Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe.
Trends and Perspectives

Research Report funded by the Danish Ministry of Justice

Submitted 14 January, 2005

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'The battle for Europe is larger than the one that religious leaders would have these young Muslims fight. It is a battle over the right of self-definition.

The war for Muslim minds around the world may turn on the outcome of this struggle.'

(Kepel 2004)

Introduction

This report is the outcome of a short-term research grant provided by the Danish Ministry of Justice. The purpose of the project was to shed much-needed light on the little-known process of recruitment to currently operating Islamist terrorist networks within Europe. However, the views, findings and conclusions of this report are the sole responsibility of the author and do not express the official view of the Danish Ministry of Justice.

Because of the limited time available for this study, a few remarks on its topic are appropriate. The study focuses on the recruitment practices in the global Jihad as they play out in Europe. While the focal point is terrorism, this study only deals with a single form of contemporary terrorism, usually referred to as the global Jihad in order to differentiate between religiously inspired conflicts of a geographically limited nature and those with a global vision. However interesting other types of terrorism might be, this study does not include secular or nationalist terrorist groups such as the IRA or ETA. Other religiously justified forms of terrorism also present within Europe have also been excluded. Examples of Islamic terrorist entities that have been excluded are the Palestinian organisations as well as Shi'a Islamic groups. They follow different trajectories and rarely interact with the internationally oriented militant Islamists. Although there are indications of some interaction, these are certainly not on a scale that would tempt anyone to label this phenomenon as a terrorist international. The various terrorist organisations do have very different agendas, and for some of the groups, their mutual hatred surpasses that projected onto their sworn enemies. The terrorists of interest to this study are all linked to the ideology most often associated with Al Qaeda.

Europe's role in the current global Jihad is a phenomenon that was neglected by government, security services, academia and the media throughout Europe up until the attacks on the US on 11 September 2001. The lack of attention to this phenomenon will take years to remedy, but I believe the indispensability of such endeavours became quite clear with the attacks in Spain in March 2004. Previously seen as a relative backwater in the war on terrorism, Europe is now on the

frontline. 'It's trench warfare', in the words of a security expert. 'We keep taking them out. They keep coming at us. And every time they are coming at us harder'.(Barnett 2004)

The geographical limitation imposed on this study – that of Western Europe – necessitates further elaboration. Strictly speaking, it would be impossible to consider the European dimension of the global Jihad as an isolated phenomenon. Instead it is intertwined with individuals, organisations, ideologies and situations across the world. The Jihad is truly global in nature, and it would amount to folly to ignore its close links to the Middle East, South East Asia, Central Asia and North Africa. The idea behind this study was to examine the level of recruitment activity as it unfolds in Europe, whether it has a direct impact on European affairs or affects other countries.

While some readers may be disappointed by the author's apparent disinterest in the actual number of individuals being recruited for terrorist activity in Europe, this is not the case. However, to present reliable figures on European terrorists would require access to restricted government information across Europe. Needless to say, this was not possible to obtain, nor was it actually desirable. Several recent remarks by officials from European security services state that terrorist recruitment is on the rise. Taking these remarks into consideration, and at the same time assuming that evidence exists to verify the claims, my focus remains on the general trends exemplified by specific cases. The information used in this study comes exclusively from open sources. An obsession with numbers would likely result in a skewed and potentially misleading analysis. It is the opinion of the author that the central question that should be answered in this study concerns what future trends are to be expected in the recruitment to the Jihad in Europe. In short, will Europe experience a decline or an increase in recruitment to Islamist terrorism in the near to mid-term future? I am inclined to argue that Europe is likely to see increased participation in the global Jihad, and the following pages will serve to clarify this perspective.

The attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 by Al Qaeda were unlikely to have materialised without a significant and dedicated European component. International investigative efforts rapidly pointed out a group of Islamists residing in Germany as a critical component in the successful realisation of an ambitious operational plan. The Hamburg cell of Al Qaeda terrorists had become radicalised and later joined the global Jihad in Germany. While the attacks certainly affected the US, the operation pointed to a significant security problem emanating from Europe.

Fortunately, 11 September 2001 was contrived and organised under conditions that no longer exist. A safe haven, a training infrastructure, organisational support, and the integrity needed to prepare a complex terrorist attack have all been dismantled over the past three years (Leiken 2004).

This development could lead to the assumption that Islamist terrorism has been set back irrevocably. While it is true that the terrorists have been put under considerable pressure, this perspective emphasises the organisational structure of a more or less defunct terrorist organisation and does not take the wider social context into consideration. To simplify the argument, the war on terrorism has notably been successful because Al Qaeda has suffered irretrievable losses. Yet, Islamist terrorism has simultaneously managed to metamorphose into a new threat. How did this happen?

Among Europe's millions of Muslims, who is susceptible to recruitment? Why do they join? How does one actually join the Jihad? Those assuming that all Muslims in Europe represent a threat of some kind contribute with nothing besides a public display of ignorance. That the terrorists of concern to this study are all Muslims should be obvious, but this in itself explains nothing. Statistically speaking, militants and terrorists represent but a fraction of a minority and do not act on behalf of every European Muslim.

Something that unites a very diverse group of European militant Islamists is their decision to make a link to the Jihad. Previously, the recruitment took place in camps in Afghanistan and constituted a form of formal recruitment. While many young Muslims went to Afghanistan to train, less than thirty percent of the trainees were invited to join a terrorist organisation (Sageman 2004). This selection process is no longer an option since the training facilities in Afghanistan have been effectively dismantled, thus depriving the militant Islamists of a place to train and interact.

Yet, the European media run stories about terrorist suspects being arrested across Europe on a weekly, if not daily, basis. It would seem that the loss of Afghanistan as a terrorist safe haven is not the victory it was claimed to be. The continuing arrests signal a new development in which Europe's role should be scrutinised closely. A new stage in the war on terrorism would be reached if Muslims raised in Western Europe were recruited, underwent their military and ideological training here, and then considered Europe as a frontline. The Dutch intelligence service concluded in December 2002 that the first signs of such a development were already becoming visible (AIVD 2002). This report is inclined to argue that this is no longer a future scenario, but is already taking place.

Research notes

As the British terrorism scholar Andrew Silke notes in his introduction to terrorism research, 'research on terrorism has had a deeply troubled past…and the quality of the content leaves much to be desired' (Silke 2003). This troubled past has been carried into the present and is acutely visible in the terminology applied in terrorism literature. Something akin to anarchy prevails at the moment, a situation where definitions are unclear, misleading or inappropriate. I have chosen to clarify my understanding of key terminology in relation to this study. In some respects, my understanding and definitions differ from those of other researchers, though the ensuing academic discussion is better treated in-depth elsewhere. The focus remains on terrorist recruitment.

Cell

A small group of terrorists. A closed unit but with one or more links to a network.

European

For the purpose of this study, defined as individuals residing in Europe, whether as migrant workers, foreign students, asylum seekers or citizens.

Gatekeeper

A militant Islamist who is personally connected to a terrorist network.

Islamist

A Muslim who follows one of the very conservative branches of Islam, often the Salafi or Wahabi creed, and who has turned Islam into a self-contained lifestyle.

Mujaheddin

Literally, Holy Warrior, but most often associated with militant Islamists fighting guerrilla warfare.

Network

A number of cells interrelated through personal relationships.

Recruitment

Recruitment for the Jihad is understood as an activity that intends to enlist militant Islamists in an existing terrorist cell. Recruitment is the bridge between a personal belief and violent activism.

Radicalisation

The progressive, personal development from law-abiding Muslim to militant Islamist.

Recruitment to Jihad in Europe before 11 September 2001

To comprehend the current situation of Islamist terrorist recruitment in Europe it is necessary to have at least a rudimentary understanding of previous cases. A very brief outline of this trend is necessary to fully appreciate the circumstances leading up to 11 September 2001 and beyond. While the members of the Hamburg cell certainly represent the most lethal of Islamists to emanate from Europe, they were by no means the first group of people to have been recruited to the Jihad. The recruitment to Jihad in Europe did not begin with the now ill-famed Hamburg cell that carried out the attacks on the US in 2001. There is no disputing the fact that there has been a clear development in the direct threat posed by Islamist groups to the West. What started as an insignificant external threat in the 1980s, almost always carried out somewhere outside Europe, has now become a threat to Europe and is emanating from within European countries. While this development has been gradual, 11 September 2001 was a turning point that marked an intensification of the recruitment process.

It should be stressed that while a number of individuals from Europe joined various Jihads over the past decades, the vast majority did so as Mujaheddin with the intention to fight as guerrillas in irregular units. They linked up with various insurgency movements across the Muslim world, like Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kashmir and Chechnya, where they took part in conventional guerrilla warfare. It is important to note that very few actually became terrorists. This said, there was an overlap between the Mujaheddin and the terrorists, at times making it impossible to distinguish between them. Some who started out as Mujaheddin later turned into terrorists, and some who trained as terrorists found themselves fighting on the frontlines. The various groups were to some degree intertwined through a shared ideology.

Before 11 September 2001, Europe was considered a tolerant area by militant Islamists because it was possible to advertise a connection to the Jihad. Prospective Mujaheddin only had to ask somebody with a public appearance to arrange for training and recruitment, most often through the Afghan camps. The tolerant attitude of governments and the indifference of the population in general resulted in a systematic effort by radical clerics to preach the virtues of Jihad from Mosques in Europe. The best known of these Mosques is the one located in Finsbury Park in London, led since 1996 by the charismatic Abu Hamza Al-Masri, himself a former Mujaheddin. Radical Islamist propaganda was sold at the Mosque, including audiotapes and videos with graphic combat footage, all in line with the Salafist leanings of the Imam. Abu Hamza appears to have been a vital link in sending young Muslims off to train for Jihad.

Recruitment was conducted fairly openly and candidates were channelled through fringe extremist Salafist Mosques. This traffic was to a certain extent known by the authorities, who deliberately ignored it on the assumption that the Holy Warriors would not conduct operations on European soil. In several instances, complaints by local Muslims infuriated by the behaviour of the Islamists were considered as domestic disputes. This approach has been labelled an expression of political correctness and it is difficult to come up with a more plausible interpretation. The fear of provoking Muslim communities without reason created a climate in which the Islamists felt quite secure. Over the years the most important destination by far was Afghanistan, although the reason for going there changed dramatically.

The Afghan Experience

The historical significance of the Afghan war (1979-1988) must be stressed once again. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a watershed in militant Islamist circles. From all over the Muslim world volunteers met, interacted and fought for an extended period, and the fact that an unknown number of the Mujaheddin originated in Europe is not surprising. Western governments were dedicated to striking a blow at the Soviet Union, preferably through the physical sacrifices of others. It appears that those willing to risk their lives fighting the Soviets were free to do so. I have not been able to detect a coherent or systematic effort to discourage European Muslims from travelling to Afghanistan during the war.

The ideological impact of the Afghan war on the formation of a global Jihad cannot be overemphasised. A common enemy had united various indigenous Mujaheddin factions and foreign volunteers and strong bonds were forged (Sageman 2004). However, the withdrawal of Soviet troops eventually exposed the very real ideological differences between the Mujaheddin factions, and internal disagreement about future actions resulted in a withering of allegiances and alliances. In the end, the traditionalist Mujaheddin retired. Believing they had fulfilled their religious duty in defending oppressed Muslim brothers, their task was completed and they returned to their previous lives. With the moderate Mujaheddin gone, the Salafi and Wahabi adherents were left to chart the future, emboldened by their success. In the late 1980s, only a small hardcore advocated the initiation of a wider Jihad against the enemies of Islam.

The leading proponents of a continued Jihad were isolated in every sense of the word and found little resonance for their uncompromising stance. However, they were later to form the nucleus of Al Qaeda. Other Afghan veterans suggested that an international brigade should be

formed that could be called upon whenever and wherever Muslim communities were under threat from an invading force. As such, the idea resembled an informal version of a rapid reaction brigade based on an operational concept of defence rather than an offensive one. As far as I have been able to detect, the rapid reaction concept was only activated once, although it later surfaced in a degraded form during the Balkan conflicts.

The single known case of activation concerns the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the contested region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s. It is a well-documented fact that Azerbaijan contracted about 1,000 Mujaheddin from Afghanistan to serve as frontline troops. The Afghan brigade was disbanded in 1994 after suffering heavy casualties in fighting the Armenians. Although the conflict was portrayed as a Jihad in Islamist circles it generated little interest among European Islamists and even less actual support. The reason why the European Mujaheddin did not respond to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh has never been examined properly.

The end of the Afghan war and the ensuing doctrinal disputes between Mujaheddin factions shaped the later development of the Jihad. The overconfidence generated by a decisive victory against an infidel superpower led to the assumption that anything was possible and that the Mujaheddin had God on their side. However, in the late 1980s the debate centred on offensive vs. defensive Jihad in a traditional way; the belief in terrorism by any means was institutionalised much later.

Within the militant Islamist circles in Europe some degree of training and indoctrination was considered indispensable, and the best place for this was Afghanistan. During the 1990s, many thousands of Islamists went to Afghanistan to train for Jihad: estimates range from 12,000 to 70,000. It is worthwhile to take a look at the experience of these volunteers because quite a few replaced their previous lifestyle with an unswerving loyalty to the Jihad. The training camps in Afghanistan provided the infrastructure for these volunteers, and handpicked instructors took care of instilling the Al Qaeda doctrine of maximum damage in the mind of the terrorist operative. A great number of recruits went through basic training in the camps in Afghanistan, most between the ages of 16 and 25 and originating from virtually all corners of the world. European recruits were often sent to the camp at Khalden, and they came from France, Germany, Sweden and other countries to do basic training. Those who were very dedicated were then invited to attend the Darunta camp for advanced courses — like a six-week course in bomb manufacturing (Bernton 2002).

The combat training was coupled with a conditioning of the mindset of the recruit. The steps involved in this process have been well described in the biography of Zacarias Moussaoui.

> Once in the camp, it is easy, as in any sect to make him lose his bearings. First of all he is put through athletic training, and then training in weapons handling. These are intensive exercises. He is always being set challenges that are increasingly difficult to meet. The young recruit is not well fed. He gradually becomes exhausted. He never manages to completely come up with what is being asked of him. After several weeks or months, he gets the feeling that he's not capable of doing what is expected of him. He experiences a feeling of embarrassment and malaise. In his own eyes, he is completely belittled: he feels guilty because he is incompetent. And yet he is told over and over again that others before him have succeeded and gone on to "great things"….. And if he carries on, it is to the bitter end. Because the only thing he can do to help the cause is to give his life to it. And this will also prove to others that, at the end, he met their expectations. (Moussaoui 2003)

The process of selecting a candidate for terrorist operations was not difficult once the recruits were in the camp. As the quote illustrates, emphasis was less on technical aptitude than on the nurturing of a certain mindset. The desired change in the recruit could only be brought about by an arduous and humiliating experience that would separate the mentally strong from the lesser beings. By being exposed to intense rigors, the young men who passed the test would have proved their dedication. If they survived the training phase without suffering a breakdown they would become trusted members of a sacred fraternity. In this respect it should be remembered that bin Laden himself was rather unformed and naïve when he first came to Afghanistan. He too was to change considerably.

To join the Jihad prior to 11 September 2001 the only prerequisite was an acquaintance who could arrange for training in Afghanistan. A formal invitation to join a terrorist network was extended to the volunteers upon completion of their training after senior members had had a chance to evaluate their dedication and usefulness.

The most severe blow to terrorist recruitment is directly related to the intervention in Afghanistan in late 2001. The loss of the training facilities in Afghanistan deprived the volunteers of a place to learn the skills of a terrorist, but they also lost the opportunity to meet other volunteers from all over the world. It is possible that the loss of the training camps will gradually diminish the psychological control of the leaders over the militant Islamists, for without the intense experience of training at the centre of international terrorism in a dusty Afghan camp, the concept of a global Jihad may prove difficult to internalise.

A considerable number of Al Qaeda leaders and Mujaheddin managed to avoid capture by the US troops and left Afghanistan. Some have returned to their country of origin and have joined the ranks of local Islamist militant groups. Others have become what Shaul Shay has called 'architects of independent terrorist cells' (Shay and Schweitzer 2000). While lacking a specific organisational affiliation, these cells cooperate with other institutionalised terrorist organisations, thus taking the global Jihad to another, more complex level.

The war in Bosnia

The civil war in the Former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s attracted many prospective Mujaheddin from the Arab world and to a lesser extent from Europe. It is difficult to define these volunteers as terrorists because the majority were involved in regular guerrilla warfare. They joined as Holy Warriors and not in order to become terrorists. They are, however, important to consider because some of the Mujaheddin were later to resurface as full-blown terrorists.

The foreign Mujaheddin appeared in Central Bosnia for the first time in July 1992. A battalion was created for non-Bosnian fighters, where Arabs were a minority in comparison to the Mujaheddin, who came from all over the world. There is no certainty about the actual number of foreign Mujaheddin who went to fight in Bosnia. Estimates range from 300 to 30,000, although both figures appear unrealistic. According to information released by UNPROFOR, there were about 3,000 volunteers, largely concentrated in Central Bosnia. Besides being integrated into the Bosnian army they were also associated with paramilitary groups known as 'The Green Legion' and the 'Black Swans' (Balkanpeace 2000). The majority of foreign Mujaheddin came from Yemen, Algeria, Egypt and Afghanistan, and many had combat experience. In addition, several hundreds of Islamists came from France, Italy, Germany and Britain. One explanation for this traffic has been provided by Abu Hamza al-Masri, who claimed to understand why young European Muslims would volunteer for the Jihad in Bosnia. In Abu Hamza's words, 'they want to struggle against something that is indisputable, which is non-Muslims raping, killing and maiming Muslims' (Kohlmann 2004). By stressing the virtues of the Mujaheddin, Abu Hamza conveniently forgot that the Mujaheddin were to be accused of the same crimes they claimed to resist. By 1993 the enthusiasm of the early arrivals were replaced by some semblance of order and by then the Mujaheddin were a force to be reckoned with. Gradually they slipped away from the Bosnian army to run their own show with an independent agenda with the full but tacit support of Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic (Kohlmann 2004).

Although the Mujaheddin certainly fought and acquired a ferocious reputation, they also introduced a missionary zeal. Their unfamiliarity with Bosnian history and culture allowed them to sidestep local sentiments and present a one-dimensional view of the conflict. Insisting on the religious roots of the conflict they projected an image of an Islam under siege, and they were in their right element. They were preoccupied with building their own organisation and recruiting local Bosnian Muslims from their principal training centre in Travnik. Although comparatively small in number, the Mujaheddin were instrumental in escalating the conflict. Their propensity for executions and mutilations was a deliberate and planned affair designed to turn the conflict into an irrevocable act of religious warfare. This view was certainly not shared by the majority of Bosnian Muslims, who did not see the conflict in the same religious terms as the Mujaheddin.

The foreign Mujaheddin were widely feared and hated by the local Bosnian Muslims, who led an almost secular lifestyle. They saw no problem in eating pork, consuming alcohol or maintaining a close shave, and resented having foreigners telling them they were bad Muslims. The initial gratitude turned into hostility and a significant clash of cultures arose. In the words of the deputy commander of BiH Army, Colonel Stjepan Siber, 'It was a mistake to let them here… They commit most of the atrocities and work against the interest of the Muslim people. They have been killing, looting and stealing'(Balkanpeace 2000). Today it is presumed that the Mujaheddin were responsible for a very large part of the atrocities, a fact they often documented themselves by proudly displaying trophies of fallen enemies.

During the war, the presence of a large number of Mujaheddin was widely known but usually considered as just one problem among many. The international community turned its full attention the issue of Mujaheddin in Bosnia only after it was discovered that a remarkable number of the Mujaheddin volunteers were known to Interpol because of their association with Islamic terrrorism. As the war was winding down, and the Mujaheddin were asked to leave; some left for other trouble spots, notably Chechnya, Algeria and Afghanistan, at times taking locally recruited youth with them.

The Mujaheddin battalion was disbanded in 1996 as a direct result of US pressure, and the 7th Muslim brigade soon afterwards. Some former Mujaheddin settled in Central Bosnia, where they continued their menacing presence in respect to the local population, SFOR, and the police. Many dispersed again in 2001, when they were evicted from properties rightly belonging to returning Serb refugees.

An aspiring Al Qaeda took an active part in the recruitment for the Jihad in Bosnia, but the fledgling terrorist network succeeded mainly in attracting Arab volunteers. However, during this period important links and friendships were forged that survived the war in Bosnia (Vermaat 2002). An example of the ideological impact of the Bosnian experience is the case of a young Frenchman originally from Roubaix, Lionel Dumont. He converted to Islam at a young age and went to Bosnia, where he joined the Takfir Wal-Hijra element of the Mujaheddin. After the war he returned to France with a commitment to carry the Jihad further. There he formed the 'Roubaix Gang', largely composed of French North Africans, to conduct a number of terrorist attacks (Vermaat 2002). With the exception of France, the spill-over effect of the war in Bosnia attracted scant attention in Europe. A French intelligence report from 1995 stated that a serious security threat existed in Europe and was directly related to terrorist sleeper cells trained in Bosnia (Kohlmann 2004). The French were right in their assessment, and the bombing spree in France in 1995 established links between Algerian GIA cells in Europe and Mujaheddin leaders in Bosnia and Afghanistan.

In October 2001, the US and Britain closed their embassies in Sarajevo as a response to a credible and imminent threat of a terrorist attack. Shortly after, NATO officials claimed to have averted an attack on US SFOR bases in north-eastern Bosnia. These events have led to much speculation about the terrorist threat from the Balkans. However, the risk of Islamist-inspired violence seems slight and is primarily contingent on the weakness of institutions, rather than on ideological and religious sympathies with the Islamic world. The real danger seems to be closely linked to inept governance, lack of public security, weak rule of law, economic stagnation, institutional corruption and organised crime. In such an environment, terrorists have a free rein. There is a very limited risk of a fundamentalist wave emanating from the Balkans, because such a development would contradict religious traditions, political views and lifestyles. The religious views imported by the Mujaheddin during the war in Bosnia made it crystal clear to the local Muslim population that this was not what they wanted. But then again, terrorist cells and even larger networks operate without the need for a broader base of popular support (ICG 2001).

Within the Balkans, accusations have been rife since 11 September 2001 concerning allegations that especially Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania harbour Islamist terrorists and that training camps are located in these areas. However, the much-talked-about terrorist training camps have never materialised in spite of intense media interest (ICG 2001). These allegations remain unsubstantiated and have not been supported by any form of evidence, but have instead served as short-term political strategies. Serbia especially wasted no time in the immediate aftermath of 11

September 2001 of revoking its own existential myth of being the defender of the West. The war on terrorism was perceived as heaven-sent by Serbia's leaders and the media, who stressed their anti-terrorist operations during the wars in Bosnia (1992-95) and Kosovo (1998-99). Viewed from afar, the same operations amounted to deliberate ethnic cleansing and were completely unrelated to counter-terrorism.

Lessons learned and lessons ignored

The examples from Afghanistan and Bosnia illustrate that recruitment to Jihad is not a new phenomenon in Europe. A few general observations are appropriate in this respect.

- While some European Muslims expressed their sympathy with the Mujaheddin, very few actually fought
- Not all of the Jihads have involved Europeans
- There has been a change in modus operandi from guerrilla warfare to terrorism

It is not surprising that of the millions of Muslims living in Europe some would be attracted to fighting as Mujaheddin or to becoming involved in terrorist activity. Yet, in spite of the inadequate figures available, there are indications that this group was quite small indeed. While many European Muslims sympathised with one cause or another, very few actually crossed the line between vocal opposition and armed struggle. This trend clearly illustrates that it has always been a miniscule minority of European Muslims who represented a security risk, whether domestic or international. This phenomenon has not received the attention it actually merits, and further research would enlighten us on different perspectives on armed conflict within the Muslim communities.

The Islamist terrorist presence in Europe was introduced by Egyptians and Algerians in exile who continued their national struggle from European host countries. Primarily, the Egyptian Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya and the Algerian GIA carried their violent activities abroad, with the exception of the Algerians who set their sights on France in the mid-1990s. Compared to the support for the Afghans fighting the Soviet Union, the reach and appeal of these groups were limited because they were essentially preoccupied with political struggles in North Africa. Few Europeans fought in Asia, but this aspect was instrumental in creating a sense of spiritual commonality and global visions of Jihad, and though it took years to develop the concept, this

would later affect Europe and the rest of the world. The direct threat from Islamist terrorists to Europe was insignificant until the mid-1990s. There were few Mujaheddin in Europe, and they took no interest in targeting Europe; instead they travelled abroad to take part in Jihads in Chechnya, Kashmir, Tajikistan, Albania and Kosovo.

While the Islamist involvement in Bosnia galvanised the Mujaheddin, it never became the success they had hoped for. The complete disregard for the local culture alienated the Mujaheddin from their only source of support. The strategy of reinforcing other Muslim communities considered oppressed was to fail again, especially in Kosovo. While Al Qaeda did recruit some members of the UCK, the Kosovo Liberation Army, and later recruited among radical Albanians in Macedonia, because of the intervention by NATO forces the influence of the Islamists was undercut, and the local Muslims of the region realised that they would be much better off if they oriented themselves towards the West and Europe in particular, in spite of the considerable availability of Islamist funds (Vermaat 2002). Foreign Mujaheddin repeated their mistakes while operating with the UCK, having forgotten the hard-learned lesson from Bosnia. Again their propensity for mindless violence backfired, as testified in the summer of 2001 by an UCK fighter who pointed out that Albanians do not mutilate bodies, only the Mujaheddin (Taylor 2001).

Much of the picture that has been uncovered since 11 September 2001 could have been revealed earlier through studying the writings, speeches and preaching of these scholars and groups during the 1990s. There have been many arrests and investigations of suspected terrorists in Europe over the past three years; so far these activities have focussed on the operational levels rather than the cultural and social infrastructure of this phenomenon (Paz 2002). In the words of Jason Burke, the militants believe they are fighting a last-ditch battle for the survival of their society, culture, religion and way of life (Burke 2004). Burke's perception is accurate, but exactly what culture and what form of Islam are they defending? Their actions testify to the existence of an introverted, xenophobic, and extremely isolated community that tolerates no opposition whatsoever. It is from within this community that the terrorists are being recruited.

Changes affecting recruitment

As briefly illustrated in the previous section, recruitment to Jihad in Europe is not a new phenomenon. Efforts to prevent terrorist recruitment in Europe increased dramatically after 11 September 2001 but with limited results. The sudden change in the attitude of the governments meant that the recruiters were prohibited to speak as openly as they had done right up until the attacks on America. Europe is gradually, but surely, rivalling the Middle East and Afghanistan as a recruiting hub of Islamist terrorists. Terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda and the GSPC are very well entrenched in Western Europe, where they have established clandestine networks and terrorist cells. During the 1990s, these networks managed to stay clear of counter-terrorist investigations and only a few were uncovered. It is not possible to come up with a realistic estimate of the number of terrorists presently located in Europe, but it is a question of quality rather than quantity. Despite the efforts to track down Islamist terrorists, Europe has remained an active centre for terrrorist support activity such as propaganda, recruitment, fundraising and procurement (Gunaratna 2004). There is still a terrorist presence in Europe organised according to mutual ideologies and personal friendships. The significance of a shared ideology is crucial and has allowed militant Islamists to gain entry into an otherwise closed community of Holy Warriors.

Yet there have been significant changes, both in a long-term perspective and naturally in the wake of 11 September 2001. These changes have altered the European dimension in the global Jihad to the extent that it merits our sincere attention. One of the better analyses of the post-11 September 2001 recruitment structure in Europe comes from the Dutch security service (AIVD). Notwithstanding a little confusion about the terminology used in the report, the findings are clear and prescient. The conclusion reached by the AIVD is that recruitment to Jihad is not a new phenomenon, and its scope and significance are becoming more important (AIVD 2002). However, in order to fully appreciate the Dutch findings it is necessary to highlight what actual changes have occurred in the recruitment environment.

From noble to savage

The most far-reaching change has largely gone unnoticed over the past two decades. The entire concept of Jihad has been exposed to a very profound transformation. In essence, what started as a noble intent some twenty years ago, intended to assist Muslims in need, has been degraded to such an extent that today Jihad is most often associated with mindless violence directed at civilians. What was previously understood as a form of self-defence against unequivocal aggression now

equals indiscriminate bombings and beheadings. Contemporary militant Islamists who evoke a recent glorious victory against the Soviet Union in the Afghan war seem to be unaware of the severed ideological link to the very premises of the Afghan resistance. This short span of attention is noteworthy because it signals a very dynamic and ecclesiastical form of reasoning and represents a conceptual downward spiral, enthusiastically supported by a few radical clerics. The clerics who were outcasts ten years ago are now the leading proponents of armed struggle, and it is their apocalyptic vision that sets the agenda. In no other respect does this subtle yet all-pervasive change affect the circumstances of the current and continued recruitment to Islamic terrorism in Europe.

Visibility

Another significant change is the increased scrutiny of militant Islamist circles by the authorities. The indifference towards radicals and militants alike that characterised Europe in the 1990s was replaced by frantic efforts to ascertain that no terrorist operations were launched from Europe or within Europe after 11 September 2001. The former complacency has been replaced by a suspicious eye, especially on radical Mosques. This of course has made recruitment in a Mosque environment much more difficult. Radical clerics with a public profile were demoted to the role of provocateurs, regardless of their claims to be in contact with key figures of the Global Jihad.

Afghan sanctuary

The impact of the loss of Afghanistan as sanctuary dealt a blow to the recruitment structure of the global Jihad, forcing the terrorists to adapt. With the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 the traffic of European Jihadists to the training camps came to an abrupt halt and has ceased permanently, thus depriving new recruits of paramilitary training and making new acquaintances.

The 'Real Al Qaeda'

The Al Qaeda that masterminded 11 September 2001 and created a terrorist infrastructure during the 1990s has suffered serious setbacks and heavy losses. This particular network has been significantly weakened in the global war on terror. The initiative has shifted to a new and younger generation of Islamist terrorists who are much less linked to the original core of Al Qaeda. The new generation is not affiliated with the companionship of the Afghan war, the following civil war, or the environment of the training camps. Possessing weak organisational links to the original Al Qaeda members, they have chosen instead to align themselves with the broader aims of the Global

Jihad. The current networks and the associated cells are autonomous to a high degree, and the operatives do not share the organisational history of the old core, but rather display greater independence and a looser structure. There has even been speculation that the new generation sees the old Al Qaeda as an anachronism, and they are very committed to carrying the torch further (Gorka 2004).

The current and very diffuse network of Al Qaeda-inspired or related groups is extremely adaptive and dynamic. Instead of being structured and organised in a traditional organisational sense, the mutual support and coordination between members of the network is on an ad hoc basis and primarily based on a shared vision of a common enemy. Adding to the complexity is the existence of multiple, simultaneously operating networks largely independent from each other. They function like layered networks, so taking one down does not affect the others. This change in structure from a former core to a new generation of Al Qaeda operatives leads to the term of the Real Al Qaeda, which implies that it is the ideological influence of Bin Laden that matters, not the actual operational control, and this corresponds exactly with the strategic vision of Al Qaeda as it was formulated years ago.

The war in Iraq

A significant factor in the transformation of the recruiting environment has been the war in Iraq. Popular opposition to the war was widespread in Europe during 2003 and this also influenced the sentiments in Muslim communities. The vast majority of European Muslims were content to express their disagreement with the invasion of Iraq by peaceful means. Active participation in anti-war demonstrations actually showed an adherence to the European ideal of expressing discontent. Some, however, perceived the invasion of Iraq as a pretext for a Western plot to subdue the Muslim world and as a plot to control natural resources in the Middle East. Even fewer people within this group responded to the call to arms to defend Muslims in Iraq.

Before the invasion of Iraq, intelligence and law enforcement officials remarked that the discussion about Iraq in Europe was being exploited by militant Islamists as a recruitment drive. 'Iraq' had become a battle cry and anti-American sermons and rhetoric increased considerably. The message clearly resonated among the young European Muslims who attended the radical talks. According to the official comments, recruitment was most visible in Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands, specifically targeting a younger audience that included many converts (Natta

and Butler 2003). The recruitment drive to support Iraqi Muslims from infidel aggression did succeed to some extent, and a few examples amply illustrate the extent of the commitment.

In March 2003, German authorities arrested six men with ties to the al-Nur Mosque in Berlin. Although the al-Nur Mosque is located in a predominantly Turk neighbourhood, it is primarily frequented by worshippers from Arab countries who adhere to the Wahabi branch of Islam, which has little following among Germans of Turkish descent. Those arrested were suspected of belonging to a network working to recruit Arab students to conduct terrorist operations to coincide with the outbreak of war in Iraq. The recruiter was a 32-year-old Tunisian, Ihsan Garnoaui. According to press reports, Garnoaui had been in personal contact with Osama Bin Laden and had spent five years training in Afghan camps. At the al-Nur Mosque, police found bomb-making materials, a toxicology manual, a video showing Germany from the air, a pistol and various passports (Leiken 2004).

In November 2003, it was reported that Ansar al-Islam and Al Qaeda had joined forces to recruit Arab volunteers in Europe to fight the US and its allies in Iraq (Williams 2003). A month later, European intelligence agencies tracked Abu Musab Zarqawi's effort to recruit and dispatch suicide terrorists to the Middle East and conduct operations in Europe as well. The investigation into Zarqawi's network involved Italy, Germany, France, Spain and the UK (Leiken 2004). A cell in Italy accused of recruiting and assisting militants around Europe was dismantled in November 2003. The cell reportedly sent the volunteers via Turkey and Syria to fight in Iraq. Their destination was the training camps near Kurmal in North Eastern Iraq operated by Ansar al-Islam. The network uncovered is said to have recruited suicide bombers to strike US and allied forces in Iraq (Mason 2003). One suicide bomber who has been positively identified was a young Frenchman, Abdelhakim Badjouj, from Seine-Saint Denis, who died in Baghdad in November 2004 (Merchet 2004).

It is believed, though not confirmed, that the suicide bombings on the al-Rasheed Hotel, the United Nations, and Red Cross headquarters in Baghdad during August and October 2003 were carried out by bombers originating in Europe, purportedly recruited by a certain Mullah Fouad in Syria. The recruits had been involved in a terrorist network run by Abderrazak Mahdjoub in Hamburg (Barnett 2004). Fouad is under the command of Abu Musab Zarqawi and has been described by incarcerated militants as the gatekeeper to Iraq. It is estimated that Zarqawi's associates in Italy sent at least forty fighters to train in Ansar al-Islam camps in Iraq (Rotella 2003).

Another cell was broken up by the Italian authorities in May 2004. The police arrested an Algerian cleric, Maamari Rashid, and also four Tunisians, all suspected of belonging to Ansar al-Islam. From intercepted phone conversations it was clear that the men were ready for departure to Iraq and were willing to become suicide bombers to strike Western targets (D'Emilio 2004). In the traffic to Iraq, Syria appeared as the central hub for moving recruits from Europe into Iraq. Sympathisers in Syria were in phone contact with their European counterparts and welcomed the volunteers in Aleppo and Damascus, where they were taken care of until they could be dispatched to Iraq. In December 2004, the EU conter-terrorism coordinator Gijs de Vries confirmed that young Muslims from Western Europe were going to Iraq to join the insurgency, and voiced concern that experienced Islamist militants would pose a threat when they returned (Moller 2004).

As observed by Rohan Gunaratna, Iraq is likely to provide a pull identical to that seen in the conflicts in Afghanistan or Bosnia in the 1990s (Gunaratna 2004). The conflict is seen in a much wider scope than that offered by Western governments. Essentially, Iraq has become a land of symbolic value which must be liberated at all costs from foreign aggression. A successful outcome to this conflict is equally important to the militant Islamists and the Western world alike. Whatever direction the situation in Iraq takes it will become a defining moment for both parties, as neither will accept a loss.

Current structure of the recruiting environment

Turning to the current trends in the recruitment environment, one historical feature should be emphasised, that of top-down versus bottom-up recruitment. The Hamburg cell is well suited for illustrating the complexities of this phenomenon. Much has been written about the Hamburg cell – perhaps too much, because the really significant feature of the cell is often obliterated by speculations on suicidal behaviour. Only a few experts have noticed one of the most striking aspects of the Hamburg cell, which is the absence of any form of top-down recruitment and alleged brain-washing of the plotters, both of which have become popular explanations for the growth of the Jihad (Sageman 2004). The Hamburg cell emerged from a convergence of nine people in an upper-middle-class expatriate student community. The terrorists-to-be were devout in their beliefs and practices, which allowed for a network of friendships to form and preceded formal introduction into the global Jihad. As a group they went through an incubation period of almost two years, during which the intensity of their beliefs and sense of brotherhood gradually transformed the members beyond recognition.

The actual recruitment process of the Hamburg cell can best be described as highly unstructured in any conventional sense and therefore deserves some attention. Mohammed Atta and Ziad Jarrah began attending the radical Al Quds Mosque in Hamburg in late 1997. There they struck up a friendship with an outspoken Afghan veteran named Mohammed Haydar Zammar, who encouraged the young men to pursue their religious obligation and to join the Jihad. Zammar has widely been reported as the actual recruiter of the Hamburg contingent, even claiming credit for his involvement in public. This version of the sequencing of events has been discredited by people familiar with Zammar, who subsequently labelled him as an individual of limited intellect and much too talkative. Yet, Zammar must be credited with serving as a spiritual and ideological guide who was to set the pattern for further action. This view is supported by the fact that several Hamburg members named Zammar as their main inspiration to join the Jihad.

But the real gatekeeper – the person who could direct them to other people in the know – entered the plot in a most unusual fashion. According to available evidence, by late 1999 Mohammed Atta, Ziad Jarrah, Marwan Al Shehhi and Ramzi Bin-al-Shibh had decided to join the Chechen rebels. However, that plan was changed by a chance encounter on a train in Germany where an individual named Khalid al-Masri approached Binalshibh and Shehhi and struck up a conversation about the Jihad in Chechnya. The two men later called al-Masri, who directed them to a certain Abu Musab in Duisburg. Abu Musab was a cover name for Mohamedou Ould Slahi, a

well-connected Al Qaeda operative residing in Germany, apparently without the knowledge of German intelligence. Slahi invited these committed young men to see him in Duisburg. At the meeting Slahi convinced them that travelling to Chechnya was too dangerous and too difficult at the time, suggesting instead that they should go to Afghanistan for training. If they decided to go, they would receive an introduction to someone named Umar al-Masri at the Taliban office in Quetta in Pakistan (Kean and Hamilton 2004). The rest, I believe, is well-known.

Based on available background information about the members of the Hamburg cell, this example of a recruitment process contained the following elements:

- Individual alienation and marginalisation
- Spiritual quest
- Process of radicalisation
- Meeting and associating with likeminded people
- Gradual seclusion and cell formation
- Acceptance of violence as legitimate political means
- Connection with a gatekeeper in the know
- Going operational

It should be remembered that the above-mentioned stages characterise the recruitment structure of the Hamburg cell and naturally occurred before 11 September 2001. This was in essence a self-generating process from below – and not structured recruitment controlled by an Al Qaeda committee. But before turning to the more personal reasons for joining, a cursory understanding of the recruitment structure is required.

The terrorism network analysis undertaken by Marc Sageman has dispelled some prevalent myths about the nature of recruitment to Jihad. His study has revealed the absence of any top-down recruitment: joining the Jihad centres on spontaneously formed groups. Sageman very explicitly states that Al Qaeda never invested much effort into a comprehensive recruitment drive but instead relied on Allah to guide the curious and the dedicated into their fold for further training and indoctrination.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no evidence of a top-down recruitment programme in the global Jihad (Sageman 2004). Somewhat naively, the senior leadership of Al Qaeda expected their vision to be so self-evident that recruits would eventually turn up on the doorstep of the Afghan camps, with a little guidance from their European mentors. This optimism obviously has its roots in an ideology that is only self-evident to the committed insider but it was never rewarded on

the anticipated scale. Al Qaeda experienced internal disagreement throughout the 1990s, and the wave of future Mujaheddin never materialised. What did materialise was a small core of very dedicated individuals, so instead of a structured effort it more closely resembled a process in which only the most radical elements joined a terrorist cell. From a conventional organisational perspective the half-hearted recruitment efforts of the past decade cannot be considered a success, yet those who actually joined were fully committed to the cause. This type of non-structured recruitment is very much in place today, and the phenomenon deserves closer scrutiny because it is a critical element in the further development of the Global Jihad.

Instead of a top-down process where the terrorist organisation actively and aggressively searches for new members, it was a bottom-up process of young people volunteering to join the organisation. Many wanted to join but didn't know how to get in touch with the right people. Joining a terrorist organisation was often a chance phenomenon (Sageman 2004). Formal affiliation with the Jihad appears to have been a group phenomenon, with friends deciding to join the Jihad together rather than as isolated individuals. On a global scale this self-organising structure resulted in a profusion of multiple parallel networks, all of them loosely connected. These networks were defined by the characteristics of its members, certain important localities, and specific procedures. Examples of such networks and their associated cells in action are some of the major operations by Al Qaeda in Europe. The foiled bombing of the Christmas market in Strasbourg in December 2000, the thwarted attack on the US embassy in Paris in 2001, and the failed attempt to blow up a commercial airliner in 2001 involved a number of terrorists who knew each other from their time in London. These terrorists cannot be seen as embodying a coherent and rigid organisational structure, yet they frequented the same localities, were inspired by the same people, and had similar backgrounds to some extent.

The Global Jihad does not resemble a traditional organisation and there is no point in trying to portray the structure in any kind of organisational diagram. The global Jihad works on quite a different principle, much like that of a social movement defined by a shared ideology and personal interaction. Unlike any other international organisation, the Global Jihad appears to be structured around a number of specific individuals with numerous personal contacts, who through these contacts have the ability to make things happen. These individuals function much like a gatekeeper, since they know the congregations at the radical Mosques, the former Mujaheddin, and active terrorists. While not necessarily conducting terrorist operations themselves, they are able to open the gate to the exclusive community of militant Islamism. These gatekeepers are surrounded

by more isolated activists, who in turn have limited knowledge or contacts. The low-level operatives are dependent on a personal relationship with a gatekeeper, otherwise they lose the ability to function.

In order to understand how a radical Islamist enters the Jihad circuit, it is extremely important to take this division of labour into consideration. As Sageman notes, the growth comes from the bottom up as prospective members are eager to join the Jihad. This process is called preferential attachment. It is very difficult to find evidence of an actual recruiter in a normal sense. The current Global Jihad grew spontaneously without a specific or dedicated effort from Al Qaeda, resulting in huge gaps in the global dispersion of active cells and their replenishment. It is extremely important for the prospective terrorist to be able to identify a link in joining the Global Jihad. Without a solid, visible and accessible enlistment structure, each individual prospective member has to identify his own contacts.

The critical and specific element in joining is the accessibility of a link to the Global Jihad. Without the acquaintance of a gatekeeper, the group of friends, students and worshippers will undergo progressive isolation. They may try to participate in the Jihad, but without know-how, resources or coordination with other terrorist cells. Although lethal, their operations do not constitute a serious threat to society. Only the Global Jihad, with its interconnectedness of resources and skills, poses such a danger (Sageman 2004). Largely drawing on Sageman's insights, the process of joining the Global Jihad follows a general pattern that entails specific elements and steps.

- The existence of a strong social affiliation between a group of Islamists. Often this affiliation is shaped by close friendships, kinship or discipleship.
- The group of Islamists embark on progressive social isolation that eventually differentiates between enlightened believers (themselves) and infidels (everybody else).
- The group of Islamists experience a progressive intensification of their beliefs, culminating in an unquestioning acceptance of Jihad, though not in the traditional sense.
- Formal acceptance and entry into the Jihad circuit through acquaintance with a gatekeeper.
- After this relationship is formed they become operational.

The evidence available outlines the significance of social bonds that appear to precede the operational stage. At the Mosques, small clusters form quite spontaneously out of personal friendships. Whatever the source of their social bonds, these clusters experience a prolonged period of intense social integration. The closer they become to one another, the more extreme their views. Their newfound belief distances them from previous relationships, again leading to increased

isolation from society. Curiously, at least some of these friendships formed develop such aggressive views that they are no longer part of the original community at the Mosque. There are several confirmed cases of a group of friends severing their ties to the Mosque that brought them together in the first place. After quarrelling with Mosque officials and other worshippers they left in disgust and found a new sanctuary in a small circle of likeminded friends. The Mosque environment is an important first step but is later often abandoned once the Islamist initiates a personal process of radicalisation.

The process of a small circle of friends joining the Jihad as groups has strong implications for its rate of growth, which depends on its ability to forge links with experienced people. If the pool of potential recruits is composed of isolated individuals, its growth will be slow, because each potential member needs to establish his own contact. However, if the pool is composed of groups of friends, families or worshippers, the Jihad will experience explosive growth since one link brings clusters of new terrorists, each of whom can then serve as an efficient weak tie to new potential members (Sageman 2004). This pattern of unstructured growth has immense implications. The strength of weak ties makes counterterrorism efforts much more complicated because it is impossible to disrupt an organisational structure that does not exist. Joining as a group appears to be a widespread occurrence in European Islamist circles – the Roubaix gang, the Kelkal group, the Hamburg cell and the members of the 2001 failed embassy plot in Paris are just a few examples of this trend.

Only in this context is the number of militant Islamists residing in Europe of interest. Recruitment to the Jihad is contingent on a pool of candidates of a sufficient size in order to reconstitute itself, to recover from set-backs, and to forge new links. Without a critical mass to sustain a militant Islamist ideology the Jihad will whither to insignificance. The problems associated with assessing the size of the militant community are legion. Several European security services have presented estimates which naturally guide their own counterterrorism policy and doctrine. A confidential study conducted by the British government leaked to *The Daily Telegraph* in May 2004 found that there are up to 10,000 'active' supporters of Al Qaeda in the UK (Helm 2004). The quotation marks are mine, because it is not exactly clear which methodology was applied in producing the estimate. I have not been able to ascertain the British definition of active, and a definition would certainly enlighten us as to the scope of the threat.

German intelligence has presented the figure of 31,000 Islamist extremists in Germany who are considered likely to respond violently if threatened sufficiently (Spiegel 2004).

About 100 German residents are thought to have trained in Afghan camps, and French security has given a similar number (Leiken 2004). The numbers of militants in the UK and Germany alone would suggest the presence of an Islamist army in Europe, not composed of cells but divisions. However, it is impossible to analyse these estimates independently, and they should be treated with the utmost caution, if not outright scepticism. Whether or not these estimates constitute a critical mass remains to be seen.

While there are indications of increased sympathy with militant Islamism in Europe after 11 September 2001, establishing that crucial link with a gatekeeper has become more difficult for the prospective terrorist. Those individuals who previously displayed their Jihadist credentials in public are now much more wary about revealing their affiliations. An attempt by a prospective terrorist to seek advice from a notorious and public figure affiliated with the Jihad circuit will inadvertently result in the intense interest of the security services. In essence, recruitment has been forced underground.

The current difficulties in entering the Jihad circuit have prompted a few individuals to try their luck. Those few instances of isolated individuals attempting to become active militants without the benefit of a gatekeeper represent a form of self-recruitment. An example is the case of Ahmed el-Bakiouli and Khalil el-Hassnaoui, young Moroccan men from Eindhoven who went to Kashmir in December 2001. The two initially planned to go to Afghanistan to fight the Americans, but turned their attention to Kashmir when they were unable to cross the border. Both were shot dead by Indian security forces in January 2002. They had a record of Islamist sympathies through Internet chatting and their frequenting of radical Mosques, but there is no evidence that they were recruited by anyone (Vermaat 2002).

According to terrorism expert Magnus Ranstorp, the networks are mutating and adapting at lightning speed (USAToday 2002). The severed links to the leadership in Afghanistan are a recent development and has slowed but not stopped communication and coordination efforts. Instead the cells within the networks are operating more autonomously than in the past. Largely self-supporting cells are now capable of planning and committing attacks relatively independently. Recruitment to the Jihad in Europe also shows that Islamist terrorism is not only a threat aimed at the Western world, but also one that is more and more professionally generated in Europe itself (Akerboom 2003).

While not directly related to Islamist terrorism in Europe, the case of the Casablanca bombings in May 2003 may provided some indications of possible developments. The bombers did

not go to Afghanistan for training as this was not an option at the time. The only training they received was done by themselves over weekends and cannot be considered professional in any way. Their technical ineptitudes resulted in difficulties in the bomb-making process and eventually they were forced to postpone the bombings. A solution to the bomb-manufacturing problems was found on the Internet, allowing them to build explosive devices the day before the operation. Their glaring amateurishness and utter ineptitude did not discourage the bombers in their endeavours. In spite of considerable set-backs their unswerving commitment to the cause produced the desired outcome in the end. A year later this development materialised in Madrid. Again the terrorists were relatively unsophisticated Islamists. While the inspiration from Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda was clear, the organisational links were less so. This development reportedly worried security services in Europe (Kepel 2004). The Madrid operation relied on home-grown Islamist militants who apparently were unconcerned by their lack of a transitional experience in Afghanistan, signifying a European presence of the Real Al Qaeda.

Supporting this view is information obtained by *The Observer,* which concluded that the Islamist networks have not only survived the scrutiny of European security services, but also expanded their operations. According to interviews with senior intelligence officials, the militants have been able to reconstitute and even enlarge their operations over the past two years (Barnett 2004). France is the key recruiting grounds for Jihadists going to Chechnya, while the UK has retained its position as the nerve centre of militant Islamism. Increasingly, links have been forged with organised crime to secure a flow of forged documents and weapons. Most of the European cells are autonomous with links to other terrorists across Europe. An example of this transnational phenomenon and the interconnectedness of the various cells is the case of the Ricin plot discovered in London in January 2003. Most of the detainees were of North African descent, and this incident triggered arrests in Spain, France, Italy and Germany. More than 100 suspects were arrested, the majority of North African descent (Leiken 2004).

Despite the media hype concerning a wave of Islamist terrorists crossing Europe's perimeter with sinister intentions, there is scant evidence to support this theory. However, some European intelligence services have warned of infiltration, like the Dutch security service. According to AIVD, migration poses a security risk because terrorists have tried to enter the Netherlands under the pretext of political asylum (Vermaat 2002). As far back as 1996, the AIVD stated in its annual report that the Netherlands had turned into a safe haven for more and more Islamists who were on the run from other European countries. Belgian and German security

services have issued similar warnings in the past (Vermaat 2002). The Dutch and Belgian security services increased the vigilance during the latter part of the 1990s as they became aware of a network of Arab Afghans that deliberately sought to penetrate and infiltrate Muslim communities in both countries.

While it was reasonable to worry about the infiltration of terrorists into Europe during the 1990s, part of this problem was related to differences in strategic perspective between Europe and countries directly affected by Islamist terrorism. An example of this divide dates back to 1995 when an Egyptian government official issued a prophetic warning in accusing Europe of establishing a dangerous precedent by granting asylum to wanted Egyptian militant Islamists:

> ….these groups are operating on a worldwide scale, using places like Afghanistan and Bosnia to form their fighters who come back to the Middle East… European countries like Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, England and others, which give sanctuary to these terrorists, should now understand it will come back to haunt them where they live. (Kohlmann 2004)

More recently, the Dutch security service (AIVD) noticed a worrying trend that became reality with the assassination of Theo Van Gogh. AIVD stated that the threat of violence represented by Islamist terrorism has grown into a considerable and permanent exogenous and endogenous threat. The cases of recruitment for the Jihad with which the Netherlands has been confronted over the past few years have shown that a violent, radical Islamic movement is gradually taking root in Dutch society (Akerboom 2003). The Dutch example is representative of the general development in Europe as regards the direction of the threat. From the problem of infiltration prevalent years ago, the centre of gravity has shifted to the domestic production of Jihadists.

Robert S. Leiken from the Nixon Center concluded in his 2004 report on US immigration and national security problems that while the terrorist threat to the US is exogenous, the European threat is endogenous. In short, while the US has to worry about foreign hit squads, Europe must contend with home-grown terrorists. Naturally, this has wide implications for counterterrorism policy on both sides of the Atlantic (Leiken 2004).

Who Is Being Recruited?

As outlined in the introduction, the terrorists mentioned in this study are all Muslims. But what kind of Muslim is susceptible to recruitment to the Jihad? Unfortunately, this question is not easily answered; however, it is possible to make a few general assertions in order to dispel some popular myths. The most persistent of these myths concerns the role of Islam. One of the prevailing arguments in the counterterrorism debate is the trouble with Islam. But to single out a major religion as the single explanatory model for the support of terrorism reflects uninformed prejudice and a profound lack of imagination. I have vehemently and persistently argued that this assumption is dangerously misleading because it distracts attention from the multi-dimensional causes of Islamism and its off-shoot, Islamist terrorism (Taarnby 2002), (Taarnby 2003). When terrorists readily hijack commercial airliners, public schools and relief workers, it should come as no surprise that they also hijack Islam to further their cause. Their claim to represent an Islamic truth is far too often left unchallenged. The sheer complexity involved in understanding the causes of Islamist terrorism undermines any attempt at simplifying the phenomenon, and this perspective will be clarified in this section.

The Adversary's Perspective

Before analysing the different types of Islamist terrorists that are recruited in Europe, it is worthwhile to turn to the terrorists themselves to learn more about their perspectives on recruitment. Studying the publications and manuals of the terrorist organisations that are actively recruiting in Europe for the global Jihad eliminates speculation. An excellent source is the Al Qaeda manual recovered in a search in Manchester in May 2000. The voluminous computer file covered many aspects of the global Jihad, and of particular interest to this study is the 'Second Lesson: Necessary Qualifications and Characteristics for the Organization's Members' (USDOJ 2004). According to the manual, the member, in reality the terrorist operative, should display no less than fourteen different traits.

The primary, indispensable qualification is faith in Islam. Complementing strong religious belief, the member must be fully committed to the ideology of the organisation to free them from conceptual problems. He must be a mature and responsible person, yet willing to make sacrifices when called upon, even his own life if necessary. He must be able to listen to and accept the authority of senior members and never disclose information entrusted to him. Furthermore, he

should be in good health, of a tranquil nature and intelligent. In his actions he must demonstrate caution and prudence and the ability to observe and analyse.

These desirable individual characteristics are then projected into an organisational structure that serves a singular purpose. To be operationally efficient, the member is placed in a cell that in Al Qaeda's vocabulary is part of a 'project team', meaning a terrorist cell. To understand this structure it is useful to consult the Al Qaeda monthly online magazine *Al-Battar,* which currently serves as a virtual recruiting, propaganda and training centre. Besides editorials, articles on weapons handling, survival and communications, a lengthy article from 2004 detailed the construction and functioning of cell organisation. Issue six of *Al-Battar* describes how a 'project', meaning an attack, is divided into a number of sub-cells, each of which operate independently and report to a single management cell. Each sub-cell consists of no more than four members and is composed of individuals with an ability to blend into their environment. The organisation of the project team is organised along functional principles, preferably into four distinct cells.

- A management cell
- An information-gathering cell
- A preparation cell
- An execution cell

The *Al-Battar* article further stresses that the members of a cell should have no knowledge of the identities of the members of other cells, nor should they ask questions. In general, they should have no more information than necessary for them to carry out their task.

While the requirements of the individual terrorist and the specific guidelines for his placement in a cell are quite impressive, this vision does not necessarily reflect reality on the ground. As proven in corporate studies over the past decades, people within an organisation don't always live up to the expectations of the management, nor do they always do what they are supposed to do, however motivated they might be. The fact remains that the qualifications listed above represent a wish list of sorts. Very few mature, intelligent and responsible European Muslims have joined the ranks of the Global Jihad. To them, life in a terrorist cell is not an option because they have nothing to gain. The Al Qaeda manual and the article from *Al-Battar* can be seen as a scramble for quality people who can think and act for themselves and have the ability to blend into their environment. This situation is incidentally identical to the current recruitment problem to the intelligence and security services across Europe. While MI5 encourages candidates with a non-British background, Al Qaeda is looking for Europeans.

Muslims in Europe

That European Muslims are the target of recruitment to Jihad is obvious, but what kind of Muslims? Although this study is about current trends instead of statistics, a few figures are relevant to place the recruitment environment in its proper context. No one knows how many Muslims are living in Europe, and for good reason. Religious belief is a personal matter and is not registered in Europe. Estimates vary considerably, from twelve to twenty million in total. The correct figure is basically irrelevant; what matters is the extent of the radicalisation process within the Islamic community – or, to be more precise, communities, because it is quite misleading to speak of a single, unified Islamic community. The existence of single community, in Quranic terminology called the Umma, is a figment of the imagination in Islamist circles. In reality, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of Islamic communities, each defined by its religious practices and specific culture.

That the recruitment process focuses on young Muslim men is indisputable, but there are invisible yet very real divisions that are unbridgeable in Muslim Europe. An example of the inherent limitations in recruitment is the exclusion of Shi'a Muslims. They are considered heretics by the proponents of militant Islamism, and this religious fault line prevents any form of allegiance. That a Shi'a movement like Hezbollah has its sympathisers and fundraisers in Europe only adds to the confusion. The Shi'a Islamists inhabit a different environment separate from the Salafi or Wahabi activists. Another example would be the absence of any significant component of Turks in the terrorist networks despite the millions of Turks residing in Europe. European radical Turks certainly exist; however, they seem to prefer other venues for expressing discontent. In short, they are not the ones who become Salafist bomb makers. From these simple but important observations it can be deducted that the global Jihad only appeals to a certain segment of European Muslims.

Mark Juergensmeyer points in the right direction when he asserts that all the groups that have advocated religiously justified terrorism have been marginal, to varying degrees, to their own religious societies (Juergensmeyer 2003). Marginality preceded the violent acts and this sequencing is of the greatest importance. Whether or not the marginality was put on public display proudly or hidden from public view because of feelings of shame and guilt, the ensuing violence became a means of empowering the individual as well as the group. This marginality can be viewed either from the inside or the outside. The insiders are those within the Islamic communities who can identify with the experiences of those feeling marginalised, while the outsiders are those who have little understanding of the conditions facing Europe's plethora of Muslim communities. Again

drawing on Juergensmeyer's insights, the terrorists' perspectives are shaped by socio-political realities of their immediate environment, which in turn provokes a radical response in religious cloaking.

Striking among the European Islamists who have embraced terrorism is their newfound spirituality. In rejecting the superficiality and emptiness of secular modernity, where they do not fit in, they logically become attracted to a religious ideology that promises to fill the vacuum. The Islamist ideologues only promise an uphill struggle towards personal fulfilment, but this does not seem to discourage their followers: on the contrary, they are more than ready for a challenge as long as it also involves a higher meaning. In resorting to a 'traditional religion' which is anything but traditional, they have exposed their concerns not for the fate of mankind, Islamic civilization or Islamic communities, but for themselves. As Robert S. Leiken emphasises in a comparative study, the alienated Muslim communities in Europe would appear to be a much more fertile ground for recruitment for radical groups than Muslim communities in the US (Leiken 2004). Through his case studies, Leiken noticed the difference in the level of integration and assimilation between US and French Islamist sleeper cells. Leiken's analysis resulted in a distinction between two types of candidates of Muslim terrorists, the outsiders and the insiders. The outsiders are the aliens, foreign dissidents, students or asylum seekers, some of whom have sought refuge from anti-Islamic crackdowns in the Middle East or North Africa. The insiders are citizens from the downwardly mobile second-generation immigrants from Muslim countries (Leiken 2004).

I am inclined to argue that Leiken's typology could be augmented by a third type, that of the European convert. Supporting this view is the excellent study by the Dutch security service (AIVD) from 2003 on the recruitment of Islamist terrorists in the Netherlands. AIVD had identified a few dozen individuals under suspicion of being involved a recruitment process. They were all young Muslim men between eighteen and thirty-two years old who fell into three general categories: converts, recent immigrants and second-generation immigrants. Each of these three categories deserves some attention.

Outsiders and recent immigrants

Newcomers to Europe sometimes experience confusion about their new situation. Being cut off from their community of origin and unable to understand their new country leads to social isolation and an identity crisis. While many students, migrant workers and asylum seekers are familiar with such a situation only a few become overwhelmed by the experience. The best example is the

Hamburg cell, which was largely composed of foreign students. Their individual identity crisis in an expatriate community made them look for a source of companionship, and the most accessible place to meet new friends with similar backgrounds was the Mosque. Here, various types of shared, negative cross-cultural experiences formed the basis of a small circle of friends. The Mosque environment became a source of stability that served to counter their poor assimilation. Some were religious before moving to Europe, but most were not and very few were militant Islamists.

The transformation necessitated a transplantation into an alien culture; it did not occur in the country of origin. The religious revival was not anchored in tradition, but instead in individuals who experienced a profound crisis of identity. Their faith is extremely emotionally oriented and disregards both theology and tradition (Roy 2003). In trying to reconstruct an identity they naturally discard their original as well as European culture and instead direct their energies toward an imagined community. This is the Umma, the all-encompassing spiritual community of believers, and this is where individuals like Mohammed Atta, Ziad Jarrah and Marwan al-Shehhi found refuge.

Second-generation immigrants

The reason why second-generation immigrants would be susceptible to recruitment is complex. Arrested terrorists have often been described as seemingly well-integrated, in itself a contradiction in terms. The terrorists were apparently only superficially integrated, and their rejection of society points to a more complex motivation, as witnessed by their deep resentment (Laquer 2004).

Studies of the French recruits have been helpful in understanding their turn-around. According to Gilles Kepel, they appear to follow a typical trajectory. These young Muslims were all born in Europe and basically tumble into the Islamist circles. The first stage is brainwashing at the hands of a Salafist imam. Later they meet an actual recruiter, who offers to quench their thirst for absolutes through a militant activism. This progression is neither systematic nor inevitable, and often there is a struggle between Salafist imams and the militant Islamists (Kepel 2004). The keyword in Kepel's analysis is tumble, because it is not possible to brainwash someone who is not susceptible. A confused mindset is the mandatory first step. Disillusioned with the society that has excluded them and tired of the empty promises of the official France, second-generation immigrants frequent the Mosque to meet likeminded people. Islam becomes a way to restore their dignity. In the words of Sageman, 'People who are satisfied with life are unlikely to join a religious revivalist terrorist movement' (Sageman 2004).

According to a DST report on the recruitment of young Muslims to Jihad, Islamism represents a vehicle of protest against problems of access to employment and housing, discrimination of various kinds, and the highly negative image of Islam in public opinion (DST 2003). Zacarias Moussaoui fits this description because he rejected his parents' North African origin and did not assimilate into Western culture. He eventually found a way of expressing his discontent through what Roy has called neo-fundamentalism, a term that signifies a complete lack of allegiance to any roots (Roy 2003). A number of European Muslims who followed this trajectory has since been arrested in Europe or are imprisoned at Guantanamo.

A similar pattern has been detected in the Netherlands by the AIVD, where the second-generation terrorists are predominantly of Moroccan origin. They were either born in the Netherlands or moved there at a very young age. The majority are Dutch citizens, who display little affiliation with Morocco and do not master Arabic. In the Dutch case, this group is the most active in the recruitment process. They blame Dutch society for not respecting their ethnic and religious community, to which they have very weak links. They are often guided by former Mujaheddin and in the process have developed a strong personal affiliation (AIVD 2004).

Converts

Individuals who have converted to Islam represent a miniscule minority in the ranks of the militant Islamists; however, they are potentially highly deployable for Jihad. While it is difficult to create a general impression the convert's background it would appear that they also come from the margins of society, with a few exceptions that prove there is no single profile.

The complete break with the society and culture of origin has not been examined properly and many questions remain unanswered. However, I do suspect that Olivier Roy is on the right track when he claims that the core issue is not linked to theology but to post-modernism. Those converts of interest to this study embraced Islam vigorously and proceeded to militant Islam. They entered mainstream Islam just as quickly as they deviated, thus raising some fundamental questions about their spiritual bearings. Converts who adopt Jihad as a lifestyle apparently do not possess the cultural or religious grounding necessary to asses the tenets of Islamism independently. It is considerably easier to convince a convert about the religious obligation of Jihad.

Some German converts ended up fighting with Mujaheddin against disbelievers in Chechnya and Bosnia. In the case of Germany, many converts have a special story. Often they are extremely attached to their religion, and wanting to prove themselves to their new fellow Muslims

they take their conversion very seriously and for this reason have a strong desire to demonstrate their religious commitment. As such they are an ideal target group for the terrorist organisations, who assist them in joining the Mujaheddin or send them abroad for further indoctrination — like Christian Ganzcarski and Thomas Fischer from Ulm who was killed in Chechnya in November 2003 (Rasche 2004). Some were sent to Damuscus in order to study Islam but were inserted into regular strongholds of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

A surprising number of converts foundered in drugs and pretty crime before turning to Islam, and quite a few were recruited while serving a prison sentence (Smith 2004). Jerome and David Courtallier, French brothers who converted and turned to Jihad, followed this pattern and they later went to Afghanistan to train (Camus 2004). Some converted abroad, and perhaps there is a parallel to the recent immigrants. Lionel Dumont converted while doing military service in Africa and Jerome Courtallier in Leicester under the strong influence of Beghal.

The three types of young European Muslims who are susceptible to recruitment originate from a very diverse range of individual backgrounds, yet they all embraced militant Islam unconditionally. Marginalisation was present in one form or another before they accepted violent activism. The sequence of marginalisation preceding religious revival confirms the view that although Islam is an important aspect in understanding Islamist terrorism, the data available strongly suggests that social conditions serve as the foundation. Bernhard Lewis makes an important point in this respect:

> In a time of intensifying strains, of faltering ideologies, jaded loyalties, and crumbling institutions, an ideology expressed in Islamic terms offered several advantages: an emotionally familiar basis of group identity, solidarity, and exclusion; an acceptable basis of legitimacy and authority; an immediately intelligible formulation of principles for both a critique of the present and a program for the future. By means of these, Islam could provide the most effective symbols and slogans for mobilisation, whether for or against a cause or a regime (Lewis 2003).

Much remains to be explored to understand why militant Islamism becomes an attractive alternative. One thing nevertheless appears certain: that motivation is a complex issue and cannot be reduced to any single factor (Nesser 2004). In cancelling their membership in society and pledging allegiance to an imaginary community, the various types of European Islamist terrorists increasingly see themselves as a part of the global Jihad.

It would appear that recruitment in Europe is somewhat structured along national and ethnic lines. For instance, in in the summer of 2004 the UK the intelligence service made a list with the names of 100 Islamist activists suspected of being involved in terrorist activities. The majority were British citizens and mainly of Pakistani descent (Burke 2004), a number of whom have fought with militant Islamist groups in Kashmir. An example of the Kashmir connection is Sheikh Ahmed Omar Saeed, indicted by the US in March 2002 in relation to the kidnapping of Daniel Pearl in Pakistan. Believed to be the mastermind of Pearl's kidnapping, Saeed was born and educated in London, to a family of well-to-do Pakistani immigrants. He later moved to Pakistan, where he functioned as a senior figure in the radical Jaish-e-Mohammed and received his training in Al Qaeda-run camps in Afghanistan (Vermaat 2002). It is believed that hundreds of British citizens have gone to the Jihad in Kashmir, but have since returned to the UK. Since few of these returned Mujaheddin have actually joined a terrorist cell, it would be reasonable to ask why. Without any evidence to answer this interesting question we are left with several possible explanations, one of which might be that the young British-Pakistanis are part of a community that follows events in the Kashmir very closely and have strong views on the conflict. This environment may have led some to believe that it was their duty to assist oppressed Muslims with whom they share some cultural background, and perhaps this belief was supported in their immediate family. By joining the Jihad in Kashmir they may have considered this journey akin to a pilgrimage later to return a normal life in the UK.

As regards national or ethnic affiliation, the Hamburg cell is perhaps the most heterogeneous example available. Quite a few of the cells that have been discovered over the past three years display some sort of similarity. An example is the Madrid cell, which was overwhelmingly North African with a few members of Middle Eastern origin. Out of the eighteen provisionally charged in connection with the March 2004 bombings in Madrid, fourteen were Moroccans. Six out of the seven suspects who died in the blast in a Madrid apartment in April were also Moroccans. According to Spanish authorities, a prime suspect is Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, known as Mohammed the Egyptian, and it is presumed that Ahmed recruited Sarhane Ben Abdelmajid Fakhet at a Mosque in Madrid (Haahr-Escolano 2004). Until his death in the explosion at the apartment in Leganes, Fakhet was the head of a fully operational cell that had successfully recruited candidates within Spain. He formed his cell around North African immigrants like

himself, and was able to shape the group into a well-organised and disciplined group. Fakhet was Imam of a small Mosque located in a basement in central Madrid.

To complicate matters further, the Spanish investigation has highlighted links between those arrested in Spain and Islamists in Morocco with ties to Al Qaeda. Jamal Zougam, one of the Moroccans suspected of planting the bombs, has been identified as a follower of Imad Yarkas, who has links to Al Qaeda. Militant Salafist groups have existed in Algeria and Morocco for years, and it seems they are increasingly reaching out to young North Africans in Europe, some of whom are susceptible to its radical ideology. According to Spanish terrorism expert Josep Ramoneda, Spain has to contend with an underground Islamist network of an estimated 3,000 people, predominantly North Africans. Not all are terrorists: some are collaborators and sympathisers while others provide various forms of logistical assistance (Haahr-Escolano 2004). The significance of national or ethnic affiliation has not yet been explored properly and further studies would reveal if there is a pattern to the process of cell formation.

A criminal background is not an obstacle in joining the Jihad for two reasons. Experience with forgery, credit-card fraud, and knowledge of arms dealers and people traffickers are essential for conducting subversive activities and thus desirable among terrorist groups. Besides bringing in wanted logistical skills criminals are also of interest for more personal reasons. As Rohan Gunaratna noticed, it is the practice of Al Qaeda recruiters to select prospects that drink, chase women, or are otherwise bad Muslims, since they can more easily be persuaded that their only hope for salvation comes through Al Qaeda. Only after considerable conditioning will the recruiter approach the candidate with offers of money, training or logistical help(Leiken 2004).

Recruitment process

A successful relationship between the recruiter and the prospective Islamist terrorist is highly contingent on a structure of oppositional character traits. This is not as confusing as it may seem, and a brief elaboration on a few traits makes the dual nature of this relationship quite understandable. Any recruiter who wants to attract followers into an extremist and militant ideology is of a special character by any definition, exploiting his inter-personal skills in a manipulative and destructive way. The special character traits can for obvious security reasons rarely be displayed in public but are instead confined to one-on-one encounters, where the recruiter has an opportunity to affirm his superior position towards the candidate in a number of areas through the subtle stressing of the differences between them.

In relation to oppositional character traits I have listed seven topics, though more can no doubt be added.

- True believer/apostate
- Wise/unenlightened
- Leader/unguided
- Respected/rejected
- Brother/outsider
- Honourable/dishonourable
- Activist/powerless

First of all, the recruiter personalises the true believer, whereas the candidate is treated as an un-enlightened individual, a Muslim who has not yet realised the true meaning of Islam. This superiority as to religious adherence also conveys the image of someone who holds wisdom, again testifying to the lack of religious education and grounding of the candidate. The recruiter presents himself as a leader, which draws attention to on the candidate's unguided nature and confused lifestyle. This situation commands respect from someone who himself is in need of recognition and direction, and the subtly hierarchical dimension is further reinforced by an artificial form of brotherhood in which the recruiter portrays himself as a true brother whose disciple is a prospect − i.e. not yet a fully accepted member. The allusion to a sense of brotherhood introduces a sense of honour between the recruiter, who might believe his own words, and the candidate who until then had no allegiances. Having discovered The Right Way, the recruiter wants to be seen as a do'er who actually acts on his revelation, which in turn appeals to someone who feels powerless to change

even his own situation. The recruitment relationsship is necessarily founded on inequality, although the recruiter will go to great lenghts to stress the equality between two Muslims.

The process of transformation from an alinated individual to a committed activist is commonly seen in religious sects and terrorists groups and requires investment in intense and lengthy personal interactions. This implies that the fear that vulnerable young Muslims may be recruited to the Jihad through internet messages is overblown. Reading and sending messages about the Jihad on the Internet may make these individuals receptive to its appeal, but direct involvement requires interaction (Sageman 2004).

Much has been said about the loss of the Afghan camps, and it has been depicted as a major victory in the war on terrorism. It is true that the loss of an Afghan sanctuary has deprived the Jihadists of a headquarters of sorts, but it appears as if the focus has changed. Today another type of individual is preferred by the terrorist organisations. Currently the recruits available have very little or usually no paramilitary experience, and this represents a change in focus from guerrilla-style insurgency operations to urban warfare and terrorism.

There is no doubt that the attacks on 11 September 2001 revitalised an interest in the global Jihad among European Muslims, though this interest should not be confused with sympathy. While the vast majority of Europe's Muslims were content to discuss the events and to condemn one side or the other, or even both, a parallel development occurred among a small segment of Muslim youth who became radicalised. Some expressed their views through attacks and vandalism on Jewish targets, while others openly advocated militant action and terrorism. The latter group might possibly be relatively easy prey for recruitment. Rather than a traditional Islamic trait it is much more an explosive mixture of political realities and negative socio-cultural experiences that makes Islamist terrorism attractive for European Muslims

The size and the quality of the recruitment pool in Europe are extremely dynamic. It is very likely that the disclosure of maltreatment by US military personnel at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq provided a temporary boost to the Islamist camp that evaporated just as quickly with the indifference of the hostage takers in Beslan. These fluctuations will likely continue to shape the recruitment environment in the foreseeable future.

Where are they being recruited?

Before 11 September 2001 European Islamists would usually operate more or less openly through certain Mosques, Islamic information centres, Islamic schools and charities. Open as well as covert support was extended to the Mujaheddin in Chechnya and Afghanistan to the apparent indifference of the authorities. Examples of radical Mosques that became prominent in the process of affiliation with the Jihad are Finsbury Park Mosque in London, the Islamic Cultural Centre in Milan, the Abu Bakr Mosque in Madrid, and the Al-Quds Mosque in Hamburg. Throughout the 1990s these localities served as the gateway to the global Jihad and dispatched militant young Muslims to training sites in Afghanistan or to the frontlines in Bosnia and Chechnya.

While there is no disputing the centrality of said locations in the European network of militant Islamists it is inappropriate to label these institutions as recruiting centres. They appear to have played an ambiguous role in the recruitment process, mostly serving as a radicalizing agent. It is commonly assumed that the terrorists were recruited at the Mosque, and this is certainly true in some cases, but most significantly it was the social environment at the Mosque or the religious institution that transformed young and alienated Muslims into terrorists.

The transformation of a group of young Muslims from the Middle East into the deadly Hamburg cell, and especially their Mosque attendance, is worth noticing. The Al Quds Mosque in Hamburg played a crucial but indirect role in the radicalization process. All of the central cell members regularly attended the Mosque where they listened attentively to the fiery sermons. Since 11 September 2001 there has been widespread speculation about the presence of a recruiter who allegedly talked them into a suicide operation. There is no evidence of this taking place; instead it was a rather spontaneous development that took time to mature and ultimately a chance encounter – entirely outside the Mosque environment (Kean and Hamilton 2004). At the Al Quds Mosque the members of the Hamburg cell met likeminded people who shared their thoughts and grievances, and this cannot be called structured recruitment in spite of the important function of the Mosque.

Recruitment is still taking place although it has undergone some noticeable changes and the role of the radical clerics has changed. They are no longer able to recruit openly because of intense scrutiny by the authorities. Instead they have embarked on a massive propaganda effort extolling the virtues of Jihad and the Mujaheddin, carefully avoiding any direct involvement. The ill-reputed radical institutions have been replaced by underground Mosques often located in the very same cities as the former ones. This is due to what could be termed a sustainable environment, meaning a situation where there are sufficient Islamists, former Mujaheddin and people with the

necessary connections to sustain an alternative environment. Years ago it was places like London, Hamburg, Milan and Madrid that featured prominently on a map of the European Jihad, much like they do today. Having carved out a territory for themselves the Islamists in these cities have contributed disproportionately to the global Jihad. In contrast, similar prominent cities like Berlin, Rome or Barcelona have not experienced the same level of militant Islamist presence. It would appear that Islamists residing in these cities lacked the contacts needed to enter a wider European network (Sageman 2004).

Britain

Islamic terrorist organizations still consider London as the launching pad for enlisting new recruits. This conviction is supported by a thorough understanding of immigration laws, adherence to the individual's right to privacy, and the constraints and limitations of the British security services (Fighel 2003).

For years the Finsbury Park Mosque was the hub of European terrorists and its role and function deserves to be mentioned in this context. Abu Hamza al-Masri founded the Supporters of the Sharia (SOS), which used the North London Central Mosque in Finsbury Park as its base, and the attendees of the late 1990s were a virtual who's-who in European Jihadist circles. In 1998 worshippers began to notice groups of young men staying overnight at the Mosque. Many where Algerians and were recruited by Djamel Beghal, who had been assigned the task of setting up cells in Europe by senior Al Qaeda members in Afghanistan. Beghal arrived from France in 1997 and quickly became known as an engaging figure who circulated among the drifters and asylum seekers steered towards Finsbury Park by other militants, inviting them to linger after Friday prayers and join study groups. By the spring of 1998 Beghal had three would-be suicide bombers staying with him at the Mosque: Zacarias Moussaoui, Richard Reid and Nizar Trabelsi (Shameen 2002). Feroz Abbasi, a young Briton, later incarcerated on charges of terrorism at the US prisoner holding facility on Guantanamo, revealed that it was people from Finsbury Park who helped him organize his terrorist training in Afghanistan. Abu Hamza was singled out as his mentor. Among other people who visited the Mosque were Ahmed Ressam, Anas Al-Liby, Abu Doha, Earnest James Ujaama and several of the Britons held in Guantanamo (Leiken 2004). Beghal was arrested in Dubai in 2001 and was about to initiate a series of attacks on American targets in Europe after a year-long stay in Afghanistan where he worked closely with Abu Zubeida. His recruits from London were central operatives to the plans (Bright 2001).

Of more recent interest is the claim by Sheikh Omar Bin Bakri Muhammad, the leader of the Al-Muhajiroun in Britain. In 2003 he ostensibly recruited Muslim volunteers for training in paramilitary camps located in Lebanon and specifically in the Ein Al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon (Fighel 2003). In the late 1990s Al-Muhajiroun split from the Hizb ut-Tahrir and quickly took over HuT's role in recruiting new members in universities and Mosques. Eager new entries where encouraged to visit Hassan Butt, who ran an office in Lahore, Pakistan. Some members must have passed through this office, since at least three Britons were killed in an American bombing during the intervention in Afghanistan. Later, eighteen Britons surfaced in Lahore to request political asylum because they had fought with the Taliban, according to Al-Muhajiroun (Whine 2003). Al-Muhajiroun as such does not recruit terrorists, instead it appears to serve a different function. Its followers are heavily indoctrinated and radicalised, and though this process they become militant Islamists. Thus, Al-Muhajiroun serves as a portal where some members are encouraged to continue their search for Jihad (Whine 2003). A further example of Al-Muhajiroun's indirect role in support of Islamist terrorism can be deducted from the case of Asif Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif, both British nationals who conducted a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv in April 2003. Both had links with Al-Muhajiroun. SOS and HuT have since been banned from staging events at British universities because of the vitriolic content of their speeches, which often contained incited to violence and racial hatred against Jews. However, this ban has been creatively circumvented by the Islamists, who simply set up new organizations under different names.

The UK continues to be an important centre for militant Islamist activity in Europe, and at least 500 people have been arrested in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 on terror-related charges (Abedin 2004). In spite of certain specific setbacks in the recruitment effort, like the offer to join the Taliban before 2001, which was widely rejected, the Salafist congregations have become increasingly popular in Oldham, Bradford, Birmingham and Manchester. The battle between radical, conservative and moderate British Muslims for control of the Mosques is ongoing. In the summer of 2004 hundreds of leaflets were distributed at the Birmingham Central Mosque urging Muslims to become Mujaheddin. The leaflet was signed by Ahl Sunna Wal-Jamah, but Mosque officials claim it was a front name for al-Muhajiroun. Mosque officials removed the leaflets and asked the police to investigate (Oldham 2004).

The aggressive attempts at Mosque hijacking have only recently attracted the attention of the authorities. To the credit of the London communities of Muslims it should be noted that chairman of the Brixton Mosque, which has often been associated with terrorism, contacted the

police when Islamists began to target the Mosque. The chairman, Abdul Haqq Baker, did not approve of the Brixton Mosque being hijacked by extremists who more or less openly recruited young Muslims for Jihad. However, the atmosphere in the UK before 11 September 2001 caused MI5 not to get involved; such a matter was considered a local ethnic dispute and did not require any official involvement (Vermaat 2002).

Jason Burke has noticed a shift over the past decade in the composition of militant Islamists in the UK. In the 1990s the Islamist activists operating from Britain were educated and relatively moderate, but lately their ranks have supplemented by former convicts, the unemployed, and asylum seekers (Burke 2004). Recruitment appears to have diversified and is now assumed to cover a wide spectrum of social settings including universities (Helm 2004). Parallel to this diversification is the concern of moderate British Muslims, who have pointed out that the situation in Iraq is making recruitment for an Islamist cause much easier (Wagner 2004).

The label of Londonistan unfortunately appears to be justified. Two brief examples of the centrality of the UK in the militant Islamist networks clearly illustrate that everything goes through London. Abu Zubair al-Haili, nicknamed the bear because of his size, lived in south London until recently. He used his reputation as a fearless Mujaheddin with experience from Afghanistan and Bosnia to dispatch new recruits to training camps abroad. He was arrested in Morocco suspected of involvement in a suicide mission on British naval vessels passing through the Gibraltar Strait (Kohlmann 2004). In another case, the Spanish police arrested eight members of a cell in November 2001. This cell recruited volunteers for training camps in Afghanistan, provided terrorists passing through Spain with forged documents, and paid for their travels. Some of the volunteers went on to Bosnia, Chechnya and Indonesia. The leader of this network was Imaz Eddin Barakat Yarbas, who appeared to live a respectable life with his family. He had numerous highly suspect contacts throughout Europe, in London which he visited about twenty times (Vermaat 2002).

France

In Europe, France arguably has the longest experience with Islamist terrorism. The civil war in Algeria during the 1990s had a profound impact on the French-Algerian Muslims in France. A part of this community became radicalized, believing that the Algerian regime supported by France should be fought by all means available. Some joined the Takfir wal-Hijra or the GIA, creating independent and disciplined cells around Europe but especially in France. The French were forced

into a situation that necessitated the introduction of an effective and specifically French counterterrorism system. Especially the persistent efforts of the investigating magistrates have provided France with a deep understanding of Islamist terrorism. As early as 1994 the magistrates began to notice a flow of GIA activists into Afghanistan for the training camps (Shapiro and Suzan 2003). While the French system has been uniquely tailored to monitor recruitment practices and network constructions and to disrupt planned attacks it has not been able to stem the flow into militant Islamist circles. Despite a head start of almost a decade France is faced with a situation of increased radicalization and support of terrorism.

A recent phenomenon in France is the emergence of a mass movement that adheres to a strict and orthodox appearance and advocates strict adherence to the Sharia and the Sunna. It is determined to apply these religious concepts to modern life in France. Especially the Salafi school is increasingly popular in France. It is essentially a more conservative form of Wahabism and holds that all Western influences most be purged from Islam. It should be mentioned that while all Salafists are very conservative not all are violently inclined, though some Salafist groups are notorious troublemakers known for their very aggressive stance. Often they will target a moderate Mosque and try to convince the regular worshippers of the virtues of Salafism. The regulars either adapt, find another Mosque or throw the Salafists out (Camus 2004).

The Takfir wal-Hijra has ties to Algerian terrorists, primarily the GSPC. Takfir members are very secretive, and they do not attend the existing Mosques as they consider all other Muslims to be heretics and therefore shun them. The Takfir cells are extremely well organized and disciplined, and their primary location is the Parisian suburbs. The movement generally attracts young French-born Muslims who become born-again Muslims. Djamel Beghal, himself a member of the Takfir, was particularly adept at attracting rootless young men (Camus 2004). The Islamist networks in France largely consist of first or second-generation immigrants from North Africa with a working or middle class background.

The area around Lille and Roubaix has long served as fertile ground for recruitment to foreign Jihads, most notably in this respect is the Roubaix gang. Also the Lyon area has supplied a suicide bomber, Nizar Hawar, and fighters for the Taliban. But the most important recruiting grounds appear to be the rundown suburbs of Paris and Marseilles – for example, the Salafist Mosque in Levallois-Perret, which has been closed. A worshipper at this Mosque was Redouane el-Hakim, a nineteen-year-old of Tunisian origin who travelled via Turkey and Syria to Iraq to join the insurgents. He was assisted by his brother, Boubaker, who is now detained in Syria (Merchet 2004).

The closing of radical Mosques has little impact on the sentiments or the social conditions of the poorer suburbs. Former Mujaheddin with experience from Bosnia or Chechnya end up as role models for young Muslims with few prospects for the future (DST 2003). To understand the potential for terrorist recruitment in France, a quote from a young French Muslim from the suburbs underscores the level of social marginalization and the secondary importance of religion: 'There are millions of us who feel excluded and unwanted… A lot of us think since we have nothing to lose, we might as well turn to violence to get some respect. There is so much disgust here that one day the authorities will wake up and find they are fighting a civil war,' (Kohlmann 2004).

Netherlands

Again the AIVD study on recruitment provides useful information. The Dutch security service has noted the centrality of former Mujaheddin in the militant Islamist circles. Before 11 September 2001 these recruiters were linked to people in Afghanistan and were able to dispatch young recruits to training facilities either through personal contacts or through association with an organized terrorist group. In answer to the question of where recruitment takes place the answer is straightforward and quite illuminating. The former Mujaheddin involved in recruitment need to be located in proximity to the potential candidates; in reality this translates to the margins of Dutch society (AIVD 2002).

The radical Mosques are important in this respect because the Mujaheddin join the congregation, where they strike up conversations and interact with young people to assess who is suitable to be approached. The actual recruitment takes place elsewhere, outside the view of the Mosque community. Initial recruitment contact can be made at private apartments, coffee shops or at Islamic study groups. It is very important to remember that they operate on the margins of the Mosque community, even in the radical environments, thus making it a little less complicated to assess the size and composition of the pool of candidates. The Dutch example highlights the role of the former Mujaheddin to the dismay of the security service: 'If no Mujaheddin were staying here, there would undoubtedly be a lot less Muslims involved in a recruitment process' (AIVD 2004).

Italy

The Mosques in Via Quaranta and Viale Jenner, both in Milan, have been active in terrorist recruitment and logistical support since the late 1990s according to Italian authorities (Rotella 2003). Milan became an important hub during the war in former Yugoslavia. Militant Islamists

using the Islamic Cultural Center have a considerable record of association with various Jihads. Safe houses and forged documents were provided to European volunteers who went on to fight in Bosnia and later Chechnya, Albania and Kosovo. During the 1990s the traffic through Italy prompted Italian intelligence to dub a particular airline "Jihad Air" because of the sheer volume of dubious passengers (Vermaat 2002). An example of the Italian setup was the Tunisian citizen Essid Sami ben Khemais, who entered Italy illegally in 1994 and gravitated to the Mosque in Milan. He went to training camp in Afghanistan, and returned to Italy in 1998 to set up operations using the Mosque and his own apartment. His inconspicuous appearance and behavior allowed him to send a substantial number of recruits to camps in Afghanistan via Switzerland and Pakistan. A small cleaning business was used as a cover for what became known as the "Varese network" and was highly efficient with links to Belgium and Germany (Vermaat 2002). The extent of Khemais operations prompted the following remark to an associate, 'God loves us because Europe is in our hands,' (Vermaat 2002).

Sheikh Anwar Shaban, a militant Egyptian, used the Islamic Cultural Institute as a recruiting hub for young Muslims in Europe and sent them off to Eastern Afghanistan for training. Shaban personally dispatched hundreds of recruits from Europe. ICI emerged as the centre of activity of Arab-Afghan activity in Southern Europe in the 1990s where it had developed into a command centre for GIA, al-Gama'a Islammiyya, and the Tunisian an-Nahda. Italian authorities later stated that they uncovered direct links between Al Qaeda operatives behind the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa and the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan (Kohlmann 2004).

That the role of the radical Mosques and religious institutions in Italy is changing can be seen from a wiretap from June 2002 – at the Via Qaranta Mosque in Milan! In a striking example of senior Islamist leaders completely ignoring their own advice, the not-so-confidential conversation confirmed suspicions that London was still the most central location within Europe. Italian Islamists were urged to avoid the Mosques because of intensive surveillance by the police, other buildings were needed to maintain a low profile (Italy 2002).

Radical Islamist Movements

The examples from Britain, France, the Netherlands and Italy are by no means conclusive but were intended to illustrate two specific trends: that recruitment to terrorism is still going on and that it is a trans-European phenomenon. A number of terrorist attacks – in London, Strasbourg, Paris and Berlin and elsewhere – have been averted after 11 September 2001 (Nesser 2004). These plots

involved operatives recruited to the global Jihad both before and after 2001 and they were united through their extreme beliefs.

On the transnational level there have been many speculations about the nature of the various radical Islamist movements and their role in supporting terrorism. This is indeed a complex matter and is not analysed easily; however, the radical movements are worth noticing because they appear to play a central, if indirect, role. While it is indisputable that some European Islamist terrorists have maintained very close links with, for instance, the al-Muhajiroun, the Tabligh and the Takfir wal-Hijra, many others did not.

A working hypothesis could benefit from a distinction between channels of radicalization and actual end stations for full-blown militant Islamists in order to understand the significance of the radical movements. The above-mentioned movements certainly adhere to the most radical interpretations of Islamism, but strictly speaking they cannot be considered terrorist organisations. Then why have these movements in particular so often been associated with Islamist terrorism?

To take an example from France, the Tabligh movement illustrates the connection. The Tabligh is a pietistic movement that encourages recruitment among those who do not know their faith. Its spiritual centre is the ar-Rahma Mosque in St. Denis, near Paris, and it has been active in France since 1968. The Tabligh is foremost a religious and spiritual movement, and focuses on teaching a correct understanding of Islam and what it means to be Muslim. Some of its members have gone to Pakistan for an extended stay in one of the movement's centres. It is believed that some Tabligh members later went on to training camps in Afghanistan, and onwards to Jihad, although the Tabligh does not promote violence. Instead, as Camus has pointed out, the lengthy and strict period of spiritual indoctrination has resulted in some profound personal changes in certain individuals who afterwards seem to have developed a deep interest in militant groups (Camus 2004).

John Walker Lindh, who was captured in Afghanistan in 2002 while fighting for the Taliban, and Herve Loiseau, a young Frenchman who froze to death when he tried to escape from Tora Bora in late 2001, were both former Tabligh members. Their personal disposition made them open to religious indoctrination that changed them beyond recognition. Through their new-found belief they diverted their attention to militant activism and for all practical purposes split from the ideology of the Tabligh. Lindh and Loiseau are examples of those individuals who willingly or unwillingly use the Islamist movements as a radicalizing agent and who then move on to become

terrorists. From this perspective the Tabligh served as the channel and the Taliban as the end station. There is a pattern of young European Muslims who join the al-Muhajiroun, the Tabligh and the Takfir wal-Hijra who end up becoming terrorists for Al Qaeda, GSPC and other organizations.

While not directly linked to the global Jihad the radical movements seem to function like a greenhouse of sorts, to use a term coined by Reuven Paz. The radical movement is the indirect framework of support created by groups that are not connected to political violence or terrorism; indeed, some of them publicly condemn such methods. These groups carry out considerable political, social, cultural and educational work in the name of Islam. As such, they preserve the Islamic atmosphere in which more extremist and violent groups thrive (Paz 2002). To add to the complexity is the presence of a number of underground Mosques that encourage support for the global Jihad. Rarely connected to any established radical movement they are run by imams who lack credentials and qualifications. Moderate European Muslims have lashed out at what they call garage-based Mosques, clearly signalling their contempt (Haahr-Escolano 2004). A group of friends who spontaneously meet in such Mosques constitute one of the main venues for joining the Jihad. Their voluntary seclusion from the rest of society, European and Muslim communities as well, could be a model for future recruitment patterns and this was in essence what took place in the formation of the Madrid cell.

Conclusion

This study was intended to provide an overview of the current status of recruitment to the Global Jihad in Europe. This study by no means exhausts the topic – indeed, it should be considered as a sketchy outline for future research projects. Considering the restrictions imposed by the exclusive use and interpretation of open source material a number of general conclusions can nevertheless be made.

The Threat

The first conclusion of this study is related to the nature of the threat. It is very difficult for experts and the general public alike to assess the level and the nature of the threat from Islamist terrorists within Europe. The current recruitment to the Jihad is only one dimension of a very complicated situation. The recruitment process is not an isolated phenomenon but is intrinsically linked to issues like marginalization, questions of identity, religious identity, political protest – just to mention a few.

Perhaps the best description of the threat by those who have to deal with the problem of terrorist recruitment on a daily basis came from the Dutch AIVD in 2002. In its study on terrorist recruitment in the Netherlands, the inevitable conclusion stated that militant Islamism constituted a threat to democratic society by leading to increasing polarisation within Dutch society and heightening the risk of confrontation between different groups. The threat was considered to be on a societal scope because it impacts negatively on societal cohesion and promotes conflicts (AIVD 2002). EUROPOL reached an identical conclusion in its 2004 annual report, in which it stated that Europe is affected by both internal and external threats. The character of the threat is unevenly distributed across Europe, yet it affects all countries to some extent. Islamist terrorism in particular will remain a major threat to European security for the foreseeable future (EUROPOL 2004).

This threat is transnational by nature. The days when ETA was a Spanish problem and the IRA a British problem are gone. A Richard Reid who travelled between the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, not to mention his far-off destinations, amply sums up the problem. Like the threat, the response must also be transnational to be meaningful. As Rohan Gunaratna has pointed out, an overemphasis on Al Qaeda will be detrimental to Western governments. The current and indeed the future threats come from many directions and are globally dispersed. Another example is the assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of the Afghan Northern Alliance. Although the assassination took place in a remote corner of Central Asia it had far-reaching

implications and could probably not have been conducted without the substantial support of European-based operatives. Today the Islamist terrorist threat has moved beyond the individual and the group to become an ideology. Eliminating Osama bin Laden will not make Al Qaeda go away. Certainly not the Real Al Qaeda, which is slowly but surely beginning its transformation from terrorist entity to a state of mind (Gunaratna 2004). Though cautiously phrased, the IISS concurred with this view in stating that the Madrid bombings reinforced the perception that Al Qaeda had fully reconstituted and moreover had succeeded in enlisting local affiliates (Chipman 2004).

This ideology feeds off the polarization and radicalization in Europe. Seemingly trivial issues like the dress code in French public schools become significant because the roots of the problem go much, much deeper. This is thoroughly understood by the Islamists and the terrorists, who tap into this source of confusion and direct its energy into their own cause and struggle. The question of the right to wear the veil at school was inserted into a new and more profound context when the issue was picked up by Al Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri, who subsequently threatened France with violent retaliation for infringement on Islamic practice.

Recruitment

The lack of a comprehensive recruitment drive left the global Jihad at the mercy of self-recruits. Groups of Mujaheddin built upon pre-existing linkages to Jihad resulting in a form of natural growth that took place within particular social niches susceptible to a radical ideology. This phenomenon is simultaneously a major flaw and the true strength of the global Jihad. To maintain momentum the terrorists are highly dependent on a few skilled individuals with the ability to move beyond rhetoric and attract followers. While there have been examples of top-down recruitment the general trend both before and after 11 September 2001 is largely one a bottom-up process. While many European Muslims were sensitized to current issues on the Internet and developed a sense of collective social identity through it, none went straight from interacting on the Internet to Jihad. Personal acquaintances are still required. It should be emphasized that 11 September 2001 was designed to mobilize the Muslim masses behind a glorious Jihad intended to overthrow existing apostate Muslim regimes and to replace them with a new world order. In this objective the militant Islamists have failed utterly (Kepel 2002).

With the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan it was expected that recruitment would be curbed. This does not seem to be the case. The role of militant Islamists residing in Europe should be changing in the direction of more independence from the established terrorist

organizations. In the future, recruitment, training, and planning and executing attacks will be more confined to Europe through a network of more or less autonomous cells.

Several highly questionable estimates on the number of militant Islamists in Europe have been presented but the obsession with numbers is to a certain extent misleading. Mirroring my own conclusions in a previous report is the very informative transcript of a tapped conversation between two senior figures in militant Islamist circles (Taarnby 2003). While discussing future recruitment, an Islamist from Germany exclaimed, 'But dear Abu Umar, it is not quantity but quality [that matters]; even if they number only ten, that is sufficient. Because you study them, you understand them psychologically. You do like at school… At each stage there is an exam' (Italy 2002).

Intelligence

September 11 was a wake-up call especially for the intelligence community. Attention had been diverted from the militant Islamists by Irish and Basque groups – this, I believe, is well documented. Often a radical group was identified but the authorities chose inaction over controversy. By late 1998 German investigators had identified the entire Hamburg cell but apparently failed to make the right conclusions, devoting counter-terrorism resources to rightwing groups. Andreas Croll, chief investigator of Islamic extremism for the Hamburg state police, said in 2003, 'We've learned a lot about Islamicists [sic] since September 11 … We are only now beginning to understand how they operate' (Leiken 2004). Better late than never, but the comments underscore a considerable head start on behalf of the militant Islamists. Since 11 September 2001 Islamic terrorists have rebuilt and even extended their European operations despite police and intelligence efforts. That is the conclusion drawn by senior officials and it identifies a gap that needs to be closed.

Baltasar Garzon, the Spanish counter-terrorism magistrate, aptly summed up the situation: 'There is an enormous amount of information, but much of it gets lost because of failure to coorporate. There is a lack of communication, a lack of coordination and a lack of any broad vision' (Golden 2004). The last point, which concerns the lack of a vision, is the most worrying. Especially so when the EU is deeply involved in a long-term asymmetrical conflict.

Recommendations

Anti-terrorist operations and arrests of suspects are the visible element in contemporary counter terrorism. These are, needless to say, indispensable, but do not address the roots of the problem. Intelligence and security services should also, while fighting terrorism, concentrate on gathering information that will allow them to better understand the ideological, cultural, educational, and social factors of this phenomenon in order to counter it efficiently (Paz 2002). Averting the next attack obviously has priority, but this can only be done when there is a thorough understanding of the Islamist environment. The role of security services is vital but is only the tip of the iceberg. As this study indicates it is at the level of socially disparate groups that recruits to the global Jihad can be found, and only there. And this is outside the scope and competence of the security services.

Further documentation on the fate of former Mujaheddin and terrorists might be useful in countering the glorious versions of the global Jihad that until now have been the exclusive domain of the Islamists. Quite often the death or capture of European volunteers has been entirely devoid of any glamour. An example of such documentation that provides a different version of the realities of Jihad is the MEMRI Special report from July 2003: 'Arab and Muslim Jihad Fighters in Iraq'. A sombre read for prospective Mujaheddin, it is a collection of Arab media stories of young Arabs who travelled to Iraq to join the insurgents. They were abandoned by their Iraqi fellow soldiers, turned away by local Iraqis and left disillusioned (Stalinsky 2003).

An underground terrorist recruitment network is a challenge to eliminate in its entirety. However, as mentioned previously it is most vulnerable to disruption at the level of the cell leadership. Any gatekeeper functions through his distributed network of personal contacts, without this his options are greatly diminished. This in turn necessitates communication above the level of regular cell-members and attracts attention. Previously, the radical Mosque facilitated these contacts and served as important recruitment localities. There are signs that this pattern has changed due to the intensive surveillance of radical institutions, which has forced militant Islamists further into the shadows. By constantly applying pressure on the militant circles it is to be expected that they either become exposed or slow down their activities considerably. This approach does not eliminate the further recruitment of terrorists, but it buys time to consider other options.

On a final note, much more research is needed to understand the complexities involved in the current process of terrorist recruitment in Europe. Andrew Silke has summed up the predicament quite well, 'Yet three decades of study on terrorism has taught one lesson with certainty, and that is that terrorism is not a simple phenomenon with easy explanations and direct solutions. On the contrary it is a highly complex subject' (Silke 2003). The modest amount of

research that does exist on Islamist terrorism in Europe is highly fragmentary, often outdated and contains little data to support the conclusions. The lack of academic attention to the radicalization process in Europe has left the field wide open to interpretations of all sorts, by scholars and the public alike.

The search for the root causes of Islamist terrorism has led some observers to become distracted at a time when it is of singular importance to differentiate between various types of Jihads. Solving the Palestinian problem, which is unquestioningly connected to terrorism, will do nothing to alleviate a profound sense of socio-cultural alienation in a European suburb. These phenomena are basically unrelated, and solving one will not make the other go away. Problems that originate in marginalization and alienation are currently being channelled into a global cause that insists on solidarity between Muslims. While it is important that the EU supports the development of democracy abroad it needs to turn its attention to the home-grown threat as well, anything else would border on the irresponsible

European Muslims have too often been lumped together and described as an entity when in fact they form numerous distinct communities. Olivier Roy has suggested that we develop and consult a new sociology which he terms 'Euro Islam', and this is a point well made (Roy 2003). Without solid and evidence-based research, counter-terrorism policies lack the foundation for carrying out the right decisions. We should ask ourselves whether we are asking the right questions. Do we even know what we don't know?

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