

Chronology of *Jihadism* in Western Europe 1994–2007: Planned, Prepared, and Executed Terrorist Attacks

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Considering Europe's long history of terrorist violence by separatist, leftist and rightwing groups, terrorism by militant Sunni Islamists has until recently been a marginal phenomenon. However, empirical data presented in this chronology suggests it constitutes a growing and increasingly lethal threat, and a worrisome trend in the context of increased tensions between the Muslim world and the West in the wake of 9/11 and the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which needs to be dealt with on many levels—socially, politically, and economically. The current chronology is meant to serve as a tool for conducting academic research on the scope of the threat, and for mapping incidents that might be surveyed in more depth to create a better understanding of its organizational, operational, and motivational patterns.

Since December 1994, Western Europe has experienced increased levels of terrorism¹ perpetrated by militant Sunni Islamist activists (gangs, groups, cells, and networks) associated with or inspired by guerillas and terrorist networks originating from the Muslim world. The militants belonged to the so-called *salafi-jihadi* strand of Sunni Islamism, and they referred to themselves as “*mujahidin*” or “*jihadis*” [Holy Warriors].²

Most of these terrorists were affiliated in one way or another with the Al Qaeda organization (founded in Peshawar in 1988) and the global *jihad* doctrine propagated by the organization's leaders and ideologues. Some of them were Al Qaeda members who were supported and controlled by Al Qaeda, and trained in the organization's training facilities in Qandahar, Khowst, and Jallalabad, Afghanistan. Others were members of local and regional *jihadi* groups from different parts of the Muslim world with varying ties to Al Qaeda and the global *jihad*. A number also seem to have operated quite autonomously from *jihadi* organizations, but were clearly inspired by Al Qaeda's ideas, strategies, and tactics.

Between 1994 and 1998, members and supporters of the Algerian *Armed Islamic Group* (GIA) organized a series of terrorist attacks in France (and some minor incidents in Belgium) that killed 8 people and injured more than 200. The GIA was initially supported financially by Al Qaeda, but later fell out with the Al Qaeda leadership over interorganizational differences and the GIA's wanton killings of common people and Islamists during the Algerian civil war.³

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From around 1998, coinciding with the intensification of Al Qaeda's global terrorist campaign and the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, European security services intercepted a growing number of terrorist conspiracies with direct linkages to the Al Qaeda organization and the global *jihad* ideology. A further increase in terrorist plotting by "global *mujahidin*" coincided with the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, before culminating in the mass casualty bomb attack against trains in Madrid (2004), the assassination of a Dutch filmmaker on the streets of Amsterdam (2004), and mass casualty bomb attacks against the Tube and a bus in London (2005). During 2006 and 2007, there were several serious attempts to launch new mass casualty attacks. All in all, terrorism by *mujahidin* inside Europe resulted in more than 250 deaths and affected many thousands.

The following provides an open source chronology of attempted and executed attacks by *salafi-jihadis* inside Europe from 1994 until 2007.⁴ It is meant to serve as a working tool for others, like the author, who ponder about various aspects of the phenomenon of *jihadism* in the Western world from an academic point of view. The incidents have been collected from a previous FFI report on terrorism activities by Algerian Islamist militants inside France and Belgium in the mid- to late 1990s, and from an extensive open source database on *jihadism* in Western Europe after the millennium maintained by the author since January 2003.⁵ Sources include local and international media, secondary literature and databases, judicial documents, and interviews with European counterterrorism officials. To the best of the author's knowledge, there exist no similar chronologies in academic publications except for less comprehensive ones in Nesser (2004) and Bakker (2006).⁶

Organization of the Chronology

The chronology is organized into three periods reflecting changes in the organizational, operational, and motivational patterns of *jihadism* inside Western Europe:

- From 1994 until 1996, Europe functioned as an *arena for local jihad*, when GIA activists took their local, Algeria-based, struggle to France, in an attempt to deter the former colonial power from further involvement in the conflict between local Islamists and the secularist military regime.
- From 1998 until 2003/2004, Europe functioned as *arena for global jihad*, when several terror networks linked to and trained by Al Qaeda planned and prepared mass casualty attacks against the interests and citizens of the United States, Israel, and to a minor extent, France.
- From 2003/2004 until 2007, Europe became a *target for global jihad*, when Al Qaeda inspired Islamist militants planned, prepared, and executed attacks against European countries that contributed to the U.S.-led "War on Terrorism." Many of these militants were recruited and radicalized within Europe's *jihadi* underworld, and they appear to have been motivated principally by European participation in the invasion of Iraq.

Criteria for Including Incidents

One of the main problems facing terrorism researchers is access to reliable information and high quality data. The study of *jihadism* is no exception to this rule. Moreover, the topic is politically charged and sensitive, due to the religious dimension, and because of the linkages that can be made to issues such as immigration and crime. Political opportunists will seek to manipulate information and data in order to use it to their advantage. For

example, people with a very right-wing political outlook will typically seek to manipulate facts so as to throw suspicion beyond the circles of Islamist extremists and militants toward Muslims in general.

There is also a risk that state actors will want to exaggerate the threat to further their agendas, for example, to justify their existence, to boost funding, and so on and so forth.

Another problem is related to the media's coverage of terrorism. Terrorist acts are sure to make the headlines, and many journalists tend to exaggerate, twist, or turn facts, or come to hasty conclusions based on poor evidence to sell their stories. Such mechanisms might at times distort the perception and analysis of the threat. Besides, it often takes quite a while before official documents (such as judicial papers) on terrorism offenses, which are prepared on basis of stronger evidence, become more widely available. Such documents can, in turn, be difficult to access and difficult to read and interpret for the average readers.⁷

Because of the danger of information being inaccurate or manipulated, and the possibility that it might be misused, it is important that terrorism databases and chronologies are very clear about how they define and categorize terrorist incidents and the criteria for including incidents, and that they make apparent any uncertainties in the source material on which incidents are based.

The current chronology only includes incidents that, according to the sources, involved concrete terrorist attacks, or concrete plans to undertake such attacks. The article includes some threats of concrete attacks where they were presented in the context of an ongoing terrorist campaign, such as GIA's terrorist attacks in France in the mid-1990s. It excludes reports about investigations and prosecutions of other kinds of terrorism-related activities by *jihadis*, such as fund-raising, propaganda, and so forth.⁸ A short presentation of each incident includes a description of the conspiracy/attack, an explanation for why the actors involved might be characterized as *jihadis*, and an outline of the evidence/documentation. In addition, and so that readers themselves can assess the realities of each incident as they have been presented, every incident is referenced with sources providing more detailed reports. The article divides the incidents into three categories based on the extent to which they fulfill the following criteria: known actor; identified target; solid evidence.

The article defines substantially documented incidents as category 1 incidents, whereas I have defined less documented incidents as category 2 and category 3 incidents.

The criteria for defining a case as category 1 are: the existence of hard evidence that a terrorist attack was planned, prepared, or launched; that an attack struck a specific target or that a target or a type of target had been identified by the terrorists; and, finally, that clearly identifiable *jihadis* were behind the planning and attacks. Examples of hard evidence might be video surveillance of a selected target, the discovery of bombmaking materials and/or written plans on computer files, so-called martyrdom videos or testaments, money transfers, testimonies, and released intelligence, such as that gathered from wire tapping, and so on. For evidence to be assessed as hard, ideally, it should have been tried by a court of law, and resulted in guilty verdicts.⁹ Incidents of a more dubious character, in which information about suspected terrorists, targets, and intentions is vaguer, and which the author has not yet been able to verify or adequately substantiate through independent sources, have been defined as category 2. This is the case with most of the recent incidents presented here. If information is very limited and vague, incidents have been defined as category 3.

Importantly, where the article defines an incident as dubious, this simply means that the author has not been able to, or had the capacity to, access information to adequately substantiate it according to the outlined criteria. Local experts might therefore possess knowledge about incidents in specific countries that contradict my assessments.

As for the timeline of events, it is based on when information about plans became known to the public, meaning that in some instances, the terrorist activities might predate the time when information about them surfaced.

Chronology

In the first part of the chronology, “1994–1998: Western Europe as an arena for ‘local jihad,’” incidents have been borrowed from Brynjar Lia and Åshild Kjøk’s excellent 2001 survey of support activities and terrorist violence by members and supporters of the GIA in Europe from 1994–2000 (the article attempts to categorize the incidents according to the aforementioned criteria).

1994–1998: Western Europe as an Attack Arena for “Local Jihad”

Investigations into the bombings in France have revealed an extensive network consisting mainly of Algerian Islamist activists stretching across France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and other central European countries, and even as far as Scandinavia, fulfilling various functions ranging from providing funds and weapons for GIA fighters inside Algeria and spreading propaganda, to supporting the terrorist units that became operational (mainly inside France).¹⁰

Category 1. On 24 December 1994, four GIA activists acting on the orders of the group’s “amir” (prince), Djamel Zitouni, hijacked Air France flight 8969 at Houari Boumediene Airport, Algiers. The flight was en route to Paris and it is alleged that the plan was to blow up the airplane over the French capital using dynamite. The operation failed because negotiators duped the hijackers into believing the aircraft had to refuel to make it to Paris. The flight was diverted to Marseilles Airport where it was stormed by French commandos. Three passengers were executed during negotiations with the hijackers in Algiers before the plane was allowed to take off and enter French airspace.¹¹

Category 3. In January 1995, alleged GIA activists sent a threatening letter to Belgian newspapers claiming that they had placed a bomb under one of the prime minister’s cars. They demanded that the European Union cut its diplomatic ties with Algeria. Police searched the cars, but found no bomb.¹²

Category 2. On 11 July 1995, a prominent member and co-founder of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), shaykh ‘Abd al-Baqi Sahraoui, and his bodyguard were murdered in a Paris mosque. It is unknown who actually committed the murder, but evidence pointed towards the GIA and its supporters in France. Sahraoui had appeared on a “death list” issued by the GIA the day before the killing. The murder weapon was found in a backpack belonging to a 24-year-old French-Algerian, Khaled Kelkal.¹³ Kelkal was recruited by the GIA while in prison. He is considered to be the operational leader of a series of attacks in Paris by the so-called Vaulx-en-Velin network (a network of GIA activists). He was shot dead by French police on 29 September 1995 during a shoot-off in a hamlet called Maison Blanche, West of Lyon.

Category 1. On 25 July 1995, members of Kelkal’s network placed a gas canister time-bomb on board a train, which exploded at the St. Michel subway station in Paris. Eight people died and 86 were injured as a result. Investigations into this deadly operation and follow-up

attacks in France revealed an extensive network of activists stretching across France and several other European countries.

Category 1. On 17 August 1995, a bomb similar to the one that was used in the Metro-bombing exploded near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. It is believed that Kelkal's network was behind the bombing. Seventeen persons were injured in the attack.¹⁴

Category 1. On 26 August 1995, a powerful bomb device was detected on a high-speed railway track north of Lyon. The bomb was defective and failed to explode. The fingerprints of Khaled Kelkal were found on the bomb device, which was similar to the gas canister bomb used in the attack on the Metro on 25 July.¹⁵

Category 3. In August 1995, there were bomb threats against three railway stations, as well as the airport in Brussels. It is alleged that GIA members or sympathizers were behind the threats.¹⁶

Category 1. On 4 September 1995, a bomb was found inside a public toilet near a marketplace South of Paris. Police officers disarmed the bomb. Evidence (e.g., how the bomb was constructed) suggested the attempted attack was part of the GIA terror campaign.¹⁷

Category 1. On 7 September 1995, a car-bomb exploded outside a Jewish school in Lyon, hosting approximately 700 children. The bomb was set to explode when the pupils came out of the building, but, fortunately, the school's clock was slow. Fourteen people were injured as a result of the explosion. Again, evidence pointed to Kelkal and his cadre. Police eventually managed to track down the terrorist leader and killed him in a shoot-out near Lyon on 29 September. However, terrorist attacks continued after his death.¹⁸

Category 1. On 6 October 1995, a bomb exploded outside the Maison Blanche subway station near Paris coinciding with the funeral of Khaled Kelkal. Twelve people were wounded by this bomb. The GIA activist Ali Belkacem confessed that he had taken part in this attack, and investigators found the fingerprints of GIA bombmaker Boulaem Bensaid on the bomb device.¹⁹

Category 1. On 17 October 1995, a bomb exploded on board a suburban train in Paris. Twenty-nine people were injured, 5 of them seriously. The GIA activist Ali Belkacem confessed that he took part in the bombing.²⁰

Category 1. On 5 November 1995, French police intercepted a plan by GIA activists to bomb an outdoor market in Lille, France. Ten suspects were arrested and several of them later tried and convicted (together with accomplices who were convicted in absentia. One such accomplice was later convicted of plotting a bomb attack against a marketplace in Strasbourg in December 2000). The people behind the attack plans belonged to a network operating out of Lille that was headed by GIA bombmaker Boulaem Bensaid. This network originally functioned as a support structure for Kelkal's operational crew, but took on a more operational role after Kelkal's death.²¹

Category 3. In January 1996, Belgian police discovered a car full of explosives during a routine patrol. The two Algerian GIA affiliates inside the car started shooting at the police,

and thus managed to escape. It is alleged that they belonged to the so-called Roubaix gang (Roubaix being an area on the Franco–Belgian border that was the operational center for the group), a criminal off-shoot of the GIA headed by the Frenchman Christopher Caze (a 25-year-old former Catholic and medical student), and consisting mainly of Algerians and some Moroccans. The gang engaged in a wide range of violent crime (mainly armed robberies), but also undertook terrorist actions.

Category 2. In March 1996, members of the Roubaix gang placed a car-bomb consisting of explosives and compressed gas on the streets of Lille, France, three blocks from where leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized nations (G7) (including French President Jacques Chirac), were to have a meeting. French police discovered the bomb device and rendered it harmless. The same day, they tracked down members of the Roubaix gang inside an apartment in Lille. Four gang members were killed during police raids, and the leader, Gaze, escaped, but was tracked down and shot dead by the police the next day.²²

1998–2003/2004: Western Europe as an Attack Arena for “Global Mujahidin”

After the disruption of the Roubaix gang in 1996, GIA-associated terrorism decreased throughout European countries. The GIA came under pressure, both inside Algeria and in Europe. The group lost its worldwide support from Islamists over the killing of fellow Algerians and became increasingly marginalized, before it dissolved during 1997. Toward the end of the 1990s, new militant networks formed on the remnants of GIA structures. They also consisted of North Africans, most of whom were formerly associated with the GIA, and who had forged varying forms of ties to the GIA off-shot inside Algeria, the GSPC, and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Such networks continued support activities for *jihadism* outside Europe (mainly in Algeria, Chechnya, and Afghanistan), and increasingly began to utilize Europe as an arena for terrorist attacks.

Category 3. In May 1998, French police rounded up more than 50 Islamists suspected of belonging to the GIA off-shoot organization, the GSPC. The operation was portrayed in the press as an effort to forestall terrorist attacks during the Soccer World Cup to be held in Paris. However, hardly any weaponry was seized during the raids, and no information has been released about concrete terror plans. Police sources indicated that the arrests were meant to disrupt general militant activism, rather than concrete terror plans.²³

Category 2. In June 1999, Islamist activists sympathizing with imprisoned GIA fighters made new threats against the Belgian government. They demanded that incarcerated Islamists be released, and that previously expelled activists be allowed to return. The government was given a 20-day deadline to meet the demands, or else there would be “massacres where throats will be slashed and churches and other buildings destroyed.” However, when the deadline expired, nothing happened.²⁴

Category 3. In October 1999, a man who claimed to represent the GIA made a bomb threat against the subway system in Brussels.²⁵

Category 1. In December 2000, German police arrested four Algerians, who, according to the German verdicts, planned and prepared a bomb attack against revelers at the Christmas market outside Notre Dame Cathedral in Strasbourg. The Algerians were associated with people belonging to Al Qaeda and the GSPC, and one of them had been associated with

the GIA network in Lille, France, in the mid-1990s. They had received training in the Khalden training complex in Khowst, Afghanistan.²⁶ The operation was not planned as a suicide mission; the terrorists made arrangements to escape to Algeria via London after the bomb attack.²⁷ The plot to launch an attack in Strasbourg was the first attempt by more globally oriented *jihadis* to execute a major attack on European soil. The terrorists belonged to the so-called Abu Doha Network (or The Group of Abu Doha), a North African terrorist network, operating out of the Khalden training camp and consisting of several cells planning and preparing attacks in Europe and the United States.

Category 1. In September and October 2001, several European security services, supported by their U.S. counterparts, broke a terrorist ring consisting of North African (Algerians and Tunisians), French-Algerian, and French *mujahidin*, headed by the Algerian Djamel Beghal. This network planned and prepared bomb attacks against U.S. targets in Europe. One member of Beghal's network, the Tunisian Nizar Trabelsi, was sentenced for planning a suicide operation against the canteen of the Kleine Brogel U.S. airbase in Belgium, whereas Beghal and other members of the cell have been sentenced for planning a suicide operation against the U.S. embassy in Paris. The cell was associated with Al Qaeda and several North African *jihadi* organizations, including the GIA/GSPC. The terrorists had received training in Jallalabad, Afghanistan.²⁸

Category 2. In October 2001, the international press reported that Italian police had arrested members of the so-called Milan cell, supposedly headed by the Tunisian Sami Ben Khemais. It is alleged that Khemais had trained in Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, and that he took orders from Al Qaeda. According to Italian court documents cited by the *Washington Post*, members of the cell discussed "bombings and other attacks in Europe." In bugged conversations they also discussed attacks using chemicals (poison gas). Khemais and his accomplices were convicted for providing material support for a terrorist organization, but not, however, for planning and preparing specific attacks in Europe.²⁹

Category 2. In October 2001 French authorities foiled an alleged plot to launch a terrorist attack during the first soccer match between Algeria and France since the Algerian war of independence in 1962 at the Stade de France, North of Paris. After intercepting telephone warnings to keep away from the stadium and a conversation, police arrested four men suspected of being militant Islamists [formerly] associated with the GIA. When searching the houses of the suspects police retrieved bullet-proof vests, an explosives manual, a pen gun, Al Qaeda propaganda, and, according to some reports, explosives.³⁰

Category 1. In December 2001, the Al Qaeda-associated Richard Colvin Reid tried to blow up a transatlantic flight from Paris to Miami with plastic explosives concealed in his shoes. The attempted suicide operation was prevented because passengers and crew restrained him. Reid justified his actions ideologically with reference to Osama bin Laden, and U.S. support for the regimes in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, and Jordan. According to indictments, Reid trained in Afghanistan, and he received support and took orders from Al Qaeda.³¹

Category 1. In April 2002, German police arrested a group of Jordanian-Palestinian Islamist militants belonging to the Al Qaeda-affiliated Jordanian *jihadi* organization al-Tawhid, which was headed by the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The terrorist cell planned and prepared attacks against Jewish targets in Germany, including a restaurant owned by a Jew. According to judicial documents, the terrorists wanted to use bombs made out of

pressure cookers, hand-grenades, and handguns. Documentation reveals that at least one of the operatives had trained in *jihadi* camps in Afghanistan.³²

Category 2. In October 2002, Italian police arrested five North African militants in Milan suspected of plotting attacks against U.S. representations in The Hague and Brussels, among other targets. Authorities claimed that they belonged to the GSPC. The cell was multinational (operatives were of several nationalities), and headed by a Libyan. Reportedly, several of those arrested had trained in Afghanistan, and, allegedly, they had ties to militants in Iran and Malaysia. The arrests came after wire-tapping of telephone conversations in which they talked about striking a subway with explosives.³³

Category 3. In October 2002, according to press reports, Italian police arrested three Egyptians in Anzio, South of Rome, suspected of planning attacks in Italy. The suspects were in possession of explosives and a map of a U.S. military cemetery. The source did not relate the arrests to specific militant Islamist groups, but the incident was reported in connection with broader crackdowns on alleged North African Islamist terrorist cells in Italy.³⁴ In March 2007, the *New York Times* reported that the three men had been “wrongfully detained for nearly 19 months,” and that they intended to sue Italian authorities.³⁵

Category 1. In November 2002, the Al Qaeda–associated extremist preacher Abu Qatada told British interrogators that Al Qaeda was planning to attack London’s Heathrow Airport. According to U.S. authorities, Al Qaeda lieutenants in U.S. custody spoke similarly of plans to hit European airports. Pakistan’s President Pervez Musharraf’s memoirs detail plans involving the hijacking of aircraft en route to London from Eastern Europe and crashing them into Heathrow and other sites in the British capital in early 2003.³⁶ A British Muslim convert, Andrew Rowe, who was convicted to 15 years in prison for terrorism-related offenses in 2005, has been linked to the alleged attack plans against Heathrow.³⁷ In February 2003, *The Guardian* reported that British authorities had received “high quality intelligence” that extremists with links to Al Qaeda attempted to smuggle portable SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles into Britain, intending to fire them at airliners taking off from Heathrow Airport. This information prompted immediate security measures to be taken at Heathrow.

Category 3. In November 2002, U.S. authorities warned European states of plans by Al Qaeda to launch simultaneous bomb attacks against European ferries. The bombs were allegedly to be placed in trucks. U.S. officials were contacted by an anonymous source that specified 9 November as a possible date of an attack. The ferries of the Scandinavian Company *Stena Line* were mentioned specifically as targets. The threats prompted security measures by ferry companies all over Europe.³⁸

Category 3. In November 2002, British newspapers reported that a group of North Africans (Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan) had been arrested, suspected of planning a cyanide attack against the London underground (the Tube). It was alleged that the suspected leader of the group was an associate of the GSPC and Al Qaeda. Three of those who were arrested were released after interrogation. Reportedly, British intelligence had infiltrated the North African Diaspora community and detected plans to smuggle cyanide into the country. Police house searches discovered no chemicals or explosives, only false travel documents. Three suspects were charged under the Terrorism Act of 2000, but evidence of concrete, planned attacks was poor.³⁹

Category 1. In December 2002, French police arrested a group of North Africans (Algerians and French-Algerians) in the Paris suburbs. Reportedly, they had ties to Al Qaeda and the GSPC, and they were convicted for planning and preparing an attack against the Russian embassy in Paris using regular bombs, perhaps in combination with chemical or biological agents. Police retrieved chemicals and electronics suitable for making bombs in the suspects' hideouts. They also confiscated an NBC protection suit, but traces of chemicals on it were absent. Investigators dubbed the cell the "Chechen Network" because operatives had received training in the Caucasus and spent time among separatists in Chechnya. One of them has been referred to as a former GIA "emir," and it appears that they were in contact with and received support from a GSPC support network in Paris.⁴⁰

Category 2. In January 2003, British police arrested several North Africans (almost exclusively Algerians) in North London suspecting them of having ties to Al Qaeda and the GSPC, and of producing the lethal toxin ricin for terrorist purposes. During police raids, one of the suspects, Kamel Bourgass, stabbed to death police officer Stephen Oake. House searches revealed poison recipes, bombmaking instructions, and a very amateurish and rudimentary "laboratory" for making poisons. Prosecutors failed to produce sufficient evidence to charge the suspects with a terrorist conspiracy. All but Bourgass were acquitted. Indeed, it is difficult to assess the realities of this particular case. The arrests were prompted by interrogations of an affiliate of the arrestees in Algeria. He identified the suspects, said Bourgass had received training in poison-making techniques in Afghanistan, and specified potential targets and attack methods. Skeptics claim that he is likely to have been tortured, and that the "Ricin plot" was constructed by U.K. and U.S. authorities in order to gain political support for the invasion of Iraq. Bourgass was sentenced to 15 years in prison for slaying the police officer and for "conspiracy to cause a public nuisance by the use of poisons and/or explosives to cause disruption, fear or injury." Physical evidence was limited. Bourgass came across as a disaffected social misfit with extreme views and a strong hatred for the Algerian authorities, more than a "professional" Al Qaeda-associated global *jihadi* terrorist, who was intent on waging global Holy War on British soil. However, although the case is dubious, it cannot, based on the available information, be dismissed as spontaneous violence by a madman.⁴¹

Category 3. In January 2003, a Turkish man and his American fiancée were charged with conspiring to attack a U.S. military base in Heidelberg, Germany. Reportedly, they planned to launch the attack during the fall of 2002. Investigators found gunpowder, pipes, chemicals sufficient to make 250 pounds of explosives, and a picture of Osama bin Laden among their belongings. The author has not been able to find reports indicating that the couple was connected to organized militant groups. The terrorist charges were dropped, and the couple was only convicted on minor drug offenses.⁴²

Category 1. In January 2003, the international press reported that five Moroccans had been arrested in a building in the Northern Italian city of Rovigo. Italian police found 2.2 pounds of C4 explosives (the same explosive that was used in the Bali bombings in 2002), maps with NATO bases in Northern Italy encircled, and maps of central London. Press reports of the event referred to no specific militant Islamist group, but one of the suspects was known as a "leader" and a "preacher" among Islamist extremists in Rovigo.⁴³

Category 2. In January 2003, Italian police detained 28 Pakistanis in a raid in Naples. According to the international press, police found a substantial amount of explosives,

Islamic religious texts, photographs of “*jihad* martyrs,” false documents, maps of Naples with NATO installations identified, more than one hundred cell phones, and addresses of contacts around the world. Among the suspects’ belongings, investigators found a photograph of Britain’s top military officer, Defence Chief of Staff Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, with his face encircled. Despite this seemingly well-founded and alarming evidence, an Italian court released all 28 because, according to the judge, “It’s not reasonable to hypothesize that a terrorist in possession of deadly explosives or about to devise an attack on the American Consulate or on the British Chief of Staff would decide to calmly stay in the house where the explosives were kept, serenely expecting a likely return.” Reportedly, in addition, Italian authorities came under substantial political pressure from “Pakistani officials” in relation to the arrests.⁴⁴

Category 2. In May 2003, the journalist and acknowledged Al Qaeda specialist, Jason Burke, cited German intelligence documents saying that members of the Jordanian-Palestinian al-Tawhid organization had “plotted to use poison in the U.K. and elsewhere.” Al-Tawhid’s operational leader was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, whereas the militants considered the London-based extremist preacher Abu Qatada to be their religious guide. The author has not been able to obtain information from other sources about a Tawhid conspiracy in Britain, but judicial documents from German investigations confirm that the organization maintained networks in Britain.⁴⁵

Category 1. In June 2003, Belgian police arrested a 45-year-old Iraqi for sending letters laced with toxic powders and signed “The International Islamic Society,” to the Belgian prime minister; U.S., British, and Saudi embassies and companies; and a court in which 23 Islamists suspected of being involved in terrorist conspiracies in Europe (including the Al Qaeda– associated designated suicide bomber Nizar Trabelsi) were being tried.⁴⁶

Category 2. In June 2003, according to German press reports, police detected a German-based terrorist cell planning and preparing an attack against the French vacation islands of Reunion. According to police, the alleged terrorist cell was headed by a long-time Al Qaeda associate Christian Ganczarski, a native German of Polish origin living in the German city of Duisburg. Reportedly, one of Ganczarski’s Moroccan accomplices made a trip to the islands in order to seek out potential targets.⁴⁷

Category 3. In July 2003, Dutch police investigated a scuba-diving school in Eindhoven, headed by a Tunisian instructor and frequented by Muslims. One of between 50 and 150 Muslims taking diving classes, Iraqi-born Kasim Ali was suspected of recruiting terrorists for an operation in Europe. Statements by Al Qaeda operatives about plans to use scuba divers in terrorist attacks against maritime targets prompted the investigations. Several of the scuba students were suspected of being Islamist extremists. A former Algerian student was arrested in France together with an Islamist militant who has since escaped from a Dutch prison.⁴⁸

Category 2. In November 2003, the *New York Times* published an article about how a considerable number of Europe-based Islamists traveled to Iraq to take part in anti-coalition operations. German intelligence confirmed that German-based Islamists had headed for Iraq. The article also contained information about a planned terrorist attack on the tourist location of Costa Brava in Spain. A German-based Islamist, Abderazak Mahdjoub, with

ties to Islamist networks in Spain, was put under investigation for his role in financing the planned attack.⁴⁹

Category 1. In December 2003, British police arrested the 24-year-old British-Malawi Sajid Badat for having intended to launch a shoe-bomb suicide mission on a transatlantic flight in 2001. Police found explosives and a detonator in Badat's house, similar to the device used by the convicted shoe-bomber Richard Reid. Badat was recruited and radicalized by Al Qaeda associates in Britain and Pakistan. He is believed to have been trained in Pakistan and/or Afghanistan together with Reid. Allegedly, both men met Al Qaeda's then Chief of Military Operations, Mohammed Atef. It is also alleged that they received directives from Al Qaeda through a middle-man or "handler," the Tunisian Nizar Trabelsi (serving a jail sentence in Belgium for planning a terrorist attack against a U.S. airbase). Badat had second thoughts about becoming a terrorist and notified Trabelsi that he would back out. During his trial, Badat pleaded guilty as charged and was convicted to 13 years in jail for his intentions in 2005.⁵⁰

Category 3. In December 2003, according to the international press, German authorities received "concrete indications" from U.S. intelligence sources that the *jihadi* organization Ansar al-Islam was planning a car-bomb attack against a military hospital in Hamburg, which had been treating U.S. troops wounded in Iraq. Reportedly, two members of the organization had entered Germany with intentions to carry out the attack. A well-informed German journalist claimed that the alleged plans did not exist, and no one has been arrested and prosecuted in the case. Moreover, a recent verdict against German-based Ansar al-Islam members does not refer to an attempted attack against a hospital.⁵¹

2003/2004–2006: European Nations as Targets for "Global Mujahidin"

After 9/11, and subsequent attempts by Al Qaeda-associated groups to launch operations on European soil, the region's *jihadi* networks came under pressure. Terrorist suspects and militant clerics were arrested; Al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan were destroyed. Given this situation, new actors and new nationalities entered Europe's *jihadi* scene. From around 2003/2004, there were increasing numbers of incidents involving "newborn" Muslims of Pakistani descent and ethnic Europeans, in addition to North Africans and other nationalities. For the new generation of terrorist networks, the invasion of Iraq had become the main mobilizing factor, and European nations contributing to warfare in the Muslim world had become legitimate and prioritized targets for the *mujahidin*.

Category 1. In January 2004, French police claimed to have interrupted plans by French-Algerian militants to launch terrorist attacks using deadly botulism or ricin toxins. The suspects were relatives of Menad Benchellali who was arrested in connection with the conspiracy by the so-called Chechen Network to attack the Russian embassy in Paris in December 2002. The 2004 arrests led investigators to strengthen the theory that the "Chechen Network" was producing toxins for distribution to militants throughout Europe in addition to planning a bomb attack on the Russian embassy in Paris. Benchellali is described by a police source as a chemical expert and an expert in handling poison, who received his training at the Derunta training complex in Jallalabad, Afghanistan. According to the same source, he was actively trying to produce botulism toxin and ricin in France.⁵²

Category 2. In February 2004, Italian police arrested Tunisian and Moroccan militants suspected of planning attacks against the subway systems in Milan and a church in the Italian city of Cremona. According to Italian press reports citing police sources and referring to testimonies, the militants had planned attacks on the subway using the explosive C4, an explosive favored by Al Qaeda operatives. The militants themselves estimated that the attack on the subway would kill approximately 250 civilians, and it would have been followed up by an attack on the church in Cremona. The motive for the attack was, according to press reports, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's support for the "War on Terrorism."⁵³

Category 1. In February 2004, British police arrested a group of British-Pakistani militants, aged between 17 and 32, suspected of planning attacks in London with fertilizer-bombs. The suspects had gathered 500 kilograms of ammonium nitrate (commonly used by terrorists to build bombs). An accomplice living in Canada was, according to prosecutors, responsible for building detonators. Suspects allegedly trained and tested bombs in Malakand, Pakistan, and they are suspected of being connected to and having received support from militant Kashmiri separatists, persons belonging to Al Qaeda, and U.K.-based extremists.⁵⁴

Category 3. In March 2004, the German News Magazine *Focus* reported that Islamist militants had planned terrorist attacks against antiwar demonstrators in Berlin in 2003. The magazine referred to police sources and said the plans were foiled when the police arrested a Tunisian who was suspected of taking part in the planning of the attack.⁵⁵

Category 1. On 11 March 2004, a network consisting mainly of North Africans (referred to as the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group), associated with, or inspired by, Al Qaeda, launched simultaneous bomb attacks against commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 civilians and injuring more than 1,600. The operation was strategically timed to coincide with Spain's general elections. The terrorists wanted to influence the outcome of the elections in a way that led to the pull-out of Spanish troops from Iraq, and they succeeded. Spanish voters punished the conservative party for how they responded to the attacks, and elected the socialists who had the withdrawal of Spanish troops on their election program.⁵⁶

Category 3. In April 2004, the Italian news agency *Agenzia Giornalistica Italia* reported that the suspected suicide-bomber and Al Qaeda associate Nizar Trabelsi said to the TV program "Panorama" that three Moroccans he had trained with in a *jihad* camp in Jallalabad (that was mainly for Moroccans), were planning to launch terrorist attacks in Rome, Italy. Trabelsi specified the aliases used by two of the Moroccans.⁵⁷

Category 3. In May 2004, the Spanish press reported that Al Qaeda was planning a chemical attack against a U.S. naval base in Rota, Southern Spain. Information about the attack plans allegedly came from an Algerian militant who had been extradited to France from Syria. The Algerian was said to have been a close associate of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.⁵⁸

Category 3. In June 2004, Italian police tipped off Belgian police about a Moroccan located in Brussels who had talked on the phone with contacts in Italy, saying that he and three accomplices were prepared to launch a suicide operation in Brussels. Belgian police promptly arrested the suspects, and stated to the press that it was "beyond dispute" that a terrorist attack was in the making. Investigations failed to identify connections with known militant groups, and the suspects were later released.⁵⁹

Category 1. In June and July 2004, Dutch police arrested a group of Al Qaeda–inspired militants suspected of planning and preparing attacks against various targets in the Netherlands. Reportedly among the targets were Schipol Airport, the headquarters of the police security service (AIVD), and a nuclear reactor. One of the detainees, Samir A., belonged to a group headed by the Dutch-Moroccan Muhammad Bouyeri, who later murdered the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh. Samir A. and his accomplices were also arrested in connection with the slaying of Van Gogh, released because of insufficient evidence, and then rearrested as suspects in the planning of attacks again in October 2005.⁶⁰

Category 1. In August 2004, British police arrested a group of British-Pakistanis in London, Luton, Hertfordshire, and Lancashire. The arrests came after interrogations of a captured 25-year-old Al Qaeda operative and computer expert Muhammad Naeem Noor Khan in Pakistan. Files from Noor Khan’s computer indicated that a U.K.-based terror cell had planned to launch terrorist attacks against targets in Britain and the United States. In November 2007, U.K. courts convicted the leader of the cell, a Hindu convert to Islam named Dhiren Barot, to life in prison for plotting explosions and murder. In June 2007 courts convicted the seven other members of the cell (all of whom were of Pakistani origin) to long prison sentences (between 15 and 26 years).⁶¹

Category 3. In September 2004, Spanish antiterrorism police arrested ten Pakistanis in Barcelona who were in possession of false documents and drugs, as well as a suspicious video showing details of two landmark buildings known as “Spain’s twin towers.” Authorities alleged that they belonged to an “Islamic radical support network.”⁶²

Category 1. In October and November 2004, Spanish press reported that police had intercepted a terrorist cell consisting of North African militants (Algerians and Moroccans) that planned and prepared an attack against Madrid’s Supreme Court in late 2001/early 2002. According to press reports citing police sources, arrests came after intelligence agencies monitored conversations between the suspects indicating that they planned attacks with explosives. According to the Spanish press quoting a writ by Judge Baltasar Garzon, the initiator of the terrorist plot had made arrangements to acquire 1,000 kilograms of the explosive Goma 2 Eco (similar to that used by perpetrators of the 11 March bombings in Madrid). Five hundred kilograms were, according to the writ, destined for a truck-bombing of the High Court. The aim of the attack was supposedly to punish Spanish authorities for, and destroy public documents relating to, investigations of militant Islamists in Spain in the wake of 9/11.⁶³

Category 1. In November 2004, Dutch police arrested a group of Al Qaeda–inspired *jihadis*, codenamed the “Hofstad Group,” in connection with the murder of the filmmaker Theo Van Gogh. Most were young Dutch citizens of North African origin. They allegedly planned and made preparations for multiple bomb attacks and assassinations of politicians and media figures in the Netherlands, and possibly abroad. Members and affiliates of Van Gogh’s killer have been arrested for terrorism-related activities both before and after the killing.⁶⁴

Category 2. In November 2004, German press reported on an alleged conspiracy by Iraqi and Lebanese members and associates of the Northern Iraqi *jihadi* group, Ansar al-Islam, to assassinate the Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Alawi while on a visit to Germany. Arrests were

made based on tapped telephone conversations indicating attack plans. One of the suspects called leading personalities in Ansar's German networks, and asked for a "go ahead" to prepare an assassination, and, reportedly he received an approval and was offered financial support.⁶⁵

Category 2. In July 2005, Dutch police arrested a 17 year old of Dutch-British nationality in possession of homemade explosives. Reportedly, the youngster was radicalized when he was 14, and was very active on the "jihadi Internet." He was suspected of being associated with the so-called Hofstad Group, headed by the killer of Theo Van Gogh. The suspect administered extremist MSN groups and posted texts by Al Qaeda and Van Gogh's killer, as well as threats against Dutch politicians.⁶⁶

Category 1. On 7 July 2005, a terrorist cell composed of three British nationals of Pakistani origin and one of Jamaican origin, launched terrorist attacks against the Tube and a bus in central London. The terrorists killed 52 people and injured hundreds. U.K. authorities believe the terrorists had trained with Pakistani/Kashmiri militant groups and/or Al Qaeda, and documentation exists claiming that they were in contact with other U.K.-based extremists planning terrorist attacks.⁶⁷

Category 1. On 21 July 2005, a group of East Africans launched a copycat terrorist attack against the Tube and a bus in central London causing commotion and fear, but failing to kill anyone. Reportedly, there was no connection between this group and the 7 July group, but they tried to use similar kinds of explosives, and they too appeared to be inspired by Al Qaeda and likeminded groups.⁶⁸

Category 2. In September 2005, French police arrested nine alleged members of the Algerian GSPC suspected of planning terrorist attacks against the French intelligence (DST) headquarters, the Paris Metro, and Orly Airport. Citing a source "close to the investigation," *Agence-France-Presse* reported that the plans had been revealed during the interrogation of an affiliate of the group by Algerian authorities, and that one of the arrestees in France confirmed attack plans during interrogations by French authorities. The suspects' attorneys denied that any of their clients had confirmed that they planned to attack specific targets in France.⁶⁹

Category 2. In October 2005, Danish police arrested a group of young Muslim extremists suspected of planning and preparing suicide attacks against Western targets in an unspecified European country. The cell involved Danes and one Swede. The suspects were of different origins including Palestine, Morocco, Serbia-Montenegro, Turkey, and Bosnia. On 19 October, Bosnian police arrested two members of the group, a Danish-Turk and Swedish-Bosnian, in possession of 20 kilograms of explosives, weapons, a "suicide belt," and a so-called martyrdom-video. Reportedly, the suspects communicated with each other and other Islamist extremists on the Internet, and mingled with extremists in Denmark and Bosnia.⁷⁰

Category 2. In November 2005 Italian police arrested a group of North Africans (mainly Algerians) believed to belong to the Algerian GSPC, and to have discussed large-scale terrorist attacks in Italy and abroad. According to the Norwegian press, the suspects spent time in Norway during the summer of 2004 trying to recruit for the insurgency in Iraq, and might have planned an operation against a synagogue in the Norwegian capital,

Oslo. According to the Italian press citing police documents, phone tapping revealed conversations about placing explosives on subways in France and Spain. However, sources attached to the Italian Interior Ministry said the media had “overplayed” the arrests, and that a possible attack was most likely to be undertaken outside Italy.⁷¹

Category 2. In April 2006, the Italian Interior Minister told the public that authorities had thwarted attempted terrorist attacks against the Milan Subway and a church in Bologna. Three terrorist suspects were deported and two arrested in connection with the alleged plot. A fifth person was said to be “placed under observation.” Italian press reported that the terrorists planned to strike close to the time of the national elections in order to prevent a re-election of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Reports did not specify connections to known militant Islamist groups.⁷²

Category 2. In June 2006, Swiss authorities arrested seven radical Islamists who allegedly plotted to shoot down an Israeli *El Al* airplane taking off from Geneva Airport using a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) in December 2005. Reportedly, the suspects had discussed smuggling RPGs from Russia for the attack. However, Swiss officials denied speculations that police had actually confiscated “rocket-propelled grenade launchers, surface-to-air missiles or explosives.”⁷³

Category 1. In July 2006, two Lebanese students studying in Germany planted two propane bombs on board two commuter trains between Dortmund and Koblenz. Reportedly, the terrorists constructed the bomb devices following instructions downloaded from the Internet. The bombs failed to explode because the devices were poorly constructed. The students were associated with the Lebanon-based *jihadi* militia Fatah al-Islam, which operated out of the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp, and they departed for their home country immediately after the attempted attacks. The bombers maintained contacts with, and might have received backing and support from, Islamists in Germany, Lebanon, and Denmark. One of them came from an extremist family background. The suspects were familiar with *jihadi* propaganda on pro-Al Qaeda websites, and the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, and the death of al-Zarqawi in Iraq have been cited as possible motivations for the attempted attacks.⁷⁴

Category 1. In August 2006, British police arrested 24 young Muslims suspected of planning and preparing suicide-bombings on transatlantic airliners taking off from Heathrow Airport. Most of them were British citizens of Pakistani descent, but the group also included an ethnic Briton. According to British authorities, the suspects planned to smuggle homemade bomb devices (liquid explosives) on board the airliners in sports drinks bottles. Investigations revealed substantial evidence, such as bombmaking materials, “martyrdom videos,” and *jihadi* propaganda. Investigators suspect that the group had ties to Kashmiri separatists, U.K.-based extremists, and possibly to Al Qaeda. Evidence suggests they were at least clearly ideologically inspired by Al Qaeda.⁷⁵

Category 2. In September 2006, Danish police arrested 9 individuals (Five Palestinians, one Kurd, two Iraqis, and one Dane, aged between 17 and 35) suspected of planning and preparing terrorist attacks on Danish soil. According to the Chief of the Danish Police Security Intelligence Service (PET), the suspects had gathered bombmaking materials (fertilizer and the explosive TATP). Authorities believe they had planned a terrorist attack against an unspecified target in Denmark. Press reports have speculated about ties to

extremists in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom but no international ties have been confirmed by the authorities.⁷⁶

Category 2. In September 2006, Norwegian police arrested three Norwegians of Pakistani origin and one ethnic Norwegian suspected of planning terrorist attacks against a synagogue, and the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Oslo. According to the Norwegian press, the main evidence against the suspects stemmed from audio-recordings of conversations in a car during alleged reconnaissance of the targets. The alleged leader of the group, a former criminal and a gang member, was arrested in Germany during the Soccer World Cup, being suspected of planning terrorist attacks. At the time he was in possession of pictures of anti-tank missiles, suspicious notes, and a picture of a Palestinian girl killed during Israeli air strikes on Gaza. He is also suspected of having fired shots at the Oslo synagogue with an automatic gun. At the time of writing, no ties to known militant groups or international extremist networks have been confirmed by the authorities.⁷⁷

Category 3. In November 2006, the German press reported that police had detained six Islamists who were suspected of planning to bomb an airliner departing from Frankfurt Airport by smuggling explosives on board the plane, at some point during the summer of 2006. Reportedly, the suspects were Arab nationals. According to the German newspaper *Die Welt*, a passenger plane belonging to the Israeli airliner company *El Al* was the intended target. Allegedly, the suspects contacted an employee at the airport and offered money in exchange for assistance in smuggling a bomb device on board a plane. The plan was supposedly at an early stage, and the suspects and the airport employee had not been able to reach an understanding on payment for planting the bomb.⁷⁸

Category 2. In January 2007, nine Islamists were arrested, suspected of planning to abduct and kill a Muslim soldier in the British Armed Forces who had served in Iraq (two of them were released without charges the day after the arrests). All of the suspects were Britons of Pakistani descent. A central person belonging to U.K.'s *jihadi* networks was supposedly involved in the plans. Reportedly, the suspects planned to videotape the killing and to distribute the tape on the Internet via Al Qaeda propagandists situated in Pakistan.⁷⁹

Category 3. In March 2007, the U.K. press reported that “al-Qaida” plotted to “bring down” the Internet of the country in order to harm the economy. News reports claimed terrorists intended to infiltrate the headquarters of Telehouse Europe in the Docklands (which houses Europe’s biggest “web hotel,” containing dozens of “servers”) and blow it up from inside. According to the press, plans were confiscated from the computers of arrested suspects. The press article did not specify how many suspects had been arrested, or their nationalities, but the article did mention that the “Islamic terrorists” had carried out reconnaissance against the huge Bacton complex of gas terminals on the Norfolk coast during 2006, a threat that led to the deployment of armed guards around the plant.⁸⁰

Category 1. In June 2007, Al Qaeda–inspired militant Islamists attempted to bomb a nightclub in Haymarket, central London, and another in Cockspur Street. The attacks were planned and prepared as remote control car-bomb attacks (to be set off by using cell phone detonators). The bombs in London failed to explode, and the police began an intensive hunt for the perpetrators. The day after the failed attacks in London, the terrorists attempted a suicide car-bombing against an airport terminal in Glasgow using a car loaded with gas canisters. The car caught fire, but did not explode. One of the terrorists was fatally wounded

during the attacks, and later died. Another operative was arrested on the spot. All in all, eight people were arrested (seven in the United Kingdom and one in Australia). The operatives were of Middle Eastern/Asian origin and hospital workers (seven medical doctors and one medical technician). Their ties to militant organizations remain unknown.⁸¹

Category 2. In July 2007, Italian police arrested three Moroccans, one of whom acted as an Imam, suspected of running a “terror school” in the city of Perugia. Police claimed that they had maintained contacts with members of the Al Qaeda–linked Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group in Belgium, and that they had trained *jihadi* recruits in terrorism, offering courses in making poisons and explosives, and giving instructions on how to fly commercial airliners. Police confiscated different types of chemicals “including acids and cyanide” and “equipment for remote detonation of explosives” in the cellar of a Mosque frequented by the suspects. They also seized suspicious documents that might indicate reconnaissance and planning activities, such as photographs of Rome’s Fiumicino Airport, as well as a map of the main cities in Northern Italy with the city of Milan encircled.⁸²

Category 2. In September 2007, Danish police intercepted what they referred to as an Al Qaeda–linked terror cell planning and preparing terrorist bomb attacks. The suspects had begun mixing “precursor chemicals for bombs,” but no information about potential targets was specified in the press coverage. Eight people were arrested and two were charged. Most were Danish citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. According to U.S. officials, U.S. intelligence agencies helped the Danish authorities to locate the suspects through electronic surveillance of electronic communications between the suspects and their contacts in Pakistan. One of the suspects reportedly received terror training in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan between September 2006 and September 2007. In a press conference, a spokesman for the Danish Police security service said there was a direct link between the terror suspects and high standing Al Qaeda members.⁸³

Category 1. In September 2007, German police and intelligence agencies discovered plans by two German Muslim converts and a Turk to execute car-bomb attacks against U.S. interests and citizens in Germany. Frankfurt International Airport, the U.S. Ramstein Airbase, and restaurants and discos frequented by Americans, have been quoted as being possible targets of the attacks. The terrorist suspects are believed to have been linked to Al Qaeda through an Uzbek militant organization dubbed the “Islamic Jihad Union.” They communicated with members of this organization through coded e-mails, and the Union claimed responsibility for the attempted attacks after the suspects were arrested. The suspects had gathered explosives equivalent to more than 500 kilograms of TNT as well as military detonators to be used in the attacks. They also conducted reconnaissance of potential targets. The terrorists allegedly received explosives and weapons training in Pakistan close to the Iranian border during 2006.⁸⁴

Category 3. In December 2007, Belgian police arrested 14 Islamists suspected of plotting a jailbreak to free the Tunisian Al Qaeda associate Nizar Trabelsi, who was convicted to 10 years in prison for planning and preparing a suicide car-bomb attack against the canteen of the NATO Kleine Brogel Airbase on the border between Belgium and Holland. Allegedly, the plotters intended to utilize explosives and guns during the operation. According to investigators, one of the brains behind the prison break plans was the widow of one of the two Tunisians who executed the suicide attack against Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud on 9 September 2001.⁸⁵

Concluding Remarks

Europe is no stranger to terrorism. Since the Second World War, the region has faced high levels of terrorism by violent vanguards of social, political, and to a minor extent religious, activist movements or activist groups.^{86,87} The threat mainly came from nationalist–separatist activist groups, such as Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and the Irish Republican Army, but also from ideological activists from the far right and the far left, such as, for example, the Marxist-Leninist Red Army Fraction (Rote Armee Fraktion—RAF). Terrorism was widespread and frequent, especially from the beginning of the 1970s and over the following two decades. Terror attacks in postwar Europe number in the thousands, and have caused the deaths of thousands.

Considering Europe’s traditions for political violence, terrorism by Islamists must be seen as a marginal phenomenon. Yet, empirical data presented in this chronology suggests it constitutes a growing and increasingly lethal threat, and a worrisome trend in the context of increased tensions between the Muslim world and the West in the wake of 9/11 and the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which needs to be dealt with on many levels—socially, politically, and economically.

The current chronology is meant to serve as a tool for conducting a critical assessment of the scope of the threat, and for mapping incidents that might be surveyed in more depth to create a better understanding of the threat and its organizational, operational, and motivational patterns. Due to the insecurity of information and data, the author does not wish to present the chronology as statistics at this point, and suffice to say that the version published here contains a total number of 74 incidents, of which 31 have been categorized as category 1 incidents, 24 as category 2, and 19 as category 3. The number of incidents has increased steadily during the three periods by which the chronology is organized; except within category 3 (poorly and vaguely documented events). The lack of increase in the number of category 3 incidents probably indicates that cases have become more substantial over time (and also that access to information and data on terrorism incidents has become easier). In particular, one can see that incidents became more frequent and lethal after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, in the period dubbed “European nations as targets for “global *mujahidin*.”

Notes

1. There exists no consensus on how to define “terrorism.” An excellent review of the definitional debates by Whittaker (2003) concludes that terrorism is: “—ineluctably political in aims and motives,—violent, or equally important, threatens violence,—designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target,—conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia),—and perpetrated by a sub national group or non state entity.” See David J. Whittaker, *The Terrorism Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 9.

2. The term *salafi-jihadi* is commonly used (by Islamists themselves and others) to refer to Islamists who pursue a purist or literalist interpretation of the Islamic faith, relying almost exclusively on the Quran and the Prophet’s traditions (al-Sunnah) on the one hand, and who see violence as a legitimate means of activism to further religious and political goals on the other hand. Currents within *salafi-jihadism*, such as Al Qaeda, see terrorism as a legitimate and necessary means of struggle in a campaign aiming to: (1) Re-Islamize the Muslim world by toppling local regimes they accuse of having become too secular and too dependent on the West and (2) Rid Muslim lands of Western (and especially U.S. and Israeli) influences (social, political, economic, and especially military). In research on militant Islamism, the terms *jihadi* and *jihadism* are most often used about Islamist

militants pursuing international or global aims and strategies (Al Qaeda and likeminded groups) and not about militants predominantly involved in local, nationalist separatist conflicts (e.g., Palestinian Hamas), despite the fact that such groups often use the concept of *jihad* to legitimize their struggles. For a thorough and critical review of the terminology used in studies of Islamism and *jihadism*, consult Thomas Hegghammer, “Islamist Violence in Saudi Arabia, 1979–2006: The Power and Perils of Pan-Islamic Nationalism” (Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, 2007)—doctoral thesis.

3. In 1998, another group formed on the remnants of the GIA, The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which eventually became the leading force within Algerian *jihadism*. GSPC gradually forged closer ties with Al Qaeda and recently joined the network, adopting the name “the al-Qaida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb” [Tanzim al-Qaida bi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami]. It has been widely assumed that the GSPC “replaced,” or “took over” GIA’s infrastructure in Europe; see for example, Lorenzo Vidino and Steven Emerson, *Al Qaeda in Europe: the New Battleground of International Jihad* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005). A similar interpretation is made in Nesser, “Jihad in Europe: A Survey of the Motivations for Sunni Islamist Terrorism in Post-Millennium Europe.” Report (Kjeller: FFI, 2004). A well-informed European government official the author talked to in October 2007 said this was not exactly the case. According to the source, the GSPC focused nearly all of its capacities on the internal battle in Algeria, and maintained little or no organizational control over networks in Europe. Rather, the Algerian networks in Europe were mainly run by former GIA activists and Al Qaeda associates (who had denounced GIA under Antar Zuwabri) and ran their own networks out of Afghanistan [the author’s interpretation of the source’s statements]. For an overview of this period, consult Nesser, “Jihad in Europe.”

4. The chronology is part of an ongoing Ph.D./book-project within the framework of FFI’s Terrorism Research Group.

5. Incidents from 1994 until 1999 have been collected from Brynjar Lia and Ashild Kjøl, “Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and Their Host States: The Case of the Algerian GIA in Europe 1993–2000” (Kjeller: FFI, 2001).

6. Petter Nesser, “Jihad in Europe”; Edwin Bakker, “Jihadi Terrorists in Europe,” in *Clingendael Security Paper no. 2* (Haag: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, December 2006).

7. At the same time as there is a danger that the threat is exaggerated, there is of course also a risk that one belittles the threat poised by Islamist militancy. The following chronology contains a substantial number of incidents. Some of them are well-documented, but in other instances, it is dubious if they qualify as terrorism at all. At the same time, the chronology only presents incidents covered in open sources. Public statements by senior European security officials, such as former head of the MI5, Eliza Manningham Buller, suggest there might be quite substantial, dark figures, concerning terrorism by Islamist militants in Western Europe.

8. However, in many cases, suspected terrorists were involved in a range of activities, some of which might be characterized as support activities for militant groups and networks inside Europe and abroad, and some of which were related to concrete attack planning inside European countries.

9. However, in some instances incidents have been defined as substantially documented even though verdicts have not yet been reached, for example, when information from several independent and seemingly reliable sources substantiate that terrorism was in the making and that *jihadis* were involved.

10. The network consisted of a combination of hardened GIA veterans coming from Algeria, or training camps in Afghanistan. Key figures in the network as portrayed in the press and literature were: Ali Touchent aka Tarek (leader of GIA’s European network), Boualem Bensaid (GIA recruiter and coordinator), Smaïn Aït Ali Belkacem (facilitator and bombmaker) Khaled Kelkal (operational leader and “muscle” in the attacks in Paris), Rachid Ramda (financer). The network was subdivided into three branches: the Vaulx-en-Velin (Rhône department) network, the Lille (Nord) network, and the Chasse-sur-Rhone (Isère) network. Khaled Kelkal headed the Vaulx-en-Velin network, Boualem Bensaid headed the Lille network, and a man called Safe Bourada headed the Chasse-sur-Rhone network (he was later suspected of heading a GSPC cell planning attacks in France in 2005; see later). For more details on the GIA networks in France, consult for example, Lia and Kjøl, “Islamist

Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and Their Host States”; Vidino and Emerson, *Al Qaeda in Europe*; Omar Nasiri, *Inside the Jihad; My Life with Al Qaeda a Spy’s Story* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

11. The operation unit was headed by the 25-year-old Algerian Abdul Abdullah Yahia. Kamil Tawil’s excellent study of the FIS and the GIA sheds light on and supports the hypothesis of Lia and Kjøk (2001) that the operation was a top-down initiative from the GIA leadership and a strategic escalation of the *jihad* in Algeria “taking the battle to France”; consult Kamil al-Tawil, *The Armed Islamic Movement in Algeria: From “The Salvation” To “The Group”* (in Arabic) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1998).

12. “Hardline Algerian Group Threatens Belgian P.M.,” *Reuters*, 18 January 1995.

13. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad, The Trail of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 309.

14. Lia and Kjøk, “Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and Their Host States,” pp. 35–37.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

18. *Ibid.*

19. “Bomb Conspirators in France Linked to U.K., Other Islamic Groups—GIA Leader Allegedly Operated from London,” *Agence-France-Presse*, 3 November 1995.

20. Lia and Kjøk, “Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and Their Host States.”

21. *Ibid.*

22. Consult, for example, Hal Bernton, Mike Carter, David Heath, and James Neff, “The Terrorist Within; the Story Behind One Man’s Holy War Against America,” *The Seattle Times*, 23 June–7 July 2002.

23. Lia and Kjøk, “Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and Their Host States,” pp. 41–42.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. The Khalden training camp in Khowst was a facility mainly for Algerians. Several of the operatives involved in GIA’s bombings in France trained at this camp. Activities at Khalden were coordinated by the Al Qaeda affiliate Abu Zubaydah, whereas Algerian *jihadi* veterans Abu Jaffar, aka Omar Chabaani, and Abu Doha acted as leaders and instructors. Khalden continued to act as a base for Algerians after the fall of the GIA, and trained known terrorists, such as Ahmed Ressam and his accomplices, who planned bombings in Los Angeles to coincide with the Millennium celebrations, and the group headed by Salim Boukhari that planned bombings in Strasbourg in 2000.

27. *Verdict in the Criminal Case against Mr Djilali Benali (“Aeurobui Beandali”) et al.* (in German) (2003).

28. The High Court of Paris against Daoudi, Beghal, Bounour et al., Verdict of 15 Mars 2005 (in French—with Author) (2005).

29. Peter Finn and Sarah Delaney, “Al Qaeda’s Tracks Deepen in Europe, Surveillance Reveals More Plots, Links,” *Washington Post*, 22 October 2001.

30. Bakker, “Jihadi Terrorists in Europe.”

31. “United States of America Vs. Richard Colvin Reid, a/K/a Abdul-Raheem, Abu Ibrahim, Indictment and Detention Order” (January 2001).

32. *Indictment of the Jordanian Citizen of Palestinian Origin Mohamed Ghassan Ali Saud Abu Dhess Et Al* (in German) (2003), *Translated Excerpts of Interrogations of Shadi Abdullah* (Translated by Steven Arons), Courtesy Peter Bergen, May through October 2002.

33. Sebastian Rotella, “6 Alleged Members of Milan Cell Held,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 October 2002; Finn and Delaney, “Al Qaeda’s Tracks Deepen in Europe, Surveillance Reveals More Plots, Links.”

34. “Arrests Trigger Italy Terror Alert,” *BBC News*, 24 January 2003.

35. Elisabetta Povoledo, "Man Wrongly Held in '02 Italy Terror Raid Wins Damages," *New York Times*, 17 March 2007.
36. Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 2006).
37. Nick Hopkins and Richard Norton-Taylor, "Huge Hunt for Missile Smugglers," *Guardian*, 13 February 2003; Hugh Muir, "British Muslim Convert Jailed for Terrorism Offences," *Guardian*, 24 September 2005.
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that was pieced together from the rubble of the hideout apartment in which seven terrorists blew themselves up in Leganes on 11 March, contained threats of new attacks unless the Spanish troops were pulled out of Iraq fast. On 2 April there was an actual attempt by the terrorists to strike again. Railroad workers detected a bomb device on the tracks of the high-speed railway between Madrid and Seville. The device was made of the same explosive and constructed in the same way as those used on 11 March. According to the indictment the terrorists also planned to strike targets such as Jewish centers, and U.K. and Japanese tourists.

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