

# **TERRORIST GROUP COUNTERINTELLIGENCE**

A Dissertation  
submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Georgetown University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
In Political Science

By

Blake William Mobley, M.A.

Washington, DC  
October 20, 2008

Copyright 2008 by Blake William Mobley  
All Rights Reserved

## **TERRORIST GROUP COUNTERINTELLIGENCE**

Blake W. Mobley, M.A.

Thesis Advisor: Daniel L. Byman, Ph.D.

### **ABSTRACT**

Most terrorist groups do not survive past their first few years of existence. All terrorist groups, even those that survive for decades, face a basic and constant existential threat: discovery of their activities, personnel, and plans by government law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Why do some terrorist groups manage this threat better than others? What accounts for the variation in terrorist group counterintelligence capabilities? Answers to these questions have profound implications for homeland security and international counterterrorism efforts.

The study examines how three core variables: a terrorist group's organizational structure, its access to controlled territory and its level of popular support, affect the terrorist group's counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities. Thirty-three terrorist groups are examined in a large typological framework while additional case studies provide an in-depth focus on Al Qaeda, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Fatah, Black September, and the Egyptian Islamic Group (Gemaa al-Islamiyya).

The study shows that terrorist groups inevitably face predictable, though often subtle, counterintelligence dilemmas that challenge their ability to function effectively. Contrary to popular belief, the dissertation shows that hierarchical and tightly organized terrorist organizations are frequently superior to decentralized or 'network' terrorist

organizations in their counterintelligence capabilities, and therefore are in many cases better suited for long-term survival. Additionally, the study shows that most terrorist group leaders crave publicity, which frequently undermines the terrorist group's need to maintain secrecy and security. This research offers numerous policy prescriptions for more efficiently exploiting terrorist counterintelligence vulnerabilities. Incorporating these insights into current counterterrorism efforts promises to add inventive methods for monitoring and eliminating terrorist groups.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction to Terrorist Group Counterintelligence.....	1
Chapter Two: The Provisional Irish Republican Army.....	54
Chapter Three: Fatah and Black September.....	125
Chapter Four: Al Qaeda.....	195
Chapter Five: The Egyptian Islamic Group.....	306
Chapter Six: Terrorism and Counterintelligence.....	347
Bibliography.....	386

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO TERRORIST GROUP COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

Only half of all terrorist groups survive their first year of existence and only five percent survive their first decade.<sup>1</sup> Terrorist groups “end” for a variety reasons. Some lose key leaders, while others transition to non-violent political entities or fail to pass their cause on to the next generation of terrorists.<sup>2</sup> Almost all terrorist groups face a more basic and daily threat to their survival—discovery of their activities, personnel and plans by government law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Groups that fail to hide their communications, movements, and plots from a determined adversary will be quickly eliminated. Terrorist groups that survive for years often do so because they have developed sophisticated methods for staying hidden. Such strategies are often referred to as counterintelligence. Intelligence and counterintelligence often play a vital role in how terrorist groups end and how clandestine armed organizations adapt to existential threats. Most studies of terrorist groups omit analysis of these critical variables and, importantly, most groups that experience crippling counterintelligence problems do not survive long enough to be studied at all.

What accounts for the variation in terrorist group counterintelligence capabilities? Why do some groups adopt sophisticated counterintelligence procedures while others fail? Understanding terrorist group counterintelligence is critical for several reasons.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Hoffman, “The Modern Terrorist Mindset,” In *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment*, ed. RD Howard, RL Sawyer. (Guilford CT: McGraw Hill, 2002): 84.

<sup>2</sup> Audrey Cronin, “How Al Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups.” *International Security*, (Summer 2006).

First, anticipating terrorist counterintelligence vulnerabilities will enable governments to more effectively monitor and dismantle terrorist groups. Second, correctly diagnosing a terrorist group's counterintelligence capabilities may produce insight into the group's size, command structure, budget, access to state sponsors, and ability to adapt to its adversary's counterterrorism initiatives.

The literature on intelligence and terrorism offers limited insights into terrorist group counterintelligence. A large portion of terrorism literature focuses on terrorist group motivations, decision-making and government policy responses. The intelligence literature consists mainly of firsthand accounts of intelligence practitioners and large scale appraisals of the intelligence community and intelligence reform. Very few studies attempt to carefully examine and theorize about the operational side of intelligence and terrorist group intelligence operations in particular. This study attempts to address this deficit in the literature. To the terrorism literature it adds a unique framework for predicting terrorist group behavior, decision-making and strategy. Importantly, the study shows that terrorist groups inevitably face counterintelligence dilemmas that challenge their ability function effectively. The study also contributes to the intelligence literature by developing a typological framework that allows for a more systematic examination of counterintelligence strategies in variety of organizations.

Specifically, the study explores how three core independent variables affect a terrorist group's counterintelligence capabilities. These core variables are organizational structure, popular support, and controlled territory. The study also includes two important control variables, the counterterrorism capabilities of the group's adversary and

the terrorist group's resources.<sup>3</sup> The study argues that changes in the core variables lead to specific counterintelligence and security tradeoffs for terrorist groups. Understanding why and predicting when these tradeoffs arise will allow government law enforcement and intelligence agencies to better detect and exploit them.

The first section of this introductory chapter provides a definition of key terms. The second section situates the investigation of terrorist group counterintelligence in the broader literatures of organizational theory, terrorism and insurgency. The third and fourth sections of the introductory chapter detail the hypotheses and alternative hypotheses to be examined in the study. The fifth section discusses how each of the variables will be measured and the challenges of measurement. The sixth section provides an explanation of how insights from the study will improve theorizing and contribute to the broader literature. The seventh and eighth sections introduce the terrorist counterintelligence typology and then test the hypotheses against thirty-three terrorist group cases. The final section of the introductory chapter outlines the four in-depth case studies that constitute the remainder of the study and explains why these cases in particular were selected.

### Section One: Defining Terms

Definitions of the three key concepts of the study—terrorism, intelligence and counterintelligence—are frequently debated in the literature. The study does not seek to

---

<sup>3</sup> While these two variables are not addressed directly in the hypotheses, their effect on terrorist group behavior is substantial. Therefore, one of the goals of the study is to hold these variables constant while the values of the core variables shift and the independent variables are measured. By doing this, the study will isolate the effects of the core variables on the independent variables.



resolve controversies around these definitions. Rather, the following definitions are selected to allow for a broad application of the study's insights into both theory and practice.

Using Bruce Hoffman's definition of terrorism, a terrorist group has the following characteristics: a sub-national group or non-state entity that uses violence or threatens violence, whose goals are political and whose actions are designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, insurgency is defined as a struggle of a weaker party against a far stronger adversary, using political resources and violence to upset the 'illegitimate' political system and political authority of the stronger party.<sup>5</sup> Insurgency stresses mobilization of mass support for an overarching political goal, while terrorism stresses violence, against combatants and noncombatants, to create a mood of fear for political ends.<sup>6</sup>

Terrorist counterintelligence is the process by which a terrorist group prevents its adversaries from acquiring accurate information about its activities, personnel and plans. A group can do this by concealing its activities or by surreptitiously supplying its adversary with misinformation about the group's activities.

---

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (Victor Gollancz, London: 1998): 43.

<sup>5</sup> Bard O'Neill, "Insurgency: A Framework for Analysis," in *Insurgency in the Modern World*, eds. Bard O'Neill, William Heaton, Donald Alberts (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980): 1.

<sup>6</sup> To keep the scope of this study narrowly focused on the behavior of terrorist groups, the study will only incorporate insights from insurgencies that are widely seen as terrorist groups.

Defining intelligence is also essential for this study. Intelligence will be defined as the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on behalf of national security decision makers or organizational leaders.<sup>7</sup>

## Section Two: Terrorist Groups and Counterintelligence in the Literature

The following literature review introduces the broad theoretical themes and concepts that shape the hypotheses and alternative hypotheses presented in the third section. The first section of the literature review addresses the three core hypotheses: (1) organizational structure, (2) political organizations and popular support, and (3) controlled territory and geography of insurgency. The second section addresses the primary control variables: the adversary's counterterrorism capabilities, and terrorist group resources and state sponsorship.<sup>8</sup> The third section reviews two topic areas that impact the core hypotheses: the literature on secret societies, and the literature on misconduct and betrayal in organizations.

### **Organizational Structure**

An organization's internal structure significantly affects its decision-making process and ability to achieve its goals. Organizational structures vary in numerous ways, though the literature on organizational theory focuses on centralization (concentration of decision-making authority), spans of control (number of subordinates per supervisor), formalization (number of rules, regulations and procedures), complexity

---

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Sims, "Understanding Friends and Enemies: The Context for American Intelligence Reform," in *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, (eds) Jennifer Sims and Burton Gerber, (Georgetown University Press, DC, 2005): 15.

<sup>8</sup> As will be explained in greater detail, the control variables will be held constant, when possible, to ensure that changes in the independent variables are the primary cause of variation in the dependent variables.

(number of occupational specialties represented) and administrative intensity (number of support personnel within the system).<sup>910</sup>

Each of these variables undoubtedly plays a role in terrorist group organizational structure. Perhaps the most interesting among these variables is centralization.

Centralization describes how much power group leaders have over their subordinates in the organization and how effective group leaders are at shaping the behavior of subordinates. For the purposes of this study, groups that are highly centralized—with group leaders exercising a large degree of control over subordinates—will be referred to as ‘tightly commanded.’<sup>11</sup>

In tightly commanded organizations leaders exercise strategic, operational and tactical control over their personnel. In loosely commanded organizations leaders exercise mainly strategic control over group personnel, affording lower ranking members a greater degree of decision-making autonomy.<sup>12</sup> Strategic control is the ability to define top-level goals and aims of the group. Operational control is the ability to influence the

---

<sup>9</sup> Bobbitt, Randolph H. Jr, and Orlando Behling, “Organizational Behavior: A Review of the Literature”, *The Journal of Higher Education*, (Vol 52, No 1, Jan – Feb 1981): 35. / Johnson, Norman J., Richard H Hall, J. Eugene Haas, “Organizational Size, Complexity and Formalization”, *American Sociological Review*, (Vol 32, No 6, Dec 1967): 905.

<sup>10</sup> Theorizing on organizational complexity and ‘normal accidents’ is among of the central debates in the organizational literature. Charles Perrow’s work suggests that a terrorist group (as a complex organization) would be more likely to suffer from catastrophic CI accidents as the group requires tight coordination between sub-units (which are increasing mismatched as the sub-units’ modus operandi undergo “practical drift” over time) [Perrow 1984/Snook 2000]. However, finding examples of terrorist groups whose organizational complexity created catastrophic friction with the group’s need for tight coupling between organizational units has proven extremely difficult.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Jackson, “Groups, Networks or Movements: A Command and Control Driven Approach to Classifying Terrorist Organizations and its Applications to Al Qaeda,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, (Vol 29, 2006): 243.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

activities and operations being carried out in pursuit of the organization's strategic goals. Tactical control is the ability to influence the specific activities an individual member or component of the organization carries out on a day-to-day basis.<sup>13</sup> The following subsection helps to develop the study's hypothesis on organizational structure by linking theoretical insights to terrorist group counterintelligence.

*Organizational Structure and Counterintelligence.* Organizational theorists tend to agree that tight command and control structures improve strategic coordination but reduce local adaptation and tactical innovation.<sup>14</sup> This insight will serve as an anchor for the hypotheses about counterintelligence in organizations. Strategic coordination will be beneficial for many intelligence tasks, including coordinating intelligence collection, sharing intelligence across geographical and organizational units, and alerting the group to general counterintelligence threats. On the other hand, high levels of strategic coordination can also create counterintelligence vulnerabilities for a terrorist group. Strategic coordination discourages innovation and potentially useful variation within the organization. The Basque terrorist group ETA, for example, trained all its recruits to evade government surveillance by communicating with couriers and anonymous exchange points, known as 'dead drops', rather than landline telephones and the postal

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. / It is important to note that most terrorist groups will not be perfectly tightly-or loosely-commanded. Instead, groups will fit somewhere on the spectrum in between these extremes and, as a result, will be subject to a mixture of advantages and vulnerabilities that come with each command structure.

<sup>14</sup> Russ Marion and Mary Uhl-Bien, *Complexity Theory and al Qaeda: Examining Complex Leadership*, Presented at Managing the Complex IV: A Conference on Complex Systems and the Management of Organizations, (Fort Meyers, FL, December, 2002). Available at: [sce.edu/ISCE\\_Group\\_Site/web-content/ISCE%20Events/Naples\\_2002/Naples\\_2002\\_Papers/Marion\\_Uhl-Bien.pdf](http://sce.edu/ISCE_Group_Site/web-content/ISCE%20Events/Naples_2002/Naples_2002_Papers/Marion_Uhl-Bien.pdf); Jackson, 247. Kauffman, S.A. (1993), *The Origins of Order*. New York: Oxford University Press.

service. As a result, however, Spanish police could more easily identify ETA couriers—and perhaps ETA personnel and facilities—by studying the standardized methods of a subset of the group’s couriers.

Strategic coordination is also required for implementing an organizational strategy known as compartmentation—the process restricting the flow of information within an organization to prevent the disclosure of sensitive intelligence to individuals who are not authorized to receive such information. For an organization to achieve compartmentation without fragmenting itself into many autonomous groups, a higher degree of coordination at upper levels of the organization are required to compensate for reduced communication and information flow at lower-levels.<sup>15</sup> For example, when Italian police began to rout the Italian Red Brigades in the mid 1970s, the Brigades established a rigid territorial hierarchy to facilitate the creation of a highly compartmented structure among their operational cells.<sup>16</sup>

These insights lead to the first two organizational hypothesis. Hypothesis 1(A): A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure, relative to a group with a loose command structure, will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation. Hypothesis 1(B): A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure, relative to a group with a loose command structure, will be more vulnerable to

---

<sup>15</sup> Wayne E. Baker, Robert R. Faulkner, “The Social Organization of Conspiracy: Illegal Networks in the Heavy Electrical Equipment Industry,” *American Sociological Review*, (Vol 58, No. 6, Dec., 1993): 848. And G.H. McCormick and G. Owen, “Security and Coordination in a Clandestine Organization,” *Mathematical and Computer Modelling* 31 (2000): 176.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Meade, Jr. *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism*, (MacMillan: London, 1990): 51, 95.

its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures. Organizational theorists have developed these basic insights about centralization, coordination and innovation from studying a variety of 'normal' organizations, but will these principles extend to terrorist groups as well? Demonstrating that this phenomenon may apply to terrorist groups offers evidence of its universality, and perhaps the applicability of similar organizational theorizing to a larger variety of terrorist group behavior.

Organizational theorists also hypothesize about how an organization's environment affects its internal structure. The threat-rigidity hypothesis, developed by Staw et al, posits that external threats lead to centralization and constriction of control—and consequently to rigidity in organizational responses and restriction in information processing.<sup>17</sup> Centralization is characterized by a decline in the number of participants in decisions and an increase in decision-making control at upper levels of the organization. The literature suggests that rigidity in response may be adaptive if causal relationship between process and performance is stable but maladaptive if the task or environment has radically changed. This suggests that loosely commanded organizations may be more effective at dealing with complex problems if the increase in threat is accompanied by radical changes in the environment and a need for innovative responses. Applied to

---

<sup>17</sup> Group Decision Making under Threat: The Tycoon Game, Deborah L. Gladstein; Nora P. Reilly, *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3. (Sep., 1985): 613. / Threat Rigidity Effects in Organizational Behavior: A Multilevel Analysis, Barry M. Staw, Lance E. Sandelands, Jane E. Dutton, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Dec., 1981). / Organizational Actions in Response to Threats and Opportunities Prithviraj Chattopadhyay; William H. Glick; George P. Huber *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 5. (Oct., 2001).

terrorist group structures, the threat-rigidity proposition offers a second hypothesis: terrorist groups facing external threats will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time.

### **Popular Support**

Literature on popular support for terrorist groups, insurgencies and secret societies provides some insight into terrorist group counterintelligence. To keep the scope of this study narrowly focused on the behavior of terrorist groups, the study will only incorporate insights from insurgencies and secret societies that are widely seen as terrorist groups.<sup>18</sup> The literature has come to a general consensus that secretive armed groups generally cannot survive without either active or passive support from a surrounding population.<sup>19</sup> A sociological study of violent, underground movements showed that securing public sympathy and support was often their first task.<sup>20</sup> Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf argue that one of the most important forms of support for a rebellion is the act of popular nondenunciation, which they define as a population's refusal to provide information to the government about a rebel group.<sup>21</sup> More active forms of support include the provision of safe houses and storage facilities and the

---

<sup>18</sup> While a wide range of insurgencies share many common characteristics with terrorist groups there are many important differences between these two classes of armed groups and exploring how these differences impact the core hypotheses is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>19</sup> Cronin, Summer 2006. / Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory Anthony Oberschall, *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Theories of Terrorism: A Symposium. (Mar., 2004): 30.

<sup>20</sup> Sociology of Secret Societies Joseph S. Roucek *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 19, No. 2. (Jan., 1960): 167.

<sup>21</sup> Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytical Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, (The RAND Corporation, Markham Publishing Company, Chicago: 1970): 10.

identification of outsiders and counterintelligence threats in the terrorist group's territory. For example, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) occasionally used local sympathizers in the government tax offices of Northern Ireland to identify PIRA members who were earning and spending 'beyond their means'—an indication that the member was earning money on the side as a British informant.

Terrorists often garner public support through direct contact with a 'host' population. Terrorists may then gain the advantage of living among the host populations, whereas government forces are quickly identifiable as hostile and external. Thus, proximity to a supportive host population can reduce a terrorist group's counterintelligence vulnerabilities if the population can help the group identify suspected government agents and intelligence operations. Occasionally a group will gain public support with more coercive tactics. For example, populations may feel social pressure not to collaborate with the police or may fear the consequences of being exposed as a collaborator.

Another way terrorist groups generate public support is to use local and international media. A study of insurgency and terrorism in Southern Africa showed that exploitation of the local media featured prominently in strategies for gaining popular support.<sup>22</sup> Terrorists and insurgents used the local media in two ways. First, they relied on media coverage of their violent operations to convey messages to the public about government ineffectiveness. Second, they cultivated long term relationships with media

---

<sup>22</sup> Insurgent Violence versus Image Management: The Struggle for National Images in Southern Africa Jarol B. Manheim; Robert B. Albritton *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2. (Apr., 1987): 202.



organizations and journalists in order to influence media output. For these groups, exploiting and influencing the media paid large dividends—the study found that even in the context of highly salient historical events, both the government and the terrorist and insurgent groups succeeded in manipulating images portrayed in the media to their advantage.<sup>23</sup>

Studies of terrorist groups and popular support show a similar pattern. In a study of militant Islamic Palestinian groups, Mia Bloom found that public support for and recruitment into radical Palestinian groups increased as a direct result of the groups' use of high-profile suicide bombings.<sup>24</sup> Robert Pape's analysis of suicide bombing argued that terrorist groups have successfully employed this method of attack to alter the adversary government's policies<sup>25</sup>—presumably an element of public sympathy for the terrorist group or outrage at heavy-handed government tactics played a large role in this process.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, competition among Palestinian groups led some groups to claim responsibility for attacks before it became evident whether their members had conducted the attacks.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Manheim et al., 218.

<sup>24</sup> Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding Mia M Bloom. *Political Science Quarterly*. (New York: Spring 2004. Vol. 119, Iss. 1).

<sup>25</sup> Robert A. Pape The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3. (Aug., 2003).

<sup>26</sup> A contrasting view is presented is Max Abrahms' "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," in *International Security*, Fall 2006. Abrahms argues that terrorist groups rarely achieve their core objectives using terrorism, particularly when targeting civilians. However, Abrahms fails to account for the critical importance of most terrorist groups' small, daily, bureaucratic successes, especially as they communicate with their constituency as well as the adversary government through their 'resistance efforts'.

<sup>27</sup> The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective Ami Pedahzur, Arie Perliger. *Social Forces*. (Chapel Hill: Jun 2006. Vol. 84, Iss. 4): 1987.

While the literature highlights the benefits of popular support to armed movements, theoretical exploration of the downsides of popular support is almost non-existent. The central question around this gap in the literature is: in what ways do terrorist groups jeopardize their survival and operational activities in their selection of popular support strategies?

*Popular Support and Counterintelligence.* A brief look at the historical record of terrorist group behavior suggests that there is a natural tension between gaining popularity and maintaining secrecy. Terrorist group leaders often devote considerable time to improving their public image to increase popular support or improve group morale and cohesion. For example, the leader of Filipino terrorist group Abu Sayyaf spent substantial time with local media organizations bragging about his battles with Filipino security forces.<sup>28</sup> Underground resistance groups in Czechoslovakia in World War II relied on illicit radio stations to broadcast their anti-Nazi message. This activity put the underground groups at considerable risk as Nazi radio direction-finders occasionally located illicit Czech stations and dealt with offenders harshly.<sup>29</sup>

In another instance, in 1975 the Greek terrorist group November 17 released a detailed account of how it assassinated a US official in Greece by taking advantage of the Greek police's counterintelligence vulnerabilities.<sup>30</sup> Though November 17 released the account to prove to the Greek public that it was responsible for the operation, Greek

---

<sup>28</sup> Mark Bowden, "Jihadists in Paradise", *Atlantic Monthly*, March 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Roucek, 167.

<sup>30</sup> George Kassimeris, *Europe's Last Red Terrorists: The Revolutionary Organization 17 November* (Hurst and Company, London 2001): 234.

security forces were provided an opportunity to learn about the terrorist group's operational procedures and improve police communications security.

Similarly, many terrorist group leaders tend to relish the media spotlight. Though developing media support for the group may help to bolster the group's popularity, occasionally group leaders bask in the spotlight to develop a personal popularity which does not directly serve the group. Yassir Arafat, for example, had a huge appetite for publicity and gave many interviews to Western reporters. While these interviews most likely resulted in some increase in popular support for Arafat's terrorist group, they also provided his adversaries with valuable assessment data on his location and health, in addition to valuable information about his group.

This leads to our hypotheses about popular support and terrorist groups.

Hypothesis 2(A): A terrorist group with popular support, relative to one without popular support, will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.

Hypothesis 2(B): A terrorist group with popular support, relative to one without popular support, will be more likely to expose sensitive information about its personnel and operations through its efforts to generate and maintain popular support. The study will test this hypothesis and probe the deeper question: under what conditions do high-profile popular support campaigns serve as a net benefit to terrorist groups?

## **Controlled Territory**

Controlled territory is a geographical space where a terrorist group regulates physical access to and security within defined territorial boundaries.<sup>31</sup> Controlled territory can be acquired either from a state sponsor granting a terrorist group freedom of movement within its borders or from a weak government that does not have the resources or the will to challenge the terrorist group's control of the territory.

The literature on terrorist group use of controlled territory is thin and the counterinsurgency literature has addressed this issue to only a limited extent.<sup>32</sup> The creation of an insurgent 'state' can be characterized as developing in three stages.<sup>33</sup> In the first stage, the terrorist or insurgent group has no fixed territorial base and relies on mobile warfare. In the second stage, the group establishes a core territory and begins to engage in terrorist and guerrilla warfare and more open confrontations with the adversary state. In the third stage, the group controls a large swath of territory and defends the territory with more conventional military strategies. A study of the Shining Path organization in Peru revealed that the group developed a large network of sympathizers in the first phase and later converted that sympathy into a core territorial base. In the

---

<sup>31</sup> Though the literature on insurgencies is discussed in this section, the study limits the analysis of this literature to insights relevant to how terrorist groups acquire and use controlled territory.

<sup>32</sup> African Militaries and Rebellion: The Political Economy of Threat and Combat Effectiveness, Jeffrey Herbst, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41, No. 3. (May, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Geographical Dimensions of the Shining Path Insurgency in Peru Robert B. Kent *Geographical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 4. (Oct., 1993): 441.

final stage, Shining Path controlled access to its territorial base so effectively that it was able to evict non-sympathizers from key areas.<sup>34</sup>

Controlling territory is intimately linked to popular support. It is unlikely that a terrorist or insurgent group could control territory for an extended period without the direct or indirect support from the resident population. In some cases, terrorist groups may lose popular support if they poorly manage key controlled territories. The Shining Path suffered from a decline in popular support when its economic and social policies were disagreeable to the population within Shining Path territory. Studies of inner city gangs show that gangs typically maintain control of urban turf and popular sympathy around this turf as long as their operations do not disrupt the normal day-to-day activities of the local population.<sup>35</sup> The struggle to maintain popular support in a controlled region, and the challenges this poses to terrorist group counterintelligence, is a key theme of the study.

*Controlled Territory and Counterintelligence.* Access to controlled territory may provide a terrorist group many counterintelligence advantages. Territory allows the group to train, communicate, and meet face-to-face with other group members with a degree of freedom not available in hostile, uncontrolled territory. For example, in the 1970s the Palestinian terrorist group Fatah protected the secrecy of its communications and operational plans far more effectively in its controlled territory in Beirut than in the

---

<sup>34</sup> Kent, 442.

<sup>35</sup> Residence and Territoriality in Chicano Gangs Joan Moore; Diego Vigil; Robert Garcia *Social Problems*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (Dec., 1983): 184. / Community Tolerance of Gang Violence Ruth Horowitz *Social Problems*, Vol. 34, No. 5. (Dec., 1987): 437.

uncontrolled territory of the West Bank, which was deluged with Israeli security agents and collaborators.

On the other hand, controlled territory can confine a group and give the adversary a ‘target’ territory to monitor and against which it can array its forces. Thus, a terrorist group may enjoy greater secrecy within a controlled territory but the terrorist group’s movements into and out of their controlled territory will be easier for the adversary to track. For example, a state adversary with territory adjacent to that of a terrorist group can set up checkpoints on their common ‘border’ to monitor movement in and out of the area with technical or human assets. Individuals of interest can then be followed into the state adversary’s territory to identify contacts and activities. A terrorist group that controls territory is also under greater pressure to maintain popular support—particularly if it wishes to deter adversary collaborators from developing and thriving within its territory.

These insights lead to the controlled territory hypotheses. Hypothesis 3(A): A terrorist group with controlled territory, relative to one without territory, will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting. Hypothesis 3(B): A terrorist group with controlled territory, relative to one without territory, will be more vulnerable to its adversary’s efforts to track the group’s gross financial, logistical and personnel movements into and out of the controlled territory. Because popular support and controlled territory would appear to be highly correlated, testing this hypothesis will require a close examination of, and control for, the effects of popular support.

### **Control Variable: The Adversary's Counterterrorism Capabilities**

The adversary's counterterrorism capability is an important control variable in this study. Controlling for this variable will be crucial for demonstrating that a terrorist group's counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities are a result of changes in organizational structure, popular support and controlled territory rather than changes in the strength of the adversary.

Terrorist groups face a wide variety of adversaries, which differ significantly in their counterterrorism capabilities. A state adversary with strong counterterrorism capabilities will employ a counterterrorism strategy that involves diligent police work, rather than heavy-handed military tactics, good coordination between police and intelligence agencies, and the prudence to avoid costly overreactions to terrorist activities. A state adversary that does not perform diligent police work, foster coordination between police and intelligence agencies nor avoid costly overreactions may permit its terrorist adversary to evade capture and capitalize on a windfall of popular support.

The terrorist group and its state adversary are often engaged in a competitive and dynamic relationship. A move or innovation by a terrorist group will frequently result in a countermove or counter-innovation by the state adversary, and vice versa. Because the state typically outmatches its terrorist adversary in military strength, the terrorist group will struggle to stay hidden and operate clandestinely by constantly improving its counterintelligence practices. For example, the Indonesian terrorist group Jemaah

Islamiyya adopted sophisticated communications encryption standards in the 1990s as a result of Indonesian law enforcement efforts to intercept the group's communications.<sup>36</sup>

A terrorist group that does not adapt to its adversary's intelligence gathering innovations will quickly be defeated. Bruce Hoffman describes the process as one of "natural selection...whereby every new terrorist generation learns from its predecessors, becoming smarter, tougher, and more difficult to capture or eliminate."

Innovation and counter-innovation doesn't always lead to more technologically sophisticated strategies. In many cases terrorist groups will strengthen their counterintelligence by adopting more 'primitive' or basic counterintelligence practices. Groups may avoid higher technologies and rely instead on more basic or archaic ways of communicating with its members and vetting its personnel.

#### **Control Variable: Resources and State Sponsorship**

Understanding a terrorist group's financial and personnel resources will be critical for this study as well. Controlling for the resources variable will help to demonstrate that a terrorist group's counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities are a result of changes in organizational structure, popular support and controlled territory rather than changes in the group's overall resources.

State sponsorship is an important component of the resources variable. States support terrorist groups for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways. This variation affects how terrorist group counterintelligence is impacted by state support. Dan Byman identifies eight reasons why states sponsor terrorist groups: to weaken and destabilize a

---

<sup>36</sup> Larry Margasak, "Philippines reports show terrorists' careful plans," The Associated Press, April 7, 2003.



neighbor, to project power, to change a neighboring regime, to shape the opposition of a neighboring regime, to increase international prestige, to export a political system, to aid their kin, and to provide a terrorist group with a military boost.<sup>37</sup> States also vary the type and level of support they provide to terrorist groups. Byman categorizes state sponsorship into six levels: a strong supporter is highly committed to the terrorist group and offers significant resources, a weak supporter is highly committed to the terrorist group but does not have significant resources to offer, a lukewarm supporter favors the terrorist group but provides a terrorist group with only indirect support, an antagonistic supporter favors the terrorist group but seeks to control it or weaken its cause, and a passive supporter does not directly aid a terrorist group but knowingly turns a blind eye to the group's activities.<sup>38</sup> A state's motivation for supporting a terrorist group will shape the type of counterintelligence and intelligence support a group receives from the state.

Ultimately, state sponsorship is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, a strong supporter can enhance a group's capabilities directly by training the terrorist group in counterintelligence methods and sharing state-collected intelligence or indirectly by providing the group with safehaven and logistical counterintelligence assistance. On the other hand, an antagonistic supporter can heighten a terrorist group's exposure by compromising information about the group in order to manipulate and control it.

---

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connection: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005): 36 -50.

<sup>38</sup> Byman, 2005, 15.

### **Additional Insights from the Literature: Secret Societies**

The literature on secret societies offers additional insight into the core variables. A secret society is defined as a group that holds as one of its primary organizational objectives to keep its personnel, plans, and processes hidden from non-group members. Using this definition, terrorist groups can be classified as a type of secret society—though terrorist groups have many objectives, keeping personnel, plans and processes secret from the adversary are a primary goal.

The literature on secret societies helps us to explore the interaction between organizational structure and secrecy in terrorist groups. Sociologist Georg Simmel originally posited that secret societies are rational, deliberate, and hierarchical. More recent work on secret societies shows that their structures vary widely.<sup>39</sup> Bonnie Erickson argues that a secret organization's structure reflects the structure of the social networks the group taps into to recruit new members.<sup>40</sup> As secret organizations enhance security by recruiting from trusted social, clan, family and neighborhood networks, groups will trend towards less hierarchy because new recruits will have many connections to existing group members at all levels of the organization.<sup>41</sup> The proliferation of informal connections between many levels of the organization would naturally lead to an erosion of hierarchy and chain of command. This insight conflicts with the threat-rigidity hypothesis, which posits that terrorist groups facing external threats will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time. Erickson's

---

<sup>39</sup> Bonnie H. Erickson, "Secret Societies and Social Structure", *Social Forces*, Vol. 60, No. 1. (Sep., 1981): 195.

<sup>40</sup> Erickson, 195.

<sup>41</sup> Erickson, 196.

insights suggest that an increase in external threats may lead to less hierarchy and centralization in terrorist groups as recruitment from only the most trusted social, clan and family networks increases.

A second insight from secret society literature offers further support to this hypothesis. A secret organization should prioritize keeping its plans, leaders, and core personnel hidden from its adversaries. Adopting an organizational structure most conducive to maintaining secrecy should then be a goal of any secret group. Though a variety of organizational designs offer secrecy advantages, a decentralization of command would seem the ideal structure for maximizing concealment. Decentralization reduces the number of connections and regular interactions between group members—and particularly between core leaders and lower level members—which in turn reduces the chances that group members implicated in crimes would be directly linked to other members. A study of illegal networks showed that centralized networks had more vulnerabilities at their core as the large volume of connections between key leaders allowed them to be more easily identified by law enforcement than lower-level members.<sup>42</sup> Thus, according to this scholarship, a secret organization under threat will be expected to adopt a more decentralized organizational model. Lending support to this hypothesis, Ronfeldt and Arquilla argue the less hierarchical, more ‘networked’ forms of organization are better suited for survival, and are increasingly common, in the

---

<sup>42</sup> The Social Organization of Conspiracy: Illegal Networks in the Heavy Electrical Equipment Industry Wayne E. Baker; Robert R. Faulkner *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, No. 6. (Dec., 1993): 844.

globalization age.<sup>43</sup> The study will test these hypotheses by observing how the structures of several terrorist groups over time change and whether these changes produce net beneficial effects.

Secret societies develop numerous methods for keeping themselves hidden, including limiting face-to-face contact between members, concealing leaders, and minimizing channels of communication. Many groups invent special coded language and decision rules to substitute for direct, personal communication.<sup>44</sup> Using coded language can turn into a vulnerability, however, if the adversary cracks the code. Groups occasionally insulate key leaders from ‘partially’ initiated members at the group’s periphery.<sup>45</sup> This can also become a vulnerability if the partially initiated are less indoctrinated and therefore easier for the adversary to recruit and turn against the group. Additionally, insulating leaders renders oversight of decision-making on intelligence matters nearly impossible and this reduction of oversight almost certainly reduces the quality of intelligence analysis for the entire group.<sup>46</sup> Exploring the tradeoffs that come with adopting security strategies, such as these, is a key focus of the study.

---

<sup>43</sup> David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*, (The Rand Corporation): 311.

<sup>44</sup> Peasant Politics and Secret Societies: The Discourse of Secrecy Robert C. Ulin *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 1. (Jan., 1986): 36.

<sup>45</sup> A Test of Simmel on the Secret Society: The Doukhobors of British Columbia H. B. Hawthorn *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 1. (Jul., 1956): 7.

<sup>46</sup> Ritchie P. Lowry, “Toward a Sociology of Secrecy and Security Systems,” *Social Problems*, Vol. 19, No. 4. (Spring, 1972): 446.

### **Additional Insights from the Literature: Misconduct in Organizations**

The literature on misconduct in organizations also offers insight into the core variables and their effects on terrorist group counterintelligence.<sup>47</sup> Every secret organization with an adversary must actively prevent its members from defecting and becoming informants for the adversary. The literature on misconduct and betrayal in organizations suggests that particular features of the organization and its environment can increase or decrease the likelihood that an organization's members will engage in betrayal. This section highlights the organizational and environmental features that are most relevant to terrorist group counterintelligence.

Betrayal in secret organizations can be divided into at least three categories: the informant, the unwitting informant, and the agent provocateur.<sup>48</sup> The informant is a trusted insider in a secret organization who reports to the adversary on the secret personnel, plans and strategies of his organization. The unwitting informant is a trusted insider whose careless or injudicious actions may inadvertently allow the adversary to collect sensitive information about the secret organization. The agent provocateur is a trusted insider, controlled by the adversary, who covertly leads his secret organization in a direction desirable to the adversary. The agent provocateur is a rare form of betrayal in terrorist organizations due to the difficulty of penetrating a terrorist group at a leadership level. The agent provocateur is a more valuable penetration, however, because it allows

---

<sup>47</sup> Specifically the literatures explored are those on trust in organizations, informants and agent provocateurs, defectors and whistle-blowers, white-collar crime and insider trading, and the free-rider problem in collective action scenarios.

<sup>48</sup> Steven Greer, "Towards a Sociological Model of the Police Informant," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46, No. 3. (Sep., 1995): 513.

the adversary to monitor the terrorist group as well as control some of its behaviors, potentially hastening the group's demise.

Individuals may betray their secret organization for a number of reasons.<sup>49</sup> An individual may be coerced, promised lenient punishment, or offered financial rewards by a powerful adversary. An individual may also invite contact with the adversary in order to change the direction of his organization, retaliate for being marginalized within the organization, resolve a personal vendetta, or enhance his sense of importance and self-esteem.

The unwitting informant does not actively betray his organization but may, by his careless actions, provide more information to the adversary than a witting informant. The literature on the free-rider problem in collective action scenarios offers an interesting window into counterintelligence lapses regarding unwitting informants. Free riding is the tendency for individuals to avoid contributing to group efforts to obtain a collective good when the costs of participating in those efforts outweigh the benefits of obtaining the good. The free rider problem occurs because (1) an individual's participation in large group efforts will not have a discernable impact on the provision of the good and (2) if the good is provided, every individual will enjoy its provision without necessarily having borne the costs of obtaining it.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Gary T. Marx, "Thoughts on a Neglected Category of Social Movement Participant: The Agent Provocateur and the Informant," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 80, No. 2. (Sep., 1974): 414.

<sup>50</sup> Will H. Moore, "Rational Rebels: Overcoming the Free-Rider Problem," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 2. (Jun., 1995): 424. / To Snitch or Not to Snitch? Applying the Concept of Neutralization Techniques to the Enforcement of Occupational Misconduct, Jana L. Pershing, *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 46, No. 2. (Summer,

In this context, secrecy can be thought of as a collective good. Everyone in a secret organization benefits from enhanced secrecy, as the adversary will be less able to locate, monitor and dismantle the organization. The organization's ability to acquire this collective good is enhanced when all group members forsake the particular desires and comforts that erode collective secrecy. Such comforts include, visiting or conversing with family and friends, using modern technologies, developing friendships outside the organization, publicly claiming affiliation with the organization, bragging to family and friends about secret activities and, in some ways, living a 'normal' open life. While none of these behaviors necessarily furnishes the adversary with sensitive information, a clever adversary may collect this information covertly. Furthermore, none of the above actions may offer the adversary a complete picture of a secret organization's processes and plans, but collected over time, these bits of information can be assembled to create a nearly complete picture of an organization.

Importantly, there are organizational and environmental features that can alleviate the free rider problem. Increasing a group member's sense of efficacy—the idea that his behavior can impact the organization significantly—is one method for reducing the free rider problem. Establishing conventions and contracts against engaging in compromising behavior is another way to reduce free riding. This method relies on strong peer pressure to deter group members from being tempted to avail themselves of compromising comforts. Monitoring group members closely is another method for reducing free riding.

---

2003): 153. / Wendy L. Hansen; Neil J. Mitchell; Jeffrey M. Drope, "The Logic of Private and Collective Action," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 1. (Jan., 2005).

This technique reduces the anonymity of anti-group behavior and promises punishment for such behavior.

*Misconduct and Counterintelligence.*<sup>51</sup> Whether a group has controlled territory can potentially affect the extent to which groups grapple with the counterintelligence free rider problem.<sup>52</sup> Studies of civil conflict and rebellion propose that geographical dispersion of a rebel group results in higher rates of defection and betrayal. Higher rates of defection, it is posited, result from the core leaders' diminished ability to detect and punish transgressions.<sup>53</sup> Conversely, reduced defection is linked to the group's ability to compensate rebels with the spoils of war—a task made more difficult with geographical dispersion.<sup>54</sup>

The popular perception of terrorist groups is that they are composed of fiercely dedicated operatives, who are unlikely to defect and do not need to be compensated for their dedication. Are terrorist groups subject to the same defection and betrayal difficulties that seem to plague rebel and insurgent groups with regards to geographical dispersion? The controlled territory hypothesis posits that terrorist groups that control territory will have superior counterintelligence, which is supported by the notions

---

<sup>51</sup> Terrorist groups that do not control territory are assumed to be more geographical dispersed than groups that do control territory.

<sup>52</sup> Insight into the impact of complexity and formalization on misconduct are explored in: Nancy Reichman, "Breaking Confidences: Organizational Influences on Insider Trading," *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2. (Summer, 1989): 187. / Diane Vaughan, "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 25. (1999): 277.

<sup>53</sup> Scott Gates, "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Understanding Civil War. (Feb., 2002): 117.

<sup>54</sup> Patrick M Regan, Daniel Norton, "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (Beverly Hills: Jun 2005. Vol. 49, Iss. 3): 319.



introduced above. The case studies will explore the relationship between territory and counterintelligence in detail, and perhaps illuminate whether defection and betrayal increase with geographical dispersion.

### Section Three: Hypotheses

This section restates the hypotheses to be tested against case studies of five terrorist groups: al Qaeda, the Provisional Irish republican Army (PIRA), the Egyptian Islamic Group (IG), the Palestinian nationalist group Fatah and, its offshoot, the Black September Organization (BSO), as well as against a lower resolution assessment of thirty-three terrorist groups.

*Hypothesis 1(A):* A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure, relative to a group with a loose command structure, will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.

*Hypothesis 1(B):* A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure, relative to a group with a loose command structure, will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures. Thus a tight command structure will make the recruitment of high-level penetrations more difficult, but more damaging if they are acquired.

*Hypothesis 2(A):* A terrorist group with popular support, relative to one without popular support, will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.

*Hypothesis 2(B):* A terrorist group with popular support, relative to one without popular support, will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular

support. Specifically, a campaign to maintain popular support often requires that a terrorist group raise its operational profile to make contact with independent media organizations and inspire its supporters with details about the group's leaders, organization and terrorist plans.

*Hypothesis 3(A):* A terrorist group with controlled territory, relative to one without territory, will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.

*Hypothesis 3(B):* A terrorist group with controlled territory, relative to one without territory, will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.

*Hypothesis Four:* Terrorist groups facing external threats will become increasing centralized and tightly commanded over time.

#### Section Four: Control Variables

Our core hypotheses test how three key independent variables affect the dependent counterintelligence variables. However, there are several other variables that, if not properly controlled for, could influence the outcome of dependent variables. These variables are called control variables because they will be held constant over time to strengthen our confidence in the hypothesized effects of independent variables.

The study does not test the control variables as it does the independent variables—that is, there are no hypothesized 'effects' on terrorist group counterintelligence associated with shifts in the adversary's capabilities, terrorist group resources, or organizational learning. The effects of the independent variables on

terrorist group counterintelligence are somewhat surprising and counterintuitive, but the potential effects of control variables seemed more obvious and less interesting. Thus, while a terrorist group's adversary and its resources may be a good predictor of its overall counterintelligence capabilities, understanding the group's organizational structure, popular support and controlled territory potentially offers insights into more subtle and less often exploited vulnerabilities. The key control variables are: the adversary's counterterrorism capabilities, terrorist group resources, and terrorist group learning.

*Adversary Capabilities.* Appreciating changes in the adversary's counterterrorism capabilities is perhaps the most important control variable. For Hypothesis 1, a tightly commanded group is expected to be less vulnerable to low-level penetrations but more vulnerable to high-level penetrations. If we observe this phenomenon as terrorist group structure changes, we need to ensure that this variation is not due to the adversary's increasing adeptness at developing high-level penetrations. Perhaps the adversary's increased capability is leading directly to the development of high-level penetrations as well as forcing the terrorist group's structure to centralize.

For Hypothesis 2(B), a group generating popular support is expected to induce counterintelligence vulnerabilities. If we observe this phenomenon, we need to ensure that this variation is the result of the group's campaigns to increase popular support, rather than the adversary's decreased ability to collect information about the group—this would be a case where the group understood that it was increasing its counterintelligence vulnerabilities knowing that the weakened adversary would be unable to capitalize on

them. Perhaps the adversary has become weaker, allowing the group to become bolder in its publicity campaign while capitalizing on increased support.

For Hypothesis 3(A), a group not controlling territory is expected to have inferior communications security and physical security. If we observe this phenomenon as terrorist group territory changes, we need to ensure that this variation is not due to the adversary's increasing ability to locate and attack the group. Perhaps the group abandoned its territory, or never sought territory in the first place, because the adversary became too strong. Understanding the terrorist group's motive for operating outside of controlled territory will be important for judging this alternative hypothesis.

*Resources.* Resources are almost certainly a primary determinant of intelligence and counterintelligence capability. A group with more money will be able to buy more sophisticated technology, bribe and recruit more adversary informants, motivate and retain top group leaders and operatives with a generous salary, and engineer sophisticated campaigns to generate popular support. Financial resources are highly correlated with capabilities, and therefore they are very important to control for and measure.

For Hypothesis 1(A), a tightly commanded group is expected to enjoy superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation. If we observe this phenomenon as terrorist group structure changes, we need to ensure that this variation is not due to the group's increased resources. Perhaps the group's increased resources allowed it to centralize its command structure, inspire the allegiance of a larger portion of the group, and mandate training for group members.

For Hypothesis 3(A), a group controlling territory is expected to have superior communications security and physical security. If we observe this phenomenon as terrorist group territory changes, we need to ensure that this variation is not due to the group's overall increase in resources. Perhaps the group's ability to gain controlled territory and implement improved communications security both result from having greater financial resources.

*Organizational Learning.* Organizational learning can be defined as a process through which a group acquires new knowledge of technology that it then uses to make better strategic decisions, improve its ability to develop and apply specific tactics and increase its chances of success in its operations.<sup>55</sup> For this study it will be important to demonstrate that variations in terrorist group counterintelligence that can be considered improvements are related to changes in the core variables rather than solely as a result of the group's acquisition of new knowledge.<sup>56</sup>

For Hypothesis 1(A), if changes in structure lead to superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation, we need to ensure that this improvement is not the result of increased learning capacity that leads to general improvements across a broad spectrum of activities. For example, perhaps the group has learned that a centralized command structure is superior in addition to learning how to better implement counterintelligence training and compartmentation.

---

<sup>55</sup> Brian Jackson, et al, "Aptitude for Destruction Volume 1: Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and its Implications for Combating Terrorism." RAND (2005).

<sup>56</sup> Of course, this distinction does not apply if the new knowledge leads the group to change one of more of the core variables, such as whether the group is more hierarchical or territory-seeking.

For Hypothesis 2(A), a group generating popular support is expected to enjoy more counterintelligence support from the local population. If we observe this phenomenon, we need to ensure that this variation is the result of wider spread popular support, rather than the group's ability to squeeze additional support from the same subset of the population.

For Hypothesis 3(A), a group controlling territory is expected to have superior communications security and physical security. If we observe this phenomenon, we need to ensure that this variation is not the result of the group's learned ability to both acquire territory and improve security measures.

It will be difficult, and perhaps not always necessary, to completely separate improvements in counterintelligence from normal organizational learning. In fact, most intentional changes in strategy that lead to improvements will be considered organizational learning by definition. Thus, what the study will demonstrate is that when normal learning does occur the counterintelligence improvement would have not occurred, or the learning would not have been possible, without the core variable change. The study will have to demonstrate that the core variable change played the primary role in the improvement and that the improvement was not purely the result of organizational learning.

One additional way of controlling for organizational learning is to select cases where the change in the core variable predicates the opposite outcome of the organizational learning hypothesis. The cases for this study occasionally offer the opportunity to control for learning in this manner.

### Sample of Core Hypotheses and Alternative Explanations

	<b>Core Hypothesis</b>	<b>Control Variable Explanation</b>
<b>Organizational Structure</b>	As structure tightens, training and coordination improve	1) Adversary is getting weaker. 2) Terrorist group resources are increasing. 3) Terrorist group is experiencing normal learning over time.
<b>Popular Support</b>	As support increases, vulnerabilities increase with media exposure	1) Adversary is getting stronger.
<b>Controlled Territory</b>	With territory, security and vetting improve	1) Adversary is getting weaker. 2) Terrorist group resources are increasing. 3) Terrorist group is experiencing normal learning over time.

#### Section Five: Alternative Hypotheses

Throughout the study, we will consider a number of alternative hypotheses to explain terrorist group behavior. The alternative hypotheses contradict the core hypotheses, stating that there are no relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Alternative Hypothesis 1(A): A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure will not have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation. Tight command structures may have little impact on a group's propensity or ability to adopt more sophisticated training and compartmentation.

Alternative Hypothesis 1(B): A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure will not be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures. Penetrations of terrorist groups may be so difficult for an adversary that the group's

organizational structure has little impact on this outcome. Standardized counterintelligence procedures may also not present a discernable vulnerability relative to non-standardized counterintelligence procedures.

Alternative Hypothesis 2(A): A terrorist group with popular support will not have greater counterintelligence support from the local population. Local populations may have little to offer terrorist groups in the way of counterintelligence support, regardless of their attitude towards the terrorist group.

Alternative Hypothesis 2(B): A terrorist group with popular support will not be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support. While a terrorist group's popular support campaign may provide the adversary with information about the group, none of this information may be sensitive or actionable from the adversary's perspective.

Alternative Hypothesis 3(A): A terrorist group with controlled territory will not have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting. Whether a terrorist group controls territory may not have a significant impact on its ability to secure its communications and personnel.

Alternative Hypothesis 3(B): A terrorist group with controlled territory will not be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements. A terrorist group's adversary will undoubtedly have significant trouble tracking the terrorist group's movement, and whether the group controls territory may have little impact on this difficult task.



Alternative Hypothesis 4: Terrorist groups facing external threats will not become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time. As discussed earlier, a terrorist group's need for secrecy may push it to loosen rather than tighten as it faces external threats.

#### Section Six: Variable Measurement

Measuring the dependent variables will present some challenges. In some cases, making an absolute judgment on dependent variable values will be straightforward, but in some cases variable values will exist in a gray, middle ground where precise measurement is more difficult. In the latter cases, measuring each dependent variable's relative change over time will help to isolate the effects of its shift on the independent variables. For example, if a terrorist group shifts from being rigidly 'tightly controlled' to significantly less 'tightly controlled', the independent variables should reflect the hypothesized affects of a loosening command structure.

For organizational structure in general, organizations in which leaders exercise strategic, operational and tactical control over their personnel will be considered tightly commanded. The challenge of measuring organizational structure is interpreting the extent of leaders' strategic, operational, and tactical control from the behavior of the group's lowest level members. In some cases it will be obvious that leaders do or do not control subordinates, and in other cases this will require greater investigation of how subordinate behavior is in accord with top leaders' strategic directions.

Groups with widespread sympathy and popularity among large segments of the population, relative to their adversary, will be defined as possessing high levels of

popular support. In some cases, whether a terrorist group enjoys widespread support will be obvious. In cases where the terrorist group has some popular sympathy, but not overwhelming popularity, this variable will be more challenging to measure.

Groups that regulate physical access to and security within a defined, and significant, territorial boundary will be defined as possessing controlled territory. Measuring whether a group has controlled territory will be challenging for groups that may regulate access to a handful of neighborhoods, though not a significant swath of territory. Noting shifts in a group's controlled territory over time will help to make measurement of this variable more accurate.

State adversaries will be judged as 'strong' when they employ a counterterrorism strategy that involves diligent police work, rather than heavy-handed military tactics, good coordination between police and intelligence agencies, and the prudence to avoid costly overreactions to terrorist activities.

#### Section Seven: From Practice to Theory

The central hypotheses of this study are derived in large part from the various literatures described above. The case studies to follow will test the hypotheses and also provide insight into the broader theoretical literatures from which they were derived. The case studies also weigh in on theoretical debates: Do organizations under threat tend toward centralization or decentralization? Do geographical dispersion and formalized monitoring procedures actually exacerbate the free rider problem in secret organizations, and terrorist groups in particular?

The case studies will also fill gaps in the literature: do insights from organizational theory on centralization and innovation apply to clandestine organizations and terrorist groups in particular? Does popular support ever produce disadvantages for terrorist and insurgent groups? The study addresses some of these debates and gaps immediately with a low-resolution look at thirty-three terrorist group cases. The following section introduces the counterintelligence typology with which we will classify our cases and test our hypotheses.

### Section Eight: A Counterintelligence Typology

The counterintelligence typology allows us to situate each terrorist group in one of sixteen possible counterintelligence environments.<sup>57</sup> The typological approach offers at least two benefits. First, the typology allows us to make predictions about and assess the interactive effects of our three core, dependent variables. For example, glance at the typology reveals that terrorist groups with a tight command structure, high popular support, controlled territory and a strong adversary are expected to exhibit the most sophisticated counterintelligence capabilities, relative to all other possible types. Second, the typology allows us to isolate changes in one variable while other variables are held constant. This technique will provide ‘clean’ tests of our hypotheses, assuming we account for all relevant control variables. Clean tests give us confidence that the observed effects on terrorist group counterintelligence capabilities—our independent variables—are caused directly by the observed change in the dependent variable.

---

<sup>57</sup> A typology is a method of classifying of a group of items based on their characteristics.

The chart below shows the relationship between the dependent variables and six independent variables that feature prominently in the hypotheses. The six independent variables are ‘Standardized CI Training for All Members’ – **ST** - (Hypotheses 1 and 4), ‘Uniform CI Methods Across the Organization’ - **UM** - (Hypotheses 1 and 4), ‘CI Support from Local Population’ – **LS** - (Hypothesis 2), ‘Damaging CI Exposure Through Media Contact’ – **ME** - (Hypothesis 2), ‘Adoption of Communications Security’ – **CS** - (Hypothesis 3), and ‘Vetting and Counterespionage Investigation’ –**VC** - (Hypothesis 3).

The interactive effects on the chart are considered additive, with each independent variable contributing a +, -, or = based on its unique predicted effects on the dependent variables. Based the hypotheses, a tight organizational structure adds a plus to ST, UM, CS and VC and a loose organizational structure contributes a minus. High popular support adds a plus to LS and ME, and low popular support adds a minus. Controlling territory adds a plus to ST, CS, and VC and not controlling territory the opposite. Finally, having a strong adversary, and hence a strong external threat to survival, contributes a plus to ST and UM.<sup>58</sup> The left-hand column shows the sixteen counterintelligence environment ‘types.’ The values of the six independent variables, on the right-hand side of the chart, reflect the hypothesized likelihood of observing these variables with the counterintelligence type.

---

<sup>58</sup> This reflects the predictions of hypothesis four, rather than specific predictions about the effects of the adversary’s capabilities.

## Variables and Hypothesized Effects

Type	Independent Variables				Dependent Variables					
	OS	PS	CT	AD	ST	UM	LS	ME	CS	VC
1	+	-	-	-	=	+	-	-	=	=
2	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
3	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+
4	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
5	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	=	=
6	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
7	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	+	-	=	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	+	-	=	-	-	-	=	=
12	-	-	+	+	+	=	-	-	+	+
13	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
14	-	+	-	+	-	=	+	+	-	-
15	-	+	+	-	=	-	+	+	+	+
16	-	+	+	+	+	=	+	+	+	+

Independent and Control Variables		Inputs	
OS	Organizational Structure	+	Tight
		-	Loose
PS	Popular Support	+	High
		-	Low
CT	Controlled Territory	+	Yes
		-	No
AD	Adversary Capability	+	High
		-	Low

Dependent Variables	
ST	Standardized CI Training for All Members
UM	Uniform CI Methods Across the Organization
LS	CI Support from Local Population
ME	Damaging CI Exposure Through Media Contact
CS	Sophisticated Communications Security
VC	Vetting and Counterespionage Investigation



Hypothesized Outcomes	
=	No Effect
-	Less Likely
+	More Likely

## Section Nine: The Framework Applied to Several Cases

The chart below shows thirty-three cases, bounded by year, evaluated on counterintelligence environment variables and the six independent variables.<sup>59</sup> The thirty-three cases reflect a wide range of terrorist group spanning a variety of geographical regions, ideologies, time periods and sizes. The data set includes many ‘mature’ terrorist groups—groups that survived for a few years and achieved some operational success. The sample also includes ‘immature’ terrorist groups—groups that did not survive long or faced dramatic failure. This helps to balance the cases between groups enjoying relative success and those suffering relative failure. Despite the inclusion of several ‘failed’, immature groups, the sample remains biased towards mature terrorist groups that were sophisticated enough to be around for at least a couple of years, receive high level attention from the international media and their state adversary. This is due to the difficulty of finding examples of groups that both experienced immediate failure and were observed carefully and closely enough to assess the group on the dependent variables. To further balance on this bias the sample includes several ‘successful’ groups that experienced dramatic failures or setbacks at some point in their existence, such as Egyptian Islamic Group (1994 – 1995), Al Qaeda (2001-2003), Abu

---

<sup>59</sup> Chart Sources: Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Database, Patrick Seale, “Abu Nidal: A Gun For Hire,” Random House, New York, 1992, Robert Meade, Jr. “Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism,” MacMillan: London, 1990, Neamatollah Nojumi “The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan,” Palgrave: New York, 2002, George Kassimeris, “Europe’s Last Red Terrorists: The Revolutionary Organization 17 November” Hurst and Company, London 2001, Anthony Vinci, “The Problems of Mobilization in the Analysis of Armed Groups,” Parameters, Spring 2006, and Robert Clark “The Basque Insurgents: ETA 1952-1980” University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1984, Paddy Woodworth, “Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, the GAL and Spanish Democracy,” Cork University Press, Cork Ireland, 2001, Gabriela Tarazona\_Sevillano, “Sendero Luminoso and the Threat of Narcoterrorism” CSIS, Washington Papers, Praeger: New York, 1990, and various print media. accounts.

Sayyaf (1993 – 2001), BSO (1971-1984), and PIRA (1972-1976). Despite these adjustments, an unavoidable bias towards mature groups remains. However, the sample remains useful for gaining insight into the strengths and weaknesses of mature terrorist groups—a task that is particularly relevant from a policy standpoint.

Groups	Type					Dependent Variables					
		OS	PS	CT	AD	ST	UM	LS	ME	CS	VC
Italian Red Brigades (72-85)	1	+	-	-	-	?	?	-	-	?	+
Fatah (1964-1967)	2	+	-	-	+	+	=	-	-	=	+
GSPC (1999 -2003)	2	+/-	-	-	+	?	?	?	+	=	?
Zviadists ( 1996 – 1998)	2	+	-	-	+	-	?	-	+	?	?
Abu Nidal (1985-1995)	3	+	-	+	+/-	+	+	?	?	?	+
LRA ( 2000 – 2004)	4	+	-	+	+	+	?	-	-	?	?
AQ (1996-2001)	4	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
November 17 (1980–2000)	5	+	+	-	-	?	?	-	+	?	+
Orange Volunteers (1999)	6	+	+	-	+	+	+	?	+	?	?
BSO (1971-1984)	6	+	+	-	+	=	=	+	=	+	+
Abu Sayyaf (1993 – 2001)	7	+/-	+	+	-	?	?	+	+	+	+
LTTE ( 1999 – 2001)	7	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Taliban ( 1990 – 1996)	7	+	+	+	-	+	?	?	?	-	+
Jemaah Islamiyyah (95-01)	8	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	+	+
Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (00-04)	8	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	+	?	+
Hizballah (1982-2000)	8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
ETA (1981– 2001)	8	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
FARC (1992 – 2003)	8	+/-	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	?
Fatah (1967-1984)	8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
AQ (2001-2003)	8	+/-	+	+	+	=	-	+	+	+	+
PIRA (1976-1994)	8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
HAMAS (1987– 2001)	8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Cambodian Freedom Fighters (1998)	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	?
AIAI (1996– 2001)	11	-	-	+	-	-	?	+	-	?	?
AQ (1988-1996)	11	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
Islamic Group (94 – 98)	12	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	=	=
PKK (1984 – 2004)	14	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	=	+
Jesh-e-Mohammedi (00-04)	14	-	+	?	+	?	?	?	+	+	?
Islamic Group (89 -93)	15	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	=	=
PIRA (1969-1972)	15	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
PIRA (1972-1976)	16	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	=	=	+
Shining Path (1980– 2001)	16	-	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	=	+
ELN ( 1995 – 2003)	16	-	+	+	+	?	?	+	?	?	?

Tabulation of Independent, Dependent and Control Variables<sup>60</sup>

**Popular Support Arrayed Against High Local Support and High Media Exposure**

PS	LS (HIGH)	ME (HIGH)
HIGH	79%	82%
LOW	14%	25%

**Organizational Structure Arrayed Against High Standardized Training and High Uniform CI Methods**

OS	ST (HIGH)	UM (HIGH)
HIGH	67%	63%
MIX	67%	75%
LOW	14%	14%

**Controlled Territory Arrayed Against High Local Support and High Communications Security**

CT	LS (HIGH)	CS (HIGH)
HIGH	78%	59%
LOW	20%	25%

---

<sup>60</sup> The tabulation charts do not include cases from the chart where the value of the independent variable was unknown. The charts also do not include tabulation of the “low” cases, and so do not add up to 100 percent. Each square represents the percentage of cases scoring “high” for the stated independent variable, for each of the dependent variable values.



**Adversary Capability Arrayed Against High Communications Security and High Vetting**

AD	CS (HIGH)	VC (HIGH)
HIGH	63%	93%
LOW	33%	75%

*Initial Framework Analysis.* An analysis of the chart yields some initial insights into the hypotheses. The data set lends support to Hypotheses 1(A), 2(A), 2 (B) and 3(A). However, the casual mechanisms driving these outcomes are not discernable without a more in-depth look at each case. Importantly, case studies will help us determine whether organizational and environmental changes precipitate or result from variations in the terrorist group's counterintelligence capabilities. The data set does not provide insight into Hypotheses 1(B) and 3(B), which are very difficult to assess at such low resolution and will only be possible with in-depth case studies.

The data set also provides immediate feedback on Hypothesis 4: *Terrorist groups facing external threats will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time.* The data suggest that this hypothesis is mostly accurate. Groups observed over time appear to migrate or 'evolve' to a tighter command structure. Additionally, many mature terrorist groups in the sample have a tight command structure. The threat-rigidity hypothesis posits that the move to centralization results from a desire of a group's leaders to consolidate control over the organization in response to external threats. Whether

groups centralized control as a result of leadership preference or as a rational response to an external threat, or for some other reason, is also not discernable from this data set. One alternative hypothesis is that groups centralize command as increased resources allow them to afford centralizing the organizational structure, rather than simply as a response to external threats. For example, groups with more financial resources may command greater loyalty from well-paid foot soldiers or maintain more frequent contact with middle managers with better communications systems. The case studies to follow will help us tease out some of these causal relationships.

The majority of cases roughly fit with the theoretical predictions of the typological chart. The most glaring conflict between the typological predictions and the observed outcomes relates to the ‘Damaging CI Exposure Through Media Contact’ variable (3A). The typology predicts that groups with high popular support will expose themselves counterproductively in the media while groups without popular support will not expose themselves. In fact, it appears that groups with and without popular support expose themselves in the media. It may be that many groups without popular support will strive unsuccessfully to be more popular and in doing so expose themselves. The case studies may help to tease out this casual mechanism.

One notable observation is that several terrorist group ‘types’ are rarely, or not all, observed. Not surprisingly, type 10 cases were not observed. Type 10 groups are probably unlikely to survive very long as they are loosely structured, unpopular, without territory, but up against a strong adversary. There is only one instance of a type 9 group, which is also loosely structured, unpopular, and without territory. Interestingly, there is

only one example each of types 1, 3 and 5. Each of these types has a tight organizational structure and a weak adversary, though each is lacking popular support, controlled territory or both. This may be an unusual combination as terrorist groups with a weak adversary but tight organizational structure may be more likely to gain popular support and control territory.

Additionally, there are no observations of type 13 and only one observation of type 12. Type 12 seems logically unlikely, with a loose structure, no popular support, but with controlled territory and a strong adversary. The absence of type 13 is a bit more puzzling. This could suggest that popular terrorist groups facing a weak adversary are likely to also gain controlled territory, perhaps regardless of the tightness of their organizational structure.

The four case studies will help to evaluate the casual mechanisms at work in many of these types. In fact, the four case studies are really ten case studies, as each case is broken into smaller time periods. This is done to permit a ‘most similar’ case comparison within each group, between different time periods. This is an ideal case comparison because other than the shifting dependent variable, the group otherwise stays the same in the key observable, as well as many unobservable, ways. While within group comparison is ideal, the study also permits ‘most similar’ case comparison *between* several group cases on all three independent variables. That is, in several instances, two case studies differ on only one variable: Fatah (1964 – 1967) and al Qaeda (1996 – 2001) differ only on controlled territory, al Qaeda (1996 – 2001) and Fatah (1967 – 1984) differ only on popular support, al Qaeda (1988 – 1996) and PIRA (1969 – 1972) also differ

only on popular support, al Qaeda (1996 – 2001) and the Egyptian Islamic Group (1994 – 1998) differ only on organizational structure, and Fatah (1967 – 1984) and PIRA (1972 - 1976) also differ only on organizational structure.

### Comparison of Most Similar Cases (Between Groups)

Groups	Type						Dependent Variables					
		OS	PS	CT	AD		ST	UM	LS	ME	CS	VC
Fatah (1964-1967)	2	+	-	-	+		+	=	-	-	=	+
AQ (1996-2001)	4	+	-	+	+		+	+	-	+	+	+
AQ (1996-2001)	4	+	-	+	+		+	+	-	+	+	+
Fatah (1967-1984)	8	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
AQ (1988-1996)	11	-	-	+	-		+	-	-	-	-	+
PIRA (1969-1972)	15	-	+	+	-		-	-	+	+	-	-
AQ (1996-2001)	4	+	-	+	+		+	+	-	+	+	+
Islamic Group (94 – 98)	12	-	-	+	+		-	-	-	-	=	=
Fatah (1967-1984)	8	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
PIRA (1972-1976)	16	-	+	+	+		-	-	+	=	=	+

From the analysis of the typological framework, we can preliminarily evaluate these ‘most similar’ cases. For the first set above, comparing Fatah (1964 – 1967) and al Qaeda (1996 – 2001), the acquisition of controlled territory is correlated with enhanced communications security and uniform counterintelligence standards. For the second set above, comparing al Qaeda (1996 – 2001) and Fatah (1967 – 1984), the acquisition of popular support is correlated with increased counterintelligence support from the population, though media exposure was present even without popular support. For the

third set, comparing al Qaeda (1988 – 1996) and PIRA (1969 – 1972), the acquisition of popular support is correlated with increased counterintelligence support from the population and increased media exposure. For the fourth set, comparing al Qaeda (1996 – 2001) and the Egyptian Islamic Group (1994 – 1998), a tighter organizational command structure is correlated with more standardized training, greater uniformity in counterintelligence methods, improved communications security and improved vetting and investigations. For the fifth set, comparing Fatah (1967 – 1984) and PIRA (1972 - 1976), a tighter organizational command structure is correlated with more standardized training, greater uniformity in counterintelligence methods, and improved communications security.

One could argue that because groups tend to centralize over time, the correlation between tight command structures and improved tradecraft is consequence of the terrorist group's experience, which leads independently to improved counterintelligence methods. However, the large-N framework shows that loosely commanded groups with many years experience (such as the ELN in 2003, the PIRA in 1976, the PKK in 2004 and the Egyptian Islamic Group in 1998) had inferior counterintelligence training and standardization relative to tightly commanded groups with fewer years of experience (such as Fatah in 1964, November 17 in 1980, and Hizballah in 1982).

Importantly, the most frequently occurring types are all given close consideration in the case studies portion of the dissertation. Groups from type 2 (3 instances), type 8 (9 instances), and type 16 (3 instances) have one or more in-depth case studies devoted to them. Type 7 (3 instances) is the most frequent type for which there is no in-depth case

study. The groups in this type, including Abu Sayyaf (1993 – 2001), LTTE (1999 – 2001) and the Taliban (1990-1996), all have tight structures, high popular support, controlled territory and a weak adversary. These are groups that dominate their environment without challenge. In some ways, this makes them a less interesting target of study, as they enjoy a relatively solid counterintelligence posture without pressure from a strong adversary to expose and test their strengths and weaknesses.

A final notable observation is that the most common terrorist group is type 8—a tight organizational structure, high popular support, controlled territory, and a strong adversary. These features were also common among all terrorist group types: 24 out of 33 had a tight organizational structure, 22 had high popular support, 23 of the groups controlled territory, and 23 had a strong adversary.

This could be the result of the bias in our sample towards ‘mature’ terrorist groups—mature groups are subject to greater scrutiny and therefore easier to observe and study. As discussed above, several immature terrorist groups are incorporated into the data set to balance out this bias, though mature groups remain overrepresented in the data.

This bias challenges the conclusions we can draw from the data set, suggesting that the results apply mostly to mature groups and probably less to immature groups. For example, while mature terrorist organizations may standardize training and counterintelligence procedures more effectively with a tight organizational structure, immature groups may fail to standardize procedures regardless of organizational structure. Immature terrorist groups may not convert local support into a counterintelligence advantage, even when they enjoy popularity among the local

population. Immature groups may not enjoy superior physical and communications security when they control territory or, more likely, their movements and personnel may be obvious to the adversary even when they do not control territory. Immature groups may not tighten their command structure in response to external threats. All of these ‘failures’ of immature groups may contribute to their rapid demise. The three immature terrorist groups assessed in the large data set tentatively supported the core hypotheses. Interesting, however, each one of the three immature groups exposed themselves extensively to the media, even when they did not have popular support, which almost certainly contributed to their counterintelligence deficits.

From a policy perspective, this bias does not enormously impact the study’s findings, as immature terrorist groups are by definition more easily defeated and therefore are less urgent targets of study. Remedying this bias from a theoretical standpoint, however, is important. If the hypotheses hold true for mature groups but not immature groups, we should be left wondering: why do these mechanisms only apply to mature groups? What is it about immature terrorist groups that shelter them from the forces shaping mature groups? Is their immature and short-lived existence the result of an overwhelmingly strong adversary, an unpopular cause or a total lack of resources? While data on the three immature terrorist groups suggests that the core hypotheses do hold true for immature groups, interrogating these questions more fully will be an important step in generalizing the study’s results to all terrorist groups.

The case study portion of the dissertation will address this bias by including among the case studies several terrorist groups that experienced substantial failure in their

existence. The Egyptian Islamic Group, for example, was rapidly and entirely routed by its state adversary even though it was a mature terrorist group. Most importantly, each of the cases provides insight into the causal mechanisms described by the hypotheses and allows us to gauge the universality of the mechanisms. Thorough evaluation of the causal mechanisms will allow us to assess the extent to which a terrorist group's organizational structure, popular support, and controlled territory shape its counterintelligence capabilities, regardless of the group's 'maturity', resources, the capabilities of its adversary, or the popularity of its cause.

#### Section Ten: Case Study Selection and Outline

The four in-depth case studies represent the remainder of the study. Each case study is encapsulated in its own chapter, testing each of the hypotheses but highlighting one or two of the core hypotheses. Chapter Two focuses on the organizational structure hypothesis with an in-depth look at the PIRA from 1969 to 1994. Chapter Three focuses on the popular support hypothesis with a case study on al Qaeda from 1988 to 2003. Chapter Four focuses on the controlled territory hypothesis with case studies on Black September and Fatah from 1964 to 1984. Chapter Five focuses on the popular support hypothesis with a case study on the Egyptian Islamic Group from 1989 to 1998. Chapters Two and Five also present an in-depth test of the interaction of the terrorist group's organizational structure and the adversary's counterterrorism capabilities. Chapter Six provides a review of the hypotheses and discusses options for improving counterintelligence policy in light of the studies key findings.



These four cases are selected because they allow us to isolate key variables over time and, as a result, cleanly observe the effects of our core variables. Each case is separated into time periods that permit observation of core variable changes while all other variables are held constant—as stated above, a ‘most similar’ case framework. This approach is feasible because these particular cases allow for wide variation in the dependent variables: groups with tight and loose organization structures, high and low popular support, controlled and no controlled territory, as well as strong and weak adversaries. Further, the cases represent a wide variation in the independent variables, depicted groups with meager counterintelligence capabilities and sophisticated capabilities.

The four cases are also selected for their representativeness. The cases depict a wide geographical area: Europe (PIRA), North Africa (GI), the Levant (Fatah and BSO), as well as the Gulf and South Asia (AQ). The cases also span a wide time range, from 1964 to 2003.

The cases are also selected to compliment the large-N data set presented above. While the data set provided feedback on Hypotheses 1(A), 2(A), 2 (B), 3(A), and 4, comprehensively testing all the hypotheses, but particularly Hypotheses 1(B) and 3(B), requires a deep examination only the case study method can offer. For example, the case studies of the PIRA and the Black September Organization will offer unique insights into the casual mechanisms posited by Hypotheses 1(B) and 3(B), respectively. The case studies of Al Qaeda and the Islamic Group will provide additional insights into 2(A) and 2 (B) and all of the cases will provide insight into Hypothesis 4.

The case studies will also aid in evaluating and addressing the data set bias towards mature terrorist groups by facilitating a more thorough understanding of the causal mechanisms posited by the core hypotheses. Only by breaking down the causal mechanisms into their component parts can we judge the extent to which our hypotheses are limited to mature groups.

Finally, the cases are selected because of their relevance to contemporary counterterrorism efforts. The groups depicted pioneered and made infamous many of terrorist tactics and guerrilla strategies used by some of today's most deadly terrorist groups. Al Qaeda case study insights are directly relevant to current counterterrorism efforts against the group. The relevance of this set of cases to modern counterterrorism efforts will facilitate discussions about improving counterterrorism responses and policy options in the study's final chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE PROVISIONAL IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY**

In the early 1970's, British security forces were steadily dismantling the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). British interrogators were collecting confessions and details of terrorist plots from PIRA detainees and using the information to locate and capture senior PIRA leaders. By 1978, however, arrests and detentions of PIRA personnel had dropped dramatically, and those who were captured gave less information to their British interrogators. How was the PIRA able to dramatically improve its counterintelligence capabilities so rapidly?

The following case study will show that the PIRA tightened its organizational structure in the mid-1970s, significantly improving its counterintelligence training and compartmentation, but in so doing also increased its vulnerability to high-level penetrations by the British Government. The case will also show that the PIRA chose to tighten its organizational structure in response to the British Government's increasingly effective counterterrorism tactics. The PIRA case offers a good test of Hypotheses 1(A), 1(B) and 4. Though the large-N data set supported each of these hypotheses, only an in-depth examination of the casual forces driving the observed outcomes will provide insight into the strength and universality of the hypotheses.

In this chapter, I first provide a discussion of the key hypotheses and alternative hypotheses, followed by the PIRA case study. I then review the hypotheses and provide a general assessment of the key lessons offered by the case study for both theoretical and policy debates.

The PIRA case study is broken into three parts. The first part depicts the PIRA in its earliest stages, from 1969 to 1972, when its organizational structure was relatively loose and the British government's counterterrorism capabilities were relatively weak. The second part describes the PIRA from 1972 to 1976, when its organizational structure remained relatively loose, while British counterterrorism capabilities improved significantly. The third part describes the PIRA from 1976 to 1994, when its organizational structure became tight and compartmented while British counterterrorism capabilities remained strong. The three parts will illustrate how the PIRA's intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities changed in relation to its organizational structure. While British counterterrorism capabilities shifted over time, the case is broken into three sub-cases in order to isolate the shift in PIRA organizational structure from the shift in its adversary's capabilities.

#### *PIRA Case Study Core Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1(A):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure the PIRA will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.

*Hypothesis 1(B):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure the PIRA will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.

*Hypothesis 2(A):* With relatively greater popular support the PIRA will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.

*Hypothesis 2(B):* With relatively greater popular support the PIRA will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.

*Hypothesis 3(A):* With relatively more controlled territory the PIRA will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.

*Hypothesis 3(B):* With relatively more controlled territory the PIRA will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.

*Hypothesis 4:* The PIRA will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.

#### *Alternative and Falsifiable Hypotheses*

The alternative hypotheses argue the opposite of the core hypotheses. Thus, the first alternative hypothesis is that tighter organizational structure will not produce superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation or greater vulnerabilities to high-level penetrations. Conversely, if the group has a loose organizational structure but does not suffer from inferior counterintelligence training and compartmentation, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The second alternative hypothesis is that popular support will not result in greater counterintelligence support from the local population or greater vulnerability to exposure in the media. Thus, if the group wages a popular support campaign but does not induce counterintelligence vulnerabilities as a result and does not benefit from increased local support, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The third alternative hypothesis is that controlled territory will not result in greater physical and communications security or greater vulnerabilities to tracking the group's gross movements of personnel and logistics. Thus, if the group operates from

controlled territory but does not benefit from more secure communications and vetting, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The fourth alternative hypothesis is that a terrorist group facing an increasing menacing adversary will not become more centralized and tightly commanded over time. Thus, if the group faces an increasing threat from its adversary but does not centralize its decision-making and tighten its command and control, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

*Control Variables: Alternative Explanations*

The control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the PIRA case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. First, the British Government increased its counterterrorism capabilities dramatically between Period One (1969-72) and Period Two (1972-76). Any erosion in PIRA counterintelligence capabilities between these periods is most likely a result of this shift, rather than shifts in organizational structure, popular support or controlled territory. For Hypotheses 1(A) and 1(B), pathologies of the PIRA's counterintelligence training and compartmentation may result from the British government's increasing capabilities rather than from the PIRA's loose organizational structure. For Hypotheses 2(B) and 3(B), PIRA counterintelligence vulnerabilities relating to its popular support campaigns and controlled territory may also result from the British government's increasing capabilities. Period One provides some control for all of these effects, however, as the British counterterrorism capabilities are weak in this period

while PIRA organizational structure, popular support and controlled territory remained unchanged into Period Two. Thus, the PIRA's hypothesized counterintelligence weaknesses should be present in Period Two as they are in Period One.

The PIRA case provides a good test of Hypotheses 1(A) and 1(B) as all variables remain constant from Period Two to Period Three while only the PIRA's organizational structure shifts. The case also provides a good test of Hypothesis 4, as all variables remain constant between Period One and Period Two, while only the adversary's capabilities shift.

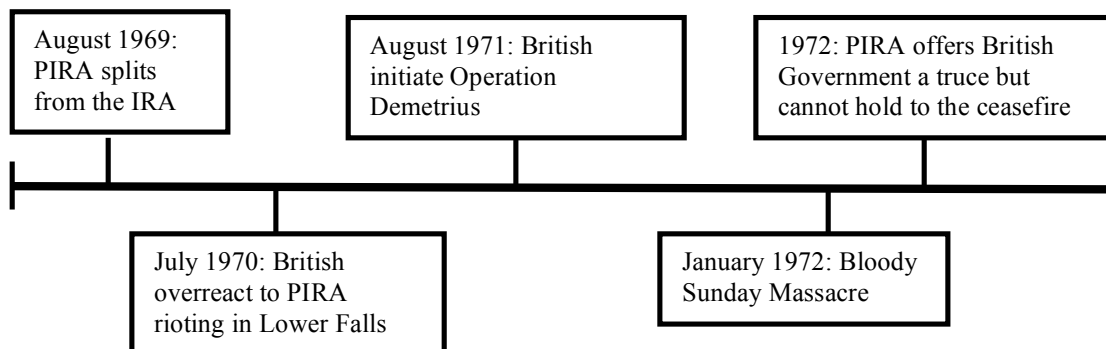
The PIRA's resources are held constant over all three periods, reducing the likelihood that shifts in resources are accounting for the changes in counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities.

Finally, the PIRA undoubtedly experienced normal organizational learning over these three periods. The case will need to show, however, that the hypothesized counterintelligence strengths and innovations resulted from the core variables rather than organizational learning. The case will do this by illuminating the casual mechanisms driving the counterintelligence outcomes and demonstrating that despite normal organizational learning, the observed counterintelligence strengths and innovations would not have occurred without the core variable shift.

### PIRA Case Study: Independent Variables

PIRA	Adversary CT Capability	Org Structure	Resources	Controlled Territory	Popular Support	Type
1969 - 1972	Low	Low	High	Yes	High	15
1972 - 1976	High	Low	High	Yes	High	16
1976 - 1994	High	High	High	Yes	High	8

#### PIRA Timeline: 1969 - 1972



#### PIRA Background

In the late 1960's the British government's handling of the crisis in Northern Ireland was increasing aggravating residents of Northern Ireland. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) had been fighting the British occupation with varying intensity since 1919, but some IRA members worried that its resistance efforts were flagging. The PIRA was officially created in August 1969 when IRA members Gerry Adams, Sean MacStiofain,



Billy McKee, Joe Cahill, Leo Martin, and Seamus Twomey decided that the IRA was failing to provide adequate defense for the people of Northern Ireland against “the forces of British imperialism.”<sup>61</sup>

Period One: 1969 to 1972

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capabilities.* Prior to 1969, the British had amassed considerable counterinsurgency experience in Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus and the English Intelligence Center in Sussex became the historical storehouse of British counterinsurgency experience.<sup>62</sup> Despite these experiences, the British had difficulty translating these lessons to the Northern Ireland battlefield. The British Army, the Royal Ulster Constabulary’s (RUC) Special Branch, British Internal Security Service (MI5) and British Special Intelligence Service (MI6) were the British government’s main counterterrorism forces in Northern Ireland and each faced challenges in gathering intelligence, coordinating policing and intelligence activities, and resisting military overreaction to the PIRA’s terrorist operations.

Between 1969 and 1972 the British government’s intelligence on the PIRA was severely lacking. When the conflict began, the RUC’s Special Branch, a police intelligence unit, had only 20 officers.<sup>63</sup> Historically, the Special Branch’s intelligence gathering had been focused on the IRA and produced very little intelligence on the new

---

<sup>61</sup> Peter Taylor, “Provos: The IRA and Sinn Fein,” Bloomsbury, London, 1997, 60.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Taylor, “Beating the Terrorists? Interrogation at Omagh, Gough and Castlereagh,” Penguin Books, Middlesex, UK: 1980, 20.

<sup>63</sup> Nicholas Davis, “Ten Thirty Three: The Inside Story of Britain’s Secret Killing Machine in Northern Ireland,” (Mainstream Publishing: Edinburgh, 1999, 32.

young hardliners of the PIRA.<sup>64</sup> Special Branch files were based on the IRA's previous military campaign in the late 1950's and contained information that largely concerned families that had IRA connections in the country districts in the 1950s.<sup>65</sup> An MI5 team sent to Northern Ireland in the early 1970's to supplement Special Branch activities found that Special Branch did not have a single address for any high-ranking PIRA personnel.<sup>66</sup>

The British Army's intelligence gathering was also unsophisticated. The Army relied on a policy of "tea and sympathy." Army officers on patrol would stop and chat with locals, in an effort to gain their confidence, and follow-up with a visit from an intelligence officer should the locals seem willing to provide information on the PIRA.<sup>67</sup> Thus, an overall picture of the Republican activity was constructed through casual contact with locals and the occasional four-hour detainment of more 'interesting' suspects.<sup>68</sup>

In this early period, British security forces suffered from inept policing and counterterrorism techniques. British counterterrorism activities initially were militarily passive, relying heavily on fostering good community relations. The British strategy in late 1969 and late 1970 was to avoid confrontation with the broader Catholic community in Northern Ireland by keeping a low-profile in Catholic areas and opening lines of communication to representatives of the Catholic minority.<sup>69</sup> The policy inadvertently

---

<sup>64</sup> Davis, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Taylor (1980), 19.

<sup>66</sup> Davis, 33.

<sup>67</sup> Davis, 33.

<sup>68</sup> Davis, 33.

<sup>69</sup> Colonel Michael Dewar, *The British Army in Northern Ireland (Arms and Armour: UK, 1996)*, 49.

created “no-go” areas for British forces, which the PIRA exploited to extend its influence in the Catholic communities.<sup>70</sup> A low-profile for the British also meant fewer arrests, less patrolling, and fewer house searches, which allowed the PIRA to operate openly in these critical “no go” areas.<sup>71</sup>

When the PIRA-led rioting began in the summer of 1970, the British Army overcorrected its permissive counterterrorism policy. In July 1970, they imposed a curfew on a prominent Catholic thoroughfare, known as the Falls Road—an incident which later became known in Republican circles as the “Rape of the Lower Falls.”<sup>72</sup> Standoffs and gun-battles between PIRA and British soldiers led to an even more severe British reaction, including wide-spread arrest and internment operations. In August 1971, the British initiated Operation Demetrius, in which British forces were permitted to arrest any individual “under suspicion of acting, haven acted, or about to act in a manner that disturbed the peace in Northern Ireland.”<sup>73</sup> Operation Detritus was a disaster on account of the British government’s poor intelligence on the PIRA. The British army rounded up hundreds of innocent people and very few key PIRA members, which further alienated the Catholic population from them.<sup>74</sup>

Operation Demetrius was also an example of poor British counterintelligence. One reason the British failed to apprehend many PIRA volunteers was because the PIRA knew the operation was coming. The British Army had ‘telegraphed’ the operation by

---

<sup>70</sup> Dewar, 64.

<sup>71</sup> Dewar, 64.

<sup>72</sup> Tim Pat Coogan, “The Troubles: Ireland’s Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace,” Roberts Rinehart Publishers, USA: 1996, 112.

<sup>73</sup> Taylor (1997), 92.

<sup>74</sup> Taylor (1997), 93.

conducting a series of dry-runs and ‘try out’ swoops in late July—an obvious sign to the Republican community that a big operation was imminent.<sup>75</sup> This evidence, coupled with a tip-off from clandestine sources, gave the PIRA advanced warning of the British forces’ plans.

A second mistake the British made was to increase heavy-handed interrogations of PIRA suspects. As the conflict with the PIRA heated up, the British began more aggressive use of the “five techniques” of interrogation, which included hooding, sleep deprivation, white noise, a starvation diet, and standing for hours spread-eagle against the wall, accompanied by verbal harassment and occasional blows.<sup>76</sup> A public inquiry exposed the interrogation abuses and left the Catholic community feeling increasingly alienated from the British government and sympathetic towards the PIRA.<sup>77</sup>

The PIRA’s car-bomb innovation further complicated the British government’s policing efforts. In order to stop the flow of car bombings in Northern Ireland the British sealed off traffic from city centers and set up numerous checkpoints. This effort placed a large burden on the security force’s resources and failed to prevent many car bombings.<sup>78</sup>

*Organizational Structure.* The PIRA’s leadership consisted of an elected 12-member Provisional Irish Republican Army Executive, which then elected a seven member Army Council. The Army Council, which included the General Headquarters

---

<sup>75</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA*. (Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, 1997, 381.

<sup>76</sup> Coogan, 127.

<sup>77</sup> Coogan.

<sup>78</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 172.

Staff (GHQ), elected MacStiofain the provisional Chief of Staff—the primary position of authority within the PIRA.<sup>79</sup>

Borrowing from the IRA's structure, the PIRA was modeled after the British Army with brigades, battalions, and companies.<sup>80</sup> In Belfast, the PIRA had three battalions under its influential Belfast Brigade: the First Battalion covering Upper Falls and Ballymurphy, the Second Battalion covering the Lower Falls and Clonard, and the Third Battalion covering Crumlin Road and the Short Strand.<sup>81</sup> Every company, in theory, had a Commanding Officer (O/C), a training officer, a quartermaster and an intelligence officer, in addition to the rank-and-file PIRA members, known as 'volunteers'.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the army-like structure, PIRA leaders exercised only loose command and control over the organization and had relatively little tactical or operational control over the activities of PIRA companies. J. Bowyer Bell, a scholar of the Republican movement, argued that the PIRA relied on 'control by consensus'—units worked within a rough framework and decisions were made by those "close to the pointed end of the stick, often at the last possible moment."<sup>83</sup> IRA scholar Ed Maloney, argued that there was virtually no central control of the PIRA from Dublin or even the Belfast Brigade: "IRA

---

<sup>79</sup> Brian A. Jackson, John C. Baker, Kim Cragin, John Parachini, Horacio R. Trujillo, Peter Chalk, "Aptitude for Destruction, Volume Two: Case Studies of Organizational Learning in Five Terrorist Groups" (RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, 2005), 96.

<sup>80</sup> Ed Maloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*, (W.W. Norton Company: New York, 2002), 87.

<sup>81</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*. (Frank Cass Publishers: London, 2000), 226.

<sup>82</sup> Brendan O'Brien, *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Fein 1985 to Today*, (O'Brien Press: Dublin, 1993), 39.

<sup>83</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*, 162.

companies were encouraged to go their own way. This led to a large amount of operations...a bank would be robbed, a bomb downtown, a booby trap for the Brits, snipes, a float—where three or four heavily armed IRA members would drive randomly around their streets in the hope of encountering a British army patrol to fire upon.”<sup>84</sup>

During this early period, the GHQ suffered from a general lack of control over PIRA volunteers and inability to coordinate operations among battalion commanders. In one incident Gerry Adams, then commander of the Ballymurphy units, had to detain a PIRA Belfast unit at gunpoint to keep them from meddling with military affairs in his area of operations.<sup>85</sup> In another incident, in March 1971, undercover PIRA volunteers assassinated three young off-duty British soldiers, despite PIRA guidelines not to target off-duty soldiers. The killing was so heinous that the PIRA immediately issued a denial of responsibility.<sup>86</sup>

Throughout 1971, the attacks against policemen and soldier grew more reckless, endangering civilians and bystanders.<sup>87</sup> It became clear that guidelines issued by Dublin were malleable and transgressing them would not result in disciplinary action.<sup>88</sup> This became painfully clear to the PIRA when offered a truce to the British in the summer of 1972, but subsequently could not prevent its members from conducting terrorist operations. During the 14 days of the truce PIRA volunteers were suspected of killing at

---

<sup>84</sup> Maloney, 107.

<sup>85</sup> Maloney, 88.

<sup>86</sup> Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, “The Provisional IRA” (Heinemann, London: 1987), 136.

<sup>87</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 141.

<sup>88</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 137.

least six Protestants, though the PIRA leadership denied responsibility and even alleged that some of the killings might have been done by “freelancing” elements.<sup>89</sup>

One advantage the PIRA gained from this lack of control, Bell argues, is that PIRA units could keep a very high operational attack tempo because of considerable operational freedom at low levels. This worked in favor of PIRA interests when PIRA leaders needed to sustain or escalate its operational tempo.<sup>90</sup>

*Resources.* When the PIRA split from the IRA in 1969 its resources, in terms of recruits and finances, were relatively meager. There were an estimated 50 to 60 members in Belfast and even fewer guns.<sup>91</sup> At the time of the August 1970 riots, there were an estimated 100 to 120 volunteers in Belfast and between 300 and 500 Republican supporters in the population, known as auxiliaries, who could be relied upon to relay a message or hide weapons.<sup>92</sup> The PIRA quickly amassed a deep reservoir of recruits, weapons, and financial supporters, due to the British government’s inept and heavy-handed response to PIRA activity in Northern Ireland.

Revelations of detainee abuse following Operation Demetrius resulted in many new recruits coming forward in Belfast and in areas where the PIRA previously had little support.<sup>93</sup> In 1970, the PIRA planted 213 bombs leading to 25 deaths. By the end of 1971, the PIRA had increased those numbers to 1,756 bombs and 174 deaths.<sup>94</sup> The

---

<sup>89</sup> M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement*, (Routledge: London, 1995), 119.

<sup>90</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*, 142.

<sup>91</sup> Maloney, 87 & Jackson et al (2005), 98.

<sup>92</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 108.

<sup>93</sup> Coogan, 128.

<sup>94</sup> Coogan, 131.

PIRA was enjoying a network of safe houses, sympathetic medical personnel, and around one thousand ‘auxiliary’ volunteers.<sup>95</sup>

One of the PIRA’s most important resources was its access to controlled territory. Following the internment debacle, the PIRA was able to develop a number of “no go” areas where they could operate openly, patrolling the streets with weapons on display, and controlling the entire area with barricades and checkpoints.<sup>96</sup> One of the benefits of operating openly was that PIRA volunteers could engage in a wider range of training and testing activities. For example, the volunteers often used their controlled territory in South Armagh to test new weapons and prototype bombs.<sup>97</sup>

The PIRA’s ability to establish and control territory areas varied by region. County Derry, which shared a border with the Republic of Ireland and whose population was seventy-five percent Catholic, was home to PIRA-controlled “no go” areas.<sup>98</sup> Belfast’s Catholic population was far smaller and less suitable for PIRA control, though the ghettos of Belfast became effective “no go” areas for British forces.<sup>99</sup>

Weapons and recruits were also critical resources for the PIRA. By 1972, the organization was inundated with weapons, collected from sympathetic Irish-American communities, partners in the Middle East, and international arms markets.<sup>100</sup> The PIRA had also been flooded with recruits. PIRA companies were growing so large that they were forced to split and new members came to outnumber the veteran volunteers needed

---

<sup>95</sup> Coogan, 113. & Maloney, 103.

<sup>96</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 152.

<sup>97</sup> Jackson et al (2005), 104.

<sup>98</sup> O’Brien, 51.

<sup>99</sup> Bell (1997), 382.

<sup>100</sup> Maloney, 107 & Jackson et al (2005), 98 & Taylor (1997), 108.



to train and test them.<sup>101</sup> With its ranks swollen, PIRA terrorist activity reached a high point in May 1972 with 1,200 military operations.<sup>102</sup>

*Popular Support.* The PIRA's level of popular support in the 1969 to 1972 period was intimately related to the British government's failings in Northern Ireland. The British army's policy of aggressive house-to-house searches was one of the greatest sources of anger in the Catholic communities.<sup>103</sup> The PIRA's ability to play a law enforcement role in its controlled territories, punishing criminals and deterring crime in areas where traditional law enforcement forces had pulled back, gave the PIRA an added boost of support.<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, it was the British government's blunders in Northern Ireland—the large-scale raids, bombing out roads at the Irish border, and Bloody Sunday in January 1972—that led to an upwelling of support for the PIRA. Gerry Adams summed up the result: “Thousands of people who had never been republicans now gave their active support to the IRA; others, who had never had any time for physical force now accepted it as a practical necessity.”<sup>105</sup>

The PIRA knew that British military overreactions aided the Republican cause and often sought to induce security crackdowns. The PIRA successfully compelled British forces to increase security operations outside of the Catholic ghettos, in the Loyalist and economic centers of Northern Ireland—PIRA bombings in Belfast forced the British to set up a tedious series of checkpoints, body-searches, and vehicle searches

---

<sup>101</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*, 81 and 225.

<sup>102</sup> Maloney, 112.

<sup>103</sup> Raymond Gilmour, *Dead Ground: Infiltrating the IRA* (Little Brown and Company, London, 1998), 21.

<sup>104</sup> Smith, 93.

<sup>105</sup> Taylor (1997), 83.

in the heart of the city's economic center.<sup>106</sup> PIRA volunteers are alleged to have made anonymous telephone calls to the security forces and misidentified people in Catholic areas as PIRA members, causing a flurry of arrests of innocent Catholics for which the British would be blamed.<sup>107</sup> The PIRA also knew it could suffer as a result of its own military zealotry. Bloody Friday, a PIRA bombing incident that accidentally killed seven civilians and two soldiers in Belfast, allowed the British to initiate a series of ambitious raids against the PIRA with relatively little public backlash in Northern Ireland.<sup>108</sup>

The PIRA also used intimidation to garner population support in the early period. Though most intimidation and knee-capping was directed at criminal or 'anti-social' elements in the population, the PIRA also targeted Catholic women that fraternized with British soldiers on the streets or in Army discos.<sup>109</sup> If Catholic women were caught fraternizing with British soldiers in the street or in the British Army's discotheques they were sometimes tied to a lamppost while hot tar was poured over their head and upper body—a technique known as “tarring and feathering.”<sup>110</sup>

*PIRA Intelligence.* In the 1969 to 1972 period, PIRA intelligence gathering was ad hoc and haphazard, but was often good enough to serve the PIRA's immediate goals of terrorizing the British and Protestant communities of Northern Ireland.

---

<sup>106</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 127.

<sup>107</sup> Tony Geraghty, “The Irish War,” HarperCollins Publishers, London, 1998, 52.

<sup>108</sup> Maloney, 117.

<sup>109</sup> Taylor (1997), 87.

<sup>110</sup> Taylor (1997), 88.

Importantly, PIRA intelligence was focused on simple military operations, rather than assessing the political climate in Britain or Northern Ireland.<sup>111</sup> In 1970, the core of the PIRA campaign involved a series of bombs aimed at economic targets, which would have required only basic surveillance.<sup>112</sup> The strategy worked well because the PIRA had access to plenty of explosives and the British could not defend every building.<sup>113</sup>

For many targets, extensive pre-operational ‘intelligence’ was unnecessary for PIRA units. PIRA volunteer Martin Meehan describes the daily routine for PIRA units in the Ardoyne in this early period: “members [would] set off in pairs, usually by car, to cruise the narrow streets in search of a target...instructions were vague...They were simply under orders to engage any troops who entered the district.”<sup>114</sup> PIRA volunteer Brenden Hughes describes this technique as a ‘float’: “That’s a two-man car with one man driving and one man in the back with a particular weapon...They’d be floating around waiting until a target came along...some [operations] would have been opportunistic.”<sup>115</sup> Sometimes the PIRA’s targets were carefully chosen—army foot patrols and vehicle convoys would be monitored to find patterns, and sometimes hoax warnings were used to lure soldiers into an ambush.<sup>116</sup>

In this early period, the PIRA received a great deal of intelligence support from sympathetic local populations. In areas where population support was very strong, such

---

<sup>111</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*, 241.

<sup>112</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 127.

<sup>113</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*, 276.

<sup>114</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 149.

<sup>115</sup> Taylor (1997), 109.

<sup>116</sup> Taylor (1997), 109.

as South Armagh, PIRA units relied on locals to gather details of troop activities.<sup>117</sup> In the “no go” areas, where population were particularly supportive, PIRA units could openly patrol the streets and check the identities of everyone coming in or out of the area.<sup>118</sup> In some areas, British soldiers would be greeted by hen patrols—local women and children rattling garbage can lids, blowing whistles, and following the patrols alley to alley—in order to alert PIRA units to impending raids.<sup>119</sup>

Additional population support for PIRA intelligence came from the young men that lived in the areas of operation. Men who were too young to serve as PIRA volunteers would be used as couriers or lookouts for snipers.<sup>120</sup> Former British Colonel Michael Dewar recalls that in one operation, boys would signal to hidden PIRA members when a British patrol had entered a kill zone, allowing the PIRA members to keep a safe distance for concealment and quick escape.<sup>121</sup>

There is little evidence to support the claim that the PIRA had penetrated the security services or the British government during the 1969 to 1972 period. PIRA member Joe Cahill alleges, however, that the PIRA was tipped off to Operation Demetrius by a PIRA mole working in the office of the Minister of Home Affairs.<sup>122</sup> Cahill and PIRA volunteer Sean MacStiofain, allegedly traveled to different company

---

<sup>117</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 159.

<sup>118</sup> Geraghty, 55.

<sup>119</sup> BB, 78 & Gilmour, 21.

<sup>120</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 117.

<sup>121</sup> Dewar, 71.

<sup>122</sup> Brendan Anderson, “Joe Cahill: A Life in the IRA,” (The O’Brien Press: Dublin, 2002), 223.

areas 48 hours before the operation, telling volunteers not to sleep in the own houses.<sup>123</sup>

Though the claim seems sensational, it is corroborated by the fact that the vast majority of key PIRA volunteer eluded British capture by going on the run well before the operation began.<sup>124</sup>

*PIRA Counterintelligence.* In the 1969 to 1972 period, PIRA counterintelligence was ad hoc and disorganized, but was also relatively effective when pitted against British capabilities.

The PIRA did not have a counterintelligence staff or unit in this period, so every PIRA volunteer was informally responsible for detecting informers.<sup>125</sup> Former PIRA official Brenden Hughes argues that because a unit would undertake a series of operations every day, any unexplained absence would have raised suspicion among members of the unit.<sup>126</sup>

The British did not seem to have any significant penetrations of the PIRA in this early period, so the PIRA could survive with haphazard counterintelligence tradecraft. Potential PIRA volunteers would directly contact a local recruiter and would then attend an overt Sinn Fein political meeting where they could volunteer to join the violent side of the movement.<sup>127</sup> The advantage of recruiting locally was that most volunteers would be known in their community and vetted by their neighbors.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Anderson, 223.

<sup>124</sup> Taylor (1997), 92.

<sup>125</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*, 244.

<sup>126</sup> Peter Taylor, *Brits: The War Against the IRA*, (Bloomsbury: London, 2001), 133.

<sup>127</sup> Sean O'Callaghan, *The Informer* (Bantam Press: London, 1998), 27.

<sup>128</sup> Bell (2000), 226.

Despite the PIRA's haphazard counterintelligence practices, it was able to stay a step ahead of the British in many cases. Tipped off to Operation Demetrius in August 1971, PIRA volunteers escaped to safe houses. PIRA scholar Tony Geraghty recalls asking PIRA leader Leo Martin where he slept at night, to which Martin held up a key ring with 30 different door keys.<sup>129</sup> The PIRA also benefited from recruiting volunteers that had no Republican background, called 'unknowns' or 'sixty-niners', to assure that some portion of the organization would be unknown to the Special Branch.<sup>130</sup> The natural counterintelligence advantage fell to the PIRA in this case, as many of the most recruitable volunteers, the young and unemployed, were also those on which the Special Branch had little intelligence.<sup>131</sup>

Population support provided the PIRA with a counterintelligence advantage in a number of cases. The medical assistance provided by sympathetic populations within the Republic of Ireland proved invaluable, as medical personnel in Northern Ireland would sometimes report suspicious injuries to the police.<sup>132</sup> PIRA controlled territory in the countryside, such as South Armagh, allowed the PIRA to relax its counterintelligence profile and operate more openly.<sup>133</sup> Staying 'hidden' in urban areas was more challenging. Some PIRA leaders realized early on that South Belfast, a religiously-mixed

---

<sup>129</sup> Geraghty, 48.

<sup>130</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 145.

<sup>131</sup> Taylor (1980), 19.

<sup>132</sup> Geraghty, 63.

<sup>133</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 159.

area with a large transient student population, was an ideal hiding ground and so decided to use the area as a base.<sup>134</sup>

Some of the PIRA's counterintelligence advantages were based on more coercive practices. Starting in the autumn of 1970, the PIRA took measures against members of the community who socialized with British soldiers. As described earlier, young girls caught socializing with soldiers would sometimes be tied to a lamppost with a placard hung around their neck announcing their offense.<sup>135</sup> The organization dealt even harsher penalties to touts, who were volunteers suspected of passing information to the British. The PIRA carried out its first execution in January 1971. John Kavanagh had ignored warnings to avoid contact with the police and so was apprehended, tried in a PIRA 'court', and then shot in the back of the head.<sup>136</sup>

During the 1969 to 1972 period, the PIRA also suffered as a result of its counterintelligence sloppiness. Following a PIRA gunbattle with British soldiers in South Armagh, two volunteers proceeded to brag about the operation while drinking in a bar and were subsequently arrested.<sup>137</sup> Many PIRA members made no attempt to conceal their PIRA affiliation, in some cases walking in public with balaclava helmets, carrying guns and stopping cars.<sup>138</sup> During the halt in hostilities in 1972, many of the PIRA volunteers that had previously guarded their affiliation openly mixed in public with

---

<sup>134</sup> Maloney, 104.

<sup>135</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 133.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 138.

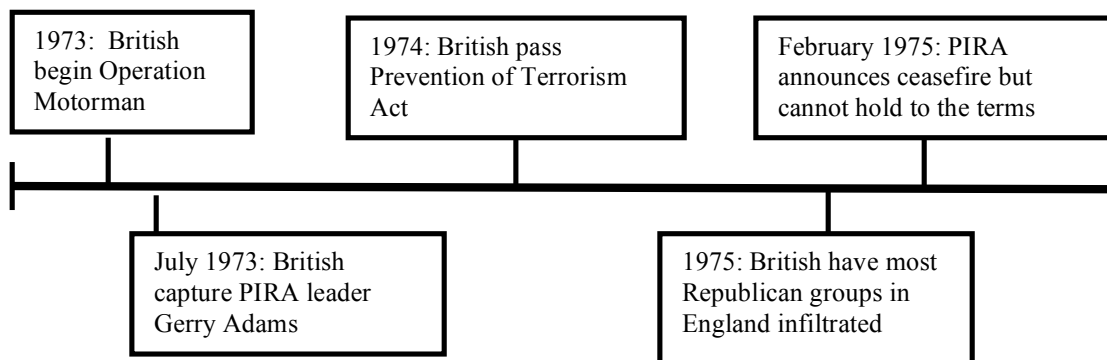
<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>138</sup> Gilmour, 25.

known PIRA men, which was all very visible to, and later exploited by, British intelligence.<sup>139</sup>

*Summary.* In the 1969 to 1972 period, the PIRA maintained a loose organizational structure and a wealth of resources and controlled territory. The PIRA also benefited from a relatively weak adversary, prone to military overreaction and unpopular mass arrests. As predicted, the PIRA's operational and counterintelligence postures were ad hoc rather than standardized. The PIRA occasionally exposed its personnel and political agenda in its efforts to generate popular support through open Sinn Fein meetings in the local communities.

*Timeline: 1972 - 1976*



*Period Two: 1972 to 1976*

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capabilities.* By 1973, the British government's counterterrorism capabilities had dramatically improved, and continued to improve through 1976.<sup>140</sup> Specific counterterrorism improvements included intelligence

---

<sup>139</sup> Maloney, 113.

<sup>140</sup> Bell (2000), 227.



collection through house raids, interrogations and penetrations of the PIRA, as well as improved policing coordination and more politically-sensitive military interventions.

House raids conducted by British forces reached a peak in 1973, when security forces searched one-fifth of all houses in Northern Ireland.<sup>141</sup> Raids and interrogations were reoriented towards gathering information about future PIRA operations rather than gathering evidence to facilitate criminal prosecution of past operations.<sup>142</sup> The British parliament passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974, which aided British counterterrorism efforts by allowing terrorist suspects to be detained for up to seven days.<sup>143</sup> The Prevention of Terrorism Act proved an intelligence windfall for the British as they could arrest suspects without a warrant and interrogate them for a week without bringing charges against them.

A secret PIRA document confiscated in 1977 from a high-ranking PIRA leader revealed that British detentions were taking a severe toll on the organization: “The three day and seven day detention orders are breaking volunteers and it is the Republican Army’s fault for not indoctrinating volunteers with a psychological strength to resist interrogation.”<sup>144</sup>

British penetrations of the PIRA also improved.<sup>145</sup> British forces were able to recruit many cash-deprived young Catholics during their interrogation by offering them a

---

<sup>141</sup> Allen Feldman, “Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland,” University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1991, 88.

<sup>142</sup> Feldman, 88.

<sup>143</sup> Taylor (1997), 174.

<sup>144</sup> Coogan, 345.

<sup>145</sup> Maloney, 125.

financial reward for spying on the PIRA.<sup>146</sup> British also stepped up its effort to penetrate the Irish community in Great Britain hoping to forestall support to PIRA units.<sup>147</sup> British forces were also able to skillfully use their interrogation centers, to meet with PIRA informants. Uniformed British battalions sometimes staged mass arrests to identify new informers and to provide cover for meetings with ongoing informants.<sup>148</sup>

In one case, the British recruited the Belfast Brigade quartermaster, Eamon Malloy, during an interrogation but knew that releasing him back to the street quickly without a criminal trial would raise suspicion in the PIRA ranks.<sup>149</sup> The British invented a cover story for Malloy, which was that he had escaped through a door that was carelessly left unlocked at the interrogation facility. The story was good enough to get Malloy back into the PIRA ranks where he was able to provide British forces with details about arms dumps and the location of hard-to smuggle weaponry—intelligence that decimated the PIRA arsenal.<sup>150</sup> The British worked hard to recruit quartermasters during this time because they would know where weapons were and, up until the PIRA's reorganization, who was using them.<sup>151</sup>

The British Internal Security Service MI5 recruited many new officers and employed new techniques in order to improve surveillance operations against the

---

<sup>146</sup> Davis, 34.

<sup>147</sup> Bell (1997), 400.

<sup>148</sup> Geraghty, 137.

<sup>149</sup> Maloney, 134.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 141. / Malloy's cover story was that he slipped out an open door at the interrogation center and away from his British captors.

<sup>151</sup> Taylor (2001), 149.

PIRA.<sup>152</sup> MI5 also began to plant listening devices in suspects' cars and homes—in one scenario, MI5 would covertly 'award' a suspect with a weekend holiday trip through a staged radio contest and then wire the house with microphones once the individual left for the weekend.<sup>153</sup>

British forces used creative intelligence analysis to improve operations against the PIRA. Special Branch and other intelligence were able to work out which units were responsible for which operations based on the PIRA's well-defined geographical distribution. British forces used this analysis to aid interrogations and achieve more precise targeting.<sup>154</sup>

British intelligence agencies also employed more sophisticated offensive intelligence operations, which targeted internal PIRA morale. The British frequently announced that informant information had led to an arrest, when it had not, or announced an exaggeratedly high figure for the spoils of a PIRA bank robbery, which sometimes resulted in a spate of internal PIRA punishment shootings.<sup>155</sup>

A PIRA spokesperson aptly summed up the British counterterrorism capabilities in this period, referring to a specific British operation: "We were had. We knew we had fallen for it. It was very much in the mould of the [British Army Intelligence] operations, clever, well-planned and brilliantly executed...They almost destroyed us. They created paranoia in the ranks and left us severely damaged."<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Taylor (1980), 145.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>154</sup> Maloney, 156.

<sup>155</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 187.

<sup>156</sup> Coogan, 267.

*Organizational Structure.* The PIRA's command and control structure in period two remained loose and nominally organized in brigades, battalions, and companies. The flood of PIRA recruits was incorporated, sometimes haphazardly, into this structure.<sup>157</sup>

By 1973, British forces began to capture many PIRA leaders but the PIRA's loose command structure allowed it to recover quickly from these losses in some cases.<sup>158</sup> J. Bower Bell argues that when the British captured C/O of the Belfast Brigade Gerry Adams, the Brigade took "only a week or so to recover."<sup>159</sup> The quick recovery, defined as the ability to continue conducting terrorist operations at the same pace, scale, and expertise, proved particularly valuable to the Belfast unit—following Adams' arrest in July 1973, the next five C/O's of the Brigade were arrested in succession within a year.<sup>160</sup>

The PIRA's resilience was due in part to the operational independence of PIRA units. Units in the countryside, in particular, had little or no operational connection to other PIRA units and sometimes no contact with the Army Council or a representative from the GHQ Staff for six months at a time.<sup>161</sup> Units in East Tyrone and South Armagh were effectively under the control of clan chieftains, Kevin Mellon and Tom Murphy, respectively.<sup>162</sup> Ed Maloney quotes a rural PIRA volunteer describing the relationship between these units and central leadership: "The leadership would never try to give them orders... There was virtually no control from the center. They mounted operations against the British, and the job of the leadership was to provide resources, training, guns,

---

<sup>157</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 254.

<sup>158</sup> Bell (1997), 399.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 405.

<sup>161</sup> Bell (2000), 233 & Bishop and Mallie, 246.

<sup>162</sup> Maloney, 160.

explosives.”<sup>163</sup> PIRA units deployed in London also exercised considerable autonomy. In 1974, the London unit was averaging about one attack a week in spite of limited communication with the PIRA’s ‘overseas operations’ headquarters in Dublin.<sup>164</sup>

The relative autonomy of PIRA units made them difficult to control. Units throughout Northern Ireland would often act without clearance from the GHQ, seeking revenge for sectarian killings or conducting special operations. In one case, the PIRA unit in Andersonstown kidnapped a German businessman without official authorization and when the German died of a heart attack, the PIRA disowned the attack out of embarrassment.<sup>165</sup> Lack of control also imperiled some of the PIRA’s political strategies. For example, on February 9, 1975, the PIRA Army Council announced a ceasefire after discussions with British officials and a month later a PIRA unit in Derry killed an RUC constable.<sup>166</sup>

The loose command and control structure also affected personnel management. Talented individuals were not easily shared or transferred around to where they might be needed most.<sup>167</sup> In addition, there was no formal plan for retiring PIRA members. Former PIRA member Sean O’Callaghan recalls that volunteers came and went all the time and sometimes their absence was not even noticed.<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>163</sup> Maloney, 160.

<sup>164</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 202.

<sup>165</sup> Bell (1997), 406.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>168</sup> O’Callaghan, 85.

The PIRA continued to lack a formal training plan for its recruits between 1972 and 1976.<sup>169</sup> Former PIRA member O’Callaghan recalls that when he was a young volunteer in the mid-1970s, training was informally conducted by a member of his unit and focused mostly on weapons skills.<sup>170</sup>

*Resources.* PIRA resources did not shift significantly from the early 1970’s to the mid-1970’s. One of the big changes from early to mid-1970s was the PIRA’s loss of its urban ‘no go’ areas.<sup>171</sup> In spite of this, the PIRA still had a flood of recruits, and often too many to deploy.<sup>172</sup>

Bordering areas in the Republic of Ireland continued to offer safe haven to PIRA units.<sup>173</sup> As the British improved their counterterrorism capabilities, however, they began to challenge the PIRA’s controlled territory more effectively. Operation Motorman, one of the British government’s most important counterterrorism operations, worked well because it was politically sensitive and hemmed in PIRA ‘no-go’ areas in the urban centers of Belfast and Derry.<sup>174</sup> The operation took place on July 31, 1973 and was largely successful because it followed a particularly bloody PIRA attack known as Bloody Friday—an operation that killed six civilians, including two Catholics and two children. The attack gave the British license to reclaim some of the PIRA’s urban controlled territory and construct military forts in some of these areas, which severely restricted the PIRA’s freedom of movement and allowed the British to surveil thousands

---

<sup>169</sup> Bell (2000), 233.

<sup>170</sup> O’Callaghan, 30.

<sup>171</sup> Bell (2000), 226.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>174</sup> Bell (1997), 393.

of civilians with Republican sympathies.<sup>175</sup> The British grip on the PIRA strongholds in West Belfast grew so tight, that the PIRA was forced to move its operational headquarters to the southern outskirts of the city.<sup>176</sup>

The number of PIRA suspects arrested, interned, or charged with criminal offenses increased from 100 to 1,000 between 1972 and 1973.<sup>177</sup> On a single day in July 1973, the PIRA saw at least sixteen of its most experienced leaders arrested by the British, including the entire staff of the Third Brigade.<sup>178</sup> Following Operation Motorman, the British set up security checkpoints in urban centers and security towers in the countryside. Urban units continued their bombings campaigns but at a reduced level and though the countryside was still considered ‘bandit country,’ PIRA volunteers had to move about more cautiously or operate only at night.<sup>179</sup>

*Popular Support.* Popular support for the PIRA also did not shift significantly from the early to mid-1970’s. Local support continued to be an important asset in PIRA intelligence and counterintelligence operations. One of the most important forms of support from the population was nondenunciation—pretending not to know of any PIRA personnel or activities.<sup>180</sup>

Popular support also aided intelligence collection. PIRA ‘spies’ in tax and social security offices passed useful information to the group, such as the home addresses of

---

<sup>175</sup> Maloney, 117.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 133.

<sup>179</sup> Bell (2000), 227.

<sup>180</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 228.

policemen or personal information about members of the loyalists paramilitaries.<sup>181</sup> In 1973, a telephone engineer with PIRA sympathies offered to tap British Army Communications when his company assigned him to install a new back-up telephone exchange at the Army's Lisburn headquarters.<sup>182</sup> The engineer was not a member of the PIRA, but had developed strong sympathies for the PIRA after he saw the Army kill a stone-thrower in Andersonstown.<sup>183</sup>

The PIRA also continued to use intimidation and other 'heavy-handed' techniques to gain the population's acquiescence. Police informers were dealt with harshly, and knowledge of the PIRA informant policy was enough to compel many citizens to lend their cars and houses for PIRA operations without question.<sup>184</sup> The majority of residents did not approve of the organization's intimidation methods, but found it preferable to tolerate rather than resist the PIRA.<sup>185</sup> Former PIRA member Raymond Gilmour recalls that people who knew each other fairly well might talk about PIRA policies freely in the confines of their own homes, but talking about the PIRA in public was considered dangerous.<sup>186</sup> Though there was no appreciable difference in population support, sympathy for the PIRA was beginning to thin as the shock of internment wore off and reckless PIRA thuggery in the ghettos continued.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 228.

<sup>182</sup> Taylor (2001), 158.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>184</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 228.

<sup>185</sup> Gilmour, 40.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 173.



*PIRA Intelligence.* The PIRA's intelligence collection capability in this period was relatively advanced. In some cases, the PIRA's intelligence collection could be considered sophisticated, for example, when the PIRA tapped key phones at the British Army's Lisburn headquarters.<sup>188</sup>

For the most part, however, the PIRA's intelligence collection supported very basic operations against static or soft targets. Successful intelligence collection operations included locating the London home of the Adjunct General of the British Army, the bus ferrying British soldiers between Manchester and Catterick Camp, British Army Headquarters at the Grand Central Hotel, Special Branch Chief in Omagh, Judge Rory Conaghan, and Magistrate Martin McBirney.<sup>189</sup> In some cases, soft civilian targets would require even less operational intelligence—pubs frequented by off-duty soldiers were likely easy surveillance targets.<sup>190</sup>

Even the PIRA's more sophisticated intelligence operations were performed in a relatively ad hoc and haphazard manner. The successful bugging of Lisburn Army Headquarters depended on a fortuitous access of a Republican sympathizer who, through trial and error, eventually tapped the line that led to the Army's intelligence unit 'G2 Int.'<sup>191</sup> The tap itself was not sophisticated, consisting of a voice-activated tape recorder, and a descrambling device stolen from the Army headquarters.<sup>192</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> Taylor (1997), 162.

<sup>189</sup> Bell (1997), 404 & 411, 424 & Coogan, 190.

<sup>190</sup> Taylor (1997), 173.

<sup>191</sup> Taylor (2001), 158.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 158.

Even the relatively successful London operations in the mid-1970's were based on ad hoc intelligence collection. Units would get intelligence, orders, and suggestions from headquarters through couriers, but would usually choose their own targets and gather the critical operational intelligence only weeks before the operation.<sup>193</sup>

Though intelligence collection was basic and often disorganized, the PIRA made good use of prisons for intelligence analysis. Long Kesh prison, home to many arrested PIRA volunteers, developed its own command and leadership structures and became a de facto think tank for the organization.<sup>194</sup> Some of the PIRA's most innovative analysis, including that which inspired the PIRA's reorganization, was prepared by prisoners at Long Kesh.<sup>195</sup>

*PIRA Counterintelligence.* PIRA counterintelligence in this period was still relatively ad hoc and disorganized, and was increasingly haggard by improvements in British counterterrorism efforts.

In spite of its unstructured counterintelligence practices, the PIRA enjoyed several counterintelligence successes in this period. Some PIRA units continued to recruit volunteers with no criminal records who were unlikely to be known to British forces.<sup>196</sup> The PIRA also occasionally forced non-volunteers to drive truck bombs to their targets in order to keep PIRA volunteers out of the reach of security forces.<sup>197</sup> For some

---

<sup>193</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 200 & Coogan,(1993), 293 & Taylor (1997), 155.

<sup>194</sup> Maloney, 149.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>197</sup> Bell (1997), 405.

operations, PIRA units would change the license plates and paint jobs of cars to be used in operations to keep from drawing the suspicion of security forces.<sup>198</sup>

The PIRA continued to enjoy counterintelligence support from the Catholic and Republican community. The community's knowledge of what the PIRA did to police informants could be enough to keep them from offering information to security forces.<sup>199</sup>

The British government's 'confidential phone' operation, in which any citizen could leave an anonymous message about PIRA activities, was a failure for the British.<sup>200</sup>

Gerry Adams argued that it was impossible for the majority of Catholics to see the PIRA from the same perspective as British forces did: "It's not staff officer Paddy McGuire [Adams explained]...it's Mrs. Maguire's boy."<sup>201</sup> The PIRA also recognized the counterintelligence threat that came from operating in areas where it lacked popular support, such as in England. By the early 1970's, the British had infiltrated many pro-Republican organizations in England and, as a result, Sinn Fein did not allow its British supporters to open overseas branches.<sup>202</sup>

The PIRA would occasionally offer amnesty to informants, if they told the PIRA everything about their activities and other British informants.<sup>203</sup> This was a particularly clever strategy, in theory, as it potentially allowed the PIRA to reduce the number of informants in their ranks, assess damage done by British informants, and adjust PIRA operations to reduce damage from current and future British intelligence operations. On

---

<sup>198</sup> Taylor (1997), 155.

<sup>199</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 228.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 230.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>203</sup> Taylor (2001), 149.

the down side for the PIRA, offering amnesty regularly may have reduced a volunteer's perceived risk of becoming British informant.

The PIRA further bolstered its counterintelligence posture by exploiting the talents of volunteers in prison. PIRA inmates at Long Kesh analyzed a string of British counterterrorism successes and discovered that PIRA volunteer Kevin Malloy was most likely an informer. Inmates passed this message to the leadership outside and Malloy was eventually tricked into admitting his role as an informer.<sup>204</sup> PIRA inmates would debrief and interrogate newly arrived inmates and, in one case, prompted two 'fake' inmates in the Crumlin Road jail to confess to working as informants for the RUC's Special Branch.<sup>205</sup> Interrogations were sometimes brutal—a warden at Long Kesh prison discovered that PIRA interrogation devices included piano wire and electric current.<sup>206</sup>

The PIRA used interrogations to enhance its counterintelligence practices outside of the prisons as well. The organization used interrogation to learn from informant Kevin Malloy that the British had PIRA leader Brenden Hughes and an important PIRA safe house under constant surveillance.<sup>207</sup> The PIRA also learned of several major British covert action programs by interrogating suspected informants Kevin McKee and Seamus Wright.<sup>208</sup> In addition to revealing the presence of more British informants among the PIRA, McKee and Seamus revealed a laundry service run by British spies to test the

---

<sup>204</sup> Maloney, 134.

<sup>205</sup> Coogan (1996), 266.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>207</sup> Maloney, 138.

<sup>208</sup> Taylor (2001), 135.

clothing of Republicans for explosives residue.<sup>209</sup> These counterintelligence victories demonstrate the PIRA's effective interrogation practices, but also reveal that the PIRA had limited systematic counterintelligence capabilities as the penetrations were detected as a result of non-routine counterespionage interrogations.<sup>210</sup>

In this period, the PIRA's disorganized and ad hoc counterintelligence practices cost the organization dearly. Part of the problem stemmed from the PIRA's growing membership—as the organization grew, security tended to slacken.<sup>211</sup> In some areas, such as the Divis Flats, security problems arose because PIRA volunteers were easy to target as they patrolled streets openly with rifles displayed.<sup>212</sup> Lack of training and sloppiness also contributed to counterintelligence problems. British police named this sloppiness the 'Paddy factor.'<sup>213</sup> PIRA scholar Tim Pat Coogan argues that in the mid-1970s anyone could stroll into a PIRA establishment, such as a bar in Andersonstown, and observe PIRA volunteers and supporters mixing together and singing about the battalion to which they belonged—a potential intelligence windfall for any police agent present.<sup>214</sup>

The British government's most lethal counterterrorism platforms during this period were its interrogation 'holding centers,' at Castlereagh, Gough Barracks, and Strand Road. One PIRA volunteer recalled: "Men were breaking in the police stations.

---

<sup>209</sup> Maloney, 120.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>211</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 254.

<sup>212</sup> Maloney, 123.

<sup>213</sup> Bell (1997), 406.

<sup>214</sup> Coogan (1993), 353.

We'd hear of people handing over 25 or 30 names at a time."<sup>215</sup> The British used this intelligence to arrest top PIRA leadership, including Sean MacStiofain (November 1972), Sean Keenan (November 1972), Martin Meehan (November 1972), Ruairi O'Bradaigh (December 1972), Martin McGuinness (December 1972), Joe McCallion (December 1972), Anthony Doherty (January 1973), Leo Martin (January 1973), John Martin (February 1973), Seamus Twomey (September 1973), Kevin Mallon (September 1973), and Ivor Bell (April 1974), to name a few.<sup>216</sup> In June of 1973, British forces arrested 23 known PIRA volunteers and 13 known officers in a period of five days.<sup>217</sup> In July, security forces arrested 17 members of the Belfast Brigade, including the three most wanted men in Belfast—senior PIRA leaders Gerry Adams, Tom Cahill, and Brenden Hughes.<sup>218</sup>

The PIRA was so weakened by the string of arrests, that PIRA leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness regarded this time in PIRA history as the closest the organization would come to defeat.<sup>219</sup>

*Summary.* In the 1972 to 1976 period, the PIRA maintained a loose organizational structure as well as a high level of resources and access to controlled territory. The British counterterrorism capabilities dramatically improved in this period, presenting the PIRA with a significant, existential challenge. The PIRA's operational and counterintelligence postures remained ad hoc rather than standardized, and PIRA leaders

---

<sup>215</sup> Maloney, 155.

<sup>216</sup> Taylor (1997), 152-158 & Coogan (1996), 159-160.

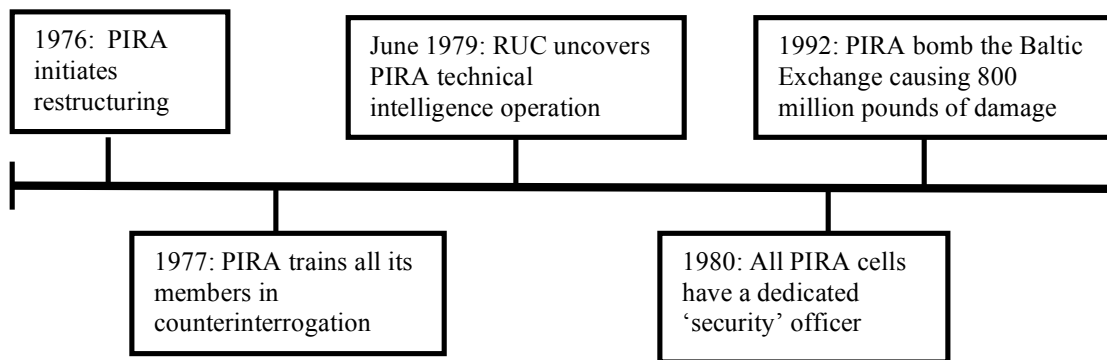
<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, 197.

were systematically captured as a result. The British Government's ability to take advantage of the PIRA's lack of training, also known as the "Paddy factor," is a clear example of the critical importance of standardized counterintelligence training for terrorist groups.

Timeline: 1976 - 1994



Period Three: 1976 to 1994

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capabilities.* British counterterrorism capabilities remained high, and steadily improved, from 1976 through 1994. British security forces continued to successfully coordinate operations, extract information through interrogation centers, recruit informants, and moderate military activity to garner public sympathies.

The RUC took the lead in the war against the PIRA in 1976—the job that had previously fallen to the British army—which led to increased cooperation between the RUC and other military and intelligence agencies.<sup>220</sup> The RUC's Special Branch and military intelligence were sharing information and running some agents together by the

---

<sup>220</sup> Taylor (1997), 202.

mid-1980s.<sup>221</sup> The RUC turned itself into a top-notch policing and intelligence organization, having developed the most comprehensive network of informants in Northern Ireland, a world-renown forensic science department, and their own equivalent of the British Special Air Service (SAS) (a surveillance unit known as Echo 4 Alpha), which increased collaboration between the police, SAS, and MI5.<sup>222</sup> Supplementing the RUC's work was the Force Research Unit (FRU), a British military intelligence squad, which managed its own spies and informants.<sup>223</sup> The British army also fielded the Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF), which conducted surveillance and intelligence operations against the PIRA.<sup>224</sup> Beginning in the mid-1980s, the SAS increased its operations in Northern Ireland and used sophisticated electronic surveillance and informants to conduct ambushes and captures.<sup>225</sup>

British interrogation centers continued to produce information on the PIRA but it also became fertile ground for recruiting informants. The British had to rely on 'turning' vulnerable PIRA volunteers—security services could not infiltrate the PIRA with their own spies due to the PIRA's cellular structure and the group's fear of 'unknown' Republicans.<sup>226</sup> Captured volunteers would be given the choice of a long jail sentence or money and protection if they agreed to spy on the PIRA, and not surprisingly some chose to spy.<sup>227</sup> Interrogation centers such as Castlereagh also benefited from a brutal

---

<sup>221</sup> Taylor (1997), 256.

<sup>222</sup> O'Brien, 162 & Geraghty 131.

<sup>223</sup> Coogan (1996), 210.

<sup>224</sup> Coogan, 245.

<sup>225</sup> Taylor (1997), 268.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 256.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.



reputation and some captured volunteers would quickly give up information to avoid the RUC's infamous torture practices.<sup>228</sup>

Through the 1990s, the RUC was getting a large portion of its daily intelligence on the PIRA from informants run by Special Branch, estimated to have been in the hundreds.<sup>229</sup> The British government also began to use supergrasses—informants who were offered amnesty, a new life, and a pension—to provide evidence in court against PIRA volunteers.<sup>230</sup> British forces cleverly targeted senior PIRA officers that were alleged to have left the organization under a cloud of disagreement as these individuals were most vulnerable to the informant 'pitch.'<sup>231</sup> The British started rumors of informants in the PIRA—the British knew that PIRA cells would tend to lie low for up to several months after such an incident for fear of also being betrayed by the phantom informant.<sup>232</sup>

The British also infused their counterterrorism strategy with an increasing technological sophistication. When the RUC took the counterterrorism helm in 1976, it centralized collected intelligence in massive databases—every suspect brought into the police station would have personal information, including aliases, nicknames, neighborhood, accent, scars, and tattoos, loaded into a database.<sup>233</sup> By the late-1980s, intelligence agents would plant listening devices in suspects' houses that could transmit

---

<sup>228</sup> Taylor (1980), 193.

<sup>229</sup> Geraghty, 157.

<sup>230</sup> Coogan (1996), 195.

<sup>231</sup> Davis, 36.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>233</sup> Taylor (1980), 61.

for months and upload recorded material to a helicopter flying overhead.<sup>234</sup> The Royal Air Force provided aerial photography to British forces and used infra-red and thermal imaging to search for buried arms caches.<sup>235</sup> The British also used sophisticated computer software to monitor large numbers of telephone calls, including all cross-border calls and all calls to known Republicans.<sup>236</sup> The increased surveillance capability made it difficult for the PIRA to operate in the open, even in the PIRA's countryside strongholds.<sup>237</sup>

British counterterrorism practices improved steady through the 1990s, setback only occasionally by coordination problems, gaps in informant intelligence, or difficulty in targeting an increasingly stealthy PIRA.<sup>238</sup>

*Organizational Structure.* The PIRA's command and control structure changed dramatically from period two to three. The structural change began in the autumn of 1976 and involved a tightening of command and control over the organization, which increased control of PIRA volunteers by top leadership and included the compartmentalization of PIRA Active Service Units (ASUs) into cells.<sup>239</sup>

The PIRA made these structural changes in direct response to improvements in British counterterrorism practices. The PIRA's 'restructuring strategy' memo, known as the Staff Report, was found on arrested PIRA member Seamus Twomey in December

---

<sup>234</sup> Taylor (1997), 276.

<sup>235</sup> Geraghty, 131.

<sup>236</sup> Bell (2000), 206.

<sup>237</sup> Bell (1997), 615.

<sup>238</sup> Bell (1997), 536 & Coogan (1996), 246.

<sup>239</sup> Coogan (1996), 345.

1977.<sup>240</sup> The document spelled out the motivation for and the ramifications of PIRA restructuring:

“This old system with which the Brits and the [Special] Branch are familiar has to be changed. We recommend reorganization and remotivation...We emphasize a return to secrecy and strict discipline. Army men must be in total command of all sections of the movement...Anti-interrogation lectures must be given in conjunction with indoctrination lectures...Cells of four volunteers will be controlled militarily by the Brigade’s/Command Operations Officer...Cells should operate as often as possible outside of their own areas: both to confuse Brit intelligence (which would increase our security) and to expand out operational areas.”<sup>241</sup>

The PIRA was able to ‘tighten’ its command and control structure by compartmenting PIRA units.<sup>242</sup> Compartmentalization was designed to keep most of the members of one cell from knowing the members of another cell and dependent on top leadership for resources and direction. Cells would have one leader that reported to the Brigade Operations Officer so only the leader of the cell would be in contact with members of the Brigade Staff.<sup>243</sup> Importantly, compartmentalization would make it difficult for a British interrogator to extract much information from a captured volunteer.<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>240</sup> Coogan (1996), 205.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 345-347 & Appendix A.

<sup>242</sup> In spite of the push to reorganize the entire PIRA, the restructuring process was not uniform across the organization. Units in rural areas fought harder to retain their old structures and operational habits.

<sup>243</sup> Urban, 1992, 31.

<sup>244</sup> Taylor (1997), 211.

The PIRA's second organizational shift involved dividing the PIRA into two commanding units, the Northern and Southern Command, and subordinating the previously influential Southern Command to the Northern leadership. The Northern Command, created in 1976, gave leaders from the North much greater control over daily operations in the six counties of Northern Ireland and the four border counties of the Republic of Ireland, where the majority of fighting occurred.<sup>245</sup> The Southern Command retained control over military action abroad and was responsible for facilitating weapons procurement for the Northern fighters.<sup>246</sup> The position of Northern Commander became the most important position in the PIRA and the individual occupying that post had the final say in strategic and operational matters.<sup>247</sup> Over time, the Northern Command's control over the PIRA grew—by 1986 the Northern Command was vetting most operations and area commanders were expected to describe prospective operations to the Chief of Staff in detail.<sup>248</sup>

The PIRA also restructured its prison command and control structures. Inmates could not longer select a prison O/C by vote, but instead would submit a list of candidates to the Army Council, which would then select one of the nominees to assume the role of O/C—a move that significantly increased the influence of the Army Council in the prisons.<sup>249</sup>

---

<sup>245</sup> Taylor (1997), 213.

<sup>246</sup> Bell (2000), 227.

<sup>247</sup> Maloney, 158.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 317.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid, 148.

The effort to tighten and compartmentalize the PIRA was largely successful, but it was neither complete nor problem-free. Because the PIRA remained relatively dependent on public support for its operations, volunteers were in some cases known to the local population and to each other.<sup>250</sup> Volunteers also broke with secrecy practices during the Hunger Strike protests and marches when they could be seen talking and marching together in the open.<sup>251</sup>

Though compartmentalization reduced contact between PIRA leaders and low-level volunteers, it increased contact between PIRA leaders and mid-level volunteers, making those volunteers a more valuable target for the British. PIRA volunteer Raymond Gilmour, a driver for his cell, became an ideal British informant because he was in regular contact with a wide range of PIRA members throughout Derry.<sup>252</sup> PIRA counterespionage officer Freddie Scappaticci, became another key British informant as he had access to the PIRA's innermost secrets—upcoming missions, arms cache locations, travel and security details, bombing and assassination targets, and which PIRA volunteers were suspected of being informants. Scappaticci was able to protect himself from suspicion by rigging counterespionage investigations and framing 'innocent' PIRA members.<sup>253</sup>

The restructuring also increased PIRA leaders' knowledge of and power over the organization, which made them more enticing targets for British forces. Because the

---

<sup>250</sup> Bell (2000), 136 & Kevin J. Kelley, "The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA," (Lawrence Hill and Co.: Westport, Connecticut, 1988), 285.

<sup>251</sup> Taylor (1997), 257.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>253</sup> Matthew Teague, "Double Blind: The Untold Story of How British Intelligence Infiltrated and Undermined the IRA," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2006.

PIRA depended more heavily on this cadre of leaders, every leadership loss would affect the PIRA more deeply.<sup>254</sup>

Compartmentation occasionally generated operational coordination problems. In theory, cell leaders would deconflict their operations by coordinating their activities via the Brigade Commander. At times, however, one cell's operations could compromise the logistical base or safety of another clandestine cell.<sup>255</sup>

Increased top-down command and coordination also blunted the PIRA's spontaneous edge.<sup>256</sup> Unpredictability had made the PIRA a hard target in the 1970s and some of that was lost when PIRA leaders standardized the organization's operations and tradecraft.<sup>257</sup> For example, the PIRA in South Armagh had resisted sharing its radio-controlled bomb technology with the rest of the PIRA for fear of having it captured and studied by the British—which is exactly what happened when Northern Command began to share the bomb technology with other PIRA units.<sup>258</sup>

In spite of these challenges, the restructuring was on balance a success for the PIRA. First and foremost, the compartmented structure provided a host of counterintelligence advantages. In addition, the PIRA was able to exert greater control over its personnel. A higher degree of control allowed the Northern Command to coordinate Northern Ireland-wide attacks and make rapid alterations in military tactics

---

<sup>254</sup> Smith, 189.

<sup>255</sup> Jackson et al (2005), 129.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 205.

<sup>257</sup> Maloney, 160.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

more feasible.<sup>259</sup> Improved control also equipped the organization to support advanced training and increased specialization in PIRA units.<sup>260</sup> Finally, the PIRA was better prepared to increase or scale-back operations to maximize public support for its campaign.<sup>261</sup>

Perhaps the most convincing evidence on this ledger was the British government's admission that the PIRA had become significantly more sophisticated. Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, spoke about the PIRA in July 1979: "The first six months of this year have shown a marked rise in the level of terrorism and have demonstrated that we are up against a more professional enemy, organized on a system of self-contained, close-knit cells which make it difficult to gather information."<sup>262</sup>

*Resources.* The PIRA's resources in the 1976 to 1994 time period remained high. The PIRA's rosters were purposely slimmed down following reorganization, commanding between 300 and 400 active duty volunteers in Northern Ireland by the early 1980s.<sup>263</sup> The PIRA continued to draw on 1,000 'auxiliary' supporters who provided safe houses and transportation assistance.<sup>264</sup> Full time active service members were expected to be ready at a moments notice and were even paid by the PIRA—though

---

<sup>259</sup> Maloney, 160.

<sup>260</sup> Jackson et al (2005), 125.

<sup>261</sup> Bell (1997), 592-593.

<sup>262</sup> Maloney, 171.

<sup>263</sup> Dewar, 161.

<sup>264</sup> O'Brien, 161.

only about 20 pounds per week.<sup>265</sup> The PIRA assured itself of a steady supply of recruits through its PIRA ‘boy scouts’ movement.<sup>266</sup>

Border and countryside areas, such as South Armagh, remained the PIRA’s main controlled territories. The RUC sources claimed that there was an almost total lack of informants in South Armagh.<sup>267</sup> A British military assessment from the time remarked that there were areas in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland where the PIRA could act with relatively impunity: “the Republic [of Ireland] provides many of the facilities of a classic safe haven so essential to any terrorist movement...”<sup>268</sup>

In contrast, non-controlled territories were far more vulnerable to British surveillance. J. Bowyer Bell argues that nationalist areas of the city began to resemble low-security prisons: “There were cameras and night sights, hidden spotters, bought informants, erratic patrols and undercover police, computer banks and those who kept track of milk delivered and clothes taken to the cleaners.”<sup>269</sup> Belfast was cut by road blocks and barriers and traffic had to flow through choke points, while unmarked cars and hidden observation posts recorded all suspicious activities.<sup>270</sup>

The PIRA also did not lack for weaponry in this period. By October 1986 the PIRA had smuggled approximately 300 tons of Libyan weapons into Northern Ireland, and had hidden the weapons in secret dumps.<sup>271</sup> This was supplemented with a steady

---

<sup>265</sup> Gilmour, 178.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>267</sup> O’Brien, 206.

<sup>268</sup> Coogan (1996) 214.

<sup>269</sup> Bell (1997), 470.

<sup>270</sup> Bell (2000), 138.

<sup>271</sup> Maloney, 292 & Taylor (1997), 277 & O’Brien, 129.



stream of weapons smuggled from the United States in small shipments that were hard for law enforcement to detect.<sup>272</sup> Though the PIRA always wanted more weapons, they always seemed to have plenty to continue their campaign.<sup>273</sup>

It is probable that the quality of PIRA personnel and their expertise increased from 1976 to 1994. By the 1990s, the average PIRA volunteer was in his mid-20s to late 30s, in contrast to the earlier periods when the average volunteer was in his late teens.<sup>274</sup> Volunteers improved their technological sophistication, deploying more deadly bombs and preventing more volunteer deaths due to premature detonations.<sup>275</sup> In 1993, police discovered a PIRA electronics engineering lab in the Republic of Ireland, where the PIRA had put young electronics graduates to work on making and testing homemade electronic detonators.<sup>276</sup>

*Popular Support.* The PIRA popular support remained high from 1976 through 1994. The countryside, including border areas and South Armagh, continued to offer the greatest source of popular support. Many of these areas initially wished to remain neutral in the conflict in order to not attract police attention, but rough searches, planting of weapons, and abrasive checkpoints, turned the population against the police.<sup>277</sup> In the Republic of Ireland, the PIRA had an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 sympathizers, based

---

<sup>272</sup> Bell (1997), 438.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid, 566.

<sup>274</sup> O'Brien, 206.

<sup>275</sup> Geraghty, 206.

<sup>276</sup> O'Brien, 280.

<sup>277</sup> Bell (2000), 212.

on those who attended commemorations, made their opinions known, or signed petitions.<sup>278</sup>

The PIRA had by the late-1970s grown even more savvy about cultivating public support. The top leadership required that any potentially contentious operation, such as an assassination or operation that endangered civilians, receive top-level clearance.<sup>279</sup> This care was reflected in the dramatic decline in civilian deaths caused by the PIRA in this period—while security force deaths were approximately the same between 1976 and 1977, civilian dropped from 243 to 67 in that period.<sup>280</sup> The PIRA’s Green Book states: “Resistance must be channeled into active and passive support with an on-going process through our actions, our education programmes, our policies of attempting to turn the passive supporter into a dump holder, a member of the movement...”<sup>281</sup>

The PIRA also sought to undermine its adversaries’ popular base. A PIRA analysis in 1977 estimated that a terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland might evoke a Loyalist overreaction and thereby reduce popular support for Protestants.<sup>282</sup>

The PIRA’s reorganization both helped and hindered its quest to win popular support. On the one hand, the reorganization allowed the PIRA to plan and coordinate operations that did not alienate the public.<sup>283</sup> On the other hand, compartmentation and the increased secrecy drew PIRA volunteers away from daily interaction with the average

---

<sup>278</sup> Bell (2000), 235.

<sup>279</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 250 & Maloney, 317.

<sup>280</sup> Bell (1997), 440.

<sup>281</sup> The PIRA’s Green Book.

<sup>282</sup> Dewar, 117.

<sup>283</sup> Smith, 145.

citizen of Northern Ireland.<sup>284</sup> One PIRA volunteer argued that less contact with the population eventually led to less familiarity and trust between the PIRA and the public.<sup>285</sup>

*PIRA Intelligence.* The PIRA increased the sophistication of their tactical intelligence collection operations from 1976 to 1994. Though PIRA never acquired a capacity to systematically gather strategic or political intelligence, the organization's survival rarely depended on this type of intelligence collection before political negotiations began in 1994.<sup>286</sup>

The PIRA's military operations usually followed the same basic procedure: scouting teams would case an area, safe houses would be rented, explosives would be moved in, cars used for the operational would be acquired, intelligence would be gathered by volunteers conducting basic foot surveillance, and then the bomb would be delivered to its target.<sup>287</sup> Intelligence collection didn't need to be highly sophisticated to be effective.

The PIRA eased the tactical intelligence burden by selecting targets that were generally vulnerable to observation. PIRA soft targets included civil servants, fuel, food, and cleaning contractors, British Telecom and Standard Telephones, shipping and bus companies that transported soldiers, vending machine supplies, and retired members of the various British security forces.<sup>288</sup> Harder targets included British soldiers, members

---

<sup>284</sup> O'Brien, 161.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Bell (1997), 470.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 597.

<sup>288</sup> Bell (2000), 227.

of the RUC and UDR, and members of Loyalists paramilitaries.<sup>289</sup> Even an RUC officer, however, had considerable vulnerabilities—RUC officers were easy to spot and follow, walking around in official uniforms and stationed in immobile bases.<sup>290</sup> The PIRA also grew more proficient at tracking troop patrol and police movements.<sup>291</sup> PIRA operations would often follow the path of least resistance, seeking vulnerable targets close to home—targets which required relatively less sophisticated intelligence collection. J. Bowyer Bell put it succinctly: “If the lights in London were to be turned off, the IRA bombed the power stations rather than tinkered with the computers.”<sup>292</sup>

Static targets were preferred because they were more easily observed and, by definition, could not be hidden or moved. The PIRA mounted attacks on Downing Street, the Grand Hotel in London, an RAF officer’s club in Germany, and RUC stations across Northern Ireland.<sup>293</sup> The PIRA also successfully targeted VIPs. Among their favorite targets were British judges involved in prosecuting PIRA volunteers. The organization assassinated Judge William Doyle, Magistrate William Staunton, Magistrate Martin McBirney, Judge Rory Conahan, and Lord Chief Justice Sir Maurice Gibson, Northern Ireland’s second most senior judge.<sup>294</sup> Other victims of PIRA assassinations included several Ulster politicians, assistant governor of Long Kesh prison, the director of an American-owned Dupont factory in Derry, the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, a prominent retired British Ambassador, and the prominent author of *The*

---

<sup>289</sup> Bell (2000), 228.

<sup>290</sup> O’Brien, 163.

<sup>291</sup> Interview with former USG counterterrorism official (3/1/2006).

<sup>292</sup> Bell (2000), 229.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 247 & Taylor (1997), 269-271.

<sup>294</sup> Geraghty, 114.

Guinness Book of World Records, after he had offered 100,000 pound reward for information leading to the arrest of PIRA volunteers.<sup>295</sup>

PIRA surveillance continued to be strong in this period. RUC stations and bases were regularly watched and the model and license plates of RUC vehicles were recorded.<sup>296</sup> Detectives working against the PIRA could be observed as they gave evidence against the organization in court.<sup>297</sup> Patient PIRA surveillance occasionally produced dramatic operational successes. In 1979, surveillance of British convoy activity in Country Down allowed the PIRA to ambush a British truck convoy that left 18 soldiers dead.<sup>298</sup> Also in 1979, patient observation of former British Ambassador Lord Mountbatten and the Gardai forces protecting him allowed the PIRA to assassinate him on his private boat while he vacationed in Ireland.<sup>299</sup>

The PIRA also benefited from improvements in technical surveillance collection. In June 1979, the RUC raided three houses in Andersonstown and stumbled upon a command post filled with radios, unscrambling equipment, sophisticated monitors, military-grade transmitters, position fixing devices, and telephone taps routed through the British Telecom network.<sup>300 301</sup> Most surprisingly, the RUC discovered detailed transcripts of the RUC's Operation Hawk—a major surveillance operation against the

---

<sup>295</sup> Coogan (1996), 194-196 & Taylor (1980), 158 & Bell (1997), 443.

<sup>296</sup> Taylor (1997), 258.

<sup>297</sup> Taylor (1980), 157.

<sup>298</sup> Bell (2000), 229.

<sup>299</sup> Bell (1997), 451.

<sup>300</sup> The PIRA's telephone taps in the British Telecom Network included the private line on the Dunmurry residence of the Army General commanding the Army garrison. [Bell (2000), 246]

<sup>301</sup> Bell (1997), 474.

PIRA, initiated in early 1979.<sup>302</sup> Operation Hawk had been tracking PIRA leadership and the PIRA had been listening in and adjusting its operations.<sup>303</sup> PIRA leadership had even deliberately moved their people around to discover what code names the RUC was using for them.<sup>304</sup> It isn't difficult to imagine that the PIRA leadership also used this technique to discover which volunteers were unknown to the RUC, and therefore more useful for particularly sensitive activities or operations. The PIRA also used this technical collection windfall to call off risky operations, move out of unsafe locations, and refine their bombs by listening to RUC post-operation assessments.<sup>305</sup>

The PIRA had actually begun to acquire radio equipment capable of breaking into police and Army communications networks in the early 1970s, but it wasn't until the late 1970s that they acquired the number of radios and the technical expertise to sift quickly through security force frequencies and lock in on a particular target.<sup>306</sup> This technical surveillance capability also allowed the PIRA to cut back on the number of volunteers conducting labor-intensive foot surveillance.<sup>307</sup>

There is some evidence that the PIRA used open sources to supplement secret collection activities. J. Bowyer Bell argues that a close reading of open sources helped the PIRA to conduct several operations, including the attempted assassination of Margaret Thatcher at the Grand Hotel.<sup>308</sup> Former PIRA volunteer Raymond Gilmour

---

<sup>302</sup> Bell (2000), 246.

<sup>303</sup> Bell (1997), 474.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Bell (2000), 246.

<sup>306</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 323.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Bell (2000), 247.

argues that checking the local news was a trusted source of intelligence: "...every IRA man tuned in to the BBC's early morning Northern Ireland bulletin...[which] always gave a catalogue of all the previous night's bombings, shootings, hijackings, knee-cappings, riots, arrests, and arms finds."<sup>309</sup> It is alleged that PIRA volunteers sometimes used public sources, such as the "Who's Who" book, to gather biographical information for assassination operations.<sup>310</sup>

There is also evidence that the PIRA occasionally collected human intelligence through interrogations and penetrations of British security elements, including the RUC.<sup>311</sup> The PIRA used a seductress, as known as a 'honey trap,' to control a vulnerable Maze prison guard, John Christopher Hanna, who was subsequently given a life sentence for helping the PIRA.<sup>312</sup> PIRA prisoners reported gathering valuable intelligence from Loyalist prisoners—one PIRA prisoner commented: "The Loyalists generally talk in jail...[h]alf of them haven't even got a clue that they are giving away information."<sup>313</sup>

Interrogations proved to be a fruitful source of intelligence. By interrogating confirmed RUC informant Peter Valente in 1981, the PIRA was able to get the names of six more British informants.<sup>314</sup> Interrogations were also used to control damage caused by British capture and interrogation of PIRA volunteers. It was standard practice to subject volunteers to an extensive debriefing after they were released from a British

---

<sup>309</sup> Gilmour, 177.

<sup>310</sup> Jackson et al (2005), 126.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid, 125 & Bishop and Mallie, 320.

<sup>312</sup> Taylor (1980), 97.

<sup>313</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 273.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid, 320.

interrogation center<sup>315</sup> Debriefers could evaluate the state of RUC intelligence by learning what questions they were asking PIRA captives and what captives has told them.<sup>316</sup>

Prisons turned out to be a good source of intelligence analysis and collection for the PIRA. Prisons were thought of as ‘think tanks’ for the organization. The PIRA’s ‘Green Book’, a manual on the organization’s mission and intelligence and counterintelligence procedures, was written by PIRA prisoners in the mid-1970s and later smuggled out.<sup>317</sup> The PIRA regularly used false priests in order to lure new prisoners into confessing to acting as informants for the British.<sup>318</sup> Prisoners frequently used visits from friends and family to pass intelligence to the organization in the field.<sup>319</sup>

In its later years, the PIRA collected more intelligence in support of reducing unintended civilian casualties. In 1992, the PIRA bombed the Baltic Exchange causing 800 million pounds in damage. However, because the bomb was timed to harm no one, it killed only three people.<sup>320</sup>

The PIRA reorganization had a noticeable effect on the PIRA’s intelligence operations. PIRA operations were far less hectic than in the early 1970s, with more planning and operational dry-runs.<sup>321</sup> Compartmentalization protected senior PIRA leaders from the routine arrests and detentions they were subject to in the early 1970s,

---

<sup>315</sup> Gilmour, 223.

<sup>316</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 322.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid, 275.

<sup>318</sup> Gilmour, 40.

<sup>319</sup> Liam Clarke, “Broadening the Battlefield: The H-Blocks and the Rise of Sinn Fein,” (Gill and Macmillan: Dublin, 1987), 67.

<sup>320</sup> Bell (1997), 631.

<sup>321</sup> O’Brien, 203.



which helped them keep valuable experience and knowledge in the field and out of British prisons.<sup>322</sup> The reorganization also allowed the PIRA to train its volunteers more thoroughly in intelligence techniques and impress upon them the valuable role they played as the “eyes and ears” of the organization.<sup>323</sup>

*PIRA Counterintelligence.* The PIRA counterintelligence capabilities increased dramatically from the second to third period. After its reorganization was initiated in 1976, the hemorrhage of volunteer arrests slowly subsided. By 1978, there were 465 fewer charges for paramilitary offenses than in the year previous.<sup>324</sup>

The PIRA leadership’s increased control of the organization played a key role in counterintelligence improvements. For the first time, volunteers from across the organization were given strict orders to keep a low profile, to not be seen in each other’s company or in the company of known republicans, and to refrain from activities that would draw attention to themselves.<sup>325</sup> All recruits were required to go through a series of background checks and read the PIRA’s counterintelligence-heavy ‘Green Book’ before they could be officially admitted into the organization.<sup>326</sup>

By the 1980s, all PIRA units in Northern Ireland had a ‘security’ officer, who enforced secrecy standards, and the PIRA set up an entire security department to vet recruits and conduct counterespionage investigations and interrogations.<sup>327</sup> One of the security department’s first investigations exposed volunteer Peter Valente as an RUC

---

<sup>322</sup> Maloney, 157.

<sup>323</sup> Jackson et al (2005), 123-125.

<sup>324</sup> Smith, 145.

<sup>325</sup> Taylor (1997), 257 & Coogan (1996), 345-347.

<sup>326</sup> Maloney, 154 & Gilmour, 96.

<sup>327</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 3.

informant in 1980.<sup>328</sup> Within the PIRA, security department volunteers gained the unpopularity of policemen, lurking around bars in Belfast to develop hunches and pick up investigative leads.<sup>329</sup> The security department executed ‘confirmed’ informants and deliberately left executed individuals in public places as a warning to others.<sup>330</sup> Former PIRA volunteer Raymond Gilmour recalled that when he was suspected of being an informer, security department officers parked outside his house and, “were hovering about, watching for any sign of tension or break in routine...[t]hey made no attempt at concealment since visibility was part of their game: crank up the pressure, see if he panics.”<sup>331</sup>

Increased control over the rank-and-file PIRA volunteers permitted the organization to reach a level of compartmentalization that produced numerous counterintelligence benefits. After compartmentalizing the PIRA, the average member’s knowledge of the organization’s plans and personnel became severely limited.<sup>332</sup> Raymond Gilmour recalled that his ASU leader did the mission planning while ASU volunteers would typically learn about the operation only a short time before it was to take place.<sup>333</sup> Another benefit of compartmentalization was that information about PIRA arms caches was more limited.<sup>334</sup> Even if the British could find an informant who knew where an arms cache was, that informant wouldn’t have known how or by whom the

---

<sup>328</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 320.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 321.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 322.

<sup>331</sup> Gilmour, 279.

<sup>332</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 256.

<sup>333</sup> Gilmour, 105.

<sup>334</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 256.

arms were delivered.<sup>335</sup> Compartmentalization also allowed the PIRA leaders to investigate leaks and informant activity more easily—the list of suspects with access to particular compartments was small so moles had less room to maneuver.<sup>336</sup>

With increased control, the PIRA leadership was able to standardize and oversee counterintelligence training for its recruits. Counter-interrogation training was a primary focus. The ‘Green Book’ exposes recruits to many British interrogation tactics, including the use of verbal and physical abuse to ‘soften up’ captors and the “top secret file” technique, wherein interrogators tried to convince their detainee that they already had a complete file of all their crimes and activities.<sup>337</sup> Gilmour was trained to dump his weapon, dump his getaway car, change his clothes, and give his clothes a good wash to “get rid of forensics” following every operation.<sup>338</sup> Gilmour was also taught to say nothing during interrogation and remember the interrogators questions for his PIRA counterintelligence debriefing following his release.<sup>339</sup> By 1977, the RUC became aware that the PIRA was training its members in counter-interrogation techniques and detectives at Castlereagh alleged that they had recovered documents and tapes to prove it, including notes of debriefings by PIRA intelligence officers.<sup>340</sup> One of the techniques the PIRA volunteer would employ was naming the interrogation tactic being used by his British questioner—a technique that psychologically empowered the PIRA volunteer and

---

<sup>335</sup> Taylor (1997), 288.

<sup>336</sup> Taylor (1980), 206 & Urban, 120.

<sup>337</sup> The PIRA’s Green Book

<sup>338</sup> Gilmour, 99.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>340</sup> Taylor (1980), 155, 223 & Geraghty, 83.

frustrated British interrogators, as many interrogators didn't even know the names of the techniques they were using.<sup>341</sup>

The PIRA's operational procedures in this time period reflected better counterintelligence training and awareness. ASUs would pick up weapons, disguises, and vehicles at safe houses prior to an operation and then drop them at 'wash houses' following the operation, where volunteers would also get debriefed and then burn or wash their clothes to remove forensic evidence.<sup>342</sup> During operations, ASUs would work in code, using the jargon of taxi drivers to avoid getting ensnared in the RUC's electronic surveillance nets.<sup>343</sup> ASUs would mask the identity of their vehicles by changing license plates to match those of 'real' vehicles registered in another county or region.<sup>344</sup> Following operations, volunteers were taught to act discretely, to not brag about operations, and avoid getting drunk.<sup>345</sup>

The PIRA also began to develop an impressive counter-forensics capability. Collecting information from volunteers that were captured and put on trial, PIRA forensic experts were able to put together a 9000 page document on avoiding detection.<sup>346</sup> The document details the RUC's formidable forensic capabilities, describes how the RUC will commonly take fibers from washing machines and waste from water pipes in suspected wash houses, and notes that volunteers should wear nylon or denim rather than wool

---

<sup>341</sup> McFate, 252.

<sup>342</sup> Feldman, 44.

<sup>343</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 323.

<sup>344</sup> O'Brien, 214, 277.

<sup>345</sup> The PIRA's Green Book.

<sup>346</sup> Geraghty, 83.

clothing since wool sheds fibers easily and readily retains fibers from other materials.<sup>347</sup> Perhaps the PIRA's most sophisticated counter-forensic operation involved concealing a bomb in a car taken into the Northern Ireland forensics laboratory—the 'trojan horse' car was then remotely detonated, destroying much of the forensic evidence held in the RUC laboratory.<sup>348</sup> PIRA ASUs began using 'drogue' bombs in the late-1980s, which would first punch a hole through an armored vehicle and then detonated a second explosive to destroy any forensic evidence left on the bomb.<sup>349</sup> In instances where forensic evidence was believed to be successfully destroyed, the PIRA would sometimes falsely announce the death of a high-value member, which would allow them to 'resurrect' that member for special operations.<sup>350</sup>

The PIRA continued to use population support in this period for a counterintelligence advantage. The British SAS found it extremely difficult to operate clandestinely against the PIRA in areas like South Armagh because locals paid close attention to outsiders and suspicious behavior.<sup>351</sup> Gilmour, a member of a Derry-based PIRA unit, reported that any strange individual hanging out in a local pub would be watched closely, chased out, or possibly detained and interrogated.<sup>352</sup> Anti-British sentiments in PIRA strongholds were so strong that British soldiers would not risk directly challenging an attack on an RUC or Army base in these areas, which allowed

---

<sup>347</sup> Geraghty, 84-87.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>349</sup> O'Brien, 155.

<sup>350</sup> Jackson et al (2005), 133.

<sup>351</sup> Taylor (1997), 268.

<sup>352</sup> Gilmour, 105.

ASU's to escape undetected after an operation.<sup>353</sup> Keeping the Army and RUC on constant alert and under heavy fortification limited their intelligence collection and offensive operations against the PIRA in these strongholds.<sup>354</sup> Population support also facilitated PIRA investigations of informants. The PIRA used 'snitches' to keep tabs on how much money locals had in their shops, who was relocating to certain areas, and which women were spending time with British soldiers.<sup>355</sup> In the early 1980's locals would provide support for high-level meetings by scanning police frequencies to alert leaders to threatening police activities.<sup>356</sup>

Aggressive interrogations and investigations of informants also increased in the third period. Following a failed mission or operational surprise, the PIRA assumed that someone had betrayed the organization.<sup>357</sup> By one estimate, seventy percent of all informants caught by the PIRA during the entire troubles were executed after 1977.<sup>358</sup> Analysis of recovered informant bodies, such as that of British agent Robert Nairac, suggests that in some cases informants were tortured before being executed.<sup>359</sup> Former PIRA volunteer Sean O'Callaghan reported that investigations of informants sometimes entailed passing them false information and then monitoring the police reaction.<sup>360</sup> Compartmentation made investigations of 'leaked' operations even easier as the list of

---

<sup>353</sup> O'Brien, 207.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>355</sup> Gilmour, 230.

<sup>356</sup> Dewar, 127.

<sup>357</sup> Bell (2000), 250.

<sup>358</sup> Maloney, 155.

<sup>359</sup> Coogan, , 265.

<sup>360</sup> O'Callaghan, 200.

volunteers with access to pre-operational information about a subsequently compromised mission was usually very small.<sup>361</sup>

When the PIRA discovered that an informant had penetrated its organization, it acted to limit the damage the informant could cause. When the British supergrass informants threatened to cause serious damage in the early 1980s, the PIRA communicated to the supergrasses through their families that if they retracted their testimony they would be granted amnesty.<sup>362</sup> The PIRA also sent ‘solicitors’ to meet with arrested PIRA volunteers, under the ruse of providing legal advice, to assess how much the prisoner had told interrogators and how likely it was he that would break under additional interrogation—because the ‘defending lawyer’ was entitled to see everything the prisoner had told interrogators, he could ascertain which volunteers had been compromised.<sup>363</sup>

The PIRA also demonstrated a limited capability to manipulate British security force intelligence operations. Using the aforementioned technical surveillance equipment, the PIRA discovered key RUC strengths and weaknesses by running operations and watching the RUC's operational responses.<sup>364</sup> In another example, former PIRA volunteer Stephen Lambert recalled being pitched by a member of the security forces, and then subsequently working with PIRA leadership to clandestinely tape future meetings with the British agent to get information about British informant recruitment

---

<sup>361</sup> Maloney, 316.

<sup>362</sup> Coogan (1996), 277.

<sup>363</sup> Gilmour, 322.

<sup>364</sup> Bell (2000), 246.

procedures.<sup>365</sup> Also, on at least on one occasion, the PIRA used a false report of a break-in to lure RUC units into an ambush.<sup>366</sup>

During the 1976-94 period, the PIRA improved its prison counterintelligence practices. PIRA prisoners were strictly prohibited from speaking to non-PIRA prisoners and each floor would designate one member to speak with prison officials.<sup>367</sup> New prisoners would be debriefed or interrogated to prevent the British from ‘planting’ informants in their prison community.<sup>368</sup> Some PIRA prisoners taught each other a variation on Irish Gaelic, known as jailic, so that they could converse openly without being understood.<sup>369</sup> PIRA prison leadership in some instances controlled the intelligence acquired by the rank-and-file prisoners. One PIRA prisoner recalled that they would get a Sunday paper with complete pages taken out by their own PIRA staff.<sup>370</sup>

In spite of its counterintelligence advances, the PIRA experienced its fair share of counterintelligence setbacks. Firstly, compartmentalization was not adopted comprehensively throughout the organization, which the British supergrass informants made painfully obvious when they gave evidence against former colleagues in court.<sup>371</sup> During the Hunger Strike in the early 1980s, volunteers that had once strictly observed

---

<sup>365</sup> Taylor (1997), 295.

<sup>366</sup> Bell (1997), 488.

<sup>367</sup> Gilmour, 216.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid, 216.

<sup>369</sup> Clarke, 80.

<sup>370</sup> Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2003), 230.

<sup>371</sup> Taylor (1997), 211.



non-fraternization rules openly attended marches and conversed with other volunteers in public, overcome by the emotion of the day.<sup>372</sup>

Secondly, centralization generally made the PIRA less vulnerable to informants among the rank-and-file but generally more vulnerable to informants in high-level or sensitive positions. The RUC's Special Branch and British army intelligence had long identified the PIRA's security department as a leading target for infiltration.<sup>373</sup> Because the security department was privy to many 'compartmented' programs, an informant in the department would be able to pass valuable information about PIRA personnel and plans.<sup>374</sup> Moreover, the security department was the vetting and counterespionage shop for the PIRA, so a well-positioned informant could more easily redirect, terminate or otherwise manipulate an investigation to exonerate himself. Centralization also allowed the British to concentrate their resources against key high-value operatives and leaders, instead of dispersing resources against hundreds of equally low-value targets.<sup>375</sup>

Thirdly, standardization of intelligence and counterintelligence procedures made the PIRA more predicable to British security forces. Prior to reorganization, each area of Northern Ireland had its own training camps and procedures. After reorganization, British forces could better assess PIRA standard operating procedures by surveilling a single camp.<sup>376</sup> Ultimately, this reveals the key counterintelligence tradeoff that comes with centralization—centralization allows a group to establish uniform, high-quality

---

<sup>372</sup> Taylor (1997), 257.

<sup>373</sup> Maloney, 335.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid, 155.

<sup>375</sup> Smith, 188.

<sup>376</sup> Maloney, 160.

tradecraft that is, once cracked by the adversary, significantly more transparent and predictable.

Finally, the PIRA's culture of counterintelligence could stifle the organization at times. Following high-profile British counter-terrorism operations, the PIRA would stall operations in order to conduct investigations to discover informants.<sup>377</sup>

Counterintelligence proved to be a good strategy for preserving leaders and talent, but militated against a high operational tempo.

*Summary.* The PIRA's resources, controlled territory and adversary's capabilities stayed constant in this period. The PIRA's organizational structure tightened significantly in direct response to the British Government's counterterrorism improvements. While the PIRA was able to reduce the steady flow of information to British security forces through superior training and compartmentation, the group also suffered from several devastating high-level penetrations. The PIRA's popular support campaigns also routinely exposed critical information about the group's personnel and plans.

#### *Hypotheses Revisited*

*Hypothesis 1(A): With a relatively tighter command and control structure the PIRA will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.* This is correct. The PIRA was able to standardize counter-interrogation and general counterintelligence training as a result of tightening up command and control structures. There is some evidence that PIRA volunteers were better prepared to resist interrogation

---

<sup>377</sup> O'Brien, 143.

as a result of this training. The PIRA volunteers' increased attention to counter-forensic techniques also reflects the benefits of improved training. Additionally, British infiltrations of PIRA ASUs by the late 1970s provided the British with more limited picture of PIRA activities on the whole as a direct result of compartmentation.

*Hypothesis 1(B): With a relatively tighter command and control structure the PIRA will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.* The PIRA case strongly supports this hypothesis. British infiltration of sensitive cells in the late 1970s, such as the security department, provided British forces with a volume of information on the PIRA that they could not have acquired with their best penetrations of the early 1970s. The PIRA's standardization of training, for example, allowed the British to glean more about the PIRA through infiltrating a single camp than it could in the early 1970s. There is no evidence, however, that directly demonstrates a link between improved British counterterrorism operations and British knowledge or exploitation of PIRA counterintelligence standard operating procedures.

*Hypothesis 2(A): With relatively greater popular support the PIRA will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.* Though the PIRA case did not provide an opportunity to contrast periods of high and low popular support, the PIRA's experience of high popular support is consistent with the hypothesis. The PIRA received crucial counterintelligence support from its Hen Patrols, who were members of the community that alerted Republicans to incoming British patrols and raids. The PIRA

also capitalized on its popular support as members of the community volunteered vital human and technical intelligence to the group.

*Hypothesis 2(B): With relatively greater popular support the PIRA will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.* The PIRA's experience of high popular support is consistent with the hypothesis. The PIRA routinely exposed its personnel and plans at PIRA marches, rallies and pubs, despite non-fraternization rules banning the mingling of known and unknown PIRA members.

*Hypothesis 3(A): With relatively more controlled territory the PIRA will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.* Though the PIRA case did not provide an opportunity to contrast periods of high and low controlled territory, the counterintelligence gains enjoyed by PIRA in its controlled territories is consistent with the hypothesis. The PIRA's controlled territories allowed the group to more effectively train its members and coordinate its operations while analyzing their counterintelligence strengths and weaknesses.

*Hypothesis 3(B): With relatively more controlled territory the PIRA will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.* The counterintelligence deficits incurred by PIRA in its controlled territories is mostly consistent with the hypothesis. British security forces were consistently able to produce intelligence from close observation of areas of high PIRA member concentration. Checkpoints and surveillance cameras near urban controlled territories allowed known PIRA members to be tracked and suspected PIRA members to

be monitored for connections to confirmed PIRA entities. Security towers in the PIRA's rural controlled territories offered the British a similar surveillance advantage.

*Hypothesis 4: The PIRA will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.* The PIRA case supports this hypothesis. The PIRA leadership recognized explicitly in the 'Staff Report' and the Green Book that British counterterrorism capabilities had to be met with improved counterintelligence tradecraft. The PIRA deemed it essential to its survival to become more effective in counter-interrogation techniques, vetting new members, conducting investigations of suspected informants, lowering the operational profiles of members, and countering forensic innovations adopted by the British government. If the PIRA had not adapted so effectively it probably would have been incapacitated, if not completely eliminated, by the end of the 1970s.

#### *Control Variables: Alternative Explanations Review*

As discussed earlier, the control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the PIRA case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. First, the British Government's counterterrorism capabilities increased in Period Two. Thus, the dramatic improvements in the PIRA's counterintelligence capabilities from Periods Two to Three, hypothesized to result from a change in the group's organizational structure, may be exaggerated by the initial shock of the adversary's increased capabilities in Period Two. Perhaps the PIRA would have naturally recovered from this shock to develop more capable and sophisticated counterintelligence procedures in response, regardless of organizational structure. While

this explanation seems plausible, it is important to note that many PIRA counterintelligence innovations, such as standardization and compartmentation, were only possible with a tightened structure.

The increasing British capabilities could also account for counterintelligence deficits hypothesized to have been associated with the group's popular support and controlled territory. Period One, however, provided a good control for these effects as PIRA counterintelligence deficits associated with popular support and controlled territory were present in Period One when British capabilities were low and Period Two when British capabilities were high.

The PIRA's resources are essentially held constant over all three periods, reducing the likelihood that shifts in resources are accounting for the changes in counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities. However, the PIRA did recruit higher quality personnel in the late 1970's relative to the early 1970's. Thus, the PIRA increased counterintelligence capabilities could have resulted from recruiting and developing higher quality personnel. This is probably true to a certain extent and British intelligence made this assessment in 1978: "The active service units are for the most part manned by terrorist with up to 10 years of operational experience...[t]he mature terrorists, including for instance the leading bomb makers, are usually sufficiently cunning to avoid arrest."<sup>378</sup> Though the PIRA might have occasionally been recruiting more talented individuals, it was the reorganization and standardization of training that permitted the PIRA to develop and coordinate the activities of more talented individuals.

---

<sup>378</sup> Coogan (1996).

Additionally, the counterintelligence advantages gained through the compartmentation of cells had little or nothing to do with the talents of the individuals making up those cells.

The PIRA undoubtedly experienced normal organizational learning over the three periods. While organizational learning can account for some improvements in PIRA counterintelligence procedures, the most important improvements resulted directly from a tightening of the group's organizational structure. As explained above, the ability to train group members, coordinate counterintelligence operations, and compartment group cells are innovations that require a tight organizational structure.

#### *Lessons from the PIRA Case Study*

The PIRA case study provides support for several hypotheses, suggests interesting twists on several hypotheses, and provides insight into potential interactions between the independent variables and between the intelligence and counterintelligence variables.

First, tightening a terrorist group's structure provides both counterintelligence advantages and disadvantages. Tightening allows a group to provide better counterintelligence training and direction to compartmented cells. Tightening also increases the adversary's ability to predict organization's standard operating procedures and counterintelligence tradecraft, making the organization more vulnerable to adversary surveillance and penetration. Compartmentation makes the group less vulnerable to low-level infiltration, but the tight structures required for effective compartmentation with control makes the organization more vulnerable to high-level penetrations. Tightening allows the group to better vet and control operations in order to maintain the population's support—for instance by mandating that civilians not be targeted in terrorist group

operations. Conversely, tightening and compartmentation can reduce popular support by giving the terrorist organization's community leaders and civic activities a lower public profile.

Second, the case suggests that the quality of a terrorist group's intelligence apparatus can directly affect the quality of its counterintelligence capabilities. If a terrorist group has intelligence on what its population desires and on its adversaries vulnerabilities, then it can select targets and conduct operations that achieve its population's objectives. With better operations the terrorist group will increase its popular support, which will reduce the adversary's ability to stage aggressive military, policing and intelligence operations against the terrorist group. Additionally, a terrorist group that performs better operations and garners high population support will produce fewer disaffected and disillusioned members that are vulnerable to the adversary's recruitment pitches.

Third, prisons can play an important role in the quality of a terrorist group's intelligence capabilities. For the PIRA, prison sentences were sometimes a great benefit for the organization as the jail time allowed volunteers to ponder PIRA strategy and tactics face to face with other volunteers, without the fear of being arrested.

Fourth, centralization may affect how quickly a terrorist group's capabilities can evolve as its adversary's counterterrorism capabilities evolve. As stated earlier, the terrorist group and its state adversary are often engaged in a competitive and dynamic relationship—a move or innovation by a terrorist group will frequently result in a countermove or counter-innovation by the state adversary, and vice versa.



Terrorist groups that can initiate intelligence and counterintelligence innovations, as opposed to simply reacting and adapting to the adversary's innovations, will be better positioned to take advantage of its adversary's vulnerabilities. It stands to reason that centralized organizations would be uniquely capable of transmitting lessons learned to the whole organization and thereby increasing the organization's overall capacity for innovation.

### CHAPTER THREE: FATAH AND BLACK SEPTEMBER

The Palestinian terrorist group Fatah used territory it controlled in the 1960s to recruit and train its personnel and to launch attacks against Israel, its main adversary.<sup>379</sup> In the early 1970's, Fatah sent terrorist operatives into 'uncontrolled territory' across Europe, Asia and the Middle East to attack Israeli interests abroad. Israel answered by dispatching assassination squads throughout these regions to hunt down Fatah's international leaders, many of whom were successfully tracked down and killed. While Fatah had adapted to the challenges and advantages of their controlled territory, the uncontrolled territory of Europe and the Middle East offered an entirely new set of challenges.

The case will show that Fatah leveraged the critical counterintelligence advantages of operating outside of its controlled territory.<sup>380</sup> The case will also show that despite these advantages, Fatah leaders were often more secure within Fatah's controlled territory as they could insulated themselves with multiple layers of personal security among tightly-knit communities. The Fatah case study provides a good test of Hypotheses 3(A) and 3(B). While the large-N data set provided support to the

---

<sup>379</sup> As described in Chapter One, controlled territory is defined as a geographical space where a terrorist group regulates physical access to and security within defined territorial boundaries. Controlled territory can be acquired either from a state sponsor granting a terrorist group freedom of movement within its borders or from a weak government that does not have the resources or the will to challenge the terrorist group's physical control of the territory. Geographical space is defined, at a minimum, as a large neighborhood or collection of neighborhoods.

<sup>380</sup> Operating 'outside of or without controlled territory' occurs when the terrorist group's operatives live, plan operations or carry out a significant portion of operational acts in a geographical space to which they do not regulate physical access.

hypothesis, the case study permits close evaluation of the causal mechanisms linking controlled territory and the hypothesized counterintelligence outcomes.

In this chapter, I first provide a discussion of the key hypotheses and alternative hypotheses, and then the Fatah case study. Following the case study, I review the hypotheses and provide a general assessment of how a group's controlled territory impacts its counterintelligence capabilities.<sup>381</sup>

The Fatah case study is broken into three parts. The first part depicts Fatah when it operated without controlled territory and minimal popular support in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 1965 and 1967. The second part depicts Fatah when it operated within its controlled territory with high popular support in Jordan and Lebanon between 1967 and 1982. The third part depicts a smaller core of Fatah members, also known as the Black September Organization (BSO), operating outside of Fatah's controlled territory in Lebanon, dispersed among the Palestinian diaspora communities of Europe from 1971 to 1978. The three parts will illustrate how Fatah's counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities changed depending on whether it was operating in its controlled territory.

#### *Fatah Case Study Core Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1(A):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure Fatah will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.

---

<sup>381</sup> It is important to note that control of territory and popular support are closely associated. Therefore, popular support will be given special attention in order to isolate the effects of access to controlled territory and popular support.

*Hypothesis 1(B):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure Fatah will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.

*Hypothesis 2(A):* With relatively greater popular support Fatah will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.

*Hypothesis 2(B):* With relatively greater popular support Fatah will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.

*Hypothesis 3(A):* With relatively more controlled territory Fatah will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.

*Hypothesis 3(B):* With relatively more controlled territory Fatah will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.

*Hypothesis 4:* Fatah will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.

#### *Alternative and Falsifiable Hypotheses*

The alternative hypotheses argue the opposite of the core hypotheses. Thus, the first alternative hypothesis is that tighter organizational structure will not produce superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation or greater vulnerabilities to high-level penetrations. Conversely, if the group has a loose organizational structure but does not suffer from inferior counterintelligence training and compartmentation, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The second alternative hypothesis is that popular support will not result in greater counterintelligence support from the local population or greater vulnerability to exposure in the media. Thus, if the group wages a popular support campaign but does not induce counterintelligence vulnerabilities as a result and does not benefit from increased local support, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The third alternative hypothesis is that controlled territory will not result in greater physical and communications security or greater vulnerabilities to tracking the group's gross movements of personnel and logistics. Thus, if the group operates from controlled territory but does not benefit from more secure communications and vetting, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The fourth alternative hypothesis is that a terrorist group facing an increasing menacing adversary will not become more centralized and tightly commanded over time. Thus, if the group faces an increasing threat from its adversary but does not centralize its decision-making and tighten its command and control, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

#### *Control Variables: Alternative Explanations*

Some control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the Fatah case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. Fatah's adversary's capabilities remain relatively constant in the three periods and so are unlikely to produce variations in the counterintelligence capabilities over time. Fatah's resources, however, fluctuate between the three periods. Thus, the variation in Fatah's counterintelligence capabilities could result from

differences in its overall size or the quality of its members, rather than from variations in its controlled territory. For example, Fatah was much larger than the BSO, which would have increased its operational profile and the group's exposure to Israeli security services. BSO operatives were also better-trained than Fatah terrorists on average, making them more likely to achieve intelligence and counterintelligence success. If BSO's small size or superior skills helps it to evade Israeli security forces or recruit sympathetic diaspora community members, then this would challenge Hypotheses 3(B).

Fatah's popular support also varied between the three periods and differences attributed to the variation in controlled territory could have arisen from changes in Fatah's popular support between the time periods. Fatah in the 1967 to 1982 period had more popular support than BSO and spent more time campaigning for support. For example, BSO spent less time generating popular support and publicizing its achievements and information about its members. BSO should thus have enjoyed more counterintelligence successes, as posited by Hypothesis 2(B).

The variation in Fatah's counterintelligence capabilities could result from differences between the goals and missions of Fatah between the time periods. For example, while both Fatah and BSO engaged in sabotage and terrorist operations, BSO was created to be more secretive and clandestine than Fatah. Whereas Fatah operated among and interfaced with its popular support base on a regular basis, BSO was able to fade into the background of its theater of operations. This might account for the counterintelligence vulnerabilities associated with controlled territory posited by Hypothesis 3(B). Examining Fatah in 1964 to 1967 period when it operated without

controlled territory, but with a mission similar to that of Fatah in the 1967 to 1982 period, will help to tease out the effects of the groups' mission and territories.

Finally, Fatah's counterintelligence strengths in periods two and three may result from normal organizational learning rather than variation in controlled territory. The case will need to show, however, that the hypothesized counterintelligence strengths and innovations resulted from the core variables rather than organizational learning. The case will do this by illuminating the casual mechanisms driving the counterintelligence outcomes and demonstrating that despite normal organizational learning, the observed counterintelligence strengths and innovations would not have occurred without the core variable shift.

#### **Fatah Case Study: Dependent Variables**

<b>Fatah/BSO</b>	<b>Adversary CT Capability</b>	<b>Org Structure</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Controlled Territory</b>	<b>Popular Support</b>	<b>Type</b>
Fatah 1964 - 1967	High	High	High	No	Low	2
Fatah 1967 - 1982	High	High	High	Yes	High	8
BSO 1971 - 1978	High	High	High	No	High	6

#### **Fatah Background**

Fatah's nucleus formed in the late 1950's among Palestinian students at universities in Europe and Egypt. The organization's full name, Tahrir al Hatani al

Filistini, as an acronym (HTF) forms the Arabic word for death, and in reverse (FTH) forms the Arabic word for conquest.<sup>382</sup> In the early 1960's Fatah concentrated on developing secret cells, collecting funds and distributing Palestinian literature. By 1965 Fatah had launched a more active and violent campaign of terrorist warfare against Israel.<sup>383</sup>

#### Fatah 1964 - 1967

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* Powerful state adversaries have hounded Fatah since its inception in the late 1950's. When Fatah emerged as a political movement run by Egyptian university students in the late 1950s, and the Egyptian government moved quickly to deport its leaders.<sup>384</sup>

In 1965, Fatah based itself in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, using this territory to recruit guerrillas and launch operations against Israel. Fatah did not have control of this territory however, because the group did not regulate physical access to or movement within defined territorial boundaries in these locations. Israel's aggressive policing of the West Bank and Gaza prevented Fatah from controlling the territory.

Israel was able to arrest and imprison many of Fatah's recruits in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.<sup>385</sup> Using informers in the West Bank and Jordan, Israel infiltrated Fatah

---

<sup>382</sup> Edgar O'Ballance, *Arab Guerilla Power: 1967-1972*, (Archon Books: London, 1973), 26.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>384</sup> Ehud Yaari, "Strike Terror: The Story of Fatah," (Sabra Books, New York: 1970), 22.

<sup>385</sup> Said K. Aburish, "Arafat: From Defender to Dictator," (Bloomsbury: New York. 1998), 74.



and disrupted its operations as they were being planned.<sup>386</sup> Israel's swift retaliation made many would-be Fatah recruits reluctant to join the terrorist organization.<sup>387</sup>

In addition to collecting information from informants, Israel broke up newly formed Fatah cells and kept abreast of the political mood of the population.<sup>388</sup> Israel's retaliation involved demolitions of Palestinian houses, curfews, and restrictions on movements, all of which caused the Palestinian population to distance itself from Fatah terrorists.<sup>389</sup> Palestinians became reluctant to pass on information or provide food or shelter to Fatah fighters.<sup>390</sup>

In the Six Day War of June 1967, Israel fought Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan and ultimately seized the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. Israel was able to capture the Jordanian army intelligence branch's files of all the fedayeen and sympathizers in the West Bank, along with their detailed histories and photographs.<sup>391</sup>

Despite Israel's control over the Gaza and West Bank territories, Fatah continued its terrorist operations. In the latter part of 1967, Fatah organized sixty-one military operations in the West Bank, mostly against civilian targets such as farms, apartment buildings and factories.<sup>392</sup> By November 1967, however, the majority of Fatah personnel

---

<sup>386</sup> Ibid. / Yaari, 141.

<sup>387</sup> Aburish, 74.

<sup>388</sup> Zeev Schiff and Raphael Rothstein, *Fedayeen: Guerrillas Against Israel*, (David McKay and Company, Inc: New York, 1972), 77.

<sup>389</sup> O'Ballance, 40.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>391</sup> John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September*, (Frank Cass: London, 1973), 98.

<sup>392</sup> Rubin, 39.

in the West Bank had been killed, captured, or driven into Jordan.<sup>393</sup> By 1968, Israeli security patrols kept the border between Jordan and the West Bank virtually sealed off and carefully scrutinized all militants organizing in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>394</sup> As a result, Fatah had limited manpower—by one estimate Fatah had no more than 100 fighters.<sup>395</sup>

*Controlled Territory.* Fatah, as explained above, did not have controlled territory in the 1964 to 1967 period. Fatah did use a small number of refugee camps for training and recruiting. In 1964, Fatah took advantage of the Lebanon's weak central government and set up training sites near Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.<sup>396</sup> The overcrowded camps of the Gaza Strip provided Fatah terrorists with some limited cover and sanctuary while they launched attacks against Israel.<sup>397</sup>

Israel policed the West Bank and Gaza Strip aggressively and moved forcefully to challenge Fatah guerrillas, which eventually forced Fatah to relocate to Jordan.

*Organizational Structure.* In the 1964 to 1982 period, Fatah's organizational structure was mostly tight, with leaders exercising a relatively high degree of command and control over the organization. When Fatah operated predominantly out of the West Bank in the mid-1960s, terrorist cells were often cut-off from Fatah's top leaders based in Syria.<sup>398</sup> Fatah leaders, as a result, imposed strict regulations on cells for choosing

---

<sup>393</sup> O'Ballance, 40.

<sup>394</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 85.

<sup>395</sup> Yaari, 109.

<sup>396</sup> Aburish, 60.

<sup>397</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 86.

<sup>398</sup> Yaari, 77.

targets and methods of attack.<sup>399</sup> The leadership in Syria and cells in the West Bank would communicate through couriers and liaisons when they had the opportunity.<sup>400</sup>

Fatah's control over its cells was due in part to the force of Yasser Arafat's charismatic leadership. Arafat was personally organizing underground networks, coordinating and mediating between various units, and determining their objectives by intermittently shuttling between the West Bank and Damascus.<sup>401</sup> Arafat contacted almost all units and many captured terrorists could tell stories about him.<sup>402</sup> Though Fatah had a mostly tight organizational structure, Fatah faced some organizational discipline challenges during its time in the West Bank. Some terrorists, for example, joined Fatah without being efficiently coordinated or supervised by senior members.<sup>403</sup>

*Popular Support.* Though Fatah's popular support was high for much of its existence, its support was relatively low during 1964 to 1967 period in the West Bank. In 1964, Fatah created a political base from the Palestinian intelligentsia and enjoyed some support in the refugee camps of the West Bank and Gaza—though not as much as it would gain after 1967.<sup>404</sup> Fatah's West Bank command set up its headquarters in Nablus and used sympathetic local physicians to treat wounded terrorists.<sup>405</sup> Unrest in

---

<sup>399</sup> Yaari, 77.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid, 128. / Kurz, 48.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid, 131.

<sup>404</sup> El-Rayyes and Nahas, 8.

<sup>405</sup> Yaari, 130.

Palestinian refugee camps, where an estimated 200,000 of the 400,000 refugees lived under United Nations sponsorship, provided a recruiting pool for Fatah.<sup>406</sup>

Fatah also tried tapping into a network of Arab Fatah sympathizers within Israel who helped carry out acts of sabotage.<sup>407</sup> In this period, there were approximately 440,000 Israeli Arabs living in Israel but only a small fraction would end up in Israeli prisons or detention camps for real or alleged cooperation with Palestinian guerrillas.<sup>408</sup> Many Israeli Arabs did not support Fatah and instead aligned themselves with the Israeli government or with popular Egyptian leader Gamal Nassar who openly opposed sabotage activities.<sup>409</sup>

Several factors impaired Fatah's ability to gain popular support in the West Bank between 1964 and 1967. Fatah's code of secrecy was one factor that interfered with the group's effort to gain widespread support.<sup>410</sup> Israeli counterinsurgency efforts also capped the amount of widespread public support Fatah could attain, as villages were often reluctant to pass information or provide shelter to Fatah terrorists.<sup>411</sup> Fear of being caught and punished by Israel compelled many Palestinian residents to limit their assistance to Fatah to providing food and advice on local conditions.<sup>412</sup> Arafat would spend a good deal of time escaping Israeli forces, which were being aided by Palestinian

---

<sup>406</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 86. / Ibid, 204.

<sup>407</sup> Cooley, 109.

<sup>408</sup> John Laffin, "Fedayeen: The Arab-Israeli Dilemma," (Cassell: London, 1973), 95. / Cooley, 109.

<sup>409</sup> Yaari, 111.

<sup>410</sup> Yaari, 74.

<sup>411</sup> O'Ballance, 40.

<sup>412</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 203.

informants.<sup>413</sup> By the late 1960s, it was clear to Fatah that the local population was not receptive to a popular uprising against Israel.<sup>414</sup>

*Resources.* During Fatah's initial campaign in the West Bank, it drew upon recruits gathered in the refugee camps of Lebanon and among men accustomed to hiring themselves out to Arab intelligence services.<sup>415</sup> Recruits were trained in terrorist techniques based on Algerian and Vietnamese programs of unconventional warfare.<sup>416</sup> Recruits were trained on Kalashnikov rifles and indoctrinated in Palestinian and Arab history as well as Fatah's philosophy.<sup>417</sup> In late 1967, Fatah organized sixty-one military operations in the West Bank, mostly against civilian targets such as farms, apartment buildings and factories.<sup>418</sup>

Throughout its existence, Fatah was well-financed. In its early days, members of the Qatari ruling family as well as wealthy and influential Saudis provided funds to Fatah.<sup>419</sup> As it grew, Fatah began to receive donations from other Arab governments and remittances from Palestinians working throughout the world. In Lebanon, Fatah forced some Lebanese businesses to pay protection fees, while some Fatah members ran illicit arms and drugs networks.<sup>420</sup>

*Intelligence.* Fatah's intelligence capabilities were fairly basic during 1964 to 1967 period. Target surveillance was a staple of the Fatah operations. As early as 1964,

---

<sup>413</sup> Rubin, 39.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid, 203.

<sup>415</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 62.

<sup>416</sup> Aburish, 60.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>418</sup> Rubin, 39.

<sup>419</sup> Walker, 37.

<sup>420</sup> Rubin, 58.

Fatah was running reconnaissance missions into Israel to gather intelligence for sabotage operations.<sup>421</sup> In the first three months of 1965, Fatah carried out ten sabotage operations in Israel using terrorists recruited for each operation by liaison men in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>422</sup> Before Arafat relocated to the West Bank, couriers shuttled intelligence to him in Damascus from Fatah cells in Beirut and the refugee camps.<sup>423</sup>

Syrian intelligence training, by 1965, had made a noticeable impact on Fatah intelligence capabilities—intelligence units became more efficient and better able to provide information on targets and approach roads.<sup>424</sup>

The “Minimanual of the Urban Terrorist”, which Israeli-Arab expert Steve Posner claims was required reading for Fatah and PLO recruits, counsels terrorists to take personal responsibility for gathering intelligence against the adversary: “The urban terrorist must have a great ability for observation...he must be well-informed about...the area in which he lives, operates, or travels through.”<sup>425</sup> The Minimanual notes that local populations that oppose the government and its security forces will be an excellent source of information.<sup>426</sup>

In the mid-1960s Fatah tried to establish ‘village cells’, modeled after the Viet Cong intelligence system, to provide such information on Israeli security forces.<sup>427</sup> Fatah

---

<sup>421</sup> Yaari, 43.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>425</sup> Carlos Marighella, “The Minimanual of the Urban Terrorist,” accessed on 22 August 2006 at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marighella-carlos/1969/06/minimanual-urban-terrorist/index.htm>.

<sup>426</sup> Marighella.

<sup>427</sup> O’Ballance, 39.

recruited some of the Israeli Arabs living inside of Israel but the Israeli internal security services were effective at monitoring these populations and at limiting the support that Fatah gained.<sup>428</sup> A small network of Fatah informants allegedly operated in Israel in 1967 and passed intelligence on potential targets to Fatah liaison men waiting in Jordan.<sup>429</sup>

*Counterintelligence: 1964 – 1967.* Fatah's counterintelligence capabilities had varying sophistication in the 1964 to 1967 period, though counterintelligence and security probably were always a central focus for the group. Even before Fatah was formed, Arafat was learning how to evade Arab intelligence services by compartmenting his small, radical student organization in Kuwait.<sup>430</sup>

When Fatah formed in the early 1960s, the group concentrated on developing secret, compartmented cells that would distribute pro-Palestinian literature.<sup>431</sup> From the beginning, Fatah leaders adopted aliases.<sup>432</sup> Arafat's alias was Abu Amar and Fatah itself was given an alias, al Assifa (the Storm).<sup>433</sup> Fatah's leaders reasoned that the group alias would allow Fatah to avoid embarrassment and continue with secret military and propaganda operations if its initial attacks failed.<sup>434</sup> At this early stage, Arafat chose not to reveal his identity in order to maintain his safety.<sup>435</sup> Fatah's security consciousness

---

<sup>428</sup> Yaari, 111.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>430</sup> Aburish, 47. / Yaari, 10.

<sup>431</sup> O'Ballance, 26.

<sup>432</sup> Yaari, 127.

<sup>433</sup> O'Ballance, 28.

<sup>434</sup> Cooley, 95.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, 97.

was reinvigorated in the first few months of 1965 in the wake of several counterintelligence lapses and betrayals.<sup>436</sup>

Fatah leaders took numerous precautions in vetting new members. Potential recruits had to be recommended by two or three active members.<sup>437</sup> Recruits also had to demonstrate that they had severed ties with Arab political parties, probably to prevent infiltrations by Arab intelligence services. They were interviewed at length and then had to take an oath of allegiance, wherein they promised not to give away Fatah's secrets.<sup>438</sup> One Fatah member recalled: "We kept our secrets so close that the word Fatah would not be mentioned except to a member. Only Fatah members could see our two basic documents, the organizational structure and the political program."<sup>439</sup>

Fatah was occasionally burned in this early period by bad counterintelligence practices. One of these setbacks involved Fatah's habit of cataloguing lists of members and operational details. In May 1966, a Jordanian-informant in Fatah's ranks fled to Jordan with a list of Fatah's members, details the organization, their leaders and operational plans.<sup>440</sup> Many of Fatah's cells in the West Bank were rolled up soon thereafter. The Jordanians also used the compromised information to broadcast fake code signals calling terrorists in Syria to Jordan, where the Jordanian security forces subsequently captured the terrorists at the border with their weapons.<sup>441</sup> The Israelis were

---

<sup>436</sup> O'Ballance, 29.

<sup>437</sup> Walker, 24.

<sup>438</sup> Walker, 24.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>440</sup> Yaari, 88.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid, 88.



also able to defeat Fatah in the West Bank quickly because they developed good intelligence sources among the local Palestinians.<sup>442</sup>

Fatah also had its share of counterintelligence innovations in this early period, such as its use of throw-away aliases. Fatah coordinators assembled cell members for operations in an ad hoc manner and issued members one-time aliases for the operation, which would change for their next mission.<sup>443</sup> Fatah also established a formal counterespionage capability. Counterespionage personnel focused on capturing Arabs suspected of cooperating with Israeli security forces in the refugee camps.<sup>444</sup> Arafat also developed sophisticated personal security procedures, using several go-between security officers to vet any group member that requested an audience with him.<sup>445</sup> Arafat relied on messengers and couriers and allegedly never used the telephone or telegraph.<sup>446</sup> Fatah in some cases communicated with its rank and file by sending coded signals via its Cairo Radio station, which broadcast to Egypt, Jordan and Syria.<sup>447</sup>

Fatah faced a serious counterintelligence setback in August 1967 when Israeli forces advancing into the Jordanian controlled West Bank seized Jordanian intelligence and police files on Fatah.<sup>448</sup> The intelligence files included detailed histories and mug shots of many Fatah terrorists.<sup>449</sup> Israeli security forces used the information to capture

---

<sup>442</sup> Rubin, 39.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>444</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 86.

<sup>445</sup> Yaari, 128.

<sup>446</sup> Yaari, 128. / Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, "Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography," (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), 39.

<sup>447</sup> O'Ballance, 60.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>449</sup> Cooley, 98.

Fatah operatives as they tried to reenter the West Bank.<sup>450</sup> Israel also conducted a ‘cave’ survey in the West Bank, capturing and interrogating many terrorists.<sup>451</sup> Security forces encircled villages where suspected terrorists were hiding and by January 1968 had almost completely shut down sabotage operations launched from the Palestinian territories.<sup>452</sup>

Fatah responded to Israel’s increased intelligence by ferociously hunting down informants—Israeli figures indicate that terrorists were terrorizing suspected collaborators as often as they were terrorizing Israelis in the late 1960s.<sup>453</sup> Fatah set up a special counter-espionage unit in this period, called the Jihaz al Razd, which was run by Arafat’s confidant Saleh Khalef, also known as Abu Iyad.

When the infamous BSO terrorist Ali Hassan Salameh joined Fatah as a young man in 1967, one of his first assignments was to track down Fatah terrorists who were working for the Israeli security forces.<sup>454</sup> Salameh, working for the Jihaz al Razd, would scan the file of each new recruit and conduct a background check. Abu Iyad and Salameh would sometimes test suspected informants by making them undertake particularly dangerous missions behind Israeli lines to test their loyalty. Salameh would then threaten to broadcast a tape of the terrorist confessing to being an informant if the terrorist did not return from the mission.<sup>455</sup>

---

<sup>450</sup> O’Ballance, 39.

<sup>451</sup> Yaari, 143.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>453</sup> Dobson, 26.

<sup>454</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 100.

<sup>455</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 100.

Only a few terrorists confessed to collaborating with Israel, while many suspected informants were brutally killed—twenty in Salameh’s first year in the Jihaz.<sup>456</sup> Though Arafat dealt with informants in a heavy-handed fashion, he refrained from punishing local leaders in the West Bank to avoid a backlash among the prominent tribes and families in the area.<sup>457</sup> Israel, it seems, had more leeway in meting out punishment and was able to wipe out Fatah’s networks in the West Bank. This is probably due to the fact that the comfortable, middle-class Palestinians of Nablus, Ramallah and Jerusalem, with some important exceptions among young people, did not desire to live the life of clandestine guerrillas.<sup>458</sup>

*Summary.* In the first period, Fatah maintained a tight organizational structure and enjoyed high resources, but had low popular support, no controlled territory and a very capable adversary. Fatah enjoyed some of counterintelligence advantages of operating outside of controlled territory, forcing Israel to locate and monitor Fatah operatives across large swaths of ‘neutral’ territory. However, Fatah’s lack of controlled territory did not always make it easier for the group to hide its personnel and logistics. This is partly due to the fact that Fatah remained in territory that was effectively policed by Israel. Fatah’s popular support also seemed to play a role in its counterintelligence failures as residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip feared Israel’s wrath more than they supported Fatah’s activities.

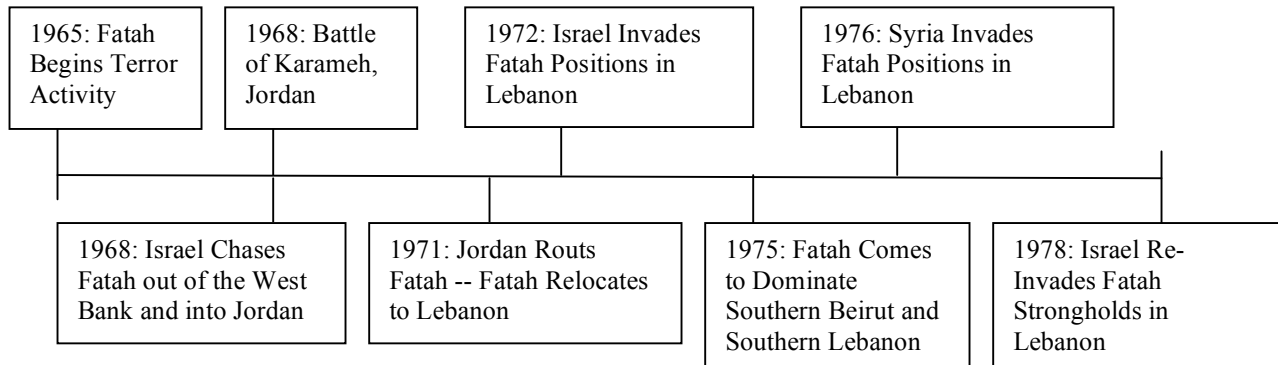
*Fatah Timeline: 1967 - 1982*

---

<sup>456</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 100.

<sup>457</sup> Aburish, 74.

<sup>458</sup> Cooley, 98.



### Fatah 1967 - 1982

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* Challenged by Israel's dominance of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Fatah relocated to Jordan and Lebanon by 1968, and returned to launching operations against Israel.<sup>459</sup>

Fatah found refuge in Jordan in part because the Jordanian army was still recovering from the Six Day War and Jordan's leaders did not want a larger confrontation with the country's large pro-Palestinian population. Fatah was able to seize and control territory in Jordan and the city of Karameh became the centerpiece of its strongholds. Israel could not infiltrate and police Karameh and other Fatah strongholds in Jordan so instead Israel mounted large military attacks against these territories. Israel carried out one of its largest attacks against the Fatah stronghold in Karameh on March 21, 1968.<sup>460</sup> Israeli security forces also set up ambushes on frontier paths to catch Fatah militants traveling to and from the Jordan.<sup>461</sup> Though Karameh was a clear tactical victory for Israel, Fatah post-battle propaganda made the event a huge strategic victory for the

<sup>459</sup> Simon Reeve, *One Day in September*, (Arcade Publishing, New York, 2000), 28.

<sup>460</sup> Anat N. Kurz, "Fatah and the Politics of Violence: The Institutionalization of a Popular Struggle," (Sussex Academic Press: Brighton, 2005), 52.

<sup>461</sup> O'Ballance, 57.

terrorist group. In Jordan, pro-Fatah posters showing Palestinian guerrillas defeating the Israeli army filled many shop windows.<sup>462</sup>

Fatah terrorists also began to battle with Jordanian security services. Jordan's King Hussein became increasingly angered as Fatah sought to control large swaths of Jordanian territory. Though King Hussein offered Fatah guerrillas a truce in 1968, Fatah's conflict with Jordan steadily escalated throughout 1969 and 1970.<sup>463</sup> Guerrilla groups proliferated in Jordan during this time, making negotiation between Jordan and the Palestinian factions very difficult. Furthermore, Arafat had relatively little control over the estimated fifty-two separate Palestinian factions scattered across Jordan.<sup>464</sup> George Habash's Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) further complicated the picture, calling for revolution against Jordan and its ruling family.<sup>465</sup>

Jordan finally took decisive action when the PFLP hijacked three planes in 1970, declaring martial law and demanded the guerrillas leave Jordan's cities. Arafat responded by commanding his troops to topple King Hussein.<sup>466</sup> Jordan's army attacked Palestinian refugee and guerrilla camps, forcing fighters onto the streets where they were easily gunned down.<sup>467</sup> Jordan battled the guerrillas so ruthlessly that some Fatah fighters were authorized by their commanding officer to seek refuge in Israel rather than

---

<sup>462</sup> Rubin, 46.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>464</sup> Tony Walker and Andrew Gowers, "Arafat: The Biography," (Virgin Books: London, 2003), 66.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid, 51.

allow themselves to fall into the hands of the Jordanian army.<sup>468</sup> The Jordanian army methodically destroyed Fatah and other fedayeen elements in Jordan.<sup>469</sup>

Many of Fatah guerrillas retreated to Syria, southern Lebanon, the West Bank or into the hills of northwest Jordan.<sup>470</sup> Jordan's brutal tactics, including executing terrorists without trial and mutilating their bodies, began to take a toll on Fatah.<sup>471</sup> The Jordanian army had largely killed, captured or driven Fatah rebels out of the country by the end of 1971.<sup>472</sup>

In the early 1970s, southern Lebanon became the critical front in the war between Fatah and Israel. Fatah established a foothold in a small section of Lebanon known as the Arkoub region, which also became known as Fatahland.<sup>473</sup> Fatahland was an area of approximately 30 square miles in the foothills of Mount Hermon near the borders of Israel and Syria.<sup>474</sup> Following a fedayeen attack on an Israeli school bus in May 1970, Israel invaded Fatahland with 2,000 troops and 200 tanks. Israel paved roads into the area so they could set up fortified positions and elevated observation posts.<sup>475</sup> This did not dissuade the Fatah migration to Lebanon. By 1972, over 3,000 Fatah members had

---

<sup>468</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>469</sup> Brian Crozier (ed), *Since Jordan: The Palestinian Fedayeen*, *Conflict Studies* No. 38, September 1973, 6.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>471</sup> Michael Bar-Zohar and Eitan Haber, *The Quest for the Red Prince*, (William Morrow and Company, Inc.: New York, 1983), 108.

<sup>472</sup> El-Rayyes and Nahas, 22. / O'Ballance, 182.

<sup>473</sup> Jullian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization*, (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1984), 95.

<sup>474</sup> O'Ballance, 122.

<sup>475</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 237.

settled in Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon, joining the over 200,000 Palestinians that had been in southern Lebanon since 1948.<sup>476</sup>

Again in 1972, Israel briefly occupied southern Lebanon following the Fatah-led Munich Olympics massacre.<sup>477</sup> Israel used undercover intelligence collectors in Lebanon throughout the 1970s and 1980s to gather information on Fatah and PLO leadership and facilities.<sup>478</sup> One well-placed spy provided the Israeli army with the positions of terrorist targets and photographs of harbors in Lebanese cities of Tyre, Sidon and Ras-a-Shak, which were subsequently used in Israeli naval raids.<sup>479</sup>

Israeli security services working in Lebanon tracked terrorists and assisted in special-forces raids. Israeli services, knowing well the modus operandi of the Lebanese services, kept the Lebanese authorities from meddling in some Israeli raids. To keep the Lebanese out of one Israeli raid in 1973, Israeli commandos called the Lebanese police from various public phones in Beirut falsely claiming that Palestinian factions were engaged in gun battles—from which Lebanese police kept their distance as the Israelis had expected.<sup>480</sup>

---

<sup>476</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 218. / Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1984), 42.

<sup>477</sup> Becker, 100.

<sup>478</sup> The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was created in 1964 to represent Palestinian people throughout the world. The PLO also became an umbrella organization for numerous terrorist groups, including Fatah. Fatah was the largest and most politically influential component of the PLO.<sup>478</sup> As head of Fatah, Yassir Arafat also became the head of the PLO in 1969.

<sup>479</sup> Steve Posner, *Israel Undercover: Secret Warfare and Hidden Diplomacy in the Middle East*, (Syracuse University Press: New York, 1987), 47.

<sup>480</sup> George Jonas, *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorism Team*, (Simon and Schuster Paperbacks: New York, 2005), 185.

By 1975, Fatah and the PLO controlled significant portions of southern Beirut, southern strips of Lebanon, and Palestinian refugee camps. Guerrillas set up roadblocks, took over buildings, protected fugitives, commandeered vehicles, opened shops and nightclubs, and issued its own passes and permits.<sup>481</sup> Though the Lebanese government scored numerous victories against Fatah, the group also controlled vast areas of Lebanon with little challenge.

Israel continued its military incursions into southern Lebanon in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including a massive invasion in 1982, involving 75,000 Israeli soldiers.<sup>482</sup>

*Controlled Territory.* Fatah's controlled territory in Jordan from 1967 to 1971 and Lebanon from 1972 to 1984. Fatah was able to regulate physical access to and security within these large segments of territory. When Fatah was forced to relocate to Jordan in 1967, Arafat moved his headquarters to Karameh, a large refugee town in the Southern Jordan Valley.<sup>483</sup> Many of the commanders and networks of the West Bank were moved to Jordan's East Bank.<sup>484</sup> Fatah found fertile recruiting ground among the 450,000 Palestinians living in Jordan.<sup>485</sup> By 1968, Fatah membership probably reached into the thousands.<sup>486</sup> At first, Fatah controlled only the refugee camps in Jordan, but

---

<sup>481</sup> Aburish, 151.

<sup>482</sup> Aburish, 171.

<sup>483</sup> Yaari, 245.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>485</sup> Schultz and Hammer, 46.

<sup>486</sup> O'Ballance, 60.



gradually the group began to take over towns and villages close to the border with Israel.<sup>487</sup>

When Israel launched its offensive on Karamah most terrorists retreated across the River Jordan from the East Bank.<sup>488</sup> Despite Fatah's retreat, the Battle of Karamah was a propaganda success for the organization. The Israeli military withdrew from Jordan after violent confrontations with Fatah terrorists ended, and Fatah was subsequently flooded with money and recruits.<sup>489</sup> Fatah, overwhelmed by the hundreds of recruits joining the group, experienced a shortage of instructors, which degraded the quality of training for at least a year.<sup>490</sup> Fatah also moved its headquarters to Es Salt, outside the range of Israeli commando raids, and set up training camps.<sup>491</sup> The Jordanian government had limited control over the camps but Israel hit Es Salt with air strikes in August 1968.<sup>492</sup> Israeli air strikes were designed to prevent Israeli military losses, boost domestic morale in Israel, and compel the Jordanian regime to restrict the terrorists' movements—the policy's intended effect on Jordan, however, was not immediate.<sup>493</sup>

King Hussein of Jordan offered a truce to Fatah in November 1968 where Fatah agreed not to create trouble for Hussein's regime and Hussein agreed to not restrict the terrorists' movements within Jordan.<sup>494</sup> Hussein also permitted Fatah to retain their own

---

<sup>487</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 105.

<sup>488</sup> O'Ballance, 57.

<sup>489</sup> Reeve, 29.

<sup>490</sup> Kurz, 55.

<sup>491</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 86.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>493</sup> Kurz, 52.

<sup>494</sup> O'Ballance, 64.

travel documents, which were honored by the Jordanian authorities.<sup>495</sup> By 1970, Fatah had achieved a high level of organization in Jordan, administering its own hospitals and taking care of widows, orphans and the disabled.<sup>496</sup> Jordanian authorities estimated that Fatah commanded approximately 5,000 terrorists in 1971.<sup>497</sup>

King Hussein, however, became wary of Fatah's growing influence in Jordan and its unchallenged control over swaths of Jordanian territory, including the northern areas of Jerash and Ajloun. Jordanian security forces began to hem in Fatah elements, and many terrorists chose to flee to Syria and southern Lebanon rather than face off with Jordanian Bedouin troops.<sup>498</sup> By the end of 1971, the Jordanian army had killed or driven most Fatah members from the country.<sup>499</sup>

Fatah's relationship with Lebanon was equally complex. The Lebanese government had fought terrorist elements to a stalemate in southern Lebanon in November 1968, which led to the Cairo Agreement in November 1969.<sup>500</sup> The agreement provided the PLO, and by extension Fatah, the right to have a military presence in the refugee camps in southern Lebanon and the right to provide camp residents with security.<sup>501</sup> In 1972, over 3,000 Fatah members had settled in Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon.<sup>502</sup>

---

<sup>495</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>498</sup> Reeve, 33.

<sup>499</sup> El-Rayyes and Nahas, 22.

<sup>500</sup> El-Rayyes and Nahas, 31.

<sup>501</sup> Schultz and Hammer, 55.

<sup>502</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 218. / Richard A. Gabriel, Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1984), 42.

Arafat continued to embrace the Cairo Agreement in 1972, realizing that a head-on clash with the Lebanese forces would severely damage the PLO and Fatah.<sup>503</sup> The Lebanese government tolerated the terrorist presence in Fatahland, mostly because the Lebanese army was unable to decisively challenge the military power of the PLO.<sup>504</sup>

The PLO and Fatah gradually assumed administrative control over the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, running schools and hospitals.<sup>505</sup> By 1975, the PLO and Fatah controlled southern Beirut, southern strips of Lebanon, and Palestinian refugee camps. In some cases the chain of command became muddled, however, as local militias developed their own checkpoints, youth movements, and offices.<sup>506</sup>

Fatah continued to receive support from Syria, though the relationship was continually rocky. Israeli air raids on Syria in 1972 and 1973 convinced Syria to restrict the Fatah's freedom of movement in Syria and Lebanon, in a bid to avoid future Israeli strikes.<sup>507</sup> On June 6, 1982, the Israeli military launched a major ground offensive against the PLO and Fatah infrastructure in southern Lebanon, and the out-gunned terrorists abandoned their safehaven.<sup>508</sup> With the loss of its controlled territory, Fatah lost its ability to train members and prepare for battle, educate its youth and recruit them to the PLO ranks, and protect arms caches—in short, Fatah lost its power base.<sup>509</sup>

---

<sup>503</sup> O'Ballance, 210.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, 231.

<sup>505</sup> Dan Bavly and Eliahu Salpeter, *Fire in Beirut: Israel's War in Lebanon with the PLO*, (Stein and Day Publishers: New York, 1984), 38.

<sup>506</sup> Becker, 142.

<sup>507</sup> Cooley, 131.

<sup>508</sup> Kurz, 102.

<sup>509</sup> Bavly and Salpeter, 178.

*Organizational Structure.* In the 1964 to 1982 period, Fatah's organizational structure was mostly tight, with leaders exercising a relatively high degree of command and control over the organization.

Arafat maintained control over the Fatah movement even as it shifted its bases from the West Bank to Jordan and Lebanon. Couriers kept some Damascus-based Fatah leaders in touch with the organization's cells throughout Lebanon, allowing Fatah leaders to direct recruitment campaigns and operation activities carried out from Lebanese territory.<sup>510</sup>

*Popular Support.* When Israel's counterterrorism efforts forced Fatah to move its bases from Gaza to Jordan, where the group began building refugee centers, training camps, schools, clinics and orphanages.<sup>511</sup> Eventually, King Hussein of Jordan recognized that Fatah was building its own state within his kingdom. The King could not take military action against the group, however, because the Jordanian public was largely sympathetic to Fatah's cause.<sup>512</sup> Fatah ruled the Palestinian refugee camps, where Jordanian officials and soldiers were not allowed to enter.<sup>513</sup> Fatah's popularity among indigenous Jordanians was limited, though, as many resented the Palestinian refugees.<sup>514</sup>

Fatah's popularity gained a major boost after the Battle of Karameh. Fatah's perceived victory drew 5,000 recruits within 48 hours of the battle.<sup>515</sup> Up to this point, Fatah had maintained secrecy about its organization, origins and membership. After

---

<sup>510</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>511</sup> Reeve, 30.

<sup>512</sup> O'Ballance, 31.

<sup>513</sup> Rubin, 46.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>515</sup> Walker, 52.

Karamah, it became clear to Fatah's leaders that good publicity could yield huge dividends.<sup>516</sup> Arafat's appetite for publicity seemed unbounded, giving interviews to Western reporters, releasing mythologized versions of his life to the media, and allowing himself to be filmed living in caves with his fighters.<sup>517</sup>

Fatah began to invest more in its public image, using a radio station in Cairo for a short period every day to broadcast threats and communiqués designed to inspire Arabs.<sup>518</sup> Arafat attempted to generate widespread public support in Jordan's East Bank, trying to achieve what he had failed to do in the West Bank.<sup>519</sup> However, when Fatah incursions from Jordan drew Israeli troops into the East Bank, many residents of the Jordanian Valley were forced to flee their homes and move away from the border.<sup>520</sup> Fatah's publicity push faced additional obstacles when the group began to fear that Israeli assassination squads were exploiting Fatah's openness to track down its leaders.<sup>521</sup>

Fatah found fertile ground for their activities in Lebanon as the Lebanese population initially lent support to Fatah.<sup>522</sup> Fatah used many tactics to gain popular support. For example, in Sidon, a town south of Beirut, students would only receive education credits if they were members of Fatah.<sup>523</sup> Fatah and the PLO also co-located their headquarters and training facilities with large refugee populations. Co-location in

---

<sup>516</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>519</sup> Yaari, 245.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>521</sup> O'Ballance, 87.

<sup>522</sup> Helena Lindholm Schulz with Julianne Hammer, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland*, (Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: London, 2003), 121. / O'Ballance, 91.

<sup>523</sup> Becker, 150.

refugee camps also had a sharper edge in that an Israeli strike against Fatah facilities and personnel could also result in the deaths of innocent refugees. Indeed, when Israel bombed refugee camp military bases in Lebanon in 1980, thousands of innocent refugees were killed and injured, generating an upwelling of anger towards Israel.<sup>524</sup>

*Resources.* During the 1967 to 1982 period, Fatah had access to funding, training, and a large pool of recruits. In 1968, Fatah sent 500 volunteers from the West Bank to be trained in Syria, Iraq, and Algeria.<sup>525</sup> In some instances, Fatah camps in Syria were even staffed with Syrian military personnel and stocked with Syrian arms and ammunition.<sup>526</sup> It is important to note, however, that Fatah's relationship with Syria was often rocky as Syria tried to control and at times weaken Fatah and the PLO to advance Damascus's political agenda.

Arafat dispatched a select group of terrorists to train in Egyptian military and intelligence schools.<sup>527</sup> Fatah also made a push to recruit Palestinian students in Europe for operations in the Middle East.<sup>528</sup>

Fatah's fund-raising efforts during this period increased as the group focused on establishing links to Palestinian worker, student and professional organizations throughout the Middle East.<sup>529</sup> Fatah also received financial assistance from the Chinese and Soviet governments.<sup>530</sup> In the mid-1970s, Fatah had enough money to pay every

---

<sup>524</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>526</sup> O'Ballance, 38.

<sup>527</sup> Aburish, 79.

<sup>528</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 74.

<sup>529</sup> Aburish, 79.

<sup>530</sup> Posner, 72.

adult male member of the organization between 700 and 1,000 Lebanese pounds monthly—approximately what an average Lebanese farm worker would earn.<sup>531</sup> Fatah was also aggressively training the next generation of terrorists. Its youth movement, called the Lion Cubs, would train 12-year olds in basic military skills, including hand-to-hand combat, explosives, and shooting.<sup>532</sup>

Fatah continued to rely on Syrian support once it had established itself in Lebanon, though its relationship with Syria remained rocky. Around 3,000 fedayeen fled Jordan to seek refuge in Syria, but the Syrian government imposed onerous restrictions on them.<sup>533</sup> A road leading from Fatahland to Damascus, known as the ‘Yasser Arafat Trail’, became Fatah’s main supply route in the late 1960s.<sup>534</sup> As Fatah’s strength in Lebanon grew, Syrian President Hafaz al-Asad struggled to keep Fatah in check, viewing Lebanon as Syria’s prize.<sup>535</sup> In June 1976, the Syrian army invaded Lebanon and conquered almost all the areas previously held by Fatah.<sup>536</sup>

Despite its setbacks, PLO groups committed more than eight thousand terrorist acts between 1969 and 1985—435 of them abroad—killing more than 650 Israelis and 28 Americans.<sup>537</sup>

*Intelligence.* Fatah’s intelligence capabilities continued to be fairly basic in the 1967 to 1982 period. Fatah collected intelligence for sabotage operations largely directed

---

<sup>531</sup> Becker, 148.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>533</sup> Walker, 139.

<sup>534</sup> Becker, 93.

<sup>535</sup> Rubin, 80.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>537</sup> Rubin, 41.

against civilian targets, such as factories, private homes, cinemas, buses, restaurants, and open markets.<sup>538</sup> Thus, it is possible that the most valuable intelligence for Fatah was information on how to best approach and attack these soft targets. Fatah continued to use Israeli Arabs as guides and to get access to storage areas and accommodations inside Israel.<sup>539</sup>

The Urban Terrorist Minimanual emphasized two types of espionage: information gathered from recruited informants within the adversary's ranks and information gathered from unwitting members of the local population. The manual notes: "The urban terrorist, living in the midst of the population and moving about among them, must be attentive to all types of conversations and human relations, learning how to disguise his interest with great skill and judgment. In places where people work, study, and live, it is easy to collect all kinds of information on payments, business, plans of all kinds, points of view, opinions, people's state of mind, trips, interior layout of buildings, offices and rooms, operations centers, etc."<sup>540</sup> Though there is no evidence that Fatah penetrated the Israeli security forces, Israeli Arabs working with Fatah most likely gathered intelligence through the second mode of espionage described above. Additionally, Fatah managed to penetrate the Jordanian army in 1968, successfully recruiting a number of middle-ranking officers.<sup>541</sup>

When Fatah and the PLO controlled a large swath of territory in Lebanon in the 1970s their intelligence capabilities improved. They moved from almost exclusively

---

<sup>538</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid, 140.

<sup>540</sup> Marighella.

<sup>541</sup> Walker, 66.



targeting civilian infrastructure to targeting more commercial and military infrastructure, including oil installations, embassies, and airports.<sup>542</sup> The PLO and Fatah used their prisons, such as their largest prison in Sidon, to gather intelligence through the interrogation of detainees.<sup>543</sup> Fatah also developed the ability to rapidly communicate intelligence to vital parts of its organization. Soon after the Israeli raid of Beirut in April 1973, Fatah broadcast urgent messages to its followers to scatter and seek shelter, as Israeli agents were assumed to be looking for key Fatah members in Beirut.<sup>544</sup>

*Counterintelligence: 1968 - 1972.*<sup>545</sup> After Fatah's propaganda victory in the Battle of Karamah, the group relaxed its counterintelligence posture in order to capitalize on its windfall of popular support. Fatah leaders gave interviews to the press, appeared on television, and appeared in public with their bodyguard entourage.<sup>546</sup> The position of leaders and units were still kept secret, and junior leaders and rank-and-file terrorists were not allowed to seek individual publicity.<sup>547</sup> Arafat was almost captured by Israeli security forces in West Bank in the late 1960s, but he escaped his Ramallah compound as it was being stormed and managed to hide in a Volkswagen parked nearby.<sup>548</sup>

Arafat's affiliation with Fatah was first announced in April 1968, when he was appointed the organization's official spokesperson, though his birthplace and family and

---

<sup>542</sup> Becker, 101.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>544</sup> Christopher Dobson, *Black September: Its Short Violent History*, (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc: New York, 1974, 124.

<sup>545</sup> The counterintelligence assessment of Fatah is broken into three sections, (1) 1968-72, (2) 1972-82, and (3) a comprehensive look from 1967-82, to better highlight the key CI events and effects of the variable shifts.

<sup>546</sup> O'Ballance, 51.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>548</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 78.

political background were kept secret.<sup>549</sup> Fatah's Damascus headquarters were also kept secret, in addition to the group's structure and size.<sup>550</sup> All Fatah leaders had aliases and contacted members in the Persian Gulf, Europe and Lebanon through couriers and liaison men using crudely coded letters.<sup>551</sup>

Over the next several years, Fatah would gain a renewed appreciation for maintaining strong counterintelligence awareness. One of Fatah's most vexing security problems was the exposure of its bases to its Arab and Israeli adversaries. In 1969, Israeli air strikes inflicted a significant portion of Fatah's losses, causing the terrorists to frequently search for new hiding places.<sup>552</sup> In 1969, almost ten percent of Fatah's losses were inflicted by Israeli air raids.<sup>553</sup> Following a demonstration in Tripoli, Lebanon in 1969, the Israeli Air Force conducted air strikes against PLO bases in the region.<sup>554</sup> In May 1970, Israeli forces attacked Fatahland, destroying nineteen terrorist bases and killing about 100 terrorists.<sup>555</sup> Also in 1970, the Jordanian army began its campaign against Fatah, shelling terrorist bases in Amman and other Jordanian cities.<sup>556</sup> Terrorists were instructed, as a result, to keep on the move from cave to cave. Fatah also obtained anti-aircraft weapons, dug underground trenches and strictly enforced the use of camouflage.<sup>557</sup>

---

<sup>549</sup> Yaari, 11.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid, 357.

<sup>553</sup> Yaari, 359.

<sup>554</sup> Becker, 96.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>556</sup> Cooley, 114.

<sup>557</sup> Yaari, 356.

By interrogating captured Fatah terrorists, Israel sometimes gained a huge advantage—one Fatah member exposed an entire network in the early 1970s, turning over the names of seventy Fatah members.<sup>558</sup> In some cases, Fatah cells infiltrated into the West Bank were instructed not to form relationships with the local population, for fear of informants lurking among the locals.<sup>559</sup> Some Fatah elements were instructed not to conduct recruitment campaigns, since leaders feared that rapid expansion would lead to a lapse in security.<sup>560</sup>

When the Jordanian army began to rout Fatah in 1971, Fatah leaders advocated for a return to greater secrecy, shunning the publicity of the late 1960s.<sup>561</sup> The problem facing Fatah, however, was that its leaders were already known to the Arab and Israeli security forces so going back ‘underground’ would be nearly impossible for these individuals.<sup>562</sup>

*Counterintelligence: 1972-1984.* Fatah moved to the controlled territory in Fatahland after being driven from Jordan. The large controlled territory offered numerous benefits. By 1975, Arafat reigned supreme over this territory in southern Lebanon as well as the southern districts of Beirut.<sup>563</sup> Free of Lebanese government interference, Fatah could provide its leaders with unfettered security as well as intelligence on activities in its territory.<sup>564</sup> For example, when BSO leader Salameh

---

<sup>558</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 118. / Yaari, 197.

<sup>559</sup> Yaari, 375.

<sup>560</sup> Yaari, 378.

<sup>561</sup> O’Ballance, 168.

<sup>562</sup> Yaari, 187.

<sup>563</sup> Aburish, 151.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid, 151.

stayed in Beirut in the early 1970s he would always travel with a large bodyguard entourage.<sup>565</sup> This made it difficult for the Israelis to assassinate Salameh, as he rarely was left unprotected or defenseless.<sup>566</sup>

A second benefit of the controlled territory was that it allowed Fatah to opportunity deceive Israeli overhead and ground imagery intelligence. Fatah's attempts to disguise military vessels, equipped with cranes for lowering rubber dinghies, as ordinary fishing vessels docked in Lebanese harbors was probably an attempt to deceive such intelligence collection.<sup>567</sup>

A third benefit of the controlled territory was that it allowed Fatah a brief respite from the control of its state sponsors. As Fatah launched terrorist operations from Lebanon's southern border, Israel warned the Lebanese government that Israel would continue to occupy and carry out attack in southern Lebanon as long as Fatah remained.<sup>568</sup> The Lebanese government, however, could do little to impede Fatah and PLO terrorist activities, in contrast to the governments of Jordan and Syria that could more easily control Fatah terrorists in their territories.<sup>569</sup>

The controlled territory also presented a number of counterintelligence drawbacks, which the Israelis were quick to exploit. The chief drawback was that Fatah and PLO bases and supply routes were plainly observable to the adversary, and thus vulnerable to air strikes and shelling. In 1969, the Israeli air force was easily able to

---

<sup>565</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 160.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>567</sup> Posner, 47.

<sup>568</sup> El-Rayyes and Nahas, 106.

<sup>569</sup> Bavly and Salpeter, 178.

bomb Fatah bases deep inside Jordan.<sup>570</sup> Following the BSO attack in Munich in 1972, Israel attacked numerous Fatah and PLO positions and refugee camps, including the supply routes emanating from Fatahland.<sup>571</sup> During Operation Litani in March 1978, Israel struck Fatah and PLO targets deep inside Lebanon, including bases, refugee camps, ammunition dumps, and training facilities in a sports stadium in southern Beirut.<sup>572</sup> When the Israeli military moved into southern Lebanon they were able to locate arms caches and target refugee camps for mass arrests.<sup>573</sup>

A second drawback was that controlled territory drew Fatah into complacency and occasionally counterintelligence sloppiness. In spite of the Minimanual's admonition that the urban terrorist "must not write or hold any documents," Fatah kept many files and occasionally failed to destroy them during Israeli raids. When Israeli security services captured Fatah files of terrorists, supporters, and sleepers during a Beirut raid in 1973, it resulted in a massive round up of terrorists within a few days.<sup>574</sup> During Operation Litani in 1978, Israeli security services were able to capture PLO registration lists, which allowed them to locate key terrorist leaders and support elements in southern Lebanon.<sup>575</sup>

Though Fatah's controlled territory made the organization a harder target for Israel's security services, it was still vulnerable to Israel's human intelligence network.

---

<sup>570</sup> The New York Times, "Information Bank Abstracts," March 16, 1969, Page 21, Column 1.

<sup>571</sup> Cooley, 129.

<sup>572</sup> Gabriel, 62.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>574</sup> Dobson, 124.

<sup>575</sup> Gabriel, 114.

Israel skillfully used human spies to infiltrate Fatah's safehaven in order to pinpoint bombing targets in Beirut and collect intelligence on Fatah leaders.<sup>576</sup> This allowed Israel to increase the accuracy of its air strikes and increasingly avoid destroying purely civilian installations, within which Fatah and the PLO had traditionally 'hid' themselves. One Israeli spy was able to get close to the lieutenant of Fatah leader Abu Iyad in Beirut, serving as his family's baby-sitter. This access allowed her to photograph documents in his house detailing the names of PLO members, forged ID papers, and the time and location of impending attacks.<sup>577</sup>

Though Syria was one of Fatah's key sponsors, Damascus's hold on the group occasionally placed Fatah and the PLO at a major counterintelligence disadvantage. For example, Syria arrested and jailed Arafat in the mid-1960s when he was perceived to be acting too independently.<sup>578</sup> Syrian intelligence may have supported Palestinian terrorist Sabi Khalila Bana, also known as Abu Nidal, in his campaign to intimidate and discredit PLO leaders in the mid 1970s, probably to further reign in Arafat.<sup>579</sup> In 1983, Syria recruited Fatah leader Abu Musa to rebel against Arafat, though the Syrian-inspired coup ultimately failed.<sup>580</sup>

Syria also intervened militarily against the Palestinians in Lebanon in 1976.<sup>581</sup> Though it is not certain that Damascus used its extensive knowledge of the military and

---

<sup>576</sup> Posner, 10.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>578</sup> Byman, 127.

<sup>579</sup> James Dorsey, "Syria tries to discredit PLO: a tale of intrigue and murder," The Christian Science Monitor, August 5, 1981, pg. 5.

<sup>580</sup> Byman, 128.

<sup>581</sup> Byman, 127.

leadership structures of Fatah and PLO to fight against them, it seems a reasonable assumption. Fatah probably enjoyed a partial respite from Syrian meddling when it occupied Fatahland, though Syria continued to harass and compromise Fatah assets throughout the group's lifetime.

In this period, Fatah appears to have adopted methods detailed in the Minimanual of the Urban Terrorist. Counterespionage is key focus in the Minimanual: "[T]he enemy encourages betrayal and infiltrates spies into the terrorist organization. The urban terrorist's technique against this enemy tactic is to denounce publicly the spies, traitors, informers and provocateurs. For his part, the urban terrorist must not evade the duty—once he knows who the spy or informer is—of physically wiping him out."<sup>582</sup> In accord with this philosophy, Fatah tortured and killed many informants in public.<sup>583</sup> The Minimanual also stresses setting up a formal counterintelligence service, which Fatah initiated in the late 1960s: "For complete success in the battle against spies and informers, it is essential to organize a counter-espionage or counter-intelligence service."<sup>584</sup> Before Fatah sent new recruits to training, every new member was interrogated by Fatah's counterespionage service, the Jihaz al Razd.<sup>585</sup>

*Counterintelligence Adaptations: 1972 – 1984.* Fatah and the PLO responded to Israeli counterterrorism efforts by increasing its counterintelligence and security efforts. After Israel raided Beirut in April 1973, terrorist leaders were instructed to change their apartments at least once a month, keep their new addresses secret, and discontinue use of

---

<sup>582</sup> Marighella.

<sup>583</sup> Becker, 147.

<sup>584</sup> Marighella.

<sup>585</sup> Yaari, 282.

official PLO vehicles.<sup>586</sup> Every time Israel pulled off an intelligence success, Fatah and the PLO would initiate a flurry of counter-espionage activity to root out potential informants.<sup>587</sup> Fatah used brutal interrogations to get intelligence out of captured informants. Fatah tortured one Israeli spy by burning her skin with cigarette butts and her mouth with a hot electric curling iron. The same spy was subject to mock executions, where she was forced to write a farewell letter to her family, convinced she would soon be killed.<sup>588</sup>

Arafat continued to develop strategies for keeping himself secure. He would sleep in the back of cars and be on the move constantly.<sup>589</sup> Arafat frequently abandoned appointments in order to keep an unpredictable schedule.<sup>590</sup> He would periodically try to feed his adversaries misinformation through suspected informants and reduce the adversaries' confidence in their human sources.

*Summary.* For the most part, Fatah had a tightly organized command structure, high resources and strong adversaries. Fatah's leaders were well-protected inside its controlled territories of Jordan and Lebanon in contrast to the uncontrolled territory of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that West Bank communities were not as supportive as those in Jordan and Lebanon.

Fatah provided its members with training in intelligence and counterintelligence. Though some of this training took place in Palestinian refugee camps, more advanced

---

<sup>586</sup> Dobson, 124.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>588</sup> Posner, 76.

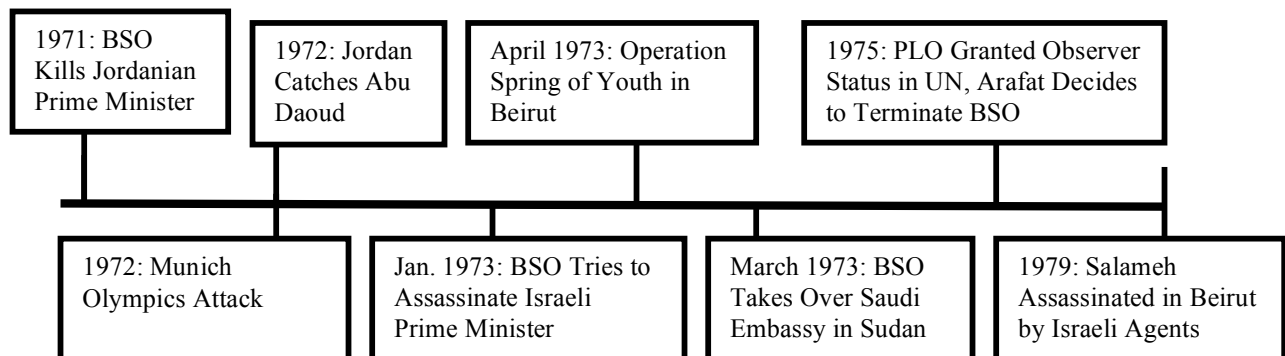
<sup>589</sup> Aburish, 174.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid, 174.



training for elite members probably took place outside Fatah's controlled territories in places like Syria and Egypt. Some of Fatah's counterintelligence advantage came from recruiting guerrillas with experience in hiding from Arab intelligence services. The training Fatah provided its members was almost certainly better when it controlled territory.

*BSO Timeline: 1971 - 1978*



*BSO Background*

BSO was formed by the Fatah Central Committee in the wake of the Jordanian government crackdown on Fatah in September 1971, from which BSO derived its name. BSO was designed to be disconnected from Fatah's traditional hierarchy and to live and operate outside of Fatah's traditional theater of operations. In many ways, BSO remained

connected to Fatah in that its leaders probably consulted regularly with Fatah leaders, received funding regularly, and relied heavily on Fatah connections to build its networks. BSO remained operationally distinct, however, insofar as its operations were geographically dispersed and not directly launched from Fatah's controlled territory of Lebanon. BSO was essentially a covert paramilitary arm of Fatah, detached from the organization operationally but connected to the organization ideologically and financially.

#### BSO 1971 - 1978

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* Throughout its lifespan, BSO was hunted by the very capable Israeli intelligence services. In the first several months of 1972, Israel was preoccupied with Fatah terrorists operating in the Middle East and was not yet hunting down BSO operatives in Europe.<sup>591</sup> One of BSO's first European operations was the kidnapping of several Israeli athletes during the 1972 Munich Olympics. The success of BSO's kidnapping operation was due, in part, to the lenient security at the Olympic Village.<sup>592</sup>

Following the Munich Olympics, Israel initiated Operation Wrath of God, where a team of Israeli assassins was dispatched to Europe to hunt down members of BSO. Mike Harari, leading the Israeli assassins, conducted the initial reconnaissance in the Middle East and Europe, picked the assassination teams, and then moved the teams to safe houses in Paris.<sup>593</sup> Israel used about 15 agents divided into five squads: two

---

<sup>591</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 114.

<sup>592</sup> Reeve, 1.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid, 161.

assassins, two backups, two logistics men for renting safehouses and cars, seven agents conducting surveillance, and two communications specialists.<sup>594</sup>

Israel methodically assassinated key BSO members throughout Europe and the Middle East. The first assassination was Wael Zwaiter, who worked in Rome at the Libyan Embassy and organized BSO attacks in Italy.<sup>595</sup> The second assassination was Dr. Mahmoud Hamshiri, head of BSO in France, in Paris in 1972. In January 1973, the Israeli squad killed Hussein Abad al Chir, a senior Fatah official and liaison with the Soviet KGB, in Cyprus.<sup>596</sup> In April 1973, the squad moved back to Paris to kill Dr. Basil al Kubaissi, BSO's quartermaster in Europe who arranged for the transfer of weapons and explosives to BSO operatives.<sup>597</sup> In May 1973, Israeli commandos stormed a BSO-hijacked flight after it landed in Israel, killing and capturing several BSO terrorists.<sup>598</sup>

Israel proved it could hit more challenging BSO targets as well. In April 1973, Israeli security forces launched Operation Spring of Youth where they successfully tracked down and assassinated several key BSO leaders in the heart of their Beirut stronghold.<sup>599</sup> Just hours after the Beirut operation, Israeli agents in Athens killed Zaiad Muchasi, head of BSO in Cyprus. Israel then killed two junior BSO members in Rome

---

<sup>594</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid, 164.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid, 167.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>599</sup> Reeve, 176.

and Mohammed Boudia, the new head of BSO in France.<sup>600</sup> Arafat estimated that more than sixty BSO operatives were killed between September 1972 and July 1973.<sup>601</sup>

As Israeli security forces began to overwhelm BSO in Europe, BSO leaders shifted their focus to softer targets in Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Persian Gulf.<sup>602</sup> For years Israeli squads stalked key BSO leader Ali Hassan Salameh, finally catching up with him in Beirut in 1978 where they were able to kill him as he eventually relaxed his security procedures.<sup>603</sup> The collateral damage from the Salameh assassination was large however, to Israel's political disadvantage, as eight bystanders were also killed.

BSO eventually came to an end sometime in the late 1970s from the combination of Israeli counterterrorism efforts and Arafat's desire to shut the group down after the PLO was granted observer status in the UN in 1975. Interestingly, Arafat shut the group down by marrying off approximately 100 BSO operatives to Palestinian women in Lebanon, and providing them with an apartment, a salary, and a nonviolent PLO job.<sup>604</sup> As former operatives were married and started families, their desire to continue terrorist operations was curtailed, according to a former deputy to Abu Iyad.<sup>605</sup>

*Controlled Territory.* BSO did not reside in or launch operations from Fatah's controlled territory—though they had occasional access to them. BSO operatives and supporting units were spread out among the populations of Europe and the Middle East,

---

<sup>600</sup> Reeve, 184.

<sup>601</sup> Walker, 92.

<sup>602</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 161.

<sup>603</sup> Reeve, 205.

<sup>604</sup> Bruce Hoffman, "All You Need is Love: How the Terrorists Stopped Terrorism," *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 2001.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

commanding no specific territory. BSO did not regulate physical access to or security within its operating environments in Europe and in fact was often monitored or harassed by European and Arab law enforcement elements.

*Organizational Structure.* Fatah's leaders selected ten young men to head the BSO, which was designed to be small, well trained and able to strike Israeli targets abroad.<sup>606</sup> BSO reflected Fatah's frustration with its secrecy and counterintelligence lapses and Fatah hoped BSO would better harness the advantages of the secret 'underground.'<sup>607</sup> Importantly, BSO would be separate from the Fatah hierarchy and Arafat hoped that Fatah could maintain plausible deniability should the BSO fail or publicly embarrass itself.<sup>608</sup>

BSO may have relied on a small council of leaders rather than a single chief.<sup>609</sup> Many of the key leaders, including Salameh and Abu Iyad, had served in Fatah's Jihaz al Razd intelligence service.<sup>610</sup> Abu Iyad was BSO's most senior leader and Mohammed Abu Najjer, also known as Abu Yussef, took charge of BSO's overall strategy.<sup>611</sup> Fakhri al-Omri served as Iyad's confidant and right-hand man.<sup>612</sup>

The group probably had a cell-based infrastructure and family affiliations were likely important to group cohesion and organization.<sup>613</sup> The group was highly

---

<sup>606</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 103.

<sup>607</sup> El-Rayyes and Nahas, 24.

<sup>608</sup> Reeve, 34.

<sup>609</sup> Aburish, 124.

<sup>610</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 97.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>612</sup> Aaron J. Klein, "Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response," (Random House: New York, 2005), 33.

<sup>613</sup> Crozier, 8.

compartmentalized and operatives selected for a mission knew few operational details until the mission was in progress.<sup>614</sup>

BSO used Palestinians and Arabs who had lived in Europe for years as students, teachers, diplomats and businessmen.<sup>615</sup> These individuals knew nothing about BSO operations beyond their personal assignments. BSO ‘employed’ close to one hundred people of this type.<sup>616</sup> Mahmoud Hamshiri, Fatah’s chief in Paris, built a French Fatah network that included native Frenchmen and non-Arab anarchists.<sup>617</sup> It is likely that most BSO operatives were brought into the group for special missions, at which point they would go into training and swear allegiance to BSO.<sup>618</sup> It is unlikely that BSO had a large inactive pool of operatives waiting to be assigned to an operation.

For example, when BSO took hostages at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Khartoum, Sudan, the operation was planned and organized by one BSO member, Fawaz Yassin, Fatah’s representative in Khartoum. As one of the few obvious culprits of the operation, Yassin flew out of Sudan a few hours before the operation began.<sup>619</sup>

A few of the support personnel were Sudanese nationals.<sup>620</sup> One operative was local Palestinian news reporter Abu Salem, who worked on the Voice of Palestine

---

<sup>614</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 119.

<sup>615</sup> Cooley, 123.

<sup>616</sup> Klein, 33.

<sup>617</sup> Jonas, 144.

<sup>618</sup> Dobson, 47.

<sup>619</sup> The New York Times, “Information Bank Abstracts,” March 8, 1973, Page 10, Column 1.

<sup>620</sup> The New York Times, “Information Bank Abstracts,” March 8, 1973, Page 10, Column 1.

program on Sudanese radio.<sup>621</sup> The other six operatives were flown in on Jordanian passports and briefed on the operation the day before the attack.<sup>622</sup>

*Resources.* BSO was probably consistently well funded and well stocked with recruits throughout its existence. Fatah seconded many high-quality recruits from the Jihaz al Razd to the BSO. Many were university graduates who could speak foreign languages and operate in foreign capitals without raising suspicion.<sup>623</sup> Abu Iyad recruited Ahmed Afghani, aka Abu Motassin, to look after BSO's finances and supplies. Iyad hired Ghazi el Hussein, an engineer, to develop and obtain sophisticated weaponry and equipment.<sup>624</sup>

State sponsorship played an important role in BSO's training and operations. Ten BSO members, including Salameh and Mohammed Daoud Odeh, also known as Abu Daoud, were given special intelligence training in Cairo as BSO was being formed.<sup>625</sup> The Egyptian intelligence service taught the multi-month course on unconventional intelligence operations, including modules on intelligence recruiting and sabotage.<sup>626</sup>

Libya also provided BSO with support in Europe via various Libyan embassies. In exchange, BSO and Fatah tracked down and assassinated several Libyan exiles in Europe for Qaddafi.<sup>627</sup> Algerian and Libyan diplomats would carry weapons, explosives,

---

<sup>621</sup> The New York Times, "Information Bank Abstracts," March 5, 1973, Page 1, Column 1.

<sup>622</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 165. / "A Blacker September," Time Magazine, March 19, 1973.

<sup>623</sup> Dobson, 45.

<sup>624</sup> Reeve, 35.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>626</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 103. / 2, 9.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid, 104.

and communications to BSO operatives in Europe. Algerian and Libyan embassies would issue passports and identity papers to BSO members.<sup>628</sup> Algerian embassies may have supplied BSO with intelligence reports produced by their security services.<sup>629</sup> Libyan embassy employees are alleged to have assisted BSO in some terrorist operations. Following the Sudan operation, the Sudanese government arrested and charged two employees of the Libyan embassy in Khartoum with aiding BSO.<sup>630</sup>

Some BSO leaders worked closely with the Soviet and East German intelligence services, the KGB and the Stasi, respectively. Abu Iyad, code named KOCHUBEY by the KGB, met with the KGB in Moscow in June 1978.<sup>631</sup> Hussein Abu Khair was working as a liaison to the KGB when he was assassinated by Israeli security elements in Cyprus in 1973.<sup>632</sup> Abu Daoud often stayed in the Palast Hotel in East Berlin, where the Stasi helped him to hide, providing him with an around-the-clock security detail.<sup>633</sup>

*Popular Support.* Fatah and its leaders laid the foundation for BSO's European and Middle Eastern support networks years before BSO was created. Throughout the 1960s, Arafat used the Palestinian Students' Federation in Cairo, Baghdad and West Germany to collect funds and recruits for Fatah.<sup>634</sup>

---

<sup>628</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>630</sup> The New York Times, "Information Bank Abstracts," March 8, 1973, Page 10, Column 1.

<sup>631</sup> Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, "The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World," (Basic Books: New York, 2005), 257.

<sup>632</sup> Klein, 138.

<sup>633</sup> Reeve, 211.

<sup>634</sup> Cooley, 90.



Germany was a particularly fruitful operating environment for Fatah, where the group drew upon the approximately 6,000 Palestinians living in West Germany.<sup>635</sup> West Germany was a particularly important base for BSO. Munich was home to many Arab guest workers, including approximately 800 Jordanian workers, and German security services did not consider these individuals to be a terrorist threat until after the Olympic Village attack.<sup>636</sup> Following the Munich attack, West German authorities estimated that the three largest Palestinian organizations in the country were the General Union of Palestinian Students (with 27 cells), and General Union of Palestinian Workers (with 24 cells), and Fatah (with 23 distinct cells).<sup>637</sup>

Two Palestinian brothers, Khalid and Hani al-Hassan, organized thousands of Palestinian students in Stuttgart—a city that became a principal center for Fatah activity in Europe.<sup>638</sup> Khalid and Hani established firm connections with left-wing Palestinian student groups in Germany and other European countries.<sup>639</sup> Students in Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain were occasionally selected to take short training courses in Algeria in the use of arms and sabotage techniques.<sup>640</sup> These students would then be sent to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan where they would prepare to participate in terrorist operations against Israel.<sup>641</sup>

---

<sup>635</sup> Klein, 143.

<sup>636</sup> Reeve, 228.

<sup>637</sup> The New York Times, “Information Bank Abstracts,” September 9, 1972, Section 1, Column 4.

<sup>638</sup> Cooley, 90. / Yaari, 40.

<sup>639</sup> Aburish, 56.

<sup>640</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 76.

<sup>641</sup> Schiff and Rothstein, 76.

Fatah was also successful in recruiting Palestinian students in Lebanese and Algerian universities.<sup>642</sup> Some of these recruited students would join Fatah's Jihaz al Razd, and many of them spoke European languages after studying in European universities or at the American University in Beirut.<sup>643</sup>

BSO was able to tap into Fatah's vibrant and deep European connections and was able to raise a shadow army among the scholars and students of the region. Rome became headquarters for BSO in Europe due to its proximity to the Middle East and the generally relaxed security practices of the local police services.<sup>644</sup> BSO operatives from all over Europe would use Rome for secure meetings. BSO could also draw upon the approximately 2,000 Arab students at the universities in Rome and Perugia.<sup>645</sup>

Paris also became an important arms depot and communications center for BSO operations in Europe.<sup>646</sup> BSO was able to draw upon the thousands of Algerian and Moroccans workers living in Paris, some of whom were a part of the left-wing intelligensia who had supported Algerians in their war against the French occupation.<sup>647</sup> For example, Mohammed Boudia was able to recruit a French woman, who did not fit the terrorist profile, to carry out one BSO attack.<sup>648</sup>

---

<sup>642</sup> Yaari, 39.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>644</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 146.

<sup>645</sup> Dobson, 136.

<sup>646</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 151.

<sup>647</sup> Dobson, 137.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid, 138.

Geneva also became a favored operating environment due to BSO's ability to blend into the large foreign and diplomatic community. Geneva was used as a transit point for BSO operatives moving to and from the Middle East.<sup>649</sup>

Fatah opened an office in Stockholm in 1976, and the Swedish branch of the Palestinian Workers' Union became closely associated with the PLO.<sup>650</sup> Many Palestinians had gone to Sweden in the early 1960s to get supplementary education, though many returned to Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank after completing their studies.<sup>651</sup>

BSO never established a presence in Britain. This most likely happened for two reasons. First, Britain did not have a large Arab student population like Germany nor did it have a large Arab worker population like France to provide BSO operatives camouflage.<sup>652</sup> Second, Britain strictly regulated movement and documentation in the UK in contrast to the continental Europe, where movement and documentation controls were more relaxed.<sup>653</sup>

BSO benefited directly from Fatah's and the PLO's popularity in Europe and the Middle East. BSO's affiliation with Fatah provided it financial support and credibility among Palestinians.

---

<sup>649</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>650</sup> Schultz and Hammer, 84.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>652</sup> Dobson, 143.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid, 143.

BSO did not have to mount a massive independent campaign to generate popular support within Europe, as the group needed only to rely on a few dedicated individuals among the Palestinian diaspora.

BSO leaders—including Ali Hassan Salameh, Abu Yussuf Najjar, Hani al-Hassan, Khalil al-Wazir and Abu Iyad—returned to the security of the pro-Fatah communities of the Fakhani district of west Beirut and Fatahland as BSO was being eviscerated in Europe.<sup>654</sup> This demonstrates that key BSO leaders and operatives had access to Fatah’s controlled territory, though most likely returning to Lebanon took these operatives out of the ‘terrorist game’ permanently or semi-permanently. The upwelling of pro-Fatah sentiment in Beirut was related to Fatah’s quasi-government role in Lebanon—Fatah was the second largest employer in west Beirut, after the Lebanese government, and had its own police and fire departments, hospitals, and factories making furniture, clothing, and ammunition.<sup>655</sup> When Israel assassinated Fatah leaders Kamal Nasser, Kamal Adwan, and Abu Yussuf Najjar during the Operation Spring of Youth in 1973, nearly half a million Lebanese marched in their funeral cortege.<sup>656</sup> Arafat had the support of the most radical Palestinian organizations, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the relative moderates, such as the West Bank mayors and

---

<sup>654</sup> John Kifner, “West Beirut Bids Farewell to the PLO,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 1982.

<sup>655</sup> John Kifner, “West Beirut Bids Farewell to the PLO,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 1982.

<sup>656</sup> Rashid Khalidi, “Under Siege: PLO Decisionmaking During the 1982 War,” (Columbia University Press: New York, 1985), 23.

Arab leaders throughout the Middle East.<sup>657</sup> BSO occasionally fed off of this popularity to improve its own security.

*Intelligence.* BSO's intelligence capabilities, though in many instances not directly observable, can be partially gleaned from the quality of its operations. BSO assassinated several targets that would have required sophisticated surveillance or insider knowledge, including an Israeli intelligence officer in January 1973 and an Israeli deputy military attaché in Washington in June 1973.<sup>658</sup> In 1971, BSO also killed the Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi Tal while he was attending the Arab League summit in Cairo and almost killed the Jordanian ambassador in London.<sup>659</sup> For Prime Minister Tal's assassination, BSO members Essat Rabah and Monzer Khalifa flew in from Beirut before the attack and waited for Tal in the lobby of his hotel.

BSO also attacked a number of factories in Germany and gas installations in the Netherlands in the early 1970s that were allegedly connected to Israeli interests.<sup>660</sup> Attacking these individuals and installations indicates that BSO employed relatively successful methods for surveilling its targets.

BSO used a network of accomplices in Europe to do some of its intelligence gathering. For example, the BSO operation to blow up the trans-alpine oil pipeline in Italy in August 1972, involved an Italian and two Frenchmen.<sup>661</sup> The oil pipeline was targeted because it served as a main feeder point for Middle Eastern and North African

---

<sup>657</sup> Thomas Friedman, "Arafat Leads the PLO into Toughest Salvage Operation," The New York Times, July 11, 1982.

<sup>658</sup> Crozier, 9.

<sup>659</sup> Crozier, 14.

<sup>660</sup> Dobson, 65. / Cooley, 124.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid, 47.

oil flowing into Europe.<sup>662</sup> Salameh, in particular, tapped into a network of radical European groups for some of his intelligence.<sup>663</sup> BSO in Germany used its extensive links to Palestinian students and the General Union of Palestinian Workers to improve its intelligence gathering.<sup>664</sup>

BSO's pre-operational reconnaissance for the Munich mission reflected its reliance on both BSO leaders and locals to gather intelligence. One of the architects of the Munich operation, Abu Daoud, began reconnaissance for Munich in July 1972. Daoud arrived in Munich, familiarized himself with the city streets, and began collecting information on hotels and flights into and out of the city—Jordanian security services would later catch Daoud casing government buildings in Amman for a major BSO attack planned by Abu Iyad.<sup>665</sup>

Intelligence gathering for the Munich operation continued with two Palestinian operatives, Luttfi Afif and Yusuf Nazal. Afif, aka Issa, had lived in Germany for five years and attended the University of Berlin and took a job as a civil engineer in the Olympic Village to surveil BSO targets.<sup>666</sup> Nazal, had worked for a Munich oil company and took a job in the Olympic Village as a cook to conduct surveillance. These temporary jobs allowed the men to roam freely through the village, case the Israeli living quarters and gather information about the Israeli athletes.<sup>667</sup>

---

<sup>662</sup> Cooley, 124.

<sup>663</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 118.

<sup>664</sup> O'Ballance, 216.

<sup>665</sup> Reeve, 200. / Ibid, 40.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid, 3.

Finding Israeli agents and collaborators was also an intelligence priority for BSO. BSO tracked down an Italian employee of El Al, who BSO suspected was an Israeli agent, and assassinated him in April 1973.<sup>668</sup> A few weeks after BSO's Munich operation, BSO operatives tracked down and assassinated a Syrian radio reporter, who was working as an informant for Israel.<sup>669</sup> BSO also used its network of European agents to track down and assassinate the Israeli intelligence officer, Baruch Cohen, in 1979.<sup>670</sup>

*Counterintelligence.* BSO considered security and counterintelligence a high priority throughout its existence. Arafat's denial that BSO was a Fatah proxy group was itself a counterintelligence tactic, designed to distract Israeli security services from drawing connections between leaders of Fatah and BSO.<sup>671</sup> Many BSO leaders had experience in counterintelligence as they were seconded from Fatah's counter-espionage and intelligence group. Others had been longtime members of the secretive Muslim Brotherhood, including Abu Jihad and Abu Iyad.<sup>672</sup>

BSO disseminated information on a 'need-to-know' basis. Beyond Abu Iyad, few were allowed to see the complete picture of BSO's operations and strategy.<sup>673</sup> BSO operatives were organized into compartmented cells and were acquainted with fellow cell members but probably never BSO leaders or members of other cells.<sup>674</sup> In some cases, Fatah terrorists recruited for BSO missions were not aware they were embarking on a

---

<sup>668</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>669</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 135.

<sup>670</sup> Reeve, 173.

<sup>671</sup> Dobson, 39.

<sup>672</sup> Aburish, 35.

<sup>673</sup> Klein, 32.

<sup>674</sup> O'Ballance, 215.

BSO mission until after it was initiated.<sup>675</sup> Some BSO leaders did not know the group's top leadership or where their headquarters were located.<sup>676</sup> BSO probably assigned its operatives aliases for most of its big operations.<sup>677</sup>

BSO operatives involved in the Munich operation were trained and dispatched to Germany in this pattern. The six BSO operatives selected for the operation were told they were to take special training in Libya, but were instructed not to tell their families where they were going.<sup>678</sup> They received about a month of advanced military training in Libya, some of which involved jumping over high walls—operatives figured that the training was for scaling Israeli military bases, but in fact it was for jumping over the wall at the Olympic Village.<sup>679</sup> Operatives were flown to Germany and briefed into the operation only hours before it was to begin.<sup>680</sup> After operatives were briefed on the operation, they had to surrender their money, passports and everything else that could reveal their identities.<sup>681</sup> As an added counterintelligence bonus, many of the operatives had grown up in the refugee camps together, trained together in Libya and trusted one another.<sup>682</sup> The chance that an informant could slip in among them was slim.

BSO differed dramatically from Fatah in its approach to publicity. When BSO was formed, Abu Iyad argued to the Fatah Central Committee that secret methods and operations would actually increase popular support for and the mystique of the

---

<sup>675</sup> Dobson, 43.

<sup>676</sup> O'Ballance, 216.

<sup>677</sup> Dobson, 118.

<sup>678</sup> Reeve, 43.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>680</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid, 46.



movement.<sup>683</sup> Thus, BSO operatives shunned publicity in striking contrast to Fatah's publicity hungry leaders.<sup>684</sup> The group would never have an official spokesperson.<sup>685</sup> BSO would, however, occasionally conduct bogus interviews to plant disinformation.<sup>686</sup>

Israeli security services had great difficulty tracking BSO operatives in the early 1970s because of their tight security. After information began to trickle into the Israeli services, they discovered that BSO leader Salameh was somewhere in Europe, though they didn't know exactly where.<sup>687</sup> BSO also ran a double agent operation against Israeli security services in 1973. The Moroccan Mohammed Rabah tried to get in contact with Israeli services in the early 1970s to help them find Fatah targets in Europe.<sup>688</sup> After Munich, an undercover Israeli agent, Zadik Ophir, agreed to meet Rabah at a café in Brussels, whereupon Rabah shot Ophir at point blank range.<sup>689</sup>

BSO security and counterintelligence shifted its focus when group members operated among the Fatah-controlled areas of Lebanon. For instance, Salameh traveled alone using forged passports when he worked abroad, but would surround himself with armed bodyguards when he worked in Lebanon in the early 1970s.<sup>690</sup> This suggests that Salameh felt comfortable enough in Lebanon to increase his operational profile (e.g. traveling with an entourage), but not comfortable enough to travel without physical protection. The BSO leader knew he could be tracked to Beirut but also knew that he

---

<sup>683</sup> Crozier, 6.

<sup>684</sup> Cooley, 124.

<sup>685</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 110.

<sup>686</sup> Cooley, 124.

<sup>687</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 118.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid, 160.

could not easily be attacked once inside the Fatah territory. Salameh also constantly kept on the move in Lebanon and rarely spent more than one night in the same apartment.<sup>691</sup> Abu Iyad would also changed his apartment constantly when he was in Beirut, sometimes getting up in the middle of the night to change his hideout.<sup>692</sup> As a testament to the advantage of security in controlled territory, Israel spent thousands of man-hours, in the field and the office, in the hunt for Salameh—it became Israel's longest and most costly mission.<sup>693</sup> Israeli agents also spent two-decades unsuccessfully chasing Abu Iyad, who secured himself in the PLO's Tunis safehaven.<sup>694</sup> While BSO leaders had the ability to secure themselves in Fatah's controlled territory, the rank-and-file BSO operative would not have this same access, perhaps unless he decided to quit the organization.

One of BSO's greatest counterintelligence advantages was its ability to blend in to the European background while planning and conducting operations. For example, the Munich operation employed the services of Abdullah al Franji, an official at the Arab League's Office in Bonn, who German officials linked to BSO after finding incriminating documents and bomb materials in his apartment.<sup>695</sup> During the Munich operation, BSO mission planner dressed his operatives in track suits to allow them to blend in with other athletes climbing over the Olympic Village gates after a late night—a disguise that was

---

<sup>691</sup> Ibid, 160.

<sup>692</sup> Dobson, 43.

<sup>693</sup> Klein, 212.

<sup>694</sup> Klein, 231.

<sup>695</sup> Dobson, 131.

so effective that BSO operatives were actually helped over the fence by a group of returning athletes.<sup>696</sup>

BSO operatives often used forged passports and identity papers to move about Europe and the Middle East.<sup>697</sup> Some BSO operatives became masters of disguise. Mohammed Boudia, head of BSO in France, constantly changed his identity and even dressed as a women at times to throw off the French security agents assigned to monitor his movements.<sup>698</sup> Salameh took advantage of the natural cover available to BSO operatives in Europe, recruiting intellectual elites who could use their blameless records, connections to the local intelligensia and sophistication to avoid being suspected or targeted by security services.<sup>699</sup> BSO's European quartermaster, Basil al-Kubaissi, relied heavily on his status as a professor of law at the American University in Beirut to keep himself above suspicion—though Kubaissi also employed elaborate ways of communicating covertly and avoiding surveillance.<sup>700</sup> When Kubaissi was assassinated in 1973, he had nine forged passports in his possession.<sup>701</sup> BSO also used Libyan and Algerian embassy personnel to take care of logistics and acquire identity documents.<sup>702</sup>

Salameh was not only a master of disguise, but probably was also adept at using deception to throw security services off his scent. It is possible that he actively planted rumors among Palestinians in Europe that he had gone to live in Scandinavia. Israeli

---

<sup>696</sup> Reeve, 1.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>699</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 160.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>701</sup> Klein, 231.

<sup>702</sup> Dobson, 131.

security services picked up rumors in Geneva, Zurich and Paris that Salameh had moved into Scandinavia—ultimately the rumors led to Israeli agents assassinating an innocent man living in Sweden.<sup>703</sup>

Counter-espionage remained an important counterintelligence tactic for the BSO. When Jordanian authorities caught key BSO member Abu Daoud in 1972, it was a counterintelligence disaster for the group. Daoud revealed details of the projected BSO operation as well as sensitive details about BSO operations in general.<sup>704</sup> BSO leaders were infuriated by Daoud's confessions and went to great lengths to secure his release from Jordanian prison so that they could execute him. The 'Punishment Group' took thirteen hostages at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Paris in September of 1973 and demanded Daoud's release, though it was not granted.<sup>705</sup>

BSO experienced other counterintelligence setbacks as well. In one operation, compartmentation led to a serious operational backfire. A mixed Japanese-Palestinian BSO group attempted to hijack a Japanese airliner in July 1973, but the mission planner was killed during the initial aircraft takeover. No other member of the hijacking team was fully briefed on the mission, so the remaining terrorists had to abandon the operation.<sup>706</sup>

Israeli intelligence efforts were sometimes able to defeat BSO's counterintelligence strategies. In January 1973, Salameh was planning to shoot down the Israeli Prime Minister's plane as she landed in Rome. Salameh used multiple passports

---

<sup>703</sup> Reeve, 190.

<sup>704</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 164.

<sup>705</sup> Reeve, 201.

<sup>706</sup> Dobson, 47.

to arrange for surface-to-air missiles to be smuggled from Dubrovnik to Rome and then stored the missiles at a PLO safe house in Rome.<sup>707</sup> Israeli security services were able to thwart the operation due to three sources of intelligence. First, an Israeli informant working in the PLO gave Israel information that an operation was being planned. Second, telephone intercepts from a PLO safehouse in Rome tipped Israel off on the timing of the operation and the use of missiles. Third, an Israeli surveillance patrol in the vicinity of the Prime Minister's landing plane found the BSO's missiles ready to launch out of two suspicious-looking chimneys on a food cart.<sup>708</sup>

BSO also demonstrated its adaptiveness and counterintelligence resilience in this period. During Operation Spring of Youth in 1973, Israeli commandos captured three filing cabinets in Beirut housing part of Fatah's and BSO's archives and operational files.<sup>709</sup> Though it could have been a massive counterintelligence setback for BSO, the group adjusted quickly to limit the damage. Unsure of the extent of the compromised information, BSO began replacing agents, changing its codes and abandoned missions in the planning stages.<sup>710</sup>

Following the Israeli operation in Beirut, BSO increased the protective detail of its leaders and were instructed to change their address at least once a week.<sup>711</sup> As BSO leaders were assassinated in Europe, the remaining leaders increased their security

---

<sup>707</sup> Reeve, 172.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>709</sup> Becker, 108.

<sup>710</sup> Dobson, 131.

<sup>711</sup> Reeve, 184.

precautions. After Wael Zwaiter was killed, Mahmoud Hamshiri increased his countersurveillance procedures, refraining from making precise appointments.<sup>712</sup>

BSO was also able to use some of Israel's human intelligence networks to deceive Israeli security services. In the mid-1970s, BSO discovered a Palestinian student intelligence network that Israel had developed in Madrid.<sup>713</sup> At first, BSO used the network to feed false information to Israeli security services, through Israel's case officer Baruch Cohen. When Cohen began to suspect that several of his contacts were working for BSO, the group decided to assassinate Cohen.<sup>714</sup> On January 23, 1979, Cohen was shot and killed by a 25 year-old Palestinian medical student as he was being 'debriefed'.<sup>715</sup> These BSO double agent operations clearly demonstrated the sophistication of BSO's counterintelligence methods.

#### *BSO Summary*

For the most part, BSO had a tightly organized command structure, a high level of resources, strong adversaries and popular support, but limited access to Fatah's controlled territories for operational purposes. BSO was able to hide its logistical and operational plans from Israel and its operatives had a relatively easy time blending into their European and Middle Eastern environments. A number of BSO operatives were tracked down and killed by Israel agents. However, these individuals were known to the Israeli security service or were prominent members of the Palestinian community, whereas the relatively anonymous rank-and-file BSO members were far more secure.

---

<sup>712</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 151.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid, 155.

<sup>714</sup> Reeve, 173.

<sup>715</sup> Ibid, 174.

BSO used locals and their knowledge of local targets to collect intelligence for its operations. Sympathetic diaspora communities provided fertile ground for gathering information about the operational environment.

BSO did not conduct campaigns to increase its publicity or popular support. This is partly due to the fact that the group tapped into Fatah's popular base of support for recruiting and intelligence collection purposes.

### Hypotheses Revisited

*Hypothesis 1(A): With a relatively tighter command and control structure Fatah will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.* This is correct. Both Fatah and BSO had tight organizational structures, and both groups were able to train its members in intelligence and counterintelligence procedures.

*Hypothesis 1(B): With a relatively tighter command and control structure Fatah will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.* This is at least partially correct. Jordan partially exploited Fatah's standardized counterintelligence procedures when it broadcast fake code signals calling guerrillas to Jordan where they were arrested. BSO almost fell victim to standardization when Israel captured BSO documents during Operation Spring of Youth. However, the BSO's tight structure allowed it to respond quickly to the document leakage by replacing BSO agents and changing BSO codes. On the other hand, had BSO counterintelligence and operational procedures not been

standardized or centrally coordinated, the group would not have had to spend precious resources to adapt after the document leakage.

*Hypothesis 2(A): With relatively greater popular support Fatah will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.* This is correct. Fatah almost certainly enjoyed greater counterintelligence support from the local populations when it had high popular support. For example, Fatah leaders could easily relocate from apartment to apartment in Beirut in the 1967 to 1984 period while the group was constantly rattled out in the West Bank and Gaza in the 1964 to 1967 period.

*Hypothesis 2(B): With relatively greater popular support Fatah will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.* This is correct. Fatah craved publicity, particularly between 1968 and 1971. Fatah leaders gave interviews to the press, appeared on television, and appeared in public with their bodyguard entourages. Fatah leaders tried to increase the group's secrecy after 1971 but found it difficult to go back 'underground' after exposing the group's leaders and organizational structure to the public. Fatah also had to appease local tribes and families to keep their support, which sometimes meant not reprimanding local tribal leaders who might be collaborating with Israel. BSO, in contrast, assiduously shunned publicity as an organization and rarely had to deal with overexposure to the media. However, some BSO leaders in Europe were well-known in their respective academic and professional circles and as a result were easier to locate, monitor and capture.

*Hypothesis 3(A): With relatively more controlled territory Fatah will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.* This



is mostly correct. Israel found it difficult to track and assassinate Fatah leaders in Lebanon as they were surrounded by bodyguards and was able to move between safe houses with ease. Had Israel tried to strike at Fatah leaders in these conditions, they would likely have been caught in a firing match causing a great deal of very public, collateral damage. Additionally, the pro-Fatah community in Beirut and Fatahland could have alerted Fatah to Israel's efforts to surveil and track Palestinian targets. To surveil a terrorist for assassination could require weeks of careful observation in close proximity to the individual and his entourage of well-armed bodyguards. Thus, Israel would have to divert energy away from tracking its targets to increasing its own counterintelligence posture when it operated in this hostile territory.

Operation Spring of Youth, where Israeli special forces units raided an apartment in Beirut and killed several high-ranking Fatah members, is an example of where Israel took this risk. The half-hour-long operation cost Israel the lives of two of its soldiers as well as hundreds of hours of surveillance of buildings and neighborhoods.<sup>716</sup> The Israeli operation also left in its wake a large amount of collateral damage, which could have been worse had the Israeli commandos been forced to engage the Lebanese security forces or the PLO guards that chased after them as they were exfiltrated from Beirut.<sup>717</sup>

In contrast, once Israel located BSO leaders in Europe they were tracked and hunted down with relative ease and overall had worse personal protection. BSO leaders in Europe could not change houses every night and travel with an entourage of bodyguards as Fatah leaders could with the group's controlled territory. In the 1964 to

---

<sup>716</sup> Klein, 160.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid, 168.

1967 period, Fatah also did not control territory, and the group's physical and operational security suffered as a result.

*Hypothesis 3(B): With relatively more controlled territory Fatah will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.* This is also correct. Israel could more easily track the movement of persons, weapons, and supplies to and from Fatah safehavens than it could BSO personnel, weapons and supplies through and between its operations in Europe and the Middle East. For example, Israel sealed the border between the West Bank and Jordan, ambushed militants on guerrilla passes in Jordan, and set up observation posts in Lebanon to better monitor and apprehend Fatah members. Thus by watching particular territories, Israel could estimate Fatah's relative manpower, communications and weapons supplies.

In contrast, the rank-and-file members of BSO were more anonymous and hidden among tens of thousands of non-combatants with similar biographical profiles. In many cases BSO operatives were also legitimate students and workers, and BSO operatives who participated in only one mission would leave very few operational footprints. Thus, the difficulty of locating BSO operatives made estimation of BSO's overall manpower, communications and weapons supplies at any time very difficult. Even BSO members with a large operational footprint were difficult to locate—Israel spent thousands of man-hours in the hunt for Salameh, making it one of Israel's longest and most costly operations. Once located, however, these BSO operatives proved easy for the Israeli services to apprehend.

For Fatah in the 1964 to 1967 period, operating outside of controlled territory did not provide as many advantages. This is mainly because Fatah was centralized within territory that was controlled by its adversary, which made location and monitoring of Fatah relatively easy for Israel. Thus, a terrorist group will probably only capitalize on the benefits of operating outside of controlled territory if its adversary also does not control the territory of operation.

*Hypothesis 4: Fatah will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.* Fatah and BSO were tightly structured during all three periods, so it is difficult to judge the accuracy of this hypothesis with this case study.

#### Control Variables: Alternative Explanations Review

As discussed earlier, the control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the Fatah/BSO case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. While the adversary capabilities stayed relatively constant, resources fluctuated between the three periods. For example, variation in Fatah and BSO counterintelligence capabilities could have resulted from differences in their overall size. Fatah was much larger than the BSO and its size probably created a number of counterintelligence problems for the group. First, a large group will have a larger operational profile, which would increase the group's exposure to the adversary's security services. Second, a larger group will face a greater risk of

informants as more group members leads to less vetting and more opportunities for Israeli forces to recruit collaborators.

There are also some counterintelligence advantages that come with size. A larger group can employ more members as counterintelligence and counterespionage personnel. A larger group can also delegate to ‘non-sensitive’ personnel the most dangerous tasks, reducing the adversary’s opportunities to capture individuals that know the group’s most sensitive secrets.

One might hypothesize that BSO’s advantage in hiding its logistical and operational plans resulted from its small size and Israel’s inability to recruit informants within BSO’s ranks. In fact, BSO’s size probably did provide the group with a hiding advantage in foreign theaters of operation. However, even if BSO had been larger than Fatah, it still would have retained its hiding advantage in its relatively enormous operating environments such as Europe. BSO’s foreign theaters were so large, that its size would not have significantly changed its ability to hide. On the contrary, in Fatah’s safehavens Israel knew precisely the towns and neighborhoods to target for intelligence operations—or air force strikes—because these safehavens were not mobile. Even if Fatah had been very small, Israel still would have been able to monitor the group’s logistical and operational activity in a relatively discrete operational area like the city of Beirut or the Gaza Strip.

Variation in counterintelligence capabilities could have resulted from differences in Fatah’s and BSO’s popular support between Periods One, Two and Three. BSO spent less time generating popular support and publicizing its achievements and information

about its members. As a result, BSO should have suffered from fewer counterintelligence leaks, as posited by Hypothesis 3(B). This is also probably true to an extent. Fatah leaders expressed frustration that they could not return to an “underground” movement once they had embraced the public spotlight. BSO leaders also suffered from publicity, though much of it was not purposefully sought out. In some cases, Israel was able to track BSO leaders in Europe as a result of their high-profiles. For example, Mahmoud Hamshiri was Fatah’s public chief in Paris, Basil Kubaissi was a well-known law professor, and Wael Zwaiter a well-known scholar.

Variation in Fatah’s counterintelligence capabilities could also have resulted from differences between the goals and missions of Fatah and BSO between the time periods. There are several important differences between Fatah and BSO’s missions. First, Fatah engaged in some military-on-military insurgency operations while BSO engaged exclusively in civilian target terrorist operations. Second, Fatah operated among and interfaced with its popular support base while BSO slipped relatively anonymously into the background of its theaters of operation. Both of these factors could have allowed BSO to remain more anonymous and could have improved BSO’s counterintelligence capabilities. Thus, it is difficult to tell whether BSO’s relative ease in hiding its members and logistical plans was a result of operating outside of controlled territory or a result of having a lower operational profile.

One way to test this proposition is to see if there were any direct benefits to BSO as a result of operating outside of controlled territory, regardless of its mission. There is evidence that it was BSO’s physical detachment from controlled territory, rather than its

mission and goals, which directly provided the group with its greatest leverage over Israeli security services. Outside of the controlled territory, there were too many populations to monitor and too many diaspora communities to penetrate and dissuade. In contrast, Israel could more easily monitor Fatah's controlled territory in order to recruit informants and target or threaten potential Fatah collaborators.

Another way to partially test this proposition is to compare Fatah in 1964 to 1967 period, when it operated without controlled territory, but with a mission similar to that of Fatah in the 1967 to 1982 period. In the 1964 to 1967 period, Fatah had severe counterintelligence problems and was eventually routed by Israeli counterterrorism forces. This was mostly due to the fact that Fatah was operating in territory controlled by its adversary and was thus both easy to locate and track and easy to apprehend with little resistance. This suggests a caveat to Hypothesis 3(B): a terrorist group acquires the benefits of operating outside of controlled territory on the condition that the territory it operates in is also not controlled by the adversary.

#### *Lessons from the Fatah/BSO Case Study*

The Fatah case study provides support for several hypotheses and provides insight into potential interactions between the independent variables and between the intelligence and counterintelligence variables.

First, having access to controlled territory has both advantages and disadvantages for intelligence and counterintelligence operations. Controlled territory allowed Fatah to police a geographical area within which it could track and capture informants, conduct

background checks on recruits, increase its popular support, insulate its leaders from foreign security services, and develop a media function to inspire and communicate intelligence to its members. Controlled territory also produced some complacency, which decreased Fatah's counterintelligence posture. For example, Fatah kept paper records and files on its members and operations without developing a means of destroying them in an emergency. This proved disastrous for Fatah on a number of occasions when these records were captured by Jordanian and Israel security forces.

Second, state sponsorship has both advantages and disadvantages for intelligence and counterintelligence operations. State sponsorship provided Fatah and BSO with high-quality training, protection from hostile security services, financial assistance, identity papers and logistical support for operations, and even raw intelligence on targets. On the other hand, key state sponsors such as Syria often tried to control and weaken Fatah when the group acted against the Syria's interests.

Third, campaigns to increase popular support may be a necessary evil for clandestine terrorist groups, but they may exact a huge counterintelligence cost on the group. Campaigns to increase popular support provided valuable targeting data to the adversary and made it very difficult for terrorist leaders to return 'underground' once they had become popular.

## CHAPTER FOUR: AL QAEDA

In the early 1990s, al Qaeda had relatively little international popular support but enjoyed a high level of local security in its controlled territory in Sudan. In the mid 1990's, al Qaeda dramatically increased its publicity campaigns and attacks against its adversaries, and as a result significantly increased its international popular support. This popular support led directly to improvements in al Qaeda's international intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities. At the same time, al Qaeda began to suffer from many new security and counterintelligence problems in its local controlled territory. How could al Qaeda's campaign to increase its popular support simultaneously advance its international counterintelligence capabilities and impede its local counterintelligence efforts?

The case study will show that al Qaeda's campaign to increase its international popular support introduced numerous counterintelligence and security challenges in its local controlled territory. These challenges arose as al Qaeda raised its operational profile to connect with media organizations and inspire its international supporters with details about al Qaeda's leaders and terrorist plans. Additionally, the case will show that al Qaeda's efforts to improve its local counterintelligence posture occasionally introduced counterintelligence problems for the group's international operations. The case provides a good test of Hypothesis 2A and 2B. The large-N data set offered preliminary support to these hypotheses, but the al Qaeda case offers an in-depth look at the causal mechanisms driving the relationships between counterintelligence and popular support.



In this chapter, I first provide a discussion of the key hypotheses and alternative hypotheses, followed by the al Qaeda case study. I then review the hypotheses and provide a general assessment of how a terrorist group's popular support may impact its intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities.

The al Qaeda case study is broken into three parts. The first part depicts al Qaeda from its inception in 1988 until its departure from Sudan in 1996, when the group had relatively little international and local popular. The second part depicts al Qaeda from 1996 until the initiation of U.S military operations in Afghanistan in 2001, when the group enjoyed relatively high international popular support but relatively little local popular support. The third case focuses on the group from 2001 until 2003, when it enjoyed high levels of both international and local popular support.

To sharpen the differences between al Qaeda's local and international conditions, the resources, popular support, intelligence and counterintelligence variables are measured separately for each period in local and international subsets.<sup>718</sup>

#### *Al Qaeda Case Study Core Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1(A):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure al Qaeda will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.

---

<sup>718</sup> It is important to note that the evidence offers examples of potentially exploitable vulnerabilities, as opposed to vulnerabilities that were certainly exploited by al Qaeda's adversaries. Al Qaeda's potential vulnerabilities are a purer measure of its counterintelligence deficits, as the vulnerabilities that are actually exploited represent the nexus of the adversaries' capabilities and the group's vulnerabilities.

*Hypothesis 1(B):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure al Qaeda will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.

*Hypothesis 2(A):* With relatively greater popular support al Qaeda will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.

*Hypothesis 2(B):* With relatively greater popular support al Qaeda will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.

*Hypothesis 3(A):* With relatively more controlled territory al Qaeda will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.

*Hypothesis 3(B):* With relatively more controlled territory al Qaeda will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.

*Hypothesis 4:* Al Qaeda will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.

#### *Alternative and Falsifiable Hypotheses*

The alternative hypotheses argue the opposite of the core hypotheses. Thus, the first alternative hypothesis is that tighter organizational structure will not produce superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation or greater vulnerabilities to high-level penetrations. Conversely, if the group has a loose organizational structure but does not suffer from inferior counterintelligence training and compartmentation, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The second alternative hypothesis is that popular support will not result in greater counterintelligence support from the local population or greater vulnerability to exposure in the media. Thus, if the group wages a popular support campaign but does not induce counterintelligence vulnerabilities as a result and does not benefit from increased local support, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The third alternative hypothesis is that controlled territory will not result in greater physical and communications security or greater vulnerabilities to tracking the group's gross movements of personnel and logistics. Thus, if the group operates from controlled territory but does not benefit from more secure communications and vetting, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The fourth alternative hypothesis is that a terrorist group facing an increasing menacing adversary will not become more centralized and tightly commanded over time. Thus, if the group faces an increasing threat from its adversary but does not centralize its decision-making and tighten its command and control, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

#### *Control Variables: Alternative Explanations*

Some control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the al Qaeda case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. Al Qaeda's resources remain relatively constant and therefore are unlikely to be the cause of variations in counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities. Al Qaeda's adversaries' strength, however, shifted from low to high from period one to two, which may account for the counterintelligence deficiencies al Qaeda

accrued in period two. For example, the counterintelligence setbacks associated with campaigning for popular support in period two may result from having a more capable adversary.

Additionally, al Qaeda almost certainly experienced organizational learning over the three periods, which may account for a variety of improvements in its counterintelligence capabilities. For example, al Qaeda's ability to gain more counterintelligence support from the local population over time may result from normal organizational learning rather than shifts in al Qaeda's popular support.

#### **Al Qaeda Case Study: Dependent Variables**

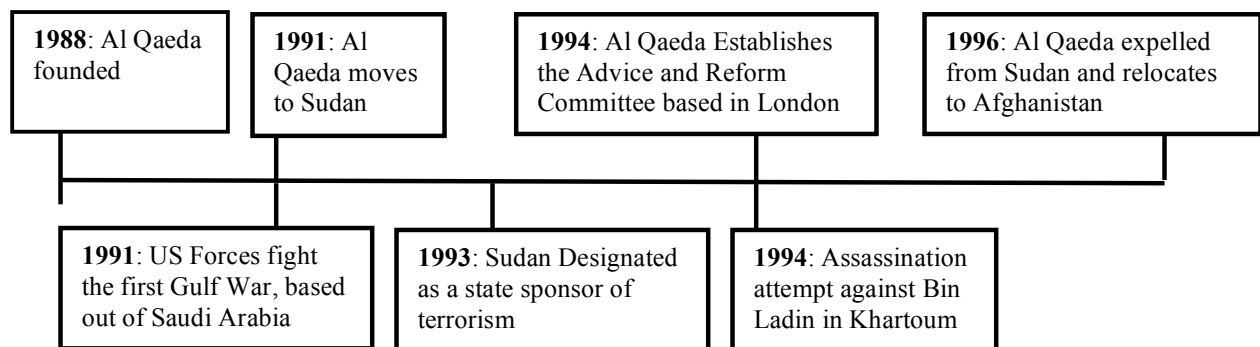
<b>Al Qaeda</b>	<b>Adversary CT Capability</b>	<b>Org Structure</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Controlled Territory</b>	<b>Popular Support</b>	<b>Type</b>
1988 - 1996	Low	Low	High	Yes	Low	11
1996 - 2001	High	Tight	High	Yes	Low	4
2001 - 2003	High	Medium	High	Yes	High	8

#### *Al Qaeda: Background*

Al Qaeda formed in 1988, after the war between the USSR and Muslim fighters in Afghanistan ended. Osama Bin Laden, a financier and fighter in the Afghan insurgency,

created al Qaeda to continue the struggle to drive non-Islamic powers out of the Middle East. Roughly a dozen individuals pledged their allegiance to Bin Laden and al Qaeda in 1989 and many individuals traveled to the Balkans, Somalia, and Chechnya to continue what they viewed as a global jihad. Bin Laden established al Qaeda's headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan in 1991 until the group was forced to leave in 1996.

*Al Qaeda Timeline: 1988 – 1996*



*Al Qaeda: 1988 – 1996*

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* From its beginnings in 1988, al Qaeda faced capable adversaries. In this first period, however, its adversaries did not always take aggressive military action against the group. The United States, one of al Qaeda's most powerful adversaries, relied mainly on non-military counterterrorism measures to keep the group in check after it established itself in Sudan in 1991.

First, the US pressured Sudan to expel several terrorist groups, including al Qaeda.<sup>719</sup> The governments of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Libya also pressured Sudan to cut off its support to al Qaeda. In 1993, the US designated Sudan a state sponsor of terrorism and placed Bin Laden on a terrorist watch list, which prevented him from obtaining a visa to enter the United States.<sup>720</sup> Though US counterterrorism authorities were trying to keep track of Bin Laden's activities, they considered him an extremist financier, rather than a terrorist.<sup>721</sup> International pressure on Sudan continued to mount until the Sudanese government forced Bin Laden and al Qaeda to move its headquarters out of the country in 1996. Meanwhile, preparations for al Qaeda's earliest terrorist operations in Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Tanzania continued undetected, as the US authorities had limited motivation to gather counterterrorism intelligence in these locations.<sup>722</sup>

*Organizational Structure.* Al Qaeda's organizational structure in the 1988 to 1996 period was relatively hierarchical and tightly commanded and managed.<sup>723</sup> Bin Laden was the group's first leader in 1988, commanding the group's intelligence branch, a military committee, a financial committee, a political committee, a media committee,

---

<sup>719</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report, Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, Thomas H. Kean, Chair, August 21, 2004, 62.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>722</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, *Countering Al Qaeda*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 6.

<sup>723</sup> For the purpose of this chapter, Al Qaeda is defined as the Bin Ladin, his advisors and deputies, individuals pledging allegiance (bayat) to Bin Ladin or to his deputies, and individuals using this core group's funding and training to conduct attacks in the name of Al Qaeda.

and the Advisory Council that comprised Bin Laden's inner circle.<sup>724</sup> The Advisory Council had between seven and ten members who advised Bin Laden on operational goals and political considerations and were considered the highest authority in al Qaeda after Bin Laden and his deputy.<sup>725</sup>

*Resources: Local.* Al Qaeda had access to money, high quality personnel and controlled territory in this early period. Bin Laden's confidant Ayman al-Zawahiri brought with him a cadre of highly-disciplined Egyptian fighters.<sup>726</sup> His recruits were doctors, engineers and soldiers, and many were used to working in secret.<sup>727</sup> These men joined recruits from the large pool of Arab Afghans left over from the war against the Soviets.<sup>728</sup> From the minutes of al Qaeda's first meeting in August 1988, al Qaeda's leaders were planning to have 314 militants trained by mid-1989.<sup>729</sup>

In 1988, Zawahiri and Egyptian Islamic Jihad leader Sayyid Imam al Sharif, aka Dr. Fadl, established the Farouk Camp near Khost, Afghanistan to recruit and train elite fighters that would become part of al Qaeda.<sup>730</sup> The group had enough money in this

---

<sup>724</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 56.

<sup>725</sup> Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy, *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-000080.

<sup>726</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, (Alfred Knopf: New York, 2006), 128.

<sup>727</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>728</sup> Wright, 133.

<sup>729</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama bin Ladin I Know: An Oral History of the al Qaeda Leader*, (Free Press: New York, 2006) 79.

<sup>730</sup> Wright, 141.

period to pay its married members \$1,500 per month and its single members \$1,000 per month.<sup>731</sup>

Sudan provided al Qaeda with territory and safehaven. In 1990, Hassan 'Abd Allah al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front political party in Sudan, invited Bin Laden to use Sudan as a safehaven after he was expelled from Saudi Arabia in 1991.<sup>732</sup> Turabi then dispatched Sudanese intelligence officers to meet with Bin Laden and facilitate his move to Sudan.<sup>733</sup> Sudan was an ideal terrorist territory. The border with Egypt was largely unguarded and Islamic militants from all over the Middle East, and Egypt, Pakistan and Afghanistan in particular, had used Sudanese territory for terrorist training since the mid 1980s.<sup>734</sup>

In 1989, Sayf al-Adl, a high-ranking member of al Qaeda and a former Egyptian army officer, purchased two farms in Sudan for al Qaeda military training—one in Port Sudan for \$250,000 and the other near Khartoum for \$180,000.<sup>735</sup> Turabi provided al Qaeda with 200 passports and semi-official status, allowing group members to travel outside of Sudan with relative ease under alias identities.<sup>736</sup> Sudan also allowed foreign militants to enter the country. By 1993, young men from many countries were traveling to al Qaeda's Soba Farm, ten kilometers south of Khartoum, to meet Bin Laden and begin

---

<sup>731</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>732</sup> Coll, 267.

<sup>733</sup> Wright, 164.

<sup>734</sup> Jason Burke, *Castling a Shadow of Terror*, (I.B. Taurus: London, 2003), 130.

<sup>735</sup> Bergen (2006), 121. ; Bergen (2001), 82.

<sup>736</sup> Jane Corbin, *Al-Qaeda: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*, (Thunder's Mouth Press: New York, 2003), 55.



their terrorist training.<sup>737</sup> Bin Laden paid for 480 Islamic fighters to move from Pakistan to Khartoum in the spring of 1993.<sup>738</sup>

An officer in the Sudanese army, Muqadem Abdul Basit Hamza, supplied al Qaeda with a system of radios for internal communications.<sup>739</sup> During this period, Bin Laden also had access to a satellite phone.<sup>740</sup> Even when Sudan expelled al Qaeda in 1996, the Sudanese intelligence service tasked its Peshawar station with scouting out a suitable new base for Bin Laden in Afghanistan.<sup>741</sup>

Al Qaeda received support from other militant groups as well. In 1991, al Qaeda was still relatively small and occasionally relied on the expertise and resources of more established militant groups, such as Egyptian Islamic Jihad.<sup>742</sup> Sometime between 1991 and 1993, veterans of the Afghan war compiled the Encyclopedia of Jihad, an eleven-volume collection of the terrorist and guerrilla tactics, which al Qaeda used to improve its operational tradecraft.<sup>743</sup>

*Resources: International.* Al Qaeda has access to an international recruiting network in this early phase. Mosques and schools throughout the world that served as recruiting stations for the Afghan war continued to attract radical Islamic militants.<sup>744</sup> Bin Laden was also familiar with the global recruitment strategies and logistics, as he had

---

<sup>737</sup> Wright, 187.

<sup>738</sup> Coll, 268.

<sup>739</sup> US v. UBL et al., United States District Court Southern District of New York, S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, 2.

<sup>740</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>741</sup> Burke, 142.

<sup>742</sup> Burke, 9.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>744</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 55.

helped to set up the Mektab al Khidmat, aka the Bureau of Services, which channeled recruits into Afghanistan in the 1980s.<sup>745</sup> However, al Qaeda had not yet gained international notoriety nor was it able to use its name recognition to draw recruits to its cause.

Al Qaeda had access to money in this period, though not the \$300 million Bin Laden fortune as some analysts have claimed. The Saudi government froze Osama Bin Laden's assets and forced his family to share his portion of the company, so Bin Laden probably had access to only \$30 million in Sudan.<sup>746</sup>

Al Qaeda's international recruits reflected its global ambitions. Many al Qaeda members settled in Sudan in part because they could not return to their home countries, particularly Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Syria, and Iraq, for fear of government persecution.<sup>747</sup> Though al Qaeda was headquartered in Sudan, it retained training camps in Afghanistan and had members training in Bosnia, Yemen, and the Philippines.<sup>748</sup>

One of al Qaeda's most important early resources was a former Egyptian military officer, Ali Adbelseoud Mohammed, aka Abu Omar. Abu Omar served in the Egyptian military from 1971 to 1984 where he received special forces and intelligence training. Abu Omar worked for Egyptian Airlines from 1984 to 1986 as a counterterrorism specialist. In 1986, Abu Omar emigrated to the US, enlisted in the US Army and was

---

<sup>745</sup> Ibid.

<sup>746</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," 20.

<sup>747</sup> Bergen (2006) 107.

<sup>748</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2004), 44.

assigned to the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School.<sup>749</sup> Abu Omar stole and translated US military training manuals into Arabic and used his knowledge of special warfare and intelligence to train al Qaeda fighters.<sup>750</sup> Al Qaeda's manuals were probably important for the group as many operatives were apprehended in possession of these materials. For example, in 1993 an operative involved in the first attack against the World Trade Center was detained at JFK airport with a bag full of al Qaeda terrorist training manuals.<sup>751</sup>

In this early phase, al Qaeda was already using its international resources to prepare for the Embassy bombings attacks that would occur in 1998. In 1994, al Qaeda cells were setting up in Nairobi and Mombasa and preparing the initial phases of surveillance for the Embassy attacks.<sup>752</sup>

*Popular Support: Local.* Al Qaeda did not enjoy a significant amount of local popular support in Sudan in the 1988 to 1996 period. This is mostly because Bin Laden was able to purchase or otherwise win the loyalty of the Sudanese government. Since the government allowed Bin Laden to set up al Qaeda's headquarters and camps in Sudan, there was not a pressing need to develop local popular support.

---

<sup>749</sup> US v. Ali Abdelseoud Mohamed, Sworn Affidavit of FBI Special Agent Daniel Coleman, Sept 1998.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid.

<sup>751</sup> Burke, 9.

<sup>752</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (Columbia University Press: New York: 2002), 159.

Bin Laden cultivated relationships with Sudan's business community, political leadership, and intelligence and military communities. Bin Laden became close to Turabi, Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir and to some government ministers.<sup>753</sup>

Support for al Qaeda among the general Sudanese population was limited, though not completely absent, in this period. Some of this popularity was directed at Bin Laden as an individual. Bin Laden fought alongside Arabs and Afghans in the trenches of Afghanistan and became respected and renowned for such bravery.<sup>754</sup> Bin Laden also held regular lectures at his guesthouse and mosques in Khartoum, where group members and recruits could hear Bin Laden speak about jihad and al Qaeda.<sup>755</sup>

Al Qaeda did not embrace the terrorist image during this period and forbade its members from claiming credit for attacks or publicly identifying the organization for fear of drawing attention from its adversaries.<sup>756</sup>

Al Qaeda's lack of popular support and dependence on Sudan ultimately backfired on the group. Sudan was under constant pressure from the US, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to expel Bin Laden. The fact that the Sudanese public would not react violently to al Qaeda's expulsion gave the government leverage over al Qaeda.<sup>757</sup> President al-Bashir came under increased international pressure to expel Bin Ladin in 1996, but did not face a countervailing local pressure demanding Bin Ladin's protection. The President believed that he would not be able to win the US's favor or investment dollars as long as Bin

---

<sup>753</sup> Ibid 32.

<sup>754</sup> Bergen (2006) 55.

<sup>755</sup> Coll, 269.

<sup>756</sup> Gunaratna, 35.

<sup>757</sup> Bergen (2006), 155.

Laden was in Khartoum.<sup>758</sup> As a result, Bashir informed Bin Ladin that al Qaeda needed to move from Sudan in 1996.

*Popular Support: International.* From its inception, al Qaeda attempted to inspire the ‘feeling of jihad’ on a global scale.<sup>759</sup> The group was partially successful in this endeavor in the 1988 to 1996 period.

Bin Laden came to al Qaeda with experience in media and propaganda, having run the Office of Services with Abdullah Azzam. Beginning in 1984, the Office of Services published Jihad magazine, which provided a monthly assessment of the war in Afghanistan and focused on how Arabs contributed to the struggle against the Soviets.<sup>760</sup> Bin Laden distinguished al Qaeda’s philosophy from those of its militant cohorts by focusing on overthrowing governments in the Muslim world that were deemed ‘apostate’.<sup>761</sup> Al Qaeda members began to meet at Bin Laden’s residence in Peshawar in the late 1980s and invited journalists and relief agencies to put Bin Laden and al Qaeda in the media spotlight.<sup>762</sup>

Bin Laden carefully managed his public persona, commissioning documentaries of his life in Afghanistan in 1988, which showed him eating poor food and living in caves in the Afghan hills. Bin Laden funded a newspaper in Pakistan and cultivated influential journalists.<sup>763</sup> Bin Laden became close to Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi, for

---

<sup>758</sup> Coll, 324.

<sup>759</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa’ida’s Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-000080.

<sup>760</sup> Bergen (2006), 32.

<sup>761</sup> Bergen (2006), 74.

<sup>762</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>763</sup> Burke, 75.

example, who wrote about Bin Laden's exploits in Afghanistan and took the first published photograph of the al Qaeda leader.<sup>764</sup> Al Qaeda's media committee started a weekly newspaper called Nashrat al Akhbar and established a media liaison wing in 1994, known as the Advice and Reformation Committee (ARC), based in London.<sup>765</sup>

Bin Laden loyalist Khaled al-Fawwaz moved from Sudan to London in 1994 to establish and manage the ARC. Fawwaz began disseminating al Qaeda condemnations of the Saudi and US governments.<sup>766</sup> Bin Laden's hatred for the Saudi regime and US increased dramatically in the early 1990s when the US military based itself in Saudi Arabia to fight the 1991 Gulf War.<sup>767</sup> Bin Laden's vitriolic attacks on the Saudi regime increased his popularity among Muslim youths throughout the Arab world and earned him the moniker Sheikh Osama.<sup>768</sup>

Bin Laden granted an interview to TIME magazine correspondent Scott MacLeod in May 1996 in Khartoum, probably to combat his emerging 'terrorist' image in the popular media. Bin Laden argued that he was a simple businessman who was working nonviolently to reform the Saudi regime.<sup>769</sup> At the time, however, US authorities suspected Bin Laden had played a role in the bombing of a US-run National Guard training center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

---

<sup>764</sup> Wright, 199.

<sup>765</sup> Bergen (2006), 87. / Burke, 158.

<sup>766</sup> Abdel Bari Atwan, *The Secret History of al Qaida* (Saqi Books: London, 2006), 15. / Corbin, 57.

<sup>767</sup> Christopher M. Blanchard, "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology," *Congressional Research Service*, Order Code RS21973, November 16, 2004, 2.

<sup>768</sup> Bergen (2006), 150.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid, 134.

Bin Laden changed his rhetoric after being expelled from Sudan, issuing his first declaration of jihad against the US in 1996, via the London-based newspaper *Al Quds Al Arabia*.<sup>770</sup>

*Intelligence: Local and International.* Al Qaeda's intelligence capabilities were limited in this period, primarily because the group was just beginning its intelligence activities to support planned terrorist operations.

In Sudan, al Qaeda was using a relatively sophisticated, hand-held radio system to pass information between the group's 'officers'.<sup>771</sup> The radios were provided to al Qaeda by the Sudanese military. In 1992, Abu Omar was training al Qaeda members in surveillance and intelligence gathering techniques.<sup>772</sup> Portuguese al Qaeda member Paulo Jose de Almeida Santos, aka Abdullah Yusuf, asserted in 2002 that he was part of an al Qaeda open source intelligence group that provided political analysis to al Qaeda leaders based on newspaper articles.<sup>773</sup>

Outside of Sudan, al Qaeda intelligence efforts were gathering steam. Zawahiri had tasked Abu Omar to penetrate US intelligence in the early 1990s. Abu Omar used his access to the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg to steal training manuals and then downsize and copy them at Kinkos.<sup>774</sup>

---

<sup>770</sup> It is not exactly clear why Bin Ladin was motivated to change al Qaeda's rhetoric at this point.

<sup>771</sup> US v. UBL et al., 4.

<sup>772</sup> Burke, 95.

<sup>773</sup> Bergen (2006), 118.

<sup>774</sup> Wright, 181.

In 1993, Bin Laden sent Muhammed Atef, one of his top military commanders at the time, to Somalia to determine how best to attack US forces based there.<sup>775</sup> Atef reported back to Sudan and al Qaeda dispatched a mortar specialist to Somalia. Atef also returned to provide military training and assistance to Somalis fighting against US forces.<sup>776</sup>

In the mid-1990s, Bin Laden dispatched Abu Omar to Nairobi to surveil targets for the upcoming Embassy attacks. Abu Omar surveilled the French Cultural Center and the British-owned Norfolk Hotel, as well as the Embassy of Israel and the Israeli El Al Airline office—though he determined that the Israeli targets were too heavily fortified to be attacked.<sup>777</sup> Abu Omar carried several cameras as he surveilled the US Embassy and noted traffic patterns, the rotation of security guards, and the location of closed circuit television cameras. He developed the photographs himself, drafted a plan of attack on his Apple PowerBook 140 and then made his presentation to Bin Laden in Khartoum.<sup>778</sup>

*Counterintelligence: Local.* Though al Qaeda faced few major security threats in the 1988 to 1996 period the group gave some thought to counterintelligence procedures.

Some of al Qaeda's counterintelligence awareness was a product of the guerrilla fighting and 'underground' experience of its members. Zawahiri, for example, led a

---

<sup>775</sup> Bergen (2001), 85.

<sup>776</sup> Ibid.

<sup>777</sup> Ibid, 198.

<sup>778</sup> Ibid.



clandestine underground organization in Egypt before he was sixteen and spent years evading Egyptian security services.<sup>779</sup>

Zawahiri's security consciousness was evident when he met Bin Laden in 1988. Bin Laden was giving a lecture on boycotting American goods and Zawahiri warned Bin Laden that he was provoking a powerful enemy and advised him to increase his security posture.<sup>780</sup> The Egyptian recruits that Zawahiri brought to al Qaeda were also security conscious and many were used to working in secret.<sup>781</sup>

Al Qaeda received direct and indirect counterintelligence support from the Sudanese government. Al Qaeda trainers showed recruits how to create false passports and alter documents while Sudan provided the group with hundreds of passports.<sup>782</sup> Sudanese intelligence provided perimeter security for Bin Laden while his personal bodyguards provided close proximity security.<sup>783</sup>

In return for Sudan's support, al Qaeda provided Sudan with counterintelligence support. As early as 1992, al Qaeda members were tasked to the Sudanese intelligence service's 'Delegation Office' where people coming into Sudan were interviewed and given a background check to make sure they were not a threat to Sudan.<sup>784</sup> As a byproduct, al Qaeda's service in the Delegation Office provided the group with valuable intelligence on who was coming into Sudan.

---

<sup>779</sup> Montasser Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of bin Ladin's Right Hand Man*, (Pluto Press: London, 2004), 18.

<sup>780</sup> Wright, 127.

<sup>781</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>782</sup> Corbin, 40.

<sup>783</sup> US v. Ali Abdelseoud Mohamed, Sworn Affidavit of FBI Special Agent Daniel Coleman, Sept 1998..

<sup>784</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 2. / Gunaratna, 32.

Bin Laden and his top officers also gave thought to physical and personnel security. Bin Laden employed guards to watch his house in Khartoum and accompany him when he left the capital. He also required his chief of security to secure the guesthouses and farms where he stayed.<sup>785</sup> Bin Laden also kept a database of each al Qaeda member, where he stored information about their families, their aliases, how much money they made for al Qaeda, and whether they participated in military operations. Bin Laden used these files to determine which individuals were best suited for a particular task.<sup>786</sup>

Communications security was also important to the group. Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, a Sudanese member of al Qaeda, testified during the US Embassy bombings trial that al Qaeda relied on radio-based communications because they considered radio communications to be more secure than telephones.<sup>787</sup>

Al Qaeda had some counterespionage abilities in this period, though it wasn't systematic or sophisticated. Through its work in the Delegation Office, al Qaeda could monitor specific threats to the group and vet recruits who were coming into Sudan to join al Qaeda.<sup>788</sup> Jamal al-Fadl, as chief of security for Bin Laden, was responsible for checking individuals who were meeting with Bin Laden.<sup>789</sup>

---

<sup>785</sup> Bergen (2006), 133. / US v. UBL et al., Day 7.

<sup>786</sup> Gunaratna, 33.

<sup>787</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 2.

<sup>788</sup> Ibid, Day 7.

<sup>789</sup> Ibid, Day 7.

Al Qaeda relied partially on kinship and trusted referrals to recruit and vet new members.<sup>790</sup> According to the minutes from one of al Qaeda's first meeting in August 1988, one requirement for entering the group was a referral from a trusted source.<sup>791</sup> Egyptian members of al Qaeda were tasked with screening new recruits in their first few weeks of training, but this screening was probably designed to assess their skill and intelligence rather than their trustworthiness.<sup>792</sup>

Al Qaeda experienced several counterintelligence setbacks in this period. First, al Qaeda suffered two major espionage cases. The most damaging was al-Fadl, one of Bin Laden's most trusted aids, who was caught stealing money from al Qaeda in 1995. When Bin Laden confronted al-Fadl, he decided to leave al Qaeda rather than return the money, and then sold al Qaeda information to a variety of intelligence services in the Middle East.<sup>793</sup> US officials first encountered al-Fadl at the American Embassy in Eritria in 1996 where he became an FBI informant and eventually a key witness in the US Embassy bombings trial.

A second espionage case was L'Houssaine Kherchtou, one of Bin Laden's personal pilots. Kherchtou turned on al Qaeda after Bin Laden refused to give him \$500 for his wife's Caesarean section.<sup>794</sup> Al Qaeda caught at least three other informants in

---

<sup>790</sup> Wright, 192.

<sup>791</sup> Bergen (2006), 81.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>793</sup> Wright, 197.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid, 197.

this period and sent two of them to prison and executed the third, according to al-Fadl's testimony at the US Embassy bombing trials.<sup>795</sup>

Bin Laden also had at least one serious security breach where he was nearly assassinated. In 1994, the assassins, led by a Libyan, sped by Bin Laden's Khartoum residence and raked the building with machine gunfire.<sup>796</sup> In response, Bin Laden made several renovations to his security protocol. First, he tasked Abu Omar with training an elite force of bodyguards to protect him around the clock. Egyptian made up most of Bin Laden's inner ring of bodyguards, probably to ensure greater loyalty or control.<sup>797</sup> Interestingly, Bin Laden relied on nationality to some extent for vetting. Sudanese intelligence personnel provided perimeter security at his Khartoum home alongside additional armed guards and road blocks to prevent traffic from passing too close to the compound.<sup>798</sup>

Another counterintelligence vulnerability for Bin Laden was his large family. When he moved to Sudan in 1992, he brought his four wives and seventeen children with him.<sup>799</sup> This left a large footprint whenever he traveling with his family and also gave an adversary's intelligence service more individuals to target for surveillance or even recruitment.

The final counterintelligence vulnerability was al Qaeda's closeness to its state sponsor, Sudan. Sudan had the ability to compel al Qaeda to act in ways that made the

---

<sup>795</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 2.

<sup>796</sup> Peter Bergen, "The Long Hunt for Osama," *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 2004.

<sup>797</sup> Wright, 193.

<sup>798</sup> Bergen (2006), 136 – 143.

<sup>799</sup> Wright, 165.

group more vulnerable. For example, al Qaeda was forced to expel its Libyan members when Sudan promised the Libyan Government that it would cease providing sanctuary to enemies of Libya—a move that angered the Libyan al Qaeda members and prompted them to renounce their connections to Bin Laden.<sup>800</sup>

Sudanese officials, and its intelligence service in particular, also knew a great deal about al Qaeda's modus operandi, personnel, resources and plans. In 1996, Sudan allegedly offered to give the US its intelligence files on al Qaeda, with details of the groups personnel and networks, in exchange for better diplomatic and economic relations.<sup>801</sup> Sudan may or may not have been prepared to give the US such damaging information. Regardless, an able adversary would only have needed to penetrate the Sudanese intelligence service, or perhaps a Sudanese military or law enforcement entity, in order to access sensitive information about al Qaeda's personnel, plans, and networks.

*Counterintelligence: International.* Though al Qaeda had a counterintelligence capability in this period, it was not systematic or sophisticated.

The al Qaeda cell in Nairobi was aware of its counterintelligence vulnerabilities, in some cases to the point of extreme paranoia. Cell manager Harun Fazul faxed a report to American al Qaeda member Wadi al-Hage warning that the cell members in East Africa were probably under telephonic and physical surveillance by agents of the US, Egyptian and Kenyan governments.<sup>802</sup>

---

<sup>800</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 62.

<sup>801</sup> Corbin, 62.

<sup>802</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 3. / Frontline:  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/upclose/computer.html>

In addition to being aware of its counterintelligence weaknesses, al Qaeda also appreciated the vulnerabilities of its adversaries. From its inception, al Qaeda was interested in recruiting individuals who carried US passports.<sup>803</sup> Al Qaeda assessed that individuals with US passports would be given less scrutiny and would raise less suspicion in their travels.<sup>804</sup> Al Qaeda members also used aliases and cover identities.<sup>805</sup> Zawahiri traveled to the US in 1993 to raise money for al Qaeda, traveling under cover as a Kuwaiti Red Crescent representative with the alias Dr. Abdul Mu'iz.<sup>806</sup> Al Qaeda advised some of its members to carry cigarettes and cologne in their travel bags in case they were questioned and searched by customs officers.<sup>807</sup> Though this strategy is fairly unsophisticated and easily detected, it was probably sufficient at the time to avoid attracting scrutiny.

Al Qaeda had additional counterintelligence vulnerabilities in its international operations in this period. First, al Qaeda did not conduct extensive background checks on its recruits, but instead relied in part on kinship and friendship ties to determine if members could be trusted.<sup>808</sup> The system of informal 'vouching' would later lead to counterintelligence setbacks for al Qaeda, including the leakage of information by a husband of one of Bin Ladin's nieces. Second, al Qaeda members did not always practice good computer security in Kenya and the Philippines. Police seized al Qaeda

---

<sup>803</sup> US v. Ali Abdelseoud Mohamed, Sworn Affidavit of FBI Special Agent Daniel Coleman, Sept 1998.

<sup>804</sup> Ibid.

<sup>805</sup> Bergen (2006), 78.

<sup>806</sup> Wright, 179.

<sup>807</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 2.

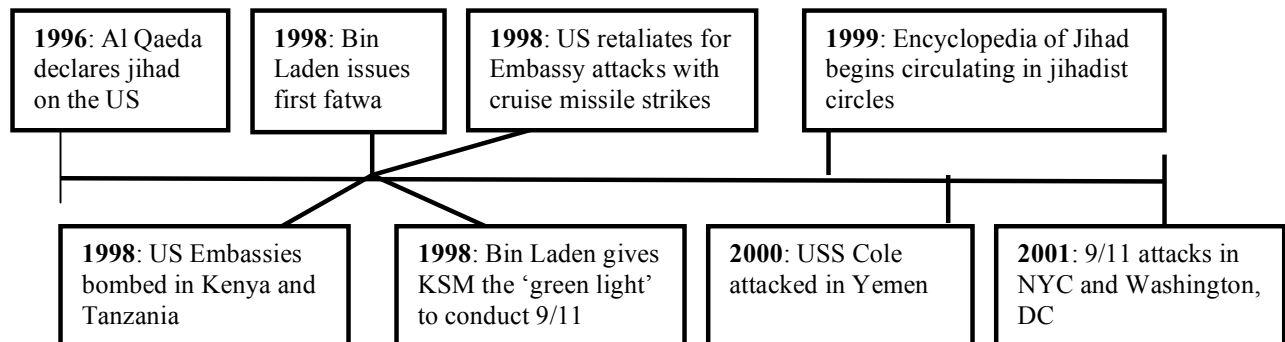
<sup>808</sup> Ibid, Day 4.

computers in those countries and it is plausible that law enforcement exploited sensitive information on those hard drives. Keeping sensitive files on computers is probably unavoidable for a terrorist organization, but the counterintelligence vulnerability comes from not having a method for hiding or destroying computers and computer files before the hard drives are seized.

*Summary.* From its beginnings in 1988, al Qaeda faced powerful adversaries, though these adversaries were not always militantly proactive against the group. Al Qaeda had access to a high level of financial resources, high quality personnel, controlled territory, and an international recruiting network. Al Qaeda did not enjoy a significant amount of local popular support in Sudan mostly because Bin Laden was able to purchase the loyalty and protection of the Sudanese government. Al Qaeda attempted to inspire a global following but was only successful to a limited extent in this endeavor. Al Qaeda's intelligence capabilities were also limited. Though al Qaeda had a counterintelligence capability in this period, it was not systematic or sophisticated. However, al Qaeda's relatively tight organizational structure and access to controlled territory allowed it to train its members and boost its intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities.

Al Qaeda did not have a high level of popular support and therefore did not convert this goodwill into intelligence and counterintelligence from locals. Al Qaeda also did not create an overwhelming counterintelligence burden from publicity campaigns because the group did not focus too heavily on promoting itself in this period.

*Al Qaeda Timeline: 1996 – 2001*



*Al Qaeda: 1996 – 2001*

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* Al Qaeda was unique in that it developed powerful adversaries both in the Middle East and in the West. Al Qaeda believed that in order to defeat the “near enemies” such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt the group had to challenge the “far enemies”, such as the US.<sup>809</sup>

The US was al Qaeda’s most powerful adversary in the 1996 to 2001 period. Bin Laden issued a declaration of jihad against the US in 1996 after moving from Sudan to Afghanistan. The US sketched out the first of several plans to seize and detain Bin Laden in 1997.<sup>810</sup> The US mapped out Bin Laden’s Tarnak Farms facility in Kandahar including the buildings where he was most likely to be sleeping. Working with some

---

<sup>809</sup> Interview with Roger Cressey; *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa’ida’s Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-600002.

<sup>810</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 112.



local tribal leaders, the US rehearsed the seizure operation in the fall of 1997.<sup>811</sup> The US cancelled the operation, however, after assessing that the tribal personnel would be unlikely to complete the mission. The US recognized the dangers of the operation: millions of dollars lost, a bloody shootout that might be made public, and perhaps a violent backlash among radicals in Pakistan.<sup>812</sup>

After al Qaeda successfully bombed the US Embassies in East Africa in August 1998, the US once again made plans to strike at al Qaeda's leaders, this time at a terror training camp in Khost, Afghanistan. The US initially assessed the strike as worth the risk, given that the camp was far from civilian population centers and almost certainly contained Bin Laden and his chief lieutenants.<sup>813</sup> US Navy vessels in the Arabian Sea launched cruise missiles at the targets in Afghanistan but Bin Laden and his lieutenants survived.<sup>814</sup>

The US received information in December 1998 that Bin Laden was spending the night at the governor's residence in Kandahar. Again, plans were drawn up to strike Bin Laden with cruise missiles. The plan was shelved, however, after several US officials expressed concern over the quality of the information and the likelihood of killing or injuring over 300 bystanders.<sup>815</sup>

In the fall of 1999, the US increased its counterterrorism efforts against al Qaeda. The US began a program to hire officers with more counterterrorism skills, recruit more

---

<sup>811</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>812</sup> Ibid, 114 - 115.

<sup>813</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 116.

<sup>814</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid, 131.

assets, penetrate al Qaeda's ranks, and continue disruption and rendition operations worldwide.<sup>816</sup> The US also began to increase its contacts with the Northern Alliance rebels fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan as well as increase signals and imagery collection against al Qaeda.<sup>817</sup>

Despite the US assets arrayed against al Qaeda prior to 9/11, US remained deficient in intelligence on al Qaeda's top leaders, operational planners and camps. Feroz Ali Abassi, an al Qaeda member captured in Pakistan after the fall of the Taliban, asserted that it was common knowledge in the camps just prior to 9/11 that there was a large imminent operation against a US target. Therefore, he was surprised that there were no American strikes against al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan before 9/11.<sup>818</sup>

*Organizational Structure.* Al Qaeda's structure in the 1996 to 2001 period remained relatively hierarchical, though the operatives deployed outside of Afghanistan retained some operational autonomy. The inner core, which swore loyalty to Bin Laden, had clearly defined positions and salaries.<sup>819</sup> The core in Afghanistan and the al Qaeda camps were tightly managed. One of al Qaeda's master recruiters, Abu Zubaydah, kept files on all the members, made their travel arrangements, assigned them to camps and assigned them tasks appropriate to their training.<sup>820</sup> By the late 1990s, Mohammed Atef, as known as Abu Hafs al Masri, was al Qaeda's senior operational planner and

---

<sup>816</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>817</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>818</sup> Bergen (2006), 308.

<sup>819</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 67.

<sup>820</sup> Corbin, 79.

commanded a group of overseas field commanders with help from al Qaeda member Sayf al-Adl.

Al Qaeda called this management model the “centralization of decision and decentralization of execution.”<sup>821</sup> Al Qaeda’s leaders would select the targets and provide funding for the operations in many cases. However, the field commanders would make the day-to-day decisions about logistics and planning.<sup>822</sup> Some have described this as a terrorist venture capital model, where terrorist entrepreneurs would approach al Qaeda with ideas for operations and leaders would decide on which ‘projects’ they would fund.<sup>823</sup>

Field commanders adopted al Qaeda’s goals and took assignments from Bin Laden and Atef, but retained operational autonomy in the field and, in some case, did not swear a formal oath of loyalty to Bin Laden.<sup>824</sup> Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), Riduan Isamuddin (Hambali), and Abd al Rahim al Nashiri were three such commanders. KSM proposed the 9/11 operation to Bin Laden sometime in the 1990s, but it wasn’t until late 1998 that Bin Laden gave KSM the green light to plan and manage the operation.<sup>825</sup> KSM, unlike Atef and al-Adl, never formally swore his loyalty to Bin Laden but nonetheless was given the responsibility to manage al Qaeda’s most ambitious and elaborate operation.<sup>826</sup> While KSM planned and executed the operation Atef and al-Adl

---

<sup>821</sup> Wright, 318.

<sup>822</sup> Ibid, 318.

<sup>823</sup> Burke, 209.

<sup>824</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 145.

<sup>825</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>826</sup> Ibid, 150.

continued to manage al Qaeda's worldwide operations.<sup>827</sup> KSM managed the operation with relative autonomy from the al Qaeda leadership and even resisted Bin Laden's requests on three occasions to execute the operation ahead of schedule.<sup>828</sup>

Hambali, considered a lieutenant of Bin Laden in Southeast Asia, was affiliated with the Indonesian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and retained a degree of independence from the al Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan. For example, Hambali objected when al Qaeda leaders attempted to assign JI fighters to al Qaeda operations without notifying him.<sup>829</sup>

Nashiri became a key al Qaeda operations planner in Yemen in 1998 after proposing a plan to strike a US Navy vessel. Bin Laden directed Nashiri to begin planning the operation while providing him with al Qaeda recruits and money.<sup>830</sup> Nashiri consulted with Bin Laden before he planned his attacks but selected the recruits and planned the operation specifics on his own.<sup>831</sup>

Al Qaeda's field commanders did not cut themselves off from al Qaeda's leaders once operational planning began, however. The al Qaeda cell in Nairobi interacted regularly with the al Qaeda media branch in London, sent security reports to al Qaeda headquarters in Afghanistan, and requested secure communications equipment from the group's leaders.<sup>832</sup> Ziad Jarrah, one of al Qaeda's 9/11 operatives, visited al Qaeda

---

<sup>827</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 3.

<sup>828</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>829</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 152.

<sup>830</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>831</sup> Ibid, 153.

<sup>832</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 20.

camps in Afghanistan in 2001 to report to senior leaders and bring back new instructions for the cells in the US.<sup>833</sup>

Al Qaeda probably adopted the “decentralization of execution” policy as a result of the logistical difficulty of commanding operations from Afghanistan and the security danger of frequent contact between ‘known’ al Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan and ‘unknown’ operatives in cells around the world.<sup>834</sup> The group began to remedy its disconnect with overseas operatives by increasing al Qaeda’s communications and training presence on the Internet, though it wasn’t until after 9/11 that this strategy was fully implemented.<sup>835</sup>

*Resources: Local.* Al Qaeda’s access to financial resources, high quality personnel and controlled territory continued in the 1996 to 2001 period. When the group initially relocated from Sudan to Jalalabad, Afghanistan in 1996, Bin Laden had local support from warlords in Jalalabad.<sup>836</sup> A core of al Qaeda militants traveled with Bin Laden from Khartoum and though Bin Laden’s bank accounts had been drained the group received financial backing from wealthy individuals in the Gulf.<sup>837</sup>

Bin Laden unrooted al Qaeda once more in 1996 and moved the entire group to Kandahar at the behest of the Taliban.<sup>838</sup> The Taliban allowed al Qaeda to open up terrorist training camps in Kandahar, Khost and Kabul. For a brief time in 1999,

---

<sup>833</sup> Corbin, 180.

<sup>834</sup> Burke, 150.

<sup>835</sup> Brachman Jarret M. and William F. McCants, *Stealing Al-Qa’ida’s Playbook*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, February 2006, 5.

<sup>836</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 59.

<sup>837</sup> Burke, 151.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid, 248.

however, the Mes Aynak training camp in Kabul was al Qaeda's only training facility.<sup>839</sup>

Al Qaeda trainer Salah al Din complained in this period that the number of recruits in the camp exceeded the training capacity, but Bin Laden insisted that they all be trained.<sup>840</sup>

Al Qaeda opened al Faruq camp near Kandahar with the Taliban's authorization sometime after 1998. Al Faruq offered advanced terrorist training for select al Qaeda members. Training included courses on security, intelligence collection, counterintelligence, and hijacking.<sup>841</sup> An even more select group of al Qaeda members were trained in setting up clandestine cells, planning terrorist operations, and assassination operations.<sup>842</sup> Al Qaeda member Rashed Daoud al-Owhali testified that he received training in several camps in recruitment, surveillance, counter surveillance, site surveys, and intelligence collection with video and still photography.<sup>843</sup>

Before attending these camps, members would have to pass basic training and an additional guerrilla warfare course that lasted 45 days.<sup>844</sup> As a reference, al Qaeda trainees could access a 180-page manual on weapons training, security and espionage called *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants*.<sup>845</sup>

Some recruits could also access videotapes of terrorism and security training given by al Qaeda member Abu Mousab al Suri. In six videotapes recovered from Afghanistan after 2001, Suri is viewed in front of a whiteboard addressing a class on how

---

<sup>839</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 157.

<sup>840</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>841</sup> Burke, 156.

<sup>842</sup> Burke, 157.

<sup>843</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 767, 5.

<sup>844</sup> Wright, 303.

<sup>845</sup> Ibid 302.

to set up clandestine cells and create contingency plans of their original operation fails.<sup>846</sup>

Bin Laden was also able to rely on veterans of the Afghan war to serve as trainers in administrators in al Qaeda camps.<sup>847</sup>

*Resources: International.* Al Qaeda's international resources grew steadily in the 1996 to 2001 period. Though attacks are not an ideal indicator of resources, the sophistication of al Qaeda attacks in this period, both successful and unsuccessful, provide some evidence of the group's extensive resources. The most prominent attacks were the millennium plots in Amman and Los Angeles Airport in December 1999, the two attacks against US Navy ships in 1999 and 2000, the Christmas Eve bombings in Manila in December 2000, the Christmas market bombing plot in Germany in December 2000, and the 9/11 attacks.<sup>848</sup> These attacks required well-forged documents, trained and dedicated operatives, well-oiled logistical networks, and relatively large amounts of cash.

Perhaps the group's most impressive resource was the number of individuals it trained between 1996 and 2001. In this period, tens of thousands of individuals are estimated to have visited al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan.<sup>849</sup> Bin Laden's reputation was an important factor in drawing militants to Afghanistan. Journalist Peter Bergen argues that, "something of a bin Laden cult was taking shape in [this] period" which "helped fuel an unprecedented volume of recruits to al Qaeda's camps."<sup>850</sup> Al Qaeda's rhetoric about attacking the US, coupled with its success in attacking US

---

<sup>846</sup> Bergen (2006), 245.

<sup>847</sup> Burke, 13.

<sup>848</sup> Sageman, 48.

<sup>849</sup> Burke, 5 / Wright, 302.

<sup>850</sup> Bergen (2006), 258.

diplomatic and military assets in the late 1990s, spurred its legendary status in the Islamic world.<sup>851</sup>

Al Qaeda suffered some financial setbacks following its move to Afghanistan in 1996. Bin Laden lost a number of his businesses after their connection to Bin Laden was leaked to the Saudi Arabian government.<sup>852</sup> However, al Qaeda continued to rely on its network of wealthy financiers from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and the Persian Gulf, known as the “Golden Chain”, for donations that were collected via charities, nongovernmental organizations, and front companies.<sup>853</sup>

The US government estimated that it cost al Qaeda \$30 million per year to sustain its activities in this period, almost all of which was raised through donations.<sup>854</sup> Fund-raisers for al Qaeda used banks to store and transfer their money, which was most likely facilitated by corrupt individuals working at these banks as well as by lax regulation at banks in UAE and Pakistan.<sup>855</sup> Though operations were generally cheap—the 1998 Embassy bombings cost around \$10,000 and the elaborate 9/11 attacks cost around \$500,000—the group also had the overhead costs of maintaining camps, recruiting, and evaluating members.<sup>856</sup>

After moving to Afghanistan in 1996, al Qaeda began to use hawala banking networks more extensively, in part because Afghanistan’s primitive banking sector did

---

<sup>851</sup> Burke, 152.

<sup>852</sup> Atwan, 53.

<sup>853</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 55. / Gunaratna, 62.

<sup>854</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>855</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, “Monograph on Terrorist Financing,” 26.

<sup>856</sup> Ibid, 28.



not provide al Qaeda with many alternatives. Hawala banking also allowed al Qaeda to move its finances without government scrutiny or a paper trail of financial transactions.<sup>857</sup>

Al Qaeda relied on logistical support networks outside of Afghanistan as well. Support networks in Europe provided assistance in several operations. A Dublin-based charity gave material support to the al Qaeda operatives involved in the US Embassy bombings in East Africa.<sup>858</sup> The al Qaeda operatives that assassinated Ahmed Shah Massoud received forged document assistance from a European cell.<sup>859</sup> The Hamburg cell of the 9/11 operation relied on logistical and communications resources provided to them, sometimes unwittingly, by local Germans.<sup>860</sup> Al Qaeda's network in Yemen assisted al Qaeda operatives with transportation and logistical support.<sup>861</sup>

Al Qaeda operatives overseas were also using training manuals, such as the Encyclopedia of Jihad, to aid them in tradecraft and terrorist operations. The 7000-page Encyclopedia of Jihad was allegedly transferred to computer disk in the mid-1990s and was circulating widely in radical Islamic circles by 1999.<sup>862</sup> The Jordanian al Qaeda members captured before they could conduct their millennium terrorist attack in December 1999 carried with them an al Qaeda training manual on CD-ROM.<sup>863</sup>

Al Qaeda also benefited from its connections to jihadist terrorist groups throughout the world. The group's connection to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was one of its

---

<sup>857</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>858</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad*, (Prometheus Books: New York, 2006), 81.

<sup>859</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>860</sup> Corbin, 150.

<sup>861</sup> Gunaratna, 140.

<sup>862</sup> Burke, 189.

<sup>863</sup> Wright, 297.

most fruitful relationships. For example, when Mohammed Atef needed someone to head up al Qaeda's biological weapons program, Hambali introduced a US-educated JI scientist, Yazid Sufaat, to Zawahiri in Kandahar in 2001.<sup>864</sup> Sufaat spent several months in 2001 serving in an al Qaeda biological weapons laboratory near the Kandahar airport.<sup>865</sup>

*Popular Support: Local.* Al Qaeda's local popular support in the 1996 to 2001 remained relatively low. The group relied on the strategy of purchasing the loyalty of local leaders rather than campaigning to win the hearts of the local population. Though al Qaeda developed very close ties to the Taliban, relations between the two were not close initially.

When al Qaeda arrived in Jalalabad in 1996 the area was controlled by a regional council of Pashtun tribal leaders and former guerrillas.<sup>866</sup> Al Qaeda had not yet developed a relationship with the Taliban and the two groups were probably not cooperating at this time.<sup>867</sup> In 1997, Taliban chief Mullah Mohammed Omar asked al Qaeda to move from Jalalabad to Taliban-controlled Kandahar, probably to keep a closer watch on Bin Laden.<sup>868</sup>

Al Qaeda's relationship with the Taliban grew increasingly important for both parties—al Qaeda supplied the Taliban with funds and guerrillas while the Taliban provided al Qaeda with a safehaven within which to establish controlled territory. US

---

<sup>864</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 151.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid, 151. / Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 51.

<sup>866</sup> Bergen (2006), 159 / Coll, 327.

<sup>867</sup> Coll, 328. / Byman (2005), 199.

<sup>868</sup> Burke, 164.

officials estimate that al Qaeda was supplying \$10-\$20 million per year to the Taliban.<sup>869</sup>

The group also provided the Taliban with Arab fighters fresh out of al Qaeda training camps, which the Taliban used to fight its war against Ahmed Shah Massoud's Northern Alliance.<sup>870</sup> Al Qaeda developed a special guerrilla unit, Brigade 055, dedicated specifically to helping the Taliban fight the Northern Alliance.<sup>871</sup>

Al Qaeda reaped some indirect popular support as a result of its association with the Taliban. The Taliban originated as a small vigilante militia in Kandahar in 1994 and slowly developed the support of powerful Durrani Pashtun traders and cheiftans.<sup>872</sup> As the Taliban consolidated control over and brought order to Afghanistan it gained legitimacy and popular support.<sup>873</sup> By September 2001, the Taliban controlled about ninety percent of Afghanistan.<sup>874</sup>

Al Qaeda relations with the Taliban were occasionally rocky. Al Qaeda frequently angered the Taliban with its publicity campaigns, as the campaigns brought negative international attention to the Taliban's role in providing safehaven to the group. Mullah Omar requested that Bin Laden halt his international media campaign in 1996 and Bin Laden agreed to remain silent. However, in 1998 Bin Laden issued a second fatwa and held numerous press conferences.<sup>875</sup> The Taliban became internally divided about how to deal with al Qaeda's provocative media strategy. Some Taliban officials,

---

<sup>869</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 171.

<sup>870</sup> Bergen (2006), 161.

<sup>871</sup> Gunaratna, 40.

<sup>872</sup> Coll, 285.

<sup>873</sup> Bergen (2006), 160.

<sup>874</sup> Byman (2005), 194.

<sup>875</sup> Wright, 262.

including the Foreign Minister Wakil Muttawakil, wanted to expel Bin Laden from Afghanistan while officials, such as Mullah Omar, strongly opposed expelling the group.<sup>876</sup>

The US Embassy bombings led to a US cruise missile attack on Afghanistan in August 1998 and further taxed the patience of some elements of the Taliban.<sup>877</sup> For other elements of the Taliban, the US attacks in 1998 brought them even closer to al Qaeda and Bin Laden. Bin Laden again antagonized some Taliban officials by giving an inflammatory interview to Al Jazeera's bureau chief in Pakistan in December 1998.<sup>878</sup>

Al Qaeda also had internal debates about the merits of a media campaign that could potentially get them expelled from Afghanistan. In an internal al Qaeda memo from 1999, two Syrian members in Kabul considered the downside of a campaign for popular support: "In short, our brother Abu Abdullah's [Bin Laden] latestest troublemaking with the Taliban and the Leader of the Faithful [Mullah Omar] jeopardizes the Arabs, and the Arab presence, today in all of Afghanistan, for no good reason... The strangest thing I have heard so far is Abu Abdullah's saying that he wouldn't listen to the Leader of the Faithful when he asked him to stop giving interviews... I think our brother [Bin Laden] has caught the disease of screens, flashes, fans, and applause."<sup>879</sup>

Bin Laden compensated for this antagonism by developing strong personal ties to Mullah Omar. In the spring of 2001 Bin Laden and Mullah Omar hosted a gathering of

---

<sup>876</sup> Bergen (2006), 219.

<sup>877</sup> Burke, 164.

<sup>878</sup> Bergen (2006), 241.

<sup>879</sup> Alan Cullison, "Inside Al-Qaeda's Hard Drive," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2004.

Taliban supporters where Bin Laden announced that he had sworn his loyalty and allegiance to Mullah Omar.<sup>880</sup> Ultimately, the Taliban continued to protect Bin Laden and al Qaeda, alleging that they had lost track of the terrorist leader in Afghanistan, which was almost certainly untrue.<sup>881</sup>

Despite al Qaeda's relative inattention to local popular support beyond that offered by the Taliban, the group orchestrated some small-scale public support campaigns. In 1998, Bin Laden circulated hundreds of 100 Pakistani Rupee notes that featured his face and a satire of an American request for information about him.<sup>882</sup> Allegedly, several posters widely available in Pakistan featured Bin Laden riding on a white horse, according to al Qaeda scholar Rohan Gunaratna, reminding the viewer of the Prophet Mohammed who rode a white horse into battle.<sup>883</sup> Bin Laden had to limit his 'public' exposure in the al Qaeda camps, however, due to security concerns, and while many aspiring jihadists would come to hear him speak probably only a few were allowed to see him.<sup>884</sup>

*Popular Support: International.* Al Qaeda's international support increased substantially between 1996 and 2001. The increase is the result of a boost in inflammatory public statements and a series of successful al Qaeda attacks. The group's public communications, including articles, videos, audio tapes and interviews, increased

---

<sup>880</sup> Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, (Random House: New York, 2002), 155.

<sup>881</sup> Burke, 168.

<sup>882</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>883</sup> Gunaratna, 41.

<sup>884</sup> Bergen (2006), 258.

from an average of 1.3 per year between 1993 and 1995 to 6.5 a year between 1996 and 2001.<sup>885</sup>

Beginning in the winter of 1996, al Qaeda made big changes to its media strategy. Bin Laden began to reach out to international and English-language media to deliver sermons and warnings.<sup>886</sup> In some cases he responded to international media organizations reaching out to him for interviews.<sup>887</sup> Bin Laden considered the shift in al Qaeda's media strategy as critical to its success as a international terrorist organization. Sometime between 1997 and 1998, Bin Laden wrote Mullah Omar a letter where he stated: "Many international media agencies corresponding with us requesting an interview with us [al Qaeda]. We believe that this is a good opportunity to make Muslims aware of what is taking place [in] the land of the two Holy Mosques [Saudi Arabia] as well as what is happening here in Afghanistan. It is obvious that the media war in this century is one the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90 percent of the total preparation for the battles."<sup>888</sup> Bin Laden hypothesized that ninety percent of al Qaeda's guerrilla campaign was a battle for the hearts of the Muslim world.

Al Qaeda's message of expelling foreign influence from Muslim lands stayed constant throughout the 1990s, but its focus on expelling Americans increased. Bin Laden believed that terrorist groups focused solely on attacking local rulers and Israel did not go far enough as they missed the opportunity to attack the "head of the snake."<sup>889</sup>

---

<sup>885</sup> IntelCenter, "al-Qaeda Attack/Messaging Statistics v.1.0," 22 August 2003, 10.

<sup>886</sup> Coll, 341.

<sup>887</sup> Bergen (2006), 426.

<sup>888</sup> Ibid, 426.

<sup>889</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 54.

Al Qaeda's first declaration of jihad against the US came in 1996. Bin Laden argued in his 1996 decree that the Muslim world was being overrun by an "alliance of Jews, Christians, and their agents."<sup>890</sup> He issued his first fatwa, or religious edict, on 26 May 1998 claiming that the US made a "clear declaration of war on God, his messenger, and Muslims."<sup>891</sup> His fatwa announced the formation of "The World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders", which included al Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and several other regional Islamic militant groups. The goal of World Jihad was to encourage Muslims throughout the world to target American civilians and military personnel.<sup>892</sup>

Al Qaeda began courting international and English-speaking news organizations in order to get its message to a wider Muslim audience. Bin Laden granted interviews to CNN, ABC News, and Al Jazeera.<sup>893</sup> Bin Laden instructed the al Qaeda media representative in London to invite British journalist Robert Fisk and Al Quds al Arabia journalist Abdel Bari Atwan to Afghanistan to interview the terrorist leader.<sup>894</sup> To impress foreign journalists, al Qaeda would sometimes put on a show to herald Bin Laden's arrival for his interviews. In one instance, according to Pakistani journalist Ismail Khan, Bin Laden arrived in a three-car escort while his bodyguards fired machine

---

<sup>890</sup> Blanchard, 2.

<sup>891</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>893</sup> Bergen (2006), 161.

<sup>894</sup> Atwan, 16.

guns and rocket-propelled grenades into the surrounding hills the moment he stepped out of the car.<sup>895</sup>

Al Qaeda's tactical interaction with its international media contacts also became more sophisticated in the 1996 to 2001 period. Bin Laden's February 1998 fatwa had been dictated over a satellite phone to Fawwaz in London who then delivered it to Al Quds al Arabia.<sup>896</sup>

In May 1998, Atef faxed Fawwaz another fatwa issued by a group of sheikhs in Afghanistan. Fawwaz was instructed to send the fatwa, along with Bin Laden's comments, to al Quds, Al Sharq al Awsat, Al-Moharer, and Al Hayat.<sup>897</sup> Atef told Fawwaz that it would be best if Bin Laden's comments on the fatwa were published separately, probably to maximize exposure.<sup>898</sup> Both the fatwa and Bin Laden's comments appeared a week later in Al Quds.<sup>899</sup> Al Qaeda followed up the fatwa with a press conference in Khost, Afghanistan.<sup>900</sup> Al Qaeda foot soldiers transported foreign journalists from Pakistan to the press conference and local guerrillas heralded al Qaeda's presence by firing their machine guns into the air.<sup>901</sup>

Later that month, Bin Laden gave a video interview to ABC News in Afghanistan. In August 1998, at least a few days before the attacks on US Embassies in East Africa, al Qaeda faxed a claim of responsibility for the attacks to a joint al Qaeda-Islamic Jihad

---

<sup>895</sup> Bergen (2006), 202.

<sup>896</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 20.

<sup>897</sup> Ibid.

<sup>898</sup> Ibid, Day 20.

<sup>899</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 69.

<sup>900</sup> Burke, 158.

<sup>901</sup> Ibid, 159.



office in Baku.<sup>902</sup> The office was given orders to prepare to transmit the message to Al Quds when they got the word from headquarters.<sup>903</sup>

Al Qaeda leaders also increased their personal contacts with journalists. Sometime in early 1998, Bin Laden sent a letter to an associate in Pakistan asking him to increase payments to selected journalists.<sup>904</sup> Zawahiri conversed regularly with Pakistani journalist Yusufzai via a satellite telephone, including immediately before and after the 1998 cruise missile strikes.<sup>905</sup> Bin Laden called Al Quds editor Atwan after the missile strikes to assure Atwan that he and his deputies survived the strikes.<sup>906</sup>

All the while, Bin Laden and his committee crafted his public image with precision. For example, in one Al Quds interview, Bin Laden did not allow the interviewer to record their conversation so that if he made a mistake the recording could not be used to tarnish his image.<sup>907</sup>

Al Qaeda's media committee played an important role in delivering the group's message. The media committee was responsible for issuing statements and reports in support of the group's operations.<sup>908</sup> An internal al Qaeda document highlights the

---

<sup>902</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 69.

<sup>903</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>904</sup> Burke, 158.

<sup>905</sup> Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Ladin: The Man Who Declared War on America*, (Prima Publishing: Roseville, CA, 2001), 289.

<sup>906</sup> Ibid, 293.

<sup>907</sup> Bergen (2006), 170.

<sup>908</sup> Blanchard, 1.

committee's central role in providing information to Muslims about the plans of al Qaeda's adversaries.<sup>909</sup>

The media committee worked closely with the operational side of al Qaeda. KSM, the chief operative and manager of the 9/11 attacks, occasionally worked with the media committee during his career and was appointed by Bin Laden in October of 2000 to head the committee.<sup>910</sup> Al Qaeda's media representative in London, Fawwaz also played an important role in the group's publicity campaign. Fawwaz delivered Bin Laden's 1998 fatwa to media outlets in London, keeping in contact with top al Qaeda leaders with a satellite phone.<sup>911</sup> From 1998 to 2000, al Qaeda members made over 200 calls to Fawwaz, probably to discuss and calibrate al Qaeda's media strategy and to arrange for journalists to meet with Bin Laden in Afghanistan.<sup>912</sup>

It appears that al Qaeda's media strategy paid off in some instances and attracted Muslims as far afield as Europe and the United States. For example, al Qaeda member Abdessater Dhamane came to Afghanistan in 2000 after being inspired by a news program on Bin Laden in Denmark. Dhamane would assassinate Ahmed Shah Massoud on 9 September 2001 for al Qaeda.<sup>913</sup>

While its statements and rhetoric were important for international support, al Qaeda's attacks also increased its popular appeal. Al Qaeda used the successful attack on

---

<sup>909</sup> Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy, *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-000078.

<sup>910</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 2. / The 9/11 Commission Report, 150.

<sup>911</sup> Corbin, 66.

<sup>912</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>913</sup> Bergen (2006), 258.

the USS Cole in 2000 to increase support and improve recruiting. Following the attack, KSM produced a video that included a re-enactment of the attack mixed with images of al Qaeda training camps and Muslims suffering in Chechnya and Palestine.<sup>914</sup> The video was widely disseminated and inspired many young men from Saudi Arabia and Yemen to travel to Afghanistan for al Qaeda training, according to US officials.<sup>915</sup> The US Embassy in Nairobi was chosen as a target for the attack in 1998 because the Ambassador was a woman, which al Qaeda reasoned would give the attack more media coverage.<sup>916</sup>

US attacks against al Qaeda also proved to be a powerful driver of popular support. US cruise missile attacks in Afghanistan in 1998 generated large demonstrations in Pakistan and Egypt and led to a wave of pro-Bin Laden iconography across the Muslim world.<sup>917</sup> Pakistani journalist Rahmullah Yusufzai argued that the US cruise missile strikes made Bin Laden a cult hero in Pakistan.<sup>918</sup> Journalists Jason Burke argues that donations to al Qaeda, which had been lagging, increased markedly after the strikes.<sup>919</sup>

This method of attracting support would seem to be in conflict with al Qaeda's desire to maintain local popular support. While being attacked was good for international support and sympathy, the local population might resent al Qaeda for attracting such deadly attention of their region. There is a gap in our understanding of how strikes

---

<sup>914</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 191.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>916</sup> Corbin, 81.

<sup>917</sup> Burke, 163.

<sup>918</sup> Bodonsky, 295.

<sup>919</sup> Burke, 163.

against al Qaeda affected the sentiment of the locals affected by the strikes. Given that al Qaeda had privileged international popular support over local popular support, due in part to the Taliban's protection, it is not surprising that they made this tradeoff.

Al Qaeda had other means of attracting popular support. The group relied on informal support networks in places like Saudi Arabia and Yemen to radicalize young men and direct them towards al Qaeda. Some of the Saudi operatives involved in 9/11 were likely recruited through sympathetic contacts at universities and mosques in Saudi Arabia.<sup>920</sup> In 2000, Bin Laden married his fourth wife, who hailed from the northern tribes of Yemen. Al Qaeda already had close relations with the Islamic Army of Aden, an Islamic group from the south of the country, but his new marriage solidified his contacts with the northern Yemeni Al Islah Party.<sup>921</sup>

Al Qaeda's media strategy introduced several operational vulnerabilities in the 1996 to 2001 period. At the strategic level, al Qaeda's inflammatory media statements ultimately had to be backed with action against the group's declared enemies. Al Qaeda came under increase pressure to produce results that matched its rhetoric. In an interview with Al Quds in Tora Bora in November 1996, Bin Laden defended the fact that al Qaeda had not yet attacked despite its proclamation to do so in August 1996: "Preparations for major operations take a certain amount of time, unlike minor operations. If we wanted small actions, the matter would have been easily carried out immediately after the [August 1996] statement."<sup>922</sup>

---

<sup>920</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 233.

<sup>921</sup> Gunaratna, 48.

<sup>922</sup> Burke, 150.

Al Qaeda also came under pressure from Taliban leader Mullah Omar to discontinue its media campaign. The Taliban were coming under increased scrutiny by the international community and Mullah Omar unsuccessfully relayed this concern to Bin Laden when al Qaeda launched its media campaign in 1996.<sup>923</sup>

*Intelligence: Local and International.* Al Qaeda's intelligence capabilities were more sophisticated in this period as the group conducted intelligence collection in support of its terrorist operations.

Locally, al Qaeda's intelligence efforts remained fairly basic and consisted mostly of physical surveillance of its facilities and open source collection to support intelligence analysis by al Qaeda's leaders. One internal al Qaeda memo provided Atef's assessment of foreign reconnaissance aircraft activity near an al Qaeda compound.<sup>924</sup> This memo suggests that al Qaeda not only provided surveillance support for al Qaeda facilities but also may have kept formal records of incidents and patterns.

Throughout this period, al Qaeda kept track of world events and provided leaders with intelligence reports based on open sources. In the late 1990s, KSM was part of the effort to collect news articles for al Qaeda leaders.<sup>925</sup> Al Qaeda members sometimes learned of operations after hearing about them from international news agencies, such as Al Jazeera.<sup>926</sup> Leaders would sometimes send operatives to Internet cafes to collect open source information. For example, al Qaeda operative Iyman Faris searched for

---

<sup>923</sup> Wright, 247.

<sup>924</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-801138.

<sup>925</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 149.

<sup>926</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-003251.

information on ultralight aircraft at an Internet café in Karachi, Pakistan at the behest of a top al Qaeda leader in 2001.<sup>927</sup> Faris then provided a hard copy of the open source report to the individual. In many cases, top leaders probably received clippings from Arab and foreign press or breaking news from clippings of daily wire services.<sup>928</sup> After visiting Bin Laden in Afghanistan, Al Quds editor Atwan reported that Bin Laden had a huge archive of data in hard copy and soft copy formats, including press clippings.<sup>929</sup> Al Qaeda's Nairobi cell also followed local and international press reporting assiduously.<sup>930</sup>

Al Qaeda's intelligence collection operations for its international operations increased in sophistication in the 1996 to 2001 period. Al Qaeda probably developed an intelligence collection protocol for its terrorist cells during this period. Al Qaeda operative Owhali testified that the terrorist cell's intelligence chief was the most important member of the cell. The intelligence chief, according to Owhali, assessed the operational environment and then assigned deputies and case agents to manage and conduct the tasks needed to complete the mission.<sup>931</sup>

After the cell conducted surveillance of a series of targets, the intelligence was then sent to Afghanistan, where al Qaeda leaders would study the information and decide whether to move ahead with the operation, according to al Qaeda operative Kherchtou.<sup>932</sup>

---

<sup>927</sup> US v Iyman Faris, Statement of Facts, United States District Court for the District of Eastern Virginia, Criminal Case.

<sup>928</sup> Atwan, 34.

<sup>929</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>930</sup> Haroun Fazul Letter in Nairobi, acquired by PBS Frontline, available at: [www.pbs.frontline.org](http://www.pbs.frontline.org).

<sup>931</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 767, 5.

<sup>932</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 11.

Al Qaeda leaders seemed to have played a role in the analysis of intelligence for several operations. The leaders played such a role in the US Embassy attacks. Al Qaeda cell members in Nairobi would type up security and intelligence updates and then fax the reports to Pakistan.<sup>933</sup> From Pakistan they were delivered to al Qaeda leaders by courier.<sup>934</sup> Al Qaeda was probably using the Internet to transmit some of its collected intelligence. In an internal al Qaeda memo from operative Abu Huthayfa to Bin Laden in June 2000, Abu Huthayfa notes that websites such as [www.driveway.com](http://www.driveway.com) allowed users to send up to 100MB of data to one another in one transmission.<sup>935</sup>

While cells probably had specific targets in mind when beginning intelligence collection, there is evidence that al Qaeda cells used surveillance to search for targets of opportunity. For example, the cell responsible for the attack on the USS Cole set up a surveillance post in the hills overlooking the Aden harbor with the intention of finding a vulnerable US vessel.<sup>936</sup>

Al Qaeda also collected intelligence by conducting “dry runs” of operations to detect the security reaction to provocative or suspicious behaviors. Al Qaeda operative Khallad tested security on an international flight from Malaysia to Hong Kong in 1999 by bringing box cutters in his toiletries kit. During one of his flights he removed his toiletries kit from his carry-on bags and noted the reaction of passengers and flight

---

<sup>933</sup> Ibid, Day 12.

<sup>934</sup> Ibid, Day 12.

<sup>935</sup> Bergen (2006), 427.

<sup>936</sup> United States of America v. Jamal Ahmed Mohammed Ali Al-Badawi, et al., S(12) 98 Cr. 1023 (KTD), Southern District Court of New York.

stewards.<sup>937</sup> Bin Laden originally asked Khallad to conduct this intelligence collection and it is likely that Khallad reported this information back to him.

Open sources remained a staple of al Qaeda intelligence collection. The al Qaeda manual known as *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants* argues that 80 percent of intelligence relevant to the terrorist mission is available in open sources.<sup>938</sup> The manual notes that the percentage varies depending on the openness of the government but that is it possible to get most information from newspapers, magazines, books, periodicals and broadcasts.<sup>939</sup> The 9/11 Commission report cites four instances where KSM and his 9/11 operatives used the Internet to gather information or facilitate communications.<sup>940</sup>

Additionally, operatives could reference the Encyclopedia of Jihad, the fifth chapter of which is dedicated to lessons on spying, military intelligence, sabotage, communication, security within jihad, and secret observation.<sup>941</sup>

Al Qaeda used local support networks to gather intelligence as well. The al Qaeda cell in Nairobi used a local operative to learn about Nairobi and gather

---

<sup>937</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 158-159.

<sup>938</sup> *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants*

<sup>939</sup> Sharad S. Chauhan, *The al Qaeda Threat*, (APH Publishing House: New Delhi, 2003), 103.

<sup>940</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists*, Before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence United States House of Representatives, May 4, 2006, 11.

<sup>941</sup> Chauhan, 14.



intelligence.<sup>942</sup> Al Qaeda operative Odeh testified that locals relied on to gather intelligence did not have to be full-fledged members of al Qaeda.<sup>943</sup>

There is limited evidence of al Qaeda espionage operations against key adversaries during this period. In one instance, however, al Qaeda recruited a US Naval enlistee to collect information on the movement of US battle groups. Al Qaeda operative Babar Ahmed ran a jihadist website and received information from the enlistee about the US destroyer on which he was stationed, the USS Benfold, via Ahmed's website.<sup>944</sup> The enlistee was sympathetic to al Qaeda's mission but had no prior connections to the group. He provided Ahmed with information about his ship's movements, its battle group formation, and details about the best way to attack the ship with a small boat and RPGs.<sup>945</sup>

*Counterintelligence: Local.* Al Qaeda increased the sophistication of its local counterintelligence procedures in the 1996 to 2001 period.

Al Qaeda's controlled territory offered key counterintelligence and security advantages. While al Qaeda could move freely in and out of Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan, most of its adversaries probably encountered some difficulty recruiting sources and preparing operations in these areas. Journalist Steve Coll reported that al

---

<sup>942</sup> Burke, 144.

<sup>943</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 12.

<sup>944</sup> United States of America v. Babar Ahmed and Azzam Publications, District of Connecticut, 2004.

<sup>945</sup> Ibid.

Qaeda's adversaries had an easier time recruiting Afghan agents in the Jalalabad region, where the Taliban's control was weak.<sup>946</sup>

Though the Taliban's agenda occasionally differed from al Qaeda's, the Taliban often helped the group improve its security. Following a series of security threats in Jalalabad in 1996, Mullah Omar asked Bin Laden to move his organization to the Taliban-controlled area of Kandahar.<sup>947</sup> Omar almost certainly used this 'invitation' to keep a better eye on the publicity-hungry Bin Laden, but al Qaeda would also benefit from the closer ties to the ruling Taliban.

With the volume of recruits flowing into al Qaeda camps, the group developed systematic camp security and counterintelligence procedures. Al Qaeda operative Owhali testified that when he first arrived at the Khaldan training camp in Afghanistan he immediately began to use an alias and was told by the camp supervisor that camp members would never again use their real names.<sup>948</sup> Shadi Abdalla, who served as Bin Laden's bodyguard in Afghanistan in 2000, reported that al Qaeda member Ramsi Binalshibh wore a veil at training camps because he feared that there could be spies among the recruits.<sup>949</sup> Al Qaeda operative Iyman Faris told US authorities that some al Qaeda members at the training camps wore black scarves, probably to mask their

---

<sup>946</sup> Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, (The Penguin Press: New York, 2004), 471.

<sup>947</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 65.

<sup>948</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 767, 3.

<sup>949</sup> Bergen (2006), 263.

identity.<sup>950</sup> According to an internal al Qaeda document known as the “New Recruits Form”, recruits must leave all forbidden items out of the camp, including tape recorders, radios, cameras or video equipment.<sup>951</sup> This indicates that al Qaeda believed that photographs of its personnel and facilities could pose a threat to camp security.

Though al Qaeda vigorously cultivated its connections to select media organizations and journalists, the group took great care to manage and monitor these entities when they came into al Qaeda’s camps. After ABC News’ John Miller taped an interview with Bin Laden, al Qaeda’s technical experts seized the tape, erased the faces of several al Qaeda members caught on tape during the interview, and then returned the tape to Miller.<sup>952</sup> CNN journalist Peter Bergen and CNN correspondent Peter Arnett had to pass a number of security checks before interviewing Bin Laden in 1997. The journalists first had to travel to London to be vetted by al Qaeda representative Fawwaz, who asked them if they worked for the US government. When they were approved to meet with Bin Laden a month later, the two men were greeted in Afghanistan by a coterie of al Qaeda security guards, who told them they couldn’t bring their own camera for security reasons.<sup>953</sup> To prevent the journalists from retracing their steps to al Qaeda’s facilities, the men were blindfolded and driven to the camp, switching vehicles several times.<sup>954</sup> Just before entering the camp, the journalists were told that if they had tracking

---

<sup>950</sup> US v Iyman Faris, Statement of Facts, United States District Court for the District of Eastern Virginia, Criminal Case.

<sup>951</sup> Bergen (2006), 406.

<sup>952</sup> Wright, 264.

<sup>953</sup> Bergen (2006), 180.

<sup>954</sup> Bergen (2004).

devices they would be killed, unless they declared them to al Qaeda security

immediately.<sup>955</sup> Bergen alleges that they were also swept for electronic devices.<sup>956</sup>

Other journalists' accounts of meeting with Bin Laden corroborate this data. Al Quds editor Atwan was instructed to fly to Peshawar, Pakistan and was then contacted secretly by an intermediary before he met with Bin Laden.<sup>957</sup> Atwan was moved from Peshawar to a safehouse in Jalalabad and finally taken to an al Qaeda camp. Atwan recalls that the camp was well-protected, with anti-aircraft guns, armoured vehicles and a heavily controlled approach road.<sup>958</sup>

The group took extraordinary precautions to protect Bin Laden, in particular. Bin Laden sometimes had fourteen bodyguards at a time armed with automatic weapons.<sup>959</sup> When Saudi Arabia sent an assassin to kill Bin Laden in 1998, Bin Laden's armed entourage easily captured the man.<sup>960</sup> Al Qaeda selected only trusted Arabs to serve as bodyguards for Bin Laden to eliminate the chances of a 'turned' Afghan or Taliban bodyguard trying to kill or spy on the leader.<sup>961</sup> Former Bin Laden bodyguard Abdalla reported that bodyguards were only trusted after they had served for an extended time in Bin Laden's entourage.<sup>962</sup> Before Abdalla was fully trusted, he was only allowed near

---

<sup>955</sup> Bergen (2006), 181.

<sup>956</sup> Bergen (2004).

<sup>957</sup> Atwan, 23.

<sup>958</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>959</sup> Bergen (2006), 241.

<sup>960</sup> Ibid, 241.

<sup>961</sup> Daniel Byman, "Strategic Surprise and the September 11 Attacks," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2005, 165. / Gunaratna, 42.

<sup>962</sup> Bergen (2006), 263.

Bin Laden when the leader was on the move.<sup>963</sup> Bin Laden also had special protection from new al Qaeda recruits. Any recruit that wanted to meet with Bin Laden had to go through additional vetting.<sup>964</sup>

Bin Laden rarely spent two nights in the same place and would move around Afghanistan in a convoy of up to twenty vehicles, armed with rocket launchers, surface to air missiles, and automatic weapons.<sup>965</sup> Bin Laden would travel very secretly, often showing up by surprise after his security detail cleared and guarded the route he was planning to take.<sup>966</sup> For the most part, Bin Laden's arrival was not heralded by fanfare and rocket-fire, unless al Qaeda was making a propaganda film or trying to impress journalists.<sup>967</sup> On the other hand, Steve Coll reported that Bin Laden's journey's within Afghanistan sometimes followed a predictable path: he would move from Kandahar to Ghwr province, where there was a valley he enjoyed visiting, and then to Jalalabad and back to Kandahar.<sup>968</sup>

Bin Laden's living quarters were relatively easy to secure given the remoteness of the al Qaeda camps. He lived in a concrete compound surrounded by a ten-foot wall in the middle of an isolated desert on the outskirts of Kandahar.<sup>969</sup> An attempt to breach this fortress would probably have been easy for Bin Laden's security detail to detect.

---

<sup>963</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>964</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>965</sup> Simon Reeve, *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism*, (Northeastern University Press: Boston, 1999), 193.

<sup>966</sup> Bergen (2006), 265.

<sup>967</sup> Ibid, 265.

<sup>968</sup> Coll, 500.

<sup>969</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 112.

Al Qaeda had effective local security procedures for its members as well. Following their terrorist operations, members anticipated US retaliation strikes at the camps and would flee the camps. Al Qaeda leaders fled Kandahar for the countryside after the US Embassy bombings in 1998.<sup>970</sup> General camp warnings were issued two weeks before the USS Cole attack and ten days before the 9/11 attacks.<sup>971</sup> During such an alert, al Qaeda members would leave the camps with their families and Bin Laden would remain sequestered until the alert was cancelled.<sup>972</sup> For the USS Cole attack, Bin Laden split up his top leaders, sending Atef to a location in Kandahar and Zawahiri to Kabul, thereby reducing the odds that the group's top leaders would be killed in a single strike.<sup>973</sup> Before the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden and Zawahiri fled to the mountains of Khost.<sup>974</sup>

To protect the group against espionage and information leakage, al Qaeda expected high security awareness among its recruits and mid-level managers. An internal al Qaeda memo lists the qualities of potential leaders of the group's information committee. Every leader is required to have five years of work experience and be able to keep a secret.<sup>975</sup> Another al Qaeda memo provides details of a computer system used to track al Qaeda personnel matters.<sup>976</sup> The memo states that each recruit should have

---

<sup>970</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>971</sup> Huge CI vulnerability for the attack cell, but tradeoff with local security.

<sup>972</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 250.

<sup>973</sup> Wright, 331.

<sup>974</sup> Ibid 356.

<sup>975</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-000078.

<sup>976</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-000112.

“continuous personnel follow-up which accompanies him to any place he is transferred.”<sup>977</sup> According to the same memo, recruits are encouraged to take courses in member security, group security, and communications security.<sup>978</sup> Al Qaeda established special training course at some of its camps to improve recruits’ security practices and their ability to set up and run a clandestine cell.<sup>979</sup> New arrivals in al Qaeda camps were given extra scrutiny. Before these new comers were granted access to the camp they had to surrender their personal belongings.<sup>980</sup> In some cases, camp supervisors would personally assess a new comer to determine if the recruit was sincere in his commitment to al Qaeda’s goals.<sup>981</sup>

Al Qaeda practiced good communications security in this period as well. Internal al Qaeda communications recommended that members not use email or the telephone but faxes and couriers instead.<sup>982</sup> It is unclear why al Qaeda believed that fax machines were more secure than telephones. Before 9/11, Bin Laden used Inmarsat satellite telephones and possibly two electronic scramblers to encrypt his conversations.<sup>983</sup>

The group also adapted its communication security procedures to changes in their adversaries’ methods. When several individuals connected to al Qaeda abroad were compromised in 1998, al Qaeda members in Afghanistan began to rely more heavily on a

---

<sup>977</sup> Ibid.

<sup>978</sup> Ibid.

<sup>979</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant’s Exhibit 767, 4.

<sup>980</sup> Bergen (2006), 264.

<sup>981</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>982</sup> Cullison.

<sup>983</sup> Reeve, 206.

communication coding system called the one-time-pad system.<sup>984</sup> The group also changed code names for personnel and facilities.<sup>985</sup> The 9/11 Commission determined that al Qaeda's senior leadership stopped using a particular means of communication almost immediately after a leak to the Washington Times, which made it more difficult for US authorities to eavesdrop on their conversations.<sup>986</sup>

Al Qaeda developed more systematic methods for securing its documents and files. An internal al Qaeda memo recommends keeping personnel files in a safe place in the main office of headquarters.<sup>987</sup> The same memo is itself classified as "Very Secret", suggesting that the group altered the way it protected a document based on its sensitivity.<sup>988</sup> An al Qaeda computer recovered after the fall of the Taliban in 2001 provided even more detail of the group's document security practices. The computer, probably belonging to Zawahiri, contained approximately a thousand text documents, encrypted and protected with passwords, written in what one journalist assessed as "an elliptical and evolving system of code words."<sup>989</sup>

Al Qaeda's most dangerous local counterintelligence threats resulted directly from its campaign to garner international popular support—specifically, its contact with international media and its methods for claiming credit for attacks.

---

<sup>984</sup> The one-time pad system is a simple cryptographic mechanism, used by the Allied and Axis powers in World War II, that pairs individual letters with randomly assigned numbers and letters that made messages readable only to those who know the pairing key.

<sup>985</sup> Cullison.

<sup>986</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 127.

<sup>987</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-000112.

<sup>988</sup> Ibid.

<sup>989</sup> Cullison.



Al Qaeda's contact with the media introduced numerous counterintelligence vulnerabilities. First, group members had to interact with the media over the telephone, Internet, or in person to convey their message or threat. Atef called Al Quds editor Atwan on 21 August 1998, after US cruise missiles hit Afghanistan, to tell Atwan that Bin Laden and key group leaders were still alive.<sup>990</sup> Al Qaeda needed to make this call to reassure its base of international supporters that they were still in business, but the phone call itself could have provided valuable targeting information to its adversaries. Bin Laden and Zawahiri also used their phones to contact the media following the 1998 cruise missiles strikes.<sup>991</sup>

Second, al Qaeda allowed certain interviews to be video-taped, which occasionally offered valuable information about the group's location, faces of unknown al Qaeda operatives, and the health of key individuals. During the ABC News interview in 1998, al Qaeda technical experts had to black out the faces of two of its operatives who accidentally got in the picture with Bin Laden. The two Saudis were Mohammed Owhali and Jihad al Azzam, who would fly to Kenya to join the al Qaeda cell responsible for the US Embassy bombing in Nairobi.<sup>992</sup> Had the technical experts not caught the mistake, the identity of these two men could have been used to apprehend them before the attack. Moreover, the fact that al Qaeda needs to employ technical experts introduces a counterintelligence vulnerability. These individuals could be targeted and recruited by intelligence services at universities before or after they have joined al Qaeda.

---

<sup>990</sup> Atwan, 55.

<sup>991</sup> Wright, 283.

<sup>992</sup> Ibid 264.

Al Qaeda's need to claim responsibility for its attacks also introduced vulnerabilities. Before the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden insinuated to some trainees and high-level visitors that al Qaeda was planning a large attack against the US. KSM and Atef urged Bin Laden to exercise greater discretion and refrain from bragging about the upcoming mission.<sup>993</sup> In some cases, al Qaeda transmitted their claim of credit before the attack occurred, possibly to ensure that another group would not make the first claim of credit. Perhaps if law enforcement had closely monitored these transmissions they would have raised security alert levels at probably targets prior the attack.

Al Qaeda's campaign to reach out to the international media imperiled its relationship with the Taliban at times. When Mullah Omar asked al Qaeda to move from Jalalabad to Kandahar in 1996 he was probably motivated by a desire to keep a better eye on Bin Laden in light of his developing inflammatory media campaign.<sup>994</sup> Elements of the Taliban were set against Bin Laden as his inflammatory statements brought negative international attention to the Taliban regime. Taliban Foreign Minister Muttawakil ordered that Bin Laden be placed under surveillance and asked Mullah Omar to reign in the terrorist leader.<sup>995</sup> Allegedly, Bin Laden used to say of Muttawakil: "Two entities are against our jihad...one is the US, and the other is the Taliban's own foreign ministry."<sup>996</sup>

The group's record keeping also brought some counterintelligence setbacks. For example, al Qaeda recruiter Abu Zubaydah kept files on al Qaeda recruits, which he used

---

<sup>993</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 31.

<sup>994</sup> Wright, 247.

<sup>995</sup> Bergen (2006), 250.

<sup>996</sup> Ibid, 250.

to match individuals with required tasks.<sup>997</sup> It is probably necessary for a group to keep records of its personnel, and perhaps can even improve the group's counterespionage capabilities by keeping track of security violators. However, improper storage and destruction of such files backfired for al Qaeda when they evacuated Kabul on 12 November 2001. In 2001, journalist Alan Cullison purchased two al Qaeda computers containing sensitive organizational and operational information that had been looted from al Qaeda's central office.<sup>998</sup>

Al Qaeda also suffered from espionage in its camps and recruitment of its lower level members. Bin Laden's chief bodyguard in 2001, Abu Jandal, told reporters that an Afghan cook working for a foreign intelligence service provided information about Bin Laden's movements in August 1998.<sup>999</sup>

The nature of al Qaeda's controlled territory in Afghanistan also brought security vulnerabilities. Al Qaeda lived and trained in camps far removed from urban centers and, as a result, it was easier for the US to justify large-scale strikes against the group.<sup>1000</sup> Had al Qaeda been based in an urban center, the US may have hesitated to strike the group to avoid generating unacceptable collateral damage.

*Counterintelligence: International.* Al Qaeda international counterintelligence capabilities in the 1996 to 2001 period were increasingly sophisticated and systematic.

The group established a formal system for evaluating individuals coming to train at al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. Before candidates received training from al Qaeda

---

<sup>997</sup> Corbin, 79.

<sup>998</sup> Cullison.

<sup>999</sup> Atwan, 62.

<sup>1000</sup> Benjamin and Simon, 153.

they were screened and vetted at guesthouses and camps.<sup>1001</sup> Recruits would transit through Peshawar or Karachi, where they wait for up to two weeks while their papers were verified and their backgrounds scrutinized.<sup>1002</sup>

Al Qaeda had new comers fill out a “New Recruits Form” where an individual would indicate his security status in his country of origin, whether he could return to his country, how he arrived in Afghanistan, and the problems he encountered while traveling to Afghanistan.<sup>1003</sup> Recruits were asked to write an account of their trip to Afghanistan, presumably to assess other counterintelligence concerns associated with the new comer and to catalogue the counterintelligence vulnerabilities likely to encumber future travelers.

Once at the camps, recruits were kept away from sensitive facilities and individuals. Islamic conferences or summits were held in isolated buildings or tents in the camp so that trainees and other bystanders could not see who was attending.<sup>1004</sup> One al Qaeda training manual reminds recruits that keeping secrets and concealing information from even the closest of friends and relatives is a necessary qualification for membership.<sup>1005</sup> Recruits were also given advice on how to blend in and avoid surveillance once they were operating overseas. US authorities captured al Qaeda operative Ahmed Omar Abu Ali with a six-page document on how to avoid various forms

---

<sup>1001</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 67.

<sup>1002</sup> John Miller and Michael Stone, with Chris Mitchell, *The Cell: Inside the 9/11 Plot, and Why the FBI and CIA Failed to Stop It*, (Hyperion: New York, 2003), 260.

<sup>1003</sup> Bergen (2006), 403.

<sup>1004</sup> Bodonsky, 289.

<sup>1005</sup> Chauhan, 46.

of surveillance by government and private entities.<sup>1006</sup> Operatives sometimes received further counterintelligence instruction from al Qaeda members familiar with the country to which they would be deployed. Operatives Binalsheibh and Mohammed Atta received training in security precautions specific the United States from KSM in 2000 in Karachi.<sup>1007</sup>

The al Qaeda manual also provides members with counter interrogation tips. The manual instructs members to have prepared answers to questions about the purpose and length of their trips when traveling through airports.<sup>1008</sup> The manual tells members about what a common interrogation looks like and what techniques an interrogator will use to elicit information, including blindfolding and torture.<sup>1009</sup> Members are told that they should not speak to anyone in their prison cell because some prisoners could be enemy agents.<sup>1010</sup> Finally, the manual suggests that members memorize the procedures and content of the interrogation so that other members can learn from the experience.<sup>1011</sup>

Al Qaeda practiced good operational security in the 1996 to 2001 period. First, the group compartmented its operational cells. The 9/11 attacks offer an example of the degree to which al Qaeda restricted information about the operation among its cells. Only Bin Laden, KSM, Atef and a few senior hijackers knew about the specific timing,

---

<sup>1006</sup> United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, Criminal No. 1:05CR53, Feb 2005..

<sup>1007</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 167.

<sup>1008</sup> Chauhan, 83.

<sup>1009</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>1010</sup> Ibid, 164.

<sup>1011</sup> Ibid, 168.

targets, operatives, and method of attack.<sup>1012</sup> According to KSM, the thirty-four individuals involved in the 9/11 attacks were divided into five groups with varying access to operational details. The first group, the principal decision makers, consisted of Bin Laden, KSM, and Atef, Binalsheibh (the communications link between KSM and Atta), and Abu Turub al-Urduni (the trainer of the ‘muscle’ hijackers).<sup>1013</sup> These individuals would have known almost all the sensitive details of the operation.

The second group, the principal hijackers, consisted of Atta, Al Shehhi, Hani Hanjour, Ziad Jarrah, Nawaf al-Hamzi, and Khalid Mihdhar. These individuals were privy only to operational details that concerned their respective missions. The third group consisted of the other thirteen hijackers, all of whom were ‘muscle’ hijackers. These individuals did not learn much about the operation, including that they would flying hijacked airplanes into buildings, until Atta briefed them on the operation in August of 2001.<sup>1014</sup>

The fourth group consisted of four individuals who handled logistical, financial and training aspects of the operation and these individuals only knew that they were involved in an al Qaeda operation against the US. The fifth group consisted of the seven ‘muscle’ hijackers that were unable to get into the US and these men only knew that they were to be involved in a suicide operation inside the US.<sup>1015</sup>

---

<sup>1012</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant’s Exhibit 941, 21.

<sup>1013</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>1014</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant’s Exhibit 941, 25.

<sup>1015</sup> Ibid, 26.

The US Embassy operation followed a similar protocol. For example, al Qaeda technical advisor to the Nairobi attack Mohamed Odeh never met al Qaeda cell member Owali, who constructed the bomb and participated in the attack.<sup>1016</sup> All the while, the cell would report back to al Qaeda headquarters with security updates and requests for logistical support. One report back to headquarters, captured off of Fawwaz's computer, provided a security assessment and reported the cell's desire to secure cell communications with a satellite telephone.<sup>1017</sup>

It is possible that many other operations were compartmented in this manner. When camp graduates made their requests for operational and logistical support from al Qaeda, they did so separately and directly to Bin Laden and Atef. Thus, very few individuals were in a position to see al Qaeda's full operational picture.<sup>1018</sup>

Al Qaeda cells also enhanced operational security by blending into their local environments. Operation planners tried to select environments where blending in would be easy. While casing flights in 1999, al Qaeda operative Khallad traveled to Malaysia because Malaysians did not heavily scrutinize Saudi Arabians or suspected Islamist jihadists.<sup>1019</sup> Saudis were also used for the 9/11 attacks because the US did not scrutinize them as heavily as others coming from the Middle East.<sup>1020</sup> The Hamburg cell distanced themselves from Islamist extremists, wore Western clothing and shaved their beards.<sup>1021</sup>

---

<sup>1016</sup> Phil Hirschhorn, "Trial Spotlights America's Top Terrorist Threat," *The Journal of Counterterrorism & Security International*, 2001 Summer, Vol. 7, No. 4.

<sup>1017</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 20.

<sup>1018</sup> Burke, 188.

<sup>1019</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 158.

<sup>1020</sup> Burke, 222.

<sup>1021</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 167.

Al Qaeda operatives used code names and ‘Abu’ names to further increase security.

Operative Owhali could not provide the FBI with the true names of his colleagues when he became a US informant because he only knew their code names.<sup>1022</sup>

Al Qaeda’s operational security protocol included moving non-attack personnel out of the area of operations prior to the attack. For example, before the USS Cole operation, the senior commander of the attack left Yemen.<sup>1023</sup> Said Bahaji, the logistical support element for the Hamburg cell, fled to Pakistan several days before the 9/11 attacks.<sup>1024</sup> <sup>1025</sup> Several days before the US Embassy bombings, cell members not involved in the attack had mostly left East Africa.<sup>1026</sup>

Elements of al Qaeda enhanced operational security by securing internal documents that could give away sensitive details about the group. One al Qaeda cell member reported that he had collected the cell’s sensitive files and moved them to a secure location when he thought law enforcement personnel were watching the group.<sup>1027</sup>

The group also practiced good communications security. Operational planners consistently demonstrated good communications security awareness. Fawwaz demanded that Nairobi cell members not to call him on his telephone as he was certain that it was ‘tapped.’<sup>1028</sup> Only select members of the Nairobi cell were allowed to make international

---

<sup>1022</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant’s Exhibit 767, 2.

<sup>1023</sup> Burke, 193.

<sup>1024</sup> Vidino, 34.

<sup>1025</sup> This also introduces some CI vulnerabilities in that he knew the dates of the attack.

<sup>1026</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 69.

<sup>1027</sup> Haroun Fazul Letter in Nairobi, acquired by PBS Frontline, available at: [www.pbs.frontline.org](http://www.pbs.frontline.org).

<sup>1028</sup> Reeve, 192.



telephone calls, according to al Qaeda member Odeh.<sup>1029</sup> Atta reported to KSM that he had forbidden his 9/11 hijackers from calling their families to say goodbye to them before the attack.<sup>1030</sup> Very sensitive communications were conducted via couriers when possible. KSM was informed of the date of the 9/11 attacks by al Qaeda courier Zakariya Essabar, who hand-carried the letter from Germany to Afghanistan.<sup>1031</sup> The 9/11 hijackers used anonymous mail and Internet centers, such as Kinkos and Mail Boxes Etc, to send electronic and paper messages.<sup>1032</sup>

Al Qaeda couriers were typically recruited from among al Qaeda members who could maintain a low profile. Couriers would probably not know the purpose or end user of their ‘package’ and in some cases would hand off the ‘package’ to another courier.<sup>1033</sup> Al Qaeda used couriers to transfer funds as well as messages. Al Qaeda reportedly used a Pakistani-based hawaladar to move \$1 million from UAE to Pakistan, at which point another hawaladar passed the money to a courier who smuggled the funds into Afghanistan.<sup>1034</sup>

Al Qaeda also used encryption and coded messages to enhance communications security. Messages found on an al Qaeda computer recovered from Afghanistan were encrypted, sometimes with the one-time pad system or coded in the language of the

---

<sup>1029</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 12.

<sup>1030</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 245.

<sup>1031</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant’s Exhibit 941, 30.

<sup>1032</sup> Corbin, 217.

<sup>1033</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, “Monograph on Terrorist Financing,” 26.

<sup>1034</sup> Ibid.

multi-national firm.<sup>1035</sup> Odeh reported to US authorities that members in Kenya referred to jihad as work, weapons as tools, hand grenades as potatoes, and bad documents as papers.<sup>1036</sup> Bin Laden was referred to as the contractor and US and UK intelligence services were referred to as foreign competitors. The al Qaeda cell leader for the USS Cole attack sent a coded pager message to the operative in charge of filming the attack to indicate that the attack was imminent.<sup>1037</sup>

Owhali made a telephone call to his logistical contact in Nairobi following the attack and could not use coded language, so instead spoke cryptically to request a passport and money to get out of Kenya.<sup>1038</sup>

KSM actually advised his cells to use code words sparingly, as he believed overuse would attract the attention of hostile intelligence services. He asked his operatives to keep their messages as normal and as short as possible.<sup>1039</sup> KSM also delegated operational authority to his subordinates in order to keep his communication with his cells to a minimum.<sup>1040</sup>

Al Qaeda helped its operatives stay clandestine by providing them with forged documents. The al Qaeda manual recommends that every member have forged identity cards and passports.<sup>1041</sup> The group tried to forge or steal high-quality papers, particularly

---

<sup>1035</sup> Cullison.

<sup>1036</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 12.

<sup>1037</sup> 43, 15.

<sup>1038</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 767, 14.

<sup>1039</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 10.

<sup>1040</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>1041</sup> Chauhan, 51.

from Western countries.<sup>1042</sup> The al Qaeda office of passports and host country issues, based at the Kandahar airport and managed by Atef, altered passports, visas, and identification cards.<sup>1043</sup> Operatives probably received some training to alter documents on their own. Al Qaeda operative Ahmed Omar Abu Ali received training in document forgery in Saudi Arabia.<sup>1044</sup> As a testament to their training and preparation, al Qaeda operatives involved in the 9/11 operations carried a cache of alias documentation and pocket litter that supported their false identity, including ID cards and medical, banking and educational records.<sup>1045</sup>

Al Qaeda probably enjoyed enhanced operational security as a result of the close ties between individuals in its cells. Nairobi cell member Kherchtou testified that he joined al Qaeda with four of his friends.<sup>1046</sup> Training camps in Afghanistan also helped to bring members together with a shared experience, building confidence and creating an esprit de corps.<sup>1047</sup> Though there is no direct evidence that this closeness resulted in counterintelligence benefits, it is probable that members were less likely to betray their cell and their friends once these relationships were formed. On the other hand, it is possible that closeness would lead to informality and more non-essential communication, which could produce counterintelligence vulnerabilities. Hamburg cell members, for example, frequently emailed one another to share experiences and jokes, which helped

---

<sup>1042</sup> Vidino, 81.

<sup>1043</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 169.

<sup>1044</sup> United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, Criminal No. 1:05CR53, Feb 2005.

<sup>1045</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, “9/11 and Terrorist Travel,” 56.

<sup>1046</sup> Sageman, 111.

<sup>1047</sup> Ibid, 121.

them foster and maintain an emotional closeness.<sup>1048</sup> Thus, the closeness of individuals may have made them less susceptible to espionage but more susceptible to eavesdropping.

Al Qaeda may have engaged in more sophisticated counterintelligence practices, such as deception and rapid adaptation to security procedures. The al Qaeda manual counsels its members to mislead the adversary with fake telephone conversations if the adversary is monitoring calls.<sup>1049</sup> However, though the Nairobi cell believed its phones were tapped there was no evidence they engaged in deceptive communications. The manual also recommends that operatives agree on a purposefully misleading cover story in the event they are captured and interrogated.<sup>1050</sup> Deception operations require lots of coordination and pre-planning, and therefore are less likely to have been used by al Qaeda, particularly in any systematic manner.

On occasion, al Qaeda rapidly adapted its security procedures to prevent the leakage of sensitive information or to stay one step ahead of its adversaries' counterterrorism efforts. When al Qaeda member Khallad was captured in Yemen before the USS Cole operation, Bin Laden contacted a Yemeni officials and successfully negotiated Khallad's release. Bin Laden was worried that Khallad would break under interrogation and reveal Nashiri's plans to hit a US naval vessel in Yemen.<sup>1051</sup> KSM

---

<sup>1048</sup> Ibid, 159.

<sup>1049</sup> Chauhan, 60.

<sup>1050</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>1051</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 156.

anticipated the US security response to the 9/11 attacks and planned a second wave of attacks that relied on non-Arab country passport holders to conduct the mission.<sup>1052</sup>

Al Qaeda faced its share of counterintelligence setbacks in the 1996 to 2001 period. First, as al Qaeda spread itself out across the world, and remained centrally controlled, the need to keep in touch with its operatives via telephone and the Internet increased.<sup>1053</sup> Connections between the individuals made them vulnerable to monitoring and targeting by savvy intelligence services. For the US Embassy bombing operations al Qaeda operative Ahmed Abdallah in Tanzania used a cellular telephone to keep in touch with overall operational commander Saleh in Nairobi.<sup>1054</sup> Al Qaeda member Fawwaz calls the London-based media outlet Al Quds Al Arabia for over thirty minutes in February 1998 to dictate Bin Laden's fatwa to the newspaper.<sup>1055</sup> Yemeni telephone records from 1998 to 2000 show that the operatives involved in the USS Cole attack were talking to operatives involved in the US Embassy bombings.<sup>1056</sup>

Al Qaeda experienced a similar vulnerability as a result of its need to claim credit for its attacks. In many cases, al Qaeda relayed its claim of credit for an attack before the operation took place. For the US Embassy bombings, al Qaeda videotaped their would-be suicide bomber, Owhali, in Pakistan before he made the final trip to Kenya to prepare

---

<sup>1052</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 41.

<sup>1053</sup> Encouraging vulnerabilities: tight command and control has its disadvantages for a global group... global groups may need to be loose for communications security purposes.

<sup>1054</sup> Stephen Ulph, "Intelligence War Breaks out on the Jihadi Forums," *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 3, Issue 14, April 11, 2006, 9.

<sup>1055</sup> US v. UBL et al., Day 20.

<sup>1056</sup> Burke, 193.

for the operation.<sup>1057</sup> Al Qaeda headquarters then sent its media contact in London a letter claiming responsibility for the upcoming attack. They assumed Owhali would complete his suicide mission and so claimed in their letter that two Saudis in Nairobi and one Egyptian in Dar Es Salam had perished in the attacks.<sup>1058</sup> Before the operation, the Nairobi cell also sent a fax to the Cairo office of Al-Hayat newspaper from Egyptian Islamic Jihad threatening an imminent attack against US interests.<sup>1059</sup>

For this operation in particular, the adversary's intelligence service would have had the opportunity to intercept communications regarding an attack involving two Saudis and an Egyptian in specific locations, and perhaps could have obtained the video bearing Owhali's image. These communications also created counterintelligence problems in the post-attack environment. UK's security service tracked the claim of credit to Fawwaz in the wake of the US Embassy bombings and sent him to a maximum-security prison for his aid to al Qaeda.<sup>1060</sup>

Before the US Embassy and USS Cole attacks Bin Laden issued an interview and a video, respectively, threatening an attack on US interests. In both media events, Bin Laden put a 'teasing' clue about the upcoming attacks—for the USS Cole attack video he wore a distinctive, curved Yemeni dagger in his belt.<sup>1061</sup> This may have been subtle

---

<sup>1057</sup> Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 767, 6.

<sup>1058</sup> Gunaratna, 161.

<sup>1059</sup> Burke, 160.

<sup>1060</sup> Corbin, 89.

<sup>1061</sup> Wright, 331. ; Bin Laden's 'teasing clue' in his June 1998 interview with ABC news was his statement that he predicted a black day for Americans when they would bring their civilians and soldiers home in coffins—two months later al Qaeda attacked the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

manner of making sure credit was given to al Qaeda in the aftermath, but it also introduced some chance that the clue would be useful to those trying to prevent the attacks.

Al Qaeda's publicity campaign videos occasionally gave away sensitive information about the group. As Bin Laden became more popular in the Muslim world in the late 1990s, his 'public' demanded more information about him. Bin Laden obliged, and video interviews he granted to CNN, ABC News, and Al Jazeera gave away valuable information about his health and location.<sup>1062</sup> For example, Bin Laden claimed that he would regularly ride horseback for more than 70 kilometers—information that would be valuable for those assessing his health or those studying Bin Laden's modes of travel.

Al Qaeda also subjected itself to potentially crippling counterintelligence weakness in its extensive travel. The four pilots for the 9/11 operation passed through US immigration and customs inspections 17 times between 2000 and 2001. Ziad Jarrah alone entered the United States seven times.<sup>1063</sup>

Al Qaeda's reliance on personal connections for recruiting and advancement provided the group with counterintelligence advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, personal connections provided al Qaeda with a quick and low-cost vetting process. However, personal connections also muddled their decision-making about how to punish security violations. Bin Laden had a personal affiliation for 9/11 operative al-Midhar, and prevented KSM from excluding him from the 9/11 attacks after al-Midhar made an

---

<sup>1062</sup> Corbin, 91.

<sup>1063</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "9/11 and Terrorist Travel," 7.

unauthorized departure from San Diego in 2000.<sup>1064</sup> Shadi Abdalla, one of Bin Laden's bodyguards in Afghanistan, enjoyed a special position of trust in al Qaeda simply because Bin Laden's brother-in-law recruited him in Mecca and Binalsheibh had good person rapport with him.<sup>1065</sup>

Personal connections could also create vulnerabilities if an intelligence service can link individuals through kinship ties. Nearly every 'muscle' hijacker for the 9/11 operation could be linked to each other and other al Qaeda members through kinship and friendship.<sup>1066</sup>

Al Qaeda's use of face-to-face communications also had its counterintelligence advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, face-to-face meetings reduced al Qaeda's communications profile, making the interception of those conversations nearly impossible. On the other hand, face-to-face communications takes longer and requires traveling, which allows intelligence services to monitor an operative's physical movements more easily. For example, KSM reported that he would deliver oral updates to Bin Laden, which required him to travel for a day and a half in some instances.<sup>1067</sup> This slowed the organization's response, in theory, to information that KSM was collecting in the field—information that could have related to counterintelligence problems that needed immediate fixing. Al Qaeda's limited supply of trusted couriers

---

<sup>1064</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 21.

<sup>1065</sup> Bergen (2006), 262.

<sup>1066</sup> Sageman, 50.

<sup>1067</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 55.



probably also restricted its ability to move messages and funds quickly.<sup>1068</sup> All of the 9/11 hijackers met occasionally in Las Vegas and Florida, traveling together to and from these locations.<sup>1069</sup> This provided them with valuable face-to-face planning time but also could have implicated all of the hijackers if one of them had come under the scrutiny of the FBI.

Al Qaeda's strategy to provide its operational cells with a degree of autonomy generated several counterintelligence problems. First, operational planners did not always know whether their operatives were following security protocols. KSM reported that he instructed his hijackers not to talk to one another in the US, but he had no way of checking up on them to make sure.<sup>1070</sup> Second, planners could not easily discipline operatives when they violated protocol. KSM instructed al Qaeda operative Moussaoui not to mention airplanes in his communications with him or Binalsheibh but Moussaoui nevertheless mentioned flight training in an email. The greatest discipline KSM could exact on Moussaoui was to cut him out of the operation and require other operatives to cut off communication with him.<sup>1071</sup>

Operations that were even more autonomously designed had additional counterintelligence problems. Many al Qaeda operations were partially or completely self-financed. Some of the self-financed operations relied on criminal activities to raise funds. Conducting criminal activities in some cases raised the operatives' profiles and

---

<sup>1068</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "Monograph on Terrorist Financing," 26.

<sup>1069</sup> Sageman, 167.

<sup>1070</sup> Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941, 36.

<sup>1071</sup> Ibid, 49.

exposed them to law enforcement.<sup>1072</sup> Al Qaeda operatives arrested while preparing for the Millennium attack in Jordan had financed their operation with bank-robberies, burglary and forged checks.<sup>1073</sup> Even the 9/11 operation, which was fully funded, exposed itself to scrutiny when operative remitted their unspent funds back to al Qaeda before the attacks.<sup>1074</sup>

Al Qaeda also suffered from information stolen by spies in this period. Following al Qaeda's move to Afghanistan in 1996, the husband of one of the Bin Laden's nieces surrendered himself to Saudi Arabian intelligence and divulged details of Bin Laden's funding network.<sup>1075</sup> Al Qaeda member Al-Fadl also gave himself to US authorities in 1996, providing the US with a rare look at al Qaeda's inner workings.<sup>1076</sup>

*Summary.* Al Qaeda developed powerful adversaries in the Middle East and the West. Al Qaeda's structure in the 1996 to 2001 period remained relatively hierarchical, though the operatives deployed outside of Afghanistan retained some operational autonomy. Al Qaeda's access to financial resources, high quality personnel and controlled territories continued in the 1996 to 2001 period. Al Qaeda's local popular support remained relatively low, but the group's international increased substantially between 1996 and 2001. The increase is the result of a series of successful al Qaeda attacks and an increase in inflammatory public statements. Al Qaeda's intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities were more sophisticated in this period.

---

<sup>1072</sup> Javier Jordan and Robert Wesley, "The Madrid Attacks: Results of Investigations Two Years Later," *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume IV, Issue 5, March 9, 2006, 3.

<sup>1073</sup> Gunaratna, 116.

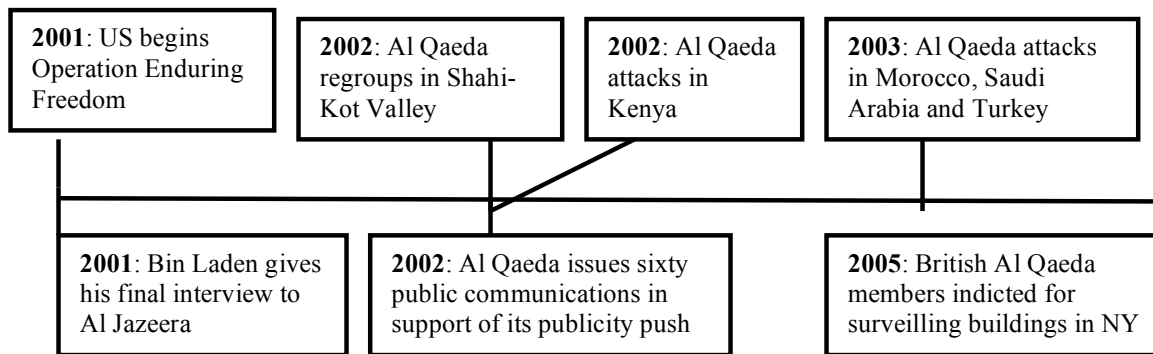
<sup>1074</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>1075</sup> Atwan, 53.

<sup>1076</sup> Bergen (2006), 155.

Al Qaeda enjoyed popular support in many locations and successfully co-opted locals into providing intelligence support. There is not much evidence that locals provided much counterintelligence support. However, the fact that al Qaeda could work in a foreign theater without being ‘turned over’ to local law enforcement gave the group a large counterintelligence advantage. Al Qaeda’s campaigns to generate popular support occasionally gave away sensitive information about its personnel and plans. Additionally, al Qaeda imperiled its relationship with the Taliban in its quest to generate widespread support, which could have caused al Qaeda to lose its controlled territory—arguably one of its most precious counterintelligence resources. Al Qaeda’s contact with the media introduced counterintelligence vulnerabilities as the group interacted with journalists by phone, Internet and in person.

*Al Qaeda Timeline: 2001 – 2005*



*Al Qaeda: 2001 – 2003*

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* After 11 September 2001, the US dramatically increased resources devoted to locating and destroying al Qaeda.

The US initiated *Operation Enduring Freedom* on 7 October 2001, in response to the al Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington, DC. The US assembled a coalition of 24 countries to accomplish this mission. The campaign began with a series of air strikes, while US intelligence personnel and special operations forces worked with the Northern Alliance and with anti-Taliban Pashtun forces.<sup>1077</sup> By 12 November, Coalition forces took the capital, Kabul, and by 7 December had taken key Taliban strongholds in Kunduz and Kandahar.

By March 2002, al Qaeda had regrouped in the Shahi-Kot Valley and Arma Mountains southeast of Zormat. The US launched Operation Anaconda in order to slowly squeeze al Qaeda forces in the region. US Predator drones circled the skies while US and Afghan troops, along with soldiers from Canada, Australia, Denmark, France, Germany and Norway swept through the mountains.<sup>1078</sup>

The US also increased its efforts to find and disrupt al Qaeda cells throughout the world. The US began working more closely with liaison partners. Al Qaeda's online presence increased in this time period as well, and the US continued its efforts at shutdown websites and chat rooms where al Qaeda was suspected of transmitting information or propaganda to its operatives.

Shutting down all websites proved very difficult, however. Roger Cressey, former NSC official for Counterterrorism in the Clinton Administration, depicted the futility of the US's cyber strategy arguing that the process was akin to a game of "whack-a-mole,"

---

<sup>1077</sup> Byman (2005), 216.

<sup>1078</sup> Wright, 372.

where al Qaeda could set up alternative websites with relative ease when one was shut down.<sup>1079</sup>

*Organizational Structure.* Al Qaeda's structure in the 2001 to 2003 period became relatively loose as the core of the group in the Afghan-Pakistan border region was essentially cut-off from its operatives deployed outside of Afghanistan. The al Qaeda core in Afghan-Pakistan tribal areas continued to issue strategic and inspirational direction to its some of its overseas operatives, though these individuals greater operational and tactical autonomy.<sup>1080</sup>

The organizational structure of al Qaeda's core probably remained hierarchical. An internal al Qaeda document dated March 20, 2002 lays out the requirements for joining the group, including: abiding by al Qaeda rules, obedience to leaders in charge without disobeying Islamic rules, and no connection between al Qaeda membership and any other Islamic group.<sup>1081</sup> This indicates that al Qaeda retained a high degree of command over its local membership.

Al Qaeda's international operatives appear to have enjoyed increased autonomy, though they continued to interact with the al Qaeda core. For example, Abdal Rahim al Nishiri, the al Qaeda operative responsible for the USS Cole attack, continued to plan terrorist operations in the Gulf, including the attack against a French oil tanker in October

---

<sup>1079</sup> Interview with Roger Cressey.

<sup>1080</sup> For the purposes of this case study, al Qaeda operatives are considered those who have some direct logistical, financial or communications connection to the al Qaeda core in the Afghan-Pakistan region. Individuals who were inspired by al Qaeda and adopted its mission, but did not have any logistical or material connection to the al Qaeda core, are not considered a part of al Qaeda.

<sup>1081</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-600045.

2002.<sup>1082</sup> Nashiri formed the idea of the attack, picked the target and his operatives, and then asked for funds and the ‘green light’ from the al Qaeda military committee, which was headed by Sayf al Adl.<sup>1083</sup> The al Qaeda core used videos released to the media to boost morale and provide strategic direction to operatives that it was able to maintain regular contact with.<sup>1084</sup>

*Resources: Local and International.* Al Qaeda’s local and international resources remained relatively high in the 2001 to 2003 period. Al Qaeda activity in this period included attacks on the French oil tanker Limburg on 6 October 2002, an Israeli-owned hotel in Kenya on 28 November 2002, the Cordoval Compound in Saudi Arabia on 13 May 2003, the Spain House and Jewish cemetery in Morocco on 16 May 2003, the Muhaya Housing Compound in Saudi Arabia on 8 November 2003, and the HSBC Bank and British Consulate in Turkey on 20 November 2003.<sup>1085</sup>

Locally, al Qaeda suffered an initial shock when its controlled territory in Afghanistan was lost, but then regained controlled territory along the Afghan-Pakistan border—though its new controlled territory did not begin to match the controlled territory it enjoyed in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda continued to receive a good deal of financial support, though the US moved to cut off its finances by freezing assets of al Qaeda and Taliban affiliated individuals and charities. Al Qaeda’s videos continued to inspire donors to contribute to the group’s mission. Al Qaeda’s finances also received a major

---

<sup>1082</sup> Bergen (2006), 253. / The 9/11 Commission Report, 153.

<sup>1083</sup> Bergen (2006), 253.

<sup>1084</sup> Ben Venzke, “Evolution of Jihadi Video V1.0,” Intelcenter, 11 May, 2005, 9.

<sup>1085</sup> IntelCenter, “al-Qaeda Operational Tempo – Madrid Follow-on Attack Assessment – v.1.0,” 14 March 2004.

boost after dropping its exorbitant annual donation to the Taliban government.<sup>1086</sup> It is unknown how much of these funds were redirected to tribal leaders in al Qaeda's controlled territory in the Afghan-Pakistan border region.

Al Qaeda members also managed to salvage some their high-tech equipment following the US bombardment in Afghanistan in 2001. Hamed Mir, a Pakistani journalist and Bin Laden's biographer, reported that every other al Qaeda member fleeing camps in 2001 carried a laptop computer with him.<sup>1087</sup>

Al Qaeda's links and access to 'international' fighters were also degraded by the US military action in Afghanistan. The US operation essentially eliminated al Qaeda's training and logistical infrastructure in Afghanistan, which made it much harder to train, recruit and plan on the same scale as it had done previously.<sup>1088</sup>

Al Qaeda members overseas tried to make up for this deficit by relying more heavily on indigenous resources in their areas of operation and training available on the Internet. Saudi Arabia is one country that experienced marked growth in indigenous support for al Qaeda. Operative Ahmed Omar Abu Ali offered his services to al Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia in 2002. Al Qaeda members provided Abu Ali with training in weapons and document forgery as well as funds for a computer and a cell phone.<sup>1089</sup> Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia also launched a newsletter, called Al Battar Military Camp Publication, targeted at Saudis interested in joining the jihad against the Saudi regime.<sup>1090</sup>

---

<sup>1086</sup> Byman (2005), 217.

<sup>1087</sup> Atwan, 122.

<sup>1088</sup> Burke, 232. / Byman (2005), 217.

<sup>1089</sup> United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, Criminal No. 1:05CR53, Feb 2005..

<sup>1090</sup> Bergen (2006), 376.

The al Qaeda core's connections to the Saudi branch are demonstrated by the regular 'column' the chief of al Qaeda's military operations writes for Al Battar.<sup>1091</sup>

Al Qaeda also made up for its controlled territory deficit by creating a virtual safehaven on the Internet, where it could communicate with its followers and provide instruction on training, intelligence, and counterintelligence techniques. Before the 9/11 operation, al Qaeda had only one known website, [www.alneda.com](http://www.alneda.com), but the group had as many as fifty websites by 2006.<sup>1092</sup> The Saudi branch of al Qaeda developed an online training publication called Mu'askar al-Battar (Camp of the Sword). The first issue encouraged those who could not travel to training camps saying: "in order to join the great training camps you don't have to travel to other lands...alone, in your home or with a group of brothers, you too can begin to execute the program."<sup>1093</sup>

Al Qaeda operatives also used the Internet to communicate with one another. As late as 16 September 2002, al Qaeda cells in Western countries reportedly used Internet-based phone services to communicate with operatives overseas.<sup>1094</sup> In an internal al Qaeda memo, operative Abu Huthayfa reports that electronic mail is good for sending attachments up to 4MB in size and website such as [www.driveway.com](http://www.driveway.com) are good for storing and transmitting files up to 100MB in size.<sup>1095</sup>

---

<sup>1091</sup> Ibid, 376.

<sup>1092</sup> Hoffman, 5.

<sup>1093</sup> Hoffman, 10.

<sup>1094</sup> Timothy Thomas, "Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of 'Cyberplanning'" *Parameters*, Spring, 112.

<sup>1095</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-003251.



*Popular Support: Local.* Al Qaeda's local support increased dramatically following the US Operation Enduring Freedom. Al Qaeda's exodus and relocation to the Afghan-Pakistan border region was facilitated by local warlords in Afghanistan and by the Pashtun tribes of the Pakistan frontier area.

Al Qaeda knew that fleeing its strongholds in Afghanistan was necessary when Operation Enduring Freedom began. They chose to retreat to Tora Bora, a mountainous fortress on the border of Pakistan.<sup>1096</sup> The tribal leaders in Tora Bora, the Eastern Shura, had the final word on what would happen to al Qaeda in Tora Bora.<sup>1097</sup> The Eastern Shura had a favorable view of Bin Laden and his cohorts, as they had brought commerce and employment opportunities to Afghanistan during their tenure. As the US invasion began, the Eastern Shura's main interests were stability and defending fellow Muslims, including members of al Qaeda, from invading forces.<sup>1098</sup>

To shore up al Qaeda's popular base before moving to Tora Bora, Bin Laden held a jirga with regional Pashtun elders on November 10, 2001 where he announced that al Qaeda intended on fighting the US as its forces advanced across Afghanistan.<sup>1099</sup> Bin Laden's close association with the Taliban, coupled with his mythical status as a hero of the anti-Soviet jihad, afforded him additional support with the tribal elders.<sup>1100</sup> The final

---

<sup>1096</sup> Philip Smucker, *Al Qaeda's Great Escape: The Military and the Media on Terror's Trail*, (Brassey's, Inc.: Washington DC, 2004), 57.

<sup>1097</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>1098</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>1099</sup> Smucker, 51.

<sup>1100</sup> Ibid, 52.

pillar in al Qaeda's escape strategy was to pay off regional tribal leaders in return for support against invading Western forces.<sup>1101</sup>

As Bin Laden moved east from the Mileva Valley to Tora Bora the core of his close quarters guards consisted of sixty men, according to villagers in the area. In addition to these bodyguards, a 400-man force acted as pickets on al Qaeda's flanks.<sup>1102</sup>

While the US and its tribal allies fought up one side of the Tora Bora Valley, tribesman loyal to Bin Laden were helping to smuggle al Qaeda members out of Tora Bora into Pakistan. The Eastern Shura also facilitated the delivery of food to al Qaeda, even while the US was bombing the area.<sup>1103</sup>

Al Qaeda continued to encourage Afghans to join al Qaeda during this time. Appeals for support were circulated by covert 'night letters', as known as shabnama. The distribution of 'night letters' was a psychological warfare technique taught to the Afghans by the United States during the 1980s.<sup>1104</sup> Taliban also put out night letters offering a bounty for specific Special Forces personnel as well as for any foreigner.<sup>1105</sup> Al Qaeda provided clan leaders and local Pashtun village leaders with thick envelopes of Pakistani Rupees in return for support.<sup>1106</sup>

Al Qaeda experienced setbacks in popular support during their exodus. Al Qaeda member Fouad al Rabia recalls that group members could only stay in a stranger's house

---

<sup>1101</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>1102</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>1103</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>1104</sup> Robin Moore, *The Hunt for Bin Ladin: Task Force Dagger*, (Random House: New York, 2003), 272.

<sup>1105</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>1106</sup> Corbin, 265-269.

for a couple of days because many villagers feared that renting a house to an Arab would result in their being shot or bombed.<sup>1107</sup> Fear of being bombed was reinforced when the US bombed the Al Jazeera offices in Kabul. After the bombing, Al Jazeera decided not to air any more al Qaeda videotapes.<sup>1108</sup>

Once al Qaeda escaped to the Afghan-Pakistan border region, they received an additional measure of popular support. In both of the Pakistani provinces that border Afghanistan, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), al Qaeda-friendly Pashtun tribes were major players. These tribes subscribe to pashtunwali, a law of the Pashtuns, which prizes hospitality and providing refuge to those in need.<sup>1109</sup> The border region stretched 1,500 miles—approximately the distance from Washington, DC to Denver—and was riddled with Pashtun tribes.<sup>1110</sup>

*Popular Support: International.* Al Qaeda international popular support continued to swell in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom. Al Qaeda restructured its public media efforts in 2002, becoming even more prolific in its public outreach—al Qaeda issued sixty public communications in 2002 and twenty-nine in 2003, in contrast to only four in 1999 and 2000.<sup>1111</sup> Since the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden and Zawahiri have released an audio or video statement approximately once every six weeks.<sup>1112</sup>

---

<sup>1107</sup> Bergen (2006), 328.

<sup>1108</sup> Corbin, 261.

<sup>1109</sup> Bergen (2004).

<sup>1110</sup> Bergen (2004).

<sup>1111</sup> IntelCenter, “al-Qaeda Attack/Messaging Statistics v.1.0,” 22 August 2003, 10.

<sup>1112</sup> Bergen (2006), 377.

Al Qaeda redoubled its public relations offensive soon after the US invasion of Afghanistan. On the first day of the US bombing of Kabul, al Qaeda released a videotape to Al Jazeera where Bin Laden and al Qaeda spokesperson Sulaiman Abu Ghaith called for a religious war to drive Americans out of the Muslim world.<sup>1113</sup> Al Qaeda had anticipated US airstrikes and had the professionally edited video queued to go as soon as the US campaign began.<sup>1114</sup> Bin Laden gave his last television interview to Al Jazeera in October 2001.<sup>1115</sup> Atif telephoned Al Quds editor Atwan after the US bombed Tora Bora to issue a communiqué to confirm Bin Laden had lived through the assault.<sup>1116</sup>

In part, the US invasion of Afghanistan was itself a source of increased support for al Qaeda. Though the US endeavored to minimize collateral damage, the perception of collateral damage was hard to eliminate. Media outlets reported large numbers of villagers killed and civilian homes destroyed.<sup>1117</sup> This allowed al Qaeda's to cast itself as the 'David' to the US's 'Goliath.' Some of this support, however, was tempered by a idea circulating in Islamic world that al Qaeda had 'lost' Afghanistan with its militant provocation.

Al Qaeda used its website, [www.alneda.com](http://www.alneda.com), to increase public support during this time as well. The website published a list of names of eighty-four al Qaeda fighters captured in Pakistan following their exodus from Afghanistan, presumably to let their

---

<sup>1113</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: 2RAD-2004-600457. / Corbin, 260.

<sup>1114</sup> Hoffman, 1.

<sup>1115</sup> Bergen (2006), 321.

<sup>1116</sup> Atwan, 25.

<sup>1117</sup> Bodonsky, 283.

family members know they were still alive.<sup>1118</sup> In February 2003, al Qaeda released the fifth and sixth installment of Internet articles called *In the Shadow of Lances*, where Sayf al Adl provided advice on how to employ guerrilla tactics against US forces in their upcoming invasion of Iraq.<sup>1119</sup> Al Qaeda members probably also used chat rooms and online social networking services to connect to and communicate with jihadist communities throughout the world.<sup>1120</sup> Coupling dramatic video footage with digital photographs, stirring music, and audio clips has most likely facilitated al Qaeda's mission to create a community of sympathizers all over the world.<sup>1121</sup>

Despite obvious difficulties, al Qaeda maintained contact with media personnel and organizations. Al Qaeda sent an email to Al Quds in October 2002 to claim credit for its attack on a French tanker in Yemen and again in November 2003 to claim credit for its attacks in Istanbul.<sup>1122</sup>

Al Qaeda's video production became more sophisticated during the 2001 to 2003 period. The video production branch of al Qaeda, called the Sahab Institute for Media Production, was a professional video production outfit. Sahab would produce multiple versions of videos with subtitles in various languages in order to increase its audience.<sup>1123</sup> Sahab produced the al Qaeda video containing Bin Laden's address to Americans and

---

<sup>1118</sup> Thomas, 117.

<sup>1119</sup> Bruce Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat" Testimony presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on February 16, 2006.

<sup>1120</sup> Corman, Steve R. and Jill S. Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas," *Consortium for Strategic Communication*, Arizona State University, April 20, 2006, 17.

<sup>1121</sup> Hoffman, 16.

<sup>1122</sup> Atwan, 120-121.

<sup>1123</sup> Venzke, 5 -32.

Muslims in Iraq, released to Al Jazeera on 18 October 2003.<sup>1124</sup> Sahab probably helped Bin Laden and Zawahiri make some of their twenty-six video statements between January 2002 and July 2005.<sup>1125</sup>

For al Qaeda, the downside of its video campaign was the pressure it put on the group to ‘deliver’ on attacks. Clinton Administration counterterrorism official Roger Cressey argues that al Qaeda had to follow through on the attacks it was promising in its videos or risk losing its street credibility. Cressey noted the tension this produced between more operational elements of al Qaeda, such as Zarqawi’s branch in Iraq, and the core leadership remaining in the Afghan-Pakistan border region.<sup>1126</sup>

Al Qaeda was careful to shape its message in the 2001 to 2003 period in order to appeal to the largest possible audience. After the 9/11 attacks, al Qaeda began to appeal directly to national groups subject to the greatest counterterrorism assault from the West, such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Palestinian territories.<sup>1127</sup> Al Qaeda continued to sell its mission as a religiously sanctioned defensive jihad—an act of self-defense of Muslim lands in response to Western aggression.<sup>1128</sup>

At times, Bin Laden tried to portray himself as a statesman to make himself more palatable to Western audiences and moderate Muslims.<sup>1129</sup> This appears to have paid off. In June 2003, the Pew Research Institute found that solid majorities in Indonesia, Jordan,

---

<sup>1124</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>1125</sup> Intelcenter, “al Qaeda Warning Cycle Completion for CONUS,” v1.1, 9 Dec 2005, 32.

<sup>1126</sup> Interview with Roger Cressey.

<sup>1127</sup> Blanchard, 5.

<sup>1128</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>1129</sup> Ibid, 5.

Morocco, Pakistan and the Palestinian territories believed that Bin Ladin would do the right thing regarding world affairs.<sup>1130</sup> Al Qaeda was also sensitive to the collateral damage it created by its attacks on Western interests. For example, the Al Battar Training Camp publication advised al Qaeda members to know the nationalities of the likely victims of their attack, as “nationalities determine the effect of the operation.”<sup>1131</sup>

*Intelligence: Local and International.* There is a dearth of information about al Qaeda’s intelligence capabilities in the 2001 to 2003 period, though the group appears to have continued to conduct intelligence collection in support of its international operations.

Al Qaeda’s Internet-based intelligence training continued in this period. Sayf al Adl wrote numerous articles that advised al Qaeda operatives on how to conduct intelligence. The Al Battar Training Camp publication featured Al Adl articles on the following topics: how to collect intelligence during conversations, how to set up a safehouse, how to conduct an operational test for vetting weapons dealers, how to secure a location using remote surveillance, and how surveillance operations can differ based on the number of operatives involved.<sup>1132</sup> Al Qaeda also made an appeal in 2002 on one of its websites, [www.alrakiza.com](http://www.alrakiza.com), for Muslims working at US airbases, naval bases, seaports and airports in the Arabian Peninsula to provide intelligence to al Qaeda. The website announcement asked ‘brothers’ to post information, including the location of US

---

<sup>1130</sup> Steven Simon and Jeff Martini, “Terrorism: Denying Al Qaeda Its Popular Support,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2004-05, 6.

<sup>1131</sup> Al Battar Training Camp: Issue 10, May. 23, 2004, Provided by SITE, RAND Voices of Jihad Database..

<sup>1132</sup> Al Battar Training Camp, Issues 6,9,14 and 16.

naval vessel refueling stations and the type fuel lines used at airbases, to the al Qaeda website with photographs and scanned commercial maps.<sup>1133</sup>

Al Qaeda probably continued to blend into local environments to conduct surveillance for its operations. The al Qaeda attack in Kenya in November 2002 was preceded by months of surveillance by al Qaeda operatives posing as fishermen, according to a UN report.<sup>1134</sup>

Espionage operations probably remained sporadic and opportunistic, as opposed to systematic. Al Qaeda may have had a series of penetrations of the Saudi government during this time. An al Qaeda computer recovered after the fall of Kabul contained some secret Saudi government documents, presumably passed to al Qaeda by sympathetic Saudi bureaucrats.<sup>1135</sup> The al Qaeda operatives involved in the attack in Saudi Arabia in 2003 were alleged to have had very detailed knowledge of the Vinnell corporation's residential complex, suggesting the group had recruited sources in the Saudi National Guard to provide information about the compound.<sup>1136</sup>

It is likely that al Qaeda members continued to use open sources to collect information on targets. In 2005, British al Qaeda members were indicted on charges of carrying out reconnaissance of targets in New York, Newark, New Jersey, and

---

<sup>1133</sup> [Http://www.alrakiza.com](http://www.alrakiza.com), accessed on November 19, 2002.

<sup>1134</sup> Marc Lacey, "Terrorists in Kenya Killings Posed as Fishermen," *The New York Times*, November 6, 2003.

<sup>1135</sup> Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*, (Brassey's, Inc: Washington, DC, 2004) 72.

<sup>1136</sup> "US Intelligence: Al Qaeda Infiltrated Saudi Arabia's Elite National Guard," *Al Bawaba*, May 19, 2003.



Washington, DC. The men allegedly videotaped the targets and collected over 500 photographs of the targets, many of which they downloaded from the Internet.<sup>1137</sup>

*Counterintelligence: Local.* Al Qaeda's local counterintelligence procedures remained high, and probably improved, in the 2001 to 2003 period.

Al Qaeda continued to demand that its recruits uphold an agreement to secrecy. An internal 'contract' between al Qaeda and its recruits, dated March 2002, stipulates that members cannot talk about work assigned in al Qaeda with other al Qaeda members, with the exception of their 'direct' commander.<sup>1138</sup> The same document outlines the responsibilities of al Qaeda's security committee, which include providing necessary security for operations, promoting the feeling of security among personnel, and facilitating the administrative security procedures related to the host country.<sup>1139</sup> The promotion of the "feeling of security" may relate to the cultivation of a counterintelligence awareness among its members to reduce espionage and information leakage problems.

The same internal document also describes the duties of al Qaeda's counterespionage section and its installations, personnel and facilities security section. The counterespionage group, referred to as the Central Section, was responsible for uncovering espionage and penetration operations by the enemy, penetrating the enemy's

---

<sup>1137</sup> Hoffman, 12.

<sup>1138</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-600045.

<sup>1139</sup> Ibid.

defenses through agent recruitment, monitoring everything in the media related to al Qaeda's work, and filing all gathered data either on paper or computer.<sup>1140</sup>

The facilities protection section, referred to as the Organizational Work Security Section, was responsible for al Qaeda leaders' protective detail, guarding al Qaeda's documents and facilities, conducting background checks on personnel handling sensitive documents, and selecting suitable locations for secure work facilities.<sup>1141</sup> Interestingly, al Qaeda seems to have weighed the risk of keeping soft and hard copies of files and decided that it was better to keep them.

Al Qaeda continued to use videos to promote its message despite the risks associated with producing and delivering such material to non-al Qaeda personnel. One strategy they probably employed to reduce the information leakage risk was to minimize the time between the delivery of a videotape and its airing. Al Qaeda videotape experts at the Virginia-based government contractor IntelCenter contend that typically videotapes were aired within two days of their being delivered to the media outlet.<sup>1142</sup>

To keep core al Qaeda operatives from exposing themselves to enemy law enforcement, lower-level members were used for logistical tasks, delivering messages by hand, and inputting Internet messages and communications at Internet cafes. Al Qaeda operative Iyman Faris was reported to have helped al Qaeda members arrange travel to Yemen by visiting a travel agency disguised as a member of Tablighi Jamaat.<sup>1143</sup>

---

<sup>1140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1143</sup> US v Iyman Faris, Statement of Facts, United States District Court for the District of Eastern Virginia, Criminal Case.

Internet communications were also handled through lower-level members. Al Qaeda leaders would record a communication on a disk and then send a low-level operative to upload the material on a computer at a cyber café.<sup>1144</sup> Allegedly, the core of al Qaeda does not use the Internet directly for fear of being caught or tracked.<sup>1145</sup>

Al Qaeda's local security also received a boost as a result of their newfound controlled territory in the Afghan-Pakistan border region. Not only is the region remote and free of Pakistani and Afghan Government control, but non-tribal entities in the region are easily identified by locals. Pakistan journalist Yusufzai reported that outsiders stick out immediately in the tribal region, so that non-locals, and even Arabs, find it difficult to hide there.<sup>1146</sup> Journalist Peter Bergen points out that even without the anti-US sentiment in the region, finding a few al Qaeda members in this vast area is a daunting task. He describes how thousands of NATO soldiers spent more than a decade unsuccessfully hunting Bosnia-Serb war criminals in Bosnia, an area less rugged than and only two-thirds the size of the Northwest Frontier Province.<sup>1147</sup>

Al Qaeda's connections to the Pashtun tribes in the region afforded them even greater security as a result. The group's ties with the chiefs of southern Afghan heroin-trafficking networks may have allowed them to move fighters across the Afghanistan-Iran and Afghanistan-Pakistan borders.<sup>1148</sup> It is telling that despite the \$100 million reward offered by the US for information leading to the capture of Bin Laden, not a

---

<sup>1144</sup> Atwan, 130.

<sup>1145</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>1146</sup> Bergen (2004).

<sup>1147</sup> Bergen (2006), 395.

<sup>1148</sup> Anonymous, 64.

single person stepped forward to offer such information.<sup>1149</sup> Part of this reticence may result from al Qaeda's popularity and willingness to pay off locals. One tribal elder reported to a journalist: "Osama and his men are heroes for locals... They are treated as honorable guests. They don't harm tribesmen, stay for a couple of nights, and pay [\$175 to \$300] before they leave."<sup>1150</sup>

Despite its improving counterintelligence tradecraft, al Qaeda faced a number of setbacks in the 2001 to 2003 period. First, the group continued to give away sensitive information about its personnel and locations in its videos. In one al Qaeda video, operatives are seen close-up in some rugged mountain setting with their faces and communications equipment in full view.<sup>1151</sup> While this doesn't give away their exact location, intelligence services could use the information to assess the group's general location, communication modus operandi and overall physical and financial health. For example, one tribal elder in Waziristan commented to a journalist: "The footage I saw on a local TV channel, looked to me like our area... Osama was wearing a Waziristani woolen cap, shalwar kameez, and a scarf on his shoulder. The dress is of here and the terrain is familiar; I have walked these mountains all my life."<sup>1152</sup>

In a video released on 27 December 2001, Bin Laden appeared gaunt and was not moving his left arm, probably as a result of injuries from US strikes against al Qaeda. The

---

<sup>1149</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>1150</sup> Owais Tohid, "Tribesmen Take Cash, Count Blessings from Al Qaeda," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 29, 2003.

<sup>1151</sup> Venzke (2006)..

<sup>1152</sup> Owais.

video, in theory, would allow al Qaeda's adversaries to assess his health and perhaps speculate on the accuracy of intelligence they had received leading to the air strikes.

More recently released videotapes of Bin Laden give the impression that he is not living in a remote tribal region but that he is in a secure, comfortable location where he is able to follow political developments with some ease.<sup>1153</sup> This information could be valuable to intelligence services that are tracking Bin Laden's location based on small clues such as these.

Second, al Qaeda risked exposure by trying to get its publicity products to media organizations. A recent al Qaeda video featured an interview in English with operative Abdullah al-Amriki and was delivered to ABC News via a source known to have contacts with al Qaeda in the tribal region of Pakistan.<sup>1154</sup> As journalist Peter Bergen notes, it is possible to exploit these contacts and sources by tracing the series of handoffs that must occur for the media product to reach the final source.<sup>1155</sup> Allegedly, a number of minor operatives have been arrested after being spotted on CCTV uploading al Qaeda communications at Internet cafes.<sup>1156</sup>

*Counterintelligence: International.* Al Qaeda's international counterintelligence procedures probably remained high in the 2001 to 2003 period, as the group seemed to capitalize on the counterintelligence advantages afforded by the Internet for communication and training.

---

<sup>1153</sup> Atwan, 229.

<sup>1154</sup> Intelcenter, "al Qaeda Warning Cycle Completion for CONUS," v1.1, 9 Dec 2005, 27.

<sup>1155</sup> Bergen (2004).

<sup>1156</sup> Atwan, 130.

Al Qaeda continued to use code systems to communicate with its operatives. Operative Iyman Farris reported that he relayed information to his al Qaeda managers by referring to gas cutters as “gas stations” and special operational equipment as “mechanics shops.”<sup>1157</sup> For an additional measure of communications security Farris’ manager instructed him to access email only after opening other Internet sites first and never immediately after logging in.<sup>1158</sup>

Al Qaeda’s loose organizational structure probably helped the group to evade some surveillance of its coded communications. According to Canadian al Qaeda operative Mohammed Monsour Jabarah, captured in 2002 by Canadian authorities, code words were generally established by individual cells.<sup>1159</sup> This would make it difficult for law enforcement to scan communications for a discrete number of ‘standard’ code words.

Al Qaeda members also employed some counterintelligence procedures when dealing with journalists. When Al Jazeera journalist Yosri Fouda met with KSM and Binalsheibh in Pakistan in 2002, Fouda first had to meet an intermediary outside Karachi and was then blindfolded and driven to a safehouse before meeting the al Qaeda leaders.<sup>1160</sup>

Al Qaeda used the Internet to maintain the international reach of its media and operational campaigns while retaining a level of secrecy. During and immediately following Operation Enduring Freedom, al Qaeda used [www.alneda.com](http://www.alneda.com) to boost morale

---

<sup>1157</sup> US v Iyman Faris, Statement of Facts, United States District Court for the District of Eastern Virginia, Criminal Case.

<sup>1158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1159</sup> Bergen (2006), 274.

<sup>1160</sup> Ibid, 302.

among its operatives and gain new support from sympathizers throughout the world.<sup>1161</sup> This website was operational irregularly through 2002, jumping from one Internet service provider to another as the US government tried to shut it down completely. In one eight week period it moved from a provider in Malaysia, to one in Texas, and finally to one in Michigan before being cut off.<sup>1162</sup> In the cyber game of “cat and mouse,” the difficulty of shutting even a single website down permanently is a testament to the current security advantage afforded to the “mouse.” Perhaps the greatest natural advantage the Internet provides is its size. London based Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Masri points out that, “nine hundred million people use the Internet annually...it is impossible to keep it under random surveillance.”<sup>1163</sup>

Al Qaeda may have adapted to some law enforcement techniques for tracing communications. Al Quds editor Atwan argues that some members may use one-time email accounts or pass messages through a shared email account.<sup>1164</sup> This would thwart law enforcement efforts to monitor a suspect email account or intercept emails passed between accounts. Short-life websites, perhaps open for only a few hours, may also be used to pass information, thereby avoiding a direct email-to-email communication. Atwan argues that al Qaeda members probably do not need to encrypt their website and chatrooms, relying instead on the jihadi visitors “sixth sense” of what is being communicated through the text and various signposts.<sup>1165</sup> This would thwart law

---

<sup>1161</sup> Hoffman, 7.

<sup>1162</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>1163</sup> Atwan, 130.

<sup>1164</sup> Ibid, 133.

<sup>1165</sup> Ibid, 135.

enforcement efforts to casually drop into a website forum and pick up hidden messages without a substantial background on the forum.

Sayf al Adl wrote numerous articles that advised al Qaeda operatives on counterintelligence practices. The Al Battar Training Camp publication featured Al Adl articles on the following topics: how to develop an effective cover, how to write and classify intelligence reports, how to physically secure sensitive information and documents, when to be particularly wary of monitoring by the adversary, and how to communicate with a limited number of coded references in order to avoid raising suspicion.<sup>1166</sup>

Al Qaeda suffered from a number of counterintelligence vulnerabilities in the 2001 to 2003 period. First, al Qaeda's increased media efforts required it to raise its operational profile on numerous occasions. Al Qaeda's media efforts require that it have regular access to videocameras, videotapes, production equipment, computers, editing equipment, and the Internet.<sup>1167</sup> These efforts could potentially expose al Qaeda members to law enforcement as they monitor the signatures and footprints left by the purchase and use of such material. Some of al Qaeda videos display a distinctive mark, known as a 'bug' to indicate which media shop produced the video. Al Qaeda's Sahab Institute for Media Production, for example, has a unique bug that indicates the production group has handled and edited the video.<sup>1168</sup>

---

<sup>1166</sup> Al Battar Training Camp Publication, Issues 3, 10, 16, and 22.

<sup>1167</sup> Hoffman, 1.

<sup>1168</sup> Venzke, 12.



Some al Qaeda operatives came out of hiding to give media interviews. Binalsheibh, for example, granted an interview to Al Jazeera in 2002 while he was hiding in Karachi.<sup>1169</sup>

Al Qaeda has also been exposed to second-hand monitoring via its associations with non-al Qaeda intermediaries and international media organizations, who are easier for governments to monitor. Increased monitoring occasionally deterred media organizations from dealing with al Qaeda at all. An internal al Qaeda memo described the difficulty al Qaeda was having finding volunteers to distribute the group's propaganda in the Gulf due to security pressure from the governments in the region.<sup>1170</sup>

Al Qaeda videos in the 2001 to 2003 period were occasionally held in clearing houses, often based in London, from where they would be distributed internationally. Those managing these clearing houses were easily monitored and some may have been arrested and prosecuted.<sup>1171</sup> When authorities cannot track down al Qaeda's intermediaries, they can often track al Qaeda's interactions with larger media organizations. For example, British police raided Al Quds' offices in London after the newspaper received an email from a suspected al Qaeda operative in the wake of the Madrid bombings.<sup>1172</sup>

Second, al Qaeda's loss of controlled territory generated both counterintelligence advantages and vulnerabilities. While the volunteers could no longer be traced to al

---

<sup>1169</sup> Burke, 223.

<sup>1170</sup> *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, Document: AFGP-2002-003251.

<sup>1171</sup> Kohlmann, Evan F. "The Real Online Terrorist Threat," *Foreign Affairs*, September 2006 - October 2006, Pg. 115 Vol. 85 No. 5.

<sup>1172</sup> Atwan, 121.

Qaeda through visits to training camps in Afghanistan, it is likely that the lack of formal training caused operatives' security tradecraft to suffer. In addition, al Qaeda members that are known to have visited Afghanistan before Operation Enduring Freedom are still hounded, and sometimes arrested, by intelligence services throughout the world.<sup>1173</sup> The loss of a controlled territory may also adversely impact the fervor and dedication of the next generation of al Qaeda recruits. Terrorism expert Brian Jenkins argues that, "televised videotapes and virtual realms on the Internet may not suffice to maintain a high level of devotion."<sup>1174</sup> A decrease in secrecy and security would likely accompany such a decline in devotion and commitment to the movement.

Third, al Qaeda's increase in organizational looseness generated both counterintelligence advantages and vulnerabilities. Though operatives have fewer connections to al Qaeda operatives known or monitored by law enforcement, their security tradecraft likely suffers as a result of increasingly self-managed training. In addition, al Qaeda's core must rely on less secure and more open channels for mass communicating with operatives whose access to secure websites and connections to other operatives is ambiguous.<sup>1175</sup>

*Summary.* After 11 September 2001, the US began to devote increasing amount of its resources to locating and destroying al Qaeda. Al Qaeda's structure in the 2001 to 2003 period became relatively loose as the core of the group in the Afghan-Pakistan

---

<sup>1173</sup> Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy, *Harmony and Disharmony Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, February 14, 2006., 21.

<sup>1174</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, *Countering Al Qaeda*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 10.

<sup>1175</sup> Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy, 33.

border region was essentially cut-off from its operatives deployed outside of Afghanistan. Al Qaeda's local and international resources remained relatively high in the 2001 to 2003 period, and the group's local popular support increased dramatically following the US Operation Enduring Freedom. Al Qaeda's exodus and relocation to the Afghan-Pakistan border region was facilitated by local warlords in Afghanistan and by of the Pashtun tribes of the Pakistan frontier area. Al Qaeda's international popular support also swelled in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom. Al Qaeda appears to have continued to conduct intelligence collection in support of its international operations. The group's local counterintelligence procedures remained high in the 2001 to 2003 period, despite encountering new local security and counterintelligence challenges. Al Qaeda's international counterintelligence procedures probably remained high in the 2001 to 2003 period.

Al Qaeda enjoyed popular support in many locations and probably co-opted locals into providing intelligence support, especially in places like Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. Al Qaeda's campaigns to generate popular support continued to offer its adversaries sensitive information about its personnel and plans. Additionally, the group's contact with the media continued to introduced counterintelligence vulnerabilities. Al Qaeda's decentralization probably enhanced some aspects of its counterintelligence by diversifying the sources of its publicity campaign and the methods and codes of its international cells.

### Hypotheses Revisited

*Hypothesis 1(A): With a relatively tighter command and control structure al Qaeda will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.* This is correct. In Sudan and Afghanistan before October 2001, al Qaeda trained its members in intelligence and counterintelligence techniques and every member leaving an al Qaeda camp was assured to have a basic competence in guerrilla fighting. When al Qaeda had a surfeit of recruits in 1999, Bin Laden insisted that every recruit attend the training camps, regardless of overcrowding. Al Qaeda's tight structure also allowed select members to train heavily in one intelligence or counterintelligence skill and serve as a specialist for the group. Jamal al-Fadl, for example, served as Bin Laden's chief of security. After October 2001, however, al Qaeda had to rely more on Internet based training guides and operational publications like Al Battar to provide worldwide operatives with a basic understanding of intelligence and counterintelligence procedures.

*Hypothesis 1(B): With a relatively tighter command and control structure al Qaeda will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.* This is mostly correct. When al Qaeda had a looser structure, cells were responsible for devising a set of codes to communicate with cell members. With cell-based code selection, the discovery of one cell's codes would not necessarily compromise another cell codes. Al Qaeda's tight organization in period one caused a major counterintelligence setback when al Qaeda turncoat al-Fadl was able to describe many details of the group's international organization to US authorities in 1996. Al Qaeda's international structure was generally

looser than its local structure. In period two, this allowed cell members in Yemen to search for targets of opportunity in Aden Harbor rather than relying on top down target selection. However, given that the Yemen cell had to report regularly to al Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan, the system's tightness imposed some constraints on innovation.

*Hypothesis 2(A): With relatively greater popular support al Qaeda will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.* This is mostly correct. Before al Qaeda gained international notoriety it sent a core group member to do its intelligence collection for the US Embassy attacks. After it gained popular support it was able to exploit local networks to gather intelligence. For example, the US serviceman who provided details to al Qaeda through a website was gathering intelligence on US ships because he was an al Qaeda sympathizer. There is some evidence that al Qaeda continued to use its extensive Internet presence to solicit anonymous intelligence from sympathizers after 9/11. Al Qaeda presumably used the international recruits it trained in Afghanistan to conduct intelligence as they returned to their home countries. Though al Qaeda did not enjoy local popular support in Sudan, the group was given access to the government's Delegation Office, which allowed al Qaeda to collect valuable intelligence and counterintelligence data on the local population. There is some evidence that al Qaeda used its international contacts to spot and vet new members, such as it did in mosques in Saudi Arabia.

*Hypothesis 2(B): With relatively greater popular support al Qaeda will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.* This is correct. Bin Laden routinely leaked valuable information about his health, locations, and operational

intentions in video interviews and tapes released to media organizations. Al Qaeda leaders were in frequent contact with journalists, media organizations, and group members in the West liaising regularly with the media. Zawahiri was on the telephone with a Pakistani journalist immediately before and after the US cruise missile strikes in Afghanistan in 1998. From 1998 to 2000, al Qaeda members made over 200 calls to Fawwaz to coordinate the group's media strategy. Any of these calls could have given away valuable information about the group's location and plans. In one case, al Qaeda transmitted a message detailing the nationality and location of an operative before he performed his suicide mission in order to get an immediate press release after the attack.

Al Qaeda planners might argue that this is a risk worth taking, as popular support is the most important component of waging a guerrilla war. It is important to note that the evidence offers examples of potentially exploitable vulnerabilities, as opposed to vulnerabilities that were necessarily exploited by al Qaeda's adversaries. Al Qaeda's potential vulnerabilities are a purer measure of its counterintelligence deficits, as the vulnerabilities that are actually exploited represent the nexus of the adversaries' capabilities and the group's vulnerabilities.

*Hypothesis 3(A): With relatively more controlled territory al Qaeda will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.*

This is mostly correct. Al Qaeda leaders were trailed by an armed coterie, which would have made an assassination or seizure operation difficult. Bin Laden was able to change his abode every evening, lowering the chances he could be tracked by a single informant and targeted for a missile strike. Al Qaeda members in the group's Afghanistan camps

were well-protected from exposure to ‘outsiders’. Even well-known journalists, such as John Miller and Peter Bergen, had to go through an extensive vetting procedure before getting access to the camps. In contrast, al Qaeda members giving interviews and meeting with media organizations in Pakistan (such as KSM) and London (such as Fawwaz) did not have access to such controlled meeting and vetting procedures. Al Qaeda’s communications security was also better in its controlled territory. Members could meet face-to-face and did not have to rely on means of communications that could be intercepted.

*Hypothesis 3(B): With relatively more controlled territory al Qaeda will be more vulnerable to its adversary’s efforts to track the group’s gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.* This is mostly correct. Al Qaeda’s large presence in Afghanistan would allow its adversary the ability to observe the relative size and activity of its known training camps remotely. Individuals passing into and out of the training camps could also be subject to scrutiny simply based on the fact that they were traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

*Hypothesis 4: Al Qaeda will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.* This appears to be correct. Al Qaeda fostered a tight organizational structure and developed towards greater compartmentalization and hierarchy between periods one and two. Al Qaeda became loose again in period three, but not by choice. Following the US strikes in Afghanistan, al Qaeda was forced to decentralize as communications with international operatives was made impossible.

### Control Variables: Alternative Explanations Review

As discussed earlier, the control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the al Qaeda case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables.

First, the counterintelligence weaknesses that occurred in period two may result from the increase in adversary strength from periods one to two, rather than al Qaeda increased campaigning for popular support. However, while al Qaeda's adversary may have become more capable of exploiting the counterintelligence weaknesses created by al Qaeda's popular support campaigns, al Qaeda's exposure through the media increased dramatically. Whether its adversaries fully exploited that exposure is unknown. Regardless of the adversary's actions, al Qaeda created very real counterintelligence weaknesses as a result of its media activities.

Second, it is possible that normal organizational learning accounted for al Qaeda's counterintelligence improvements over time. It is possible that irrespective of an increase in popular support, al Qaeda operatives learned over time how to tap into indigenous support networks and recruit non-al Qaeda members to conduct intelligence and counterintelligence tasks for the group. By this logic, we should expect that al Qaeda's ability to locate and recruit indigenous intelligence assistance should increase steadily over time and major increases in international popular support should not significantly increase the level of assistance. Contrary to this expectation, al Qaeda's local intelligence support increased markedly soon after it began its global support campaign.



On the other hand, experience most likely did improve al Qaeda's ability to conduct effective intelligence operations overseas. For example, al Qaeda operatives used the Internet creatively to recruit a USS Benfold serviceman. However, the increasing skill of al Qaeda operatives was only effective because local sympathy for al Qaeda was on the rise. In the case of al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, the group's operations skyrocketed in part because al Qaeda seemed to be receiving a volume of intelligence from sympathizers within the Saudi government and security services.<sup>1176</sup> Ideally, the alternative hypothesis would be tested in an environment where al Qaeda's popular support was decreasing while its skills were increasing. Unfortunately, al Qaeda's popularity has only increased since it began its global support campaign in 1996.

Improvements to al Qaeda intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities during period three could result from al Qaeda's relatively looser organizational structure, rather than from increased levels of international and local popular support. As noted in the analysis of hypothesis five, al Qaeda's looseness in period three probably increased innovation at the cell level. For example, al Qaeda's ability to diversify its coded communications may have given it an advantage in evading law enforcement organizations. Evading law enforcement could have resulted in an increased ability to clandestinely locate and recruit indigenous intelligence assistance. However, al Qaeda's key intelligence improvements in period three, including the ability to blend into sympathetic communities and recruit local government officials, stemmed mostly from a

---

<sup>1176</sup> Anonymous, 72.

growing international sympathy for the group's objectives, not from a dramatic increase in superior tradecraft.

*Lessons from the al Qaeda Case Study*

The al Qaeda case study provides support for several hypotheses and provides insight into potential interactions between the independent variables and between the intelligence and counterintelligence variables.

First, there is a natural tension between international and local counterintelligence. The most important tension arises as the group campaigns to increase its international popular support. On the one hand, international popular support brings the group increased funds, recruits, and intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities. On the other hand, the process by which a group generates international popular support often causes the group to expose itself to its support base and through contact the media. Additionally, local security precautions can sometimes introduce international counterintelligence vulnerabilities. For example, al Qaeda members were told to disperse from camps before major attacks, which could have compromised operational security for international cells had al Qaeda camps been penetrated or monitored at the time.

Second, a tight command structure introduces serious disadvantages for an organization conducting global terrorist operations. On the one hand, a tight command allows terrorist leaders to exercise more control over their organization, perhaps mandating counterintelligence training and coordinating counterintelligence efforts. However, communications security is a fatal weakness of a tightly controlled global

group. As a group spreads out across the globe face-to-face communication becomes more difficult and communications migrate to cell phones, email, the Internet, or courier. Using couriers becomes an impractically slow form of communication as distances grow, but remains the most secure after face-to-face meetings. Additionally, relying on couriers can become impractical if the group's supply of trusted couriers becomes limited. By covertly undermining a terrorist group's confidence in its couriers, counterterrorism practitioners would almost certainly slow the transmission of messages, materials, and funds.

Just as al Qaeda did in the 1990s, terrorist groups that wish to retain control over their global operations will most likely opt for a "centralization of decision and decentralization of execution" model. In this model, communication with global cells occurs in infrequent, short bursts.

Third, state sponsorship provides many intelligence and counterintelligence benefits to terrorist group, but also provide exploitable vulnerabilities. A key vulnerability is that terrorist groups sometimes share with their state sponsor information about their leaders, personnel, facilities, training and military capabilities. Thus, an adversary that cannot infiltrate the terrorist group may gain access to such information through penetrations of the state sponsors security and police service, whose members may be more susceptible to standard recruitment techniques.

Fourth, terrorist links to family members offer another exploitable vulnerability. When Bin Laden moved al Qaeda to Sudan in 1991, he brought with him his four wives and seventeen children. This provides a number of intelligence recruitment and

monitoring targets for an adversary's intelligence apparatus. Though terrorist may be portrayed as cold-hearted killers, they are also human in their need to maintain closeness with their friends and family. Is it interesting to note that an Israeli assassination squad killed Ali Hassan Salameh, the famous Black September terrorist, as he visited his niece in Beirut on her birthday. Counterterrorism practitioners should recognize that a terrorist's relatives are the proverbial waterhole to which the terrorists will periodically return.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE EGYPTIAN ISLAMIC GROUP**

In the early 1990s, the Egyptian Islamic Group (IG), also known as Gamaa al-Islamiyya, enjoyed widespread popular support in Egypt. IG's attacks on the tourism industry and Egyptian security forces left the Egyptian Government struggling to fight back. By the end of the decade, IG lost most of its popular support and many of its key leaders and operatives had been killed or imprisoned. Resigned to defeat, the group agreed to a ceasefire with the Egyptian government in 1998. After enjoying such great success in the early 1990's, why did IG collapse so quickly?

The case study will show that IG collapsed because the Egyptian Government made dramatic improvements in its counterterrorism capabilities while IG lost critical popular support as a result of audacious and unpopular attacks on civilians and the tourism industry. The case provides a good test of Hypothesis 2A and 2B. The large-N data set offered preliminary support to these hypotheses, but the IG case offers an in-depth look at the causal mechanisms driving the relationships between counterintelligence and popular support. The case also highlights a number of interesting dynamics between counterintelligence, popular support and adversary's counterterrorism capabilities.

In this chapter, I first provide a discussion of the key hypotheses and alternative hypotheses, followed by the IG case study. I then review the hypotheses and alternative hypotheses, and provide a general assessment of the practical and theoretical lessons that the IG case offers.

The IG case study is broken into two parts. The first part depicts IG from 1989 to 1993, when the group faced a relatively weak Egyptian security force while enjoying widespread popular support, particularly among young men with middle or lower-middle class and rural or small town background. The second part depicts IG from 1994 until its collapse in 1998, when the group faced a much stronger Egyptian Government while its popular support slipped away.

*IG Case Study Core Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1(A):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure IG will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.

*Hypothesis 1(B):* With a relatively tighter command and control structure IG will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.

*Hypothesis 2(A):* With relatively greater popular support IG will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.

*Hypothesis 2(B):* With relatively greater popular support IG will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.

*Hypothesis 3(A):* With relatively more controlled territory IG will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.

*Hypothesis 3(B):* With relatively more controlled territory IG will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.

*Hypothesis 4:* IG will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.

*Alternative and Falsifiable Hypotheses*

The alternative hypotheses argue the opposite of the core hypotheses. Thus, the first alternative hypothesis is that tighter organizational structure will not produce superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation or greater vulnerabilities to high-level penetrations. Conversely, if the group has a loose organizational structure but does not suffer from inferior counterintelligence training and compartmentation, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The second alternative hypothesis is that controlled territory will not result in greater physical and communications security or greater vulnerabilities to tracking the group's gross movements of personnel and logistics. Thus, if the group operates from controlled territory but does not benefit from more secure communications and vetting, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The third alternative hypothesis is that popular support will not result in greater counterintelligence support from the local population or greater vulnerability to exposure in the media. Thus, if the group wages a popular support campaign but does not induce counterintelligence vulnerabilities as a result and does not benefit from increased local support, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

The fourth alternative hypothesis is that a terrorist group facing an increasing menacing adversary will not become more centralized and tightly commanded over time. Thus, if the group faces an increasing threat from its adversary but does not centralize its

decision-making and tighten its command and control, then the alternative hypothesis is correct and the core hypothesis is falsified.

*Control Variables: Alternative Explanations*

The control variables do not remain perfectly constant in the IG case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. First, the Egyptian Government increased its counterterrorism capabilities dramatically between the first period (1989-93) and second period (1994-98). Any erosion in IG's counterintelligence capabilities could result from this shift, rather than shifts in organizational structure, popular support or controlled territory. For hypothesis one, IG's counterintelligence training may remain weak over time as a result of the adversary's increasing counterterrorism capability, rather than as a result of IG's loose command structure. For hypothesis two, IG's vulnerability to being monitored and tracked around its territory may increase over time as a result of the adversary's increasing capabilities. For hypothesis three, IG's reduced counterintelligence support from the local population may result from a more capable adversary, rather than from lower overall popular support.

The IG case provides a good test of hypothesis four—the adversary's capabilities are increasing steadily over time, which should lead directly to a tighter and more centralized command structure.

The Islamic Group's resources are held constant over the two periods, reducing the likelihood that shifts in resources are accounting for the changes in counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities.



### IG Case Study: Dependent Variables

Islamic Group	Adversary CT Capability	Org Structure	Resources	Controlled Territory	Popular Support	Type
1989 - 1993	Low	Low	High	Yes	High	15
1994 - 1998	High	Low	High	Yes	Low	12

#### Islamic Group: Background

IG began as an umbrella organization for a loose association of militant student groups.<sup>1177</sup> Operating mostly in mosques and on university campuses, IG flourished in Egypt when prominent Islamic organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, renounced violence in the 1970s. IG's goal was to overthrow the Egyptian Government and replace it with an Islamic government based on Islamic shari'a law.<sup>1178</sup> Preaching in mosques and drawing its members from universities and from impoverished communities, the group became a renowned social movement. IG's popularity in Upper

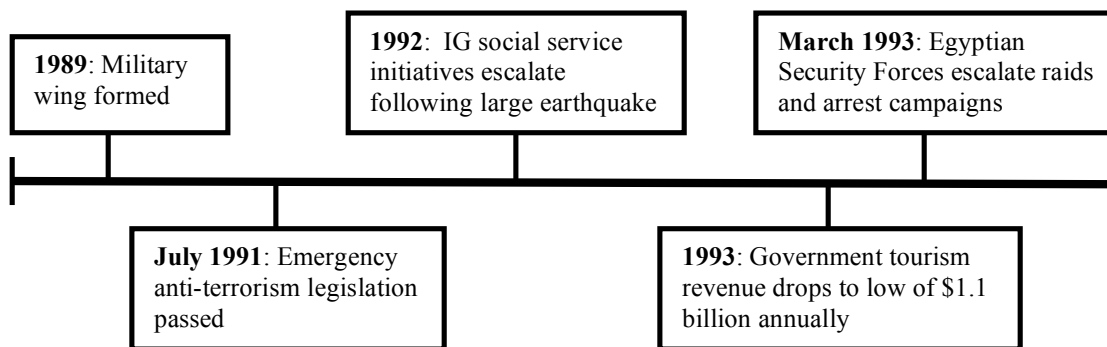
---

<sup>1177</sup> Islamic Gema'at groups, a more or less generic term for Islamic student groups, have existed in Egypt since the 1960s but they are not organizationally connected to the IG that emerged in the 1980s.

<sup>1178</sup> Nachman Tal, "Islamic Fundamentalism: The Case of Egypt and Jordan", (Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv, 1999), 45.

Egypt was particularly widespread and provided the foundation for what IG hoped would be a mass-based movement. In 1989, the leaders of IG formed a military wing for the purpose of spearheading a violent revolution in Egypt.

*Islamic Group Timeline: 1989 - 1993*



*Islamic Group 1989 - 1993*

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* The Egyptian Government was the IG's chief adversary throughout the group's lifespan. The Egyptian Government had battled numerous domestic opposition groups for decades, including the secretive and very capable Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>1179</sup> Through hard-earned experience the Egyptian Government had developed expertise in how to address such threats. Despite this expertise, the Egyptian Government responded in a heavy-handed fashion to IG in the first period, perhaps overwhelmed by a sharp increase in violent opposition from multiple

---

<sup>1179</sup> While the Muslim Brotherhood fluctuated between violent and nonviolent resistance strategies, the group ultimately settled on an essentially nonviolent strategy, due in part to the efforts of its very capable state adversary.

groups in the early 1990s. The IG was high on the government's list of targets, as it was responsible for more than a thousand civilian and security personnel fatalities in the first half of the 1990s.<sup>1180</sup>

The Egyptian Government had very little intelligence on the group in this period as the security forces had not penetrated the group with human assets.<sup>1181</sup> A good deal of their information came fortuitously during police investigations and from house-to-house searches and mass arrests.<sup>1182</sup> Frustrated by their overall lack of progress, security forces resorted to collective punishment, which included demolishing homes, holding relatives of wanted terrorists in detention, holding onerous curfews, and rounding up suspects en masse.<sup>1183</sup> Some nighttime raids on suspected terrorist havens involved several hundred security force personnel armed with heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers.<sup>1184</sup> The security forces would then hold thousands of suspected militants in extended detention without charges or trial.<sup>1185</sup>

In July 1991, Egypt passed anti-terrorism legislation that mandated life imprisonment or death for those who committed terrorist offenses. Egypt would put to death 90 individuals in this period—the largest number of executions for political crimes

---

<sup>1180</sup> Jason Burke, *Casting a Shadow of Terror*, (I.B. Taurus: London, 2003), 139.

<sup>1181</sup> Tal, Nachman. "Radical Islam in Egypt and Jordan." (Sussex Academic Press: Brighton, 2005), 113.

<sup>1182</sup> Tal, 113.

<sup>1183</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>1184</sup> Chris Hedges, "Egypt's War With Militants: Both Sides Harden Positions," *The New York Times*, April 3, 1993.

<sup>1185</sup> Montasser Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of bin Ladin's Right Hand Man*, (Pluto Press: London, 2004), 95. / Murphy, Caryle. "Passion for Islam: Shaping the Modern Middle East: The Egyptian Experience." (Scribner: New York, 2002), 76.

in the country's modern history.<sup>1186</sup> By mid-1993, thirty-one prisons in Egypt housed more than 40,000 convicts and political prisoners, including tens of thousands of Islamist activists with no connection to militant activities.<sup>1187</sup> Judicial standards were not very rigorous, so evidence against arrested individuals was frequently thin.<sup>1188</sup>

In March 1993, Egyptian security forces dramatically escalated their campaign against the Islamist militants. A massive wave of raids and arrests resulted in the deaths of 45 people and the arrest of all bearded youth in numerous Islamist neighborhoods.<sup>1189</sup> In one incident, security forces are said to have lobbed tear gas into a mosque in the southern Egyptian city of Aswan and then subsequently killed seven people and wounded 15 others.<sup>1190</sup>

Though the Egyptian Government launched social welfare programs to combat its negative image, the Islamist welfare programs in Egypt were generally far superior in their quality.<sup>1191</sup> IG welfare programs were also more strategically targeted than the Egyptian Government's programs, so the group did not need to compete with the Government on all social programming. Thus, the Egyptian Government fought an uphill battle for hearts and minds.

The heavy-handed activities of the Egyptian security forces affected IG both positively and negatively. On the one hand, IG would benefit from an increase in popular

---

<sup>1186</sup> Murphy, 7.

<sup>1187</sup> Tal, 116. / Burke, 139.

<sup>1188</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, (Alfred Knopf: New York, 2006), 185.

<sup>1189</sup> Weaver, Mary Anne. *A Portrait of Egypt: A Journey Through the World of Militant Islam*. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1999), 115.

<sup>1190</sup> Stanley Reed, "The Battle for Egypt," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1993.

<sup>1191</sup> Weaver, 147.

support without having to ‘campaign’ for it. The government’s tactics alienated most of the Islamist population and some of the non-Islamist population as well. Thus, IG would not have to expose itself with complex media campaigns in order to cash in on increased support. On the other hand, the government’s aggressive policing practices would reduce the amount of territory and neighborhoods IG could control.

*Organizational Structure.* IG’s organizational structure in the 1989 to 1993 period was relatively loose and decentralized. IG’s military branch was run collectively by a widely scattered network of leaders, some of whom were serving sentences in Egyptian prisons.<sup>1192</sup> IG’s cells were spread across Egypt, and typically based themselves out of local mosques. Mosques would provide a great cover for clandestine meetings or the passage of general directions from national leaders to local cells—government security forces would not be able to infiltrate every mosque in Cairo nor could they arrest every charismatic sheik and preacher without a major public backlash.

At the top of IG’s organization was its spiritual leader, or emir. Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, also known as the Blind Sheik, served as IG’s spiritual and inspirational leader for a large part of its existence. Sheik Rahman played mostly a symbolic or spiritual role, rather than an organizational role, in IG.<sup>1193</sup>

Below Sheik Rahman were the provincial emirs, who were also members of the IG’s consultative body known as the Majlis al-Shura. Among other responsibilities, the

---

<sup>1192</sup> Murphy, 77.

<sup>1193</sup> Al-Hadlag, Abdulrahman. “Repression and Peoples’ Political Violence in Egypt: The Case of *al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya*.” Ph.D. diss., University of Idaho, 1994, 100.

Shura would elect IG's emir.<sup>1194</sup> Falling under the command of each provincial emir was an emir designated for each town or village. Each of IG's small group cells within these towns and villages would also have an emir. The cell's 'emir' would answer to a number of superiors, though the lines of authority were poorly defined and directions occasionally conflicted.<sup>1195</sup> IG's large numbers of militants, preachers, and leaders created a sprawling organization.<sup>1196</sup> This organizational structure made it difficult for IG's leaders to strictly control group activity, decentralizing decision making to the village and town level to a great extent. Members of a cell in one Upper Egypt village or Cairo slum would not know their colleagues in another village or slum.<sup>1197</sup> IG's decentralized nature was occasionally evident in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, when some elements of IG claimed responsibility for the attack while others denied responsibility.<sup>1198</sup>

While IG cells had some freedom of action, they were not completely autonomous from one another. IG's top leaders issued general direction and religious rulings to its cells, which cells obeyed for the most part, bound together by ideological kinship.<sup>1199</sup> Very few IG leaders were universally known, however, probably because

---

<sup>1194</sup> Michael Collins Dunn, "Fundamentalism in Egypt," *Middle East Policy* 2, no. 3 (1993): 75.

<sup>1195</sup> Murphy, 65.

<sup>1196</sup> Al-Zayyat, 71.

<sup>1197</sup> G.G. LaBelle, "Abdel-Rahman's Following in Egypt," *The Associated Press*, July 18, 1993.

<sup>1198</sup> Murphy, 88.

<sup>1199</sup> G.G. LaBelle, "Abdel-Rahman's Following in Egypt," *The Associated Press*, July 18, 1993.

very few leaders had ultimate authority over the entire group or a full view of the network.<sup>1200</sup>

There were several important IG leaders operating under Sheik Rahman.<sup>1201</sup> Mustafa Hasan Hamza, thought to be the head military planner for IG, resided in Sudan and Afghanistan. Talaat Fouad Qassam, the spokesperson for IG, resided in Denmark. Rifai Ahmed Taha, resided in Afghanistan and helped direct attacks inside Egypt. Sawfat Abdel-Ghani was convicted of ordering the 1992 assassination of human rights activist Farag Foda from his prison cell. Mohammed Abu Halima served as an assistant to Sheik Rahman inside of Egypt. Ali Abdel Rahman Salama was head of the IG military wing in the Egyptian governates of Badari and Assuit. Talaat Yassin Mohammed Hammam led IG members in Afghanistan and headed IG's security branch. Ahmed Salam was a senior operations officer for IG and Ahmed Sayid was the IG leader in Upper Egypt.

IG's loose structure impacted the group both positively and negatively. On the one hand, IG's decentralized nature helped in recruiting members and cultivating new leaders. Additionally, a decentralized cell network would make far-reaching government infiltration of IG extremely time-consuming, as most cells would need to be penetrated for the government to gain a full picture of the group's activities. On the other hand, decentralization allowed for strong local leaders to emerge and carry portions of the group in directions 'unapproved' by national and regional leaders.<sup>1202</sup> This potentially

---

<sup>1200</sup> Weaver, 112.

<sup>1201</sup> Charles Davidson, "Political Violence in Egypt: A Case Study of the Islamic Insurgency 1992-1997," Ph.D. diss., Turfs University, 2005, 288.

<sup>1202</sup> Stanley Reed, "The Battle for Egypt," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1993.

would make it very difficult for IG leaders to impose standardized, high quality tradecraft upon its many cells.

*Resources.* IG had significant resources at its disposal in this first period. While the IG did not control large swathes of territory, the group did control some areas and fielded a large number of militants and supporters.

IG's resources were reflected in its campaign to fight back against the Egyptian Government. In addition to IG's anti-foreigner and anti-Christian agenda, Egypt's tourism industry was one of the IG's most important targets. Tourism was the government's single largest source of foreign currency—\$3.3 billion annually—and IG believed it could turn the population against the government if Egypt's tourism industry were to falter.<sup>1203</sup> IG's attacks against foreign tourists and security personnel caused massive panic. Government income from tourism dropped to \$1.5 billion by 1993.<sup>1204</sup> Attacks on policemen grew bolder across this time period, including daylight ambushes against senior police security officials and their bodyguards.<sup>1205</sup>

IG's manpower also grew in this period. At its peak, IG's network of underground militants reached approximately 3,000 men, while its network of supporters and sympathizers was estimated to be between 10,000 and 100,000 people.<sup>1206</sup> By 1993, IG was thought to have a presence everywhere in Egypt, with a particularly strong presence in Cairo and the southern portion of the country.<sup>1207</sup> Many of IG's members and

---

<sup>1203</sup> Wright, 184. / Murphy, 81

<sup>1204</sup> Murphy, 82.

<sup>1205</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>1206</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>1207</sup> Ibid, 65.



sympathizers were poor, young and unemployed, though not necessarily uneducated.<sup>1208</sup>

Some of these individuals were recruited into the organization through a network of low-cost health clinics, inexpensive schools, and stores providing jobs.<sup>1209</sup>

Some of IG's operatives had valuable jihad experience in Afghanistan, which increased their skill in guerrilla conflict. When veterans from the Afghan jihad returned to continued their armed struggle in Egypt the Egyptian Government was taken off guard.<sup>1210</sup>

IG's targets were diverse, ranging from Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz to street police officers.<sup>1211</sup> IG concentrates some of its attacks on areas where security forces had been rough with IG members.<sup>1212</sup> One of the group's most daring initial attacks was an attempted assassination against the Interior Minister Zaki Badr, who IG believed was responsible for the intensification of police attacks on its operatives.<sup>1213</sup> Security force fatalities increased dramatically in the early 1990's from 14 in 1991, to 23 in 1992, to 120 in 1993.<sup>1214</sup>

The group also aggressively targeted tourists and Westerners. Civilian fatalities also increased dramatically from 16 in 1991, to 39 in 1992, to 111 in 1993. IG fatalities kept pace, with 4 in 1991, 32 in 1992, and 101 in 1993.<sup>1215</sup>

---

<sup>1208</sup> Jane's Insurgency and Terrorism Database, "El Gemaa el-Islamiyya," Accessed on 02/15/2007.

<sup>1209</sup> Nejla Sammakia, "Islamic Fundamentalists Gain Strength in Egypt," July 18, 1992.

<sup>1210</sup> Murphy, 85. / Tal, 28.

<sup>1211</sup> Wright, 184.

<sup>1212</sup> Murphy, 77.

<sup>1213</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>1214</sup> Tal, 154.

<sup>1215</sup> Tal, 154.

IG probably subsisted on a modest financial income in addition to support provided by foreign state sponsors. IG is alleged to have collected ‘Islamic’ taxes in Coptic Christian neighborhoods where inhabitants were encouraged to convert to Islam or continue paying rents.<sup>1216</sup> The Government of Sudan, Egypt’s southern neighbor, provided IG activists with housing, documentation, training and safe haven.<sup>1217</sup> This safe haven allowed IG to gather up and smuggle weapons into Egypt to supply its operatives. Sudan’s intelligence service provided further support to IG operatives, who were able to smuggle explosives along ancient and unguarded caravan trails across the Sudanese-Egyptian border.<sup>1218</sup>

One of IG’s most important resources in this period was its access to a large pool of recruits. The large number of recruits allowed IG to maintain a force of operatives that could overwhelm Egypt’s security forces, numbering far beyond what the Egyptian Government could monitor closely. The large number, however, made it difficult for IG to train and equip its operatives to the highest standards. The result was that the average IG member would be more vulnerable to becoming a government informant—probably a price IG was willing to pay for the volume of operatives it could throw against the government.

IG’s decentralized structure also contributed to its large number of operatives, with local branches springing up more readily and taking on recruits without waiting for ‘approval’ from a central IG authority.

---

<sup>1216</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>1217</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>1218</sup> Wright, 185.

*Popular Support.* IG had high popular support in the 1989 to 1993 period. IG dominated the Islamic activist scene on university campuses, lead by its spiritual guide Sheik Rahman.<sup>1219</sup> IG had a solid following in the towns of Upper and Middle Egypt, though it shared equal popularity with another underground movement, Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), in many neighborhoods of Cairo, Alexandria, Islamiya and Port Said.<sup>1220</sup> In contrast to EIJ, IG believed in displaying a public face, having a visible presence in the community and taking responsibility for its actions.<sup>1221</sup> Undoubtedly, this gave IG an edge in the battle for popular support. IG's core sympathizers were young men (typically under the age of 30) with rural or small town backgrounds from the middle or lower-middle class, with some university education.<sup>1222</sup> IG also enjoyed wide spread support among Egypt's rural populations and among rural migrants in metropolitan locations.

Not surprisingly, IG flourished in areas where the Egyptian Government failed to alleviate economic depression and high unemployment—which accounted for a substantial portion of Upper Egypt.<sup>1223</sup> IG enjoyed a boost of support, particularly among Egyptian youth, when it initiated militant operations against the government.<sup>1224</sup> The government's widespread crackdown on the Islamic community in the wake of increased Islamic militancy in Egypt further strengthened IG's standing in the community.<sup>1225</sup> IG also mounted publicity campaigns that highlighted the government's use of corruption,

---

<sup>1219</sup> Weaver, 29.

<sup>1220</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>1221</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>1222</sup> Gilles Kepel, "Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam," (I.B. Tauris: New York, 2006), 285. / Davidson, 277.

<sup>1223</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>1224</sup> Al-Zayyat, 71.

<sup>1225</sup> Weaver, 147.

lying and torture to achieve its goals.<sup>1226</sup> IG had some interaction with Western media organizations in Cairo, releasing statements to reporters following a militant attack or unpopular government action.<sup>1227</sup>

Islamic groups in Egypt often responded to the community's needs more rapidly than the Egyptian Government. In the aftermath of an earthquake in 1992, Islamic groups rushed in to provide relief while the government moved much slower.<sup>1228</sup> In the Cairo slum of Imbada, home to 1.2 million squatters without access to basic public services, IG opened mosques and schools and medical clinics.<sup>1229</sup> The IG leader in Imbada, Sheik Gaber Mohamed Ali, was recognized in the community for ridding the slum of thieves and thugs. Worried that IG was beginning to gain control of Imbada, the Egyptian Government conducted a weeklong security sweep where it arrested 650 suspected radicals.<sup>1230</sup> Predictably, the community of Imbada became even more hostile to the Egyptian Government and more supportive of IG. Despite these gains, IG experienced occasional setbacks to its popularity in its slum territories. Girls and women were subject to harassment if they moved about without proper Islamic head coverings and Christian residents were threatened and forced to pay taxes to IG.<sup>1231</sup>

---

<sup>1226</sup> Murphy, 85. / Nejla Sammakia, "Islamic Fundamentalists Gain Strength in Egypt," July 18, 1992.

<sup>1227</sup> Murphy, 83.

<sup>1228</sup> Weaver, 249.

<sup>1229</sup> Khaled Dawoud, "The Battle for the Mosque: Government vs. Extremists," The Associated Press, December 24, 1993.

<sup>1230</sup> Dalia Baligh, "Crackdown on Extremists Winds Down in Cairo Neighborhood," The Associated Press, December 15, 1992.

<sup>1231</sup> Weaver, 147.

IG's popular support in the 1989 to 1993 period benefited the group immensely. Popular backing in the slums of Cairo provided IG with small, but critical, pockets of controlled territory. IG took a 'hands-on' approach to increasing its popularity, establishing mosques and provided public services. The group's decision not to rely on media-based publicity campaigns provided the group with some counterintelligence cover. IG's simple Islamic values message, coupled with the government's inept handling of Islamic resurgence in Egypt, allowed the group to maintain its popularity without exposing details of its leaders, organization and plans.

*Intelligence.* The quality of IG's intelligence collection in this period is difficult to determine. By analyzing the quality of its attacks, it is possible to draw some limited conclusions about what intelligence would have been required to make such an attack.

IG had many successful and near-successful assassination attacks against 'hard' targets, which took numerous security precautions. IG killed Egypt's parliamentary speaker as well as numerous high-level security force leaders—targets that would likely have had a cadre of well-trained security guards.<sup>1232</sup> IG also attempted but failed to assassinate several hard targets. The group made three attempts on the Egyptian Minister of Information, two attempts on the Ministers of the Interior, one attempt on Minister of Foreign Affairs and two attempts on the life of President Hosni Mubarak.<sup>1233</sup> Targets of this caliber would require a measure of relatively sophisticated surveillance methods. Each of these targets would have had armed escorts that would likely employ countersurveillance and counterattack procedures.

---

<sup>1232</sup> Tal, 95. / Murphy, 82.

<sup>1233</sup> Ibid, 28.

A few of IG's assassination targets held security positions that would have been unknown to the general public. This suggests that IG was using a penetration of the security forces to identify these individuals. For example, on September 25, 1993, IG militants gunned down Abd al-Halim, a member of a secret task force monitoring Islamic militants, outside his house. A few days later IG assassinated a prison doctor they accused of facilitating torture inside one of the security force's covert prisons.<sup>1234</sup>

*Counterintelligence.* IG's counterintelligence procedures in this period were relatively basic, but sufficient to keep the group's key leaders and large operational plans secret.

IG's internal security group was one of group's more counterintelligence savvy branches. The security branch was led by Talaat Yassin Hammam, known as the 'Ghost' to police forces due the difficulty they had in locating and capturing him.<sup>1235</sup> Hammam's branch was responsible for special operations and counterespionage as well as physical security for the group's public meetings, seminars and demonstrations.<sup>1236</sup> Though Hammam's branch was mostly compartmented from IG's overt branches, Hammam's men would wear badges and provide crowd control at public meetings.<sup>1237</sup> This practice was a significant counterintelligence oversight for Hammam. This would have afforded a watchful police service a chance to identify individuals with access to IG's most covert

---

<sup>1234</sup> "Jemmah Islamiya reported to Have Killed Policeman in Asyut," AFP, September 25, 1993.

<sup>1235</sup> Murphy, 77.

<sup>1236</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>1237</sup> Ibid.

operatives simply by taking note of which IG members wore this special badge at public meetings.

Hammam exercised a great deal of personal security. He rarely met with anyone in IG, including his own security branch personnel.<sup>1238</sup> He never appeared in public, unlike many other IG leaders. Many of his operatives maintained a high-level of personal security as well. To avoid police scrutiny they held regular jobs, shaved their beards and did not frequent IG mosques.<sup>1239</sup> The importance of maintaining a low profile was reinforced for IG operatives when the group's spokesperson was gunned down by undercover security forces in broad daylight on a Cairo street.<sup>1240</sup>

Senior IG's operatives allegedly had instructions to commit suicide if they were caught and detained by security forces to ensure that no information would leak out during the brutal interrogation session.<sup>1241</sup> On one occasion, an IG operative fulfilled this command by jumping out the fifth-floor window of the police headquarters in Aswan during an interrogation.<sup>1242</sup>

Some of IG's operatives were not as well trained. One IG operative recruited in a hasty manner completed an attack against a German tour bus and was quickly hunted

---

<sup>1238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1239</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>1240</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>1241</sup> "Egypt's New Security Strategy: No Dialogue, No Retreat in All-Out War," Mideast Mirror, April 22, 1993.

<sup>1242</sup> Ibid.

down by local police forces.<sup>1243</sup> One of the men involved in the attack on Farag Foda was captured and gave police details about the operation.<sup>1244</sup>

IG probably relied to some extent on tribal, kinship and friendship ties to weed out potential informants and planted government agents.<sup>1245</sup> When IG discovered a police informant in its ranks, the informant would be killed.

IG also had a very public side to its activities, including its well-received social services. Compared to Ayman Zawahiri's clandestine EIJ operatives, rank-and-file IG militants were probably easy for the Egyptian Government to identify.<sup>1246</sup> The sheer number of IG activists, however, would make monitoring each militant impractical—in contrast, EIJ members were probably hard to find but easy to monitor due to the relative small size of the group.

IG popular support helped the group to gain counterintelligence support from the local population. IG's political wing employed personnel that acted as community liaison officers. These IG members would work with the local population to facilitate IG communications, provide hospitality to IG couriers, and arrange hiding places for group members on the run from the police.<sup>1247</sup> IG political wing members would also select IG recruits from the local population, which almost certainly involved working with locals to weed out recruits with potential counterintelligence concerns.

---

<sup>1243</sup> Murphy, 81.

<sup>1244</sup> Tal, 97.

<sup>1245</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2004), 147.

<sup>1246</sup> Weaver, 88.

<sup>1247</sup> Arbuckle, Tammy. "Egypt's Catch-22." *Jane's International Defense Review*, 1993, 26.



IG's communications with media organizations also exposed the group on a regular basis. The group contacted numerous international media organizations in Cairo, both by telephone and fax, to issue threats and claim responsibility for attacks against tourists and security forces. In one instance, a key IG leader personally contacted foreign journalists to claim that his fighters had carried out a recent attack.<sup>1248</sup>

In another instance, IG operatives conducted an interview a handful of Western and Egyptian journalists at an IG safe house used clandestine operatives. They compounded their mistake by using their real names in the interview.<sup>1249</sup> Though these operatives were emboldened by the fact that were inside their controlled territory in Imbada, this still reflects fairly mediocre security tradecraft.

Overall, IG's relatively basic application of counterintelligence methods in this period reflected the fact that IG was not able to impose a strict standard of counterintelligence awareness among its operatives. While top-level operatives did employ strict security procedures, these habits did not filter down to lower levels. IG's large number of operatives, its quick recruiting cycle, and its relatively loose organizational structure provides some explanation for this deficit.

IG was able to partially compartment its public branches from its clandestine branches. Though there was some crossover between the two branches, the group seemed to keep these functions separate and therefore avoided getting large numbers of its covert militants arrested in this period. Interestingly, this strategy proved doubly effective as the government, in its frustration to locate true IG operatives among a mass

---

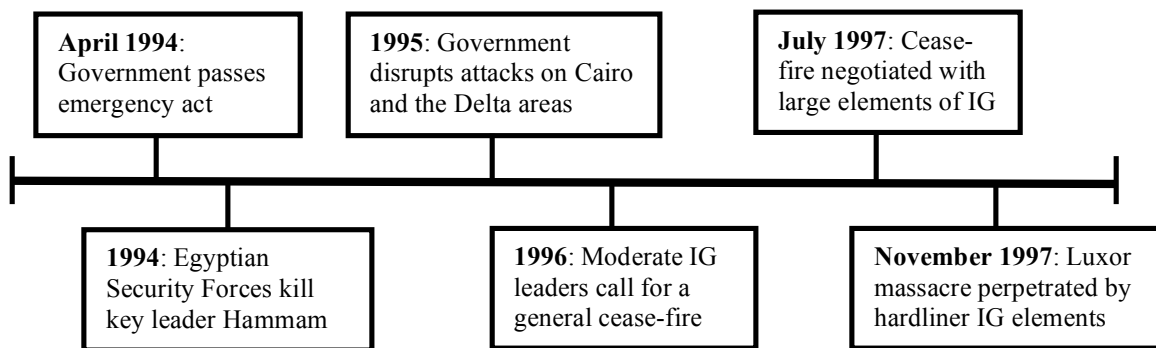
<sup>1248</sup> Tal, 95.

<sup>1249</sup> Nejla Sammakia, "Islamic Fundamentalists Gain Strength in Egypt," July 18, 1992.

of supporters and Islamic bystanders, resorted to mass arrests, which further drove the population into the arms of IG.

*Summary.* In the 1989 to 1993 period, IG had a loose organizational structure, a relatively incapable adversary, access to controlled territory, a relative abundance of popular support and financial resources. IG's struggle to standardize tradecraft supports hypothesis one. The benefits and drawbacks of popular support and controlled territory also appear to hold true for IG in this period. IG's pockets of controlled territory provided some guarantee that the Egyptian government would have difficulty gaining insight into IG's activities in these areas. IG's 'social services' focused public support campaigns, coupled with the Egyptian Government's inept counterterrorism strategies, added an interesting wrinkle to the popular support landscape—IG was able to gain support without having to expose itself to the general population too extensively in the media.

*Islamic Group Timeline: 1994 - 1998*



Islamic Group 1994 - 1998

*Adversary Counterterrorism Capability.* The Egyptian Government's counterterrorism capabilities increased dramatically in the 1994 to 1998 period. The Egyptian Government improved its strategy in six key ways. First, the government succeeded in recruiting IG members to infiltrate the group and provide intelligence. Security forces began to recruit networks of informants and agents living among IG members in their communities.<sup>1250</sup> These informants provided vital information to the security forces on the local activities of many IG cells. In 1995, security forces were able to raid an IG cell safe house in Zawya Al Hamra and kill seven militants as a result of an informant's tip-off.<sup>1251</sup> Based on information received from terrorist group penetrations, security forces were able to thwart planned terrorist operations in Cairo and the Delta areas in 1995.<sup>1252</sup> Information gleaned from interrogations of captured IG members would also prove critical in the human intelligence effort.

Second, the government created a centralized database to track terrorist groups, their members and their activities.<sup>1253</sup> This contributed to the government's ability to track and kill terrorists—357 for 1994 -1995, versus just 150 for 1992 - 1993.<sup>1254</sup>

---

<sup>1250</sup> Tal, 119. / Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Egyptian Police, Sweep, Seize Suspects in Killing of Greeks," The New York Times, April 20, 1996.

<sup>1251</sup> Murphy, 92.

<sup>1252</sup> Tal, 124. / Hassan Mekki, "Security forces kill top militant in new blow to fundamentalists," Agence France Presse, November 17, 1994.

<sup>1253</sup> Tal, 124.

<sup>1254</sup> Ibid, 154.

Third, security force members received more extensive training, raising their level of professionalism. This led to more effective policing of borders, particular the border with Sudan, and ultimately to a reduction of weapons smuggled into Egypt.<sup>1255</sup>

Fourth, the government targeted high-level IG members for assassination and capture and focused less attention on detaining and killing middle-level group members. Security forces were successful in this effort, killing more high-level commanders than they had in previous years.<sup>1256</sup> The government was able to kill senior leader Talaat Yassin Hammam and his replacement, Ahmed Hassan Abdel Galil in 1994.<sup>1257</sup>

Fifth, the government began to study IG's international infrastructure and worked to exploit the vulnerabilities of its transnational support networks.<sup>1258</sup> Though IG's international infrastructure was not extensive, it included cells of terrorist operatives in several European, Middle Eastern and South Asia countries. In addition, some of IG's leaders and fundraising elements were based outside of Egypt. Egypt's ability to work with foreign governments to facilitate the monitoring, arrest and extradition of IG elements in those countries was an important component of this strategy.<sup>1259</sup> The government worked more closely with Arab governments in the region and Pakistan, in particular, to shut down IG training camps and track down IG members operating internationally.<sup>1260</sup> Importantly, as the Egyptian Government operated more effectively against IG within Egypt, IG members began to migrate increasingly to bases outside of

---

<sup>1255</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>1256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1257</sup> Ibid, 121. / Murphy, 93.

<sup>1258</sup> Tal, 119.

<sup>1259</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>1260</sup> Ibid, 149. / Murphy, 86.

Egypt. This rendered the Egyptian Government's ability to combat IG outside of Egypt progressively more important.

Sixth, the government passed emergency anti-terrorism legislation that broadened the counterterrorism powers of the security forces under a more legitimate, publicly supported banner. The Egyptian parliament ratified the three-year extension of the 'State of Emergency Act' on April 11, 1994. In addition, the penalties for committing a terrorist act were made harsher and the definition of terrorism was broadened to include "obstructing the work of the authorities."<sup>1261</sup>

Though the Emergency Act had been effective since the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, the extension and other acts of anti-terrorism legislation gave Egyptian security forces renewed cover for moving more aggressively against terrorist elements.<sup>1262</sup> Police forces were given the authority to open fire and assassinate terrorist group leaders in broad daylight if they felt it was warranted.<sup>1263</sup> Legislative changes were accompanied by government-sponsored media campaigns aimed at reducing IG's appeal by publicizing particularly shocking terrorist acts.<sup>1264</sup>

By 1997, the Egyptian Government had so battered IG that large elements of the group were ready to negotiate a cease-fire.<sup>1265</sup> In July 1997, the Islamist lawyer Montassir al-Zayyat had struck a deal between IG and Egyptian Government, known as

---

<sup>1261</sup> Murphy, 85.

<sup>1262</sup> Wright, 215.

<sup>1263</sup> 2RAD-2004-600457.

<sup>1264</sup> Tal, 133.

<sup>1265</sup> While the Muslim Brotherhood had been co-opted political by the Egyptian Government to a limited extent, it is unclear what insight the Government gained into IG activities by way of potential 'liaison' contact with Muslim Brotherhood elements.

the nonviolence initiative.<sup>1266</sup> In March 1999, IG's exiled leadership ratified the group's decision to cease IG operations.<sup>1267</sup>

Though the Egyptian Government made huge strides in its counterterrorism policy in this period, it also continued many ineffective and counterproductive practices. Among these were the implementation of mass curfews, arrests and searches, the mistreatment of civilians coming forward with information on terrorist activities, the consistent overcrowding of prisons, and the use of collective punishments for entire neighborhoods or families associated with militants.<sup>1268</sup> While the Egyptian Government probably deterred some IG activities with its security crackdowns, brutal police tactics frequently backfired for the Government.<sup>1269</sup> Whether security crackdowns provided a net loss or net gain for Egypt is difficult to judge.

Overall, however, Egypt's dramatic turn around in counterterrorism tactics paid off remarkably well. The security forces less frequent use of collective punishments coupled with a more legitimate legal platform almost certainly generated more public support for the government campaign. Even more importantly, the government's ability to penetrate IG cells would lead a steady dismantling of the group. With IG leaders increasingly dead or in prison, the group was forced to cave into the government's demands.

---

<sup>1266</sup> Wright, 40.

<sup>1267</sup> Mideast Mirror, "Cairo Frees 1,200 Gama'a Members Following Cessation of Violence," vol. 13, no. 79.

<sup>1268</sup> Tal, 150.

<sup>1269</sup> Sarah Gauch, "Egypt Uses Fear to Fight Islamic Extremists," Christian Science Monitor, April 3, 1995.

*Organizational Structure.* IG's organizational structure in the 1994 to 1998 period remained relatively decentralized. A collection of influential leaders continued to roughly direct the group's actions, though increasingly these leaders would do this from their prison cells.

A number of crucial field commanders, both in Egypt and overseas, took these general directions from the most senior leaders and tailored their groups' operations to satisfy these strategic plans. An important overseas operative, Mustafa Hamza, trained and directed a cell of militants in Ethiopia to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.<sup>1270</sup> Hamza, along with Afghanistan-based IG leader Ahmed Taha, planned and directed a cell of militants to execute the Luxor Massacre in November 1997—a brutal attack that left over 60 tourists dead and repulsed most Egyptians.<sup>1271</sup> Talal Hammam directed numerous cells in Egypt and once the security forces killed him, terrorist activities dropped sharply.<sup>1272</sup>

The growing divisions in IG's leadership created a more decentralized overall organization. Ironically, the growing divisions may have also produced a collection of more centralized sub-organizations. Divisions in the group formed between hardliners and moderates, as well as between the internal Egyptian leaders and the external leaders. IG's many external leaders, known as the Diaspora Council, operated from Europe, Afghanistan and North Africa and tended to support a hardliner approach until they ratified the nonviolence initiative in March 1999. Key personalities on the Council were

---

<sup>1270</sup> Tal, 110.

<sup>1271</sup> Wright, 257.

<sup>1272</sup> Murphy, 96.

Sheikh Rahman, Hamza, Mohammad Islambouli, Talat Qassem, and Rafai Taha.<sup>1273</sup>

Unhappy about the direction of the group, divided leaders probably attempted to more forcefully shape behavior within their respective emerging divisions—whether they were successful in this endeavor is not evident from the available historical record.

While the hardliners continued to plan audacious attacks against Egyptian interests, the moderates realized that armed struggle would not achieve the group’s goals. Sheikh Rahman—among the moderate members of the Diaspora Council—issued decrees and direction to IG members from a prison in the United States. Prominent moderate IG leader Khalid Ibrahim called for a general ceasefire in 1996, and many more IG leaders echoed the call in July 1997.<sup>1274</sup> Many of these moderate leaders, who tended to be older than the hardliners, were languishing in Egyptian prisons when they called from the ceasefire.

The Luxor Massacre further shattered the group, driving moderates to bend even further to government demands. Taha, thought to have ordered the Luxor attack to scuttle the ceasefire movement, was forced to resign from the IG council.<sup>1275</sup> Interestingly, one IG source issued a claim of responsibility for the Luxor attack, which was quickly answered with a counterclaim from IG’s ‘official’ spokesperson that rogue IG members had perpetrated the attack.<sup>1276</sup>

---

<sup>1273</sup> Tal, 29.

<sup>1274</sup> Al-Zayyat, 70.

<sup>1275</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>1276</sup> Agence French Presse, “Most Jamaa leaders favor end to all attacks: lawyer,” December 11, 1997.



The Egyptian Government probably did not succeed in gaining a penetration of IG's leadership in Egypt or its Diaspora Council, as evidenced by the complete surprise of the Luxor attack. However, the security forces were able to infiltrate a sufficient number of lower level cells to disrupt many plots and capture many important leaders.

*Resources.* IG maintained its access to resources in the 1994 to 1998 period. IG's ability to carry out numerous terrorist operations was a testament to their access to recruits, money and assistance from state sponsors. IG killed over 550 civilians and security personnel between 1994 and 1998.<sup>1277</sup> IG also achieved its goal of destroying Egypt's tourism industry—five star hotels were operating a 5 to 10 percent capacity, cancelled reservations totaled \$1 billion, and tourism companies had to reduce employee salaries by 50 percent.<sup>1278</sup>

IG would get some of its money from government-sponsored charities in Saudi Arabia and wealthy Saudi businessmen.<sup>1279</sup> Other funds would come from membership dues, contributions from Egyptians living overseas and donations from Islamic charities and foundations throughout the world.<sup>1280</sup> According to various trial transcripts, IG was alleged to have received some of its money from Iran.<sup>1281</sup> IG would also receive logistical support from the Sudanese government. The Sudanese issued diplomatic

---

<sup>1277</sup> Tal, 154.

<sup>1278</sup> Weaver, 267. / Tal, 99.

<sup>1279</sup> Robert Fisk, "Might of the Sword Menaces Christians," The Independent, February 9, 1995.

<sup>1280</sup> Murphy, 87.

<sup>1281</sup> Tal, 88.

passports to several IG cell members after they attempted to assassinate President Mubarak in Ethiopia.<sup>1282</sup>

Many IG members remained well trained in this period, benefiting from years of guerrilla experience in the Afghan War.<sup>1283</sup> The group's access to recruits and fighters continued, though the government had arrested and incarcerated an estimated 20,000 militants by 1997.<sup>1284</sup>

The group's access to controlled territory also continued. IG would use Sudanese territory to train and stage unmolested by Egyptian security forces.<sup>1285</sup> Though Sudanese support to IG may have been declining by 1996, Sudan almost certainly remained a key safe haven in this time period.<sup>1286</sup> Though the Egyptian Government began to push IG members from its traditional strongholds in Upper Egypt, the group would retain its core territories in Assiut and Minya.<sup>1287</sup>

IG's support from foreign sponsors probably became increasingly important as the group was driven from its traditional strongholds within Egypt. This also became one of IG's liabilities, as its dependence on the foreign sponsors backfired once the Egyptian Government began to track and eliminate its foreign connections.

---

<sup>1282</sup> Sageman, 42.

<sup>1283</sup> Murphy, 92.

<sup>1284</sup> Mark Huband, "Luxor Masterminds in Afghanistan Exile," *The Financial Times of London*, November 20, 1997.

<sup>1285</sup> G.G. LaBelle, "Charges of Terrorism, Claims of Democracy Mix Blur of Sudan," *The Associated Press*, March 28, 1996.

<sup>1286</sup> James Adams, "Americans Move to Destabilise Sudanese regime," *Sunday Times* November 17, 1996.

<sup>1287</sup> Hassan Mekki, "Security forces kill top militant in new blow to fundamentalists," *Agence France Presse*, November 17, 1994.

*Popular Support.* The Egyptian population's precipitous decline in popular support for IG was perhaps the most dramatic change for the group in the 1994 to 1998 period. IG had calculated correctly that attacking the tourism industry would hobble the Egyptian Government's economic base. IG hadn't accounted for the fact that it would also destroy the livelihoods of millions of regular Egyptians, and turn them against the group. Directly or indirectly, more than 10 million Egyptians nationwide had been involved in the tourism trade and were thus negatively affected by the drop in tourism.<sup>1288</sup> Moreover, the bulk of Egyptians did not support widespread violence against foreigners and venerated Egyptian intellectuals like Mahfouz—this targeting strategy almost certainly backfired on IG as well.

Without the support of the population, IG had to retreat even further into its inner strongholds in Upper Egypt. IG's internal leaders, many of whom remained in prison, recognized that their defeat was inevitable and moved to endorse a ceasefire.

IG's strategic miscalculation highlighted an interesting dynamic between popular support and effective terrorist operations. IG had to find a plan of attack that struck at its enemy, the Egyptian Government, without causing direct collateral damage to its base of support. The group's attacks on Egyptian security forces seemed to fulfill this objective—security forces overreacted and imposed unpopular collective punishments on the population—leaving IG only *indirectly* responsible for the collateral damage. IG's attacks on tourists lead directly to tourists canceling trips to Egypt and directly to a loss of revenue. The lesson for terrorist groups is that populations will punish a group for

---

<sup>1288</sup> Weaver, 267.

causing direct collateral damage to the population but may be less likely to punish a group for indirectly inviting such collateral damage. The lesson for governments is that populations should always be reminded of the direct role the local terrorist group plays in bringing collateral damage upon that population.

*Intelligence.* Determining IG's intelligence capabilities in this period is difficult, but it is possible to reach some conclusions about these capabilities by looking closely at the group's activities.

IG monitored and assassinated several hard targets, which indicates that the group had some advanced surveillance capabilities. For example, IG assassinated the deputy chief of an elite police force, which was the Egyptian equivalent of the Federal Bureau of Investigations. More impressively, the murdered deputy had been using an unmarked car and had implemented countersurveillance measures. It is possible that IG's operations against this deputy and his three aides in previous incidents could have been aided by an IG penetration of the elite police force.<sup>1289</sup> In another example, it is widely believed that the 1994 assassination of Major General Rauf Khayrat, a ranking veteran of the security services, would have required information accessible only to high-ranking security officers.<sup>1290</sup> In either case, advanced surveillance and human penetrations suggest a fairly sophisticated intelligence collection capability. IG also assassinated a number of police generals and high-ranking judges, who they blamed for the conviction of IG members.

---

<sup>1289</sup> Murphy, 91.

<sup>1290</sup> Joseph Kechichian and Jeanne Nazimek, "Challenges to the Military in Egypt," *Middle East Policy* 5, no. 3 (September 1997): 128.

Though IG failed to assassinate President Mubarak, they nearly succeeded during a Presidential trip to Ethiopia. The assassination unit had trained for and rehearsed their attack in Khartoum, which demonstrates an additional layer of sophistication.<sup>1291</sup>

Many of these incidents suggest that IG had some insiders feeding them information about the locations of their targets, at the very least. However, it is likely that most of these penetrations were not high-level, but rather somewhere fairly low in the security bureaucracy.

*Counterintelligence.* IG began to suffer from numerous counterintelligence lapses in this period, some of which stemmed from the government's increased capabilities and some of which stemmed from the group's hemorrhaging popular support.

Prominent IG commander Talat Hammam faced a number of counterintelligence failures just before he was captured by security forces. On February 16, 1994, Hammam's picture ran on the front page of Al Akbar newspaper with the offer of a reward.<sup>1292</sup> Not only was Hammam's picture soon plastered on every coffee shop and sidewalk kiosk, but the fact that the security forces had collected a 'confirmed' picture of Hammam suggested a major security leak in IG. Hammam soon sent out a message over public radio canceling all IG meetings and movements for a week. The fact that Hammam did not have any other way to securely transmit this message to the rest of his IG compatriots suggests that IG counterintelligence procedures were slipping as times became desperate.

---

<sup>1291</sup> Tal, 110.

<sup>1292</sup> Murphy, 90.

With his group facing increasing pressure, Hammam was forced to meet face to face with front line operatives rather than to send intermediaries. Police forces began to draw a progressively tighter circle around Hammam's activities until they finally cornered him in his apartment in the Cairo neighborhood of Hada'ak Al Kubbah.<sup>1293</sup> One police official claimed that they found Hammam by monitoring militants overseas who they suspected would try to contact Hammam in Cairo.<sup>1294</sup> The government also alleged that they were led to Hammam by a penetration of this network.<sup>1295</sup>

Seizing Hammam in his operations center and residence caused extensive damage to key IG networks. With documents recovered from Hammam's center, police were able to storm 36 other cells and arrest 120 of Hammam's confederates.<sup>1296</sup> Additionally, the police found numerous forged identification papers and passports. This could have allowed Egyptian police to target individuals with similar forged documents in circulation for greater scrutiny.

Examination of Hammam's center also revealed a number of the IG leader's personal counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities. First, Hammam lived with his wife and two children, which could have imposed additional counterintelligence weaknesses for Hammam as his wife would likely have been easier to track.<sup>1297</sup> Second, Hammam's center was located only a short distance from the headquarters of Egypt's elite police forces—an audacious move that could have gotten Hammam wrapped up

---

<sup>1293</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>1294</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>1295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1296</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>1297</sup> Ibid, 95.

even sooner. To Hammam's credit, he did not fit the profile of a typical slum-based IG member. Instead, he lived a bourgeois lifestyle and drove a late-model red Mistubishi.<sup>1298</sup>

Once captured, IG members most likely gave up more information about the group to police interrogators. In the case of the attempted assassination of Mubarak, the terrorists arrested following the attacks identified to the police the other militants involved in the attack.<sup>1299</sup>

IG also had several counterintelligence successes in this period. The group successfully stemmed the tide of police informants by monitoring and harassing suspected informants in their neighborhoods. In the Upper Egypt slum of Mallawi, IG detained and killed over 40 informants in only four months in 1995.<sup>1300</sup> While the amount of information available to the adversary was reduced substantially, that IG had to fight a tide of informants may have been an indication that popular support was slipping. IG's international operations, including the assassination attempt on Mubarak, also indicated a level of sophistication. For the assassination attempt, IG established an operational infrastructure in Ethiopia that included safe houses, weapons, escape plans, communications, and forged documents.<sup>1301</sup>

---

<sup>1298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1299</sup> Tal, 110.

<sup>1300</sup> Robert Fisk, "Terror Stalks Egypt's Forgotten Towns," *The Independent*, February 8, 1995.

<sup>1301</sup> Tal, 110.

Overall, IG's counterintelligence capabilities were in decline in this period. The two most obvious sources of this decline were the group's declining popular support and the increased counterterrorism capabilities of the Egyptian security forces.

Declining popular support would allow police forces to develop a larger number of informants within and around the group in its areas of operations and controlled territories. IG's initiative to stage its leadership and some operations outside of Egypt are a testament to the fact the Egypt was becoming a hostile operating environment for the group.

The government's augmented counterterrorism capabilities turned the conflict even more dramatically in the state's favor. Adept monitoring of militants overseas and exploitation of documents seized at crime scenes allowed the police to capitalize on IG's counterintelligence vulnerabilities.

*Summary.* In the 1994 to 1998 period, IG maintained a loose organizational structure and an abundance of resources and controlled territory. However, IG faced a much stronger adversary and a sharp reduction of popular support. Despite some continued success, IG made a critical strategic miscalculation in this period. The group wagered that their attack on the tourism industry would harm the government but would not undercut their popular appeal in Egypt. However, as the tourism industry faltered, occasionally on the heels of brutal civilian attacks, the public began to turn against IG. The goodwill that seemed to insulate IG from penetrations in the first period faded away.

The government's dramatic increase in counterterrorism capabilities compounded IG's problems. The government was very successful at rounding up key IG leaders and



operatives and keeping them in jail. As the number of key IG personnel in prison increased, the group slowly realized that it was on the brink of failure. Ultimately, it is difficult to judge whether the IG's counterintelligence challenges are a result of the fading popular support or the government's increased capabilities—most likely the challenges the group faced came as some combination of these two major changes.

### Hypotheses Revisited

*Hypothesis 1(A): With a relatively tighter command and control structure IG will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.* The IG case mostly supports this hypothesis. IG's loose organizational structure in the 1989 to 1993 period prevented the group from imposing rigorous tradecraft upon its group members. The lack of counterintelligence standards occasionally backfired for IG, as men who were captured by the police quickly gave up important operational details. IG became more fragmented in the 1994 to 1998 period, though each of the fragments may have become relatively tighter than the previous whole.

*Hypothesis 1(B): With a relatively tighter command and control structure IG will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.* The IG mostly supports this hypothesis. IG's loose structure allowed for the emergence of strong local leaders, which militated against the creation of an IG-wide, standardized tradecraft. This prevented the Egyptian government from exploiting group-wide plans and procedures. Functionally, this meant that the Egyptian would have had to penetrate a large percentage of IG cells to understand and predict IG's behavior and upcoming plots.

*Hypothesis 2(A): With relatively greater popular support IG will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.* The IG case also supports this hypothesis. There is evidence that the local population provided counterintelligence assistance to IG when the group enjoyed high levels of popular support. Support appears to include identifying and vetting potential recruits, helping to secure courier-based communications, and providing hiding places for IG members on the run from the police.

*Hypothesis 2(B): With relatively greater popular support IG will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.* This hypothesis is partially supported by the IG case. IG was very concerned about popular support and, in contrast to groups like Egyptian Islamic Jihad, worked hard to cultivate a public side. IG routinely reached out to local and international media outlets, telephoning and faxing media offices and granting interviews with journalists. All of this behavior risked exposing sensitive details about IG personnel and resources to the Egyptian Government. In one instance, IG even held an interview in an operational safe house—a dangerous move if the safe house were ever to be used again by undercover operatives. However, IG was able to gain popular support in ways that provided much less exposure to the media. First, IG relied on providing social services through local mosques, health clinics and schools. This directly increased popular support while giving up few important details about the group's membership and resources. Of course, the leadership of the mosques, health clinics and schools would have had some connection to more central IG figures and, thus, would have been priority recruitment targets from the Egyptian government. IG relied on the Egyptian Government's heavy-handed missteps to gain

additional support—a windfall the group forfeited when they began to more brutally attack civilians and tourism industry.

*Hypothesis 3(A): With relatively more controlled territory IG will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.* This hypothesis seems mostly correct. IG clearly benefited from controlled territory in terms of security. Egyptian security forces could not adequately police these areas and had to rely on mass sweeps and raids when venturing into IG territories. Raids on this scale may have been easy to predict and may have given key leaders and operatives a chance to hide or escape police round-ups.

*Hypothesis 3(B): With relatively more controlled territory IG will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.* This hypothesis also seems mostly correct. IG's controlled territories gave security forces an area to target, and mass arrests almost certainly netted some operatives and IG sympathizers. This would have provided Egyptian forces with captured militants who would give up some useful information in the course of an interrogation—on balance, however, it is difficult to assess whether the mass arrests served as a net gain or net loss for the Egyptian government.

*Hypothesis 4: IG will become increasingly centralized and tightly commanded over time in the face of external threats.* The IG case provides tentative support for this hypothesis. IG's military wing, the branch of IG that had the greatest exposure to hostile Egyptian security forces, was relatively tightly coupled and centralized around Talat Hammam during both periods one and two. Overall, however,

the group became more fragmented over time as moderates, hardliners, internal and foreign components each desired a preferred direction for the group. Leaders were faced with an increasingly capable adversary and a need to reassess IG's preferred targets—the hardliners wanted to continue attacking tourists and civilians while the moderates predicted that this strategy would ultimately lose popular backing. Despite this macro-fragmentation, the organizational structure likely tightened up as each division began to assert more control over their sub-group membership. Thus, there is a distinct possibility that the government's direct, growing challenge to IG caused the group to evolve into a more fragmented but centralized structure. Unfortunately, evidence of organizational tightening is not available from the historical record.

*Control Variables: Alternative Explanations Review*

As discussed earlier, the control variables did not remain perfectly constant in the IG case study, opening up the possibility that the control variables account for some of the change in the dependent variables. First, the Egyptian Government increased its counterterrorism capabilities dramatically between the first and second periods. Thus, any erosion in IG's counterintelligence capabilities could result from this shift, rather than shifts in organizational structure, popular support or controlled territory. First, IG's vulnerability to human penetrations increased from period one to period two. This vulnerability appears to have resulted from the Egyptian Government's increasing counterterrorism capabilities rather than from changes in IG's command structure. Second, IG's controlled territory vulnerabilities were almost certainly heightened by the Egyptian Government's ability to exploit them—however the Egyptian Government was

able to exploit these vulnerabilities in period one as well, when the government's counterterrorism capabilities were assessed as low.

The organizational learning hypothesis would predict that IG's counterintelligence capabilities should improve over time. The organizational learning hypothesis cannot account for capabilities that decrease over time, as learning leads almost exclusively to improvements. IG's key counterintelligence capabilities mostly decreased over time and therefore the organizational learning alternative hypothesis is disconfirmed. Additionally, IG's resources were constant over time and therefore changes in the independent variables cannot be explained by a shift in resources.

#### *Lessons from IG Case Study*

The IG case study provides support for several hypotheses and provides insight into potential interactions between the independent variables and between the intelligence and counterintelligence variables.

First, the IG case demonstrates the interesting tension that arises between maintaining controlled territory and popular support. In general, controlling territory leads to increased popular support when the group provides public goods to, while demanding little from, the population. When the group can offer social services to the population, while doing very little 'social policing' (i.e. punishing people for not adhering to the group's particular, in some cases religious, social agenda), the population will most likely be very supportive. This support can be further strengthened when frustrated government forces make heavy-handed incursions into controlled territory, further alienating the population to the government's cause. IG's ultimate failure to

terrorize the Egyptian Government without terrorizing its own population highlights the difficulty groups face in pursuing a terrorist mission on home soil. Terrorist groups that create wide separation between the territories in which they operate and the territories they control and derive popular support will more easily avoid this predicament. Al Qaeda, for example, largely avoided this problem in the 1990s by conducting terrorist operations in areas far removed from its core territories in Afghanistan.

The case also highlights the challenges and tradeoffs governments face when battling a group with controlled territory. On the one hand, government incursions into controlled territory have the potential to backfire dramatically if the government's counterterrorism nets snare numerous innocent bystanders—a likely outcome in territory with which security forces are not familiar. On the other hand, groups that controls territory for long periods are likely to harbor numerous high value terrorist targets and may have relaxed security practices as the territory is perceived as relatively impenetrable. In such an instance, a government raid can yield a good deal of intelligence from high value targets while alienating segments of the population inside and outside of the controlled territory. Governments need to weigh these tradeoffs carefully for each territory and its likely intelligence yield when planning mass arrests and raids.

Third, the case highlights an interesting facet of the relationship between popular support and the adversary's counterterrorism capabilities. As the Egyptian Government become more capable of protecting its forces against IG attacks, IG operatives were forced to attack less protected targets—civilians, Coptic Christians and tourists. Whereas

attacks on government forces were more widely supported, attacks on tourists and civilians were not as popular.

## CHAPTER SIX: TERRORISM AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

The practice of counterintelligence, whether for terrorist groups or governments, is a discipline of calculated tradeoffs. Like a game of chess, the majority of ‘moves’ in the operational environment enhance some features of an organization’s counterintelligence posture while weakening others—for example, advanced technologies offer counterintelligence benefits but usher in new technical counterintelligence vulnerabilities; an increased attack tempo wins more popular support for a terrorist group but also increases the group’s operational profile; group record keeping enhances counterintelligence trend analysis but also leaves a paper trail of the organization’s most sensitive personnel and activities. The hypotheses explored in the case studies underscore this fundamental feature of counterintelligence by demonstrating that terrorist groups regularly grapple with the counterintelligence tradeoffs posed by their organizational structure, popular support and controlled territory.

In this final chapter, data and insights from the case studies and the large data set will be synthesized to provide the clearest possible judgment of the hypotheses and the mechanisms driving the observed outcomes. First, the core hypotheses and control variables will be reviewed along with the alternative hypotheses. Second, the chapter outlines how the study’s findings advance several theoretical debates and, more broadly, create new avenues for research in the field of terrorism and intelligence and counterintelligence studies. Finally, the chapter contributes to the counterintelligence policy debate by translating the lessons of this study into practical moves for improving global counterterrorism efforts.



### Reviewing the Hypotheses: Organizational Structure

*Hypothesis 1(A): A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure, relative to a group with a loose command structure, will have superior counterintelligence training and compartmentation.* The study strongly supports this hypothesis. The large data set showed that tightly structured groups tend to have better counterintelligence training. The case studies also support this hypothesis. The PIRA case provides the best test of this hypothesis as its organizational structure rapidly tightened in the mid 1970s while all other variables stayed constant. As the PIRA tightened its structure it was able to more effectively compartment its operations and train its members in counterinterrogation techniques. Fatah and BSO both had tight structures and successfully trained their members in counterintelligence methods. From 1989 to 2001, al Qaeda had a relatively tight command structure and was able to train its members in counterintelligence. When al Qaeda's structure began to loosen after 2001, the al Qaeda rank-and-file outside of Afghanistan had to rely on previous training, or in some cases Internet-based training, to develop and sharpen their counterintelligence practices—of course, some of the training deficits al Qaeda experienced after 2001 resulted from al Qaeda's being physically cut off from their overseas operatives, rather than from their loosening organizational structure. The Egyptian Islamic Group had a loose structure its entire existence, which prevented the group from imposing rigorous tradecraft on its group members and led to a variety of basic counterintelligence vulnerabilities.

*Hypothesis 1(B): A terrorist group with a tight command and control structure, relative to a group with a loose command structure, will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to develop high-level penetrations and exploit the group's standardized counterintelligence procedures.* The study strongly supports this hypothesis. The large data set showed that tightly structured groups tend to have standardized counterintelligence procedures. The case studies also support this hypothesis. For the PIRA, moving from a loose to a tight command structure increased the risk of high-level penetrations. British infiltration of the PIRA security department in the late 1970s provided British forces with a volume of information on the PIRA that they could not have acquired with their best penetrations of the early 1970s. Fatah's tight structure permitted the use of standardized codes, which the Jordanians exploited to monitor and capture Fatah operatives. In contrast, when al Qaeda was loosely structured each of its cells was responsible for devising their own set of codes to communicate with cell members. With cell-based code selection, the discovery of one cell's codes would not necessarily compromise another cell codes. When al Qaeda was tightly structured in the 1990's, however, al Qaeda turncoat al-Fadl was able to describe many details of the group's international organization to US authorities in 1996.

*Hypothesis 4: Terrorist groups facing external threats will become increasing centralized and tightly commanded over time.* The study supports this hypothesis. The large data set showed that many mature terrorist groups were centralized and tightly commanded. Moreover, tightly commanded groups suffered fewer counterintelligence vulnerabilities than loosely commanded groups, which were less likely to have

standardized counterintelligence training, strong communications security and strong vetting procedures. The cases also mostly support this hypothesis. The PIRA leadership recognized explicitly in multiple internal documents that British counterterrorism capabilities had to be met with improved counterintelligence tradecraft. The PIRA deemed it essential to its survival to become more effective in counter-interrogation techniques, vetting new members, conducting investigations of suspected informants, and lowering the operational profiles of members, all of which required tightening and compartmenting its structure. If the PIRA had not adapted so effectively it probably would have been incapacitated, if not completely eliminated, by the end of the 1970s. Al Qaeda maintained a tight organizational structure until it was unable to do so following the loss of its safehaven in 2001. Al Qaeda's near complete loss of its communications infrastructure in this period physically prevented the group from conveying commands and receiving feedback from its international operatives in a manner reliable and timely enough to retain tight command over the organization.

While the tight command structure appears to be favored by terrorist groups, it is not without its flaws, as described above. Interestingly, a tight command may facilitate catastrophic counterintelligence vulnerabilities, such as damaging, long-term penetrations by the group's adversary. However, because these catastrophic weaknesses are very difficult to detect and slow to develop, terrorist groups may be very far down the road to a tight structure before they become aware of such vulnerabilities. Tightening command structure may also reflect the preference of terrorist group leaders to retain control over their organization, despite the attending counterintelligence disadvantages, real and

perceived. Thus, tightening may not always be the most logical or efficient structure for the group, but rather one that favors the group leader's personal preferences.

Furthermore, as a group becomes tighter organizationally, it will be increasing easier for a powerful central leader to nurture this trend and defeat calls for decentralization.

*Causal Mechanisms.* The case studies suggest several driving forces behind these outcomes. First, loose organizations are less capable of monitoring and controlling, and therefore training, its members. With little oversight, members of loose organizations may be unwilling to implement good counterintelligence tradecraft. Good counterintelligence is often inconvenient and laborious. Members must refrain from many common conveniences and comforts that they've grown used to enjoying, such as keeping in touch with family and friends. With little oversight, members of loose organizations may also be incapable of implementing good counterintelligence tradecraft. In addition, counterintelligence procedures are occasionally subtle or counterintuitive. Members will likely understand that they are forbidden from providing information directly to their adversary, but members may not be aware of the many indirect ways the adversary collects information on their organization, such as through informants and wiretapping.

The inability to strictly control group members also impairs organizational compartmentation. A compartmented organization requires high levels of coordination between organizational units to effectively prosecute its mission—compartmentation without coordination and oversight results in organizational fragmentation and disintegration.

Conversely, because members of loose organizations are less controllable they are also less predictable to the adversary. There are fewer ‘signature’ styles of attacking, organizing covert cells, reaching out the media, and communicating. Additionally, loose organizations rarely assign individual members administratively responsible for managing large portions of the organization, such as a payroll or security section. For the adversary facing a tightly commanded organization, these administrative sections are a prime target for high-level penetrations.

*Organizational Structure and Counterintelligence.* The structure of an organization and its level of compartmentation deeply affect the organization’s counterintelligence posture.

Tightly structured organizations have the important advantage of being more capable of conducting superior training. While training can specifically augment counterintelligence procedures, it can also instill a general sense of discipline in group members. Before the PIRA began its standardized training, the British often referred to PIRA sloppiness as the “Paddy Factor”, due directly to the general lack of operational discipline. Tight organizations also enjoy superior strategic coordination, which is critical to systematic analysis and dissemination of lessons learned. Al Qaeda kept meticulous records of its members, which aided in identifying ideal candidates for particular missions as well as internal counterintelligence threats. Black September Organization was able to rapidly recover from an Israeli raid on its headquarters due to its tight organizational structure, quickly replacing agents, changing codes and abandoning missions in the planning stages across the world.

The most important weakness of tightly structured organizations is their vulnerability to long-term penetrations. Like any tightly structured organization, tightly structured terrorist groups promote low-level members to increasingly important positions over the course of their career. The teenage courier and low-level ‘lookout’ eventually gets promoted to regional quartermaster and perhaps, one day, to senior advisor to the head of the security department for the entire organization. Recruiting the young, impressionable, and cash-strapped teenager and handling him until he becomes a senior commander may prove easier than recruiting the hardened senior leader. Additionally, senior leaders in tight organizations are typically left in positions of influence until they retire. Therefore, once a senior leader is recruited, he is likely to maintain his access to sensitive information for many years. This is exactly what happened with the British recruited the high-ranking PIRA counterespionage officer Freddie Scappaticci. Scappaticci became a key British informant as he had access to the PIRA’s innermost secrets—upcoming missions, arms cache locations, travel and security details, bombing and assassination targets, and which PIRA volunteers were suspected of being informants. Scappaticci was able to protect himself from suspicion by rigging counterespionage investigations and framing ‘innocent’ PIRA members.<sup>1302</sup> Loose organizations are better at avoiding this problem because group members are not necessarily promoted from local or regional cells to a centrally-managed or administrated headquarters.

---

<sup>1302</sup> Matthew Teague, “Double Blind: The Untold Story of How British Intelligence Infiltrated and Undermined the IRA,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2006.

Standardization also has its benefits and drawbacks. Standardization allows a group to establish uniform, high-quality training and operational procedures across the organization. The organization can then approach the operational environment with some assurance that each member is capable of performing certain activities, such as firing a weapon or resisting interrogation. Standardization also makes an organization more predictable and therefore easier to monitor and manipulate. Fatah's use of standard codes allowed the Jordanian government to manipulate the organization by mimicking their communications. Standardization of special technology or training procedures also increases the risk that these special technologies will be exposed to the adversary. For example, one PIRA branch resisted sharing its radio-controlled bomb technology with the rest of the PIRA for fear of having it captured and studied by the British—which is exactly what happened when PIRA headquarters began to share the bomb technology with other PIRA units.<sup>1303</sup> Standardization also risks leaving signatures, footprints, and patterns that the adversary can study and exploit over time. Al Qaeda established a formal system of using guesthouses and specific vetting procedures to screen recruits coming to al Qaeda camps. Standardized vetting would allow a clever adversary to penetrate al Qaeda camps by studying and testing the vulnerabilities in the group's vetting procedures.

Compartmentation has its benefits and drawbacks as well. Compartmentation is designed to keep most of the members of one cell from knowing the members of another cell and dependent on top leadership for resources and direction. Compartmentation of

---

<sup>1303</sup> Maloney, 160.

the PIRA made it difficult for a British interrogator to extract much information from a captured PIRA member.<sup>1304</sup> Compartmentation also makes counterintelligence investigations easier. Restricting the flow of information makes the list of suspects with access to the ‘compromised’ information small, giving a potential mole far less room to maneuver. For the counterterrorism official, this is a critical point. Understanding if and how a terrorist group is compartmented is important step in managing terrorist group penetrations. For example, if a government acts on information provided to it by a terrorist group member, such as conducting a raid or bombing a specific location, the government needs to be sure that many individuals in the terrorist group had access to this information or it will risk compromising its source. On the other hand, a government may have the opportunity to create paranoia in a terrorist group if the true source of actionable information is considered above reproach or believed not to have access to the compromised information. Thus, the government may act on this information for the purpose of causing the terrorist group to initiate an internal investigation that generates confusion and mistrust in their ranks.

However, compartmentation is an ideal that is probably seldom achieved. Particularly in organizations that recruit from particular families, ethnicities or neighborhoods, many members will know many other members in distant compartmented cells. For the PIRA, the British ‘supergrass’ informants made this point painfully obvious when they gave evidence in court against former PIRA colleagues, despite

---

<sup>1304</sup> Taylor (1997), 211.



extensive formal compartmentation within the PIRA.<sup>1305</sup> Too much compartmentation can also be harmful, if leaders are killed or captured and remaining members are not fully briefed on the operational goals and plans. When a mixed Japanese-Palestinian BSO group attempted to hijack a Japanese airliner in July 1973 the mission planner was killed during the initial aircraft takeover. No other member of the hijacking team was fully briefed on the mission, so the remaining terrorists had to abandon the operation.<sup>1306</sup>

Compartmentation, and secrecy more generally, can also hinder the development of popular support. Organizational leaders and top commanders may opt for greater secrecy to avoid assassination, but will also conversely lower their public profile. Lowering senior leaders' public profile can ultimately backfire if the popular support base loses interest in an organization with no face or personality.

#### Reviewing the Hypotheses: Popular Support

*Hypothesis 2(A): A terrorist group with popular support, relative to one without popular support, will have greater counterintelligence support from the local population.*

The study supports this hypothesis. The large data set showed that groups with high popular support tend to have counterintelligence support from the local population. The case studies also support this hypothesis. The PIRA received crucial counterintelligence support from its Hen Patrols, who were members of the community that alerted Republicans to incoming British patrols and raids. Fatah leaders could easily relocate from apartment to apartment in Beirut when the group enjoying high popular support in

---

<sup>1305</sup> Taylor (1997), 211.

<sup>1306</sup> Dobson, 47.

the 1967 to 1984 period while the group was constantly ratted out in the West Bank and Gaza in the low popular support era of 1964 to 1967. Before al Qaeda gained international notoriety it sent core group members to do all of its intelligence collection for the US Embassy attacks. After it gained popular support it was better able to exploit local networks to gather intelligence. For the Islamic Group, local support included the identification and vetting of potential recruits, aid in securing courier-based communications, and the provision of hiding places for Islamic Group members on the run from the police.

*Hypothesis 2(B): A terrorist group with popular support, relative to one without popular support, will be more likely to expose itself in its efforts to maintain popular support.* The study mildly supports this hypothesis. The large data set showed that terrorist groups tended to compromise sensitive organizational details in their efforts to gain popular support, regardless of whether they enjoyed popular support. The case studies show, however, that having high popular support increases the likelihood and depth of exposure to the media.

The PIRA routinely exposed its personnel and plans at PIRA marches, rallies and pubs, despite non-fraternization rules banning the mingling of known and unknown PIRA members. After cultivating a very public image, Fatah leaders tried to increase the group's secrecy in the early 1970's but found it difficult to 'go back underground' after exposing the group's leaders and organizational structure to the public. Al Qaeda leaders were in frequent contact with journalists, media organizations, and group members in the West had regular liaison contact with the media. Bin Laden routinely leaked valuable

information about his health, locations, and operational intentions in video interviews and tapes released to media organizations. The Islamic Group routinely reached out to local and international media outlets, telephoning and faxing media offices and granting interviews with journalists. All of this behavior risked exposing sensitive details about Islamic Group personnel and resources to the Egyptian Government.

*Casual Mechanisms.* The case studies point to several driving forces behind these outcomes. First, local populations that support a terrorist group will take a risk in providing material support to that group. As the risk of being detected by the adversary providing support decreases, it is likely that the instances and boldness of support will increase. Additionally, as the popularity of the group increases, it is likely that the instances and boldness of the support will also increase. Though the study did not test these hypotheses, it stands to reason that decreasing counterintelligence support to terrorist groups must involve either increasing the risk of detection or decreasing the popularity of the terrorist group.

Second, the process of winning popular support almost requires that terrorist group divulge sensitive details about its plans, personnel and organization to the public. Populations are often motivated by the human dimension of the terrorist group's cause—the personal struggle of the group's leader, the inspiring and daring plan to defeat the adversary, and the success and methods of recent attacks and victories. Terrorist group leaders are occasionally seduced by their base of support as well and end up offering valuable intelligence on the goals and health of the organization to their adoring populations and watchful adversaries alike. Terrorist groups sometimes earn popular

support by default when a clumsy adversary alienates the population with heavy-handed tactics. This popular support windfall comes with a price, however, as the shots of a heavy-handed adversary frequently cause damage to both the offending terrorist group and the bystander population.

*Popular Support and Counterintelligence.* Popular support and the processes required to gain and maintain popularity can both alleviate and create counterintelligence problems for a terrorist group. For most terrorist groups, gaining popular support is essential to survival and the counterintelligence losses incurred in the process are necessary concessions. Fatah's leader Arafat embarked on a popular support campaign in Jordan when he recognized that failure to gain popular support in the West Bank had been one of Fatah's early downfalls.<sup>1307</sup> Fatah soon began to fear, however, that Israeli assassination squads were exploiting Fatah's openness to track down its leaders.<sup>1308</sup>

Popular support offers terrorist groups numerous, alluring benefits. Support frequently results in increased recruitment. Bin Laden's reputation was an important factor in drawing militants to Afghanistan. Journalist Peter Bergen argues that, "something of a bin Laden cult was taking shape in [this] period" which "helped fuel an unprecedented volume of recruits to al Qaeda's camps."<sup>1309</sup> Support also ensures that local populations and members of the terrorist group are less likely to defect to and spy for the adversary.

---

<sup>1307</sup> Yaari, 245.

<sup>1308</sup> O'Ballance, 87.

<sup>1309</sup> Bergen (2006), 258.

Importantly, for clandestine organizations there is a natural tension between secrecy and popularity. Fatah encountered enormous popular support difficulties when it prized secrecy over all other goals. One Fatah member recalled of Fatah's secrecy obsession in the 1964 to 1967 period: "We kept our secrets so close that the word Fatah would not be mentioned except to a member. Only Fatah members could see our two basic documents, the organizational structure and the political program."<sup>1310</sup> The PIRA considered its compartmentation in the mid-1970s a net gain for counterintelligence, but it also felt the drain on its popular support. One PIRA member noted that increased secrecy drew PIRA volunteers away from daily interaction with the average citizen of Northern Ireland and that less contact with the population eventually resulted in less familiarity and trust between the PIRA and its base of popular support.<sup>1311</sup>

#### Reviewing the Hypotheses: Controlled Territory

*Hypothesis 3(A): A terrorist group with controlled territory, relative to one without territory, will have superior communications security, physical security and counterintelligence vetting.* The study supports this hypothesis. The large data set showed that groups with controlled territory tend to have better communications security. The PIRA's controlled territories allowed the group to more effectively train its members and coordinate its operations to mitigate their counterintelligence vulnerabilities. Fatah also enjoyed superior security in its controlled territories. Israel found it difficult to track and assassinate Fatah leaders in Lebanon as they were surrounded by bodyguards and

---

<sup>1310</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>1311</sup> O'Brien, 161.

were able to move between safe houses with ease. Operation Spring of Youth, where Israeli special forces units raided an apartment in Beirut and killed several high-ranking Fatah members, is an example of where Israel took the risk of attacking within Fatah's controlled territory. The half-hour-long operation cost Israel the lives of two of its soldiers as well as hundreds of hours of surveillance of buildings and neighborhoods.<sup>1312</sup> In contrast, Israel monitored and attacked Black September leaders in Europe with relative ease once these individuals had been located. When al Qaeda controlled territory in Afghanistan, top leaders were able to change their location every evening, lowering the chances they could be tracked by a single informant and targeted for a missile strike. Al Qaeda's communications security was also better in its controlled territory. Members could meet face-to-face and did not have to rely on means of communications that could be intercepted. For the Islamic Group, Egyptian security forces could not adequately police the group's controlled territories and had to rely on mass sweeps and raids when venturing into Islamic Group areas. Police raids on this scale may have been easy to predict and may have given key leaders and operatives a chance to hide or escape police round-ups. On the other hand, the controlled territories gave security forces an area to target, and mass arrests almost certainly netted some operatives and Islamic Group sympathizers.

*Hypothesis 3(B): A terrorist group with controlled territory, relative to one without territory, will be more vulnerable to its adversary's efforts to track the group's gross financial, logistical and personnel movements.* The study mostly supports this

---

<sup>1312</sup> Klein, 160.

hypothesis. British security forces were consistently able to produce intelligence from close observation of areas of high PIRA member concentration. Checkpoints and surveillance cameras near urban controlled territories allowed known PIRA members to be tracked and suspected PIRA members to be monitored for connections to confirmed PIRA entities. For Fatah, its adversary Israel could relatively easily monitor the borders of its controlled territories and thereby estimate Fatah's manpower and weapons supplies. In contrast, the rank-and-file members of Black September were more anonymous and hidden among tens of thousands of non-combatants with similar biographical profiles. In many cases Black September operatives were also legitimate students and workers, and Black September operatives who participated in only one mission would leave very few operational footprints. Thus, the difficulty of locating Black September operatives made estimation of the group's overall manpower, communications and weapons supplies at any time very difficult. An important caveat to this hypothesis is that non-controlled territory offers the hypothesized benefits only if the territory is not controlled by one of the terrorist group's adversaries. When a group's adversary controls the territory they operate in, group members will be easy to locate, monitor and attack.

*Causal Mechanisms.* The case studies point to several factors driving these outcomes. First, controlled territory denies the adversary physical access to its most important targets. While some intelligence and counterintelligence information can be acquired remotely, gaining physical proximity to terrorist group personnel, meeting venues, and popular support base is almost certainly the most important intelligence objective for the adversary. An adversary that physically encounters terrorists can recruit

terrorists to spy. An adversary that gains physical access to meeting venues can monitor those venues directly. An adversary that interacts directly with a terrorist group's base of support can psychologically influence that support base.

Second, controlled territory places a challenging but guaranteed high value target directly in the adversary's sights. The adversary will have to devote much energy to penetrating the controlled territory but once the territory has been penetrated, the adversary may gain access to a large percentage of its highest priority targets. In contrast, terrorist operatives scattered across non-controlled territory will be less predictable in their location but far more vulnerable to monitoring and attack once located.

Finally, when physically penetrating a controlled territory is impossible, governments may find that the high concentration of terrorist members in one area makes them more susceptible to remote monitoring. As terrorists congregate in small areas, governments may be able to use overhead imagery and technical measures to observe the group's size, key training facilities, and key meeting venues. Groups that are spread out over large urban areas will be far less susceptible to this type of monitoring.

*Controlled Territory and Counterintelligence.* Whether or not a terrorist group controls territory substantially impacts its counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities.

Control territory affords terrorist groups the opportunity to live, communicate, and train together in the open. For example, PIRA controlled territory in the countryside, such as South Armagh, allowed the PIRA to relax its counterintelligence profile and



operate more openly.<sup>1313</sup> This not only lifts the physical and financial counterintelligence burden of hiding personnel and property but also helps to alleviate the psychological counterintelligence burden that can wear heavily on members who would otherwise need to live ‘in the shadows.’ Al Qaeda used its controlled territory to conduct secure training and enhanced vetting of its recruits. Before al Qaeda recruits were granted access to the camp they had to surrender all their personal belongings, enhancing al Qaeda’s counterintelligence control over trainees and training venues.<sup>1314</sup> In some cases, camp supervisors would personally assess a new comer to determine if the recruit was sincere in his commitment to al Qaeda’s goals.<sup>1315</sup>

Controlled territory may have the disadvantage, however, of fostering a dangerously relaxed counterintelligence posture. For example, Bin Laden’s journey’s within al Qaeda’s controlled territory of Afghanistan sometimes followed a predictable path: he would move from Kandahar to Ghowr province, where there was a valley he enjoyed visiting, and then to Jalalabad and back to Kandahar.<sup>1316</sup> Operatives in non-controlled territory, living on the run, are almost certainly more likely to keep a sharp counterintelligence mentality or will risk being detected and captured in short order.

Operating in non-controlled territory can have additional counterintelligence advantages. Primary among these advantages is the relative ease with which a terrorist in non-controlled territory can remain anonymous and travel around undetected. For example, Black September members participating in the group’s attack in Khartoum in

---

<sup>1313</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 159.

<sup>1314</sup> Bergen (2006), 264.

<sup>1315</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>1316</sup> Coll, 500.

the 1970s would have been nearly impossible to detect as six of the operatives were flown in on Jordanian passports and briefed on the operation the day before the attack.<sup>1317</sup> Operatives for Black September's operation in Munich were equally well hidden. One Palestinian operative had lived in Germany for five years, attended the University of Berlin and took a job as a civil engineer in the Olympic Village to surveil BSO targets.<sup>1318</sup> A second Palestinian had worked for a Munich oil company and took a job in the Olympic Village as a cook to conduct surveillance.

Operating in non-controlled territory can also pose a serious counterintelligence risk if the territory is well policed by the adversary. For the PIRA, concentrations of its members and supporters in non-controlled urban areas lived under constant threat of British surveillance. One observer noted the PIRA areas of the city resembled low-security prisons: "There were cameras and night sights, hidden spotters, bought informants, erratic patrols and undercover police, computer banks and those who kept track of milk delivered and clothes taken to the cleaners."<sup>1319</sup>

The relationship between controlled territory, popular support, and the adversary's capabilities also offers insight into counterintelligence benefits and drawbacks of controlled territory. On the one hand, control territory offers terrorist groups a chance to build an invaluable local support base within the territory by providing social services, uninterrupted and unchallenged by their adversaries. In Fatah's controlled territory in Jordan, the group administered its own hospitals and provided

---

<sup>1317</sup> Bar-Zohar and Haber, 165. / "A Blacker September," Time Magazine, March 19, 1973.

<sup>1318</sup> Reeve, 2.

<sup>1319</sup> Bell (1997), 470.

service to widows, orphans and the disabled.<sup>1320</sup> Furthermore, adversary incursions into controlled territory have the potential to backfire dramatically if the adversary's counterterrorism operations snare numerous innocent bystanders—a likely outcome in territory with which security forces are not familiar—winning even more popular support for the territory's 'freedom' fighters.

On the other hand, adversary incursions into a terrorist group's controlled territory may pay dividends to the adversary if the incursions net high value terrorist targets. Further, adversary incursions may alienate the population from both the adversary and the terrorist group if the population views the terrorist group as the ultimate cause of the raids. A variation of this predicament beset al Qaeda when it was driven from its safehaven in Afghanistan in 2001. Even as al Qaeda portrayed itself as "David" to the U.S.'s "Goliath", the idea circulated in Islamic world that al Qaeda had 'lost' Afghanistan with its militant attack on the United States. The Islamic Group felt this tradeoff even more sharply as it attacked the economic base of the Egyptian government and inadvertently undermined the economic livelihood of its local support base.

#### Reviewing the Control Variables

*The Adversary's Counterterrorism Capabilities.* The counterterrorism capabilities of a terrorist group's adversary affect that group's counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities. First, strong adversaries force terrorist groups to adopt superior counterintelligence practices or face elimination. Some of al Qaeda's

---

<sup>1320</sup> O'Ballance, 122.

counterintelligence awareness, for example, was a product of the guerrilla fighting and ‘underground’ experience of its members. Al Qaeda leader Ayman Zawahiri led a clandestine underground organization in Egypt before he was sixteen and spent years evading the Egyptian security services.<sup>1321</sup> Thus, somewhat paradoxically, strong adversaries play a critical role in the counterintelligence evolution of many terrorist groups.

*Terrorist Group Resources.* A terrorist group’s resources can also dramatically affect its counterintelligence strengths and weakness. For the purposes of counterintelligence, having an abundance of resources almost certainly provides some advantage, while having too few resources can be a fatal flaw. Terrorist groups with meager finances may be particularly vulnerable. The PIRA suffered numerous counterintelligence problems when they couldn’t pay their members. British forces were able to recruit many cash-deprived young Catholics during their interrogation by offering them a financial reward for spying on the PIRA.<sup>1322</sup> Terrorist groups with a deficit of recruits also face challenges. For al Qaeda, even before 2001, a limited supply of trusted couriers almost certainly restricted the group’s ability to move messages and funds quickly.<sup>1323</sup>

An abundance of resources can also present counterintelligence problems, if those resources are not properly handled. Occasionally, terrorist groups take on more recruits

---

<sup>1321</sup> Montasser Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of bin Ladin’s Right Hand Man*, (Pluto Press: London, 2004), 18.

<sup>1322</sup> Davis, 34.

<sup>1323</sup> Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, “Monograph on Terrorist Financing,” 26.

than they can train, which lowers the group's overall counterintelligence standards. Relying too heavily on a state sponsor for resources also ushers in counterintelligence problems. A key vulnerability is that terrorist groups sometimes share with their state sponsor information about their leaders, personnel, facilities, training and military capabilities. Al Qaeda's close relationship with the Sudanese and Taliban governments frequently exposed al Qaeda's most sensitive personnel and activities to many government officials that did not favor al Qaeda's cause. The US cruise missile strikes in Afghanistan in 1998 taxed the patience of many Taliban officials.<sup>1324</sup> Bin Laden further antagonized some Taliban officials by giving an inflammatory interview to Al Jazeera's bureau chief in Pakistan in December 1998.<sup>1325</sup> An adversary that cannot infiltrate the terrorist group, thus, may gain access to such information through penetrations of the state sponsors security and police service, whose members may be more susceptible to standard recruitment techniques.

*Organizational Learning.* An organization will inevitably learn over time and as a result improve its counterintelligence capabilities. While the study demonstrated that the core variable changes were necessary for the observed counterintelligence improvements, a terrorist group must also intentional seize the opportunity to adopt and embrace these improvements. This action is, in part, organizational learning. Thus, counterintelligence improvements linked to variable changes cannot be completely isolated from normal organizational learning. For example, the PIRA recognized the need to improve counterintelligence by tightening its command and control and

---

<sup>1324</sup> Burke, 164.

<sup>1325</sup> Bergen (2006), 241.

intentionally shifted its organizational structure to meet this need. Fatah recognized the operational counterintelligence benefits of operating outside of its controlled territory and created Black September to capitalize on these benefits.

### Reviewing the Alternative Hypotheses

Throughout the study, a number of alternative hypotheses were considered to explain terrorist group behavior. The alternative hypotheses contradicted the core hypotheses, positing that there were no significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The review of the hypotheses above clearly demonstrates that hypothesized effects of the independent variables were mostly correct. Therefore, the alternative hypotheses are proven incorrect. Alternative explanations for observed outcomes, mostly derived from movement in the control variables, were individually dealt with and by in large discarded in each chapter. However, one major challenge remains for the core hypotheses—do the hypothesized effects only hold true for mature terrorist groups?

As discussed in the first chapter, mature terrorist groups (i.e. groups that survive past their first few years of existence) are overrepresented in the data sample. Thus, our results potentially to apply mostly to mature groups. For example, mature terrorist organizations may standardize training and counterintelligence procedures more effectively with a tight organizational structure, while immature groups may fail to standardize procedures regardless of organizational structure. Mature groups tend to tighten their command structure in response to external threats while immature groups

may fail in this task. All of these ‘failures’ of immature groups may contribute to their rapid demise.

The subset of immature terrorist groups in the large data set shed some light on this question. First, all of the immature groups in the sample were decisively outmatched from the start by their respective state adversary. None of the groups had a real shot at surviving once they initiated the war against their very capable adversary. The more proximate sources of their failures were poor leadership, weak causes and insufficient local support. The subset of immature terrorist group cases support some of the predicted outcomes of the core hypotheses—weak popular support and lack of controlled territory are correlated with counterintelligence disadvantages. Interesting, each one of the three immature groups exposed themselves extensively to the media, even when they did not have popular support.

Close examination of the case studies also sheds light on this question. A tight organizational structure is one that empowers its leaders, regardless of their leadership skill and intelligence. Thus, terrorist groups will be led, and misled, in their counterintelligence posture under a tight organizational structure. A subset of immature terrorist group leaders probably choose not to train their members in counterintelligence procedures and thus make themselves easier targets.

Thus, it appears as though the hypothesized mechanisms are mostly universal, but may not apply to terrorist groups that whose leaders are ignorant of, or chose not to adopt, counterintelligence practices. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the hypotheses

may not apply to groups that operate in uncontrolled territory that is effectively policed by the adversary.

#### From Practice to Theory

The study offers a variety of insights into the terrorism, intelligence and organizational theory literatures. To the terrorism literature it adds a unique framework for predicting terrorist group behavior, decision-making and vulnerabilities. The study suggests that a terrorist group's organizational structure, popular support and controlled territory significantly affect the group's strategic options and overall strengths and weaknesses.

The terrorism literature is enriched by the introduction of the concept of controlled territory. The conventional way of dealing with the geographic location of terrorist groups is with the concept of safehaven. While safehaven defines whether or not a group is sheltered from general harassment from any variety of adversaries, it does not describe how the group was able to gain or maintain this geographic space. The concept of controlled territory provides more granularity on the circumstances of the group's territory and a useful starting point for estimating the group's local support base, capabilities and resources.

The terrorism literature is also enriched by the exploration of the drawbacks of popular support. While the literature frequently highlights the benefits of popular support to armed movements, theoretical exploration of the downsides of popular support is almost non-existent. The study vividly demonstrates that terrorist groups frequently pay a heavy, though occasionally acceptable, price to gain and maintain popular support.



To the intelligence literature, the study offers a framework for systematic examination of counterintelligence behavior in a variety of organizations. Theoretical frameworks are rare in the intelligence literature as most studies on intelligence recount on a single case study or weigh in on a narrowly focused policy question. There is a myth that intelligence cannot be studied because the world of intelligence is hidden and secret. To the contrary, with a bit of historical distance significant portions of the history of intelligence in the West, and even those of formerly closed Eastern and Communist societies, are available in open sources and special public archives. There remain a large number intelligence questions unanswered, but susceptible to historical analysis: What determines how a state conducts intelligence activities? How do a state's resources, geopolitical agenda, and culture shape its intelligence collection capabilities and weaknesses? What determines how a state conducts counterintelligence activities? How do a state's resources, collection focus, and collection style shapes its counterintelligence strengths and vulnerabilities?

To the organizational theory, the study has much to contribute. First, the study shows that the basic insights organizational theorists have posited about the dynamics of centralization, coordination and control also hold true for terrorist groups. This is an interesting testament to the universal applicability of these organizational theories. Second, the study offers strong support to the threat-rigidity hypothesis. The threat-rigidity hypothesis posits that group under threat tend to tighten their command structure, resulting from the desire of the group's leaders to consolidate control over the organization. The large data set shows that mature terrorist groups tend to be tightly

structured. The case studies show that terrorist groups over time tend to become more tightly structured. The case studies also show that the driving force behind organizational tightening may frequently reflect the desire of the core group leaders to increase their ability to control and coordinate organizational activities.

These insights add a wrinkle to the debate on networks and ‘netwars’.

Organizational theorists David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla have argued that less hierarchical, more ‘networked’ forms of organization may be better suited for survival, and are increasingly common, in the globalization age.<sup>1326</sup> In fact, an organization’s unique environmental circumstances and counterintelligence demands will determine whether the organization should, normatively, adopt a tight or loose organizational structure. In many cases, a tighter organizational structure will enhance the terrorist group’s ability to stay hidden and complete its mission.

#### Counterintelligence and Terrorist Groups: Exploiting the Vulnerabilities

Understanding the mechanics of terrorist group counterintelligence allows for more efficient exploitation of terrorist counterintelligence vulnerabilities. Exploitation of terrorist group counterintelligence vulnerabilities can lead to improvements in intelligence collection on terrorist group personnel, activities and intentions, which ultimately leads to improved counterterrorism operations. The following subsections describe a number of ways counterintelligence vulnerabilities can be exploited to

---

<sup>1326</sup> Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy, David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, The Rand Corporation, 311.

improve intelligence collection on and counterterrorism operations against terrorist groups.

*Enhancing Paranoia and Mistrust.* Secret organizations are by their nature prone to paranoia, mistrust and conspiracy. The common practice of compartmentation—the act of restricting information flow to prevent information leakage—testifies to the fact that the organization believes some percentage of its members cannot be trusted with sensitive information. Organizations often engage in ‘mirror imaging’ their own conspiratorial strategies and plotting mindset onto their adversaries. As a secret organization faces existential crises and serious losses at the hand of its adversary, the organization’s tendency to mistrust members who may be trustworthy and perceive conspiracies where there may be none, will grow. The tendency towards paranoia and mistrust, particular in hard times, offers fertile ground for governments to disrupt and manipulate terrorist group behavior.

Sowing discord and mistrust in terrorist groups has yielded tremendous gains historically. The British frequently employed these techniques against the PIRA. For example, the British would announced that informant information had led to an arrest, when it had not, or would announce an exaggeratedly high figure for the spoils of a PIRA bank robbery, which sometimes resulted in a spate of internal PIRA punishment shootings.<sup>1327</sup> A PIRA spokesperson summed up the damage: “[The British] almost destroyed us. They created paranoia in the ranks and left us severely damaged.”<sup>1328</sup>

---

<sup>1327</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 187.

<sup>1328</sup> Coogan, 267.

Increasing mistrust in terrorist groups can be achieved in numerous ways. First, every government should understand how its terrorist adversary conducts internal investigations—how do members come under suspicion of betrayal? Which members are already suspected of divided loyalty? What assumptions does the group have about its own informant vulnerabilities? For example, if members often come under suspicion by mishandling finances or having unexplained wealth, the government can provide a targeted member and his family with unexplained ‘contest’ winnings, scholarships, or gifts. Targeting members who are already under suspicion of divided loyalty will be particularly vulnerable to this approach. If a group assumes that its foreign operatives are more susceptible to recruitment by a foreign power, claim publicly that a record number of foreign operatives have been recruited this year or that a particular foreign operative has provided sensitive details of the group’s internal dynamics. All of these paranoia-inducing untruths are more likely to work if they fit into the terrorist group’s assumptions about its own vulnerabilities.

The quasi-omniscient mystique that some government security agencies possess may offer a second avenue for sowing discord and confusion within terrorist groups. Many terrorist groups assume that their state adversary occasionally lives up to the quasi-omniscient reputation that the popular media and culture tend to promote. Governments may benefit from augmenting this popular belief as terrorist group expend valuable resources to protect against illusory intelligence capabilities. Terrorist groups that assume their adversary has near-omniscience will be more likely to believe the adversary regularly compromises group members and critical internal communications pathways.

Governments could use agents within terrorist groups to spread rumors about ‘compromises’ of sensitive information that *could only* have resulted from an novel government collection capability. Many groups would likely respond by scaling back a wide variety of operations and activities that could have been compromised by the novel, but ultimately illusory, capability. Groups that naturally assume their adversary is highly capable and cunning will more easily fall into this trap.

*Exploiting the Publicity Craving.* If there is one affliction that all terrorist groups suffer from, it is the craving for publicity. The craving typically afflicts the group’s leaders most severely and directly cuts against the group’s need for secrecy and discretion.

Terrorist group leaders may come to believe their own rhetoric that they are the saviors of the populations whose grievances they promise to right. Leaders may also become fascinated with their newfound stardom. Regardless of cause, group leaders frequently are seduced by an adoring population’s demands for information about their life, activities, and the group’s plans and personnel more generally. Bin Laden became close to Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi, for example, to whom Bin Laden proudly recounted his exploits in Afghanistan.<sup>1329</sup> Fatah leader Yassir Arafat was also easily seduced by his popular support base and provided the local media with sensitive details, which in turn allowed the Israelis to more easily track down Fatah leaders. Individual group members can also fall victim to this seduction. Clandestine members of

---

<sup>1329</sup> Wright, 199.

the PIRA marked a Treaty negotiation victory by emerging public to celebrate with their support base and known PIRA members, all in plain sight of the British.

Governments should encourage this type of behavior by cultivating in terrorist group leaders the conviction that their support base requires this type of close interaction. Group leaders should believe that their personal story is uniquely compelling and that they are uniquely capable of delivering the group's narrative to the media. Group leaders with a messianic self-image will almost certainly be more open to sharing details about themselves, the terrorist group and its operational and strategic victories over the adversary. Cultivating the same sense of egotism in up-and-coming leaders may serve to increase damaging group publicity while simultaneously encouraging the formation of rifts and challenges to top group leaders.

Part of this strategy may require an examination of current policies on censoring terrorist group propaganda. In some cases, allowing terrorist websites the flourish and propaganda videos to stir up targeted population may produce some critical counterintelligence vulnerabilities in the long run.

*Enhancing the Allure of the Common Comforts.* Terrorist group members typically do not lead normal, comfortable lives. They may live for decades without family contact, the comforts of good food and relaxation, recognition for their life's work, or even a daily routine—all of which takes a psychological toll. Terrorists with an apocalyptic mindset may be less drawn to these psychological necessities, but terrorist that are less convicted of this, or simply tired of living on the run, may be drawn to these comforts.

Persuading terrorists to indulge in these comforts will improve intelligence collection against them. Even for many hardened terrorists, relatives are the proverbial watering hole to which they will periodically return. Recruiting family members will be one way for governments to exploit this familial contact. Simply watching family members may be another strategy. For example, an Israeli assassination squad was able to assassinate its arch nemesis, Ali Hassan Salameh, as he visited his niece on her birthday.

When terrorists cannot reach out to family members and friends, they often increase their dependence on other terrorist group members. The al Qaeda members of the Hamburg cell involved in the 9/11 attacks frequently emailed one another to share experiences and jokes, which helped them foster and maintain an emotional closeness.<sup>1330</sup> This closeness led to informality and increase non-essential communication, which could produce counterintelligence vulnerabilities. The comfort of close friendships is a vulnerability governments can directly encourage and exploit. Terrorist operatives may experience an especially pronounced loneliness when they are deployed in foreign theaters of operation and therefore will be more susceptible to government operations that encourage non-essential communications.

Terrorist operatives in controlled territory may be particularly susceptible to ‘comfort’ campaigns. Controlled territory can provide terrorists a sense of security and lure them into relaxing their counterintelligence posture. Journalist Steve Coll reported that Bin Laden’s journey’s within al Qaeda’s controlled territory in Afghanistan

---

<sup>1330</sup> Sageman, 159.

sometimes followed a predictable path: he would move from Kandahar to Ghowr province, where there was a valley he enjoyed visiting, and then to Jalalabad and back to Kandahar.<sup>1331</sup> This routine was a counterintelligence risk for Bin Ladin as his movements could be more easily predicted at times.

Prisons pose a similar risk to terrorist groups as they occasionally think of prisons as a quasi-controlled territory. The PIRA frequently relied on its prison-based members, who gathered in ‘think-tanks’ to perform some of the group’s long-term counterintelligence and political analysis.<sup>1332</sup> Reinforcing the sense that prisons are a ‘safe and secure’ venue for terrorist inmates to plot and analyze information can substantially improve intelligence collection on terrorist groups. If terrorist groups are sufficiently harassed outside prison walls and key terrorist leaders are confined within prison walls, terrorist groups may find that prisons are one of the few venues available for long-term face-to-face communications. For this reason, governments may not always want to prevent terrorists in prison from communicating with one another or even the outside world. This will allow government to capture essential details of the terrorist groups key plots and strategies. The need to develop routine and find comforts may be particularly acute for terrorist members serving long prison terms.

Indulging in the luxuries of relaxation and routine can often compromise a terrorist’s counterintelligence profile. So how would a government wage a comfort campaign? An obvious method would be to keep a group under siege to the point where enjoying any comforts becomes difficult without compromising the group’s

---

<sup>1331</sup> Coll, 500.

<sup>1332</sup> Maloney, 134.



counterintelligence posture. Another method would be to rely on traditional advertising strategies for selling such comforts, though instead of selling a Mercedes the campaigns would highlight the subtle and culturally distinct comforts of home, whatever they may be.

*Exploiting Greed and Self-Interest.* Terrorists, and extremist fundamentalist terrorist in particular, are often described as possessing unflinching dedication to their terrorist cause. However, history has shown that even the most ideologically-extremist terrorist groups contain members who can be motivated to betray their group to exercise their greed, interpersonal vendettas or a need for respect. For example, one of Bin Laden's personal pilots, L'Houssaine Kherchtou, turned on al Qaeda and volunteered himself to U.S. officials after Bin Laden refused to give him \$500 for his wife's Caesarean section.<sup>1333</sup> The British found that they were able to recruit many cash-deprived young Catholics during interrogations by offering them a financial reward for spying on the PIRA.<sup>1334</sup> The trick to this method is finding the terrorist group members that have the motivation to comprise the group for their own personal gain. Governments may find that groups going through ideological flux or lean financial times will be more likely to produce members that are not satisfied with the group's leaders or treatment of group members.

*Exploiting Points of Exposure.* Governments may find that their terrorist group adversary has very few counterintelligence weak points. Fortunately, terrorist groups frequently expose themselves to a variety of 'liaison' partners, state sponsors, and other

---

<sup>1333</sup> Wright, 197.

<sup>1334</sup> Davis, 34.

political entities whose counterintelligence postures may be far weaker than that of the terrorist group. For example, al Qaeda provided its Sudanese liaison partners with volumes of sensitive data about its members and capabilities. Governments may gain access to a significant portion of these secrets by penetrating the weaker liaison partners rather than trying to penetrate the terrorist group itself.

Terrorist groups occasionally create, or at least consort with, a political wing to carry the burden of generating popular support and negotiating with adversary politicians. These political wings are occasionally created to minimize the exposure of the clandestine wings operatives and leaders. However, the political wings often have less sophisticated counterintelligence procedures and assume some level of exposure to the adversary through regular negotiations and meetings. As the clandestine wing of the group almost certainly shares sensitive details about its personnel and plans with the political wing, the political wing presents a significant counterintelligence vulnerability to many terrorist groups. Governments should focus on recruiting these individuals to gain intelligence on the terrorist group, including which members of the clandestine wing are most vulnerable to recruitment and manipulation.

*Exploiting the Bureaucratization of Counterintelligence.* Terrorist groups often adopt counterintelligence procedures that are simple but effective. For example, groups may only recruit individuals from a particular clan or neighborhood, dramatically reducing the likelihood they will be directly infiltrated by the adversary.

While bureaucratization and standardization of this practice often augments terrorist group counterintelligence, any standardized practice can become a

counterintelligence vulnerability if it is studied and covertly circumvented by the adversary. This can be particularly true for practices that are considered ‘simple and effective’ because terrorist groups will be unlikely to suspect that these methods have been defeated. For example, al Qaeda standardized the procedures by which a prospect recruit would be vetted prior to gaining access to al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan.

<sup>1335</sup> A clever adversary could have methodically studied these procedures and over time gained a penetration of the camps by some trial and error.

Governments should look for opportunities to turn a terrorist group’s standardized and trusted counterintelligence procedures against them. Methods for identifying and vetting new members, investigating and interrogating suspected informants, and recruiting its own penetrations of its adversary can be mapped out and defeated over time.

*Exploiting the Tension Between Local and International Counterintelligence.*

International terrorist organizations are frequently challenged by the natural tension between its local and international counterintelligence and security posture—that is, moves to strengthen security and counterintelligence in their controlled territory can often produce vulnerabilities in the security and counterintelligence of their international operations, and vice versa.

For example, al Qaeda members were told to disperse from camps before major attacks, which could have compromised operational security for international cells had al Qaeda camps been penetrated or monitored at the time. Conversely, international

---

<sup>1335</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, 67.

security procedures sometimes create local security challenges. For example, as Fatah's international operatives occasionally hid from their pursuers in Fatah controlled territory in Lebanon, and as a result brought additional, and frequently deadly, scrutiny to these controlled territories. Groups using international couriers to communicate more securely and directly with leaders in the controlled territories may in fact highlight those perhaps previously unknown couriers, territories and destinations to interested governments.

International terrorist groups also must weigh the tradeoffs between secrecy and counterintelligence on the one hand, and geographic striking range, command and control, and scale of attack on the other. Tightly commanding a widely dispersed terrorist group that aims to conduct spectacular attacks is an enormous counterintelligence challenge. Decentralizing command, diminishing geographic range, or scaling back on attacks will relieve some of this counterintelligence burden. Governments may find that intelligence victories against an international terrorist group result in these alleviating behaviors. Conversely, long period without intelligence victories may result in tightening of command, increased geographical dispersion and increased planning of large scale of attacks. Understanding how a terrorist group is evolving and adapting its counterintelligence procedures in relation to the behavior and counterterrorism adaptations of its state adversary will allow governments to better monitor and ultimately eliminate their targeted group.

#### Counterintelligence: A Discipline of Tradeoffs

Counterintelligence is a discipline of tradeoffs and no terrorist group, nor government, can maintain ‘perfect’ secrecy—every soaring advantage has its vulnerabilities. The ideal counterintelligence strategy is one that balances counterintelligence vulnerabilities and strengths to ensure that the adversary’s weaknesses are exploited while one’s own weaknesses are minimized.

Much like a game of chess, counterintelligence is a competitive venture where success and failure are judged entirely with respect to the activities of the competitors. Thus, achieving counterintelligence dominance does not require that a competitor flawlessly manage tradeoffs, but rather that a competitor manage tradeoffs more efficiently and cleverly than its adversary. For example, thinking of terrorist safehavens as an indisputable good for terrorist groups is a popular, but inaccurate, sentiment. The study has shown that controlled territory induces powerful and exploitable vulnerabilities that can be fatal for a terrorist group if not properly understood and managed. This stands as a reminder that no terrorist group can achieve an unassailable counterintelligence position—every position has its vulnerabilities.

Conceiving of counterintelligence as an inherently competitive venture is not a new idea. For centuries governments have shaped their intelligence and counterintelligence organizations in direct relation to the perceived capabilities of their adversary’s intelligence organizations. Though terrorist groups differ in many ways from a traditional state intelligence service the two entities share many core behaviors and strategies—collecting secrets, recruiting clandestinely, and hiding plans and activities from adversaries in hot pursuit. Thus, the study of counterterrorism and the study of

counterintelligence are natural companions and the lessons learned from each discipline have much to offer the other. Importantly, one key to success in both endeavors is the recognition that almost every move has its counterintelligence advantages and disadvantages. Incorporating these insights into current counterterrorism efforts promises to add inventive methods for monitoring and eliminating terrorist groups.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aburish, Said K. *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator*. Bloomsbury: New York. 1998.
- Al-Awadi, Hesham. *In Pursuit of Legitimacy : The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000*. London, GBR: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2005.
- Alexander, Yonah. *Counterterrorism Strategies: Successes and Failures of Six Nations*. Potomac Books, Inc.: Washington, DC, 2006.
- Al-Hadlag, Abdulrahman. *Repression and Peoples' Political Violence in Egypt: The Case of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*. Ph.D. diss., University of Idaho, 1994.
- Al-Zayyat, Montasser. *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of bin Ladin's Right Hand Man*. Pluto Press: London, 2004.
- Anderson, Brendan. *Joe Cahill: A Life in the IRA*. The O'Brien Press: Dublin, 2002.
- Andrew, Christopher M. and Vasili Mitrokhin. *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World*. Basic Books: New York, 2005.
- Anonymous. *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*. Brassey's, Inc: Washington, DC, 2004.
- Arbuckle, Tammy. *Egypt's Catch-22*. Jane's International Defense Review, 1993.
- Atwan, Abdel Bari. *The Secret History of al Qaida*. Saqi Books: London, 2006.
- Al Battar Training Camp Mu'askar Al-Battar, Issues 3, 6, 9, 10, 16, 17, 22. Accessed 2004.
- Al Battar Training Camp: Issue 10, May. 23, 2004, Provided by SITE, RAND Voices of Jihad Database.
- "A Blacker September." *Time Magazine*, (March 19, 1973).
- Baker, Wayne E. Robert R. Faulkner. "The Social Organization of Conspiracy: Illegal Networks in the Heavy Electrical Equipment Industry." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, No. 6, (December 1993).
- Bakier, Abdul Hameed. "The Evolution of Jihadi Electronic Counter-Measures." *Terrorism Monitor*. Volume IV, Issue 17, (September 8, 2006).

Baligh, Dalia. "Crackdown on Extremists Winds Down in Cairo Neighborhood." *The Associated Press*. (December 15, 1992).

Bar-Zohar, Michael and Eitan Haber. *The Quest for the Red Prince*. William Morrow and Company, Inc.: New York, 1983.

Bavly, Dan and Eliahu Salpeter. *Fire in Beirut: Israel's War in Lebanon with the PLO*. Stein and Day Publishers: New York, 1984.

Becker, Jullian. *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization*. St. Martin's Press: New York, 1984.

Benjamin, Daniel and Steven Simon. *The Age of Sacred Terror*. Random House: New York, 2002.

Bergen, Peter. *The Osama bin Ladin I Know: An Oral History of the al Qaeda Leader*. Free Press: New York, 2006.

Bergen, Peter. *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*. Simon and Schuster: New York, 2001.

Bergen, Peter. "The Long Hunt for Osama." *The Atlantic Monthly*. October 2004.

Bishop, Patrick, and Eamonn Mallie. *The Provisional IRA Heinemann*. London: 1987.

Blanchard, Christopher M. "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology." *Congressional Research Service*. Order Code RS21973, (November 16, 2004).

Bloom, Mia M. "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding." *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 119, Iss. 1, (Spring 2004).

Bobbitt, Randolph H. Jr, and Orlando Behling, "Organizational Behavior: A Review of the Literature." *The Journal of Higher Education*. Vol 52, No 1, (January – February 1981).

Bodansky, Yossef. *Bin Ladin: The Man Who Declared War on America*. Prima Publishing: Roseville, CA, 2001.

Bowden, Mark. "Jihadists in Paradise." *The Atlantic Monthly*. (March 2007).

Brachman, Jarret M. "High-Tech Terror: Al-Qaeda's Use of New Technology." *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Vol. 30:2 (Summer 2006).



Brachman, Jarret M. and William F. McCants, "Stealing Al-Qa'ida's Playbook, February 2006." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*.

Brass, Daniel J., Kenneth D. Butterfield, Bruce C. Skaggs. "Relationships and Unethical Behavior: A Social Network Perspective." *The Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 23, No. 1, (January 1998).

Bromley, David G. "Linking Social Structure and the Exit Process in Religious Organizations: Defectors, Whistle-Blowers, and Apostates." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. Vol. 37, No. 1. (Mar. 1998).

Burke, Jason. *Casting a Shadow of Terror*. I.B. Taurus: London, 2003.

Byman, Daniel. *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005.

Byman, Daniel. "Strategic Surprise and the September 11 Attacks." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 8 (2005): 145–70.

Carlough, Montgomery. *Pax Britannica: British Counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland, 1969-1982*, Dissertation, Yale University, 1994.

Chattopadhyay, Prithviraj, William H. Glick, George P. Huber. "Organizational Actions in Response to Threats and Opportunities." *The Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 44, No. 5., (Oct. 2001).

Chauhan, Sharad S. *The al Qaeda Threat*. APH Publishing House: New Delhi, 2003.

Ciaran de Baroid, *Ballymurphy and the Irish War*. Pluto Press: London, 2000.

Clapman, Christopher ed. *African Guerillas*. Oxford: James Currey, 1998.

Clark, Robert. *The Basque Insurgents: ETA 1952-1980*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1984.

Clarke, Liam. *Broadening the Battlefield: The H-Blocks and the Rise of Sinn Fein*. Gill and Macmillan: Dublin, 1987.

Coll, Steve. *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*. The Penguin Press: New York, 2004.

Colonel Michael Dewar. *The British Army in Northern Ireland*. Arms and Armour Press: UK, 1996.

Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy. *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*. Document Archive accessed on February 14, 2006.

Coogan, Tim Pat. *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*. Roberts Rinehart Publishers, USA: 1996.

Coogan, Tim Pat. *The IRA: A History*. Roberts Rinehart Publishers: Colorado, 1993.

Cooley, John K. *Green March, Black September*. Frank Cass: London, 1973.

Corbin, Jane. *Al-Qaeda: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*. Thunder's Mouth Press: New York, 2003.

Corman, Steve R. and Jill S. Schiefelbein. "Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas." *Consortium for Strategic Communication*. Arizona State University, (April 20, 2006).

Cronin, Audrey Kurth. "How al-Qaida Ends; The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups." *International Security*. (Summer 2006).

Crozier, Brian ed. "Since Jordan: The Palestinian Fedayeen." *Conflict Studies* No. 38, (September 1973).

CSIS, "Irish Nationalist Terrorism Outside Ireland: Out-of-Theatre Operations 1972-1993." *Commentary*, No. 40. (February 1994).

Cullison, Alan. "Inside Al-Qaeda's Hard Drive." *The Atlantic Monthly*. (September 2004).

Davidson, Charles. *Political Violence in Egypt: A Case Study of the Islamic Insurgency 1992-1997*. Ph.D. diss., Turfs University, 2005.

Davis, Nicholas. *Ten Thirty Three: The Inside Story of Britain's Secret Killing Machine in Northern Ireland*. Mainstream Publishing: Edinburgh, 1999.

Dawoud, Khaled. "The Battle for the Mosque: Government vs. Extremists." *The Associated Press*. (December 24, 1993).

Dobson, Christopher. *Black September: Its Short Violent History*. Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc: New York, 1974.

Dunn, Michael Collins. "Fundamentalism in Egypt." *Middle East Policy* 2, no. 3 (1993).

- El-Rayyes, Riad and Dunia Nahas. *Guerrillas for Palestine*. Portico Publications: London, 1976.
- English, Richard. *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*. Oxford University Press: New York, 2003.
- Erickson, Bonnie H. "Secret Societies and Social Structure." *Social Forces*. Vol. 60, No. 1, Sep., 1981.
- Feldman, Allen. *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1991.
- Fisk, Robert. "Might of the Sword Menaces Christians." *The Independent*. (February 9, 1995).
- Fisk, Robert. "Terror Stalks Egypt's Forgotten Towns." *The Independent*. (February 8, 1995).
- Gabriel, Richard A. *Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon*. Hill and Wang: New York, 1984.
- Gates, Scott. "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, No. 1, (Feb. 2002).
- Geraghty, Tony. *The Irish War*. HarperCollins Publishers, London, 1998.
- Gilles, Kepel. *The Roots of Radical Islam*. Saqi Books: London, 2005.
- Gladstein, Deborah L., Nora P. Reilly. "Group Decision Making under Threat: The Tycoon Game." *The Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 28, No. 3, (Sep., 1985).
- Greer, Steven. "Towards a Sociological Model of the Police Informant." *The British Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 46, No. 3. (Sep. 1995).
- Gunaratna, Rohan. *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*. Columbia University Press: New York: 2002.
- Hansen, Wendy L., Neil J. Mitchell, Jeffrey M. Drope. "The Logic of Private and Collective Action." *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 49, No. 1., (Jan. 2005).
- Hawthorn, H. B. "A Test of Simmel on the Secret Society: The Doukhobors of British Columbia." *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 1, (Jul 1956).

- Hazelrigg, Lawrence E. "A Reexamination of Simmel's 'The Secret and the Secret Society': Nine Propositions." *Social Forces*. Vol. 47, No. 3. (Mar. 1969).
- Herbst, Jeffrey. "African Militaries and Rebellion: The Political Economy of Threat and Combat Effectiveness." *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 41, No. 3., (May 2004).
- Hoffman, Bruce, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat." Testimony presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on February 16, 2006.
- Hoffman, Bruce. "All You Need is Love: How the Terrorists Stopped Terrorism." *The Atlantic Monthly*. (December 2001).
- Hoffman, Bruce. *The Modern Terrorist Mindset, In Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment*. ed. RD Howard, RL Sawyer. Guilford CT: McGraw Hill, 2002.
- Hoffman, Bruce. "The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists." Before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence United States House of Representatives, May 4, 2006.
- Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. Victor Gollancz, London: 1998.
- Horowitz, Ruth. "Community Tolerance of Gang Violence." *Social Problems*. Vol. 34, No. 5. (Dec. 1987).
- Huband, Mark. "Luxor Masterminds in Afghanistan Exile." *The Financial Times of London*. (November 20, 1997).
- Ibrahim, Youssef M. "Egyptian Police, Sweep, Seize Suspects in Killing of Greeks." *The New York Times*. (April 20, 1996).
- IntelCenter, *al Qaeda Messaging/Attacks Timeline v5.0* Public release Version, 29 Septmeber 2006, IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC.
- Intelcenter, *al Qaeda Warning Cycle Completion for CONUS, v1.1*, 9 Dec 2005.
- IntelCenter, *al-Qaeda Attack/Messaging Statistics v.1.0*, 22 August 2003.
- IntelCenter, *al-Qaeda Operational Tempo – Madrid Follow-on Attack Assessment – v.1.0*, 14 March 2004.
- Interrogation of Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, US v. Mousaoui, Cr. No. 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 941.

Interview with Roger Cressey by the Author. 10/11/2006.

J. Bowyer Bell, *The IRA: 1968-2000: Analysis of a Secret Army*. Frank Cass Publishers: London, 2000.

J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA*. Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, 1997.

Jackson, Brian A., John C. Baker, Kim Cragin, John Parachini, Horacio R. Trujillo, Peter Chalk, *Aptitude for Destruction, Volume Two: Case Studies of Organizational Learning in Five Terrorist Groups*. RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, 2005.

Jackson, Brian. "Groups, Networks or Movements: A Command and Control Driven Approach to Classifying Terrorist Organizations and its Applications to Al Qaeda." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. Vol 29, 2006.

Jane's Insurgency and Terrorism Database, *El Gemaa el-Islamiyya*. Accessed on 02/15/2007. Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Database.

Jenkins, Brian Michael. *Countering Al Qaeda*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002.

Johnson, Norman J., Richard H Hall, J. Eugene Haas, "Organizational Size, Complexity and Formalization." *American Sociological Review*. Vol 32, No 6, (Dec 1967).

Jonas, George. *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorism Team*. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks: New York, 2005.

Jordan, Javier and Robert Wesley, "The Madrid Attacks: Results of Investigations Two Years Later." *Terrorism Monitor*. Volume IV, Issue 5, (March 9, 2006).

Kassimeris, George. *Europe's Last Red Terrorists: The Revolutionary Organization 17 November*. Hurst and Company, London 2001.

Kauffman, S.A. *The Origins of Order*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Kean, Thomas H., Chair. *The 9/11 Commission Report, Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. August 21, 2004.

Kechichian, Joseph and Jeanne Nazimek. "Challenges to the Military in Egypt." *Middle East Policy* 5, no. 3 (September 1997).

Kent, Robert B. "Geographical Dimensions of the Shining Path Insurgency in Peru." *Geographical Review*. Vol. 83, No. 4. (Oct. 1993).

- Kevin J. Kelley, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA*. Lawrence Hill and Co.: Westport, Connecticut, 1988.
- Kienle, Eberhard. *Grand Delusion : Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt*. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000.
- Klein, Aaron J. *Striking Back: The 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israel's Deadly Response*. Random House: New York, 2005.
- Kohlmann, Evan F. "The Real Online Terrorist Threat." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 85 No. 5. (September 2006 - October 2006).
- Kurz, Anat N. *Fatah and the Politics of Violence: The Institutionalization of a Popular Struggle*. Sussex Academic Press: Brighton, 2005.
- LaBelle, G.G. "Abdel-Rahman's Following in Egypt." *The Associated Press*. (July 18, 1993).
- LaBelle, G.G. "Charges of Terrorism, Claims of Democracy Mix Blur of Sudan." *The Associated Press*. (March 28, 1996).
- Laffin, John. *Fedayeen: The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*. Cassell: London, 1973.
- Leites, Nathan and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytical Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, The RAND Corporation, Markham Publishing Company, Chicago: 1970.
- Lowry, Ritchie P. "Toward a Sociology of Secrecy and Security Systems." *Social Problems*. Vol. 19, No. 4. (Spring, 1972).
- M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement*. Routledge: London, 1995.
- Maloney, Ed. *A Secret History of the IRA*. W.W. Norton Company: New York, 2002.
- Manheim, Jarol B., Robert B. Albritton, "Insurgent Violence versus Image Management: The Struggle for National Images in Southern Africa." *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 17, No. 2. (Apr. 1987).
- Margasak, Larry. "Philippines reports show terrorists' careful plans." *The Associated Press*. (April 7, 2003).
- Marion, Russ and Mary Uhl-Bien, "Complexity Theory and al Qaeda: Examining Complex Leadership." Presented at *Managing the Complex IV: A Conference on*

*Complex Systems and the Management of Organizations*. Fort Meyers, FL, December, 2002.

Marx, Gary T. "Thoughts on a Neglected Category of Social Movement Participant: The Agent Provocateur and the Informant." *The American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 80, No. 2. (Sep. 1974).

McCormick, G.H. and G. Owen, "Security and Coordination in a Clandestine Organization." *Mathematical and Computer Modeling*. Vol 31, 2000.

Meade, Robert Jr. *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism*. MacMillan: London, 1990.

Mekki, Hassan. "Security forces kill top militant in new blow to fundamentalists." *Agence France Presse*. November 17, 1994.

Mileti, Dennis S., Doug A. Timmer, David F. Gillespie. "Intra and Interorganizational Determinants of Decentralization." *The Pacific Sociological Review*. Vol. 25, No. 2. (Apr., 1982).

Miller, John and Michael Stone, with Chris Mitchell. *The Cell: Inside the 9/11 Plot, and Why the FBI and CIA Failed to Stop It*. Hyperion: New York, 2003.

Mohammad Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali Interrogation, U.S. v Moussaoui Cr. No 01-455-A, Defendant's Exhibit 767.

Montasser Al-Zayyat. *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of bin Ladin's Right Hand Man*. Pluto Press: London, 2004.

Moore, Joan, Diego Vigil, Robert Garcia. "Residence and Territoriality in Chicano Gangs." *Social Problems*. Vol. 31, No. 2. (Dec. 1983).

Moore, Robin. *The Hunt for Bin Ladin: Task Force Dagger*. Random House: New York, 2003.

Moore, Will H. "Rational Rebels: Overcoming the Free-Rider Problem." *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 48, No. 2. (Jun.1995).

Murphy, Caryle. *Passion for Islam: Shaping the Modern Middle East: The Egyptian Experience*. Scribner: New York, 2002.

Nojumi, Neamatollah. *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*. Palgrave: New York, 2002.

- O'Ballance, Edgar. *Arab Guerilla Power: 1967-1972*. Archon Books: London, 1973.
- O'Brien, Brendan. *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Fein 1985 to Today*. O'Brien Press: Dublin, 1993.
- O'Callaghan, Sean. *The Informer*. Bantam Press: London, 1998.
- O'Neill, Bard. *Insurgency: A Framework for Analysis, in Insurgency in the Modern World*. eds. Bard O'Neill, William Heaton, Donald Alberts Boulder: Westview Press, 1980.
- Oberschall, Anthony. "Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory." *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 22, No. 1, Theories of Terrorism: A Symposium, Mar. 2004.
- Pedahzur, Ami, Arie Perliger. "The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective." *Social Forces*, Vol. 84, Iss. 4, Chapel Hill: Jun 2006.
- Pershing, Jana L. "To Snitch or Not to Snitch? Applying the Concept of Neutralization Techniques to the Enforcement of Occupational Misconduct." *Sociological Perspectives*. Vol. 46, No. 2., (Summer 2003).
- Posner, Steve. *Israel Undercover: Secret Warfare and Hidden Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Syracuse University Press: New York, 1987.
- Raymond Gilmour, *Dead Ground: Infiltrating the IRA*. Little Brown and Company, London, 1998.
- Reed, Stanley. "The Battle for Egypt." *Foreign Affairs*. (September/October 1993).
- Reeve, Simon. *One Day in September*. Arcade Publishing: New York, 2000.
- Reeve, Simon. *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism*. Northeastern University Press: Boston, 1999.
- Regan, Patrick M., Daniel Norton. "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 49, Iss. 3. Beverly Hills: (Jun 2005).
- Reichman, Nancy. "Breaking Confidences: Organizational Influences on Insider Trading." *The Sociological Quarterly*. Vol. 30, No. 2, (Summer, 1989).
- Ronfeldt, David, and John Arquilla. *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*. The Rand Corporation, 2001.



Roucek, Joseph S. "Sociology of Secret Societies." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. Vol. 19, No. 2. (Jan. 1960).

Rubin, Barry and Judith Colp Rubin. *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003.

Rubin, Barry. *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*. St. Martin's Press: New York, 1990.

Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2004.

Sammakia, Nejla. "Islamic Fundamentalists Gain Strength in Egypt." *Human Rights Watch*. July 18, 1992.

Schanzer, Jonathan. *Al Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror*. Specialist Press International: Washington, DC, 2005.

Scheuer, Michael. "The New York Plot: The Impact of Bin Laden's Campaign to Inspire Jihad." *Terrorism Focus*. Volume III, Issue 28, (July 18, 2006).

Scheuer, Michael. *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Ladin, Radical Islam, and the Future of America*. Potomac Books: Washington, DC, 2006.

Schiff, Zeev and Raphael Rothstein. *Fedayeen: Guerrillas Against Israel*. David McKay and Company, Inc: New York, 1972.

Schulz, Helena Lindholm with Juliane Hammer. *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: London, 2003.

Seale, Patrick. *Abu Nidal: A Gun For Hire*. Random House, New York, 1992.

Shultz, Richard. "Breaking the Will of the Enemy during the Vietnam War: The Operationalization of the Cost-Benefit Model of Counterinsurgency Warfare." *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 15, No. 2. (1978).

Sims, Jennifer. "Understanding Friends and Enemies: The Context for American Intelligence Reform." in *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*. eds Jennifer Sims and Burton Gerber, Georgetown University Press, DC, (2005).

Smucker, Philip. *Al Qaeda's Great Escape: The Military and the Media on Terror's Trail*. Brassey's, Inc.: Washington DC, 2004.

Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Monograph on Terrorist Financing.

Staw, Barry M., Eugene Szwajkowski. "The Scarcity-Munificence Component of Organizational Environments and The Commission of Illegal Acts." *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Vol. 20, No. 3, (Sep., 1975).

Sullivan, Denis J. and Sana Abed-Kotob. *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State*. Lynn Rienner Publishers: London, 1999.

Tal, Nachman. *Radical Islam in Egypt and Jordan*. Sussex Academic Press: Brighton, 2005.

Tarazona\_Sevillano, Gabriela. "Sendero Luminoso and the Threat of Narcoterrorism." *CSIS, Washington Papers*. Praeger: New York, 1990.

Taylor, Peter. *Beating the Terrorists? Interrogation at Omagh, Gough and Castlereagh*. Penguin Books, Middlesex, UK: 1980.

Taylor, Peter. *Brits: The War Against the IRA*. Bloomsbury, London, 2001.

Taylor, Peter. *Provos: The IRA and Sinn Fein*. Bloomsbury, London, 1997.

Teague, Matthew. "Double Blind: The Untold Story of How British Intelligence Infiltrated and Undermined the IRA." *The Atlantic Monthly*. (April 2006).

Thomas, Timothy. "Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of 'Cyberplanning'." *Parameters*, (Spring 2003): pp. 112 – 123.

Ulin, Robert C. "Peasant Politics and Secret Societies: The Discourse of Secrecy." *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 59, No. 1, (Jan., 1986).

Ulph, Stephen. "Intelligence War Breaks out on the Jihadi Forums." *Terrorism Monitor*. Volume 3, Issue 14, (April 11, 2006).

United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, Criminal Action No. 05-53 GBL.

United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, Criminal No. 1:05CR53, Feb 2005.

United States v. Ali Abdelseoud Mohamed, Sworn Affidavit of FBI Special Agent Daniel Coleman, Sept 1998.

United States v. Iyman Faris, Statement of Facts, United States District Court for the District of Eastern Virginia, Criminal Case.

United States v. Jamal Ahmed Mohammed Ali Al Badawi and Fahd al-Quso, United States District Court Southern District of New York, S12 98 Cr. 1023 KTD, Grand Jury Charges.

United States v. Usama Bin Laden et al., United States District Court Southern District of New York, S7 98 Cr. 1023.

Vaughan, Diane. "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster." *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol. 25. (1999).

Vaughan, Diane. "Transaction Systems and Unlawful Organizational Behavior." *Social Problems*. Vol. 29, No. 4. (Apr., 1982).

Venzke, Ben. *Evolution of Jihadi Video V1.0*. Intelcenter, 11 May, 2005.

Venzke, Ben. *Jihadi Master Video Guide v1.1*. 18 May 2006.

Vidino, Lorenzo. *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad*. Prometheus Books: New York, 2006.

Vinci, Anthony. "The Problems of Mobilization in the Analysis of Armed Groups." *Parameters*. Spring 2006.

Weaver, Mary Anne. *A Portrait of Egypt: A Journey Through the World of Militant Islam*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1999.

Woodworth, Paddy. *Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, the GAL and Spanish Democracy*. Cork University Press, Cork Ireland, 2001.

Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. Alfred Knopf: New York, 2006.

Yaari, Ehud. *Strike Terror: The Story of Fatah*. Sabra Books, New York: 1970.