

Jihad in Europe: Post-millennium patterns of jihadist terrorism in Western Europe

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INTRODUCTION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Why do jihadist terrorists once again resort to terrorism in European countries, and how do they operate in the European context? Aiming to provide valid answers to these questions, I have conducted case studies of six jihadist terrorist conspiracies in Europe after 2000. I gathered as much open source data as I could find about these cases, and systematized and analyzed information about what the terrorists said and did before, during, and after their involvement in terrorism. Then I conducted a qualitative contextual analysis of this information. My analysis indicated a very complex motivational landscape, but also that the ideological-political doctrine of global jihad against the US and its allies stood out as the most important driving force behind the jihadist terrorism for the terrorist group as a whole (group level). At the individual level, i.e. the question of why individuals joined terrorist groups, the data indicated motivational factors that were less ideological-political, and more related to social issues. I will elaborate more on this distinction as I proceed. As for profiles of the individuals who composed the terrorist cells, the picture was also very complex, but there were some common denominators, for example that almost all of the “core members” of the cells had some kind of affiliation with al-Qaida, or the movement’s ideology, and were trained in military and/or terrorist tactics. I identified two main categories of affiliation; the terrorists were either directly associated with people who are reckoned as belonging to the inner circles of al-Qaida, or, they were clearly inspired by the religio-political ideas and program advocated by Bin Laden and his cadre.

PROGRAM FOR TODAY’S SPEECH

First of all I will define the object of my analysis, jihadist terrorists, and jihadist terrorism. Secondly, I will elaborate on the scope of jihadist terrorist activity in European countries in recent years. Thirdly, I will put forward some general observations and preliminary conclusions about the operational and motivational patterns of jihadism in the region, before I substantiate these patterns, by, in a very concentrated fashion, addressing six well-known cases of jihadist terrorism in Europe after 2000. Finally, I will offer some concluding remarks and discuss the future threat of jihadist mass casualty terrorism in European countries.

WHAT IS JIHADIST TERRORISM?

Terrorism here is seen as acts (or intended acts) of political communicative violence, mainly targeting civilians or “soft targets”, aimed at spreading fear amongst, and paralyzing those governments and populations who are perceived as, enemies. I define terrorism as jihadist in the case that such acts (or intended acts) of violence can be attributed to clearly identifiable radical Islamist individuals or groups.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF JIHADIST TERRORISM IN WESTERN EUROPE?

The terrorist attacks in the Spanish capital represented the culmination of a pattern of jihadist terrorism reemerging and intensifying in Europe since the end of the 1990s. After the millennium, Western European police and intelligence services have thwarted at least fifteen, and possibly as many as thirty, mass casualty attacks by al-Qaida associated, or al-Qaida inspired terrorists. The scope of the threat of terrorist attacks increased after the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The number of terrorist incidents (attempted attacks and attacks) attributed to jihadists in Western Europe – (which in general should be a good indicator of the level of militancy) - increased after the invasion of Afghanistan, in 2001. However, the increase did not come immediately after the US led offensive. There was a time lag after the invasion and the battles in Afghanistan in which activity in Europe was relatively low. The significant increase in terrorist activity came after Ayman al-Zawahiri included for the first time two European countries – France and Germany – in a threat communiqué issued in October 2002. This was possibly due to the fact that al-Qaida associated militants had to recover, reorganize and refocus after the painful

blows to the Afghanistani infrastructure and the al-Qaida “Central command”. After al-Zawahiri’s October statement, European allies of the US have routinely been included in the al-Qaida leadership’s threat communiqués. The number of thwarted jihadist terrorist conspiracies in Europe increased further after the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, before a jihadist terrorist network in Spain finally managed to launch a successful bomb attack against trains in Madrid on 11th of March 2004. Despite intensified anti-terrorism efforts directed against radical Islamist milieus by European states, in response to the detection of active terrorist cells, and a level of high alert after the Madrid bombings, conspiratorial activity remained at a raised level in 2004. A number of terrorist plans were detected after Madrid, and in November, a member of an al-Qaida inspired jihadist group in Holland assassinated a Dutch filmmaker on the streets of Amsterdam. This assassination can probably be seen as the second successful terrorist attack by jihadists in Europe after 2000.

PATTERNS OF JIHADISM IN EUROPE

Jihadist terrorist conspiracies and attacks in Western Europe over the past few years have involved multinational, transnationally operating, “ad-hoc”, jihadist terrorist cells that were either associated with, or inspired by, al-Qaida.

Target selection

The terrorists selected a wide range of targets including religious, political, military, economic and civilian sites, symbols and infrastructure. Representations, symbols, and military installations of the United States were frequently targeted, in line with al-Qaida’s perception of America as the main enemy of Islam.

Weapons and modus operandi

The terrorists planned to attack these targets with low-tech weapons, mostly home-made bombs, and they often planned to deliver the bombs using suicide-bombers, a typical *modus operandi* of al-Qaida and its associated groups. Terrorist suspects in the UK, Italy and France, and other European countries displayed an interest in manufacturing poison in order to use it in attacks. The militants’ *modus operandi* strongly indicated that they had been trained in techniques of covert operations. For example, they all followed a set of similar security precautions such as having multiple identities, false travel documents, coding their communications, and renting apartments on the ground level in order to facilitate an easy escape. In fact, investigation of the cases revealed that the terrorists almost literally followed the basically common sense prescriptions and advices for clandestine operations given in the so-called Manchester manual retrieved from the home of al-Qaida member Abu Anas al-Liby in the UK in May 2000, and similar manuals available on jihadist websites. In one instance, all members of a terrorist cell were given the same CD-rom containing instructions in bomb making and covert operations. As opposed to most organized terrorist networks in the Middle East and North Africa, the European cells did not run their own websites, and they issued statements only on rare occasions. Sometimes they leant on and received support from domestic jihadist infrastructure in European countries. This “infrastructure” is composed of many different religio-political movements and groups originating from the Muslim world. Some of these groups are mainly concerned with spreading radical ideology, and convincing younger generations of Muslims in Europe that armed jihad is necessary to restore the Islamic nation and Allah’s rule on earth, whereas others, such as the Algerian GSPC, are more pragmatically oriented, clandestinely generating funds, procuring weaponry, and recruiting fighters for jihad in Algeria, in Chechnya, and elsewhere. Indeed, many of the terrorist cells conspiring attacks in Europe received logistical and sometimes financial support from GSPC support networks.

Cell structure

The cells were most often composed of five to ten core members, and varying numbers of affiliates. The core members were extremely motivated, informed about the upcoming operation, and in most cases trained in terrorist tactics. Around this core group there were affiliates that

knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, fulfilled support functions for the conspirators. The affiliates could be friends, relatives, criminals, or others that could be exploited for the purposes of the terrorists. Members of the core group had clearly defined roles and tasks. There was a cell leader and coordinator, a chief of communication, a chief of finances, sometimes a designated suicide-bomber, etc. Although the core had a fixed structure, there were fuzzy cell boundaries. The conspiracies involved contacts and coordination between jihadists belonging to different terrorist cells in several European countries, and often these contacts were based upon personal relationships established in jihadist camps in Afghanistan, or in the Islamist underground milieus of European urban centers. Individual terrorists, or terrorist groups, also maintained contacts with militants in other regions of the world. In many ways the jihadist groups resembled gangster or Mafia gangs, because there was internal hierarchy, and the cell members developed strong social bonds between each other. Sometimes the conspiracies involved families in the manner of the Mafia. However, the “gangs of jihad” had different goals than those of criminal gangs and the Mafia. Although social bonds held the members of the cell together, and the cell in this way offered the social gains of friendship and identity, the group as a whole had a mainly ideological-political purpose, to punish the enemies of Islam and reestablish the Rule of God on earth. They were not involved for profit’s own sake, such as is the case with many criminals.

Terrorist Profiles

The cells were composed of male Muslim immigrants (first and second generation), most often of North African ancestry. They comprised political refugees as well as legal and illegal immigrants. The terrorist profiles also included a few ethnic Europeans who had converted to Islam. Profiles of the terrorists included criminals, drug addicts or socially misplaced people, but many were gifted, educated, employed and seemingly assimilated into Western European countries. Indeed, many were married and had children. Moreover, they did not appear to have been particularly religious or politically active prior to their affiliations with militants. Leaders of terrorist cells have been described as “model immigrants”, leading a Western lifestyle, wearing Western clothes, having Western girlfriends, etc. Family and friends often expressed disbelief that a friend, sibling or son had become a Holy Warrior. In fact, one can say that very few, if any of the jihadist terrorists that operated in Europe, fitted the prejudice stereotypical profile of an Islamic fundamentalist, as a serious, bearded man, shunning worldly pleasures and wearing traditional Islamic clothing.

Recruitment

The terrorists usually resided in Europe prior to joining jihadist groups. They were thus recruited to Islamist militancy inside Western Europe, although there are examples of operatives who were recruited in North Africa, in Pakistan, or other places. As pointed out in recent studies of recruitment for the global jihad, there is little evidence that al-Qaida and its associated groups maintain recruitment “apparatus” in Europe. The best accounts of the recruitment process to date suggest that recruitment was initiated more from below than above.¹ A typical pattern is that young alienated male North African and Middle Eastern immigrants to European countries have become “newborn Muslims”, and taken active steps to seek out the radical Islamist doctrine. They have visited radical mosques or contacted radical milieus, and encountered so-called “gatekeepers”. These “gatekeepers” provided know-how about how to become a Holy Warrior, and instigated violence against the “enemies of Islam”. Jihadist recruits were advised to enlist at the camps in Pakistan/Afghanistan, Chechnya or Kashmir. “Gatekeepers” were typically “jihad-veterans”, people who fought against the Soviets in the 1980s, or people who trained in jihad camps in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, and Kashmir, etc., during the 1990s. The gatekeepers provided knowledge about how to join militant groups, and where to go in order to receive the

¹ Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Michael Taarnby, *Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe*, Aarhus: Danish Ministry of Justice, 2005; and Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Umma*, London: Hurst, 2004, chapter 7.

necessary training. In this way, veterans from the Afghan jihad have played an important role in radicalizing Islamists in Europe, and establishing militant groups. Some of the “gatekeepers” were more prominent than others, and operated quite overtly, holding sermons in which they preached anti-Americanism, and hailed the efforts of al-Qaida and its associated groups. Some of these preachers facilitated terrorist conspiracies and support activities in Europe, in the US, and elsewhere. Many of the recruits joined the jihad during personal crises and transnational phases of their lives, such as at the death of parents, divorce, depression, etc. Although many of the recruits were gifted people and did not experience serious socio-economic problems, they were not harmonious people. Several cases indicate that those who ended up as terrorists were alienated, sometimes exposed to racism and general deprivation, and thus vulnerable and receptive to the propaganda of jihadist groups, that offered the social gains of a strong and clearly defined identity, spirituality, and a consistent ideology, clearly defining “the evil wrongdoers” of World politics.

Training

Investigations of detected terrorist cells have revealed that nearly all the cells had one thing in common, namely that key operatives had attended religious schools in Pakistan/Afghanistan, and/or received training in guerrilla warfare and/or urban terrorism in the jihad camps in Afghanistan during the latter half of the 1990s. Some of the senior leaders and instigators, or “religious guides”, such as the London-based preachers Muhammad Umar Uthman aka Abu Qatada al-Filastini and Mustafa Kamil Mustafa aka Abu Hamza al-Masri, had fought in the jihad against the Soviets during the late 1980s. The Afghanistan link was in some instances very direct, in the way that core members of terrorist cells had personally met and befriended people belonging to the core of al-Qaida, and they had received personal orders from people like Usama Bin Ladin and his top lieutenants, such as Abu Zubaydah.

Motivations for jihadism in Europe.

As for the motivational patterns, they appeared very complex, and involved both ideological (religious)-political as well as social grievances, related to the European context, the terrorists’ countries of origin, as well as to the global/structural level of world politics. The doctrine and idea of global defensive jihad against aggressors attacking Islam and Muslims stands out as the single most important motivational factor at the group level. Key operatives and leaders appeared to be ideologically informed and conscious about political matters. In line with al-Qaida’s ideology they linked issues such as the occupation of Palestine, the French support for the Algerian regime, the Russians’ military operations inside Chechnya, the Iraq war, with regional European issues such as tightened security and more restrictive immigration legislation, as well as surveillance and persecution of radical Islamist milieus in European countries in the aftermath of 9/11. My analysis indicates that political and military developments in areas of symbolic value and political grievance for radical Islamists are the most important as motivational factors for the terrorist group as a whole. At the individual level, a notion of “social relative deprivation”, defined as raised expectations of being fully accepted as a fully-fledged member of European societies, which was not fulfilled, seemingly played an important role in motivating young Muslim immigrants to join jihadist groups and become terrorists. Several cases indicated that the terrorists had serious problems of fitting into Western societies. The jihadist groups could offer young alienated immigrant youth the social gains of companionship, identity and “direction in life”.

SIX CASES OF JIHAD.

The following six cases substantiate the operational and motivational patterns that I have outlined. The first two cases involved jihadists that were closely associated with al-Qaida, as well as the European networks of the Algerian radical organization, the Salafist Group for Combat and Call (GSPC) (a splinter group of the Armed Islamic Group – GIA – that fought the Algerian regime and France in the 1990s). The third case involved radicals who were associated with the international networks of the Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who at the time of these conspiracies had not become an integrated part of al-Qaida. However, al-Zarqawi’s broader

goals, at that time, appeared to be largely compatible with those of al-Qaida, and recently, al-Zarqawi swore allegiance to Bin Ladin and became the leader of the al-Qaida Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers, that is Iraq. The fourth case displayed links both to al-Qaida, al-Zarqawi and the Algerian GSPC. The last two cases, on the other hand, did not display as close links to the globalist jihadist networks and the al-Qaida “Central Command”. Indeed, one has not yet been able to confirm that key members of the Madrid cell, such as “The Tunisian”, trained in jihad camps in Afghanistan. However, both the Madrid bombers and the murderer of Theo Van Gogh were clearly inspired by the ideas and doctrine of al-Qaida, and they considered al-Qaida affiliated Europe based jihadist preachers to be their religious guides.

CASE I: THE STRASBOURG PLOT

The plot by a group of Algerian jihadist terrorists to launch a bomb attack against the Notre Dame Cathedral in Strasbourg, France, in many ways appears to have set a standard for the transnational jihadist terrorist conspiracies that were detected in the aftermath of this event. The cell members were recruited in Europe, and they received paramilitary and terrorist training in Afghanistan. They operated according to terrorist training manuals. The conspiracy was truly transnational. It was conceived in Algerian dominated jihad guesthouses and camps in Afghanistan between early 1999 and the fall of 2000, further plans and preparations were made in London and in Frankfurt, and the attack was going to be launched in Strasbourg, France. Al-Qaida associated members of the Algerian jihadist organization GSPC were central both in coordinating and financing the conspiracy. When caught, the terrorists were in possession of bomb making instructions supplied by jihadists in London and in Afghanistan, as well as recipes for making deadly poison. Police seized chemicals sufficient for making a powerful bomb, light weapons (probably meant for shipment to GSPC insurgents in Algeria), and a reconnaissance videotape of the target cathedral. In addition to this, intelligence monitored communications between the operatives of the cell and a London based jihadist milieu headed by a lieutenant of the Algerian jihad organization GSPC and an al-Qaida associate, Abu Doha. Doha has been involved in a number of terrorist conspiracies worldwide, including Ahmad Ressay's attempt to bomb the LA Airport in 1999. He also appears to have been central in the channelling of jihad recruits between Afghanistan, Europe and Algeria. The members of the cell had multiple false identities and falsified documents. They communicated in codes, and they rented first-floor apartments in order to facilitate their escape in case anti-terrorism police detected them. The cell was partly self-financed through petty crime and drug dealing, and partly externally supported by the Abu Doha network. For example, the operatives received falsified credit cards from Doha's cadre, which they used when procuring chemicals for bomb making. The operation did not involve suicide-bombers. The attackers planned to head for Algeria via London after they launched the attack. The group motivations for the attack appeared mixed. On the one hand the terrorists wanted to punish France for the country's involvement in the local conflict in Algeria, but on the other hand the terrorists displayed strong anti-western sentiment and seemed to interlink France's support for the Algerian regime, and France's crack-down on jihadist milieus after the GIA terrorist campaign from 1994-1996, with perceived injustices against Muslims in Palestine and Chechnya. Such issue-linkages and global outlook is typical of those who subscribe to al-Qaida's ideology. The reconnaissance tape of the target cathedral indicated that they were extreme, and violently anti-Western. While filming the cathedral and people outside one of the terrorists said, “This is the church of God's enemies”, “These are the enemies of God! They are dancing, and they are joyful. Must they, inshallah, burn in Hell”. The terrorist's individual motivations for joining the jihad appeared to have a social component. They were first and second-generation immigrants to France and Germany. They drifted between odd jobs and unemployment. Some were involved in petty crime, and some developed drug habits. They failed to obtain the permits needed to stay legally in the region, and there were reports of failed marriages. They came in touch with the jihadist underground, and stayed for a period in the extremist milieu in London, where they appeared to have become recruited by the GSPC-based circle of Abu Doha. Later they headed for Afghanistan.

CASE II: THE BEGHAL-NETWORK

In 2001 a jihadist group headed by the French-Algerian Jamal Beghal planned operations against US targets in several European countries. The core operatives were either second-generation French-Algerian immigrants to France, or Algerians and Tunisians who had lived in European countries for a long time. The operatives were gifted people in their 20s and 30s, and some of them had higher education. One of them had been a professional soccer player for a German team. They appeared assimilated and westernized, and several of them were married to European women. They were recruited to militancy in the extremist milieus in London. They trained in jihad camps in Afghanistan and encountered top al-Qaida leaders such as Usama Bin Ladin himself, and Abu Zubaydah. Allegedly, these two prominent leaders gave orders to the core members of the cell to attack American targets in Europe. The conspiracy was conceived in Afghanistan, and it spanned several European countries such as France, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. In addition, operatives traveled to North Africa and the Gulf during the preparations for the attacks. The terrorists acted according to terrorist manuals. They had clearly defined roles and tasks. One of them was in charge of securing the cell-members' communications on the Internet. They possessed fake identity cards and were engaged in document fraud, probably to finance their activities. They gathered weapons and chemicals for bomb making which they hid in rented apartments (safehouses). In addition they undertook reconnaissance of potential targets, such as the US embassy in Paris and the US airbase Kleine Brogel in Belgium. The terrorist cell allegedly received financial and logistical support from Europe based GSPC members. One of the cell-members was designated as a suicide-bomber for the attacks against the airbase in Belgium. The terrorists defined themselves as takfiris, extreme religious literalists who see anyone who does not subscribe to their own fanatic interpretation of the Quran and the Prophet's traditions as unbelievers and legitimate targets. The motivations at the group level appeared to be mainly ideological-political and clearly al-Qaida inspired. The core members of the cell expressed an intense loyalty to Bin Laden and Zubaydah. At the individual level, social grievances, personal crises and deprivation seem to have played a role in making the young men receptive to jihadist propaganda. There were reports that members of the group were exposed to racism, suffered from depression, and felt deprived of a decent living in the West.

CASE III: THE AL-TAWHID CONSPIRACY

In April 2002, German police detected a terrorist cell, formed by members of the Jordanian al-Tawhid movement, planning bomb attacks against Jewish targets in Berlin and Dusseldorf. The cell-members assembled early in 2001. The core members were of Jordanian and Palestinian origin. They were first and second-generation immigrants to Germany. The cell acted according to the, by now, familiar operational patterns of jihadist terrorism. The cell was mainly self-financed through crime and the collection of religious taxes, they coded communications, they had multiple identities, they undertook reconnaissance of the targets, and the cell was hierarchically structured. The operatives were recruited in European countries, in Germany and in the UK, but some might have been recruited in Jordan. They traveled extensively inside and outside Europe, and operatives have been to the UK, Belgium, Czech Republic, Austria, Iran, Syria and Afghanistan. One cell member enlisted in the al-Qaida run training camp al-Faruq near Kandahar Airport, and encountered top al-Qaida leaders and lieutenants such as Usama Bin Ladin, Muhammad Atif, Saif al-Adil and Ramsi Bin al-Shibh. Others enlisted in a camp run by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Herat near the Iranian border in 2001 and underwent special courses in bomb making in camps of like-minded groups surrounding al-Zarqawi's complex. Al-Zarqawi was the military leader of the al-Tawhid movement and the coordinator of the cell. He ran the operation "hands on", giving orders on the telephone and through personal meetings in Afghanistan and Iran. The final planning for the attack was completed during a meeting in Iran between 7th and 12th September 2001. The cell was part of al-Tawhid's international support-network. It collected funds and falsified travel documents for al-Tawhid operatives locally in Jordan, in Afghanistan and Iran. The movement was originally focused on toppling the Jordanian Monarchy, establishing a true Islamic state in Jordan, and reoccupying Palestine, but it now also supports the global jihad against the US and its allies, and maintains networks in several European countries, including the UK, Germany, Belgium and Denmark. The movement

considers the London-based jihadist shaykh Abu Qatada their religious guide. The motivation for the group as a whole appeared to be local grievances related to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. However the aims of the movement locally are highly compatible with the broader aims of the global jihad, and there were substantial links and points of contact with al-Qaida's "Central command". At the individual level, the patterns of immigrant frustration, unemployment and deprivation were present pre-recruitment. The operatives became "new-born Muslims" through interacting with Islamic movements in the Diaspora, and they were radicalized and trained in the religious schools and camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

CASE IV: THE CHECHEN NETWORK

The plans by a group of Algerian terrorists to attack the Russian embassy in Paris in December 2002 represent, in my view, one of the best examples of the "globalization" of jihad. The jihadists were former members of the Algerian jihadist organization the GIA, which focused mainly on the battle against the Algerian authorities and France during the 1990s. The members of the Chechen network lived as expatriates in France, but in the latter half of the 1990s they traveled to the Caucasus, Chechnya and Afghanistan where they trained in jihad camps. During raids, French anti-terrorism police seized chemicals and bomb making instructions, and also material suggesting that the militants were interested in manufacturing poison or a biological weapon. The cell appears to have operated in the same fashion as the other detected cells. For example, the cell leader was observed clean shaved and in typical Western clothing a few days before his arrest. The cell members were jihadist "globetrotters" and "jihad veterans" who maintained contacts with militants inside and outside Europe. The alleged cell leader is suspected of involvement in the plot to attack the Notre Dame Cathedral in 2000. The terrorist suspects received logistical support from a GSPC support network operating in Paris, mainly generating funds for jailed "brothers", and the insurgency in Algeria. The leader of this support network, Karim Bourti, expressed ambivalence towards the doctrine of global jihad, and said the Algerian authorities were the main enemy of the GSPC. According to press sources, interrogations of the terrorists indicated that they were mainly motivated by a desire to avenge the killing by Russian special forces of the operational leader of the Dubrovka hostage taking in Moscow in October 2002, Movsar Barajev, and possibly the deaths of other mujahidin in Chechnya. The cell leader is suspected of maintaining ties to al-Zarqawi, and to have been trained in bomb making and manufacturing of chemical weapons. There is insufficient open information to say much about possible individual motivations for joining the jihad. However, in this case, the operatives seem to have been affiliated with jihad both in Algeria and France before they "went global".

CASE V: 11TH MARCH 2004, THE MADRID OPERATION

On 11th of March 2004 a multinational, Moroccan-based, transnationally operating terrorist cell launched multiple bomb attacks against trains in the Spanish capital. The operation was a typical example of the al-Qaida inspired mass casualty terrorism. It took the lives of 191 civilians and injured physically more than 1500, and it led (directly or indirectly) to the fall of the conservative government, and to the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. The terrorist cell was formed in November 2003. The terrorists were recruited in Spain or in Morocco. They appear to have been trained in covert operations and terrorist techniques, but one has not been able to confirm that key members of the cell attended training camps in Afghanistan, or that they had encountered al-Qaida leaders or operatives. Cell members maintained extensive contacts with jihadists outside Spain, and they used the Internet for communications amongst the cell-members and with militants abroad. However, it has been confirmed that affiliates of the core group have trained and possibly fought in Bosnia and Afghanistan. The cell was self-financed through selling drugs and dealing in stolen cars. They obtained the explosives locally, from a mine in Northern Spain. The Madrid operation left few doubts concerning the motivations for the attacks. The timing of the operation, jihadist texts on the Internet, as well as communiqués by Usama Bin Ladin, and an unidentified member of the terrorist cell, implied that the group wanted to punish the Spanish government for sending troops to Iraq, and use democracy as a crowbar to pressure the Spaniards out of Iraq. Another factor that might have contributed to the group's motivations for attacking is the intensified anti-terrorism efforts directed against jihadist networks in Spain after

9/11. For example, the prosecution of the al-Qaida associated Abu Dahdah and his cadre, as well as crackdowns on GSPC support networks in the country. As for the individual motivations for joining the jihad, the profiles of the terrorists do not indicate that they suffered much in terms of social problems such as racism, etc. The terrorists were gifted and seemingly assimilated immigrants in Spain, and there were no reports of serious socio-economic problems. It seems that the operatives actively approached radical underground milieus in Spain and in Morocco and became gradually more fundamentalist and inspired by the doctrine of global jihad.

CASE VI: THE ASSASSINATION OF THEO VAN GOGH

On the 2nd of November 2004, an al-Qaida inspired militant murdered the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, as the artist was cycling on his way to work. What first appeared to be a spontaneous, religiously motivated murder, prompted by a short film Van Gogh made about domestic violence against Muslim women, now appears to have been part of a broader conspiracy aimed at launching terrorist bomb attacks in the Netherlands, and to conduct political murders of Dutch right-wing liberal politicians and a Portuguese EU-commissionaire. The murderer belonged to a jihadist milieu in Amsterdam and The Hague that acted according to the *modus* of jihadist terrorist cells. A Syrian and a self-proclaimed and self-taught radical imam who came to Holland from Germany in 1998 headed the cell. The assassin pinned a letter to the dead artist containing threats against the Dutch-Somali politician Ayan Hirsi Ali, who wrote the script for his recent short film, as well as clear references to al-Qaida's ideology. In addition, the letter condemned Dutch immigration policies and proclaimed that Dutch politicians, who were dominated by Jews, had initiated a Crusade against Muslims in Holland. The assassin also seems to have been obsessed with Israel's occupation of Palestine and the US-led invasion of Iraq. In one article he wrote for the bulletin of a youth center he worked for, he said that, "the Netherlands is now our <the jihadists'> enemy because the country participates in Iraq. Allegedly, members of the group also conspired to launch terrorist attacks in Portugal during the European soccer championship in 2004, possibly to send a message to the Portuguese government that supported the invasion and sent troops to Iraq. The terrorist suspects seem to have linked issues such as the invasion with domestic grievances related to the treatment of Muslims in Holland. At the individual level, the assassin and some of his accomplices appear to have suffered from alienation, personal crises, failed ambitions, exposure to racism, etc., in the period before recruitment.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ladies and gentlemen, I have now presented what I believe are the main patterns or trends concerning why and how jihadist terrorists operate in the European context. Most analysts have portrayed the recent patterns of terrorism in Europe as an integrated part of al-Qaida's global jihad against the US and its allies. It has been said and written by leading experts that Europe has become a battleground for the al-Qaida-led globalist salafist jihad, instead of being a sanctuary for jihadist individuals and groups. There is much truth to this, but yet, it is somehow misleading. Describing Europe as a "battleground" might lead people with limited knowledge of the subject to think of "hordes" of al-Qaida connected Holy Warriors who are waging a "terrorist war" on the European continent. As we have seen, this is not the reality. Maintaining an either/or perception on the battleground/sanctuary distinction is not necessarily fruitful either. This presentation has showed us that Europe has become an attack arena, and a target in its own right, for small groups of highly or extremely-motivated, and more or less trained terrorists, with varying ideological and organizational ties to al-Qaida. Importantly, and not covered in this presentation, despite massive efforts to halt terrorism financing on the global scene, the region is still a sanctuary for Islamist expatriates of various ideological shades, and it is still an area in which moderate, semi-radical and radical Islamists engage in support activity for jihadist insurgencies in North Africa, the Middle East and other parts of Asia. Indeed, investigation of the operative terrorist cells in European countries has revealed that the cells gathered funds, weapons and falsified travel documents for "brothers" operating in other regions, parallel to planning and preparing terrorist attacks in Europe. So, where are we to date?

Many jihadist terrorist attacks have been thwarted because of vigilance on behalf of the European intelligence services and good police work. The public increasingly accepts the reality of the threat. The services have increased their budgets and heightened their competence to deal with the threat. Anti-terrorism campaigns have dealt substantial blows to the radical Islamist infrastructures of European countries, such as the networks of the GSPC. However, Jihadist terrorist activity seems to persist despite counter-terrorism efforts. I do think we will see new attacks in the European theatre, probably against countries that contribute or contributed in Iraq. The symbolically important conflicts that fuel the ideological-political motivations for jihad continue (Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, etc.). The social conditions that contribute to motivating individuals to join jihadist groups persist. Problems of xenophobia, racism, “ghettofication” might become even more widespread if Europeans increasingly associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism. We observe that new generations of jihadists are being recruited. The recruits are getting younger, indicating that al-Qaida is becoming even more of a youth movement. When al-Qaida leaders issue their statements, they address the “Mujahid Youth” and seek to secure the generation shift for the global jihad. The Iraq war certainly benefits recruitment for the jihadist cause. In the eyes of the mujahidin and many potential recruits, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq “confirm” the validity of al-Qaida’s ideology. We have seen acts of terrorism in Europe in which the Iraq war appears to have been an important motivational factor, such as Madrid and Van Gogh cases. The big question concerning the future threat to Europe, and to other regions as well, is how “Iraq veterans” will affect patterns of Islamist terrorism on the international scene. How important will they be as instigators and leaders of the European jihadist networks? Will we in the future also see more direct “spillover” from Iraq in the form of attacks executed by “international wings” of groups that are active inside Iraq? In terms of assessing the threat of new attacks, smaller attacks and assassinations by jihadist individuals who are inspired by the more organized groups, might in principle occur anywhere. Based on this investigation of motivational and operational patterns of jihadism in Europe, the likely targets of Islamist mass casualty terrorism in Europe are countries that:

1. Participate in Iraq and Afghanistan, voice support for US military operations abroad.
2. Support and/or cooperate with other enemies of the global jihadists (Russia, India, etc.).
3. Are on al-Qaida’s “radar”, meaning that they have received threats.
4. Have a significant domestic jihadist “infrastructure”.
5. Crack down hard and indiscriminately against suspicious Diaspora subgroups.
6. Tolerate discriminating and anti-Islamic discourse and political statements domestically.
7. Implement harsh measures against immigrants that stigmatize the broader Diaspora communities.
8. Lack experience and institutional tools to tackle the threat.
9. Do not accept the reality of the threat.

With this rather pessimistic conclusion and list of threat factors, I thank you all for your attention.