

Testimony of
Steven Emerson
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Assessment

"The Homeland Security Implications of Radicalization"

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Executive Summary

The radicalization of Muslim populations in Western societies has leapt to the forefront of homeland security concerns due to the rise in homegrown terrorist plots in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Australia. Every episode of radicalization is a unique process, nonetheless these episodes often, but not always, share several commonalities, including, but not limited to, a charismatic spiritual leader, mosque attendance, an Internet connection, and overseas travel.

Homegrown terrorism poses a challenge to law enforcement because the individuals in the plots, prior to their radicalization, have not necessarily shown any evidence of extremist views, much less any connection to terrorist activity. They appear to lead normal lives, at times even after indoctrination into an extremist ideology. The examples to be presented demonstrate that there are several underlying similarities characterizing homegrown terrorism.

Those involved come from an array of backgrounds, but are largely first or second-generation Americans with a Middle Eastern or South Asian ethnic origin. The significant role played by Islamic converts is apparent in the cases of the “Virginia *jihād* network,” the recent Canadian plot, the Folsom prison case, the Portland Seven and the London bombing cell.

The majority of these radicalized individuals who become involved in such plots are below the age of 30 and are often times radicalized in private study circles or by individuals they meet at their place of worship. In several instances, an older and charismatic imam or spiritual leader is involved such as Ali Al-Timimi or Juma al-Dosari in the U.S., and in the case of the Toronto plot, by Qayyum Abdul Jamal, a 43-year-old mosque volunteer from suburban Toronto. These homegrown *jihadists* are often well-integrated into Western society and many were students at American universities.

Certain domestic radical Islamic civil society groups engender radicalization through spreading a false sense of persecution and alienation in the Muslim community in the West, labeling the war on terrorism as a war on Islam. These conspiratorial allegations facilitate and maintain indigenous Islamic alienation from host governments, reinforce loyalty to the larger Muslim *ummah*, and in some cases rationalize acts of terrorism. In nearly all of the post-9/11 terrorist plots, unsuccessful and successful, the perpetrators have claimed that they are only avenging crimes committed by the West against Muslims.

The effect the Internet has on radicalization and the formation of homegrown cells has increased exponentially. Signs of the influence and use of *jihadist* websites and forums are conspicuous in many homegrown plots around the world, including some in the United States. Experts around the world agree that access to the Internet is having a radicalizing effect on Western second-generation Muslim youths who find themselves divided between two cultures with contrasting value systems. The Internet can facilitate the entire process of the development of a plot from initial radicalization to the formulation of a complex and potentially deadly terrorist attack.

Introduction

Terrorism is no longer only an external threat posed by foreign entities. Since 9/11, there is an increasing trend towards homegrown terrorism plotted and, in some cases, executed locally. This realization struck with painful clarity following the terrorist attacks in London in July 2005 and the foiled terrorist attack in Canada in June 2006. Within the United States, this trend has been characterized by the involvement of individuals who were integrated into American society and have had little or no affiliation with formal terrorist organizations prior to, and often after, their radicalization.

This testimony will attempt to elucidate the growing threat of domestic radicalization by analyzing some of the many plots that have already been hatched in the United States in addition to the agents of radicalization, including radical spiritual leaders and the Internet, that have been infusing the Muslim-American community with *jihadist* thought and knowledge for years. Unfortunately, describing these domestic plots as “homegrown” has only recently come into vogue in our national discourse. This belated awakening to the root causes of homegrown terrorism – including elements on the Internet, certain imams, and others in positions of leadership or counsel who advocate divisiveness and violence – has hindered our ability to understand the threat posed by militant Islamism from within our borders. However, with more events such as this hearing, designed to share a greater understanding of the processes, risks, and vulnerabilities regarding radicalization, there is improved potential to successfully address this trend.

Homegrown Terrorism Plots

An overview of certain homegrown terrorists who have grown up in America and the plots they have nurtured and developed, often within our borders, provides a useful perspective on the causes and methods by which radicalization occurs and the dangerous ways in which such a process can manifest itself.

There is a misleading notion that those who fall prey to radicalization – and from within that pool, the minority who take the next step by committing or abetting acts of terrorism – are individuals who feel marginalized. Whether this marginalization is brought about via poor socioeconomic circumstances or simple unpopularity, there is tendency to assume that these are the individuals who are fodder for radicalization. While this is sometimes the case, relying on this template ignores other, more prevalent factors at play in the process of radicalization that direct a young man with friends in an environment healthy in terms of family and economic condition towards an extremist ideology.

John Walker Lindh

John Walker Lindh, known as the “American Taliban,” was raised in well-to-do Marin County in California.¹ As a teenager, he was quiet and limited his interests to basketball and hip-hop music. Later in his adolescence, he became interested in Islam and converted at a local mosque. People who knew him described him as a devoted Muslim.²

¹ David E. Kaplan and others., “Hundreds of Americans have Followed the Path to Jihad. Here's How and Why,” *US News and World Report*, June 10, 2002.

² Philip Sherwell, “The new Malcolm X?” *Sunday Telegraph*, April 9, 2006.

In May 2001, Lindh traveled to Pakistan and spent time at a recruiting center in Peshawar for Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), a Pakistan-based terrorist group with links to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.³ After leaving the recruiting center, he spent twenty days at a training camp run by HuM.⁴ After his training, he returned to the Peshawar recruiting office and expressed a wish “to fight with the Taliban on the front line in Afghanistan.”⁵ Carrying a letter of introduction from HuM officials, Lindh traveled to Afghanistan and presented himself to Taliban recruiters in Kabul who sent him to al Qaeda’s infamous Al Faruq training camp after again expressing a desire to fight on the front lines for the Taliban against the Northern Alliance.⁶

During his two months at Al Faruq, Lindh learned to use rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons. Osama bin Laden visited the camp three times during Lindh’s training period and during one of these visits, Lindh actually had a five minute conversation with bin Laden. After he completed his training, Lindh declined to participate in plots against the United States, Israel, or Europe in favor of fighting against the Northern Alliance.⁷ In November 2001, Lindh surrendered to Northern Alliance troops.⁸

In late 2002, Lindh agreed to plea guilty to supplying services to the Taliban and carrying an explosive during the commission of a felony and was sentenced to twenty years in prison.⁹ Lindh will be eligible for parole in 2019.

The Lackawanna Six

The Lackawanna Six may have been influenced by a lecture given by an extremist imam named Juma al-Dosari at a Lackawanna, New York mosque in 2001.¹⁰ The mosque did not invite al-Dosari to speak again due to his radical beliefs.¹¹ In April 2001, the men decided to travel to an al Qaeda guesthouse in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and then went to an al Qaeda training camp where they received weapons training. While they were at the camp, Bin Laden visited and gave a speech to all of the trainees.¹²

The young men involved in the case were not always known to harbor extremist views. Neighbors recalled that “As teens, they liked to drive fast, party and pick up girls. But... sometime during or after high school, the young men became, in varying degrees, more devout. They stopped drinking, swore off sex and began praying five times a day at the local mosque.”¹³ Federal investigators believe that al-Dosari helped persuade the men to travel to Afghanistan.¹⁴ According to Rodney O. Personius, the attorney who represented one of the six, al-Dosari told

³ Kaplan, “Hundreds Of Americans Have Followed The Path To Jihad.”

⁴ *USA v. John Phillip Walker Lindh*, 02-37-A, “Sentencing Memorandum,” pp. 2-3 (ED VA October 4, 2002).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ *USA v. John Phillip Walker Lindh*, 02-CR-37A, “Indictment,” (ED VA February 5, 2002).

⁷ *USA v. Lindh*, “Sentencing Memorandum,” 4.

⁸ *USA v. Lindh*, “Indictment.”

⁹ Kaplan, “Hundreds Of Americans Have Followed The Path To Jihad.”

¹⁰ Michael Powell, “No Choice But Guilty,” *Washington Post*, July 29, 2003.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *U.S. v. Al-Bakri*, 02-M-108. “Criminal Complaint,” (WD NY September 13, 2002).

¹³ “Defense Says Terror Suspects No Threat” *NBC*, September 19, 2002.

¹⁴ “Seventh Member of ‘Lackawanna Six’ in Custody,” *Associated Press*, January 29, 2004.

the men “that Mecca wouldn't do, that they needed *jihad* training if they wanted to save their souls.”¹⁵ The imam was unable to testify at the trial of the Lackawanna cell members because he was in U.S. custody at the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center where he still remains.¹⁶ Kamal Derwish, a charismatic man described as the cell's ringleader, further compelled his companions to attend the training camp.¹⁷ Additionally, cell member Yahya Goba later indicated that radical websites – specifically material from Qoqaz.net, the Chechen mujahideen website – also motivated his participation.¹⁸

In September 2002, the six men were arrested and indicted on charges of providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.¹⁹ All of the men pled guilty to charges of material support and were sentenced to prison terms of seven to ten years.²⁰ A seventh member of the cell, Jaber Elbaneh, was arrested in Yemen in late 2003,²¹ but is believed to have escaped from prison in February 2006.²² Kamal Derwish, was killed in a CIA missile strike near Marib, Yemen in November 2002.²³

Virginia Paintball Jihad

In June 2003 eleven men, nine of whom are U.S. citizens, were indicted for their involvement with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a Specially Designated Terrorist Organization.²⁴ In a superseding indictment in September 2003 the men were further charged with conspiracy to levy war against the United States and conspiracy to provide material support to al Qaeda.²⁵

A member of the group, Randall Royer, a.k.a. Ismail Royer, who pled guilty to weapons and explosives charges in January 2004,²⁶ had helped form and recruit other men from the suburbs of Washington, D.C., to train as *mujahideen* with LeT. Their training – which included paintball war games intended to simulate combat – began in the United States and continued at camps in Pakistan.²⁷ For two years, the group trained at firing ranges in Virginia and Pennsylvania, and seven of the defendants traveled to Pakistan.²⁸

¹⁵ Powell, “No Choice But Guilty.”

¹⁶ Powell, “No Choice But Guilty.”; David Muir, “Suicide Pact; Guantanamo Suicides,” *ABC World News Tonight*, June 11, 2006.

¹⁷ Betsy Z. Russell, “Al Qaeda recruits say images on Web sites part of allure,” *Spokane Review*, May 21, 2004.

¹⁸ Patrick Orr, “Hussayen defense gets surprise help; Testimony of key witness is blow to prosecution,” *Idaho Statesman*, May 25, 2004.

¹⁹ *USA v Yahya Goba, Sahim Alwan, Shafal Mosed, Yassein Taher, and Faysal Gala*, 02-M-107. “Decision and Order.” p. 3 (WD NY October 8, 2002).

²⁰ “Sahim Alwan Sentenced For Providing Material Support to Al Qaeda,” *USDOJ Press Release*, December 17, 2003, http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2003/December/03_crm_699.htm (Accessed September 18, 2003).

²¹ “Seventh Member of ‘Lackawanna Six’ in Custody,” *Associated Press*, January 29, 2004.

²² “Man added to ‘Most Wanted Terrorist’ list,” *UPI*, February 26, 2006.

²³ John Lumpkin, “Yemeni-American Killed in Airstrike Was Alleged Leader of Buffalo Cell,” *Associated Press*, November 12, 2002.

²⁴ *USA v. Royer, et al*, 03-CR-296. “Indictment.” (EDVA June 25, 2003).

²⁵ “U.S. charges seven with ‘Virginia jihad,’” *United Press International*, September 26, 2003.

²⁶ “Two Defendants in Virginia Jihad Case Plead Guilty to Weapons Charges, Will Cooperate with Ongoing Investigations,” *USDOJ Press Release*, January 16, 2004,

http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/January/04_crm_030.htm (Accessed September 18, 2006).

²⁷ “Defendants Convicted in Northern Virginia Jihad Trial,” *USDOJ Press Release*, March 4, 2004,

http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/March/04_crm_139.htm (Accessed September 18, 2006).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Although the indictment alleges that the network was involved with LeT, according a court filing, the cell began playing paintball as early as 2000 to train for possible *jihad* in Chechnya, because, according to Nabil Gharbieh, one of the founders of the paintball group, “Chechnya was a very ‘hot topic’ among Muslims.”²⁹ Al-Timimi was integral in encouraging the members to travel to Afghanistan after 9/11, but both Randall Royer and Ibrahim Al-Hamdi, had taken an active role in the *jihad* prior to 9/11. Al-Hamdi stated that since the age of 12 he had aspired to die as a martyr and traveled with Royer in 2000 to a LeT training camp in Pakistan.³⁰ Royer, the son of a Baptist and a former Catholic nun, converted to Islam at the age of 19. From the beginning, he was extremely involved with issues facing Muslims around the world, so much so that in the mid 1990s, he traveled to Bosnia to fight with a unit that supported Bosnian soldiers.³¹ Seifullah Chapman, and former Marine and member of the “Virginia *jihad* network,” is also a convert to Islam, having been introduced to the faith by his second wife.³²

It appears the plot took hold after 9/11 when members of the “Virginia *jihad* network,” gathered in Northern Virginia where the spiritual leader of their prayer group, Ali Al-Timimi,³³ told the other men, “the time had come for them to go abroad to join the mujahideen engaged in violent *jihad* in Afghanistan.”³⁴

According to witness testimonies, after September 11, 2001, “Al-Timimi stated that the attacks may not be Islamically permissible, but that they were not a tragedy, because they were brought on by American foreign policy.”³⁵ Witnesses also testified that Al-Timimi was not permitted to give sermons at Dar al Arqam, a Northern Virginia mosque, after his comments on 9/11 which may have explained the reason why on September 16, 2001, cell member Yong Kwon “organized a meeting at the urging of Al-Timimi to address how Muslims could protect themselves, and invited only those brothers who had participated in paintball training and owned weapons.”³⁶

Al-Timimi, the last member of the cell to be indicted (in September 2004), was convicted in April 2005 for inciting terrorist activity, attempting to contribute services to the Taliban, and on explosives and other firearms charges. Al-Timimi was sentenced to life in prison.³⁷ Of the others in the cell, six have pled guilty, three were convicted, and two were acquitted.³⁸ In June 2006, the last defendant linked to the “Virginia *jihad* network,” Ali Asad Chandia, was convicted of material support of terrorism.³⁹

²⁹ *USA v. Masoud Khan, et al.*, 03-CR-296. “Memorandum Opinion.” p. 18 (EDVA March 4, 2004).

³⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

³¹ Mary Beth Sheridan, Caryle Murphy and Jerry Markon, “Va. 'Jihad' Suspects: 11 Men, Two Views,” *The Washington Post*, August 8, 2003.

³² *Ibid*.

³³ *USA v. Al Timimi*, 04-CR-385. “Indictment.” (ED VA September 23, 2004).

³⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

³⁵ *USA v. Masoud Khan, et al.*, “Memorandum Opinion,” 31-32.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 32-33.

³⁷ *USA v. Al Timimi*, 04-CR-385. “Judgment.” (EDVA July 13, 2005).

³⁸ “Defendants Convicted in Northern Virginia Jihad Trial,” *USDOJ Press Release*.

³⁹ “Maryland Man Sentenced to 15 Years for Providing Material Support to Terror Group,” *United States Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of Virginia*, August 25, 2006, <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae/Pressreleases/08-AugustPDFArchive/06/20060825chandianr.pdf> (Accessed September 18, 2006).

Ahmed Omar Abu Ali

In November 2005, Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, a Texan by birth, was sentenced to 30 years in prison for joining an al Qaeda cell in Saudi Arabia and plotting with al Qaeda operatives to personally carry out the assassination of President Bush.⁴⁰ In December 2002, while pursuing religious studies in Saudi Arabia, Abu Ali joined a clandestine terrorist cell with ties to al Qaeda.⁴¹ According to court documents, Abu Ali received training from members of the al-Qaeda cell in weapons, explosives, and document forgery, and discussed plans to smuggle Saudi al Qaeda members into the United States through Mexico to carry out terrorist operations within the country.⁴² Abu Ali was raised in Falls Church, Virginia and worshipped at the Dar al-Hijrah mosque.⁴³ Abu Ali attended high school at the Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA) in Alexandria, which receives substantial funding from the Saudi government,⁴⁴ and graduated valedictorian of his class in 1999.

Abu Ali was not the only terrorist or extremist from this Virginia high school, founded in 1984.⁴⁵ Another former student, Mohammad Osman Idris, was charged with lying in immigration forms about his association with Hamas.⁴⁶ Idris and another ISA student named Mohammad El-Yacoubi were both prevented from entering Israel after a letter was found in their possession that has been described as a farewell letter for a suicide bombing mission from El-Yacoubi's younger brother.⁴⁷ The letter read, "When I heard what you were going to carry out, my heart was filled with the feeling of grief and joy because you are the closest human being to my heart." It continued, "I have no right to prevent you from your migration to Allah and his holy messenger, but it is incumbent on me to encourage you and help you because Islam urges *jihād* for the sake of Allah."⁴⁸ The comptroller of the school, Ismail Selim Elbarasse, has been described as an assistant to a high-level Hamas operative.⁴⁹ Court documents from a related case claim that Elbarasse shared an account used to launder money for Hamas with Mousa Abu Marzook, a Hamas official currently headquartered in Damascus.⁵⁰

After the Islamic Saudi Academy, Abu Ali spent a year at the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America (IIASA) in Fairfax.⁵¹ The IIASA, founded in 1989 as a non-profit educational institution affiliated with Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University

⁴⁰ "Ahmed Omar Abu Ali Sentenced to Prison on Terrorism Charges," *U.S. Department of State Press Release*, March 29, 2006.

⁴¹ *USA v. Abu Ali*, 05 CR 53. "Opposition to Defendant's Motion to Suppress" (ED VA September 19, 2005).

⁴² *USA v. Abu Ali*, 1:05CR53. "Superseding Indictment" (ED VA September 8, 2005).

⁴³ Jerry Markon, "Va. Man Convicted In Plot to Kill Bush; Defendant Claimed Confession Coerced," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 23, 2005.

⁴⁴ Matthew Barakat, "Saudi Academy Disputes Radical Reputation," *Associated Press*, May 18, 2005.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Michael Hedges, "Goodbye Letter," *Houston Chronicle*, May 27, 2002.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ "Alleged Hamas figure arrested in Md. taping Bay Bridge," *Associated Press*, August 24, 2004.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Caryle Murphy and John Mintz, "Va. Man's Months in Saudi Arabia Go Unexplained," *The Washington Post*, November 22, 2003.

(IMSIU) of Saudi Arabia, also receives funding from the Saudi government.⁵² In 2003, eleven scholars at IIASA were asked to leave by the US government.⁵³ In the summer of 2004, FBI, Customs, and IRS agents raided the school.⁵⁴ Publications by the IIASA received much attention in a report by Freedom House – a non-partisan GNO that promotes human rights and religious freedom – on Saudi hate literature in mosques. IIASA publications are replete with anti-Semitism in addition to condemnations of liberal democracy, freedom of thought, Western society, and Zionism.⁵⁵

In June 2003, Abu Ali was arrested by Saudi authorities along with several others in connection with the bombing of a residential compound in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that killed 34 people, including nine Americans.⁵⁶ Abu Ali admitted to his Saudi jailers that he came up with the idea to assassinate President George W. Bush on his own: “My idea was ...that I would walk on the street as the President walked by, and I would get close enough to shoot him, or I would use a car bomb.”⁵⁷ He compared himself to Mohammed Atta, who led the cell that carried out the September 11, 2001 attacks: “I wanted to be the brain, the planner, just like Mohammed Atta and Khalid Sheikh Mohammad.”⁵⁸

In Abu Ali’s home in Falls Church, where he lived with his family, authorities found a number of items that spoke to the level of his radicalization. These items included a six-page document on different types of surveillance methods used by the government and ways to avoid such surveillance; an undated two-page document commending Taliban leader Mullah Omar and the 9/11 attacks that criticized U.S. military action in Afghanistan; audio tapes in Arabic supporting “violent jihad, the killing of Jews, and a battle by Muslims against Christians and Jews;”⁵⁹ and a book written by al Qaeda’s deputy leader Ayman Al Zawahiri that “characterizes democracy as a new religion that must be destroyed by war, describes anyone who supports democracy as an infidel, and condemns the Muslim Brotherhood for renouncing violent *jihad* as a means to establish an Islamic state.”⁶⁰

Folsom State Prison, California

On August 31, 2005, a federal grand jury in San Ana, California indicted four men for their alleged roles in a conspiracy to levy war against the United States government through terrorism.⁶¹ The conspiracy allegedly involved a plot to attack U.S. military facilities as well as Israeli government and Jewish facilities in the Los Angeles area.⁶²

⁵² Susan Schmidt, “Saudi Group’s Leader Critical of Clerics,” *Washington Post*, December 11, 2003.; David B. Ottoway, “U.S. Eyes Money Trails of Saudi-Backed Charities,” *Washington Post*, August 19, 2004.

⁵³ Ottoway, “U.S. Eyes Money Trails of Saudi-Backed Charities.”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Fill American Mosques* (Washington, DC: Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, 2005)

⁵⁶ *USA v. Abu Ali*, 05 CR 53. “Indictment” (ED VA February 2, 2005).

⁵⁷ *USA v. Abu Ali*, “Opposition to Defendant’s Motion to Suppress.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *USA v. Abu Ali*, “Indictment.”

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *USA v. Kevin James, et al.*, 05-CR-214. “Indictment.” (CDCA August 31, 2005).

⁶² *Ibid.*

The terrorist conspiracy was hatched in California's Folsom State Prison by an inmate who founded the clandestine, prison version of a militant Islamic organization known as Jam'iyat Ul Islam Is Saheeh (JIS) and compelled JIS members to attack the infidel enemies of Islam.⁶³ The indictment further alleges that members of the conspiracy committed armed robberies of gas stations in order to finance their terrorist operation.⁶⁴ As FBI Director, Robert S. Mueller, III noted, this case involved a homegrown cell founded in a prison that saw themselves as "al Qaeda of California" and attempted to engage in crime locally to finance its terrorist activities.⁶⁵ If convicted of all charges, the defendants face a maximum sentence of life in prison.⁶⁶

Miami-Based Cell

On June 23, 2006, in Miami, Florida, seven suspected al Qaeda sympathizers were indicted on charges of conspiring to support al Qaeda by plotting attacks on targets that included the Sears Tower in Chicago, the FBI building in North Miami Beach, Florida, and other government buildings in Miami-Dade County.⁶⁷ It is important to note that while the men are thought to have sought to take part in the militant Islamist war against the United States, they were not Islamists in any traditional sense, but followers of a cult called the Seas of David, which reportedly drew on elements of Christianity and Judaism as well as Islam, and is allegedly tied to the ideologies of the Moorish Science Temple of America,⁶⁸ "an early 20th century religion founded by the Noble Drew Ali, an African-American circus magician who claimed he was raised by Cherokee Indians and learned 'high magic' in Egypt. Ali went on to style himself an 'angel' and prophet of Allah."⁶⁹

According to the indictment, Narseal Batiste, the group's ringleader, expressed the desire to wage a "full ground war" against the United States. The indictment further alleged that the individuals stated the urge to "kill all the devils we can" in planned attacks they hoped would "be just as good or greater than 9/11."⁷⁰ The cell came to the attention of law enforcement when Batiste sought to recruit an individual who was traveling to the Middle East to assist him in locating foreign Islamic extremists to fund his mission. This individual alerted the FBI, who arranged a meeting between Batiste and an informant of Arab descent who presented himself to Batiste as an al Qaeda operative.. During several meetings with the informant in December 2005, Batiste requested boots, uniforms, guns, radios, vehicles, and \$50,000 in cash to help construct an "Islamic Army" to wage *jihad*.⁷¹ In a March 2006 meeting, each individual in the cell swore

⁶³ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5, 7-10.

⁶⁵ "Unity: The Greatest Weapon Against Terrorism; Remarks by Robert S. Mueller, III Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation," James Fox Memorial Lecture, New York, April 26, 2006. (Accessed September 18, 2006).

⁶⁶ "Four Men Indicted on Terrorism Charges Related to Conspiracy to Attack Military Facilities, Other Targets," *USDOJ Press Release*, August 31, 2005.

⁶⁷ *USA v. Batiste, et al.*, 06-CR-20373, "Indictment" (SD NY June 23, 2006).

⁶⁸ Frank Main, "Dad: Sears Tower Suspect under Spell of Man," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 25, 2006; Paul Thompson and Sara Baxter, "Bizarre Cult of Sears Tower 'Plotter,'" *Sunday Times*, June 25, 2006.

⁶⁹ Thompson and Baxter, "Bizarre Cult of Sears Tower 'Plotter.'"

⁷⁰ *USA v. Batiste, et al.*, "Indictment."

⁷¹ Ibid.

an oath of loyalty to al Qaeda. Just prior to the oath, which was covertly recorded by the FBI, Batiste told the informant that he “admired the work bin Laden was doing.”⁷²

Adam Gadahn

Adam Gadahn, a convert to Islam, grew up on a farm in California. He was born Adam Pearlman to a Catholic mother and a Jewish father who later converted to Christianity, taking the name Gadahn.⁷³ As a young man, he was interested in death-metal music and hosted a show on the environment on a student television station.⁷⁴ In 1997, at the age of 17, he converted to Islam under the tutelage of a purportedly moderate religious leader named Haitham "Danny" Bundakji and was hired as a security guard at the Islamic Society of Orange County.⁷⁵ Bundakji claimed that Gadahn was then befriended by a group of Pakistani nationals he described as “fundamentalist” who were outspoken in their criticism of moderation and Bundakji’s interfaith activities, calling him “Danny the Jew.”⁷⁶ One of the group was Hisham Diab, a well-connected al Qaeda operative who once hosted the blind sheik Omar Abdel Rahman at his home.⁷⁷ After Bundakji banned these men from the mosque, Gadahn stormed angrily into Bundakji’s office, slapped him in the face, and accused him of not being a true Muslim. Shortly after this incident, Gadahn left for Pakistan and kept in touch with his family only occasionally.⁷⁸

Gadahn later traveled to Afghanistan where he attended al Qaeda training camps and served as an al Qaeda translator.⁷⁹ During his ongoing career as a terrorist, he has spent time with the captured al Qaeda leader Abu Zubaydah and John Walker Lindh.⁸⁰ Another associate of Gadahn’s, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, allegedly wanted to use Gadahn in a plot to bomb Baltimore gas stations.⁸¹ In May 2004, the FBI issued a BOLO (be on the lookout) for Gadahn and he was later added to the FBI’s most wanted list.⁸² In December 2004, Gadahn resurfaced as Azzam al-Amriki, or Azzam the American, on an al Qaeda videotape threatening attacks against the United States that would far surpass those of 9/11.⁸³ In the tape, he stated:

⁷² *USA v. Batiste, et al., 06-CR-20373*, “Government’s Motion for Pretrial Detention” (SD NY June 29, 2006).; “Seven Florida Men Charged with Conspiring to Support al Qaeda, Attack Targets in the United States,” *USDOJ Press Release*, June 23, 2006.

⁷³ Steven Stalinsky, “A Jewish Musician's Son Joins Al Qaeda's Ranks; The MEMRI Report,” *New York Sun*, September 13, 2006, <http://www.nysun.com/article/39535> (Accessed September 15, 2006). ; Peggy Lowe, “Gadahn tape urges conversion to Islam; Terror expert calls former O.C. man ideal convert for al-Qaida's purposes,” *Orange County Register*, September 3, 2006.

⁷⁴ Brian Ross, “Married to al Qaeda; Woman Unsuspectingly Weds Terrorist,” *Primetime Live*, ABC, December 23, 2004.

⁷⁵ Stalinsky, “A Jewish Musician's Son Joins Al Qaeda's Ranks.”; Spencer Ackerman, “Why American Muslims haven't turned to terrorism,” *New Republic*, December 12, 2005.

⁷⁶ Ackerman, “Why American Muslims haven't turned to terrorism.”

⁷⁷ Ross, “Married to al Qaeda; Woman Unsuspectingly Weds Terrorist.”

⁷⁸ Ackerman, “Why American Muslims haven't turned to terrorism.”

⁷⁹ Salah Naswari, “Latest al-Qaida message seen as PR bid,” Associated Press, September 3, 2006.; Evan Thomas, Daniel Klaidman, and Michael Isikoff, “Enemies among Us,” *Newsweek*, June 7, 2004,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Thomas, Klaidman, and Isikoff, “Enemies among Us.”

⁸² “Seeking Information RE: Adam Gadahn,” FBI, <http://www.fbi.gov/terrorinfo/gadahn.htm> (Accessed August 19, 2005).; Stalinsky, “A Jewish Musician's Son Joins Al Qaeda's Ranks.”

⁸³ Amy Argetsinger, “Muslim Teen Made Conversion to Fury; Intelligence Sources Say Californian Was on Tape,” *Washington Post*, December 2, 2004.

People of America, I remind you of the weighty words of our leaders, Osama Bin Ladin and Dr. Ayman Al Zawahri, that what took place on September 11 was but the opening salvo of the global war on America, and that Allah willing, the magnitude and ferocity of what is coming your way will make you forget about September 11.⁸⁴

Gadahm made another appearance on September 11, 2005 in a video in which he called on the West to remove its, “current leaders and governments and their anti-Islam, anti-Muslim policies.”⁸⁵ He threatened, “Yesterday, London and Madrid. Tomorrow, Los Angeles and Melbourne, God willing.”⁸⁶ He also made an appearance in an al Qaeda video released on the first anniversary of the London transit bombings, in which he condemned American leadership and the American people who elected them. In the message, Gadahm decried the “crimes” of American and British forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. He blamed America for carrying out the majority of what he sees as atrocities against Muslims and blames the British for “coaching from the sidelines and lending a helping hand whenever possible” and being “the one who taught America how to kill and oppress Muslims in the first place.”⁸⁷ Gadahm takes care to emphasize the legitimacy of attacking civilians as opposed to solely military targets.⁸⁸ Over the summer of 2006, an essay was removed from the website of the Muslim Student Association (MSA) of the University of Southern California. The author of that essay was “Adam Pearlman.” In the essay, a young Gadahm transitioning into Islam wrote, “As I began reading English translations of the Qur'an, I became more and more convinced of the truth and authenticity of Allah's teachings. ... Having been around Muslims in my formative years, I knew well that they were not the bloodthirsty, barbaric terrorists that the news media and the televangelists paint them to be.” While it is true that there is only an unfortunate segment of extremist Muslims who meet the description of “bloodthirsty, barbaric terrorists,”⁸⁹ Adam Gadahm unfortunately chose to join their ranks, stating in the As-Sahab release on the anniversary of the 7/7 attacks, “When we bomb their cities and civilians ...no sane Muslim should shed tears for them.”⁹⁰

Agents of Radicalization

While there are many different factors that contribute to radicalization and the development of terrorist plots, two in particular stand out as acutely noteworthy: religious leaders and the Internet. Below, certain imams connected to terrorist activity and extremist rhetoric and the role of the Internet in radicalization and terror-plot development are discussed.

Imams and Spiritual Leaders

Ali Al-Timimi

⁸⁴ As Sahab videotape of “Azzam the American,” identified by US intelligence as Adam Gadahm (Aired by ABC News, October 28, 2004)

⁸⁵ Ackerman, “Why American Muslims haven't turned to terrorism.”

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ As Sahab video, July 8, 2006.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Stalinsky, “A Jewish Musician's Son Joins Al Qaeda's Ranks.”

⁹⁰ As Sahab video, July 8, 2006.

Ali Al-Timimi was the primary lecturer at Dar al Arqam Islamic Center in Falls Church, Virginia from 2000-2001.⁹¹ As explained earlier in this testimony, he was convicted in April 2005 for inciting terrorist activity, attempting to contribute services to the Taliban, and on explosives and other firearms charges, and was subsequently sentenced to life in prison.⁹²

According to his indictment, Al-Timimi told a group of young men, later to be convicted for involvement with the terrorist group Lashkar e Taiba that “American troops soon to be deployed in Afghanistan would be legitimate targets of the violent jihad in which his listeners had a duty to engage.” He also told the men to “obtain jihad training from Lashkar e Taiba because its belief system was good and it focused on combat,” and provided information on how to reach the Lashkar e Taiba camp undetected.⁹³ Yong Kwon, one of the convicted paintball *jihadists*, testified at Al-Timimi's trial that his lectures had “fired him up” and was a “big factor” in his decision to go to Afghanistan and fight with the Taliban, although his trip was never realized.⁹⁴

Al-Timimi, like Virginia *jihad* cell members Royer, Kwon, and Chapman, grew up as a secular individual. Although Al-Timimi was born Muslim, as a young child he celebrated Christmas, and it was not until his early years of high school, when his family moved to Saudi Arabia, that he became more religious.

While in Saudi Arabia, Al-Timimi was mentored by a Saudi trained imam named Bilal Philips.⁹⁵ Philips, a Jamaican born, ex-communist, convert to Islam who grew up in Canada was Al-Timimi's Islamic Studies teacher at Manaret Riyadh High School in the early 1980s.⁹⁶ According to Philips, “The clash of civilizations is a reality,” and “Western culture led by the United States is an enemy of Islam.”⁹⁷

In 1993, Philips ran a program to convert US soldiers to Islam during the first Persian Gulf War. According to a 2003 *Washington Post* article, Bilal Philips, reported that the program was led by “a special team whose members spoke fluent English,”⁹⁸ educated in broadcasting and psychology. These conversion specialists financed pilgrimages and would later send Muslim clerics in the United States to their homes. He also encouraged some converts from this program to fight in Bosnia in the 1990s, which led to FBI investigations.⁹⁹

In a 2004 letter of appeal circulated in sympathetic circles in the US and the UK, Philips encouraged Muslims to assist Al-Timimi “financially, morally or politically.”¹⁰⁰ According to

⁹¹ *USA v. Al Timimi*, “Indictment.”

⁹² *USA v. Al Timimi*, 04-CR-385, “Judgment,” (EDVA July 13, 2005).

⁹³ *USA v. Al Timimi*, “Indictment.”

⁹⁴ *USA v. Al Timimi*, 04-CR-385. “Trial Transcript” p. 17 (ED VA September 23, 2004).

⁹⁵ November 30, 2004 letter of appeal from Abu Amina Bilal Philips on behalf of Ali Al-Timimi circulated in the US and the UK.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ John Mintz and Gregory L. Vistica, “Muslim Troops Loyalty a Delicate Question,” *Washington Post* November 2, 2003.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Abu Amina Bilal Philips.

Philips, “whatever the charges against him [Al-Timimi] may be, from an Islamic perspective they are false and contrived in order to silence the Da’wah to correct Islaam.”¹⁰¹

Upon returning to the United States, Al-Timimi received a bachelor’s degree in biology and computer science and a Ph.D in computational biology.¹⁰² Simultaneously he continued his missionary work, retaining the severe interpretations that he was introduced to abroad. For example, when asked, by an audience member during a lecture he gave whether it is permissible for a Sunni to pray with a Shiite, Al-Timimi responded: “Ok, you cannot pray behind any of these people. In fact if we were in an Islamic state these people their, their heads should be, you know, lopped off, that’s what, you know, should be done to these people. They deserve nothing better than to just cut their necks, if we were in an Islamic country. To be [UI word] to make the chance to make repentance and if they do not repent to cut their necks, that’s what these people deserve.”¹⁰³

Fawaz Damrah

Fawaz Damrah was the Imam at the Islamic Center of Cleveland.¹⁰⁴ Damrah also was a close associate with Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Sami al-Arian. In fact, Damrah actively raised funds for PIJ in the United States.¹⁰⁵

At a conference held in Chicago in 1991, Damrah promoted violence amongst the attendees, urging to “...point their gun toward the enemy, toward the children of pigs and monkeys, the Jews.”¹⁰⁶ Damrah also raised money for violent *jihad* at another conference, “The Jihad is still going on in Palestine. The intifada is calling on you. Donate \$500. Who would add to that \$500? Who would add \$500?”¹⁰⁷

Damrah, defending the use of violence in the Palestinian territories, stated, “The Palestinians are being terrorized and being victims of state sponsored terrorism...And they have the right to defend themselves just like they did then, like they did now.”¹⁰⁸ At a 1989 discussion panel moderated by Sami al-Arian, Damrah stated, “Terrorism and terrorism alone is the path to liberation.”¹⁰⁹

Damrah was also identified as a co-conspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing.¹¹⁰ Damrah was affiliated with the Al Kifah Refugee Center,¹¹¹ a predecessor organization to al

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² James Dao, “Muslim Cleric Found Guilty in the Virginia Jihad Case,” *New York Times*, April 27, 2005.

¹⁰³ Audio recording of lecture by Ali Al-Timimi.

¹⁰⁴ *USA v. Fawaz Damra*, 03-CR-484. 334 F. Supp. 2d 967. (ND OH September 13, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ *USA v. Fawaz Damra*, 03-CR-484. “Memorandum Opinion.” (ND OH August, 2004).

¹⁰⁶ ICP event commemorating the “Great Intifada” at Currie High School, Chicago, IL, Sept. 29, 1991

¹⁰⁷ “People In Cleveland Take A Closer Look At A Muslim Leader After The September 11th Attacks.” *National Public Radio (NPR), Morning Edition*, January 18, 2002.

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Sullivan and Robert L. Smith, “Parma Imam Says Palestinians Have Right To Take Up Arms.” *Plain Dealer*, September 27, 2001.

¹⁰⁹ Elaine Silvestrini, “Video Evidence In Al-Arian Trial Shows Anti-Israel Rhetoric,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 27, 2005, <http://news.tbo.com/news/MGB5AT9XMBE.html> (Accessed September 18, 2006).

¹¹⁰ *USA v. Elgabrownny, et al*, 93-CR-181. “List of 173 Possible Co-Conspirators Submitted by Mary Jo White.” (SD NY February 2, 1995).

Qaeda.¹¹² Damrah is currently awaiting deportation for failing to disclose his membership to a terrorist organization on his application for citizenship.

Mohammed El-Mezain

Mohammed El-Mezain formerly served as the imam of the Islamic Center of Passaic County and as the former Chairman of the Holy Land Foundation.¹¹³ In July 2004, Mezain was indicted for material support to a terrorist organization.¹¹⁴ According to a November 5, 2001 FBI Memorandum:

an FBI source who has provided reliable information in the past reported that during a speech at the Islamic Center of Passaic County (ICPC) in November, 1994, Mohammad El-Mezain, the HLFIRD's current Director of Endowments and former Chairman of the HLFIRD Board, admitted that some of the money collected by the ICPC and the HLFIRD goes to HAMAS or HAMAS activities in Israel. El-Mezain also defended HAMAS and the activities carried out by HAMAS.¹¹⁵

According to the same memorandum, El-Mezain attended a Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA) conference from December 30, 1994 to January 2, 1995 in Los Angeles, where an individual named Sheikh Muhammad Siyam was the keynote speaker. Siyam was introduced as "Head of operations of Al Jihad Al Islamia in Gaza, the HAMAS military wing." His leadership in Hamas is confirmed with a flyer of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) advertising its 1990 convention. On that flyer he is advertised as "Dr. Mohammed Siyam, Islamic scholar and head of *Intifadah* [uprising], Hamas Movement in Palestine."¹¹⁶

At the MAYA convention Siyam stated, "I've been told to restrict or restrain what I say...I hope no one is recording me or taking any pictures, as none are allowed ... because I'm going to speak the truth to you. It's simple. Finish off the Israelis. Kill them all! Exterminate them! No peace ever! Do not bother to talk politics."¹¹⁷

The same memorandum states that following Siyam's speech, El-Mezain exhorted the crowd to contribute money, subsequently announcing that \$207,000 had been for "the cause."¹¹⁸ At that

¹¹¹ *USA v. Damrah*, 03-CR-484. "Indictment." p. 2 (ND OH Dec. 18, 2003).

¹¹² "Additional Background Information on Charities Designated Under Executive Order 13224," United States Treasury Department, http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/key-issues/protecting/charities_execorder_13224-i.shtml#m (Accessed August 12, 2005).

¹¹³ Joel Mowbray, "Corzine, Pascrell Attended Brunch With Links to Radical Islamic Groups," *The New York Sun*, March 29, 2004, <http://daily.nysun.com/Repository/getFiles.asp?Style=OliveXLib:ArticleToMail&Type=text/html&Path=NYS/2004/03/29&ID=Ar00600> (Accessed September 18, 2006).

¹¹⁴ "Holy Land Foundation, Leaders, Accused Of Providing Material Support To Hamas Terrorist Organization," *USDOJ Press Release*, July 27, 2004, http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/July/04_crm_514.htm (Accessed September 18, 2006).

¹¹⁵ "Action Memorandum, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development International Emergency Economic Powers Act," From Dale Watson, Assistant Director FBI Counterterrorism Division to Richard Newcomb, Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of Treasury, November 5, 2001, 46. (Watson Memorandum)

¹¹⁶ Flyer, ICNA 15th Annual Convention, 1990.

¹¹⁷ Watson Memorandum, 46-47.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

conference, El-Mezain reportedly stated that during 1994 he raised \$1,800,000 inside the United States for Hamas.¹¹⁹

Adnan Bayazid

The imams addressed above have either been indicted or convicted of terrorism or are tied to a terrorist group. However, there are other imams who have preyed on their congregants and followers with incendiary rhetoric.

Adnan Bayazid served as the Imam of the Islamic Center of Greater Kansas City as well as on its board of directors.¹²⁰ In October 2002, Adnan Bayazid spoke to a Kansas City Art Institute class about *jihād*. The professor of the class noted “No one asked specifically about September 11, but [Adnan Bayazid] started going on a tirade... and for 30 minutes proceeded to tell us that there were no Islamic fundamentalists on the (hijacked) planes; that they had all been framed by U.S. and Israel; that the planes were flying by remote control by the Israeli government or secret police; that every Jewish person was told not to go to work that day at the World Trade Center. He blamed Israel for the whole thing, but he also said numerous times Jews not just Israel or the Israeli government, but that it was a Jewish conspiracy. He said that specifically numerous times.”¹²¹

When Bayazid was contacted by the media, he confirmed the account: “That’s what I believe, yes.” He furthermore added, “The planes who did the attack, the passenger and the pilots, their name is a public record, and none of them is a Muslim. So the 20 names or the 19 names of those Saudis they take, some of them are still alive in Saudi Arabia. Some of them were dead. It is not true.”¹²²

The vast majority of imams and Islamic spiritual leaders play a necessary and beneficial role in communities in which they serve, but a minority of this profession has taken advantage of their positions of trust and the vulnerability of American-Muslim community. These men have used their pulpits to preach malicious conspiracy theories and falsely paint the Global War on Terrorism as a war against Islam in order to alienate the Muslim community and engender radicalism and extremist thought. Any successful strategy to counter the influence of radicalism must employ imams who reject extremism and terrorism.

Internet

Another factor affecting the radicalization process is the Internet. It is common knowledge that the Internet is a resource widely implemented by terrorists and extremists. The Internet has become an indispensable multifaceted operational tool for terrorists in terms of psychological warfare, publicity, propaganda, data mining, fundraising, recruitment, mobilization, networking,

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Rick Hellman, “Blood libel: Muslim speaker at local college blames Israelis, Jews for 9/11.” *The Kansas City Jewish Chronicle*. January 17, 2003.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

sharing information, planning, and coordination.¹²³ Several of these functions can combine to serve the larger function of radicalization, which is crucial to the success of terrorists and extremists who propagate militant Islamism – particularly those who act on behalf of the ideology propagated by al Qaeda.

The U.S. led invasion of Afghanistan in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001 forced an historically and strategically significant shift on the part of al Qaeda that reverberated throughout the larger *jihadi* movement. The successful invasion decimated the hierarchy and configuration of al Qaeda, which was centralized in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda was forced to devolve to an ideological presence and surrender the greater portion of operational control outward to various affiliate groups. While these affiliate groups continued to direct *jihād* around the world, the ideology of al Qaeda continued to spread and led to the formation of various provisional cells,¹²⁴ several of which have been homegrown. Instead of a centralized organization, al Qaeda has become a franchised idea. While many prominent *jihadist* thinkers agitated over the circumstances that forced this strategic shift, some – such as Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, popularly known as Abu Musab al-Suri – had promoted the strategic necessity of this change for the wider Salafi *jihadist* movement for some time.

The nature and structure of the Internet serves the contemporary *jihadi* movement perfectly. It is a diffuse resource that can be utilized at almost any location to communicate any type of information. This resource is all too often utilized to convey and promote Islamist militancy and isolationism, which has had a radicalizing effect on individuals in almost every society with an Islamic population. As FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III pointed out last June:

Radical fundamentalists are particularly difficult to pinpoint in cyberspace. There are between 5,000 to 6,000 extremist websites on the Internet, encouraging extremists to initiate their own radicalization and to cultivate relationships with other like-minded persons.

Although we have destroyed many terrorist training camps in the past five years, extremists increasingly turn to the Internet for virtual instruction. Of course, not every extremist will become a terrorist. But the radicalization process has become more rapid, more widespread, and anonymous in this Internet age, making detection that much more difficult.¹²⁵

This sort of cyber-radicalization has tragically been demonstrated time and time again around the world, but most infamously and recently in Western countries – the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Exploitation of the Internet by terrorists and extremists for purposes of radicalization is finally getting the attention it demands from law enforcement, policymakers, and – most importantly – the public. By simply logging online, terrorists and extremists from Indonesia to Indiana are able to post articles, exchange information, and exchange thoughts and beliefs, often theologically flawed or distorted, on radical websites and in chat rooms. While there is an ever-growing trend

¹²³ Gabriel Weimann, “www.terror.net; How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet,” Special Report 116, United States Institute of Peace, March 2004, 5-10.

¹²⁴ Yoram Schwietzer and Sari Goldstein Ferber, *Al-Qaeda and the Internationalization of Suicide Terrorism* (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, November 2005), 18–19.

¹²⁵ Robert S. Mueller, III, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, June 23, 2006, <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/speeches/mueller062306.htm> (Accessed September 11, 2006).

towards the globalization of all thought and ideology, this communication of ideas regarding the harsher strains of Islam has led to an increase in the ease, level, and speed of radicalization and the networking of radicals that could not occur without the enabling medium of the Internet.

As noted by FBI Director Mueller, there is a plethora of extremist websites on the Internet that radicalize and educate an untold number of aspiring terrorists. Some of these websites and online forums provide explicit instructions on how to contribute to violent *jihad*. Others disseminate the extremist thought that often serves as the central ingredient in the radicalization process. Websites in the first category are dangerous for obvious reasons and continue to proliferate at an alarming rate. Websites in the second category present a more subtle and perhaps more dangerous threat. Once they are identified, websites of the first category can occasionally be shut down or be traced to the individuals behind them in order to provide actionable intelligence to the pertinent authorities. These websites convey information on combat tactics, explosives, chemical and biological weaponry, espionage, attending a terrorist training camp, and executing operations. Websites of the second category are purveyors of a different sort of information – the sort that is intangible and focuses on theology and ideology designed to lead its visitors down the path of isolationism and extremism, shaping them into terrorists.

One example of a website in the first category was Qoqaz.net. One of the two main sites of Azzam Publications, Qoqaz.net was the English language website for the Chechen mujahideen.¹²⁶ This website, hosted by an Internet service provider in Connecticut for seven years until 2003,¹²⁷ was utilized to raise funds for the mujahideen in Chechnya. The Qoqaz.net homepage, quoting Osama bin Laden's mentor, Abdullah Azzam, reads, "Jihad and the rifle alone. NO negotiations, NO conferences and NO dialogue."¹²⁸ Pages on Qoqaz.net detailed how one might donate to, train for, and join the *jihad* in Chechnya.¹²⁹ Qoqaz.net also played a role in motivating Lackawanna Six cell member Yahya Goba.¹³⁰

While Qoqaz.net is no longer operational, thousands of websites, forums, and cyber how-to manuals have taken its place. A recent posting on a militant Islamic forum about the bacterial botulinum toxin, which causes the deadly disease known as botulism, is one of a seemingly endless string of examples that should draw our attention to resources on the Internet that could allow radicalized individuals to execute a lethal plot. The post, published on an extremist forum hosted in the Middle East, details the preparation and preservation of the biological weapon botulinum toxin, the most potent toxin known today, and one of the Centers for Disease Control

¹²⁶ Web archive of Azzam Publications, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000818175151/63.249.218.164/html/chechnyafacts.htm> (accessed February 28, 2006).

¹²⁷ *USA v. Ahmad, et al.*, 04-CR-301, "Indictment," (D CT October 6, 2004).

¹²⁸ Web archive of Azzam Publications, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000621135807/www.qoqaz.net/> (accessed August 10, 2005).

¹²⁹ Web archive of Azzam Publications, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000818175151/63.249.218.164/html/chechnyafacts.htm> (accessed February 28, 2006).;

Web archive of Azzam Publications, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000818175151/http://63.249.218.164/html/chechnyafacts.htm#faqs> (accessed February 28, 2006).; Web Archive of Azzam Publications, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000816204345/63.249.218.164/html/chechnyajihadtrain.htm> (accessed August 10, 2005).

¹³⁰ Patrick Orr, "Hussayen defense gets surprise help; Testimony of key witness is blow to prosecution," *Idaho Statesman*, May 25, 2004.

and Preventions (CDC) six Category A Bioterrorism Agents. After a brief, but ominous introduction in which the author, “We are lurking in wait for you. Allah will torment you himself or use us to do so. You can plot, but we are plotting as well,” he includes facts about the bacteria, how to produce the toxin, lethal doses, experiments and observations, and possible methods of dissemination.¹³¹ The availability of such literature on the Internet provides individuals who are not trained scientists the opportunity to produce biological, chemical, and radiological weapons, though perhaps crude in form. Additionally, the easy distribution of information pertaining to various forms of attacks illuminates alternative and innovative methods of terrorism that might not be otherwise considered. In the case of the Al Qaeda affiliated individuals who were accused of planning to produce ricin in an apartment in London, the group was in possession of a recipe for making the toxin taken off the Internet.¹³² Equipment to produce biological threat agents, such as the castor beans from which ricin is processed, as well as makeshift laboratory materials are also available on the Internet. This technology provides the information to allow aspiring terrorists around the world, including those in the United States, to consider and produce biological, chemical, and radiological weapons that would otherwise be inconceivable.

Combating the operations of websites in this first category will prove to be crucial and effective in the fight against terrorism, however these efforts are largely reactive in nature. In order to achieve a meaningful victory in this long war against Islamic extremism, it will be necessary to take proactive measures, such as eliminating or lessening the influence of websites in the second category. A central challenge in this effort will be drawing the line between extreme-orthodox Islamic isolationism that cannot necessarily be restricted in a democratic society and “unacceptable forms of radical-Islamic isolationism.”¹³³ It will undoubtedly be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve a cessation of the flow of extremist thought on the Internet, nonetheless efforts must be undertaken to reduce the allure of the fundamentalist message.

A dark corner of another website, MySpace.com, has essentially become a late-model innovation in this second category of extremist websites. MySpace, the popular online social networking site, is a cyber-refuge for people around the globe to keep in touch with old friends and make new ones. It is especially popular among American university students and young adults, but the subjects discussed in certain circles on this popular website go beyond social activities consisting of friendship and fun. There is a healthy and growing population on MySpace of Islamist extremists and their sympathizers. Through monitoring these networks and the individuals of which they consist, it is evident that there is a possibly dangerous level of radicalization occurring on one of America’s most popular websites.

Like other MySpace users, these individuals post extensively in their blogs and write notes on their friends’ profiles; however, instead of commenting on a party, telling a joke, or making social plans, they angrily condemn America, swear support for Osama bin Laden, and express graphic desires to inflict violence upon innocents at home and abroad. Some even identify themselves as active terrorists and claim to have participated in attacks against American soldiers

¹³¹ “Toxins of the Next Phase,” Forum Posting, June 2006. The forum will remained unnamed for security reasons.

¹³² Milton Leitenberg, “Assessing the Biological Weapons and Bioterrorism Threat” *Strategic Studies Institute*, December, 2005.

¹³³ *From dawa to jihad; The various threats from radical Islam to the democratic legal order* (The Hague: General Intelligence and Security Service, December 2004), 9.

in Iraq, providing horrific photographs as evidence. These extremists who ascribe to the belief systems of groups like al Qaeda, Hamas, and Hizballah are largely adolescents and young adults. Apart from their *jihadi* inclinations, they share common similarities with others in their demographic. They often enjoy popular television shows, video games, and sports. The majority of these self-professed militants live in America – the land in which they were raised. Websites such as MySpace enable its users to connect with peers with greater ease, even if those peers are turning to violent extremist ideologies. While MySpace is not responsible for these growing radical networks, the service is a medium exploited to facilitate them.

Authorities around the world have already seen the heavy hand of the Internet in the development of homegrown terrorist cells. For domestic cells in London, Australia, Canada, the United States and elsewhere, cyber-radicalization and the use of the Internet's other resources mentioned above have reached new heights. In the case of the alleged terrorist cell arrested in the Toronto area early in June 2006, Qayyum Abdul Jamal, a 43-year old bus driver that served as a caretaker and prayer leader at the Al-Rahman Islamic Center, where the cell members worshipped, was an influential figure in the radicalization of the plotters, who were largely juveniles and young adults.¹³⁴ However, the investigation into this cell began in 2004 when intelligence officers monitoring an Internet chat room observed cell members promoting anti-Western sentiment.¹³⁵ Through the Internet, the cell members had connections with extremists all over the world. The arrests of the seventeen terrorism suspects in Toronto was the latest in a series of arrests and raids in Europe and North America – that began in Bosnia with a cell of two men who planned on attacking the British embassy in Sarajevo – all connected to a worldwide Internet terrorism network with links to al Qaeda in Iraq among other terrorist elements, including the now-detained terrorist Internet operative known as Irhabi 007.¹³⁶

Conclusion

Radicalism and homegrown terrorism pose unique challenges to the complex homeland security environment. The core of this threat is an extremist ideology that transcends borders. Until 9/11, the U.S. focused its efforts on the terrorist threat from overseas. However, as evident from these instances, extremism is as much of an internal battle as an external one. We, along with our allies, must be vigilant in combating this ideology at home as well as abroad with a multi-pronged campaign that relies on addressing root causes, but not at the expense of locating and incapacitating terrorist cells, with the result of isolating, retarding, and halting radicalization.

The growing pollution of the Internet by militant Islamist ideology is a particularly acute hazard that will continue to propel radicalization. There are no easy solutions to this crisis and innovative strategies are needed. Infamous terrorist Internet operatives, like Irhabi 007, can be tracked and arrested, but the ideology will continue to seep out on websites, online forums, and chat rooms. Currently, the most viable option available is to work to insulate Muslim

¹³⁴ Rebecca Cook Dube, "Canada faces 'jihad generation,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, June 6, 2006.

¹³⁵ Michel Comte, "Canadian bomb plot suspects appear in court," *Agence France Presse*, June 6, 2006.

¹³⁶ "Worldwide web of terrorism suspects exposed," *Australian*, June 8, 2006.

communities in the West from this radicalizing influence through the empowerment of constructive and truly moderate Muslim leaders.

While government agencies and law enforcement authorities must engage the American Muslim community to address the root causes of radicalization, officials must take greater care to avoid legitimizing certain elements – whether radical imams or certain groups – within the organized Muslim community who act as agents of radicalization.

These radical groups and Islamic leaders falsely present themselves as moderates and make it their mission to push a narrative to their community that the US government's campaign against terrorism is, rather, a generalized "war against Islam" that must be shunned, discouraged, and monitored. This characterization serves to demonize the efforts of the US government and, by extension, the West, which ultimately serves to radicalize and alienate Muslims in the United States, creating fertile ground for extremists to operate and recruit followers.

To a large degree, the narrative propagated by these groups is a corollary of the primary message of radical Islam at large: That there is a conspiracy by the West to subjugate Islam. This self-victimization fuels paranoia that Muslims are being selectively targeted for racist reasons, because of "special interests," or due to anti-Muslim bias in Western foreign policy. This, in turn, inflames self-alienation and degrades any positive connections between Western Muslim communities and their host state. It is therefore not surprising to see a common claim in most of the terrorist attacks the West has witnessed since 9/11, from the "Virginia *jihad* network" to the cell that executed the London transit bombings: that they were committing acts of violence to avenge Western atrocities against Muslims.

Too often, the US Government empowers the very groups that are instilling alienation from the United States and the West. Many of the leaders of these groups falsely claim to speak on behalf of most Muslim Americans while they attempt to neutralize other voices within the Muslim community. The "dialoguing" that goes on – with group leaders who demand to be the only representatives of the Muslim community with whom the government should meet – has serious and far-reaching consequences. The extent to which the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the State Department have legitimized radical groups masquerading as "moderate" warrants close oversight by Congress.

This same self-victimization formula has been applied by Islamic groups in Great Britain and Australia. The leaders of these countries, Prime Ministers John Howard and Tony Blair, at their own political expense, have recently articulated the dangers of empowering these groups that reinforce mistrust and hatred of the West. The British Prime Minister recently stated:

Look, we've got a problem even in our own Muslim communities in Europe, who will half-buy into some of the propaganda that's pushed at it – the purpose of America is to suppress Islam, Britain has joined with America in the suppression of Islam. And one of the things we've got to stop doing is stop apologizing for our own positions. Muslims in America, as far as I'm aware of, are free to worship; Muslims in Britain are free to worship. We are plural societies. It's nonsense, the propaganda is nonsense. And we're not going to defeat this ideology until we in the West go out with sufficient confidence in our own position and say, this is wrong. It's not just wrong in its methods, it's wrong in its ideas, it's wrong in its ideology, it's wrong in every single wretched

reactionary thing about it. And it will be a long struggle, I'm afraid. But there's no alternative but to stay the course with it. And we will.¹³⁷

The U.S. government should seek out dialogue and cooperation with true Muslim moderates, who have neither supported terrorism nor justified their actions and who seek the integration of Muslims into the American family, rather than self-isolation. Lending legitimacy to extremist imams and organizations only reinforces to the American Muslim community that these groups do, in fact, speak for them. Additionally, law enforcement agencies should continue vigilantly monitoring known pockets of extremism in the United States and abroad, including the trafficking of Saudi religious materials – known for promoting both violent *jihad* and gross intolerance of Christians, Jews and the West – in U.S. mosques and Islamic schools.

U.S. government programs and official engagement can provide only a limited amount of success. A greater effort on the part of the Muslim community must be undertaken to counter a growing trend that sees *jihad* as the new counterculture for a generation caught between two cultures that are often at odds. Circumstances demand that these efforts go beyond condemnations of terrorist attacks and conditional statements of support.

¹³⁷ "President Bush and Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom Participate in Press Availability," The White House Office of Press Secretary, July 28, 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/07/20060728-1.html> (Accessed September 18, 2006).