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Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 773576048]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t713723134>

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Online Publication Date: 01 March 2009

To cite this Article Nomikos, John M. and Burweila, Aya(2009)'Another Frontier to Fight: International Terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism in North Africa',International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence,22:1,50 — 88

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/08850600802254822

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08850600802254822>

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JOHN M. NOMIKOS and AYA BURWEILA

Another Frontier to Fight: International Terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism in North Africa

Allah will not be pleased until we reach the rooftop of the White House.

—Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Libi on Al-Arabiya television.¹

In what was regarded as the deadliest attacks in at least five years, on 11 April 2007, al-Qaeda's Committee in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) conducted two suicide car bombings in Algiers, the capital of Algeria. Crushing the assumption that Islamic violence in Algeria had long ceased, the attacks targeted the prime minister's office, a police station, and purportedly a local office of Interpol,² killing 33 people and wounding over 160 others.³ Signifying the increasing importance of North Africa in international terrorism, al-Qaeda's Committee in the Islamic Maghrib is the result of the alliance between al-Qaeda and the region's best-organized and prolific terrorist group, Algeria's The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, known by its French acronym of GSPC. Clearly, instead of

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dissolving under the intense pressure exerted by the Algerian security forces, the GSPC chose to reemerge and survive by formally allying itself with al-Qaeda, with whom it enjoys a common cross-section of personnel as well as parallel agendas. After sharing long-standing links, the process of merging the national Algerian group with its international counterpart initially began in 2005 and culminated on 11 September 2006, when Ayman al-Zawahiri announced via al-Qaeda's media and propaganda organization, as-Sahab:

[T]he GSPC has joined Qa'idat al-Jihad, under the blessing and mercy of Allah. We pray to Allah that this event would be a thorn in the neck of the American and French crusaders and their allies, an arrow in the heart of the French traitors and apostates. We ask Allah to help our brothers of the GSPC to hit the foundation of the Crusader alliance, primarily their old leader the infidel United States, praise be on Allah.⁴

Two days later, on 13 September, the GSPC confirmed the alliance in a statement posted on its Website. Emphasizing in its communiqué that “the United States can only be defeated by an Islamic United States,”⁵ the GSPC referred to itself as the “only organization qualified” to gather the mujahideen in solidarity against the infidel West. Additionally, in the words of Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, by enfranchising itself with al-Qaeda, the group would become “one stone in building the coming Islamic nation,” and “an inspiration” to the mujahideen everywhere to get rid of the “disease” of nationalism.⁶ To this effect, GSPC leaders also argued that Algeria occupies a “very prominent role in this war, perhaps even more dangerous than the role taken by the Pakistanis, the Saudis and the Egyptians.”⁷ Interestingly enough, not until 24 January 2007 did the GSPC adopt its new name of al-Qaeda's Committee in the Islamic Maghrib to reflect its evolution, despite having stated the previous September that “We will give him [Osama bin Laden] the proceedings from our hands and the fruits from our hearts, to continue our jihad in Algeria as soldiers under his [Emirate] instructions. He can use us to strike whomever and whenever he wishes and he will find nothing but obedience from us and shall only receive what pleases him.”⁸ Not ones to disappoint, having killed more than 165 people in 2007, the AQIM did not waste any time in being either fruitful or obedient⁹ and has effectively revived the GSPC's status as the greatest terror threat in Northwestern Africa. An offshoot of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the GSPC traces its roots to the Islamic insurgency that began in January 1992 after the Algerian army cancelled the election that would have given victory to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)—which had intended to use the elections as a one-time vote to establish an Islamic state based on Shari'a. This strategy, invented by the Muslim Brotherhood and known as “political jihad,” uses democracy to come to power so that

once in power it can then destroy democracy itself.¹⁰ Subsequently, the Islamists mounted a vicious confrontation against the Algerian government and civilian population that lasted until the end of the year 2000. Within that decade, under an Islamization movement whose “barbaric compulsion in armed violence” and “genocidal character” is seen as comparable only to the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia,¹¹ Islamic terrorism in Algeria caused an estimated 150,000 deaths¹² and no less than one million victims. Over a period of ten years, factories, bridges, railways, schools, and cultural centers were systematically destroyed, to the tune of \$20 billion dollars. In addition to the killing of fellow Algerians, the Islamist campaign was highlighted with bombings, purposeful criminal acts, and massacres of isolated citizens, sabotage, rape, mutilation, and torture.¹³ To illustrate the extent of the depravity, in 1994, in the space of a mere two months, the GIA managed to kill thirty teachers and principals and torch no less than 538 schools.¹⁴ Nonbelievers were not to be spared either: during the beginning stages of the movement, 120 foreign citizens were killed, including the Bishop of Oran, who was assassinated in a bomb attack in 1995.¹⁵

Throughout the decade, the vanguard of this movement would continue to change: the FIS was eventually taken over by the Islamic Jihad, which in 1995 became the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a group which had enjoyed a \$40,000 cash injection from bin Laden.¹⁶ Like the neighboring Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which is mainly comprised of 2,500 Libyans who fought in the Soviet-Afghan War and also allied to the al-Qaeda network,¹⁷ the GIA was likewise comprised of Algerians who fought in Afghanistan and is estimated to have been created in the House of Muhajireen (Immigrants) in 1989 in Peshawar, Pakistan.¹⁸ Through the representatives of the Pakistani organization Tabligh Jamaat in Algeria, by the end of the year 1980 no fewer than 3,000 to 4,000 Algerian volunteers were dispatched to Pakistan and Afghanistan,¹⁹ volunteers who would later return to their homeland euphoric with victory over the Soviets, and eager to establish an Islamic state in their own country. As James Buchan observed, after the war the mujahideen were left in Afghanistan “with a taste for fighting but no cause,”²⁰ and resolved this dilemma accordingly by taking up the Islamist campaign within their own countries of origin. But the GIA’s brutal tactics alienated the Algerian civilian population while group infighting eventually led to its disintegration. The most powerful and popular GIA offshoot was the GSPC, which was officially established in March 1999 as Al-Jamaah al-Salafiyah li-al-Da’wa wal Qital, i.e., the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. In the words of Abu Omar Abdul Birr, the director of the GSPC’s media wing,

The GSPC is a military organization, following the Salafist creed and ideology, fighting in jihad against the Algerian regime which has

abandoned Islam and its masters among the Jews and Christians [in order] to restore the rightly guided Caliphate and to implement Shariah and remove the oppression and humiliation from the shoulders of our oppressed brothers.²¹

Today, the GSPC is considered to be the greatest terror threat in Northwestern Africa, with Algeria, Morocco, and the Sahara region between the two countries serving as the epicenter of the region's terrorist activity. Furthermore, by merging with al-Qaeda, the GSPC gained an extensive infrastructure throughout the Middle East and Western Europe, along with a greater number of recruits the newly acquired networks would surely yield. This new and improved GSPC version has three objectives:

1. to unite Jihadists in the region and bring them under the umbrella of all al-Qaeda
2. to recruit and send suicide bombers to join the insurgency in Iraq and
3. to carry out attacks in Europe and North America.²²

Not only does the AQIM seek to attack Europe and North Africa, it is highly probable that it will increase its attempts to attack Western targets in the region, particularly businesses and employees associated with the United States and France. According to Mohammed Bedjaoui, out of the nearly \$16 billion invested in Algeria over the past year, \$2.8 billion came from foreign investors.²³ However, even before the formal alliance of the GSPC with al-Qaeda on 16 December 2002, French officials arrested two Algerians and two Moroccans in possession of chemicals and a military personal-protection suit. Authorities said that the four, who were linked to the GSPC's Frankfurt, Germany, cell, appear to have been planning a chemical attack on the nation.²⁴ Four years later, on 11 December 2006, GSPC elements attacked employees of Brown Root and Condor, a joint venture of KBR and Algeria's Condor Energy, killing an Algerian and injuring several Americans. A few months later, on 3 March 2007, AQIM attacked Russian employees of a natural gas contractor, killing one Russian and three Algerians.²⁵ According to Abu Omar, "The GSPC is not limited by a narrow regional vision. It is important for us to spread the fragrance of jihad in every country and region, and ignite flames under the feet of the Jews, Christians, and apostates."²⁶ To this end, while Algeria hosted one of the longest-running Islamic insurgencies in the world, and the most consistent source of religious violence in the region,²⁷ Europe hosted cells of the movement on its continent, with consequences both inside and outside its borders. Indeed, the Algerian terror groups have not drawn their strength solely from sympathizers and supporters in Muslim nations. While the largest number of North Africans arrested since

11 September have been detained on British soil, the GIA, the GSPC, and the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GCIM) have, with little hindrance, used Britain as a base for coordinating attacks against American, European, and North African targets.²⁸ More importantly, taking advantage of the United Kingdom's liberal laws and legal safe havens, these groups have received exceptional material means and great quantities of arms and funds from more than 5,000 Islamic activists long entrenched in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Geneva, and Brussels.²⁹ To do this, European security services point out that the GSPC has long capitalized on its relationships with immigrant communities in Europe,³⁰ what Islamists generally regard as being part of the international Muslim community, referred to in religious terms as the *ummah*. For example, according to a 14 September 2006 report in *Le Figaro* magazine, the group reportedly raised 100,000 euros in Switzerland alone.³¹ According to Boudjema, so embedded is this Algerian terror network in Europe that Western nations have done little to engage against them, even when the Islamist campaign against the Algerian government reached such proportions as to threaten the stability of the entire region.³²

Understandably, home to an estimated fifteen to twenty million Muslims,³³ Europe has found itself paralyzed by the projected severity of the consequences should it choose to actively denounce the terrorists and their supporters among them.³⁴ This policy of *laissez-faire, laissez passer*³⁵ has not only benefited the terrorists and contributed to the prolonging of the crises in Algeria, but also speaks volumes on the influence Islamists wield in shaping the threat perception of Western states and by extension, their domestic and foreign policies.³⁶ As Redha Malek so perceptively points out, even nongovernmental organizations are being limited to merely addressing attacks on human rights, taking particular care not to accuse the ideology that seeks to justify the staggering violations. For example, Amnesty International has categorized the war waged by the Islamists as an "armed opposition" rather than identifying it for what it is: a religiously motivated asymmetric war campaign against civilians, as well as the nation-state itself.³⁷ As the Madrid and London tragedies would prove, this shortsighted policy has gravely neglected to take into account the nature of the threat, that is, the fact that Islamic terrorism takes upon itself not a regional but an international dimension.³⁸ To illustrate this, for the bombings in Madrid, 29 people were indicted: fifteen Moroccans, nine Spaniards, two Syrians, one Egyptian, one Algerian, and one Lebanese. Indeed, the detonation of ten explosive devices at train stations in Madrid, which claimed casualties of eleven nationalities, effectively embodies al-Qaeda's "paradigm of a fighting cross-nation Muslim community dispersed all over the globe, employing extreme violence against those who are perceived to be opposed to its Islamic

fundamental ideology” and which “regards the world as a legitimate arena of active jihad by means of terrorism in general and suicide attacks in particular.”³⁹ In fact, dispersed over sixty countries, al-Qaeda is the most widely spread nonstate terrorist network in history.⁴⁰

Unfortunately, with the exception of the French, until the Madrid attacks “deeply shocked” the European Union (EU) and served as a “terrible reminder” of the threat posed by terrorism the European approach to understanding Islamic terrorism mimicked that of the U.S. non-approach to terrorism that characterized the period leading to 11 September. That is, the EU’s counterterror policy was ascribed not to a failure of intelligence or even imagination, but to a failure of education, coupled with a policy of accommodation. As one senior intelligence official based in Europe said after the London train bombings carried out by young British Muslims: “The terrorists have come home. It is payback time for a policy that was, in my opinion, an irresponsible policy of the British government to allow these networks to flourish inside Britain.”⁴¹ As Paul Wilkinson, Professor of International Relations and former Director of the University of St Andrews Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence has observed, a major factor that is conducive to the growth of modern terrorism has been the repeated weakness and appeasement in national and international reaction to terrorism, despite numerous antiterrorism laws, conventions and governmental rhetoric. Wilkinson pointed out that early writings on terrorism tended to treat it as a relatively minor threat to law, order and individual human rights. After a series of studies, he concluded that because of their capacity to affect public opinion and foreign policy, and to trigger civil and international wars, major outbreaks of terrorism should be recognized as potentially dangerous to international security and a threat to human rights and, in extreme cases, to international peace.⁴²

Today, most terrorism takes place in the Muslim world or is launched against other Muslims or against people of other creeds and nationalities.⁴³ According to the databases of the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, seventy-four out of the eighty-one identified religious international terrorist groups are Islamic in ideology and persuasion.⁴⁴ Without accounting for attacks in Iraq, between 2002 and 2006, the United States and seven of its Western allies (the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Australia, Israel, France, and Germany) have been the targets of eighteen major attacks in eleven countries: Tunisia, Pakistan, Yemen, Indonesia, Kuwait, Spain, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, Egypt, Kenya, and Morocco. No fewer than 775 people have been killed in these attacks.⁴⁵ In this light, the alliance of North Africa’s regional militant groups with international networks represents not only the further globalization of Islamic terror, but also strongly suggests that North Africa, in particular Morocco and Algeria, is to act as another major

frontier of Jihad against the United States, Europe, and secular regimes in Muslim populated countries.⁴⁶ To this effect, the GSPC makes it clear that the purpose of the revived terror campaign in Algeria is not simply to “punish” the Algerian government for its support of the U.S. and the Iraqi government, but also to reignite popular interest in waging frontline combat within the borders of the Maghreb itself and against the “crusaders and apostates.”⁴⁷ More revealingly, the significance of the changing nature of the conflict in Algeria is that Islamists view it as an entry point of terror into Europe, and from there, to the United States, the “head” of the “snake.” As Emily Hunt has already emphasized, given that the road to the “rooftop of the White House” may very well be paved through North Africa, Iraq, and Europe, the security implications of the strategic alliance between the Algerian militants of the GSPC and al-Qaeda must henceforth be analyzed in the context of international Islamic terrorism.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ALLIANCE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Today, the entire world has understood that Algeria, beyond [the fight on] its own territory, is waging a battle of universal dimensions against a poison that has no borders: Islamist terrorism.

—N. Sebti in the daily *Liberté*, 14 April 2007.⁴⁸

In his lecture titled *Jihad in Islam*, delivered in the Town Hall of Lahore, on 13 April 1939, Sayed Abul Ala Maududi (1903–1979), one of the leading Islamic interpreters of the twentieth century, made the objective of Jihad clear to both his followers and the societies they aspire to dominate:

It must be evident to you from this discussion that the objective of the Islamic Jihad is to eliminate the rule of [the] non-Islamic system and establish in its stead an Islamic system of state rule. Islam does not intend to confine this revolution to a single State or a few countries; the aim of Islam is to bring about a universal revolution. Although in the initial stages it is incumbent upon members of the party of Islam to carry out a revolution in the state system of the countries to which they belong, but their ultimate objective is no other than to effect a world revolution.⁴⁹

Clearly, the initial stages of the movement are long past. According to extracts from the document *al-Qa'ida's Strategy to the Year 2020*, published on 11 March 2005 by *al-Quds al-Arabi*, the organization delineated five distinct stages by which it would pursue its campaign. Posted on the Internet by Muhammad Ibrahim Makkawi, al-Qaeda's main military strategist, the fourth stage was to become a global network by converting al-Qaeda into a set of guiding ideological principles that transcend all national boundaries and make affiliation or enfranchisement with the group

exceptionally easy.⁵⁰ This stage is being manifest both in Europe and North Africa, engendering grave security implications not only on these two continents but on international security as well. Indeed, just a month before the Madrid bombings, on 4 February 2004, Richard A. Falkenrath, a former homeland security advisor to U.S. President George W. Bush, and currently Deputy Commissioner for Counter-Terrorism of the New York City police department, had warned on Radio Netherlands that:

There's no question that for al-Qaeda and its affiliates, deploying another operative team into the United States is a more daunting proposition than deploying one into continental Europe. And it's been quite clear in the last three and a half years that Europe is a more active terrorist environment than is the United States.⁵¹

For his part, al-Zarqawi had long recognized the strategic importance of developing a European network and, until his death in June 2006, he maintained a steady two-way flow of mujahideen between Europe and Iraq. According to Abdel Bari Atwan, much like in North Africa, the European network of Jihadists evolved organically after the dispersal of Afghan-Arabs throughout the 1990s and the evolution of other movements, like the GSPC and the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), which soon became active in Europe and subsequently formed strong ties not only with each other but to al-Qaeda as well.⁵²

In the past decade, the Jihadi presence in Europe has grown to include a new group almost entirely composed of North Africans. These individuals are considered "Jihadi tourists," that is, operatives who arrive in European cities using false documents for the single purpose of recruiting and establishing military cells. The majority are associated with the Algerian GSPC network, which was closely affiliated with al-Qaeda even before their formal alliance. Though their primary focus was to provide manpower for the insurgency in Algeria, the presence of these cells now offers an opportunity for al-Qaeda to "subcontract" attacks within Europe.⁵³

In fact, when beginning to negotiate its alliance with al-Qaeda in 2005, the GSPC stated that, although it still sought the establishment of an Islamic state in Algeria, because France supported the "apostate" Algerian regime, henceforth, France would now be the group's primary target.⁵⁴ True to their word, by September 2005, French authorities had arrested an Islamist cell planning attacks on the Paris metro, airport, and the country's domestic security service, the DST. Not only did one of the other members arrested confirm the three targets, he added that his group was also planning attacks against other European countries. Among those arrested was a notorious Algerian terrorist, Safe Bourada, an Islamic militant who was convicted on charges of terror and freed from prison in 2003.⁵⁵ In this spirit, the GSPC had also issued an "open call to the Muslims of France,"

implored them for their active support and direct assistance: “Bring victory to your Algerian brothers by executing those criminals in France—watch them and drive them out from France.”⁵⁶ Mentioning France no less than fifteen times and describing the European country as its “enemy number one,” the leader of the GSPC, Abdel Malek Dourkdal stated: “The only way to teach France to behave is Jihad and the Islamic martyr.”⁵⁷

Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, authors of *The Next Attack: The Globalization of Jihad* also emphasized that the coming years will see the threat becoming greater in Europe, where more individuals are being recruited into the ideologies of the Jihadists.⁵⁸ They point out that the actual number of recruits is not the only index of threat: organization, capability, and opportunity are also key factors that make the probability of future 3/11s in Europe greater than that of a 9/11.⁵⁹ As one expert on al-Qaeda testified, “Every single attack carried out or attempted by al-Qaeda throughout the world has [had] some link to Europe, even prior to September 11.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, during his congressional testimony, Peter Bergen, author of *Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Bin Laden*, stated that “the greatest threat to the United States from al-Qaeda, its affiliated groups, or those animated by al-Qaeda’s ideologies emanates from Europe” while future attacks against U.S. interests are “likely to have a European connection.”⁶¹ European intelligence services estimate that since 11 September radical Islamists have planned as many as thirty “spectaculars”⁶² while according to Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the former Director-General of the British Security Service, MI-5, there are currently no less than thirty plots against British civilians and economy: “These plots often have links to Al-Qaeda in Pakistan and through those links, Al-Qaeda gives guidance and training to its largely British foot soldiers here on an extensive scale.”⁶³ Though the terrorist environment in Europe remains active, if not thriving, this was not entirely unforeseen. Writing more than a decade ago, in March 1995, Klaus Grünwald, the former head of the German counterterrorist division of the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), revealed that at least fourteen extremist Islamic organizations dedicated to propagating militant Islam in Europe were active in Germany.⁶⁴ One of the declassified key judgments of the *National Intelligence Estimate: Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States*, released in April 2006, points out that,

The jihadists regard Europe [as] an important venue for attacking Western interests. Extremist networks inside the extensive Muslim diasporas in Europe facilitate recruitment and staging for urban attacks as illustrated by the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London bombings.⁶⁵

As Jonathan Stevenson observed, “Broadly construed, Europe may be al-Qaeda’s highest-value ‘field of jihad’ other than the United States.” Due

to this status, the effectiveness of European counterterrorism efforts bears a direct impact not only on its own security, but by extension, on U.S. and international security as well.⁶⁶ Illustrating how and why a bulk of counterterrorism effort should begin in Europe, the notorious “Hamburg Cell” served as the main operational base for 11 September. As for the heralded Algiers bombing, Antoine Basbous, the director of the Paris-based Observatory of Arab Countries, remarks that the new surge of terrorism in Algeria indicates that “Islamists have never stopped gaining ground in the last 5 1/2 years, and those fighting them have lost ground,” while “What we’ve seen in the last four months is proof that there is a new force at the gates of Europe.”⁶⁷ But this force is neither new, nor is it truly at Europe’s gates, rather, it is an international campaign that relies heavily on the networks it has already established on the European continent.

In this context, the Dutch experience is both sobering and a disturbing reflection of this internationalist Islamist force that has been acting within Europe for decades. For releasing a short film depicting the range of abuses Muslim women endure under the auspices of Islamic law, on 14 November 2004, the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was brutally assassinated by Mohammad Bouyeri, a Dutch Moroccan. According to the Dutch Security Service (AIVD), there are around 200 active extremists in Holland are liable to commit violence, with roughly 1,200 others who support them.⁶⁸ Further illustrating the international element of Islamic terror operations is the very group Bouyeri belonged to, the Hofstad Group. According to European intelligence services, the group was hardly domestic: it was a cell comprised of second-generation Muslims connected to networks in Spain, Italy, Belgium, and North Africa’s Morocco. Nor did the group lack ambition: in addition to other acts of political violence around Europe and the murder of Van Gogh, they were also concurrently planning a series of assassinations of Dutch politicians and, even more disturbingly, an attack on Netherlands’ sole nuclear reactor.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the cell is linked to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, which has been associated with the Madrid bombings and a series of attacks that took place in Casablanca in May 2003. Counterterrorism officials now consider this group to be much larger and more dangerous than they had previously assumed. Unfortunately, despite fairly intensive efforts, they have thus far been unable to locate many of the group’s leaders.⁷⁰

As opposed to the Red Brigades and the Basque separatists, the Islamic groups are made operational by their wide social base, as embodied by the notion of the *umma*. In Europe, according to the French scholar Gilles Kepel, this social base is nurtured by a rigid Islamic identity among second-generation immigrants which leads them to reject cultural integration into European culture and to adopt cultural separatism instead. A minority, like Bouyeri, will move from voluntary secession into violence

as a means of expressing social resentment and hatred justified by religion whereas others, the silent majority, will be content to turn inwards to closed communities where Islamic doctrine reigns over every aspect of their lives. These separatist attitudes that alternately nurture and tolerate each other are the result of Salafist and Wahhabi teachings that adhere to a mainstream version of Islam that not only imposes complete cultural separation from the West, but devalues and demonizes European values and norms.⁷¹ As Benjamin Barber elucidates, although Islam is a complex religion, it is inhospitable to democracy and its very inhospitality, in turn, nurtures conditions favorable to parochialism, antimodernism, exclusiveness, and hostility to the “other,”⁷² the very characteristics that undergird the bin Laden–Zawahiri “cultural jihad.” Keeping in mind that it takes an entire culture to create a terrorist, in this competition and contest of values, Western liberal democracy is the de facto rival of the Islamist movement. Indeed, in a videotape aired on 23 January 2005, al-Qaeda-in-Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (now dead) declared: “We have declared a bitter war against democracy.”⁷³ Mawlana Maududi confirms this situation in stating that

Islamic jihad is both offensive and defensive at one and the same time. . . . As a party, it has no home to defend; it upholds certain principles which it must protect. Similarly, this party does not attack the home of the opposing party, but launches an assault on the principles of the opponent. The objective of this attack, moreover, is not to coerce the opponent to relinquish his principles but to abolish the government which sustains these principles.⁷⁴

As Abdel Bari Atwan points out in *The Secret History of Al-Qa'ida*, Europe is fast emerging as the new battlefield for military jihad, as well as cultural and moral jihad. Cultural and moral jihad is particularly dangerous since it can engage and harness the frustration and anger of all Muslims regardless of background, age, or status, not just “hot headed” youths.⁷⁵ The most active group is composed of disaffected Muslim immigrant youths—often second- or third-generation with serious cultural identity issues for which they seek resolution by identifying with the ummah. Most of the recent terrorist attacks in Europe have been committed by youths who were radicalized in mosques or prisons, or through personal contacts or Jihadi Websites, and who have simply set up their own cells. Also increasing are incidents of native European converts to Islam engaging in terrorism, such as the infamous Muriel Degauque, Belgium’s first female suicide export to Iraq.⁷⁶ Not surprisingly, a study of 373 Jihadists by Robert Leiken, director of national security studies at the Nixon Center in California, revealed that a quarter of all terrorists were EU citizens.⁷⁷

AL-QAEDA AND CO.: THE HYDRA STRATEGY OF ALLIANCES

The ultimate goal of our Islamist struggle is to rebuild the Caliphate as a greater power and rebuild its armies. Only with state power can we achieve the goals of establishing Muslim power in the region and face the West.

—Ayman al Qadiri, spokesman of Hizb al-Tahrir⁷⁸

After 11 September and the vigorous counterterror policies adopted by the United States government, al-Qaeda was obliged to move its center of gravity to its smaller affiliates as its primary mode of operation,⁷⁹ and accordingly began to restructure the organization whereby a central organ, a “mother” al-Qaeda (al-Qaeda Al Oum), simultaneously coordinates and loosely controls the actions of semi-independent regional structures around the world.⁸⁰ As Loretta Napoleoni astutely observes, the European network continues to rely upon al-Qaeda’s financial support, while the organization’s strategy is to act more like a venture capitalist company of terror rather than as a direct organizer of attacks. As in the venture capital model, al-Qaeda provides supervision and part or most of the funds, while the decision to back one attack instead of another is taken after a detailed analysis of the cost-benefits of the bombing. As was the case with the Madrid attacks, once an attack has been successfully carried out, only then does the leadership of al-Qaeda officially endorse it.⁸¹ Originally, the principal strategic objective of al-Qaeda, which sees itself as the representative of all Muslims, was the establishment of governing regimes throughout the world that would function according to Islamic religious law, first in leading Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia, and then in other parts of the globe.⁸² For example, before the rise of al-Qaeda, Algerian Sunni extremist groups were intent on attacking the Algerian government, Egyptian groups were focused on overthrowing the Egyptian regime, and the Afghan-Arabs were intent on stopping a Communist takeover of Afghanistan. But the formal alliance of the GSPC with al-Qaeda shows that bin Laden believed this to be a wrong-headed strategy, arguing that attacks against the United States are more potent, America being the “head of the snake.”⁸³ Bin Laden’s change of priorities was based on the fact that, in North African countries such as Algeria and Libya, domestic terror organizations face unrelenting and effective counterterrorism efforts by the regimes in power. Unable to install an Islamic state in their own countries and threatened with near-extinction, thereby finding themselves in a situation of “ally or die,” the local groups were compelled to look outward and merge with al-Qaeda’s more international enterprise and focus on the Jihad abroad, such as ideological penetration and attacks in Europe and the insurgency in Iraq. The Madrid events, as well as the London bombings, also illustrate how the influence of Islamist movements affects not only the authoritarian regimes that are characteristic of Muslim nations, but also Western democracies with

significant Muslim minorities. Where state sponsorship is lacking, these movements are organized into mosques where they can “spread the faith” (*da’wa*), while many of them also support charitable and educational organizations that provide extensive services which, in turn, provide Islamists with a grassroots level of social and political access. Bernard Lewis claims that, even under authoritarian regimes,

Islamic movements also have another immense advantage as contrasted with all their competitors. In the mosques they dispose of a network of association and communication that even the most dictatorial of governments cannot entirely control. Indeed, ruthless dictatorships help them, unintentionally, by eliminating competing oppositions.⁸⁴

In this manner, the nature of their organization ensures that even where Islamists do not win elections, or are not allowed to, their large and active memberships make them powerful even when they are not in power—which is precisely what enables al-Qaeda and its affiliates to carry out preparations and operations within European territory as well as against it. According to Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou in his *Understanding Al Qaeda: The Transformation of War*, al-Qaeda has immersed itself in the political process of countries in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States, as well as in parts of Asia, particularly in Pakistan and Indonesia.⁸⁵ In testimony to al-Qaeda’s influence among Muslim communities in Europe, these smaller affiliates have proven to be no less successful in compromising European security: many analysts have commented that Spain’s withdrawal from the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, on 11 March 2004, signified a resounding success for al-Qaeda’s strategy of isolating the United States from its European allies so that it may end up fighting this international war against terror alone. To this extent, another, perhaps more subversive, strategy of al-Qaeda is to influence the democratic process in various European countries by orchestrating attacks of intimidation on the eve of elections. In order to replicate the heavily influenced success of the 2004 Spanish elections, the GSPC may have been planning an attack on the eve of the French and Italian elections as well.⁸⁶ On this note, Paul R. Pillar, the former U.S. National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia and author of *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, emphasized that “terror is the tactic, not the adversary itself,”⁸⁷ and its main purpose is psychological: to inspire global Jihad and to terrorize the global public.⁸⁸ That approach notwithstanding, Ould Mohamedou insists that, in order to combat terrorism, nations must understand bin Laden’s political objectives. Citing the Spanish electoral results as a precedent for other nations to follow, Mohamedou believes that the reversal of a policy that was perceived by al-Qaeda as anti-Muslim led to the cessation of hostilities and a formal statement by al-Qaeda to

that effect. Apparently, popular pressure exerted at the polls in reaction to a major al-Qaeda attack was the decisive factor in the evolution of Spain's domestic and foreign policies.⁸⁹ What Mohamedou omits however, is that according to police dossiers made public by *El Pais*, the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) is still building cells in Spain and conducting preparations for future operations.⁹⁰ More importantly, in "The Radicalization of Muslim Youth in Europe: the Reality and the Scale of the Threat," Claude Moniquet, the Director General of the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center, stated that the attacks of 11 March were already being prepared in 2000–2001, that is, before the war in Iraq had even begun, and before Spanish troops had been sent there in support of the U.S.–UK invasion.⁹¹ Furthermore, terror attacks preceded the war in Iraq, and have been perpetrated against countries like Indonesia, which hosts the world's largest Muslim population and was irrelevant to the war in Iraq, and against France, which antagonized its traditional ally, the United States, by vehemently rejecting its Iraq venture.

To this end, the reemergence of the GSPC as an al-Qaeda franchise, and its change in strategy and target pool, indicates that the goals of the Jihadi movement will be fought for until al-Qaeda's ideological drive to dismantle democracies is satisfied. As Pierre de Bousquet de Florian, head of the French DST said, the threat of terrorist attack in France remains "very high and very international," pointing out that "for our Islamist adversaries, our country is frankly in the Western camp, the crusaders in their words, and we will be spared nothing."⁹² Indeed, as the Algiers bombings indicate, the targeting of public spaces and civilians represents a drastic reversal of GSPC's vow to avoid civilian casualties, and its adoption of al-Qaeda's penchant for spectacular mass casualty attacks that generate considerable publicity.⁹³ As Brian Jenkins once noted, traditional groups used terror to have "a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead," whereas al-Qaeda specifically aims to have a lot of people watching, as well as a lot of people dead.⁹⁴ To this effect, Olivier Roy, the Research Director in the Humanities and Social Sciences sector of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris and consultant to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1984, states in *Europe's Response to Radical Islam* that "The challenge is not to go at the roots of terrorism, as European government spokespeople never tire of saying. . . . The challenge is to prevent the radical fringe from finding a broad political base among the local Muslim population." That is, the "terror master" is not a person or a foreign policy, but an idea which, via the process of cultural and religious indoctrination, turns ordinary young men into human bombs. The full authority of religion and culture gives this idea legitimacy and obliges its constituents to act upon their beliefs. As Ibn Khaldun points out, "In the Muslim community, the jihad is a religious

duty because of the universalism of the Islamic mission and the obligation [to convert] everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force. . . . [By contrast] the other religions had no such universal mission and the holy war was [therefore] not a religious duty to them apart from self-defense.”⁹⁵

Judging by the activity of Muslim groups in Europe, the fighting in Chechnya, and the expanding activity of Islamists online, the consensus among Western intelligence services and independent analysts is that a significant and growing transformation is taking place: that those who might be susceptible to the virus of the Jihadist ideology are becoming those committed to personally carrying out acts of terror or actively supporting those who do through fund-raising, propaganda, and recruitment.⁹⁶ According to Paul Wilkinson, “There is a well-founded concern among police and intelligence services that the networks are managing to replace captured operatives and to recruit additional potential suicide bombers, more than outstripping the authorities’ ability to identify and apprehend them. This is the most serious worry of all, for if this trend continues, it is going to take decades to unravel those networks.”⁹⁷ Carl Heinrich Bauer, the deputy head of the North Rhine-Westphalia state police, confirms that “Most of the al-Qaeda cells in Germany have been prosecuted and destroyed. But whenever one terrorist gets arrested, one, two, three or more men will fill his space somewhere else.”⁹⁸ This is because, in order to recruit, the movement recognizes that it must first indoctrinate, which it does most successfully. In stark contrast, opponents are doing little to combat the doctrine of the Islamist indoctrinators. As the psychologist Stanley Milgram pointed out in 1974,

Each individual possesses a conscience which to a greater or lesser degree serves to restrain the unimpeded flow of impulses destructive to others. But when he merges his person into an organizational structure, a new creature replaces autonomous man, unhindered by the limitations of individual morality, freed of humane inhibition, mindful only of the sanctions of authority.

As long as little is done by targeted liberal societies to address the “sanctions of authority” that Islamist ideology readily provides, achieving a long-term, effective solution to counterterrorism is difficult to imagine.

RECRUITMENT

What people in the West simply don’t understand is that we love death even more than they love life. It is my biggest regret that I have not been martyred yet, for this life is rotten.

—Osama bin Laden, November 1996.⁹⁹

The Algiers bombings of April 2007 signify not only a major escalation, but the suicide attacks patently bear the fruits of the GSPC’s alliance with

al-Qaeda, namely a new *modus operandi* and fresh recruits from Iraq with the expertise to carry out its more global objectives. Indeed, Algerian Islamists constitute the largest national grouping in al-Qaeda, while Algerian Jihadists have been involved in successful or thwarted attacks in the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Iraq.¹⁰⁰ According to the “Country Report for Terrorism 2004,” published by the U.S. State Department, al-Qaeda is attempting to turn Iraq into a “melting pot for jihadists from around the world, a training ground, and an indoctrination center.”¹⁰¹ As Lianne Kennedy-Boudali of the Counterterrorism Center emphasizes, mujahideen who have fought in Iraq have an entirely different skill-set than the aging Arab-Afghans who formed the core of the first Algerian terrorist groups. Consequently, if this flow of trained fighters from Iraq continues, AQIM would gain operational expertise in urban insurgency techniques that could prove to be much more difficult for the Algerian government to combat. Furthermore, if the Algiers attacks are an indication of AQIM’s future strategy, counterterrorist officials must expect a significant increase in suicide attacks and a corresponding increase in the group’s ability to damage Western interests.¹⁰² As Roger Scruton, author of *The West and the Rest: Globalization of the Terrorist Threat* further observes, Islamists “do not work through diplomacy or negotiation, but through violence, and suicide bombings are now their principal device.”¹⁰³ Killing four times as many people per incident as other forms of terrorism,¹⁰⁴ suicide bombings have the following tactical advantages over other types of terrorist attack:

- simple and low cost operation
- require no escape routes or complicated rescue operations
- high probability of mass casualties and extreme damage
- in real time, a suicide “smart” bomber selects the exact time, location, and circumstances of the attack
- no fear of cell compromise from a captured, interrogated bomber
- stunning public and media impact resulting from a sense of fear and hopelessness.¹⁰⁵

Further illustrating the cost-benefit of utilizing suicide bombers, bin Laden invested no more than \$500,000 for the 11 September 2001 attacks, which yielded returns of over one billion dollars worth of damage. Mahmoud Mamdani takes it a step further, and points out that “we need to recognize the suicide bombers, first and foremost, as a category of soldier.”¹⁰⁶ How then is this category of soldier manufactured, and what and where are the factories? When Ramzi Yousef, the self-proclaimed “International Terrorist” and genius of creating improvised bombs, declared “I am a Pakistani by birth, Palestinian by choice,” he also offered

a very important perspective to the recruitment strategy of the Islamist movement. As V.S. Naipaul observed,

Islam is not simply a matter of conscience or private belief. It makes imperial demands. A convert's world-view alters. His holy places are in Arab lands; his sacred language is Arabic. His idea of history alters. He rejects his own; he becomes, whether he likes it or not, a part of the Arab story. The convert has to turn away from everything that is his. The disturbance for societies is immense, and even after a thousand years can remain unresolved; the turning away has to be done again and again. People develop fantasies about who and what they are; and in the Islam of converted countries [i.e., Pakistan], there is an element of neurosis and nihilism. These countries can be easily set on the boil.¹⁰⁷

Clearly, an ideological process motivated Yousef's choice, and this "bomb-making factory" is found in places where people can be indoctrinated: mosques, educational institutions, and religious media. For example, Madeleine Bunting points out that in the United Kingdom the most difficult and important front in combating terrorism is found in the country's fiercely independent 1,600 mosques where an estimated 90 percent of Britain's male Muslims attend Friday prayers, making these venues the ideal places for Islamists to connect to their core constituency.¹⁰⁸ As James Q. Wilson succinctly asserts, the key to recruitment is the group that is doing the recruiting.¹⁰⁹ Considering in particular their views on suicide terrorism, it is important to note the lack of disagreement between the doctrines propagated by preachers dubbed as being "radical" and those preachers regarded as "mainstream" and official Islamic authorities. Indeed, as the conclusion of a study on the internationalization of suicide terrorism conducted by Israel's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies points out, it is imperative to stress "the need for an ideological response to the concept of self-sacrifice in the name of Allah as a mandatory component of the effort to curb its dissemination to new recruits by al-Qaida and its affiliates is imperative."¹¹⁰ This ideological response should function in conjunction with enhanced intelligence operations, which are critical for thwarting the terrorist operations of al-Qaeda and its affiliates. But, without collaboration from the Muslim community, security agents will remain challenged, not only in preventing terrorist operations but in engaging in predictive intelligence operations, such as identifying members of terrorist groups and their networks.¹¹¹ This is especially important, given that, in the recruitment process, ideological motivations play the most pivotal role. As then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asked, "Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?"¹¹² Unfortunately, while an ideological and

political response to terrorism is lacking, by allying itself with al-Qaeda the two groups give each other access to a greater pool of potential recruits to indoctrinate into fighting global jihad. Al-Qaeda's evolution toward an ever-increasing reliance on North Africans for the advancement of its international campaign is reflected in the body of a forty-four-year-old Libyan, Abu Yahya al-Libi. According to Ben Venzke, the founder of *Intelligence Watch Reports* and CEO of Tempest Publishing, an intelligence company that specializes in tracking terrorism, "Abu Yahya al-Libi is now the most visible face of al-Qaida, surpassing even Ayman Al-Zawahiri in actual video appearances. Even within the broader global jihadi community, Abu Yahya's face is more visible in jihadist videos than any other current jihadi figure."¹¹³

But he is not the only Libyan with a prominent position within the international terror organization. Introduced in a May 2007 video as "one of the leaders of Qaida al-Jihad Group in Khorasan," Abu Laith al-Libi is considered to be the director of al-Qaeda's operations in Afghanistan, while another Libyan—formerly the head of al-Qaeda's North African operations under Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—Abu Faraj al-Libi is believed to have played a role in organizing the 11 September attacks. Until captured by U.S. forces in May 2005, Abu Faisal occupied al-Qaeda's No. 3 position as the organization's director of international operations.¹¹⁴ Propaganda being a core strategy for the recruitment of Jihadi terrorists, and North Africa being a potentially rich market for recruits, al-Qaeda's choice of a North African "poster boy" clearly speaks volumes regarding the organization's change in regional objectives. In the opinion of Roger Cressey, former deputy director of counterterrorism for both the Clinton and Bush administrations, "North Africa has risen in prominence within al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is evolving from Saudi and Egyptian leadership into one that is increasingly a broader operation, that places North Africans in positions of prominence, both operationally as well as in propaganda roles."¹¹⁵ Not surprisingly, according to Rohan Gunaratna, author of an authoritative book on al-Qaeda and associate professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, the Libyan-Islamic Fighting Group helped broker the alliance between the GSPC and al-Qaeda.¹¹⁶ To this extent, the GSPC is a major source of recruiting and other support for al-Qaeda operations in Europe. The evolution and steady enhancement of GSPC's media enterprise is indicative of the group's increasing alignment with al-Qaeda's strategic doctrine and redoubled efforts in establishing a sustainable public presence. This will likely pay dividends in the strategically crucial area of recruitment, which is critical to the success of the Islamist terror movement.¹¹⁷ In fact, Rita Katz, director of the Search for International Terrorist Entities (SITE) Institute in Washington points

out how, “What we can say for certain is that [among] the jihadists online, the support for AQIM is growing. Adopting the name Al Qaeda brought the GSPC the instant support of tens of thousands of online jihadists, many who now perceive the group as fighting on behalf of Al Qaeda.”¹¹⁸

FUNDING

True, there is poverty in Morocco, and a political struggle in Algeria, and the region is full of grave issues that need to be faced, from corruption to political monopoly to totalitarian regimes . . . but these bombings were terrorist acts that are related to issues of another kind, and have nothing to do with poverty or elections. This is a war of people who are religious extremists.

—Director General of Al-Arabiya TV 'Abd Al-Rahman Al-Rashed in *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*¹¹⁹

Adequate funding is necessary for a group's propagation effort which, in turn, is crucial to the recruitment of suicide bombers, the bedrock of al-Qaeda's asymmetric warfare. To finance its activities, the GSPC relies extensively on extortion of Algerian nationals as well as foreigners. Two types of extortion exist: first, the GSPC ambushes groups of people, either in their villages or by setting up illegal roadblocks and then proceed to shake down their victims of all their possessions. For example, in May 2006, the GSPC raided a café in the town of Ouled Rabah where “once surrounded, the customers were forced to listen to a bloodthirsty sermon” before the terrorists “ordered the targeted people to pay them major sums of money.” The second type of extortion consists of kidnapping rich members of society, then demanding ransom money. As the Algerian press observed, “[t]his kidnapping is not anything alien to the groups from the Salafist Group for Call and Combat, which are in the habit of abducting entrepreneurs, businessmen, and even their relatives to demand ransoms in exchange for their release.”¹²⁰ For example, in early 2003, a GSPC cell led by Abdelrazak El Para (aka Amar Saifi) kidnapped thirty-two European tourists, for whom they are believed to have received a \$5–6 million ransom from the German government. This kidnapping sparked an international manhunt and a running gun battle that transited Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, before El Para was eventually captured in Chad with the help of the U.S. government.¹²¹ According to Olivier Guitta, kidnapping as a fund-raising method is a routine occurrence in Algeria, where terrorists attack military personnel, government employees, or ordinary civilians on a daily basis.¹²² When not kidnapping European tourists for ransom, the GSPC receives funds from networks in Europe. According to Loretta Napoleoni, Islamic terrorism is self-funded by a mixture of legitimate and illegitimate enterprises, so the first step in fighting terrorism is to identify its legitimate channels on interactions with the economies of

the West and to progressively sever them by closing its access to the West's free capitalist market.¹²³ For example, Farid al-Belaribi, an Algerian immigrant, was jailed in England during the summer of 2003 for helping raise \$250,000 dollars through an international fraud network. Though he admitted to having defrauded banks and credit-card companies, he insisted that he was unaware that the money was being used by terrorists.¹²⁴ Another lucrative criminal activity is the trafficking of narcotics. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) observes:

Drug trafficking has always meant untold suffering and death for addicts. Today, drug trafficking is also the source of a different and very urgent problem: the financing of terrorism. The revenue generated by organized crime offers terrorist groups a steady flow of funding, making the effect to eliminate drug trafficking and to reduce drug abuse critical strategies in the global fight against terrorism.¹²⁵

For example, hashish trafficking from Morocco, estimated to bring in some \$12.5 billion, has been identified as the major source of funding for three major terrorist incidents: the aborted attack on a U.S. Navy vessel in Gibraltar in 2002; the Casablanca bombings of May 2003; and the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid.¹²⁶ The link between al-Zarqawi and Ansar-al-Islam, which is involved in the smuggling of drugs from Afghanistan, as well as suicide bombers from all over the globe, confirms that Islamist groups benefit from the sale of illegal narcotics in Europe.¹²⁷ For its part, al-Qaeda is too rich to be sponsored by any single entity, be it a fellow organization or a sympathetic state. For example, regarding Sudan and Afghanistan, al-Qaeda terrorists sponsored the states rather than the states financially sponsoring al-Qaeda.¹²⁸ Furthermore, Islamic organizations, many of which are linked to armed groups, can draw from a pool of money ranging from \$5 billion to \$16 billion dollars, while the Saudi Arabian government alone donates \$10 billion dollars each year via the Ministry of Religious works. The origins of these funds are largely unknown because the fiscal structure of Islamic countries makes it very difficult to monitor charitable organizations.¹²⁹ Also, external sponsorship of mosques, religious schools, and scholarships for locals to study religion in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran has helped conservative strands of Islam gain a foothold in North Africa.¹³⁰ In 1993, the Saudis offered money to Hosni Mubarak's government on the condition that it would encourage the Islamization of Egyptian society. According to Rifaat el-Said, the general secretary of the Egyptian opposition party Tagammu (Progressive Union), "the Saudis have . . . managed to infiltrate almost every channel of Egyptian cultural, economic, and political life." Another strategy is to promote the proliferation of Islamic investment houses where loans are conditional upon strict adherence to Islamic laws and traditions. One such

organization, al-Rayan, pays female students fifteen Egyptian pounds a month in pocket money on the condition that they wear the hijab, the Islamic headscarf. This practice of providing incentives is not isolated to Egypt but takes place in other Muslim countries as well.¹³¹ Morocco is especially vulnerable to the emergence of terror cells that thrive in the slums of important urban centers such as Casablanca and Tangiers, while the country's substantial tourist industry and strategic location on the Straits of Gibraltar provides terrorists with an unusually rich target pool.¹³² In conjunction, these trends have created a current of cultural Islamization which has increased al-Qaeda's attraction in certain segments of the region's youth.¹³³

In parallel, across the Mediterranean, European counterterrorism officials are adamant that the presence of large Saudi investments in Europe facilitate the funding of mosques and madaris (religious schools) on the continent. In turn, the mosque network is the most powerful instrument for recruiting, funding, and coordinating the activity of cells and armed groups linked to Islamist terrorists in Europe and abroad. Spanish counterterrorism officers have defined European mosques as "havens for al-Qaeda planning and fund-raising" while Spanish magistrates have recently discovered that a Spanish cell, Abu Dahda's Soldiers for Allah, which started in Madrid's Abu Baker mosque in 1994, provided support and money to the Hamburg cell which participated in the 11 September attacks.¹³⁴ As the next section will illustrate, the hosting of such mosques and the propaganda that is so necessary to the manufacturing of suicide bombers in European nations can be just as dangerous as the sponsorship of terrorism by state-sponsors such as Iran, with consequences that reach international dimensions.

THE INTERNET

We will export our revolution throughout the world . . . until the calls "there is no god but Allah" and "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah" are echoed all over the world.

—Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, 1979.

Ironically enough, the advent of the World Wide Web could not have been more timely for Islamism, an intrinsically global movement that recognizes no territorial boundaries or sovereignty. Via personal satellites and the Internet, Muslim preachers now have access to and influence over Europe's Islamic population that was unattainable when the Islamization movement was first revived in the late 1970s. Regarded as the first Web-directed guerilla network, al-Qaeda today relies on the Internet to operate, expand, develop, and survive. Each Jihadi group requires and consists of four essential parts: members; a leader; a religious guide; Internet Technology (I.T.) specialists.¹³⁵ Used by terrorists located on any part of the globe to develop and

disseminate propaganda, recruit new members, raise and transfer funds, train members on the use of weapons and tactics, and plan operations, according to the U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism of September 2006, the Internet provides an inexpensive, anonymous, geographically unbounded, and largely unregulated virtual haven for terrorists.¹³⁶ Today, over 4,500 overtly Jihadi Websites help al-Qaeda maintain itself as a global ideological movement by bringing together likeminded people from all over the world, while about 300 Websites are connected to radical Islamic groups that support al-Qaeda.¹³⁷ Given that online Jihad is ubiquitous and available globally, a reasonable assumption is that, given the higher level of computer use and Internet access in the West, the epicenter of the new ummah is not Egypt but Europe.¹³⁸

According to the AIVD, the Internet played a very important role in the ideological and religious development of the Hofstad Group. Many of the ideas expressed in Mohammad Bouyeri's letters have circulated in news groups and chat rooms, or can be found on international Websites under texts about "true Islam."¹³⁹ In addition, with possibly grave implications for international security, by aligning itself with al-Qaeda, the GSPC has gained access to more exposure, funds, and assistance, including those of states that have shown support to al-Qaeda and its affiliates, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has a history of cooperation not only with Hizbollah but also with al-Qaeda and al Ansar al Islam.

GSPC membership today has declined dramatically, and is now estimated to be between 250 and 500, compared to the thousands it enjoyed during the height of the conflict between the years 1994–1996.¹⁴⁰ Because terrorist groups attract and maintain support when they appear to be active and successful, GSPC leaders felt pressured to conduct attacks in order to hold the group together.¹⁴¹ To prove that it has gone beyond its national objectives and is dedicated to global Islamic terror, the GSPC's main activities in recent years have been the recruitment of young North Africans and providing them with minimal basic training in GSPC camps before sending them to Iraq. The formal alliance of the GSPC and al-Qaeda is likely to have the same consequences as the aftermath of the Afghan–Soviet war; the recruits who fight in Iraq will return to North Africa with combat experience that will improve the group's capabilities. Indications are that the number of Jihadists being sent to Iraq has risen sharply since the GSPC officially joined al-Qaeda. The Algerian daily *Liberté* reported that only 30 Jihadists were sent to Algeria over three previous years, whereas 25 were sent in the months of December 2006 and January 2007 alone.¹⁴²

With this new alliance, a new strategy will likely be adopted by a GSPC that will see its target pool widening to include civilians and foreigners, as well as the nation's energy sector.¹⁴³ Figuring that if it can destabilize even

one secular Muslim state in North Africa, or better yet, overthrow one, the threat that al-Qaeda and its allies can pose internationally would increase exponentially,¹⁴⁴ international Islamic terror has intensified its efforts on the African continent. The GSPC's alliance with al-Qaeda indicates that an Islamic movement does not halt its activities nor abandon its ambition, but rather bides its time and evolves its strategy in order to realize its goal. To this end, the first attempt by al-Qaeda to establish a franchise in North Africa was conducted vis-à-vis Moroccan groups that, in turn, have a history of collaboration with Algerian groups. This was discovered in the trials that ensued after Moroccan security forces captured a cell of al-Qaeda operatives whose leaders had close relations with Abu Musab al Zarqawi. The operatives confessed that they were planning to establish what was to be called "The Al-Qaeda Organization in the Arab Maghreb"—hardly a far cry from the moniker adopted by the al-Qaeda-GSPC alliance. Analysts suspect that the discovery of this cell delayed al-Qaeda's franchising plans by a year, and this setback may have led it to rely more directly on the GSPC.¹⁴⁵ In the meantime, with support from the aggressively Islamic state of Sudan, Islamist militants had been orchestrating insurgencies and causing terrible losses and instability in neighboring Egypt and Algeria, where Libya's very own LIFG keeps contacts. More importantly, on 24 June 2004 near Libya's border with Chad, Libyan forces discovered a camp belonging to the GSPC.

In response to the GSPC's growing activity in neighboring Niger, Mali, and Chad, and under agreements signed during Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's 2003 visit to Washington, the United States began to discreetly build a huge military surveillance base at Tamanrasset, in the heart of the Sahara Desert in southern Algeria,¹⁴⁶ in an attempt to protect the region's secular interests. As terrorism risk analyst Gordon Woo points out, because terrorists aim for "soft" rather than "hard" targets, al-Qaeda has adapted its strategy to focus on smaller nation-states such as Morocco and Algeria, unstable nations like Iraq, and politically weak states in Europe, with their myriad democratic loopholes and traditions of cultural and financial accommodation.

AS WITHIN SO WITHOUT: LESSONS FROM THE JIHADISTS

There are loopholes in the [Western] temporal laws that could be exploited in favor of Islam and Muslims.

—Omar Bakri Mohammed—leader of the al-Muhajiroun

Since October 2002, Abu Qutada, al-Qaeda's "spiritual ambassador to Europe" and spokesman of the GIA in London, was known to be leading the Spanish, Milan, and German al-Qaeda cells from his base in the

United Kingdom. Nonetheless, as Reda Hussaine, an Algerian informer for French intelligence and Britain's MI-5 laments:

I watched young Muslims at the Finsbury Park mosque in London in the late 1990s being prepared for journeys to military camps. Money was raised for their air fares by selling books and films in stalls at the mosques. Those who were chosen to go were the most fanatical—and also the most obedient. I saw Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, at the mosque and many others like him before they went abroad to learn their skills as mujahideen.¹⁴⁷

More bluntly, as a former senior U.S. intelligence official was reported as saying:

They have a really hard time understanding that people like Massari and Abu Quatada are real goddamn problems. It took a long, long time before they began taking those threats seriously. . . . There is a certain amount of reluctance on the part of the British to move quickly. What they never seem to realize is that by the time they know they have a problem, it is too late.¹⁴⁸

Faced with the goals of such a movement, a “Neville Chamberlain approach” to combating terror is hardly appropriate. In the stratagem of counterterror, to believe that diplomacy, engagement, appeasement, and negotiation will undercut the terrorist cause, which by definition remains wed to absolutist acts of ideologically motivated violence, is both misleading and reckless. More importantly, such an approach betrays a lack of understanding, or even an acceptance, that this is in fact a war of ideologies declared by ideologues. As Redha Malek, former Chief of Government and President of the Republican National Alliance (ANR) of Algeria pertinently observes, terror has a theoretical construct that makes negotiations obsolete because, in the world of terror leaders, the issue is one of jihad, not terrorism, and the jihad, with its lack of territorial and ideological boundaries, does not stop.¹⁴⁹ Malek further points out that when American traveler Nicholas Berg was beheaded, no demands were made for preserving his life, while the purpose of kidnapping and beheading *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl was certainly not to negotiate, but rather, to humiliate. Sheikh Omar Abdel Raman, mastermind of the first World Trade Center bombing, is more succinct: “There is no truce in Jihad against the enemies of Allah.”¹⁵⁰

Not surprisingly, regarding the relentless massacres unleashed on the Algerian people by the Islamists over a period of ten years, Jamal Zitouni, also known as Abu Abderrahman Amine, the chief of the GIA from November 1994 to July 1996, in a letter addressed in 1995 to Ayman al-Zawahiri, justifies the massacres of innocents as a principle and an end in and of itself, not as a tactic or a means of coercion, as the many fatwas

of Abu Qatada, the GIA's Palestinian spokesperson in London, liked to suggest. Like all Islamic terrorist organizations today, the GIA's political position is "No dialogue, no truce, no peace."¹⁵¹ Indeed, the London train bombings of July 2005 vividly illustrated that the ideological appeasement and tolerance of Islamic indoctrinators within Europe's borders is more a failure of political leadership than an effective counterterror solution.

According to British authorities, no fewer than sixteen thousand British Muslims are either actively engaged in or support terrorist activity, while up to three thousand are estimated to have gone through al-Qaeda training camps, with several hundred thought to be primed to attack the United Kingdom.¹⁵² Some 2,000 British Muslims annually have attended clandestine terrorist training camps run by the al-Muhajiroun. These camps, held during weekends in Birmingham and London, trained recruits in hand-to-hand combat and survival skills, and encouraged them to seek real military instruction in such countries as Yemen and Afghanistan.¹⁵³ Prompted by the London bombings, a poll published by the London *Sunday Telegraph* on 19 February 2006, surprisingly revealed that four out of every ten British Muslims want Shari'a law introduced in those areas of the country which are predominantly Muslim, while an equal percentage oppose it.¹⁵⁴ According to British antiterrorist officers, nearly 250 terror suspects in the UK are classified as high-risk and some 700 as medium risk. But, as Sandra Laville points out, individuals can easily move from peripheral to high-risk.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, as Gilles Kepel has commented on London's strategy: "Granting political asylum to extremist ideologues in Londonistan in return for orderly behavior offered no guarantee that their sympathizers would not be transformed overnight into terrorists."¹⁵⁶ The strategy implemented by preachers like Abu Hamza and his fellow Islamists is described by Dr. Walid Phares in his landmark book, *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against the West*, as "political mollification," a situation in which the political or cultural opposition, through ideological penetration, is successful in diverting and anaesthetizing the attention of a nation, its government and its media from achieving its long-term objectives vis-à-vis their prime enemy.¹⁵⁷ Political mollification, in effect, gravely distorts a nation's threat perception. Thus, for years, the lethal triad of Omar Bakri Mohammad (the founder of Hizb-ut-Tahrir), Abu Hamza, and al Masri were allowed to incite violence, fund-raise, and recruit for the Jihadist cause entirely undisturbed by British authorities, prompting the French intelligence community to dub London as "Londonistan" in order to illustrate the UK capital's status as an active hub for international terror.¹⁵⁸ During the 1980s and 1990s, both formal and informal complaints had been issued by the governments of Jordan, Egypt, the U.S., Morocco, Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India, Israel, France, Algeria, Peru, and Yemen regarding Britain's allowance of

terrorist organizations within its borders, while refusing to extradite those guilty of perpetrating attacks on other nations.¹⁵⁹ Morocco was reported to have sought and failed to obtain the extradition of the founder of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, cited by the United Nations as a terrorist network connected to al-Qaeda, and said to have had sleeper cells prepared to mount synchronized bombings in Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, and Canada. Likewise, Spain had requested the extradition of the GIA's spokesman, Abu Qatada, and also failed, while for ten years (until December 2005), France had sought the extradition of Rachid Ramda for his suspected role in the Paris metro bombings of 1995.¹⁶⁰ Over the years, Britain's reluctance to address the threat nurtured under its protection was part of an ill-made tacit agreement that ignored jihad's international objectives and indiscriminate targeting. Under the doctrine of jihad, London-based Islamists in the United Kingdom, such as the Muhajiroun and Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammad, had formulated a *Mua'ahadat Amn* (security treaty) with the British, stating that they "have extended a treaty for as long as England doesn't engage in hostilities against our presence."¹⁶¹ As Abu Mus'ab Al Suri reveals:

London was the centre for communications between Islamist groups and groups opposed to the governments of their own countries. We maintained communications with jihadi leaders outside Britain, in particular Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, who used to call me regularly, and I would take his calls in a telephone box in the London suburbs. John Major's government was very clever and served the security of Britain and the interests of its people by accepting our truce by which we meant that we would never target Britain . . . as long as the security forces left us alone . . .¹⁶²

Not only did the British security service leave the terrorists alone, but after the 2005 London attacks, documents revealed that the four suspects had collected more than a half-million pounds in welfare benefits from the British government. According to the *Sunday Telegraph*, Omar Bakri Muhammed was receiving 331.28 pounds per month in incapacity benefits and 183.30 pounds a month in disability living allowance." In addition, he collected a "housing benefit" and a "council tax benefit," which was compounded by his wife's welfare intake of "at least 1,300 pounds a month." Under a government program, even his car had been acquired free of charge.¹⁶³ By early 2005, however, sources close to Abu Hamza al-Masari said that the previously mentioned *Mua'ahada* was cancelled "because of the British security investigations of and pressure on the radical Islamists groups on the isles."¹⁶⁴ Clearly, appeasement does not alter the goals of an ideological movement. As Chellaney describes in the *Hindustan Times*:

If any state deals with terrorists, it not only encourages stepped-up terrorism against its own interest but also creates problems for other nations. A classic

case is India's ignominious surrender to hijackers of flight IC-814. One freed terrorist hand-delivered by the foreign minister is the suspected financier of Mohammad Atta, the alleged ring leader in the September 11th terrorist strikes. Another released terrorist founded a group in Pakistan that has claimed responsibility for major Kashmir strikes.¹⁶⁵

The refusal of Western governments to identify and challenge the beliefs of an aggressive movement constitutes a severe act of complicity that compromises effective counterterrorism and the type of society it seeks to protect. Poignantly published two months before the London attacks, according to the risk monitor report of 18 April 2005 by AON's Insurances, the second largest insurance broker in the world, Britain had an "elevated" risk of being hit by terrorists, while London shares the same "high risk" category of risk with Baghdad, Kabul, and Jerusalem.¹⁶⁶ In stark contrast, the threat assessment by the Joint Terrorist Analysis Centre, completed just before the London bombings, reported that "there was no group with current intent and the capability" of mounting terrorist strikes in the UK.¹⁶⁷ This approach also failed to identify who the enemy was, and what constitutes the characteristics of the threat. As a French security official said: "In our many inquiries we kept finding our investigation led back to London and Abu Qatada. We have been warning the UK long before the September 11 attacks in America about the threat of Algerian terrorists in Britain."¹⁶⁸ The responses of European nations to the Islamist strategies have been varied and somewhat disorganized in the past, though cooperation is steadily improving. The first to confront the Islamic threat of terror was France, home to Europe's largest Muslim community, and long on the receiving end of Algerian terror operations abroad. In clear contrast with former British and Belgian policy, for the past twenty-five years the French government had taken an uncompromising stance in fighting terrorism by consistently refusing to grant asylum to Islamist leaders.¹⁶⁹ In fact, France gives terror suspects fewer rights than any other Western state, permitting interrogation without a lawyer, lengthy pretrial incarcerations, and evidence acquired under dubious circumstances, conditions which allow Evan Kohlmann, the author of *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, to believe that, were he a terrorist, he "would least like to be held under" the French system.¹⁷⁰ In France, no mosque or Islamic institution is off-limits to the police, and imams preaching religious and gender hatred are regularly deported, while Islamists wanted in their own countries are refused asylum (only to later obtain asylum from Britain).¹⁷¹ More importantly, immediately after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, President Jacques Chirac instructed French intelligence agencies to share counterterror data with their American counterparts "as if they were your own service," which resulted in a bilateral intelligence cooperation described as "one of the best in the world" by former acting CIA director,

John E. McLaughlin.¹⁷² Jason Burke of *The Observer* outlines how such cooperation evidentially paid off during December 2006:

The channel tunnel has been targeted by a group of Islamic militant terrorists aiming to cause maximum carnage during the holiday season, according to French and American secret services. The plan, which the French DGSE foreign intelligence service became aware of earlier this year, is revealed in a secret report to the French government on threat levels. The report, dated December 19, indicates that the tip-off came from the American CIA . . . threat level remains high. . . . According to the French sources, the plan was put together in Pakistan and is being directed from there. The plotters are believed to be Western Europeans, possibly Britons of Pakistani descent.¹⁷³

After the Madrid bombings, the French demonstrated a shift in tactics, placing greater emphasis on preemptive action based on apprehending those suspected of having both the skills and ideological resolve for committing violence. As one senior French official said, the new counterterrorism motto is: "Every time we discover a cell, we eliminate it as a preemptive measure."¹⁷⁴ As a result of its policies, France is considered to be comparatively free of terrorist networks. Clearly, in combating terror, member states of the European Union must cooperate not only with the United States and other powers such as Russia, but with each other, formulating a single common European policy to be applied uniformly in matters of intelligence and counterterrorism.

THE BATTLE AHEAD

I am extremely happy that the seeds I have planted have started to bear fruits.

—Abu Mus'ab al-suri, instigator of the Paris metro bombing in 1995 conducted by Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA)

By allying itself with al-Qaeda, Algeria's top terror group has become part of the international network of Islamic terror that receives resources from affiliates in Europe, as well as the states that support them. According to Aaron Karp, the former director of the Arms Transfer Project at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "During the 1980s, terrorist attacks sponsored by states were generally eight times more lethal than attacks carried out by terrorists without the assistance of states."¹⁷⁵ Today, four states provide the vital wherewithal for the Islamic terror network: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Sudan. Without a doubt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its long tradition of military skill and strategic deception, is the most important and active state sponsor of terrorism.¹⁷⁶

More importantly, what is less commonly known and even less articulated, is the Hamburg (Germany) cell's connection to Iran. Before 11 September, the hijackers in the World Trade Center attacks and al-Qaeda planners conducted planning sessions with senior Iranian officials and intelligence officers,¹⁷⁷ the first of which took place in January 2001, when Ayman al-Zawahiri arrived in Iran from Afghanistan, accompanied by 29 other al-Qaeda members and leaders. Upon arriving, Zawahiri requested from the Iranians special equipment and assistance in laundering money in Dubai, as well as aid with travel documents so that al-Qaeda operatives could easily move from Iran to Europe without attracting the attention of customs and immigration personnel. So successful was this meeting, which took place over four days, that twelve of Zawahiri's men stayed behind in Iran in order to set up operational headquarters in the city of Karaj, staying in a safe house known as "Three Thousand Mountain."¹⁷⁸ This first session was followed by a more prestigious one on 4 May 2001, when an al-Qaeda delegation from Afghanistan, led by Sa'ad bin Laden, the eldest son of Osama bin Laden, arrived in Iran. There, the younger bin Laden met with all five members of Iran's leadership council in a session that lasted three hours.

For the next three weeks after his arrival, Sa'ad bin Laden met with leaders from Operational Division Number 43, a Special Forces unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and the detail men of Iran's foreign terrorist organization.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, Iran's assistance was pivotal not only in the perpetration of the 9/11 attacks, but also in the first post-9/11 terrorist attack that took place on 11 April 2002 on one of the oldest synagogues in North Africa. On that day, a natural gas truck fitted with explosives breached the gates of the synagogue, killing fourteen German tourists, six Tunisian tourists, and one French tourist and wounding over 30 others. Though the suicide bomber was a Tunisian, the attack was allegedly organized by Sa'ad bin Laden from his sanctuary in Iran. In fact, in the north of Tehran, near the town of Chalous on the Caspian Sea coast, between 20–25 former leaders of al-Qaeda and two of Osama bin Laden's sons reside in custody of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.¹⁸⁰ The aid of state-sponsors like Iran, as the success of the 9/11 attacks devastatingly demonstrated, is indispensable. For terrorists, finances and armaments are easy to come by, but without the support of states, major terrorist organizations would be crippled because only states can provide safe havens, safe passage, training camps, travel documents, the use of diplomatic pouches, secure communications, as well as the benefit of their own state intelligence service.¹⁸¹ For example, the Iranian Intelligence Ministry (MOIS) produced a training manual for terrorists that was used by al-Qaeda in Sudan. Described by a top British terror expert as "the mother of all training manuals," this professional product was discovered

by the British military forces in a Muslim sector of Bosnia in February 1996. The manual contained detailed instructions on everything from clandestine communication, to the construction of secure terrorist cells, recruitment, morale-building, simultaneous paramilitary attacks, the use of explosives, kidnapping, countersurveillance methods, and extended sections on jihad against the West.¹⁸² Clearly, the Islamists recognize no boundaries, thus posing a serious problem in combating terror. Because terrorist suspects travel often and have ties to numerous countries, they can easily exploit divisions of responsibility that create jurisdictional and coordination disagreements,¹⁸³ making the close cooperation of multiple governments an absolute must for a successful prosecution. As illustrated by its parallel expansion in both Europe and North Africa, al-Qaeda's strategy is to exploit democratic loopholes in Europe and to target weak states around the world. Recognizing this, and despite the fact that Algeria and Morocco have chilled relations due to a dispute over a large swath of desert called the Western Sahara,¹⁸⁴ these two countries, under the auspices of Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSTP), an effort led by the U.S. State Department, are cooperating with one another in order to combat their common problem of terrorism. To this end, the TSTP's purpose is to integrate and pursue multiagency objectives in the region by working with, and providing counterterrorism training to local powers in Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia.

Designed to help prevent the GSPC and other Islamic groups from making further progress in North Africa, and also to encourage those countries to cooperate with one another, the United States has learned from the consequences what a lack of cohesive counterterrorism policy within the European Union (EU) entails—though the recent enactment of the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) should not be underestimated. Unfortunately, with the exception of France, other U.S. allies, notably the United Kingdom, had previously failed to respect the relationship between terrorism and instability around the world and their own national security. Though terrorists may not cooperate with international law, those they identify as their enemies must cooperate with one another. According to Roger Scruton, "International law can do nothing to control al-Qa'eda, nor is the United Nations effective against organizations that neither are, nor aspire to be, nation-states. While it is possible to bring pressure to bear on individual states that harbor terrorists, this pressure is ineffective against a failed state, or against a state like Iran which is happy to ignore requests from Satan."¹⁸⁵ All acts of terrorism, at one stage of manifestation or another, must be recognized as being the result of an international effort and cooperation, whether in the recruitment of young Muslim British boys to go fight in Afghanistan or Iraq, or in the ideas and propaganda flowing from an imam

in a Saudi Arabian mosque to the television sets of Dutch-Moroccans in Holland, to the illegal trafficking of arms and the financing of terrorism by activists in and outside of Europe. Learning from the nuclear crisis surrounding the Islamic Republic of Iran, or the centers of international terrorism that were left behind in Afghanistan and in Bosnia, where, after importing Muslim fighters for their war against the infidels, Islamists began to export them to fight other infidels elsewhere, or the train-wreck failure of Britain's appeasement policy, it becomes urgently clear that an Islamist victory in one part of the world will translate into a security threat in another part of the world. Indeed, in dealing with terrorists, rather than appeasement, the judgment of the medieval Arab historian Ibn Khaldun is that those who seek power by manipulating religion are either sick and should be helped, or fools and should be ridiculed, or troublemakers and should be punished.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, a recognition of the changing, nonconventional nature of this international war is important. Herfried Mukler describes al-Qaeda's redefinition of warfare in *The New Wars*:

In broad terms, [it is] likely to be widely dispersed and largely undefined: the distinction between war and peace will be blurred to the vanishing point. It will be non-linear, possibly to the point of having no definable battlefield or fronts. The distinction between "civilian" and "military" may disappear. Actions will occur concurrently throughout all participants' depth, including their society as a cultural, not just a physical entity.¹⁸⁷

Hence, to be truly effective in combating terrorism, governments must also adopt what Paul Wilkinson describes as the "Educative Solution." This is a solution in which a combination of educational efforts by democratic political parties, the mass media, trade unions, churches, schools, colleges, and other major social institutions attempt to persuade the terrorists, or a sufficient proportion of their supporters, that terrorism is both undesirable and counterproductive to the realization of their political ideals.¹⁸⁸ In the meantime, the *modus operandi* of the enemy must be observed and taken at face value. In the introduction of the *al-Qaeda Manual*, the following statement is made:

... Islamic governments have never and will never be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. They are established as they [always] have been:

by pen and gun;

by word and bullet; and

by tongue and teeth.¹⁸⁹

Al-Qaeda's words should be taken as seriously as their ruthless explosions, and governments must show equal resolve and solidarity in combating them on every ground on which they wage their battle: ideologically, culturally, militarily, and finally and always, with intelligence.

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