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Case Studies in Exploiting Terrorist Group Divisions with Disinformation and Divisive/Black Propaganda

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Counterterrorism operations should be exploiting the divisions and infighting of terrorist groups. The overall goal should be to make fewer mistakes than the jihadis, help increase inter-group and intra-group tension, and further their disconnection from the wider public. This paper argues that strategic psychological operations (PSYOP) that focus on exploiting rifts in leadership, differences in strategic planning, and ethnic, national and tribal differences within and among terrorist groups could be an integral part of overall counterterrorism efforts. Using three case studies, chosen because of the attention given to them in the international community and the illuminating group and leadership characteristics that can be found in many other jihadist organisations, the paper illustrates that PSYOP that expand on the existing framework could be very effective in countering the jihadist threat.

Field Manual (FM) 3-05.30 is the keystone publication for PSYOP principles of the United States military and a useful doctrine related to current psychological operations. It describes PSYOP as information for effect, used during peacetime and conflict, to inform and influence. Two of the specified roles embodied by these operations are influencing foreign populations and countering enemy propaganda, misinformation, disinformation, and opposing information. According to the field manual, PSYOP supports counterterrorism by integrating with other security operations to target the forces employing terrorism with the aim of placing the terrorist forces on the psychological defensive. To do so, forces may conduct operations seeking to counter the adverse effects of a terrorist act, decrease popular support for the terrorist cause, or publicise incentives to the local populace to provide information on terrorist groups. [1]

The utilisation of disinformation and divisive propaganda in PSYOP could be very effective in decreasing the threat posed by terrorist groups and their leadership. Disinformation involves the deliberate spread of false information in order to mislead or deceive a target audience. The goal of divisive propaganda is to separate groups. In instances where there may exist a number of loosely allied terrorist organisations, divisive propaganda can be utilised to create and further develop fractures between such entities. [2] Propaganda itself can be divided into three types, or forms, depending on whether the source and intention is known or unknown. White propaganda comes from an identified source and the information tends to be factually based. Black

propaganda tends to imply secrecy; the information tends to be fabricated, and source identity deception is actively sought. Grey propaganda is placed somewhere in the middle; the aims and actual identity of the source may be known or unknown. Maintaining the use of black propaganda in possible PSYOP ensures that the information is presented by a source that will deflect prejudices the target audience may hold. This is especially important since anything the US does is closely scrutinised and blowback effect frequently occurs in counterterrorism operations. Strategies utilising disinformation, divisive propaganda, and black propaganda can weaken the inter-group, intra-group, and leader-rank-and-file cohesion. The tension, differences, and fighting within groups can be exploited to the extent that operations are hampered or terrorists redirect their focus from the enemy to one another.

In 1988, Ward Churchill, formerly of the University of Colorado, wrote an eccentric book with Jim Vander Wall on the FBI's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) against the Black Panther Party and American Indian Movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. One chapter of the book is devoted to the overall strategy of COINTELPRO, which lasted until 1971, when President Hoover suspended operations because of public disclosure. This particular chapter provides for a framework of unique opportunities in counterterrorism. COINTELPRO was designed to neutralise domestic political dissidents but can also be used to combat terrorist groups. One operation carried out by the FBI was the fabrication of correspondence between members of targeted groups, or between groups, designed to foster splits within or between organisations. Efforts were continued, and in some instances intensified, when it became apparent that the resulting tension was sufficient to cause physical violence among group members. [3] A second operation involved the infiltration of organisations with informers and *agents provocateurs*, the latter expressly for the purpose of carrying out illegal activities that could then be attributed to key organisational members and/or the organisation as a whole. *Agents provocateurs* were also assigned to disrupt the internal functioning of targeted groups and to assist in the spread of disinformation. [4] COINTELPRO also utilised *snitch-jacketing*. "Snitchjacketing, or bad-jacketing, refers to the practice of creating suspicion—through the spread of rumours or manufacture of evidence—that bona fide organisational members, usually in key positions, are police/intelligence informers." [5] The purpose of this tactic was to isolate or eliminate organisational leadership and incite violence upon the jacketed individual. These three operations provide for a framework of possible counterterrorism tactics aimed at the very real, and very combustible, divisions within and among terrorist groups.

Al Qaida Central

There were several members within the Al Qaida Majlis al-Shura, or governing council, who publicly criticised Osama Bin Ladin's leadership and his underestimation of the American response to the 9/11 attacks. The newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat obtained and published a document critical of Bin Ladin entitled "The Story of the Afghan Arabs: From the Entry into Afghanistan to the Final Exodus with the Taliban," written in the personal notebook of Abu al-Walid al-Masri, a senior member and leading theoretician within Al Qaida, and veteran Afghan Arab. [6] Al-Masri was close to both Mullah Omar and Bin Ladin and his account illustrates the tenuous relationship between the two leaders. The document shows Bin Ladin in a highly negative light, managing Al Qaida like a tribal fiefdom, and frequently demonstrating disdain for Mullah Omar's advice. [7] In the lead-up to carrying out the 9/11 attack, Bin Ladin ignored the pleas of many within his inner circle, believing that the United States was weaker than imagined and unable to withstand significant attacks. Al-Masri was highly critical of Bin Ladin for stifling internal debate and hampering open and effective decision-making. According to his notebook, the final stages of Al Qaida's existence in Afghanistan represented:

> A tragic example of an Islamic movement managed by a catastrophic leadership. Everyone knew that their leader was leading them to the abyss, and even leading the entire country to utter destruction, but they continued to bend to his will and take his orders with suicidal submission. [8]

This first-hand account sheds light on the tension and frustration aimed at Bin Ladin, emanating from both the Taliban leadership and Al Qaida's Majlis al-Shura.

Al-Masri also wrote of Bin Ladin's "extreme infatuation" or "crazy attraction" with the international media, a widely held view of Al Qaida's leader. Mullah Omar and other Taliban leaders often impressed on Bin Ladin the need to refrain from giving interviews to the media and involving the Taliban in unnecessary conflicts with the world community. [9] According to al-Masri, Bin Ladin was fully prepared to sacrifice Afghanistan and Mullah Omar at the altar of his public relations campaign. Self-centered and manipulative, he was more concerned with his own image than with the security of his Taliban hosts. [10] Bin Ladin was becoming a liability and his conduct was costing the Taliban both Pakistani and official Arab support. In the end, Mullah Omar continued to brush off those around him, allowing Bin Ladin's actions to persist largely because he was grateful for the role played by Bin Ladin and his Arab mujahedeen during the Afghan War.

Tension within the ranks of Al Qaida also stemmed from the large contingent of Egyptians

holding leadership roles in the organisation. After the 9/11 attacks, the international community overemphasised the role of Saudis and failed to see the vital role played by the lieutenants and strategic planners. According to former participants and Fawaz Gerges's interviews with jihadis, Ayman Zawahiri, Al Qaida's ideologue and second-in-command, planted around Bin Ladin trusted and competent Egyptian lieutenants from his former group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, who subsequently became leading actors in Al Qaida. [11] The influence of Egyptian strategic planning would not have gone unnoticed within the lower echelons of the organisation. For example, some former jihadis were convinced that Zawahiri inducted Bin Ladin into suicide bombings, or martyrdom operations. Zawahiri had pioneered and legitimised these attacks against the near enemy. Since suicide bombings are in disagreement with classical Islamic political thought, which forbids suicide, either Bin Ladin was brainwashed or he underwent a revolutionary transformation thanks to the influence of Zawahiri. [12] The large presence of jihadists from Zawahiri's Islamic Jihad and the accompanying ideology created fault lines in Al Qaida between Egyptians and those from the Arabian Peninsula, in addition to the tension that marked Osama Bin Ladin's leadership.

The tenuous relationship between Mullah Omar and Bin Ladin, the frustration with Bin Ladin's leadership and obsession with the media, and the large contingent of Egyptian lieutenants were all potential opportunities for PSYOP against Al Qaida. The fabrication of correspondence between members of the Majlis al-Shura and Taliban leadership could have added to the calls for Bin Ladin's eviction from Afghanistan. Disinformation pointing out Bin Ladin's mixed record of participation with mujahedeen in the Afghan War could have furthered the gap felt between Arabs and Afghans. Tension stemming from the Egyptian contingent could have been capitalised upon by putting a label on those lieutenants who came from Islamic Jihad and distributing leaflets or documents comparing the strategic beliefs of Zawahiri to those of the overall group (also ensuring that they are written in Egyptian Arabic, and not modern standard or Iraqi dialect). In the early years of Al Qaida, the hegemony of Egyptians became such a sore point among other nationalities, particularly the Saudis, that Bin Ladin was forced to work hard to recruit young people from the Arabian Peninsula to establish an ethnic and nationality equilibrium within Al Qaida. [13] In regard to possible informers or agents provocateurs, statements emphasising Bin Ladin's disdain for Mullah Omar and lack of responsibility felt towards the Taliban could have been circulated within the ranks of both groups. In addition, fabricated media interviews and statements could have furthered the views of the sheikh as a publicity hound. In regards to snitch-jacketing, there was a very real possibility of painting Bin Ladin as an American intelligence agent. This is not far-fetched considering that, after 9/11 an anti-Bin Ladin faction among the Taliban, who were opposed to his presence in Afghanistan, actually advanced a

conspiratorial theory and claimed that he had been sent by Americans as a ploy to destroy the Taliban emirate. [14]

Al Qaida in Mesopotamia

In 2004, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi formally pledged *bayat* to Osama bin Ladin, and his jihadist group, Jamaat al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad in Iraq, was renamed Al Qaida in Mesopotamia (also known as Al Qaida in Iraq). However, according to Oraib Rantawi, the director of the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies in Amman:

> From the beginning, Zarqawi wanted to be independent. Yes, he gained stature through this alliance, but he only swore bayat after all this time because of growing pressure from Iraqis who were members of Al Qaida. [15]

Doctrinally, Zarqawi saw eye-to-eye with Al Qaida but he "was not fully pleased with the network's modus operandi. He criticised Al Qaida for not being fierce enough to deal more violent and more painful strikes to the enemy."[16] Initially, Bin Ladin himself was reluctant to incorporate al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad because of Zarqawi's excessive sectarianism and reckless killing of civilians. Rantawi suggests that "his suicide bombings of the hotels in Amman (in which some sixty civilians died, many of them while attending a wedding celebration) were a huge tactical mistake. My understanding is that Bin Ladin was furious about it." [17] The sheikh was also reportedly against the sectarian violence between Shiites and Sunnis, since it could cause distractions from the main confrontation with the US.

Personal testaments by Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, Zarqawi's former spiritual mentor, and other close associates painted Zarqawi as an ultra militant who was even more hardline than the hardliners within Al Qaida. He was more interested in action than in preaching and indoctrination and had an impulsiveness and recklessness that disturbed his cohorts. [18] Al-Maqdisi, currently under house arrest in Jordan, also became one of the most vocal critics of Al Qaida in Mesopotamia's indiscriminate killing of civilians and fellow Muslims. In several interviews with Arabic language newspapers and Al-Jazeera, al-Maqdisi said that violence that does not differentiate between women and children, civilians, soldiers and American troops is wrong.

> The kidnapping and murder of relief workers and neutral journalists have distorted the image of jihad. They make the mujahedeen look like murderers who spill blood blindly. [19]

In addition, Sheikh Mohamed Sayed Tantawi, the grand imam of al-Azhar mosque in Cairo up until his death this March, called on the international community to put an end to terrorism in Iraq and to punish Zarqawi and his men for killing civilians. In two other separate statements, imprisoned leaders of the Egyptian Islamic Group and Islamic al-Jihad, the two largest jihadist organisations in the world, also criticised Zarqawi. [20]

The press reported skirmishes between Al Qaida and domestic Iraqi fighters, partly due to the indiscriminate suicide bombings of civilians, and perhaps also due to the Jordanian and Syrian backgrounds of the rank-and-file and higher echelons of Al Qaida in Mesopotamia. In addition to the lieutenants Zarqawi brought with him from connections forged in Jordanian jail, he focused much of the recruitment effort in Syria, Jordan and Palestine. The Syrian contingent of Al Qaida in Mesopotamia became just as vital as the Jordanian one, especially considering the rapid turnover rate of Zarqawi's lieutenants. [21] The group declared on the Internet in January of 2006 that it had joined Iraqi insurgent factions to form the Mujahedeen Shura Council, a move seen as part of a response to pressure from the public and indigenous fighters that Zarqawi tone down indiscriminate killing of Iraqis. He was alienating the very constituency that he claimed to be defending against foreign occupiers. Then, in early April, the 'Iraqi resistance's high command' announced that it had stripped al-Zarqawi of his political role and relegated him to military operations. [22] Even more remarkable, Zawahiri dispatched a 6,000-word letter to Zarqawi, chiding him that he risked alienating Arabs. "In the absence of this popular support," Zawahiri wrote, "the jihadist movement would be crushed in the shadows." [23] In addition to the tension aimed at Zarqawi's leadership originating from within the group, fault lines were created between Iraqis and foreigners, Shiites and Sunnis.

Zarqawi's interest in independence from greater Al Qaida, his indiscriminate killing of fellow Muslims, and the divisions between Iraqis and foreigners, Sunni and Shiite, all posed opportunities for PSYOP against Al Qaida in Mesopotamia. The distribution of fabricated correspondence between Bin Ladin (or more likely Zawahiri) and Zarqawi, focusing on Bin Ladin and his lieutenants' distrust and frustration with Zarqawi, as well as his supersize ego, could have intensified the division between Al Qaida central and the franchise group, as well as Zarqawi's isolation. Disinformation and agents provocateurs could have added to the number of sectarian and indiscriminate killings to Zarqawi's name, furthering the view of him and his followers as ruthless, sectarian foreigners. In regards to snitch-jacketing, perhaps Zarqawi could have also been painted as a pawn of the US. Interestingly enough, the case of Al Qaida in Mesopotamia is an example of one of the more recent attempts to incorporate PSYOP in counterterrorism, but the approach was all wrong. According to an April 2006 Washington Post

article, the US. military was conducting a propaganda campaign at the time to magnify the role played by Zarqawi in the Iraqi insurgency. Documents stated that the US campaign aimed to turn Iraqis against Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian, by playing on their perceived dislike of foreigners. [24] US military leaders were using leaflets, radio and television broadcasts and Internet postings as part of the PSYOP. A month after the Washington Post report, the military appeared to attempt to reverse field and portray al-Zarqawi as an incompetent who could not even handle a gun.[25] Fou'ad Hussein, Zarqawi's biographer, claimed that by exaggerating Zarqawi's military strength and blaming most attacks in Iraq on foreign terrorists led by Zarqawi, the US turned him into a "hero and symbol" of resistance in the eyes of the Arabs: "Every Arab and Muslim who wished to go to Iraq for jihad wanted to join al-Zarqawi and fight under his leadership." [26} What the PSYOP should have done was blame only the sectarian attacks on Zarqawi, while creating suspicion, through the spread or rumors or false evidence, that he was in fact working for US intelligence, ensuring the need for more troops and a continued presence in the country.

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan

The Pakistani Taliban movement emerged as the younger brother of the Afghan Taliban, who occasionally must be reigned in for attacking civilian targets, but who shares broader objectives. It became a network of numerous factions, with the original Afghan Taliban and Baitullah Mehsud's faction at the base. Recruits and funding are shared between the movements, and the only real division between the two is one of labour. The Pakistani Taliban were first forced to come together by Afghan Taliban emir Mullah Omar after broader differences fostered violent competition between the factions. On December 12, 2007, 40 senior Pakistani Taliban leaders, commanding some 50,000 men, gathered in Peshawar under the banner of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Until then, many of them had carved out their own turfs in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), often working at cross-purposes in their resistance to both American and Pakistani forces. [27]

The initial council that met in Peshawar elected Baitullah Mehsud as the first chief of the TTP, though not without objections from various leaders vying for power, including Wali-ur Rehman. Baitullah Mehsud's TTP was blamed for some of the most high-profile attacks in Pakistan for years, including the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and a suicide attack on the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. The hotel attack was sanctioned and applauded by Al Qaida, and in turn brought the TTP further into the limelight and under the Taliban movement.

In early August of 2009, a CIA drone attack in South Waziristan killed Baitullah Mehsud. In the

wake of his death, a power struggle marked by vicious infighting took place. At a meeting of surviving commanders and potential successors in August of 2009, at Sara Rogha in South Waziristan, a gunfight ensued. The Pakistani interior minister, Rehman Malik, confirmed reports of the shootout at the meeting and mentioned that someone had been killed. "The infighting was between Wali-ur Rehman and Hakimullah Mehsud," proclaimed Malik. [28] Reports speculated that during an argument over succession at the tribal jirga, shots were fired across a table, a brawl erupted and Hakimullah Mehsud was killed and Rehman wounded. A resident of the area who spoke by telephone to reporters after the incident said foreign militants favoured Mr. Rehman, while local militants favored Hakimullah Mehsud, Baitullah's protégé and cousin, to be their new leader. [29] To add to the confusion, another commander, Faqir Mohammad, proclaimed that he had taken over as leader of the group and had been endorsed by Hakimullah. Soon afterwards, Mohammad told the Agence France-Presse:

> I am the most senior leader of the TTP after Baitullah, and the sacrifices I rendered for it are no less. However, due to some unavoidable reasons, I am stepping down. There is no factionalism within the TTP now. [30]

Clashes that followed between pro-Mehsud and anti-Mehsud factions reportedly killed more than a hundred militants in the tribal areas. According to Ismail Khan, Peshawar bureau chief of Dawn newspaper, a fierce rivalry exists within the pro-Mehsud elements. "There are problems within the leadership that are not all resolved," he claims. [31]

The death of Baitullah Mehsud and the entrance of Hakimullah Mehsud shed light on the tension between the various factions that make up Tehrik-e-Taliban. Hakimullah Mehsud, who Pakistani intelligence officials now believe survived a CIA drone aircraft strike in January, is thought no longer to run the Pakistani Taliban. Pakistani intelligence officials now say that Hakimullah's credibility within the TTP has receded and Taliban commanders like Wali-ur-Rehman are once again positioning for leadership.

The power struggle marked by vicious infighting that seems to take place every time a leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is killed provides for an ample opportunity in PSYOP. The factionalism inherent in a group that first came together from some 40 leaders vying for territory is one potential target. Fabricated correspondence between these various commanders, or their replacements, could capitalise on the power struggles. If foreign militants favour Wali-ur-Rehman, and local militants favour Hakimullah Mehsud, this is a division that can be exploited.

Even without any PSYOP or help from the outside, the meeting of successors following Baitullah Mehsud's death last year turned into a brawl and shootout. The actions of commanders like Faqir Mohammad, who claimed leadership to Agence France-Presse shortly after, can also serve as an example. There must have been confusion within the rank-and-file when more than one commander claimed control; why not make it a dozen? In addition, *agents provocateurs* could have spread disinformation and committed violence on behalf of various commanders, further spinning the situation out of control. The changeover in leadership of groups like the Pakistani Taliban is marked by complete chaos. A good idea for counterterrorism operations in this respect is simply to add fuel to the fire.

Opportunities in Counterterrorism

The use of divisive propaganda in PSYOP could include the fabrication and distribution of publications (leaflets, etc.) or correspondence 'on behalf of' targeted organisations or individuals designed to misrepresent their positions, goals, or objectives in such a way as to publicly discredit them or foster intra/inter-group tensions. [32] When formulating the divisive (and subsequently black) propaganda, it is important that the supposed source be a credible one. The criticisms of Bin Ladin likely resonated with jihadists because they came from within Al Qaida's highest circles and drew on close experiences of the Taliban movement and the Bin Ladin network. [33] Considering al-Maqdisi is, or at least was, the mufti of the Salafi-jihadi movement, his public criticism of Zarqawi reportedly caused considerable tension among Al Qaida. The use of informers or agents provocateurs in PSYOP could include the attribution of negative actions to key members and leaders, as well as the spread of disinformation in order to disrupt internal activity. The use of snitch-jacketing in PSYOP could be implemented through the spread of rumors or fabricated evidence that key members are intelligence informers or pawns of foreign governments, thus isolating or leading to the elimination of the leadership. At the juncture in which the snitch-jacketing takes hold within an organisation, it begins to unravel, and eat itself alive. The members could become increasingly factionalised and isolated from one another. In cases where extreme danger is involved, members may also begin to kill one another as a desperate means to perceived self-preservation. [34]

PSYOP are not without their own challenges and practical issues. Establishing credibility in planting *agents provocateurs* because of a lack of suitable candidates with the correct ethnic, linguistic, and religious make-up is one particular problem. However, this is the same difficulty, to which there is no real alternative, that plagues intelligence agencies in recruiting credible sources within terrorist groups. The high rates of illiteracy in relevant areas is another practical issue, especially in the TTP areas of operation in Pakistan, which makes the distribution of literature-based PSYOP potentially problematic. This makes the infiltration of organisations with

informers, the spread of rumours, and the manufacture of evidence even more important.

Domestic law and policy, along with international conventions, regulations and treaties, delineate the boundaries of PSYOP activity in counterterrorism. It is indeed important to recognise the ethical issues of PSYOP,in particular when *agents provocateurs* are encouraged to carry out acts of violence. This paper's aim is simply to point out the potential for PSYOP in recent conflicts, including the GWOT, and not to argue the moral justification of its use.

Fawaz Gerges summed up the potential for exploiting terrorist group division in his book *The Far Enemy*:

> The sociology of jihadis does not differ much from that of their nationalist counterparts; jihadis tend to be just as prone to political positioning, calculation, and power struggle. The warriors of God also unconsciously internalised nationalism and sometimes acted as members of separate tribes, although they would be shocked to be told so because they spent a lifetime portraying themselves as the vanguards of the Ummah. [35]

Terrorist group leaders fight each other for power, lose public support for killing their own, display symptoms of paranoia and identify themselves with nations, ethnicities and tribes. Since mistakes made in counterterrorism operations increase the widespread support for jihadist groups, the best way forward could simply be to help terrorists make more with PSYOP.

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Revenge or Reward? The case of Somalia's suicide bombers

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This article explores the social mechanisms that lead to the emergence of suicide attacks in new theatres, as well as factors influencing the frequency of such suicide attacks, by studying one of the states in which suicide attacks have most recently occurred – Somalia. The article argues that a suicide attack in the Somali setting seems to be a well-planned reaction to diplomatic or military moves by opposing parties in the conflict. However, it also poses that the initial emergence of suicide attacks in Somalia is grounded in ideological elements new to Somalia. The article thus argues that while frequency variations in suicide attacks are best understood as the result of rational calculations within an organisation, ideological elements and organisational belief systems have to be explored in order to understand the initial adoption of suicide attacks in Somalia.

Introduction

In early March 2007, Adam Salad Adam started work as a salesman, selling watches, clothes and electronics to Ethiopians and Somalis in the vicinity of Tarbuunka in Mogadishu, Somalia. On 26 March, he drove his Toyota through the first checkpoint guarding a local Ethiopian base. Adam Salad Adam's car was loaded with explosives; his plan was to detonate the charges as close as possible to the Ethiopian military base. He did not intend to escape from the explosion. He was a suicide bomber, part of a relatively new phenomenon in Somalia.

When the car exploded at the gate of the base, close to the cantina of the Ethiopians, 63 Ethiopian soldiers died and 50 were wounded. The 26 March attack was the first Somali suicide bombing that was filmed, a film that was later posted on the Internet. It signalled a new trend in Somalia. Before 2006, there had been no recorded suicide attacks in Somali history; from 2006 to February 2010 (when this article was written), there were 20 confirmed suicide attacks, as well as several other alleged cases. Sub-Saharan Africa, for the first time, witnessed a theatre with the systematic and prolonged use of suicide bombings. The Somali case is part of a global pattern. In the last ten years, suicide attacks were adopted for the first time in Afghanistan (9 September 2001), in Chechnya (7 June 2000) and in Iraq (26 February 2003).[1] Bruce Hoffman has found that 80 per cent of suicide attacks since 1968 occurred after 11 September 2001.[2]

There have been many attempts to explain the phenomenon of suicide bombing. One approach is to focus on individual suicide bombers and their ostensible psychological or economic problems. However, the consistency of social and/or psychological problems amongst suicide bombers

varies from case to case – being absent in the Sri Lankan, Iraqi, Pakistani and Palestinian cases but present in the Chechnya and Afghanistan cases.[3] It is important to note that the focus on individual psychological/economic/social factors fails to explain longer suicide campaigns. In order to sustain a long-term suicide campaign, several individuals have to be involved. Suicide attacks are thus a group phenomenon rather than an individual phenomenon, and in most suicide attacks there are organisations involved.[4] Systematic recruitment efforts, experienced planners and logistics are important factors in the execution of any sustained organisational effort, including that of suicide attacks.[5] Suicide attacks can be viewed as a specific type of tactic employed in order to achieve a specific goal, as the result of a planning process, and as a tool comparable to other strategies in asymmetric warfare such as guerilla attacks or remote-controlled bombs. The suicide bomber thus becomes the low-cost equivalent of a cruise missile – able to seek out weak points in the defences of the enemy, and, in disguise, even with a potential stealth capacity. Applying suicide attacks may thus be seen as the result of learning from the successes of such strategies in other conflicts. In fact, in his book "Dying to Win", Robert A Pape focuses on learning from the successes of suicide tactics as one of the major factors that prompt an organisation to adopt suicide terrorism.[6] Pape focuses on suicide attacks as an *organisational phenomenon*, and his approach examines the adoption of suicide tactics as a reflection of rational cost-benefit calculations on the part of strategic decision makers. However, Pape's claims have been strongly criticised. Assaf Moghadam shows that only four out of 17 suicide terrorist campaigns have led to a successful outcome.[7] Similarly, Brym and Arj show that Palestinian groups implemented suicide strategies despite clear knowledge that these strategies had few positive political effects.[8] Their critique is timely but may overlook the tactical gains that suicide strategies can achieve and the smaller local rewards that improve the standing of the implementing organisation. A conflict does not need to be won through suicide attacks in order for a suicide strategy to be applied so as to gain advantage over an enemy or a rival. Suicide attacks provide valuable media exposure to groups in asymmetric conflict situations, drawing local and possibly global attention to their grievances, and creating a low-cost and sustainable environment of insecurity that can force the opposition to the negotiating table.[9] When applied in a state-building context, suicide bombing also attracts attention to the failures of the state- builders.[10] Suicide attacks can also, in the right circumstances, be a method of generating grass-roots support for an insurgency. The use of suicide attacks becomes a demonstration of ideological commitment, as the act itself demonstrates a willingness to make a total sacrifice for a cause.[11] It may also be a good alternative for hitting hardened and well-protected targets that would anyway have created casualties for the attacker. [12] Suicide attacks thus provide recruitment advantages for an organisation against other rivals' armed factions that are fighting the same enemy. This is the essence of Mia Bloom's so-called *out-biding thesis*,

which views suicide attacks as a recruitment strategy in the competition with other groups fighting a similar enemy.[13]

Why so few suicide bombers?

According to the line of argumentation above, the initial adoption of suicide attacks and the frequency of such attacks should correlate with a belief that some form of organisational reward (in this life), either politically or tactically, is estimated by the challenger to be sufficient to justify the costs of suicide bombing – namely the deaths of the suicide bombers and potential hostility towards the strategy owing to local and international antipathy. These explanations see suicide attacks as the result of a rational calculation process, where the initial adoption becomes a result of learning, of seeing examples of its successful adoption both locally and internationally, and of employing suicide attack as a form of military tactic, employed to gain advantage at a tactical level against an enemy or popularity in the face of rivals. Frequencies of suicide attacks should thus increase when such strategies are needed and when organisations are facing hardship, trying to establish themselves in new areas or trying to gain attention.

Why then do not all organisations employ suicide attacks when they can gain from it? Firstly, the high human cost may limit the application of suicide bombing strategies to desperate situations. Ami Pedahzur, Stephen Hopgood and Berman and Latin, for example, see suicide attacks as a strategy in asymmetric warfare, in which one party is superior to another party. Suicide attacks then become the desperate strategy of a weak opponent challenging a stronger enemy.[14] Yet factions in Somalia have fought asymmetric battles without resorting to suicide attacks, being defeated and destroyed. In their "Club model", Berman and Latin also suggest that organisations that have high entry costs for members, and thus have very committed members, are the most common employers of suicide attacks. However, this overlooks the high entry costs and high commitment of several insurgent organisations that nevertheless have not led to the application of suicide attacks.[15]

Another approach argues that suicide attacks are more a question of revenge. Pedahzur claims that counter-terrorism strategies actually influence the decision to apply suicide attacks. Collective punishment and large-scale killings create an environment where suicide action becomes more accepted.[16] Barry Weingast and Rui de Figueiredo's argument is that violence tends to follow a retaliatory pattern, resulting in cycles of violence.[17] Robert J. Brym and Bader Araj stress the importance of the counter strategies; they claim that extreme countermeasures, such as assassinations and the use of heavy artillery, lead to an increase in suicide attacks.[18] Araj also points out that suicide attacks can be used as a form of revenge, a way to punish an opposing enemy for atrocities.[19] He illustrates this point by showing how, by 2006, Palestinians were already aware of the fact that suicide attacks increased extremism and

determination in Israel, yet nevertheless they supported suicide attacks.[20] Such an approach seems related to a psychosocial approach, exploring collective traumas. Evelin Lindner claims that collective/group humiliation, the feeling that 'our' societies are worse off than our enemies', mixed with historical entrepreneurs playing on these feelings, may create terrorism, including suicide terrorism.[21] Her view was that collective experiences may create fertile ground for suicide strategies; therefore, a humiliating invasion and a high frequency of war traumas become factors that could act as motivators for group actions. Luca Ricolfi sees collective humiliation such as this as a factor for increasing recruitment, making suicide missions easier to conduct, and enabling other motives to operate, for example the need for fame. The humiliation would make the general population more appreciative of the act of the suicide bomber, thus ensuring that a suicide bomber wanting fame and sympathy would get this.[22] One of Robert Pape's arguments may seem to run parallel with this type of argument, as he maintains that suicide attacks are the result of occupation, that they are a form of resistance against an invader. However, there are frequent experiences of violence, humiliation and dreadful collective experiences around the world, and perhaps particularly so in the case of Somalia and the general region of the Horn of Africa, that do not lead to any form of suicide attack, even though some of them pit a Christian occupying power/invader against Muslims; there must be other mechanisms at work as well.[23]

Perhaps religion or culture could be such mechanisms? [24] Mia Bloom argues that community acceptance (or rejection), often influenced by elements within the local culture, is essential in determining both the initial adoption and the frequency of suicide attacks.[25] Another purported explanation focuses on the religious rationality behind suicide attacks. David Bukay, for example, argues that suicide bombing is created by religious beliefs. Bukay claims that Islam in particular has a clear theological foundation for suicide attacks, and that this foundation is a vital factor in explaining why suicide attacks occur.[26] Stephen Dale's argument runs parallel to Bukay's, suggesting that cultural traits of resistance activated when Islam faces occupation powers create suicide bombing, rather than traits of Islam *per se*.[27] However, any explanation focusing on the general traits or culture of Islam, or even Islamic resistance to invasions, is highly problematic, particularly in the Somali case. Somalis have been fighting several wars with neighbouring Christian-dominated Ethiopia since the sixteenth century, yet suicide attacks only occurred in 2006. Given that Somalia is overwhelmingly a Muslim country, and that suicide attacks are a relatively new occurrence despite a lengthy period of civil war, explanations that highlight Islam as a causal factor seem to be misleading, even when ostensibly Christian nations have engaged in Somalia before, such as the United States (1993-1994), and Ethiopia's, albeit short, interventions (1996, 1998).

Another possible approach is to limit the scope more and to examine specific ideologies within Islam. Salafism, or Salafi jihadism, has been blamed for the spread of suicide bombings.[28] Such an approach also encounters large problems. As Sheik Khalil Ameer from the former Eritrean Islamic Jihad and Sheik Ali Gawish of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood express it, mixing elements from Salafism with other types of Islam is relatively common, and some groups will retain some elements from mainstream Salafism while discarding others.[29] Salafists are far from a homogeneous group; the term itself is broad and vague and can be misleading and overly broad when applied to politics and ideological studies. Even when Salafi jihadism is defined narrowly, it encounters problems. As Thomas Hegghammer points out, there were few Salafi jihadist groups that carried out suicide attacks before 2000, so Salafi jihadism in itself fails to offer a satisfying explanation for suicide attacks.[30] A more specific approach may perhaps be needed. Such an approach may avoid the trap of generalising about vague concepts such as religion or culture, while at the same time maintaining the focus on elements within a religious/ ideological belief system held by a particular organization, or at least powerful elements within them. Such ideational elements could be common to some organisations rather than to a religion as such, and could be traits that even secular organisations may internalise. Diego Gambetta, for example, focuses on *shaheedness,* a destructive martyrdom, martyrdom in war rather than in peace. Farhad Khosrokhavar similarly emphasises "offensive martyrdom" which is employed against heretics and non-believers, while Muhamed M. Hafez emphasises "the culture of martyrdom" as a result of victimisation and the active self-reinforcing of organisational rites. However, a case study of Somalia may give us the opportunity to delve deeper into the belief systems of specific organisations, as well as sub-groups within them, and to identify more such elements.[31]

It is important to note that rationality-focused explanations do not necessarily contradict a focus on components of organisational belief systems, as suggested by Elisabeth Kier, as such elements may define strategies or targets that are incorporated into a rational calculating process. Nor do rationality-focused arguments necessarily contradict a humiliation hypothesis, humiliation simply defining the goals of a rational actor.[32] This article claims that, in the Somali case, suicide bombings have followed a pattern that indicates a rational organisation strategy that is designed to face new challenges; it is a type of tactic chosen because of the benefits it has brought the organisation. Nonetheless, the third section of the article will claim that a benefit-focused hypothesis alone fails to explain the initial adoption of suicide attacks. The article argues that to understand the initial emergence of suicide terrorism in Somalia, it is necessary to explore the set of beliefs held by powerful elements of the Harakat Al Shebab group, who are the primary, if not the only, agent of suicide attacks inside Somalia. This is explored not by

employing a broad concept such as Salafi jihadism or Islam, but rather by analysing the specific elements that separate the Shebab from other groups in the Somali setting.

The structure of the Somali suicide attacks

Although Somalis may have been involved in suicide attacks outside of Somalia before 2006, the first alleged suicide attack within Somalia took place on 18 September that year.[33] The attack targeted a convoy with the then-president of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Abdullahi Yusuf. The attack took place in confusing circumstances, and no person or organisation took responsibility, as the TFG had a strong interest in convincing the global media that it was a suicide attack by radicals with connections outside Somalia because of a need to gain Western support for their struggle against their then-rivals, the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (SCIC) in Mogadishu. Nevertheless, the next attack was confirmed by independent sources and was claimed by a group, and fits into a pattern when compared with later attacks: on 30 November 2006, an Ethiopian control post on a road leading into Baidoa (at Daynuunaay) was targeted by a suicide bomber.[34] A local commander of the Al Bayan Sharia court – formally part of the alliance of Sharia courts, the SCIC – Mohamed Ibrahim Said Bilal, claimed responsibility for the attack. Bilal's declaration of responsibility seemed to contradict his supposed superiors within the SCIC, and the latter publicly distanced themselves from the attack.[35] Bilal's special connections with more radical Afghanistan veterans within the SCIC may explain this difference of opinion, as he was at the time (through the Al Bayan court) working for Afghanistan veteran Muqtar Robow "Abu Mansoor", who later became one of the leaders of the Somali radical Al Shebab organisation.[36] Al Shebab has since become the foremost agent of suicide attacks in Somalia, indeed no other group has ever publicly acknowledged responsibility for suicide attacks.[37] This first confirmed attack illustrates how suicide attacks in Somalia were launched by a group of radicals within the Sharia courts rather than by the Sharia courts themselves. It also illustrates how the Sharia courts distanced themselves from the suicide attacks, even those against ostensibly Christian Ethiopia. In fact, it seemed as though the courts did not need to use suicide bombs, that there was a balance of power between the belligerents, and many believed that the Ethiopians would be defeated.[38] While Somalia's first suicide attack came in this period, the frequency compared with later periods was low, there being only one confirmed, and one possible attack in the whole of 2006.

In December 2006, local clashes escalated into outright war between the SCIC and the TFG supported by Ethiopia. The SCIC was rapidly defeated in a humiliating campaign. By the end of January 2007, the SCIC's institution was shattered and its members were on the run; the TFG and its Ethiopian allies asserted control over central and southern Somalia but refrained from occupying parts of the capital, Mogadishu. The start of Somalia's first wave of suicide attacks

coincided with a large Ethiopian offensive to conquer parts of Mogadishu, an offensive that started in March 2007.[39] In the period from March to April, fighting was intensive in Mogadishu.[40] The impact of the fighting on the civilian population was devastating:[41] by late April, the UN estimated that at least 365,000 people had fled the city.[42]

At the time, Al Shebab was one of many insurgency groups and was in the process of reestablishing itself after its collapse in late December 2006. Before its use of suicide attacks, Al Shebab was by and large ignored by the media, although this changed as suicide attacks became more frequent. Suicide attacks targeted Ethiopian bases and led to a large number of casualties ; thus they had a purely military value. The suicide wave also occurred simultaneously with the defeat of the insurgents; they were attacked and humiliated by superior forces, and were clearly outmatched.[43] The attacks could thus be the result of a wish for revenge because of a collective humiliation due to the Ethiopian intervention/invasion; indeed Adam Salad Adam's suicide video depicted his attack as a revenge tactic for a rape conducted by Ethiopian forces.[44] The Somali pattern of suicide attacks before 2007 do not indicate this. Firstly, although Ethiopia had intervened regularly during the years 1996-1998, this did not result in suicide attacks, even from Somali Islamist organisations, although Ethiopians severely crushed their bases. Not even during the larger Ethiopian-Somali Ogadeen war in 1977-78, taking place in Somali-inhabited lands, did suicide attacks occur. Secondly, although Ethiopia had had a military presence in areas of Somalia since spring 2006, only the two previously-mentioned suicide attacks (of which one seems to have been a bomb-attack rather than a suicide attack) were registered between September 2006 and March 2007. It could be argued that it was the general suffering of the Mogadishu population during the March-April offensive in 2007 that prompted the suicide wave, given that the campaign took place in densely-populated Mogadishu. However, the Mogadishu population had suffered before the March-April offensive, such as during the UNISOM II intervention in 1993-1994 (which at the time bin Laden argued was a Christian invasion) and the so-called Four Month War in 1991, and no suicide attacks occurred during these periods. Even in 2006, only one organisation, the Harakat Al Shebab, implemented the suicide attacks; thus humiliation must have influenced other insurgent groups differently.[45]

From the end of May 2007, suicide attacks continued even after the Ethiopian withdrawal from Mogadishu and Somalia in 2009. Ethiopian presence was still felt in Somalia through fast raids and through support for Ethiopian allies. However, Ethiopian operations after 2009 were similar to Ethiopia's frequent interventions in 1995-2006, rapid raids rather than occupation, support for allies rather than commitment men of forces. Although Ethiopian forces deployed on short-term missions in Somalia before 2006 had provoked anger, they never provoked suicide missions, but after the 2009 withdrawal suicide missions continued. Suicide missions also took place during

periods without intensive fighting. The suicide attacks seem rather to be correlated with the Shebab's need to gain attention, to establish itself in new areas or to damage peace and state-building processes. Once the March-April offensive ended, which was a humiliating experience for Shebab, the Ethiopians and their Somali allies won in Mogadishu, the rate of suicide bombings decreased and remained low until October 2008. This decline is best explained by the tactical situation on the ground. During the summer of 2007, Al Shebab was reorganising, was gaining attention on both the Somali and the international stage, and was adjusting to using guerrilla tactics in its operations. At this time, all rebel groups abstained from holding territories and resorted to hit-and-run attacks, which made them less vulnerable to large-scale TFG/ Ethiopian offensives, but they were expanding the geographical and operational scope of their attacks. Although the humiliating experience of the Ethiopian presence in Mogadishu remained, there was no desperate need to stop large TFG/Ethiopian offensives and no need to gain attention. The Shebab was on the offensive both in the media and militarily.

The first suicide attack after the summer of 2007 was the 11 October 2007 suicide attack targeted at the TFG prime minister in Baidoa, hitting a factory close to his hotel. It was the only suicide attack during the autumn of 2007, and it coincided with the Harakat Al Shebab establishing a military presence in the region, apparently drawing attention to Al Shebab when it was organising itself in a new area.[46] Following the October 2007 attack, only one attack took place over the next year. Suicide strategies were not needed, and other strategies served the aims of the Harakat Al Shebab perfectly.

However, during the summer of 2008, the TFG started negotiating with a powerful and popular faction (as it was then perceived) of the opposition in Djibouti. At first these negotiations were cumbersome and few believed that they could succeed, but by the autumn of 2008 the talks produced tangible results. On 26 October 2008, the two parties in the Djibouti process – the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia, Djibouti group (ARS-D) and the TFG – announced a ceasefire.[47] At the time, the agreement was popular within Somalia and was supported by the United States as well as by several of the veteran Islamists within the old SCIC. The mood amongst diplomats in Nairobi was frantically positive. As the focus shifted onto the Djibouti process, the insurgents lost media attention and were threatened politically and militarily; even worse, increased military deployments from the African Union and United Nation forces were seriously discussed. The insurgents' response was swift: the Shebab attacked the city of Merka. Almost simultaneously, a suicide video of Abdulaziz Bashar Abdullahi's attack against the African Union forces in April 2008 was released. Then Somalia's largest and most well-coordinated wave of suicide attacks began on 29 October 2008.[48] The wave of attacks succeeded in shifting attention away from the diplomatic triumphs of the new negotiation

process and back to the insurgency, and contributed to the deterrence of the potential UN and AU peacekeeping contingents for Somalia which were discussed within the United Nations and the African Union.[49]

The Djibouti peace process was not derailed by the 29 October attacks, and once the Ethiopians withdrew from Somalia in January 2009, Mogadishu became more peaceful until May 2009. However, despite this, suicide attacks within Somalia increased. On 24 February, an alleged suicide bomber exploded when Somali police opened fire on a suspicious car in Mogadishu. On 21 February 2009, two suicide bombers – one suicide car-bomber and one bomber using an explosive vest – attacked the forces of the African Union in Mogadishu.[50] Both the new transitional government, led by former SCIC leader Sheikh Ahmed Sheikh Sharif, which was then popular both within Somalia and amongst the Diaspora but which is now in decline, and the fact that this transitional government was supported both by the West and by notable Islamists such as Yusuf Qaradawi, presented an increasing threat to the Shebab, drawing attention away from it. It is important to note that if the Ethiopian presence in Somalia caused the suicide bombing, its withdrawal from all of its permanent bases would be expected to lead to a decline, but it did not. As the Ethiopians withdrew, the numbers of attacks remained constant. The June 18 2009 attack by suicide bomber Muxamed Deerow Shiikh Aadam (zubayr) targeting the new government's head of security Omar Hashi Aden on 18 June 2009 – seems to have been thoroughly planned and caused chaos in the government's security apparatus, paving the way for the Shebab's tactical victories during the summer of 2009. In fact, suicide attacks in Somalia seem to have been thoroughly planned as part of an organisational strategy to balance the odds and to gain attention, and they have been highly effective. Suicide bombing seems to be guided by a rational process, in which the targets and the timing are carefully selected to achieve the political and strategic aims of the Harakat Al Shebab. While suicide bombing has not succeeded in bringing large strategic victories to these groups, it has succeeded in bringing them media attention and has contributed to a general environment of insecurity that can be used for propaganda purposes.

The initial humiliation of the Ethiopian intervention does not explain the pattern of the suicide attacks nor does the humiliation of the Mogadishu offensive during the spring of 2007. Suicide attacks took place even after Ethiopia had withdrawn most of their forces from Somali territory, in a period where the Ethiopian raids were very similar to past Ethiopian presence in Somalia during the civil war (which never led to suicide attacks), and during periods of relative peace. Political and military challenges facing the Shebab are better predictors of suicide attacks. For the Harakat Al Shebab, the main initiator of suicide attacks, it seems that suicide strategies remain a specific tool in their military and political campaigns, a tool comparable to guerilla

attacks, ambushes, and remote-controlled bombs. However, the above discussion does not explain why a suicide bomber strategy has not been adopted by other factions in Somalia, and why Al Shebab and not other factions have implemented the majority of the attacks.

Why was suicide bombing adopted?

Bruce Hoffman has found that 80 per cent of suicide attacks since 1968 occurred after the September 11 attacks.[51] It seems as though the attention caused by the September 11 suicide bombing contributed to an increased interest in the strategy around the world, and Somalia is part of this pattern. Such an argument presents us with a riddle: if this interest was general, why did only one organisation in Somalia, the Harakat Al Shebab, publicly claim to use the strategy?[52] No other Somali organisation to date has ever published suicide videos or claimed responsibility for suicide attacks, and it is doubtful that any other organisation has attempted to use suicide tactics.[53] Other rival insurgent groups have been in desperate situations that could have justified suicide tactics, but they have nevertheless publicly refrained from using such tactics.[54] One reason for the lack of suicide bombings conducted by other organisations in Somalia is what Mia Bloom refers to as community rejection. Somali society has no tradition of suicide bombings, and to a certain extent the suicide tactic is alien to Somali culture – there has been no tradition of using suicide attacks in conflicts. There was no recorded suicide bombing in Somalia before 2006, and there is simply no historical tradition of suicide attacks.[55] In fact the Somali clan system to a certain extent discourages suicide bombings, as clans are seen as collectively responsible for the actions of individuals and suicide attacks could lead to retribution against a person's clan. The past fluidity of the Somali civil war, and its lack of ideology, and rather a focus on profit seeking also discouraged suicide missions. Many observers stated it was the Ethiopian intervention (occupation) that created suicide attacks.[56] However, previous interventions, which were shorter but in which Ethiopians took more direct control of land, and when the American-led AMISOM II or UNITAF more directly intervened or took control of large parts of Mogadishu, did not result in suicide attacks. Nor did Ethiopia's alleged occupation of the Somali-inhabited Ogadeen region, and various military campaigns this region, some with severe consequences and violations of human rights, result in suicide bombings. Moreover, only one out of many insurgent organisations, including other Islamist organisations, implemented suicide missions, even in the period of Ethiopian occupation 2006-2009. The most likely explanation for this is that the Islamist organisations that existed in previous periods, and other Islamist organisations active in Mogadishu 2006-2009, were different from the organisation implementing suicide attacks in Somalia in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and today, namely the Shebab. In fact, the development of suicide attacks to a certain extent follows the development of one single organisation, the Harakat Al Shebab, which until 2006 was a loose, informal network

but by 2007 was growing into a separate organisation.[57] In the end, the suicide tactic was only publicly adopted by the Shebab or Shebab affiliates, and began as the group consolidated into an organisation.

The Shebab organisation originally consisted of a core group, of which many had a background from Afghanistan; it was ideologically strong enough to transcend clan from an early stage. Two of these members were found guilty in Somaliland courts for attacks against Westerners as early as in 2003 and 2004. The attacks were not motivated by profit but rather by hostility towards the West, and not taking place in a combat situation, something new in Somalia at the time, it also took the risk of replacing the Somali flag with a black jihadi flag during the fighting over Kismayo in 2006, claiming that the former represented secular borders, creating tension between them and the more nationalistic elements within the Sharia courts. However, the success of the group meant that other elements were recruited: profit seekers, local militia that wanted to be on the winning side, as well as Diaspora motivated sometimes by nationalistic, sometimes by clanish reasons. Nevertheless, elements of the original core group remained important, if not dominating, within the organisation. Moreover, they dominated the training of new recruits, both international and Somali, in the core areas controlled by the organisation.[58] The worldviews of the old core group of Shebabs remained important, and the qualities of ideologies adopted by powerful elements of the organisation were very different from all other Somali factions. At least three ideological traits separated these elements from most of Somalia's political actors. *The first trait* was the organisation's use of special pan-Islamist and jihadist rhetoric, in some instances closely resembling the rhetoric of Al Qaeda, always tending towards praise when that organisation was mentioned while denying being a part of it. In the words of the old Shebab head of public relations Muktar Robow, "That is all there is to it. We are not part of them (Al Qaeda) but we love them very much."[59] Ideologically, the Shebab leaders often declared the need to resurrect the pan-Islamic caliphate, putting their local conflict in a global framework of good versus evil. In this sense, the enemy was not only Ethiopia but also the West.[60] In many ways, their rhetoric strongly echoed Farhad Khosrokhavar's focus on the transnationalism of some of the modern martyrs, namely Al Qaeda's focus on the Global Ummah.[61]

The second trait separating the Shebab from other Somali organisations was their anti-nationalist rhetoric, as well as their critique of traditional Islamic groups in Somalia such as the Sufis. Admittedly, Shebab probably recruited from youth hostile to the Ethiopian intervention and with a nationalist motivation for joining, even using implicit nationalistic like references to Ethiopian occupation in some of their videos, but the rhetoric of the leadership was to a certain extent surprisingly anti-nationalist, revolutionary in a Somali setting where most fractions publically have claimed their allegiance to the Somali nation (although often functioning as mere clan

fronts).[62] Most of the known Shebab top leaders have made strong anti-nationalist statements. Former spokesperson Muktar Robow is perhaps the Shebab leader who most clearly defined the Shebab's attitude towards nationalism and patriotism, stating that "a nationalistic, patriotic bond is against the (Muslim) brotherhood bond", as well as criticising the organisation for replacing the jihad with "patriotic resistance".[63] Shebab leaders strongly and explicitly distanced themselves totally from the nationalist agenda.[64] Symbolically, the Shebab even refused/ refuses to use the Somali flag, tearing it down wherever possible. In this sense the Shebab, or at least most of the Shebab leaders, depict themselves as sharing ideology and motivation with other radical organisations with similar goals; and with four out of the eight leaders in the Shura council in 2007 with a background from Afghanistan, this seemed natural.[65]

The third trait also seems to have been borrowed from Al Qaeda – death worshipping, best illustrated by Abu Mansoor's remark

> Our brother Ma'alin and our brother Umar Dheere alias Abu Jabal. Many of those who were present during the formation of the group have also been martyred. Those who are still alive are also looking forward to death, in order to die for the same cause that others before them died for.[66]

Shebab ideology, much more refined than its Somali predecessors, also provided stronger justifications for suicide attacks. Admittedly, there have been rifts even within the old core group of Shebabs – for example, between former press spokesman Muktar Robow and leader Abu Zubeir – but both parties, even the supposedly more moderate Muktar Robow, adhered to the elements described above, both in statements in the Somali press or on international jihadist websites and in interviews; and the two parties also seem to have become reconciled during the summer of 2009.[67] These three traits were important throughout the Shebab's organisational history and remain so today.

Shebab leaders were thus the only Somali leaders that publicly and repeatedly praised Al Qaeda. They framed their struggle in a global context; this approach deviated from all mainstream and traditional religious views in Somalia.[68] This indicated a willingness to adopt ideology from organisations with similar views and also indicated admiration for Al Qaeda, a major implementer of suicide attacks. In fact, it was almost natural that Shebab in the end borrowed the suicide strategy, amongst other elements, from Al Qaeda.

The above line of argumentation supports Thomas Hegghammer's view that elements within specific ideologies need to be explored rather than abstract notions such as Islam, culture or Salafism. Any attempt to explain the adoption of suicide bombing in Somalia that focuses on Somali or Islamic culture or religion can be misleading. Somalia and Islam have been tied

together for centuries during which there were no suicide attacks. Indeed, even today there are many Islamist organisations fighting alongside Al Shebab, but no known Somali Islamist organisation other than the Shebab implementing suicide tactics. An examination exploring the differences between the Shebab and the other Somali actors seems to indicate relatively large variations in ideology, and to show that there are certain tenets of some of the most powerful Shebab leaders that are alien to Somali society in general, but that are shared by other global jihadi actors. Rather than talking about an abstract notion of Somali culture or about religion *per se*, it may be more fruitful to talk about a specific belief system or a combination of more specific ideological elements. The most important point is that the Shebab's ideological traits contain indications that powerful elements within the organisation adopted ideological tenets from other organisations implementing suicide attacks – both indicating a willingness to learn from these organisations, in particular Al Qaeda, as well as providing justification for the use of suicide attacks. The fact that only the Shebab adopted suicide tactics seems to indicate that their openness to Al Qaeda's ideology, and the ideological elements borrowed from them justifying suicide attacks, are important in understanding their initial willingness to use suicide attack. In fact, the Al Qaeda-inspired ideological elements are what make the organisation stand out in the Somali political context.[69]

The situation in 2006-2007 created a window of opportunity for the special elements of Shebab ideology as well as for the Shebab itself. Similarly, the Iraq crisis had an impact in Somalia, and hostility towards the West increased.[70] In this sense, humiliation did play a role but only because of the ideological elements that allowed it to have an influence, and it had little influence on the variations in the frequency of suicide bombings. Statements by the leaders of the organisation indicate elements of a very specific belief system that were used to justify the use of suicide attacks, and that indicated a willingness to learn from external organisations sharing these elements. In examining suicide attacks, it may be fruitful to explore specific belief systems and shared perceptions of the world within smaller groups, rather than for example exploring whole religions; to study more detailed elements rather than to generalise about a religion or even larger sub-groups within that religion.

Pape's claims regarding suicide tactics as a form of resistance to physical occupation are misleading, as it is not occupation *per se* that creates suicide attacks. It is perhaps a specific element of ideology that enables not only occupation but also perceived humiliation – such as the Danish cartoon incident frequently depicted in Shebab suicide videos – to have an impact; it may be a depiction of a world of eternal struggle between an imagined community, the Umma, and everyone else, rather than national resistance to Ethiopian intervention.

Conclusion

The main finding of this article is that the frequency of suicide bombings in Somalia varies according to the strategic needs of the Al Shebab organisation, indicating that the use of suicide bombing is a product of strategic reasoning. Suicide bombing is thus the result of a strategic cost-benefit calculation, wherein groups use this suicide tactic to gain attention, to gain political advantage and, in a few cases, to gain military advantage. Only in one period of suicide attacks in Somalia, between March and April 2007, does the traumatisation hypothesis have explanatory power; but even within this period, Al Shebab's strategic needs provide a good alternative explanation. This suggests that a view that focuses on the organisation implementing suicide attacks in order to increase its own power explains variations in the frequency of the tactic's adoption in Somalia.

However, a focus on organisational needs and rewards does not fully explain the initial adoption of suicide bombings in Somalia. Other Somali organisations could have adopted suicide attacks as a tactic but chose not to. The Shebab differed from these organisations in several of the ideological traits which its leadership claims to adhere to. An approach focusing on organisational rewards or organisational suicide tactics is not enough to understand suicide bombings in Somalia. Ideological elements, creating a belief system that provides some form of justification for suicide tactics alien to Somali culture, had to be in place to enable suicide bombing to take root. This suggests that a study of organisational beliefs, also the beliefs of organisational sub-groups, in general can be fertile when attempting to explore the organisations that will respond to organisational needs by adopting suicide attacks. The findings suggest that suicide bombings may fruitfully be approached through a combined rational actor/belief system-based model. In the Somali case, this offers some hope as the organisation that so far has claimed responsibility for most suicide attacks in Somalia, the Shebab, has drastically expanded its new membership. With a possible shift in the ideological orientation of the Shebab, the organisation may evolve and become less willing to use suicide attacks.

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Interview with x5, Mogadishu, 6 April 2009.

Interview with x6, Mogadishu, 8 August 2009.

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Interviews with Al Khala's leader Sheik Khalil Ameer, 24 July 2009, Khartoum.

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Notes

[1] See United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, 2007, *Suicide Attacks in Afghanistan (2001-2007)*, Washington: United Nations; Speckhard, Anne & Akhmedova, Khapta, "The New Chechen Jihad: Militant Wahhabism as a Radical Movement and a Source of Suicide Terrorism in Post-War Chechen Society", Democracy & Security 2 (1) 2006; Bunker, Robert J. and John P. Sullivan, "Suicide Bombings in Operation Iraqi Freedom", *Military Review,* January-February 2005. Modern suicide attacks are often claimed to have started on 15 December 1981, when a suicide car bomb hit the Iraqi embassy in Lebanon. However, such an account fails to take into consideration the drastic change in the frequency and geographical scope after the end of the millennium.

[2] Hoffman, Bruce, "Security for a New Century", Washington D.C., September 23, 2005 (briefing for Senate Foreign Affairs Committee staff).

[3] For cases where suicide bombers have had fewer social, psychological and economic problems compared with the population, see for example Davis, Joyce M., 2003, *Martyrs: Innocence, Vengeance and Despair in the Middle East*, New York: Palgrave; Stern, Jessica, 2003, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, New York: Ecco/Harper Collins, 2003; Victor, Barbara, 2003, *Army of Roses*: *Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers*, Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 2003; Reuter, Christoph, 2004, *My Life Is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. For notable exceptions see Speckhard, Anne & Akhmedova, Khapta, "The New Chechen Jihad: Militant Wahhabism as a Radical Movement and a Source of Suicide Terrorism in Post-War Chechen Society", *Democracy & Security* 2 (1) 2006, 23 (psychological traumas) and Fair, Christina, *Who are the Pakistani Militants and Their Families*, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20 (1), 62 and United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, 2007. Hopgood, Stephen (2005) "Tamil Tigers 1987-2002" in Diego Gambetta (ed.) *Making Sense of Suicide Missions,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 54. Several organisations, for example the Tamil Tigers, even have screening processes to remove candidates with personal problems.

[4] See, for example, Diego Gambetta (ed.), *Making Sense of Suicide Missions,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 261. The most regular user of suicide attacks over the last 100 years is imperial Japan.

[5] The above reasoning is based on the assumption that organisations employing suicide attacks are relatively unitary.. Together with Arie Perliger, Pedahzur stresses the importance of *social network theory* in order to explain how independent cells within non-hierarchical organisations adopt suicide strategies. According to a *network perspective,* suicide bombers are seen as individuals joining on an *ad hoc* basis, with little training from their own organisation. Thus the power struggle between local groups becomes more important, influencing both the adoption and the frequency of suicide attacks, so we nevertheless speak of a form of local organisation. Pedahzur, Ami & Perliger, Arie, (2006), "The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks", *Social forces* 84 (4).

[6] Pape, Robert A., (2005), *Dying to Win,* New York: Random House.

[7] Moghadam, Assaf, (2006), "Suicide Terrorism, Occupation and the Globalisation of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (8), 715.

[8] Brym, Robert J. & Araj, Bader, (2006), "Suicide Bombings as Strategy and Interaction: The Case of the Second Intifada", *Social Forces*, 84 (4).

[9] Hafez, Mohammed M., (2006), "Suicide Terrorism in Iraq; A Preliminary Assessment of the Quantitative Data and Documentary Evidence", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (6).

[10] In the case of Iraq, Mohammed M. Hafez argues that suicide attacks can be seen as a tool by anti-government groups to draw attention to the failures of the government in providing security. Ibid 604.

[11] Ibid. 26.

[12] Berman, E. and Latin, D., (2008), "Religion, Terrorism and Public Good, testing the club model", *Working Paper* 13725.

[13] Bloom, 2005.

[14] Pedahzur, Ami, (2005), *Suicide Terrorism*, Malden: Polity Press, 27; Berman, E. and Latin, D., (2004), "Rational Martyrs, Evidence from Suicide Attacks", paper presented at the conference on suicide bombing, Stanford, September 2003. Hopgood, Stephen, (2005), "Tamil Tigers (1987-2002)" in Diego Gambetta (ed.), *Making Sense of Suicide Missions,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 54.

[15] Berman, E. and Latin, D., (2008), "Religion, Terrorism and Public Good, testing the club model", *Working Paper* 13725, 28-29. For example, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in their early phases, which demanded a high sacrifice from members and provided welfare services.

[16] An organisational rational-focused exploration of suicide attacks as a military strategy should also draw upon the works on military doctrine and strategy within political science. So far this has been neglected, see Hansen, Stig Jarle, (2007), *Doktrineutvikling i Heimevernet*, Oslo: Abstrakt forlag.

[17] Rui de Figueiredo and Barry Weingast, "Vicious Cycles: Endogenous Political Extremism and Political Violence" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, September 1998).

[18] Brym, Robert J. & Araj, Bader, 2006.

[19] Araj, Bader, 2008.

[20] Ibid. 291.

[21] Lindner, Evelin G., (2001), "Humiliation as the source of terrorism: A new paradigm". Available: http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document (accessed 26 April 2002).

[22] Ricolfi, Luka, (2003), "Palestinians 1981-2003" in Diego Gambetta (ed.), *Making Sense of Suicide Missions,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 111.

[23] Harsh repressions of the Somali Ogadeen in Ethiopia, large-scale killings in Somalia, and disappearances in Kenya under the Moi regime have not resulted in suicide bombings, nor did the Ethiopian invasions of Somalia in 1996 and 1998 or the American intervention in Mogadishu in the early 1990s.

[24] Hegghammer, Thomas, (2009), "Apostates vs. infidels: explaining differential use of suicide bombings by jihadist groups". Paper presented at the conference "Understanding Jihadism: Origins, Evolution and Future Perspectives", Oslo, 19-21 March 2009, 5.

[25] Bloom, Mia, (2005), *Dying to kill, the allure of suicide terrorism*, New York: Colombia University Press.

[26] Bukay, David, "The Religious Foundations of Suicide Bombings: Islamist Ideology", *Middle East Quarterly, Fall 2006.*

[27] Dale, Stephen, (1988), "Religious suicides in Islamic Asia: Anticolonial Terrorism in India, Indonesia and the Philippines", *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 23.

[28] Assaf Moghadam, (2008), *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

[29] Interviews with Al Khala's leader Sheik Khalil Ameer, 24 July 2009, Khartoum. Interview with Ikhwan spokesman Ali Gawish, 26 July 2009.

[30] In fact, Hegghammer suggests that it is other mechanisms at work. Hegghammer, Thomas, (2009), "Apostates vs. infidels: explaining differential use of suicide bombings by jihadist groups". Paper presented at the conference "Understanding Jihadism: Origins, Evolution and Future Perspectives", Oslo, 19-21 March 2009, 5.

[31] Gambetta, Diego, (2003), "Can we make sense of suicide bombings" in Diego Gambetta (ed.), *Making Sense of Suicide Missions,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 286. Hafez, Mohammed M., (2006), *Manufacturing Human Bombs*, Washington, United States Institute of Peace, 72. Khosrokhavar, Farhad, (2005), *Allah's New Martyrs*, London, Pluto Press.

[32] Kier, Elisabet, (1997), *Imagining War,* Princeton, Princeton University Press.

[33] The first involvement of Somalis in the planning and execution of suicide attacks may have been on 7 October 1998, when bombs exploded close to the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Statements by the accused given after interrogations in American custody suggest that these attacks initially were planned as suicide attacks. It is important to note that the American legal indictment fails to mention any Somali involvement, although later statements made by American sources have implied that Somalis supported the operation logistically. It is unknown whether any Somali knew that the attacks were initially planned as suicide attacks. The first suicide attack in the Horn of Africa, on 28 November 2002, the Paradise Hotel attack in Kenya involving four suicide bombers, follows the same pattern in relation to Somali actors, albeit having a clearer link to Somalia. There are strong indications that individuals behind the attack, identified as Al Qaeda members by witnesses in American courts, used Somalia as a hideout, and had a close relationship with individuals who later were to become members of the main employers of suicide attacks in Somalia, the Harakat Al Shebab, aka the Youth. See International Crisis Group, (2005b), "Somalia's Islamists", *Africa Report* no. 100, 12 December, 11; International Crisis Group (2005a) "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?", *Africa Report* no. 95, 11 July, 8.

[34] Two to three bombs exploded. The exact number of persons involved (as well as cars) varies from source to source but is said to be between one and four, including, according to some sources, a female suicide bomber in the plot.

[35] Staff writer, "Somali Islamists claim car bomb attack", *Mail & Guardian,* 30 November 2006.

[36] Interview with anonymous x1, Mogadishu, 9 April 2009, and interview with anonymous x2, Mogadishu, 5 December 2006.

[37] Hansen, Stig Jarle (2008), "Misspent Youth", Jane's Intelligence Review 10, 16. See also International Crisis group (2005a), International Crisis Group (2005b), "Somalia's Islamists", *Africa Report no. 100.*

[38] In November 2006, the writer visited Abokor Omar Adane's garage in Mogadishu. Adane was, at the time, the main financer of the courts. He promised that his 6614 Fiat armoured cars would be in Addis Ababa within months.

[39] The offensive also started approximately one month after Harakat Al Shebab restarted their activities on the Internet and claimed responsibility for other types of hit and run attacks against Ethiopia and their allies in the TFG.

[40] Neighbourhoods like Casa Populare (KPP) in the south, Towfiq and Ali Kamin around the stadium, all along Industrial Road, and the road from the stadium to Villa Somalia, were heavily shelled or repeatedly hit by Ethiopian BM-21 multiple-rocket launchers.

[41] Rice, Xan, "400 die in Mogadishu's worst fighting for 15 years", *The Guardian*, Tuesday 3 April 2007.

[42] Staff writer,"U.N. says 90,000 refugees return to Mogadishu", *Reuters,* 1 June 2007; Rice, Xan, "400 die in Mogadishu's worst fighting for 15 years", *The Guardian*, Tuesday 3 April 2007.

[43] The first attack had been planned for a month. Adam Salad Adam had used the time to gain the friendship of the Ethiopians; it was thus planned before the Ethiopian offensives but was implemented after the Ethiopian offensive had started.

[44] All the attacks were highly successful; they had tangible military results and targeted Ethiopian bases in the Mogadishu area.

[45] Interview with anonymous x2, x3, x4, Mogadishu, November 2006. This can be seen when radicals used the black flag instead of the Somali flag during the battle for Kismayo that year, challenging the SCIC shura.

[46] The attack targeted the Hassi factory, close to the hotel where the TFG prime minister lived. The suicide bomber was Ahmad Hussayn Ahmad (using the name 'Abu Ayyub' on the suicide video). The 21-year-old British citizen of Somali origin was originally from Ealing; his suicide video was in English and concentrated on international jihadist rhetoric. The next attack was the attack by Abdulazzis Bashir Abdulahi on the forces of the African Union, which took place on 8 April 2008.

[47] United Nations in Somalia, "The Djibouti agreement", http://www.un-somalia.org/Djibouti_Agreement/index.asp (accessed 01/03 2009).

[48] Five suicide bombers attacked Hargeisa in the relatively peaceful Somaliland enclave, an area never hit by suicide bombers before, targeting the Somaliland presidential palace, the Ethiopian trade mission office and the United Nations Development office. In a neighbouring region, Puntland, the offices of the American-trained Puntland Intelligence Service, in the city of Bosasso, was hit by two suicide bombers.

[49] An American citizen, Abdihraman Shirwa, was later identified as one of the suicide bombers, being the first American citizen to have acted as a suicide bomber. Shirwa was from Minnesota, and other Minnesota Somalians allegedly disappeared at the same time. Sources in the Hargeisa police claimed a link with Shebab leaders, however little evidence for this link has been forthcoming. Sources within the Somaliland police also claimed that three of the suicide bombers had been from the region, and had been detained but later released for previous terror attacks against Western aid workers in Somaliland. Unconfirmed reports from police investigations indicated that two explosive experts of Pakistan/Bengali origins were paid to transport and make the explosives used in the triple suicide-bomb attack. The Harakat Al Shebab has been implicated in the attacks but has never taken responsibility for them – a relatively new phenomenon, as the organisation has taken responsibility for most of the other suicide attacks and the attack was blessed by a Shebab sheik in Kismayo. Interview with anonymous Nigerian diplomat x1, Nairobi December 2008.

[50] The suicide bombers were Ahmed Sheikhdon Sidow Wehliye and Mursal Abdinur Mohamed Ali. For more information, refer to AllAfrica/garrowe online, "Somalia: 11 African Union Peacekeepers Killed", http://allafrica.com/stories/200902230003.html (accessed 23 March 2009), see http://anikah.wordpress.com/2009/02/ (accessed 23 March 2009) for the Shebab's own pictures.

[51] Hoffman, 2005.

[52] The Shebab have so far taken public responsibility for 14 out of 20 confirmed suicide attacks, and are accused by the Somaliland authorities of planning five more (no denial has been issued by the Shebab). The suicide video from Abdulazzis Bashir Abdulahi presents the first nine suicide bombers, see Mujaheedin Youth Movement, Al Qosra Army, Media section (date unknown), "The series of martyrdom operations in Somalia, Martyrdom operation number nine", MYM/Al Qosra army. See also Harowo, "Somaliland blames suicide attack on Al Shebab", http://harowo.com/2008/11/28/somaliland-blames-oct-suicide-attacks-on-shebab-group/ (accessed 25 March 2009). The Shebab have published intimate details regarding the suicide bombings on their homepages, details that indicate in-depth knowledge of the suicide attacks and that the claims are valid.

[53] At the time of writing, there are five confirmed suicide attacks that no party has publicly taken responsibility for; these attacks are the Hargeisa/Bosasso 29 October 2009 suicide bombing wave. The Shebab is accused by the Somaliland authorities of being behind these attacks.

[54] Several of the Shebab's rivals have been in high-pressured tactical situations, such as when facing the March-April 2007 TFG/Ethiopian offence, nevertheless they have abstained from employing suicide bombing as a strategy.

[55] Interview with x5, Mogadishu, 2 April, 2009.

[56] Thomas Hegghammer makes a serious empirical mistake when claiming that the Sharia court alliance has existed since 1994 but only implemented attacks in 2006. Various alliances have existed and disappeared, but the 2006 alliance was driven by three specific courts (some courts refused to join while others joined quite late). The Shishi, the Ifka Halane and the Circola courts drove the development. See Stig Jarle Hansen (2009), "Somalia – Grievance, Religion, Clan, and Profit" in Hansen, Mesøy & Kardas, (2009), *Borders of Islam*, Colombia University Press, London. The court union of 2006 was formed informally in 2005, and only formalised in 2006.

[57] Hansen, Stig Jarle, "Misspent Youth, Somalia's Shabab insurgents", Jane's Intelligence Review, 2008, 20 (10).

[58] Interview with anonymous human rights (x6 and x7) activists in Baidoa, summer 2009. The writer had the fortune to work with these activists over time. It is very interesting that these local sources correctly read the conflict between Abu Mansoor and Abu Zubeir, that many predicted would lead to a split in the Shebab from 2008 and onwards. The local sources claimed that this was impossible as the indoctrination radical elements made it impossible for Mansoor to trust his own militia.

[59] Al Jazeera, "Interview with Mukthar Robow Abu Mansoor", Al Jazeera, 7 March 2009.

[60] Telephone interview with Abu Mansoor, Mogadishu/Nairobi, 20 September 2008. Al Jazeera, "Interview with Mukthar Robow Abu Mansoor" as aired on Al Jazeera, 7 March 2009.

[61] Khosrokhavar, Farhad, (2005), *Allah's New Martyrs*, London, Pluto Press.

[62] The writer of this article conducted a survey of one of the major news web pages in Somalia. In the period 2007-2009, the Shabelle news and other Islamist factions made no claims in a pan-Islamic direction. According to Abu Mansoor Al Ameriki, the Sharia court leadership even banned foreign fighters from entering Somalia in 2006. Global Islamic Media Front, "A message to the Mujahideen in particular and Muslims in general by Abu Mansoor Al Ameriki", Moharam 1429.

[63] Abu Bakr Karshi, 2008.

[64] Speech/movie by Sheik Fuad Khalif Shongola, "The reality of Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia Part I", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPTmTsQP9ww&feature=PlayList&p=825D79CE89315709&index=2 (accessed on 23 April 2009).

[65] Hansen, Stig Jarle (2008), "Misspent Youth", Jane's Intelligence Review 10.

[66] Al Jazeera, 7 March 2009.

[67] See for example Ibid. Al Jazeera, "Interview with Mukthar Robow Abu Mansoor" as aired on Al Jazeera 7 March 2009. Interview x4 and x5. The conflict between the two seems to have been created by allegations that Muqtar Robow was too lenient upon captured TFG political leaders from his own clan, allowing them to leave, and the quick rise in Robow's power may also have frightened Zubeir. However, by the summer of 2009, the problem seemed to be solved by Muqtar Robow when he stepped down as the Shebab's spokesperson and promised to kill the most notable member of the TFG he had allowed to go, Muhammed Ibrahim Hapsade.

[68] The suicide film of Abu Ayyuub al-Muhajir can serve as an example of the special Shebab ideology, as described above, and depicts Abdullah Azzam, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and the Hamas leader Sheikh Yasin, as well as the Chechnya leader Khatab. The film also displays Osama bin Laden looming over a movie depicting the attack in Baidoa, as well as a short interview with the latter at the end of the film. The latest speech (at the time of writing) of Abu Zubeyr starts with the lines "Peace be upon the Amir of believers, Mullah Mohammed Omar, who has been very patient and did Jihad in the cause of Allah, Peace be upon our Sheik and Amir Sheikh Osama bin Laden the Mujahid, and Peace be upon Sheikh Murabit who has lived for Jihad and in Jihad, Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri". Muqtar Robow confirmed his similar statements made in the Al Jihad magazine on the telephone with the writer of this article in November 2008, although most of the web pages previously (until autumn 2008) had intimate and updated details of clashes involving Shebab forces all over Somalia, indicating connections with the field forces of Al Shebab. Similar views were expressed in movies with the leaders posted on YouTube, and in interviews with the local press. See for example Al Jazeera, 7 March 2009, speech/movie by Sheik Fuad Khalif Shongola, "The reality of Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia Part I", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPTmTsQP9ww&feature=PlayList&p=825D79CE89315709&index=2 (accessed on 23 April 2009); speech/movie by Sheik Fuad Khalif Shongola, "The reality of Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia Part II", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPTmTsQP9ww&feature=PlayList&p=825D79CE89315709&index=2 (accessed on 23 April 2009); Abu Bakr Karshi, 2008, "An interview with commander Abu Mansoor, Muqtar Robow", *Sada al-Jihad Magazine, Global Islamic Media Front*, 25 (3), Al Shebab (accessed on 23 April 2009).

[69] The background of several Shebab leaders can illuminate the dynamics behind this belief system. Leaders such as Ibrahim Afghani, the late Aden Hashi Ayro, Abdi Godane and Muqtar Robow had been trained in Afghanistan, if one believes Robow's statement that the organisation was headed by a shura of 8 persons, which means that the majority of the leaders were Afghanistan alumni. Muqtar Robow described the origins of the organisation: **"**Al Shebab was formed not too long ago after people returned from the fighting in Afghanistan in which the Taliban was ousted", interview with "Mukthar Robow Abu Mansoor", Al Jazeera, 7 March 2009. Telephone interview with Abu Mansoor, Mogadishu, 20 September 2008.

[70] International Crisis Group, (2005a), "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?", *Africa Report* no. 95, 11 July, 8.

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Appendix 1: Suicide attacks in Somalia January 2006-April 2010

Date	Target	Confirmed as a suicide attack by more than one independent source (yes/ no)	Organisation claiming responsibility	Suicide video issued (yes/no)	Name of suicide bomber
19 September 2006	Car convoy with Somali President Yusuf in Baidoa	No, several sources describe it as an ambush only.	None	No	None given
30 November 2006	Somali road block outside Baidoa	Yes	Mohamed Ibrahim Said Bilal, militia commander, Al Bayan court claim responsibility, Bilal close to radicals later joining Shebab	Suicide bomber depicted on later video	None given, possibly involved two bombers
26 March 2007	Ethiopian base in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Adam Salad Adam 'Okiyo'
19 April 2007	Ethiopian base in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Abdul-Aziz Dawood Abdul-Qader
24 April 2007	Ethiopian base in Afgoye	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Othman Otayo (otibo) al-Kini
25 April 2007	Hotel in Mogadishu	No, only one source says it was a suicide attack, other sources claim it was a bomb.	None	No	Not known
7 May 2007	African Union forces	No, AU is not sure if it was a suicide attack or not. The attack was conducted with a wheelbarrow.	None	No	Not known
3 June 2007	Prime minister Gedi's house in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Abdul-Aziz Mohammad Semter
4 June 2007	Ethiopian Road block, possibly the United Nations	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Abu bakr sidi hiray

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1 July 2007	Arrested before attack in Baidoa (unknown)	No	None	No	Female arrested, accused of being the suicide bomber
10 October 2007	Ethiopian Base in Baidoa	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Ahmad Hussayn Ahmad (alias Abu Ayyub)
8 April 2008	African Union base in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Abdulazzis Bashir Abdulahi
29 October 2008	PIS base in Bosasso	Yes	Not claimed but blessed by Shebab sheik in Kismayo	No	Shirwa Ahmed
29 October 2008	UNDP Hargeisa	Yes	Not claimed but alleged by Somaliland to be Shebab, blessed by Shebab sheik in Kismayo	No	Not known
29 October 2008	Ethiopian trade mission in Hargeisa	Yes	Not claimed but alleged by Somaliland to be Shebab, blessed by Shebab sheik in Kismayo	No	Not known
29 October 2008	Somaliland presidential palace in Hargeisa	Yes	Not claimed but alleged by Somaliland to be Shebab, blessed by Shebab sheik in Kismayo	No	Not known
24 January 2009	Roadblock	No	Not claimed	No	Not known
21 February 2009	AU base in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Ahmed Sheikhodn Sidow Wehliye
21 February 2009	AU base in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes	Mursal Abdinur Mohamed Ali.
24 May 2009	Government (GNU) base in Mogadishu	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Not at the time of writing	Abdul Qader Hassan Mohammed
18 June 2009	Ministers in the new government	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	yes	Muxamed Deerow (Diire) Shiikh Aadam (zubayr/ Azzubay)

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17 September 2009	Al-Shabaab suicide bombers detonated two vehicles bearing UN logos at the AMISOM Forces headquarters in Mogadishu, killing nine AMISOM soldiers, and two civilians, including the deputy force Commander, Maj. Gen. Juvenile Niyoyunguriza.	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	No	
3 December 2009	Suicide attack on graduation sermony in Shamo Hotel, Mogadishu.Qamar Aden Ali, the health minister, Ahmed Abdulahi Waayeel, the education minister, and Ibrahim Hassan Addow, the higher education minister, all died in the explosion	Contested as a suicide operation	**Shebab explicitly denies responsibility**; alleges that this is a government operation	No	Alleged to be a Danish citizen, but contested
26 January 2010	A suicide attacker attacks a medical Clinique close to the airport and often used by African Union personnel . The attacker wore an explosive jacket	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	No	Not known

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04 February 2010	Alleged suicide attack against Somaliland Minister of Interior Abdillahi Ismail Ali (Irro) at Hamdi Hotel Las Anod, in the contested Sool province	Alleged only by Somaliland officials. It is also claimed to be a handgrenade attack	No	No	No
15 February 2010	Suicide attack, combined with road bombs (two) against the convoy of State Minister for Defense Sheikh Yusuf Mohammad Siad, who is better known as Indha'adde or White Eyes	Yes	No	no	Not known
27 April, 2010	Two attackers drove a truck filled with explosives toward a new AU peacekeeping base. Claimed to be a revenge for the killing of Al Qaeda leaders in Iraq.	Yes	Harakat Al Shebab	Yes, the face of one suicide bomber removed from pictures.	Ahmed Mohamed Yusuf and Abdulaahi Yaasiin

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An Analysis of the Public Reporting to Lothian and Borders Police on Perceived Terrorism-Related Matters after the Glasgow Airport Terrorist Attack in 2007

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Abstract

The Glasgow Airport terrorist attack of 2007 led to the initiation of a Lothian and Borders Police operation to investigate an expected increase in the public reporting of terrorism-related matters. This paper considers the two specific areas of data in respect of these reports: the reporters and the information they imparted. An analysis of reporter characteristics is undertaken, highlighting areas of interest concerning age, employment and place of birth. The information imparted to the police is then analysed with particular aspects of reporting identified, primarily the activity the subject was undertaking, with sub-analysis of ethnicity of subjects and premises cited. The influence of the media is also considered. The conclusions centre on the prevalence of Asian subjects in the reporting, an apparent lack of minority reporters and the nature of the public implications concerning terrorist activity as opposed to overt expressions of the nature of suspicions.

Introduction

Much effort has been made since the attacks of September 11th 2001 to engage with the general populace of Western nations in an effort to encourage reporting of suspicious activity that may be connected to terrorism. The Contest [1] and Contest 2 [2] strategies of the Government of the United Kingdom in particular show the efforts that are being taken by Government to combat Al Qaeda-inspired radicalisation leading to terrorist activity.

In their paper 'Policing Terrorism', Kelling and Bratton (2006) spell out how crucial the citizenry is in detecting terrorist activity, citing an example where

> In the summer of 2004… the NYPD was able to disrupt a planned bombing of the Herald Square subway station just days before the Republican national convention, based on information received from the local community. [3]

Other powerful examples of citizens supplying crucial information are also cited in the article.

Although members of the public appear key to identifying terrorist activity and consequently great efforts are being made to encourage their participation, there does not appear to have been any extensive academic work in relation to identifying the current picture of reporting. In respect of this, the first apparent question is who amongst the public is contacting the police with concerns arising from activity they suspect may be linked to terrorist activity? Secondly, what activity are they reporting and who is undertaking this activity? Finally, the question of what motivations or driving factors, if any other than conventional suspicion, are causing the public to contact the police to report suspected terrorist-linked activity?

In light of the UK Government's recently restated strategic aims concerning minority community contact with the police, this is an area of particular relevance. It is an issue that has been considered in the past, albeit in relation to conventional crime. Davis and Henderson (2003) considered the issue of a perception of low level of reporting to police by immigrants, thought to be engendered through bad experiences in origination countries coupled with misunderstandings experienced in any dealings with the police of their new country, further exacerbated by language and cultural difficulties. They found social cohesion was a key factor in promoting contact with the police but that

> many immigrants tend to settle in ethnically heterogeneous, high-crime, urban neighbourhoods – exactly the kinds of communities likely to promote apathy, a low sense of collective efficacy and a lack of social cohesion[4],

fostering a reluctance to report crime.

The issue of the perceived reluctance of sections of the Muslim community to contact police have been considered recently. Spalek, El Awa and McDonald (2009) found when conducting research on the topic that their evidence suggested

> that one of the main reasons for some Muslims not to have taken a proactive role in supporting counter-terrorism was the British role in the highly contested 'War on Terror'– a synonym for a war on Islam in many minds .[5]

They concluded that greater engagement with Muslim communities was required to ensure that terrorism was perceived as a crime and not an activity clouded in the theological propaganda circulated by Al Qaeda and the like.

Background to Circumstances of Data Collection

Lothian and Borders Police is Scotland's second largest police force, covering an area of 6467 square kilometres.[6] In 2007, the population of the force area was estimated to be 904,970. It was also estimated that 18% of the total of Scotland's ethnic minority population live in the

Lothian and Borders Police area[7]. The main centre of population is Scotland's capital, the city of Edinburgh.

On Saturday 30th June 2007, a burning Cherokee Jeep loaded with material intended to act as an explosive device was intentionally driven into the main terminal building at Glasgow Airport. Immediately thereafter, Lothian and Borders Police, the neighbouring Police Force to Strathclyde Police, where the incident occurred, formed a team of detectives to provide mutual aid. The mutual aid was not ultimately required; however, an executive decision was taken to retain the team that had been formed. It had been surmised by senior officers of Lothian and Borders Police that an increase in reporting on terrorism related matters from the public was likely following the attack and the connected attempted attacks that had taken place in London.

Consequently, the team of detectives formed an operational unit, named 'Operation Mainsail'. During the period the operation was live Operation Mainsail were concerned with reports received by Lothian and Borders Police that members of the public, henceforth referred to as 'reporters', thought related to possible terrorist activity. If control room staff receiving a report believed that it concerned terrorist-related activity it was directed to Operation Mainsail. Finally, a member of office staff within the Operation Mainsail team scanned all public reporting received by the force on a daily basis and took ownership of any reports that they thought concerned possible terrorist-related activity. With this checking mechanism in place, it was thought that all reports from the public in relation to terrorism-related activity would be captured.

This paper concerns public reporting only, and as a consequence the data presented does not encapsulate that gathered or investigated as a result of any police intelligence activity that may have been ongoing during the dates in question.

The operation ran for two months and concluded on 31st August 2007.

Analysis

Statements had been noted from all persons who provided information falling within the conventional remit of Operation Mainsail. Statements noted by officers of Lothian and Borders Police generally contain the full particulars of the reporter in addition to a full account of what they wish to inform the Police about. It was determined that these statements then would provide the necessary research base from which it could be determined what information was being provided and by whom.

A total of 107 statements were found to have been taken during the course of 'Operation Mainsail'. Of these, 16 were found to have been compiled by police officers in relation to actions they had undertaken during investigations, and three were noted from civilian witnesses as follow-up work in relation to matters reported to the police. These were subtracted from the

statements analysed, and the remaining 88 statements were analysed in detail in respect of reporter information.

Eighty-two statements were found to contain information in respect of the sex of the reporter. Of these, 51 were found to be male (62% of those disclosed), while 31 (38% of those disclosed) were female. There was no obvious explanation for the prevalence of male reporters.

The total mean age from the 80 statements where information on both age and sex was available was found to be 41.79 years, with the mean age amongst males at 40.84 years and the mean age amongst females at 44.13 years. The youngest male reporter was aged 19 years, the oldest 74 years. The youngest female reporter was aged 12 years, the oldest 73 years. Standard deviation for the overall sample where age was available was 13.58443.

The age distribution amongst reporters is outlined in Figure 1 below:

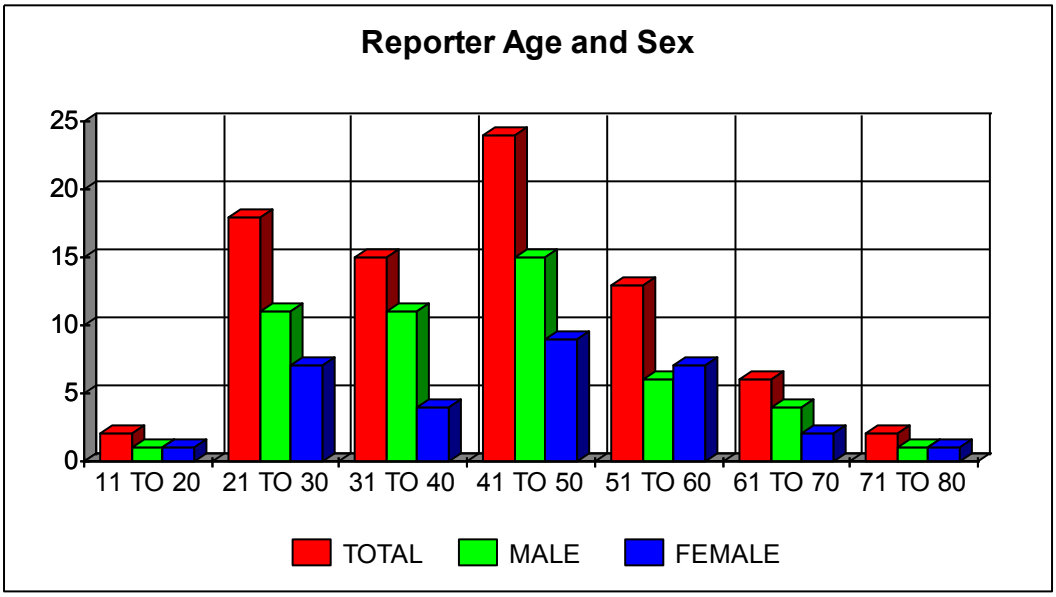

Figure 1: Reporter Age and Sex

As is illustrated and provided in the means information above, reporting from teenagers was extremely low. The 41 to 50 age bracket contained the greatest population, corresponding with the data concerning mean ages.

The employment characteristics of the 84 reporters, where this information was available, is outlined in graph form for comparison below in figure 2:

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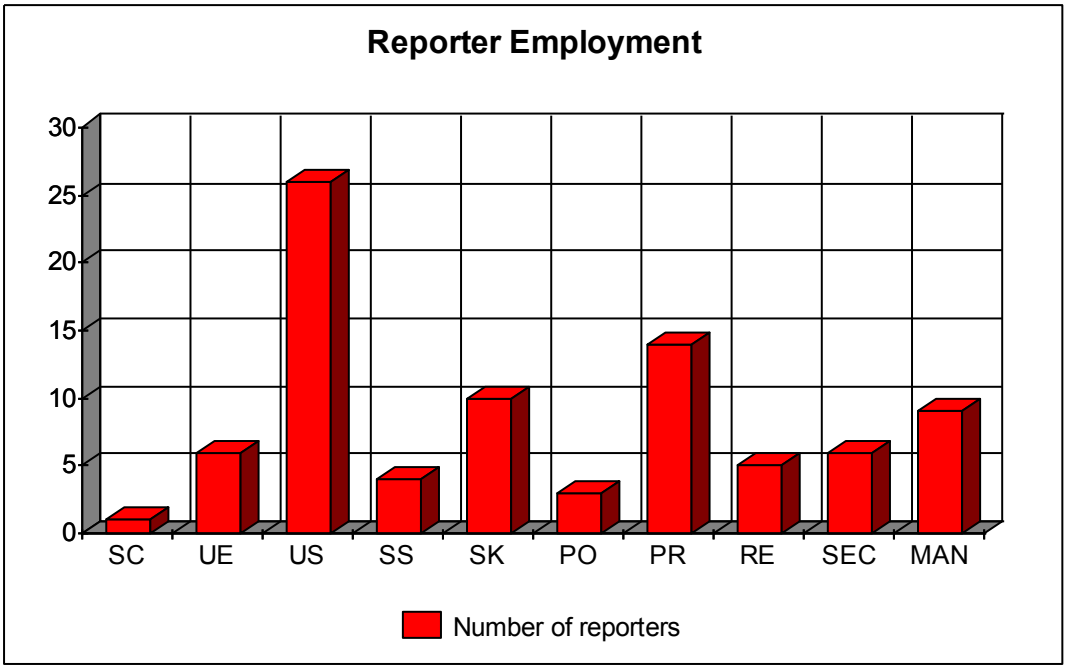

Key: SC – School; UE – Unemployed; US – Unskilled; SS – Shop Staff; SK – Skilled; PO – Police Officers; PR – Professional; RE – Retired; SEC – Secretarial; MAN – Management

Unskilled workers were found to have contributed the biggest single share of reporters (31%), while notably only a small number of reporters were found to be unemployed (7%).

The police officers included above made their reports to Lothian and Borders Police in respect of matters they witnessed while off duty and the procedures adopted in respect of them were found to be identical to those adopted in respect of members of the public.

In respect of 75 reporters, information regarding place of birth was available. This is outlined in Figure 3 below:

Place of Birth	Total
Scotland	61
England	6
Wales	1
Holland	1
Belgium	1

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Poland	1
Australia	1
India	1
USA	1
Ghana	1

Figure 3: Place of Birth (Reporter)

The overwhelming majority of reporters where the information was available (91%) were born in the United Kingdom (UK).

Of the witnesses born in the UK only one was noted to have a non UK-traditional forename and surname.

The non-availability of antecedent information in a number of instances appears to be due to police officer oversight and non-deliberate in nature.

No data existed in respect of the ethnicity or religion of reporters as it was not a criteria noted by police officers.

Subject Information

Of the 88 reports made, it was found that there were 13 instances where more than one statement had been noted in respect of the same report, that is, multiple reporters to one piece of subject information. These multiple instances ranged in number from two to five witness statements concerning the same information. Careful checks were made to ensure that each multiple report contained information that would be coded in the same manner, with this being found to be the case in respect of all 13 instances. This synthesis of multiple reports resulted in there being a total of 61 individual reports of subject information that were to be coded.

The reports were examined collectively in order that the latent themes could be identified and coded. The entire text from each subject report was summarised in order that a general picture of theme could be gathered and then appropriately broken down into categories. This resulted in the identification of eight latent themes. These were: Hostile Reconnaissance (HR); Glasgow Airport (GA); Improvised Explosive Device (IED); Neighbours Behaving Oddly (NBO); Landlord Suspicions (LS); Customer Behaving Oddly (CBO); Internet Activity (IA); and Suspicious Activity (SA). The use of these codes enabled each entry to be referred to by one code only.

A rationale for each theme's application to the individual subject reports was then determined and these were as follows:

Hostile Reconnaissance (HR) was applied where the theme of the statement was such that it appeared to the reporter that the subject of the report was involved in gathering information as to the construction and or use of a particular building, arousing their suspicions.

Glasgow Airport (GA) was applied where the statement showed a direct reference to the attacks themselves. This was generally a reporter wishing to provide information in respect of the Jeep Cherokee utilised by the attackers but also included a report by a person present during the attack on Glasgow airport.

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was applied where the theme of the statement was that the reporter had seen a person within the subject information in possession of materials that may be used for the construction of an IED, or knew/suspected that a person referred to within the subject information was making efforts to obtain such materials.

Neighbours Behaving Oddly (NBO) was applied where the theme of the statement showed a general level of suspicion in relation to the reporter's neighbours. This was represented by subject information that contained reference to a disproportionate number of callers to the house, constantly closed curtains, odd noises and such.

Landlord Suspicions (LS) was applied where the theme of the statement showed that a subject's landlord viewed their behaviour as odd in relation to how they conducted themselves within the tenancy and financial arrangements in respect of their rent.

Customer Behaving Oddly (CBO) was applied where the theme of the statement was that a reporter was engaged in their normal working practices and encountered a subject who through their behaviour in relation to the business in question aroused suspicion.

Internet Activity (IA) was applied where the subject report related to the suspicions of the reporter being raised by activity on the Internet. This included postings of an inflammatory nature.

Suspicious Activity (SA) was applied where the statement was unique in nature, in terms of this study, however related to generally suspicious activity on the part of the subject. Examples where this criterion was applied are: a male subject appearing nervous and clutching a rucksack on public transport; hill walkers encountering a group of males in a remote location involved in some form of collective training; the fraudulent purchase of mobile telephone SIM cards; and a person collecting for charity with an ulterior motive.

The breakdown of the population of each of these categories is outlined in Figure 4 below:

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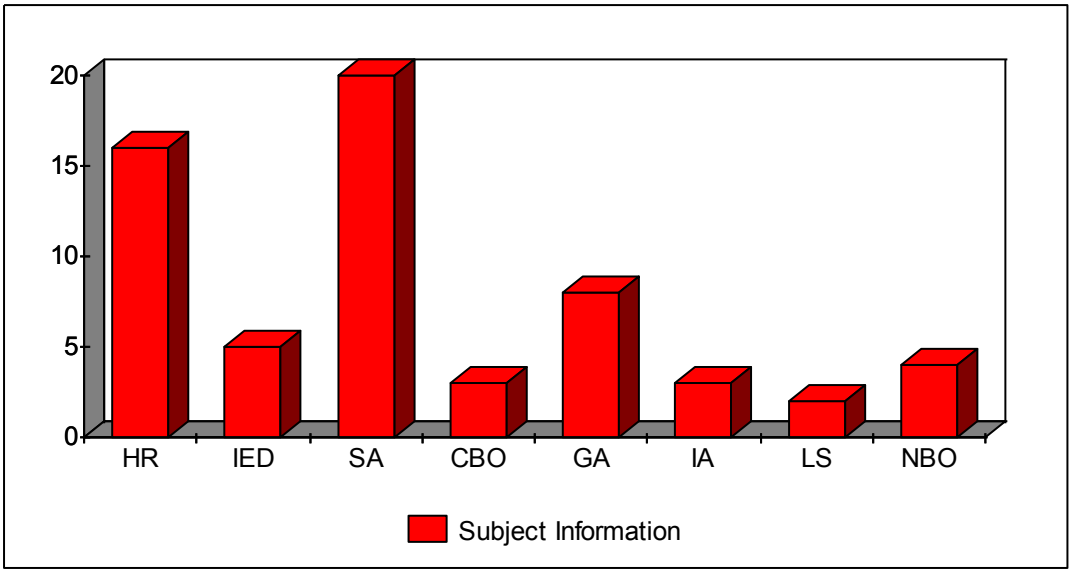

Figure 4: Subject Information

Key: HR – Hostile Reconnaissance; LS – Landlord's Suspicions; IA – Internet Activity; CBO – Customer Behaving Oddly; GA – Glasgow Airport; SA- Suspicious Activity; IED – Improvised Explosive Device; NBO – Neighbour Behaving Oddly

Although Suspicious Activity is the biggest contributor, this category's status as an amalgam of unique circumstances must be borne in mind. Hostile Reconnaissance is particularly noteworthy in its prevalence in 16 (26 %) of reports.

From the reading of all the subject reports a number of specific points of information were identified. The ethnicity of subjects was described in a number of statements, as were specific places and actions. In addition to this the driver for reporting was also disclosed in a number of statements.

Firstly, Figure 5 details ethnicity of subjects, where given:

	Asian	Arabic	White	Dark European
HR	9	1	1	1
GA	1			
IED	3			
NBO	1			

LS	1			
CBO	1			
IA		1		
SA	12	3	1	
Total	28	5	1	1

Figure 5: Ethnicity of Subjects

With 28 (46%) of the total reports referring to Asian persons in the subject information, this is by far the largest ethnic group reported on. At 80% of the total where ethnicity has been described, this information is of particular note.

Figure 6 details where reference was made to specific premises, or type of premises:

	Edinburgh Airport	Torness Power Station	Forth Road Bridge	Entertainment Location
HR	4		1	3
LS		1		
SA	3			
Total	7	1	1	3

Figure 6: Premises Specified in Reporting

In the Hostile Reconnaissance category, eight reports were also found to refer specifically to the subject taking photographs or using a camera during their suspicious activity.

The driving factor reporters provided as their source of motivation for reporting was given as media coverage in 22 (36%) of the reports. This was broken down into two specific areas, firstly the media coverage of the Glasgow attack itself and the attempted attacks in London that immediately preceded it, and secondly media coverage of terrorism in general terms. Figure 7 outlines the categories that references to media coverage as a motivating factor were found within:

	Glasgow/London Attack Media Coverage	Media Coverage of Terrorism in General
HR	3	
GA	6	

SA	10	3
Total	19	3

Figure 7: Reports Detailing Media Coverage as a Motivational Factor

No statements made reference to any Government campaign or information as being the motivating factor in the reporter contacting the police.

Amongst the 61 subject information reports there were also found to be five direct references to areas of interest. In one 'Landlord Suspicion' report there was a direct reference to terrorism, while within the category 'Suspicious Activity' there was one direct reference to terrorism, one direct reference to the Taliban and two direct references to Al Qaeda.

In the vast majority of reports (82%), there was found to be no direct reference to terrorism or groups associated with terrorism. The reports in the main simply outlined facts, what the reporter had seen, and the reporter thereafter made no direct link to any activity beyond their own experience. The consequent suspicion that the activity described may be related to terrorist activity on the part of the reporter, police control room staff or Operation Mainsail screening officer, was implied through the content of the report rather than explicitly stated.

Conclusion

The data gained from the analysis of the archive material in respect of Operation Mainsail does provide an interesting picture of the public reporting to Lothian and Borders Police following the Glasgow Airport terrorist attack of 2007.

Particular features of note have emerged through the study. The prevalence of Asian subjects in almost half of all reports appears particularly striking. When one considers that only 35 reports describe ethnicity with 80% of these reports describing Asian subjects this information becomes particularly noteworthy. This has to be qualified with the estimate that 18% of Scotland's ethnic minority population reside in the Lothian and Borders Police Force area and that the country's main tourist attractions lie there. Set against this, the figure does still seem high, given that 82% of the area's home population are not from a minority group and that Asians will only be a contributor to the 18%.

The Contest 2 strategy seeks to encourage greater engagement with the authorities by minority communities, specifically the Muslim community. Measurement of the success of this strategy will be difficult. Were reporters' particulars to be noted in detail by the police per se, including factors not featuring in this study, such as religion, then over time figures suitable for future comparison work would be obtainable. These figures, if obtained, could show not only raw information in respect of an increase or decrease in reporting from groups of interest but also

follow through the qualitative aspects of the reporting and subject area, examples being the accuracy of reporting when investigated and the activity the reporting concerned. Any efforts in this regard would need to be handled delicately in order to avoid contributing to the dangerous manner in which, in some ways, the Muslim community is seen as a 'suspect community' or 'problem group'[8].

With just over a quarter of all reports highlighting hostile reconnaissance activity the awareness of the public of an activity that until recently was unlikely to provoke interest is also worthy of note. Only three accounts cited media coverage of the Glasgow airport attacks as the motivating factor in Hostile Reconnaissance reports. However, awareness of this aspect of terrorist activity is new, and the low figure citing the media has to be qualified with knowledge that the police when noting statements in relation to suspected terrorist activity would not be explicitly gathering information as to motivating factors. Given this aspect of police practice, the number of statements overall that cite media influence as the motivating factor is surprising to the researcher, and implies how much of an influence on reporter behaviour this factor was overall. Government information in relation to counter terrorism may generally be gathered by the public through media reporting of the Government's policies, hence the lack of citation of Government information and instead the citing of the media as influential.

Although ethnicity and religious information was not available to the study the lack of any substantial number of non-UK-born reporters, particularly reporters of Asian sub-continent origin, is also of interest. Although an individual's name can only give a clue to their ethnicity, there was only one non-standard-Western name detected amongst all reporters, suggesting an overall lack of reporters with a non-Western European ancestry. In respect of the Muslim community, this facet perhaps does indicate a lack of contact with Lothian and Borders Police over the issue of counter terrorism during the course of the operation, although this is only a suggestion. With the information available, it is obvious that one is far from able to draw any conclusion as to whether this was the case: however, it is worthy that the issue is highlighted. Although writing concerning the United States, Davis and Henderson, when considering the difficulties in relation to immigrant reporting to Police, make a point equally relevant to the United Kingdom that "gaining the cooperation of immigrants in crime reporting and police activities is important because their numbers are large and growing." [9] This study did not have the scope to consider the overall status of Lothian and Borders ethnic minority communities, but the difficulties considered by Spalek et al. and Davis and Henderson may be equally relevant to the force area, given the general lack of information from immigrant communities reported to Lothian and Borders Police.

The low number of direct references to terrorism, Al Qaeda and the Taliban was notable. There were, after all, only five direct references to these subjects during a counter terrorist operation involving the gathering of information from the public. The general theme of the statements though was one of implication, that the reporter wished to impart information but, as their knowledge did not, generally, reach beyond suspicion, they in no way wished to make deductions as to what observed behaviour might mean, what its overall purpose could be.

Overall, the data gathered during the research presents an interesting picture of the reporters contacting Lothian and Borders Police during the period specified and further to this, a varied and noteworthy account of the information they supplied.

Further Research

Operation Mainsail was unique in its approach within Lothian and Borders and consequently the data available cannot be compared to similar data in respect of reporting either before or after the dates it covered. Other police data collection methods could be looked at for research of a similar nature, which could provide a continuing picture of reporter information and this is being considered as a future research project by the author.

In respect of Operational Mainsail, the data held could be researched further, in particular concerning outcomes. This is a project the author intends to return to in future.

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Al-Qaeda in Gaza: Isolating "the Base"

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In 1996, Osama bin Laden declared jihad against the American forces occupying Saudi Arabia, calling for Muslims to expel the infidels from the "land of the two holy places." The first sacred ground mentioned in this statement, however, was not Saudi Arabia but Palestine. His words seething with hatred, bin Laden scorned the Arab regimes for failing to recapture Jerusalem and described the situation as a festering wound upon the Islamic *umma*.[1] Fourteen years later, even after orchestrating devastating attacks in three Western capitals, Bin Laden's al-Qaeda is still unable to do much against Israel besides issuing scathing diatribes. Its most vigorous efforts to establish itself in the Palestinian arena have been in the Gaza Strip. Here, however, al-Qaeda-linked groups are stymied by a perhaps surprising adversary: Hamas. But despite Hamas's efforts to suppress them, *Salafi*-jihadi groups maintain an underground presence. Even if al-Qaeda affiliates remain weak operationally in comparison to Hamas, al-Qaeda's ideology of global jihad seems to be on the rise in Gaza. Meanwhile, the al-Qaeda leadership is relentless in pursuing new and ingenious ways for its agents to penetrate the Strip. A Hamas weakened by a tightened blockade or another war with Israel would leave an opening for *Salafi*-jihadi militants. The prospect of these al-Qaeda-linked factions upsetting a fragile peace needs to be considered among the many other factors relevant to engagement with Hamas.

As bin Laden's declaration demonstrates, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict always figured prominently in al-Qaeda's propaganda, but this emphasis has only become stronger in the years since 9/11. After deciding to concentrate its resources on crushing "the head of the snake"—America—al-Qaeda has not been able to strike again on US soil. At the same time, it has squandered its favour in the Arab world with bloody attacks on Muslim civilians. A third blow to al-Qaeda's image is its failure to mount direct attacks against Israel, a source of considerable embarrassment to the organisation. In 2008, when jihadist web-sites hosted an interview with Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's second in command, the first questioner asked him:

> Excuse me, Mr. Zawahiri, but who is it who is killing with Your Excellency's blessing the innocents in Baghdad, Morocco and Algeria? Do you consider the killing of women and children to be jihad? … Why have you—to this day—not carried out any strike in Israel? Or is it easier to kill Muslims in the markets?[2]

Al-Qaeda styles itself the defender of the Palestinians, particularly the Gazans, as a way of deflecting such criticism and bolstering Arab support. In doing so, it has often clashed with Hamas, Gaza's de facto government and the most powerful Palestinian militant group.

Although both Hamas and al-Qaeda place their struggles in an Islamist context, Hamas's goal is ultimately a nationalist one: Palestinian liberation. In contrast, al-Qaeda has a focus on the "far jihad" against America and the West, which alienates many in Hamas. During an exchange of insults and accusations between the two movements in September 2009, Hamas posted a paper on its web-site highlighting the work of the prominent Muslim Brotherhood cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi.[3] Al-Qaradawi's writings justify Palestinian resistance against Israel while castigating al-Qaeda for its attacks overseas. His disapproval draws on a distinction in Islamist thought between a "defensive jihad" against an occupying power (Israel) and an improper "offensive jihad" that fosters ill will toward Muslims in the international community (a veiled criticism of al-Qaeda). On a more practical level, Hamas is also wary of al-Qaeda-linked groups threatening its shaky truce with Jerusalem and inciting Israeli retaliation.

In fact, it was Hamas's truce with Israel coupled with its participation in Palestinian elections which set the stage for a public confrontation between the two groups. The dispute began in the wake of Hamas's victory in the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, when al-Zawahiri applauded Hamas's accession to power but called for the movement to fight on.[4] Al-Zawahiri's tone became openly hostile when Hamas signed the Mecca Accords in early 2007, an act he equated with submitting to "the US Satan and his Saudi agent."[5] By the end of the year, after mentioning Hamas's deviation in at least a dozen statements, Osama bin Laden finally declared that Hamas had "renounced its religion."[6]

Al-Qaeda's verbal barrage paralleled an increasingly defiant attitude toward Hamas rule among Gaza's *Salafi*-jihadi groups. Most of these factions, such as Jaljalat, Jund Ansar Allah, and Jaish al-Islam, began appearing in Gaza around 2005. This tumultuous period, which saw the withdrawal of Israeli forces, Hamas's victory in the Palestinian elections, and the ouster of Fatah, provided the opportunity these groups needed to take root. Seeking to challenge Hamas's newly-won hegemony, the *Salafi*-jihadists began to embarrass Hamas by violating the truce with Israel and assassinating Hamas leaders who tried to suppress them. In June 2008, Jund Ansar Allah attempted an attack on the Nahal Oz fuel terminal (near the Gaza-Israel border) that, if successful, could very well have instigated a major Israeli response.[7] After its bombings killed five senior Hamas officials in August 2008, Jaish al-Islam fought Hamas in Gaza streets.[8] Jaljalat operatives were the first to strike against Israel after the truce ending the Gaza War, planting an IED along the border fence that killed an IDF soldier.[9] In November 2008, Jaish al-

Islam again raised the ire of the Hamas leadership with rocket attacks on Ashkelon and the western Negev.[10]

The *Salafi*-jihadists' open disregard for Hamas control culminated in a blatant challenge which elicited a harsh Hamas response. On August 13, 2009, the jihadist Internet buzzed with the announcement of a talk to be given the next day at Rafah's Ibn Taymiyyah mosque. The sermon, entitled "Advice worth its weight in gold for the Ismail Haniya [Hamas] government," was to be delivered by Sheikh Abd al-Latif Musa, Jund Ansar Allah's spiritual leader. Anticipating a protest, Hamas stationed its police around the mosque. When Musa proceeded to condemn Hamas for failing to implement sharia law and announced the formation of an Islamic emirate in Gaza, Hamas was ready. Its forces quickly cordoned off the area and began firing rocket-propelled grenades at the building. The seven-hour battle ended with 130 wounded and 24 dead, some of whom were summarily executed by Hamas forces as they tried to surrender.[11]

A Covert Al-Qaeda Presence and Its Dangers

The bloody confrontation at Rafah did not spell the end of Gaza's unofficial al-Qaeda affiliates. Instead, it just seems to have sent them underground. For its part, Hamas seems to tolerate some level of *Salafi*-jihadi activity in Gaza for several reasons. One possibility is the useful role these organisations play in deflecting blame for unpopular terrorist attacks. Al-Qaeda operational expertise may also be valuable to Hamas, as seen in the joint Hamas-Jaish al-Islam kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.[12] Finally, the spectre of al-Qaeda influence allows Hamas to accuse its Palestinian rivals of plotting against it and to present itself as the only barrier to an al-Qaeda stronghold in Gaza.[13]

However, Hamas's ability to police these cells has been questionable at times. For example, when Jaish al-Islam captured BBC journalist Alan Johnston in June 2007, the group was apparently willing to execute its hostage if Hamas tried to rescue him.[14] In exchange for releasing Johnston unharmed, Hamas reportedly gave Jaish al-Islam $5 million and over a million Kalashnikov rounds.[15] Jaish al-Islam's threats also succeeded in freeing its members from Hamas jails after the bombing of the YMCA library in Gaza City.[16] When questioned about its loyalties after continued struggles with *Salafi*-jihadi groups, Hamas released 50 Jund Ansar Allah detainees for the holiday of Eid ul-Fitr in September 2009.[17] Hamas describes its raids against *Salafi*-jihadi groups as routine policing of criminal elements, but this claim is belied by the participation of Hamas's paramilitary wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.[18] The *Salafi*-jihadists are believed to be responsible for the bombs detonated under the vehicles and near the homes of Hamas leaders after these sweeps.[19]

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More significant than Hamas's occasional failure to curb *Salafi*-jihadi activities is the stream of defectors, many of them high-level, from Hamas to al-Qaeda-inspired groups. Fed up with Hamas's failure to attack Israel and its sluggishness in implementing sharia law, these men see the *Salafi*-jihadi groups as a more legitimate mantle for the Palestinian cause. For example, Fuad Banat, a Jund Ansar Allah commander killed in the Rafah mosque shootout, had originally been sent to Gaza by the Hamas leadership in Damascus.[20] Mumtaz Dughmush left Hamas's Qassam Brigades to help found Jaish al-Islam.[21] Al-Qaeda encourages these desertions through its messages urging Hamas soldiers to turn on their commanders and join the growing *Salafi*-jihadi movement.[22] The al-Qaeda leadership thus appears to have resigned itself from confronting Hamas in favour of slowly undermining it—man by man–from within. As Abu Mustafa, a *Salafi*-jihadi leader, said in a rare interview with the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*,

> [Taking up arms against Hamas] won't be necessary. They will destroy themselves. … Hamas is like a block of ice in the sun. Every minute they get smaller – and we get larger. [23]

While Gaza's *Salafi*-jihadists lie low and gather weapons and recruits, al-Qaeda higher-ups stress spying and deception in order to bypass the Israeli and Egyptian blockade around Gaza. An al-Qaeda foothold in Gaza would be a welcome training ground for new recruits, who could gain much-needed experience manufacturing explosive devices, launching mortars and rockets, and engaging in firefights with IDF soldiers. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the deceased leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, once said that his group "fights in Iraq, but its eyes are on Jerusalem."[24] Al-Zarqawi himself had once been given $35,000 by his superiors to find reliable methods of entry into Israel.[25] Now, as the US withdraws from active combat operations in Iraq, many Sunni militants are moving west and seeking to take up Zarqawi's legacy.[26] It is estimated that 800 to 1,000 people crossed the Egypt-Israel border in January 2010 alone, some of them undoubtedly sent by al-Qaeda.[27] Saleh al-Qarawi, the leader of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades charged with reinvigorating al-Qaeda in the Levant, escaped Saudi Arabia by disguising himself as a Westerner.[28] Al-Qaeda agents have shown skill at creating multiple identities, forging passports, and using bleaching products to alter their skin tone.[29] Some al-Qaeda members have gone as far as dressing in women's clothing to evade detection at border crossings.[30] An intercepted letter from Yemen's Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to *Salafi*-jihadists in Gaza proposes sending Somali and Ethiopian operatives to Israel posing as Jewish refugees.[31] Similarly, in a recently discovered manual for Palestinian jihadists, an al-Qaeda writer suggests joining human rights organisations as a way of collecting target intelligence.[32] Given this emphasis on secrecy, the splintering and constant turnover of *Salafi*-jihadi groups may be

deliberate—a tactic to counter Hamas surveillance rather than a sign of weakness.[33] Likewise, the dearth of information on these groups could just as well signal improved operational security as it does a lack of activity.

Although al-Qaeda has not formally endorsed any of Gaza's *Salafi*-jihadi groups, it has provided them with tactical guidance and advice. Al-Qaeda leader Abu al-Laith al-Libi, for example, corresponded with members of the Jaljalat network before he was killed in Afghanistan.[34] Yusuf Miqdad, a resident of Gaza's Shati refugee camp, communicated with global al-Qaeda on the Internet and travelled to Saudi Arabia to obtain funds for an al-Qaeda cell before he was picked up by Israeli authorities.[35] Al-Qaeda stands to gain at least as much as local Palestinian militants from such exchanges, as sympathetic individuals can provide al-Qaeda with detailed reconnaissance information regarding possible targets as well as border areas where personnel might infiltrate into the Strip.[36] The ranks of Gaza's *Salafi*-jihadi groups already include Syrians, Yemenis, and even Europeans who passed through the notoriously porous Egyptian border.[37] These esteemed veterans of the international jihad are especially potent tools for the recruitment and mobilisation of local Palestinians. But even if the impact of these foreigners is minimal, al-Qaeda's propaganda continues to diffuse into Gaza through satellite TV channels, the Internet, and smuggled literature.[38]

Al-Qaeda's borderless character also enables it to draw on disaffected Israeli Arabs in a way that Hamas cannot. If Hamas continues its moderating trend, radicalised Arabs within Israel may turn more and more to the "pure resistance" espoused by Gaza's *Salafi*-jihadists rather than Hamas's nationalist approach. There is some evidence to believe this is already happening. In July 2008, six Arab students at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem appeared in court on allegations they planned to shoot down President Bush's helicopter during his visit to Israel. One of the men had inquired about obtaining a missile for this purpose on global al-Qaeda forums.[39] A month later, another Israeli Arab student was charged with plotting bomb attacks at a central bus station and along a road frequently used by IDF vehicles. The suspect had visited web-sites affiliated with the global jihad, where he encountered al-Qaeda operatives in Gaza and learned how to fashion explosives.[40] In June 2010, Israeli police announced that three Israeli Arabs had been indicted for the murder of an Israeli taxi driver. The men, part of a seven-person al-Qaeda-inspired group which authorities called "one of the most dangerous cells we have ever uncovered," had also planned kidnappings and bombings of various Jewish- and Christian-owned businesses.[41] Their activities had only been discovered when two of the conspirators were detained in Africa after attempting to join the Somali jihad.[42]

Though al-Qaeda tends to reserve its formal sanction for only the most proven groups, it cannot prevent others from aligning themselves with its ideology. Thus, in considering the potential for an al-Qaeda presence in Gaza, it is important to examine local political dynamics. Since Hamas seized power in 2007, criminal gangs, local clans, and Fatah members have all used *Salafi*-jihadi ideology as a bludgeon to discredit Hamas and rally their own supporters.[43] While this renders their genuine jihadist credentials suspect, these groups retain considerable influence through their participation in Gaza's lucrative trade in drugs and weapons. The *Salafi*-jihadists may also derive some measure of "safe haven" from their position within Gaza's web of clan-based criminals, which Hamas can suppress but never fully control.[44] Whatever their true motivations, these groups' propaganda finds receptive ears among Gaza's youth.[45] Ironically, Hamas may be aiding this radicalisation process through its program of gradual, but forced, Islamisation. It is only a small step in the minds of many Gazans from justifying jihadist attacks against Israel to justifying them against all non-Muslims. To some degree, then, Hamas propaganda that frames the struggle against Israel as a religious one has helped foster an undercurrent of support for *Salafi*-jihadi ideas. In polls conducted in 2006, 79 percent of those responding in Gaza supported al-Qaeda attacks on the West.[46] Reviewing these results, the author noted,

> To a larger extent than other Arabs, Palestinians … tend to associate all attacks on the West [by Al Qaeda] with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and therefore regard such actions as legitimate resistance rather than terrorism.[47]

Such sentiments put Hamas in an awkward position with respect to the *Salafi*-jihadists. On one hand, Hamas does not want to be pulled into another Gaza War; on the other hand, it cannot be seen as defending Israel. Thus, when critics accused Hamas of collaborating with the West after its actions at the Ibn Taymiyyah mosque, Hamas claimed that Sheikh Musa had "gone mad" and that the violence arose out of a "misunderstanding."[48] Hamas's dilemma in this regard was encapsulated by a political cartoon in the Saudi daily *Al-Watan*. The drawing depicts a Hamas soldier angrily shooting his severed arm, the sleeve of which reads "Jund Ansar Allah."[49] Hamas's backtracking contrasts sharply with the line taken by the *Salafi*-jihadists, who may lie on the fringe but present a much more unified and consistent position.

While the al-Qaeda leadership may not currently have the means to establish a regional base in Gaza, its interest in the area cannot be denied. Five years ago, a myopic focus on Palestinian terror organisations led Israel to miss the global jihadists beginning to appear in the Strip.[50] Israel cannot afford to wait until a critical mass of these foreign fighters coalesces—perhaps helped by radicalised Israeli Arabs or Hamas defectors—and becomes strong enough to execute a major attack. Al-Qaeda's operational record clearly shows that it is capable of committing

large-scale strikes with a small number of terrorists. Al-Qaeda's history also demonstrates its predilection for a "slow war" approach, with long periods of meticulous preparation punctuated by unexpected, hard-hitting attacks. The al-Qaeda leadership's hesitation to endorse Gaza's *Salafi*-jihadi groups may simply reflect its desire for one of these groups to first prove itself with a stunning baptism of fire. To be sure, *Salafi*-jihadi militants face significant logistical difficulties given the current state of siege around Gaza. Nevertheless, one large attack against Jerusalem would likely have more of an impact than in any other theatre. The *Salafi*-jihadists do not need to defeat Hamas in order to significantly compromise the broader peace process. It is easy, for example, to imagine a second captured Israeli soldier igniting another Gaza War.[51] Similarly, the reactions of Egypt, Jordan, and Israel to the August 2010 rocket attacks on Eilat and Aqaba illustrate the pressure *Salafi*-jihadi groups could bring down on Hamas with just a few well-placed rockets. Perhaps most importantly, successful al-Qaeda attacks on Israel would be a huge propaganda coup for al-Qaeda's global jihad. Joining the battle against the Zionists helps sustain al-Qaeda's notion of a "clash of civilizations" in which Israel and the West are arrayed against the entire Muslim world.[52]

Policy Recommendations

The potential for an al-Qaeda base in concert with Gaza's existing *Salafi*-jihadi groups cannot be ignored among the other issues affecting the Palestinian-Israeli situation. Israel must be careful that its boycott of Hamas does not serve to empower even more radical elements in Gaza. If al-Qaeda and the *Salafi*-jihadists were to gain significant strength relative to (and perhaps because of) an increasingly moderate Hamas, it might lie in Israel's interest to somehow come to terms with Hamas. While this contingency gives many pause, it has been promoted by former senior officials in both Israel and the US.[53] Al-Qaeda would likely have two options in this situation: remain silent, which weakens its image as true guardian of the Palestinians, or openly vie for power, which in the past has led to an overwhelming response from Hamas (e.g., Jund Ansar Allah in 2009).

Israel must also ensure that its own Arab citizens are not attracted to the *Salafi*-jihadi ideology emerging in Gaza. Israel's walls and fences have been successful in shielding it from suicide attacks originating in the West Bank, but these defenses are ineffective against Palestinian terrorists within Israel's own borders. While "homegrown" radicalisation into al-Qaeda has been a major topic in the terrorism literature in the last five years, it has not been closely examined in the Israeli context. What seems consistent among the studies that have been conducted elsewhere, however, is the salience of mosques and prisons as major incubators for jihadist thought. Given the formidable reputation of Israeli prisons and the thousands of Palestinian

radicals they hold, the dissemination of global jihadist propaganda is a serious concern. With respect to *Salafi*-jihadism propagated by Palestinian imams, both Fatah and Hamas have placed mosques under surveillance as a way of checking each other's influence in the West Bank and Gaza, respectively.[54] Israel may wish to enact a similar program to track *Salafi*-jihadi extremism at home.

Engaging with Hamas would also further isolate al-Qaeda. An Israeli recognition of Hamas as an elected government with de facto control of Gaza would not change the facts on the ground, but it could help widen the divide between Hamas and al-Qaeda. Many Arabs neither identify with al-Qaeda nor support its attacks, but nonetheless admire it for its continued trumpeting of Palestinian rights. As long as Hamas remains a shunned pariah state, al-Qaeda will use the plight of the Gazans as a rallying cry for its cause. Advancing a peace that includes Gaza would deny al-Qaeda this oft-cited grievance against the West.

Al-Qaeda is now about 20 years old, long past the life expectancy of most terrorist organisations. Its resilience is due in large part to the strength not of its regional franchises, but of the tentacle-like network that holds them together and allocates funds, fighters, and guidance. What al-Qaeda fears more than anything, then, is the isolation of its various fronts in the global jihad. Its failure to establish itself in Gaza, arguably its most appealing locale, says a lot about its limitations and the ideological corner into which it has driven itself. Israel should make sure it stays there.

Warren Marshall will graduate Phi Beta Kappa with a BA in Psychology from Binghamton University this spring. He intends to pursue an MA in Security Studies. His interests include terrorist ideologies and strategies, psychological operations, and counter-intelligence.

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Opinion Piece - Thinking about the 'Law of Unintended Consequences'

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The United State's now-not-so-covert drone based program targeting Al Qaeda (AQ) and Taliban commanders based in Pakistan's inhospitable and hostile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FETA) has been operational since 2004. However, US air strikes in Pakistan's tribal belt have steadily escalated over the past three years. The US has claimed that these attacks have successfully decimated core Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership. This past September alone the US military conducted 26 drone strikes in Pakistan, racking up a figure that the BBC is calling the "highest monthly total for the past six years". Not only do these steadily escalating drone strikes raise some pertinent questions about US/NATO successes claimed under the rubric of the Global War on Terror (or if you prefer, the Overseas Contingency Operations) but they also shed some light on the deteriorating political situation in Pakistan.

In a classic example of what Peter S. Probst terms the 'law of unintended consequences' drone strikes in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (former NWFP) and FATA seems to have achieved no more than strengthening the hand of radical Islamist movement in Pakistan. Of course, Pakistani authorities have had long-standing ties with various militant groups, including the Afghan Taliban. It is a well known fact that after the loss of East Pakistan (i.e. Bangladesh) in 1971, Pakistan took a series of measures to counter the perceived threat from both the Indian state as well as Pashtun nationalism. These measures included an increasing Islamisation of Pakistani society as reflected in a growing numbers of *maddrassas* as well as increased support for various militant, Islamist groups that could then be used as proxies to safeguard Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan and India. The Pakistani ISI not only played an instrumental role in the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan but Pakistan also politically supported the Taliban regime. Ahmed Rashid outlines how this support extended well beyond providing arms, ammunition and fuel to include economic assistance and the provision of military advisors and trainers. So much so, that even in 2001, ISI supply trucks were crossing the border from Pakistan into Afghanistan in what was a direct breach of US-imposed sanctions.

Since 2007, several Islamist militant groups based in north-west Pakistan have coalesced under the banner of the *Tehrik-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan* (i.e. the TTP or the Pakistani Taliban). Many of

these militant groups, once fostered by the Pakistani state, are now increasingly targeting the very hand that fed them. A direct result of this has been Pakistani military operations in FATA and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa undertaken to dismantle these networks. This pressure, along with US drone strikes in this area, have served to push both Al Qaeda's top leadership and external operations network as well as the Afghan Taliban out of Pakistan's tribal belt into the heartland. This also holds true of the TTP and various other Islamist militant groups. In short, groups that were originally based in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and FATA are now steadily moving into Punjab and Pakistan's urban areas.

The fact that rural districts in southern Punjab are emerging as new sanctuaries and training areas is not surprising. For one this is a drone-free area that offers better sanctuary to Pashtun and AQ fighters than Pakistan's tribal belt. For another it is an immensely over-populated, poverty-ridden area with a deeply entrenched *madrassa* culture where local leaders tolerate, and even support, militant Islamist groups. Corruption is rampant, the population frustrated and the Pakistani authority exerts what can be best described as a tenuous hold on large parts of this area. In other words, southern Punjab represents both a sanctuary and fertile recruiting grounds for Pakistan's various Islamist groups. At the same time it also offers easy access to Islamabad and the heart of the Pakistani state in a way that the traditionally lawless and peripheral tribal areas do not. This is not good news.

Moving into southern Punjab means that AQ and the Afghan Taliban are coming into increasing contact with a wide variety of Pakistani militant groups. There is increasing cross-pollination between AQ, Pashtun and TTP fighters. Given that banned Punjabi groups operate freely across the Punjab province it is not surprising that they have deepened ties with both the AQ and the Afghan Taliban, which are also looking for new alliances and refuge in Pakistan's political and military heartland. Of course, Punjabi militants have a long history in Pakistan. They were first nurtured by Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s as proxies for strategic depth in conflicts in Kashmir and Afghanistan and used against Pakistan's Shia minority, which were viewed as a credible threat to internal security after the 1979 Iranian revolution. These militants also actively participated in the Afghan jihad against the Soviets and helped establish a Taliban regime in Afghanistan post-1994. Punjabi groups like *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT) and *Jaish-e-Mohammad* (JeM) have conducted a series of spectacular terror attacks in the region, including the 2001 attacks on the Indian parliament.

LeT, for example, is believed to not have only shared training camps with AQ in Afghanistan but also contribute fighters to Al Qaeda in Iraq during the US invasion. The obvious outcome of such

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active participation in Iraq was that LeT fighters returned to South Asia trained in state-of-the-art urban guerilla warfare techniques and more ostensibly mimicking AQ operations. This was more than obvious in the 2008 Mumbai attacks where LeT moved away from its traditional frontal assault tactics towards the hallmark AQ-style of simultaneous attacks on soft targets. The ideological hybridisation between the two groups is also evident when we see the shifts in LeT objectives. Historically, an anti-Indian group active and fully focussed on a jihad in Kashmir, LeT has steadily evolved and developed global links and ambitions. Various counter-terrorism and intelligence agencies believe that LeT today has ties with militant groups in the Arab world and sleeper cells in the US and Australia. In March 2009, a British parliamentary committee discovered that LeT had trained an AQ operative involved in the 7/7 London attacks while various agencies believe that LeT also trained the Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad.

Closer contacts between AQ, the Pashtun Taliban, the TTP and Punjabi militants are the direct result of US and Pakistani strikes in FATA and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. Closer contacts between groups like LeT and AQ in the Pakistani heartland translate into a whole host of new challenges for Pakistan – and concurrently new and more frightening challenges for both regional and global security. Local Punjabi groups that operate independently (outside Pakistani control) with a global jihadi agenda undoubtedly poses a serious threat to the political security and stability of the Pakistani state. But, according to some analysts, the threat does not end at the borders of the Pakistani state as Punjabi militants pose much greater problems for regional and global security than either the TTP or the Pashtun Taliban. A key reason for this is because as Imtiaz Ali, a Pakistani analyst states, Punjabi militants are on the whole "more hard-line, more fundamentalist and more connected to a global agenda". Thus, as they spread their areas of operation beyond South Asia they are emerging as a key threat to both European and US security. At the same time, unlike the Pashtun Taliban, Punjabi militants tend to be more educated and better informed and therefore more able to move freely across international borders. They are also better trained, thanks to years of working alongside AQ in training camps across Afghanistan and decades of state patronage. In the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq they have also emerged as battle-hardened fighters who can more than hold their own against the poorly-trained and badly-equipped Pakistani police forces. In short, as these virulent groups facilitate AQ's infiltration into the Pakistani heartland and develop agendas independent of the Pakistani state, they promises to pose a more dire threat to the longterm stability and security of both the Pakistani state and world security. There is something to be said for thinking about the "unintended consequences" of our actions.

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Book Reviews

Myriam Denov. *Child Soldiers: Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Paperback £16.99, pp. 246. ISBN-13: 9780521693219, Reviewed by Emma Leonard, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone fought a bitter and bloody civil war against the Sierra Leonean government throughout the 1990s. Often referred to as a terrorist organization, they were infamous for their attacks against civilians and for their use of child soldiers. However, as Denov demonstrates in this well written and informative book, much is still to be learnt about the realities of life as a child soldier within the RUF.

The general portrayal of children as victims in these situations rarely tells the whole story. Children are often rational actors – the fact that the RUF (and others) found it necessary to give the children alcohol and drugs in order to ensure they follow orders demonstrates that children of all ages were able to make value judgements on the orders that they were given and were capable of deciding whether or not to follow through with an order. Recognising this, the bulk of this book is based on interviews and focus group discussions with former child soldiers of the RUF and essentially provides a framework within which it is possible to understand how these children could be simultaneously both victims and perpetrators of terrible violence.

Denov begins the book with a comprehensive review of the current academic literature on child soldiers, making clear the complexities of even defining who qualifies as a child soldier and highlighting the debate between advocates of a structuralist understanding of the reasons why children become soldiers and those who argue that children have agency even in impossible situations. She then moves on to explore how the children became involved in the RUF, their experiences during the war and their lives since.

One of the reasons that this book stands out is the amount of primary data collected and recounted to reconstruct for the reader the processes that many of the children went through to become often very violent soldiers. The data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions conducted by both the author and a group of trained Sierra Leonean researchers, allowing the children both the opportunity to exchange their stories with others who had been through a similar process but also the privacy to speak in confidence with the interviewer. One of the strengths of this book is the frank acknowledgement of the difficulties that researchers often

face when operating in an unfamiliar environment. Denov does not shy away from these issues and instead addresses them head on, acknowledging for example that many former child soldiers, in conflicts around the world, have recognized the benefits of presenting themselves as victims to 'outsiders and humanitarian aid organizations, [as it] may be crucial to obtaining aid and assistance' (p. 90) as a way out of the often dire poverty in which they have found themselves.

Nor does she shy away from the fact that many of the children did become accustomed to the violence and some have now come to remember their time in the RUF fondly – not necessarily because of the violence but because of the order and hierarchy within the organization. All of the children knew what their role was and they were offered some sort of protection within the group. Few of these children have been able to find a clear place for themselves within the chaos of post-conflict Sierra Leone and the transition has left them rootless and confused – a problem that must be recognized within disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes.

This book makes a very important contribution to the literature and will be of interest to academics and students in the fields of peace and conflict studies. Scholars of terrorism will be interested by the levels of detail about a group regularly described as one of sub-Saharan Africa's terrorist groups, as well as the process of radicalization that some of the children go through, and practitioners working with children in post-conflict states will find few better books to give them a grounding in the academic debates surrounding child soldiers.

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Audrey Kurth Cronin. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 2009. pp. 330. $29.95 ISBN: 978-1-4008-3114-2., Reviewed by Cheryl M. Graham,University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

Although the literature devoted to the phenomenon of terrorism is abundant, Audrey Kurth Cronin's latest contribution is welcomingly unique. While avoiding conventional approaches dedicated to the origins, ideology and behavioural patterns of particular groups, Cronin identifies and tackles the obvious, yet frequently overlooked, subject of 'How Terrorism Ends'.

Cronin begins the book by explaining how terrorist campaigns can be understood as a "triad" of interaction between three actors: the group, the government, and the audience. With this triad in mind Cronin then identifies six common patterns that have contributed to the ultimate demise of terrorist campaigns.

1. Capture or killing of a group's leader. (Decapitation).
2. Entry of the group into a legitimate political process. (Negotiation).
3. Achievement of group aims. (Success).
4. Group implosion or loss of public support. (Failure).
5. Defeat and elimination through brute force. (Repression).
6. Transition from terrorism into other forms of violence. (Reorientation).

Each of these pathways is then explained and analysed in consecutive chapters. One of the most impressive aspects of this book is that Cronin consistently assesses these pathways within the framework of the aforementioned triad. The wide range of terrorist campaigns used to support her arguments is also a notable contribution in terms of empirical value.

Chapter one studies the unique role played by leaders of terrorist campaigns before examining opportunities for disruption through decapitation. Case studies facilitating this assessment range from the Kurdistan Workers' Party to Abu Sayyaf. Chapter two shifts the focus from the leadership to the relationship between the state and particular groups before assessing the potential role negotiation can play in marginalising terrorism. After an analysis of both the Northern Ireland and Israeli-Palestinian peace processes Cronin determines that although negotiation is not necessarily a "tactical" answer to terrorism, it is "a wise and durable strategic tool for managing the violence, splintering the opposition, and facilitating its longer term decline." (P. 72)

Chapters three and four both utilise the full triad of group, government and audience interaction to assess the conditions under which terrorist campaigns either succeed or fail outright. Discussing the role of the African National Congress in the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, chapter three draws attention to the fact that terrorist 'success' usually coincides with broader geo-political changes, (in this case the ending of the Cold War). With regards to incidents of outright failure, chapter four discusses the internal dynamics of a group that can lead to implosion, infighting, and loss of operational control. The importance of terrorist constituents is also considered with regards to potential ideological irrelevance and public backlash.

The wide range of case studies identified in chapter five highlights the fact that attempts to end terrorism through repression can be identified in nearly every part of the world. However, despite the fact that the use of force is the most common response to terrorism, Cronin concludes that the ability of terrorist groups to leverage state power against itself renders such efforts relatively ineffective.

The final pathway is considered in Chapter six and relates to the groups' transition from terrorist methods to other forms of violence such as guerrilla attacks and insurgency. Cronin warns that such an "end of terrorism is not necessarily the beginning of peace." (P. 146)

After outlining these six pathways Cronin assesses their relevance with regards to Al Qaeda. What is particularly outstanding in this respect is that Cronin does not fall victim to the common misconception that Al Qaeda represents a unique threat without historical precedent and is therefore deserving of entirely new modes of thinking. Cronin is therefore well placed to argue that Al Qaeda is not immune to some of the pathways, though not all, that have been shown to contribute to the decline of its terrorist predecessors.

Overall this is a well-written and informative book that deserves to be read not only by academics and students, but also policy-makers involved in the field of terrorism and political violence. As Cronin explains, the only way that "the United States and its allies can effectively respond to twenty-first-century terrorism is to formulate their policy with an understanding of how terrorist campaigns end and then follow a path built on that understanding." (P. 6)

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