, Texas, Ohio and Maryland.<sup>2</sup>

There is no direct relationship between the distribution of Muslims and Islamist terrorists. Larger Muslim populations might be considered a potential risk-factor (hence, for example, Minnesota is reportedly home to the largest Somali population in the US and has become an area for concern regarding young Somalis returning to their homeland for violent jihad<sup>3</sup>). However –in line with the social transmission hypothesis– the original distribution of Islamist terrorists also seems to show some relation to the



geographic occurrence of extremism over time (although of course this does not prevent ‘random’ occurrences). This will be discussed more in chapter 11.

### **9.2.2 Demographic Profiles**

#### ***Gender, Nationality and Age***

**Table 9.3.** Gender; nationality; time in the US; legal status and average age at the start and end of offending in US Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.

% Male	1st nationality American	2nd nationality American*	Av. years in US (Non-American 1st nationality)	Entered US illegally	Av. age at start of offence	Av. age at end of offence
89/91 (98% Total)	42/91 (46% Total)	27/91 (30% Total)	10.3 yrs (n=41)	5/89 (6% n)	27.9 (n=90)	30.1 (n=90)

\*Includes legal permanent residents.

In line with general findings on the gender of terrorists, Table 9.3 shows that 98% of the total sample are males. Of the two females, one (October Martinique Lewis of the ‘Portland 7’ –case #10) played a supporting role only, while the second (Aafia Siddiqui, who attempted kill US officials after being apprehended in Afghanistan- case #45) was involved in an impromptu attack. Quantitatively, women who have lived in the US are barely involved in the global jihad. Numbers are too few to be able to accurately categorise the roles that they play, but the potential for females to perpetrate violence should not be overlooked.

In terms of nationality, 46% of the sample are Americans by birth, while a further 30% are naturalised US citizens or legal permanent residents. Among those individuals whose first nationality is not American, the average length of time in the US prior to offending was 10.3 years. The minimum was 0 years (for two individuals- Ali Saleh Kalah al-Marri who was sent to the US in 2001 as a ‘sleeping agent’ by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed- case #4; and Egyptian Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohammed who came to the US as a student in 2007- case #41) while several individuals had been living in the US for more than 20 years.



Twenty-one nationalities other than American were represented in the sample, mostly from the Middle East.<sup>ii</sup> However, among non-US first nationalities, the top 5 were: Pakistani (16 individuals or 18% of the overall total); Somali (10 individuals or 11%); Jordanian (4 individuals or 4%); Albanian (3 individuals or 3%) and Moroccan (2 individuals or 2%). The prominence of Pakistanis in the sample is reflective of the central position that that country continues to occupy in the global jihad and the increasing numbers of Somalis are evidence of developments in East Africa. Overall though, the sample is quite mixed in terms of ethnicity and this also applies to ethnic heritage or ‘second nationality’, which was not determined in 41 individuals, seemingly because most did not have any to speak of. Among those who did, there were no more than 1 or 2 individuals from any non-American country (not counting African Americas), for example, 2 had Puerto Rican heritage, 2 were of Pakistani descent and there were 5 individuals each with origins in different Middle Eastern countries.

Contrary to public impressions, only 5 of 89 (6% of all those for whom there were data) had entered the US illegally. Although a further 3 cases involved expired visas, the number of individuals involved in Islamist terrorism who have come from abroad and entered the country via illicit means has so far been minimal.

Finally, Table 9.3 show that the average age at the onset of offending was 27.9 years and by the time the offence ended (almost exclusively by way of arrest) was 30.1. 68 (76%) of the sample was aged 30 or under when they started offending; the minimum age was 17 and the eldest was 68. By comparison Sageman reported an average age for those ‘joining the jihad’ of 25.7 years based on a global sample of 172 individuals, and Bakker reported an average age of 27.3 at the time of arrest based on a European sample of more than 200.<sup>4</sup> The American average ‘joining’ age of 27.9 and arrest-age of 30.1 are thus slightly higher than these previous studies.

More recently Sageman has suggested that the average age of jihadi recruits in Europe and Canada has “dramatically decreased” down to about 20 years old (based on a sample of those detained since 2006).<sup>5</sup> He divides the global Islamist movement into three waves: those who joined in the 1980’s and fought the Soviets in Afghanistan; those who joined in the 1990’s; and those who became involved after the invasion of Iraq in 2003.<sup>6</sup> Studies of jihadis in Denmark and the Netherlands support Sageman’s

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<sup>ii</sup> These are: Pakistani, Somali, Jordanian, Albanian, Moroccan, Bangladeshi, Iraqi, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Egyptian, Haitian, Indian, Iranian, Kurdish, Lebanese, Qatari, South Korean, Turkish, Yemeni, Puerto Rican and Canadian.



claim that recruits are getting younger, a trend which appears to be facilitated by the growing accessibility of violent Islamist messages on the Internet.<sup>7</sup>

By dividing the American sample according to whether individuals became active in the pre- vs post-Iraq era (defined here as anything prior to 2004, and 2004 onwards, thus counting 2003 in the pre-Iraq period to allow for ‘incubation’ time) the respective average ages at the time of arrest are 33 and 27.4. Hence the slightly higher average age of American jihadis is maintained, although there is some indication that this is decreasing in absolute terms, thus showing conformity to global trends. These results are reinforced by those from another study conducted by this author, an exhaustive examination of Australian Islamist militants, which revealed an average age of 28 at the onset of offending and 29 at the time of arrest.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the criteria applied in the current study are also quite strict and are based on actual offence behaviour- in reality this obscures the fact that the radicalisation of these individuals most often began at least a year prior to breaking the law. The problem is that it is extremely difficult to judge exactly when offending commenced, and even more so to judge when the process of radicalisation was initiated or when it concluded. Ages at the time of arrest are more accurate but by themselves tell us little about how long a person may have been involved in militancy already. The basic conclusion regarding age is that most Islamist terrorists are young (in their 20’s and 30’s), that the potential for involvement begins in the teenage years, and that there is no upper age limit that precludes the possibility of offending.

### *Education*

**Table 9.4.** Level of education completed in US Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.

Education completed	Unknown	Did not finish high school	High school	University/ college degree
Number	39	4	25	23
% n (52)	N/A	8%	48%	44%
% TOT	43%	4%	27%	25%

Level of education completed is another variable of interest. Table 9.4 shows that, for 52 individuals on whom there were data, only 4(8%) did not finish high school. 48% did graduate from high school and another 44% went on to complete degrees at university. The vast majority (92%) thus completed at least a basic level of education.



Recalling the discussion from chapter 4, this is comparable with Bakker's findings that 88% of his sample had completed secondary education.<sup>9</sup> However, only 30% of people for whom there were data in his sample had completed a degree, compared to 44% here; although data was even scarcer in Bakker's study (information was available for just 47 out of 242 individuals) hence limiting the validity of comparisons.

At this point it should be noted that 'findings' using limited data are to some extent an artefact of the way the numbers are expressed. The tendency in the press (the primary data source for background information) is to report the presence of certain variables but not their absence. So, for example, if a person is married, or they have a mental health problem, or they hold a master's degree, this tends to be reported. The absence of those variables is of less interest and so goes unreported. This may be thought of as '*positive-reporting*'. Applied to education, in all likelihood the vast majority of cases for whom we do not have data probably did complete high school at least, while there is less probability that they either did not finish, or that they completed further education. Even if positive-reporting was not a factor, these outcomes are statistically less likely anyway. Expressed as a percentage of the total sample, the proportion of people with a completed university education is 25% and for this variable this is more likely accurate, although we can treat the '%n' and '%total' as upper and lower limits, i.e. the real figure is between 25% and 44% with a greater probability of lying at the lower end of this spectrum.

If we also take into consideration Sageman's<sup>10</sup> contention that the level of education among the post-Iraq generation of jihadis is somewhat less than their predecessors, the data here shows some support. Sixteen of 21 (76%) of individuals for whom there were data in the pre-Iraq era had completed university/college education compared to 7 of 31 (23%) in the post-Iraq era, plus all 4 individuals who did not finish high school were also in this latter period. Having said that, 20 individuals (65%) for whom there were data and began offending in the post-Iraq period were confirmed to have completed high school, showing that a basic level of education is still the norm. The veracity of these tentative indications will be clarified by a more inclusive sample, taking into account pre-9/11 and post-2009 offenders. For now, the conclusion is simply that most Islamist terrorists from, or living in, America have a reasonable level of education- they are by no means clearly less, or clearly more educated than the general population.



### *Occupation*

**Table 9.5.** Occupation of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.

Occupation	High school	Prisoner	Un-employed	Student	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled
Number	1	1	1	18	19	30	11
% n (81)	1%	1%	1%	22%	23%	37%	14%
% TOT	1%	1%	1%	20%	21%	33%	12%

Turning to occupation at the time that offending began, information was available for the majority of the sample. Only one person was explicitly reported to have been unemployed directly before the start of offending, although in reality this figure is slightly higher given that several individuals quit their jobs and at least some of the 10 for whom there was no information did not appear to be in employment. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the US sample was employed prior to their involvement in Islamist terrorism, and in particular for those that did not go overseas, many stayed employed even as they committed their crimes. Also, once involved in terrorism very few might be classed as ‘full-time’ terrorists able to support themselves through such activity, with the possible exception of Adam Gadahn (case #11) who has been part of Islamist militant networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan for more than 10 years now. Individuals such as Jose Padilla (case #3) or John Walker Lindh (case #9) might also be considered full-time, if only for the duration of their time in Afghanistan.

Table 9.5 shows that at the time of involvement in Islamist terrorism most individuals (37%) were employed in semi-skilled occupations such as running a small business, managing a store, or working in a trade such as construction. Those working in unskilled jobs (23%) constituted the next largest group and occupied such positions as retail or security. Almost as many (22%) were students, while those in skilled positions such as doctors and computer programmers made up just 14% of those for whom there were data. By comparison, Bakker<sup>11</sup> found that 33% of his European sample was in unskilled occupations, 18% were semi-skilled and 12% were skilled. Putting aside potential differences in subjective judgements, it would appear that overall the US jihadis were in slightly better occupations than those in Europe (as might be generally predicted based upon the economic situation of respective Muslim populations).



If we return again to Sageman's observation that there has been a decline in the social class and achievements of subsequent generations of jihadis, the data here are supportive. Table 9.6 below divides occupation according to whether individuals began offending prior to the invasion of Iraq (inclusive of 2003) or after (2004 onwards). More individuals in the sample were in unskilled occupations after 2003; fewer were in semi-skilled jobs after 2003; and most of those in skilled occupations began their offences before 2004 (actually in 2002 or earlier).

**Table 9.6.** Occupation of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) divided by whether they began before or after the 2003 Invasion of Iraq. Percentages refer to %n for the pre- vs. post-Iraq populations.

Occupation	High school	Prisoner	Un-employed	Student	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled
Number	1	1	1	18	19	30	11
Pre-2004	0	0	0	7 (18%)	6 (15%)	17 (44%)	9 (23%)
2004-2008	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	11 (26%)	13 (31%)	13 (31%)	2 (5%)

Finally, although the data does support a gradual decline in skilled occupational –and possibly educational- achievements, further education remains popular. Indeed, a greater proportion of the sample were students after 2003 than were before 2004. That said, many of them dropped out of college or university to take part in the jihad, which may help explain somewhat lower educational attainment over time. Looking at the content of study, it is important to note that out of 13 for whom there was available information, 10 (77%) were studying some form of engineering or computer science. Such subjects can potentially foster a rigid mindset that lends itself to jihadist ideology and their popularity among jihadis borders on notoriety.<sup>12</sup> The US data suggest that this trend does not appear to be waning.



### *Faith*

**Table 9.7.** Religious faith of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Faith	Born Muslim	Convert	Religious offshoot	Non-Muslim
Number	58	24	10	2
% n (89)	65%	27%	11%	2%

Unsurprisingly, most Islamist terrorists are Muslims. However, there is not much reported about individual religious practices or beliefs. The majority ‘born Muslim’ category refers to people who effectively inherited their faith from their parents and is in fact the only variable that has been inferred based on ethnicity and the fact that they are participating in *Islamist* terrorism. The extent to which people in this group practiced their religion throughout their lives, or whether they ‘reverted’ to their faith at some point is largely unknown.

Most of the rest of the sample (27%) were converts to Islam, which compares very closely to Bakker’s figure for European jihadis of 28%.<sup>13</sup> Moreover the converts in the US sample are divided quite equally according to the pre vs. post-Iraq divide: 13 (54%) of them began offending in 2004 or later, thus showing a continued –if not marginally increasing- susceptibility to militant Islamism among America’s convert population.

The last religious category is that of religious/ideological ‘offshoots’. There are 10 individuals here<sup>iii</sup>, constituting 3 cases- those of Kevin James’ JIS group formed in prison (case #25); Narseale Batiste’s Moorish Science Temple/Islamist group formed in Miami (case #33); and Mohammed Reza Taheri-Azar, who taught himself the Quran (case #35). The fact that other versions of jihadi ideology have emerged should not be surprising given that it is now ‘out there’ for public consumption. In fact many individuals involved in Islamist terrorism who purportedly adhere to the ‘same’ ideology and religion are likely to hold varied interpretations of their faith and to emphasise different aspects as it suits them. Faith should thus be considered a continuum of belief and practice.

<sup>iii</sup> Note that the JIS group members and Taheri-Azar were also converts (except Hammad Samana of JIS, who was a ‘born’ Muslim). They are thus counted twice: under the ‘offshoot’ heading and under converts (x4) and born Muslims (x1).



### *Marital Status*

**Table 9.8.** Marital status of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Marital Status	Unknown	Single	Married	Divorced
Number	30	14	39	8
% TOT	33%	15%	43%	9%

Table 9.8 shows the marital status of the sample. 43% were reported to be married at the time of offending. Of those who were married, there was 1 polygamist, 1 arranged marriage and at least 1 person on their second marriage. Children were mentioned in 26 (67%) of marriages. A further 9% of the total sample was divorced, 15% were reported to be unmarried, and for 33% there was no information (although the tendency towards positive-reporting makes it likely that many of those where nothing was reported were in fact unmarried). 73% of Sageman's original sample, and 59% of Bakker's were married;<sup>14</sup> both these percentages were expressed as a proportion of the number with available information though. If the same method is applied here it inflates the married percentage to 64%.

However, similar to here, Bakker also noted that many for whom there was no specific information appeared to be single. It seems a reasonable estimate then to conclude that around half of the current sample was married. Regardless of the precise numbers, it is evident that a significant proportion of Islamist terrorists have wives (and often children) and they should not be expected to be socially isolated. Nevertheless, looking at marital status according to the pre vs. post-Iraq divide, 28 individuals who began offending in 2003 or earlier were confirmed to be married, compared to just 11 who began offending in 2004 or afterwards (i.e. 63% of the pre-Iraq generation vs. 23% of the post-Iraq generation were confirmed to be married). Marriage is certainly not uncommon in America's post-Iraq generation of jihadis but it appears to have become significantly less likely over time.



### *Criminal Record*

**Table 9.9.** Criminal records of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Criminal record	Unspecified felony	Parental kidnap	Theft	Unspecified
Number	1	1	1	2
% n (25)	4%	4%	4%	8%
Criminal record	Gang related*	Misdemeanour	Violent	Traffic offence
Number	4	4	7	9
% n (25)	16%	16%	28%	36%

\*Applies to the theft and 3 of the convictions for violence.

Criminal histories of terrorists are of interest as they have implications for assumptions that they are simply criminal or violent ‘types’ or that they might follow a typical pattern of offending prior to involvement in terrorism. No such assumptions are supported by the data. Specific information on criminal records was only available for 33 (36%) of the sample and –in accordance with positive-reporting- 25 of these individuals (i.e. 27% of the total sample) had records, while only 8 were explicitly referred to as having no prior record. The histories of the remaining 58 people (64% of the total) are not known here. Of course some of this number will have prior convictions, but in all likelihood if they had been serious offenders it would have been reported. Sageman and Bakker both also found that about 25% of their samples had criminal records,<sup>15</sup> which is comparable to the figure of 27% found here.

As for the type of offending history, it appears to be quite diverse. The largest single category of offence is for traffic violations (which most likely applies to the general population also). Just over a quarter of individuals with criminal records had been arrested or convicted for violence (assault and armed robbery) and the remainder were mixed. The overall impression is that Islamist terrorists living in, or from, the US are not by and large serious, dedicated offenders and that the types of previous offences are varied.

It is worth noting that Sageman and Bakker reported that among those who had a criminal record in their studies, most were for relatively petty offences and Sageman specifically named the offences of forgery, document trafficking, fraud and drug-dealing.<sup>16</sup> None of these offences showed up as previous convictions in the current sample, although fraud, money laundering, immigration violations and firearms



offences were all prosecuted concurrently to the terrorism investigation in several instances.

Two points arise from this. 1) It is possible that the differing patterns of offence may reflect different types of jihadi activities in America and Europe. Given heavy European and North African contingents in Sageman's sample, their different patterns of offending may be reflective of larger jihadi support networks, which often rely on 'everyday' crime such as drug-dealing to raise funds, and have also dealt extensively in false documents. Examples include individuals connected to Finsbury Park mosque in London, and the network behind the 2004 Madrid train bombings. As opposed to these entrenched and possibly more visible criminal networks, fundraising for Islamist militants in the US appears to have chiefly taken place via charitable front-organisations, which have proven very difficult for prosecutors to secure convictions against, even for lesser crimes such as fraud. Enaam Arnout (case #2) –included in the current sample- is one of the few instances of successful prosecution of such an organisation and was convicted of fraud only- but he does not have any reported prior convictions. This leads to the second point.

2) It is important to distinguish between previous crimes and crimes that are committed in direct relation to terrorism offences. Fraud-type offences, as noted by Sageman are certainly common *within* terrorism and this is where they show up in the current sample. The fact that Sageman's sample had prior convictions for such crimes might also be indicative of repeat offenders, or of terrorists deliberately seeking out criminals with the requisite skill-sets to fulfil their needs.

Concurrent, related convictions reveal a variety of criminal exploits, which also to some degree reflect the social standing of the individuals involved. So, for example, members of Kevin James' group (case #25) lived in a poor area of Los Angeles and were led outside of prison by convicted felon Levar Washington. In order to raise funds they carried out a series of armed robberies, which quickly led to their arrest. By comparison, Khalid Ouazzani (case #44- arrested in Kansas City in February 2010) ran his own used car dealership and from at least 2007 onwards raised funds for al-Qaeda via fraud and money laundering. Despite the fact that terrorist activity is often closely associated with other forms of crime, Islamist terrorists do not appear to be 'career criminals' with a long history of unrelated offending.



A final point to consider with respect to prior offending is whether or not criminal records have become more common in the post-Iraq generation of jihadis. The data here supports this, with 18 of 25 (72%) of individuals with criminal records beginning their terrorist careers in or after 2004. The reasons for this, however, are not entirely clear. Sageman observes that terrorists these days are more likely to be self-sufficient in the absence of funding from al-Qaeda Central and therefore resort to criminal means for funding,<sup>17</sup> but this does not explain previous *unrelated* criminality. It is possible of course that terrorists are making more effort to deliberately recruit criminals but this is not readily apparent from the US sample. A more plausible explanation may be that militant Islamist ideology has simply found a wider audience and manages to resonate with the feelings of a minority of ordinary criminals.

### ***Mental Health***

**Table 9.10.** Mental health of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Mental Health	Unknown	No issues	Low IQ	Questioned at trial	History of illness
Number	80	6	1	2	2
% TOT	88%	7%	1%	2%	2%

As detailed in chapter 4, mental health has largely been discounted as playing a role in how or why individuals become terrorists. The present sample supports this. Only 1 individual was reported to have below average IQ (Shahawar Matin Siraj, convicted of plotting to attack the New York Herald Square subway station- case #23) and 2 others were reported to have had a diagnosable mental disorder. Of these 2, only Siraj’s co-conspirator, James Elshafay, suffered from long-term illness (including delusions, depression and schizophrenia) while the other, JIS member Hammad Samana (case #25), was temporarily deemed unfit to stand trial. Overall it is a safe assumption that the vast majority of individuals for whom information was lacking did not suffer from mental illness and it is clearly not useful for explaining the behaviour of the sample.



### **9.2.3 Offence Date Range**

**Table 9.11.** Offence date ranges in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Min	Max	Average	Mode
Offence date range	<1 week	17 years	2.59 years	1 year or less

Offence date ranges were coded by the year rather than exact dates, since they are extremely difficult to accurately pinpoint. The minimum offence range was, however, less than 1 week. For example, there is no publicly available information which makes it clear that Mohammed Taheri-Azar or Aafia Siddiqui (cases #35 & #45- both of whom were prosecuted for attempted murder) had engaged in much preparation for their attacks. Taheri-Azar appears to have begun active preparation a day or two before, while Siddiqui's attack was clearly a product of the moment. Having said this, it also highlights the fact that the focus here is upon identifiable offending behaviour, which precludes the build up of radicalisation and numerous other potentially relevant behaviours. Generally speaking, most of the individuals studied here embarked on the path to radicalisation at least a year prior to actively offending.

The maximum offence range was 17 years (which was for Christopher Paul – case #1- who left the US for training in 1990 and was not apprehended until 2007) while the average was 2.6 years. However, the most frequently occurring offence range was 1 year or less, which applied to 57% of cases. Further dividing the sample into pre-Iraq (up to and including 2003) and post-Iraq (2004 onwards) is also revealing. The average pre-2004 offence range is 3.95 years compared to 1.4 years after 2003. Given the fact that the longest-running cases began before 2001, plus the effect of increased scrutiny after 9/11, it appears that Islamist terrorists are now more likely to be caught at an earlier stage of offending. A related argument would be that terrorists are making effort to advance their plans more rapidly or that individuals are progressing from being more or less inactive to going operational within a shorter space of time than has been the case in the past. However, whilst the speed that cases sometimes progress at is striking, the actual degree of change that might have occurred is very difficult to assess.



### **9.2.4 Radicalisation**

**Table 9.12.** Radicalisation classification for individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Radicalisation	Individual	Virtual	Social	Mixed	Not radicalised	Unknown
Number	1	1	7	5	2	75
% n (16)	6%	6%	44%	31%	13%	N/A
% TOT	1%	1%	8%	5%	2%	82%

Despite a general interest in how radicalisation takes place, there was very little reliable information available on individual pathways into Islamist extremism. One subject (Taheri-Azar –case #35- who ran several students over at the University of North Carolina in 2006) appeared to have largely radicalised on an individual basis, reading the Quran by himself. However, he was also reportedly influenced by a family friend with extremist views and may well have accessed online propaganda. Ryan Anderson (case #21) the National Guardsman who attempted to provide al-Qaeda with military intelligence in 2004, appears to have turned to Islamist militancy almost entirely by way of websites and online chat-rooms (swiftly bringing him to the attention of authorities) and there are no references to anyone else having influenced him.

Seven individuals are classed as having radicalised primarily via face-to-face social interaction: 4 of these are the JIS group headed by Kevin James (James radicalised in prison, Washington was influenced by James, and in turn influenced Patterson and Samana). The remaining 3, Jose Padilla (case #3), ‘Mike’ Hawash (case #10) and Ahmed Omar Abu Ali (case #13) were clearly influenced by individuals whom they were in direct contact with (the first 2 cases within the United States and the latter in Saudi Arabia). 5 more individuals, Adam Gadahn (case #11); Mohammed Junaid Babar (case #14); Elshafay and Siraj (case #23); and Omar Hammami (case #39), all showed signs of active searching on the Internet as well as influential face-to-face interaction. And just 2 individuals, Ronald Grecula (case #29) and Michael Reynolds (case #31) were not radicalised in that they were first and foremost criminal opportunists/ ‘troubled’ individuals who were not apparently Muslims.

It may be surprising that so little information is available, but unless a great many assumptions are made it is not possible to classify the majority of individuals in this sample without seriously compromising the validity of the study. However, it is worth noting that for a great many of the 75 unclassified individuals (constituting 82%



of the total) face-to-face social interaction appears to have played an important role. Use of the Internet to access jihadi propaganda and forums is certainly common as well –and in this sense, processes of radicalisation are very often a combination of the social and the virtual- but ‘real-life’ interaction with other like-minded individuals and significant others remains a key ingredient in the lives of many Islamist terrorists emerging from America.



### **9.2.5 Group Characteristics**

#### ***Immediate Group Size***

**Table 9.13.** Immediate group size of US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Immediate Group Size	Min.	Max.	Average	Mode
Overall (46)	1	11	2.4	1 57% TOT
Pre-2004 (20)	1	11	3.1	1 45% n
2004-2008 (26)	1	5	1.8	1 65% n

Table 9.13 shows the immediate group size of the US terrorism cases. The minimum was just 1 individual acting entirely alone; the maximum was 11 and the average was 2.4. Like many of the variables examined here though, group size is not always an objective factor, which can be clearly determined. It is quite common for other individuals to have frequent contact with groups of individuals later convicted for terrorism offences (e.g. all acquitted individuals who were still frequent group-members were excluded from the current sample). Furthermore, many groups and individuals are also part of wider, poorly defined networks that have some influence on how they function. Immediate group size thus focuses quite narrowly on the particular individuals that were prosecuted within the same case and should not be thought of as a ‘concrete’ variable.

The fact that groups of 1 are apparently the most frequently occurring (regardless of time-period) at face value seems to contradict the above discussion on radicalisation, which emphasises the importance of face-to-face interaction. However, these figures are quite misleading. 26 out of 46 cases were classified as having a group-size of 1 because they were not part of an *identifiable* group either in the US or abroad. But the majority of these ‘lone’ cases were in fact very much part of larger networks and many of them became part of jihadi organisations overseas. For example, Christopher Paul, Adam Gadahn and Omar Hammami are each dealt with as individuals in terms of their offending behaviour, but all were absorbed into wider militant networks and should not be considered lone individuals at all.

Of the 26 ‘individual’ cases, only 8 (17% of the overall total) appear to be genuinely lone actors as far as their specific offences are concerned (Ryan Anderson



(case #21); Ahmed Hassan al-Uqaily (case #22); Mark Robert Walker (case #24); Ronald Allen Grecula (case #29); Mohammad Radwan Obeid (case #30); Michael Reynolds (case #31); Mohammed Taheri-Azar (case #35); and Aafia Siddiqui<sup>iv</sup> (case #45)). Interestingly, all of these cases began in 2004 or later. The reasons for this are complex but seem to relate to the widespread public awareness of Islamist terrorism (essentially increasing exposure to it and making it seem a viable cause to grasp onto for certain people), combined with general disillusionment with the Iraq war and other issues. In addition, networks of Islamist militants have come under increased scrutiny after 9/11 –making them harder to connect to for many individuals. One thing that is for certain though is that, generally speaking, US Islamist terrorism is still very much a social phenomenon.

This point is emphasised by considering another issue regarding how group-size is recorded, which relates directly to a prominent feature in the investigation of terrorism in America, i.e. the use of informants and undercover agents. Informants were not recorded as part of the immediate group size, but nevertheless play quite active roles in the way in which groups progress. Moreover, their presence is of undoubted psychological significance to the other individuals involved (to the extent that entrapment has routinely been questioned). Thus, for example, an ‘individual’ like Derrick Shareef (case #36) was clearly willing to go ahead with planned violence against civilians, but he did not believe he was acting alone. The informant’s collaboration in the plan was vital to Shareef’s progression. Therefore –regardless of legal issues of entrapment- we should not understand his actions as those of a lone individual. As an alternative to the coding used in the current study, it would be quite feasible to include informants and undercover agents as part of the group.

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<sup>iv</sup> Siddiqui acted alone in terms of the offence for which she was prosecuted; however she is suspected to have been part of the al-Qaeda network.



### *Leadership*

**Table 9.14.** Leadership in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Unknown	None	Leader only	Spiritual sanctioner only	Both/ mixed	Top-down influence out-with group	Overseas leaders/ sanctioners
18	10	0	0	4	2	12
39% TOT	22% TOT	0% TOT	0% TOT	9% TOT	4% TOT	26% TOT

Leadership is another variable on which there is very limited data, making it extremely difficult to objectively classify. Within-group leaders only (i.e. where an individual was credited with instigating events but not with any great deal of religious authority) or the reverse, sanctioners only (with religious but not operational authority) could not be reliably identified. There were, however, 4 cases where both types of leader could be identified, or where single individuals seemed to fulfil both roles (demonstrating the fact that there is overlap between operational and religious concerns). These were: Ali al-Timimi and Randall Todd Royer in the Virginia jihad network (case #7); Habis Abdulla al-Saoub in the Portland 7 (case #10); Kevin James and Levar Washington in the JIS case (case #25); and Narseale Batiste in the Liberty City Sears Tower plot (case #33). There were no clear leaders, but some evidence of top-down influence from others out-with the group in 2 cases (those of Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee (case #27); and Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed- case #28). A further 12 cases<sup>v</sup> again showed no clear evidence of leadership on the domestic stage but, by virtue of the fact that individuals joined overseas terrorist organisations it can be inferred with some confidence that once overseas they were subject to an established hierarchy (note that this is distinct to domestic cases being controlled from abroad, which was not apparent).

Finally, the available information indicated that leaders and sanctioners were absent from 10 cases (almost all individuals, mostly active after the invasion of Iraq) and 18 cases (39% of the entire sample) could not be classified. Nevertheless, these results should not be seen as refuting claims that leadership is an important factor in the operational activities of Islamist terrorists. First, it is a reflection of lacking and poor quality data. Second, it seems an indication of informal leadership styles- there may be

<sup>v</sup> Padilla (case #3); al-Marri (case #4); Faris (case #6); Lindh (case #9); Gadahn (case #11); Ali (case #13); Maldonado (case #38); Hammami (case #39); Shumpert (case #40); Vinas (case #42); Isse et al (case #43); Maruf et al (case #46).



fairly clearly understood ‘pecking orders’ in many groups but it is rare for these to be formalised in such a way that lower individuals in the group’s hierarchy are following orders issued by higher-up group members.



### **9.2.6 Operational Activity**

#### ***Ideological Commitment***

**Table 9.15.** Ideological commitment of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Ideological offshoot	Criminal opportunists	Troubled/ criminal	Troubled individuals (Islamist)	Social terrorists/ wannabes	Hardcore/ social	Hardcore	U/K
9	5	2	2	26	13	15	19
10% TOT	5% TOT	2% TOT	2% TOT	29% TOT	14% TOT	16% TOT	21% TOT

Before examining what people are doing to support jihad, it is useful to consider the extent to which individuals appear personally committed to violent Islamist ideology. This has ramifications for understanding how and why people become involved, and for the prospective rehabilitation of different individuals. This proved a particularly difficult judgement to make with any degree of confidence since it is an attempt at inferring individuals’ mindsets based on their behaviour, including things they have said and done both before and after offending, yet relying on very limited available data (hence 21% of individuals could not be classified- although they appeared to lie somewhere between social and hardcore).

In particular it is extremely difficult to draw the line between ‘social’ terrorists (those who appear to be driven more by factors such as a sense of belonging or self-esteem) and those who are ‘hardcore’ (firmly committed to the Islamist ideology- someone who is unlikely to change their views under any circumstances). The problem is that even social ‘wannabes’ can commit the most extreme acts, such as joining an overseas conflict or planting a bomb in a public place. By the same token hardcore terrorists might deny their convictions, be cooperative and maintain a pretence of regret if they are caught in an attempt to escape punishment. As with several other variables, ideological commitment is thus a matter of emphasis and there is undoubtedly overlap between categories.

Caveats aside, 9 individuals (Kevin James’ JIS gang arrested in LA in 2005 and the Sears Tower plotters arrested in Miami in 2006) were classed primarily as ‘ideological offshoots’ - combining violent Islamism with other elements- an Islamist



‘protocol’ established by James in prison and teachings of the Moorish Science Temple respectively. Another 5 individuals were classed as criminal opportunists, willing to engage with Islamist militants largely for personal gain as opposed to any ideological commitment of their own. This applied most clearly to Saifullah Anjum Ranjha (case #20) and Abdul Tawala Ibn Alishtari (case #34) both of whom agreed to launder money they believed was going to fund violent Islamists. The others were Ilyas Ali (case #12) who was struggling financially and became involved in a drug trafficking scheme seemingly aimed mostly at monetary profit (although missiles were asked to be ‘thrown into’ the deal, which were intended for al-Qaeda). Finally, Yassin Muhiddin Aref and Mohammed Mosharref Hossain (case #17) were caught in an FBI sting in which they agreed to launder money believed to be from the sale of a stinger missile for Jaish e-Mohammed (JeM), and little evidence has been presented that they were personally committed to violent Islamism.

Two more individuals (Ronald Grecula and Michael Reynolds- cases #29 & 31) were classed as ‘troubled’ criminal opportunists. Both attempted to reach out to al-Qaeda to offer their services and both showed evidence of being driven by a combination of dissatisfaction in their personal lives as well as financial gain. In addition, 2 more individuals were classed as apparently troubled individuals but at the same time inspired by violent Islamist ideology. This applies to Ahmed Hassan al-Uqaily (case #22) who in 2004 –acting alone- made sustained efforts to acquire weapons and grenades whilst voicing his disdain for Jews; and Mohammed Taheri-Azar (case #35) who apparently taught himself the Quran and claimed that Mohammed Atta was a role model of his.

A large proportion of the US sample appeared to be ‘social’ terrorists or ‘wannabes’ caught up in their sense of belonging or self-esteem within a specific group, although within this category there was still variation in terms of motivation and behaviour. For example, most of the members of the Virginia jihad group were classed as social rather than hardcore- they were inspired by a charismatic leader (al-Timimi) and actively encouraged by higher-status group members (those with experience of overseas training, such as Royer) to go overseas for training and combat. Furthermore, their offence planning took place in a socially-enclosed group environment within the emotionally charged context immediately following 9/11 with the imminent US invasion of Afghanistan. Their motivations were also more attuned to feelings of



altruism and the need to defend Muslims overseas, as opposed to ones of hatred and the need to kill civilians at home. By contrast, another ‘social’ terrorist, Derrick Shareef (case #36) was actively planning along with an informant to plant grenades in a shopping mall during the busy Christmas period. On the face of it he would appear hardcore; however the impression from reading transcripts of Shareef’s conversations with his accomplice is of an ill-informed young man with few prospects in life, barely aware of the consequences of his actions and intent on playing a role of bravado.

Another 13 individuals defied classification as either social or hardcore, apparently crossing the divide between the two. For example, Daniel Maldonado (case #38) who trained with Somali Islamist insurgents at the end of 2006 seemed truly committed to the ideal of establishing an Islamist state through violence, but at the same time could be described as a zealous convert desperate to demonstrate his commitment over and above other Muslims (a process of social comparison) and was cooperative with authorities once captured. Meanwhile, the Fort Dix plotters (case #37) seemed to be hardcore in the sense that they were moving ever closer to carrying out a military-style assault on an army base in the name of Islam, but were also ‘kept in the game’ by each other’s declarations of seriousness and on several occasions there were discussions about who was ‘in’ or ‘out’. Of course –as discussed in chapter 4- social mechanisms are very important to the way in which terrorists develop and just because such processes are apparent does not mean individuals are necessarily less committed. Moreover, even the most extreme of hardcore individuals have to go through some process to reach the stage they are at.

Examples of hardcore militants in the sample include Christopher Paul (involved with violent Islamists for around 17 years), Adam Gadahn (al-Qaeda’s American spokesman since 2004), Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohammed (who sent sarcastic and taunting letters to the prison deputy after he was incarcerated), and Shirwa Ahmed (case #43) who blew himself up in Somalia in 2008). Such individuals generally show sustained association with violent Islamists, an enduring willingness and enthusiasm to support, promote or personally carry out acts of violence, and in instances where they have been captured are more often defiant. Thirteen of 15 hardcore militants began offending prior to 2004 (constituting 30% of the earlier generation vs. 4% of the latter), which might be read as an indication that the most recent generation of Islamist terrorists are less committed or less dangerous than their predecessors. However, it



might equally be an artefact of the way that it has been coded here, taking into account length of time offending and the nature of associations and contacts.

Overall, it must be concluded that ideological commitment is probably too unreliable –based on the available data- to tell us much about how US Islamist terrorists operate or what chances of rehabilitation there might be.

### *Behavioural Classification*

**Table 9.16.** Behavioural classification of US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008). The top two rows refer to individuals; the bottom two rows refer to cases.\*

Promoting jihad	Facilitating: Top-down	Facilitating: Active support	Facilitating/ fundraising	Offering services	Preparation for violence	Active pursuit of violence	Misc.
4	1	2	7	14	24	38	1
4% I	1% I	2% I	8% I	15% I	26% I	42% I	1% I
4	1	2	6	11	11	18	1
9% C	2% C	4% C	13% C	24% C	24% C	39% C	2% C

\*Note that the case total is greater than 46 since some individuals performed different roles within cases, bringing the total to 54. Case percentages are still derived using 46 as the total.

Behavioural classification is a more direct indicator of operational activity and is one of the main variables of interest since it tells us what exactly individuals from, or living in, the US are doing in furtherance of violent Islamist ideology. Like many of the variables here it proved difficult to classify, given overlapping behaviours within groups and individuals, and unclear boundaries between categories. Classification should thus be considered a matter of emphasis rather than an absolute steadfast system of division.

Figures are shown both for individuals (the top two rows) and cases (the bottom two rows) since individuals within the same case are not always fulfilling the same function. In particular, facilitating/fundraising the activities of others, and preparation for violence were both carried out within groups that were primarily concerned with other activities. The pursuit of violence obviously involved prior preparation, but also demonstrated more determined, overt steps to perpetrate violence against others. Offering of services to organised jihadis such as al-Qaeda also encompassed a range of behaviours, characterised by people ‘reaching out’ in a bottom-up fashion in an attempt



to provide services (or in a few cases being asked to perform services) such as logistic support activities, training others, locating targets or manufacturing explosives.

Promoting jihad applied to 4 cases- those of Ali al-Timimi, the spiritual leader in Virginia; Adam Gadahn, who became the American spokesperson of al-Qaeda; Mohammad Radwan Obeid (case #30) who promoted jihad online; and Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohammed (case #41) who posted an online instructional video on how to make a remote-controlled detonator.

Top-down facilitation of jihad was rare. The single case referred to here is that of Kevin James, who devised his own jihadi group whose activities he was not directly involved in only because he was in prison. Active support was also rare. The cases here were those of Ali Asad Chandia of the Virginia jihad network who assisted senior Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT) operative Mohammed Ajmal Khan (UK case #11), and Mohammed Junaid Babar (case #14) who set up a training camp in Pakistan attended by a group of British jihadis led by Omar Khyam (UK case #14).

The 6 cases involving facilitation/fundraising were somewhat different to the ‘top-down’ and ‘active’ forms of facilitation in that they were not clearly *directing* others or providing such *hands-on* support and specifically involved the transfer of money. They include Enaam Arnaout (case #2) who ran a charity-front company, the Benevolence International Foundation; Adham Amin Hassoun and Kifah Wael Jayyousi, who were involved in recruiting Jose Padilla (case #3); October Martinique Lewis, who sent money to her partner, Jeffrey Battle (case #10); Abdulrahman Farhane, an associate of Tarik Shah, who discussed money-raising schemes for jihad (case #15); Abdul Tawala Ibn Alishtari (case #34) who agreed to launder money for Islamist militants; and Khalid Ouazzani (case #44) who laundered money and made donations to al-Qaeda.

There were 11 cases<sup>vi</sup> that were classed as ‘offering services’, which involved either individuals ‘advertising’ the fact that they wished to perform tasks such as training others (Tarik Shah- case #15) or helping to build bombs and/or identify targets for attack (Grecula and Reynolds- cases #29 and #31), or else involved individuals who were asked to perform certain tasks and agreed to do so, e.g. Uzair Paracha (case #16)

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<sup>vi</sup> Ilyas Ali (US case #12); Tarik Shah et al (US case #15); Uzair Paracha (US case #16); Aref & Hossain (case #17); Saifullah Ranjha (US case #20); Ryan Anderson (US case #21); Mark Walker (US case #24); Syed Hashmi (US case #26); Ahmed & Sadequee (US case #27); Ronald Grecula (US case #29); Michael Reynolds (US case #31)



and Syed Hashmi (case #26), both of whom agreed to perform different logistic support activities for terrorist organisations. These cases show some overlap with the facilitation cases but did not necessarily involve money and were either characterised by bottom-up searching or reaching out to terrorist organisations, or else were organised more by other people rather than the individuals who were prosecuted.

Most of the remaining cases involved preparation and training for, or active pursuit of violence (constituting 68% of individuals or 63% of cases). These involved a mix of domestic and overseas paramilitary-style training, joining violent factions abroad and planning terrorist strikes on various targets. We will return to the focus of such plots (overseas vs. domestic, target type, etc) below. The miscellaneous case refers to Ruben Shumpert (case #40) who fled the US to avoid prosecution for criminal activity and joined Islamist militants in Somalia where he was later killed in a missile strike.

Overall it should not be too surprising that the majority of US terrorism cases involve preparation for, or pursuit of violence, since this is a primary concern of terrorists. However, it does not sit too comfortably with the, until recently, prevailing view that the US does not suffer from much of a ‘home-grown’ problem, or the historical observation that it has primarily been a logistic support base. Furthermore, dividing the sample into pre- vs. post-Iraq time periods lends support to a growing trend in violence among America’s jihadis. 4 out of 6 cases concerned with facilitating/fundraising began prior to 2004 (representing 20% of pre-2004 cases vs. 8% of cases beginning in 2004-2008), while 12 of 18 cases concerned with actively pursuing violence began in 2004 or later (equalling 30% of all pre-2004 cases vs. 46% of cases beginning 2004-2008). The absolute numbers involved are relatively low and the difference might also be a product of differences in how these cases are investigated (given a tendency in the US towards ‘sting’ operations) but at face value they suggest that Islamist terrorists who have lived in the US are now somewhat more focussed on violence than on support activities. This makes sense, given that providing support requires connections to militant networks (which may be less likely for individuals growing up in post-9/11 America) while violence can be carried out more or less independently.



***Domestic vs. Overseas Focus & Operation***

**Table 9.17.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) according to behavioural classification.

	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
Promoting jihad		1	3	3	1		4
Facilitating: Top-down	1			1			1
Facilitating: Active support		2			1	1	2
Facilitating/ fundraising		6		6			6
Offering services	4	5	2	7	1	3	11
Preparation for violence	2	7	2	1	5	5	11
Active pursuit of violence	9	9		6	8	4	18
Misc.		1			1		1
Total	16	31	7	24	17	13	54*

\*Note that case totals exceed 46 since some individuals performed different roles within cases, bringing the total to 54.

Table 9.17 shows numbers of US Islamist terrorism cases according to their behavioural classification divided by whether they had a domestic, overseas or mixed focus, and whether the individuals involved were based in the US, abroad or a combination of the two. A domestic focus refers to a concern with affecting events within the US (although there are almost always overtures to the foreign stage); an overseas focus involves a primary concern with the global jihad abroad; and a mixed focus is characterised by a general concern for the global jihad, i.e. definite concern for international events, with some indication that domestic operations are also deemed viable. Examining these variables gives an indication of what US Islamist terrorists want to do and where they are based.

In order to illustrate how cases were classified we will first take a look at the top category, ‘Promoting Jihad’, i.e. encouraging others to participate, in a little more detail. Looking at the table we can see that this involved 4 cases. These were Ali al-Timimi, the spiritual sanctioner in the ‘Virginia jihad’ network (case #7), Adam Gadahn, the



American spokesman for al-Qaeda (case #11), Mohammad Radwan Obeid, the online recruiter (case #30) and Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohammed, who distributed an online instructional video for how to make a remote detonator (case #41). 1 of these individuals (al-Timimi) maintained a primarily overseas focus in terms of encouraging others to fight abroad while the other 3 promoted jihad in a more general sense that could be applied overseas and/or in the US. 3 of them (al-Timimi, Obeid and Mohammed) were based in the US while committing their offences, while Gadahn is based overseas.

The single case of top-down facilitation (Kevin James) involved both a domestic focus and base of operation. The 2 active support cases (Ali Asad Chandia –case #7- & Mohammed Junaid Babar –case #14) were both focussed on jihad overseas and both offended abroad, although Chandia was also active in the US. All 6 facilitation/fundraising cases were also focussed on events overseas.

Cases where individuals offered their services to al-Qaeda or similar organisations were quite evenly split between having a domestic or overseas focus, with 2 individuals (Ilyas Ali –case #12- and Syed Haris Ahmed –case #27) seemingly more mixed in their outlook. The majority of ‘preparation for violence’ cases had overseas aims; and those who actively pursued violence were split evenly between having a domestic or overseas outlook (i.e. wanting to perpetrate attacks at home or abroad).

In general, the focus and the country of operation did not directly correspond. For example all 6 facilitating/fundraising cases were aimed at supporting militants overseas yet all 6 were based in the US. Similarly, for cases that involved offering of services to Islamist militants 7 (64%) involved an overseas or mixed focus but only 4 (36%) involved any travel abroad. These figures make sense given that it is not always necessary to travel abroad in order to provide funds, and if individuals believe they have found ‘al-Qaeda’ at home, again there is less need to look overseas.

There was a greater correspondence in terms of ambitions and actions in cases of preparation for violence:<sup>vii</sup> 9 cases (82%) involved some focus on overseas activities and there was international travel and contact with organised foreign militants in 10 cases (91%). There was also a relatively high percentage of cases involving pursuit of

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<sup>vii</sup> Paul (case #1); al-Marri (case #4); Faris (case #6); Lindh (case #9); the Portland 7 (case #10); Ali (case #13); Elshafay & Siraj (case #23); James et al (case #25); Batiste et al (case #33); Taheri-Azar (case #35); Shareef (case #36); the Fort Dix plotters (case #37); Maldonado (case #38); Hammami (case #39); Vinas (case #42); Ahmed & Hassan (case #43); Siddiqui (case #42); Maruf et al (case #46).



violence in which there was international travel: these cases were split 50/50 in terms of focus but 12 of them (67%) included some operation abroad. Again this makes sense, given a pervasive desire to attend overseas jihadi training camps and take part in conflict abroad.

**Table 9.18.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation (C.o.O) of US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) divided according to whether cases began before 2004 or 2004-2008. Percentages refer to rows.

	Focus: Purely Domestic	Focus: Purely Overseas	Focus: Mixed	C.o.O: Purely Domestic	C.o.O: Purely Overseas	C.o.O: Mixed
Overall (46)	14 (30%)	25 (54%)	7 (15%)	21 (46%)	12 (26%)	13 (28%)
Pre 2004 (20)	5 (25%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	12 (60%)
2004-2008 (26)	9 (35%)	14 (54%)	3 (12%)	17 (65%)	8 (31%)	1 (4%)

Turning to the pre- vs. post-Iraq divide, Table 9.18 shows how the focus and operation of US Islamist terrorists has changed over time (note that ‘purely’ domestic/overseas refers to the fact that there was no within-group variation- thus all group members were focussed on the same aims and all were based in the same country, otherwise they were classed as mixed, which includes operations at home *and* abroad).

Overall there has been an overseas focus in 54% of cases (with a further 15% mixed) and international travel by at least some group-members in 54% of cases. In the pre-Iraq era just 5 (25%) of cases involved a purely domestic focus (these were Ali Salah Kalah al-Marri –case #4- Iyman Faris –case #6- Ahmed Omar Abu Ali –case #13- Uzair Paracha –case #16- and Yassin Aref and Mohammed Hossain–case #17). Similarly only 4 cases were based entirely in the US, although they mostly do not correspond with those with domestic ambitions (they are Enaam Arnout –case #2- Tarik Shah et al –case #15- Aref & Hossain–case #17- and Saifullah Ranjha –case #20). This shows that before the invasion of Iraq, more US Islamist terrorism cases were focussed on activities overseas, most involved some international travel, and even when the US was being targeted it was primarily by individuals from abroad.



During the post-Iraq period, the number of cases with a purely domestic focus has nearly doubled in absolute terms and represents a significantly higher percentage (35%). Moreover, these cases<sup>viii</sup> all involved domestic-based plotters, none of whom had been sent from abroad to carry out an operation. The desire to become involved in activities overseas has remained high (seen in 54-65% of cases) but the ability to travel and become involved in jihad abroad has decreased and is seen in only 9 cases<sup>ix</sup> (35%) and in fact in 1 of these cases (Ahmed and Sadequee) they were still ultimately unsuccessful in their efforts. Thus there is a greater disparity between the ambitions and capabilities of post-Iraq generation Islamist terrorists living in or from the US. This can be explained by increased counter-terrorism measures making it more difficult to connect with terrorists overseas and in turn may help explain the growing tendency to see the US as a viable target and base of operations. The nature of international travel is further illuminated by considering *modus operandi*.

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<sup>viii</sup> These cases are: Ahmed Hassan al-Uqaily (case #22); Elshafay & Siraj (case #23); Kevin James et al (case #25); Ronald Grecula (case #29); Michael Reynolds (case #31); Narseale Batiste et al (case #33); Taheri-Azar (case #35); Derrick Shareef (case #36); and the Fort Dix plotters (case #37).

<sup>ix</sup> These were: Syed Hashmi (case #26); Syed Haris Ahmed & Ehsanul Islam Sadequee (case #27); Daniel Maldonado (case #38); Omar Hammami (case #39); Ruben Shumpert (case #40); Bryant Vinas (case #42); Abdifatah Isse et al (case #43); Aafia Siddiqui (case #45); and Jamal Sheikh Bana et al (case #46).



*Planned M.O. of Attacks*

**Table 9.19.** Target type and weaponry in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) for domestic and overseas-based attacks/ planned attacks (excluding joining overseas conflict).

	Target: Civilian	Target: Gov.	Target: Mixed	Target: U/K	Explosives	Fire- arms	Other	Mixed	U/K
Domestic target	4	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	1
Overseas target		1	2		1	1		1	

Of the 18 cases involving active pursuit of violence, 7 (39%) involved joining overseas conflicts. These were: John Walker Lindh (case #9); Habis Abdulla al-Saoub of the Portland 7 (case #10); Daniel Maldonado (case #38); Omar Hammami (case #39); Bryant Vinas (case #42); Kamal Said Hassan and Shirwa Ahmed from Minnesota (case #43); and Zakaria Maruf and Jamal Sheikh Banna (case #46- both killed in Somalia, the former via suicide bombing). The remaining 11 (61%) of cases, shown in Table 9.19, involved planned/perpetrated terrorist attacks in a more ‘traditional’ sense. None of these attacks were successful. The closest, in the sense that it came to fruition, was Taheri-Azar’s attack using a 4-wheel drive motor vehicle to run people over in North Carolina, although no-one was killed. Second to that was Aafia Siddiqui’s impromptu attempt to gun down her US interrogators in Afghanistan, although she missed and was subdued. None of the rest made it past planning stages.

As shown in Table 9.19, just 3 of these planned attacks were aimed at, or perpetrated against, overseas targets (Christopher Paul- case #1; Ahmed Omar Abu Ali- case #13; and Aafia Siddiqui- case #45) which reflects the fact that overseas cases in the sample tend to involve joining jihadi conflicts rather than carrying out urban terrorist attacks. Also note the direct correlation between being based at home/abroad and focussing attacks at home/abroad in all but 1 case- Abu Ali, who was convicted of plotting to assassinate George W. Bush while based in Saudi Arabia in 2003.

The remaining 8 planned attacks were focussed domestically. Four were exclusively aiming to attack civilians (Iyman Faris (case #6); Siraj and Elshafay (case #23); Taheri-Azar (case #35); and Derrick Shareef- case #36). One plot was aimed exclusively at a government target (the Fort Dix plot), 2 more showed signs of considering both civilian and government targets (Kevin James’ JIS gang, and the Sears



Tower plotters) and 1 case was ended too early for any concrete indications about where he might attack (the case of al-Qaeda ‘sleeper agent’ Ali Saleh Kalah al-Marri- case #4).

Choice of weaponry was also very mixed. Neither domestically-based nor overseas Islamist terrorists formerly of the US showed any preference for a particular form of weaponry, demonstrating that it is most likely restricted by availability/opportunity. Finally, as should be apparent from the cases cited above, there is no clear pattern in terms of attack-types before and after the invasion of Iraq other than already discussed (pp.204-205). Domestic plots did occur prior to the invasion of Iraq, and overseas operations have taken place since.

### **9.2.7 International Dimensions and Associations**

**Table 9.20.** Contact with foreign terrorists in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Contact with foreign terrorists		
	Yes	No	U/K
Individuals	42	42	7
	46% TOT	46% TOT	8% TOT
Pre 2004	26	13	5
2004 onwards	16	29	2
Cases	23	18	5
	50% TOT	39% TOT	11% TOT
Pre 2004	14	3	3
2004 onwards	9	15	2

A major area of interest in the post-9/11 era has been whether or not terrorists active in the US are in contact with foreign terrorist organisations, and if so, what the nature of that contact is. Table 9.20 shows that roughly half of all individuals and cases have had contact with foreign terrorists, while approximately 10% of both could not be reliably classified (although given the tendency to report these connections most ‘unknowns’ probably do not have well-established foreign connections).

By further examining the pre- vs. post-2004 divide, there is a notable difference. 59% of individuals (or 70% of cases) that began prior to 2004 had established contact with foreign terrorists. Moreover, 62% of individuals (58% of cases) that began in 2004 or later did *not* have contact with foreign terrorists. This supports general observations



that ‘home-grown’ terrorists are less likely to be in contact with foreign jihadis, although it is not something that should be discounted altogether.

**Table 9.21.** Number of US Islamist terrorism cases in contact with foreign militants in different locations, divided according to whether cases began prior to 2004 or 2004-2008.

Foreign terrorists' location	Pre 2004	2004 onwards
Global (S. Asia/ N. Africa/ Middle East/ Europe/ Balkans)	3	0
Pakistan/ Afghanistan	12	2
Germany	1	0
UK	2	2
Somalia	0	5
Saudi Arabia	1	0
Canada	1	1
Unconfirmed	0	1

Table 9.21 adds to the discussion by showing the whereabouts of foreign terrorist contacts among US Islamist terrorism cases. Note that a number of cases had contacts in multiple locations, hence the case-total in the pre- and post-Iraq categories is increased from 14 to 20, and from 9 to 11, respectively (though this still accurately reflects the number of cases in contact with similar others in each region of the world).

First, just 3 cases involved ‘global’ contacts: Christopher Paul (case #1) who fought in Bosnia, trained in Afghanistan and colluded with militants in Germany; Enaam Arnaout (case #2) who had links to Afghanistan and sent money to mujahedin around the world; and Randall Todd Royer (case #7) who also fought in Bosnia and trained in Pakistan. No cases in the post-2004 generation have rivalled these connections.

Second, it is notable that Pakistan and Afghanistan appear to have become less accessible over time (although they remain sought-after destinations and remain hotspots of Islamist terrorist activity). The 2 cases where direct contact was made with foreign terrorists in this region in 2004 or later help to clarify the situation. First, there is Syed Haris Ahmed (case #27) who met with a group of Canadian ‘home-grown’ terrorists and also made contact online with a British jihadist –Aabid Khan (UK case #25). Ahmed met with Khan in Pakistan in 2005 hoping that he would set him up in a training camp with LeT, although things did not work out as Ahmed planned and he had



to return to the US. The other case is that of Bryant Neal Vinas (case #42) who travelled to Pakistan in 2007 and joined al-Qaeda shortly afterwards. Few are able to do as Vinas did without friends or family to vouch for them or provide letters of recommendation, and that may be the difference between those who are able to connect with jihadis overseas and those who fail to do so.

This same general rule seems to apply for people living in the US but maintaining contact with terrorists abroad via phone, email, or other means of communication. All 5 cases<sup>x</sup> based in the US involving contact with overseas jihadis in the pre-2004 period had previously spent time in, or at least had links to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Khalid Ouazzani (case #44), the only US-based case beginning after 2003 to involve contact with a foreign terrorist organisation, somehow knew a co-conspirator in an unspecified location abroad who was connected to al-Qaeda. In the absence of these sorts of personal connections it is far more difficult to get in touch with, and establish credibility with overseas terrorists.

The last point to note in the above table is that, just as Pakistan and Afghanistan have apparently become more difficult sites for American jihadis to make contact with their foreign counterparts, Somalia has emerged as a new prime destination. All 5 Somali cases (Maldonado- case #38; Hammami- case #39; Shumpert- case #40; Isse et al- case #43; Bana et al- case #46) occurred after 2004 and together involved a mix of American-born and Somali individuals, none of whom seemed to encounter any great difficulties in establishing first contact with violent Islamist factions. This of course is a reflection of developments in that country, and the reactive nature of counter-terrorism (failing to intervene before individuals could leave the US).

The nature of organisational contact is another important issue, but one that is obscured by the lack of available data. However, the nature of individuals' roles does give some indication of their relationship to organised terrorists. Looking at the pre-2004 cases involving foreign affiliation<sup>xi</sup>, many can be considered operatives of an organisation, often provided with a service (training) and then offered, if not encouraged or ordered to undertake missions on behalf of the organisation, for which they were

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<sup>x</sup> Enaam Arnaout (case #2); Ali Saleh Kalah al-Marri (case #4); Iyman Faris (case #6); Ali al-Timimi et al (case #7); and Mohammed Warsame (case #8).

<sup>xi</sup> Christopher Paul (case #1); Enaam Arnaout (case #2); Jose Padilla et al (case #3); Ali Saleh Kalah al-Marri (case #4); Iyman Faris (case #6); Ali al-Timimi et al (case #7); Mohammed Abdulla Warsame (case #8); John Walker Lindh (case #9); Habis Abdulla al-Saoub (case #10); Adam Gadahn (case #11); Ahmed Omar Abu Ali (case #13); Mohammed Junaid Babar (case #14); Uzair Paracha (case #16); and Hamid Hayat (case #18).



sometimes given money and equipment to help them achieve their goals. On occasion some (e.g. Jose Padilla) were even given money for personal reasons such as visiting family, and international travel was frequently involved. At the same time, individuals seem to have had a fair amount of autonomy once they had passed through training- they had considerable freedom as to exactly how they went about their duties, and they could turn down tasks put to them or drop out of involvement altogether if they wished.

In cases that began from 2004 onwards<sup>xii</sup>, only Bryant Vinas appears to have played a similar role although he was not dispatched overseas to carry out any missions before being apprehended. Syed Hashmi (case #26) played a less involved, logistic-support type role and Syed Haris Ahmed made contact with organised jihadis but was essentially rejected by them overseas. The remaining cases were all based in Somalia and could be classed more as army volunteers rather than semi-autonomous operatives (although at least 3 individuals were able to drop out and return home, there has been speculation that at least 1 Somali-American was shot for refusing to obey an order). This further raises the point that so far involvement with Somali Islamists –which has increased in recent years- has been a matter of becoming engaged in a civil war. Even though there are reports of explosives training and suicide bombing, there have not so far been any examples of recruits being trained up and then dispatched back home to strike against the US or elsewhere (however, at the time of writing attacks in Uganda, which al-Shabab have claimed responsibility for, is a worrying indication that this may be changing<sup>18</sup>).

Finally, before we consider domestic associations out-with the immediate group, it is also informative to compare the cases that have not involved foreign affiliation. All of the cases aimed at perpetrating domestic terrorist attacks, which did have foreign affiliations began prior to the invasion of Iraq. By contrast, there was no contact with foreign organised terrorists in any of the planned domestic terrorist attack cases which began in 2004 or later.<sup>xiii</sup> Given the fact that people pay the most attention to planned attacks as opposed to terrorism-financing or even joining conflicts abroad, this helps explain the widespread perception that Islamist terrorists in the US tend to be ‘amateurs’, completely removed from global terror networks. Of course online jihadi

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<sup>xii</sup> Syed Hashmi (case #26); Syed Haris Ahmed (case #27); Daniel Maldonado (case #38); Omar Hammami (case #39); Ruben Shumpert (case #40); Bryant Vinas (case #42); Abdifatah Isse et al (case #43); Khalid Ouazzani (case #44); and Zakaria Maruf et al (case #46).

<sup>xiii</sup> Siraj and Elshafay; Kevin James et al; the Sears Tower plotters; Taheri-Azar; Derrick Shareef; and the Fort Dix group.



chat-forums make it possible that individuals based in the US were in contact with terrorists overseas but that it went undetected or un-reported. This is a possibility, but given the eagerness of authorities in the US to track down anybody who is associated with terrorists in any meaningful way, combined with the fact that foreign associations do seem to be disclosed to the press when they are present, the likelihood seems that undetected/unreported associations are generally lacking in significance.

**Table 9.22.** Numbers of US Islamist terrorism cases in the pre- vs. post-2004 periods with named domestic and foreign terrorist associations.

	Named domestic associations	Named foreign associations	Both	Total
Pre-2004 (n=20)	3	7	4	14 (70%)
2004 onwards (n=26)	7	2	1	10 (38%)
Total	10	9	5	24
% TOT (46)	22%	20%	11%	46%

Interestingly, there have also been a number of domestic associations between US-based Islamist militants. Table 9.22 shows that in the pre-Iraq period (including 2003) there were 3 cases with named domestic associations only (Nuradin Abdi (case #5), who knew Christopher Paul and Iyman Faris- all based in Ohio; Tarik Shah (case #15), based in New York, who knew Saifullah Chapman in Virginia; and Marwan Othman El-Hindi (case #19) who was part of a group with Mohammed Zaki Amawi in Ohio and knew Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed in Chicago). There were 7 cases with named foreign associations only (4 of which were connected to senior al-Qaeda operatives such as bin Laden and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed) and 4 cases where both foreign and domestic associations were named (Christopher Paul, Iyman Faris, the Virginia jihad network and Mohammed Junaid Babar) although their foreign associations were far more significant.

In the post-2003 period, the pattern of named associations is reversed. Only 2 cases (Bryant Neal Vinas and Aafia Siddiqui) have been reportedly connected to foreign (accused) terrorists only, and only 1 more (Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam



Sadequee) involved connections to both foreign and domestic terrorists. Meanwhile, 7 cases involved named domestic associations only (Syed Hashmi; Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed; Derrick Shareef; Daniel Maldonado; Omar Hammami; Abdifatah Isse et al; and Zakaria Maruf et al- the last 2 cases being essentially part of the same network).

These figures lend apparent support to the hypothesis that –in accordance with general impressions about the nature of ‘home-grown’ Islamist terrorism (HGIT)- substantial international associations with terrorists abroad have become less common. This is further supported by Table 9.20 above, showing that there have been less cases involving foreign organisational contact after 2003. However, it must also be emphasised that Table 9.22 is depicting *named* associations. Increased security measures and aggressive prosecution on the domestic stage increases the likelihood that terrorists operating in the US will be known and openly named. At the same time, certain groups have undoubtedly made foreign contacts but no names have been given- this relates specifically to the cases based in Somalia and may be reflective of lower levels of intelligence there as compared to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The numbers here, as throughout this report, should thus be considered a set of indicators rather than absolute figures. The picture will be further illuminated by examining the role of the Internet.



### **9.2.8 The Role of the Internet**

**Table 9.23.** Use of the Internet in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Use of Internet	U/K	Comm.	Access propaganda/ forums	Gather intell/ research attacks	Create/ distribute materials	Misc. Comm.	Fund-raising	Grp. formation
Pre-2004	8	8	1	2	1	0	1	0
2004 onwards	13	7	7	3	3	3	0	0
Total	21	15	8	5	4	3	1	0
% TOT	46%	33%	17%	11%	9%	7%	2%	0%

The Internet is thought to have revolutionised the global Sunni jihad. It has dramatically increased the accessibility of Islamist propaganda and has facilitated truly worldwide communication –and thereby recruitment. The credibility of these possibilities is unquestionable, and numerous examples can be cited to demonstrate the versatility of the world-wide web in the hands of today’s generation of jihadists. Yet there has been no systematic examination of how it is used.

Table 9.23 shows how US Islamist terrorists have been reported to be using the Internet (note that percentages are for the overall total of 46, but because in numerous cases the Net was used in multiple ways, the total count comes to more than this). In many cases (46%) the use of the Internet was not specifically reported (although often it seemed likely that propaganda materials had at least been accessed or that communication with associates via email may have occurred).

The most popular use, equally distributed before and after the invasion of Iraq and occurring in 33% of all cases, was for communication with confederates (i.e. sending specific messages) either by sending email, or by using the ‘drop-box’ method of writing messages in draft folders and sharing account passwords.

The next most popular usage was for accessing jihadi propaganda/ materials or online forums to share views, trade information and offer each other advice (explicitly recorded in 17% of all cases). The 1 case out of a total of 8 that occurred prior to 2004 was that of Mohammed Zaki Amawi et al (case #19) and in fact Amawi was directly inspired by the invasion of Iraq, travelling there in October 2003 in an unsuccessful attempt to join the jihad. This does not invalidate using 2004 rather than 2003 as a cut-off point for assessing the impact of the Iraq war, but demonstrates that any division is



essentially arbitrary and cannot be absolutely precise. Either way it is apparent that use of online propaganda and forums has become more apparent over time, and that the post-Iraq generation of Islamist militants have readily incorporated this into their repertoire. Cases such as these where jihadi materials were downloaded and often secure chat-rooms were accessed almost always involved use of the Internet to communicate as well. This indicates that more advanced uses of the Net are likely to incorporate more basic ones.

Gathering intelligence and information for researching attacks took place in 11% of all cases, and was reported in both the pre- and post-Iraq generations. It appears to have been quickly realised as a possible use of the Internet, and continues to be used in this way. However, despite the ease of ‘virtual surveillance’ there have not so far been any American cases where targets that were researched on the Net were then successfully attacked, and online research tends to be backed up by physical surveillance. Its chief function appears to be one of investigating (often multiple) possibilities and preliminary scouting before more thorough preparation might take place.<sup>19</sup>

Creation and distribution of jihadi materials was recorded in just 4 cases and might initially be seen as the reserve of more committed, knowledgeable or higher-status individuals. However, the evidence shows a rather mixed bunch in this category. First there is Adam Gadahn, whose speeches are posted online by al-Qaeda. He does seem to fit the role of someone who is well-entrenched and holds status by way of his associations. Similarly, Omar Hammami has featured in propaganda videos for al-Shabaab and is presented in a leadership role. At the other end of the scale is Mark Robert Walker (case #24), a student in Wyoming who allegedly started his own jihadi website as he attempted to make contact with individuals who would be able to help him join the jihad in Somalia. Finally, sitting somewhere in between these 2 cases is that of Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohammed (case #41) who independently made an instructional video on how to make a remote detonator and posted it on Youtube. These cases demonstrate that jihadis’ use of the Internet is diverse and is probably related more to their personal technological abilities (or those of their associates) with the Internet itself rather than their personal standing in extremist networks.

The 3 recorded ‘miscellaneous communication’ cases are those of Omar Hammami (case #39) and the interlinked Somali-Americans from Minnesota (cases #43



& #46), all of whom joined the jihad in Somalia and all of whom used Facebook and email to communicate- although it was to send messages to family and friends back home. This serves as a reminder that not all terrorist communication takes place in secure chat-rooms or involves code-words to disguise their meaning. Nor do they only communicate with their counterparts, but also with friends and family who are not fellow jihadists.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is only one reported instance of the Internet being used to raise funds for jihad within the sample- this was in relation to Enaam Arnaout who ran the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) from around 1992 to 2002. BIF operated as a charity and as such solicited donations from people in the name of assisting Muslims living in crisis zones and included a website for this purpose. The fact that it was not disclosed that funds were also sent to armed mujahedin resulted in Arnaout being convicted of fraud. This was a relatively high visibility organisation openly presenting itself as a legitimate charity and was able to operate freely until after 9/11. Since then, numerous charities came under investigation and were subject to sanctions for suspected ties to terrorism- therefore similar cases appear less likely to be able to function in the post-2001 environment. This may help explain the absence of such cases in the current sample, although at the same time it seems naive to suggest that the Internet is not still used for terror-financing. Its precise role in this capacity in the context of America clearly warrants further attention.

Finally, there were no recorded cases of the Internet forming the basis of group formation (i.e. a sustained group coming together having met online) although certain individuals did communicate online and then meet in person- e.g. Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee met with a group of Canadian jihadists led by Fahim Ahmad; Sadequee went on to make arrangements to form a jihadi organisation in Sweden, although was arrested before the plans were followed up; and Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed (case #28) –who were also in communication with Syed Ahmed and Sadequee- met with Marwan Othman El-Hindi to discuss possible training in the US. It thus seems that close-knit groups are more likely to form in person –aside from anything based on proximity- while the Internet is used more for networking and as a means for reaching out to people outside of the immediate group to see what each party can offer the other. As illustrated by individuals such as Ryan Anderson (case #21) or



Ronald Grecula (case #29), these networking activities also place individuals and groups at increased risk to detection by law enforcement.

Overall, the use of the Internet among Islamist terrorists from or living in the US is varied and certainly not uncommon. Islamist extremists clearly use it as much of the rest of the general population do (i.e. according to its availability and their own abilities) and the presence of jihadis online has expanded in line with the general growth of the Internet. The available evidence does not support a ‘virtualisation’ of jihad in America though. As illustrated in the discussion on radicalisation (which revealed only 1 case where an individual’s radicalisation appeared to have taken place almost exclusively online) the Internet has become an integral part of jihad but has not erased the importance of face-to-face meetings, social interaction, or physical preparation and training. Even communication –which seems the most widespread use of the Internet– still takes place over the telephone as well.



### **9.2.9 Stated Motivations**

**Table 9.24.** Stated motivations in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Stated Motivations	U/K	Religious/ altruistic/ foreign policy	Anti- US	Foreign policy/ anti- Semitism	Anti-US/ Self- serving	Anti-US/ Personal circumstance
Pre-2004	16	4	0	0	0	0
2004 onwards	3	16	2	1	3	1
% TOT	41%	43%	4%	2%	7%	2%

Having looked at what US Islamist terrorists are doing, it is important to address why they are doing it. Table 9.24 shows the distribution of stated motivations within cases (although each individual may have more or less unique motivations, they tend to express common themes within groups). Information that specifically documented stated motivations or goals was generally limited. For 41% of cases data was lacking to the extent that they could not be accurately classified. Among those that could be, most showed a predictable combination of motivations surrounding religious identification, altruistic needs to defend fellow Muslims, and a profound dissatisfaction with American foreign policy, in particular their involvement in conflict zones and other affairs involving Muslims. The remaining cases showed evidence of some of these aspects, such as a generalised contempt for America, in some cases combined with anti-Semitism (Ahmed al-Uqaily- case #22), the desire for personal gain (Grecula- case #29; Reynolds- case #31; and Alishtari- case #34) or personal circumstance (specifically the need to avoid being imprisoned- Ruben Shumpert- case #40).

The fact that most pre-2004 cases could not be classified might appear striking but is simply due to insufficient data and should not be interpreted as meaningful. Overall, based on the available data there is little that can be learned about motivating factors among the sample of US jihadis, except to say that they do not appear to exhibit a unique motivational set that might distinguish them from other global jihadists around the world. Moreover, there does not appear to be much difference in the motivations of individuals involved in different kinds of activity. A common theme that was expressed across numerous cases –albeit couched in terms of religion- was a desire for action and violence that seemed to permeate much of what individuals talked about and did. This desire for violence combined with social bravado may be a powerful mechanism in the



lives of American jihadists (just as it may be with similar young men in other countries).

Despite this generality there may well be differences in the degree or type of commitment to violence. Individuals involved in logistic support activities condone the violence of others but are seemingly less keen to become involved themselves. Meanwhile those who choose to go overseas to fight in ongoing conflicts feel a personal need to carry out violence with a specific aim in mind (usually to defend the oppressed and to establish an idealistic Islamic state). Of course they sometimes return to the West to carry out terrorist attacks, somehow believing it will help their cause. And then there are those who choose from the outset to attack at home and appear to be motivated by a nihilistic desire for violence without any particular expected benefits. Again, this is nothing new though, it is simply an observation that stated motivations and rhetoric are infused with powerful social motives.

#### **9.2.10 Outcomes**

**Table 9.25.** Outcomes in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Informants/ undercover operatives	Attacks: Thwarted	Attacks: Failed/ semi- successful	Attacks: Successful
Pre- 2004	6	4	0	0
2004 to 2008	12	5	2	0
Total	18	9	2	0
% TOT (46)	39%	20%	4%	0

The final variable of interest is how cases end. Table 9.25 shows that during the investigation phase, 39% of all cases involved informants or undercover officers, and the figure has doubled from the pre- to post-2004 period. Nine attacks were thwarted, 1 attack was completed but failed outright (the unplanned attack carried out by Aafia Siddiqui in Afghanistan) and 1 was completed but failed to kill anyone (Taheri-Azar’s attack in North Carolina). Percentages are expressed as a proportion of the total number of cases in the sample, but looking at the ratio of thwarted vs. failed/semi-successful attacks, overall the latter accounts for 22%. Both of these cases were of course atypical



attacks with little or no pre-warning though, and this explains their ability to slip through the counter-terrorism net. No planned attacks have been successful outright since 9/11.

**Table 9.26.** Outcomes for individuals in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Arrested: prosecuted	Deceased overseas	At large overseas	Average sentence in years	Life Sentences
Pre- 2004	42	1	1	15.5	3
2004 to 2008	40	6	1	15.3	5
Total	82	7	2	15.4	8
% TOT (91)	90%	8%	2%	N/A	9%

Table 9.26 shows the outcomes in US Islamist terrorism cases for individuals. Eighty-two out of 91 people in the sample was arrested and convicted or pleaded guilty. Sixty-three individuals have been sentenced resulting in an average sentence of 15.4 years in jail (minimum 2 years, maximum 85). An additional 8 individuals were sentenced to life in prison (3 of whom got life plus 30 years, although none are eligible for parole anyway). 10 individuals have yet to be sentenced at the time of writing, and 1 (Mohammed Junaid Babar) entered into a plea agreement and is reported to be in witness protection after prosecuting against his former associates.

In terms of charges applied, the vast majority involved charges of conspiracy, usually to provide material support to terrorists and in some cases to kill US nationals. Four individuals (Enaam Arnaout- case #2; Ahmed Hassan al-Uqaily- case #22; Mohammed Radwan Obeid- case #30; and Kamal Said Hassan- case #43) were prosecuted under ordinary criminal law only- they were convicted of fraud; unlawful or unregistered firearms; visa violations and lying to the FBI, respectively. Several others involved related ‘ordinary’ crimes in addition to terrorism offences. Most often these involved firearms offences, including armed robbery (Levar Washington and Gregory Patterson- case #25) but also included drug-trafficking (Ilyas Ali- case #12) and fraud (Abdul Alishtari- case #34; and Khalid Ouazzani- case #44). Lastly, 7 individuals were killed overseas and 2 are still at large (Adam Gadahn and Omar Hammami).



### **9.3 Summary and Conclusions**

Before summarising the current findings it should be re-emphasised that the available data are of poor quality and often lacking. Nevertheless, a concerted effort has been made to analyse what is available in a systematic manner focussing on pre-determined variables of interest. The results should be viewed as sets of indications rather than hard facts and they will be subject to change as new developments take place.

In terms of geographical distribution of Islamist terrorism in the US, most individuals have been based on or near the east coast. This may relate to the original distribution of Islamist terrorists in America (showing some support for the social transmission hypothesis) as well as the distribution of the Muslim population, plus numerous other ‘random’ factors (among them, the Internet, which makes it possible for new cases to ‘sprout up’ in areas with no previous history of Islamist militancy).

There is nothing particularly remarkable about the demographic background of Islamist terrorists living in or from the US and nothing about them as a whole which dramatically distinguishes them from samples in previous studies (aside from their nationality or location). 76% of the sample held American nationality, either as a first or second nationality; on average they were aged between 28 and 30 at the time of offending; most had at least a basic level of education and were in mixed occupations ranging from unskilled to highly qualified. Around half of the sample was married; 65% were ‘born’ Muslims and 27% were converts. Finally, about a quarter of the sample had a previous unrelated criminal record and very few seemed to be suffering from mental health problems. In terms of theoretical explanations of terrorism, together these results indicate that it is clearly more accurate to understand American involvement in Islamist terrorism in terms of relative and vicarious, rather than absolute deprivation, and certainly not in terms of psychopathology.

There were very few details available as to exactly how and why individuals radicalised, but for most it appeared that even where propaganda or chat-rooms were accessed online, face-to-face interactions with similar others in social settings were especially important. Very few individuals might be classed as ‘self-radicalised’ and the available evidence is congruent with social explanations of terrorism (see chapter 4).

The average offence-range was 2.59 years (although this does not capture processes of radicalisation) and the most common range of offending was about a year.



In terms of group characteristics, the average group size was 2.4 but many people were prosecuted as individuals. However, both individuals and groups were often part of wider networks and it was extremely rare for anyone to truly be acting alone. Specific leaders within groups were difficult to identify, yet this seems a reflection of informal social hierarchies rather than evidence that leadership is absent in the world of American jihadis. Again this supports social explanations of terrorism which emphasise mutual patterns of influence (both bottom-up and top-down processes).

There was not enough information available to ideologically classify individuals, except to say that a minority of those involved in Islamist terrorism are criminal opportunists, somehow 'troubled' individuals or adhere to some form of ideological offshoot. The vast majority sit somewhere on a continuum ranging from 'wannabes' to 'hardcore' terrorists, but they are not easily distinguished and may commit equally murderous acts.

Relatively few cases involved promoting or facilitating jihad, others involved offering or agreeing to perform certain services, but most (63% of all cases) involved a willingness or desire for violent activity either at home or abroad, either through preparing for violence via physical and weapons training or actively pursuing violence in the form of joining overseas conflict or planning domestic terrorist attacks.

Overall, a large proportion (around 54%) of US cases have maintained a strong focus on overseas events and activities, with a further 15% showing mixed concern, i.e. definite support for jihad abroad, with some indication of support for jihad at home. These figures remain high in the post-Iraq generation of American jihadis, showing a continued desire to train and fight overseas, but only 35% of these cases involved international travel, which is evidence of a disparity in their desires and capabilities. This may be a contributing factor behind the fact that the proportion of cases with a primarily domestic focus to their activities has significantly increased (from 25 to 35%), showing an increased willingness among US residents to perpetrate terrorist attacks at home.

In planned attacks, targets and choice of weaponry were mixed and seemed to be determined more by opportunity than by any specific preference.

Half of all cases involved contact with foreign terrorists, however this was more common prior to 2004 than in the period 2004 onwards (used here to define the pre- vs. post-Iraq war period, counting cases in 2003 as part of the pre-Iraq generation since



most were radicalised at least a year before acting). These results support the observation that ‘home-grown’ jihadis are less likely to be in contact with foreign organised terrorist groups. As for the countries in which contact was made, prior to 2004 it was more often made in Pakistan/ Afghanistan, or involved individuals based in the US. Since 2004 fewer individuals in either of these locations have had foreign jihadi affiliations (indicating a truly home-grown phenomenon), but more cases are occurring in Somalia. Named domestic associations are becoming more common than international ones in the post-2004 period, although many of the Islamists operating in Somalia appear to be unknown and therefore go unnamed.

The use of the Internet is diverse and fairly widespread, although details are often lacking in open access reports. Communication via email remains popular among US Islamist terrorists. The same goes for researching attacks online. Meanwhile accessing jihadi propaganda and chat-rooms has been more widely reported from 2004 onwards as a reflection of their growth on a global scale. Other examples of uses of the Net are disseminating materials, communicating with family or friends outside of jihadi circles, and fundraising, although the latter appears to have become less visible after 9/11. The Internet has not been used as the basis of group formation; however it is used to network and reach out to other extremists, which increases vulnerability to detection. As noted above, entirely virtual, ‘self-radicalisation’ is not common.

Regarding stated motivations –why individuals living in or from the US get involved in Islamist terrorism- again the data are poor. Domestic concerns are generally lacking (although they may play a predisposing role for some individuals). Most seem to be motivated by the same sets of motivations which are commonly reported worldwide and are reflective of the Islamist terrorist identity- notably a combination of religious and altruistic motivations as well as contempt for US foreign policy. A fascination with violence and sense of social bravado also permeate many cases, which gives some credibility to Roy’s<sup>20</sup> explanation of HGIT as a rebellious social movement.

Finally, many terror investigations in the US involve informants or undercover agents who sometimes make considerable contributions to the way in which cases progress. 90% of the current sample have been successfully prosecuted and have received sentences ranging from 2 years to life in prison. 2 more individuals remain at large and the rest have been killed overseas.



Given claims that America has had little to worry about from home-grown Islamist terrorists, the overall picture is surprising. A variety of people living in the US, many of them born there, have demonstrated that Islamist militancy holds a persistent appeal. Overseas conflicts remain one of the most important points of inspiration, but affiliation with foreign terrorists does appear to be more difficult to achieve, and a significant minority of those who are drawn to the Islamist cause are equally prepared to carry out attacks on domestic soil. The picture is also constantly changing over time and –worryingly- there have been numerous alleged cases involving Islamist terrorists in the US in 2009 and more so far in 2010 (see chapter 8, Table 8.1). The exact nature of terrorism in America over time is difficult to predict, but it certainly does not seem likely to disappear any time soon. The results from this chapter are compared to the results from the UK in chapter 11.



## **Chapter 9 Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> “The Muslim Population in the United States” *American Muslim Council*, undated <[http://www.islam101.com/history/population2\\_usa.html](http://www.islam101.com/history/population2_usa.html)> at June 15, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Meryhew & Allie Shah, “Somali President, in Minn., Meets with Grieving Families” *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, October 4, 2009 <<http://www.startribune.com/local/63489787.html?elr=KArksi8cyaiUjc8LDyiUiD3aPc: Yyc:aUU>> at June 15, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study* (2006) The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (2008) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 111.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 48-50.

<sup>7</sup> AIVD, *Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current Trends in the Islamist Terrorist Threat* (2006) The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service; Michael Taarnby-Jensen, *Jihad in Denmark: An Overview and Analysis of Jihadi Activity in Denmark 1990-2006* (2006) Danish Institute for International Studies: Copenhagen; Vesterkopi.

<sup>8</sup> Sam Mullins, “Islamist Terrorism and Australia: An Empirical Examination of the Home-Grown Threat” *Forthcoming*.

<sup>9</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 40.

<sup>10</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 48-50, 58.

<sup>11</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Diego Gambetta & Steffen Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad* (2007) Oxford: University of Oxford <[www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/users/gambetta/engineers%20of%20jihad.pdf](http://www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/users/gambetta/engineers%20of%20jihad.pdf)> at June 16, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 41.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 42; Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 78-80.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid; Ibid, 82.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 42; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 63, 82.

<sup>17</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 63.

<sup>18</sup> Josh Kron and Mohammed Ibrahim, “Islamists Claim Attack in Uganda” *New York Times*, July 12, 2010 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/world/africa/13uganda.html?\\_r=1&emc=tnt&tntemail=y](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/world/africa/13uganda.html?_r=1&emc=tnt&tntemail=y)> at July 12, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> As a side note, where attacks are being planned even physical surveillance tends to take place before any weapons are acquired and it is difficult to infer the seriousness of individuals or the imminence of an attack based on such behaviour.

<sup>20</sup> Olivier Roy, *Al Qaeda in the West as a Youth Movement: The Power of a Narrative* (2008) Microcon Policy Working Paper 2, Brighton: Microcon.



## **Chapter 10**

### **Case Study Analysis Part 2: Islamist Terrorism in the United Kingdom: 2001-2008**

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### **Overview**

The sample of UK cases –people from or living in the United Kingdom involved in Islamist terrorism from 2001-2008- is analysed, focussing on the ten variables of interest identified in chapter 2. This covers geographic distribution, demographic profiles, offence ranges, radicalisation, group characteristics, operational activity, international dimensions and associations, the role of the Internet, stated motivations, and outcomes. The results are further discussed in chapter 11 in comparison to results from the US.



## **10. Case Study Analysis Part 2: Islamist Terrorism in the United Kingdom: 2001-2008**

### **10.1 Statistical Summary**

51 cases (including 112 individuals, 2 of whom offended twice) were included in the sample of Islamist militants who were residents of the United Kingdom active between 2001 and 2008. Appendix B (Part 1) lists these individuals in chronological order according to the date range of offending behaviour. Appendix B (Part 2) gives a summary of each case in the same chronological order. Finally, Appendix B (Part 3) lists 55 cases (112 individuals) excluded from the sample and a brief description of the reason for exclusion. Here, the statistical analysis of the included cases is presented.

Table 10.1 below shows the number of Islamist terrorism cases -also shown as numbers of individuals- involving UK residents from 2001 to 2008 (pre-2001 cases are those which began any time before then and also continued after 2001). The top two rows show when cases/individuals began offending, while the bottom two rows show when cases/individuals ceased offending (usually through being arrested). Note that the total number of cases ended within this time-frame is less than the overall sample total because 1 case ended after 2008. Figure 10.1 shows these numbers in graph form, minus the pre-2001 cases since they span a six-year period, from 1995-2000, and their inclusion is potentially visually misleading (since only those which continued after 2001 are included in the sample).

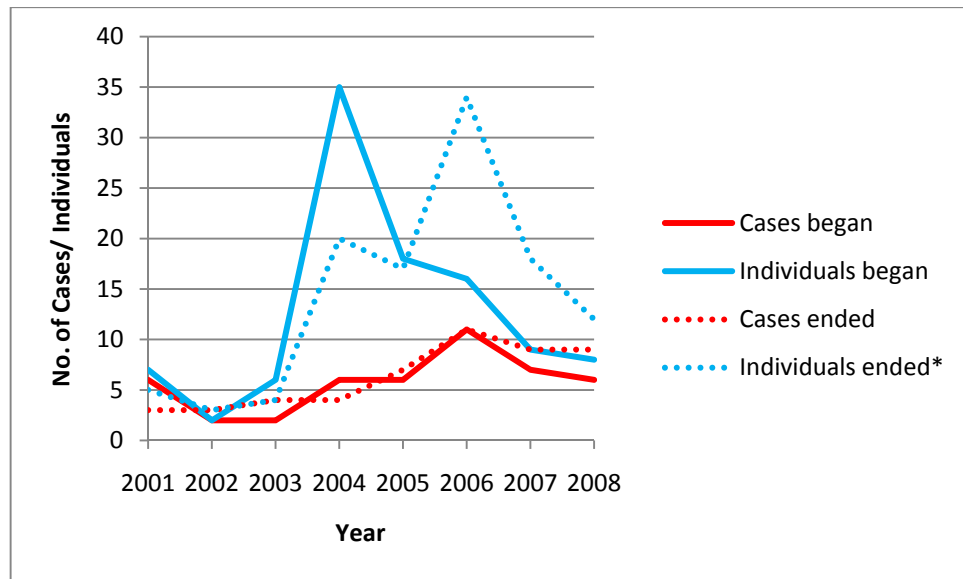
**Table 10.1.** Number of Islamist terrorism cases/individuals involving UK residents/citizens from 2001 to 2008.

Year	Pre-2001	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Cases began	5	6	2	2	6	6	11	7	6	<b>51</b>
Individuals began	13	7	2	6	35	18	16	9	8	<b>114</b>
Cases ended		3	3	4	4	7	11	9	9	50
Individuals ended*		5	3	4	20	17	34	18	12	113

\*1 case (Saeed Ghafoor) ended in 2009.



**Figure 10.1.** Number of Islamist terrorism cases/individuals involving UK residents/citizens from 2001 to 2008.



Based on the present sample, there have been 51 cases of Islamist terrorism involving 112 individuals who were resident in the UK. The average number of cases began each year is 5.75 (12.38 individuals) and the average number ended each year is 6.25. Among those offending in the period 2001-2008, 5 cases (13 individuals) began prior to 2001, constituting 9.8% of the total sample of cases (11.6% of all individuals).

The slight dip in cases beginning in 2002 and 2003 can be interpreted as a response to the heightened ‘war on terror’ after 9/11, perhaps making offenders more cautious. The increase in 2004 is demonstrative of a renewed desire and resolve on the part of Islamist extremists to take action after the 2003 invasion of Iraq (allowing time for individuals to observe the Iraqi situation, make the decision to do something about it and then come to the attention of security services). Since then the number of cases beginning each year has risen until 2006 and stayed relatively high until 2008, which is reflective of a sustained wave of militancy over a five year period. Of course cases that we do not yet know about may have begun in 2007 and 2008, which would change the shape of the graph but on the face of it (looking at alleged cases in 2009 and 2010 so far) it appears that the post-Iraq wave of UK Islamist terrorism may have ‘burnt itself out’ somewhat. The extent to which it is revitalised again in months/years to come remains to be seen.



As with the US, the UK sample will be examined according to the pre- vs. post-Iraq divide, defined as pre-2004 (inclusive of 2003) and 2004 to 2008. This allows time for individuals to become radicalised or spurred on by the invasion of Iraq and assumes that the majority of individuals who began offending in 2003 had radicalised before then. Any instances where this is not the case will be drawn out in the discussion below.

In the UK sample, 10 cases (15 individuals) began from 2001-2003 inclusive, compared to 36 cases (84 individuals) from 2004-2008. More than 3 times the number of cases, and more than 5 times the number of individuals, began offending in relation to Islamist terrorism within the latter 5 year period as compared to the former 3 year period. Even if *all* pre-2004 cases in the sample are included for comparison (15 cases, 28 individuals spanning 9 years from 1995-2003) the number is still more than 2 times higher (or 3 times for the number of individuals) in the post-Iraq period. Although this excludes cases which began and ended before September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 these figures offer strong support for the hypothesis that the 2003 invasion of Iraq has inspired more individuals living in, or from the West, to join the global Sunni jihad.

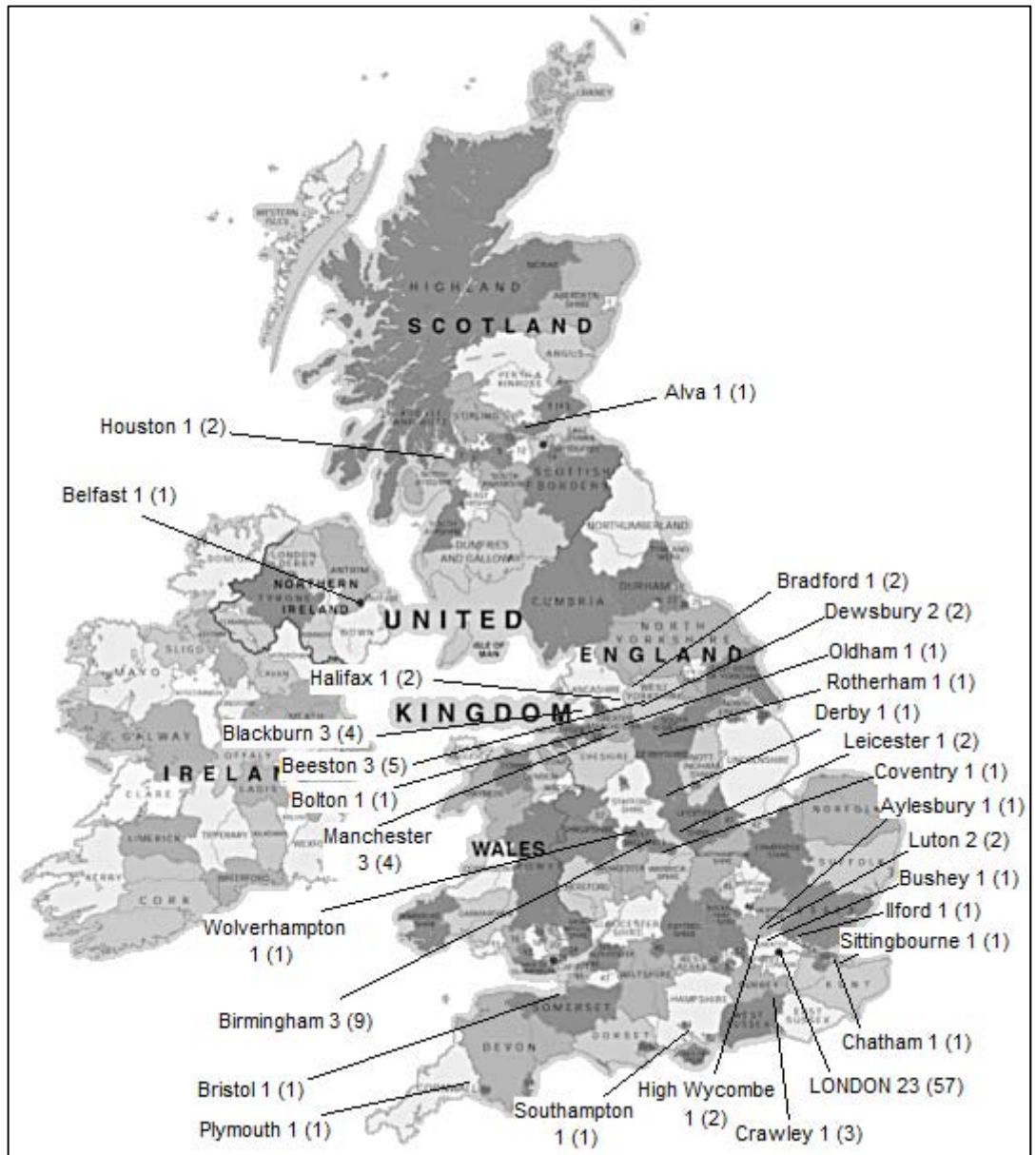
It should be borne in mind that when contrasting the pre- vs. post-Iraq generations in this chapter, the UK sample is far more heavily weighted by the latter generation (28 vs. 84 individuals) meaning that numerical comparisons require a little more care in interpretation. Each of the variables of interest identified in chapter 2 will now be dealt with.



## 10.2 Analysis of Variables

### 10.2.1 Geographical Distribution

**Figure 10.2.** Geographical distribution of UK Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.



Original map downloaded from:

[http://media.photobucket.com/image/map%20of%20UK/pauljorg31/UK%20Maps/uk\\_counties\\_map.png](http://media.photobucket.com/image/map%20of%20UK/pauljorg31/UK%20Maps/uk_counties_map.png)

Figure 10.2 shows the geographic distribution of Islamist terrorism cases in the UK from 2001-2008, with numbers of individuals involved in brackets. Because there is a much smaller area of distribution compared to the US it has been possible to pinpoint cases according to cities or towns rather than the less precise system of using counties or states. As in the US, because not all individuals within groups live in the same town,



the number of cases is inflated from 51 to 61, while the number of individuals remains accurate at 112.

Several features are apparent from the above map of Islamist terrorist activity in the United Kingdom. First, London has played host to the vast majority of Islamist terrorists in the UK: 23 cases involving 57 individuals were primarily from or based there, which expressed as a percentage represents 38% of all cases taking into account within-group distribution (i.e. inflating the number of cases in absolute terms). But since the activities of London-based groups with some members living elsewhere were indeed mostly focussed within London, it is more accurate to use the actual case total of 51 in these calculations, which means that 45% of all cases were situated in the capital. In terms of individuals 51% of the entire sample was based there. 22 individuals (39%) were based in East London; 19 (33%) were based in the North; 9 (16%) were located in the South; and 5 (9%) lived in the West.

Second, Islamist terrorism in the UK can be divided into 3 main geographic ‘hotspots’, namely London and surrounding areas, the West Midlands (including Birmingham), and the North West (including Manchester and Leeds). There have only been 5 relatively isolated cases that have occurred anywhere much outside of these areas.

**Table 10.2.** UK hotspots of Islamist terrorism ranked according to number of cases/individuals hosted.

Area	Cases	Individuals
London	33	70
North West	16	22
West Midlands	7	14
Scotland	2	3
South West	2	2
Northern Ireland	1	1
TOTAL	61	112

Table 10.2 illustrates the division of cases and individuals according to the 3 main hotspots, plus outlying cases. London and surrounding areas account for 33 of 61 (54%) of cases or 70 of 112 (63%) of individuals; the North West area accounts for 16 (26%) of cases or 22 (20%) of individuals; the West Midlands area accounts for 7 (11%) of cases or 14 (13%) of individuals; and the remainder is widely distributed



across Scotland, the South West and Northern Ireland, representing a combined total of 8% of cases and 5 % of individuals lying outside of the hotspots.

These findings support the *social transmission* hypothesis, which states that areas where Islamist terrorists originally settled and became active (such as London, Manchester and Birmingham) are more likely to show evidence of higher levels of activity over time. It is also reflective of the general significance of certain major cities in the UK, and of the symbolic importance of London for Islamist militants in particular (hence individuals based in the North West and even Scotland have been willing to travel to the capital to carry out attacks).

Turning to the geographic distribution of the UK Muslim population, there is a strong correspondence in terms of hotspots of Islamist terrorist activity. According to a 2004 report from the Office for National Statistics using data collected in the 2001 national Census,<sup>i</sup> “Around two fifths of Muslims (38 per cent) lived in London. After London, the regions with the next biggest share of the Muslim population were the West Midlands (14 per cent), the North West (13 per cent), and Yorkshire and the Humber (12 per cent). Even within these regions, Muslims were highly concentrated spatially. Muslims made up 8 per cent of London’s population overall but 36 per cent of the Tower Hamlets and 24 per cent of the Newham populations [both in East London]”.<sup>1</sup>

Of course these figures were recorded nearly 10 years ago but the main findings are unlikely to have drastically changed. Given that the ‘North West’ area as defined in the current report also includes the ‘Yorkshire and Humber’ area described by the Office for National Statistics, the UK Islamist terrorism hotspots correspond exactly in terms of rank order of Muslim population distribution and are similar in terms of proportions (albeit with a heavier percentage of terrorists based in London). And within the capital, East London represents both a high concentration of Muslims and a hotspot for Islamist terrorism. These figures should not be surprising since Islamists tend to live within Muslim communities but it must also be emphasised that this is a case of *correlation* and should not be interpreted as causal in and of itself.

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<sup>i</sup> The next Census is due in 2011.



## 10.2.2 Demographic Profiles

### *Gender, Nationality and Age*

**Table 10.3.** Gender; nationality; time in the UK; legal status and average age at the start and end of offending in UK Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.

% Male	1st nationality British	2nd nationality British*	Av. years in US (Non-British 1st nationality)	Entered UK illegally	Av. age at start of offence	Av. age at end of offence
110/112 (98% Total)	70/110 (64% n)	16/112 (14% Total)	11.6 yrs (n=35)	9/107 (8% n)	26.1 (n=112)	27.5 (n=112)

\*Includes legal permanent residents.

Table 10.3 confirms the fact that the vast majority of people actively involved in Islamist terrorism are males. The 2 females included in the sample offended in 2007 and 2008 and both were relatively minor offenders (Shella Roma –case #44- had written and distributed a leaflet encouraging people to take part in jihad, and Houria Chentouf –case #49- simply possessed a large amount of jihadist material). Other females also played minor supportive roles in the case of the 21/7 attempted bombers (case #18) but they were excluded from the sample as their actual contribution was ad-hoc and after-the-fact.

Turning to nationality, 63% of the total sample was confirmed as being British by birth with a further 14% having this as their second nationality, or having been granted indefinite leave to remain in the country. For those who did not have British as their first nationality, the average length of time in the UK was 11.6 years. Among these individuals the minimum time in the UK was less than a year (for Kafeel Ahmed –case #41- who nevertheless had previously spent 3 years in Belfast and a year in Cambridge- and Chentouf, who was questioned as she entered the country from the Netherlands). Several individuals had lived in the country in excess of 20 or even 40 years prior to offending.

Twenty-four nationalities other than British were confirmed within the sample.<sup>ii</sup> Among non-British first nationalities the top countries were Pakistani and Algerian

<sup>ii</sup> These were: Pakistani; Algerian; Somali; Jamaican; Indian; Moroccan; Ugandan; Ethiopian; Jordanian; Egyptian; Iraqi; Albanian; Bangladeshi; Eritrean; Gambian; Ghanaian; Syrian; Tanzanian; Trinidadian; Dutch; Iranian; Malawian; West-Indian; and Turkish-Cypriot (plus one individual of unconfirmed Sudanese heritage).



(each with 5 individuals or 5% of the overall known total- i.e. 110), Somali (4 individuals, or 4%), then Jamaican, Indian, Moroccan and Ugandan (each with 3 individuals, or 3%). These figures are not particularly revealing, however second nationalities or ethnic heritage is rather more significant. 27 of 88 individuals for whom there were data were of Pakistani heritage (plus another 26 individuals were of unconfirmed South Asian heritage, judged on the basis of names). Therefore between 27 and 53 of 112 individuals (24 to 47%) in the sample are of Pakistani/ South Asian heritage, plus another 5 individuals who are Pakistanis by first nationality (which comes to 52% of the total). Note that this is probably more accurate than expressing these numbers in terms of the percentage of people for whom there were data (‘% n’) because many of those recorded as ‘unknown’ second nationality appear not to have had one. In any case, the very large Pakistani contingent is extremely important for understanding the cultural ties, and often established links to the ‘epicentre’ of global jihad, of Britain’s Islamist terrorists. No other non-British nationalities are represented in any more than a handful of cases.

Irrespective of origins, the vast majority of the sample was in the UK legally. Only 9 out of 107 individuals (8%) for whom there were data had entered via illicit means.<sup>iii</sup> The majority were either born and raised in the UK or entered using British passports while the rest travelled on student visas or were asylum seekers.

Table 10.2 furthermore shows that the average age at the time of offending onset was 26.1 and the average age when offending ended (mostly via arrest, or else by death) was 27.5 years old. 90 of 112 (80%) were aged 30 or under when they began offending; the youngest was 15 and the eldest was 65. By comparison Sageman reported an average age for those ‘joining the jihad’ of 25.7 years based on a global sample of 172 individuals, and Bakker reported an average age of 27.3 at the time of arrest based on a European sample of more than 200.<sup>2</sup> The British average ‘joining’ age of 26.1 is slightly higher than in Sageman’s study, although the average age of 27.5 at the time of arrest is just below that reported by Bakker.

Finally, regarding Sageman’s contention<sup>3</sup> that the average age of jihadis has decreased since the invasion of Iraq, it makes sense to examine the sample (as we did for the US) according to the pre- vs. post-Iraq time-periods (i.e. pre-2004 and 2004

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<sup>iii</sup> Brahim Benmerzouga & Baghdad Meziane (case #6); Abbas Boutrab (case #12); Kamel Bourgass (case #13); Hussain Osman & Manfo Kwaku Asiedu (case #18); Omar Altimimi (case #31); Pa Modou Jobe (case #36); and Krenar Lusha (case #47).



onwards, allowing for ‘incubation’ time for individuals to respond to the 2003 invasion). The average age in the pre-Iraq period in the UK sample at the time that offending began was 27.3 and in the post-Iraq period was 25.7. Consistent with the direct of Sageman’s posited shift (though not the ‘dramatic’ scale) the data show a decrease in average age of 1.6 years. As noted in the previous chapter though, it should also be remembered that processes of radicalisation precede the onset of actual offence behaviour and most individuals appear to have subscribed to Islamist ideology for at least a year prior to taking illegal action.

### *Education*

**Table 10.4.** Level of education completed in UK Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.

Education completed	Unknown	Did not finish high school	High school/ basic college	University degree
Number	58	3	32	19
% n (54)	N/A	6%	55%	33%
% TOT	52%	3%	29%	17%

Table 10.4 shows levels of education completed in the sample (this means that someone who is at university but has not finished their course is classed as only so far having completed high school education). Among those for whom there were data, only 3 of 54 (6%) had not finished high-school, although for one of those –Hamaad Munshi, case #25- he was still at school. For a further 32 individuals there was evidence that they had completed high-school or some form of basic college qualification roughly equivalent to ‘A-levels’ (certificates awarded at age 18). Within the high-school category it is also possible to specify that 10 of those 32 had only completed basic high school education, i.e. leaving at 16, and 9 had completed A-levels or equivalent either at high school or college (and for the remainder exact attainment is unknown). Lastly, 19 individuals (33% of those for whom there were data) had completed a degree or higher.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the principle of *positive-reporting* –the tendency to report the presence of ‘interesting’ variables but not their absence- means that in all likelihood the absolute numbers of individuals with completed degrees and those who did not finish high school are reasonably accurate for the sample as a whole. This is because these are interesting from a reporting perspective and are therefore more



likely to be reported. Conversely, at least a basic high school education is generally taken for granted in the UK –thus it is not reported- and therefore many of the ‘unknowns’ are likely to have achieved at least this.

Nevertheless, this cannot be used to accurately assess the education levels of the current sample- it simply tells us that there is bias within the sample and gives a general likelihood of where most of that bias can be found. As it stands, the figures here indicate lower levels of basic educational achievement than those found by Bakker, using a sample of European jihadis involved in plotting attacks (which would of course be subject to the same biases to varying degrees). He reported that 42 individuals representing 88% of those for whom there were data had completed secondary (high school) education,<sup>4</sup> compared to 32 individuals (55%) here. This *could* be a reflection of lower attainment, but in all likelihood a large proportion of the ‘unknown’ group would have completed this, which means 55% is very likely to be an underestimation. Moreover, there is not a vast difference in terms of the absolute numbers for whom data was available. In terms of tertiary education (something which does tend to be reported) Bakker reported that 15/41 (31%) had completed a degree, compared to 33% here, although in both cases it is probably more accurate to express these figures as percentages of the total rather than %n.

Finally, there is Sageman’s hypothesis that educational attainment among Islamist terrorist populations has dropped in the post-Iraq generation.<sup>5</sup> The data here shows that all 3 of those individuals who did not finish high school began offending in 2004 or later, possibly hinting at such a decline. However, 19 of 33 (58%) for whom there were data in the post-Iraq era had completed high school and 11 (33%) had completed a university education. These figures compare respectively to 12 (60%) and 8 (40%) of 20 individuals who began offending in the pre-Iraq time-period. The available information thus indicates only a marginal decline in levels of educational attainment of UK Islamist terrorists over time (although the low number of people with university education in absolute terms, combined with the known tendency to report this variable when present may be taken as a very tentative suggestion that the difference is bigger than the data here permits us to believe).

Overall it must be concluded that Islamist terrorists from, or living in the UK exhibit neither particularly low, nor particularly high levels of education- most appear to have at least a basic level, a significant minority hold degrees, and very few seem to



have dropped out of education before the age of 16. This seems roughly comparable to the general population.

### *Occupation*

**Table 10.5.** Occupation of individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases, 2001-2008.

Occupation	High school	Prisoner	Un-employed	Student	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled
Number	2	2	20	11	22	23	5
% n (85)	2%	2%	24%	13%	26%	27%	6%
% TOT	2%	2%	18%	10%	20%	21%	4%

Table 10.5 shows that there was information available on occupation at the time of involvement for all but 27 individuals. Although a number of people ended their employment or studies as they became more involved in terrorism, most seemingly did not and very few could be considered ‘full-time’ terrorists somehow able to support themselves through these activities. This applied to 4 individuals (Andrew Rowe –case #2; Dhiren Barot –case #5; Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh –case #9; and Rangzieb Ahmed –case #26).

A rather large proportion (between about a fifth and a quarter) of the UK sample was unemployed immediately prior to offending. In some cases (e.g. Abdullah El-Faisal –case #8- and Aabid Khan –case #25) this was because their jihadi activities took up most of their time (although they had previously been employed); others were in receipt of benefits (e.g. Parviz Khan –case #21); at least 1 (Omar Altimimi –case #31) appeared to be supporting himself by criminal means; but overall there is no general answer that explains the situation of these individuals (e.g. 4 of them, Nadeem Tarmohamed –case #5- Abdulla Ahmed Ali –case #27- Umrans Javed –case #30- and Hassan Tabbakh –case #42- held university qualifications, therefore it is not simply a matter of low educational achievements).

There was an almost equal amount of people in unskilled (26%) and semi-skilled (27%) occupations. The former included such jobs as market traders, mobile-phone salesmen and security guards; the latter included taxi-drivers, decorators and shop managers plus 3 individuals (Abu Qatada –case #1- Abu Hamza –case #3- and Abdullah El-Faisal –case #8) who worked as imams but were in receipt of state benefits.



Only 10 individuals (11%) were students at the time that they began offending and just 5 (6%) were in skilled occupations, ranging from a plumber (Kazi Nurur Rahman –case #24) to a doctor (Bilal Abdulla –case #41). There is little or no indication about the occupations of the 27 individuals for whom data was lacking.

Comparing these figures to Bakker’s European study,<sup>6</sup> the Islamist terrorists in or from the UK are more often unemployed (23% vs. 15%); fewer were in unskilled occupations (24% vs. 33%); more were in semi-skilled jobs (26% vs. 18%) and less were in skilled occupations (6% vs. 12%). Overall this seems to show that the current UK sample was slightly less well-off in terms of their professions than in Bakker’s sample despite roughly comparable levels of educational attainment.

With respect to Sageman’s argument that more recent generations of jihadis are more likely to be from lower social classes and to hold less skilled occupations, the data again shows tentative support (see Table 10.6 below). Based on the percentages of individuals for whom there were data in each category (25 in the pre-Iraq period and 60 in the post-Iraq period) the more recent generation of jihadis in the UK are more often unemployed, less often students, more often in unskilled and less often in semi-skilled jobs, although all 5 individuals in skilled occupations began offending in 2004 or later.

**Table 10.6.** Occupation of individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) divided by whether they began before or after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Percentages refer to rows.

Occupation	High school	Prisoner	Un-employed	Student	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled
Number (n=85)	2	2	20	11	22	23	5
Pre 2004	0	0	3 (12%)	6 (24%)	6 (24%)	10 (40%)	0
2004-2008	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	17 (28%)	5 (8%)	16 (27%)	13 (22%)	5 (8%)

Two final points are worth noting. First, of the few full-time terrorists in the sample, most began offending prior to 2004 and this may be indicative of greater difficulties in making contact with and becoming part of an overseas terrorist organisation in the post-9/11 environment. If we further consider the fact that Rangzieb Ahmed (the post-2004 offender) seemingly actually began his jihadi career during the 1990’s (see case #26) then this conclusion is reinforced.



Second, although relatively fewer individuals were students immediately prior to offending they appear to be studying the same types of subjects. 6 out of 8 individuals for whom there were data were studying engineering or some form of science, illustrating that these topics, traditionally popular among jihadis worldwide,<sup>7</sup> are also favoured in the UK. Moreover, 4 of these individuals began offending after 2003 showing that this trend is continuing.

### ***Faith***

**Table 10.7.** Religious faith of individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Faith	Born Muslim	Convert	Religious offshoot	Non-Muslim
Number	81	16	0	2
% n (99)	82%	16%	0	2%

Table 10.7 shows the religious background of UK Islamist terrorists. The vast majority appear to be ‘born’ Muslims by virtue of their ethnicity, although this does not mean that they have practised Islam all of their lives. Although it is not possible to give precise figures due to lacking data, it does not seem uncommon for individuals to have gone through a process of ‘reversion’ to their inherited faith prior to involvement with Islamists.

Many of those who were classed as ‘unknown’ also appeared to be ‘born Muslims’ and almost all of the remainder were converts, constituting 16% of those for whom there were data- or probably more accurately, 14% of the total sample (5 of whom began offending before the invasion of Iraq and 11 who began after). There were no religious offshoots or examples of people combining Islamism with any other religion but 2 individuals were not Muslims. One is Hemant Lakhani (case #10) a Hindu who got involved in an arms deal simply for profit, i.e. a criminal opportunist; the other is Malcolm Hodges (case #29) a seemingly ‘troubled’ individual who attempted to encourage others to commit acts of terrorism in furtherance of a personal grudge (included in the sample because he is still relevant for understanding how Islamist terrorism is being used in British society).



*Marital Status*

**Table 10.8.** Marital status of individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Marital Status	Unknown	Single	In relationship	With children only
Number	39	19	3	3
% TOT	35%	17%	3%	3%
Marital Status	Single parent	Engaged	Married	Separated
Number	1	2	44	1
% TOT	1%	2%	39%	1%

Table 10.8 shows the rather diverse marital statuses in the sample. Percentages are given as a function of the entire sample rather than %n since most of those whose status was ‘unknown’ in fact appeared to be single or possibly in a non-married relationship (this is again a product of positive-reporting).

Forty-four individuals were married at the time that they began offending (just under 40% of the overall sample) and among these, 33 had children, 2 were arranged marriages and another 2 were on their second marriage. 2 more people were engaged; 1 was separated; 1 person was a single parent; 3 were reported to have children but it was not mentioned if they were married or with a partner; 3 were in a non-married relationship; 19 people were single and for 39 individuals there was no information (but as already mentioned most of these are likely to be unmarried).

Sageman and Bakker reported that 73% and 59% of their respective samples were married,<sup>8</sup> appearing to be much more than was found here. However, they expressed their percentages as %n and if this is done here, the married figure appears to be 60%, almost exactly the same as reported by Bakker. Regardless of the precise figures it is clear that Islamist terrorists living in, or from the UK quite often have wives and children and they are not by and large lone, socially isolated individuals. Looking at relative percentages for the ‘before’ and ‘after’ Iraq generations, the proportion confirmed as married has declined (from 13 of 28 total (46%) to 31 of 84 total (37%)) but still represents a significant amount of the sample, showing that this trend remains quite strong.



### ***Criminal Record***

**Table 10.9.** Criminal records of individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Criminal record	Visa violation	Shop-lifting/ theft	Deception	Criminal damage	Threatening behaviour
Number	1	4	1	1	1
% n (18)	6%	22%	6%	6%	6%
Criminal record	Drug related	Indecent assault	Carrying a weapon	Public order offence	Violent
Number	4	1	2	3	9
% n (18)	22%	6%	11%	17%	50%

Information on previous criminal records was scarce. 3 individuals had no prior record, 1 person (Pa Modou Jobe –case #36) had been deported from the US for reasons not specified, and information was not available for 90 others, leaving 18 people (16% of the overall sample) who did have prior records. This is considerably less than in Sageman and Bakker’s samples, in which about 25% of each had previous convictions.<sup>9</sup>

Table 10.9 shows that for those 18 individuals (some of whom had multiple convictions, hence the numbers add to more than 18) quite a wide range of offences had been committed. Having said that, 9 individuals (50% of those with a record) had a conviction –or in 1 case a caution- for a violent offence, mostly assault or robbery with 1 instance of attempted murder (Ali Beheshti- case #48). A further 3 individuals had convictions –again 1 caution- for public order offences including affray; and 1 (failed 21/7 bomber Mukhtar Said Ibrahim- case #18) had a conviction for indecent assault. These were all separate individuals so altogether 13 people, or 72% of those with convictions, had committed acts of violence. Again though, the principle of positive-reporting means that although some individuals for whom there was no data will have had criminal records, most probably did not. Expressed as a percentage of the entire sample, 13 individuals with violent criminal records equates to 12%. While this undoubtedly underestimates previous violent offences within the sample it is nevertheless a reasonable indication that Islamist terrorists living in or from the UK are generally not long-term violent criminals prior to their involvement in terrorism.

The results here raise a further point in that individuals with previous records often offended alongside those without records. In other words, the criminal histories of terrorists within groups is mixed and there is no evidence of exclusively all-criminal, or deliberately all ‘clean’, terrorist groups within the sample. By social circumstance or coincidence criminals can sometimes be found in the same groups, for example, 3 of the



4 7/7 bombers (case #17) had been cautioned for different offences and 2 of the more prolific previous offenders in the sample (Mohammed Hamid and Mohammed al-Figari- case #20) were part of the same group, but such occurrences are not widespread and very different individuals can be found working together (most notably the shoe-bombers Richard Reid and Saajid Badat- case #4).

Finally, it must be noted that the focus here has been upon previous unrelated offending behaviour. A number of individuals were simultaneously prosecuted for related criminal behaviour common to terrorist activity: thus Brahim Benmerzouga and Baghdad Meziane (case #6) were prosecuted for conspiracy to defraud in addition to terror-financing; Hemant Lakhani (case #10) was prosecuted for money laundering and arms dealing in addition to conspiring to provide material support to terrorists; and Abbas Boutrab (case #12) was prosecuted for possession of false passports as well as materials useful for terrorism.

There are also 2 individuals in the sample who are repeat-offenders for terrorism-related offences. These are Abdul Rehman Saleem and Abdul Muhid who offended together with others in 2004 (case #16) and 2006 (case #30). Their offences occurred under similar circumstances –both protest-marches organised by former members of al-Muhajiroun- and they were prosecuted for things that they said, resulting in convictions between them for soliciting funds for terrorism, inciting terrorism overseas, stirring up racial hatred and soliciting murder. These prosecutions were made possible by changes in the law and a harder stance on Islamist militancy in the UK after 7/7. In fact they were prosecuted for the 2006 offences first and then prosecuted in retrospect for the 2004 offences. Their case therefore does not tell us anything about deterrence as a result of being prosecuted already, however it does indicate a degree of ‘specialism’ in 2 individuals in that the type of offences they engaged in were very similar and were at the lower end of the spectrum of severity of terrorist behaviour. Little more can be extrapolated from this except to say that lesser offences are more likely to go undetected and therefore to have been going on for some time.



### ***Mental Health***

**Table 10.10.** Mental health of individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Mental Health	Unknown	No issues	Low IQ	Questioned at trial	History of illness
Number	101	0	1	4	6
% TOT	90%	0	1%	4%	5%

Mental health problems are not generally thought to play a role in terrorist behaviour (see chapter 4). Table 10.10 shows that information was not available for 101 people in the sample, and in accordance with positive-reporting most of these individuals are unlikely to have been suffering from mental disorder.

Looking at the rest of the table, nobody in the sample was explicitly stated to have no mental health problems. Two individuals had low IQ (1 was Junade Feroze – case #5- and the other was Nicky Reilly –case #50- who is counted under the ‘history of illness’ category due to having multiple problems<sup>iv</sup>). Four individuals had their mental health called into question at trial, although the presence of an actual disorder was not publicly confirmed (these were Malcolm Hodges –case #29- said to be suffering from a serious mental disorder; Hassan Tabbakh –case #42- said to be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of being tortured in Syria; and both females in the sample: Shella Roma –case #44- whose defence lawyer stated that she was in poor mental health at the time of offending; and Houria Chentouf –case #49- who was said to be suffering from an unspecified mental illness brought on by the death of a family member).

Last, there were 6 individuals reported to have had more long-standing prior mental health problems or at least some indication thereof. These were: Nadeem Tarmohamed (case #5) who had suffered from depression; Feroz Abbasi (case #7) who had previously attempted suicide and then tried again whilst held in Guantanamo; Mohammed Shamin Uddin (case #27) who suffered impaired cognitive functioning resulting from an assault; Kevin Gardner (case #34) who was a paranoid schizophrenic; Andrew ‘Isa’ Ibrahim (case #45) who had a history of drug addiction; and Nicky Reilly (case #50) who suffered from Asperger’s Syndrome and depression.

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<sup>iv</sup> This is also why the figures add to 113 rather than 112.



Overall the number of individuals experiencing mental health issues in the UK sample is still very small, but is actually higher than expected. The extent to which any particular individual’s disorder contributed to their involvement in Islamist terrorism can only be judged by mental health professionals with an in-depth understanding of each specific case. However, with the major exception of Kevin Gardner who was committed to a secure hospital for a period of indefinite detention, mental health issues were not deemed to be major explanatory or mitigating factors in any of these cases.

### **10.2.3 Offence Date Range**

**Table 10.11.** Offence date ranges in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Min	Max	Average	Mode
Offence date range	<1 week	8 years	1.44 years	1 year or less

Offence ranges were recorded by the year rather than the exact dates since these are extremely difficult to accurately assess. The minimum date range was, however, less than a week, which applies to protesters prosecuted for soliciting support and inciting acts of terrorism on single days in 2004 and 2006 (cases #16 & #30). The maximum date range recorded was 8 years, which was for Andrew Rowe (case #2- arrested in 2003 but active since at least 1995 when he fought in Bosnia). But because offence ranges recorded here do not capture previous radicalisation, unconfirmed prior offending or general involvement in Islamist circles, time frames are undoubtedly underestimated in a number of cases (a notable example is Abdullah El Faisal -case #8- recorded as offending for 1 year, although he was delivering similar speeches to the ones he was prosecuted for in 2002 since the mid-1990’s).

The average offence date range was 1.44 years and the most frequently occurring was 1 year or less, which applies to 78% of all cases in the UK sample. Dividing cases according to whether individuals began offending in the pre- vs. post-Iraq period (up to and including 2003, and 2004 to 2008) the average offence range in the earlier time-frame is 2.9 years, compared to 0.8 years in the latter period. This seems to indicate that the post-Iraq generation of Islamist terrorists living in or from the UK has a shorter offending ‘life-expectancy’ before they are caught, which makes sense



given that counter-terrorism surveillance has increased dramatically since 9/11. It could also be an indication that individuals are progressing faster in terms of moving through the process of radicalisation to ‘jihadisation’, i.e. the point where they choose to act on their beliefs; however this remains a tentative speculation since reliable information about individual radicalisation is generally lacking, as highlighted below.

#### **10.2.4 Radicalisation**

**Table 10.12.** Radicalisation classification for individuals involved in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Radicalisation	Individual	Virtual	Social	Mixed	Not radicalised	Unknown
Number	1	7	18	0	2	84
% n (28)	4%	25%	64%	0	7%	N/A
% TOT	1%	6%	16%	0	2%	75%

Overall there is very little information available on the radicalisation of individuals who go on to commit terrorism offences, and where it is available it is always collected in retrospect. These difficulties mean that it has only been possible to classify 27 individuals in the sample with any degree of certainty. Among these, 1 person, schizophrenic prisoner Kevin Gardner (case #34) seemed to radicalise on an individual, but not necessarily ‘virtual’ basis, as he was apparently influenced by watching television and reading books whilst in prison.

Seven individuals were classed as having radicalised on a primarily virtual or online basis. These included: 1. Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15) a Scottish student apparently ‘recruited’ online by Aabid Khan (case #25) and who became obsessed with the jihadi image through material that he downloaded; 2. Aabid Khan himself (who has a later defined *offence* period despite clearly being active before Siddique), widely regarded as a virtual recruiter with established jihadi connections in Pakistan; 3. Hammaad Munshi (case #25), a schoolboy from Dewsbury and another of Khan’s recruits; 4. Nicholas Roddis (case #40) whose fascination with Islamist terrorism material that he downloaded led him to place a hoax bomb on a bus; 5. Andrew ‘Isa’ Ibrahim (case #45) who became increasingly radicalised after looking up information on Palestinian militants on the Internet and who was planning a suicide attack on a Bristol mall; 6. Mohammed Abushamma (case #46) who tried to travel to Afghanistan to join the jihad, having reportedly radicalised through a combination of rebelliousness against



his father and spending time on jihadi websites; and lastly, 7. Nicky Reilly (case #50) who was said to spend many hours on the Internet and who was actively encouraged and assisted online in his attempt to build a suicide bomb (which prematurely detonated in an Exeter restaurant in May 2008) by 2 individuals in Pakistan who met him via his Youtube web-page.

It is noteworthy that the above ‘virtual’ cases primarily began after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Aabid Khan may have begun his online radicalisation as early as the late 1990’s and Mohammed Atif Siddique was charged with an offence period that began in March 2003 (just as Iraq was being invaded) but all of the others began after then at a time when al-Qaeda and affiliated organisations had become more adept at producing their media campaigns and distributing images from Iraq and elsewhere online. It is also striking that all of the ‘virtual’ cases are very young, their ages ranging from 15 to 21 at the time they began to offend. Furthermore all except Khan can be classed as ‘wannabe’ terrorists and both individuals who made genuine attempts at making bombs in order to kill people (Ibrahim and Reilly) had mental health issues. The numbers here are too few to be able to generalise beyond this handful of cases but at face value they suggest that younger and ‘troubled’ individuals are more likely susceptible to purely online radicalisation. With some exceptions, Aabid Khan being a prime example, wannabe terrorists radicalised online may be less likely to establish contact with organised Islamist terrorists overseas. However, as the cases of Ibrahim and Reilly show, some may still develop the willingness and capability to carry out attacks either by themselves or with limited online support.

Of the remaining individuals in the sample, most that could be categorised (18) were classed as having radicalised primarily via face-to-face social interaction.<sup>v</sup> Two individuals (Hemant Lakhani –case #10- and Malcolm Hodges –case #29) were classed as not radicalised as they did not subscribe to Islamist ideology. And lastly, 84 individuals (75% of the sample) could not be reliably classified in terms of how they had radicalised, although face-to-face interaction appears to have played a very significant role in most cases. There was not enough information to reliably class anyone as having radicalised through a combination of online and ‘real’ social

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<sup>v</sup> These were: Abu Qatada (case #1); Andrew Rowe (case #2); Abu Hamza (case #3); Richard Reid & Saajid Badat (case #4); Dhiren Barot (case #5); Feroz Abbasi (case #7); the 7/7 bombers (case #17); the 21/7 attempted bombers (case #18); Abdulla Ahmed Ali (case #27); and Waheed Ali & Mohammed Shakil (case #39).



interaction but this is not to suggest that this does not happen- indeed online jihadist propaganda, videos and instructional material are widely accessed and also play an important role in helping nurture and sustain jihadi mindsets in the UK.

### **10.2.5 Group Characteristics**

#### ***Immediate Group Size***

**Table 10.13.** Immediate group size of UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Immediate Group Size	Min.	Max.	Average	Mode
Overall (51)	1	10	2.3	1 63% TOT
Pre-2004 (15)	1	8	2	1 80% n
2004-2008 (36)	1	10	2.4	1 56% n

Table 10.13 shows that overall, the minimum immediate group size was 1 lone individual; the maximum was 10; the average was 2.3 and the most commonly occurring ‘group’ size was again 1. However, group boundaries are by no means clearly defined and even though many individuals were prosecuted by themselves they nevertheless functioned as part of wider networks (as indeed did most of the larger groups).

Rather than view the 32 ‘lone’ individuals in the sample as isolated actors, it is more useful to group them according to their levels of ‘social embeddedness.’ 7 cases (all post-Iraq) appear to have been acting entirely alone as far as the available data goes (namely Abu Bakr Mansha –case #22; Malcolm Hodges –case #29; Kevin Gardner – case #34; Pa Modou Jobe –case #36; Nicholas Roddis –case #40; Isa Ibrahim –case #45; and Saeed Ghafoor –case #51). 3 more, Hemant Lakhani (case #10), Shella Roma (case #44) and Mohammed Abushamma (case #46) were each partially assisted and accompanied by at least 1 other individual –acquitted in the latter 2 cases- but did not evidently have established militant associations.



Thirteen others<sup>vi</sup> were acting by themselves in terms of their actual offending but were at least in communication with other like-minded individuals (which, psychologically speaking, makes them distinct from those who are not). An example within this group is Kazi Nurur Rahman (case #24) who had been part of militant networks for several years and allegedly trained with Omar Khyam (case #14) and others in Pakistan in 2003 before ultimately being jailed in the UK for attempting to buy machine guns from undercover police officers. Another example is Krenar Lusha (case #47) who downloaded large amounts of jihadi propaganda and instructional material and had stockpiled more than 70 litres of petrol in his home- these things he did alone, but he was also communicating online with fellow jihadis, including Ishaq Kanmi (case #43).

Kamel Bourgass (case #13) was also ostensibly acting alone in his offence behaviour. However, while this is true concerning the murder of DC Stephen Oake, it is highly questionable regarding his attempts to develop ricin even though he was the only person prosecuted.

The final 8 individuals prosecuted by themselves (all but 1 of whom are pre-Iraq offenders) were nevertheless fully integrated into militant Islamist networks and their offences can only be understood in these terms. This applies to Abu Qatada (case #1), Andrew Rowe (case #2), Abu Hamza (case #3), Feroz Abbasi (case #7), Abdullah El-Faisal (case #8), Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (case #9), Mohammed Ajmal Khan (case #11) and Abdul Rahman (case #35).

All in all, 81 individuals (73% of the sample) were part of a group of *at least 2* people and another 9 were definitely part of established terrorist networks. This means that 90 of 112 people (80%) were very much part of groups or networks of Islamist extremists and for them –as well 13 others acting alone but in communication with like-minded contacts- involvement in Islamist terrorism was a social activity to varying degrees (and the statistics on group-size are thus by themselves misleading).

Looking at the pre- vs. post-Iraq divide, there were no genuinely isolated individuals operating in 2003 or earlier- with the exception of Hemant Lakhani (who

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<sup>vi</sup> These were Abbas Boutrab (case #12); Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15); Khalid Khaliq (case #23); Kazi Nurur Rahman (case #24); Abdul Patel (case #28); Omar Altimimi (case #31); Yassin Nassari (case #32); Sohail Qureshi (case #33); Hassan Tabbakh (case #42); Ishaq Kanmi (case #43); Krenar Lusha (case #47); Houria Chentouf (case #49); Nicky Reilly (case #50).



*thought* he was in contact with an Islamist militant) they all had at least some connections to extremist networks. The fact that 80% of this category consisted of ‘groups’ of 1 is not useful for understanding their true circumstances and only 2 individuals (Boutrab and Siddique- cases #12 & #15) were acting alone regarding the offences they were prosecuted for.

Most of the post-Iraq generation of Islamist terror-offenders were also at least in communication with like-minded individuals if not part of larger groups or networks; however 11 of these individuals were nevertheless *acting* alone and 9 others (see above) were removed from such networks altogether. Put another way, only the actions of 1 ‘lone’ individual in the post-2003 period (Abdul Rahman) can be understood as being genuinely integrated with the actions of a network. This means that 20 of 36 cases were acting alone, constituting 56% of cases or 24% of individuals. Most individuals are still part of groups then but the number of lone terrorist actors has increased over time. This can be explained by wider accessibility of Islamist ideology and propaganda and greater difficulty in making contact with more formal networks of Islamist militants, as well as the fact that heightened surveillance and changes in the law means that individuals are more likely to be detected and prosecuted at an earlier stage of involvement and offending.

### ***Leadership***

**Table 10.14.** Leadership in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Unknown	None	Leader only	Spiritual sanctioner only	Both/ mixed	Top-down influence out-with group	Overseas leaders/ sanctioners
13	21	10	3	1	1	5
25% TOT	41% TOT	20% TOT	6% TOT	2% TOT	2% TOT	10% TOT

\*Note that 2 cases with overseas leaders/sanctioners also had within-group leadership, therefore the total count comes to 54 (though percentages are still derived using the true total of 51 cases).

Detailed and reliable information on leadership is generally lacking; however it has nevertheless been possible to at least identify the presence or absence of different types of leaders in the majority of UK cases. Based on the available data, operational leaders who did not necessarily demonstrate any specifically religious authority were



identified in 10 cases<sup>vii</sup> equalling 20% of the total sample. 3 cases (Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza & Abdullah El-Faisal) were classed as *being* spiritual sanctioners (rather than having them). One case (that of Mohammed Hamid et al- case #20) showed evidence of having both a sanctioner and leaders. One other case (Mohammed Atif Siddique- case #15) was classed as coming under significant external top-down influence (from Aabid Khan- case #25). And 5 cases referred to overseas militant authority figures to varying degrees: these were Richard Reid and Saajid Badat (case #4); Dhiren Barot (case #5); Feroz Abbasi (case #7); Rangzieb and Habib Ahmed (case #26); and Abdulla Ahmed Ali et al (case #27). Twenty-one cases (all lone actors) seemingly did not involve any leadership and another 13 could not be reliably classified.

These results indicate that leadership among groups of Islamist terrorists in the UK is quite common but takes varying forms, likely to manifest according to the specific composition of any particular group and the nature of its links to outsiders, especially overseas militants. There is not enough information available to be able to describe the exact nature of leadership in much detail. However it is worth noting that except for figures such as the 3 sanctioners in the sample (Qatada, Hamza and El-Faisal) whom others recognised in a more formal capacity, hierarchical systems on the whole appear to be relatively informally organised and arrived at through mutual consensus and recognised abilities. That said, it is a topic which warrants more in-depth study by itself.

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<sup>vii</sup> These were: Dhiren Barot (case #5); Mohammed Ajmal Khan (case #11) who was a leader of others out-with his immediate case; Omar Khyam (case #14); Mohammed Siddique Khan (case #17); Muktar Said Ibrahim (case #18); Parviz Khan (case #21); Aabid Khan (case #25); Rangzieb Ahmed (case #26); Abdulla Ahmed Ali (case #10); Ali Beheshti (case #48).



## 10.2.6 Operational Activity

### *Ideological Commitment*

**Table 10.15.** Ideological commitment of individuals involved in US Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Criminal opportunists	Troubled/criminal	Troubled individuals (Islamist)	Misc	Social terrorists/wannabes	Hardcore/social	Hardcore	U/K
1	1	1	4	11	28	23	43
1% TOT	1% TOT	1% TOT	4% TOT	10% TOT	25% TOT	21% TOT	38% TOT

As a prelude to examining what exactly people are doing to advance Islamist terrorism in the UK it makes sense to develop an idea of levels of ideological commitment. The classification of ideological commitment presented here is an attempt at distinguishing between more and less committed individuals (which might potentially help inform judgements about the prospect of rehabilitation) as well people who may be involved for non-ideological reasons. ‘Social’/‘wannabe’ terrorists are defined as those individuals driven primarily by such factors as belonging and self-esteem, who most likely only have a limited grasp of Islamist ideology and religion and are more likely to ‘soften’ their political stance in the absence of social support. ‘Hardcore’ terrorists are those individuals who are ideologically informed and committed, have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to the cause and are less likely to relinquish their views.

Although people involved for non-ideological reasons are relatively easily identified, judgements about whether someone is a social/wannabe terrorist as compared to someone who is hardcore are based on very limited data and in the absence of multiple researchers (in order to establish inter-rater reliability) are essentially subjective. The levels of certainty in these judgements are further clouded by the fact that even wannabe terrorists may say the most extreme things or commit the most extreme acts of violence, thereby confusing the meaning which can be inferred from these factors. These limitations must be borne in mind when evaluating this section of the analysis and the reader is encouraged to evaluate for themselves whether the cases cited have been accurately assessed.

One individual was classed as a criminal opportunist- this was Hemant Lakhani (case #10) who was caught in an American sting operation trying to supply missiles to



an undercover officer claiming to be an Islamist militant. Lakhani is a Hindu and was not ideologically motivated- he was simply willing to negotiate a deal aimed at personal profit.

One person was classed as a ‘troubled’/criminal individual. This was Malcolm Hodges (case #29) who had nurtured a lingering grudge for more than a decade after failing an accountant’s exam and in 2006 sent letters to mosques encouraging acts of terrorism against accountancy institutions. He was thus not an Islamist himself but was willing to try and use Islamist terrorists for his own ends.

A third individual, Kevin Gardner (case #34) was classed as ‘troubled’ but also a subscriber to Islamist ideology. This is because Gardner did adhere to a self-taught version of the ideology but was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia.

Three of the 4 individuals classed as ‘miscellaneous’ together formed a group. Ali Beheshti, Abrar Mirza and Abbas Taj (case #48) were included in the sample because they attempted to burn down a publisher’s home for agreeing to release a book deemed offensive to Muslims- they were thus clearly acting to intimidate and coerce an individual for religious/political reasons and Beheshti was also involved with al-Muhajiroun. The exact nature of their ideological convictions is unknown though and they were essentially acting over a single (Islamist-related) issue. The fourth person in this category was Saeed Ghafoor (case #51) who has repeatedly made threats to carry out terrorist attacks in the name of Islam, thus receiving extended jail-time, but without any demonstrable genuine intent or means to do so. He thus defies classification.

Moving on to the bulk of the sample, 11 individuals were classed as purely social/wannabe terrorists.<sup>viii</sup> Examples include Saajid Badat who backed out of his role in the shoe-bombing plot which Richard Reid went on to attempt, and Abbas and Ilyas Iqbal who dubbed themselves the ‘Blackburn Resistance’ and spent their time posturing with knives and fake guns and recording themselves in their local park in mock training exercises.

Most of the rest of the sample (the ‘hardcore/social’ category and the 44 ‘unknowns’) appear to adhere to militant Islamist ideology to varying degrees and they all lie somewhere between ‘wannabe’ and ‘hardcore’. Examples of hardcore/social

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<sup>viii</sup> These were: Saajid Badat (case #4); Feroz Abbasi (case #7); Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15); Manfo Kwaku Asiedu (case #18); Abdul Patel (case #28); Abbas & Ilyas Iqbal (case #38); Nicholas Roddis (case #40); Andrew Ibrahim (case #45); Mohammed Abushamma (case #46); Nicky Reilly (case #50).



terrorists -those who do seem strongly committed but for whom data was insufficient to make more confident *individual* judgements- include: Omar Khyam's affiliates in the Operation Crevice plot (case #14); Abdul Rehman Saleem and other fellow al-Muhajiroun activists (cases #16 & #30); Atilla Ahmet (case #20) who helped organise domestic training camps; and Sohail Qureshi (case #33) who was preparing to train and fight in Afghanistan and had apparently done so before. As already noted the 'unknowns' also appear to lie somewhere on this continuum but there is not enough data to give any indication about which end of the spectrum they might occupy. Examples of this are Tariq al-Daour and Waseem Mughal (case #19) who were Younis Tsouli's accomplices- they were clearly heavily involved but because Tsouli stole all of the limelight there is practically no information available about them.

Twenty-three individuals (21% of the sample) were classed as hardcore militants, strongly committed to the ideology and the cause. Examples include Abu Hamza (case #3); Dhiren Barot (case #5); Omar Khyam (case #14); the 7/7 bombers (case #17); Abdulla Ahmed Ali, Ali Assad Sarwar and Tanvir Hussain from the 2006 'aircraft' plot (case #27); and Bilal Abdulla and Kafeel Ahmed (case #41) who attempted attacks in London and Glasgow in 2007. Unsurprisingly, those classed as hardcore are often leaders of others and are also those willing to carry out mass-casualty attacks- neither of these qualities may be a necessary or sufficient condition but they do help identify more obvious hardcore terrorists.

Although more hardcore individuals numerically speaking were found among the post-Iraq offenders, in relative terms they constitute 29% of the earlier and 18% of the latter generation. On the face of it this suggests a decrease in commitment and possibly the risk that Islamist militants in the UK present, but it may also relate to how this variable was determined, taking into account such factors as duration of involvement with other terrorists and the nature of their associations. At the same time a greater number of less obviously hardcore offenders necessarily reduces the proportion that they represent. And, in a related point, all of the non-Islamist-proper individuals (except for Lakhani) began offending in 2004 or later. The sample is still overwhelmingly dominated by individuals with some genuine degree of commitment to Islamist ideology but a small number of individuals operating on the periphery of the movement have also cropped up. The most likely explanation for this is one that plays an important role in a number of areas- increased awareness. This exposes more people



to Islamist ideology and activities and increases the chances that it will be adopted in new and different ways.

### *Behavioural Classification*

**Table 10.16.** Behavioural classification of UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008). The top two rows refer to individuals; the bottom two rows refer to cases.\*

Possession of terrorist articles/ propaganda	Promoting jihad	Facilitating: Active support**	Facilitating/ fundraising	Offering services	Preparation for violence	Active pursuit of violence	Misc.
11	23	9	10	1	11	47	1
10% I	21% I	8% I	9% I	1% I	10% I	42% I	1% I
11	13	6	4	1	5	17	1
22% C	25% C	12% C	8% C	2% C	10% C	33% C	2% C

\* Note that the case total is greater than 51 since some individuals performed different roles within cases, bringing the total to 58. Case percentages are still derived using 51 as the total. All individuals except 1 (Parviz Khan- case #21) were categorised according to their primary role. Khan, however fulfilled 2 quite distinct roles and is thus counted twice- individuals counts thus come to 113 although percentages are calculated using 112.

\*\*4 individuals within this category (Mohammed Ajmal Khan –case 11- Mohammed Hamid and Atilla Ahmet –case #20- and Rangzieb Ahmed –case #26) are also classed as ‘top-down’ facilitators of jihad.

Behavioural classification is a direct indicator of operational activity and is one of the main variables of interest because it tells us what exactly individuals from, or living in, the UK are doing in furtherance of violent Islamist ideology. Like many of the variables here it proved difficult to classify, given overlapping behaviours within groups and individuals, and unclear boundaries between categories. Classification should thus be considered a matter of emphasis rather than an absolute steadfast system of division.

Figures are shown both for individuals (the top two rows) and cases (the bottom two rows) since individuals within the same case are not always fulfilling the same function. In particular, individuals whose primary activity was promoting jihad were often facilitators and fundraisers to some degree and almost the entire sample was in possession of terrorist propaganda, oftentimes including instructional material such as bomb-making manuals- those who were prosecuted for this offence only (see below) can be considered cases of early intervention. The pursuit of violence obviously



involved prior preparation but also demonstrated more determined, overt steps to perpetrate violence against others (as opposed to engaging in training only).

Eleven individuals, all in separate cases, were prosecuted for possession of terrorist propaganda and material useful for terrorism<sup>ix</sup> - because they were arrested before they could do anything in relation to this it is not possible to say how they might have –or whether they would have- progressed further. These cases nevertheless sit on a continuum ranging from no apparent intent to clearly increasing intent to carry out some kind of action. For example, Khalid Khaliq (case #23), a former associate of Mohammed Siddique Khan (case #17) was in possession of a censored al-Qaeda manual downloaded from a US government website in 2005 and was prosecuted in retrospect in 2007. He did not *do* anything else. In contrast, Krenar Lusha (case #47) had been downloading a considerable amount of similar jihadi materials but had also stockpiled more than 70 litres of petrol in his home, for which he was prosecuted. It thus appears that Lusha was transgressing from ideation to action (and thus borders on preparation for violence). All but 1 of these cases (Abbas Boutrab –case #12- who was also bordering on preparation for violence) began offending after 2003.

Twenty-three individuals spread across 13 cases (21% of the former or 25% of the latter) were primarily involved in promoting jihad, which may be thought of as ‘non-specific recruitment’ although again activities varied. At the lower end of the spectrum were individuals such as Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15), a student barely out of school when he began setting up his own jihadi websites with links to instructions on the use of firearms and explosives. Siddique’s case is essentially one of bottom-up advertisement. Other cases involved more proactive encouragement from more authoritative figures. The al-Muhajiroun-affiliated protesters (cases #16 and #30) who were prosecuted for a variety of offences including soliciting funds for terrorism and inciting murder fall into this category. Others include Younis Tsouli et al (case #19) and Aabid Khan et al (case #25) who gained worldwide recognition through their online promotional activities, which bordered on facilitation of jihad (Khan even met with a US jihadi candidate in Pakistan –Syed Haris Ahmed, US case #27- in order to ‘vet’ him for training although Ahmed did not train and there is no evidence that Khan actually

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<sup>ix</sup> These were: Abbas Boutrab (case #12); Mustapha Abdullah (case #20); Khalid Khaliq (case #23); Mohammed Uddin (case #23); Abdul Patel (case #28); Omar Altimimi (case #31); Yassin Nassari (case #32); Pa Modou Jobe (case #36); Bilal Mohammed (case #37); Krenar Lusha (case #47); Houria Chentouf (case #49).



arranged this for anyone else). Then at the most serious end of the spectrum were individuals such as Abu Qatada (case #1), Abu Hamza (case #3) and Abdullah El-Faisal (case #8) whose religious opinions were issued in a top-down fashion and have influenced the actions of individuals and established terrorist organisations alike.

It should be noted that within the current sample these high-end cases of promoting jihad all began prior to the invasion of Iraq and although individuals such as Tsouli have been vigorous in their online efforts to encourage or facilitate violence they have not achieved the same level of authority or social standing. Moreover, outlying cases such as Malcolm Hodges (case #29) and Nicholas Roddis (case #40) have also cropped up in more recent years. These are individuals who have essentially promoted jihad –either for obscure personal reasons or out of an immature fascination- but are not at all part of militant Islamist circles. Promoting jihad has thus changed somewhat qualitatively speaking, seemingly becoming more of a ‘free-for-all’ activity as made possible by wider public awareness and the Internet.

Active facilitation, i.e. where individuals have taken a hands-on approach in making things happen within a network of militants, occurred in 6 (12%) of cases (9 individuals).<sup>x</sup> Almost all of these people, e.g. Andrew Rowe, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, and Rangzieb Ahmed, had established links to foreign organised jihadis if not formal membership in a terrorist organisation. They travelled frequently and were involved in obtaining supplies and equipment for militants overseas, or else as in Sheikh’s case, actively facilitated terrorist operations (the kidnap and murder of Daniel Pearl). The exception within this category is Mohammed Hamid et al (case #20). Hamid was a former follower of Abu Hamza who established his own following in London, and assisted by Ahmet and to a lesser extent DaCosta, provided domestic paramilitary-style training camps in rural areas of the UK with a view for preparing recruits either for domestic terror attacks or for training and combat abroad. Because of their senior roles in this case –providing training to others- Hamid, Ahmet and DaCosta are classed as active facilitators- those who they trained are categorised under the heading of preparation for violence.

The number of active facilitation cases has stayed consistent over time but relative to the number of other cases it has become significantly less common (from

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<sup>x</sup> These were: Andrew Rowe (case #2); Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (case #9); Mohammed Ajmal Khan (case #11); Mohammed Hamid, Atilla Ahmet & Kibley Da-Costa (case #20); Parviz Khan (case #21); Rangzieb & Habib Ahmed (case #26).



20% in the pre-Iraq era to 8% since then). This is likely to be a reflection of the difficulty of making contact with overseas terrorist organisations and the concomitant increased difficulty for such organisations to continue their activities in countries such as the UK.

Four individuals are also classed as ‘top-down’ facilitators (not shown in the table simply for reasons of space). These include Hamid and Ahmet because they orchestrated the activities of their own little group of followers. Although the other active facilitator cases were undoubtedly more integrated into worldwide militant networks, only 2 others are given that distinction (Mohammed Ajmal Khan –case #11- regarded as a senior LeT operative and convicted for directing a terrorist organisation; and Rangzieb Ahmed- case #26- convicted for the same offence). The reason for this is that authority is relative and others do not appear to have occupied such positions within their networks.

Four other cases (10 individuals) were classed as facilitators of jihad, but who were slightly less directly or less consistently involved in the ‘leg-work’ of logistic support. These included: Brahim Benmerzouga and Baghdad Meziane (case #6) who ran a credit-card fraud/ terror-financing ring and have also been accused of recruitment activities; Adel Yahya (case #18) who assisted the failed 21/7 bombers in researching hair bleach needed to manufacture explosives; Parviz Khan’s 6 accomplices (case #21) who helped him purchase and ship equipment to militants overseas; and Abdul Rahman (case #35) who helped pay for a plane ticket for an associate to flee Britain and had put together a small package of knives and other supplies to send over to Pakistan. With the arguable exception of Benmerzouga and Meziane (the only pre-2004 case and one which might arguably be classed as ‘active’ facilitation) these individuals appear to be comparatively less integral to the networks they are part of.

Fifty-eight of 112 (52%) of individuals in the sample (43% of cases) were devoted to preparing for, or more often, actively pursuing violence. Those who were prosecuted for preparing for violence either engaged in domestic training exercises (e.g. Hamid’s followers –case #20- and the Iqbal brothers –case #38) or else attempted to go and/or had been overseas for training-proper (e.g. Sohail Qureshi –case #33- and Mohammed Shakil and Waheed Ali –case #39). The one exception to this is Hassan Tabbakh (case #42) who was caught at a very early stage of mixing chemicals to make



explosives, with the apparent intention of passing on the instructions to others unknown to actually make use of. All 5 of these cases began after 2003.

The largest proportion of both individuals and cases in the sample –in accordance with common understanding of what terrorism entails- made overt steps to carry out planned, violent attacks. This applied to 5/15 (33%) of cases in the pre-Iraq era and to 12/36 (33%) of cases in the post-Iraq era. The extent to which these cases were focussed at home or abroad –as well as what kind of targets have been chosen- will be considered below, but in terms of percentages of overall cases in each time period they are the same. However, it is also worth noting that both time periods here span 5 years (the first pre-2004 pursuit of violence case in the sample began in 1999) and in absolute terms the number of planned attacks has more than doubled. The relative proportion that this represents in the post-Iraq era is more indicative of a proliferation of other offences (both in terms of what people are doing and what is defined as illegal- e.g. possession of terrorist instruction manuals etc) combined with increased detection rates. In short, the number of people planning attacks has increased.

Finally, 1 individual was classed as having offered his services to militants (Hemant Lakhani, case #10) and 1 was classed as ‘miscellaneous’ (Saeed Ghafoor, case #51). The former involved offering to supply arms for money and the latter involved a rather bizarre series of threats issued from within prison to carry out terrorist attacks on being released. Both of these cases are very much peripheral to genuine Islamist terrorism but are still helpful for illustrating the diverse ways in which it can appeal to different individuals.



### *Domestic vs. Overseas Focus & Operation*

**Table 10.17.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) according to behavioural classification.

	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
Possession of terror materials			11	9		2	11
Promoting jihad	2	2	9	12		1	13
Facilitating: Top-down		2	1	1		2	3
Facilitating: Active support		4	2	1	1	4	6
Facilitating/ fundraising	1	2	1	4			4
Offering services		1				1	1
Preparation for violence		2	3	5			5
Active pursuit of violence	12	3	2	9	1	7	17
Misc.	1			1			1
Total	16	16	29	42	2	17	61*

\*Note that case totals exceed 51 since some individuals performed different roles within cases, bringing the total to 61.

Table 10.17 shows numbers of UK Islamist terrorism cases according to their behavioural classification divided by whether they had a domestic, overseas or mixed focus, and whether the individuals involved were based in the UK, abroad or a combination of the two. A domestic focus refers to a concern with affecting events within the UK (although there are almost always overtures to the foreign stage); an overseas focus involves a primary concern with the global jihad abroad; and a mixed focus is characterised by a general concern for the global jihad, i.e. definite concern for international events, with some indication that domestic operations are also deemed viable. Examining these variables gives an indication of what UK Islamist terrorists want to do and where they are based.

In terms of terrorist materials, it was not possible to classify whether the individuals involved were more or less focussed on overseas or domestic affairs- it thus



translates into a generalised interest in jihad. Most of these cases were based entirely in the UK for the period of offending with just 2 (Yassin Nassari –case #32- and Houria Chentouf –case #49) involving some relevant international travel.

As might be expected, cases involving promotion of jihad also mostly involved a generalised outlook, although 2 cases (Malcolm Hodges –case #29- and Nicholas Roddis- case #40) focussed their actions on affecting the domestic stage, while 2 others (the al-Muhajiroun protestors in cases #16 and #30) maintained more of a specifically overseas focus. There was thus considerable disparity between their focus and base of operations in that all but 1 case (Aabid Khan, case #25) were based entirely in the UK.

The top-down facilitators in the sample showed greater correspondence in their focus and operation. Mohammed Ajmal Khan (case #11) was focussed on LeT’s efforts in Pakistan and elsewhere and travelled extensively, as did al-Qaeda operative Rangzieb Ahmed (case #26). Meanwhile Mohammed Hamid and Atilla Ahmet (case #20) might ultimately have aspired to contact with foreign terrorists but were content to organise domestic training and viewed attacks at home as legitimate. Likewise Hamid’s group represents the only purely domestic case of active facilitation of jihad, a situation that was acceptable to them by maintaining a mixed focus. All of the other active facilitation cases involved international travel and operations.

By contrast, the ‘less involved’ jihadi facilitators generally showed a difference in their focus and operations- most were based in Britain but were involved in supporting activities of militants overseas. Only 1 case (Adel Yahya, who helped the 21/7 bombers in finding out where they could buy high-concentration bleach- case #18) was focussed on assisting a domestic operation, which he did before leaving the country. The fact that such cases were based in Britain yet supporting activities abroad should not be surprising since funds and other forms of support can be sent overseas without much need for the organisers to travel.

All 5 preparation for violence cases had an overseas or mixed focus and (with the possible exception of Hassan Tabbakh –case #42- whose intentions are unclear) ultimately aspired to becoming involved in jihad overseas. At the same time all 5 were domestically located, showing a degree of mismatch between their desires and actions but a willingness to compromise and pursue their interests at home.

The pattern of aims and activity for those who pursued violence (i.e. planned or carried out terrorist attacks or joined overseas conflicts) is an interesting one. 5 of these



cases (Reid and Badat –case #4; Dhiren Barot et al –case #5; Feroz Abbasi- case #7; Abdulla Ahmed Ali et al –case #27; and Mohammed Abushamma –case #46) maintained an overseas or mixed focus and all 5 of them travelled abroad to fulfil these aims. All but 1 of them (Abushamma) was successful in joining forces with organised overseas militants. The other 12 cases<sup>xi</sup> were focussed on carrying out domestic operations. Three of them (Omar Khyam’s group and members of the 7/7 and 21/7 cells) still travelled overseas and received explosives training. Another individual, Kamel Bourgass (case #13) had also previously trained in Afghanistan, although the offences he was prosecuted for occurred in Britain. Parviz Khan (case #21) also had established links with overseas militants and travelled to Pakistan, although his plans to personally commit violence were entirely focussed at home. Yet another, Kazi Rahman (case #24) had previously trained at Omar Khyam’s camp in Malakand in 2003 although this was unrelated to his attempt to buy machine guns in Britain.

In summary, with the exception of Abushamma, all of the British cases involving active pursuit of violence were able to operate in the countries that they wanted to. Those who chose to operate abroad did so and many of those who chose to attack at home had been in contact with terrorists abroad at some point prior to offending. Only 2 cases (Bourgass and Abdulla and Ahmed) were recent immigrants, with 1 more set of individuals (Ibrahim et al) having immigrated to Britain 5-10 years earlier. Most were long-term if not life-long residents and citizens. Finally, it is noteworthy that all 5 cases which were completely domestically confined, i.e. British-born individuals who did not engage in any related travel (Mansha; Gardner; Ibrahim; Beheshti et al; and Reilly) each began in 2005 or later. Overall, these results indicate a continued strong desire to establish contact with terrorist organisations abroad, even for domestic operations, but also a willingness in the post-Iraq generation to carry out attacks in the absence of such contact.

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<sup>xi</sup> These were: Kamel Bourgass- case #13; Omar Khyam et al- case #14; Mohammed Siddique Khan et al- case #17; Muktar Ibrahim et al- case #18; Parviz Khan- case #21; Abu Bakr Mansha- case #22; Kazi Nurur Rahman- case #24; Kevin Gardner- #34; Bilal Abdulla & Kafeel Ahmed- case #41; Andrew Ibrahim- case #45; Ali Beheshti et al- case #48; and Nicky Reilly- case #50.



**Table 10.18.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation (C.o.O) of UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) divided according to whether cases began before 2004 or 2004-2008. Percentages refer to rows.

	Focus: Purely Domestic	Focus: Purely Overseas	Focus: Mixed	C.o.O: Purely Domestic	C.o.O: Purely Overseas	C.o.O: Mixed
Overall (51)	14 (27%)	13 (25%)	24 (47%)	34 (67%)	2 (4%)	15 (29%)
Pre 2004 (15)	2 (13%)	7 (47%)	6 (40%)	7 (47%)	2 (13%)	6 (40%)
2004-2008 (36)	12 (33%)	6 (17%)	18 (50%)	27 (75%)	0	9 (25%)

Turning to the pre- vs. post-Iraq divide, Table 10.18 shows how the focus and operation of UK Islamist terrorists has changed over time (note that ‘purely’ domestic/overseas refers to the fact that there was no within-group variation- thus all group members were focussed on the same aims and all were based in the same country, otherwise they were classed as mixed, which includes operations at home *and* abroad).

Overall there has been an overseas focus in 25% of cases (with a further 47% mixed) and international travel by at least some group members in 33% of cases. Of cases beginning in the pre-Iraq era, just 2 (13%) (Kamel Bourgass- case #13; and Omar Khyam et al- case #14) had a purely domestic focus, while 7 (47%) were based entirely in the UK.<sup>xii</sup> Most of these cases involved either promoting jihad and/or fundraising for Islamist militants overseas and were deliberately based in Britain- i.e. it was not a case of thwarted ambitions. The apparent disparity between domestic focus and country of operation in the pre-Iraq era is thus misleading by itself. Individuals operating within this period were primarily concerned with events overseas and were mostly able to travel quite unrestricted when they chose to. It is also notable that even within this early generation of jihadis, those who chose to attack the United Kingdom were mostly born and raised there (the exception of course is Bourgass, though his true intentions and at what point he may have formed them remain extremely murky).

In the post-Iraq period the number of cases involving a purely domestic focus is 6 times higher than before in absolute terms and represents more than double the percentage of cases (from 13% to 33%). The desire to become involved in overseas

<sup>xii</sup> These were: Abu Qatada (case #1); Abu Hamza (case #3); Benmerzouga & Meziane (case #6); Abdullah El-Faisal (case #8); Abbas Boutrab (case #12); Kamel Bourgass (case #13); and Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15).



operations only has significantly decreased over time (from 47% to 17%)<sup>xiii</sup> although 50% of cases have still involved a mixed or generalised focus on global jihad. Conversely, 75% of post-Iraq generation cases have been operationally based in the UK, with only 9 (25%) involving any relevant overseas travel.<sup>xiv</sup> Furthermore, of those 9, 1 (Abushamma) was unsuccessful in making contact with overseas militants. This means that only 8 (22%) truly operated overseas in any meaningful kind of way.

In addition, 3 of 4 cases with an overseas focus who tried to go abroad (Qureshi; Shakil and Ali; and Abushamma) failed in their most recent attempts. The evidence therefore quite strongly supports the conclusion that fewer Islamist militants from, or living in the UK in the post-Iraq era are travelling overseas for jihad and more are beginning to view domestic operations as a legitimate exercise. In accordance with ‘given wisdom’ (see chapters 3 & 4) this is likely a result of increased security measures and general difficulty in establishing contact with Islamist terrorist organisations since 9/11. This may help explain why out of the 12 post-Iraq cases involving planned violence on the domestic stage, 7 did not even attempt to go overseas in relation to these plans.

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<sup>xiii</sup> These cases are: the al-Muhajiroun protestors (cases #16 & #30); Rangzieb & Habib Ahmed (case #26); Sohail Qureshi (case #33); Shakil & Ali (case #39); and Mohammed Abushamma (case #46).

<sup>xiv</sup> These were: the 7/7 bombers (case #17); the 21/7 failed bombers (case #18); Parviz Khan et al (case #21); Aabid Khan et al (case #25); Rangzieb & Habib Ahmed (case #26); Abdulla Ahmed Ali et al (case #27); Yassin Nassari (case #32); Abushamma (case #46); and Houria Chentouf (case #49).



### *Planned M.O. of Attacks*

**Table 10.19.** Target type and weaponry in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) for domestic and overseas-based attacks/ planned attacks (excluding joining overseas conflict).

	Target: Civilian	Target: Gov.	Target: Mixed	Target: U/K	Explosives	Fire- arms	Other	Mixed	U/K
Domestic target	7	3	2	1	8	2	2	1	
Overseas target	2				2				

Of 17 cases involving pursuit of violence 2 (12%) involved joining or attempting to join overseas conflicts (Feroz Abbasi- case #7; and Mohammed Abushamma- case #46). The remaining 15, shown in Table 10.19, involved planned terrorist attacks in line with common understanding of what terrorists do. One of these (the 7/7 attacks- case #17) was an outright success; 4 more essentially failed but nevertheless came to fruition without any intervention taking place (Richard Reid’s shoe-bombing attempt- case #4; the 21/7 attacks- case #18; the attempted London and Glasgow attacks- case #41; and Nicky Reilly’s failed suicide bombing of an Exeter restaurant- case #50); and in 1 case (Kamel Bourgass- case #13) plans for attack were thwarted but a police officer was murdered as the main suspect was being apprehended. Authorities intervened and successfully thwarted the remaining 11 plots.

Only 1 case (Richard Reid and Saajid Badat- case #4) was aimed at targets entirely overseas, and another (Abdulla Ali et al- case #27) targeted North American airlines flying out of Britain. Both used or intended to use explosives to attack civilian passenger planes.

The other 13 cases (87%) intended to, or did, carry out strikes within the UK and although there has been some variation in their choice of target and weaponry, most opted for civilian targets and explosives. 7 (54%) chose exclusively civilian targets (Barot et al- case #5; the 7/7 bombers; the 21/7 bombers; Abdulla & Ahmed- case #41; Andrew Ibrahim- case #45; Beheshti et al- case #48; and Reilly- case #50); 3 were aimed at governmental –all military- targets (Parviz Khan- case #21; Abu Bakr Mansha- case #22; and Kevin Gardner- case #34); and in 1 case (Kazi Nurur Rahman- case #24) the target was unknown.



Most domestically-aimed plots (62%) used or intended to use explosives and this may reflect both the fact that this is the weapon of choice for terrorists and that other forms of weaponry –firearms in particular- are not readily available in Britain. Of the 2 firearms cases, Mansha had a blank-firing handgun converted to fire live rounds and was planning to shoot a British soldier; the other was Rahman, who was caught in a sting operation trying to buy guns from undercover police. The ‘other’ category refers to Parviz Khan’s plot to behead a British Muslim soldier (seen by him as betraying the Islamic faith) and to the arson attempt by Beheshti et al. Finally, the ‘mixed’ weaponry refers to Bourgass’s aspirations to use poisons and his impromptu use of a knife when cornered to murder a British Detective Constable. What this demonstrates is that choice of weaponry is pragmatic in that it is limited by aims and means. Those who want to carry out ‘traditional’-style terrorist attacks will try to learn how to make improvised explosives, while those whose plans are more targeted are more likely to be more ‘modest’ in their choice of weaponry.

### **10.2.7 International Dimensions and Associations**

**Table 10.20.** Contact with foreign terrorists in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Contact with foreign terrorists		
	Yes	No	U/K
Individuals	34	37	41
	30% TOT	33% TOT	37% TOT
Pre 2004	18	2	8
2004 onwards	16	35	33
Cases	22	21	8
	43% TOT	41% TOT	16% TOT
Pre 2004	12	2	1
2004 onwards	10	19	7

An important question to address is whether Western-based Islamist terrorists are in contact with their foreign counterparts, especially those who are more organised and have greater resources at their disposal. Table 10.20 shows that 30% of individuals in the sample (applying to 43% of overall cases) were in contact with overseas terrorists. 37% of individuals and 16% of cases could not be classified, however, there is a tendency for such connections to be reported when they are present



and therefore the majority of these most likely did not have foreign contacts (one possible exception is Houria Chentouf –case #49- who had connections with known, but publicly unidentified Dutch ‘extremists’).

Looking at the pre- vs. post-Iraq divide (defined as up to and including 2003, and 2004 to 2008) there is a significant difference. 18/24 (64%) of individuals (80% of cases) in the pre-Iraq generation had established contacts with foreign Islamist terrorists, compared to 16/84 (19%) of individuals (28% of cases) in the post-Iraq generation. In addition, a number of those with foreign connections who began offending in 2004 or later actually established their contacts several years previously (e.g. Mohammed Siddique Khan- case #17; and Rangzieb Ahmed- case #26), hence the trend appears to be even stronger. The general assumption that ‘home-grown’ terrorists are less likely to be in contact with foreign terrorists is thus clearly supported, although it is something that still persists in a minority of cases and is indicative of greater levels of threat where it has occurred.

**Table 10.21.** Number of UK Islamist terrorism cases in contact with foreign organised terrorists in different locations, divided according to whether cases began prior to 2004 or 2004-2008.

Foreign terrorists' location	Pre 2004	2004 onwards
Global (S. Asia/ N. Africa/ Middle East/ Europe/ Balkans)	6	2
Pakistan/ Afghanistan	11	9
Canada	2	3
US	3	4

Table 10.21 adds to the discussion by showing the whereabouts of foreign terrorist contacts among UK cases. Note that certain cases had multiple contacts and are thus counted in more than 1 category- this artificially represents the number of pre-2004 cases as 22 (real number 12) and the post-2003 cases as 18 (real number 10) but accurately reflects the number of cases with specific links to each region of the world.

One of the most striking things about the pre-Iraq period compared to cases beginning in 2004 or later is the number of cases with ‘global’ terrorist connections (50% vs. 18%). 4 cases in particular (Qatada- case #1; Rowe- case #2; Hamza- case #3; and Reid- case #4) had travelled extensively and were in contact with Islamist terrorists on a worldwide scale, and another 2 (Benmerzouga and Meziane- case #6; and



Bourgass- case #13) had links to militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as Algeria and Europe. In the post-2004 period only 2 cases (Younis Tsouli- case #19; and Aabid Khan- case #25) were classed as having global connections- both are also counted under Canada and the US, and Khan is included under Pakistan/Afghanistan. Khan did travel and spent considerable time in Pakistan, however for both him and Tsouli it was their online activities that played a more important role in establishing and maintaining their global contacts. By contrast the earlier global cases played far more hands-on, integrated roles in established terrorist organisations.

Connections with terrorists in Pakistan and/or Afghanistan have remained by far the most dominant and are found in 11 (92%)<sup>xv</sup> of pre-Iraq, and 9 (90%)<sup>xvi</sup> of post-Iraq cases with foreign connections. The continued popularity of these countries is hardly surprising given their long-standing significance in the global Sunni jihad; however the continued ability of UK Islamists to make contact with militants there is still striking. It is undoubtedly facilitated by the fact many have family ties in Pakistan and in fact Afghanistan specifically has become less commonly cited as a training destination for British jihadis.

Connections with other Western-based militants have also occurred in a number of cases both before and after the Iraq time-divide. Taking into account European connections among the globally connected UK terrorists and removing ‘double-counts’ of cases, 9 out of 12 (75%) of pre-Iraq cases have involved communication and collusion with other Western-based jihadists, compared to 4 out of 10 (40%) from 2004 to 2008. The nature of this contact has also changed somewhat over time. The earlier generation of Islamist militants seemed to perform more integrated roles within the same overall network, and new connections were made by virtue of physically meeting in the same places- for example at camps in Pakistan or Afghanistan, at Finsbury Park mosque in London or somewhere else facilitated by mutual acquaintances. This does apply to post-Iraq offenders Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer (case #17) who met with Mohammed Junaid Babar and Mohammed Momin Khawaja –from the US and Canada respectively- and also to Kazi Nurur Rahman (case #24) who had also met with Babar. However, British and other Western jihadis now seem more

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<sup>xv</sup> Qatada (case #1); Rowe (case #2); Hamza (case #3); Reid & Badat (case #4); Barot (case #5); Benmerzoug & Meziane (case #6); Abbasi (case #7); Sheikh (case #9); Ajmal Khan (case #11); Bourgass (case #13); & Khyam et al (case #14).

<sup>xvi</sup> 7/7 (case #17); 21/7 (case #18); Parviz Khan (case #21); Kazi Rahman (case #24); Aabid Khan (case #25); Ahmed (case #26); Ali et al (case #27); Abdul Rahman (case #35); & Shakil & Ali (case #39).



disparate and their connections with each other are more the result of effortful, deliberate reaching out, usually initiated online. This is exemplified by Tsouli and Aabid Khan’s liaisons with now-convicted Canadian and American terrorists who they met on the Internet.<sup>xvii</sup> Moreover, in earlier generations many European-based Islamist terrorists in particular, with whom Britons were in contact, were themselves part of terrorist organisations such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the al-Qaeda network. More recent Western-based contacts of British terrorists in the post-Iraq era have not been part of proper terrorist organisations and have looked to their UK associates for assistance.

Detailed information about the nature of contact with overseas Islamist terrorists is lacking, however the roles that individuals played reveals something about their standing in relation to their foreign associates. In the pre-Iraq generation (several of whom had been involved with Islamist militants since at least the mid-1990’s) there were 2 major jihadi ideologues –Qatada and Hamza- plus Abdullah El-Faisal who also commanded significant influence in a similar role. These individuals were highly respected by Islamists on a global scale and interacted with others from a position of religious authority. Several others in this period were operatives of terrorist organisations including al-Qaeda and Lashkar e-Taiba (e.g. Andrew Rowe, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and Mohammed Ajmal Khan) and in that capacity were assisted financially and logistically in fulfilling organisational assignments in collaboration with foreign contacts. Training in Afghanistan was common, after which individuals found a place within a loosely defined hierarchy according to their abilities- e.g. Richard Reid and Saajid Badat (case #4) were ‘foot-soldiers’ carrying out the plans of more senior figures in al-Qaeda, whereas Mohammed Ajmal Khan (case #11) was himself a member of LeT with considerable standing and freedom to orchestrate his own and others’ activities. Regardless of their levels of authority and autonomy, earlier UK Islamist terrorism cases were organisationally integrated to varying degrees and often travelled extensively. This especially applies to those who became active before 2001, which was a key turning point in terms of the ‘war on terror’ (see chapters 3 and 4).

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<sup>xvii</sup> Note that the ‘pre-Iraq’ case with links to Canada, Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15) was in reality introduced to Islamist militancy by Aabid Khan (case #25), and began offending as far as the courts were concerned just as Iraq was being invaded. He shared Tsouli and Khan’s links to the same group in Canada.



Later cases within the pre-Iraq period as defined here are indicative of qualitative changes beginning to take place in the nature of foreign associations. Thus Omar Khyam et al (case #14), although able to make contact with and receive explosives training from Pakistani terrorists (having previously been involved in a UK-based support network) were not members of any specific overseas terrorist organisation and were following their own plans. Lastly, Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15) had only virtual links to other Islamist terrorists, who in his case were based in Canada and were an autonomous 'home-grown' group.

In the post-2003 era, only 1 case (Rangzieb Ahmed- case #26) can be considered an operative of an organisation on a comparable level to the earlier generation, and of course his journey into Islamist militancy appears to have begun several years previously to the offences for which he was incarcerated. Parviz Khan (case #21) also had significant connections to Islamist terrorists in Pakistan and seemed to defer to their authority, although he was largely self-organised within Britain and his plans to behead a British Muslim soldier were at odds with his foreign associates' advice to maintain a purely supportive role. Moreover, Khan was not apparently part of a wider network outside of Britain and Pakistan and there is no evidence to suggest that he was funded from overseas.

Most of the rest of the post-Iraq cases with foreign connections knew militants in Pakistan and were able to arrange for training camps there (practice with firearms and explosives) but, like Khyam's group, did not appear to be carrying out missions on their behalf or to be taking direction from them, and were largely autonomous in their activities. That said, the airliner plot disrupted in 2006 led by Abdulla Ahmed Ali (case #27) was described by the sentencing judge as having been directed from Pakistan where key members of the plot are alleged to have conferred with senior al-Qaeda operatives. There have also been unproven allegations that a number of Pakistani nationals came to the UK with the specific intention of carrying out attacks for al-Qaeda in April 2009 (investigated under 'Operation Pathway') and the individuals involved have since been linked to accused Islamist terrorists plotting attacks in the US and in Norway as well as individuals arrested in Belgium.<sup>10</sup> All of these cases (including Ali's airline plot) shared a common link in Pakistan- the alleged al-Qaeda affiliate and since deceased British national Rashid Rauf.



Although there is still much to be established in terms of legal standards of proof, these examples indicate that there has been a deliberate resurgence of effort from organised militants in Pakistan to actively facilitate terrorist attacks in the UK and other Western countries, i.e. there is greater effort *originating* from Pakistan as opposed to simply obliging the wishes of Westerners who travel there seeking assistance in their own plans. The question that remains is the extent to which elements of the network behind this renewed wave of effort remain functioning since plotters in the West have been arrested and a number of their ‘handlers’ in Pakistan have been killed.<sup>11</sup> Certainly no British plots since 2006 have rivalled the scale or sophistication of Ali’s plans to bring down transatlantic airliners. However, given a persistent desire to strike against the UK on home soil, combined with resilient militant networks in Pakistan and persistent home-grown elements with ties to that country, it seems only a matter of time before such a plot is uncovered.

**Table 10.22.** Numbers of UK Islamist terrorism cases in the pre- vs. post-2004 periods with named domestic and foreign terrorist associations.

	Named domestic associations	Named foreign associations	Both	Total
Pre-2004 (n=15)	0	2	8	10 (67%)
2004 onwards (n=36)	9	0	7	16 (44%)
Total	9	2	15	26
% TOT (51)	18%	4%	29%	51%

Table 10.22 shows the number of cases with named foreign and/or domestic terrorist associations. Overall, among these cases it has been most common for both foreign and domestic associations to be named (applying to 29% of the sample as a whole). Next most common were named domestic associations only (18%) and then named foreign associations only (4%). These results seem to imply that where contact exists with foreign terrorists, there is most likely contact with similar others on the domestic stage too.



Looking at the pre- vs. post-Iraq generations there are similar numbers in absolute terms of cases with both foreign and domestic named associations, although relatively speaking this accounts for 53% of all pre-Iraq<sup>xviii</sup> and 19% of all post-Iraq<sup>xix</sup> cases. Two more cases in the pre-Iraq era also involved named foreign terrorist associations only: Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (case #9) who knew the founder of JeM, Maulana Azhar Masood among others; and Mohammed Ajmal Khan (case #11) who knew Ali Asad Chandia and several other members of the US ‘Virginia jihad network’ (US case #7) whom he met through LeT in Pakistan. Meanwhile no post-Iraq cases have involved foreign-only named terrorist associations but 9 (25%) have involved named domestic-only links. Most of these cases (e.g. the Iqbal brothers –case #38; Ishaq Kanmi- case #43; and Krenar Lusha- case #47- who were all tied together through Kanmi) did not appear to be in contact with foreign terrorists. The notable exception with meaningful overseas links was Muktar Ibrahim (case #18) who learned to make explosives in Pakistan at the end of 2004, but whose specific contacts are unknown.

The figures presented in Table 10.22 are less meaningful than the specific associations themselves (since these numbers do not tell us who knew who else, and do not account for unnamed contacts). However it does highlight the fact that domestic associations are also common among Islamist terrorists living in or from the UK. In particular the pre-Iraq cases were highly interconnected- Abu Qatada (case #1) taught Abu Hamza (case #3) who oversaw affairs at Finsbury Park mosque, which was the centre of a sprawling network of militants from the late 1990s through to 2003; Benmerzouga and Meziane (case #6) were followers of Qatada and linked to Finsbury Park; Reid and Badat (case #4) and also Abbasi (case #7) each worshipped at Hamza’s mosque (as did Kamel Bourgass –case #13- although it is not clear who exactly he knew outside of individuals acquitted of terrorism offences) and numerous individuals from around the world later convicted for terrorism offences also passed through (see chapter 7).

Other individuals’ associations bridge the pre- vs. post-Iraq generations. Specifically, Omar Khyam (case #14) met with Mohammed Siddique Khan (case #17) in Pakistan in 2003 and then met several more times with Khan and Shehzad Tanweer

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<sup>xviii</sup> Abu Qatada (case #1); Abu Hamza (case #3); Reid & Badat (case #4); Barot et al (case #5); Benmerzouga & Meziane (case #6); Abbasi (case #7); Khyam et al (case #14) & Atif Siddique (case #15).

<sup>xix</sup> Siddique Khan et al (case #17); Tsouli (case #19); Kazi Rahman (case #24); Aabid Khan (case #25); Rangzieb Ahmed (case #26); Ali et al (case #27); Abdul Rahman (case #35).



in Britain. Also in attendance at the camp in 2003 was Kazi Nurur Rahman (case #24) and Waheed Ali (case #39). Ali’s associate Mohammed Shakil also separately trained with Khan in Pakistan, and another acquaintance of Khan and Tanweer’s, Khalid Khaliq (case #23) is also included in the sample.

Similarly, Mohammed Atif Siddique (case #15) had been influenced by Aabid Khan (case #25) and together they were in contact online with Younis Tsouli (case #19). Their websites were frequented by untold numbers of others, among them Yassin Nassari (case #32) who is reported to have been in touch with one of Tsouli’s associates, Tariq al-Daour.

Ultimately what these examples demonstrate is that Islamist terrorism in the UK both in earlier and more recent generations remains an interconnected social phenomenon, and even though foreign affiliation with organised terrorists has become more difficult to achieve, terrorists at home are still quite often in communication with one another.



### **10.2.8 The Role of the Internet**

**Table 10.23.** Use of the Internet in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Use of Internet	U/K	Access propaganda/ forums	Comm.	Gather intell/ research attacks	Create/ distribute materials	Group formation	Fund-raising	Other research
Pre-2004	4	2	6	3	4	0	0	1
2004 onwards	15	17	12	8	2	2	1	0
Total	19	19	18	11	6	2	1	1
% TOT	37%	37%	35%	22%	12%	4%	2%	2%

Table 10.23 shows how Islamist terrorists living in or from the UK have been reported to be using the Internet. In 19 cases (37%) there was no specific usage reported although it should be noted that at least communication or accessing jihadi websites seems likely in some of these cases (this is inferred based upon a) the ubiquitous use of the Internet in modern society for communication and pursuing personal interests, b) the widely documented popularity of jihadi websites,<sup>12</sup> and c) the fact that it will not always be known about or reported). In cases where Internet use was reported there were often multiple uses, therefore the case total adds to more than 51 (although this figure is still used to derive percentages).

The most popular reported use of the Internet overall was to access jihadi websites, download written and visual material and participate in extremist (often password-protected) chat forums. There was a big difference between the pre- vs. post-Iraq generations and only 2 earlier cases (Abbas Boutrab- case #12; and Mohammed Atif Siddique- case #15) were specifically reported to have done this –and Siddique is really more of the latter generation. Meanwhile 17 cases beginning in 2004 or later utilised the Internet in this way and this is likely a reflection of increased availability of violent Islamist websites and propaganda such as videos of beheadings and attacks on coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is also likely a reflection of changes in the law which have made it an offence to possess items such as bomb-making manuals that can be used for terrorist purposes and can be found most readily online.

Almost as common and far more equally divided across the two generations was use of the Net to communicate via email, often sent using codes to disguise the nature of



their content. This is such a widely used system of communication, especially internationally, that it should hardly be surprising to find terrorists also use it. However, it is also noteworthy that despite coded conversations, emails continue to be a point of vulnerability for jihadists and an opportunity for security services to scrutinise their activities. It is perhaps for this reason that Rangzieb Ahmed (who did also use email) was in possession of diaries with the numbers of key al-Qaeda contacts written in invisible ink.

Gathering intelligence or information to assist in carrying out attacks was reported in 22% of cases overall, representing about the same proportion of both the pre- and post-Iraq generations. This demonstrates the eagerness of UK Islamist terrorists to utilise the potential of the Internet from an early stage although it should be noted that online research was generally complemented by other methods as well. Thus e.g. Dhiren Barot et al (case #5) also borrowed books from libraries and engaged in physical surveillance of potential targets, and Abrar Mirza (case #40) drove past the intended target’s home in addition to using Google Earth to view routes to and from the property. In general, online research methods for Islamist terrorists are supplemental to other methods of acquiring knowledge and skills, at least for those who follow through on plans to carry out attacks. Possible exceptions to this generality are cases where they have not established either foreign or domestic associations of any use and therefore must rely on the Internet- this applies to varying extents to Bilal Abdulla and Kafeel Ahmed (case #41), Andrew Ibrahim (case #45) and Nicky Reilly (case #50). Ibrahim was detained before he had the chance to complete his experiments with explosives and the other 2 ultimately failed to construct working bombs. As might be expected, although the Internet presents possibilities, they may remain beyond the grasp of most individuals unless assisted.

Another reported use of the Internet was to create and disseminate propaganda. Surprisingly this was recorded in more early than later cases, but again this reflects the speed at which Islamists ventured into the online world. Thus the jihadi ideologues Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza and Abdulla El-Faisal spread their message and distributed copies of their speeches online, and Hamza even had his own website for his Supporters of Shariah group. The fourth pre-2004 case, Mohammed Atif Siddique, set up his own websites featuring instructions on firearms and explosives and this is similar to the rather more significant websites set up by Younis Tsouli (case #19) and Aabid Khan



(case #25). Tsouli's online activities in particular raised his status to the level of gaining recognition from senior figures in Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's organisation in Iraq and are testament to the potential for the Internet to close distance between jihadis and for otherwise unknowns to establish credibility with organised terrorists. That said, despite ever-increasing access to the Internet along with ever-improving capabilities no other cases have matched Tsouli's achievements.

Among the final uses of the Internet was for group formation and this applies again to Tsouli and Khan. Tsouli set up and operated extremist websites assisted by 2 other individuals, Wassim Mughal and Tariq al-Daour and in fact it seems that he had never met al-Daour, who financed the operation by stealing people's credit card details online (the only specific example of online fundraising). How exactly they made contact and reached such an agreement is unknown but clearly there is potential for likeminded individuals to come together following virtual exchanges. Aabid Khan's case is another example. He is reported to have been active in recruiting others online, among them Hamaad Munshi, a schoolboy who would spend hours on the Web researching such items as suicide vests and then send what he downloaded to Khan. What his and Tsouli's cases demonstrate is that the Internet can be used to find other people of use, whose abilities or willingness to perform certain tasks can strengthen individual's or existing group's abilities. Again though this is rarely reported and face-to-face interaction seems far more important to group dynamics.

As already mentioned the case of Tsouli et al was the only specifically reported instance of online fundraising for terrorism and utilised criminal means to do so- i.e. they did not openly solicit funds for Islamists. Moreover, it is not clear how they spent the £1.8 million that they raised but there is no indication that money was being donated to militant organisations or to charitable front organisations as might be expected, although they are reported to have purchased a range of operational resources such as global positioning satellite devices, plane tickets and mobile phones.<sup>13</sup> There are clearly more opportunities for online fundraising but given that it is not a common dedicated activity among UK Islamist terrorists, it follows that it has been underutilised (at least in cases that we know about so far).

Lastly, 1 case was classed as miscellaneous research in that it did not specifically involve planning attacks. This was Mohammed Ajmal Khan's (case #11) use of the Internet to find equipment and supplies for LeT in Pakistan. This



demonstrates simply that the Internet can of course be used as a supplementary tool for all manner of logistic support in addition to attack planning. It has become an integral part of terrorists’ lives just as it has with the general population.

### **10.2.9 Stated Motivations**

**Table 10.24.** Stated motivations in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Stated Motivations	U/K	Religious/ altruistic/ foreign policy	Religious only	Personal/ Anti-Britain	Anti-US/ Self-serving
Pre-2004	4	10	0	0	1
2004 onwards	10	24	1	1	0
% TOT	27%	67%	2%	2%	2%

Motivations behind the actions of people from of living in the UK convicted for terrorism offences were classified based on reports of things that they had said, written or in some cases recorded on video. They are grouped according to cases rather than individuals because the same sorts of motivation tended to be expressed within groups.

Table 10.24 shows that information was lacking for a relatively large proportion of the sample, precluding reliable judgement. Yet most of the ‘unknown’ cases seemed to share the majority motivations, which involved an unsurprising mix of religious rhetoric, altruistic feelings and a strong distaste for UK foreign policy, especially their support for the American led war on terror and their involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq (found in 67% of cases overall).

Cases which showed slightly different motivational sets tended to be outliers in the sample. Thus the ‘religious only’ case refers to Beheshti et al (case #48) who tried to burn down a publisher’s home for releasing a book deemed offensive to Muslims; the ‘personal/ anti-Britain’ case refers to Malcolm Hodges (case #29) who tried to encourage terrorism against British accountants for a personal grudge; and the ‘anti-US/self-serving’ case refers to Hemant Lakhani (case #10) who was caught in an American sting operation where he tried to sell missiles to someone he believed was an Islamist terrorist. In this way motivations to some extent parallel ideological commitment (see above).

While the findings here are not particularly informative, it is however notable that domestic grievances about life in the UK did not form a significant part of stated



motivations. This does not of course rule out entirely the fact that dissatisfaction with British life (separate to foreign policy) may play some role in terms of predisposing certain individuals to find appeal in Islamist rhetoric, but it clearly is not a direct motivation behind acts of terrorism. This also seems to apply both across case types (e.g. planning attacks, possession of articles useful for terrorism etc) and across generations of jihadis. Obviously individuals acting before the Iraq war were not motivated by this, but they saw Bosnia, Chechnya and Palestine as evidence of Western indifference or antipathy towards Muslims during the 1990's, and from 2001 onwards Afghanistan became the main source of inspiration. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 proved 'the last straw' or catalyst in a number of pre-Iraq cases (e.g. Omar Khyam et al) who had nevertheless been moving towards violence already. It is also thought to be the driving force behind the post-2003 generation of jihadis but is still combined with other symbolic struggles and should be viewed as one of several icons of jihad, which revolve around the same themes of occupied land and injustice.

Finally, there was also a pervasive fascination with violence in the UK sample as evidenced by the propensity for individuals to have collected videos of beheadings, military operations and propaganda videos depicting death and destruction. Moreover, a number of individuals specifically talked about other terrorist attacks, which they wished to emulate. For example, Waheed Mahmood (one of Khyam's associates- case #14) was recorded commenting on the 2004 attacks in Madrid, which killed close to 200 people: "Spain was a beautiful job weren't it? Absolutely beautiful, man, so much impact".<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Mohammed Hamid (case #20) was covertly recorded stating that the 7/7 attacks which killed 52 people were "not even breakfast for [him]"<sup>15</sup> and part of the training he organised included practising the technique for beheading someone using a melon (as the head, not the knife!).<sup>16</sup> The glamorisation of violence and the tendency for individuals to encourage one another confirms the importance of social motives identified in chapter 4, and it should be remembered that they are infused with and amplify more formalised religious and political ideological rhetoric.



### **10.2.10 Outcomes**

**Table 10.25.** Outcomes in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Informants/ undercover operatives	Attacks: Thwarted	Attacks: Failed/ semi- successful	Attacks: Successful
Pre- 2004	0	2	2	1
2004 to 2008	2	6	3	1
Total	2	8	5	2
% TOT (51)	4%	16%	10%	4%

Table 10.25 shows the outcomes in Islamist terrorism cases involving people from or living in the UK from 2001-2008. Just 2 cases in the entire sample (Hamid et al- case #20; and Kazi Rahman- case #24) are reported to have involved undercover officers or informants during the investigation phase, demonstrating that this was not apparently a commonly used tactic. Focussing on terrorist attacks (excluding joining overseas conflicts) in the pre-Iraq generation 2 were thwarted, 2 were failed/ semi-successful (Richard Reid -case #4- who went undetected up until the point of actually trying to ignite explosives onboard a plane and Kamel Bourgass -case #13- who murdered a police officer in an impromptu strike) and 1 attack, the kidnap and murder of Daniel Pearl organised by Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheik (case #9) was successful. By comparison, of 10 planned attacks beginning in the post-Iraq era, 6 were thwarted altogether, 3 were followed to completion but were unsuccessful (the 21/7 attacks –case #18; the London and Glasgow bombings- case #41; and Nicky Reilly’s failed suicide bombing- case #50) and 1 was an outright success (7/7- case #17). The percentages shown are for the sample as a whole, but looking at the ratios of attacks only, 3 out of 5 (60%) in the pre-Iraq generation were able to run to completion whether or not they were successful, compared to 4 of 10 (40%) in the post-Iraq generation. Given increased counter-terrorism measures since 9/11 it is not surprising that the UK authorities’ success rate has improved.



**Table 10.26.** Outcomes for individuals in UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Deceased	Detained without charge	Released without charge	Arrested: prosecuted	Average sentence in years	Life Sentences	Death sentences
Pre-2004	0	1	1	26	15.6	8	1
2004 to 2008	5	0	0	81	5	18	0
Total	5	1	1	107	7.4	26	1
% TOT (114)	4%	1%	1%	94%	N/A	23%	1%

Table 10.26 shows the outcomes for individuals in the sample (note that 114 is used as the total since both outcomes for the 2 repeat offenders are relevant). 107 of 114 offenders were arrested and prosecuted; 4 killed themselves in the 2005 London bombings; 1 (Abu Qatada- case #1) is detained without charge pending deportation proceedings and 1 other (Feroz Abbasi- case #7) was ultimately released from Guantanamo without charge, although he did admit joining the Afghan jihad. Excluding life sentences the overall average sentence is 7.4 years, although it has decreased from 15.6 down to 5 from the pre- to post-Iraq generations, which is a reflection of increased legal powers to prosecute lesser crimes such as possession of articles useful for terrorism, without actually plotting violence. There have also been 8 life sentences in the earlier period compared to 18 in the latter, accounting for 53% vs. 21% in each respective era. Life sentences were handed out almost exclusively for planned violence, although in 2 instances (Mohammed Hamid- case #20; and Rangzieb Ahmed- case #26) they were given for providing terrorism training and membership of al-Qaeda, respectively. Life sentences do vary considerably in Britain though and include a minimum stipulated sentence- Hamid received the lowest of these at 7.5 years, while the maximum was 40 (Richard Reid, who was tried in the US received life plus 110 years).

In addition, 1 person (Omar Sheikh) was given a death sentence in Pakistan; 1 other (Kevin Gardner- case #34) was given an indefinite secure hospital order and Shella Roma (case #44) was given a 3 year community order for distributing a leaflet she had written encouraging people to take part in violent jihad.



The specific charges varied considerably but among the most serious were conspiracy to murder and cause explosions, and preparing for acts of terrorism, followed by soliciting others to undertake such acts, stirring up racial hatred, and at the lowest end of the spectrum collecting or possessing articles or documents likely to be of use to terrorists (which formed the main basis of prosecution for 20 individuals all in different cases and was also applied as a secondary charge for numerous others). 3 individuals all in the same group (Beheshti et al- case # 48) were not charged under terrorism or related legislation and were instead prosecuted for arson (which also highlights this as a borderline case for inclusion in the sample). Finally, there were few simultaneous convictions for related criminal behaviour. Among them were fraud (Tariq al-Daour- case #19) money laundering (Baghdad and Meziane- case #6; Hemant Lakhani- case #10) and breach of the peace (Mohammed Atif Siddique- case #15).

### **10.3 Summary and Conclusions**

Before summarising the current findings it should be re-emphasised that the available data are of poor quality and often lacking. Nevertheless, a concerted effort has been made to analyse what is available in a systematic manner focussing on pre-determined variables of interest. The results should be viewed as sets of indications rather than hard facts and they will be subject to change as new developments take place (although at the time of writing, very similar figures have been reported on several variables in a comparable study of Islamist terrorism in the UK, thus lending support to the current project<sup>17</sup>).

In terms of geographical distribution of Islamist terrorism in the UK, there are 3 main hotspots of activity. In descending order these are London and surrounding areas, the North West and the West Midlands. The fact that the same areas have tended to produce the UK's Islamist terrorism cases over time offers support to the social transmission hypothesis, which emphasises the importance of localised interaction and social proximity to sustain Islamist terrorism as a counter-cultural movement. The terrorism hotspots also correspond with the distribution of the British Muslim population, which should not be surprising given that Islamist terrorists will of course choose to live among Muslims.

There is nothing particularly remarkable about the demographic background of Islamist terrorists living in or from the UK and nothing about them as a whole which



dramatically distinguishes them from samples in previous studies (aside from their nationality or location). 78% of the sample held British nationality either as a first or second nationality and many were of Pakistani or South Asian descent. Individuals were aged between 26 and 27.5 at the time of offending; most had at least a basic level of education although occupation-wise a sizeable proportion (around a fifth) was unemployed immediately prior to offending and most were in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. About 40% of the sample was married; 82% were 'born' Muslims and 16% were converts. Another 16% of the sample was reported to have prior, unrelated criminal records and only a very small proportion had mental health issues (although it was slightly higher than expected). Together these results strengthen the view that psychopathology is irrelevant to understanding terrorism, and support explanations based upon vicarious and relative, as opposed to absolute deprivation.

There was not enough reliable information to be able to make confident judgements about processes of radicalisation in the sample, but overall face-to-face interaction seemed to play the most significant role, quite often complemented by accessing jihadi videos and other materials online. Few individuals were classed as having radicalised entirely online and among those that were, most were part of the post-Iraq generation of Islamist militants and were young and impressionable. On the whole, social explanations of terrorism focussing upon group dynamics are supported.

The overall average offence-range was 1.44 years, although this does not include previous radicalisation. Moreover, offence ranges have shortened over time and the average in the post-Iraq generation is less than a year. Average group size was 2.3 and whilst a large proportion of the sample was prosecuted as 'lone' individuals, in reality both groups and individuals were often situated in wider networks of like-minded Islamists. However, more genuinely lone actors have offended in the post-2004 period, which is likely a reflection of wider accessibility of Islamist propaganda. Leadership within groups was extremely difficult to identify or characterise but appears to be largely based on informal consensus and abilities rather than formalised hierarchies. Again, this supports mutual patterns of influence and social competition as drivers of terrorist behaviour.

Available data was insufficient to establish a reliable system of classification for ideological commitment except to say that most individuals unsurprisingly lie on a continuum somewhere between 'wannabes' and 'hardcore'. Although hardly



conclusive, this adds some support to the observation that involvement in terrorism is not simply a matter of absorbing ideology. A minority of others sit on the periphery of genuine Islamist terrorism and can be classed as criminal opportunists, or somehow ‘troubled’ individuals or social misfits.

Behaviourally, active pursuit of violence formed the single largest category of cases, accounting for 33% of the sample and most of these involved planned ‘traditional’ terrorist attacks with just 2 involving the desire to join overseas conflicts. Combined, possession of terrorist propaganda and instructional material plus promotion of jihad (which in the post-Iraq era often involved online distribution of such materials) applied to 47% of cases. The remainder mostly consisted of a handful of cases involving preparation for violence through training at home or abroad plus active facilitation of jihad. Fundraising for terrorism was extremely rare.

Overall, a mixed focus of activities (i.e. allegiance to global jihad with some indication that domestic operations are also viable) has been the most common among UK Islamist terrorists, seen in 47% of cases. This has remained strong over time but in the post-Iraq generation a focus on jihad at home has become increasingly prevalent, from 13% to 33% of cases, and at the same time related international travel has decreased from 63% to 25% of cases. This reflects the increased difficulty in making connections with organised terrorists overseas and greater willingness to conduct operations on the domestic stage.

In planned terrorist attacks the most popular choice of weaponry was explosives and there was a general acceptance among UK militants that civilians present a legitimate target. Choice of weaponry appears to be limited to availability and the demands of the operation- those conducting more targeted or smaller-scale attacks also showed a willingness to use readily available weapons such as knives or fire.

43% of all cases involved contact with foreign terrorists, although this decreased significantly from the pre-Iraq to post-Iraq generation (defined here as cases beginning prior to 2004 and 2004-2008, thus counting 2003 in the earlier generation to allow time for individuals to radicalise and act). This lends considerable support to the general observation that ‘home-grown’ jihadis are less likely to have links to their foreign counterparts. As for the location of such links, Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular are by far the most common both before and after the invasion of Iraq and this has been facilitated by the ethnic heritage of many of those involved in Islamist militancy in



Britain. More individuals had global terrorist connections as part of multi-national militant networks in the earlier generation and those that have such links in more recent years tend to be virtual in nature. Domestic terrorist associations remain popular.

The most often reported use of the Internet has been accessing jihadi websites and downloading material, although this applies primarily to the post-Iraq generation which is congruent with the proliferation of online activity of Islamist militants worldwide. Other uses which show stronger use over time include communication, researching information to assist in attacks and distribution of jihadi material. Online fundraising has been extremely rare and as noted above, so has entirely online 'self-radicalisation' (again verifying the importance of social interaction).

The available information on stated motivations is generally poor, however the vast majority of Islamist terrorists from or living in the UK seem to be most directly motivated by the same generic factors as similar others around the world- namely what they perceive to be a Western conspiracy against Muslims and in particular the presence of UK and US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. In accordance with explanations of terrorism which emphasise rebellion and revenge,<sup>18</sup> social motives and a fascination with violence also permeate these direct motivators.

Finally, very few British terrorism investigations have involved informants or undercover police officers and individuals under surveillance have thus independently progressed in their ideology and conspiracies. 94% of the sample has been successfully prosecuted and have received sentences ranging from a 3 year community order to life in prison.

Given that Britain has been touted as one of the main centres of Islamist terrorism in the Western world it is not surprising to find that there have been 51 active cases between 2001 and 2008. However, many of these cases –especially more recently- have involved relatively minor offences such as possession of articles useful for terrorism without further plans being alleged. This is important for understanding the counter-culture of Islamist terrorism which seems to have built up in certain parts of Britain as well as the way in which authorities control it- preferring early intervention in most cases rather than allowing individuals to progress further towards violence.

A significant proportion of cases are still concerned with perpetrating violence at home (indeed, a focus on domestic operations has increased over time and joining overseas conflicts is notable by its absence) plus a minority of recent cases have



involved support from organised terrorists in Pakistan, making them a severe threat to national security. However, it must be recognised that these *are* the minority and that the context within Britain has changed significantly since the hey-days of ‘Londonistan’. On the one hand there have been hints of resurgent British-Pakistani organised networks while on the other, 2009 and 2010 have so far been quiet on the counter-terrorism front. It seems that for the foreseeable future low-level terrorism offences will simmer away, occasionally punctuated by amateur attempts at domestic attacks or even rarer high-profile large-scale conspiracies with links to Pakistan.



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**Chapter 11**  
**Cross-Comparison and Conclusions**

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### **Overview**

In this, the final chapter, the results from the US and UK are systematically compared. Overall there are more similarities than differences in demographic profiles, offence date ranges, group characteristics, processes of radicalisation, use of the Internet and stated motivations. There are tentative indications that there may be differences in degree of ideological commitment, and there are more certain behavioural differences in terms of what individuals from each country are doing in furtherance of Islamist terrorism and whether they are focussed more on overseas or domestic jihad. There are also important investigative differences that have an important effect on terrorism in the US and UK. These results are discussed in detail and implications for counter-terrorism are considered.



## **11. Comparative Analysis of Islamist Terrorism in the US and UK, 2001-2008**

This study began by outlining the research questions and variables of interest and introduced the reader to the history of Islamist terrorism and how it has developed in Western countries (chapters 1-5). Chapters 6 and 7 presented historical overviews of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK and in chapter 8 these countries were compared based on existing current accounts of the ‘home-grown’ problems that they both face, and the differences that are posited to exist between the two. In chapters 9 and 10 Islamist terrorism cases occurring in each country between 2001 and 2008 were systematically analysed using pre-determined variables listed in chapter 2. Here these results are compared in order to clarify any differences that may exist and any implications these might have for counter-terrorism. The ‘messy’ nature of the data (relatively small samples with frequently missing information and bias created by positive reporting) combined with the need for qualitative elaboration for many of the variables does not support the use of formal statistical tests for assessing the *statistical* significance of any differences. Such tests were thus not employed and the discussion is focussed upon noticeable, manifest differences from a pragmatic standpoint- this enables a flexible and qualified approach, which is appropriate to the data.

### **11.1 Statistical Summaries**

The US sample consisted of 46 cases (91 individuals) compared to 51 cases (112 individuals) in the UK. In absolute terms there have thus been 5 more cases and 21 more individuals involved in Islamist terrorism in the UK from 2001-2008, given the sampling criteria defined in chapter 2. If the numbers of individuals are expressed as figures relative to overall population sizes of 300 million for the US and 61 million for the UK (see chapter 8) this results in a UK rate that is 6.1 times higher than in the US.<sup>1</sup> If expressed as rates relative to respective Muslim population sizes of 2.35 million in the US and 2 million in the UK, the latter is still 1.5 times higher (and very similar rates are found using case numbers instead of individuals).<sup>2</sup> The given wisdom that there has been more Islamist terrorism in the UK than in the US is thus confirmed regardless of how it is measured and, since a wide range of cases are included in the sample in an effort to be as thorough as possible (rather than merely considering cases involving active pursuit of violence, as in chapter 8) these figures can be considered a more accurate reflection of the size of that difference for the defined period.



**Figure 11.1.** Number of Islamist terrorism cases/individuals beginning each year in the US and UK.

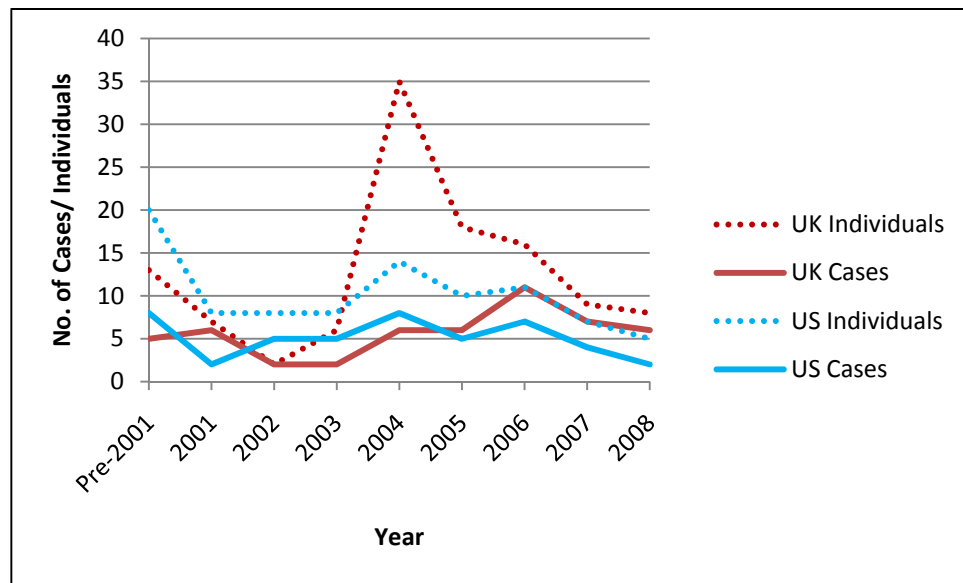


Figure 11.1 shows the numbers of individuals and cases beginning offending each year in the US and UK (translating into average yearly case-rates of 4.75 vs. 5.75 respectively). It is interesting to note that there were more US cases beginning prior to 2001 which continued over past September 11<sup>th</sup> of that year<sup>3</sup> and the US case-rate was actually higher than the UK's in absolute terms up until 2005-2006. It has only been in the last 3 years from 2006 to 2008 that the UK clearly overtook America in sheer numbers of cases, although the large increase in numbers of individuals becoming active around the invasion of Iraq from 2003 to 2004 is also significant (matched to a lesser degree in the US). The graph also reveals that in both countries there was a slight increase in the number of terrorism cases beginning after a successful attack took place at home- thus the US shows a slight increase from 2001-2002 and the UK shows a similar increase from 2005 to 2006. Of course a multitude of factors are at play but it is possible that high-profile successful attacks act to directly spur on other Islamist militants within the same country, hence offering support to the 'contagion hypothesis' of terrorism.<sup>4</sup> Finally it is important to note that the apparent decline from 2007 to 2008 in both countries is to an extent artificial since reliable data on all cases potentially starting in 2008 is not yet available, pending legal outcomes. Looking at alleged cases it seems that there has been a spike in activity in the US in 2009 into 2010, while the UK has been comparatively quiet.



## 11.2 Geographical Distribution

**Figure 11.2.** Location of Islamist terrorism cases in the US and UK (2001-2008).



Islamist terrorism has been a primarily East coast phenomenon in the US, and in the UK it has been mostly limited to 3 hotspots of activity centred around London, the North West and the West Midlands. The ‘capitals’ of Islamist terrorism in both countries are located in key cities with symbolic value in terms of places to attack—namely New York City and London. These are the main cities where Islamist terrorists from overseas originally ‘set up shop’ and this offers some support for the social transmission hypothesis, which states that the presence of greater numbers of (or highly influential) Islamist terrorists in a given location increases the likelihood of similar individuals being found nearby over time as a function of localised (often face-to-face) social interaction creating a subculture of militancy.

Yet this trend has been much stronger in the UK than in the US. London (excluding surrounding counties) accounts for 57 individuals of 112 (51%) of the UK sample, compared to New York, which accounts for 10 of 91 (11%) of the US sample<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, Islamist terrorism in the US has spread across 21 different states compared to the 3 main areas in the UK.

The distribution of Islamist terrorists in both countries parallels the distribution of their Muslim populations to varying degrees—this appears to be stronger in the UK



but this may be a product of the fact that more reliable information on the Muslim population is available and because the smaller geographical area involved necessarily limits available alternative locations. In either case it should not be surprising, given that Islamist terrorists are themselves Muslims.

### **11.3 Demographic Profiles**

#### ***Gender, Nationality and Age***

**Table 11.1.** Gender, nationality, legal status and average age of Islamist terrorists in the US and UK (2001-2008).

	% Male	% Home 1st nationality	% Home 2nd nationality	Average years in country*	Illegal entry	Average age at start of offence	Average age at end of offence
US	98%	46%	30%	10.3	6%	27.9	30.1
UK	98%	64%	14%	11.6	8%	26.1	27.5

\*Applies to those who do not have American/British as 1<sup>st</sup> nationality.

Table 11.1 shows that in both countries those becoming involved in Islamist terrorism were overwhelmingly males. The percentage of each sample holding ‘home’ nationality (American or British) either as a first or second nationality was 76% in the US compared to 78% in the UK, however there was a stronger tendency in the UK for this to be their first nationality, i.e. for people to have been born there. The larger proportion of individuals in the US sample who are immigrants (albeit naturalised or with permanent residency status) may contribute to persistent perceptions that terrorist in the US ‘come from abroad’ rather than developing at home. Looking at the pre- vs. post-Iraq divide<sup>i</sup> 19/44 (43%) of all individuals in the US in the earlier period were specifically confirmed to have been born there, compared to 21/47 (45%) in the latter period. The corresponding figures in the UK are 13/28 (46%) and 46/84 (55%). The tendency for Islamist terrorists in each country to have been born there is clearly not new, although it has increased over time (more so in the UK).

<sup>i</sup> Defined here as cases beginning prior to 2004, and those beginning in 2004 to 2008 inclusive- thus counting 2003 itself as an ‘incubation period’ allowing time for individuals to react and take action.



Among those who were not American or British by birth, the average time spent in each country was 10.3 and 11.6 years- thus showing high levels of familiarity with the ‘host’ country in both cases. Given that radicalisation did not often apparently begin as far back as a decade prior to offending, it appears that this generally occurred whilst individuals were living in the US or UK.

A diverse range of national identities were represented in both samples but Pakistanis were predominant among first and second other nationalities. However, this was far more pronounced in the UK where at least a quarter –and seemingly closer to half<sup>6</sup>- of the overall sample had roots in Pakistan, compared to about a fifth of the US. This difference may be a contributing factor behind differential rates of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK and also helps explain the continued ability of British militants to make contact with their counterparts at the epicentre of global Islamist terrorism.

Table 11.1 also shows that the vast majority of both samples had entered the country by legal means and that average ages were also very similar, although the UK sample was younger overall by a couple of years. Compared to Bakker’s<sup>7</sup> European study in which the average age at the time of arrest was 27.3, the UK age is somewhat closer than in the US. Finally, average age has decreased by about 2 years in both cases from the pre- to post-Iraq generation.

### *Education*

**Table 11.2.** Education completed of Islamist terrorists living in or from the US and UK (2001-2008). Percentages shown refer to totals.

Education completed	Unknown	Did not finish high school	High school	University
US	43%	4%	27%	25%
UK	52%	3%	29%	17%

Levels of completed education in the US and UK among each sample appear to be roughly comparable overall, with slightly more individuals in the US having completed university education. It should be reiterated that most of the ‘unknown’ categories in each most likely do have at least a basic level of education (high school) but this generally goes un-reported because it is of little interest. It should also be noted that there is a fair amount of variation within categories in terms of levels of high school



and university education and the data here provides only a rough basis for comparison. With that in mind, educational attainment in both countries has been lower in the post-Iraq generation although (with the exception of university education in the US, which has dropped from 36% to 15% of all individuals in each period) this decrease has been small. Ultimately, neither sample is vastly different in terms of educational ‘profile’ in comparison with one another or as compared to Bakker’s sample of European Islamist terrorists.<sup>8</sup>

### *Occupation*

**Table 11.3.** Occupation of Islamist terrorists living in or from the US and UK (2001-2008).

Occupation	High School	Prisoner	Un-employed	Student	Unskilled	Semi-Skilled	Skilled
US (n=81)	1%	1%	1%	22%	23%	37%	14%
UK (n=85)	2%	2%	24%	13%	26%	27%	6%

Table 11.3 shows the occupational distribution of each sample, expressed as percentages of people for whom there were data. The results indicate a sizeable difference in that more people in the UK were unemployed immediately prior to offending, less people were students and fewer were in semi-skilled or skilled occupations. Both samples showed a slight overall decline in occupational standing from the pre- to post-Iraq generation of offenders and the differences between the two have persisted, except regarding skilled occupation, which dropped in the US from 9 to 2 (5%*n*) but rose from 0 to 5 (8%*n*) in the UK. Overall we can conclude that Islamist terrorists from or living in the UK are generally slightly worse off than their American counterparts in terms of their jobs, while Bakker’s European sample lies somewhere in between. Recalling the fact that levels of educational achievement were not hugely different, this points to greater levels of underachievement and social disadvantage in the British sample, although if the trend towards fewer students becoming involved in the UK continues then both educational and occupational differences may be expected to widen. While these issues do not of course fully explain why people turn to Islamist terrorism, they may nevertheless contribute as predisposing risk factors and form part of the reason for higher levels of militancy in Britain.



Finally, of the few individuals in each sample who could be classed as ‘full-time’ terrorists seemingly garnering an income through their activities, almost all officially began offending prior to 2004 except Rangzieb Ahmed (UK case #26) who nevertheless had been involved with Islamist terrorists well before then. Paid operatives of foreign terrorist organisations from or living in the US and UK are clearly a rarity.

### *Faith*

**Table 11.4.** Religious faith of individuals involved in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Faith	Born Muslim	Convert	Religious offshoot	Non-Muslim
US (n=89)	65%	27%	11%	2%
UK (n=99)	82%	16%	0	2%

Table 11.4 shows the religious background of each sample. Based on the available information there were more converts in the American sample and also more individuals who subscribed to a ‘religious offshoot’ ideology, blending violent Sunni Islam with some other form of religion or ideology yet pursuing similar goals. In the UK the vast majority were ‘born Muslims’ by way of ethnic heritage although the degree that they –or their counterparts in the US- were practising Muslims throughout their lives varied immensely. There was not enough data to reliably quantify, but it was certainly not uncommon for it to be reported that individuals became increasingly religiously observant prior to offending, but as pointed out by Sageman<sup>9</sup> this is not so much of a cause of involvement in Islamist terrorism but a consequence, i.e. an indicator of radicalisation in these individuals.



### *Marital Status*

**Table 11.5.** Marital status of individuals involved in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Percentages shown refer to totals.

Marital Status	Unknown	Single	Married/engaged	Separated/divorced	Other <sup>ii</sup>
US	33%	15%	43%	9%	0
UK	35%	17%	41%	2%	6%

Marital status in the 2 samples, as depicted in Table 11.5 above, is overall very similar, with just over 40% of the total being confirmed as being married at the time of offending, and taking into account differences in the way percentages were reported, these figures are comparable to those found by Sageman and Bakker.<sup>10</sup> Given the tendency towards positive-reporting, i.e. reporting the presence but not the absence of interesting information, it is likely that most of the rest of the ‘unknowns’ are ‘single’ or unmarried. In line with Sageman’s posited changes in the post-Iraq generation of jihadis, the proportion of married individuals in both samples has declined. However, this has been more dramatic in the US, dropping from 63% of all individuals in the pre-Iraq era to 23% since then. This compares to shifts in the UK from 46% of all pre-Iraq individuals to 37% of all since then. There is no clear explanation for this difference, although increasing numbers of young Somali-American refugees joining the jihad back home, none of whom in the sample seem to be married, may be a contributory factor.

### *Criminal Record*

**Table 11.6.** Criminal records of individuals involved in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Criminal records	% Total	Theft/Dishonesty	Violent	Other
US	27%	4%	28%	68%
UK	16%	33%	72%	44%

There was little available information on previous unrelated criminal records. Table 11.6 shows that these were reported in 27% of the US sample vs. 16% of the UK sample. Breaking down the offences for which individuals were convicted, the

<sup>ii</sup> Note that the ‘other’ category refers to 1 individual who was a single parent and 3 whose children were mentioned but there was no further information on family status.



individuals in the US were convicted for the same types of crime although some were multiple offenders- hence the percentages on the right hand side of the table add to 100, while in the UK there was more variation within individuals, with some having been convicted of different types of offences. The most common types of offence in the US were traffic offences, applying to 36% of those with convictions (included under ‘other’) while only 28% had a criminal record for a violent offence/s. This contrasts with the British sample, where 72% of those with convictions had such a record (including 1 for indecent assault). Overall these results carry little meaning, except to say that they add support to similar findings from other studies,<sup>11</sup> and that a large majority of Islamist terrorists in the US and UK are not previously convicted criminals. Among those that do have convictions there is no unique criminal profile that might distinguish them from other criminals.

Finally, no-one in the US and just 2 people in the UK had previous terrorism-related convictions, although the repeat offences in the UK should be viewed in relation to the type of offence (making public speeches in favour of terrorism) and the fact that the individuals involved were prosecuted first for the most recent crime and then in retrospect for their earlier crimes. It was thus not a case of being punished for one offence, getting out and re-offending. Terrorism (thanks in no small part to the lengthy sentences involved and strict conditions on release) has so far proven to be a one-time venture up until the point of prosecution.

### ***Mental Health***

**Table 11.7.** Mental health of individuals involved in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Mental Health	Unknown	No Issues	Low IQ	Questioned at trial	History of illness
US	87%	7%	1%	2%	2%
UK	90%	0	1%	4%	5%

Only a few individuals in either sample was confirmed to have any kind of mental health problems, confirming the findings from other studies, which conclude that this is not a driving factor behind the actions of Islamist terrorists. It is worth noting that the percentage of people with established or at least questionable mental health problems in the UK is double that of the US, but the samples are too small for this to be statistically significant and again neither sample should be understood in these terms.



### **11.4 Offence Date Range**

**Table 11.8.** Offence date ranges in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Offence date range	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Mode
US	<1 week	17 years	2.59 years	1 year or less
UK	<1 week	8 years	1.44 years	1 year or less

Exact offending ranges are very difficult to classify and often rely on officially defined ranges as dictated in the courts, which of course rely on evidential standards of proof. They also do not capture earlier periods of radicalisation, which are even more difficult to classify- and it should be emphasised that individuals' involvement in militant Islamism (e.g. attending particular mosques, associating with like-minded others) is not confined within the defined offence range.

Looking at Table 11.8, the data indicates that while the offence period for the majority of both samples was about a year or less, the US cases on average had a longer time-span and the maximum range was also considerably higher. It should be noted, however, that the offence ranges of Abu Qatada (UK case #1) and Abu Hamza (UK case #3) are rather conservatively defined and in all likelihood rival the longest case in the US (Christopher Paul- US case #1). Moreover, in both samples it was the earlier cases which preceded the 'war on terror' that involved the longest offence ranges and they have shortened considerably in the post-Iraq era. Thus the average offence range in the US has shortened from 3.95 to 1.4 years and in the UK it has reduced from 2.9 to 0.8 years. To reiterate, these figures are indications rather than exact statistics but nevertheless demonstrate a clear reduction in the offending 'life expectancy' of Islamist terrorists in the US and UK, which can be attributed to heightened counter-terrorism measures since 2001. There are likely multiple reasons why the offence range is even shorter in the UK; however chief among them may be that a considerable number of people convicted for Islamist terrorism offences there are arrested at an early stage and prosecuted for minor 'possession' offences. By contrast, American authorities often dispatch undercover officers or informers to collude with identified suspects and nurture their growing extremism over time to see exactly how far people will go.



### **11.5 Radicalisation**

**Table 11.9.** Radicalisation classification for individuals involved in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Radicalisation	Unknown	Individual	Virtual	Social	Mixed	Not radicalised
US	82%	1%	1%	8%	5%	2%
UK	75%	1%	6%	16%	0	2%

The most striking finding with regards to radicalisation is that reliable information is lacking for the vast majority of individuals. This is unfortunate given a general interest in this phase of Islamist terrorists’ lives and the potential that this information might hold for informing counter-terrorism strategies. But given that individuals mostly do not attract any attention until they begin (or rather cease) offending it should not be surprising. Because of the extent of this limitation in the data any apparent differences between the two samples cannot be considered meaningful.

At present the indications are that face-to-face social interaction is the most prevalent –and perhaps most powerful- mechanism of radicalisation but that it is often supplemented by reference to online propaganda and downloaded materials such as video-footage from conflict zones etc. Over time and as jihadis have become more internet-savvy, such material has become increasingly widespread but it is still rare for anyone to be radicalised entirely online without some form of interaction, and even where this appears to be the case there is still often ‘virtual’ social support via chat-rooms and secure forums.<sup>12</sup> Those that are radicalised primarily online appear to mostly be relatively young and immature or slightly ‘troubled’, socially awkward individuals, although this does not preclude them from establishing contacts with other militants or from advancing to stages of ‘jihadisation’.



## 11.6 Group Characteristics

### *Immediate Group Size*

**Table 11.10.** Immediate group size in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Immediate Group Size	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Mode	Change in Average
US	1	11	2.4	1	Decrease by 1.3
UK	1	10	2.3	1	Increase by 0.4

Table 11.10 shows that overall, the two samples are remarkably similar in terms of group size, the most frequent being 1 (which applies to 57% of the US sample, compared to 63% in the UK). As discussed in the previous chapters though, the majority of ‘lone’ individuals in both cases were in fact part of wider militant networks either at home and/or abroad. Group size as defined here is thus more of a measure of how people have been prosecuted rather than an accurate portrayal of their social situation with regard to offending.

There is also a notable difference between the US and UK in that the former has shown a decrease in average immediate group size from the pre- to post-Iraq generations, from 3.1 to 1.8, while in the UK it has increased slightly from 2 to 2.4. Part of the reason for this may be that given the smaller geographical area that Islamist militants occupy in the UK it is more likely that individuals there are going to interact and form co-offending groups with like-minded others on the domestic stage (indeed there has been an increase in named domestic terrorist associations in Britain- see below). Despite this difference it has still been far more common in both countries for genuinely lone actors, i.e. those who are not part of any wider network, and those acting alone with regards to offending behaviour, to be found in the post-Iraq generation. Among the likely contributory factors are wider public awareness exposing more people to the Islamist cause, shared sympathies (e.g. disagreement with foreign policy) and a difficulty for some –especially those who are socially awkward- to entreaty others to join them in such risky behaviour in light of consistent successes for security services.



### *Leadership*

**Table 11.11.** Leadership in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Leadership	Unknown	None	Leader only	Spiritual sanctioner only	Both/ mixed	Top-down influence out-with group	Overseas leaders/ sanctioners
US	39%	22%	0	0	9%	4%	26%
UK	25%	41%	20%	6%	2%	2%	10%

There was not enough information available to reliably identify and classify leadership for quite large proportions of each sample. Leadership also appeared to be lacking altogether in 22% of the US sample and 41% of the UK, which largely referred to individuals acting alone. It was identified in different forms in 41% of US cases and 40% of the UK while the remainder could not be classified due to lacking information.

Where leadership was present within groups the comparative tendency in the US (4 cases) was for one or more individuals to fulfil both operational leadership and religious sanctioning roles, while in the UK (10 cases) within group leaders were primarily operational. In part this may be because the sanctioners in the UK sample (Qatada, Hamza and El-Faisal) were jihadi ideologues who effectively performed this function on a global scale without necessarily directly interacting with people whom they influenced. In essence, this suggests that British jihadis could more easily find religious justification for their actions from individuals who held very prominent positions in Islamist subcultures –e.g. by attending a sermon or public lecture- without those individuals being part of their group. Many in the US would of course be aware of such iconic figures (indeed, Americans such as Earnest Ujaama came to the UK to follow Abu Hamza<sup>13</sup>) but it may ultimately be more compelling to hear such messages if they are consistently delivered at a more personal level. In fact, the leader-sanctioners in the US (Altimimi and Royer; al-Saoub; Kevin James and Levar Washington; and Narseale Batiste) were terrorist ‘entrepreneurs’,<sup>14</sup> responsible for their own groups appearing in the first place. It is quite possible that Islamist terrorists in general in both of these countries draw religious justification for their actions in a remote way via books or the Internet and thus it cannot always be attributed to particular group members.

Another interesting difference was that overseas leadership was more common in the US (12 cases vs. 5). The nature of overseas leadership was also slightly different



in that in US cases it was more often a case of individuals joining overseas conflicts and thus being absorbed into militant hierarchies abroad, while in the UK it was more often 'remote' leadership from abroad, directing operatives in the UK or elsewhere. In part this seems due to a greater desire within the American sample to join overseas conflicts (more below) but to some extent is also related to the stage at which individuals are arrested, or whether or not they come home. If they go overseas and die or are arrested there then leadership doesn't get the chance to extend to the remote stage, i.e. where individuals return home but maintain contact and still defer to overseas 'handlers'. Hence the exact relationship between any set of individuals is subject to change according to developing circumstance and opportunity and should not be visualised as being rigid.

It may be tempting to place greater emphasis on the fact that leadership was apparently absent from many cases since this questions assertions by Silber and Bhatt<sup>15</sup> and Petter Nesser<sup>16</sup> that this is a vital component of Islamist terrorism. The evidence here certainly does refute the notion that leaders are *necessary* for Islamist terrorism to occur but it should also be noted that they are very difficult to reliably identify and may be more common than the data here suggests. Leadership among American and British jihadis is not formally structured and overtly obvious, but is more often manifest through informally arrived at consensus and naturally occurring social order dictated by individual associations, personalities and abilities.



## **11.7 Operational Activity**

### ***Ideological Commitment***

**Table 11.12.** Ideological commitment of individuals involved in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Ideological commitment	Other	Troubled individuals (Islamist)	Social terrorists/ wannabes	Hardcore/ Social	Hardcore	Unknown
US	17%	2%	29%	14%	16%	21%
UK	6%	1%	10%	25%	21%	38%

The classification of individuals who can be regarded as peripheral to Islamist terrorism-proper (shown above under the heading of ‘other’) was relatively easy and the distinction between these individuals and the majority of each sample, who varied in their commitment from ‘wannabes’ to ‘hardcore’, carries the greatest level of certainty. In the US, peripheral individuals included ideological offshoots (Kevin James’ JIS gang –US case #25- and the ‘Liberty City’ plotters- US case #33), criminal opportunists and seemingly ‘troubled’ criminals motivated by a combination of monetary and personal concerns. In the UK there were no ideological innovators to speak of but there were comparable criminal elements plus individuals who were involved with Islamists but focussed on a single issue (attempted arson of a publisher’s home for releasing a book deemed offensive to Muslims- UK case # 48) as well as one person who defied classification. All of the ‘troubled’, usually lone individuals with a history of personal problems (whether Islamists or not) were found in the post-Iraq generation in both countries, again demonstrating the wider variety of people attracted to terrorism as a result of greater public awareness.

As for the bulk of each sample who adhered to ‘traditional’ Islamist terrorist ideology to varying degrees, the dividing lines between image-conscious or largely socially-motivated individuals and those who were more ideologically committed, ‘hardcore’ militants are more difficult to discern. Factors which were taken into consideration were things that people said, the nature of their offending, length of time involved in militancy and known associations. Examples of wannabes include Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee (US case #27) and the Iqbal brothers (UK



case #38). Examples of hardcore terrorists include Christopher Paul (US case #1) and Mohammed Siddique Khan (UK case #17). Placing individuals in either category should be considered an indication that they lie towards a particular end of the continuum from less to more extreme in their beliefs and commitment to Islamist ideology. Those who were classed as 'hardcore/social' lay somewhere in the middle of these two extremes, while there was not enough information to classify the 'unknowns'.

More people in the US seemed to be wannabe or social terrorists compared to the UK but the reasons for why this might be are not immediately obvious. A plausible explanation might be to do with there being fewer connections with foreign terrorists in the US but in fact this is not the case (see below). Alternative possibilities are that it reflects a qualitative difference in the way that people from or living in America and Britain approach Islamist terrorism, or that (in the absence of multiple assessors) it is an artefact of subjective judgement since the system of classification here is only loosely defined. Similarly, there is little obvious reason as to why the proportion of individuals in the US in the medium category of ideological commitment is slightly fewer, other than these possibilities.

While the distribution of the low-to-medium ideological categories is thus somewhat confused, the percentage of hardcore militants in each sample is a little closer (16% vs. 21%). As already acknowledged, it is far from a steadfast system of categorisation, however the fact that a minority were classed as hardcore is at least congruent with Nesser's assertion that the majority of jihadists are 'drifters' who find themselves involved in terrorism through circumstance and social ties rather than ingrained dedication to ideological tenets.<sup>17</sup> The findings here further correspond with general observations about the nature of 'home-grown' terrorism, which tend to emphasise 'amateur' qualities, in that there has been a relative reduction in the proportion of hardcore terrorists in both countries over time. In the US 30% of pre-Iraq offenders were classed as hardcore compared to 4% of post-Iraq offenders while the respective figures in the UK were 29% vs. 18%. The fact that both samples have moved in the same direction can be taken as limited support for the reliability of judgements on this particular category while the fact that the reduction has been larger in the US again suggests a possible qualitative difference between the two countries. In assessing whether or not this is the case it will help to examine behavioural differences in offending.



### *Behavioural Classification*

**Table 11.13.** Behavioural classification of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).\*

Behavioural classification	Possession of terrorist articles/propaganda	Promoting jihad	Facilitating: Active support**	Facilitating/fundraising
US	0	9%	6%	13%
UK	22%	25%	12%	8%
Behavioural classification	Offering services	Preparation for violence	Active pursuit of violence	Miscellaneous
US	24%	24%	39%	2%
UK	2%	10%	33%	2%

\*Percentages add to more than 100 due to multiple functions within groups.

\*\*1 US case (2%) within this category was classed as a top-down facilitator only. 3 UK cases (6%) were classed as top-down *and* active facilitators.

One of the main points of interest in this study is what exactly people are doing to pursue Islamist terrorism, and whether or not there any differences between the US and UK. Table 11.13 goes some way towards answering this by showing the percentage of cases in each sample according to different behavioural classifications and (notwithstanding overlap between categories) straight away there are apparent dissimilarities. Although almost every individual in both samples had articles or documents relating to terrorism in their possession, the ‘possession’ category here refers to cases where this was the only offence, and this accounts for a fifth of the UK sample (11 cases) but none in the US. The reason for this is that British authorities make use of provisions in the law that enable early intervention and prosecution of lesser offences while the Americans tend to seek to identify specific conspiracies and often dispatch informants and undercover officers to facilitate this (hence the average sentence in the US is also longer- see below).

The second difference is that there have been proportionally more cases of promoting jihad in the UK than the US (13 cases involving 23 individuals vs. 4 cases, 4 individuals). There was a range of different promotional activities represented, from ‘wannabes’ like Mohammed Atif Siddique (UK case #15) making their own websites to hardcore Islamist militants like Adam Gadahn (US case #11) or Abu Hamza (UK case



#3) speaking on behalf of terrorist organisations or issuing fatwas. There was even one case of promoting jihad for personal, non-ideological reasons (Malcolm Hodges- UK case #29). However, the vast majority of ‘promoters’ in both countries did show a significant level of ideological commitment (3 individuals in the US and 21 in the UK). These results therefore add an element of support to the ideological distinction discussed above, whereby fewer individuals in the US were classed as hardcore/social or hardcore terrorists, since promoting the jihadi cause (‘generalised recruitment’) generally involves a degree of ideological commitment.

Active facilitation of jihad –a ‘hands on’ approach to fulfilling organisational tasks and goals- was also more prevalent in the UK, occurring in 6 cases there (3 of which also involved a top-down element) compared to just 2 in the US (plus 1 additional case of ‘remote’ top-down facilitation (Kevin James, US case #25)). All of these cases involved established links to overseas terrorist organisations except for James in the US and Hamid et al (UK case #20) in Britain, both of whom directed their own domestic groups. Not only were there more of these terrorist operatives in the UK but they also tended to occupy more senior positions. Thus, Chandia (US case #7) and Babar (US case #14) were low to mid-level operatives and in fact both played subsidiary roles in British cases (those of Mohammed Ajmal Khan –UK case #11- and Omar Khyam et al- UK case #14- respectively). Meanwhile in the UK, in addition to mid-level active facilitators, there were also figures who were close to senior organisational representatives and/or commanded some degree of authority themselves, including Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (UK case #9), Mohammed Ajmal Khan (UK case #11) and Rangzieb Ahmed (UK case #26). All of these British cases who could be classified were designated as either hardcore or ‘hardcore/social’, again contributing to the ideological differences between the two samples.

It is important to observe then, that there have been more cases of facilitation/fundraising in the US (6 cases vs. 4), which also often involved organisational connections although the individuals concerned could be more accurately described as behind-the-scenes benefactors rather than operatives or agents. In both countries there was again variation in the specifics of this, from sending money to a husband abroad (October Martinque Lewis- US case #10) or looking into buying hair bleach (Adel Yahya- UK case #18) to running dedicated, long-term financing operations (Enaam Arnaout- US case #2- and Benmerzouga and Meziane- UK case #6).



Discounting the very minor cases there were 4 in the US and 3 in the UK, and the proportional difference is thus even smaller. It can be concluded that differences in this type of case are minimal and that it represents a minority of detected cases in each country (excluding the numerous charities and non-governmental organisations in both America and Britain which have been accused of terrorist financing but not specifically charged with it, or else have had their assets frozen under executive powers not requiring a legal process).

Another notable difference is the number of cases classed as offering their services by attempting to reach out to organised militants (or in a few cases being asked to perform a service) and offering/agreeing to fulfil such functions as money laundering, training or bomb-construction. This applied to 11 cases<sup>iii</sup> (24%) of the US sample compared to just 1 (2%) in the UK. And in fact the UK case (Hemant Lakhani- UK case #10) actually took place as part of a US sting operation, which also applies to 7 of the US cases (often set up in response to individuals making it known that they wished to make contact with al-Qaeda). Ideologically speaking this category of offenders consisted of 5 criminal opportunists (2 of whom –Grecula and Reynolds- were ‘troubled’), 3 social/wannabe terrorists (Anderson, Walker and Ahmed) with just 2 considered to be ideologically hardcore (Shah and Hashmi). Hence this combines with the fewer jihadi promoters and active facilitators in the US sample to produce an apparently larger number of social/wannabe terrorists. The fact that this form of behaviour is occurring in the US but not the UK seems to be a combination of two factors: 1. Given more significant ties to Pakistan among British jihadists, for those who wish to make contact with organised militants, there are more often family-related or other social avenues that they can explore, which do not necessitate ‘advertising’ their desires on the Internet, and 2. The fact that US investigators actively patrol online forums looking for these individuals and then investing in setting up sting operations in order to elicit the maximum extent of their willingness to offend.

A higher percentage of US cases were also found to be preparing for violence in that the scope of their activities involved training for violent jihad either domestically or overseas and then returning home (in some cases alleged but not proven to be planning

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<sup>iii</sup> These were: Ilyas Ali (US case #12); Tarik Shah et al (US case #15); Uzair Paracha (US case #16); Aref & Hossain (case #17); Saifullah Ranjha (US case #20); Ryan Anderson (US case #21); Mark Walker (US case #24); Syed Hashmi (US case #26); Ahmed & Sadequee (US case #27); Ronald Grecula (US case #29); Michael Reynolds (US case #31)



attacks). This applied to 11 cases<sup>iv</sup> (24%) of the US sample and 5 cases (10%) in the UK.<sup>v</sup> In the US this was split fairly evenly according to the pre- and post-Iraq divide while in the UK all of these cases began in the post-Iraq generation (although some had engaged in earlier training for which they were not prosecuted). Given that preparatory training is an important component of jihadism it should not be surprising that this activity spans across generations and indeed, it is also incorporated within cases that had the opportunity to further progress into active pursuit of violence.

In both countries a fair proportion of individuals involved in these cases were classed as hardcore/social or hardcore and there are no obvious ideological differences that underpin differential rates of preparation for violence. One possible explanation links back to the fact that many British cases have involved early intervention (those prosecuted for possession offences) before they had a chance to progress towards preparatory action. It could also be that domestic training is more often chosen in the US since there is access to firearms that help make it a more ‘fulfilling’ experience, however there have also been cases of domestic and overseas training in the UK in the past, which were allowed to take place without legal intervention (e.g. a training camp attended by Mohammed Siddique Khan in Britain in 2001<sup>18</sup>, and a number of overseas training expeditions by associates of his, Mohammed Shakil, Waheed Ali and Sadeer Saleem<sup>19</sup>).

Despite differences in a number of behavioural categories the largest proportion of cases in both the US and UK involved the active pursuit of violence (18 cases (39%) in the former and 17 (33%) in the latter. The number of these cases has increased in absolute terms from the pre- to post-Iraq generation in the US from 6 cases to 12 and in the UK from 5 to 12, showing remarkable similarity. Relative to the number of other cases in each period this represents an increase in the US from 30% to 46%, while in the UK it holds steady at a third.

A question which arises from this is that if proportionally more US cases involve pursuit of violence (arguably the most extreme expression of ideological commitment) does this not contradict the notion that more individuals within this sample are located

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<sup>iv</sup> Padilla (US case #3); Abdi (US case #5); Warsame (US case #8); Hayat (US case #18); Amawi et al (US case #19); al-Uquaily (US case #22); Ahmed & Sadequee (US case #27); Ahmed and Ahmed (US case #28); Williams et al (US case #32); Sherif Mohamed (US case #41); and Isse and Ahmed (US case #43).

<sup>v</sup> Hamid’s trainees (UK case #20); Qureshi (UK case #33); the Iqbal brothers (UK case #38); Shakil & Ali (UK case #39); and Tabbakh (UK case #42).



toward the lower end of the spectrum of ideological commitment? First, not all those engaged in the pursuit of violence are classed as hardcore- e.g. John Walker Lindh (US case #9) was classed as being socially motivated as he was driven by feelings of religious kinship rather than hardcore commitment to Islamist ideology, and he seemed genuinely repentant in declaring at his trial “had I realized then what I know now about the Taliban I would never have joined them”.<sup>20</sup> Still others (e.g. Derrick Shareef- US case #36) were not driven by any deep ideological understanding but more by social bravado and a fascination with violence. Second, and more important to understanding the relative percentages, is the simple fact that it depends on the number and nature of other cases. It is thus not by itself contradictory to the above discussion relating differential ideological and behavioural differences between the two samples.

In a related observation, the figures from *both* countries still represent an increasing occurrence of (planned) violent Islamist terrorism given twice as many such cases from one period to the next, irrespective of the occurrence of other types of case. The active pursuit of violence represents a sizeable minority of all Islamist terrorism cases in the US and UK and has become more common in the period 2004-2008 (although it should not be assumed that this trend will continue indefinitely). Since these cases lie at the more advanced end of a continuum formed directly with cases involving preparation for violence, it also makes sense to view these case-types together. Preparation and pursuit of violence combined accounts for 63% of US cases vs. 43% in the UK. This is a substantial difference that again relates to early intervention plus lack of prosecution of some earlier training cases in the UK. Nevertheless, it also suggests that Islamist terrorists from or living in the US are on the whole more narrowly focussed on personal involvement in violent activity (but to reiterate, this does not necessarily imply any great understanding or commitment to Islamist ideology).

Finally, each sample involved 1 miscellaneous case, demonstrating that behavioural ‘outliers’, although rare, will sometimes occur. In the US this was more straightforward to understand as Ruben Shumpert (US case #40), a Seattle-based Islamist, originally fled the country to avoid being prosecuted for non-terrorism offences only to join the Somali jihad (thus in essence adding to the American tally of cases actively pursuing violence); while in the UK Saeed Ghafoor (UK case #51) made repeated yet insubstantial threats to carry out al-Qaeda-style terrorist attacks in an



apparent deliberate –and successful- attempt to gain more jail time. These cases along with a few other more unusual cases illustrate that people can sometimes adopt Islamist terrorism for unanticipated reasons and in both samples such cases have occurred in the post-2004 period.

### ***Domestic vs. Overseas Focus & Operation***

In addition to what Islamist militants in each country are doing it is important to know what their focus of activities is (i.e. domestic vs. overseas aims) and whether they are based at home, abroad or a combination of the two. This will be examined here according to each offence type, with the exceptions of possession of jihadi materials which occurred only in the UK; offering of services to organised militants, which only occurred once in the UK (see chapters 9 and 10); and the miscellaneous category since the two cases involved are not comparable.

**Table 11.14.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases involving promotion of jihad (2001-2008).

Promoting jihad	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
US	-	1	3	3	1	-	4
UK	2	2	9	12	-	1	13

Table 11.14 shows the focus and operation of cases involving the promotion of jihad. There is considerable similarity here- promoting jihad in both countries tends to involve a mixed focus (i.e. definite concern for events overseas, with some indication that domestic operations are also seen as viable). They are also similar in their operation, most being based domestically, with some travel in a minority of cases. Despite a quantitative difference in this behaviour, there is qualitative similarity in terms of focus and operation.



**Table 11.15.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases involving top-down facilitation (2001-2008).

Facilitating jihad: Top- down	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
US	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
UK	-	2	1	1	-	2	3

Table 11.15 shows that the few top-down facilitation cases have been somewhat different. The single case in the US (Kevin James- US case #25) was domestically focussed and based. Those in the UK sample have maintained overseas or mixed focus and have more often travelled (the exception being Hamid and Ahmet –UK case #20- who are closer to James in this regard). This is in keeping with the fact that they were operatives of terrorist organisations.

**Table 11.16.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases involving active facilitation (2001-2008).

Facilitating: Active support	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
US	-	2	-	-	1	1	2
UK	-	4	2	1	1	4	6

Table 11.16 illustrates the focus and operation of active facilitation cases and shows considerable similarity in that both tended to be focussed on events overseas and most involved related international travel. Again this is a function of most of these individuals acting as organisational operatives.

**Table 11.17.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases involving facilitating/fundraising (2001-2008).

Facilitating/ fundraising	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
US	-	6	-	6	-	-	6
UK	1	2	1	4	-	-	4

Table 11.17 shows that in cases involving facilitating/fundraising for jihad there was again loose correspondence between the two countries in that most cases involved



an overseas or mixed focus and all were domestically based. The fact that there was greater variation in the focus of UK cases does however, indicate some focus on domestic operations which wasn't seen in the US. Larger-scale, more organised efforts in both countries were focussed abroad though, so it seems that the variation here has so far occurred in smaller-scale operations (specifically Adel Yahya –UK case #18- and Abdul Rahman –UK case #35).

**Table 11.18.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases involving preparation for violence (2001-2008).

Preparation for violence	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
US	2	7	2	1	5	5	11
UK	-	2	3	5	-	-	5

Table 11.18 depicts the distribution of cases involving preparation for violence. In the US this involved a primarily overseas focus and correspondingly often included international travel. In the UK there was more evidence of a mixed focus and all of the cases were based at home. On the face of it this suggests that the US and UK lie on opposite ends of the spectrum for this type of activity and indeed this is congruent with more individuals from the US joining overseas conflicts (see below). However, as mentioned above this is not the whole picture either, since domestic and overseas training in the UK –and most likely some cases in the US also- have gone un-prosecuted.

**Table 11.19.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases involving active pursuit of violence (2001-2008).

Pursuit of violence	Focus: Domestic	Focus: Overseas	Focus: Mixed	Country of operation: Domestic	Country of operation: Overseas	Country of operation: Mixed	Total
US	9	9	-	6	8	4	18
UK	12	3	2	9	1	7	17

Table 11.19 shows that in cases involving the active pursuit of violence the US was split 50/50 in terms of domestic vs. overseas focus, while in the UK most cases were focussed on carrying out domestic operations. In both countries there was a general correspondence between groups' intentions and actions and there was related



international travel in 67% of US cases vs. 47% of UK cases. The most notable difference, which fittingly carries on from the above discussion on preparation for violence, is that 8 US cases (44%) were based purely overseas in that they joined overseas conflicts or were otherwise seemingly involved in militant networks (Aafia Siddiqui –US case #45) while there was only 1 such case in the UK and 1 other who tried and failed to join militants abroad (together totalling just 12%). Moreover, the tendency to aspire to overseas conflict in the US sample has remained strong over time, as evidenced by groups of Somali-Americans leaving the US for jihad in 2007 and 2008.

**Table 11.20.** Domestic vs. overseas focus and country of operation (C.o.O) of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) divided according to whether cases began before 2004 or 2004-2008.

Percentages refer to rows.

	Focus: Purely Domestic	Focus: Purely Overseas	Focus: Mixed	C.o.O: Purely Domestic	C.o.O: Purely Overseas	C.o.O: Mixed
US	30%	54%	15%	46%	26%	28%
UK	27%	25%	47%	67%	4%	29%
US: Pre-2004	25%	55%	20%	20%	20%	60%
US: 2004-2008	35%	54%	12%	65%	31%	4%
UK: Pre-2004	13%	47%	40%	47%	13%	40%
UK: 2004-2008	33%	17%	50%	75%	0	25%

Table 11.20 shows the focus and operation of cases for each overall sample distinguishing those which were ‘purely’ domestic/overseas in focus and operation, i.e. where groups were unified (so if there was any variation within groups they are counted as ‘mixed’ rather than artificially inflating the overall count).

It is clear that there are differences in the focus and operation of Islamist terrorists from or living in the US and UK. More than half of the US sample was focussed on jihad overseas and a corresponding percentage engaged in overseas or



mixed operations. By comparison only a quarter of the UK sample was singularly focussed on events abroad and only a third travelled in relation to their jihadi activities.

Looking at the changes that have taken place over time it is important to note that the percentage of cases maintaining a purely domestic focus has increased moving into the post-Iraq generation, representing about a third of each sample. At the same time the percentage of cases based purely at home has increased in the US from 20% to 65% and in the UK from 47% to 75%. These findings are congruent with the posited rise in home-grown Islamist terrorism in Western countries (partly explained by increased difficulty in making contact with foreign organised terrorists) and also helps explain why this has been viewed as somewhat less of a problem in America.

The stronger tendency towards domestic jihad in the UK is also evidenced by the relatively large drop in purely overseas focussed cases and the total lack of purely overseas operations in the post-Iraq era. Meanwhile the percentage of purely overseas focussed US cases has stayed consistent and the proportion of purely overseas operations has actually increased from 20% to 31%. This should be viewed alongside the fact that 'mixed' operations have, however, decreased, which is a reflection of the fact that travelling abroad for US militants now has become more a case of joining a conflict and staying there operationally speaking, as opposed to becoming an international operative sent back home to conduct attacks<sup>vi</sup>. Mixed operations have endured among a higher percentage of UK cases and this is likely to be because many individuals are able to utilise ties to Pakistan to gain some form of training before returning home. These differences are also reflected in different international destinations of Islamists from the US and UK (see below).

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<sup>vi</sup> The attempted bombings of the New York subway by Najibullah Zazi et al in 2009 and of Times Square by Faisal Shahzad in 2010 are recent examples of operatives who have been sent back to the US as al-Qaeda operatives.



*Planned M.O. of Attacks*

**Table 11.21.** Target type and weaponry in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008) for domestic and overseas-based attacks/ planned attacks (excluding joining overseas conflicts).

	Target: Civilian	Target: Gov.	Target: Mixed	Target: U/K	Explosives	Fire- arms	Other	Mixed	U/K
US Domestic target	4	1	2	4	2	1	1	3	1
UK Domestic target	7	3	2	1	8	2	2	1	
US Overseas target		1	2		1	1		1	
UK Overseas target	2				2				

Table 11.2 shows the target choice and weaponry in US and UK planned terrorist attacks –pursuit of violence- on the domestic and international stage (excluding 7 US cases and 2 UK cases of joining overseas conflicts). In terms of target choice, militants from the UK both at home and abroad appear to have shown a stronger inclination to attack civilians. In the US sample civilian targets were still popular on the domestic stage but it was a less pronounced preference (and in several cases the target could not be identified). There is no immediately obvious explanation for this difference and in fact the missing data and small numbers involved mean that it cannot be considered a meaningful difference.

The UK sample also showed a stronger preference in choice of weaponry (about which we can be more confident), opting for explosives in the majority of cases while in the US it was more mixed, seemingly because of the wider availability of firearms. Thus in both countries there is an interaction between the demands of the chosen task and the available tools. Explosives are not more available in Britain but in the absence of more readily available firearms they are the terrorist’s weapon of choice and can be made from household chemicals. At the same time the British-Pakistani connection may contribute here since Pakistan has repeatedly emerged as the location of explosives training



### **11.8 International Dimensions and Associations**

**Table 11.22.** Contact with foreign terrorists in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Contact with foreign terrorists		
	Yes	No	Unknown
US Overall	50%	39%	11%
UK Overall	43%	41%	16%
US Pre- 2004	70%	15%	15%
US 2004-2008	35%	58%	8%
UK Pre-2004	80%	13%	7%
UK 2004-2008	28%	53%	19%

Table 11.22 shows the percentage of cases involving contact with foreign terrorists. Overall the figures are quite similar although slightly more US cases did make such contact (in actual numbers it was 23 vs. 22). Moreover, both samples have changed in the same direction from the pre- to post-2004 generations, with marked decreases in the proportion of cases in contact with foreign terrorists. Having said that, in absolute terms the change here in the US has been from 14 to 9 cases while in the UK it has increased from 10 cases to 12, plus the 5 year period from 2004 to 2008 is shorter than the previous period for the US and equal for the UK (remembering that some cases began before 2001). The reason why the percentage appears to be less in the UK is thus because of a greater proliferation of cases not involving foreign contact. Percentages alone can be misleading and for both countries it is more accurate to state that there have been more cases over time that have failed –or not even tried- to make contact with foreign terrorists.



**Table 11.23.** Number of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases in contact with foreign militants in different locations, divided according to whether cases began prior to 2004 or 2004-2008.

Foreign terrorists' location	US: Pre-2004	US: 2004-2008	UK: Pre-2004	UK: 2004-2008
Global (S. Asia/ N. Africa/ Middle East/ Europe/ Balkans)	3	0	6	2
Pakistan/ Afghanistan	12	2	11	9
Somalia	0	5	-	-
Germany	1	0	-	-
Saudi Arabia	1	0	-	-
UK	2	2	-	-
US	-	-	3	4
Canada	1	1	2	3
Unconfirmed	0	1	-	-
True case total	14	9	12	10

Turning our attention to the location of foreign terrorists whom individuals in each sample were in contact with, the first noticeable difference between the US and UK is the greater number of UK cases with ‘global’ connections. The comparatively large number of these cases in the pre-2004 era is reflective of the historically key role that the UK and London especially played as a host to Islamist terrorists from around the world (see chapter 7). The 3 US cases were also part of the thriving militant networks of the 1990’s but America played a less prominent role. Such connections have decreased in both countries and the 2 cases that are left in the UK (Tsouli and Khan –UK cases #19 and #25) established their links primarily online.

The most interesting patterns of international association are those surrounding Pakistan/Afghanistan and Somalia. The former represented the primary point of contact with foreign terrorists for both the US and UK in the pre-2004 period; however it seems to have become far less accessible over time for the Americans while the British continue to liaise with Islamist militants in Pakistan with greater regularity. This is undoubtedly due to the more prevalent ties among the British sample and that country. Meanwhile in the US, Somalia has emerged as a new jihadi hotspot, visited in the post-Iraq era by converts and Somali-Americans alike. Despite the involvement in terrorism of a handful of Somalis in Britain, there have so far been only limited reports of anyone from the UK going there for jihad. One unnamed British-Somali was reported in 2009 to have blown himself up plus around 20 others in October 2007, and security officials



have been quoted confirming that individuals are travelling there,<sup>21</sup> but open source material at present does not permit more accurate assessment. Suffice to say that despite Pakistani dominance of jihad in Britain, it would be naive to think that (given these indications plus an estimated Somali diaspora population of 100,000<sup>22</sup> compared to 84,000 in the US<sup>23</sup>) Somalia is not a factor among UK jihadists. Indeed, Somalia appears to be gaining in significance for jihad on a worldwide scale, as evidenced by allegations made against an Australian-based group said to have been seeking approval in Somalia for an attack in Australia.<sup>24</sup> As more information emerges the picture will be clarified, but at present it is reasonable to say that American Islamists were more swiftly drawn to Somalia, or at least that this was more heavily publicised than in Britain. Such differences may be down to the presence of individual entrepreneurs who play active roles in encouraging and facilitating others' travel abroad.

In a related issue, it is important to note that Iraq is absent from the table of foreign destinations of jihadis from both the US and UK, despite the emphasis which has been placed on the conflict there as a source of inspiration for involvement in terrorism of Westerners. Indeed, it is somewhat puzzling that very few individuals in either sample made any effort to go there. The most 'concrete' example is Mohammed Zaki Amawi (US case #19) who unsuccessfully tried to enter Iraq via Jordan in 2003 (the most established route used by militants has been via Syria<sup>25</sup>). The only other case of note is that of Bilal Abdulla (UK case #41) who was an Iraqi but chose to pursue terrorism in Britain rather than attempt to join the insurgency in Iraq. To some extent, lower numbers of Westerners managing to join the Iraqi jihad may be indicative of heightened vigilance to prevent this from happening, combined with the fact that very few Iraqis are found in the samples, meaning that there is a general lack of ties to that country which might facilitate entry. However, it is also a reflection of available open source data. For example, a "senior security source" in Britain was reported in 2006 to have confirmed that between 120 and 150 Britons had travelled to Iraq for jihad, and that there was concern that the flow was increasing<sup>26</sup> (although more recent reports state that the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq has decreased over time<sup>27</sup>). Corresponding estimates for the United States could not be found as studies of foreign jihadis in Iraq tend to focus on the main contributors, such as Saudi Arabia, Libya and other Muslim countries rather than the West.<sup>28</sup> The conclusion therefore has to be that there is not enough available information at present to be able to accurately assess American and



British efforts to support the Iraqi insurgency. As new information is made available this will hopefully be clarified, as will the role of other potential jihadi hostspots such as Yemen, which is thought to have been the point of contact between Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (the Nigerian student educated in the UK who attempted to bring down a plane over Detroit on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009) and organised Islamist militants.<sup>29</sup>

Another point worth addressing from Table 11.23 is that the numbers of cases from each sample in contact with terrorists in the US and UK do not add up. The reason for this is that Abu Hamza (UK case #3) was in touch with Earnest Ujaama from the US, who is excluded from the sample because he ceased offending before September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. In addition, Mohammed Junaid Babar (US case #14) had met with multiple UK cases –some in Pakistan and some in Britain also (these were Omar Khyam et al – UK case #14- Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer –UK case #17- and Kazi Nurur Rahman –UK case #24).

Finally, more UK cases were seemingly in contact with fellow militants in Canada, which questions the assumption that international liaisons might be dictated by proximity. To an extent this is true although the nature of those contacts should also be understood. In the pre-2004 era Babar was in touch with the Canadian Mohammed Momin Khawaja- together they knew Khyam and colleagues as well as Mohammed Siddique Khan from time spent together in Pakistan and also visited them in the UK. In a similar fashion Mohammed Atif Siddique (UK case #15), Younis Tsouli (UK case #19) and Aabid Khan (UK case #25) were all in communication with each other and with a group of budding Canadian terrorists led by Fahim Ahmad, and together shared contact with two Americans, Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee (US case #27). The first set of contacts (Babar et al) were made in Pakistan, while the second (Khan et al) were primarily forged online. But in both instances they formed triangles between the US, Canada and the UK through sharing contacts and in both cases they cross over and confuse the 2004 dividing line according to when individuals ‘officially’ began offending, thus serving as a reminder that it is an analytical imposition rather than a reflection of clear-cut divisions in ‘real-life’. They are nevertheless quite striking examples of a propensity for international social networking among Western Islamist terrorists that has changed qualitatively over time (becoming more ‘virtualised’) but has not disappeared.



**Table 11.24.** Percentage of US and UK Islamist terrorism cases in the pre- vs. post-2004 periods with named domestic and foreign terrorist associations.

	Named Domestic Associations	Named Foreign Associations	Both
US Overall	22%	20%	11%
UK Overall	18%	4%	29%
US Pre- 2004	15%	35%	20%
US 2004-2008	27%	10%	4%
UK Pre-2004	0	13%	53%
UK 2004-2008	25%	0	19%

Table 11.24 shows the percentage of US and UK cases with named domestic only, named foreign only, and both types of named terrorist associations. Bearing in mind these are *named* associations, i.e. where it is known specifically whom they were in contact with, the results are in line with the above discussion. Both countries are fairly close in terms of overall domestic-only associations, the US has more foreign-only but more in the UK sample have both types, and this was particularly the case in the pre-2004 generation when there were more globally connected militants active in Britain. Similar changes have also occurred in both countries, with an increase in the proportion of domestic-only associations to around a quarter of the sample, and a decrease in foreign-only and both kinds of association combined. Named foreign-only associations remain higher in the US while combined foreign and domestic associations are higher in the UK. This may relate to both the fact that US Islamist terrorists appear to maintain a greater focus overall on overseas events, and the fact that British jihadists operate within a more confined geographical area and have a stronger domestic focus overall.



### **11.9 The Role of the Internet**

**Table 11.25.** Use of the Internet in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008). Percentages are for total case numbers for each defined period.

Use of Internet	U/K	Access propaganda/ forums	Comm.	Gather intell/ research attacks	Create/ distribute materials	Group formation	Fund-raising	Other research
US Overall	46%	17%	33%	11%	9%	0	2%	0
UK Overall	37%	37%	35%	22%	12%	4%	2%	2%
US Pre-2004	40%	5%	40%	10%	5%	0	5%	0
US 2004-2008	50%	27%	27%	12%	12%	0	0	0
UK Pre-2004	27%	13%	40%	20%	27%	0	0	7%
UK 2004-2008	42%	47%	33%	22%	6%	6%	3%	0

How individuals made use of the Internet was often not reported (as reflected in the large proportions of ‘unknown’ cases) and when it was, it was often in an incidental rather than in-depth manner. The results here therefore only provide tentative indications about jihadists’ use of the Internet in America and Britain. The reported overall differences are mostly minimal with the exception of accessing propaganda etc and gathering information and intelligence for attacks. With regards to the former, the higher percentage in the UK is likely a reflection of the British propensity to prosecute individuals for this offence, which invites more reporting on it. By contrast in the US where conspiracies are more often deliberately nurtured such details are less likely to be of interest.

An explanation for the difference in use of the Internet in relation to planning attacks is somewhat puzzling, although it is important to remember that there has been a greater focus on domestic attacks in the UK vs. a more overseas focus in the US. The Internet lends itself rather well to scouting out domestic targets or similar activities but where individuals join overseas conflicts there is often not much information about what they do there, nor does the Internet seem as relevant in such contexts.



More significant than the exact percentages themselves are how they stand relative to one another and how they have changed over time. The top three uses in both countries have been accessing propaganda/forums, communication, and researching attacks, followed by creation and distribution of materials. Group formation via the Internet has not been common, occurring in just 2 cases in the UK, and online fundraising in either sample has been scarce. The Internet is used to communicate and network with other groups and individuals around the world (as per the links between Aabid Khan –UK case #25- Syed Haris Ahmed –US case #27- and others) but it is not particularly surprising that it rarely forms the basis of long-lasting proximal relations since this depends on geographical closeness and not just shared values. Moreover it is not surprising that group formation via the Internet has only occurred in the more recent generation of jihadis for whom the Internet has become a more prevalent part of everyday life.

As for online fundraising this undoubtedly takes place but has not resulted in many prosecutions according to the sampling criteria for this study. It is useful, however, to contrast the two cases included where this did take place. One was Enaam Arnaout's (US case #2) Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), a charity-front organisation set up in America in the early 1990s (at a time when most of the Western world did not recognise the mujahedin as a threat). This was a well-organised, relatively large-scale operation sending hundreds of thousands of dollars to overseas militants and of which online fundraising was just one component.<sup>30</sup> Even more notably, BIF operated quite openly and until investigators dug deeper after 9/11 it appeared to be legitimate. By comparison the other case in the sample refers to Younis Tsouli's accomplice (UK case #19) Tariq al-Daour who set up a fairly sophisticated online credit card fraud scheme and managed to raise £1.8 million.<sup>31</sup> Al-Daour's scheme was covert, criminal and purely online. The amounts raised are likely to depend on individual skills and strategies but what is more interesting is the change from open 'charities' to purely online criminal means. There are not enough cases of this kind to make any conclusions about this type of activity here but a move from one strategy to the next makes sense in light of heightened counter-terrorism measures since 2001. In this way the findings from different countries can complement one another and add additional pieces to the overall jigsaw.



Moving on to the relative changes which have taken place, accessing propaganda and jihadi chat forums has increased in both countries just as they have proliferated on the Web. Use of the Internet for communication remains high but has apparently dropped over time, perhaps in relation to there being more cases not making contact with foreign terrorists (since email lends itself so readily to long-distance communication). Gathering information online for attacks has remained constant in each country and finally, creation and distribution of jihadi materials remains a relatively rare activity among both samples (relatively speaking it has increased in the US and decreased in the UK but in absolute terms this represents a shift from just 1 case to 3 in the former, and from 4 to 2 in the latter). Ultimately, when the results here are examined both quantitatively and qualitatively there are more similarities than differences between the US and UK in terms of Internet use.

#### **11.10 Stated Motivations**

**Table 11.26.** Stated motivations in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Stated Motivations	U/K	Religious/ Altruistic/ Foreign policy	Foreign policy/ Anti- Semitism	Religious only	Anti- American (various)	Anti- British
US	41%	43%	2%	0	13%	0
UK	27%	67%	0	2%	2%	2%

Although specific information about motivations was often lacking, the available data indicates very similar and predictable references to religion, the desire to defend Muslims and resentment and distrust for the foreign policy of the US and its allies. All of the remaining categories are really just variations on these same themes, only with a narrower emphasis on certain issues and occasionally interspersed with personal motives (and in both countries most of these cases involved criminal opportunists or ‘troubled’ individuals). Specific anti-Americanism appears to be more common than specific anti-Britishness but this is hardly surprising given the US’s leading position in the war on terror. Overall, American and British Islamist terrorists appear to be motivated by the same international symbols of jihad (Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel etc) and aside from specific developments such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003 or the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006 these have not changed over time. There is also an apparent undercurrent of social bravado which permeates group interaction in



both countries and a general fascination with violence. Whether or not these factors vary in comparative importance to ideological concerns between the two samples is open to debate. The above findings on ideological commitment suggest that social motives and violence might play slightly more significant roles in the US, but the data on which this is based is too unreliable to make confident judgements about this without more in-depth study.

### **11.11 Outcomes**

**Table 11.27.** Outcomes in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

	Informants/ undercover operatives	Attacks: Thwarted	Attacks: Failed/ semi- successful	Attacks: Successful
US Overall (%TOT)	39%	20%	4%	0
UK Overall (%TOT)	4%	16%	10%	4%
US Pre-2004	6	4	0	0
US 2004-2008	12	5	2	0
UK Pre-2004	0	0	2	1
UK 2004-2008	2	6	3	1

Table 11.27 shows the use of informants or undercover officers in all cases, plus the outcomes of planned attacks, expressed as percentages of the overall number of cases and as numerical counts for the pre- and post-Iraq time-periods. There has been a major difference in the use of informants and undercover agents, which have been deployed in a large proportion of investigations in the US (46% of post-Iraq cases) but have rarely been reported in the UK (6% of post-Iraq cases). This is discussed more below in addressing the implications for counter-terrorism.

Another difference (which may be related) is that more cases involving planned attacks have run to completion without being thwarted in the UK. In the US the overall ratio of thwarted to completed attacks is 9:2 while in the UK it is 6:7 (although both samples include attacks abroad, which are harder to thwart- Siddiqui –US case #45; Reid- UK case #4; and Sheikh –UK case #9). Ultimately the US has been more successful in detecting planned attacks before they can be attempted (82% vs. 46%). There may be several reasons for this but chief among them are that a) Islamist militants



in Britain operate within three main hotspots and are often part of wider Islamist communities, therefore making it difficult to identify individuals with genuine intent (‘finding the needle in the haystack’); meanwhile militants in the US are more geographically dispersed, less ‘insulated’ and therefore easier to spot, and b) Because American investigators often infiltrate groups as soon as they become aware of them and actually contribute to plans for violence from the start, they can intervene at will- in other words there are fewer planned attacks in the US where the individuals involved have developed their plans independently.

**Table 11.28.** Outcomes for individuals in US and UK Islamist terrorism cases (2001-2008).

Individual outcomes	Deceased	Not charged	At large overseas	Arrested: prosecuted	Average sentence in years	Life Sentences	Death sentences
US Overall	8%	0	2%	90%	15.4	9%	0
UK Overall	4%	2%	0	94%	7.4	23%	1%
US Pre-2004	1	0	1	42	15.5	3	0
US 2004-2008	6	0	1	40	15.3	5	0
UK Pre-2004	0	1	1	26	15.6	8	1
UK 2004-2008	5	0	0	81	5	18	0

Table 11.28 shows individual outcomes for both samples, showing overall percentages plus numerical counts for the pre- vs. post-Iraq time-periods. The main points of interest are first, that (unsurprisingly given the sampling criteria) the vast majority of both samples have been arrested and prosecuted, and second, there are substantial differences in the average prison sentences. In the pre-Iraq generation they are very close at 15.5 and 15.6 years, but from 2004 to 2008 the US figure has stayed relatively steady at 15.3 years, compared to a drop in the UK to just 5 years. This is a product of two main factors: 1) It is a reflection of legal changes in the UK enabling early intervention and prosecution of lesser offences, which does not seem to have been paralleled in the US; 2) Life sentences were not incorporated in the average sentence but



have substantially increased in the UK (constituting 21% of the post-Iraq generation sentences vs. 11% in the US); however, life sentences also have different meanings in each country- under the US federal system there is no possibility of parole with a life sentence while in the UK a minimum sentence is stipulated, ranging in the sample from 7.5 to 40 years (average 24.7 years). Average sentence in the UK for non-life sentences is thus lower as a reflection of prosecuting lesser offences; there have been more life sentences in Britain but most of those individuals will eventually be released.

Finally, to address minor points, the single death sentence was issued in Pakistan; 1 out of 2 individuals not charged in Britain is still detained; and other punishments not shown (both in the UK) are a 3-year community order (again a minor penalty for a minor offence) and an indefinite hospital order (which is in line with the higher rates of mental disorder in the UK sample).



### **11.12 Comparative Summary**

**Table 11.29a.** Comparative summary of findings for the US and UK (2001-2008) part 1.

	United States	United Kingdom
Statistical summary	4.75 cases per year	5.75 cases per year; UK rate is 6.1 x the US for overall population size or 1.5 x the US for Muslim population size
Geographic distribution	Mainly East coast but dispersed over 21 states; Capital: New York City (11% of individuals)	3 main hotspots; Capital: London (51% of individuals)
Demographic profiles	Young males; 76% US citizenship (46% by birth); diverse ethnic heritage; at least basic education; mostly semi-skilled jobs; 1% unemployed; 27% converts; marriage common; 27% criminal records; 2% confirmed history of mental illness	Young males; 78% UK citizenship (64% by birth); large contingent with Pakistani heritage; at least basic education; mostly semi/unskilled jobs; 24% unemployed; 16% converts; marriage common; 16% criminal records; 5% confirmed history of mental illness
Offence date range	Average: 2.59 years; Mode: 1 year or less	Average: 1.44 years; Mode: 1 year or less
Radicalisation	Face-to-face interaction most common, supplemented by online activities	Face-to-face interaction most common, supplemented by online activities
Group characteristics	Average size: 2.4; Mode: 1; Overall informal leadership; evidence of leaders & sanctioners within groups; 26% overseas leadership	Average size: 2.3; Mode: 1; Overall informal leadership; operational leaders more common than sanctioners; 10% overseas leadership

...Continued...



**Table 11.29b.** Comparative summary of findings for the US and UK (2001-2008) part 2.

	United States	United Kingdom
Ideological commitment	29% social/wannabe; 14% hardcore/social; 16% hardcore; remainder unknown	10% social/wannabe; 25% hardcore/social; 21% hardcore; remainder unknown
Behavioural classification	63% preparing for/pursuing violence; 24% offering services; 13% fundraising; 6% active support; 9% promoting jihad; 54% overall overseas focus & 54% involving international travel; mixed choice of targets and weaponry	43% preparing for/pursuing violence; 25% promoting jihad; 22% possession of jihadi materials; 12% active support; 8% fundraising; 25% overall overseas focus & 67% based in UK; majority preference for civilian targets and explosives
International dimensions & associations	50% overall in contact with foreign terrorists; key locations: Pakistan/Afghanistan & more recently Somalia; more named domestic associations only over time	43% overall in contact with foreign terrorists; global connections common in earlier generation, Pakistan remains significant; more named domestic associations over time
The role of the Internet	Top 4 uses: communication; accessing propaganda & forums; gathering intell. for attacks; distributing materials	Top 4 uses: accessing propaganda & forums; communication; gathering intell. for attacks; distributing materials
Stated motivations	Religious/ altruistic/ foreign policy	Religious/ altruistic/ foreign policy
Outcomes	Widespread infiltration of groups; few completed attacks; 90% prosecuted; average sentence: 15.4 years; 9% life sentences	Infiltration of groups rare; several completed attacks; 94% prosecuted; average sentence: 7.4 years; 23% life sentences

Tables 11.29a and 11.29b summarise the findings for each variable for both countries. There has been a higher rate of Islamist terrorism in the UK from 2001-2008 (although the current samples are not presumed to be 100% exhaustive, the figures here indicate a rate in the UK that is 1.5 times that of the US in relation to respective Muslim population sizes). Geographically they are also dissimilar in that the US cases have been far more dispersed, although in both countries they are grouped according to certain regions- in America they have occurred along the East coast and nearby while in the UK there are 3 main hotspots (London, the North West and the West Midlands). Both show



some correspondence with the distribution of the Muslim population although this is more pronounced in the UK. There has also been a stronger tendency in the UK for cases to occur in the historical capital of Islamist militancy in that country- hence 51% of all individuals in the British sample were based in London, compared to just 11% of the US sample in New York City.

Overall, demographic profiles are very similar, with a majority of individuals in both countries holding citizenship or having permanent residency rights (although more in the UK were born there) and the vast majority being males aged 30 or younger. The UK sample was slightly worse off in terms of educational achievement and occupational standing (in particular more were unemployed immediately prior to offending) but by far the most important difference has been the large contingent of individuals of Pakistani heritage compared to the situation in the US, which has not been dominated by any other nationality to the same extent. Age, educational attainment and occupation have all declined in the post-Iraq generation, but not by much (these and other changes are generally in line with suggestions made by Sageman<sup>32</sup> and with ‘given wisdom’ about home-grown Islamist terrorism (HGIT) in the West<sup>33</sup>).

In terms of offence date ranges, the US has a higher average at 2.59 years compared to 1.44 in the UK but most cases in both countries lasted for about a year or less, not counting previous activities or processes of radicalisation. Average offence range has shortened over time thanks to increased powers of detection.

As for radicalisation, there was very little available information for most individuals, but face-to-face interaction still seems to be the primary mechanism, albeit frequently supplemented by downloading videos and other online activity. ‘Virtual’ radicalisation by itself was rare in both the US and UK.

The two samples were very similar overall in terms of group size, averaging at 2.4 and 2.3, but most often individuals were prosecuted by themselves. In both countries ‘lone’ actors were, however, more often part of wider networks so this reflects more the way that cases are prosecuted rather than social reality. As for leadership, there was again not much reliable information available but what there is suggests a largely informal system of authority among American and British Islamist terrorists. Leaders and ‘spiritual sanctioners’ were more often found in the US, while in the UK operational leaders were more common in the absence of within-group religious figures (seemingly because groups can obtain Islamist justification from well-known



ideologues without much need for contact between them, or else because it is often taken for granted). Lastly, overseas leadership occurred more frequently among US cases by virtue of the fact that more individuals from the US have gone abroad to join foreign jihadi conflicts (and are thus absorbed into existing organisational hierarchies). Overseas leadership in UK cases was more often a case of 'remote' direction of activities in Britain and elsewhere following previous contact in Pakistan.

Classification of ideological commitment here was based on extremely limited information and is a concept that requires additional work in terms of more systematic specification of criteria on which to make judgements. As it stands it is useful for classifying the extremes, in particular outlying or unusual cases but cannot be considered a reliable analytical tool in its current form. With that in mind the findings here are in accordance with general observations about the nature of HGIT in Western countries in that there was a reduction in the proportion of 'hardcore' terrorists in both the US and UK from the pre- to post-Iraq eras. In terms of differences between the two, the US sample is posited to consist of proportionally more 'social/wannabe' terrorists while there were more ideologically committed ('hardcore/social' and 'hardcore') terrorists in the UK. The reasons for this difference are in accordance with the social transmission hypothesis in that the presence of influential jihadi ideologues in the UK – combined with a more integral role in foreign terrorist organisations during the 1990s – may have created a stronger sub-culture of Islamist militancy that has persisted in Britain over time. In turn it may also relate to behavioural differences between the two samples.

Behaviourally speaking, 63% of the US sample was located on a continuum from preparation and training for violence to active pursuit of violence, compared to 43% in the UK. This difference is based largely on fewer individuals being prosecuted in Britain at a stage of preparation for violence and this may relate to the fact that many individuals are prosecuted at an earlier point in their jihadi careers, simply for possession of terrorist materials such as bomb-making manuals. There was also a sizeable percentage (24%) in the US who were classed as offering their services to Islamist terrorists, either through reaching out and advertising this desire or by being asked to perform particular tasks. There was only 1 such case among the British sample but instead 25% of UK cases (and only 9% in the US) were engaged in promoting or



encouraging jihad, and these differences seem to relate to the variation in ideological commitment.

Overall, 54% in the US compared to just 25% in the UK were focussed primarily on activities and events overseas and, correspondingly, there was at least some related international travel in 54% of US vs. 33% of UK cases. Domestic aims have increased in both countries moving into the post-Iraq generation and this may be reflective of ideological endorsement of such operations but also simple displacement, given increased difficulty in making contact with terrorist organisations abroad.

In relation to planned attacks there was no clear preference of target and weaponry in the US while in the UK civilian targets and explosives were most often chosen, a difference which seemingly reflects differential availability of weapons and explosives training.

50% of US cases and 43% of the UK cases were in contact with foreign terrorists and in both countries these relative proportions have decreased over time. Pakistan and Afghanistan were the most frequent locations of contact with foreign terrorists in the pre-Iraq (mostly pre-2001) generation but over time this has become less accessible for Islamists from the US while it has remained the most popular destination for those from the UK. More militants from the UK have had ‘global’ terrorist contacts as a function of the highly significant role that London played throughout the 1990s into the new millennium, and the few individuals that have shown evidence of such links in the post-Iraq era have established them primarily online. There is more reliable evidence that Somalia has emerged as a primary destination for jihadis from the US in recent years but information also indicates that British Islamists are beginning to go there as well. In both the US and UK there has been a decrease over time in named foreign terrorist associations and an increase in named domestic ones.

Reliable data on use of the Internet was generally lacking but there is more similarity than difference between the two countries and the same top four uses were reported for each, albeit in a marginally different order: communication, accessing propaganda and jihadi forums, gathering intelligence for attacks and distributing terrorist materials. Online fundraising was very rare but the available evidence suggests that such operations may have become deliberately more covert over time in response to improved counter-terrorism. Lastly, group formation via the Internet has also been rare, although when it has occurred it has been in the more recent generation. This does not



negate the fact that disparate groups still communicate and network with one another online and sometimes meet as a result (the distinction between networking and lasting group formation).

Turning to stated motivations, information was again often lacking. It seems that there is little to distinguish the US and UK on this dimension, as the most commonly expressed motives involved a predictable combination of religious and political rhetoric and desire to defend fellow Muslims. There is also a general sense that both samples were driven by social bravado and a fascination with violence and this is in line with theory and research by Sageman<sup>34</sup> and Roy<sup>35</sup> among others (see chapter 4).

Finally, another major difference that has played a role in the manifestation of HGIT in the US is the fact that informants and undercover agents are often used to infiltrate groups of suspected militants and actively collude with them in planning violence. This is chosen over and above opportunities for early intervention and has likely contributed to the frequency of cases in the sample classed as ‘pursuit of violence’ rather than lesser offences. This –and the UK’s contrasting preference for early intervention without infiltration- helps explain the overall difference in average sentences, which are more than twice as long in the US. There have been more life sentences in the UK but some of these involve much shorter actual sentences than might be expected while those in the US federal system do not include the possibility of parole.

### **11.13 Theoretical Implications**

Having discussed explanations and patterns of terrorism at length in chapters 4 and 5, it is important to consider the extent to which results from the US and UK fit with, or contradict, those explanations. In terms of individual explanations, psychopathology was clearly not supported as being relevant in either sample. Personally experienced trauma was not evident, although ‘moral shocks’ from being exposed to images of Muslim suffering were not uncommon. Some individuals also seemed to experience personal difficulties in their social or working lives, but it was not apparent that either sample might be distinguished from general populations in this way. Moreover, neither sample could be considered dramatically deprived and there was a wide range of educational and occupational attainment represented.



Taken together, results from the US and UK both lend support to social explanations for terrorism (see chapter 4). Personal difficulties, ‘crises’ of identity and dissatisfaction with life in America or Britain may all act as predisposing risk factors where present, but they are not by themselves direct motivators of terrorism. Behavioural participation and social interaction with like-minded others characterised the situation of most of those included within this study and it is the resultant processes of social support, comparison and competition that drive terrorist behaviour. At the heart of individual and group participation in this kind of activity is the socially-supported adoption of the Islamist terrorist identity, which is defined by way of reference to propaganda and ideology. Even ‘lone wolves’, unless involved for mercenary reasons, see themselves in terms of this collective identity and act in accordance with related values and behavioural norms.

Crucially, Islamist militant identities and ideology are defined in terms of religion, yet centred around political concerns and feelings of injustice –specifically regarding Western foreign policy and occupation of Muslim lands- which have both a strong rational and emotive appeal. This is further strengthened by the power of violent imagery, which clearly permeated the psyches of individuals in both countries.

Ultimately, the results from this study support the argument that the bottom line or necessary condition for becoming an Islamist terrorist in the US and UK is a combination of social and ideological exposure<sup>36</sup>- these are the key components to shaping identity and behaviour and are best understood from a social-psychological perspective.

### **11.14 Implications for Counter-Terrorism**

#### ***General***

There are a number of implications for CT from the findings in this study, some of which are generalised in nature and confirm existing knowledge, others which are more specific to each country. First, since foreign policy -in particular military operations overseas- is such a widespread source of motivation for Islamists in both the US and UK, this is an area which presents opportunities to combat terrorism at its roots. It would be naive to assume that there is any quick-fix to Western involvement in seemingly intractable conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, or even to believe that military



strategies in each country can necessarily be adapted to appease the sense of outrage that Islamist militants (and others) feel at these situations. However, there is room for creative thinking about how best to minimise the ‘side-effects’ that such operations spawn, both at home and around the world. As Foster puts it “the US [aided and abetted by the UK] is, and has been, wandering mindlessly and aimlessly, blinded by its own arrogance and hypocrisy, through an uncharted global minefield of highly disruptive, if not potentially deadly, challenges to its well-being”.<sup>37</sup>

One way of beginning to minimise harm that is more realistic than a fundamental restructuring of government and military is to encourage a culture of accountability, both in global relations and specifically to domestic populations. A greater emphasis on explaining military operations, competing commitments and injustices (such as civilian deaths) as well promoting positive achievements can contribute to more widespread nuanced understanding and balanced perceptions about events in Afghanistan and Iraq. By contrast, a lack of effort to cultivate public appreciation of such topics leaves the door open for Islamist propaganda to shape individual perceptions unchallenged. Recent emphasis on the ‘war of ideas’ in countering Islamist terrorism tends to focus on differential interpretations of the Quran,<sup>38</sup> which is certainly important within certain contexts. However, it is not reading –or being taught- the Quran in the first place which ignites people’s emotions and sense of injustice, impotence and desire for revenge- it is political events, wars and images of people dying, which are manipulated to create global conspiracies. Reaching out to communities or individuals who are potentially susceptible to radicalisation and attempting to address their understanding of world politics (not to be confused with simply promoting democracy) rather than just their religion may be a potentially effective element of counter-terrorism in the US and UK.

Other, less specific tactics such as improving efforts to deal with inequalities in society –specifically addressing the concerns of disadvantaged Muslim communities- may be helpful for reducing an element of predisposing risk for radicalisation. Moreover, this does apply to the US as well as the UK, since despite a more affluent Muslim population on the whole in America (see chapter 8) there was not a vast difference in demographic backgrounds of the two samples. However, these are supplementary measures only as far as counter-terrorism is concerned- domestic improvements for Muslim populations do not directly combat terrorism as an issue and



the fact that there is a wide variation in educational and occupational standing of Islamist terrorists in both the US and UK is testament to the fact that material concerns and opportunities in life are by no means the whole answer. Indeed, the UK effort to combat Islamist terrorism under the heading of the ‘Prevent’ strategy, which has tried to address both religious beliefs and material disadvantages, has come under marked criticism, being described as “a textbook example of how to alienate absolutely everybody”.<sup>39</sup>

Another aspect of Islamist terrorism in the US and UK that requires more research is the deliberate counter-cultural side, which appeals to young men’s desire for a ‘hard-man’ image and their attraction to images of violence. In other words –as with the need to address foreign policy- there is the need to examine other non-ideological aspects that may be equally important for understanding how and why people become involved in terrorism. Given the findings here in relation to ideological commitment, the US especially may stand to benefit from such an approach but it is by no means absent in the UK and even in seemingly more ideologically informed groups there is still very often an obsession with imitating the violence which others have committed.

More ‘traditional’ and direct tactics such as intelligence-led community policing for identifying at-risk or dangerous individuals remain the most reliable approaches, which still facilitate a proactive rather than reactive approach to counter-terrorism, and such measures are in place already in both the US and UK. Continuous assessment of policing strategies and of developments in each country will help to ensure that these efforts continue to be effective, and one way of doing that is to maintain current empirical records of cases similar to the current study.

### ***The US***

Implications for counter-terrorism which apply more specifically to the US first and foremost include the need to relinquish the idea that Islamist terrorists only come from abroad and that the ‘home-grown’ problem is essentially minimal. In light of a multitude of alleged cases in 2009 and 2010 it does seem that this is being realised,<sup>40</sup> however it is not enough to simply say that it is because of continued military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although these are key issues, the danger is that a subculture of Islamist militancy is developing in America in a distinct but not entirely dissimilar way to that which developed in the UK during the 1990s. In this regard the rising



prominence of the Yemen-based American jihadi ideologue, Anwar al-Awlaki is cause for concern<sup>41</sup> and perhaps even more importantly Cruikshank has observed that two al-Muhajiroun affiliated groups in New York (The Islamic Thinkers Society and Revolution Muslim) appear to be gaining influence and have been linked to 7 of 23 US terrorism cases occurring between mid-2009 and August 2010.<sup>42</sup>

Attempting to combat the development of such a culture will be greatly assisted by identifying hotspots of radicalism within specific areas of cities or towns and adapting intervention approaches according to the specific context (e.g. better understanding of Somali-Americans in Minnesota)<sup>43</sup>. In addition, given a strong focus on jihad overseas and the desire among American Islamists to join foreign conflicts, it seems prudent to address these particular issues. Tactics might include improved communication about the reality of these conflicts- possibly enlisting former fighters to talk to groups about their negative experiences- as well as communicating legal penalties and the reasons why they are in place. It might also be productive to make a distinction between those who fight overseas and do not seek terrorism at home and those who do. If labelling theory has any validity, wider application of 'terrorist' labels will only produce more terrorists.

Lastly, American authorities should consider strategies of early intervention for lesser offences rather than encouraging groups of individuals to proceed to the maximum levels of radicalisation. From a social-psychological point of view, informants or agents who often assume considerable status within the groups that they operate (e.g. via claiming connections to al-Qaeda or by providing training or weapons) are undoubtedly altering the social reality and influencing the behaviour of those around them, even if they offer individuals the chance to back out. Early intervention avoids influencing people in this way and has the potential to minimise costs for individuals, their families and for wider society (since there is no evidence that long sentences imposed are effectual as a deterrent and there is considerable economic cost associated with imprisonment). Even more importantly, early intervention would free up much-needed police resources amidst a dramatic increase in home-grown terrorism cases in 2009-2010, and by limiting –rather than encouraging- individual radicalisation, this would also prevent these individuals from contributing to the growing jihadi subculture in America. Of course each situation must be individually assessed, and the US also has the advantage that it can observe how the UK situation progresses as more minor



terrorist offenders are released. Added to this, growing comprehension of possibilities for rehabilitation of Islamist extremists presents an alternative to indiscriminate lengthy prison sentences (and again if there is any validity to the classification of ideological commitment within this study then the prospects of behavioural reform among many US militants are potentially promising).

### *The UK*

As mentioned above, the proactive national strategy in the UK has come under heavy criticism and in particular is seen as failing to directly address the problem.<sup>44</sup> Specific issues within the UK include the need to better understand why and how young British Pakistanis in particular are drawn to extremism within certain communities. At the same time it is necessary to guard against a blinkered view of Islamist terrorism in Britain that ignores the involvement of other nationalities and other relevant international developments such as the conflict in Somalia. Improved understanding of specific communities, even of specific individuals within communities, combined with an informed comprehension of the nature of ties back to the country of origin and of how constantly changing international developments are likely to affect situations abroad and at home are necessary for informing a dynamic and pro-active approach to counter-terrorism.

The front line of counter-terrorism in Britain, as in the US and around the world, is fought by the security services and police. The most important strategy then is to ensure that these institutions have enough resources at their disposal (a point that is worth reiterating, given that budget cuts for the security services were considered as part of wider cuts to the UK defence budget- although ultimately British security services were allotted an additional £650m)<sup>45</sup> and that they are appropriately informed about the developing threat to be able to effectively cope with Islamist terrorism as it fluctuates over time. British authorities have been effective since 2005 in identifying and thwarting major plots with overseas links, however smaller, mostly domestically contained operations, which have occurred out-with the main hotspots of activity have managed to slip through the net. So far these have been ineffectual but there is still potential for significant damage to occur. A key challenge then is also the ability to detect such isolated plotters and to be able to correctly assess the threat that they pose.



There is no simple answer for how this can be achieved, although improved monitoring of online ‘chatter’ is one possibility. Another innovation would be to learn from the Americans’ use of paid informants as a means of improving community-level intelligence, since this has largely proven successful in containing the more dispersed threat on the other side of the Atlantic (although as the above comments make clear it is an approach which requires a great deal of care in application). Ultimately, of course, there is unlikely to be a 100% success rate in preventing terrorism in either the UK, the US, or elsewhere- learning from these experiences and improving preparations for responding to attacks are thus also vitally important. The currently ongoing inquest into the events surrounding 7/7 may help in this regard.

### **11.15 Concluding Remarks**

This study has examined two representative samples of Islamist terrorism cases involving people living in or from the US and UK who were actively offending between September 12<sup>th</sup> 2001 and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. The research questions identified in chapter 2 have been answered by way of systematically examining and comparing the cases in each country using pre-defined variables. The results represent an empirical record and evaluation of modern Islamist terrorism in the United States and Great Britain and will hopefully contribute to understanding and reducing the threat of violence. It is nevertheless important to remember that the available open-source data on which this report was based was often lacking considerable amounts of information and is of questionable reliability. Those who read this report are encouraged to bear this in mind as well as the fact that as new information emerges and as new cases are added over time the picture will change. The threat is dynamic and so must be the response.



## **Chapter 11 Endnotes**

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- <sup>1</sup> Workings: US = 91/ 300,000,000 = 0.0000003; UK = 112/ 61,000,000 = 0.00000184. UK/ US = 6.13.
- <sup>2</sup> Workings: US = 91/ 2,350,000 = 0.00003872; UK = 0.000056. UK/ US = 1.45.
- <sup>3</sup> Note that this does not contradict the descriptions given of each country in chapters 6 and 7, which highlighted the UK as a hub of Islamist terrorist activity. This is because many of the terrorists who visited the UK were prosecuted abroad and because others within the UK were not prosecuted for their actions.
- <sup>4</sup> See Brigitte Nacos, "Revisiting the Contagion Hypothesis: Terrorism, News Coverage, and Copycat Attacks" (2009) *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 3:3, 3-13.
- <sup>5</sup> One other case (Alishtari- US case #34) occurred in Ardsley, in Westchester county in New York state to the north of NYC.
- <sup>6</sup> Using names of individuals as a guideline where explicit information on ethnic background was lacking.
- <sup>7</sup> Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe: Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in Which They Joined the Jihad: An Exploratory Study* (2006) The Hague: Clingendael Institute.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- <sup>10</sup> Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, 42; Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 78-80.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid; ibid; Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (2008) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- <sup>12</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 109-124.
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- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Kim Howells, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented? Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005* (2009) London: Intelligence and Security Committee, 17 <[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/210852/20090519\\_77review.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/210852/20090519_77review.pdf)> at May 20, 2010.
- <sup>19</sup> "7/7 Trial: How Acquitted Trio Came to Embrace Radical Cause" *The Times*, April 29, 2009 <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article6188667.ece>> at July 4, 2010.
- <sup>20</sup> Susan Candiotti, "Walker Lindh Sentenced to 20 Years" *CNN*, October 4, 2002 <<http://edition.cnn.com/2002/LAW/10/04/lindh.statement/>> at June 3, 2010.
- <sup>21</sup> Duncan Gardham, "Growing Number of British Men Joining Islamic Radicals in Somalia" *The Telegraph*, February 16, 2009 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/lawandorder/4638987/Growing-number-of-British-men-joining-Islamic-radicals-in-Somalia.html>> at July 24, 2010.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>24</sup> Raffaello Pantucci, "Did Somalia's al-Shabaab Plan to Attack the Australian Military?" (2009) *Terrorism Monitor*, 7:27, 4-6.
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**Appendix A Part 1:**

**List of US Cases Included in the Sample in Chronological Order**

N = 46 cases, 91 individuals



Case #	Name	Case description	Date range from	Date range to
1	Christopher Paul	Long term AQ involvement	1990	2007
2	Enaam Arnaout	BIF	1985	2002
3	Jose Padilla	Conspiracy to murder overseas + material support	1993	2002
3	Adham Amin Hassoun	Conspiracy to murder overseas + material support	1993	2002
3	Kifah Wael Jayyousi	Conspiracy to murder overseas + material support	1993	2002
4	Ali Saleh Kalah al-Marri	KSM sleeper agent	1998	2003
5	Nuradin Abdi	Plot to attack shopping mall	1999	2003
6	Iyman Faris	Brooklyn bridge plot	2000	2003
7	Ali al-Timimi	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Randal Todd Royer	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Ibrahim Ahmed al-Hamdi	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Masoud Ahmad Khan	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Yong Ki Kwon	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Mohammed Aatique	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Seifullah Chapman	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Hammad Abdur-Raheem	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Donald Thomas Surrat	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Khwaja Mahmood Hasan	Virginia jihad network	2000	2003
7	Ali Asad Chandia	Virginia jihad network	2000	2005
8	Mohammed Abdullah Warsame	Trained & fought in Afghanistan; maintained contact with al-Qaeda	2000	2003
9	John Walker Lindh	American Taliban	2000	2001



Case #	Name	Case description	Date range from	Date range to
10	Abdulla al-Saoub	Portland 7	1998	2002
10	Jeffrey Battle	Portland 7	1998	2002
10	Patrice Lumumba Ford	Portland 7	1998	2002
10	Ahmed Ibrahim Bilal	Portland 7	1998	2002
10	Muhammad Ibrahim Bilal	Portland 7	1998	2002
10	Habis Abdulla al-Saoub	Portland 7	1998	2002
10	October Martinique Lewis	Portland 7	1998	2002
11	Adam Gadahn	AQ Spokesman	1997	...
12	Ilyas Ali	Drugs for missiles	2002	2002
13	Ahmed Omar Abu Ali	Plan to assassinate George W. Bush	2000	2003
14	Mohammed Junaid Babar	Support to AQ; involvement in UK Crevice group & others	2002	2004
15	Tarik Ibn Osman Shah	Support for terrorists abroad; offering services to AQ	2001	2005
15	Rafiq Sabir	Support for terrorists abroad; offering services to AQ	2001	2005
15	Mahmud Faruq Brent	Support for terrorists abroad; offering services to AQ	2001	2005
15	Abdulrahman Farhane	Support for terrorists abroad; offering services to AQ	2001	2005
16	Uzair Paracha	Plot to facilitate Khan's entry to US for attacks	2003	2003
17	Yassin Muhiddin Aref	\$ laundering for JeM terror attack in NYC	2003	2004
17	Mohammed Mosharref Hossain	\$ laundering for JeM terror attack in NYC	2003	2004
18	Hamid Hayat	Trained in Pakistan	2003	2005



Case #	Name	Case description	Date range from	Date range to
19	Mohammed Zaki Amawi	Training at home for jihad abroad	2003	2006
19	Marwan Othman el-Hindi	Training at home for jihad abroad	2003	2006
19	Wassim Mazloun	Training at home for jihad abroad	2003	2006
20	Saifullah Anjum Ranjha	Illegal \$ transfer with 6 others; thought \$ was for al-Qaeda	2003	2007
21	Ryan Anderson	Military intell to AQ	2004	2004
22	Ahmed Hassan Al-Uqaily	Angry at Iraq; bought weapons from FBI	2004	2004
23	James Elshafay	Herald Square plot	2004	2004
23	Shahawar Matin Siraj	Herald Square plot	2004	2004
24	Mark Robert Walker	Providing support, inc. websites, for Al-Ittihad al-Islamia	2004	2004
25	Kevin James	JIS	2004	2005
25	Levar Washington	JIS	2004	2005
25	Gregory Patterson	JIS	2004	2005
25	Hammad Samana	JIS	2004	2005
26	Syed Hashmi	Sent military gear to al-Qaeda associates	2003	2006
27	Syed Haris Ahmed	Trained at home; sought jihad abroad; global contacts.	2004	2006
27	Ehsanul Islam Sadequee	Trained at home; sought jihad abroad; global contacts.	2004	2006
28	Zubair Ahmed	Training at home for jihad abroad	2004	2007
28	Khaleel Ahmed	Training at home for jihad abroad	2004	2007
29	Ronald Allen Grecula	Freelancing services to AQ + revenge on wife	2005	2005
30	Mohammad Radwan Obeid	Online recruiting	2005	2005



<b>Case #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date range from</b>	<b>Date range to</b>
31	Michael Reynolds	Offered services to AQ for money	2005	2005
32	Kobie Williams	Trained at home + sent money to Taliban	2005	2006
	Adnan Babar Mirza	Trained at home + sent money to Taliban	2005	2006
33	Narseal Batiste	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006
33	Patrick Abraham	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006
33	Stanley Grant Phanor	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006
33	Burson Augustin	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006
33	Rotschild Augustine	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006
34	Abdul Tawala Ibn Ali Alishtari	Fraud + terror financing	2006	2006
35	Mohammed Reza Taheri-Azar	Ran people over at N. Carolina campus	2006	2006
36	Derrick Shareef	Cherryvale mall plot	2003	2006
37	Serdar Tatar	Fort Dix plot	2006	2007
37	Mohamad Schnewer	Fort Dix plot	2006	2007
37	Dritan Duka	Fort Dix plot	2006	2007
37	Shain Duka	Fort Dix plot	2006	2007
37	Eljvir Duka	Fort Dix plot	2006	2007
38	Daniel Maldonado	Captured in Somalia	2006	2007
39	Omar Hammami	Became a leader in al-Shabaab	2006	...
40	Ruben Luis Leon Shumpert	Counterfeit \$; fled to Somalia	2006	2008
41	Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohamed	Training at home; possession of weapons & explosive materials; online instructional vid	2007	2007
42	Bryant Neal Vinas	Trained with al-Qaeda; fired rocket at US base	2007	2008



<b>Case #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date range from</b>	<b>Date range to</b>
43	Abdifatah Isse	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2008
43	Salah Osman Ahmed	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2008
43	Kamal Said Hassan	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2008
43	Shirwa Ahmed	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2008
44	Khalid Ouazzani	Sending money to AQ	2007	2010
45	Aafia Siddiqui	Gun attack in Afghanistan	2008	2008
46	Jamal Sheikh Banna	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2008	2009
46	Burhan Hassan	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2008	2009
46	Zakaria Maruf	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2008	2009
46	Mohamoud Hassan	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2008	2009



## **Appendix A: Part 2**

### **United States Case Summaries**

(Presented in chronological order according to when cases began)

#### **Case#1: Christopher Paul-**

##### **Long-term Islamist militant & al-Qaeda member (...1990-2007)**

###### ***Key Features:***

- Long-term militant & member of al-Qaeda
- Trained and fought overseas
- Maintained contact with foreign jihadis
- Planned attacks in Europe
- Also in contact with domestic terrorists

Paul was born Paul Kenyatta Laws in Columbus, Ohio in 1964. He reportedly converted to Islam while attending college during the mid-1980's<sup>1</sup> and changed his name twice, settling on Christopher Paul in 1994.<sup>2</sup> According to the indictment, he left the US in 1990 and in 1991 he received paramilitary training in Pakistan and Afghanistan and formally joined al-Qaeda, after which he returned to Columbus where he taught martial arts at a mosque.<sup>3</sup> He travelled extensively throughout the 1990's (taking part in the conflict in Bosnia<sup>4</sup>) and in 1998 conducted outdoor training exercises with others in Ohio. Between 1999 and 2000, Paul was in contact with co-conspirators in Germany, whom he sent money and equipment and visited in person in April '99 giving instructions on how to make explosives. The purpose of this collaboration (which he later pleaded guilty to) was to carry out attacks on European tourist resorts popular with Americans, and/or on government buildings.<sup>5</sup>

Paul also allegedly amassed a collection of jihadi materials on topics such as bomb-making, and conducted research into remote control model vehicles and flight simulators as late as 2006.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in August 2002 Paul met with Nuradin Abdi and Iyman Faris (see case #5 & 6) to discuss Abdi's idea to bomb a shopping mall in the US (for which Paul was not indicted and apparently dismissed as a "stupid idea").<sup>7</sup> He was arrested at home in Ohio on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2007<sup>8</sup> and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008 he pleaded guilty to conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction against United States nationals



outside of the United States (referring to the German plot), thereby accepting a sentence of 20 years.<sup>9</sup>

### **Case #2: Enaam Arnaout-**

#### **Benevolence International Foundation (...1992-2002)**

##### ***Key Features:***

- Long-term associations with militants overseas
- Alleged fundraising for terrorism
- Convicted on charges of fraud

Arnaout was born in Syria around 1963. His family moved to Saudi Arabia and from there he went to Afghanistan during the mid to late-1980's.<sup>10</sup> According to the indictment,<sup>11</sup> Arnaout was associated with Osama bin Laden and other founders of al-Qaeda as well as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and whilst in Afghanistan he was involved in the organisation of training camps for mujahedin. In 1987, a charitable organisation named the Islamic Benevolence Committee was formed in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in order to support mujahedin. During the early 1990's it was renamed the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) and incorporated in the United States and elsewhere, and Arnaout –who had come to the US around 1990<sup>12</sup>- acted as the director of BIF from about 1993 onwards.<sup>13</sup> After 9/11 BIF had its assets frozen in the US for suspected ties to terrorism, its offices were raided on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2001, and Arnaout was arrested, aged 39, on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002.<sup>14</sup>

Although the indictment goes into considerable detail regarding Arnaout's past activities, he was ultimately charged with defrauding BIF donors by concealing the fact that proceeds were not only used for humanitarian purposes, but between \$200,000 to \$400,000 was also used to support armed Islamist factions in Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere. He eventually pleaded guilty to racketeering and was sentenced to 11 years in August 2003, the sentencing judge noting that his association with bin Laden and others raised suspicion, but that there was insufficient evidence to show that Arnaout supported terrorism.<sup>15</sup> The sentence was reduced to 10 years in 2006.<sup>16</sup>



**Case #3: Jose Padilla, Adham Amin Hassoun and Kifah Wael Jayyousi-  
American jihadi support-cell, conspiring to commit murder overseas (...1993-2002)**

***Key Features***

- Long-running jihadi support-network
- US-based fundraising, recruitment & facilitation of overseas training/combat
- Worldwide contacts
- Alleged plans to conduct domestic attacks
- Convicted for conspiring to murder overseas and providing material support

From as early as 1993, Jayyousi –a resident of San Diego and later Detroit- was active in incorporating the American Islamic Group, which he used to publish *The Islam Report*, a newsletter that promoted violent jihad overseas and solicited funds in support of mujahedin.<sup>17</sup> He was reported to be an avid supporter of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, whom he kept in contact with after the latter was incarcerated.<sup>18</sup> Throughout the 1990’s, in collaboration with Hassoun (an active fundraiser for mujahedin based in Broward County, Florida) and other co-conspirators in Canada, Egypt and elsewhere, Jayyousi made sustained efforts to raise funds in support of foreign mujahedin (notably in Bosnia and Chechnya) and to recruit others to join the fighting abroad.<sup>19</sup> The most high-profile of those recruits was Padilla, a former gang member in Chicago who had been incarcerated from 1991-1993 for a road-rage incident,<sup>20</sup> and who became involved with Hassoun at the Masjid al-Iman mosque in Fort Lauderdale from at least 1996 onwards.<sup>21</sup> On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998 Padilla flew from Florida to Cairo where he met with Mohamed Hesham Youssef (also a resident of Broward County until 1996) arranged for by Hassoun.<sup>22</sup>

By September/October 2000 Padilla was in Afghanistan training at al-Qaeda’s al-Farouq camp, where he met with Mohammed Atef.<sup>23</sup> In April 2001 he returned to Egypt and then in June went back to Afghanistan, where he reportedly underwent specialist training in how to destroy apartment buildings alongside a former associate from Florida (whose whereabouts remain unknown), Adnan El Shukrijumah. This plan was temporarily abandoned and Padilla allegedly then became involved in a plot to develop a radioactive ‘dirty’ bomb (inspired by online research). However, after meeting with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the original plot to destroy apartment



buildings was apparently renewed. Padilla was given \$10,000 and returned to the US, arriving in Chicago O'Hare airport on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2002 at which point he was arrested.<sup>24</sup>

The allegations of a domestic terrorism plot were never followed up, Padilla's case instead being incorporated into that of his recruiters, Hassoun, Jayyousi and colleagues. In August 2007 all three were convicted of conspiring to murder, kidnap and maim individuals abroad and of providing material support to terrorists.<sup>25</sup> They were judged to have been part of a North American support cell that operated in several cities in the US and Canada, communicated with other support networks and sent money, equipment and recruits overseas to wage violent jihad.<sup>26</sup> In January 2008 Padilla was sentenced to 17 years and 4 months; Hassoun received 15 years and 8 months, and Jayyousi received 12 years and 8 months.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Case#4: Ali Saleh Kalah al-Marri-**

##### **Al-Qaeda 'sleeper' agent (...1998-2001)**

###### ***Key Features***

- 'Sleeper agent' sent by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to research attacks in the US
- Contact with senior al-Qaeda figures overseas
- Pleaded guilty and sentenced in 2009

Al-Marri, a dual national of Qatar and Saudi Arabia was educated in Peroria, Illinois during the 1980's.<sup>28</sup> From 1998 to 2001 he is alleged to have trained at al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, also spending three months in the US from May to August 2000, during which time he set up a fake business and used stolen credit card details to fund it.<sup>29</sup> At the direction of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, he returned to the US on a graduate student visa on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001, bringing his wife and five children with him. Information linking him to other al-Qaeda figures including Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi (an alleged key financier of 9/11) led to al-Marri's arrest on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001, whereupon authorities uncovered hundreds of stolen credit card details and evidence of extensive research into the manufacture of hydrogen cyanide on his computer.<sup>30</sup> He was held on charges of fraud until June 2003 when he was designated an enemy combatant, and then was formally charged with conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaeda in February 2009.<sup>31</sup> In April 2009 he pleaded guilty to the charges against him, accepting



the government’s allegations and in October the same year he was sentenced to 8 years and 3 months.<sup>32</sup>

**Case #5: Nuradin Abdi-**

**Attempted jihadi training overseas, alleged domestic plot (...1999-2003)**

***Key Features***

- Entered the US illegally
- Associated with Islamist terrorists in Ohio
- Alleged plans to carry out a domestic attack on a civilian target (not charged)
- Pleaded guilty to conspiracy to provide support to terrorists overseas

Abdi, a Somali citizen, came to the US on a false passport in 1995, left for a period and then re-entered from Canada in 1997 and was granted asylum based on false statements that he made.<sup>33</sup> In 1999 Abdi left the US again, seeking (but failing to find) jihadi training in Kosovo, Chechnya, and Ethiopia before meeting with an Islamist ‘warlord’ in Somalia. It is not explicitly alleged that he actually received any training. He returned to the US again in March 2000, being picked up at Columbus airport by Iyman Faris (see case #6), whom he had befriended along with Christopher Paul (case #1) during his previous time in Ohio.<sup>34</sup>

Between August 2002 and March 2003 Abdi discussed with Faris and Paul his idea to bomb a Columbus shopping mall,<sup>35</sup> and although they did not join him in his plans, Abdi is alleged to have received instructions on explosives-making from one of them.<sup>36</sup> Faris was arrested in a separate investigation in March 2003 and gave information on Abdi, which led to his arrest on November 28<sup>th</sup> of the same year.<sup>37</sup> There is no information to indicate that Abdi was close to carrying out his plans, however authorities reported that between June and November 2003 he had made calls to approximately 40 different numbers associated with terrorism activity.<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately Abdi pleaded guilty not to plans of domestic terrorism (with which he was not charged, seemingly given that it did not proceed beyond discussion) but to the charge of conspiracy to provide support to terrorists overseas, referring to his attempts to find training camps, corroborated by bank and travel records as well as items seized under search warrants.<sup>39</sup> He was sentenced to 10 years in prison in November 2007.<sup>40</sup>



### **Case #6: Iyman Faris-**

#### **Al-Qaeda plan to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge (...2000-2003)**

##### *Key Features*

- Pakistani naturalised US citizen, trained in Afghanistan
- Given assignments by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed
- Conducted online research for attacks in the US

Born in Kashmir in 1969, Faris came to the US in 1994 (settling in Columbus, Ohio) and became a naturalised citizen in 1999.<sup>41</sup> Late in 2000, Faris left the US for Pakistan where he rendezvoused with a friend he had known from the jihad against the Soviets during the 1980's. Together they travelled to Afghanistan and underwent training at an al-Qaeda camp. Early in 2001 Faris conducted online research into ultra-light airplanes as requested by individuals at the camp, and around a year later he was tasked by a senior al-Qaeda figure (later revealed to be Khalid Sheikh Mohammed<sup>42</sup>) with researching the possibility of bringing down the Brooklyn Bridge in New York by cutting the suspension cables with 'gas-cutters', and also how to derail trains.<sup>43</sup>

Faris returned to the US in April 2002, conducted online research as instructed and maintained contact with his friend back in Pakistan. Early in 2003 after carrying out surveillance on the Brooklyn Bridge he sent a coded email indicating that the plot was unlikely to succeed.<sup>44</sup> He was arrested in March 2003 and in May pleaded guilty to providing material support to al-Qaeda, including carrying out research for domestic attacks.<sup>45</sup> He was sentenced to 20 years in October 2003.<sup>46</sup>



**Case #7: Ali al-Timimi, Randall Todd Royer, Ibrahim Ahmed al-Hamdi, Seifullah Chapman, Masoud Ahmad Khan, Yong Ki Kwon, Mohammed Aatique, Khwaja Mahmood Hasan, Hammad Abdur-Raheem, Donald Thomas Surratt & Ali Asad Chandia–**

**Virginia jihad network, tried to join the Taliban (...2000-2003)**

*Key Features*

- Relatively large group guided by ‘spiritual leader’ al-Timimi
- Engaged in domestic training
- Several group members trained with LeT in Pakistan
- Also assisted a senior LeT representative in purchasing military equipment

This group of eleven individuals from the Washington suburbs came together as a group through social meetings, among other places at the Dar al-Arqam mosque in Falls Church, Virginia, where they congregated to listen to the teachings of US-born imam, Ali al-Timimi.<sup>47</sup> Timimi was a respected Salafist preacher (whose sermons were also distributed on the Internet) and was a proponent of armed jihad to defend Muslims around the world. He is described as the group’s ‘spiritual’ leader and a key, influential figure behind their actions.<sup>48</sup> Timimi’s ‘personal assistant’ was Ali Asad Chandia.<sup>49</sup> At the same time group members were inspired by American Muslim convert Randall Todd Royer, who had fought in Bosnia between 1994 and 1997, and had trained with (and allegedly fought for) Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT) in Pakistan in April/May 2000.<sup>50</sup>

From as early as January 2000 members of the group engaged in live firearms practice at various shooting ranges. In June that year, Royer told the group about his exploits with LeT and -as arranged for by Royer- al-Hamdi trained with LeT from August to September 2000 (during which time he reportedly fired on Indian positions in Kashmir) and Chapman underwent training in September 2001.<sup>51</sup>

Throughout 2001, the group practiced military tactics in the US using paintball guns in addition to live firearms. Four days after 9/11 on September 15<sup>th</sup>, al-Timimi gathered the group at Kwon’s house and urged them to join with LeT in preparation for jihad, telling them that American troops in Afghanistan would be legitimate targets.<sup>52</sup> At the end of the month Aatique, Khan, Kwon and Hasan travelled in pairs to Pakistan and trained with LeT near Muzafabad from October to November.<sup>53</sup> Whilst there they



met with LeT-member Mohammed Ajmal Khan (see UK case #11) and also with Chandia, who stayed in Pakistan from November 2001 to February 2002.<sup>54</sup> Al-Timimi, Royer and al-Hamdi further encouraged the others back home to go and train, although no-one else did.

During 2002 into 2003 emails were exchanged between members of the group including Kwon, Chapman, Hasan, Chandia and Ajmal Khan. Ajmal Khan visited the US and was assisted by Chandia in particular in purchasing equipment, including paintball rounds and wireless video technology for use with a remote control aircraft, which were sent to Pakistan for use by LeT.<sup>55</sup>

Nine arrests were made in the US in June 2003, and 3 others (Chapman, Hasan and an associate, Sabri Benkahla<sup>i</sup>) were later detained in Saudi Arabia and handed over to American authorities at the end of the year.<sup>56</sup> In November 2003 Kwon, Hasan and Surratt (who had all pleaded guilty to conspiracy and illegal use of firearms) were sentenced to 11 years, 6 months; 11 years, 3 months; and 3 years, 10 months respectively.<sup>57</sup> Mohamed Aatique pleaded guilty to similar charges and was sentenced to 10-and-a-half years in December 2003.<sup>58</sup> In March 2004, Masoud Khan, Chapman and Abdur-Raheem (who, as an ex-soldier, had led domestic training exercises) were all convicted for providing support to LeT and in June were sentenced to life; 85 years; and 8 years.<sup>59</sup> In April 2004, Royer (who had pleaded guilty to facilitating the others' offences) was sentenced to 20 years, and al-Hamdi (who pleaded guilty to possessing a firearm and carrying a grenade launcher during training) received 15.<sup>60</sup>

Timimi, who had been excluded from the original indictment, was arrested and charged with soliciting the others to engage in war against the United States in September 2004 and in April 2005 he was convicted.<sup>61</sup> He was sentenced to life in prison.<sup>62</sup> Finally, Chandia was arrested on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2005, charged with providing material support to LeT. He was found guilty and in August 2006 was given a 15 year prison sentence.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Benkahla (who also knew Ahmed Omar Abu Ali- see case #13) was acquitted of involvement with the Virginia group but was later tried and convicted for lying when he denied overseas training which he undertook in 1999. He was sentenced to 10 years ("Virginia: Terror-Related Verdict Upheld" *New York Times*, June 24, 2008  
<<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9802EED71738F937A15755C0A96E9C8B63&&scp=1&sq=Sabri%20Benkahla&st=cse>> at June 4, 2010).



**Case #8 Mohammed Abdullah Warsame-**

**Trained in Afghanistan, maintained contact with foreign terrorists (...2000-2003)**

*Key Features*

- Trained with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan prior to 9/11
- Maintained contact with al-Qaeda operatives and sent money on one occasion
- Came to the US in 2002 and continued to email his jihadi contacts

Warsame was born in Somalia in 1973 and claimed refugee status in Canada in 1989, later becoming a naturalised citizen there.<sup>64</sup> He married a woman living in Minneapolis in the US in 1995 although they continued to live in separate countries for the next seven years (Warsame is described as shuttling back and forth between the two locations<sup>65</sup>). From 2000 into 2001 he trained at two al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and fought on two occasions for the Taliban. He was encouraged by an al-Qaeda official to return home rather than stay in Afghanistan, and was given the money for his plane ticket in April 2001. Warsame gained legal permanent residency status in the US and joined his wife in Minneapolis in April 2002. Since leaving Afghanistan he also maintained contact with al-Qaeda associates via email, apparently passing on information about border entries and the whereabouts of other jihadis, and on one occasion wired \$2,000 to an al-Qaeda operative in Pakistan.<sup>66</sup> This continued until December 2003 when he was arrested as a material witness for a case in New York and was then charged in Minnesota for providing material support to al-Qaeda. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 7 years, 8 months in jail to be followed by deportation to Canada.<sup>67</sup>



### **Case #9: John Walker Lindh-**

#### **The ‘American Taliban’ (...2001)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Went overseas to learn about Islam
- Trained with al-Qaeda and fought for the Taliban

Lindh grew up in Marin County, California from the age of ten.<sup>68</sup> In 1997, aged 16, he converted to become a Muslim and in July 1998 he spent 9 months in Yemen studying Islam. He returned to the US briefly before leaving for Yemen again in February 2000. Then in October of that year he left for Pakistan, joining Harakat ul-Mujahedin (HuM) around May 2001. Lindh trained with HuM for several weeks but became disillusioned with them and sought out the Taliban in Afghanistan.<sup>69</sup> From June 1, 2001 he spent seven weeks training at al-Qaeda’s al-Farouq camp, where he was reportedly invited (but declined) to pledge an oath of allegiance to bin Laden. He then joined the Taliban frontlines fighting against the Northern Alliance and was eventually captured late in November along with numerous other Taliban fighters at Mazar e-Sharif.<sup>70</sup> In February 2002 back in the US Lindh was charged with a ten count indictment and in July pleaded guilty to providing services to the Taliban and carrying weapons during those duties.<sup>71</sup> He was sentenced to 20 years.<sup>72</sup>

### **Case #10: Habis Abdulla al-Saoub, Jeffrey Battle, Patrice Lumumba Ford, Ahmed**

#### **Ibrahim Bilal, Muhammad Ibrahim Bilal, Maher Mofeid Hawash & October**

##### **Martinique Lewis-**

#### **The ‘Portland 7’ (...2001-2002...)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Influential group leader with prior combat experience
- Motivated to help Muslims
- Conducted training exercises at home
- Travelled overseas in attempt to join the Taliban
- Only one member successful, later killed

Al-Saoub –by all accounts the leader or ‘emir’ of the group by virtue of his previous experience fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan<sup>73</sup>- came to the US in 1996, settling in



Portland.<sup>74</sup> Over the next five years these seven individuals (all American citizens) came together as a group, apparently meeting each other at local mosques. Guided by al-Saoub they developed a collective sense of outrage at the plight of Muslims around the world and by the summer of 2001 several members including al-Saoub, Battle, Ford, the Bilal brothers and others were undergoing training exercises in Oregon using firearms in order to prepare themselves for violent jihad.<sup>75</sup>

This continued after 9/11. In response to the imminent US invasion of Afghanistan, and at al-Saoub’s direction, the group made preparations to go to Pakistan, intending to train and fight alongside the Taliban. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001 al-Saoub and Battle left the US for Hong Kong, followed on the 20<sup>th</sup> by Ford and the Bilals, and finally Hawash, who left on the 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>76</sup> From Hong Kong, the group entered China and then unsuccessfully tried to cross the border into Pakistan. They kept in touch with Lewis (Battle’s partner) back home via email and she sent money to Battle in order to help his efforts.<sup>77</sup>

Group members then returned home individually to the United States, with the exception of al-Saoub, who eventually did make it to Pakistan (helped financially by his friends back in Portland) and Ahmed Bilal, who travelled to Malaysia. At the beginning of October 2002, Battle, Ford, Muhammad Bilal and Lewis were arrested in the US.<sup>78</sup> Ahmed Bilal handed himself in in Malaysia and was extradited shortly afterwards, while Hawash was arrested in March of 2003.<sup>79</sup> In November 2003 Battle and Ford both received 18 years in prison having pleaded guilty to conspiring to levy war against the US,<sup>80</sup> and in November Lewis was sentenced to 3 years for providing financial assistance.<sup>81</sup> Hawash, Ahmed Bilal and Muhammad Bilal pleaded guilty to conspiring to aid the Taliban and were sentenced in February 2004 to 7, 10 and 8 years, respectively.<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile al-Saoub remained at large until October 2003 when it was reported that he had been killed in Pakistan.<sup>83</sup>



### **Case#11: Adam Gadahn-**

#### **American al-Qaeda Spokesman (...2002-Ongoing...)**

##### ***Key Features***

- American convert radicalised prior to 9/11
- Rose to prominence as al-Qaeda spokesman in 2004
- Charged with treason in 2006
- Remains at large

Gadahn's case is one of the few that fall short of the sampling criteria for this study but are nevertheless still included. His appearance in al-Qaeda propaganda videos leaves little doubt about his convictions and associations.

Gadahn is reported to have become involved with known extremists Hisham Diab and Khalil Deek at an Orange County mosque around 1996, shortly after converting to Islam at the age of seventeen.<sup>84</sup> By late 1997 he had left America for Pakistan and by 2001 is thought to have been associated with prominent al-Qaeda figures including Abu Zubaydah and to have worked as a translator based at the al-Farouq camp. He is reported to have worked on an audio translation of a speech by bin Laden in 2002, and Zubaydah (captured that year) revealed to interrogators that he knew him. Likewise, Khalid Sheik Mohammed (captured in 2003) allegedly described numerous meetings with Gadahn.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, despite the fact that he did not become a wanted man until mid-2004, 2002 is chosen as a conservative estimate of the starting point of his 'offending' (indeed, the available information indicates that his association with radicals began prior to 9/11).

In May 2004 the FBI publicly declared that they were looking for Gadahn,<sup>86</sup> and in October '04 he appeared in an al-Qaeda propaganda video in which he warned that more attacks on the US were forthcoming, stating that "after decades of American tyranny and oppression, now it's your turn to die."<sup>87</sup> He has since appeared in numerous other videos, which are widely accessible via the Internet, in which he continues to issue threats and warnings and to condemn the West and Israel for injustices against Muslims.

In October 2006 Gadahn was indicted in the US for treason as well as providing material support to al-Qaeda,<sup>88</sup> however he has continued to release new videos (ripping up his American passport in 2008 and denigrating the Obama administration in 2009<sup>89</sup>)



and his whereabouts remain unknown. Reports that he had been captured in Pakistan in March 2010 have since been refuted.<sup>90</sup>

**Case #12: Ilyas Ali-**

**Plot to trade drugs for missiles (...2002)**

***Key Features***

- Drug-trafficking conspiracy with two associates from Peshawar
- Attempted to acquire missiles, intending to sell them to the Taliban/al-Qaeda

On April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002 Ali (an Indian-born US national based in Minneapolis) met with an undercover officer in San Diego to negotiate a large drug-deal on behalf of two associates from Peshawar, Syed Mustajab Shah and Muhammed Afridi.<sup>91</sup> In September all three flew to Hong Kong via Karachi and on the 20<sup>th</sup> met with more undercover agents in a hotel to finalise a price for 5 tons of hashish and 600kg of heroin. During the meeting they stipulated that the price could be offset against the cost of four Stinger missiles, which they intended to sell to the Taliban/al-Qaeda.<sup>92</sup> All three were deported to the US in January 2003 and pleaded guilty to charges of drug trafficking and attempting to provide support to al-Qaeda. Ali and Afridi were both sentenced to 4 years, 8 months, while Shah received an 18 year sentence.<sup>93</sup>

**Case #13: Ahmed Omar Abu Ali-**

**Plot to assassinate George W. Bush (...2002-2003)**

***Key Features***

- US citizen joined an al-Qaeda cell in Saudi Arabia
- Underwent training in explosives, firearms and forgery
- Discussed plans to assassinate George W. Bush and hijack planes

Abu Ali, a US citizen and resident of Falls Church, Virginia, spent several months studying Islam in Medina, Saudi Arabia during 2000, returning to America in August.<sup>94</sup> In September 2002 he flew back to Medina, telling associates there that he wished to join al-Qaeda. He became involved with approximately ten other individuals associated with that organisation and discussed plans to assassinate George W. Bush either by shooting or car-bomb, and received a religious blessing to do so. He also discussed



plans to hijack US-bound airplanes for use in attacks.<sup>95</sup> His associates gave him money to buy equipment including a laptop and mobile phone, and trained him in the use of firearms, explosives and forgery (Ali had wanted to go to Afghanistan for training but was denied a visa).<sup>96</sup> He was finally arrested in Saudi Arabia on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2003 and held without charge until being sent back to the US in February 2005.<sup>97</sup> On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005 Ali was convicted on all nine counts of a superseding indictment, including charges of providing resources to al-Qaeda, conspiracy to assassinate the President and to hijack and destroy aircraft.<sup>98</sup> He was subsequently sentenced to 30 years,<sup>99</sup> which was increased to life imprisonment in 2009.<sup>100</sup>

#### **Case #14: Mohammed Junaid Babar-**

#### **Provided support to al-Qaeda, including a group of British jihadists planning attacks in the UK (...2002-2004)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Radicalised via Internet and subsequent contact with al-Muhajiroun
- Moved to Pakistan and established a jihadi training camp
- Supplied equipment and money to al-Qaeda
- Turned informant against his former associates

Babar was born in Pakistan in 1975 and moved with his family to the US in 1977. As an adult he became involved in the New York chapter of the London-based group, al-Muhajiroun (which he first encountered via the Internet) and nine days after 9/11 he left the US for Pakistan, going via the UK.<sup>101</sup> He apparently stayed at al-Muhajiroun's Lahore office until 2002 when he bought a house.<sup>102</sup> From at least December 2002 Babar helped establish a jihadi training camp (which he kept supplied with necessary materials and equipment) where others could learn weapons and explosives skills, and early in 2003 was joined by a group of British jihadis and fellow members of al-Muhajiroun led by Omar Khyam (see UK case#14).<sup>103</sup> Whilst there the Britons learned how to make bombs in preparation for a planned attack on civilian targets in the UK, which was later foiled after the group was arrested back in Britain in March 2004.<sup>104</sup>

After the British group left around August 2003, Babar continued his support activities, supplying military gear (including night vision goggles, sleeping bags and waterproof ponchos<sup>105</sup>) and money, which was passed on to al-Qaeda operatives in



South Waziristan. Babar personally delivered such an assignment early in 2004, then in April returned to the United States and was arrested soon afterwards.<sup>106</sup> In August 2004 he pleaded guilty to five counts of providing material support to al-Qaeda and entered into a plea agreement in which he agreed to provide information and to testify against his former associates.<sup>107</sup> He was the ‘star’ witness in the trial of the UK jihadis and that of a Canadian member of the group, Mohammed Momin Khawaja.<sup>108</sup> Babar was reported to be joining his family in a witness protection program after law-enforcement officials were done with him.<sup>109</sup>

**Case #15: Tarik Ibn Osman Shah, Rafiq Abdus Sabir, Mahmud Faruq Brent & Abdulrahman Farhane-**

**Offered expertise to al-Qaeda (...2002-2005)**

*Key Features*

- Relatively loose network of likeminded individuals linked together by Shah
- Desire to support overseas mujahedin
- One individual trained with LeT in Pakistan

Shah, a martial arts instructor based in New York, met with Sabir, a doctor, during the mid-1990’s.<sup>110</sup> As early as 1998 the two men allegedly tried to make it to Afghanistan for paramilitary training but were unsuccessful.<sup>111</sup> During the summer of 2001, Brent lived with Shah, received martial arts instruction from him at a Beacon, New York mosque and watched jihadi videos about Bosnia. Brent also introduced Shah to Seifullah Chapman (case #7) at around this time. Shah then had to cease the training after 9/11 as mosque officials felt it was inappropriate, and in February 2002 Brent travelled to Pakistan where he received training at an LeT camp (which he later told Shah about after returning to the US in June).<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile Shah had become involved in a money laundering conspiracy in which he and Farhane (along with an informant) discussed ways to send money overseas for mujahedin in Afghanistan and Chechnya.<sup>113</sup>

Beginning around September 2003 until May 2005, Shah in particular, later accompanied by Sabir, participated in a number of meetings with individuals they believed to be recruiters for al-Qaeda (but were in fact an informant and undercover agent).<sup>114</sup> During these meetings Shah repeatedly expressed his desire to help al-Qaeda and offered himself and Sabir as a ‘package’, stating that he could provide martial arts



training, while Sabir could treat injured mujahedin. In between these meetings Shah also took steps to find suitable locations for domestic jihadi training. Then at a meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Shah and Sabir both swore allegiance to al-Qaeda in the presence of the ‘al-Qaeda recruiter’, and Sabir informed him he was going to Saudi Arabia to work, and provided his details to be passed on to operatives there. The two were arrested days later, Brent was arrested in August, and Farhane was apprehended in February 2006. Shah, Brent and Farhane each pleaded guilty and received sentences of 15; 15; and 13 years respectively. Sabir was convicted at trial and sentenced to 25 years in November 2007.<sup>115</sup>

### **Case #16: Uzair Paracha-**

#### **Scheme to facilitate entry of an al-Qaeda operative into the US (...2003)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Agreed to help assist an al-Qaeda operative enter the US to carry out attacks

Uzair Paracha was born in Pakistan and spent his life shuttling back and forth between Karachi and New York studying in his country of birth and working as a gas station manager in the US, where he had permanent legal resident status. His father Seifullah (also indicted, but at the time resident in Pakistan) had also lived in New York from 1971-1986.<sup>116</sup> In January 2003 Uzair was present at a meeting with accused al-Qaeda operatives Ammar al-Baluchi and Majid Khan (both later detained at Guantanamo Bay along with Seifullah Paracha<sup>117</sup>). Uzair agreed to pose as Majid Khan back in America, using his identity documents once there, so that Khan could then obtain immigration clearance to re-enter the US in furtherance of an alleged plan to carry out attacks on gas stations.<sup>118</sup> As part of the agreement Khan would also invest \$200,000 into Seifullah’s business, which would later be reclaimed when required by al-Qaeda.

As agreed, between February and March 2003, Uzair made phone calls posing as Khan and used his credit card to make it look as if Khan was in the US. When detained at the end of March he also had in his possession a key to a post-office box opened by Aafia Siddiqui (see case #45) which she had opened for Khan’s immigration documents to be sent to, once obtained.<sup>119</sup> Uzair was convicted of all counts against him including providing material support to al-Qaeda and was sentenced to 30 years.<sup>120</sup>



**Case #17: Yassin Muhiddin Aref & Mohammed Mosharref Hossain-  
Agreed to launder money in order to facilitate a domestic terrorist attack (...2003-2004)**

*Key Features*

- Sting operation initiated by an FBI informant
- Engaged in money laundering, believing it would help terrorists

From December 2003 to August 2004 the FBI orchestrated a sting operation whereby a cooperating informant approached two leaders of an Albany mosque, Aref and Hossain.<sup>121</sup> The informant told them that he had sold a Surface-to-Air-Missile (SAM) for \$50,000 and that it was going to be used by Jaish e-Mohammed (JeM) operatives to assassinate a Pakistani diplomat in New York. Hossain agreed to take \$50,000 from the informant and pay \$45,000 back in instalments of \$2,000, with Aref acting as witness and guarantor for the transactions. They also continued to participate in the scheme after the informant continued to make clear that he was working for JeM and that the assassination was imminent. Prosecutors asserted that Hossain was involved for the money while Aref (a former member of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan who had also known Mullah Krekar, the founder of Ansar al-Islam) was ideologically motivated.<sup>122</sup> Aref was found guilty of charges relating to money laundering and lying about his terrorist associations, while Hossain was convicted of all charges, including conspiracy to provide support to JeM. They were sentenced to 15 years each in March 2007.<sup>123</sup>

**Case #18: Hamid Hayat-  
Received training at a jihadi camp in Pakistan (...2003-2005)**

*Key Features*

- Admitted to training in Pakistan
- Alleged willingness to carry out attacks in the US on receipt of orders

Hamid Hayat was born in California but lived in Pakistan for 10 years before coming back to the US in 2000 to live with his parents.<sup>124</sup> In April 2003 he then flew back to Pakistan and for about six months from 2003 into 2004 he trained at an al-Qaeda-run camp, allegedly facilitated by his grandfather who ran the madrassah that he was



attending.<sup>125</sup> At the end of May 2005 he returned to the US and was arrested shortly afterwards, after initially denying and then admitting not only that he had received paramilitary training but that he was returning to the US to await orders and was prepared to carry out an attack. His father, Umer, was also arrested after lying and then admitting that he had paid for his son's plane ticket and sent him \$100 per month allowance, knowing that he was going to attend a terror training camp.<sup>126</sup> Back at the Hayat's residence, officers also uncovered a number of jihadist publications.<sup>127</sup>

It further emerged that federal authorities had been paying an informant to secretly tape conversations within the Lodi Pakistani community for approximately three years.<sup>128</sup> In connection with the Hayat's case they arrested three other men- two Pakistani religious leaders in Lodi and one of their sons. They alleged that these men were in contact with a Taliban leader and were going to give Hamid his orders once his mission had been decided. However, no such charges were brought and these three individuals were deported to Pakistan after voluntarily choosing not to fight immigration charges brought against them.<sup>129</sup>

Hamid was convicted of attending a terror training camp knowing that his training would be used for attacks within the United States, and in September 2007 he was sentenced to 24 years in jail. After a mistrial, his father, Umer, pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about the amount of money he had taken with him when leaving the US for Pakistan in April 2003 and in August was sentenced to time served.<sup>130</sup>

### **Case #19: Mohammed Zaki Amawi, Marwan Othman El-Hindi & Wassim**

#### **Mazloun-**

#### **Conspiracy to kill US soldiers overseas (...2003-2006)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Enlisted the help of a 'trainer' to help prepare for jihad
- Engaged in domestic firearms and explosives practice
- Downloaded bomb-making instructions
- Communicated with individuals abroad via the Internet
- Attempted to provide equipment to mujahedin overseas

From as early as 2002, El-Hindi (a naturalised US citizen from Jordan) was in contact with a government informant whom he asked for security and bodyguard training,



referred to in the indictments as ‘the Trainer’, later identified as Darren Griffin, an ex-soldier.<sup>131</sup> In October 2003 Amawi went to Jordan and tried unsuccessfully to enter Iraq for jihad, returning to the US in March 2004, after which the group’s plans began to escalate. From mid-2004 to February 2006 they collectively downloaded jihadi materials including instructions on bomb-making, accessed secure jihadist websites, watched videos of attacks on American troops, engaged in training exercises with the Trainer on the use of IEDs, and practised with firearms. They also discussed ways in which they could raise money for jihad overseas, and how they might be able to get into Iraq (e.g. by using Mazloun’s used car business as a cover).<sup>132</sup>

Group members communicated with each other (as well as individuals out-with the immediate group) via email and phone, and often used code to disguise their conversations. Amawi was in online contact with an individual in the Middle East with whom he discussed trying to obtain chemicals for, to be used in the manufacture of explosives, and who told him a group of ‘Brothers’ were preparing to enter Iraq. No chemicals were acquired but in August 2005 Amawi and the Trainer flew to Jordan, taking with them five laptops intended for the mujahedin (although they did not manage to deliver them).<sup>133</sup>

In February 2006 El-Hindi and Mazloun were arrested in Ohio, and Amawi was detained in Jordan and promptly returned to the US. In June 2008 they were found guilty of all charges against them, including conspiring to kill US soldiers abroad and to provide material support to terrorists. Amawi was sentenced to 20 years in prison; El-Hindi received 13 years; and Mazloun was given 8 years and 4 months.<sup>134</sup>

#### **Case #20: Saifullah Anjum Ranjha-**

#### **Illegal money transferring, believed the money was for al-Qaeda (...2003-2007)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Operated illegal money transfer business
- Criminal opportunist, laundered money intended for al-Qaeda

Beginning in 2003, federal investigators began ‘Operation Cash-Out’, a sting operation aimed at uncovering illegal money transfer businesses using the informal *hawala* system and failing to adhere to legal regulations.<sup>135</sup> The investigation took place on an international scale, with participants in the scheme based in various locations in the US,



Europe, Australia and Pakistan. In Maryland in the US, a cooperating witness approached Ranjha who agreed to transfer money for him after being told it had been raised through drug dealing and was going to be given to al-Qaeda.<sup>136</sup> In September 2007 they arrested dozens of individuals involved, although only Ranjha faced charges in connection with terrorism, given that he was apparently the only one who knew the intended destination of the money. He pleaded guilty to conspiring to launder money and to concealing terrorist financing and was sentenced to 9 years and 2 months in prison in November 2008.<sup>137</sup>

### **Case #21: Ryan Anderson-**

#### **Attempted to give military secrets to al-Qaeda (2004)**

##### ***Key Features***

- American Muslim convert serving in the US National Guard
- Supplied intelligence to individuals he thought were al-Qaeda

Anderson converted to Islam while studying for his degree, and then joined the National Guard in 2002.<sup>138</sup> An investigation into his activities was apparently begun after a US judge posing as an Islamist extremist came in contact with him online via a jihadi website and notified authorities, and a sting operation was set up.<sup>139</sup> Between January and February 2004 (a few weeks before he was due to serve in Iraq) Anderson communicated via oral, written and electronic means with individuals he believed were al-Qaeda operatives. During these exchanges he expressed his affinity with their cause and supplied information on US Army movements, troop strength, tactics and weapons systems intending to help al-Qaeda stage attacks.<sup>140</sup> Tearful and apologetic, Anderson was found guilty of all charges in a military tribunal and in September 2004 was sentenced to life in prison.<sup>141</sup>



**Case #22: Ahmed Hassan al-Uqaily-**

**Sting operation, bought weapons intending to carry out a domestic attack (...2004)**

*Key Features*

- Iraqi-born US resident angry at the war in Iraq
- Stated he was “going jihad” against the US
- Purchased machine guns and grenades in a sting operation

Al-Uqaily immigrated to the US from Iraq in around 1994 and settled in Nashville.<sup>142</sup> In August 2004 he bumped into an old acquaintance and expressed his anger at the situation in Iraq, saying he wanted to blow something up.<sup>143</sup> The acquaintance went to the police and cooperated in the ensuing investigation. Over the next two months Al-Uqaily asked about acquiring machine guns, grenades and missiles. He reportedly expressed resentment at the Jewish community and stated that he was “going jihad” against America, but did not identify any specific targets. Finally, in October 2004 he met with the cooperating witness and an undercover agent and paid \$1000 in return for disassembled machine guns and grenades plus ammunition, and was arrested.<sup>144</sup> He pleaded guilty to illegal possession of unregistered firearms and in October 2005 was sentenced to 4 years and 8 months to be followed by deportation.<sup>145</sup>

**Case #23: Shahawar Matin Siraj & James Elshafay-**

**Plot to bomb the 34<sup>th</sup> St. Herald Square subway station in New York (...2004)**

*Key Features*

- Radicalised in New York after 9/11
- Approached by paid informant who colluded in plotting
- Planned to bomb a subway station

The radicalisation of both Siraj and Elshafay appears to have begun shortly after 9/11. Siraj (who came to the US in 1999 from Pakistan) began working at his uncle’s Islamic bookstore and became increasingly outraged at US support for Israel, the invasion of Iraq and the abuses at Abu Ghraib.<sup>146</sup> Around the same time, American-born Elshafay was disturbed by anti-Muslim sentiments expressed in the backlash after 9/11 and after visiting family in Egypt in 2002 expressed greater interest in learning about Islam. The two men subsequently met at the bookstore where Siraj worked and became friends,



spending their time watching jihadi videos and discussing their outrage at injustices against Muslims, which they blamed on America.<sup>147</sup>

As a result of tip-offs from members of the public, the NYPD sent a paid informant, Osama Eldawoody, to befriend Siraj around September 2003.<sup>148</sup> Eldawoody claimed that he was a member of an Islamic ‘Brotherhood’ and encouraged the two men from June through to August 2004 as they discussed various possible attacks, eventually becoming focussed on planting a bomb at the Herald Square subway station, intending to cause economic damage but not to kill anyone.<sup>149</sup> On August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004 Siraj and Elshafay conducted surveillance of the station and drew diagrams to help them plant the bomb, although at the time they had not acquired any explosives (Eldawoody telling them that he would provide them).<sup>150</sup>

The two men were arrested on August 27<sup>th</sup> 2004 and Elshafay pleaded guilty to conspiring to destroy a subway using explosives. He testified against Siraj (his ‘mentor’) who was ultimately convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison in January 2007.<sup>151</sup> Elshafay was sentenced to 5 years.<sup>152</sup>

#### **Case #24: Mark Robert Walker-**

##### **Attempted to obtain supplies and join the Somali jihad (...2004)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Lone individual seemingly radicalised online
- Established own website and sought contact with other jihadists
- Wanted to support and join Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya

A student in Wyoming, Walker reportedly became interested in Islam at a mosque in his hometown of Rochester, New York.<sup>153</sup> From as early as January 2004 he began using the Internet to try and connect with Somali jihadis (specifically the group Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya) with the expressed intent of providing them with funds and equipment and in hope of joining them to help fight for an Islamic government in Somalia. To this end he reportedly established his own jihadist website, of which he was the administrator, visited other online jihadi forums, researched equipment such as bullet-proof vests and night-vision goggles, and was in communication with an individual named ‘Khalid’ with whom he was discussing his plans.<sup>154</sup>



In October 2004 Walker’s roommate discovered that he had been accessing extremist websites on his computer and notified the police. Walker then fled to Mexico and was planning to meet up with Khalid at El Paso International Airport in Texas, however he was apprehended as he tried to re-enter the US. He readily admitted his plans and acknowledged that \$2,100 cash he had on him was to buy supplies for the Somali mujahedin.<sup>155</sup> He pleaded guilty to conspiring to supply goods or services to a foreign terrorist organisation (a slightly lesser version of providing material support<sup>156</sup>) and was sentenced to 2 years in prison.<sup>157</sup>

**Case #25: Kevin Lamar James, Levar Haney Washington, Gregory Patterson, Hammad Riaz Samana-**

**Jam’iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh (JIS) jihadi group formed in prison (...2004-2005)**

***Key Features***

- Terrorist group formed in prison
- ‘Ideological offshoot’ of global Sunni Islamist terrorism
- Conducted armed robberies to fund planned domestic attacks
- Used the Internet to research targets

Kevin James was imprisoned in California State Folsom prison in 1996 for a gang-related armed robbery offence.<sup>158</sup> From about 1997 he founded a secretive Islamist organisation in prison called Jam’iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh (JIS, or ‘The Assembly of Authentic Islam’). He actively recruited others to the group, demanded that prospective members swear an oath of allegiance to him and preached that infidels –the US Government and Jews in particular- must be killed.<sup>159</sup> James’ ‘star’ recruit turned out to be Levar Washington. Washington had been in and out of prison since his early teens, had converted to Islam while serving an earlier prison sentence for robbery and then joined JIS whilst serving a term at Folsom.<sup>160</sup>

In November 2004 Washington was paroled and, as instructed by James, proceeded to recruit others to his ‘cell’ in order to carry out attacks. He managed to persuade two individuals, Gregory Patterson and Hammad Samana, who attended the same Inglewood (Los Angeles) mosque to join him.<sup>161</sup>

The three men (keeping in contact with James in prison) then proceeded to carry out online research on potential targets for attack including the Israeli Consulate, Jewish



events in LA and US military sites in the area, and Samana compiled a written list entitled 'Modes of Attack'.<sup>162</sup> They also engaged in physical training and firearms practice and Washington continued unsuccessfully to try and recruit others to help them. Moreover, beginning in May 2005 Washington and Patterson began carrying out armed robberies of gas stations –sometimes in pairs and sometimes alone- in order to fund their planned attacks.<sup>163</sup>

The case was discovered after Patterson reportedly dropped his mobile phone during the course of one of the robberies- investigators then began a surveillance operation and arrested Washington and Patterson during another robbery on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2005.<sup>164</sup> Bullet-proof vests, jihadi literature and lists of targets were found in subsequent searches, and Samana was also apprehended at the start of August.<sup>165</sup>

James, Washington and Patterson all eventually pleaded guilty to conspiracy to levy war against the US and were sentenced to 16 years; 22 years; and 12 years, 7 months respectively, Washington then had another 22 years added as a result of a separate armed robbery charge.<sup>166</sup> Samana (described as a 'lesser' figure in the pot) was initially deemed mentally unfit to stand trial but was later sentenced to 5 years and 9 months in prison.

### **Case #26: Syed Hashmi-**

#### **Helped supply military gear to al-Qaeda in South Waziristan (...2004-2006)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Affiliated with al-Muhajiroun
- Moved to London
- Assisted Mohammed Junaid Babar sending military equipment to al-Qaeda

Syed Hashmi was born in Pakistan, but moved to the US at the age of 3.<sup>167</sup> He reportedly became involved with the London-based al-Muhajiroun in the late 1990's and was described as a 'mentor' to Mohammed Junaid Babar in New York.<sup>168</sup> In 2003 Hashmi moved to London, travelling on a student visa and completed a master's degree in international relations whilst there. Between January 2004 and May 2006 he also assisted his old associate Babar by letting him stay at his home in London, lending him money and helping him store and ship military gear (including clothing and night vision goggles) which were sent to South Waziristan in Pakistan to be used by al-Qaeda.<sup>169</sup> He



was arrested in June 2006 at Heathrow airport on his way to Pakistan and was extradited the following year. In April 2010 he pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to provide support to al-Qaeda and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.<sup>170</sup>

**Case #27: Syed Haris Ahmed & Ehsanul Islam Sadequee-  
Trained at home and sought jihad abroad (...2004-2006)**

***Key Features***

- Met at local mosque and reached out to jihadis online
- Established worldwide contacts with numerous future convicted terrorists
- Made and distributed a domestic surveillance video
- Travelled abroad in search of training

Ahmed (born in Pakistan) and Sadequee (whose parents are from Bangladesh) grew up in the Atlanta area of Georgia in the US and apparently met each other at a local mosque.<sup>171</sup> Beginning in late 2004 through to April 2006 the two friends discussed their shared outrage at injustices being suffered against Muslims around the world (Ahmed is reported to have cried about it<sup>172</sup>) and progressively developed plans to take part in violent jihad, undergoing rudimentary physical training and reaching out to fellow jihadists online.<sup>173</sup>

In March 2005 they travelled together to Toronto where they stayed for about a week and met with Fahim Ahmad (the ringleader of a terror-group planning attacks in Canada, arrested in June 2006<sup>174</sup>) and some of his associates, and discussed both overseas training and domestic attacks.<sup>175</sup> They maintained email contact with Ahmad and other future convicted terrorists including Younis Tsouli and Aabid Khan in the UK (see UK cases #19 and #25), Zubair Ahmed in the US (see case #28) and Mirsad Bektasevic in Bosnia. In April 2005, in a bid to establish their credentials with Khan, whom they believed could arrange training in Pakistan, Ahmed and Sadequee drove to Washington and made ‘surveillance tapes’ of landmarks and potential attack sites. They then sent digital versions of the tapes to Khan who stored them on his computer.<sup>176</sup>

On July 17<sup>th</sup> 2005 Ahmed flew to Pakistan, intending to study Islam at a madrassa and then train at an LeT camp.<sup>177</sup> He was met there by Khan, who reportedly decided that Ahmed was too immature and a liability and so did not arrange for his training.<sup>178</sup> He returned to the US on August 19<sup>th</sup> 2005 and was interviewed by the FBI.



Even after being approached by federal authorities Ahmed researched shaped explosive charges and ways to beat surveillance, and continued to communicate with his associates in code (as they had before) expressing his desire to return to Pakistan for jihad.<sup>179</sup> Meanwhile Sadequee (all the while in contact with Ahmed via email and phone) had travelled to Bangladesh to get married, study Islam and continue his own pursuit of jihad. In fact Sadequee allegedly agreed with Bektasevic, Tsouli and others to form an organisation called 'Al-Qaeda in Northern Europe' which they planned to base in Sweden.<sup>180</sup>

Ahmed was arrested in Atlanta at the end of March 2006 and Sadequee was arrested in Bangladesh on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Both men pleaded not guilty at trial but were convicted (Ahmed on one count and Sadequee on four counts) of conspiring to provide support to terrorists. In December 2009 Ahmed was sentenced to 13 years and Sadequee was sentenced to 17.<sup>181</sup>

#### **Case #28: Zubair Ahmed & Khaleel Ahmed- Conspiracy to train for jihad (...2004-2007)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Maintained email contact with other jihadis
- Continued efforts to obtain military-style training

In May 2004, American-born cousins Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed travelled to Egypt, allegedly intending to try and make contact with foreign jihadis, but were intercepted and discouraged in Cairo by Marwan El-Hindi (see case #19) whom they had been in contact with via email, and Zubair's father.<sup>182</sup> Back in the US in July 2004 they travelled to Cleveland and met with El-Hindi and an informant whom El-Hindi introduced as someone who could provide them with military-style training. They maintained intermittent contact with these individuals via email, as well as another individual in Atlanta (Syed Haris Ahmed<sup>183</sup> - case #27) with whom they discussed training and otherwise preparing for jihad. Up until the time of their arrest in February 2007 they also practised with firearms on a handful of occasions and downloaded jihadi videos and military instruction manuals.<sup>184</sup> Their case was added to that of El-Hindi and colleagues and in January 2009 they both pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide



material support to terrorists abroad.<sup>185</sup> At the time of writing their sentences have not yet been publicised, although they face up to 15 years in prison.

**Case #29: Ronald Allen Grecula-**

**Offered services to al-Qaeda in scheme to make money/ regain custody of children (...2005)**

***Key Features***

- Troubled personal life
- Criminal opportunist angry at the government
- Offered to build a bomb in exchange for money/ help ‘getting rid’ of his wife

Estranged from his family, Grecula was arrested in Malta in 2002 for having kidnapped his children from his wife.<sup>186</sup> By July the same year he was in contact with an individual who was acting as an informant for the FBI, and whom he tried to enlist the help of in a plot to either have his wife killed or set up in possession of heroin so that he could regain custody of his children. He supplied \$2,800 for the heroin and also allegedly brought up that he would be willing to build bombs for anti-American groups.<sup>187</sup>

The informant was deported to Guyana in December but Grecula remained in contact with him over the next two years and in April 2005 notified the FBI that Grecula was seeking to locate a buyer for an explosive device. An undercover agent then contacted him and claimed to represent a number of anti-American ‘clients’ including al-Qaeda. Over the course of the next few weeks Grecula persisted in trying to offer his services, saying that he could build a laser-detonated bomb of ‘nuclear’ capabilities using materials bought from a hardware store.<sup>188</sup>

Finally on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2005 Grecula flew to Houston to meet with the undercover agent and the al-Qaeda ‘client’ during which he repeated his willingness to build a bomb and also to train al-Qaeda operatives as pilots in order help kill Americans. He was arrested soon afterwards, and a mercury switch and one-and-a-half pounds of lithium nitrate was recovered at his residence.<sup>189</sup> He pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaeda and was sentenced to 5 years in jail.<sup>190</sup>



### **Case #30: Mohammad Radwan Obeid-**

#### **Online recruiting for jihad (...2005)**

##### *Key Features*

- Accused of recruiting people online for jihad
- Prosecuted for lying about his email address and for immigration violations

Obeid reportedly married a US woman in Jordan and came to the US in 2001, divorcing her five months later and moving to Piqua, Ohio.<sup>191</sup> Early in 2005 David Vasquez, a police officer in training at the time, contacted Obeid online via two websites, one of them being *jihadwatch.org*, which is geared towards counter-terrorism. Obeid allegedly tried to recruit Vasquez for jihad, telling him “we are starting a big operation that will make 9/11 nothing but a little bit of headache” and Vasquez notified the FBI.<sup>192</sup> On March 11<sup>th</sup> a librarian at an Ohio public library witnessed Obeid sending an email from one of the library computers in which he talked about gun silencers and hydrogen bombs, and also notified federal authorities.<sup>193</sup> Meanwhile Interpol had independently become aware of Obeid’s online activities and were using him as an example of how terrorists are using the Internet to communicate and recruit.<sup>194</sup>

The resultant investigation revealed that Obeid had been visiting ‘terrorist’ websites and had “aggressively attempted to recruit various individuals [in the US and worldwide] via the Internet into his radical Islamic causes and enterprise.”<sup>195</sup>

However, no terrorism charges were brought against him. Obeid was originally arrested for immigration violations (failing to report his divorce) and was prosecuted only for lying, saying he had not used a particular email address when he had. In December 2005 he pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI and in July 2006 was sentenced to 12 months in prison, to be followed by deportation for the immigration offence.<sup>196</sup>



**Case #31: Michael Curtis Reynolds-**

**Offered serviced to al-Qaeda in exchange for money (...2005)**

*Key Features*

- Lone individual with a criminal history, struggling financially
- Angry at the US government over the invasion of Iraq, plus personal reasons
- Tried to contact al-Qaeda online to offer his services

Beginning in October 2005, Reynolds posted comments on an Internet chat forum (‘OBLCrew’) soliciting help in carrying out terrorist attacks in the US in order to coerce the government into withdrawing troops from Iraq.<sup>197</sup> He thus came in contact with an informant (the same one as in the case of Ryan Anderson- see case #21) who he believed was a member of al-Qaeda and offered his services in identifying targets, planning attacks and offering advice on bomb-making. Specifically, he suggested enlisting units of al-Qaeda operatives and targeting energy-infrastructure including natural gas pipelines, intending to cause panic, economic cost and opposition to the Iraq war.

On December 5<sup>th</sup> 2005 he travelled to a remote location in Idaho to pick up \$40,000 which he had requested as partial payment for his intended services and was arrested.<sup>198</sup> Said to be motivated by a combination of anger at the situation in Iraq, personal angst at previously having his passport revoked whilst in Thailand, and personal greed, Reynolds was convicted in July 2007 of multiple charges including attempting to provide material support to al-Qaeda, soliciting others to assist him, and possession of an unregistered grenade. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison.<sup>199</sup>

**Case #32: Kobie Diallo Williams and Adnan Babar Mirza-**

**Engaged in domestic training and collected funds for the Taliban (...2005-2006)**

*Key Features*

- Houston residents angered by US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq
- Engaged in domestic training exercises and collected funds to sent to the Taliban

Beginning around May 2005, Williams and Mirza conspired to join the Taliban in response to the US military in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>200</sup> In preparation for this they



began conducting camping and training exercises in rural areas of Texas and at shooting ranges, using firearms which Williams provided. At least three others accompanied them on some of these expeditions, two of whom (both Pakistanis in the US on student visas, like Mirza) were later prosecuted for firearms violations. The third man apparently thought things were ‘going too far’ at an early stage and became an informant for the FBI.<sup>201</sup>

Williams and Mirza trained at least eight times from May 2005 until June 2006 and also attempted to make financial contributions to the Taliban. Mirza collected around \$900 (accepting around \$350 from Williams) which he passed on to an unnamed individual who agreed to make sure it would go to the intended recipients.<sup>202</sup>

The men were eventually arrested and charged in November 2006. Williams pleaded guilty and Mirza was convicted of several charges including conspiring to support the Taliban. Williams was sentenced to 4 and half years in prison, while Mirza’s sentence remains outstanding at the time of writing.<sup>203</sup>

**Case #33: Narseal Batiste, Patrick Abraham, Stanley Grant Phanor, Burson Augustin & Rotschild Augustine- ‘Liberty City 7’ Plot to bomb the Sears Tower (...2005-2006)**

***Key Features***

- Group established around a charismatic leader
- ‘Ideological offshoot’ combining Moorish Science and violent Islamism
- Pledged allegiance to ‘al-Qaeda’ and had plans to attack civilian and government targets
- Requested \$50,000 in furtherance of their plans
- Did not possess any weapons or explosives

At some point prior to 2005 Narseal Batiste built a group of followers around him, based in the ‘Liberty City’ area of Miami. They called themselves the Seas of David and adhered to a religious ideology derived from the Moorish Science Temple, which combines aspects of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.<sup>204</sup> Towards the end of 2005 an individual from Yemen contacted the FBI while in America, reporting that he had been asked by Batiste about making contact with foreign Islamist extremists to help fund his plans to overthrow the United States government.<sup>205</sup> An undercover FBI agent posing as



an al-Qaeda representative then made contact with Batiste and over the course of the next six months made covert recordings of their conversations.

From as early as December 2005 Batiste and the others met with the so-called al-Qaeda representative, spoke of plans to develop an ‘Islamic Army’, requested military equipment and weapons from him in order to wage jihad, and practised martial arts.<sup>206</sup> They further discussed plans to bomb the Sears Tower in Chicago and attack government buildings, and conducted video and photographic surveillance of several potential targets. Batiste also requested \$50,000 to help them buy the necessary equipment, and in March 2006 the group pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, repeating an oath dictated to them by the undercover agent.<sup>207</sup>

The group did not progress any further (they possessed no weapons and reportedly split due to a dispute on religious grounds some time after the pledge in May) but were arrested in June 2006. Seven individuals were originally charged. Two mistrials ensued, with one individual being acquitted,<sup>ii</sup> and in the third trial in May 2009 one man was acquitted while five were convicted of conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaeda and related charges.<sup>208</sup> Batiste was sentenced to 13 and a half years; Burson and Rotschild Augustine received 6 and 7 years respectively; Abraham was sentenced to 9 years and 4 months; and Phanor received 8.<sup>209</sup>

#### **Case #34: Abdul Tawala Ibn Ali Alishtari-**

#### **Fraud and terror-financing (...2006)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Long-term multi-million-dollar fraudster
- Agreed to transfer \$152,000 believing it was destined for Islamist terrorists

From at least 1998 through to 2004 Alishtari was involved in an investment fraud scheme in which he and a co-conspirator stole upwards of \$18 million from their victims.<sup>210</sup> In 2006 he was approached by an undercover officer with whom he met on numerous occasions, and in June of that year he agreed to help conceal the transfer of \$152,000, which the officer made clear was going to be used to buy equipment for, and

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<sup>ii</sup> Lyglenson Lemorin, a legal immigrant from Haiti was acquitted, yet US immigration officials have since moved to deport him based on the same charges (“US Seeks to Deport to Haiti Man who was Cleared in ‘Liberty City 7’ Terrorism Case” *Associated Press Worldstream*, February 6, 2008, via *Highbeam Research* <<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1A1-D8UKUO8G0.html>> at June 9, 2010).



fund a terrorist training camp in Pakistan or Afghanistan. In agreeing to do so he reportedly stated “Muslims don’t fight; we defend” and accepted a fee of \$15,000 for his services.<sup>211</sup> In accordance with the plan, on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2006 Alishtari transferred \$25,000 from New York to Montreal.<sup>212</sup> He was arrested in February 2007 and later pleaded guilty to terrorism financing and conspiracy to commit wire fraud. He was sentenced to 10 years and 1 month in prison.<sup>213</sup>

### **Case #35 Mohammed Reza Taheri-Azar-**

#### **Vehicular attack at a North Carolina college campus (2006)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Lone, ‘troubled’ individual
- Influenced by a family friend with extremist views
- Selective, self-teaching of the Quran- developed an idiosyncratic, extremist interpretation
- Angry at US foreign policy and the plight of Muslims around the world
- A personalised, ‘ideological offshoot’ of the global jihad

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006 Taheri-Azar deliberately drove a rented four-wheel-drive vehicle at students at the Chapel Hill campus of the University of North Carolina, where he had previously graduated from. He injured nine people, though none critically, then called 911 and waited for police to arrest him.<sup>214</sup>

Taheri-Azar’s stated motivations were to avenge the death of Muslims worldwide, which he blamed on the United States. In court he declared “I hate all Americans and all Jews... death to Israel”<sup>215</sup> and expressed similar sentiments in numerous letters which he wrote to local news outlets. In one such letter to Eyewitness News he declared “The U.S. government is responsible for the deaths of and the torture of countless followers of Allah, my brothers and sisters. My attack on Americans at UNC-CH on March 3rd was in retaliation for similar attacks orchestrated by the U.S. government on my fellow followers of Allah in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and other Islamic territories. I did not act out of hatred for Americans, but out of love for Allah instead.”<sup>216</sup>



He later pleaded guilty to nine counts of attempted murder and was sentenced to 33 years in prison.<sup>217</sup> The inclusion of this case in the current sample is slightly more controversial than most, however, and requires additional justification.

Authorities did not classify this attack as an act of terrorism- partly it seems because he was acting entirely alone and was an apparently ‘troubled’ individual, and partly because despite expressing hatred for America and claiming his actions were retribution for Muslims, Taheri-Azar did not express a coherent ideology that could be immediately identified as ‘bin-Laden-inspired’. The fact that he was born in Iran (moving to the US at age 2) and expressed support for the Iranian Shia regime<sup>218</sup> would also seem reason to exclude this case from a study of ‘global’ Sunni Islamist terrorism.

However, he was not raised as a Shiite and came from a liberal family that had attended a Baptist Church when he was 4.<sup>219</sup> Taheri-Azar’s family reported that he had become influenced by a one-time family friend living in Canada who held extremist views and was described a “religious mentor” to him.<sup>220</sup> By his own account he began reading the Quran himself out of curiosity about his heritage around 2003, and by July 2004 had become focussed on “the militant verses throughout the Quran”.<sup>221</sup> His personal radicalisation thus appears to have been the combination of being influenced by another individual and selective self-teaching of the Quran. In letters to the University newspaper after the attacks, ‘Ray’ –as he was known- also expressed support for al-Qaeda and described Mohammed Atta as his role model.<sup>222</sup>

Although entirely disconnected from Islamist terror-networks and following an individual interpretation of the Quran, Taheri-Azar’s idiosyncratic path to extremism nevertheless took place within the broader context of post-9/11, post-Iraq-war America. Thus, whether he is seen as a ‘terrorist’, a ‘lone-wolf’ or just a ‘nut-case’, his beliefs and actions were undoubtedly shaped in that context and are relevant to understanding the different ways in which the global Salafi jihad has been adopted by different individuals.



### **Case #36: Derrick Shareef-**

#### **Plot to attack Illinois shopping mall (...2006)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Young convert with extremist associations
- Expressed desire for violent jihad and collaborated with an FBI informant in planning a domestic attack on a civilian target

Shareef converted to Islam around 2001 (aged 17) and a year later met Hassan Abujihaad (later prosecuted for providing Islamist extremists with intelligence on battle manoeuvres whilst serving with the navy in 2001).<sup>223</sup> From around 2003 to 2005 Shareef lived with Abujihaad –who gave him advice and encouragement- in Phoenix and then moved to Genoa, Illinois to live with his mother and step-father. He maintained contact with Abujihaad but became disgruntled with him over time as Shareef became more eager to pursue violence, while his former friend and mentor did not endorse his ideas.<sup>224</sup>

In September 2006 Shareef then became acquainted with an individual in Illinois who, unbeknownst to him, was acting as an informant with the FBI.<sup>225</sup> Shareef told the informant that he was planning acts of violent jihad against the US and the FBI began recording their conversations. From November 29<sup>th</sup> they discussed attacking numerous different targets. Shareef mentioned that he had previously considered attacking a synagogue and had used Mapquest to view potential targets online, but was eager to strike government facilities. They decided instead to go with the informant's suggestion of setting off grenades at a crowded shopping mall and proceeded to surveil a local mall on two occasions discussing logistics of the attack. The following day, on December 2<sup>nd</sup> they recorded martyrdom videos together in which Shareef declared his willingness to die for jihad (although the plan did not involve deliberate martyrdom).<sup>226</sup>

Finally on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 Shareef and the informant met with the informant's 'contact', who was an undercover agent posing as an arms dealer, who had ostensibly agreed to supply them with grenades and a handgun in exchange for a set of stereo speakers owned by Shareef. Once the exchange was made, Shareef was detained.<sup>227</sup> He pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to destroy the mall and to use a weapon of mass destruction, and in September 2008 was sentenced to 35 years.<sup>228</sup>



**Case#37:Serdar Tatar, Mohamad Ibrahim Schnewer, Dritan Duka, Shain Duka & Eljvir Duka-**

**Plot to attack Fort Dix (...2006-2007)**

*Key Features*

- US-raised immigrants ‘inspired’ by bin Laden, angry at the US
- Planned domestic attacks on military sites

Members of this group had known each other since their teens- the Duka brothers grew up in the same household and Eljvir had gone to high school with Schnewer and Tatar in 1999.<sup>229</sup> Exactly how and when their radicalisation began is unclear but relatives report that in the years leading up to their arrest in 2007 they had become noticeably more religious to the point that relations with family and friends had become strained.<sup>230</sup>

The investigation into their activities began in January 2006 when an employee at a video retail store alerted the FBI after members of the group had brought in a video to be converted to DVD showing 10 men firing weapons and calling for jihad.<sup>231</sup> In March 2006 a paid informant (Omar) infiltrated the group by befriending Schnewer, and a second informant (Bakkalli) later infiltrated the group in June 2006.<sup>232</sup>

Up until the time of their arrest in May 2007, members of the group acquired and watched jihadi videos (including speeches by bin Laden and footage of US forces being attacked in Iraq) and stored them on their computers. They attempted to recruit others to their cause, engaged in tactical training exercises using paintball guns, obtained and practised with live firearms and discussed various methods and targets for attack.<sup>233</sup> In particular they talked about carrying out an assault on government facilities and military installations in their area using firearms, intending to kill as many as possible before escaping. In August 2006 one member of the group, Mohamad Schnewer, conducted surveillance (accompanied by Omar) of several military bases<sup>234</sup> and in November, Tatar obtained a map of Fort Dix from his father’s pizzeria (which used to deliver to the base) and gave it to Omar to help plan the attack.<sup>235</sup> In fact the group were looking to Omar (the informant) to lead the attack, based on his enthusiasm for the plot and prior military experience in the Egyptian army.<sup>236</sup>

Finally, in March 2007 Dritan Duka and Schnewer arranged through Omar to purchase three AK-47’s, four fully automatic M16 assault rifles and four handguns. Arrests were made on May 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 after Dritan and Shain Duka met with Omar’s



‘source’ to pick up the weapons.<sup>237</sup> The attack itself had not been immediately imminent (members of the group had raised the need to obtain a fatwa endorsing their plans<sup>238</sup>) however the group had achieved operational capability.

A sixth man, Agron Abdullahu, was also arrested in May and although he knew of the group’s violent intentions and had supplied them with firearms at an earlier stage (also giving instructions at some of the training sessions<sup>239</sup>) he was charged only with illegally providing firearms. He quickly pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 1 year and 8 months in prison.<sup>240</sup>

The five main suspects went to trial and were convicted of conspiracy to murder members of the US military, plus firearms offences. Schnewer, Dritan and Shain Duka were each sentenced to life in prison plus 30 years; Eljvir Duka was sentenced to life; and Serdar Tatar received 33 years.<sup>241</sup>

### **Case #38: Daniel Joseph Maldonado- Joined the Somali jihad (...2006-2007)**

#### ***Key Features***

- American convert sought ‘pure’ form of Islam
- Moved to Egypt and then Somalia
- Underwent basic jihadi training before being captured whilst fleeing to Kenya
- The first case of an American being charged for joining the Somali jihad

Daniel Maldonado grew up in New Hampshire before moving to Massachusetts where he converted to Islam at his local mosque around 2000.<sup>242</sup> He became increasingly austere in his observance of religion and critical of others to the point that he was asked to leave the mosque if he didn’t keep his views to himself. He left accordingly and in August 2005 moved to Houston, which was around the time that authorities became aware of him.<sup>243</sup>

In November 2005, Maldonado, his wife and three children moved to Egypt, according to him to look for a place to live where they did not feel oppressed or out of place practicing their faith.<sup>244</sup> Disillusioned with Egypt, the family then travelled to Somalia to find ‘true’ Islam and so that Maldonado could join the Somali jihad, “fighting against all those who are against an Islamic state”.<sup>245</sup> He received an AK-47 and basic training in Mogadishu before travelling south to Kismaayo for more advanced



training where he was taught to use explosives and reported seeing fighters belonging to al-Qaeda.<sup>246</sup> Whilst there he also telephoned an associate (Tarek Mehanna, currently facing terrorism charges) back in America to tell him about it.<sup>247</sup> Maldonado did not, however, complete the training as he contracted malaria (his wife is reported to have died from it<sup>248</sup>) and fled further south to Kenya to escape encroaching Ethiopian forces. He was captured by Kenyan authorities on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 and returned to America. He pleaded guilty to training with a foreign terrorist organisation and received a sentence of 10 years.<sup>249</sup>

**Case #39: Omar Hammami aka Abu Mansoor al-Amriki-  
Became prominent member of al-Shabaab, appears in recruitment videos (...2006-  
Ongoing...)**

***Key Features***

- Converted in his teens and radicalised in the US
- Inspired by the pursuit of a ‘true’ Islamic state
- Has become a leading figure and visible recruiter for al-Shabaab

Hammami reportedly converted to Islam while in high school, going on to enrol in university in 2001.<sup>250</sup> After 9/11 he was drawn to Salafism as he strove to find out more about his religion and soon became dogmatic and intolerant, causing conflict at home. He dropped out of university in December 2002, undertook several menial jobs and continued to focus on religion. He became increasingly politicised after moving to Toronto in 2004. Then in March 2005 he married a Somali woman and in September they lived in Egypt for a while, travelling with friends in search of a more Islamic existence. Hammami then became acquainted with Daniel Maldonado (see case #38) whom he met via an online chat forum. The two became consumed by events in Somalia and in November 2006 Maldonado went to Somalia (leaving his family behind) and enlisted with al-Shabaab soon afterwards.<sup>251</sup>

Reportedly charismatic, fluent in English and Arabic, skilled with computers and adept on the battlefield, Hammami soon rose to prominence amongst the Somali militants, and in October 2007 he appeared in his first recruitment video for them, which was aired on al-Jazeera.<sup>252</sup> He since appeared several times as Abu Mansoor al-Amriki, showing his face for the first time in April 2008 and more recently criticising



US President Barack Obama in July 2009, while calling for more volunteers to join al-Shabaab.<sup>253</sup> Hammami (allegedly facing charges back in the US<sup>254</sup>) remains at large.

**Case #40: Ruben Luis Leon Shumpert-  
Joined the Somali jihad (...2006-2008)**

***Key Features***

- Convicted felon and local promoter of jihad
- A leading figure in a network of individuals facing criminal charges
- Fled the US to Somalia, joined insurgents and later killed in an airstrike

Shumpert came under the scrutiny of the FBI after an investigation was initiated in 2002 into a bank-fraud racket.<sup>255</sup> It transpired that Shumpert –who had previously converted to Islam while in prison- was a leading figure in a group of individuals who would gather at his barber shop in Seattle to discuss jihad and watch al-Qaeda and related propaganda videos.<sup>256</sup> Informants reported that Shumpert would get children who came to his shop to watch the videos too and was aggressive towards anyone that disagreed with him.<sup>257</sup> However, the group was not planning anything specific and were described as ‘wannabes’, despite their criminal backgrounds and propensity to violence.<sup>258</sup>

Despite being deemed not to be a direct terrorist threat, arrests were made in November 2004 on criminal charges. Shumpert had been detained already for assault, and was then charged with use of counterfeit bills and possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. He was allowed out on bail in May 2006, pleaded guilty in September and then absconded, calling the FBI on November 18<sup>th</sup> to notify them that he was in Somalia and was not coming back. He called again nine days later stating that he and his Muslim associates would destroy everything the United States stood for.<sup>259</sup> Shumpert is thought to have joined with violent Islamist factions up until the time of his death, which reportedly occurred in a US airstrike against insurgents some time before October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.<sup>260</sup>



**Case #41: Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohamed-**

**Domestic training, possession of explosive materials, online instructional video**

**(...2007)**

*Key Features*

- Came to the US from Egypt as a post-graduate student
- Researched and manufactured explosive materials
- Posted instructional video on how to make a remote-control detonator online

Mohamed came to the US as a post-graduate civil engineering student at the University of South Florida on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.<sup>261</sup> He spent time on the Internet researching how to make explosives and then going out and buying the necessary components. He and a friend (Youseff Megahed, who was later acquitted<sup>262</sup>) also made repeated attempts to purchase firearms and went to a shooting range in July 2007 to practice. Later that same month they received a citation for firing a pellet gun at wildlife at a park in Tampa (after which they made a video recording in which Mohamed talked of his hatred for Americans).<sup>263</sup>

Mohamed (and Megahed) were then stopped for speeding on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 and police found sections of PVC pipe filled with potassium nitrate explosives in the boot of their car.<sup>264</sup> Further examination of Mohamed’s laptop also revealed a wealth of jihadi propaganda, literature and videos, including a video that Mohamed himself had made and posted online on Youtube, depicting how to use a remote-controlled toy as a detonator for explosive devices. Speaking in Arabic in the video, he “made it clear that his intention was to assist “brethren” in carrying out “martyrdom operations” that involve the murder of American soldiers.”<sup>265</sup>

Mohamed was subsequently charged with a seven count indictment and in June 2008 pleaded guilty to providing material support to terrorists.<sup>266</sup> He was sentenced to 15 years.<sup>267</sup>



## **Case #42: Bryant Neal Vinas-**

### **Joined al-Qaeda in Pakistan/Afghanistan (...2007-2008)**

#### ***Key Features***

- American convert joined al-Qaeda in Pakistan
- Participated in attempted attack on US military
- Met with numerous other operatives and provided senior figures with information useful for planning attacks in New York

Bryant Vinas grew up as a Catholic in a middle class neighbourhood in New York.<sup>268</sup> Around 2004 he converted to Islam and attended his local mosque, the Islamic Association of Long Island. He took his conversion very seriously, began wearing Arabic robes, encouraged his father to convert and became “reclusive and headstrong”.<sup>269</sup> Then in September 2007, without telling anyone he was leaving, he left for Pakistan, by his own admission “with the intention of joining a jihadist group to fight American soldiers in Afghanistan”.<sup>270</sup>

Friends of Vinas’ back in New York had reportedly arranged for him to meet with family members in Pakistan who in turn referred him to a cousin in the Taliban, and within weeks of arriving in Lahore Vinas was taken in by Islamist militants.<sup>271</sup> Beginning in March 2008 through to August he then received training in combat and explosives from al-Qaeda and in September participated in a mission where he fired rockets (which missed) at an American military base near the Afghan/Pakistan border.<sup>272</sup>

During his time in al-Qaeda Vinas was in contact with senior al-Qaeda operatives including Abu Yahya al-Libi and British-Pakistani Rashid Rauf, who was implicated in a number of Western attack plots before reportedly being killed in a missile strike in November 2008.<sup>273</sup> Furthermore he provided detailed information on the operation of the Long Island railroad system, allegedly agreed to carry out a suicide attack and met with operatives from several other countries, including a group of Belgian militants arrested in December 2008.<sup>274</sup> Vinas himself was arrested in Peshawar in November 2008 (just days before Rauf was killed). Back in the US he was charged with (and has pleaded guilty to) conspiracy to kill US nationals overseas, providing material support to al-Qaeda and receiving military-type training from a terrorist organisation.<sup>275</sup> He is yet to be sentenced at the time of writing.



**Case #43: Abdifatah Isse, Salah Osman Ahmed, Kamal Said Hassan & Shirwa Ahmed-**

**Minnesota Somali jihad network (...2007-2008...)**

*Key Features*

- A number of individuals in the Minnesota area actively recruited volunteers for the Somali jihad
- Relatively large network of Somali-American immigrants involved
- The first of several groups to travel overseas for training and combat

These four individuals are part of a much larger network, primarily young Somali-Americans living in the Minnesota area, who, since 2007 have been ‘disappearing’ abroad to join the jihad in their homeland.<sup>276</sup> The four included here are among eight whose ‘outcome’ is known; four more individuals from this networks are included as a separate case (case #46 below); another eleven are currently excluded pending more information, and more still are likely to be involved.

According to indictments and press reports, at least 20 youths of Somali origin living in Minnesota have gone overseas to fight for al-Shabaab, which was designated a terrorist organisation by the United States government in February 2008.<sup>277</sup> Speculative allegations have been made against an official based at a Minneapolis mosque, which served as a meeting point for members of the network.<sup>278</sup> Meanwhile more substantial, legal accusations have been made against a handful of significant figures within the network who were also regulars at the mosque, some of whom appear to have had prior combat experience in Somalia.<sup>279</sup> In particular, Mohamud Said Omar (currently fighting extradition from the Netherlands) stands accused of financing the travel of recruits to Somalia, as well as the purchase of weapons.<sup>280</sup> Cabdullahi Faarax (whereabouts currently unknown) is alleged to have encouraged others to fight by telling them of this own experience of ‘brotherhood’ while fighting.<sup>281</sup> And Ahmed Ali Omar and Khalid Mohamud Abshir (both of whom left for Somalia) were reportedly active in soliciting others to go with them, beginning around September 2007.<sup>282</sup> For now, we focus only on those who have returned and pleaded guilty to charges against them, or who have been confirmed killed overseas.



The first wave of recruits to fly out from Minnesota left at the end of 2007. Shirwa Ahmed left on December 4<sup>th</sup>, going on the hajj to Saudi Arabia before joining the others at a camp in Somalia.<sup>283</sup> Two days later Kamal Hassan and Salah Osman Ahmed left, followed another two days later by Abdifatah Isse (on the same flight as Ahmed Ali Omar).<sup>284</sup> The men purportedly stayed at guest-houses on their arrival before proceeding to an al-Shabaab training compound where they were given instructions on the use of firearms and explosives and were ‘indoctrinated’ in anti-Ethiopian, anti-US, anti-Israeli and anti-Western rhetoric.<sup>285</sup>

Of the four recruits covered here, Shirwa Ahmed became the most (in)famous. Following training he is reported to have taken part in an ambush on Ethiopian troops along with Omar Hammami (see case #39) that was featured in a video posted on Youtube in the summer of 2008.<sup>286</sup> Then, on October 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, he became one of five suicide bombers who simultaneously hit mostly governmental targets in northern Somalia, resulting in approximately 20 deaths including the bombers.<sup>287</sup> Shirwa Ahmed thus became the first confirmed American suicide bomber.

The exact length of time that Hassan, Isse and Salah Ahmed stayed in Somalia is unclear but all three returned to the US. According to one report, Isse and a companion left the camp within a couple of weeks and had returned home by May 2008.<sup>288</sup> Hassan meanwhile apparently fought for al-Shabaab for a time before returning to Minnesota via Yemen, and was interviewed by the FBI in February 2009.<sup>289</sup>

Early in 2009, striking plea-deals as cooperating witnesses, Isse and Salah Ahmed each pleaded guilty to one count of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organisation and have yet to be sentenced.<sup>290</sup> Hassan pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI, having denied the extent of his activities in Somali, and is also cooperating and awaiting sentence.<sup>291</sup>



**Case #44: Khalid Ouazzani-**

**Financial support for al-Qaeda (...2007-2010)**

*Key Features*

- Committed fraud to raise funds & money laundering to send finances overseas
- Sent \$23,500 to al-Qaeda
- Pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda via a foreign co-conspirator

A naturalised US citizen and native of Morocco, Ouazzani operated a used car parts business in Kansas City.<sup>292</sup> From at least 2006 he engaged in bank-fraud, purchasing properties at low prices through tax foreclosure sales before obtaining equity loans for a much higher value (later defaulting on a total of \$415,000). Part of this money he used to buy a property in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).<sup>293</sup> In August 2007 he agreed through a co-conspirator (whose location has not been disclosed) to make a payment of \$6,500 to al-Qaeda, which was made on his behalf and which he later repaid. Then in June/July 2008 Ouazzani made a further contribution to al-Qaeda of \$17,000 from the sale of the property in UAE. Around the same time he swore an oath of allegiance to al-Qaeda via a co-conspirator.<sup>294</sup> No further terror-related crimes were recorded up until the time of his arrest in February 2010. In May 2010 he pleaded guilty to bank fraud, money laundering and conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaeda and is awaiting sentence.<sup>295</sup>

**Case #45: Aafia Siddiqui-**

**Captured in Afghanistan, attempted to kill US investigators (...2008)**

*Key Features*

- Educated in the US, returned to Pakistan
- Investigated for ties to terrorists
- Attempted to murder US officials in Afghanistan

Siddiqui came to the US from Pakistan around 1991, where she obtained degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brandeis University, becoming a qualified neuroscientist.<sup>296</sup> She apparently became involved with jihadists before returning to Pakistan in June 2002, allegedly opening up a post-office box in the name of accused al-Qaeda operative Majid Khan, which was to be used by Uzair Paracha (see



case #16). Early in 2003 she then married Ammar al-Baluchi (nephew to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and currently detained in Guantanamo) and in March the FBI issued a global alert for her and her new husband.<sup>297</sup> She was reportedly arrested in Karachi and questioned in April 2003<sup>298</sup>, after which she disappeared.

Siddiqui was eventually apprehended (travelling with her 12 year old son) on July 17<sup>th</sup> 2008 in Afghanistan, carrying handwritten notes referring to a “mass casualty attack” and listing various locations in the United States.<sup>299</sup> While in custody the following day, she managed to grab an M4 rifle and fired at the US interview team. She missed and was shot in the abdomen.<sup>300</sup>

Back in the US Siddiqui was charged with seven counts all relating to the attempted murder of US personnel. Despite being uncooperative she was deemed mentally fit to stand trial and in February 2010 was convicted of all charges against her.<sup>301</sup> She faces life in prison at the time of sentencing.

#### **Case #46: Zakaria Maruf, Burhan Hassan, Jamal Sheikh Bana & Mohamoud**

##### **Hassan-**

##### **Minnesota Somali jihad network (...2008-2009...)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Part of later wave of Minnesota-based Somali-Americans going home for jihad
- All confirmed dead

These men represent another part of the network of Somali-Americans based in Minnesota who were drawn back to their homeland to fight for Islamist factions in the brutal Somali civil war (see case #43 above). All four are reported dead by their families.

Maruf flew out from Minneapolis on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008 and was apparently active as a recruiter, calling home and encouraging others like him to follow in his footsteps.<sup>302</sup> Bana and the two Hassans (not seemingly related) each heeded his call, leaving the US at the start of November in 2008.<sup>303</sup> Seven months later, Burhan Hassan was reported dead in June 2009 (allegedly shot for refusing to follow an order); Bana and Maruf were killed in July; and Mohamoud Hassan was killed in September.

As yet unconfirmed reports suggest that a fifth man, convert Troy Kastigar, may have been killed alongside Mohamoud Hassan<sup>304</sup> and that a sixth, Omar Mohamud may



have blown himself up in a suicide attack, also in September 2009,<sup>305</sup> but no more  
information has been released.



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### **Appendix A Part 3**

#### **List of US Cases Excluded from the Sample in Chronological Order**

N = 51 cases, 125 individuals



‘A Systematic Analysis of Islamist Terrorism in the USA and UK: 2001-2008’ Sam Mullins, 3335884, CTCP, UoW

Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Sami al-Arian	PIJ support	1984	2003	Palestinian
Bashir Noorzai	Taliban heroin smuggling	1990	2004	Non-resident
Muhamed Mubayyid	CARE International	1991	2003	Not charged
Emadeddin Muntasser	CARE International	1991	2003	Not charged
Samir al-Monla	CARE International	1991	2003	Not charged
Fawaz al-Damrah	Lied re. terror memberships	1993	1994	Pre-9/11
Mir Aimal Kazi	Shooting at Virginia CIA building	1993	1997	Pre-9/11/ Non-GSJ
Rashid Baz	Brooklyn bridge shooting	1994	1994	Pre-9/11/ Non-GSJ
Tarik Abdulmelik Hamdi	US rep of Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights: delivered sat phone to OBL	1994	2002	Not charged
Ghassan Elashi	Financial dealings with Mousa Abu Marzook	1995	2001	Non-GSJ
Bayan Elashi	Financial dealings with Mousa Abu Marzook	1995	2001	Non-GSJ
Basman Elashi	Financial dealings with Mousa Abu Marzook	1995	2001	Non-GSJ
Ali Hasan Abu Kamal	Empire State Building	1997	1997	Pre-9/11/ Non-GSJ
Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Meizar	NY subway suicide bomb plot	1997	1997	Pre-9/11/ Non-GSJ
Lafi Khalil	NY subway suicide bomb plot	1997	1997	Pre-9/11/ Non-GSJ
Raed Hijazi	AQ operative: sentenced to death in Jordan	1998	1999	Pre-9/11
Kamel Derwish	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Jaber Elbaneh	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Sahim Alwan	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Yahya Goba	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Yaein Taher	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Faysal Galab	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Shafal Mosed	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Mukhtar al-Bakri	Lackawanna 6	1998	2001	Pre-9/11
Pirouz Sedaghaty	Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation	1999	2001	Pre-9/11/ Outcome pending
Soliman Hamd al-Buthe	Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation	1999	2001	Pre-9/11/ Outcome pending
Earnest James Ujaama	Oregon training site	1999	2002	Pre-9/11



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Lynne Stewart	Helped Omar Abdel Rahman	1999	2001	Pre-9/11
Mohammed Yusry	Helped Omar Abdel Rahman	1999	2001	Pre-9/11
Ahmed Abdel Sattar	Helped Omar Abdel Rahman	1999	2001	Pre-9/11
Zeinab Taleb-Jedi	Joined Shia terrorists in Iraq	1999	2006	Non-GSJ
Hassan Abu Jihaad	Sharing classified navy info	2000	2001	Pre-9/11
Imran Mandhai	National Guard, Florida plot	2000	2001	Pre-9/11
Shueyb Mossa Jokhan	National Guard, Florida plot	2000	2001	Pre-9/11
Rabih Haddad	Global Relief Foundation	2000	2001	Not charged
Sabri Benkhala	Virginia paintball jihad	2000	2003	Acquitted
Mohammad Salman Farooq Quereshi	Lied to FBI about ties to Wadih El Hage & Help Africa People/ Africa Help	2000	2004	Association only
Nabil al-Marabh	Entered US illegally; had trained in Afghanistan.	2001	2001	Not charged
Sajjad Nasser	Entered US illegally; had trained with JeM	2001	2003	Not charged
Tarek Mehanna	Conspiring to support terrorists overseas	2001	2008	Outcome pending
Ahmed Abousamra	Conspiring to support terrorists overseas	2001	2008	Outcome pending
Adnan El Shukrijumah	Trained with Padilla; possible surveillance in US	2001	At large	Outcome pending
Hesham Mohamed Hadayet	El Al ticket counter attack	2002	2002	Non-GSJ
Mubarak Hamed	IARA	2002	2004	Outcome pending
Ali Mohamed Bagegni	IARA	2002	2004	Outcome pending
Ahmad Mustafa	IARA	2002	2004	Outcome pending
Khalid al-Sudanee	IARA	2002	2004	Outcome pending
Abdel Azim el-Siddig	IARA	2002	2004	Outcome pending
Mark Deli Siljander	IARA	2002	2004	Outcome pending
Saifullah Paracha	Co-conspirators of Uzair Paracha	2003	2003	Non-resident
Majid Khan	Co-conspirators of Uzair Paracha	2003	2003	Non-resident
Amar al-Baluchi	Co-conspirators of Uzair Paracha	2003	2003	Non-resident
Majid al-Massari	Ran the CDLR website	2004	2004	Borderline- not terrorism



‘A Systematic Analysis of Islamist Terrorism in the USA and UK: 2001-2008’ Sam Mullins, 3335884, CTCP, UoW

Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Fnu Lu	Iraqi translator stole military documents	2004	2005	Non-GSJ
Adnan Babar Mirza	Training at home + money to Taliban	2005	2006	Outcome pending
Assem Hammoud	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 1	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 2	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 3	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 4	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 5	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 6	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Unnamed 7	Virtual plot to attack NYC tunnels	2005	2006	Non-resident
Naudimar Herrera	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006	Acquitted
Lyglenson Lemorin	Sears Tower Plot	2005	2006	Acquitted
Saleh Al Suwailem	Said was going to blow up plane	2006	2006	Not terrorism
Rahmat Abdir	Sent supplies to JI brother	2006	2007	Outcome pending
Russell DeFreitas	JFK fuel line plot	2006	2007	Outcome pending
Kareem Ibrahim	JFK fuel line plot	2006	2007	Outcome pending
Abdul Kadir	JFK fuel line plot	2006	2007	Outcome pending
Abdel Nur	JFK fuel line plot	2006	2007	Outcome pending
Tahawwhur Hussain Rana	Planning attacks in Denmark; helped plan Mumbai	2006	2009	Outcome pending
David Coleman Headley	Planning attacks in Denmark; helped plan Mumbai	2006	2009	Outcome pending
Youseff Samir Megahed	Training at home; possession of weapons & explosive materials; online instructional video	2007	2007	Acquitted



<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date from</b>	<b>Date to</b>	<b>Reason excluded</b>
Luqman Ameen Abdullah	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Mohammad Abdul Bassir	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Muhammad Abdul Salaam	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Abdul Saboor	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Mujahid Carswell	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Abdullah Beard	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Mohammad Philistine	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Yassir Ali Khan	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Adam Hussain Ibrahim	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Garry Laverne Porter	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ
Ali Abdul Raqib	Masjid al-Haqq weapons training	2007	2009	Non-GSJ



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Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Ahmed Ali Omar	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Khalid Mohamud Abshir	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Mustafa Ali Salat	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Cabdulaahi Abdul Faarax	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Abdiweli Yassin Isse	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Mahamud Said Omar	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Omer Abdi Mohamed	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Outcome pending
Omar Mohamud	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Reported dead-unconfrimed
Abdow Munye Abdow	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Peripheral- lied re. involvement
Adarus Abdulle Ali	Minnesota Somali jihad net	2007	2009	Peripheral- lied re. involvement
Daniel Boyd	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Hysen Sherifi	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Anes Subasic	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Zakariya Boyd	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Dylan Boyd	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Jude Kenan Mohammad	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Mohammad Omar Ali Hassan	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Ziyad Yaghi	Overseas jihad + plot to attack military sites in Virginia	2008	2009	Outcome pending



<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date from</b>	<b>Date to</b>	<b>Reason excluded</b>
James Cromitie	Plot to attack National Guard base + Jewish targets in Bronx	2008	2009	Outcome pending
David Williams	Plot to attack National Guard base + Jewish targets in Bronx	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Onta Williams	Plot to attack National Guard base + Jewish targets in Bronx	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Laguerre Payen	Plot to attack National Guard base + Jewish targets in Bronx	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Michael Finton	VBIED outside Federal building in Springfield	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Colleen LaRose	Online plot to kill Swedish cartoonist	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Jamie Paulin Ramirez	Online plot to kill Swedish cartoonist	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Najibullah Zazi	Undeveloped plot to use IEDs in NYC	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Zarein Ahmedzay	Undeveloped plot to use IEDs in NYC	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Adis Medunjanin	Trained with Najibullah Zazi in Pakistan	2008	2010	Outcome pending
Nidal Malik Hasan	Fort Hood shooting	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab	Christmas Day plane attack attempt	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammed	Army recruitment centre shooting	2009	2009	Outcome pending
Betim Kaziu	Pursued jihad overseas, Kosovo	2009	2009	Outcome pending
Hosam Maher Husein Smadi	Inert VBIED attempt in Dallas	2009	2009	Outcome pending



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Ramy Zamzam	Arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of JeM involvement	2009	2009	Outcome pending
Umer Farooq	Arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of JeM involvement	2009	2009	Outcome pending
Ahmed Abdullah Minni	Arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of JeM involvement	2009	2009	Outcome pending
Waqar Khan	Arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of JeM involvement	2009	2009	Outcome pending
Aman Yasin	Arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of JeM involvement	2009	2009	Outcome pending



**Appendix B Part 1:**

**List of UK Cases Included in the Sample in Chronological Order**

N = 51 cases, 114 individuals (112 excluding double-counts)



Case #	Name	Case description	Date range from	Date range to
1	Omar Mahmoud Mohammed Othman	Bombings in Jordan + Influential preacher	1995	2002
2	Andrew Rowe	Fought in Bosnia + In possession of coded notes on explosives	1995	2003
3	Mustafa Kamel Mustafa	Inciting murder + Numerous charges	1998	2004
4	Richard Reid	Shoe-bomb plot	1999	2001
4	Saajid Badat	Shoe-bomb plot	1999	2001
5	Dhiren Barot	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Abdul Aziz Jalil	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Nadeem Tarmohamed	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Junade Feroze	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Mohammed Naveed Bhatti	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Zia Ul Haq	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Omar Abdur Rehman	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
5	Qaisar Shaffi	US/UK terror plots	2000	2004
6	Brahim Benmourzouga	Terror financing	2001	2001
6	Baghdad Meziane	Terror financing	2001	2001
7	Feroz Abbasi	Captured in Afghanistan	2001	2001
8	Abdullah El-Faisal	Inciting murder	2002	2002
9	Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh	Kidnap of Daniel Pearl	2001	2002
10	Hemant Lakhani	Weapons sale for jihad	2001	2003
11	Mohammed Ajmal Khan	Directing & supporting LeT	2001	2005
12	Abbas Boutrab	Downloaded jihadi military instructions	2002	2003
13	Kamel Bourgass	Ricin plot + murder	2002	2003
14	Omar Khyam	Crevice- fertiliser plot	2003	2004
14	Jawad Akbar	Crevice- fertiliser plot	2003	2004
14	Salahuddin Amin	Crevice- fertiliser plot	2003	2004
14	Waheed Mahmood	Crevice- fertiliser plot	2003	2004
14	Anthony Garcia	Crevice- fertiliser plot	2003	2004
15	Mohammed Atif Siddique	Online distribution of terror materials	2003	2006



Case #	Name	Case description	Date range from	Date range to
16	Abu Izzadeen	Soliciting funds for terrorism	2004	2004
16	Simon 'Sulayman' Keeler	Soliciting funds for terrorism	2004	2004
16	Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan	Soliciting funds for terrorism	2004	2004
16	Shal Jalal Hussein	Soliciting funds for terrorism	2004	2004
16	Abdul Rehman Saleem	Soliciting funds for terrorism	2004	2004
16	Abdul Muhid	Soliciting funds for terrorism	2004	2004
17	Mohammed Siddique Khan	7/7	2004	2005
17	Shehzad Tanweer	7/7	2004	2005
17	Jermaine Lindsay	7/7	2004	2005
17	Hasib Mir Hussain	7/7	2004	2005
18	Mukhtar Said Ibrahim	21/7	2004	2005
18	Yassin Omar	21/7	2004	2005
18	Hussain Osman	21/7	2004	2005
18	Ramzi Mohammed	21/7	2004	2005
18	Manfo Kwako Asiedu	21/7	2004	2005
18	Adel Yahya	21/7	2004	2005
19	Younis Tsouli	Online jihadis	2004	2005
19	Waseem Mughal	Online jihadis	2004	2005
19	Tariq al-Daour	Online jihadis	2004	2005
20	Mohammed Hamid	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Atilla Ahmet	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Mohammed al-Figari	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Kibley da-Costa	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Kader Ahmed	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Mohammed Kyriacou	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Yassin Mutegombwa	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Hassan Mutegombwa	UK training camps	2004	2006
20	Mustafa Abdullah	UK training camps	2004	2006



<b>Case #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date range from</b>	<b>Date range to</b>
21	Parviz Khan	Terror support + beheading plot	2004	2007
21	Mohammed Irfan	Terror support	2004	2007
21	Zahoor Iqbal	Terror support	2004	2007
21	Hamid Elasmr	Terror support	2004	2007
21	Mohammed Nadim	Terror support	2004	2007
21	Shahid Ali	Terror support	2004	2007
21	Sabir Mohammed	Terror support	2004	2007
22	Abu Bakr Mansha	Plotting to kill soldier	2005	2005
23	Khalid Khaliq	Possession of AQ manual	2007	2007
24	Kazi Nurur Rahman	Weapons sting	2005	2005
25	Aabid Khan	Propaganda & recruitment	2005	2006
25	Sultan Muhammad	Propaganda & recruitment	2005	2006
25	Hammaad Munshi	Propaganda & recruitment	2005	2006
26	Rangzieb Ahmed	AQ member; possession of terror docs	2005	2006
26	Habib Ahmed	AQ member; possession of terror docs	2005	2006
27	Abdulla Ahmed Ali	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Assad Ali Sarwar	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Tanvir Hussain	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Umar Islam	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Ibrahim Savant	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Arafat Khan	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Waheed Zaman	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Adam Khatib	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Mohammed Shamin Uddin	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
27	Nabeel Hussain	Aircraft plot	2006	2006
28	Abdul Patel	Possession of terror docs	2006	2006



<b>Case #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date range from</b>	<b>Date range to</b>
29	Malcolm Hodges	Sent letters encouraging terrorism	2006	2006
30	Mizanur Rahman	Soliciting murder & stirring up racial hatred	2006	2006
30	Umran Javed	Soliciting murder & stirring up racial hatred	2006	2006
30	Abdul Rehman Saleem	Soliciting murder & stirring up racial hatred	2006	2006
30	Abdul Muhid	Soliciting murder & stirring up racial hatred	2006	2006
31	Omar Altimimi	Jihadi computer files + fraud	2006	2006
32	Yassin Nassari	Rocket instructions on computer	2006	2006
33	Sohail Qureshi	Preparing for terroris abroad + possession of terror docs	2006	2006
34	Kevin Gardner	Terror plans in prison	2005	2007
35	Abdul Rahman	Manchester terror support net	2006	2007
36	Nicholas Roddis	Hoax bomb on bus	2006	2007
37	Pa Modou Jobe	Possession of terror docs	2006	2007
38	Rizwan Ditta	Possession/ distribution of terror docs	2006	2007
38	Bilal Mohammed	Possession/ distribution of terror docs	2006	2007
39	Abbas Iqbal	Online jihadis & 'Blackurn Resistance'	2006	2008
39	Ilyas Iqbal	Online jihadis & 'Blackurn Resistance'	2006	2008
40	Mohammed Shakil	Accused 7/7 support	2007	2007
40	Waheed Ali	Accused 7/7 support	2007	2007
41	Bilal Abdulla	2007 London/Glasgow attacks	2007	2007
41	Kafeel Ahmed	2007 London/Glasgow attacks	2007	2007



<b>Case #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date range from</b>	<b>Date range to</b>
42	Hassan Tabbakh	Preparing for terrorism	2007	2007
43	Ishaq Kanmi	Online jihadis & 'Blackurn Resistance'	2006	2008
44	Shella Roma	Produced jihad leaflet	2007	2008
45	Andrew Philip Michael Ibrahim	Shopping mall plot	2007	2008
46	Mohammed Abushamma	Tried to go to Afghanistan for training	2008	2008
47	Krena Lusha	Downloaded materials + in contact with Kanmi	2008	2008
48	Ali Beheshti	Arson attack on publisher	2008	2008
48	Abrar Mirza	Arson attack on publisher	2008	2008
48	Abbas Taj	Arson attack on publisher	2008	2008
49	Houria Chentouf	USB terror materials	2008	2008
50	Mohammad Rashid Saeed-Alim	Attempted suicied attack in Exeter	2008	2008
51	Saeede Ghafoor	Threats to attack	2008	2009



## **Appendix B: Part 2**

### **United Kingdom Case Summaries**

(Presented in chronological order according to when cases began)

#### **Case#1: Omar Mahmoud Mohammed Othman aka Abu Qatada-**

##### **Renowned extremist preacher (...1995-2002)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Highly influential Islamist preacher during the 1990s
- Issued fatwas legitimising acts of terrorism
- Actively recruited and raised funds for violent jihad
- Held without charge since 2002

The inclusion of Abu Qatada in the current sample is a case that strictly speaking sits outside of the relatively stringent criteria applied in this study. However, despite having not been tried and convicted in a British court, there is enough evidence that is accepted as fact –by his own admission- which makes him highly relevant to understanding Islamist militancy in the UK. As an extremely highly regarded Islamist preacher, Qatada's exclusion from the sample would be more difficult to justify.

Born near Bethlehem in 1960, Qatada lived in Jordan until 1989 when he fled the country on the basis of political persecution. He lived in Pakistan, working as a teacher in Peshawar, and is thought to have met bin Laden and al-Zawahiri during his time there. In 1993 he came to the UK and was granted asylum.<sup>1</sup>

Based at the Four Feathers mosque (and later at the Fatima Centre mosque) in central London, Qatada's reputation among jihadists grew as the spiritual advisor of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Writing for the GIA magazine *al-Ansar* produced in London, and in sermons that were often videotaped and circulated globally, he issued influential fatwas justifying all manner of atrocities. These ranged from the killing of wives and children of 'apostates' (issued in March 1995), the breaking of Western laws by Muslims –including taking Western women for sex or sale (September 1998) and the killing of Jews (including children) and by extension, Americans and English whom he described as no different.<sup>2</sup>

Having given the GIA the religious authorisation to do as they pleased, Qatada was then forced to distance himself from them –denouncing them in late 1997/early '98-



as people began to realise the scale of the escalating violence in Algeria. He promptly emerged as spiritual leader for the GIA’s successor, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and acted in a similar role for violent Islamist organisations in Morocco, Tunisia and Libya, as well as for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Al-Tawhid organisation in Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout his time in London Qatada also associated with violent Islamist extremists, many of them convicted for terrorism offences. Among them are Khalid al-Fawwaz (described as bin Laden’s representative in London, detained since 1998 and fighting extradition to the US), Rachid Ramda (sentenced to life in prison in France for his role in the 1995 metro bombings), Djamel Beghal (jailed for plotting an attack on the US embassy in Paris), Abu Doha (detained in the UK and facing charges in Europe and the US), Abu Dahdah (convicted for running an al-Qaeda cell in Spain) and Abu Hamza (see case #3).<sup>4</sup>

Within these circles Qatada is further considered to have been an active recruiter and fundraiser for militant Islamists and reportedly travelled the country delivering speeches, encouraging people to join the jihad and soliciting funds.<sup>5</sup> The following summary of his activities is offered by the Special Immigration and Appeals Commission (SIAC) which deals with cases pertaining to national security: “[Abu Qatada] has given advice to many terrorist groups and individuals, whether formally a spiritual adviser to them or not. His reach and the depth of his influence in that respect is formidable, even incalculable. It is not a coincidence that his views were sought by them. He provides a religious justification for the acts of violence and terror which they wish to perpetrate; his views legitimised violent attacks on civilians, terrorist group attacks more generally, and suicide bombings.”<sup>6</sup>

Despite Qatada’s significance in the world of Islamist extremists, which British security services were aware of (MI5 made contact with him on a number of occasions during the late 1990s) and despite two convictions in absentia in Jordan in 1999 and 2000 for allegedly playing a role in terrorist plots there, no action was taken until February 2001.<sup>7</sup> Police then arrested Qatada and questioned him in connection with an investigation into the Abu Doha network behind the Christmas 2000 planned attacks in Strasbourg. At his home in west London they found £170,000 in cash (including an envelope containing £805 and a note stating that it was for the Chechen mujahedin) but there was insufficient evidence to mount a prosecution.<sup>8</sup>



In October 2001, the UK Treasury froze Qatada's financial assets for suspected ties to terrorism and then in December, just as new powers to detain foreign nationals suspected of terrorist involvement were being introduced, Qatada went into hiding (during which time he continued to communicate with followers using the Internet).<sup>9</sup> Ten months later, in October 2002, he was found in south London and was detained without formal charge on grounds of national security. Ever since then he has been embroiled in legal battles fighting his ongoing detention and possible deportation to Jordan. He was briefly released on stringent bail conditions twice during 2005 and 2008 but was re-arrested both times.<sup>10</sup> Although he was awarded £2,500 along with several others for being unlawfully detained after 9/11, he remains in custody.<sup>11</sup>

## **Case #2: Andrew Rowe-**

### **Long-term jihadist, agreed to act as a courier of explosives (...1995-2003)**

#### ***Key Features***

- Convert and long-term Islamist militant
- Paid operative tasked with transporting explosives to Chechnya

Rowe –whose parents are Jamaican- was born and raised in London.<sup>12</sup> By the age of 19 he was involved in drug dealing and petty crime, but then converted to Islam and in 1995 –reportedly influenced by people talking about it at mosque- left for Bosnia. He took part in the war there, sustaining an injury, and travelled extensively within Islamist militant networks, also visiting Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and claiming four British passports within seven years.<sup>13</sup>

Rowe was under surveillance for some of the time in 2003 when he travelled to the Netherlands, Germany and France from August through to October.<sup>14</sup> He was reported to have met several times with a contact in Frankfurt whom he refused to name but was suspected to be Lionel Dumont (a French veteran of the Bosnian war sentenced to 30 years in 2005 for his role in the 'Roubaix gang' robberies and an attempted car-bomb attack on a police station in 1996<sup>15</sup>).

Towards the end of October 2003 Rowe was arrested as he was returning from France to the UK via the Channel Tunnel and traces of explosives were found on a rolled up ball of socks in his luggage.<sup>16</sup> Searches of his flat in West London and his estranged wife's home in Birmingham uncovered a 20-page notebook containing



detailed notes on weaponry and military equipment, and a code for referring to different kinds of explosives and targets as models of mobile phone.<sup>17</sup> During his trial he admitted that he had been given a coded list and was asked to act as a courier, tasked with picking up explosives in Eastern Europe and taking them to countries near the Chechen border (although the prosecution claimed they were intended for use in Europe).<sup>18</sup>

Charged with possession of materials likely to be of use to terrorists, Rowe was convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison, the judge remarking that “you were a paid operative over a substantial period of time, travelling the world and furthering the cause of Muslim fundamentalism.”<sup>19</sup>

**Case #3: Mustafa Kamel Mustafa aka Abu Hamza al-Masri-  
Renowned extremist preacher, convicted for inciting hatred and murder (...1997-2004)**

***Key Features***

- Long-term British resident/ citizen, emerged as highly influential extremist preacher
- Numerous allegations regarding involvement with Islamist terrorists worldwide
- Convicted for inciting racial hatred and murder
- Still facing charges in the US

Abu Hamza first came to the UK from Egypt in 1979, settling in London and marrying so that he could stay in the country.<sup>20</sup> He was not religious to begin with but ‘reverted’ to his faith beginning around 1986 after enrolling in a civil engineering degree at Brighton University. In the summer of 1987 he went on the hajj to Mecca where he met Abdullah Azzam and from there on became increasingly immersed in violent Islamism. From 1991 to 1993 he and his family (then with his second wife) lived in Pakistan and Afghanistan, during which time he lost both hands and an eye in an explosion under disputed circumstances.<sup>21</sup>

Back in the UK he excelled as a student of Abu Qatada and was invited to preach at a mosque in Luton, where he attracted numerous followers. In 1994 he set up his own organisation, the Supporters of Sharia (SoS) and in 1995 travelled to Bosnia on three separate occasions.<sup>22</sup>



Hamza became more and more prominent as an extremist preacher from 1997 onwards when he secured the position of imam at Finsbury Park mosque in North London.<sup>23</sup> He was arrested but released without charge in March 1999 after it emerged that his son and step-son were part of a group of Britons accused (and convicted) of plotting terrorist attacks in Yemen, and that Hamza had been communicating via satellite phone with a group of Yemeni terrorists calling themselves the Islamic Army of Aden during a related hostage situation in which several Westerners were killed.<sup>24</sup> At the time police found hundreds of copies of his sermons and eleven volumes of the Encyclopaedia of the Afghani Jihad but no formal charges were made and Yemen's extradition requests were ignored.<sup>25</sup>

Hamza's activities at Finsbury Park continued unabated as the mosque became a gathering point for Islamist militants from around Europe and the world, earning London the nickname 'Londonistan'.<sup>26</sup> By the end of 1999 he was allegedly involved in dispatching followers of his to the US where they investigated the possibility of setting up a jihadi training camp in Oregon (so far leading to one related guilty plea and one conviction in the US).<sup>27</sup> He was also actively involved in recruitment for armed jihad and allegedly played an instrumental role in sending at least one individual (Feroz Abbasi -case #7) to train and fight in Afghanistan.<sup>28</sup>

As an illustration of the content of Hamza's sermons (for which he was convicted) he is quoted as having declared the following to an audience in London in a lecture on the second Palestinian Intifada: "Anything that will help the intifada, just do it. If it is killing, do it. If it is paying, pay, if it is ambushing, ambush, if it is poisoning, poison. You help your brothers, you help Islam in any way you like it, anywhere you like it...They are all kuffar and can all be killed. Killing a kuffar who is fighting you is OK. Killing a kuffar for any reason, you can say it is OK, even if there is no reason for it."<sup>29</sup>

But despite such inflammatory rhetoric –which security services were aware of- no legal action was taken against him until January 2003 when Finsbury Park mosque was raided in connection with an investigation into an alleged plot to develop the deadly poison, ricin.<sup>30</sup> A variety of military equipment was found in the mosque, including knives, gasmasks, a CBRN warfare protection suit and three blank-firing handguns, plus "hundreds" of forged passports and stolen credit cards.<sup>31</sup> Yet Hamza was not charged and although he was officially removed from his position at the mosque (for failing to



pay bills and letting it fall into a state of disrepair) he continued to preach outside in the street.<sup>32</sup>

He was eventually arrested in May 2004 pursuant to an extradition request from the US, who indicted him for his role in the kidnapping in Yemen in 1998, planning the Oregon training camp, and for sending recruits to Afghanistan (namely Abbasi).<sup>33</sup> Then in August British police charged him with multiple counts of inciting racial hatred, soliciting murder and possession of documents likely to be useful for terrorism (referring to speeches recorded between 1997 and 2000, and to the Encyclopaedia of the Afghani Jihad, which police had given back to him after the raid on his home in 1999).<sup>34</sup> He was convicted of 11 of 15 charges against him and sentenced to 7 years in prison in February 2006.<sup>35</sup> In July 2008 his extradition to the US on completion of his sentence was also approved<sup>36</sup> although a recent ruling was made against such extraditions where individuals potentially face life without parole.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Case #4: Richard Reid & Saajid Badat-Shoe-bomb plotters (...1999-2001)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Two very different individuals both radicalised at Finsbury Park mosque
- Trained in Afghanistan
- Accepted suicide mission to bomb planes using explosives hidden in shoes
- Reid attempted the bombing but failed while Badat backed out

Both Reid (a former criminal who had converted to Islam) and Badat (a studious, lifelong Muslim) began attending Finsbury Park mosque around 1997, and from 1998 through to 2001 they both separately travelled overseas, visiting numerous countries between them and attending al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan.<sup>38</sup> It was there that they accepted their mission to act as suicide bombers by blowing themselves up onboard commercial flights bound for America, using explosives hidden in their shoes- a plot that was allegedly masterminded by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and delegated by him to his nephew Ammar al-Baluchi.<sup>39</sup>

Despite travelling separately, Badat and Reid maintained contact with each other and with their shared contact in Belgium, Nizar Trabelsi (another former Finsbury Park worshipper, later sentenced to 10 years in prison for planning to suicide bomb a US



airbase in Belgium<sup>40</sup>) via email and phone.<sup>41</sup> On September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 Badat was at the British embassy in Brussels claiming a replacement passport to hide his previous travels to Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup> During November 2001 both men travelled to Pakistan and then early in December Badat returned to the UK. Reid separately attended the same embassy in Brussels on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2001 to claim his own new passport, after which he proceeded to Paris via Amsterdam.<sup>43</sup>

Soon after returning to the UK Badat had a change of heart and emailed his “handlers” notifying them that he was withdrawing from the plot.<sup>44</sup> It is unclear whether Reid knew of Badat’s change of heart but in any case he proceeded. He was questioned at the airport in Paris, missing his original flight (after which he also emailed the handlers, who reportedly encouraged him to proceed) and then on December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2001 he boarded American Airlines Flight 63 en route to Miami.<sup>45</sup> Reid attempted to detonate the bomb mid-flight, using matches to light the fuse in his shoe, but it failed to ignite quick enough and he was restrained by passengers and flight staff.<sup>46</sup>

Reid was promptly detained in the US and charged with a 9-count indictment with charges ranging from interference with flight crew to attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction.<sup>47</sup> He was convicted and in January 2003 was sentenced to life in prison plus 110 years and a \$2 million fine.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile Badat simply hid the detonator cord and explosives at home in his parents’ house and resumed his life, enrolling at the College of Islamic Knowledge and Guidance in Blackburn.<sup>49</sup> Police eventually tracked Badat down via phone cards found in Reid’s possession, which Badat had used to call Trabelsi, and he was arrested in November 2003. Police also found that the length of cord in Badat’s house was the exact same as that used by Reid, which had been cut in half to form the two fuses.<sup>50</sup> He pleaded guilty to conspiring to blow up an airliner and in April 2005 was sentenced to 13 years, a relatively light sentence given in light of a genuine change of heart and cooperation with police.<sup>51</sup> Badat still faces charges in the US.



**Case #5: Dhiren Barot, Abdul Aziz Jalil, Nadeem Tarmohamed, Junade Feroz, Mohammed Naveed Bhatti, Zia Ul Haq, Omar Abdur Rehman & Qaisar Shaffi-Planning to attack ‘soft’ targets first in the US, then UK (...2000-2004)**

*Key Features*

- Led by Barot, a convert to Islam and long-term jihadist
- Conducted surveillance for attacks in the US and UK
- Produced exceptionally detailed plans for simultaneous attacks on civilian targets
- Endorsed by senior figures in al-Qaeda

Barot was born in India but his family moved to the UK a year later.<sup>52</sup> He was raised as a Hindu but converted to Islam around age 20 (1991), was influenced by the teachings of Abu Hamza and Abdullah El-Faisal, and in 1995 he left for Pakistan where he received instruction at a terrorist training camp in Kashmir.<sup>53</sup> Barot reportedly trained there for at least 5 months and wrote a book about his exploits, ‘The Army of Madinah in Kashmir’ published in the UK in 1999 (which he dedicated to Tarmohamed).<sup>54</sup> He travelled extensively over the next few years and by 1998 was allegedly a “lead instructor” at a terror training camp in Afghanistan.<sup>55</sup> In late 1998/ early 1999 Barot (operating under the names Issa al-Britani/ al-Hindi) was then sent by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia to learn about the South East Asian jihad from Hambali (Riduan Issamudin).<sup>56</sup>

According to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, he then sent Barot to the US to conduct surveillance of Jewish and financial targets early in 2001 at the direction of bin Laden.<sup>57</sup> In fact Barot had applied for a place at a New York college in June 2000, which he used to gain entry to the US (never attending any classes).<sup>58</sup> On August 17<sup>th</sup> 2000 Barot and Tarmohamed flew from the UK to New York and over the next few weeks conducted video surveillance of financial targets including the New York Stock Exchange building and the International Monetary Fund world headquarters in Washington DC. Tarmohamed returned to the UK in September, followed by Barot in November.<sup>59</sup> Then in mid-March 2001 through to early April, Barot conducted a second reconnaissance trip, accompanied first by Shaffi and then by Tarmohamed after Shaffi fell ill.<sup>60</sup>



Assisted to varying degrees by his accomplices, Barot produced extremely detailed dossiers on each potential target, describing the best possible methods of attack. However, after 9/11 the planned attacks in the US were put aside in favour of operations in the UK and over the next three years members of the group worked studiously on developing their plans. These included the ‘Gas Limos Project’, which involved plans to destroy buildings using limousines as car-bombs and a number of subsidiary plots intended to be carried out simultaneously, including the deployment of a radioactive ‘dirty’ bomb, an attack on the London underground, and driving a petrol tanker into an undecided target.<sup>61</sup>

Barot used multiple fake identities and bank accounts and the group employed anti-surveillance techniques and communicated in code. Tarmohamed, Jalil, Feroz and Bhatti were described as Barot’s most trusted confederates<sup>62</sup>, but each individual helped out according to their abilities and circumstance: Bhatti provided storage for planning materials and other documents, plus transportation and financial support<sup>63</sup>; Feroz – thought to have trained in Pakistan in 2001- acted as a driver and ‘minder’ for Barot during visits from his home in Blackburn and also assisted with researching attacks and by using his garage to dispose of cars used by the group<sup>64</sup>; Jalil was another driver/minder who also assisted in research, rented a safe house for Barot and looked into obtaining a Large Goods Vehicle driver’s licence<sup>65</sup>; Tarmohamed assisted with the US surveillance and researched electrical circuits necessary for building IEDs<sup>66</sup>; Ul-Haq –who had been in Pakistan for 9 months in 1998- helped plan both the US and UK attacks and accompanied Barot on at least one surveillance trip in the UK<sup>67</sup>; Shaffi had assisted with the second round of surveillance in the US and was in possession of extracts from the Terrorist’s Handbook<sup>68</sup>; and finally, Rehman –who apparently didn’t meet Barot until 2004 and was involved only in the UK plotting- helped by researching how to disable fire-alarm systems in buildings so that maximum death and destruction could be achieved.<sup>69</sup>

Early in 2004 Barot flew to Pakistan to present the finalised plans for approval and gave copies to his contacts there.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile authorities remained unaware of the plot until June 13<sup>th</sup> 2004 when an al-Qaeda operative, Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan was arrested in Lahore and copies of Barot’s plans were found on his laptop.<sup>71</sup> The resultant investigation led police back to the UK and arrests were carried out on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004.<sup>72</sup>



Barot pleaded guilty to conspiracy to murder and in December 2006 was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum term of 30 years (cut down from 40 on appeal).<sup>73</sup> All but Shaffi also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to cause explosions. Jalil was sentenced to 26 years in prison; Feroz received 22; Tarmohamed and Bhatti got 20 years each; Ul Haq was sentenced to 18 years; and Rehman to 15. Shaffi was convicted at trial and also received 15 years imprisonment.<sup>74</sup> Barot, Tarmohamed and Shaffi have also been indicted in the US.<sup>75</sup>

**Case #6: Brahim Benmerzouga & Baghdad Meziane-  
Terror-financing ring (...2001)**

*Key Features*

- Part of extensive network involved in fraud and manufacturing false documents
- Proceeds used to finance Islamist militants
- Also convicted of recruiting individuals to al-Qaeda

Benmerzouga and Meziane –both illegal immigrants from Algeria- were part of a relatively large network of North African immigrants involved in fraud and the manufacture and trade of false documents, which operated in Leicester, London (including direct links to Finsbury Park mosque) and across Europe.<sup>76</sup> During the late 1990s both men associated with Djamel Beghal and Kamel Daoudi (both later convicted for planning to bomb the US embassy in Paris) and were described as followers of Abu Qatada<sup>77</sup> whom Meziane was in daily contact with.<sup>78</sup>

The network was unravelled when Beghal was detained in the United Arab Emirates in July 2001 and gave information on where to find Daoudi. Hearing of Beghal’s arrest, Daoudi fled from Paris and was tracked to Leicester where he was staying with Benmerzouga, and multiple arrests ensued in both Leicester and London, beginning on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2001.<sup>79</sup>

An array of extremist material was found at the homes of Benmerzouga and Meziane and between them and their accomplices they were also found in possession of equipment used to produce false identity documents, computer programs used for cloning credit cards, and stolen details of more than 300 cards used to obtain more than £250,000 in cash plus travellers cheques, US dollars and gold.<sup>80</sup> It further transpired that



they had previously facilitated Daoudi's travel to Afghanistan to attend an al-Qaeda training camp.<sup>81</sup>

In April 2003 Benmerzouga and Meziane were convicted for running a fraud conspiracy used to finance terrorism, and for recruiting people to al-Qaeda, making them the first people in Britain to be convicted for being part of bin Laden's organisation.<sup>82</sup> They were sentenced to 11 years each in jail. Meanwhile Daoudi was extradited to France where he was later convicted on terrorism charges<sup>83</sup>, and 17 others (all illegal North African immigrants) were convicted of non-terrorism offences relating to fraud and possession of false documents.<sup>84</sup>

### **Case #7: Feroz Abbasi-**

#### **Captured in Afghanistan serving with the Taliban (...2001)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Convert to Islam, frequented Finsbury Park mosque
- Went to Afghanistan as facilitated by Abu Hamza
- Trained with al-Qaeda and was captured in December 2001
- Released without charge from Guantanamo in 2005 but openly admits activities

Abbasi came to the UK from Uganda with his family at the age of 8.<sup>85</sup> He enrolled in college around 1998 but dropped out, went travelling in Europe and reportedly took an interest in Islam after meeting a Kashmiri refugee in Switzerland.<sup>86</sup> On his return to the UK he converted to Islam, began frequenting Finsbury Park mosque and by the spring of 2000 was living there.<sup>87</sup> He apparently joined Abu Hamza's Supporters of Sharia and became increasingly enamoured with militant Islamism, helping set up a website raising funds for mujahedin overseas.<sup>88</sup>

Then in December 2000, allegedly arranged for and at least partly financed by Abu Hamza, Abbasi left for Pakistan, accompanied by another of Hamza's followers, Earnest James Ujaama (who later pleaded guilty to terrorism charges in the US).<sup>89</sup> From Pakistan Abbasi went on to Afghanistan with a group of other volunteers (minus Ujaama) and underwent training at the al-Farouq camp beginning early in 2001.<sup>90</sup> Shortly after hearing of the assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud in September 2001 Abbasi volunteered for a suicide operation but Afghanistan soon descended into chaos with the US invasion.<sup>91</sup> In December 2001 –having seen no front-line action until then-



he became separated from a small unit of mujahedin and was captured near Kandahar with grenades strapped to his legs.<sup>92</sup>

Abbasi was taken to Guantanamo and was held there until January 2005 when he was released without charge.<sup>93</sup> Despite not having been charged or convicted Abbasi nevertheless remained defiant and openly admitted his activities, explaining, “I actually left Britain to either join the Taleban or fight for the sake of Allah in Kashmir.”<sup>94</sup>

### **Case #8: Abdullah El-Faisal-**

#### **Extremist preacher convicted of stirring up hatred and soliciting murder (...2001-2002)<sup>i</sup>**

##### ***Key Features***

- Jamaican-born convert to Islam educated in Saudi Arabia
- Gained notoriety as an extremist preacher in London during the 1990’s
- Charged in 2002, imprisoned and later deported
- Remains a controversial and influential figure

Born in Jamaica as Trevor Forest, El-Faisal reportedly converted to Islam around the age of 16 and left for Guyana, where he spent a year learning Islam and Arabic, before moving on to Saudi Arabia, staying for 8 years and obtaining a degree in Islamic studies.<sup>95</sup> He came to the UK in 1991, settling in Brixton in London and married an English woman. During the mid-1990s he was an imam at Brixton mosque (attended by Zacarius Massaoui and Richard Reid- although it is not clear whether their time there overlapped) before being ousted from his position by mosque authorities who deemed him too extreme.<sup>96</sup>

El-Faisal continued to preach his extreme form of Islam at study circles in London throughout the 1990s and was stopped at Heathrow airport in 2000, when copies of his lecture notes were made but no charges were issued.<sup>97</sup> He came to the attention of authorities again after one of his tapes was found by chance in a police investigation and he was arrested in February 2002 and charged with stirring up racial hatred and soliciting murder.<sup>98</sup> He was convicted and sentenced to 7 years (cut on

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<sup>i</sup> The exact dates of the speeches El-Faisal made which formed the basis of his conviction are not specified; however he was almost undoubtedly delivering such oratory throughout the 1990’s. The offence range beginning in 2001 is thus a conservative one, based on the fact that it is certain that some of the speeches in question did occur after 9/11.



appeal from 9) and was then deported in 2007 after serving half of his sentence.<sup>99</sup> El-Faisal's sermons are still widely circulated and remain popular among jihadis (among those said to have been influenced by him is Jermaine Lindsay, one of the 7/7 bombers-see case #17).<sup>100</sup> He also continues to preach in Jamaica and in several African nations, where he has courted controversy and run into increasing travel restrictions as countries seek to bar him from visiting.<sup>101</sup>

**Case #9: Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh-**  
**Kidnap of Daniel Pearl (...2001-2002)**<sup>ii</sup>

*Key Features*

- Long-term Islamist militant also accused in an earlier kidnapping
- Played a facilitating role, luring Pearl into being kidnapped (and killed) by co-conspirators in Pakistan

Sheikh was born in London and spent most of his formative years there, save for 4 years in Pakistan from 1987-1991.<sup>102</sup> By all accounts he was a character with a certain amount of charisma but was not particularly religious. That began to change in 1992 when, after enrolling at the London School of Economics, he was moved by witnessing documentaries depicting the torture of Muslims in a Bosnia awareness week.<sup>103</sup> Not long after that he travelled to Bosnia as a charity aid work for the organisation Convoy of Mercy. He apparently, however, fell ill and while in hospital in Croatia met with an experienced jihadi who urged him to join the jihad in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Sheikh returned to the UK but then dropped out of University and left the country, by his own account receiving paramilitary training at a camp in Afghanistan, where he met Maulana Masood Azhar, a senior member in Harakat ul-Mujahedin (HuM) and future founder of Jaish e-Mohammed (JeM).<sup>104</sup>

In 1994 Sheikh was arrested in India for helping to kidnap three Britons and an American, who were intended to be exchanged for Pakistani prisoners but who were rescued by police.<sup>105</sup> He was apparently acquitted for his part in that conspiracy in 1998 due to a lack of evidence, but was kept in detention pending a retrial.<sup>106</sup> Then in December 1999 an Indian Airlines passenger plane was hijacked by Islamist militants

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<sup>ii</sup> This is another very conservative offence range, which is restricted by the fact that the study primarily remains focussed on offences for which individuals were convicted. Sheikh was in fact acquitted of an earlier kidnapping offence and there are few other details of his actions outside of the Pearl kidnapping.



who took the plane to Afghanistan and Sheikh was released alongside Azhar in exchange for the hostages.<sup>107</sup>

Sheikh continued to associate with Islamist militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan and allegedly trained at Afghan camps during September and October of 2001 and fought for the Taliban and al-Qaeda.<sup>108</sup> Beginning in January 2002 Sheikh then played an active role in luring Wall St Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, who was in Pakistan researching Islamist militants for a story, into a kidnap. Sheikh sent emails to Pearl arranging a time and place for a meeting to take place and his co-conspirators subsequently kidnapped Pearl on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and sent emails to media outlets criticising the treatment of Pakistani detainees in Cuba and demanding their release to be tried in their home country.<sup>109</sup> Sheikh reportedly sent an email to Pearl’s captors saying to release him but by then it was too late- they had beheaded him on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2002 (although they continued to send out demands via email suggesting that he was still alive).<sup>110</sup>

Sheikh was arrested in Lahore on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2002 and was later convicted for the kidnap and murder of Pearl.<sup>111</sup> He was not believed to have personally killed Pearl (a feat which Khalid Sheikh Mohammed has claimed responsibility for) and neither did three accomplices each jailed for life.<sup>112</sup> Sheikh was nevertheless attributed with a key role in the conspiracy and was sentenced to death in July 2002 and currently remains on death row.<sup>113</sup>

#### **Case #10: Hemant Lakhani-**

##### **Arranged to sell a missile to ‘Somali terrorists’ in US sting operation (...2001-2003)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Non-Muslim criminal opportunist
- Agreed to sell missiles to an individual he believed was an Islamist terrorist

A London-based Hindu businessman, Lakhani had reportedly been involved in supplying military equipment from Ukraine to Angola and in December 2001, at the advice of a criminal associate, made contact with an individual who was working as an informant for the FBI.<sup>114</sup> Lakhani met with the informant in New Jersey in January 2002 and agreed to obtain and sell a shoulder-fired missile to him, even though the informant claimed to be a member of a militant Islamist organisation from Somalia and that the



missile would be used to bring down a plane in America.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, he repeatedly concurred with the informant's intentions, expressing distaste for America and praise for bin Laden.<sup>116</sup>

In mid October 2002 a down-payment of \$30,000 was paid to associates nominated by Lakhani (Yehuda Abraham and Moinuddeen Ahmed Hameed, both prosecuted for non-terrorism offences<sup>117</sup>) and in July 2003 Lakhani and the informant met with arms dealers in Moscow who were really undercover Russian intelligence officers.<sup>118</sup> The Russians showed them a single (inert) missile and Lakhani agreed to pay \$70,000 for it, intending to sell it to the informant for \$85,000 and thereafter negotiate a much larger deal for more missiles.<sup>119</sup>

Finally, on August 12<sup>th</sup> 2003 Lakhani met the informant at Newark Liberty International Airport hotel to finalise the deal and physically hand over the missile, during which he remarked ““50 at one time, simultaneously,” in different cities. “It will shake them. They will run. They will think the war has started””.<sup>120</sup> He was arrested and in April 2005 was convicted in the US for conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, arms dealing and money laundering. He was sentenced to 47 years in prison.<sup>121</sup>

### **Case #11: Mohammed Ajmal Khan-**

#### **Senior Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT) operative (...2001-2005)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Long-term jihadist and senior LeT operative with global contacts
- Engaged in purchasing and supplying equipment to LeT in Pakistan

There is very little background information available on Khan, except that he was born in Coventry in the UK but spent considerable time in Pakistan, and by September 2001 had trained with, and held a “senior role” in Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT).<sup>122</sup> According to the US indictment, in October 2001 Khan was stationed at an LeT office in Lahore where he met with several members of the ‘Virginia jihad network’ (see US case #7).<sup>123</sup> Khan’s key contact among the group of American jihadists appears to have been Ali Asad Chandia, who was in Pakistan between November 2001 and February 2002 when he returned to the US.<sup>124</sup>



Khan (who had returned to the UK at an unspecified time) then flew out to America as well. He was there until the end of February, and then visited again during March 2003. During his time there he went about purchasing equipment for LeT including Kevlar body armour, paintballs and a remote controlled aircraft, and was assisted by Chandia and other members of the Virginia network.<sup>125</sup> Khan and his US associates contacted companies via phone, email and in person to get information and organise purchases, and also maintained email contact with each other to coordinate their activities and arrange for equipment to be shipped to Pakistan for use by LeT.<sup>126</sup>

Khan was also assisted by at least 2 individuals living in the UK, although they did not appear to have knowledge of his links to terrorism (one was later cleared of all charges, the other was convicted of mortgage fraud<sup>127</sup>). Then in June 2003 most of Khan’s Virginia-based contacts were arrested in the US, with the exception of Chandia who wasn’t detained until September 2005<sup>128</sup> (6 months after Khan). Khan was arrested in the UK on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 and charged with directing a terrorist organisation, providing LeT with funds and equipment, and being a member of LeT. He was said to have had access to “millions of pounds” raised for that organisation.<sup>129</sup> He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 9 years in prison (including 1 year for contempt of court for refusing to answer questions).<sup>130</sup>

#### **Case#12 Abbas Boutrab-**

##### **Downloaded terrorist instruction manuals (...2002-2003)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Illegal Algerian immigrant travelling on false documents
- Downloaded bomb-making instructions

Boutrab, an illegal Algerian immigrant, is reported to have spent four years in the Republic of Ireland and to have successfully obtained political asylum in 2001 using a fake identity.<sup>131</sup> He then moved from Dublin to Belfast in Northern Ireland (NI) in 2002, using another false identity, after becoming the main suspect in a knife attack on an asylum seeker.<sup>132</sup> Boutrab was detained as an illegal immigrant in April 2003 and then re-arrested in prison in November after terrorist materials were found at his former home in County Antrim, NI.<sup>133</sup>



It emerged that between October 2002 and April 2003 he had downloaded 25 discs worth of material including details on how to manufacture explosives and smuggle them onboard a plane, as well as how to make a silencer for a gun.<sup>134</sup> Boutrab had also made modifications to the circuitry of a tape player, which was cited as evidence of intent to follow through on the instructions; he was in possession of numerous false passports ('Abbas Boutrab' was even thought to be another alias) and was suspected of being part of wider Islamist militant networks.<sup>135</sup> He was found guilty of collecting and possessing articles connected with the preparation of acts of terrorism as well as possession of a false passport.<sup>136</sup> He was sentenced to 6 years in prison in December 2005.<sup>137</sup>

### **Case #13: Kamel Bourgass-**

#### **Ricin plot and murder of DC Stephen Oake (...2002-2003)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Algerian immigrant part of Islamist militant networks in London
- Had been trying to develop poisons for terrorist attacks
- Murdered a police officer at the time of his arrest

Bourgass is alleged to have trained in Afghanistan and came to the UK as an illegal immigrant in 2000, settling in London and becoming part of the network of Algerians based around Finsbury Park mosque.<sup>138</sup> He made an unsuccessful asylum claim in 2001 but stayed in the country and was arrested for shoplifting in June 2002. Police in the UK came across an associate of Bourgass's named Mohammed Meguerba, who they arrested as part of an investigation into a North African terror-fundraising network in September 2002; however Meguerba was charged only with immigration offences and was given bail, after which he fled back to Algeria.<sup>139</sup> Meguerba was then arrested in Algeria in December and, under interrogation, informed on his former associates in London.<sup>140</sup>

Meguerba's information led police to a flat in Wood Green, north London, which they raided on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2003.<sup>141</sup> Inside they found ingredients and recipes for manufacturing poisons including ricin, and at the time also believed they had discovered actual traces of ricin (although it later turned out that the initial forensic tests were mistaken).<sup>142</sup> Four initial arrests were made, and police began the hunt for Bourgass



after finding passport photos of him inside an envelope addressed to ‘Nadir Habra’ (one of his aliases) at Finsbury Park mosque.<sup>143</sup> In fact Bourgass had been sleeping at the mosque the night the flat was raided and days later fled north to Manchester, going via Bournemouth where more arrests were made.<sup>144</sup>

Bourgass was eventually found by chance on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 in Manchester when police were searching for another Algerian immigrant. During the search of the premises, which went on for over an hour, Bourgass was left unrestrained and suddenly grabbed a kitchen knife and began lashing out, killing DC Stephen Oake in the process.<sup>145</sup>

In June 2004 Bourgass was jailed for life for the murder of DC Oake, then in April 2005 he was also found guilty of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance using poisons or explosives and was given an additional 17 year sentence.<sup>146</sup> 12 other people – all North African immigrants- were charged at various times in relation to the ricin conspiracy, however the plot was clearly undeveloped and evidence against the others was scant. Four individuals were cleared in the same trial as Bourgass and a second trial against yet more people suspected of involvement was subsequently abandoned.<sup>147</sup> However, a number of those cleared of terrorism charges were still subject to deportation proceedings on grounds of national security.<sup>148</sup>

**Case #14: Omar Khyam, Jawad Akbar, Salahuddin Amin, Waheed Mahmood & Anthony Garcia-**

**‘Operation Crevice’ fertiliser bomb plot (...2003-2004)**

***Key Features***

- Part of wider network of militant Islamists
- Obtained explosives training in Pakistan
- Intended to carry out domestic terrorist attacks using explosives

Five individuals were convicted in the UK as part of the ‘Operation Crevice’ plot (the name of the police investigation). However, numerous others were also involved to varying degrees. In particular two others were prosecuted overseas in relation to their roles in this conspiracy: an American, Mohammed Junaid Babar (see US case #14) and a Canadian, Mohammed Momin Khawaja.<sup>149</sup>



The UK group –all based in the south of England not far from London- radicalised during the late 1990's in response to events in Kashmir, Chechnya and elsewhere, and met each other at local mosques and meetings of al-Muhajiroun between around 1998 to 2002.<sup>150</sup> They thus became involved in a burgeoning network of Islamist radicals operating in Crawley, Luton and elsewhere, some of whom were involved in raising funds for, and sending over equipment to Islamist militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan. An individual known as Mohammed Qayum Khan, based in Luton, was suspected of being a lead figure in this network while at the time Khyam was thought to be no more than a courier.<sup>151</sup> Khyam and his colleagues, however, were not content with mere supporting roles and actively sought out paramilitary training in Pakistan.

Khyam, who emerged as a leading member of the group, briefly attended a jihadi training camp in Pakistan from January to March 2000 before family members found him and sent him home. However, he went back again in June 2001 and also spent some time in Afghanistan where he met with members of the Taliban before returning to the UK.<sup>152</sup> Towards the end of 2001 Waheed Mahmood moved to Pakistan where he met Babar (who was a member of the New York chapter of al-Muhajiroun and had moved to Lahore days after 9/11).<sup>153</sup> Babar subsequently visited the UK on a fundraising trip in November 2002 where he met with Khyam and Garcia and according to Babar, Khyam told him that he was working for senior al-Qaeda operative Abdul Hadi al-Iraqi, sending money and supplies to the mujahedin overseas.<sup>154</sup>

From the beginning of 2003 back in Pakistan, Babar and Mahmood discussed the idea of staging attacks in the UK and as the year progressed this became the group's primary objective after obtaining training with explosives.<sup>155</sup> Khyam, Amin and Garcia were apparently the first to receive such training in Kohat in Pakistan where they were trained over a two day period early in 2003 by a man known to them as Tarik, whose "real name is probably Majid."<sup>156</sup> With the help of Babar they then managed to organise their own training camp in Malakand running from June to July/August of the same year, attended by Khyam, Garcia and Babar among others, who were joined in July by Akbar from the UK and Khawaja from Canada.<sup>157</sup> Two other men of note also attended, both from the UK: namely Mohammed Siddique Khan<sup>158</sup> (case #17) and Kazi Nurur Rahman<sup>159</sup> (case #24). It was there in Pakistan over the course of several weeks that the aspiring jihadists practiced with firearms and learned how to make bombs using ammonium nitrate fertiliser and aluminium powder.



Following training, Khyam, Mahmood, Akbar and Garcia reconvened in the United Kingdom by the end of the year but maintained contact with Amin, Babar and Khawaja via email (using codes to disguise the nature of their communication).<sup>160</sup> Beginning in October 2003, Khyam and Garcia purchased and stored over 600kg of fertiliser to be used in manufacturing a bomb, and from February 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> 2004 –by which time the Security Services had become aware of their intent to attack and had mounted a covert surveillance operation<sup>161</sup> - Khawaja visited from Canada to share his expertise on building a remote detonator.<sup>162</sup> In February 2004 Khyam also contacted Amin asking for details on the exact ratios of bomb-ingredients to mix since he had forgotten.<sup>163</sup> Amin –described by police as a “facilitator”<sup>164</sup> - duly found out from his “superior”, Abu Munthir, who was in Pakistan and whom he had previously known from meeting at a mosque in Luton.<sup>165</sup>

Throughout March, the UK plotters expressed increasing impatience to carry out an attack and discussed multiple targets including energy infrastructure as well as civilian sites including shopping centres and nightclubs.<sup>166</sup> Although MI5 had switched the fertiliser for an inert substance, they had gathered enough evidence and arrests were made at the end of March.<sup>167</sup> Khawaja was arrested in Canada on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2004; Khyam, Akbar, Mahmood and Garcia were all arrested the following day in the UK; and in April 2004 Babar and Amin were separately detained in the US and Pakistan respectively (Amin being returned to the UK in February 2005).<sup>168</sup>

The five Britons (plus two more who were acquitted) were charged with conspiring to cause explosions and endanger life. They were convicted and sentenced to life in prison.<sup>169</sup>

### **Case #15: Mohammed Atif Siddique-**

#### **Online distribution of terrorist material (...2003-2006)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Radicalised online by ‘connected’ terrorist
- Downloaded propaganda and set up websites with links to terrorist materials
- Arrested trying to leave for Pakistan

Siddique was barely out of high school at the time he came into contact online with Islamist ‘recruiter’ Aabid Khan (see case #25) who was instrumental in his



radicalisation, beginning in 2003.<sup>170</sup> Siddique went on to become absorbed with jihadi propaganda and openly courted the image associated with it, earning him the nickname ‘suicide bomber’ after he enrolled at college in Glasgow.<sup>171</sup> From March 2003 through to April 2006 Siddique downloaded extremist material, communicated online with fellow extremists who formed a worldwide network of terrorists (including Khan and a group of individuals in Toronto convicted for planning attacks in Canada) and set up his own jihadi websites which featured instructional materials on the use of firearms and explosives.<sup>172</sup>

After several months of surveillance police eventually arrested Siddique on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 as he attempted to board a flight to Pakistan with his uncle.<sup>173</sup> He was questioned and then re-arrested on April 13<sup>th</sup> at home in Alva. Siddique was charged and was initially convicted of possessing articles useful for terrorism, setting up websites with links to terrorism, circulating documents encouraging terrorism and a breach of the peace (for showing beheading videos to fellow students at college).<sup>174</sup> He was jailed for 8 years in October 2007 but then in January 2010 his conviction for possession of articles useful for terrorism was quashed as there was no established link to any specific act of terrorism, which had accounted for 6 years of his sentence. Siddique was released in 2010 but remains convicted of the other three charges.<sup>175</sup>

**Case #16: Abu Izzadeen aka Omar Brooks, Simon Keeler, Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan, Shal Jalal Hussein, Abdul Rehman Saleem aka Abu Yahya & Abdul Muhid-**

**Soliciting funds for terrorism & inciting terrorism overseas (...2004)**

***Key Features***

- Long-term Islamist activists angered by the Iraq war
- Made inflammatory speeches in support of terrorism overseas
- Tapes of the speeches discovered within a separate investigation

All of the individuals involved in this case are long-term Islamist activists, heavily involved with al-Muhajiroun (AM) and Omar Bakri Mohammed.<sup>176</sup> Abdul Saleem (better known as Abu Yahya) is reported to have been a member of AM since at least 2001 and to have previously trained with militants in Afghanistan.<sup>177</sup> Abu Izzadeen allegedly acted as Bakri Mohammed’s bodyguard and in November 2005 (after AM had



disbanded and Mohammed had left the country) he was involved in the launch of the AM-offshoot organisation al-Ghurabaa alongside Keeler and Yahya and other prominent British radicals including Anjem Choudary and Abu Uzair.<sup>178</sup>

Abu Izzadeen went on to gain infamy in the press after heckling Home Secretary John Reid in September 2006, and AM and its offshoots have since been banned in the UK under new laws outlawing the glorification of terrorism.<sup>179</sup> However, the offences for which Izzadeen and colleagues were prosecuted took place on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2004 at London’s Central Mosque in Regent’s Park. They were allegedly attending the mosque for Ramadan but began speaking out against the war in Iraq (at a time when the battle for Fallujah was taking place) and became increasingly inflammatory, specifically calling for people to join the fight against British and American troops and to donate money for the Iraqi mujahedin.<sup>180</sup> The mosque authorities expelled them but they continued their speeches outside.

At the time the incident passed by unknown to police but tapes of the speeches were discovered in 2006 after an investigation began into protests against the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (which also resulted in prosecutions, including Saleem and Muhid- see case #30).<sup>181</sup> In total eight men (2 of whom were cleared) were arrested in April 2007 and charged with soliciting funds for terrorism overseas; five of them faced additional charges of inciting terrorism overseas; and Hassan was also charged with possessing a document entitled ‘How Can I Prepare Myself for Jihad?’ of potential use for terrorism.<sup>182</sup>

In April 2008 Izzadeen and Keeler were both convicted of inciting terrorism overseas and fundraising for terrorism; Saleem and Hassan were convicted of inciting terrorism only; and Muhid and Hussein were convicted of the fundraising charge only.<sup>183</sup> Izzadeen and Keeler were sentenced to 4-and-a-half years each; Saleem was sentenced to 3 years; Hussein received 2 years and 3 months (including time for temporarily absconding); and Muhid and Hassan both received 2 year sentences. Saleem and Muhid’s sentences were to be served on completion of time they were already serving for similar offences carried out in February 2006<sup>184</sup> (making them the only repeat offenders in the sample, although the offences were prosecuted in reverse order). All of the defendants also appealed in this case and 5 had their sentences reduced in May 2009. Izzadeen’s sentence was reduced to 3-and-a-half years and he was released,



but then re-imprisoned for breaching the terms of his bail.<sup>185</sup> Details for the other defendants have not been reported.

**Case #17: Mohammed Siddique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Jermaine Lindsay & Hasib Mir Hussain-**

**7/7 London bombings, July 7<sup>th</sup> 2005 (...2004-2005)**

***Key Features***

- Part of wider extremist network
- Motivated by global events affecting Muslims including Afghanistan and Iraq
- Received explosives training in Pakistan
- First suicide bombing in the UK

Exactly how and when each of the London bombers radicalised and when they began their plans to attack the UK are unknown. Khan, the leader of the group, lived a secular life until some time during the 1990's when he reportedly turned to religion after an incident in a night club.<sup>186</sup> By 2001 he was associating with Islamist militants and was observed taking part at a training camp in West Yorkshire that had been organised by two known extremists (although he was not identified at the time).<sup>187</sup> During the summer of that year he went on his first known overseas jihadi training expedition to the Kashmiri mountains, accompanied by Waheed Ali (case #39).<sup>188</sup>

At the beginning of 2003 Khan then went on the hajj to Mecca with his wife and in April of that year he is known to have gone on a camping and outdoor activities trip in the UK with Shehzad Tanweer and other young men.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, Khan was well known in his local community as a youth worker and mentor who engaged with young men at the local gym, mosques and elsewhere. It is through these activities that he is thought to have met Tanweer and Hussain in Beeston, and Lindsay most likely in nearby Huddersfield, where the latter had lived before moving down south to Buckinghamshire in September of 2003.<sup>190</sup> Hussain is reported to have become more serious about his faith following a trip to Mecca in 2002<sup>191</sup> and Lindsay is said to have been influenced by the teachings of Abdullah El-Faisal,<sup>192</sup> but ultimately Khan appears to have been the biggest influence in the lives of his accomplices beginning around 2003.



During July and August of 2003 Khan was in contact via telephone with Mohammed Qayum Khan from Luton (a suspected lead figure in an al-Qaeda facilitation network, including Omar Khyam –case #14- involved in sending funds and supplies to Pakistan and Afghanistan).<sup>193</sup> During the same period he reportedly travelled to Pakistan where he was picked up at the airport in Islamabad by Salahuddin Amin and subsequently met with Omar Khyam and attended his training camp in Malakand for two weeks.<sup>194</sup> Back in the UK, Khan, accompanied by Tanweer, met with Khyam and his associates on a number of other occasions during February and March 2004 (although there was no indication that they were planning attacks at this time).<sup>195</sup>

By September 2004 Khan began a long period of absence from his job as a teaching mentor, which culminated in him being sacked in November, by which time the group had become close associates. That same month, Khan and Tanweer left for Pakistan where they stayed until the beginning of February 2005 and it is believed that they underwent explosives training during that time<sup>196</sup> (note that the bombs they put together in the UK used a peroxide-based explosive called HMDT, or hexamethylene triperoxide diamine<sup>197</sup>, as compared to the aluminium and fertiliser-based ingredients Khyam et al were developing).

By late 2004 both Hussain and Lindsay are reported to have suddenly switched from wearing traditional Muslim robes to Western clothing and not long after Khan and Tanweer returned from Pakistan there was a flurry of activity on Khan’s credit card and the first traceable purchases of materials necessary to make the bombs were made in March 2005.<sup>198</sup> The bomb-making ‘factory’ (a flat in Leeds) was then rented in May and Khan, Tanweer and Lindsay went on a ‘dummy’ reconnaissance run of the London Underground on June 28<sup>th</sup>.<sup>199</sup> Finally, early in the morning of July 7<sup>th</sup> 2005 Khan, Tanweer and Hussain journeyed from Leeds to London, bringing their bombs with them in rucksacks and meeting Lindsay at Luton. At King’s Cross, the four men hugged before splitting up. Khan, Tanweer and Lindsay all blew themselves up on the Underground at about 8.50am while Hussain did the same about an hour later on the no. 30 bus at Tavistock Square. Together they killed 52 people and injured more than 700.<sup>200</sup> Two months later in September a pre-recorded martyrdom video by Mohammed Siddique Khan was aired on al-Jazeera TV, in which he blamed the attacks on UK foreign policy and worldwide mistreatment of Muslims.<sup>201</sup> A similar video recorded by Tanweer was shown on the same station on the first anniversary of the bombings.<sup>202</sup>



**Case #18: Muktar Said Ibrahim, Yassin Omar, Hussain Osman, Ramzi**

**Mohammed, Manfo Kwaku Asiedu & Adel Yahya-**

**21/7 failed London bombings (...2004-2005)**

***Key Features***

- African immigrants to UK radicalised around the turn of the millennium
- Influenced by Abu Hamza and part of a London network of Islamists
- The leader, Ibrahim trained in Pakistan at the same time as Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer but plots were separate

Each of the men responsible for the failed London bombings of July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005 had separately come to the UK from East Africa during the 1990s, with the exception of Asiedu who arrived in 2003 from Ghana.<sup>203</sup> Ibrahim, who emerged as the group leader, was a former petty criminal who reportedly turned to radical Islamism while serving a prison sentence for robbery.<sup>204</sup> He was released in 1998 and met Omar around 2000. Between then and early 2004 the group gradually came together via meeting at London mosques, Islamic ‘study circles’ and Speaker’s Corner in Hyde Park and a number of them attended speeches by Abu Hamza at Finsbury Park.<sup>205</sup>

Ibrahim spent two months in Sudan in 2003, claiming on his return to have attended a jihadi training camp and in May 2004 he was accompanied by Omar, Osman, Mohammed and Yahya on a domestic training expedition in the Lake District organised by Mohammed Hamid<sup>206</sup> (case #20). Then, allegedly assisted by a man named Mohammed al-Ghabra and travelling with two others, Shakeel Ismail and Razwan Majid, Ibrahim left the UK for Pakistan on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2004.<sup>207</sup> Whilst there he learned how to make bombs from hydrogen peroxide and chapatti flour, and in March 2005 returned to the UK, after which the plot swiftly gathered pace.<sup>208</sup>

A peripheral figure in the plot, Yahya left the UK on June 11<sup>th</sup>, but prior to leaving he had helped by making enquiries at cosmetics stores about obtaining large quantities of high-strength hair bleach necessary to make the bombs.<sup>209</sup> Asiedu and the others went about purchasing hundreds of bottles of bleach from April through to July, using Omar’s flat as the bomb factory.<sup>210</sup> Finally, on July 21<sup>st</sup> 2005, two weeks after the successful ‘7/7’ attacks, Ibrahim, Omar, Osman, Mohammed and Asiedu ventured into central London wearing rucksacks containing the explosives. Targeting the Tube and a



bus, they all attempted to detonate their bombs except Asiedu, who backed out after they split up and abandoned his device in a West London park.<sup>211</sup> The bombs failed to explode (because the concentration of hydrogen peroxide wasn't strong enough<sup>212</sup>) and they went on the run.

Asiedu handed himself in on July 26<sup>th</sup>, most of the others were arrested days later and Yahya was detained in Ethiopia in November.<sup>213</sup> In July 2007 Ibrahim, Omar, Osman and Mohammed were all convicted of conspiracy to murder and were sentenced to life in prison with minimum terms of 40 years.<sup>214</sup> Asiedu pleaded guilty to conspiracy to cause explosions and was sentenced to life with a minimum term of 33 years, and Yahya pleaded guilty to collecting information useful for terrorism, relating to his part in researching hydrogen peroxide.<sup>215</sup> Ten more individuals (family and friends of the bombers) were also later convicted for having assisted when the men tried to escape and having failed to disclose information to police- three of whom had some prior knowledge of the bomb plot- and were sentenced to between 3 and 15 years.<sup>216</sup> They are listed in Appendix B Part 3 (excluded cases) because they helped in an ad-hoc manner, seemingly driven more by loyalty to family members than by genuine collusion in their activities.



## **Case #19: Younis Tsouli, Wassim Mughal & Tariq al-Daour-**

### **‘Irhabi 007’ online promoters of jihad (...2004-2005)**

#### *Key Features*

- Established reputation by distributing jihadi videos
- Made contact online with Islamist extremists worldwide
- Financed via large-scale online credit-card fraud

Younis Tsouli came to the UK from Morocco in 2001, settling in West London and doing a computer course at college. By 2003 he was posting instructions online on how to hack computer systems and in 2004 he turned his talents to the world of Islamist extremism.<sup>217</sup> He began by resizing and re-distributing online videos posted by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s militant organisation (which in October 2004 became known as al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers).<sup>218</sup> This directly solved problems that the organisation had been facing in making videos with large file sizes readily available and earned Tsouli (operating under the name ‘Irhabi007’<sup>iii</sup>) direct praise from the head of al-Zarqawi’s media wing.<sup>219</sup>

Tsouli went on to become the administrator of a number of password-protected jihadi websites and earned a significant reputation amongst fellow extremists online as he distributed propaganda videos, instructions on bomb-making and advice on how to get into Iraq to take part in jihad.<sup>220</sup> Very little about the nature of his relationship with his accomplices has been made public except to say that al-Daour was the financier of operations, conducting £1.8 million worth of fraud (using computer programs to steal people’s credit card details) and that both men kept in contact with Tsouli online.<sup>221</sup> Tsouli and al-Daour had apparently never met in person.<sup>222</sup>

As ‘Irhabi007’ grew in stature on the Internet he also made contact with numerous extremists both in the UK and worldwide. On the domestic stage he was associated with Aabid Khan (case #25) with whom he ran the ‘At-Tibyan’ website.<sup>223</sup> They were both in contact with Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee (see US case #27) in the US, who in April 2005 sent Khan and Tsouli copies of surveillance tapes they had conducted in Washington DC and together they were all in contact with a group of future convicted terrorists in Toronto.<sup>224</sup> Most significantly however, Tsouli et

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<sup>iii</sup> ‘Terrorist007’ translated from Arabic.



al were in communication with Mirsad Bektasevic, a Swedish-Bosnian who, assisted by two others, was planning suicide attacks in Europe.<sup>225</sup> Bektasevic and his accomplices were arrested in Sarajevo on October 19<sup>th</sup> 2005 in possession of explosives, firearms and a martyrdom video.<sup>226</sup> Moreover, police checked Bektasevic’s recent phone calls and found that he been calling a number in London, which led them to Tsouli.<sup>227</sup>

Tsouli, Mughal and al-Daour were all arrested on October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005 and were found in possession of extremist literature including instructions on bomb making.<sup>228</sup> Moreover, their computers revealed the extent of their online activities including Tsouli’s identity as Irhabi007 and al-Daour’s massive credit card fraud, which had been used to purchase website domains as well as operational resources for mujahedin overseas.<sup>229</sup> The three men originally faced multiple charges including conspiracy to cause explosions and murder, but ultimately pleaded guilty to inciting others via the Internet to commit acts of terrorism wholly or partly outside of the UK, and conspiracy to commit fraud.<sup>230</sup> Tsouli was sentenced to 16 years in prison, Mughal received 12, and al-Daour was given a 10 year sentence (each of which were increased to that in December 2007 after it was deemed their original sentences had been too lenient).<sup>231</sup>

**Case #20: Mohammed Hamid, Atilla Ahmet, Mohammed al-Figari, Kibley da-Costa, Kader Ahmed, Mohammed Kyriacou, Yassin Mutegombwa, Hassan Mutegombwa & Mustafa Abdullah-Domestic terror training (...2004-2006)-**

***Key Features***

- Group leaders taught directly by Abdullah El-Faisal and Abu Hamza
- Part of London network of Islamist radicals, including the 21/7 bombers
- Organised domestic training camps in preparation for jihad
- Infiltrated by an undercover officer

This was another group of individuals operating within the wider network of London-based Islamist extremists. Mohammed Hamid, a former drug addict with several criminal convictions, apparently ‘reverted’ to Islam some time during the 1990’s and opened an Islamic book-shop in Hackney, east London in 1997.<sup>232</sup> Towards the end of 2001 he spent several months in Pakistan and Afghanistan delivering aid, and back in



Britain was a student of Abdullah El-Faisal (case #8) and was associated with Abu Hamza (case #3).<sup>233</sup> Atilla Ahmet was a convert to Islam and acted as a 'bodyguard' for Hamza before the cleric was arrested in May 2004.<sup>234</sup> Ahmet also took over the Supporters of Sharia in Hamza's absence and became a close associate of Hamid.<sup>235</sup> Together they acted as the group leaders.

From at least 2004 onwards Hamid hosted discussion groups at his home, attended by Ahmet and numerous others, at which he espoused anti-Western rhetoric and encouraged jihad.<sup>236</sup> Moreover, he organised camping and paintballing weekends in the Lake District and various locations in the south of England at which group members learned military tactics in preparation for jihad.<sup>237</sup> Among those who attended in May 2004 were the men later convicted for the attempted London bombings of July 21<sup>st</sup> 2005, including Muktar Ibrahim who had previously helped out at Hamid's bookstore and been arrested alongside him for racially abusing two policemen.<sup>238</sup> Ibrahim trained with Hamid and others again in August 2004, and his confederates Ramzi Mohammed and Hussain Osman trained with Hamid in Kent at the beginning of July 2005.<sup>239</sup>

In April 2006 an undercover police officer infiltrated Hamid's group by approaching him at his bookstore and the men were placed under surveillance.<sup>240</sup> Arrests eventually took place in September 2006<sup>241</sup> and individuals were charged and convicted according to their specific roles. Hamid was convicted of soliciting murder and providing terrorism training and was sentenced to indefinite detention with a minimum term of 7-and-a-half years; Ahmet pleaded guilty to soliciting murder (encouraging recruits to kill 'kuffar' or non-Muslims) and received 7 years; da-Costa was convicted of not only attending but also providing terrorism training, as he had helped instruct the others, and also for possessing articles useful for terrorism- he was sentenced to 5 years; al-Figari, Ahmed and Yassin Mutegombwa were sentenced to 4.5, 3.75 and 3.5 years respectively for attending terrorism training; Kyriacou received 3.5 years for the same charge as well as possessing articles useful for terrorism; Hassan Mutegombwa received a 10 year sentence for obtaining funds for terrorism, having asked the undercover officer for financial assistance so he could go overseas to train, and was later stopped at Heathrow airport en route to Kenya after borrowing the funds from others; finally Mustafa Abdullah was jailed for 2 years for possessing articles useful for terrorism in the form of an al-Qaeda manual.<sup>242</sup>



**Case #21: Parviz Khan, Mohammed Irfan, Zahoor Iqbal, Hamid Elasmar, Mohammed Nadim, Shahid Ali & Sabir Mohammed-Sending supplies to Afghanistan and plotting to behead a British Muslim soldier (...2004-2007)**

***Key Features***

- Birmingham-based terror support network led by Khan
- Co-conspirators assisted with sending supplies to Pakistan for Islamist militants
- Khan also plotting to kidnap and murder a British Muslim soldier

Parviz Khan, from Birmingham, lived a relatively secular life until his early 30s (from about 2000 onwards, two years after his mother was diagnosed with cancer and he became her full-time carer).<sup>243</sup> From then on he became increasingly religiously observant and is reported to have frequented Finsbury Park mosque. He also became more politicised and began collecting clothes to send to Muslims in Chechnya and Afghanistan.<sup>244</sup> Khan then bought a house in Pakistan and at some point unknown made contact with Islamist militants there -whose names are not publicly known- and from at least December 2004 began sending over packages for the mujahedin, including camping and outdoor equipment, military clothing and a variety of electrical goods, from walkie-talkies to ‘bug detectors’ and video equipment for recording propaganda films.<sup>245</sup>

Aided by his associates, who collectively helped by providing access to wholesalers’ supermarkets, going out and buying the items on Khan’s ‘shopping lists’ and helping package and send the items, Khan sent four shipments between December 2004 and December 2006 weighing over a ton and worth thousands of pounds.<sup>246</sup> The packages would be sent to his address in Pakistan and he would travel over in person to collect and hand them over to militants. Khan and associates also collected money from people in the UK telling them it was for charitable reasons including an earthquake appeal, and while Khan was in Pakistan Iqbal sent over in excess of £12,000 between February 2006 and January 2007.<sup>247</sup>

However, Khan was not content with playing a support role and after his “superiors” in Pakistan denied his requests to engage in combat he began plotting to take action at home.<sup>248</sup> Inspired by videos of beheadings and outraged at Muslim



soldiers serving in the British army, Khan devised a plan to befriend a British Muslim soldier on a night out, lure him into a car and subdue him with the help of drug-dealers. He would then take him back to a lock-up garage and behead him whilst videoing it.<sup>249</sup> Between July and December 2006 he approached two separate individuals trying to enlist their help although neither did (one of whom was later cleared and the other – Basiru Gassama- convicted for not going to the police<sup>250</sup>).

From at least 2006 MI5 had the group under surveillance and had been recording their conversations. On January 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 Khan, Iqbal, Irfan and Elasmir were all arrested.<sup>251</sup> Khan pleaded guilty to the kidnap and murder plot as well as supplying goods to terrorists and was sentenced to life with a minimum term of 14 years. Iqbal, Irfan and Elasmir were each convicted for their part in helping to supply the goods and were sentenced to 7, 4 and 3 years and 4 months respectively while a fifth man was cleared.<sup>252</sup> Finally, Nadim, Ali and Mohammed were arrested in October 2008 and pleaded guilty to having assisted with sending the supplies to Pakistani militants. Nadim was jailed for 3 years and Ali and Mohammed received sentences of 2 years and 4 months each, while a fourth man –Abdul Raheem- was jailed for having known about their activities and failing to inform authorities.<sup>253</sup>

### **Case #22: Abu Bakr Mansha-**

#### **Plotted to kill a British soldier (...2005)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Seemingly lone individual inspired to kill a soldier in revenge for publicised bravery fighting in Iraq
- Influenced by Islamist propaganda and unnamed others

In December 2004 *The Sun* newspaper published an article about the exploits of a British soldier in Iraq, which earned him the Military Cross for bravery.<sup>254</sup> Some time after then, Abu Bakr Mansha began plotting to kill the soldier, obtaining his address and acquiring a blank-firing pistol, which was being converted to fire live rounds at the time he was caught.<sup>255</sup> Police somehow found out and raided Mansha's home in South London in March 2005 where they found the weapon, a copy of the newspaper article and a handwritten note with the soldier's address as well as notes requesting the addresses of a rich Jewish man and a Hindu businessman. He was also in possession of



extremist Islamist DVDs including footage of Ken Bigley being beheaded. He was convicted of possessing articles useful for someone for preparing an act of terrorism and sentenced to 6 years in prison in January 2006. The judge mentioned that his low intelligence and the influence of others were mitigating factors although no other individuals were named as having made specific contributions in the plot.<sup>256</sup>

**Case #23: Khalid Khaliq-**

**Possession of terrorist training manual (...2005)**

***Key Features***

- Friend of 7/7 bombers
- In possession of terror-training manual

Khaliq, a resident of Beeston, Leeds, was a close friend of Mohammed Siddique Khan and had been on a white-water rafting trip with him and Shehzad Tanweer in the UK in June 2005.<sup>257</sup> He was also one of several trustees –including the bombers- of the ‘Iqra’ Islamic bookshop, where local Islamists would congregate.<sup>258</sup>

Khaliq’s home was searched in July 2005 and police found a CD, which contained jihadi propaganda and a copy of an al-Qaeda terrorist training manual (which had been downloaded from a US government website and was thus missing the section on bomb-making but retained instructions on preparing assassinations and other activities<sup>259</sup>). No action was taken against Khaliq until the investigation was followed up and he was arrested and charged in May 2007. He was eventually convicted of possessing an article likely to be useful for terrorism and sentenced to 16 months in jail.<sup>260</sup>



**Case #24: Kazi Nurur Rahman-**  
**Weapons-buying sting (...2005)**

*Key Features*

- Long-term London-based Islamist
- Allegedly trained in Pakistan alongside Omar Khyam et al
- Caught in sting operation trying to buy submachine guns

Rahman appears to have been a long-term Islamist and part of the network of militant extremists which emerged in London during the 1990s. In 1995 he was charged in connection with the murder of a Nigerian student by a young Islamist outside Newham College, East London but the charges against him were dropped.<sup>261</sup> He was also interviewed by a reporter in Lahore in October 2001 speaking about British Muslims volunteering to fight against Western troops in Afghanistan, and allegedly trained alongside the ‘Crevice’ attempted bombers (case #14) in Pakistan in 2003. Mohammed Junaid Babar went as far to testify that Rahman was the head of an East London terror cell.<sup>262</sup>

Rahman had been kept under surveillance following the Operation Crevice arrests in March 2004 and was eventually caught in a weapons sting. In June 2005 undercover officers posing as arms dealers offered to sell Rahman firearms and he accepted.<sup>263</sup> He reportedly stated that it was “no problem” to obtain £70,000 for missiles and Rocket Propelled Grenade Launchers (RPGs) and in November 2005 he met with the ‘arms dealers’ to purchase Uzi submachine guns at £1,000 a piece, at which point he was arrested. In April 2007 he pleaded guilty to attempting to obtain property intending to use it for acts of terrorism and as prosecutors elaborated “[t]he terrorist purpose, which the defendant accepts by his plea but does not define, was to cause death, injury and damage for the religious and political purposes of al-Qaeda.”<sup>264</sup> He was sentenced to 9 years in prison.<sup>265</sup>



**Case #25: Aabid Khan, Sultan Muhammad & Hamaad Munshi-**

**Distributed Islamist propaganda, involved in recruitment for jihad (...2005-2006)**

***Key Features***

- Leader –Khan- terrorist recruiter and facilitator
- Global online contacts
- Travel to Pakistan

Aabid Khan’s radicalisation began at the age of 12 (around 1996/1997) when he became angered by Muslims being killed in Chechnya.<sup>266</sup> From then onwards he monitored related news online, collected information on pyrotechnics, accessed jihadi chat-forums and gradually amassed “the largest cyber “encyclopaedia” of articles promoting terrorism yet seized in Britain.”<sup>267</sup> Khan, based in Bradford, also set up and administered influential jihadi websites and was active in encouraging others to take part in jihad (among them Mohammed Atif Siddique –case #15- whom he allegedly recruited in 2003)<sup>268</sup> and went on to build up a global network of contacts.

By 2005 Khan was co-running the ‘At-Tibyan’ website, popular among jihadists, along with a London-based associate, Younis Tsouli (case #19).<sup>269</sup> In March of that year he reportedly flew to Toronto to meet with Fahim Ahmad and others later convicted for planning terrorist attacks in Canada<sup>270</sup> and in April he was sent surveillance footage of landmarks in Washington DC recorded by contacts in America (US case #27).<sup>271</sup>

It was also in 2005 that Khan recruited schoolboy Hamaad Munshi, with whom he maintained frequent online and telephone contact.<sup>272</sup> Munshi spent hours on the Web researching jihadi propaganda and instructional material including how to make suicide vests and would send copies to Khan.<sup>273</sup> Khan’s cousin, Muhammad, played a similar role in collecting and sharing information.<sup>274</sup>

All the while maintaining contact with fellow jihadists online, Khan spent four months in Pakistan from June to September 2005, and in December in the UK carried out surveillance on security vans, although no further action was taken.<sup>275</sup> Meanwhile, following information gleaned from the arrest of Tsouli in London in October, Khan was placed under surveillance. He again left for Pakistan in January 2006 where he met with one of his American contacts, Syed Haris Ahmed (US case #27) and returned to the UK in June and was arrested.<sup>276</sup> His clothes tested positive for explosives,



suggesting time at a militant training camp, and he was found in possession of a huge amount of propaganda, terrorist instructional material and details he had downloaded on the addresses of members of the Royal family.<sup>277</sup>

Widely described as a recruiter and facilitator of terrorism believed to be moving ever closer to preparing an attack of some sort himself, Khan was convicted on three counts of possessing articles for purposes of terrorism and was sentenced to 12 years in prison.<sup>278</sup> Muhammad was convicted of the same types of charge plus one of making a document for terrorism (a document entitled 'Draft Ideas' offering details on how to prepare for acts of terrorism) and was originally sentenced to 10 years, reduced on appeal to 8. Finally, Munshi was also convicted of making a document useful for terrorism, namely a file called 'How to Make Napalm' which he had created from material on the Internet, and received a 2 year sentence. A fourth individual was acquitted.<sup>279</sup>



**Case #26: Rangzieb Ahmed & Habib Ahmed-**

**Members of al-Qaeda (...2005-2006)**

*Key Features*

- Rangzieb, long-term Islamist militant and global terrorism operative
- Assisted by Habib
- First convictions in UK for being members of al-Qaeda

Rangzieb Ahmed was born in Manchester but grew up in Pakistan. He was imprisoned in India from 1994 to 2001 for illegally crossing the border into Kashmir (during which time Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh –case #9- allegedly sent him money<sup>280</sup>) and in May he returned to Manchester, during which time he appears to have met Habib (no relation).<sup>281</sup> Rangzieb left the UK again for over a year beginning in April 2004, during which time he is thought to have joined Harakat-ul-Mujahedin (HuM) and al-Qaeda in Pakistan, and then in May 2005 he flew back to Pakistan accompanied by Habib.<sup>282</sup>

Rangzieb is alleged to have been given a mission to carry out somewhere overseas by senior al-Qaeda operative Hamza Rabia and was in China along with wanted terrorist Mohammed Zillur Rahman when Rabia was killed in December 2005.<sup>283</sup> Rangzieb subsequently flew to Dubai where he met with Habib and gave his accomplice three diaries containing multiple contact details of al-Qaeda operatives written in hidden ink.<sup>284</sup> The two men (by this time under surveillance) then separately returned to the UK but again Rangzieb didn’t stay long. He flew back to Pakistan in January 2006 and was arrested there in August.<sup>285</sup> Back in the UK Habib (and his wife, who was later cleared of sending him money knowing it was for terrorism) was arrested in September.<sup>286</sup>

Rangzieb was sent back to the UK in September 2007 and in December 2008 he was convicted of directing a terrorist organisation and being a member of al-Qaeda. Habib was also convicted of membership of al-Qaeda plus possession of documents useful for terrorism (the diaries) but was cleared of attending a terrorist training camp in Pakistan in 2006.<sup>287</sup> They were respectively sentenced to life (with a minimum term of 10 years) and 10 years in prison.<sup>288</sup>



**Case #27: Abdulla Ahmed Ali, Assad Ali Sarwar, Tanvir Hussain, Umar Islam, Adam Khatib, Nabeel Hussain, Mohammed Shamin Uddin, Ibrahim Savant, Arafat Khan & Waheed Zaman-**

**Transatlantic aircraft plot using liquid explosives (...2005-2006)**

***Key Features***

- Part of London-based network of Islamist militants
- Angered by Western foreign policy
- Leading members received explosives training in Pakistan
- Believed to have been directed from overseas

Despite the huge amount of press-coverage that this case received, the details of what happened are relatively scarce. By his own admission, the leader of the plot, Ali, became increasingly politicised in his teens (around the mid- to late-1990s) and in 2003 he travelled to Pakistan with a London-based Islamic charity called ‘The Islamic Medical Association’ where he worked in refugee camps near the Afghan border.<sup>289</sup> This experience is thought to have had a radicalising effect on Ali, and at least four others from the group, Tanvir Hussain, Ibrahim Savant (both of whom knew Ali from school) plus Assad Ali Sarwar and convert Umar Islam, are reported to have worked for the same charity (as did Mohammed Hamid- case #20).<sup>290</sup> Others, including Waheed Zaman, appear to have met whilst attending mosques in London.<sup>291</sup>

Ali went on to make numerous other trips to Pakistan, associated with known extremists including Muktar Said Ibrahim (case #18) from at least 2004/2005 and became known to the security services around that time.<sup>292</sup> It is not known exactly when, but Ali is thought to have come into contact with suspected British-Pakistani terrorist Rashid Rauf<sup>293</sup> while in Pakistan, who allegedly put him in contact with senior al-Qaeda militants there, including Abu Obeida al-Masri.<sup>294</sup> It is of significance that Ali was in Pakistan from August 2004 through to January 2005, which overlaps with the time spent there by Mohammed Siddique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer (case #17) and Ibrahim. All three groups learned how to make bombs from hydrogen peroxide using organic materials (pepper, flour and powdered soft drink respectively) as fuel for the explosives.<sup>295</sup>

Further significant trips to Pakistan occurred in June 2005 when Ali, Adam Khatib and Sarwar were all there and after which the plot reportedly became



operational, with Khatib beginning detailed Internet research on hexamine peroxide.<sup>296</sup> However, it wasn’t until MI5 secretly searched Ali’s luggage (discovering batteries and large amounts of ‘Tang’ soft-drink powder) as he returned to the UK from yet another trip to Pakistan in June 2006 that the group was suspected of possibly planning an attack and was placed under 24-hour surveillance.<sup>297</sup>

In July, Ali acquired access to an East London flat that became the ‘bomb factory’ (originally it was reported that he had paid £138,000 cash for it, but a later report stated that it was his brother’s property and he had promised to help fix it up).<sup>298</sup> He and Sarwar went about buying the necessary materials for constructing the explosives and then, assisted by Tanvir Hussain, Ali conducted experiments back at the flat.<sup>299</sup> The alleged plan was to inject the peroxide-based explosives into soft-drink bottles, which could be resealed and smuggled onto planes, and then use an adapted disposable camera to detonate the bomb while the planes were in mid-air.<sup>iv</sup> The charge would be powerful enough to blow a hole in the side of an aircraft, causing it to crash, and multiple planes were to be targeted.<sup>300</sup>

In preparation for the plan (the full details of which appear to have been known only to the three men directly involved in the bomb-making) six members of the group recorded martyrdom videos at the flat on Forest Road, which were then stored at Sarwar’s house.<sup>301</sup> Ali, Tanvir Hussain, Islam, Khan, Savant and Zaman each made recordings in which they vilified Western foreign policy as led by the US and made threats of more attacks to come. Ali –who also researched the details of flights which would leave Heathrow for the US and Canada at around the same time<sup>302</sup> - declared that he was “over the moon...to lead this blessed operation.”<sup>303</sup>

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Ali and Sarwar met with an individual who was accused (but later cleared<sup>304</sup>) of having been sent to the UK to oversee the final stages of the plot and then, following the arrest of Rashid Rauf (with whom Ali had been in “near constant” contact with via phone, email and text<sup>305</sup>) in Pakistan on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 24 arrests were made in the UK.<sup>306</sup>

Although bomb-making materials were found in the flat on Forest Road and hidden in nearby woods, no bombs had been fully constructed and tickets for flights had not been bought.<sup>307</sup> However, the unexpected arrest of Rauf was deemed a possible

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<sup>iv</sup> Note that other targets were also considered including gas terminals and oil refineries (“Accused Admits Larger Plan” *BBC News*, June 11, 2008 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/7448798.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7448798.stm)> at July 1, 2010).



trigger for action and a significant amount of evidence had already been collected from the surveillance operation.

Three related trials have taken place so far, resulting in four people being cleared and ten convicted.<sup>308</sup> Ali, Sarwar and Tanvir Hussain were found to have known the full details of the plot. They were each convicted of conspiracy to murder by detonating explosives on airplanes and were sentenced to life in prison with respective minimum terms of 40, 36 and 32 years. Significantly, the sentencing judge remarked that evidence in the form of e-mails that the men had sent showed that “the ultimate control of this conspiracy lay in Pakistan”.<sup>309</sup>

Umar Islam and Adam Khatib were convicted of conspiracy to murder without knowing the full details and were sentenced to life with minimum terms of 22 and 18 years.<sup>310</sup> Nabeel Hussain (Tanvir’s brother) was convicted of preparing for an act of terrorism plus possession of documents useful for terrorism, while Mohammed Shamin Uddin was convicted of the latter charge and also pleaded guilty to possessing a firearm. Hussain received an 8 year sentence and Uddin received 15 months for the terrorism charge to run consecutively with a 5 year and 9 month sentence for the firearms charge.<sup>311</sup>

Savant, Khan and Zaman underwent a second retrial (i.e. the third trial for them) after they were cleared of being fully involved in the plot but no verdict was returned on whether they were guilty of the less specific conspiracy to murder.<sup>312</sup> All three of them had previously pleaded guilty in the first trial to conspiracy to cause a public nuisance<sup>313</sup> (claiming, like the others did, that the martyrdom videos they recorded were part of a publicity stunt) and in July 2010 they were each convicted of the conspiracy to murder charge as well.<sup>314</sup> They were each sentenced to life with minimum terms of 20 years.<sup>315</sup>

Finally, Rashid Rauf<sup>v</sup> (since implicated in a number of other cases including American Bryant Neal Vinas<sup>316</sup> –US case #42) escaped from prison in Pakistan and was then reported to have been killed in a missile strike in November 2008.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>v</sup> Note that Rauf is not included in the sample as a separate case because there is not enough information available in the public domain to confirm the allegations against him.



**Case #28: Abdul Patel-**

**Possession of terrorism documents (...2006)**

*Key Features*

- Arrested in connection with much larger investigation
- In possession of jihadi literature and bomb-making manual
- Not thought to be radicalised

Abdul Patel’s father, Mohammed, had allegedly fought in the Afghan-Soviet war, ran a charity shop in East London and had sent money to Bosnia and Chechnya. Abdul apparently worked for a time in the shop, which was frequented by Islamist extremists, until his father left the UK.<sup>318</sup> Abdul was arrested in August 2006 in connection to the investigation into the ‘aircraft plot’ (case #27) and was found in possession of a US federal authorities’ explosives manual, letters from ‘martyrs’ going to fight in Bosnia and other material including a book on the Taliban and instructions on the use of night-vision goggles.<sup>319</sup> He was found guilty of one count of possessing a document likely to be of use for terrorism and was sentenced to 6 months in a young offenders’ institute, to be released in 3.<sup>320</sup> The judge remarked that he did not think Patel was truly radicalised and accepted that he had been holding the material for a friend of his father’s.<sup>321</sup>

**Case #29: Malcolm Hodges-**

**Sent letters encouraging others to commit acts of terrorism (2006)**

*Key Features*

- ‘Troubled’ individual encouraged terrorism over a ‘festering’ personal grudge

Malcolm Hodges had failed an accountancy exam and was then fined by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) during the 1990’s for telling employers that he was in fact qualified.<sup>322</sup> He was jailed for ten weeks in 2000 for sending a fax threatening to kill an ACCA official but continued to harbour a grudge. Then in November 2006, having dwelled upon what he perceived as a “grave injustice” against him for some 13 years, Hodges decided to get revenge. He sent out “several hundred” identical letters to mosques around the country claiming that he was a follower of Osama bin Laden and explaining to his “brothers” that rather than targeting



planes and such like they should strike the “infidels where it hurts most”, namely chartered accountants.<sup>323</sup> Hodges also wrote to the Queen and the Prime Minister. He was arrested in April 2007 (by which time the ACCA had spent £140,000 on additional security measures) and was jailed for 2 years for recklessly encouraging terrorism, the judge remarking that Hodges appeared to be suffering from “a seriously abnormal mental condition”.<sup>324</sup> He is included in the sample because although he did not personally subscribe to violent Islamist ideology he nonetheless was willing to try and use it to his advantage and is thus still relevant for understanding how it is manifest and the full range of its use in British society.

**Case #30: Mizanur Rahman, Umran Javed, Abdul Saleem & Abdul Muhid-  
Stirring up racial hatred & soliciting murder at Danish cartoon protests (2006)**

***Key Features***

- Islamist activists formerly affiliated with al-Muhajiroun
- Made inflammatory speeches at protest against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad

In September 2005 the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, which were subsequently re-printed elsewhere in Europe in 2006 and which sparked a wave of protests around the world.<sup>325</sup> On February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006 a protest was (illegally) organised in London by former al-Muhajiroun (AM) second-in-charge Anjem Choudary.<sup>326</sup> Rahman, Javed, Saleem and Muhid –all affiliates of AM and its offshoots- each took turns leading the protest using a megaphone to shout inflammatory remarks including “bomb, bomb the UK”,<sup>327</sup> and “we want to see another 9/11 in Iraq... in Denmark... in Spain... in France... all over Europe”.<sup>328</sup> They also called for the killing of Western troops in Iraq and elsewhere and carried placards calling for non-Muslims to be beheaded.<sup>329</sup>

Rahman was convicted of soliciting murder and stirring up racial hatred and was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment.<sup>330</sup> Javed and Muhid were convicted of soliciting murder only and sentenced to 6 years each, which was cut to 4 on appeal. Finally, Saleem was convicted of stirring up racial hatred and received a 2-and-a-half year sentence on appeal.<sup>331</sup> Both Saleem and Muhid received further convictions for similar behaviour at a march in 2004 (case #16).



**Case #31: Omar Altimimi-**

**Possession of jihadi computer files (...2006)**

*Key Features*

- Failed asylum-seeker, real identity unknown
- Formerly associated with convicted terrorists
- Involved in money-laundering scheme in the UK
- In possession of Islamist propaganda and terrorist instruction manuals

Omar Altimimi came to the UK via the Netherlands sometime between 2002 and 2004 and lodged an asylum claim in the name of Abou Hawas, which was rejected, although he continued to stay in the country.<sup>332</sup> Maintaining two addresses and creating at least three identities for himself, Altimimi became involved in a money-laundering scheme worth close to £30,000, which involved stealing money from the Yemen Tourist Promotion Board.<sup>333</sup> He was arrested in connection with this operation in March 2006 and a subsequent examination of his computers revealed a wealth of jihadi material including instructions on how to set up a terrorist cell, how to build bombs and detonators and footage of hostages being beheaded.<sup>334</sup>

Based on the nature of the material and Altimimi’s former association with known, convicted terrorists in the Netherlands as well as convicted British terrorist Junade Feroz (case #5) police believed that he was potentially a key terrorism planner and the sentencing judge described him as “a sleeper for some sort of terrorist organisation”.<sup>335</sup> Altimimi was convicted on six counts of possessing material useful for terrorism and two counts of money-laundering and was sentenced to 9 years in prison. An accomplice in the money-laundering, Yousuf Abdullah, was sentenced to 3 years.<sup>336</sup>



### **Case #32: Yassin Nassari-**

#### **Possession of missile blue-prints (...2006)**

##### *Key Features*

- Radicalised at home in the UK while at university
- Visited extremist websites and communicated online with similar others
- In possession of instructions on how to build rockets

Nassari apparently radicalised beginning round 2002-2003 while studying cognitive science at the University of Westminster in London.<sup>337</sup> He dropped out of his studies, then in March 2005 married a Dutch national and they moved to Syria until November when they went to the Netherlands while his wife gave birth.<sup>338</sup> On their return to the UK on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 they were stopped at Luton airport and Nassari was found to have large amounts of jihadi material on his computer hard drive.<sup>339</sup> In particular he had instructions on how to make a 'Qassam' missile as used by Hamas and a letter from his wife encouraging him to become a martyr and also stating that she hoped that their son could join him.<sup>340</sup> It further transpired that Nassari had been a regular visitor to the 'At-Tibyan' website and that he had been in communication with Tariq al-Daour (case #19) before he was arrested.<sup>341</sup> A search of their home in West London also uncovered approximately 500 CDs and DVDs relating to jihad.<sup>342</sup>

Nassari's wife was cleared of failing to disclose information relating to an act of terrorism but he was convicted of possessing articles likely to be useful for terrorism. He was sentenced to 3-and-a-half years and was released in February 2008. At sentencing the judge had remarked that although Nassari had immersed himself in jihadi materials there was no indication that the instructional material was going to be used by anyone.<sup>343</sup>



**Case #33: Sohail Qureshi-**

**Preparing for terrorism overseas (...2006)**

*Key Features*

- Educated individual from overseas
- Claimed to have been a member of al-Qaeda
- Attempted to fly to Pakistan for armed jihad

Born in Pakistan, raised in Saudi Arabia and educated in Russia, Qureshi came to the UK in 2004 and worked as a dental assistant in London.<sup>344</sup> He was active in online jihadi forums on which he claimed to have been a former instructor at a terrorist training camp in Pakistan and to have been sent to the UK by al-Qaeda as a fundraiser.<sup>345</sup> No evidence of dedicated fundraising has been reported but towards the end of 2006 he made preparations to go to Pakistan for jihad. He was arrested on October 18<sup>th</sup> 2006 as he was attempting to board a flight from Heathrow to Islamabad and was found to be in possession of £9,000 cash, night vision goggles, two sleeping bags and some medical supplies.<sup>346</sup>

Further investigation revealed jihadi propaganda and a farewell letter stored on his laptop in which he declared “Pray that I kill many, brother. Revenge, revenge, revenge”.<sup>347</sup> It also transpired that he had been in communication with a female Islamist extremist from West London, Samina Malik, who had provided him with information about airport security checks and who later had a conviction quashed for possession of documents useful for terrorism.<sup>348</sup> Qureshi pleaded guilty to preparing for acts of terrorism and possession of articles and documents useful for terrorism and was sentenced to 4-and-a-half years.<sup>349</sup> Prosecutors appealed for a longer sentence based on his apparent long-standing dedication to Islamist militancy but it was rejected.<sup>350</sup>



### **Case #34: Kevin Gardner aka Abbas Shafiq-**

#### **Terror plans in prison (...2006-2007)**

##### *Key Features*

- Paranoid schizophrenic converted to Islam in prison
- Drew up detailed plans to attack a British army base

In October 2001 Kevin Gardner was given a prison sentence for assault after punching a fellow Territorial Army (TA) cadet.<sup>351</sup> He was released early but then sent back to Stoke Heath Young Offender's Institute in January 2005 for breaching his licence. Shortly afterwards he converted to Islam, apparently as a result of watching programs about it on television and in October 2006 he was transferred to adult prison.<sup>352</sup> Searches of his cells in both institutions between April 2006 and January 2007 revealed that he had adopted an extremist Islamist interpretation of his faith, influenced by books he read in the prison library, and that he had researched how to make bombs out of household chemicals. He also drew up detailed plans to attack soldiers at his old army base (believing that "the deaths of British soldiers on home soil [would] encourage the believers"<sup>353</sup>), conducted crude experiments using batteries to try to make explosives, and (unsuccessfully) attempted to recruit a fellow prisoner to join in his plans.<sup>354</sup>

Despite this Gardner was released in January 2007 and then re-arrested in February and charged with collecting information useful for terrorism and preparing for an act of terrorism. He eventually pleaded guilty to collecting information for terrorism in April 2009. Gardner had, however, been suffering from severe mental illness since 2002 and was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. He was ordered to be indefinitely detained in a secure hospital.<sup>355</sup>



**Case #35: Abdul Rahman-**

**Manchester terror-support network (...2006-2007)**

*Key Features*

- Entered the UK on a student visa
- Accused of playing a key role in a jihadi support network in Manchester

Rahman came to the UK from Pakistan in September 2004 on a student visa to study at Dundee but never attended any classes and went straight to Manchester where he resided with another Pakistani, Aslam Awan.<sup>356</sup> Awan left the country in August 2006, allegedly joining mujahedin in Afghanistan and engaging in combat against coalition forces. Rahman was then arrested in January 2007<sup>357</sup> after he helped pay for an unnamed British man to escape from the UK to Pakistan to avoid being subject to a terrorism-related control order. Police then found a letter from Awan to Rahman detailing his exploits in Afghanistan and urging him to distribute it to others in order to motivate them to join the jihad overseas. They also found a package that Rahman had put together containing combat knives and other items to be sent over to Pakistan.<sup>358</sup> Finally, he was in possession of jihadi literature including a document entitled ‘How can I train myself for jihad?’<sup>359</sup>

British police assert that Rahman was “at the centre” of a jihadi support network involved in recruiting volunteers to fight overseas and sending over equipment for Islamist militants<sup>360</sup>; and although information outside of the immediate offences is not available, it is noteworthy that Rahman’s contact details were reportedly included in the ‘invisible ink’ diaries possessed by al-Qaeda operatives Rangzieb and Habib Ahmed<sup>361</sup> (see case #26).

Rather than go to trial Rahman accepted a plea deal in which he pleaded guilty to possessing articles for the purpose of terrorism, disseminating information in connection with terrorism and aiding and abetting another person breach a Home Office control order. He was sentenced to 6 years in prison, which was reduced to 5-and-a-half years on appeal.<sup>362</sup>



### **Case #36: Pa Modou Jobe-**

#### **Possession of terrorist instruction manuals (...2006-2007)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Illegal immigrant, downloaded large amount of jihadi material
- Also in possession of footage of police HQ

Born in Gambia, Jobe apparently came to the UK having been deported from the US and was employed as a care worker in Birmingham.<sup>363</sup> In December 2006 he was arrested in relation to suspected immigration and passport offences and police seized his computer and other equipment including DVDs, an iPod and mobile phone.<sup>364</sup> On examination these items were found to hold “a vast quantity” of Islamist propaganda and training manuals, plus mobile phone footage of the West Midlands police headquarters, and he was re-arrested in May 2007.<sup>365</sup> Following a series of appeals Jobe’s initial plea of guilty to four counts of possessing articles useful for terrorism was upheld and he was sentenced to 3 years and 9 months in jail.<sup>366</sup>

### **Case #37: Rizwan Ditta & Bilal Mohammed-**

#### **Possession & distribution of terror-related material (...2006-2007)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Two British-born men angered by British foreign policy
- Downloaded and distributed terrorist publications

Ditta reportedly radicalised in his teens and Mohammed, who grew up in the same town and met Ditta at their local mosque, is said to have come under his influence.<sup>367</sup> They came under surveillance from the security services after Ditta visited Pakistan in 2005 and 2006 and were arrested in their home-town of Halifax, West Yorkshire in January 2007.<sup>368</sup> Both were in possession of jihadi literature and DVDs, mostly downloaded from the Internet, and it transpired that Mohammed had been travelling around the country selling copies to people from a market stall that he operated.<sup>369</sup>

Ditta pleaded guilty to two counts of possessing information useful to terrorists (including an instructional video on how to make a suicide bomb vest) and in December 2007 was sentenced to 4 years in prison.<sup>370</sup> Mohammed pleaded guilty to possessing



terrorist publications with a view to distribute/ sell them (making him the first person to be prosecuted under new laws making it illegal to glorify terrorism) and in March 2008 was sentenced to 3 years, reduced to 2 on appeal.<sup>371</sup>

**Case #38: Abbas Iqbal & Ilyas Iqbal-**  
**‘Blackburn Resistance’ (...2006-2008)**

*Key Features*

- Angry at the war in Iraq, fascinated with violent jihad
- Downloaded jihadi material and engaged in mock domestic military training

Between March 2006 and August 2008 the Iqbal brothers downloaded and shared extremist videos including speeches calling for violent jihad and footage of executions.<sup>372</sup> They also collected weapons including air-rifles, knives and a cross-bow and made notes on urban combat and attack planning. They furthermore engaged in domestic ‘military-style’ training in a local town park (wearing combat fatigues in the middle of the day) which they filmed, and referred to themselves as the ‘Blackburn Resistance’.<sup>373</sup>

They came under surveillance as part of a wider police investigation, which resulted in the almost simultaneous arrests of two other individuals linked to the Iqbals, Ishaq Kanmi (case #43) who they knew from school,<sup>374</sup> and Krenar Lusha (case #47).<sup>375</sup> Abbas Iqbal was in fact arrested on August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 alongside Kanmi at Manchester airport attempting to board a flight to Helsinki where police allege they intended to radicalise others. Ilyas Iqbal was arrested the same day.<sup>376</sup>

Abbas was convicted of preparing for acts of terrorism and disseminating terrorist publications (referring to the ‘Blackburn Resistance’ video he was taking with him to Finland) while Ilyas was convicted of possessing a document likely to be useful for terrorism. They were sentenced to 2 years and 1-and-a-half years respectively.<sup>377</sup> A third man, a Muslim convert, was cleared of all charges.



**Case #39: Mohammed Shakil & Waheed Ali aka Shipon Ullah-**

**Associates of 7/7 bombers, planned terror training abroad (...2007)**

***Key Features***

- Long-term supporters of jihad
- Associated and trained overseas with Mohammed Siddique Khan
- Cleared of assisting in the planning of 7/7
- Convicted for planning further jihadi training

Both Shakil and Ali grew up in Beeston, Leeds, and were friends with Mohammed Siddique Khan and the rest of the 7/7 bombers (case #17).<sup>378</sup> Shakil admits to training at a militant camp in Kashmir as far back as 1999 and the two men made several similar trips over the next few years.<sup>379</sup> Ali trained in Kashmir and Afghanistan along with Khan in 2001; Shakil went with Khan to train in Pakistan in 2003; Ali then accompanied Khan and Tanweer when they met with Omar Khyam (case #14) in Crawley in February and March 2004, and finally in December he attended another terrorist training camp with them in Pakistan.<sup>380</sup>

It was not, however, their overseas activities that were the main concern for police (and they were not charged in relation to previous training). Investigators had uncovered Ali's DNA and a spare car-key belonging to Shakil inside the flat used by Khan et al to make their bombs.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, both men had travelled with Hasib Hussain down to London on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2004, meeting with Jermaine Lindsay. They spent two days there on what they say was a family visit and sight-seeing trip, and what prosecutors alleged was 'hostile reconnaissance' to assist their friends in identifying potential targets for attack.<sup>382</sup>

The first trial ended in a mistrial after the jury failed to reach a verdict, then in April 2009 Ali, Shakil and a third man (who had also previously trained abroad) were cleared of assisting in the reconnaissance.<sup>383</sup> Ali and Shakil were, however convicted of conspiring to attend a terror training camp in Pakistan in 2007 after they had been arrested at Manchester airport in March. Prior to attempting to leave the country, surveillance teams had observed them purchasing outdoor equipment that they would need in the camps (which was in their luggage) and making efforts to conceal their activities. They were each jailed for 7 years.<sup>384</sup>



**Case #40: Nicholas Roddis-**

**Hoax bomber (...2007)**

*Key Features*

- Convert, “obsessed” with Islamist terrorism
- Collected jihadi literature, bomb-making instructions and ingredients
- Placed hoax bomb on bus

Roddis, a convert to Islam from Rotherham in South Yorkshire, appears to have learned about his adopted faith largely through material that he accessed on the Internet, including speeches by Abu Hamza.<sup>385</sup> He apparently developed a fascination with jihadi violence and at work he would show other Muslims videos of Western troops and hostages being killed in Iraq, and declared that Western troops were the real terrorists.<sup>386</sup>

Sometime after having lost his job, Roddis boarded a local bus on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 wearing a false beard and glasses to the reported amusement of other passengers.<sup>387</sup> When he alighted however, he left a carrier bag containing what appeared to be a bomb with a note written in crude Arabic declaring that Britain must pay, signed the al-Qaeda organisation in Iraq. Only later did it transpire that the ‘bomb’ was a hoax made using a bag of sugar and a clock bought on e-Bay along with the disguise.<sup>388</sup>

Roddis was arrested in June when he turned up at his old work-place for a job interview and showed people what he told them were landmines (in fact railway box signals) in his bag. A subsequent search of his home uncovered a collection of jihadi videos downloaded from the Internet, bomb-making instructions, hydrogen peroxide, nails and his false beard.<sup>389</sup>

Giggling in court after being asked to don his disguise in front of the jury, Roddis claimed to have done it out of boredom for a laugh and to impress people since when he’d made a similar device back in school other pupils had told him it was “right good”.<sup>390</sup> He was jailed for 7 years for preparing for an act of terrorism and placing the hoax bomb on the bus.<sup>391</sup>



## **Case #41: Bilal Talal Abdul Samad Abdulla & Kafeel Ahmed-**

### **Attempted bombings in London and Glasgow (...2007)**

#### ***Key Features***

- Doctor and engineering student angry at the invasion of Iraq
- Attempted car-bombings in the absence of any known external control or assistance

Bilal Abdulla, born in the UK but raised in Iraq, is reported to have become increasingly radicalised after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.<sup>392</sup> After qualifying as a doctor in Baghdad he came to Cambridge to take a course that would allow him to practise in the UK, and it is there that he met Kafeel Ahmed, an Indian doctoral student studying computational fluid dynamics.<sup>393</sup> The two men are reported to have spent time together discussing politics with members of the radical Islamist organisation Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT) and became close with one another during this time.<sup>394</sup>

After Ahmed returned to India to look after his father in the summer of 2005 the two men kept in touch via email.<sup>395</sup> In December 2006 Abdulla took a position at the Royal Alexandria Hospital in Paisley in Scotland and in April 2007 he rented a house in nearby Houston. Ahmed joined him in May (telling his family he was going to the UK to work on a confidential project) and over the next few weeks the two men went about purchasing the necessary components –including three cars- to construct improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which they had researched online.<sup>396</sup>

On July 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 they left Scotland, driving south to London in two Mercedes packed with petrol, gas canisters and nails. In the early hours of the 29<sup>th</sup> they parked one of the cars outside a nightclub and the other around the corner and then tried to explode them by calling mobile phones inside the cars, which they had rigged as detonators. Neither bomb went off and police soon became aware of them after smoke was spotted coming from one of the cars.<sup>397</sup> Meanwhile Abdulla and Kafeel stayed overnight in London at a hotel they had used during a reconnaissance trip in May, and the next day made their way back north using public transport.<sup>398</sup>

On the afternoon of June 30<sup>th</sup> 2007, as police were closing in on the two men using mobile phone records to track them down, Ahmed drove a four-wheel drive jeep into the main terminal at Glasgow airport with Abdulla in the passenger seat. They had



again packed their vehicle with gas canisters and ignited it with petrol, hoping for an explosion, but airport personnel and passers-by intervened after they crashed and the fire was extinguished. With the exception of Ahmed, who suffered massive burns and died four weeks later, no-one was injured.<sup>399</sup>

Following a string of arrests in the UK and one in Australia, Abdulla went on trial with one other man (who was acquitted) accused of conspiracy to cause explosions and to murder. Both he and Ahmed had written farewell letters and had intended to die in the attack. Ahmed had sent his to his brother, who read it after the attack took place and was subsequently deported for failing to come forward with evidence.<sup>400</sup> Abdulla’s ‘will’ meanwhile was recovered from a burnt laptop that had been in the jeep, which he had addressed to Sunni Iraqi insurgents and had reportedly written, “God knows that the days I spent with you were the best and most rewarding days of my life.”<sup>401</sup> Yet despite this remark and despite speculation in the press regarding time that he spent in Iraq, plus an alleged trip to Pakistan that Ahmed made,<sup>402</sup> there have been no reports that either man received any form of terrorist training or was affiliated with any organisation. Acting alone, Abdulla explained that they had aimed at giving people a “taste” of what was happening in Iraq.<sup>403</sup> He was found guilty and sentenced to life, with a minimum term of 32 years.<sup>404</sup>

#### **Case #42: Hassan Tabbakh-**

##### **Bomb-making (...2007)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Syrian asylum-seeker with no reported accomplices or terrorist associations
- Caught in the process of manufacturing bombs

Tabbakh came to the UK around the year 2000, claiming asylum on the grounds that he had been tortured in his native Syria, and was granted indefinite leave to remain in 2005.<sup>405</sup> It is not clear how he came to the attention of the police but he was arrested on December 18<sup>th</sup> 2007, and when his home in Birmingham was searched they found several bottles in which he was mixing together chemicals in order to make bombs.<sup>406</sup> Analysis revealed that they contained a mixture of plant food, acetone, nitrocellulose and white spirit but were not at a high enough concentration to be explosive.<sup>407</sup>



In addition, Tabbakh had compiled hand-written notes in Arabic, which appeared to be a set of instructions for an unknown third party. They instructed the user to mix the chemical with fertiliser and aluminium foil and insert a detonator to complete the bombs, and furthermore stated “I have put everything separately for safety and quick transport. Don't use the bottles in which I put the liquids because my fingerprints are on them. I pray that Allah would keep you safe and grant you success in the work for the sake of Allah.”<sup>408</sup>

He was also in possession of extremist propaganda including speeches by bin Laden and others, and his computer showed evidence of having visited jihadi websites, although it is unclear how exactly he gained the know-how to make bombs.<sup>409</sup> Tabbakh was found guilty of preparing an act of terrorism and was sentenced to 7 years in jail.<sup>410</sup> Although it was declared that he was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in relation to previously being tortured it was not deemed to have contributed to his actions and his sentence was upheld on appeal.<sup>411</sup>

#### **Case #43: Ishaq Kanmi-**

##### **Online threats (...2007-2008)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Seemingly self-radicalised individual
- Part of loose network of ‘wannabe’ terrorists
- Downloaded and distributed jihadi material
- Threatened attacks online in protest against British foreign policy

Kanmi is described as “lonely” and as having spent his time using the computers at his local library, where he became increasingly immersed in violent Islamist ideology.<sup>412</sup> In addition to downloading jihadi propaganda and videos, Kanmi also frequented extremist websites and in January 2008 posted a message encouraging British Muslims to undertake martyrdom operations against non-believers, in particular Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. In the same message he warned that attacks would take place within two months if British troops were not withdrawn from Afghanistan and Iraq, and Muslim prisoners not released from Belmarsh prison. He signed the message, ‘Leadership of al-Qaeda in Britain.’<sup>413</sup>



By this time police were already aware of Kanmi’s activities after a US-based website moderator had notified them of similar posts back in May 2007, which resulted in Kanmi being banned from that website.<sup>414</sup> The resultant surveillance operation recorded him downloading jihadist material at the public library and revealed that “Kanmi was at the heart of a network of radicalised young men who intended to support or promote terrorism against the West”<sup>415</sup> including the Iqbal brothers (case #38) and Krenar Lusha (case #47).

He was eventually arrested on August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 at Manchester airport, accompanied by Abbas Iqbal, intending to fly to Helsinki. At the time he was in possession of three digital storage devices and a mobile phone, all containing jihadi material that he intended to distribute.<sup>416</sup> He eventually pleaded guilty to claiming to be a member of a proscribed organisation (al-Qaeda), inviting support for a proscribed organisation, collecting or making a record useful for terrorism, and disseminating terrorist publications. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison.<sup>417</sup>

#### **Case #44: Shella Roma-**

#### **Produced & distributed jihadi leaflet (...2007-2008)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Wrote and distributed pro-jihadi leaflet

A mother of one from Oldham, Greater Manchester, Roma produced an eight-page leaflet sometime between October 2007 and January 2008 entitled ‘The Call’, which exhorted readers to engage in violent jihad against the West.<sup>418</sup> Police arrested her and her husband (who was later acquitted) on January 31<sup>st</sup> after an employee at a photocopy shop alerted them that they had been asked to make 200 copies of the leaflet, which they had done.<sup>419</sup>

137 of the 200 copies were recovered and the rest remain unaccounted for.<sup>420</sup> Roma was charged and convicted of disseminating a terrorist publication and was given a 3 year community order.<sup>421</sup>



**Case #45: Isa Ibrahim aka Andrew Ibrahim-**  
**Planning to bomb shopping mall (...2007-2008)**

***Key Features***

- ‘Troubled’ individual obsessed with Islamist terrorism
- Researched explosives online and succeeded in manufacturing HMTD
- Caught because of tip-off from Muslim community

Andrew Ibrahim grew up in Bristol and exhibited ‘difficult behaviour’ from at least the age of 12 when he began taking drugs and experimenting with explosives in order to ‘feel cool’.<sup>422</sup> Although he was expelled from three different schools he did eventually obtain his GCSE’s (the basic level of high school education in the UK) with relatively good grades but thereafter developed a drug addiction. He converted to Islam in 2005 and in February 2007 (by which time he was living in homeless accommodation and studying for AS and A-Levels at college) he changed his name to Isa.<sup>423</sup>

Still struggling with drug addiction, Ibrahim reportedly had trouble interacting with others, and attended several different mosques. One of the officers involved in the investigation into his activities commented that “every time he got into something he went to the extreme” and his religion was no exception.<sup>424</sup> From at least December 2007 he was looking up information on Palestinian militants online and over the next few months proceeded to download speeches by Abu Hamza (case #3) and Omar Bakri Mohammed as well as the 7/7 bombers’ (case #17) martyrdom videos.<sup>425</sup>

In February 2008 Ibrahim was given a council flat to live in and at the start of April he conducted reconnaissance of a Bristol shopping mall, taking notes on areas that would result in maximum carnage. He researched how to make the explosive hexamethylene triperoxide diamine (HMTD), went about buying bleach and other necessary ingredients and then filmed himself conducting experiments.<sup>426</sup> On April 14<sup>th</sup> he succeeded in injuring himself, causing cuts to his hands, and felt the need to tell some people he knew at one the mosques he attended. The resulting tip-off police received from concerned members of Bristol’s Muslim community initiated the investigation into his activities.<sup>427</sup>

Ibrahim was arrested just three days later in the city centre and back at his flat police found the explosive HMTD, 2 suicide vests, a crude electrical circuit he had constructed to serve as a detonator and items which had been collected to serve as



shrapnel.<sup>428</sup> He was convicted of engaging in conduct with the intention of committing acts of terrorism and possession of explosives with intent. The judge sentenced Ibrahim to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 10 years.<sup>429</sup>

**Case #46: Mohammed Abushamma-**

**Attempted travel to Afghanistan for jihad (...2008-2008)**

***Key Features***

- Radicalised out of rebelliousness and time spent online
- Made ‘amateur’ attempt at going to Afghanistan to fight

Abushamma reportedly radicalised as a combination of rebellion against his father and spending time on the Internet accessing jihadi websites.<sup>430</sup> He carried out “detailed online research into jihad and indicated he would be involved in violence “with a Koran in one hand and an AK47 in the other””.<sup>431</sup> Then in March 2008, accompanied by a friend (who was later acquitted) Abushamma flew to Turkey where he and his accomplice applied for visas for Afghanistan. They were spoken to by Turkish and British authorities and voluntarily returned to the UK where they were arrested at Heathrow on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Abushamma later pleaded guilty to preparing for an act of terrorism (albeit in a “haphazard and foolhardy” manner) and was sentenced to 3-and-a-half years in prison.<sup>432</sup>

**Case 47# Krenar Lusha-**

**Collecting jihadi materials & stockpiling petrol (...2008)**

***Key Features***

- Albanian immigrant entered the UK illegally 8 years previously
- Made contact with other UK-based Islamist radicals online
- Downloaded large amounts of jihadi propaganda & bomb-making instructions
- Stockpiled petrol

Lusha entered the UK as an illegal immigrant in January 2000 but was granted leave to remain the following year and in June 2008 he bought a house in Derby.<sup>433</sup> He spent his free time on the Internet and somehow made contact with Ishaq Kanmi (case #43) with whom he communicated via email and telephone.<sup>434</sup> He also reportedly spent time



online talking to females in different countries and would tell them that he was a 'terrorist' and a 'sniper' and described how he liked to watch videos of US soldiers being killed.<sup>435</sup>

Police became aware of Lusha as part of a wider investigation that netted Kanmi and other associates of his in Blackburn (case #38) who were arrested on August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008. On August 26<sup>th</sup> police raided Lusha's home and found him asleep although his laptop was left on and was downloading a video on how to make a suicide bomb vest.<sup>436</sup> He was found to be in possession of multiple Islamist terrorist publications with detailed instructions on bomb-making, had stockpiled more than 70 litres of petrol in his basement and was in possession of 2kg of potassium nitrate (an ingredient in gunpowder).<sup>437</sup>

Originally charged with ten counts of possessing articles useful for terrorism, Lusha was convicted in relation to five: namely the petrol, Hizballah Military Instruction Manuals, an article called 'Ragnar's Detonators', 'The Bomb Book' and a video, 'Mobile Detonators'. He was sentenced to 7 years in prison, to be deported back to his home country of Albania after servicing half of it.<sup>438</sup>

#### **Case #48: Ali Beheshti, Abrar Mirza & Abbas Taj-**

##### **Arson attack on publishing house (2008)**

###### ***Key Features***

- Small group lead by Islamist activist
- Angry at the planned publication of a book which 'offended Muslims'
- Attempted to burn down the publisher's home

Ali Beheshti was formerly affiliated with al-Muhajiroun and had gained press coverage in 2006 when he took his baby daughter with him on a protest against the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad and had dressed her in a hat that read "I love al-Qaeda".<sup>439</sup> In September 2008 British publisher Martin Rynja announced that he would be publishing a controversial book entitled 'The Jewel of Medina', which was about the Prophet Muhammad's child bride and which had been cancelled for publication by a number of other houses for fear of offending Muslims. Beheshti et al took exception to this and decided to inflict punishment.<sup>440</sup>



Less than a week later, Mirza drove past Rynja’s Islington home and took photographs and the following day used Google Earth to view routes to and from the property. On September 25<sup>th</sup> Beheshti bought a quantity of diesel and stored it at Taj’s house. Finally, in the early hours of September 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 the three men went first to Regent’s Park Mosque for Ramadan, and then drove to Rynja’s home. Beheshti and Mirza got out of the car, poured diesel through the letterbox and set it alight. Police, who already had the men under surveillance and had bugged Taj’s car following a tip-off, arrested them at the scene and apprehended Taj nearby. No-one was in the house and the fire was extinguished.<sup>441</sup>

Beheshti and Mirza pleaded guilty and Taj was convicted of conspiracy to commit arson, being reckless as to whether it endangered life. Although not prosecuted under terrorism legislation they clearly intended to send a message in the name of Islam by using violence, hence their inclusion in the sample. They were each sentenced to 4-and-a-half years.<sup>442</sup>

#### **Case #49: Houria Chahed Chentouf-**

#### **Possession of jihadi material (...2008)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Single mother with mental health issues, apparently ‘obsessed’ with jihad
- In possession of large amounts of propaganda and instructional material
- No indication of genuine intent to act

A divorced mother of six with dual Moroccan and Dutch citizenship, Chentouf was stopped and questioned at Liverpool airport on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 entering the UK from the Netherlands.<sup>443</sup> During the course of being interviewed a USB stick fell out from her burka, which was kept for examination and she was temporarily let go. She was then arrested in Longsight in Manchester after it was discovered that the memory stick contained “a mini encyclopaedia of weapons-making” and jihadi propaganda.<sup>444</sup> Further investigation revealed that she had “known, established links to extremists abroad”<sup>445</sup> and that she had tried to contact Islamist preachers Omar Bakri Mohammed and Abdullah El-Faisal.<sup>446</sup> She had also visited online jihadi forums expressing support for martyrdom and in her home in the Hague a handwritten note was found asking forgiveness that she and her children would be “bombs for the sake of this religion.”<sup>447</sup>



Chentouf admitted two charges of possessing documents likely to be of use for terrorism (referring to an explosives manual and a file on how to construct electronic detonators) and was given a 2 year sentence.<sup>448</sup> The judge took into account the fact that she apparently had mental health problems triggered by the death of a family member and, having served half of her time already on remand, she was released.<sup>449</sup>



**Case #50: Mohammad Abdulaziz Rashid Saeed-Alim aka Nicky Reilly- Attempted suicide bombing (...2008)**

***Key Features***

- Lone individual with history of mental illness
- Radicalised and groomed online by contacts in Pakistan
- Attempted suicide bombing of Exeter restaurant

Nicky Reilly had a long history of behavioural difficulties and mental illness, having been placed in residential care at the age of 16 following a suicide attempt and subsequently being diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome and treated for anxiety and depression.<sup>450</sup> Not long afterwards, around 2002-2003, he converted to Islam and it appears that from early on he developed an interest in violent expressions of his new religion. In 2003 he told his psychiatrist that he wanted to study engineering in order to make a bomb (which was passed on to police at the time but he was not recognised as a credible threat)<sup>451</sup> and the following year he changed his name to Mohammed Abdulaziz Rashid Saeed-Alim, reported to be a tribute to two of the 9/11 hijackers, Mohamed Atta and Abdulaziz al-Omari.<sup>452</sup>

However, despite these early indications of an interest in militant Islamism Reilly did not attract further attention to himself over the course of the next four years. He took his religion seriously, grew a beard and later became noticeably intolerant of others, but no-one guessed how radicalised he was becoming.<sup>453</sup> It seems that he spent an increasing amount of time on the Internet and by early 2008 he was in contact online with two men in Pakistan via his Youtube page ‘Chechen 233’.<sup>454</sup> The two Pakistanis, one of whom used the name ‘Adel Khan’,<sup>455</sup> tutored Reilly and in particular directed him to extremist websites and offered advice on where he could learn how to make bombs online. As 2008 progressed they also discussed possible targets for attack, with Reilly opting for a civilian site.<sup>456</sup> He proceeded to buy the materials he needed and to manufacture crude but functioning bombs using glass bottles containing kerosene, caustic soda and nails for shrapnel.<sup>457</sup>

Finally, on the morning of May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 Reilly left a suicide note at home demanding the withdrawal of Western troops from Muslim lands and took a bus into Exeter city centre carrying six bottles containing the explosive mixture in a rucksack.<sup>458</sup> He walked around for a while then made his way to the Giraffe Restaurant where he



bought a diet coke and then proceeded to the toilets to ready his devices. However, as he prepared them in a cubicle the explosives went off prematurely and he suffered a number of cuts to his face. Nobody else was harmed and Reilly was arrested soon afterwards.<sup>459</sup>

Reilly's psychological difficulties (including a mental age of ten) and the fact that police recognised that he had been "preyed on and radicalised" were not deemed to be mitigating factors, given that he knew what he was doing and intended to kill other people as well as himself.<sup>460</sup> He pleaded guilty to attempted murder and additional preparation for acts of terrorism (referring to research he had conducted into other explosives and potential targets) and was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum term of 18 years.<sup>461</sup> Three other local men had been arrested as part of the investigation but were all released without charge, and although there may have been some local influence Reilly had been acting alone except for his Pakistani contacts who remain at large.<sup>462</sup>

### **Case #51: Saeed Ghafoor-**

#### **Repeated threats to carry out attacks (...2008-2009)**

##### ***Key Features***

- Seemingly 'troubled' individual with unclear motivations
- Threatened to carry out attacks in line with basic militant Islamist ideology
- No developed means or genuine, demonstrable intent

Ghafoor's case is one that is difficult to classify. On the face of it he does not appear to be genuinely involved in Islamist terrorism; however he has demonstrated a willingness to make use of Islamist terrorism for his own ends (whatever they may be) and so is thus relevant to understanding the continuum of behaviours related to this activity.

Jailed for 12 months in January 2008 for assaulting his sister, Ghafoor made repeated claims whilst in prison that he intended to bomb the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent (named as a target in the 'Crevice' case- case #14) although he believed it was in Exeter.<sup>463</sup> He claimed that he was protesting against British troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and that he would use gas-canisters and limousines to cause explosions (reminiscent of Dhiren Barot's 'gas-limos' project- case #5). He was released on license



in March but then re-arrested in relation to the threats and in June 2008 was jailed for another year for threatening to cause criminal damage.<sup>464</sup>

In October –as his release-date was coming up- he made similar threats, saying he was going to attack a Hampshire hospital this time in order to make people aware of Muslim issues, simultaneously expressing his support for al-Qaeda.<sup>465</sup> Unable to say exactly how he would get his bombs to work, and apparently “enthusiastic” about pleading guilty, Ghafoor was sentenced to a further 16 months.<sup>466</sup> A third set of threats has since been reported as taking place in May 2009, with a related court appearance taking place in September.<sup>467</sup> A prison imam who spoke with him after the first set of threats had formed the opinion that he was “susceptible to brainwashing”<sup>468</sup>, although at no stage did he develop the means nor demonstrate genuine intent to follow through on his words. That said, there is no telling what avenues Ghafoor’s fantasies might have taken him down were he left to his own devices; his case is undoubtedly unusual and is both an example of early intervention and of the rather diverse ways in which Islamist terrorism can be ‘consumed’ by individuals living in the West.



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**Appendix B Part 3:**

**List of UK Cases Excluded from the Sample in Chronological Order**

N = 55 cases, 112 individuals



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Bashir Musa Mohammed Nafi	Accused PIJ founder & long-time activist	1980	2003	Charges ignored
Rachid Ramda	GIA operative sentenced in Algeria & France	1993	1995	Pre-9/11
Khalid al-Fawwaz	Ran the ARC: involved in '98 embassy bombings	1993	1998	Pre-9/11/ Outcome pending
Yasser al-Sirri	Sentenced to death in Cairo; accused of AQ support; runs IOC	1993	2001	Charges dropped
Moazzam Begg	Long-term Islamist & gitmo detainee	1993	2002	Released w/o charge
Anas al-Liby	Leading AQ figure: in UK from 95-2000	1993	2000	Pre-9/11/ Outcome pending
Saad al-Faqih	Run MIRA & CDLR; linked to AQ	1994	2004	Not formally charged
Mohammed al-Massari	Run MIRA & CDLR; linked to AQ	1994	2004	Not formally charged
Farid Hilali	Accused of 9/11 involvement	1997	2001	Charges dropped
Babar Ahmad	Ran jihadi websites	1997	2004	Outcome pending
Syed Talha Ahsan	Ran jihadi websites	1997	2004	Outcome pending
Ali Bin Zidane Chehidi	European recruiting network: extradited	1997	2005	No further info
Mohamed Salah Ben Hamadi Khemiri	European recruiting network: extradited	1997	2005	No further info
Habib Ignaoua	European recruiting network: extradited	1997	2005	No further info
Amer Mirza	Firebombed barracks	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Shahid Butt	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Malik Nassar Harhra	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Samad Ahmed	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Mohsin Ghailan	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Ghulam Hussein	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Mohammed Mostafa Kamel	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Ayaz Hussein	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Shazad Nabi	1998 Yemen plot	1998	1998	Pre-9/11
Adnan Abdelah	Hamas membership	1998	2001	Palestinian
Abu Doha	Numerous AQ plots	1998	2001	Pre-9/11: Outcome pending



‘A Systematic Analysis of Islamist Terrorism in the USA and UK: 2001-2008’ Sam Mullins, 3335884, CTCP, UoW

<b>Name</b>	<b>Case description</b>	<b>Date from</b>	<b>Date to</b>	<b>Reason excluded</b>
Mohammed Abdullah Azam	Possession of terrorist books	1998	2002	Collected pre-9/11
Haroon Rashid Aswat	Oregon training charges	1999	2000	Outcome pending
Djamel Ajouaou	Close associate of Abu Qatada: Was held in UK without charge	1999	2001	Not formally charged
Abdenour Sameur	Gitmo detainee	1999	2002	Released w/o charge
Bilal Mohammed 1	Suicide bombing in Kashmir	2000	2000	Pre-9/11
Rabah Kadre	Involvement in the Strasbourg plot + Numerous allegations dropped in the UK	2000	2000	Pre-9/11
Moinul Abedin	1st 'AQ' plot in UK	2000	2000	Pre-9/11
Sulayman Balal Zainulabidin	Sakina Security Services-offered jihadi training	2000	2001	Acquitted
Ruhal Ahmed	Gitmo detainee	2001	2001	Released w/o charge
Asif Iqbal	Gitmo detainee	2001	2001	Released w/o charge
Shafiq Rasul	Gitmo detainee	2001	2001	Released w/o charge
Ahmed Belbacha	Gitmo detainee	2001	2001	Not formally charged
Shaker Aamer	Gitmo detainee	2001	2001	Released w/o charge
Ahmed Rashidi	Gitmo detainee	2001	2001	Released w/o charge
Omar Deghayes	Gitmo detainee & accused LIFG member & AQ affiliate	2001	2002	Released w/o charge
Richard Dean Belmar	Gitmo detainee	2001	2002	Released w/o charge
Tarek Dergoul	Gitmo detainee	2001	2002	Released w/o charge



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Martin Mubanga	Gitmo detainee- detained in Zambia	2001	2002	Released w/o charge
Binyam Mohammed	Gitmo detainee	2001	2002	Released w/o charge
Bisher al-Rawi	Gitmo detainee- detained in Gambia	2002	2002	Released w/o charge
Jamil El-Banna	Gitmo detainee- detained in Gambia	2002	2002	Released w/o charge
Jamal Abdullah Kiyemba	Gimo detainee	2002	2002	Released w/o charge
Jamal Malik al-Harith	Gitmo detainee	2002	2002	Released w/o charge
Abdellah Abdelhafid	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Mourad Ider Abes	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Ghalem Belhadj	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Karim Benamghar	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Salah Moullef	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Hakim Ziem	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Sofiane Lahamar Hassim Ziem	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Fouad Lasnami	Edinburgh cell linked to ricin suspects	2002	2002	Charges dropped
Mohammed al-Ghabra	UN Designated terrorist for AQ	2002	2006	Not formally charged
Mohammed al-Garbuzy	Radical cleric; accused leader of GICM; sentenced in absentia for 2003 Casablanca attacks	2003	2003	Fled- outcome pending
Asif Mohammed Hanif	2003 Tel Aviv attack	2003	2003	Palestinian
Omar Khan Sharif	2003 Tel Aviv attack	2003	2003	Palestinian
Zeeshan Siddique	Trained with Crevice group	2003	2005	Not formally charged
Rauf Mohammed	Made terror tape; acquitted	2003	2005	Acquitted



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Ismail Kamoka	Fundraising for LIFG	2004	2005	Libyan- non-GSJ
Khalid Abusalama Alalagi	Fundraising for LIFG	2004	2005	Libyan- non-GSJ
Abdul Bourouag	Fundraising for LIFG	2004	2005	Libyan- non-GSJ
Abd al-Rahman al-Faqih	LIFG affiliate: Possession of terror docs	2005	2005	Libyan- non-GSJ
Omar Bakri Mohammed	Influential jihadi preacher	2005	2005	Not formally charged
Muhedin Ali	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Wahbi Mohammed	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Ismail Abdurahman	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Siraj Ali	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Abdul Sherif	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Yeshiemebebet Girma	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Mulumebebet Girma	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Esayas Girma	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Mohammed Kabashi	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Fardosa Abdullahi	Assisted 21/7 bombers	2005	2005	Ad-hoc help
Abdulbasit Abdulrahim	LIFG fundraising	2005	2008	Libyan- non-GSJ
Adelrazag Elsharif Elost	LIFG fundraising	2005	2008	Libyan- non-GSJ
Maftah Mohamed Elmabruk	LIFG fundraising	2005	2008	Libyan- non-GSJ
Mohammed Irfan Raja	Bradford 'extremist' students- acquitted	2006	2006	Acquitted
Awaab Iqbal	Bradford 'extremist' students- acquitted	2006	2006	Acquitted
Aitzaz Zafar	Bradford 'extremist' students- acquitted	2006	2006	Acquitted
Usman Malik	Bradford 'extremist' students- acquitted	2006	2006	Acquitted
Akbar Butt	Bradford 'extremist' students- acquitted	2006	2006	Acquitted
Rashid Rauf	AQ facilitator	2006	2008	Escaped; killed; not enough info



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Ahmed Mohamed	Somali terror fundraising & possession of terror docs: acquitted	2006	2008	Acquitted; re-trial pending
Musse Yusuf	Somali terror fundraising & possession of terror docs: acquitted	2006	2008	Acquitted; re-trial pending
Sadeer Saleem	Accused 7/7 support	2007	2007	Acquitted
Jamal Ahmed	Hoax bomb threats	2008	2008	Not enough info
Munir Ahmed Farooqi	Encouraging/planning jihad	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Haris Farooqi	Encouraging & planning jihad	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Matthew Ronald Newton	Encouraging & planning jihad	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Israr Hussain Malik	Encouraging & planning jihad	2008	2009	Outcome pending
Ghuma Abd'Rabbah	UN-listed LIFG affiliate	u/k	2009	Not formally charged
Tahir Nasuf	UN-listed LIFG affiliate	u/k	2009	Not formally charged
Abdulbaqi Mohammed Khaled	UN-listed LIFG affiliate	u/k	2009	Not formally charged
Mohammed Benhammedi	UN-listed LIFG affiliate	u/k	2009	Not formally charged
Abdelkader Sahli	Hoax bomb threats	2009	2009	Out-with sample time-period



Name	Case description	Date from	Date to	Reason excluded
Abid Naseer	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge <sup>i</sup>
Tariq Ur Rehman	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Hamza Khan Shenwari	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Abdul Wahab Khan	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Ahmed Faraz Khan	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Sultan Sher	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Janas Khan	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Mohammed Ramzan	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Mohammed Umer Farooq	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Mohammed Rizwan Sharif	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Muhammad Adil	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Shoaib Khan	Operation Pathway	2009	2009	Released w/o charge
Rajib Karim	Arrested BA worker	2010	2010	Outcome pending

<sup>i</sup> Naseer and Ur Rehman have since been indicted in the US in relation to the prosecution of Najibullah Zazi and others. Shoaib Khan has been explicitly cleared of involvement in the UK plot.