IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES:
BOOKLET OF RELATED READINGS 1

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**π 59 Years of Service to the Federal Government π
1948 – 2007**

PREFACE

This booklet represents the first in a series of compilations of print and electronic articles that are relevant to the defeat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that insurgent and terrorist operatives use to kill and injure U.S. military forces and civilian populations. The readings are related to IED technology, social networks that may provide insight into how insurgent groups communicate and relate to their members, and other technical and cultural phenomena that will help the Joint Improvised Explosive Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) meets its mission.

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their strategies bears a strong resemblance to the open-source movement in software development. Insurgent groups, like open-source software hackers, tend to form loose and non-hierarchical networks to pursue a common vision; united by that vision, these groups exchange information and work collaboratively on tasks of mutual benefit.

6. "Game Software Could Boost Airport Security," *NewScientistTech*, October 14, 2007.

   A short article on how researchers at the University of Southern California have used random game theory to assist Los Angeles International Airport security personnel make their procedures less predictable to criminals and terrorists. [Researcher Note: To what extent could such work be modified for use in selecting military patrol and convoy routes in combat zones to make them less predictable to the enemy?]

7. Glazov, Jamie. "The Making of a Martyr," *FrontPageMag.com*, October 17, 2007, http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=CCF98BE2-814B-4D88-B1F0-AC00ED1AE72B.

   The piece is an interview with the director of a new documentary *The Making of a Martyr*. The film examines the on-going, state-sponsored incitement and recruitment of Palestinian children to become suicide bombers against the Israelis. The movie centers on a physically stunted fifteen-year-old boy recruited to conduct a suicide operation, but who did not complete the act.

8. Jaber, Hala, and Ali Rifat. "Suicide Bombers Head to Iraq from Damascus," *The Times* (UK), October 7, 2007, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article2604119.ece.

   The authors describe how potential suicide bombers in Syria are funneled to Iraq. They present a good description of several of these men (Professor Bruce Hoffman at Georgetown calls them "violent intellectuals.") The piece also elaborates on the influence of the Saudi Wahhabis.

9. Johnston, Philip. "MI5: Al-Qa'eda Recruiting UK Children for Terror," *The Telegraph* (UK), November 5, 2007, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/11/05/nevans105.xml.

   The author discusses how terrorists in Great Britain are recruiting young (ages 15-16), "vulnerable" people for attacks in that country.

10. Knight, Will. "Video Search Makes Phone a 'Second Pair of Eyes,'" *NewScientistTech*, October 25, 2007, http://technology.newscientist.com/article/dn12831-video-search-makes-phone-a-second-pair-of-eyes.html.

Researchers at Accenture Technology Labs in France have developed a technology that allows any ordinary 3G cellphone equipped with a video camera to link to a central server, which rapidly matches on-screen objects to images previously entered into a database. The server then sends relevant information back to the user, using an algorithm called the Scale-Invariant Feature Transform (SIFT) to match objects. The algorithm uses hundreds or thousands of reference points, corresponding to physical features (edges, corners or lettering, etc.) to find a match. The process works no matter how the object is oriented, but objects must first be carefully imaged and entered into the central database. [Researcher Note: To what extent could this system be used as a forensic tool in quickly determining IED particulars when discovered in the field by counter-IED technicians?]

11. McCandlish, Laura. "3-D Scanner Tested at BWI," *Baltimore Sun*, October 25, 2007, http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-te.bz.explosive25oct25,0,83007.story.

    New security detection device from Analogic uses computed axial tomography (CAT), similar to medical scanners, to display objects in three dimensions, compared to the two-dimension technology of X-ray scanners.

12. Rotstein, Arthur H. "Project Seeks to Track Terror Web Posts," *Yahoo! News*, November 11, 2007, http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071111/ap_on_hi_te/dark_web;_ylt=AuXUtI7ThQwfDf4i av3erjRk24cA.

    The authors writes the latest open-source article on the Dark Web project, designed to track Web posts to find the Internet's most prolific and influential jihadists and to learn how they reel in potential allies. According to the article, Dark Web's software samples 480 different factors to identify whether the same people are posting to multiple radical forums. The concept of Writeprint was derived from a program originally used to determine the authenticity of William Shakespeare's works.

13. Saleem, Syed. "Death by the Light of a Silvery Moon," *Asia Times Online*, November 13, 2007, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IK13Df01.html.

    This article is Part 1 of a series on the rise of the Taliban. The author has visited with Taliban leaders twice in the last year and describes the new leadership and operations to fight against Coalition forces in Afghanistan and the Pakistani Army. The author asserts that members of the Pakistani military trained the new Taliban years ago to bleed India (presumably in Kashmir) and the Taliban's aim now is to bleed NATO and the Pakistani Army.

14. "Social Change Relies More on the Easily Influenced than the Highly Influential," *EurekAlert!* November 12, 2007.

    This report cites a very counter-intuitive study finding that highly influential individuals

in a society are rarely responsible for bringing about shifts in public opinion. Rather (according to a number of computer models) it is the presence of large numbers of easily influenced people who bring about these shifts by influencing other easy-to-influence people. [Researcher Note: To what degree could these results be used to modify the current existing counter-IED information campaigns?]

15. Vidino, Lorenzo. "Current Trends in Jihadi Networks in Europe," *The Jamestown Foundation (Terrorism Monitor)*, October 25, 2007, http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373743.

    The author addresses European jihadist movements to include the following questions: (1) Are current groups independent or part of a network? (2) Do current European militants travel outside Europe for training? (3) What is the mixture of violent urban behaviors, nihilism, and Islamic fundamentalism? (4) Are jihadist elements remaining in urban areas or expanding to the countryside? (5) Is jihadism spreading to Eastern Europe?

The General's Isolation
Saturday 10 November 2007

Mshari Al-Zaydi

A Saudi journalist and expert on Islamic movements and Islamic fundamentalism as well as Saudi affairs. Mshari is *Asharq Al-Awsat's* opinion page Editor, where he also contributes a weekly column.

"Pakistan is like your shoulder that supports your RPG; without it you couldn't fight. Thank God Pakistan is not against us."

This comment was made by Mullah Momin Ahmed, Taliban commander and member of the Taliban Shura (leadership council), in an interview in the latest US edition of 'Newsweek' magazine. It is a remark that points towards a major aspect of the crisis in Pakistan.

With the establishment of its political system in August 1947, Pakistan has had an interesting story since the ambitious Mohammed Ali Jinnah led the Indian Muslims to unite under the banner of the Muslim League, which symbolized the aspirations of Muslims in North India. Pakistan's relationship with Islam and with religious identity is a complex and intricate one that has been deeply intermingled with politics since the beginning.

Pakistan gained its independence from the motherland, India, for fear that its Muslim community would be outnumbered despite the fact that they represented a quarter of the population. This fact is mentioned by Stanley Wolpert in his biography of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. However, like many Muslim leaders and liberal activists, Jinnah felt that the Indian National Congress Party (INC) held steadfast to its Hindu inclinations, and thus he insisted upon highlighting the religious identity of the Indian Muslims so that democracy would not slip to become an instrument for tyranny in the hands of the Hindus. Jinnah, it is worth noting, was among the leadership of the INC.

During the Indian national movement to liberate India of its British occupation, the ongoing controversy was purely Indian. National claims were made under an Indian slogan; however Jinnah, a brilliant lawyer who had obtained his degree in London, felt that there were two tendencies among the INC's Hindu elite. The first group was obsessed with being the founder of the Indian national culture and the one to establish the general social and historical framework; meaning that they wanted to be the ones to create the Indian identity based on the local culture that is entrenched in the ancient roots of Hinduism. Mahatma Gandhi spearheaded this trend. The other trend believed that liberal values and secularism would prevail in India and that the religious concerns of Muslims were not justified. This movement was led by [Pandit Jawaharlal]

Nehru; however the 'liberal' wing did not agree with Nehru's assessment of the strength of liberalism, and was likewise dissatisfied with Gandhi's attempts to dominate over India and marginalize the Muslims.

It is a long and elaborate story that features intensive and convoluted political clashes within the united India. However, the story ended with Mohammed Ali Jinnah and his comrades succeeding in seceding from India and establishing the Pakistani state following the departure of the British forces and the ensuing liberation of Pakistan.

Thus, it may be said that Pakistan was established upon the basis of religious identity. However, this preliminary judgment is ostensibly deceptive since Jinnah himself, the leader of the movement, was a liberal man, as were the majority of the leaders of the 'Muslim League'. In other words, they were liberals and reformists in the general senses of the word; there was no presence or impact of a fundamentalist inclination. Islam, in this case, was a national melting pot not a revolutionary religious slogan. Jinnah himself was incapable of adopting a hardliner approach; he was born Agha Khani [Ismaili Shia Muslim] and was said to have converted to the Shia Twelver [Ithna Ashari] doctrine. He was an Indian Muslim who sensed the catastrophe that would befall the Muslims in India if they handed over the leadership of the INC (with its Hindu majority) – and this alone was the driving force which he acted upon. Further proof of this is that when Pakistan was founded, it did not resort to fundamentalist ideology to govern its internal and external affairs and was a modern state.

Does this mean that the religious-political issue did not create a crisis in the history of Pakistan? Certainly not. The evidence of this is that the main political Islam theorist of the time, [Sayyid] Abul Ala Maududi, had grown up during this period, which coincided with the emergence of Pakistan. He published his writings at the time and they had a considerable impact on Islamists worldwide through the mediatory efforts of Sayyid Qutb, of course.

During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan, then under Zia ul-Haq's rule, offered support to the jihad movement that was led by the mullahs of Afghanistan and some of its Muslim Brotherhood affiliates, such as Rabbani and Sayyaf, and also with US backing. However, when the leaders disagreed over the shares of victory, the Taliban movement was born. This took place with Pakistan's support; namely, with the backing of the intelligence authorities and the blessings of President Pervez Musharraf. However, following the events of 9/11 with the US setting out to pursue Al Qaeda and Bin Laden in Afghanistan and to eliminate the supporting pockets that were based in Pakistan; Musharraf kept his word and backed the efforts to combat terrorism. The general facilitated the capture of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a senior Al Qaeda operative and the mastermind of the September 11 attacks, as well as [Ramzi] Ibn Shibah and Abu Zubaydah [notorious Al Qaeda figures]. Moreover, Musharraf turned a blind eye to some of the missile raids conducted on Taliban leaders and their supporters.

But General Musharraf's ability to continue this partnership had begun to weaken with the increasing fundamentalism and the rising pressures exerted by old enemies, such as Nawaz Sharif, whilst other enemies within Pakistan, including cricketer Imran Khan, had turned the cold shoulder and manipulated the danger of terrorism in an opportunistic manner. Suffice it to say that Musharraf was subjected to three assassination attempts that were very close calls. Moreover, Bin Laden and al Zawahiri incited their followers to kill him.

The problem that Musharraf confronts today is complicated and multifaceted. He is criticized of being a military dictator who governs his state with an iron fist on the one hand, and yet is a wanted figure by the fundamentalist forces at a time when he receives no support from the civilian political forces. Even the US and the West do not provide him with support – at least not publicly. In fact; Musharraf only receives the support of the Pakistani army, and even that is not completely without fundamentalist tampering here and there.

The Pakistani army was the one to interfere and support the Taliban's mujahideen and as such, some believe that the army was founded on the principle of jihad and revering the heroism of the mujahideen. Aside from that; the army in the Pakistani community is part of the societal 'situation and status quo'.

The magnitude and impact of extremism has affected critical aspects in the Pakistani military institution. A Western military official based in Islamabad who agreed to speak to 'Newsweek' magazine on condition of anonymity maintained that he believes that some activist intelligence officials and retirees have dealt with the Taliban in the past and continue to do so.

Some believe that the problem with Musharraf lies in his single-handed governance – and yet Zia ul-Haq was quite similar in this regard. Others believe that Musharraf's dismissal of the President of the Supreme Court [Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry] was the reason, however perhaps we would be exaggerating the keen democratic sense of the Pakistani people if we said so. There are some, however, who believe that other generals have caused internal conflicts through incitement, in addition to the never-ending trials between the military officers and those in power.

I believe that the problem with Musharraf is that he is fighting a battle that is not supported by the public; and thus, he is not supported or protected by the public. The main reason behind the public's absence may be attributed to the Pakistani people's empathy towards movements such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda, which stems from cultural reasons and conviction that their plight is valid and justified, and that Bin Laden and Mullah Omar are Islamic heroes. Other reasons for this support are due to the people's discontent with Musharraf's regime owing to reasons related to livelihood or to cases of successful instigation caused by some of Musharraf's political opponents.

The root of the problem is that General Musharraf is battling alone and in an exposed battlefield. The graver danger lies in watching what is happening in Pakistan; the same Pakistan of Maulana Sami ul-Haq, religious seminaries, al Maududi, Waziristan, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and the youth responsible for the London 7/7 bombings, al Zawahiri, Bin Laden and finally, the nuclear bomb.

This is a truly grave and troubling issue in a country that had been hailed by its founder as "the land of the pious" and "the land of peace."

We cannot predict, at least in the near future, whether yesterday's dreams will become tomorrow's nightmares.

http://www.asharqalawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=10826

EurekAlert!

Stealthy, Versatile, and Jam Resistant Antennas made of Gas

T. R. Anderson and I. Alexeff, 2007 APS Division of Plasma Physics annual meeting
November 12, 2007

A new antenna made of plasma (a gas heated to the point that the electrons are ripped free of atoms and molecules) works just like conventional metal antennas, except that it vanishes when you turn it off. That's important on the battlefield and in other applications where antennas need to be kept out of sight. In addition, unlike metal antennas, the electrical characteristics of a plasma antenna can be rapidly adjusted to counteract signal jamming attempts.

This prototype plasma antenna is stealthy, versatile, and jam-resistant. Credit: T. R. Anderson and I. Alexeff

Plasma antennas behave much like solid metal antennas because electrons flow freely in the hot gas, just as they do in metal conductors. But plasmas only exist when the gasses they're made of are very hot. The moment the energy source heating a plasma antenna is shut off, the plasma turns back into a plain old (non conductive) gas. As far as radio signals and antenna detectors go, the antenna effectively disappears when the plasma cools down.

The antenna design being presented at next week's APS Division of Plasma Physics meeting in Orlando consists of gas-filled tubes reminiscent of neon bulbs. The physicists presenting the design propose that an array of many small plasma elements could lead to a highly versatile antenna that could be reconfigured simply by turning on or off various elements. - JR

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-11/aps-sdg111207.php

Malaysia firm's 'Muslim car' plan

By Robin Brant, *BBC News*, Kuala Lumpur, November 11, 2007

The Malaysian carmaker Proton has announced plans to develop an "Islamic car", designed for Muslim motorists.

Proton is planning on teaming up with manufacturers in Iran and Turkey to create the unique vehicle.

The car could boast special features like a compass pointing to Mecca and a dedicated space to keep a copy of the Koran and a headscarf.

Proton believes it may have found a huge gap in the market

The idea came during a visit to the Middle East by a delegation of Malaysian politicians and businessmen.

Malaysian press reports say officials in Iran originally suggested the idea.

Safety features or fuel economy is one way of selling a car, but Proton thinks vehicles designed specifically for Muslims across the world represent a huge gap in the market.

Proton is the most dominant car on the streets here but the company has suffered recently after the government allowed more foreign cars to be imported.

The firm has been in talks recently with VW about a takeover by the German car giant.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7089707.stm

MacGyver Syndrome: a Jihadist with a laptop and fertilizer

By Stefania Benaglia, October 30, 2007

MacGyver, a popular character from the American television series of the 1980s, was an exceptionally resourceful secret agent. The high profile character was known for his ability to create improbable explosives and problem-solving devices from extremely common items: plugging a sulfuric acid leak with chocolate, repairing a blown fuse with a chewing gum wrapper, or creating bombs out of gelatin cold capsules. Recent developments in European-based Jihadism seem to be moving in a similar direction, suggesting a new MacGyver-inspired trend in terrorist methods. Instead of purchasing traditional explosives, self-indoctrinated and self-trained Jihadi operatives are increasingly relying on household chemicals and the Internet. The arrests in Italy this past summer demonstrate this phenomenon.

On July 21, 2007, a joint Italian security force operation codenamed "Hamam", succeeded in capturing the Imam of Ponte Felcino, a small and quiet village near Perugia, along with two of his closest collaborators.

The investigations were conducted by several different Italian police units: UGICOS (Unit for Special Operations and Special Investigations), the Central Directorate for Anti-Terrorism, based in Rome, and the Postal and Communications Police for Rome and Umbria.

The following suspects were arrested in the sweep: Mostapha El Korchi, the Imam of Ponte Felcino; Ljari Mohamed, El Korchi's close confidante; and Safika Dris, the mosque's caretaker [1] . Noureddine Oumaadane [2], El Korchi's cousin, who was expelled from Italy in March 2007, is still being pursued by the police and is believed to be hiding in his native Morocco. In the days following July 21, the police expanded their investigations. Mohamed El Absi, the Imam of Pierantonio, another small village in the area, was placed under formal investigation, as were 20 other men.

Operation "Hamam" started about two years ago, after a cellular phone was found in Fallujah, a Sunni stronghold west of Baghdad, by Italian troops serving in Iraq. The cell phone was apparently used by Abdelaziz Ouechtati, a Tunisian citizen living in Naples, who is currently not traceable. Belgian police presume that Ouechtati is also the owner of another cell phone used by a Syrian terrorist linked to the Gruppo Islamico Combattente Marocchino (GICM), the organization involved in the 2004 Madrid bombings. Mostapha El Korchi was apparently in contact with Ouechtati, presumably through one of the associates of Ponte Felcino Mosque. The suspected contact was made with Ouechatati abroad, perhaps in Iraq [3].

Focusing on the possibility of a meeting abroad, investigators looked at the movements of El Korchi and his associates. They noticed that El Korchi went to Morocco at the beginning of this year and came back to Italy two weeks later on 20 January. "Il Corriere della Sera", an esteemed Italian newspaper, reported that El Korchi left Perugia on a scheduled bus in order to fly from Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport. On the way back the Imam met another Moroccan, Mohcine Abouda, and a third non-EU immigrant who took seven photographs of the airport that the police later found posted on El Korchi's website [4]. The Internet publication of these photos is of extreme importance in light of the high number of people who would have had access to the pictures, as well as in terms of the methodological approach they imply.

The documents attached to the arrest warrant by prosecuting magistrate Nicola Miriano and public prosecutor Alessandro Cannevale allow us a better understanding of the charges against Mostapha El Korchi and his suspected activities.

At the beginning of October 2006 the police began to monitor the mosque, Mostapha El Korchi, his family, and 23 of his closest collaborators [5]. Using wiretaps they collected information that gave them a comprehensive picture of the activities in the mosque during and after prayer time. Thanks to these wiretaps, the UGICOS police unit was able to reconstruct the suspect activities taking place in the mosque [6].

"Il Corriere della Sera" reported that on some occasions Mostapha El Korchi expressed words of support about various suicide attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya, and encouraged the pursuit of Global Jihad. Apparently the Imam also taught intolerance of Italian custom, and encouraged children to beat-up Italian classmates as a show of Muslim supremacy [7].

In order to get a comprehensive picture of his activities, a special unit of the postal police monitored Mostapha El Korchi's computer for several months. They found that he was continuously viewing web pages relating to Jihad, and in particular websites with instructions on how to create explosives and chemical weapons, as well as active recruitment of mujahideen to fight in Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya. The records show that El Korchi actively participated in several forums.

The name of operation "Hamam" comes from the codename that Mostapha El Korchi was using to enter into the online forum and other web pages, which instigated and instructed on Jihad. For example, on some of these sites urban guerrilla warfare was taught using audiovisual tools. This assiduous use of computers assumes even greater importance considering that during the hours spent downloading these documents on Jihadist strategic plans and related issues, the self-appointed mujahid was participating in the global game of Jihad despite his geographical location. This Internet dimension allows potential mujahideen to get actively involved in global Jihad and to feel like they are members of a community with a strong sense of belonging no different to any other Internet community based on common interests and discussions.

In addition to preaching intolerance the police also claim that Mostapha El Korchi organized training sessions in the Mosque. The charges involve combat training - with and without arms-, training involving the use and preparation of poisons and explosives, the seizure of secure targets, and methods of encryption. All lessons were backed-up with films and computer files downloaded from protected web pages. In addition, it seems that minors were actively involved in these training sessions [8]. According to the information collected by wiretaps, these lessons

were real training for suicide missions, and were intended as military preparation for Jihad.

Regarding the structure of the Global Jihad, the chief of the Polizia di Stato, Antonio Manganelli, declared in a hearing of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs on July 26, that it was the lack of a central operational system that characterizes Al Qaeda- as opposed to Cosa Nostra, for example, which was a highly centralized system with branches all over the world. According to Manganelli Al Qaeda's structure is its trademark: the ideology of Global Jihad suffices in encouraging terrorist acts [9].

A peculiar aspect in the recruitment and training activity is the attention given to auto-didacticism. Indeed, Mostapha El Korchi can be considered a self-trained jihadi. Thanks to a fairly good understanding of the Internet, and thanks to the aid of a computer technician, he was able to collect a sufficient amount of information and material to train himself, recruit others, and, in turn, train them [10]. The fact that El Korchi was self-taught suggests that individuals can plausibly take up the call of Global Jihad with virtually no centralized instruction. Any individuals can find their motivation and material on the Internet and Internet forums, which simultaneously provide jihadis with a virtual community. The new reality is that recruitment, ideology and methodology can be passed through Internet forums and web pages, without a central command structure.

El Korchi was using similar training techniques with his followers. He was teaching them how to train themselves, bringing the recruitment dimension a step forward, not based on a never-ending repetition of purposes and goals, but rather on the ability of finding one's own way into Global Jihad. El Korchi based his recruiting activities on ideology, which allowed for the spreading of the message of Global Jihad by his followers.

The evidence of the training undertaken and of the speeches encouraging Global Jihad, collected through wiretaps and surveillance, were sufficient for the prosecuting magistrate Nicola Miriano and public prosecutor Alessandro Cannevale to issue an arrest warrant against El Korchi and his fellows. The legal authorization came from the application of the newly introduced amendments to Law 270 of the Italian Criminal Code.

First implementation of the '270-quinquies' law of the Italian Criminal Code

Looking at the legal justification for these arrests, it is important to underline the singularity of this event. Indeed the legal justification was provided for the first time by quinquies, the recently introduced amendments to Law 270 of the Italian Criminal Code. The purpose of the law is to prevent terrorism by acting against incitement. The amendments to law 270 of the Italian Criminal Code were introduced by the former minister of the Interior, Pisanu, under a comprehensive review that was undertaken in response to the 2005 London bombings. The amendments took effect on July 31, 2005, n.155.

The amendments explicitly aim to punish training - and any associated activities - that can lead to, or encourage, domestic or international terrorism («addestramento ad attività con finalità di terrorismo anche internazionale») [11]. 270-quinquies states that the maximum penalty is 5-10 years imprisonment for distributing information about the use and preparation of arms, or any other kind of information about "violent combat or the sabotaging of essential public services with terrorist intent, even if that act were to be aimed at a foreign country or an international

institution or organization" ("per il compimento di atti di violenza ovvero di sabotaggio di servizi pubblici essenziali, con finalità di terrorismo, anche se rivolti contro uno Stato estero, un'istituzione o un organismo internazionale") .

270-quinquies regards the recruitment of people with the intention of advancing domestic or international terrorism (Arruolamento con finalita di terrorismo anche internazionale) as a criminal offence [12], stipulating a term of imprisonment ranging from 7 to 15 years if an individual "recruits one or more persons with the intent of committing violent acts, either through the sabotage of essential public services or with terrorist intent, even if aimed at a foreign country or an international institution or organization" ("per chi arruola una o piu persone per il compimento di atti di violenza ovvero di sabotaggio di servizi pubblici essenziali, con finalità di terrorismo, anche se rivolti contro uno Stato estero, un'istituzione o un organismo internazionale") [13].

Furthermore 270-tertius sets out terms of imprisonment decreeing a maximum of four years to those whom "out of direct implication in the crime by aiding and abetting, providing haven or board, hospitality, transportation, or means of communication" ("fuori dei casi di concorso nel reato e di favoreggiamento, dà rifugio o fornisca vitto, ospitalità, mezzi di trasporto, strumenti di comunicazione") [14].

This comprehensive law is an attempt to fill the legislative gap dealing with international terrorism. Based on a series of international conventions that identify and define violent behavior, as well as damage to the freedom of the individual, the law tries to preempt the dangers of legislating "the day after" a terrorist attack. After the events of September 11th, the formulation of law 270 criminalizes ideological support, the funding, the participation in and association with an act considered domestic or international terrorism or an attempt to subvert the democratic order [15]. However, it is interesting to note that article 270-bis does not include the aim of subverting the democratic structure of a foreign country within the legal paradigm of conspiracy aimed at international terrorism and, therefore, such offenders cannot, at present, be prosecuted under Italian law [16].

Notwithstanding the amendment to this article, the lack of a legal definition of an act of terrorism continues to create problems in the implementation of the law, as defense attorneys rely upon the difficulty of defining a "terrorist act" and/ or "terrorist offence".

Therefore the definition of a terrorist act given in Article 270 sexties, of the Criminal Code, assumes especial importance. The definition of a terrorist act is interpreted as encompassing violent activities that - in view of their nature or context - might cause serious harm to a country or international organization and are intended to intimidate the population or constrain state powers or an international organization to carry out or refrain from carrying out any activity; or to destabilize or to destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or of an international organization ("che, per la loro natura o contesto, possono arrecare grave danno ad un Paese o ad un'organizzazione internazionale e sono compiute allo scopo di intimidire la popolazione o costringere i poteri pubblici o un'organizzazione internazionale a compiere o astenersi dal compiere un qualsiasi atto o destabilizzare o distruggere le strutture politiche fondamentali, costituzionali, economiche e sociali di un Paese o di un'organizzazione internazionale") [17]. This definition is clearly inspired by Article 1 of the *Framework Decision of the EU Council on Combating Terrorism* of 13 June 2002.

MacGyver syndrome

While searching El Korchi's home, police found around 60 different types of chemicals. These chemicals were, for the most part, easily available, others were taken from the laboratories of the nearby University of Perugia [18] . Amongst these chemicals were fertilisers, household chemicals, an anti-rust acid, laxatives and narcotics. Currently forensic experts are set to start testing these chemicals in order to verify if their mix could produce an explosive reaction [19] . Assuming that these chemical elements - correctly mixed - could generate an explosive mixture, we can conclude that an important change in the behavior of jihadists has taken place, as already seen in the recent terror attacks in the UK. As underlined by Antonio Manganelli, the Italian Chief of Police in a hearing in front of the Camera dei Deputati, last July 26, the new frontier in jihadism techniques does not seem to be the use of traditional explosives, like Trinitrotoluene or Dynamite[20] , which are more difficult to find and easier to intercept. Instead there is a new 'MacGyver syndrome,' whereby the new jihadists seem to prefer to mix common and easy-to-find chemical elements, elements that can be found in most homes.

Summary

When we look at the investigations, and at all the tenuous international links related to the cell, we get a real idea of the difficulty of getting a clear picture as to the activities of this group. Living an integrated community life, making no frequent trips abroad, especially not to countries considered suspicious, apart from their native ones, it is extremely difficult to predict the behavior of specific persons. In addition there is the privacy of internet encrypted searches and connections. As for the chemical elements needed to make explosives- these are widely available. Indeed what we consider the stereotype of the European Jihadi seems to have changed recently. No longer based on trips to a country where a centralized command might exist, and with nothing more than ideology and the internet, these self-trained and self-motivated persons can commit acts of terror with nothing more than household chemicals.

The Muslim community needs to help in the struggle against Global Jihad. Yet few parliamentarians have spoken of the necessary steps needed to facilitate this. There is a vital need for an institutionalized Imam training school to counter the ideology of Imams that are currently appointed from outside Italy. The State also needs to officially recognize Islam as an official religion in Italy, facilitating the transparency and the visibility of the activities of Muslim communities. Having no official recognition, there is a serious lack of governmental control on spaces used as Mosques, as Islamic cultural centers or as schools. The implications are both an uncomfortable situation for the people that can hardly meet and pray in proper spaces, and the facility of spreading and preaching radical ideas.

Finally regarding the legal aspect, the application of law 270-quinquies, allowed the police to arrest the people under investigation at the very early stages of what constituted a very real threat; this effective anticipation prevented serious damage and/or loss of life. The law allows the security services significant freedom of operation, and will potentially be a major and progressive instrument in countering terrorism. In the case of El Korchi and his associates, no charges have yet been brought.

Perhaps it is possible to observe a clear tendency towards disproportion between prevention of a terrorist act and judicial legal requirements, in favor of the former. The latest developments in

legislation have lead to the strengthening of powers aimed at collecting and using any information that could be of help in prosecuting potential terrorist-linked offences. However, the increase in police powers could lead to the limitation of personal freedoms [21]. Emphasizing the function of risk prevention aimed at ensuring state security, implies, as a consequence, the risk of weakening judicial control and safeguards [22]. Consequently the debate about the convenience of such a limitation of personal freedom will continue.

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SPECTRUM
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Open-Source Warfare

By Robert N. Charette, 1 November 2007

PHOTO: JONATHAN ROMANO

ROAD TO PERDITION: In early 2005, engineers stationed in Iraq were inspecting this road when an improvised explosive device went off. An officer and his interpreter died in the blast. At the upper right is an iRobot PackBot used to investigate IED sites

On the afternoon of Thursday, 8 April 2004, U.S. troops stationed in Iraq deployed a small remote-controlled robot to search for improvised explosive devices. The robot, a PackBot unit made by iRobot Corp., of Burlington, Mass., found an IED, but the discovery proved its undoing. The IED exploded, reducing the robot to small, twisted pieces of metal, rubber, and wire.

The confrontation between robot and bomb reflects a grim paradox of the ongoing conflict in Iraq. The PackBot's destruction may have prevented the IED from claiming a soldier's life—as of 31 August, IEDs accounted for nearly half of the 3299 combat deaths reported by coalition forces. But the fact remains that a US $100 000 piece of machinery was done in by what was probably a few dollars' worth of explosives, most likely triggered using a modified cell phone, a garage-door opener, or even a toy's remote control. During the past four and a half years, the United States and its allies in Iraq have fielded the most advanced and complex weaponry ever developed. But they are still not winning the war.

Although there has been much debate and finger pointing over the various failures and setbacks suffered during the prolonged conflict, some military analysts and counterterrorism experts say that, at its heart, this war is radically different from previous ones and must be thought of in an entirely new light.

"What we are seeing is the empowerment of the individual to conduct war," says John Robb, a counterterrorism expert and author of the book *Brave New War* (John Wiley & Sons), which came out in April. While the concept of asymmetric warfare dates back at least 2000 years, to the Chinese military strategist Sun-Tzu, the conflict in Iraq has redefined the nature of such struggles [see photo, "Road to Perdition" As events are making painfully clear, Robb says, warfare is being transformed from a closed, state-sponsored affair to one where the means and the know-how to do battle are readily found on the Internet and at your local Radio Shack. This open global access to increasingly powerful technological tools, he says, is in effect allowing "small groups to…declare war on nations."

Need a missile-guidance system? Buy yourself a Sony PlayStation 2. Need more capability? Just upgrade to a PS3. Need satellite photos? Download them from Google Earth or Microsoft's Virtual Earth. Need to know the current thinking on IED attacks? Watch the latest videos created by insurgents and posted on any one of hundreds of Web sites or log on to chat rooms where you can exchange technical details with like-minded folks.

Robb calls this new type of conflict "open-source warfare," because the manner in which insurgent groups are organizing themselves, sharing information, and adapting their strategies bears a strong resemblance to the open-source movement in software development. Insurgent groups, like open-source software hackers, tend to form loose and nonhierarchical networks to pursue a common vision, Robb says. United by that vision, they exchange information and work collaboratively on tasks of mutual interest.

PHOTO: LUKE WOLAGIEWICZ/WPN; KAREEM RAHEEM/REUTERS

FAST, CHEAP & OUT OF CONTROL: Improvised explosive devices made from cellphones, radios, old mortars, and other low-tech mechanisms have exacted an enormous toll in Iraq.

And just as in the software community, information technology and the Internet play a pivotal role in bringing insurgents together. The resurrection of al-Qaeda is a good example, says Brian Jackson, a terrorism expert and associate director of the Homeland Security Program at Rand Corp. "Given the structural changes that were required of al-Qaeda to adapt to its loss of Afghanistan as a safe haven," Jackson says, "the interconnections among disparate parts of the decentralized organization that the Internet made possible have been important for its survival."

The reliance on IT also enables open-source groups to identify and respond to problems much more rapidly than a more structured, top-down entity can—be it the Pentagon or a large software company such as Microsoft. According to some estimates, it now takes Iraqi insurgents less than a month to adapt their methods of attack, much faster than coalition troops can respond. "For every move we make, the enemy makes three," U.S. Brigadier General Joe E. Ramirez Jr. told

attendees at a May conference on IEDs. "The enemy changes techniques, tactics, and procedures every two to three weeks. Our biggest task is staying current and relevant."

Unfortunately, the traditional weapons acquisition process, which dictates how the United States and other Western militaries define and develop new weapons systems, is simply not designed to operate on such a fleeting timescale. It can take years and sometimes decades—not to mention many millions or billions of dollars—for a new military machine to move from concept to design to testing and out into the field. Worse, the vast majority of the battlefield technologies now wending their way through the acquisition bureaucracy were intended to fight large force-on-force battles among sovereign nations, not the guerrilla warfare that typifies the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, time is on the insurgents' side. Since the start of the war, the consumer-grade products on which they rely have undergone several generations of improvement. Microprocessor speeds, for instance, have leaped by a factor of at least four in that time, while the cost per MIPS—or million instructions per second, a standard benchmark for processors—has dropped by roughly 70 percent.

This past spring and summer I interviewed dozens of current and former military officers, analysts, weapons developers, and others to try to understand why the coalition forces' technological might has proved so ineffectual. Nearly everyone I spoke with agreed there is a serious mismatch between the West's industrial-age approach to warfare and the insurgents' more fluid and adaptive style. All agreed, too, that the West will likely face more such confrontations in the years and decades ahead. The big concern, many people told me, is that once the war in Iraq has ended, the innovation that has occurred there and the lessons learned will be lost as the Pentagon returns to "business as usual"—that is, building enormously complex and costly weapons systems and training troops to fight large-scale wars.

To understand open-source warfare, it's instructive to revisit Eric S. Raymond's 1997 manifesto, *The Cathedral and the Bazaar*, in which he describes how a large community of open-source software hackers created the operating system Linux.

"Linux is subversive," Raymond wrote. "Who would have thought even five years ago [1991] that a world-class operating system could coalesce as if by magic out of part-time hacking by several thousand developers scattered all over the planet, connected only by the tenuous strands of the Internet?" He likened the rise of Linux to the public marketplace of the bazaar. The programmers agreed to observe a few simple principles but were otherwise free to innovate and create. Raymond contrasted that style with the "cathedral" approach to software, in which a single organization, using highly planned, sequentially structured steps, maintained tight managerial control over every aspect of the process.

Eventually, the open-source culture would triumph over the proprietary world, Raymond argued, not because it was morally right "but simply because the closed-source world cannot win an evolutionary arms race with open-source communities that can put orders of magnitude more skilled time into a problem."

BOMB BUILDING 101: These Arabic-language Web sites offer how-to tips on constructing homemade explosives. The factual information is often sketchy, though.

In studying the behaviors of insurgencies in Iraq and elsewhere, as well as organized-crime syndicates and other groups, Robb noticed the many parallels to the open-source model in software. In addition to working in counterterrorism, he has also had a successful career as a software entrepreneur.

Groups like al-Qaeda resemble in some ways the classic insurgents of the past, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization, but several factors distinguish them from their predecessors, Robb says. For one, they aren't state-sponsored, which makes them harder to track down and eradicate. Being self-financed, they generate significant income from donations as well as from black-market commerce. Also, members of the group don't report to a central authority; they operate relatively autonomously, and they tend to be well educated, media-savvy, and comfortable operating in a globalized, high-tech world. And the use of information technology has given modern terrorists an operational edge their predecessors lacked.

Mimicking open-source developers, insurgent groups "hack at the source code of warfare," Robb says. By that, he means they aren't bound by the traditional rules of military engagement; they use whatever works, with their tactics, techniques, and procedures all open to scrutiny and improvement by the community. Although such groups are weak by conventional military - benchmarks—they'd clearly be outgunned and outmanned on an open battlefield—they can still threaten strong national militaries. That's because they don't aim to invade, hold, or govern territory, but rather to exert political influence by exhausting an adversary's capacity to fight back. Their preferred method of attack is to disrupt infrastructure, whether physical, financial, or political [see photos, "World at War" "System disruption is going to be the main thrust of warfare for quite a long time," Robb predicts.

Rand CORP.'s Jackson has also studied terrorist organizations with an eye toward how they learn and share information—which he discussed in a recent report titled "Aptitude for Destruction." Access to the Internet, Jackson says, has given such groups "a quantum leap in capability to get their message out."

Many of the insurgent groups in Iraq, he notes, "are very Internet-savvy in terms of using it as an information-dissemination medium." The number of Web sites run by terrorists climbed from fewer than a dozen in 1997 to nearly 5000 in mid-2006, according to Gabriel Weimann, a professor of communications at the University of Haifa, in Israel, who has studied terrorism and the mass media. Not all of those sites pose a significant threat. Last year, a team of Pentagon

analysts told Congress that of the thousands of jihadist sites they monitor, they closely watch fewer than 100—the ones they deem the most hostile.

Whereas the mass media used to control access to the public, Jackson says, insurgents now post videos and descriptions of their attacks online within hours of their occurrence, many of which are then picked up and replayed in the global media. Al-Qaida has a media affiliate that produces slick, branded video and audio files for online distribution. The videos are often encoded in multiple formats, so you can watch them on your cellphone or play them on a big-screen television. Some insurgents are even shooting in HDTV.

Terrorist Web sites serve not only to spread propaganda but also to share knowledge among insurgent groups, Jackson says. That helps explain why the learning cycles among Iraqi insurgents are some 20 times as fast as the Irish Republican Army's were in Northern Ireland in the 1980s, according to military estimates. The SITE Institute, a group in Washington, D.C., that monitors terrorist Web activities, has documented numerous cases of technical know-how being exchanged online. These include a slide presentation posted on a password-protected Arabic-language forum purporting to teach "beginner jihad fighters" how to rig a car bomb, as well as a training manual—linked to from various jihadist forums—that claims to cover explosives, poisons, and forgery, among other topics.

To be sure, the technical information that goes up on such sites is not always to be trusted, notes Michael Kenney, an assistant professor of public policy at Pennsylvania State University in Harrisburg. "Some of the terrorist instructional manuals and online chat rooms that have received so much attention in the press are, in fact, littered with basic mistakes," Kenney says. He had one of the world's leading explosives experts review some online training manuals. The expert found that "for every four or five recipes, one may work, [but] only a trained eye can catch" the errors, Kenney says.

PHOTO: STAFF SGT. JASON ROBERTSON/DOD PHOTO

HELP IS ON THE WAY: The Pentagon plans to send thousands of mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles to Iraq in the coming year. But MRAP supply is lagging far behind demand

Kenney also wonders how much a budding guerrilla can learn by simply reading. "Building bombs with your bare hands is still the best way to learn how to build bombs," he says. "Shooting a firearm over and over is the best way to become a sharpshooter. These are skills that cannot really be learned from recipes that you download through the Internet…The reason Iraq has proven to be such a rich learning environment for insurgents has more to do with practical, on-the-ground opportunities for learning that the fighting provides."

Nevertheless, he agrees with Jackson that terrorist groups are proving to be fast learners. They're able to change their activities in response to practical experience and technical information, store this knowledge in practices and procedures, and select and retain routines that produce satisfactory results. As they gain experience, their learning cycles will only continue to shorten.

All the bomb-building advice in the world would be meaningless, of course, if the materials to build those bombs weren't also easy to come by. But they are, and terrorist groups are proving adept at using commercial, off-the-shelf technology to create effective and low-cost weapons systems.

A good example is last year's plot to smuggle common chemicals on board commercial flights using drink containers. The chemicals would then be mixed together to form explosives, which if detonated by a small charge from, say, a few modified AA batteries, could be powerful enough to bring down the aircraft.

> "As the war winds down, the forces of standardization will reassert themselves. That's likely to kill many of the innovations now in use on the battlefield."

Here again, information technology plays a crucial role. Fast and efficient worldwide distribution channels set up by the likes of Wal-Mart and Federal Express greatly simplify the acquisition of requisite components. Free from the administrative burdens of maintaining their own infrastructure, terrorist groups can spend the majority of their time on how best to achieve their collective vision.

The conflict in Iraq has become a test bed for open-source war, and the insurgents' weapon of choice is the IED. Since the beginning of the war, insurgents have rapidly improved their ability to create, deploy, and detonate IEDs. They've moved from simple makeshift explosives—old artillery shells or fertilizer—to shaped charges that can penetrate heavy armor plate and to buried explosives that can destroy a 61-metric-ton Abrams tank. In one favored mode of attack, insurgents detonate an IED beneath a military convoy vehicle, then follow up with a barrage of rocket-propelled grenades and rifle fire.

Even as coalition troops have become proficient at identifying roadside bombs, insurgents have shifted to using IEDs to booby-trap houses. "Nothing they're doing is going to win any prizes from the Department of Defense for high tech, but the stuff is deadly," says Lawrence Husick, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, in Philadelphia. "They're using a huge variety of cheaply available stuff." One recent innovation is IED detonators made from battery-powered doorbells. The doorbells consist of crude 400-kilohertz transmitters and receivers. "They're sloppy as hell, but they are really hard to jam," Husick says.

That unconventional style of mine warfare is something coalition forces clearly didn't anticipate, and response has been slow. Earlier this year, for instance, the Pentagon decided to spend $25 billion on mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) armored vehicles, whose V-shaped hulls and raised chassis make them better than armored Humvees at fending off bomb blasts [see photo, "Help Is on the Way" The price tag includes $750 million to airlift the 12-metric-ton vehicles to Iraq, instead of sending them by ship. In August, though, the Pentagon scaled back its schedule, saying only 1500 of the planned 3900 vehicles would be delivered by year's end.

It's a race against time. As happened first to unarmored Humvees and then to armored Humvees, insurgents have made destroying MRAP vehicles a high priority—a "trophy kill," as some observers call it. MRAP designs are already reportedly being rethought to deal with emerging insurgent tactics.

You might think that the lag time was due to bureaucratic screw-ups, but in fact, that's just how long the bureaucracy takes to respond. Marine commanders in Iraq first requested MRAP vehicles in May 2006. Acquisition officials reviewed the request and ultimately approved it late in the year. By April, five suppliers had demonstrated they could meet survivability requirements, production numbers, and delivery timelines, and they were then awarded contracts. But ramping up production doesn't happen overnight. Before MRAP vehicles became a high priority, the sole manufacturer, Force Protection, in Ladson, S.C., was making only about five per month.

PHOTO: FROM TOP LEFT: SULTAN AL-FAHD/REUTERS; ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS/AP PHOTO; PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES; MARCO DI LAURO/GETTY IMAGES; EDY PURNOMO/GETTY IMAGES

WORLD AT WAR: Bombings in [from top left] Bali, Indonesia; Amman, Jordan; [center] London; [from bottom left] Madrid; and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, highlight the ease with which extremists can now attack

Acquisition is even more cumbersome when the United States wants to send equipment to Iraqi security forces. Any request for equipment is first given a congressional review, which takes up to a month. Then the U.S. government has to draw up a letter of acceptance, which must be signed by the Iraqi government, after which a payment schedule is negotiated. Only then can the Defense Department begin to procure the requested equipment—which itself takes time. Clearly, the longer it takes Iraqi security forces to get their equipment, the longer coalition forces will have to remain there.

Meanwhile, U.S. military strategy has only slowly started to move away from the objective it has had since the start of the Cold War: acquiring a technologically superior military capable of fighting (and winning) two major wars simultaneously. During the past decade, efforts have been under way to transform the military into a more agile force, one that can fight not only traditional wars but also irregular or asymmetric conflicts.

But while the overall strategy may be shifting, the dependence on high-technology weaponry has not. Creating and maintaining a high-tech force has proven both costly and time-consuming. Today, it takes 12 to 15 years to field a major weapons system, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). The newest U.S. Air Force jet fighter, the F-22A Raptor, was finally declared operational in December 2005—25 years after the requirement for the aircraft was approved. Although the Air Force originally planned for a force of 750 Raptors, at the current price of $138 million per plane, fewer than 200 will likely ever be built.

The weapons acquisition process is still geared toward building traditional battlefield systems like the F-22. Even after the Cold War ended—and with it, the pressure to build large numbers of complex weapon systems—decisions made decades earlier continued to prevail.

There has been no shortage of attempts to streamline weapons acquisition. Since 1975, at least 129 studies have been conducted on how to reform the process and make it more rational and responsive. Few of the recommendations have had any lasting impact, though. A March 2006 GAO report found that for the largest acquisition programs, the average estimated development time has risen from 11 years to 14 years. Even if you could design an F-22 in a single day, it would still take years to prepare the paperwork to win funding and more years of operational tests before the plane could go into full-scale production.

The financial stakes work against reform. In a report to Congress earlier this year, David Walker, comptroller general of the United States, said that annual U.S. investments in major weapons systems had doubled between 2001 and 2006, from $750 billion to more than $1.5 trillion.

Many of the defense experts I spoke with advocate a separate acquisition process to deal with the type of irregular warfare now being fought in Iraq. Robb, for one, isn't convinced that this would make much of a difference. "The big-war crowd doesn't want to understand open-source warfare," he says.

As Upton Sinclair once said, "It is hard to get a man to understand something if his living depends on him not understanding it."

Faced with the crisis in Iraq, the Pentagon has made a number of attempts to speed up the acquisitions process. The U.S. Army, for example, has established a Rapid Fielding Initiative to try to shorten the time it takes to get requested equipment to soldiers. That has enabled the deployment of the Advanced Combat Helmet, which offers better protection, comfort, and hearing, and an improved first-aid kit for treating bleeding and removing airway obstructions. The Army's Rapid Equipping Force identifies unconventional commercial products that may be of use on the battlefield. Industrial leaf blowers, for instance, are now being strapped on to vehicles to blow away dirt and debris from hidden bombs.

The Pentagon is also now granting certain high-priority projects "rapid-acquisition authority." That process allowed warheads for the thermo baric Hellfire missile, used to attack caves and tunnels, to be developed in just 60 days, rather than the year it might have taken.

Then there are the robots, like the PackBot and the unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAVs), which have proved invaluable in Iraq and elsewhere. Many of these systems are not being developed as "programs of record"—although they're in wide use, they are still considered proto-

types in the R&D phase. As such, they are continually being improved and refitted based on real-world experience. The companies that design the robots tend to be small, entrepreneurial enterprises, and therefore quick to respond and change. Already, some 3000 smaller ground robots have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. About 1000 unmanned aerial vehicles of various stripes have also been deployed—from hand-launched, low-altitude surveillance planes to high-altitude, remotely piloted Reaper UCAVs equipped with infrared, laser, and radar targeting as well as four air-to-ground Hellfire missiles and two 500-pound bombs. These machines are probably the closest things to a "insurgent-resilient" weapons system that the West has.

The West's reliance on robotic war machines is certain to continue. Back in 2001, Congress mandated, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, that "by 2010, one-third of the operating deep-strike aircraft of the Armed Forces are unmanned, and by 2015, one-third of the operational ground combat vehicles are unmanned." The danger is that as the cost and complexity of the robots grow, they will cease to be considered "expendable" assets. Already, a four-aircraft package of Reapers carries a price tag of nearly $70 million. It's not hard to imagine the day when UCAVs will end up costing as much and taking as much time to develop as the manned systems they're intended to replace.

Growing reliance on robots also raises operational—if not ethical—questions. "What do you do when women and children come out with spray cans and hammers and start attacking your robots?" asks William Lind, a military expert with the Free Congress Foundation, a conservative think tank in Washington, D.C. "Are you going to shoot them to defend your robots?"

And so, for the most part, such shortcuts in acquisition are mere Band-Aids. The current approach effectively decouples the needs of soldiers on the ground from the process of acquiring the equipment they'll ultimately get. No sustained attempt has been made to create an insurgent-resilient model of acquisition.

> "What do you do when women and children come out with spray cans and hammers and start attacking your robots?"

What all this likely means is that when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan finally end, the Pentagon's current "cathedral" approach will envelop robots, UCAVs, and any other interesting technology developed in the heat of battle. "As the war winds down, the forces of standardization will reassert themselves," says Rand Corp. vice president Thomas McNaugher, an expert on defense acquisition. "That's likely to kill many of the innovations now in use on the battlefield."

Robb says the solution is for defense acquisition to move away from what he calls "point innovations"—that is, stand-alone systems—to platform-based systems. A platform, he explains, is a collection of services and capabilities that everyone gets access to. Think of the Internet and how eBay and Google exploit it.

How would such platforms work in the military sphere? Consider a project under way at the Space Vehicle Directorate at Kirtland Air Force Base, in New Mexico. Researchers are attempting to design inexpensive "plug and play" satellites that could be fielded in six days or

less. Each satellite would be built from a set of standard components that could then be quickly programmed to fit the specific mission.

To avoid getting trapped in a one-size-fits-all mentality, says Jim Lyke, technical advisor to the project and its principal electronics engineer, "We intentionally made it easy to swap out a small battery for a big battery, [an] X-band radio for a Ku-band radio, and so on." The concept is sort of like adding components and loading software onto your PC, depending on whether you want to create spreadsheets, play games, or listen to music.

"We are waging a battle against complexity," Lyke says. The six-day target "became a rallying theme to force us way out of our comfort zone."

Lind of the Free Congress Foundation says it's also important to capture the innovations going on in the trenches. "There is a tremendous amount of creativity at the junior level, but there is no outlet for it. We need to richly resource sergeants and let them tinker," he says. "The kinds of technology that are useful in these wars are what I call garage and junkyard technologies." The original armor for Humvees, for instance, was cobbled together by soldiers in the field, who dubbed it "hillbilly armor." Once a useful technology has been discovered, Lind adds, that information can be rapidly conveyed using the military's secure intranets. The idea is to make use of information and IT just as the insurgents do.

Meanwhile, what is happening in Iraq and Afghanistan is only a foreshadowing of the types of conflicts that Western countries will likely face in the coming decades. Insurgent learning will continue long after coalition forces have withdrawn from those countries. To face this future, it seems clear that the West urgently needs an insurgent-resilient process for developing and fielding effective military systems and tactics, along with a radical change in strategic thinking.

"We have to look outside the normal bureaucratic way of doing things," U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates noted at a press conference in June. "For every month we delay, scores of young Americans are going to die." If the United States and its allies fail to embrace the need for change, they will inevitably pay the cost in both treasure and blood.

http://www.spectrum.ieee.org/nov07/5668

Game software could boost airport security

NewScientist.com news service, 14 October 2007

Playing games with airport security guards sounds like a bad idea, but Praveen Paruchuri of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles is trying to thwart criminals by doing just that.

Guards are usually told to patrol in a random fashion but, being human, they tend to form habits that patient criminals can exploit. To help make their rounds less predictable, Paruchuri and colleagues created software based on game theory that simulates various random paths that a guard could take around Los Angeles International airport (LAX), and also how criminals might react.

Potential rewards, such as catching more criminals, and costs, such as a terrorist explosion, are evaluated for each path. The software, being trialed at LAX, then suggests the best route.

http://technology.newscientist.com/article/mg19626256.400-game-software-could-boost-airport-security.html

The Making of a Martyr

By Jamie Glazov, *FrontPageMagazine.com* | Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Frontpage Interview's guest today is Brooke Goldstein, a practicing attorney based in New York. She serves as Director of the Legal Project at the Middle East Forum, Director of the Children's Rights Institute, is an Adjunct Fellow at the Hudson Institute, an award-winning documentary film producer, and the recipient of the 2007 E Nathaniel Gates Award for outstanding public advocacy. Brooke is the director of the new documentary, *The Making of a Martyr*, which will be screened at the upcoming Liberty Film Festival.

FP: Brooke Goldstein, welcome to Frontpage Interview.

Goldstein: Thank you for having me.

FP: Tell us a bit about your new documentary and what inspired you to make it.

Goldstein: "The Making of a Martyr" is about the ongoing, state-sponsored incitement and recruitment of innocent Palestinian children to become suicide bombers. The film centers around a fifteen year old, physically dwarfed, Palestinian boy named Hussam Abdu who was arrested at an Israeli border checkpoint with live explosives strapped around his waist. Hussam had been recruited for a suicide-homicide mission by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades just 48 hours before. Fortunately, out of love for his family and hope for his future, Hussam chose not to go through with the act and voluntarily turned himself in to the IDF. Tried and convicted of attempted murder, Hussam is now serving out the third year of an eight-year sentence in the HaSharon prison.

I was finishing up my second year at law school when I heard about Hussam's case. His story was compelling and it occurred to me that there was a legal argument here that was not being made. Which is that Hussam, an innocent party who doesn't deserve to spend his formative years in jail, is as much a victim of a human rights violation as would have been the civilians killed in his explosive wake.

Hussam, like thousands of other Palestinian children, is the product of a shrewd brainwashing and recruitment strategy, targeting children from infancy and teaching them to revere martyrdom and seek their own death as suicide bombers.

This horrific strategy is being propagated by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, and is being copied outside the area by other terrorist entities such as the Taliban. Television shows, music videos, sticker albums, summer camps, school textbooks, you name it, are being used in the most sinister fashion, to indoctrinate Palestinian children towards martyrdom for the sake of Jihad. This practice is horrific child abuse, it is a form of state-sponsored mass infanticide and frankly, it is tantamount to societal suicide.

I made this documentary because I wanted to expose this crime against children, in the hopes that it will soon be stopped.

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FP: What do you think are the roots of the illegal, state-sponsored incitement and recruitment of children to become suicide bombers?

Goldstein: I don't know why the Palestinian society is actively encouraging and enabling the death of their own children. Regardless of what the motive is, there is no logical, political, moral, religious or other justification for this practice. It is abhorrent, it is illegal and it is contrary to survival instincts as well as basic principles of humanity. The scale at which this type of premeditated murder of a society's own children is happening is also unprecedented in recorded human history. Nothing good can come of this practice and no peace will ever be attained if children continue to be taught on such a mass scale to blow themselves up.

FP: Well, Palestinian culture is based on a suicidal death cult. Honor killings, infanticide, gender apartheid and the prioritization to destroy the Jewish state rather than to have one's own, are just a few extensions of this blood lust – a blood lust that your powerful documentary crystallizes.

So where is the international outrage regarding this phenomenon? And if this practice is non-Islamic, which many apologists argue it is, where is the outrage in the Islamic world and the Islamic calls to stop this crime?

Goldstein: On the same line, why aren't Muslim parents speaking out against the use of their own children as suicide bombers? Where is Louise Arbour and the United Nations on this issue? Where is Amnesty International and the special prosecutor at the Hague, why aren't they screaming bloody murder? Why is this growing phenomenon being ignored by the international media? Could you imagine what would happen if any western state strapped bombs on horses or dogs, and then sent them out into civilian populations to detonate? There would be deafening outcry from animal rights groups and rightly so! But when it comes to Palestinian children being used in the same manner no one is speaking out on a consistent basis.

The UN has issued over a hundred resolutions against Israel alleging human rights violations, but it has issued not one condemning the premeditated murder of Palestinian children as human bombs. Are the lives of these children worth less when they are taken by their own community?

I think one reason for this silence may the strong bias in the media and in international organizations against reporting negatively on the Palestinian community, which they view as the underdog. However, the silence thus far exhibited is hypocritical and sending the message that these parties either condone the activity or simply don't care. In the meantime states and other parties that sponsor this practice continue acting with immunity.

FP: One of the reasons Muslim parents aren't speaking out against the use of their children as suicide bombers is because many of them, like Umma Nidal, rejoice when their children die as martyrs in jihad. This is connected to the yearnings for suicide in Palestinian and radical Islamic culture overall – an issue that your film brings much needed attention to.

Can you talk a bit about the phenomenon of "Lawfare"?

Goldstein: Lawfare is defined as the pursuit of strategic goals through aggressive legal maneuvers. Lately analysts, researchers, media outlets, charitable groups and authors dedicated to publishing and exposing issues of concern regarding counter-terrorism, have found themselves on the receiving end of a series of targeted lawsuits.

These suits, whose claims range from defamation to workplace harassment, are designed to bankrupt, punish and intimidate Defendants into silence and have an overall chilling effect on the exercise of free speech within this country.

For example, Rachel Ehrenfeld, author of the book "Funding Evil," was sued for defamation in a Plaintiff-friendly U.K libel court by Saudi billionaire Khalid Bin Mahfouz, whom Rachel cites as providing financial support to terrorists. Rachel lost on default and was ordered to pay a significant amount to Bin Mahfouz while her important book is banned from being sold in England.

Bruce Tefft, a former anti-terrorism consultant for the NYPD, was sued by an Egyptian John Doe Muslim police officer for workplace harassment after he sent out emails to a voluntary recipient list of NYPD officers about the threat of Islamic radicalization within our country. Ironically, a few weeks later the NYPD released its own report confirming Tefft's fears. Nonetheless, Bruce continues to rack up legal costs defending himself in what looks like a frivolous suit designed to discourage the free flow of information within our justice system.

Sometimes just the threat of suit is enough to intimidate parties into silence. When Bin Mahfouz wrote a letter to Cambridge University Press threatening to sue over Robert Collins and J. Millard Burr's "Alms for Jihad," the publisher ceased print, destroyed books, requested that libraries do the same and released an apology letter claiming facts they had once proliferated as true, to be false. Even though both authors sent supporting documents to back up their claims against Mahfouz, and despite the fact that Burr is a former State Department employee and well respected intelligence analyst, Cambridge Press capitulated and refused to disseminate information of grave public concern. The Legal Project, at the MEF, of which I am director, was launched to counter such attacks on by arranging for pro-bono representation of citizens who are unfairly targeted with malicious and frivolous suits.

FP: What can readers of ours who would like to make a change in terms of the themes your film raises do to make a difference?

Goldstein: Anyone who is appalled by this practice should speak out against it, should lobby their government to push for a resolution at the UN condemning this practice and should pressure their local media to do a better job reporting on the age of suicide bombers.

Rarely does the media report on the age of the bomber and this is leading to some serious misconceptions about why we are seeing suicide bombers in the first place. Children are not doing this for political reasons, nor are they doing it out of desperation. They are doing it out of aspiration, aspiration to be famous, to have sex with virgins, to have their likeness on martyr posters hung high on classroom walls, etc. Moreover, attorneys should be encouraged to take on these cases pro-bono and litigate in international and national courts on behalf of children who have been abused in this fashion. Satellite companies that broadcast children's television programs that incite death and hate should be charged with aiding and abetting the premeditated murder of children. UNRWA schools in the Palestinian territories must cease using textbooks that espouse violence and killing.

Finally, we must empower moderate Muslim voices that are willing to speak out against the indoctrination of their children, because change will ultimately only come from within.

FP: Brooke Goldstein, thank you for joining us today. And thank you for your courage in fighting for the truth.

Goldstein: My pleasure.

FP: Just as a final note to interested readers: the Liberty Film Festival and the David Horowitz Freedom Center will present Brooke Goldstein's film with guest host Dennis Prager on Thursday, October 18th at Harmony Gold Preview House, 7655 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, CA 90046 . The reception begins at

6:30 p.m. and film screening at 7:30 p.m. To purchase tickets online, click here. For more information, call 323-556-2550 ext 209.

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http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=CCF98BE2-814B-4D88-B1F0-AC00ED1AE72B

TIMESONLINE

Suicide bombers head to Iraq from Damascus

Hala Jaber and Ali Rifat, *The Sunday Times*, October 7, 2007

IN a small flat in Damascus, a young man in jeans and T-shirt draws frequently on a Gauloises cigarette as he describes how he dressed his brother in a suicide belt and watched him blow up some American soldiers at a drinks stall in Iraq.

The young man calls himself Ahmed. He is 23 and he has a degree in chemistry. He knows all about explosives.

Last year, he says coolly, he took 15kg of TNT, packed it into pouches with some nails and strapped the bomb to his 19-year-old brother's waist.

There was never any doubt that it would go off. Ahmed placed detonators in both his brother's trouser pockets and a third in a shirt pocket, just in case the others failed.

Finally, he slipped wire rings on to his brother's fingers and attached them to a fourth detonator in the palm of his hand. The thinking was that even if his brother were shot, he would clench his fist and the TNT would still explode.

Ahmed had borrowed a drinks stall used by American convoys on the road that winds north from Baghdad past Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit. His brother was instructed to grab some bottles of cola in his free hand and head for a group of soldiers taking a break from their journey.

"Go sell them some Pepsi," Ahmed told him gently. "We will meet in heaven, you and I, and that's a promise."

Ahmed says his brother kissed him, turned and walked away without a moment's hesitation.

Did he not long to call his brother back, I ask? The question brings tears to his eyes.

"He had a smile on his face," Ahmed replies. "He knew he was crossing to a better place where he would meet his maker as a martyr."

The emotion passes and Ahmed talks with steady self-assurance about his plans to follow his brother's example. He, too, will take Americans with him when he dies, he says. His ambition is to blast some CIA men to smithereens.

The flat where we met was rented by a handler in Damascus, the Syrian capital, who channels aspiring "martyrs" to insurgent groups such as Ahmed's.

Our encounter was arranged as part of a four-week Sunday Times investigation into the world's biggest suicide bombing campaign. More than 1,300 bombers are said to have struck on foot or in vehicles since the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 – more than all the other suicide bombings of the past 20 years put together.

The number this year promises to be higher than ever. The bombers are estimated to have killed and injured more than 4,000 people in the first nine months. Their targets have ranged from lines of police recruits in and around Baghdad to an entire village near the Syrian border where up to 500 died.

So who are these bombers and why do they do it? How are they organised? And how much impact are they really making on a war that is sucking ever larger numbers of suicidal volunteers from across the Middle East into Iraq's vortex of violence.

We tracked down three bombers in our search for answers. The first interviews of their kind with men passing through Syria on their way to die in Iraq, they confounded expectations.

These were no psychopathic loners from the ghetto, but articulate, middle-class men in their twenties and early thirties who had come from good homes and gone to university. One was a newly married accountant.

Yet all had reached the chilling conclusion that killing "sinners" would transport them to paradise. None had the slightest inkling that they might be exploited by Al-Qaeda and other battle-hardened groups which will probably use these fresh-faced idealists for no higher purpose than to sustain the most brutal sectarian conflict of our age.

SIPPING a Turkish coffee and smoking a hubble-bubble pipe, the middle-aged man waiting for us at a cafe in Damascus 13 days ago could have been any commercial supplier breaking his Ramadan fast after work.

But Abu Ziad's is no ordinary business. He takes eager volunteers, inveigles them into Iraq for a fee and delivers them to insurgents who consign them to a bloody death with clinical efficiency.

His network includes the imams who drum up the volunteers and forgers who create new identities for their journey across the 390-mile border with Iraq.

Then there are the officials he bribes to turn a blind eye, and insurgent groups ranging from the pan-Arab, fundamentalist Al-Qaeda in Iraq to the Iraqi nationalist 1920 Revolution Brigade, started by former members of Saddam's armed forces.

Abu Ziad appears to receive no help from the Syrian authorities, which have been accused by some in the West of aiding the flow of terrorists into Iraq. On the contrary, he seems to live in fear of discovery by Syria's security apparatus.

We left the cafe in a taxi and alighted in a street crowded with late-night shoppers. There we switched to a second car. Only when Abu Ziad was satisfied that we were not being followed did he direct the driver to the flats where we met our first bomber.

We shook hands with Ahmed and sat on sofas, eyeing each other anxiously, while Abu Ziad turned up the sound of a soap opera on television to render our conversation inaudible through the thin walls.

I told Ahmed that he was looking at me with a hard expression on his face. Had I offended him in some way?

"No," he said with a grin. But the smile vanished as quickly as it had come and did not return during our five hours together.

Ahmed is an Iraqi whose small, dark eyes reflect the horrors he has witnessed. He comes from a military family. While he studied for his degree in Baghdad, he served in the Fedayeen, or "Men of Sacrifice", a paramilitary group loyal to Saddam.

When Saddam was toppled in the spring of 2003, Ahmed was outraged. Although he was little more than 18 years old, his father encouraged him to gather together a group of neighbours to resist the occupation in their Sunni area of Baghdad. For their first attack, they rigged up a box of grenades to be detonated as a US troop-carrier passed by. They called their weapon the "fearsome invisible enemy" and used it again and again.

Ahmed's tiny band of followers eventually joined forces with two other insurgent groups and extended their operations beyond the capital, but he was arrested near Tikrit.

It was in prison that Ahmed first heard about suicide bombing. His interest was stoked by clerics whose fiery sermons the Americans obligingly photocopied and distributed without the slightest understanding of their destructive force. Seminars followed on the making of suicide belts, the selection of targets and the timing of attacks.

By the time Ahmed emerged from jail, he had not only been radicalised but was armed with deadly new skills. Arrested a second time, he tricked his way to freedom by promising to inform on his fellow insurgents. Instead, he presented them with a proposal to carry out the group's first suicide mission himself.

His men objected, reasoning that as their "emir", or commander, he was too valuable to be sacrificed. The task should fall to one of their number, they insisted.

Ahmed now made his fateful decision. To show the men that he valued them as much as his own flesh and blood, he chose his brother for the attack.

As the teenager strolled casually into the group of soldiers on the Tikrit road, cola bottles in one hand and detonator in the other, Ahmed heard the Americans asking him what he wanted. This was the predetermined cue for detonation.

Ahmed and his men turned from the scene, climbed into a waiting vehicle and drove off.

He recounted the details to his father, who expressed satisfaction. But his mother was distraught: "One minute she cried at her loss and the next she ululated with joy and pride."

The couple are soon to lose Ahmed, their only remaining son, though he has sisters aged 12 and 9. While Ahmed's girlfriend, a university student in Mosul, knows nothing about his impending suicide mission, his father has said he will be proud if it proves "worthy" – in other words, if he kills the enemy.

The determination to kill Americans was common to the three bombers interviewed for this article, but is highly unlikely to be fulfilled by all of them.

Fewer than a quarter of suicide bombers succeed in blowing up coalition forces, who are relatively well shielded behind concrete barriers or the armour plating of their vehicles.

The bombers are much likelier to be deployed against Iraqi Shi'ites; soldiers, police, officials or even civilians. According to academics who have studied the Sunni insurgency, the main aim is not to avenge the destruction inflicted by US forces, but to broaden the sectarian divide, perpetuate the cycle of hatred and undermine confidence in the ability of the Shi'ite-led government to restore order.

And so a warm welcome awaits the volunteers streaming into Iraq from other countries to mutilate the Shi'ites. The insurgents embrace men such as Abu Ibrahim, the newlywed accountant, before giving the order to kill and die. ABU IBRAHIM, 28, our second bomber, was due to leave his native Syria last weekend for Iraq. He wanted to complete his mission by the end of Ramadan in the middle of this month. But first, he said, he would have to do something about his bride.

Speaking at his elegant, traditional home in a town we agreed not to identify, Abu Ibrahim, whose family owns two wholesale fruit businesses bringing in $500 a day, explained that he had become engaged two months ago to an educated young woman. "She loves me and I just adore her," he said. "I am crazy about her."

He listed the dowry items he had promised her, as perhaps only an accountant in love would do: gold jewellery to the value of $1,300, clothes worth $600, items of furniture for their home and so on.

They have undergone an Islamic wedding ceremony but Abu Ibrahim refused to consummate the marriage and intended to divorce her before he left so that she could find another husband, her honour intact.

"She begged me to let her come along so that we could carry out a joint mission," he said proudly. "She told me that would be the best honeymoon, in heaven together."

Instead, he was arranging to make sure that she was financially secure after he had gone.

Asked why he had married her when his suicide mission was already planned, he cited Islamic doctrine: he must carry on in life as if he would live for eternity but he must also prepare for his end as if each day were his last.

Abu Ibrahim's radicalisation came in two stages. "I had no Islamic inclinations at the start of the war," he said softly. But when he sat with his parents watching television as the first bombs of the Shock and Awe campaign fell on the country next to his, the strength of his reaction took him by surprise.

"I felt a tightening in my chest and a feeling of personal offence and injury, as though every Iraqi woman was my mother, wife or sister, every little boy my young brother and every old man my father," he said. "I spent all night crying in my bed, and in the morning I left the house and applied for a passport."

He had decided to fight in Iraq. His mother gave her blessing, saying she wished for Allah to accept him as a martyr if need be but that she would never forgive him if he became a prisoner.

His father, however, was so strongly opposed that he hid Abu Ibrahim's passport. Abu Ibrahim stole it back and joined about 400 fellow fighters in the north of the country.

He described with bitterness how he witnessed the defeat of Saddam's forces near Mosul and then found himself detained, just as his mother had feared.

Now came the second part of his transformation into a jihadi. In prison he met Sunni clerics from Saudi Arabia and other countries. These were followers of the Wahhabi tradition of Islam which casts Shi'ite Muslims as heretics. They were also supporters of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. They idolised Osama Bin Laden and lauded the September 11 attacks on America.

According to Mohammed Hafez, a visiting professor at the University of Missouri and author of *Suicide Bombers in Iraq, the Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, the influence of the Saudi Wahhabis is key to any understanding of the phenomenon. His study of 139 suicide bombings found that 53 were carried out by Saudis, compared with 18 by Iraqis, seven by Syrians and four by Jordanians.

The Saudis had already fought foreign jihads in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya, Hafez said. In Iraq they exploited the culture of martyrdom established by Palestinian suicide bombers. The targeting of so many Shi'ites has been consistent with their beliefs.

"Wahhabi tradition sees the ascendancy of Shia as [a] worse evil than occupation by infidels, because Shia are heretics and apostates," said Hafez.

So it was that if the black-bearded Abu Ibrahim went ahead with his journey as planned last week, he was bound for Al-Qaeda in Iraq; and regardless of his determination to slaughter American soldiers, the chances were that he would end up being directed towards a Shi'ite target instead.

He had no regrets about his impending death: "There is nothing stronger than my love for God and seeking martyrdom," he said brightly.

As for his wife, he had already thought of his last message to her: "If Allah accepts my martyrdom, then I shall ensure that you are one of those I name to be salvaged and brought to heaven when your time comes."

THESE, then, are the factors driving the bombers inexorably onwards. First, fury over the occupation, fuelled by images of the dead on Arab TV stations and fundamentalist websites, and fanned by radical imams who damn the "infidels" and praise Al-Qaeda to the heavens.

Second, burgeoning Wahhabism has played into the hands of Sunni extremist groups, directing their attacks increasingly at Iraq's predominantly Shi'ite security forces.

Third, the groups know that suicide attacks are easy, cheap and effective. It is hard to defend against them. They terrify the enemy, cow the general population and cast the government as incompetents, incapable of providing security.

The controllers know they can rely on a volunteer who has come all the way to Iraq for one purpose. They can be sure he is not merely willing, but fanatical.

Take Sayeed, our third bomber, who has come to Syria from his home in Jordan. Sayeed studied engineering at university, though he dropped out after a year. Now 32, he runs his own currency exchange business.

It was the hanging of Saddam, whom he regarded as one of the greatest symbols of the Arab world, that made Sayeed resolve to become a suicide bomber. He felt the need to show that "we Arabs have not lost our dignity".

Months of discussion followed with handlers in Amman before Sayeed, a Shi'ite, was admitted to the Sunni network that will smuggle him into Iraq. He has specified that he will have nothing to do with Al-Qaeda.

Sayeed has settled his debts and exonerated his creditors but has said nothing to his well-to-do family of lawyers and businessmen. His parents will get over it, he says. A little sister died when she was only a few years old. "It was devastating at the time but with time we picked up our lives and moved on."

His only targets will be Americans, he insists, like the others. "I'm going there to defend civilians, not to kill them."

But here is the paradox that becomes apparent from meeting the three bombers. They are intelligent men whose decisions have entailed a good deal of thought, discussion and, in two of the cases above, study.

"These are what I call the 'violent intellectuals'," said Professor Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert at Georgetown University, Washington. "They are well educated and highly motivated, two important attributes that ensured success in their education and then business and which will also be useful in ensuring their success as suicide bombers."

And yet they show surprisingly little insight into the big picture in Iraq. They think not of the epic struggle between Sunni and Shi'ite but of gratifying their desire for revenge or glorification on the path to the next world, where at least 70 nymphs will be waiting to give them heavenly fulfillment.

Their impact on the course of the war has nevertheless been devastating, according to Robert Baer, a former CIA officer who has presented documentaries about suicide bombing. "Thanks to the suicide bomber, there is no way the US can defeat the insurgency," Baer said.

Ahmed, the first bomber, has seen at first hand the misery and mayhem the "martyrs" can cause. He does not see that his brother's actions last year and his own imminent mission will achieve little more than prolonging the anguish of Iraq. His mind is made up. You can see it in the intensity of his small, dark eyes.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article2604119.ece

MI5: Al-Qa'eda recruiting UK children for terror

By Philip Johnston, Home Affairs Editor, November 5, 2007

Osama bin Laden's al-Qa'eda terror group is recruiting British children as young as 15 to wage a campaign of carnage against their own country, the new head of MI5 has said.

In his first public speech since taking over the security service in the summer, Jonathan Evans said Islamists were "radicalising, indoctrinating and grooming young, vulnerable people to carry out acts of terrorism".

Mr Evans said the threat posed by al-Qa'eda had yet to reach its peak despite one successful bomb attack and several thwarted atrocities.

He also revealed in a speech in Manchester that al-Qa'eda was using the chaos in Iraq as cover for its overseas forays.

While Pakistan remained the base for the "core" leadership which controls its activities, "there is no doubt now that al-Qa'eda in Iraq aspires to promote terrorist attacks outside Iraq," he said.

Mr Evans added: "There is no doubt there is training activity and terrorist planning in East Africa - particularly in Somalia - which is focused on the UK.

Mr Evans said the threat has yet to reach its peak

"And there is no doubt that the extension of what one might call the 'al-Qa'eda franchise' to other groups in other countries - notably in Algeria - has created a significant upsurge in terrorist violence in these countries."

His warnings will fuel the growing political row over the length of time terror suspects should be detained without charge.

A new terrorism Bill to be announced in the Queen's Speech will propose increasing the time limit from 28 days to as much as 56 days.

Although Mr Evans steered clear of taking sides in any political controversy he outlined the scale of the threat on which ministers will rely to make their case for tougher laws.

"MI5 has now identified around 2,000 individuals who we believe pose a direct threat to national security and public safety because of their support for international terrorism," he said.

"This increase from 1600 in November 2006 is due both to improved coverage of extremist communities and to the continued flow of new recruits to the extremist cause."

He added: "Extremists are methodically and intentionally targeting young people and children in the UK.

"This year, MI5 has seen individuals as young as 15 and 16 implicated in terrorist-related activity.

"The UK needs to protect its children from exploitation by violent extremists."

Mr Evans said the battle of ideologies would be a long one because the extremists worked in historical timescales.

"If the UK only reacts tactically while its enemies plan strategically, then we will struggle to meet this challenge," he said.

"The struggle against violent extremism relies not only on good intelligence and law enforcement, but also on the determination and perseverance of us all to resist extremism and to protect a decent, tolerant and open society."

Mr Evans said the successful and attempted attacks in Britain had not been random plots by disparate groups but coordinated and deliberate actions ordered by al-Qa'eda's leadership.

"The majority of these attacks, successful or otherwise, have taken place because al-Qa'eda has a clear determination to mount terrorist attacks against the United Kingdom," he said.

"This remains the case today, and there is no sign of it reducing. So although MI5 and the police are investigating plots, and thwarting them, on a continuing basis, we do not view them in isolation.

"Al-Qa'eda is conducting a deliberate campaign against us. It is the expression of a hostility towards the UK which existed long before September 11 2001.

"It is evident in the wills and letters left behind by actual and would-be bombers."

Ministers say one reason why longer detention is needed to question suspects is the growing complexity of the conspiracies now being uncovered.

Mr Evans said: "We now see different levels of sophistication. Yes, we have seen unsophisticated attempts to kill and injure, but we have also seen complex, logistically effective plots, which require a high degree of expertise and accurate targeting.

"We have to pay equal attention to both the crude and the complex. Because the primitive can be just as deadly as the sophisticated."

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/11/05/nevans105.xml

NewScientistTech

Video search makes phone a 'second pair of eyes'

Will Knight, *NewScientist.com* **news service, 25 October 2007**

Video-equipped cellphones could soon offer simple way to find useful information about the surrounding world.

Currently, the best way to use a cellphone to find information about, for example, a product or an ad on a wall is by entering an internet search query with the keypad. Soon, however, it may be easier to simply record a video clip of an item of interest and have your phone tell you about it instead.

Researchers at Accenture Technology Labs in France have developed technology that makes this possible using any ordinary 3G cellphone equipped with a video camera.

The prototype system, dubbed the Pocket Supercomputer, offers a simple way to seek out useful, hard-to-find information, says Fredrik Linaker who led the system's development at Accenture.

SIFTing objects

If a user records a video clip of, say, a foreign food item, the system can automatically identify ingredients that might cause an allergic reaction. Similarly, when shown a book, it can quickly perform an online price comparison, or find a review.

Live video footage is fed from the handset to a central server, which rapidly matches on-screen objects to images previously entered into a database. The server then sends find relevant information and sends it back to user.

The central server uses an algorithm called the Scale-Invariant Feature Transform (SIFT) to match objects. The algorithm uses hundreds or thousands of reference points, corresponding to physical features such as edges, corners or lettering, to find a match. The process works no matter how the object is oriented, but objects must first be carefully imaged and entered into the central database.

Creating a database containing 5000 items takes about a day, Linaker says, although it then takes just a few milliseconds to match an object. "Eventually you could imagine having one enormous [general purpose] database."

Advances in image recognition have prompted several other companies to research similar cellphone search technologies. Microsoft has a system called Lincoln, that lets users to take snapshots and send them off for identification.

Another system developed by Evolution Robotics of Pasadena, California, called ViPR, also uses video footage to identify objects, and is already available in Japan.

Robot navigation

Krystian Mikolajczyk, a computer vision researcher at the University of Surrey, Guildford, UK, says it is preferable for image processing to be done remotely. "It's hard to store a large database on the cellphone," he says. "It is also difficult to propose generic software for any brand and model."

"This is the type of application for which SIFT was developed," adds David Lowe, who developed the SIFT algorithm in 2004, and who is a computer vision expert at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

"I think it will be a useful for cellphones – a very convenient method for users to get information about the objects and locations in their surroundings," Lowe told **New Scientist**.

He does not think cellphone object recognition will become an instant hit, though: "It will take some time for consumers to learn about such systems and start to incorporate them in their daily life".

Even so, Accenture has plans to use the Pocket Supercomputer for research purposes. Linaker says it could work as an aid for blind people, as a tool for studying cellphone usage, and even to help remote robot navigation.

http://technology.newscientist.com/article/dn12831-video-search-makes-phone-a-second-pair-of-eyes.html

baltimoresun.com

3-D scanner tested at BWI

Explosives-detection device improves on X-ray

By Laura McCandlish | Sun reporter, October 25, 2007

A 3-D security scanner based on technology used in medicine is tested at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. Carry-on items move through the tunnel-like device and hazardous or questionable material is highlighted on a computer screen. (*Sun* photo by Chiaki Kawajiri / October 24, 2007)

Passengers breezed through the security checkpoint. No fumbling to pull laptops out of carry-ons. No dumping those quart baggies of liquids and gels into plastic bins.

Shoes still had to come off, but otherwise it was just a matter of putting packed bags through a futuristic MRI-like scanner and going on their way.

Dozens of randomly selected Southwest Airlines passengers were sent yesterday through a checkpoint at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport that had a new automatic explosives-detection system being tested by the federal Transportation Security Administration.

The new imaging technology is the most recent in a series of experimental devices rolled out in the six years since the Sept. 11 attacks. Several devices have gotten early live tests at BWI, partly because of its proximity to Washington.

TSA officials say the Auto-EDS system, which is also being tested at airports in Cleveland and Manchester, N.H., could eventually replace the current X-ray technology at all airport security checkpoints.

But it's being introduced at a time when the TSA is coming under increasing criticism for being unable - by either man or machine - to guard against potential threats.

According to a classified government report that leaked last week, screeners at two of the country's busiest airports failed to detect simulated explosive materials hidden in the carry-on

bags or clothing of undercover agents.

And in testimony before Congress last week, Cathleen A. Berrick of the Government Accountability Office said that the "TSA has not yet deployed checkpoint technologies to address key existing vulnerabilities."

Auto-EDS system

- A scan rate of up to 400 bags/bins per hour
- Can detect a variety of threats automatically
- Generates high-resolution, 3-D images of a bag's or bin's contents
- Laptop computers can be scanned in their cases
- CT-based system has an 80-cm tunnel opening

Sample scan

[Source: Analogic]
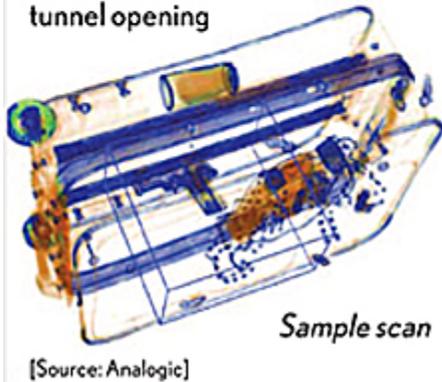
The TSA is spending more than $13 million on Auto-EDS. Analogic Corp. received a $7.6 million contract for the 12 explosives-detection scanners that TSA initially purchased, while Reveal Imaging Technologies got $5.6 million for eight similar systems, first being tested in Manchester. Both companies are based in Massachusetts.

Analogic's system will roll out at the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in November and then in Miami, said Frank G. Vorwald, vice president of the company's security systems division.

Each machine, which is longer than a standard scanner but still fits into a checkpoint lane, sells for about $350,000, Vorwald said.

Analogic's devices use computed axial tomography (CAT), similar to medical scanners, which Analogic also produces. The device displays objects in three dimensions, compared to the two-dimension technology of X-ray scanners. The technology is supposed to enhance safety and also move people through security quickly by eliminating the scramble to remove sensitive items before putting bags on conveyor belts.

The scanner revolves around the objects on the belt, producing hundreds of images from all angles that are then reconstructed on a computer screen, Vorwald said. "It just makes it easier for the passengers," he said.

Any scanned potential explosive or weapon shows up with a red box around it on the computer screen, Vorwald said. The corresponding sections of such "hot" bags are then searched.

The Analogic system also includes a lower conveyor belt to ship the plastic checkpoint bins back to the passengers waiting to move through the scanner.

But the technology has its limitations: It still can't detect an explosive liquid, Vorwald said.

The Auto-EDS pilot comes more than two years after an explosives-detection "puffer" debuted at BWI with much fanfare. Though those screening devices were expected to change the face of airport security, only one remains in use at BWI, for secondary screening of passengers in a terminal that serves Continental Airlines, TSA spokeswoman Amy Kudwa said.

About 95 puffers, which use quick blasts of air to test for traces of explosive substances, are in use at the nation's airports, Kudwa said.

"We've got a lot of different technologies piloting," she said. "Any one layer alone can be gamed in some way."

Using a combination of pre-9/11 and newer equipment, the TSA now screens all checked luggage for metal and explosives that give off vapors or smells. But other screening devices have been introduced only selectively because of their cost and technological glitches; the puffers, for example, can become contaminated by particles and dust.

And the TSA has yet to showcase technology to detect liquid explosives, which are enclosed in containers that give off no vapors or smells and often are made up of substances that by themselves are harmless.

It wasn't clear from yesterday's test - conducted at midday on a Wednesday in October - how well the Auto-EDS system would work at peak flight times. Passengers moved through the checkpoint in about the same amount of time as at nearby checkpoints with X-ray machines, though they might have gone through faster if the flow hadn't been hampered by clustered reporters and TV cameras. Analogic says the system can process 400 bins or bags per hour with a conveyor speed of 20 feet per minute.

"It wasn't a full-tilt operation today," Kudwa said.

Not having flown since the Sept. 11 attacks, Towson resident Vira Froehlinger had heard horror stories from her children about long security lines and delayed planes. So the child psychologist was pleasantly surprised to move swiftly through the checkpoint en route to Orlando, Fla., for a conference yesterday.

Froehlinger, 79, would have kept her toiletries in her carry-on if she had known her bag would go through the new scanner.

"I expected a nightmare, but it's moving so quickly," she said. "It's fantastic."

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http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-te.bz.explosive25oct25,0,83007.story

Yahoo! News

Project seeks to track terror Web posts

By ARTHUR H. ROTSTEIN, Associated Press Writer, November 11, 2007

TUCSON, Ariz. - The quivering images and militant writings are frightening: an exploding Humvee blankets passing cars with dust; a lab technician makes explosives, step by step; hatred oozes from "A guide to kill Americans in Saudi Arabia."

Tens of thousands of Web pages are now devoted to terrorist propaganda designed to attract followers. On the surface, the messages and videos reveal little about their creators. But programmers and writers leave digital clues: the greetings and other words they choose, their punctuation and syntax, and the way they code multimedia attachments and Web links. Researchers at the University of Arizona are developing a tool that uses these clues to automate the analysis of online jihadism. The Dark Web project aims to scour Web sites, forums and chat rooms to find the Internet's most prolific and influential jihadists and learn how they reel in adherents.

Lab director Hsinchun Chen hopes Dark Web will crimp what he calls "al-Qaida University on the Web," the mass of Web sites where potential terrorists learn their trade, from making explosives to planning attacks. Experts said they are not aware of any comparable effort, though some said the project may have only limited applications.
The project in the university's Artificial Intelligence Lab will not identify people outside cyberspace "because that involves civil liberties," Chen said, preferring to let law enforcement and intelligence analysts take over from there. Instead, it will help identify messages with the same author and reveal links that aren't obvious.

"Our tool will help them ID the high-risk, radical opinion leaders in cyberspace," Chen said. Chen said a few agencies are on the verge of using some of his team's techniques but he wouldn't name the agencies.

Former FBI counterterror chief Dale Watson, who noted that terrorist Web sites and communications are now analyzed manually, said the ability to sort through so much data electronically "would be a great asset in the fight against terrorism."
"It would greatly enhance the speed and capability to sort through a large amount of data," Watson said. "That would be the key here. The issue will be where is the Web site originating and where are the tentacles going?"

The only other computer-generated research of terrorist Web sites that Chen said he knew of is at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash. Spokesman Greg Koller said the lab's program is "developing some tools that a decision-maker could use, but nothing that is completely automated."

The bulk of a $1.3 million grant the National Science Foundation gave Chen's group will focus on who produces improvised explosives and what they talk about — such as American troop

movements and terrorist tactics. Before getting the NSF funding, Chen started the project with about $3 million from other Artificial Intelligence Lab programs.

<mark>Dark Web's software, which Chen calls Writeprint, samples 480 different factors to identify whether the same people are posting to multiple radical forums.</mark> It can analyze everything from a fragment of an e-mail to videos depicting American soldiers blown up in Humvees and fuel tankers.

Writeprint is derived from a program originally used to determine the authenticity of William Shakespeare's works. It looks at writing style, word usage and frequency and greetings, and at technical elements ranging from Web addresses to the coding on multimedia attachments. It also looks at linguistic features such as special characters, punctuation, word roots, font size and color, he said.

Currently, intelligence analysts cannot effectively analyze writing style in cyberspace, particularly multilingual writings, he said.

"But using our tool ... we can get about 95 percent accuracy, because I'm utilizing a lot of things your naked eye cannot see," Chen said.

Chen and counterterror specialists said what he termed a tenfold increase in the last two years in jihadist content appearing online has outstripped intelligence analysts' abilities.

"Automating this is absolutely necessary," said Evan Kohlmann, a terrorism expert with the Washington-based Investigative Project on Terrorism. "We're reaching that finite limit" of what can be done manually by humans.

Dark Web compares writings it finds to others in its logs of about 500 million pages of jihadist-produced documents, videos, images, e-mails and other postings, Chen said.

Most of the material is in Arabic, but as terrorist sympathizers have spawned new sites worldwide since 2005, Dark Web has expanded to look at Chinese-, Spanish- and French-language postings, and others will be added.

Given that some forums include close to 70,000 members and a million postings, analyzing Web traffic by hand "is really like drinking water from a fire hydrant," Chen said.

Some counterterror specialists, including some Chen consulted when he started the project nearly four years ago, are unconvinced Dark Web will deliver first-class analysis or produce real-world results.

"To be anything more than a scientific exercise, the techniques and methods developed need to be applicable to real-world counterterrorism," said Ben Venzke, head of IntelCenter, a private company that studies terrorist groups for intelligence agencies.

Venzke, who did not have specific knowledge of Chen's project, cautioned that public discussion of attempts to identify jihadists can damage those efforts.

"If you develop a method to identify something that a group is doing and then publicly disclose the method or enough of what you're looking for, there's a very good chance that they're going to stop doing it," Venzke said.

Others Chen consulted at Dark Web's outset also aren't sold on how much real-world value it can deliver.

"He has to show that the guys who post it have anything to do with the bombings," said Dr. Marc Sageman, a forensic psychiatrist, a CIA caseworker in the late 1980s in Afghanistan and a senior fellow with the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

Gabriel Weimann, an international terrorism expert at Israel's University of Haifa, also tempered his support.

"I am not very thrilled with `computerized scanning,'" Weimann said in an email. "A human eye sees more, and deeper."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071111/ap_on_hi_te/dark_web;_ylt=AuXUtI7ThQwfDf4iav3erjR k24cA

RISE OF THE NEO-TALIBAN, Part 1

Death by the light of a silvery moon

By Syed Saleem Shahzad, November 13, 2007

NAWA PASS, Pakistan border with Afghanistan - Sitting with four key Taliban commanders deep in a labyrinth of lush green mountains, I could see the Sarkano district of the Kunar Valley in Afghanistan, which is the provincial hub of the American military and a base for the Afghan National Army and Afghan intelligence.

Scores of guerrilla groups, each comprising a few dozen men, hide on the fringes of the Kunar Valley and launch daily operations into Kunar and Nooristan provinces, and with each passing day they receive new recruits and their attacks grow in intensity.

A year ago, I spent two weeks with the Taliban in Helmand province (including a few days in captivity - see "A 'guest' of the Taliban," *Asia Times Online*, November 30, 2006), but since then there has been a sea-change within the Taliban.

Without legends such as the slain Mullah Dadullah and Mullah Akhtar Osmani, and with an extremely ill Jalaluddin Haqqani, a neo-Taliban movement has emerged with a new leadership, new zeal and new dynamics. The revitalized and resupplied Taliban are geared to enter a new phase of war without borders to fight coalition forces in Afghanistan and the Pakistan army.

In a way, all that has gone before in the "war on terror" in the past six years since the Taliban were ousted from Kabul has been a dress rehearsal.

For its part, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders are preparing to take up the fight. According to Asia Times Online contacts familiar with developments, a joint Pakistan-NATO operation was approved at a meeting of Pakistan's corps commanders at the weekend. Significantly, they agreed that the boundaries would not necessarily be drawn between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Whether a conventional force such as NATO can contain the Taliban is another matter. Obviously, the Taliban are confident. I asked Shaheen Abid, the Taliban's head of guerrilla operations in the strategic Sarkano district, what was behind the group's revitalization.

Shaheen smiled in response and turned his gaze to three of his subordinate commanders - Zahid

of the Nole region, Mohsin of the Shonk Karey district and Muslim Yar of the Barogai region.

"I only know how to fight. Answering complicated questions is beyond my ambit," Shaheen said apologetically, and immediately signaled for the Taliban's media relations officer of the Kunar Valley, Dr Jarrah (a jihadi name), to respond.

Jarrah began, "Before answering you, I will ask you a question. Who is qualified to claim that he has actually seen world?" Before I could reply to this rather strange question, Jarrah answered himself, "The one who has experienced true love, the one who has lived in an alien atmosphere and place, and the one who has spent time in captivity.

"The mujahideen have experienced all three things in the past seven years. We have been reared on a true love for our global struggle, we were forcibly displaced from one place to another and we spent lots of time in the detention centers of Cuba [Guantanamo], in Pakistan, Bagram [Afghanistan] and Abu Ghraib [Iraq] and braved the brutalities of the CIA [US Central Intelligence Agency], the ISI [Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence] and Afghan intelligence," Jarrah said.

"We actually see the world now. We are seasoned and therefore you will see actual fireworks against the one which claims to be the global superpower."

Shaheen then excused himself and joined his subordinates Zahid, Mohsin and Muslim Yar, all in their early 20s. "Please don't mind them, they are discussing their previous operations and planning fresh ones," Jarrah told me.

"We carried out attacks on a daily basis until last Thursday [November 8]. We assign a particular group for a particular assignment. There are different sorts of attacks. We do send attackers called fedayeen in which fighters loaded with rockets and hand grenades and AK-47 guns attack an American base or the Afghan National Army or the intelligence headquarters in Sarkano.

"In such fedayeen attacks, there is zero chance of survival [for the attackers].

"Then we carry out specific attacks based on precise information provided by pro-Taliban elements within the Afghan establishment or by local people. And then the third and the most expensive attacks are those in which we fire missiles on an enemy position from a distance. It costs us 250,000 Pakistani rupees [about US$4,000] per operation.

"We launch all three kinds of operations many times a month. At present, due to the dim moonlight, operations have stopped for few days. We only launch operations during moonlight because Kunar is all jungle and mountains and without such light there is a strong chance of falling into the crevasses," Jarrah explained.

Jarrah said that the Taliban's operations are based on various tactics and are not only asymmetric attacks. "We have tribes and people who live in particular places. They openly resist foreign troops in the Kunar Valley. Then we have organized guerrilla groups - we use them as our

special forces - and finally we have a missile battery. Not a single day passes without the enemy facing several of our attacks in various parts of Nooristan and Kunar provinces.

"The fighters have acquired a lot of confidence due to their successes and now they confidently play tricks. Recently, we used Afghan National Army uniforms and laid siege to American troops in Nooristan and killed and wounded many of them. In return, the Americans threatened to bomb a whole village. That's why the local people didn't spy on the Taliban's positions," Jarrah said.

Suddenly, in the far distance, we saw the dark skies of Kunar light up.

"That is a light bomb used by the enemy to trace the Taliban's positions. That is approximately 10 kilometers from here, and obviously a battle is going on between the enemies and the Taliban. We are not necessarily aware of such battles every time," Jarrah said.

After a dinner of rice and chicken curry and saying the final prayers of the day, we all slept in an isolated mud house of the village. The call to morning prayers marked the start of a new day and a new struggle. After saying prayers and eating breakfast, the men who had accompanied us the previous evening left, but within two hours a new group joined us.

"They rotate throughout the day and night. Some of the people will go back to Pakistan to stay with their families and new ones will join us. Some will finish their guerrilla operations in the Kunar Valley and join us here to rest, and then a new guerrilla group will be launched," Jarrah said.

"But do you sometimes have a serious dearth of fighters?" I asked.

"Not at all," said Jarrah, laughing. "Instead, the real issue remains how to accommodate all the guerrilla groups because people are flooding to us to join the jihad and we don't always have enough resources to provide for them all at the same time. But I think we will increase our resources soon, and then you will see a flood of fighters finding its way against the foreign occupying forces."

Before I could ask any further questions, a tall man who introduced himself as Maroof asked me, "What is your name, Mr Journalist?" "Saleem Shahzad," I answered. "What?" I repeated my name. "Aren't you the one who was detained by the Taliban last year in Helmand? I listened to your interview on radio after your release," Maroof said with excitement.

"He is with us now, what happens if he is killed?" I heard Maroof inquiring of Jarrah in a loud whisper. Jarrah chuckled, "If he is killed, it would be the will of God."

Maroof was in the Afghan National Army and was once detained by the Americans for being in the army but "facilitating" the Taliban. He says he did not cough up anything during interrogation, but when he was released he promptly joined the ranks of the Taliban.

"The mujahideen have now acquired such strength that neither Pakistan nor NATO can fight against us. The Taliban are standing on both sides of the border. More operations breed more Taliban, and this time the Taliban will rule the whole region," Maroof said confidently.

Jarrah summoned a few armed men and we took a long walk on a mountain trail, ending up at a goat farm.

This was the Taliban's missile battery, comprising about 200 Russian-made rockets, which the Taliban call Sakar 20. They are 2.5 meters long with a range of about 30 kilometers and the capacity to devastate an area of about 100 square meters. The Taliban's Sarkano district battery has six donkeys to carry the weapons.

"We use these donkeys to carry the missiles and other equipment when we attack an enemy installation. In this terrain, donkeys are the only 'vehicles' that can be used as transport," Jarrah said.

"These missiles come from old dumps of weapons the Taliban recovered after the fall of the communist government in Afghanistan [in the early 1990s]. Russian technology is far superior to American," Jarrah said, and illustrated his point by taking out his Russian-made pistol.

"This pistol works like a revolver and you don't need to cock it like American pistols. It belonged to the Russian special forces. We have mostly Russian weapons stocks, but we have recently started using American weapons recovered from American troops or the Afghan National Army," Jarrah explained.

Behind the simple structures, I see the formation of a very well-trained army which was non-existent even a year ago. Only three years ago, the Taliban did not have a central command, secure bases, and the motivation they now obviously possess.

The ideologues of the neo-Taliban were raised and trained by the Pakistani military to bleed India, and now, using the same techniques, they aim to bleed NATO and the Pakistani Army.

But it was time to run - I had an appointment that evening with these Punjabi ideologues.

Next: "The Punjabis: From proxies to diehards"

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http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IK13Df01.html

EurekAlert!

Social change relies more on the easily influenced than the highly influential

November 12, 2007 – An important new study appearing in the December issue of the *Journal of Consumer Research* finds that it is rarely the case that highly influential individuals are responsible for bringing about shifts in public opinion.

Instead, using a number of computer simulations of public opinion change, Duncan J. Watts (Columbia University) and Peter Sheridan Dodds (University of Vermont), find that it is the presence of large numbers of "easily influenced" people who bring about major shifts by influencing other easy-to-influence people.

"Our study demonstrates not so much that the conventional wisdom is wrong . . . but that it is insufficiently specified to be meaningful," the researchers write. "Under most conditions that we consider, we find that large cascades of influence are driven not by influentials, but by a critical mass of easily influenced individuals."

Instead of a model in which opinion flows only from the media to influentials, and then only from influentials to the larger populace, Watts and Dodds created an influence network with opinion flows in many directions at once, adjusted for the probability that a given individual will adopt a change when the information comes from a certain source.

They then introduced an event into the simulation, evaluating what factors resulted in an overall shift in opinion in their model system. They also introduced "hyper influentials" and monitored their effects, tried grouping individuals together into sub-networks, and adjusted the degree at which attitudes shift.

"Anytime some notable social change is recognized, whether it be a grassroots cultural fad, a successful marketing campaign, or a dramatic drop in crime rates, it is tempting to trace the phenomenon to the individuals who "started it," and conclude that their actions or behavior "caused" the events that subsequently took place," the authors write.

However, they explain: "…under most of these conditions influentials are less important than is generally supposed, either as initiators of large cascades, or as early adopters."

Duncan J. Watts and Peter Sheridan Dodds, "Influentials, Networks, and Public Opinion Formation." *Journal of Consumer Research*: December 2007.

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-11/uocp-scr111207.php

Current Trends in Jihadi Networks in Europe

By Lorenzo Vidino

The terrorist related events that took place during the summer in Europe—the doctors' plot in Great Britain, the dismantling of various cells in Italy, Austria and Spain, and, finally, the September arrests in Germany and Denmark—have confirmed that Europe is a key staging ground for jihadi activities. Although large differences exist from country to country and within various subgroups in the ever-evolving underworld of jihadi networks in Europe, it is possible to identify some current trends that, in one way or another, are common to the whole continent.

Independent, or Part of a Network

During the last few years, commentators have been fascinated with homegrown networks in Europe and, clearly, small groups of European-born, self-radicalized, violence-prone Islamists have sprung up in most European countries. Yet, the panorama of jihadi networks in Europe is quite complex and, for a more accurate analysis, could be described on a continuum. At one extreme, one can identify quintessential homegrown groups such as the Hofstad Group in the Netherlands: small domestic clusters of radicals that have developed no ties to external groups and act in complete operational independence. At the opposite side of the spectrum are cells that respond to the traditional model used by al-Qaeda-affiliated groups in the 1990s: compartmentalized cells inserted in a well-structured network and subjected to a hierarchy whose heads are often outside Europe. That is the model to which various cells of the Algerian GSPC (today Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) belong.

In between these two extremes, there is a whole spectrum of realities, positioned according to the level of autonomy of the group. The most recurring model seems to be that of the cell dismantled by Danish authorities on September 4, 2007: a small group of young men, most of them born and/or raised in Europe, who knew each other either from the neighborhood or from the mosque. Their radicalization took place in Europe and only one or two members of the group traveled out of the country (Pakistan, in this case) to link up with foreign-based, well-structured groups ideologically or operationally affiliated with al-Qaeda. The knowledge acquired by the cell after this linkage obviously makes it more dangerous.

Traveling for Jihad: Primary and Secondary Fields

In contrast to the situation before the September 11 attacks, today most European jihadis do not travel out of the continent for training or to fight. Nevertheless, a small but significant number of them still opt for short stints in places where they can join training camps or guerrilla units. Pakistan/Afghanistan and Iraq are the two primary destinations. The former seems to attract recruits mostly from Northern Europe (Great Britain, in particular), while militants from Spain, Italy and France seem to travel mostly to the latter (*El Periodico*, May 6; *Le Monde*, December

16, 2004).

Noteworthy is the presence of European militants in two lesser-known fields of jihad: Somalia and Lebanon. A few dozen European volunteers have been arrested by Ethiopian and Somali governmental forces among the Islamic Courts Union's (ICU) fighters since December 2006. Several of these militants possess Scandinavian passports, and, according to intelligence sources, Sweden is considered the hub for the flow of money from Europe to the ICU (*Sveriges Radio*, January 30). Italian authorities have also monitored the visits of several ICU-linked preachers who are traveling to various Italian cities in order to fundraise and recruit among the country's Somali population (*L'Espresso*, February 5). Reportedly, Swedish and British fighters were killed by U.S. missiles and Somali army operations (*BBC News*, June 3). A smaller number of Western volunteers, mostly from Denmark and Australia, have allegedly fought with Fatah al-Islam in the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp in Lebanon (*The Australian*, September 13).

The Muslim Ghetto Subculture: Jihad and Rap

Europe today is witnessing the growth of a disturbing new subculture that mixes violent urban behaviors, nihilism and Islamic fundamentalism. Many young, often European-born Muslims feel a disturbingly intense sense of detachment from, if not sheer hatred for, their host societies and embrace various antagonistic messages. While some turn to Salafism, others adopt an indefinite blend of counter-cultures, ranging from hip-hop to Islamic fundamentalism. Many youngsters from the Muslim-majority ghettoes 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 [1]. Any individual who attacks mainstream society becomes a hero to these teens, be it Abu Musab al-Zarqawi or the late American rapper Tupac Shakur.

This hybrid street culture is particularly influenced by African-American gangster culture and music. Bands such as Fun-da-mental and Blakstone in the United Kingdom, Medine in France, and Zanka Flow (Moroccan-based, but hugely popular in the Netherlands) combine radical Islamic concepts with hip hop sounds, jargon and attitudes. An aspiring star in the jihadi rap underworld is Mohammed Kamel Mostafa, the son of former Finsbury Park imam Abu Hamza, who has recently formed a rap duo called Lionz of Da Dezert. Using the stage name of al-Ansary, Mostafa raps about jihad and killing infidels. "I was born to be a soldier," read the lyrics of one of his songs. "Kalashnikov on my shoulder, peace to Hamas and Hezbollah, that's the way of the lord Allah. We're jihad. I defend my religion with the holy sword" (*Agence France-Presse*, March 1, 2006).

While the phenomenon affects only a minority of European Muslims, its dimensions and repercussions are more than noteworthy. In London, city officials are worried about the growth of an extremely violent gang commonly known as the Muslim Boys. Operating in the southern areas of the British capital, the gang is composed of several hundreds of members and is active in criminal activities ranging from robberies to drug trafficking. The members of the gang are mostly British-born black youth originally from the Caribbean or Africa who converted to Islam in British penitentiaries and bond over their newfound faith (*Evening Standard*, February 3, 2005). Yet, their interpretation of Islam is perverted. The gang members do not respect the most basic tenets of Islam, and their appearance and slang more closely resemble that of American ghetto culture than that of practicing Muslims. Tellingly, a gang member admitted to a reporter

from the *Evening Standard*: "I pray twice a day: before I do crime and after. I ask Allah for a blessing when I'm out on the streets. Afterwards, I apologize to Allah for what I done [sic]." The gang is also involved in "forced conversions," compelling black youth at gunpoint to convert to Islam and join them; two years ago, they executed a 24-year-old for refusing to convert.

The Expansion to the Countryside

Radical Islam in Europe has traditionally been an urban phenomenon. Muslim immigrants have historically settled in large and mid-size cities and, as a consequence, radical mosques and jihadi activities have also been largely confined to urban settings. Yet, during the past few years, there has been a noticeable expansion of radical activities to rural areas. The phenomenon is particularly evident in southern European countries, where large numbers of North African immigrants are employed, seasonally or permanently, in agriculture. Wandering imams, often linked to Tablighi Jamaat and small makeshift mosques run by radicals, have popped up in small country towns and villages in Spain, Italy and France, spreading Salafism among the local Muslim communities. Taking advantage of the absence of other mosques and the limited surveillance of the small local police forces, Salafists have managed to establish a presence in rural areas of Piedmont, Campania, Provence and southern Spain [2].

In some cases, Salafist networks have taken advantage of the isolation provided by the countryside to create small fundamentalist communes, as in Artigat, a bucolic village of less than 1,000 residents in the French Pyrenees. When French authorities dismantled a Toulouse-based network that was smuggling volunteers to Iraq, they uncovered links to a 60-year-old Syrian man who was leading an Islamist commune in Artigat (*Le Parisien*, February 15). Living completely isolated from the outside world, the commune's five families lived under a strict self-imposed Islamic code and preached a radical interpretation of Islam to their children and to the visitors who would come occasionally from the city (mostly Toulouse) to spend time in a "pure Islamic environment."

Eastern Europe?

While not already an established trend, there are indications showing that radical Islam is spreading, albeit at a slow pace and with significant differences from country to country, to Eastern Europe. The presence of radical networks in Bosnia, many of them leftovers from the conflict of the 1990s, is well known. Although less grave, Wahhabi influence, propagated mostly by a wide network of Saudi-sponsored mosques, is on the rise in other areas of the Balkans with significant Muslim populations such as Albania, Kosovo and Serbia's Sandzak region (*B92 Radio Serbia*, June 6, 2006).

Various Islamist groups have been reported to be actively spreading their propaganda to other Muslim populations throughout Eastern Europe. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, for example, organized a large conference in Ukraine in August, targeting mostly Crimean Tatars (*Kommersant-Ukraina*, August 13). Yet, even countries with little or no native Muslim population have seen a tiny, yet growing, presence of Islamist activities, particularly among their Arab and Pakistani student population. During the last few years, authorities in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria have arrested individuals who were either promoting radical Islam through websites and publications or funneling money to terrorist organizations. Additionally, in October 2006, Czech authorities

issued a terror alert after uncovering information of an alleged plot to kidnap and kill Jews in Prague (*Der Spiegel*, October 6, 2006).

The attractiveness of Eastern European countries for jihadis has increased significantly with the inclusion of many of them in the European Union. Some Eastern European countries, with their understaffed and often corrupt intelligence and law enforcement agencies, easy access to black market weapons and forged documents, and possibility of traveling to Western Europe without border controls, can constitute ideal bases of operation. An interesting related phenomenon is the suspicious spike in marriages between Bulgarian and Romanian women and North African men reported in Italy and Spain immediately after the entrance of the two Eastern European countries in the European Union. In all likelihood, the majority of these artificial marriages involve individuals with no connections to terrorism who simply want to acquire a European passport to stay and work in Western Europe. Nevertheless, the possibility that terrorists could use the same scheme should also be considered.

Conclusion

Jihadism is a global movement whose characteristics mutate rapidly. While today some of the abovementioned trends are still in a developing phase or can be noticed only in some European countries, it is likely that they will be replicated with greater intensity and in more countries in the near future.

Notes

1. The information is based on author's observations throughout Europe.
2. The information is derived from a variety of sources, including: the Indictment of Abdelillah El Kaflaoui, Tribunal of Turin, May 7, 2005; *Libero*, October 18, 2007; author's private intelligence sources.

http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373743