A PLACE TO HIDE: POPULAR SUPPORT AND TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS

Julia C. Whitehair, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: C. Christine Fair, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Conventional thinking holds that terrorist safe havens develop in failed states, weak states, or ungoverned spaces where weak governance—among other factors—creates a permissive environment in which terrorist groups can operate. In this scenario, and without state sponsorship, the absence of a functioning government or robust law enforcement provides a *de facto* source of protection and anonymity. However, this fails to explain how terrorist groups find sanctuary in functioning states with ample law enforcement capabilities—absent state sponsorship. This thesis posits that local popular support serves as a source of protection and anonymity in these safe havens. It seeks to explain how local sympathy can provide protection and anonymity through the examination of two cases: the Red Army Faction in West Germany from 1968 to 1977, and the London-based cell of Islamic extremists who perpetrated the July 7, 2005, attacks on the London subway and bus system.
Many thanks to my advisor, Dr. Christine Fair, and my fellow students for their advice, guidance, and encouragement during the writing of this thesis; and to my parents and sister for their constant love and support.

With gratitude,

JULIA C. WHITEHAIR
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**INTRODUCTION**

Conventional thinking holds that terrorist safe havens develop in failed states, weak states, or ungoverned spaces where weak governance—among other factors—creates a permissive environment in which terrorist groups can operate. In this scenario, and without state sponsorship, the absence of a functioning government or robust law enforcement provides a *de facto* source of protection and anonymity. However, this fails to explain how terrorist groups find sanctuary in functioning states with ample law enforcement capabilities, absent state sponsorship.

This paper posits that local popular support serves as a source of protection and anonymity in safe havens in functioning states. It seeks to explain how local sympathy can provide protection and anonymity through the examination of two cases: the Red Army Faction in West Germany from 1968 to 1977, and the London-based cell of Islamic extremists who perpetrated the July 7, 2005, attacks on the London subway and bus system. The case studies outline the nature of each group’s safe haven, the activities each group conducted in its sanctuary, the types of local support the groups received, and the motivations for that support. This paper then evaluates how the groups derived anonymity and cover from the local support they received, demonstrating the strength of the thesis based on generalizations drawn across case studies of both a left-wing terrorist group and an Islamic terrorist group. Finally, it gives policy recommendations based on the lessons learned from the case studies.
The structure of this thesis is as follows. Section I discusses the policy significance of safe havens for U.S. counterterrorism policy and foreign policy mechanisms. Section II defines key concepts central to this thesis and describes the methodology used. It also includes a discussion of the data sources and implications for the scope of the thesis. Section III discusses the role of popular support in terrorist sanctuaries. Section IV outlines the safe haven of the Red Army Faction (RAF) in West Germany from 1968 to 1977, describes the level of popular support the RAF received, and gives the reasons for the popular support. Section V does the same for the safe haven in the United Kingdom (UK) used by the bombers responsible for the July 7, 2005, attacks in London. Section VI assesses the role of popular support in terrorist sanctuaries in healthy states based upon the data presented in the case studies. Section VII gives policy recommendations for U.S. counterterrorism policy and foreign policy mechanisms based on the findings.
I. TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS AND U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY

The important place the denial of safe havens holds in U.S. counterterrorism strategy dictates that the policy include an accurate definition of safe haven that encompasses the range of sanctuaries terrorist groups may seek. Current U.S. policy includes notions of weak states, failed states, and ungoverned spaces as potential safe havens.¹ U.S. strategy reflects conventional thinking on terrorist sanctuaries: they usually develop within a failed state or weak state or with the help of a state sponsor, and the weak, absent, or sponsor government acts as a source of protection and anonymity.

The 9/11 Commission in its 2004 report set forth one of the most commonly cited definitions of a terrorist safe haven. According to the Commission, places that could provide the needed sanctuary were “areas that combine rugged terrain, weak governance, room to hide or receive supplies, and low population density with a town or city near enough to allow necessary interaction with the outside world.”² The first recommendation given by the 9/11 Commission for a global counterterrorism strategy was the identification and disruption of terrorist safe havens.³ The Commission

reasoned a complex attack, like the 9/11 attack, required time and a place free of disruptions in which a terrorist group could plan and prepare for the operation.\textsuperscript{4} The elimination of terrorist safe havens as a plank in the U.S. counterterrorism strategy came prominently into focus when the United States intervened in Afghanistan to deny al-Qa’ida its safe haven.

Given U.S. efforts to shut down traditional safe havens and the attention given in recent years to homegrown terrorist cells in the United States and Europe, policymakers likely will have to confront questions about safe havens within healthy states. Terrorism experts and policymakers with counterterrorism portfolios have already raised Europe as a persistent source of terrorism targeting the United States. Michael Scheuer in his testimony before members of Congress called the European Union “the earth’s single largest terrorist safe haven” and “a major, consistent, and invulnerable source of terrorist threat to the United States.”\textsuperscript{5} Former Director of Central Intelligence Porter Goss in 2005 and former U.S. Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Harry A. Crumpton in 2006 testified about the persistent threat to the United States from terrorists based in Europe.\textsuperscript{6} Senators Lieberman and Collins of the

\textsuperscript{6} The Honorable Porter Goss, “Global Intelligence Challenges 2005: Meeting Long-Term Challenges with a Long-Term Strategy,” Testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (as prepared
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs spoke of an increase in homegrown terror cells and attacks with roots in the United States.\(^7\)

The definition of safe haven generally accepted in U.S. counterterrorism policy also has implications for U.S. foreign policy mechanisms designed to strengthen partner countries’ counterterrorism capabilities. The U.S. Government maintains several initiatives designed to improve the counterterrorism capabilities of partner countries, two of which affect the denial of terrorist safe havens in foreign countries. The Antiterrorism Assistance Program provides training, equipment, and technology to partner nations to assist in counterterrorism law enforcement efforts, and the Middle East Partnership Initiative supports the development of robust civil societies in Middle Eastern countries to engage communities and encourage political participation.\(^8\) Both of these initiatives stem from U.S. counterterrorism policies, which, if correctly informed by a better understanding of how safe havens could develop under the radar of active law enforcement, could assist in denying safe havens in well-governed areas in foreign countries.

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To better understand how popular support impacts the development of a terrorist safe haven within a functioning state, this project examined case studies of terrorist safe havens in two non-failed states. The first generation of the Red Army Faction established a sanctuary within West Germany beginning in 1968. RAF members depended on a network of supporters and sympathizers to assist them in their bombing campaigns and their lives underground. They also received some tacit support from the West German population, which varied depending on the perceptions of the RAF’s terrorist acts and the West German law enforcement’s countermeasures. Decades later, the four British men who perpetrated the July 7, 2005, suicide attacks on board London public transportation found sanctuary in the suburbs of London, albeit with a different level of support than the RAF received. The London bombers received guidance and support from other UK-based extremists, and they depended on tolerance from their British Muslim community for their views. While the constraints of using only two case studies limited the explanatory power of the hypothesis, this thesis laid the foundation for future study by establishing the role of popular support in two different cases and drawing generalizations for further investigation.
II. DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This section defines key concepts central to this thesis, including safe haven, weak or failed state, and local popular support. It also addresses the case study methodology used in this thesis, and it discusses the data sources consulted and the implications of the sources for the scope of the thesis.

A. Safe haven.

The 9/11 Commission defined a safe haven by what it allows terrorists to do. In the context of the 9/11 attacks, the Commission wrote that a safe haven permitted the following precursors to a catastrophic attack:

...time, space, and ability to perform competent planning and staff work; a command structure able to make necessary decisions and possessing the authority and contacts to assemble needed people, money, and materials; opportunity and space to recruit, train, and select operatives with the needed skills and dedication, providing the time and structure required to socialize them into the terrorist cause, judge their trustworthiness, and hone their skills; a logistics network able to securely manage the travel of operatives, move money, and transport resources (like explosives) where they need to go; access, in the case of certain weapons, to the special materials needed for a nuclear, chemical, radiological, or biological attack; reliable communications between coordinators and operatives; and opportunity to test the workability of the plan.9

Christiana Brafman Kittner in her work on Islamic terrorist groups’ safe havens condenses these activities into five main categories. By her definition, a terrorist safe haven is a geographical space “where Islamist terrorists are able to successfully establish an organizational and operational base that may include one, some, or all of

the following [activities].” She lists fundraising through legal or illegal activities; a communications network for efficient command and control and intelligence gathering; operational space for training, recruiting, and planning attacks; access to weapons and related materiel; and a logistics network to enable travel, financial transactions, and access to fraudulent documents and other illicit material.  

According to the Commission, a safe haven is most likely found in places that combine “rugged terrain, weak governance, room to hide or receive supplies, and low population density with a town or city near enough to allow necessary interaction with the outside world.”  

The Commission seems to assume an urban landscape can also be rugged terrain, given its later comment about the possibility of a safe haven arising in a European city with ineffective law enforcement.  

Given this assumption and combined with the activities described above, these characteristics of a safe haven have entered into the counterterrorism conversation as the accepted notion of a safe haven.

Kittner further distinguishes between two types of safe havens, which helps to clarify how terrorist groups might use a particular safe haven and what level of support they might require. Terrorist groups use a support network safe haven to conduct organizational activities that ensure a group’s continuation and survival, such as fundraising, communicating command-and-control decisions, and publishing

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propaganda. An operational safe haven permits a group to perform activities that relate directly to conducting an attack, such as reconnaissance, recruiting, and logistics. According to Kittner, these two kinds of sanctuaries are not mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{13} While the activities frequently overlap, the distinction is helpful in describing how terrorists might seek different kinds of safe havens.

B. Weak or failed state.

The Fund for Peace in its widely used Failed States Index describes a failing state as having several characteristics. First, it has lost control of its physical territory or its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Second, its authority to make collective decisions has eroded. Third, it is unable to provide reasonably expected public services to its citizens. Fourth, it has lost its ability to interact as a functioning member of the international community.\textsuperscript{14} According to Edward Newman, a weak state is one in which “central government has a poor capacity to control public order within its territory, is unable to consistently control its borders, cannot reliably maintain viable public institutions or services, and is vulnerable to extra-constitutional domestic challenges.”\textsuperscript{15} However, as Stewart Patrick notes, authors have found little room for agreement on the characteristics that would designate a state as “failed,” and he argues that scholars tend to lump all troubled countries into the single category, ignoring

\textsuperscript{13} Kittner, 308.
differences in regime type and past history, for example.\textsuperscript{16} Newman argues, however, that most scholars can agree on the problems that result from the degeneration of state authority, including porous borders, unchecked criminal networks, an informal economy, and easy migration, which allegedly create an attractive environment for terrorist groups to operate.\textsuperscript{17}

Newman argues a weak or failed state is not a sufficient condition to explain the rise of a terrorist safe haven, although the weakness may prove an enabling condition for certain types of terrorist groups. He cites several anecdotal examples of terrorist groups that arose in stable states, including the al-Qa’ida cells operating in the United States and Germany prior to 9/11, Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, the Irish Republican Army and its successors in Northern Ireland, and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain.\textsuperscript{18} He concludes that groups with safe havens in failed states perpetrate the most destructive attacks, but:

…most weak or failed states do not host significant terrorist activity, and it is generally not the weakest states that do. Therefore, situations of weak or failed statehood—relating to governance, public security, human development, and service delivery—do not form a satisfactory explanation of why these terrorist groups emerge from or operate within such states. Situations of weak or failed statehood may form an enabling environment within which terrorist groups—in conjunction with other factors—can operate, but such an environment can also be much less relevant than is assumed.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Newman, 466.
\textsuperscript{18} Newman, 471.
\textsuperscript{19} Newman, 483.
Newman argues that the presence of other variables, including local support, needs exploration.\textsuperscript{20} This thesis builds on Newman’s argument to examine how a terrorist group uses popular support to develop a safe haven within a functioning state.

C. Sympathetic local population or popular support.

Christopher Paul identifies two forms of support for terrorists as used in related literature. One is expression of sympathy for a terrorist’s case (\textit{expressive} support), and the other is actual direct material support to the terrorist in his activities or indirect aid, to include passive approval, in which the individual does not report the terrorist to authorities (\textit{material} support).\textsuperscript{21} Paul states that passive support is similar to a safe haven because it allows terrorists to operate with the resources they have free of harassment or interruption.\textsuperscript{22} He identifies size, overtess, nature of operations undertaken, and group goals as factors affecting how much support a particular terrorist organization needs.\textsuperscript{23} Paul cautions, however, that social science has not yet determined a way to fully explain popular support, but he offers that social scientists may be able to identify the causes of popular support in a particular historical case. He writes that “just because we cannot discern ‘absolutely’ necessary or sufficient factors or collections of

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{20} Newman, 464-465.
\item\textsuperscript{22} Paul, 118-119.
\item\textsuperscript{23} Paul, 119.
\end{itemize}
factors does not mean that we cannot identify factors that are likely to be more or less important, to appear more or less frequently, and to be amenable to policy influence.”

Paul enumerates different reasons why an individual chooses to support a terrorist organization, divided into “bins” of context, cultural or social processes, and support motivated by actions of the terrorist group, such as intimidation or provision of social services. He argues these factors should be identified on a case-by-case basis with particular terrorist organizations because they vary widely between groups, based on situational context and other dynamics. This thesis takes Paul’s approach by identifying the motivations for popular support in each case study.

D. Methodology.

This thesis takes a qualitative approach, using the body of work on the RAF and the London 7/7 cell available from academic, governmental, policy, and historical sources. It relies on primary and secondary sources identified after an extensive review of the available literature to construct the case studies. A review of the literature on terrorist sanctuaries identified a standard set of characteristics of safe havens in both cases. Each case study outlines the activities conducted in the safe haven, describes the level and nature of support each group received, and draws conclusions about the underlying motivations for sympathy based upon standardized categories.
The case studies chosen represent terrorist groups or cells able to establish their primary safe havens, where they conducted most of their activities and spent most of their time, in functioning states with ample law enforcement capabilities. Neither group crossed borders regularly to avoid law enforcement pursuit, and neither was state sponsored. Both groups perpetrated successful attacks. Both were part of larger socio-political movements: the RAF was one of many left-wing European terrorist groups active in the 1960s and 70s, and the 7/7 London cell subscribed to and acted upon al-Qa’ida’s ideology.

This thesis addresses the impact of local popular support on a terrorist safe haven; it does not address the entire process by which a safe haven develops or how a terrorist group forms—except to address the underlying motivations for local support for a terrorist group. It does not argue that local popular support alone enables safe havens. Instead, it posits that local popular support is a permissive condition for a safe haven to develop in a functioning state as weak governance is supposed to be a permissive condition for safe havens in weak states. Popular support undoubtedly contributes to safe havens in weak states as well; however, that relationship falls outside the scope of this thesis.

This thesis relies on qualitative descriptions based on primary and secondary sources to make the case for local popular support in each case study. Much of the

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27 Later generations of the RAF had assistance from the East German Stasi, but the first generation received only passive tolerance in its interactions with the Stasi.
evidence for local support draws on historians’ and academics’ characterization of the local environment, backed by polling data where available. The London cell section relies heavily on UK government reports about the 7/7 attacks and the resulting intelligence and law enforcement investigations. Some of these reports include caveats and speculative language due to the ongoing nature of the investigation at the time of the writing and due to the limited amount of intelligence disclosed in the reports. In instances when the use of probabilistic language was unavoidable, this paper includes the direct quotation from the report.

One of the limitations of these case studies is that the researcher cannot recreate these situations to gather more data or conduct new studies. Where available, this thesis includes data on the social movements from which the groups arose to indicate possible support for the underlying ideology. Popular support is difficult to measure, even quantitatively, and this thesis depends on characterization and anecdotal evidence to show the degree and manner of local support. Some of the characterizations will no doubt remain subject to debate.

Controlling for intervening variables in these case studies remains difficult. The role of globalization, independent factors impacting public attitude, and the use of technology as a shield against law enforcement are all candidates. Where possible, the case studies address and discuss other possible explanatory variables.

While this thesis draws out implications from these two case studies, it cannot draw generalizations across all terrorist groups. The small number of cases examined
does not permit broader applicability. However, this thesis establishes the nexus
between popular support and sanctuary in functioning states in these two cases and lays
the foundation for a broader study to examine the implications in a larger sample. Its
contribution to scholarly literature lies in the construction of the case studies and the
identification of an area for further investigation.
III. Popular Support and Terrorist Sanctuaries

The literature on popular support for terrorist groups indicates how it affects a terrorist group’s ability to find safe haven within a given population. Among the set of identified causes of terrorism, Martha Crenshaw lists social support for a subgroup with a concrete set of grievances as a direct cause of terrorism because an extremist faction of a broader movement uses terrorism to address the grievances. However, she states an aggrieved population is neither a sufficient nor a necessary cause of terrorism. Anna Simons and David Tucker take Crenshaw’s findings a step farther, stating that populations can provide active or tacit support terrorist groups need for a sanctuary if the populations have relatively little or no political representation or possess sustained grievances. They find that:

…throughout much of the world, and especially in areas with no sustained government presence, terrorists can only successfully hide or train if they secure local support and/or local silence. Terrorists in such locales need to be able to count either on communal ties and codes of honour and/or on sympathetic elements within the security services. At the same time, relying on others has to be predicated on something more than money. This is a critical yet under-recognised fact. The proof: anyone purchasing protection or silence can eventually be outbid.

Lawrence Kuznar and James Lutz find a connection between the risk sensitivity of a given population and support for terrorism when disenfranchised populations feel they

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30 Simons and Tucker, 393.
have no course for redress when they are deprived and their expectations go unmet.\textsuperscript{31}

However, the authors limit their conclusion by observing that terrorism is just one of the techniques aggrieved groups may choose when faced with limited options, and groups are likely to choose terrorism only when they are too weak to use other alternatives.\textsuperscript{32}

The literature also points to the nexus between popular support and protection from law enforcement. Daniel Byman addresses the process through which a proto-insurgency—a group that is too small to be an insurgency but aspires to generate a greater social movement—becomes an insurgency and includes finding or fostering a safe haven as one step in that process.\textsuperscript{33} He includes pros and cons of rural and urban safe havens as well as the usefulness of outside support for providing a sanctuary. However, Byman concludes that even if the terrorist group’s cause is popular, the government can still root out the group, citing the success the Egyptian government experienced in the 1990s arresting members of Egypt’s al-Jihad group even in sympathetic neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{34} Gaga Gvineria, in a survey of social science literature on terrorism, identifies loss of popular support as one possible reason for a terrorist group’s


\textsuperscript{32} Kuznar and Lutz, 357.


\textsuperscript{34} Byman, 187.
demise and a factor in other reasons a terrorist group ends, such as unsuccessful
generational transition.\textsuperscript{35}

IV. THE LONDON CELL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE 7/7 BOMBINGS

The four men who committed suicide attacks on London mass transit on July 7, 2005, found an operational safe haven in the suburbs of London\(^\text{36}\) where they grew up and lived. They exploited their roots in the area and their knowledge of its freedoms to shield their activities from law enforcement actively investigating Islamic extremists engaged in plotting against the United Kingdom.\(^\text{37}\) They also depended upon both expressive support from the British Muslim community and material support from individuals.

A. Historical background.

On July 7, 2005, three British citizens of Pakistani descent, Mohammed Siddique Khan, Hasib Hussain, Shahzad Tanweer, and one of Jamaican descent, Jermaine Lindsay,\(^\text{38}\) conducted near-simultaneous suicide bombings, three in London’s subway system and one on board a London public bus. UK investigators found radical Islamic ideology inspired the men to conduct the attacks.\(^\text{39}\) The radicalization occurred, “in the absence of evidence of other methods…through personal contact and group bonding. Lindsay appears to have been strongly influenced by a known extremist


\(^{38}\) For the purposes of standardizing the spelling of the bombers’ names in this thesis, this paper uses the spelling in the official UK reports on the 7/7 attack.

A martyrdom video of Khan aired on al-Jazeera on September 1, 2005, in which he declared his allegiance to and identification with Islam and the global Muslim community, his actions as a response to atrocities perpetrated against Muslims around the world, and his love for Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Al-Sahab, al-Qa’ida’s communications arm, released Tanweer’s martyrdom video, in which he expressed views similar to Khan’s, on July 1, 2006.

Khan, Tanweer, and Hussain shared similar backgrounds. All three were second generation British Muslims whose parents immigrated to the United Kingdom from Pakistan. They grew up and received their educations in the suburb of Leeds outside London and resided there at the time of their deaths. Although the area had a high percentage of poverty, Khan, Tanweer, and Hussain lived comfortably by local standards. Khan, who was 30 years old in 2005, was married with one daughter and had worked in local schools and as a community youth worker. Tanweer and Hussain, ages 22 and 18 in 2005, lived at home and were unemployed at the time of the attacks. All three took their religion seriously and were active in the local Muslim community.

UK investigators believed the three became acquainted circa 2003 through Khan’s work

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42 Hoffman, 1102, 1103-1104.
with local youth and their shared community circles. All three made trips to Pakistan, and Hussain made several trips to Saudi Arabia.

Lindsay was born in Jamaica but moved with his mother to Great Britain when he was young. He converted to Islam in 2000. UK police believed he listened to the sermons of a radical preacher of Jamaican descent, Sheikh Abdallah al Faisal. Lindsay, age 19 in 2005, married a fellow convert in 2002 and had one child at the time of the bombings. He was unemployed. Authorities did not know when Lindsay met the other bombers, but he knew at least Khan well by mid-2004.

The UK investigation could not establish an exact timeframe for when operational plotting began. A BBC documentary reported Khan sought British Muslim recruits as early as 2001. Khan started taking long sick absences from work in 2004 and eventually quit his job. Operational activity began in earnest in early 2005 when Khan and Tanweer returned from a trip to Pakistan. They started purchasing explosive precursors, rented the apartment they used to build the explosive devices, and went on a reconnaissance trip in London.

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B. Establishing a safe haven.

Greater London provided an operational environment that allowed the bombers to perform most of the activities associated with a terrorist safe haven per Kittner’s five categories. The bombers were able to raise funds, communicate with each other as well as individuals overseas, obtain access to weapons and other materiel, recruit, and test their operational plan. Two of the cell members sought training in building explosive devices and detecting surveillance overseas.\textsuperscript{51} The cell did not develop a logistics network because it did not attempt to build an organizational base in London.

The official UK post-attack reports described the suburbs where three of the bombers lived as residential in nature and densely populated with much of their closely packed housing in disrepair.\textsuperscript{52} The population was ethnically heterogeneous, highly transitory, and economically poor, including some of the lowest standards of living in the country, which were consistent with other urban areas in Great Britain.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{Fundraising.} The cell obtained the funds needed for the operation through bank fraud and the manipulation of the financial loan system, and the members discussed other forms of financial fraud and money laundering as possibilities for raising additional funds. Khan’s job ended in November 2004 after long periods of absence from work; he and Tanweer, who did not have a full time job, “were able to devote

\textsuperscript{51} Hoffman, “Radicalization and Subversion,” 1102.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
themselves more or less full-time to planning." Investigators believed Khan provided most of the funding through his credit history and rating, multiple bank accounts, credit cards, and a personal loan. He defaulted on his loan payments and overdrew all his accounts. Lindsay bounced several checks in the weeks leading up to the attack. The 7/7 bombers may also have used benefit fraud to fund propaganda and training activities. A British investigation, designated CREVICE, into another group of UK-based extremists revealed the men, including an unidentified individual later shown to be Khan, “received detailed advice from a fraud expert about raising money fraudulently, selling cars bought on credit, lying about wages in loan applications, skimming credit cards, and obtaining and defaulting on bank loans” in 2004.

Communications. Given the freedom of movement and association the bombers enjoyed in the UK, they had little need for secure communications between each other, but they clearly had access to the robust communications network in 21st century London and used it to communicate with other extremists in the United Kingdom and Pakistan. The Home Office’s official report gave few details but noted the bombers

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56 Ibid.  
58 MI5 opened an investigation called Operation CREVICE into a group of UK-based men when authorities believed the men were providing logistical and financial support to al-Qa’ida (ISC report 2009, 29). CREVICE intensified when MI5 uncovered possible planning for an attack using fertilizer bombs.  
59 UK Intelligence and Security Committee, Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented, 28.
were in contact with other UK-based extremists and communicated with an individual or individuals in Pakistan between April and July 2005. This led investigators to believe they were receiving advice and guidance from abroad. The content of the communications were unknown, but the contacts appeared suspicious to investigators because the communicants took steps to disguise their identities, indicating the conversations may have been plot-related.

Access to weapons and other materiel. The bombers had ready access to explosive precursors because they chose materials that were commercially available and raised no red flags with law enforcement. The devices used in the attacks were made of triacetone triperoxide (TATP) combined with pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN), which was dangerous to make because of the mixture’s instability, but not difficult given a certain level of expertise and the right materials. The first known purchase of materials was on March 31, 2005, and the bombers used their knowledge of the local area to avoid triggering law enforcement suspicions. Some reports indicated Jermaine Lindsay bought perfume on the Internet and traded it for some of the bomb-making materials.

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60 Matthew Hickley, “Missed Clues over the Fanatical Four,” Daily Mail, May 12, 2006, in LexisNexis Academic.
61 Hoffman, “Radicalization and Subversion,” 1102.
materials. The bombers used personally owned or rented vehicles and rented a subleased apartment as a bomb-making facility, minimizing the need for an extensive logistics network. According to the Home Office’s report, investigators found materials consistent with the bomb-making process at the Alexandria Grove apartment, which showed signs the men constructed the devices there with the windows open and covered with curtains to avoid detection.

**Logistics network.** The 7/7 cell did not establish an extensive logistics network because of the operational nature of its safe haven and the limited scope of its activities. The cell planned one suicide attack, which none of the members planned to survive, negating the need to procure new documentation or arrange travel for post-attack activity or escape.

**Operational space for training, recruiting, and planning attacks.** The bombers—Khan and Tanweer in particular—found the freedom to recruit and prepare for their operation in greater London. A BBC documentary reported Khan was seeking British Muslim recruits as early as 2001. British intelligence believed Khan “probably organised and radicalised” Tanweer, Hussain, and Lindsay. Khan knew Tanweer and Hussain through Muslim social circles. Investigators do not know how

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65 Hickley, “Missed Clues over the Fanatical Four.”
Khan and Lindsay met, but, according to the Home Office’s report, their meeting was not surprising because Khan was active in the Muslim community in Lindsay’s area.\textsuperscript{70} Khan and Tanweer took outdoor activity trips for camping or whitewater rafting in 2003 and a few weeks before the attacks in 2005.\textsuperscript{71} Khan attended a similar type of trip organized by two known Islamic extremists in 2001.\textsuperscript{72} While what transpired on these trips is unknown, “it is possible that some trips were used to identify candidates for indoctrination…to help with bonding between members of cells already established, or for more direct indoctrination or operational training and planning.”\textsuperscript{73} All four men went on several paintballing excursions in summer 2002, preceded by meetings at the men’s homes where they would watch graphic videos before leaving to play paintball.\textsuperscript{74}

Khan and Tanweer spent significant amounts of time at Iqra Islamic bookstore, known for selling extreme material and for its popularity among young radicals and converts, and it “seems clear that Iqra was a pivotal site in the course of their radicalization…”\textsuperscript{75} All four men exercised at the Hamara Healthy Living Center, a gym attached to a Muslim community center in Beeston near Tanweer’s home. The gym’s reputation as a gathering place for individuals with radical views gained it the nickname

\textsuperscript{72} UK Intelligence and Security Committee, \textit{Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented 57}.
\textsuperscript{75} Kirby, 418.
of “the al-Qa’ida gym.” The men used a room in the adjacent youth center to plan certain facets of their operation.

One of the biggest questions surrounding the 7/7 attack was whether and to what degree Khan and Tanweer received training—from al-Qa’ida or an associated trainer—while traveling in Pakistan in 2004 and 2005. Khan visited Pakistan in 2003 and again with Tanweer from November 2004 to February 2005. Official reports indicated the two men made contact with al-Qa’ida figures while in Pakistan. British intelligence assessed Khan and Tanweer obtained some form of operational training, such as bomb-making or countersurveillance tradecraft. The difficulty and danger associated with the construction of the devices used on 7/7 increased the confidence in this assessment because:

…as government officials and terrorism scholars have long recognized, training can be an important source of knowledge for aspiring militants, particularly when it provides them with hands-on instruction relevant to their areas of operation, along with the opportunity to practice their violent skills. Several officials interviewed in this research stress that the most significant terrorist plots in Britain, including the 7/7 bombings and the airline liquid explosives plot in August 2006, involved people who had received at least some operational training from more experienced militants in the federal tribal areas in north-western Pakistan.

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76 Kirby, 418.
78 Hoffman, “Radicalization and Subversion,” 1102.
79 UK Intelligence and Security Committee, Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005, 12.
80 Kirby, 421.
81 UK Intelligence and Security Committee, Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005, 12.
82 Hoffman, “Subversion and Radicalization,” 1102.
83 Kenney, 914.
Khan also received training while in Pakistan in 2003.\textsuperscript{84} Given the involvement of all four bombers in the bomb-making process\textsuperscript{85} and the fact that all four detonated their own bombs, Khan and Tanweer would have had to pass along at least some of their training to Hussain and Lindsay while in London.

The bombers also had the ability to conduct operational testing dry runs of their trips on the London subway and test explosions. The bombers made one reconnaissance trip in March 2005, and three of them conducted a dry run of their routes in late June, nine days before the bombings.\textsuperscript{86} The Home Office’s report indicated the men would have needed to conduct at least one test explosion, but it was unknown where or when this took place.\textsuperscript{87}

C. Receiving local support.

The 7/7 cell received both categories of support identified by Paul, one of which was \textit{expressive} support, or sympathy, and the other was \textit{material} support, or active assistance.\textsuperscript{88} These different forms of support are not mutually exclusive. Terrorist groups require varying levels of support depending on the size of their group or operation, the resources readily available to them, the environment in which they are operating, and the covert or overt nature of their existence. According to Paul, “one can easily imagine operations for which a group needs to avoid having anyone notify the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[84] UK Intelligence and Security Committee, \textit{Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented}? 37.
\item[88] Paul, 115.
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forces of their preparations but needs very little support beyond that.”

These groups require only passive support that allows them to operate with their existing resources without disruption by law enforcement.

Given the operational nature of the 7/7 cell in London, the small size of their planned attack, and the freedom existing in their operating environment, the London bombers fit into the latter category.

**Expressive support.** The four bombers received expressive support in the form of sympathy for their radical views and tolerance of their suspicious activities, despite their open expressions of sympathy for al-Qa’ida or its ideology. Following the attacks, individuals familiar with the four bombers recalled hearing Khan, Tanweer, and Hussain express radical views, for which several local mosques banned them.

Hussain told classmates after 9/11 that he admired and supported al-Qa’ida and considered the 9/11 hijackers martyrs. Some who heard Khan preach said he did so aggressively, and others heard he espoused radical views.

Lindsay passed out materials at his school in support of al-Qa’ida. The intensifying nature of their clique, the fact they were spending large amounts of time together, and their attendance of a local gym and bookstore known as hotspots for Muslims with radical views were well-

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89 Paul, 119.
80 Paul, 118.
81 Kirby, 418.
known in their community.95 While they were open about their views to others, they shielded their families in some respects by accessing extremist material at the bookstore, not using their home computers.96 However, by expressing their radical views and conducting recruiting and operational activity within their community, the bombers left themselves open to law enforcement detection.

A review of polling data of British Muslims prior to 7/7 indicates a level of sympathy with the ideology espoused by the 7/7 cell.97 After 7/7, around one in ten British Muslims polled believed attacks in the UK were justified, and a similar percentage thought it acceptable to use violence to achieve political ends. Around one-fifth sympathized with the motives of the bombers. While nine in ten wanted ordinary Muslims to cooperate with the police, one-quarter said they would inform the police of any suspicions they had about a future attack, and half would tip off the police about an individual radicalizing young Muslims.98

One objection to this characterization is that the London community in which the four lived simply lacked awareness of the problem of radicalization and the possibility of radical views taking a violent turn. However, the environment at the time of the cell’s activity makes this argument problematic. The case of Richard Reid, the attempted “shoe bomber,” in 2001 raised awareness of the involvement of British

95 Kirby, 418.
98 Field, 468-469.
Muslims in terrorist attacks. The revelation that Reid and 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed had studied at the Finsbury Park mosque in North London shone a spotlight on the teachings of radical cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri. Pakistani authorities arrested a British citizen in 2002 for his role in the kidnapping and murder of journalist Daniel Pearl. The British had uncovered terrorist cells involved in operational activity in the UK as well, disrupting plots in 2003 and 2004, including a group conducting reconnaissance of British and U.S. financial institutions as possible targets.

Some members of the community were aware of the cell members’ views. A youth worker before 7/7 told police extremists were using the Hamara youth center as a front for the radicalization of young people. Leaders at the Hardy Street Mosque in Leeds became concerned about some of Khan’s views and activities there and asked him to leave sometime after 2001. Others believed men like Khan were helping youth stay out of trouble and generally “cleaning up the neighborhood.”

101 Coll and Glasser, “In London, Islamic Radicals Found a Haven.”
Material support. The cell received material support for its plot, albeit on a limited basis based on available information. The man from whom the quartet rented the Alexandria Grove apartment for bomb-making was a chemist from Egypt who met Lindsay at the Leeds Grand Mosque in 2004.\(^{105}\) The man admitted after the attacks to knowing two of the four bombers and left Britain for Egypt a week after the attack. Egyptian authorities questioned him for three weeks before releasing him when they found no evidence to link him to the plot.\(^{106}\) UK authorities alleged two Pakistani British citizens conducted reconnaissance on potential targets for the 7/7 bombers. The two were not convicted of assisting in the attacks, but they were convicted of attempting to attend terrorist training camps in Pakistan.\(^{107}\)

The bombers received support and guidance from other British Muslim extremists with interest in conducting violent attacks in the UK. MI5 uncovered a group of British Muslims involved in financial and logistical support for al-Qa’ida in 2003. The investigation, dubbed Operation CREVICE, revealed in early 2004 that the group was actively plotting an attack in the UK using fertilizer bombs.\(^{108}\) During the investigation, MI5 surveillance of a key courier in the CREVICE group noted that he met with two unidentified males on at least two occasions; after the 7/7 attacks,

\(^{106}\) Bennetto and Herbert, “London Bombings: The Truth Emerges.”
\(^{108}\) UK Intelligence and Security Committee, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented*, 7, 10.
investigators determined these individuals were Khan and Tanweer.\textsuperscript{109} The men discussed financial fraud, possible travel to Pakistan, and the success of the 2004 Madrid bombings, but they did not talk about attack planning or anything MI5 deemed operational activity.\textsuperscript{110} Analysis after 7/7 of the CREVICE group leader’s phone records show that he had been in telephonic contact at least four times with Khan.\textsuperscript{111} British authorities arrested eight individuals as part of Operation CREVICE in early 2004.\textsuperscript{112}

Khan also had ties to Haroon Rashid Aswat, a British citizen and aide to well-known radical London cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri. The United States sought Aswat’s extradition for years based on allegations he helped to set up a terrorist training camp in Oregon in 1999.\textsuperscript{113} An alleged informant claimed Aswat was recruiting young men at the Finsbury Park mosque to receive overseas training from al-Qa’ida.\textsuperscript{114} A phone linked to Aswat made around twenty phone calls to the 7/7 bombers before leaving the country just prior to the bombings.\textsuperscript{115}

In hindsight, the conversations raised red flags about the nature of Khan and Tanweer’s contacts with the CREVICE group. The Home Office’s post-attack report

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\item\textsuperscript{109} UK Intelligence and Security Committee, \textit{Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented}, 23.
\item\textsuperscript{110} UK Intelligence and Security Committee, \textit{Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented}, 27.
\item\textsuperscript{111} UK Intelligence and Security Committee, \textit{Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented}, 19.
\item\textsuperscript{112} Tumelty, “New Developments Following the London Bombings.”
\item\textsuperscript{113} Tumelty, “New Developments Following the London Bombings”; Leppard, et al, “Tangled Web That Still Leaves Worrying Loose Ends.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
noted Khan and Tanweer traveled frequently outside the immediate Leeds area to attend Islamic events and that these events could have been discussions of Islamic matters or operational meetings. Khan and Tanweer may have known the CREVICE operatives or others through routine contacts in radical fringe of the London Muslim community:

There is a well-established and well-documented culture of radicalism present in the United Kingdom dating back to the mid-1990s. Some of the media reports that allege Khan’s links to other suspected terrorists neglect to provide extensive details for legal reasons and these omissions significantly cloud the picture. The community of the Finsbury Park Mosque, and other outlets like it suggest that at least a moderate likelihood that some such contact was made during the course of the bombers’ radicalization. 

While the breadth of the support given to the 7/7 bombers is unclear, they at least received guidance and moral support from fellow extremists.

The 7/7 not only benefited materially from the radical fringe in their Muslim community, but they also received protection through it. According to Robert Leiken, “the very isolation of these diaspora communities obscures their inner workings, allowing mujahideen to fundraise, prepare and recruit for jihad with a freedom available in few Muslim countries.”

A similar phenomenon in the Netherlands revealed this radical fringe encompassed a range of movements and organizations, some of which were nonviolent but shared the same anti-Western and strict religious views as the more violent sects. In the UK, both parts operated openly.

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117 Kirby, 420.
119 Leiken, 126.
120 Leiken, 130.
D. Motivation for support.

Local populations take significant risks when they extend any measure of support for terrorist organizations, particularly if the group is targeting the host government. Therefore, the population must have strong motivation to endanger their positions. Paul identifies six broad categories of factors that could motivate a population to support terrorism:

- Humiliation, intense frustration, alienation, or hatred;
- Repression or occupation;
- Lack of government legitimacy, lack of political opportunity, and absence of political freedom;
- Desire for resistance or action, including self-defense;
- Social movements; and
- Grievances.\textsuperscript{121}

While there is rarely a single source of motivation for any choice or action, even on an individual level, Paul’s categories may help classify the general reasons why the London Muslim community actively or tacitly supported the 7/7 cell. In polling conducted after the attacks, only six percent of British Muslims polled believed the attacks were justified, but nearly a quarter responded that they had sympathy for the feelings and motivations of the bombers.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{121} Paul, 121-122.
\textsuperscript{122} Kirby, 422.
Feelings of repression and alienation may have motivated some to support the ideology or activities of radical Islamic terrorists. Second and third generation British Muslims, the demographic to which all four 7/7 bombers belonged, found they could not participate fully in mainstream “British culture.” Their increasing religiosity set them even farther apart from primarily secular British culture. This led to concern that British multiculturalism was creating two separate cultures. Extremism appealed to individuals who felt their societies treated them as second-class citizens. The economic disparity, lack of earning mobility, and community stagnation experienced by some British Muslims exacerbated the sense of alienation and repression for some. They also expressed frustration at the hostility they felt based on their religion, and this translated into a sense of political underrepresentation. Their experiences cultivated feelings of resentment and frustration that might have led some to endorse or tacitly support acts of violence, even if the majority remained opposed to violence.

126 Kirby, 422.
127 Ibid.

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V. The Red Army Faction, 1968-1977

The Red Army Faction’s (RAF) safe haven began as a small cadre of terrorists operating in their native environment through social ties to the Radical Left movement. However, unlike the 7/7 cell, the RAF, also called the Baader-Meinhof Gang or Group, sought to win over the local population and inspire a working class revolution to overthrow the West German government. Also unlike the 7/7 cell, the RAF did not conduct suicide attacks but spent significant amounts of time evading law enforcement after conducting its initial attacks. After the group broke its leader, Andreas Baader, out of prison in 1970, the members went underground, using false identities and a series of safe houses to continue preparing for attacks, creating a dependence on sympathetic supporters who sheltered them and protected their identities.

A. Historical background.

The RAF emerged out of the volatile political and social climate in post-World War II (WWII) Federal Republic of Germany (FDR, or West Germany). In the 1960s, West Germany was still grappling with the psychological trauma and political consequences of Nazism and the Holocaust. West Germany became a democracy following WWII, but political culture did not change as quickly as the political system. West Germans turned their energy to defending the nascent democracy.

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through economic prosperity and anti-communism.\textsuperscript{129} Despite the anti-Fascist purge and the de-Nazification policies, some individuals who played a role in Germany’s Fascist past remained in the government bureaucracy and civil service.\textsuperscript{130} As the social and political leaders of post-WWII FDR, they permitted no expression of progressive political or social ideologies\textsuperscript{131} and instead emphasized unity and political harmony.

This climate, in which West Germans were trying to leave the past behind and the leadership tightly controlled the direction of the future, was not conducive to youthful expressions of political dissatisfaction or reform efforts. As the children of the WWII generation became students in the 1960s, they rebelled against the “conformism, concealment and repression” they saw in their parents even after Germany’s democratic transformation and reconstruction.\textsuperscript{132} Horst Mahler, one of the founders of the RAF, told an interviewer that his progression toward rejecting the German social order began with his father’s denial of Nazi crimes. “[He] and his peers criticized their own parents’ generation for having stood idly by when the Nazis committed their deeds” and consequently felt compelled to take direct action against the evil they saw in the world,\textsuperscript{133} which included the materialism of the West German lifestyle and the United

\textsuperscript{129} Fritzsche, 469.
\textsuperscript{130} Fritzsche, 468.
\textsuperscript{132} Fritzsche, 470
\textsuperscript{133} Konrad Kellen, Terrorists—What Are They Like? How Some Terrorists Describe Their World and Actions (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1979), 32-33.
States’ conduct of Vietnam War. These issues became the seeds of the 1968 student protests.

Some of the students involved in the protests became disillusioned with the political process after a split from their parent political party, and the creation of a coalition between the former political party and the students’ former enemies. For a time, extraparliamentary opposition (APO) served as a vehicle for political action for those who felt they were unrepresented in mainstream politics. On June 2, 1967, police fatally shot Benno Ohnesorg, a 26-year-old student, at a protest against the Shah of Iran’s visit to Berlin. Less than a year later, there was an attempted assassination of APO leader Rudi Dutschke, which the protestors viewed as an attack on the APO itself. Based on these events, some APO participants raised the question of violent resistance, which became a subject of controversy and debate in the APO, but those in favor of violent confrontation found themselves increasingly in the minority. The death of Ohnesorg and the attempt on Dutschke’s life marked a significant turning point in the thinking of the RAF’s founding members. They saw the need for violence to

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134 Kellen, “Ideology and Rebellion,” 47.
135 Fritzsche, 469.
138 Wright, 54.
139 Wright, 27.
push the government out of the status quo, but this view made them increasingly marginalized in the APO.\textsuperscript{140}

These elements combined to bring the future RAF members to the point of violent action. In April 1968, Thorwald Proll, a Berlin student, and his friends Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin decided to set a fire in a department store.\textsuperscript{141} They and another individual traveled to Frankfurt, where they left several incendiary devices in the Kaufhaus Schneider store. No one was hurt, but the fires did significant damage.\textsuperscript{142} The arson marked the birth of the RAF, even though the organization would not come into formal existence for two more years.

The RAF became one of West Germany’s most violent terrorist organizations, spanning three decades and three generations of members. The group conducted bomb attacks, arson, kidnappings, assassinations, and bank robberies against West German, European, and U.S. targets in FDR and elsewhere in Europe. This case study focuses on the first generation of members, which formed the group from 1968 to 1977, to show how public support for the RAF evolved and influenced the West German safe haven.

B. Establishing a safe haven.

Fundraising. The RAF centered its safe haven around Berlin, making frequent trips to the rest of FDR as counterterrorism efforts against it increased in Berlin. The group raised funds for its operations primarily through bank robberies with auto theft to

\textsuperscript{140} Rasch, 163-164; Wright, 26-27.
\textsuperscript{142} Aust, \textit{The Baader Meinhof Group}, 50.
procure transportation when necessary. By 1980, FDR authorities estimated the RAF procured approximately DM11 million, most of it between 1975 and 1977. The RAF devoted a significant amount of its underground activity to the bank robberies and often initiated new members into the group through participation in the hold-ups. The money went to rent apartments, retool cars, and obtain weapons, radio equipment, and fraudulent documents.

*Communications.* The RAF was able to communicate via telephone both domestically and internationally with some limitations after the group came under law enforcement scrutiny. The group also had its own radio communications network and procured equipment to listen to the West German police radio communications.

*Access to weapons and other materiel.* The RAF obtained its weapons and materials from a variety of sources, both legal and illegal. The RAF purchased much of its bomb-making materials openly by buying commercially available components and taking them to witting and unwitting individuals who could put them together and construct bombs. The members bought weapons from German criminal networks.

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145 Rasch, 164.
and the German authorities had evidence they also attempted to purchase weapons from an international arms dealer.\(^{150}\)

**Logistics network.** The RAF’s underground existence necessitated a vast logistics network for transporting and hiding people, weapons, propaganda materials, and money, and the members devoted significant time to constructing such a network. They stole some of the fraudulent documents and paid to have others forged.\(^{151}\) The RAF rented some apartments as safe houses,\(^{152}\) but it also depended on sympathizers and sometimes reluctant friends to house members, either in empty apartments or on floors and couches.\(^{153}\) FDR authorities initially had difficulty finding these safe houses.\(^{154}\) Even overseas the RAF relied upon sympathizers to house and protect them from law enforcement. Two RAF members, whom the West German police were hunting in 1969 found shelter in Paris at the home of a sympathetic prominent French family, who also shielded them from the French authorities.\(^{155}\)

The RAF traveled within Germany via an effective system of disguising stolen cars. The RAF used a network of witting and unwitting garages to paint cars, change license plates, and remove identifying marks from stolen cars.\(^{156}\) The members then drove the cars openly around West Germany, evading law enforcement detection unless

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\(^{151}\) Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 85, 94.

\(^{152}\) Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 81-83.


\(^{154}\) Aust, *Baader-Meinhof*, 75.


they were stopped for traffic violations. When members of the group flew overseas to obtain training from Palestinian terrorist groups, they flew out of East Germany with the knowledge of the East German Ministry of State Security, which monitored their travel and interviewed some members upon their return but did nothing to stop them or alter their plans.\textsuperscript{157}

\textit{Operational space for training, recruiting, and planning attacks.} The founding RAF members sought crucial training overseas. Palestinian terrorist groups provided training in 1970 in Syria and Jordan to prepare the members for urban guerrilla warfare.\textsuperscript{158} They participated in endurance training and practiced the use of firearms, hand grenades, and urban guerrilla maneuvers. They also learned tactics for robbing banks.\textsuperscript{159} There is no indication the training camp graduates engaged in systematic training for other RAF members upon returning to West Germany. No evidence suggests the RAF trained in bomb-making while overseas; the group appears to have depended on members with specialized skills and hired individuals to construct explosive devices.

The RAF had the opportunity to test operational plans in FDR when necessary. Members made several reconnaissance trips in West Germany to scout possible passport offices for robbery.\textsuperscript{160} They had means and opportunity to assess pattern of

\textsuperscript{157} Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, xv.
\textsuperscript{159} Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, 67-68.
\textsuperscript{160} Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, 85.
life habits of their kidnapping and bombing victims.  

Gudrun Ensslin conducted multiple pre-operational trips to the jail where Andreas Baader was imprisoned prior to the operation in 1970 that sprung him from prison.  

C. Receiving local support.

The RAF received both expressive and material support as defined by Paul. The group depended more heavily on its supporters for material support than the 7/7 cell did on its supporters for two reasons. First, the RAF sought to use West Germany as both an operational and an organizational safe haven, while the 7/7 cell used London solely as an operational safe haven. Second, the RAF had to sustain an underground existence post-attack while under significant law enforcement scrutiny. Since the London cell conducted a suicide attack, it needed only to avoid pre-operational law enforcement detection.

Expressive support. The expressive support the group received in West Germany varied widely based on which group the public perceived to be more dangerous, the RAF or the West German Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA). Some of the early law enforcement actions and government policies increased the public’s support for RAF or at least neutralized the public’s willingness to assist German authorities in apprehending the terrorists. First, the German authorities used the word

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162 Aust, Baader-Meinhof, 59-60.
“terrorism” in the late 1960s and 1970s to describe a range of student protests and other political demonstrations:

The term was used to describe peaceful demonstrations and what devolved into protestors’ violent skirmishes with police; poster actions, sit-ins, and sit-down strikes; eggs and tomatoes thrown against buildings; actions with stink bombs, smoke bombs, and ‘pudding bombs,’ bags of flour and red paint. Terror seemed for officials to comprise an extremely wide array of activity—and ultimately virtually all (leftist) protest—described circumstantially as disturbing public order in a very general sense, in the name of raising political challenges authorities found unappealing and/or embarrassing.  

The overuse of the term desensitized the population to authorities’ efforts to raise awareness about the nature of the RAF’s intentions. This accounted for the German population’s shock at the RAF’s first murders and the slow build-up of public resistance to the RAF. 

Second, the public perceived some of the government’s policies and actions aimed at dismantling the RAF as repressive and overly broad. German officials announced the so-called “Radicals Decree” in 1972, which “purged perceived (and broadly defined) ‘radicals’ from every layer of government, including teachers, and which encouraged private business to follow suit…” This effectively grouped large segments of the population in with the terrorists the West German government had identified. After the decree, increasing numbers of West Germans proclaimed


\[165\] Davis, 46.
sympathy for the RAF and members of the Radical Left.\textsuperscript{166} The shooting death of RAF member Petra Schelm in a shootout with West German police in 1971 revealed a certain distrust of West German law enforcement’s handling of the incident and a degree of public sympathy with the RAF. A poll conducted ten days after the shooting revealed one in twenty West German citizens were willing to house an RAF member overnight, and one in four citizens under age 30 admitted a “certain sympathy” with the RAF.\textsuperscript{167} Pollsters concluded the nationwide attitude was against the police.\textsuperscript{168} A series of manhunts followed, and most did not result in significant arrests.\textsuperscript{169} The police actions combined with the Radicals Decree gave some perceived credibility to the RAF’s charges that the West German government was a repressive and corrupt police state.\textsuperscript{170}

A bombing campaign by the RAF and a change in West German counterterrorism tactics in 1972 resulted in a significant shift in public sympathy, particularly among its New Left supporters, away from the RAF. According to a member of another German left-wing terrorist group, the RAF seriously miscalculated, saying, “Instead of throwing bombs against selected targets, they suddenly threw them against God know whom—the police, the Americans, some judges. As a result, big mistakes occurred…workers were killed. All this led to a change of public opinion and

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Wright, 178.
\textsuperscript{168} Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, 119.
\textsuperscript{169} Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, 148-149.
then to a really big loss of sympathizers...people no longer supported the terrorists.”  

The BKA once again undertook a nationwide manhunt to arrest RAF members, but they coupled their efforts with an intensive public information campaign in which they encouraged the public to pass along tips to the authorities. The efforts resulted in the arrests of key RAF members a few weeks later. 

The bombing campaign had a severely negative impact on the RAF’s base of support among the New Left. Those who sympathized with the RAF saw the damage the bombings had done to the Left’s image and feared the country would turn against them. The RAF had increasing difficulty finding places to stay, and authorities eventually arrested most of the core members. 

Public support swung once again toward the RAF—although less decisively—during the imprisonment and trial of the RAF founding members in Stammheim from 1972 to 1977. Propaganda and statements made during the trial, hunger strikes by the prisoners to protest prison conditions, sympathetic media coverage, and the inability of the West German government to counter these efforts effectively allowed the RAF’s message to resonate with young Germans. According to Wright, “it will be argued that the RAF’s use of prisoners was undoubtedly its singularly most successful theme in

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171 Michael Baumann, as quoted by Kellen, What Are They Like, 43.
173 Aust, Baader-Meinhof, xvii; Becker, 246.
attracting support, both at the sympathetic level and in terms of recruiting more members.\textsuperscript{175}

The RAF’s ideology and objectives centered around its ability to awaken popular opinion against the government and inspire the working classes to revolution. However, it overestimated the expressive support it would receive from the German people and its ability to provoke the German government to overreact and alienate the citizens.\textsuperscript{176} This miscalculation eventually led to serious disruptions of the group and an eventual dismantling in the late 1990s.

\textit{Material support.} The RAF also received material support from a crucial network of helpers and sympathizers who gave members safe haven and assisted their activities. The helpers and sympathizers served a critical role, often performing menial but vital tasks, such as stealing or forging documentation, buying weapons or explosives precursors, couriering messages or documents, and robbing banks.\textsuperscript{177} Often the RAF members could not perform these tasks themselves because they were known to authorities or imprisoned. These helpers also became a source of potential recruits because they were sympathetic to the cause and already tied to the group’s illegal activities. Even when the RAF experienced serious disruptions because of arrests by West German law enforcement in 1972, 1974, and 1976, the group survived because the

\textsuperscript{175} Wright, 117.
helpers and sympathizers acted as a go-between for the members at large and the jailed members, maintaining the group’s links and allowing the jailed members to direct some of the operations conducted by newer members. Many of the jailed members’ lawyers served as helpers and later joined the group.

The RAF’s supporters also assisted with propaganda, particularly while the prominent RAF members were in jail at Stammheim. With their support:

…the RAF succeeded in developing propaganda actions, designed to portray the Federal Republic as a fascist state and justify the aims of the terrorists. During this campaign the RAF supporters alleged that the imprisoned RAF members were subjected to ‘isolation torture.’…The campaigns of their supporters often produced understanding in Germany…

An estimated 150 to 200 individuals served as helpers who provided refuge and logistical support.

The supporters and the group’s social network provided a crucial source of safe houses and bed-down locations for the RAF. Not all agreed with the RAF’s ideology, but they felt obligated to assist their friends, even if it meant disregarding law enforcement. Many of these friends were members of the Schili (Chic Left), Germany’s wealthy and artistic glitterati who sympathized with the RAF’s leftist

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179 Michael, 350.
181 Ibid.
183 Aust, Baader-Meinhof, 78.
ideology—although perhaps not its violence—and found the Baader-Meinhof gang’s lifestyle and self-denial glamorous.\footnote{Becker, 53, 92, 94, 96.}

D. Motivation for support.

Of the motivations identified by Paul, the RAF supporters’ rationales fell into several different categories. The RAF, based on its roots in the New Left and student protest movements, attracted supporters based on its representation of a social movement. The RAF grew out of the student protest movement of the 1960s,\footnote{Fritzsche, “Terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany,” 466.} and some Germans initially viewed the RAF members—many of whom were university students—as intellectuals involved in and acting out ideological debates.\footnote{Michael, 348.} A statement RAF member Gudrun Ensslin’s mother after Ensslin’s arrest for arson in 1970 perhaps best exemplifies this attitude:

“In Berlin she developed a life-style which we of an older generation couldn’t understand. She probably meant this act of arson to demonstrate the viewpoint of left-wing students in our society.”…The crime as a means to self-realization and self-liberation: Gudrun Ensslin’s mother was able to feel the same way when she talked about the arson to her daughter in the remand prison.\footnote{Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, 40-41.}

The RAF through its propaganda also tapped into a latent anti-Americanism among German youth, who viewed the United States in a contradictory light as the aggressor in Vietnam and the protector of democratic values in Europe.\footnote{Andrei S. Markovits, “The Minister and the Terrorist,” \textit{Foreign Affairs} 80, no. 6 (2001): 136.} Some of the New Left,
particularly the Schili, were also drawn to the RAF out of a desire to support its resistance or action.

As with the 7/7 cell in London, some of the RAF’s supporters were motivated by the repression they perceived in the West German government, a sentiment the RAF sought to inflame by provoking a government overreaction. The Radicals Decree in 1972 seemed to confirm what the RAF’s propaganda said about the government and made West Germans more sympathetic toward the RAF.\textsuperscript{189}

The RAF also successfully exploited the imprisonment of its members to gain sympathy. When the group’s founding members went to jail in 1972, the RAF began a media campaign against the prison conditions and “show trial” tactics used by the government.\textsuperscript{190} The message resonated in particular with German youth who viewed the RAF as David to the West German government’s Goliath.\textsuperscript{191} Individuals sympathized with the RAF not necessarily out of agreement with its ideology but out of genuine concern the group would not receive a fair trial or democratic privileges.\textsuperscript{192} New groups formed around the anger felt at the West German treatment\textsuperscript{193} An underlying social guilt felt in post-WWII and post-war West Germany amplified the perception of imprisoned RAF members as victims.\textsuperscript{194}

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\textsuperscript{189} Davis, 49.\\
\textsuperscript{190} Martin Gutmann, “Notable Literature on Germany's Red Army Faction within the Context of Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus,” \textit{Studies in Conflict and Terrorism} 31, no. 4 (2008): 371.\\
\textsuperscript{191} Gutmann, 371; Davis, 46.\\
\textsuperscript{192} Wright, 179.\\
\textsuperscript{193} Aust, \textit{The Baader-Meinhof Group}, 273.\\
\textsuperscript{194} Aust, \textit{Baader-Meinhof}, xvii.
\end{flushright}
VI. POPULAR SUPPORT FOR TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS

The case studies illustrate how popular support sustains terrorist safe havens, albeit at different levels given each group’s needs and objectives. The RAF used West Germany as an organizational and operational safe haven, according to Kittner’s typology of safe havens. The group conducted group-building activities, including fundraising, communicating command-and-control decisions, and disseminating propaganda. Operational activity also took place as the RAF performed reconnaissance, built explosive devices, and plotted attacks. Because of the diversity, range, and length of the RAF’s activities in West Germany, the support network it needed was substantially larger than the support network the London 7/7 cell required. The RAF relied not only on expressive support from the West German population but also on a network of sympathizers and helpers who assisted with logistics, propaganda, and legal issues. The sympathizers effectively sheltered RAF members during manhunts by the BKA, and the expressive support from West Germans hindered law enforcement efforts to get information from the local population.

The London 7/7 bombers used the suburb of Leeds and the surrounding areas as an operational safe haven. The cell’s activities were limited to those directly supporting the operation itself and did not include building an organization. Evidence suggests the bombers did not intend for their activities to extend beyond the 7/7 operation. The martyrdom video made by Mohammed Siddique Khan and the gun and explosives

\[\text{Kittner, 308.}\]
found left behind in the cars the bombers drove to the subway station indicate the bombers would have violently resisted interdiction or arrest by law enforcement. This limited focus and time frame meant the 7/7 cell needed less support than the RAF did. The cell received tacit support from a British Muslim community that has expressed a degree of reluctance or unwillingness to inform police of radical activity in its midst. Khan and Tanweer also received material support in the form of guidance from other like-minded extremists in Pakistan, identified by British authorities during the investigation of another bomb plot targeting the United Kingdom.

Both groups received a certain amount of cover from a radical but nonviolent socio-political movement that sympathized with their grievances but rejected violence as a means to achieve political change. The 7/7 cell received protection from the well-known presence of a radical element in London’s Muslim community, exemplified by the Finsbury Park mosque, which obscured the expression of explicitly violent views. The RAF grew out of the 1960s student protest movement and the broader Radical Left, which sympathized with the RAF’s underlying ideology but did not actively support the use of violence to achieve leftist aims. This association initially caused law enforcement and West Germans to underestimate the group because they viewed the RAF in its nascent actions as simply an escalation in protests. The members of this movement, while unwilling to join the RAF, were equally unwilling to turn their back on members of their political movement and instead offered them shelter, assisted them

with logistics, and did not inform on them. However, the RAF’s extensive bombing campaign in 1972 soured even the Radical Left on the RAF and decreased the level of support the RAF received, which contributed to the BKA making multiple arrests of RAF members. The arrests illustrated that law enforcement can use the nexus between popular support and terrorist safe havens against the terrorist group if authorities can capitalize on a terrorist group’s miscalculations in attacks and targeting.

In both cases, a certain number of members of both terrorist groups sought training from other terrorist groups outside their safe havens to supplement what was available to them locally. Khan and Tanweer, two of the 7/7 attackers, received some form of training in an al-Qa’ida training camp in Pakistan. RAF members traveled to Jordan to obtain training from Palestinian terrorists. This demonstrated one shortcoming of the thesis: safe havens in functioning states may not present terrorist groups with an opportunity to conduct certain forms of training that are difficult to conceal, such as constructing explosive devices or using guerrilla tactics, and may attract law enforcement attention. The Internet may change this dynamic as more information and tutorials for terrorists become available online. However, as long as individuals need hands-on instruction in difficult and specialized techniques, would-be terrorists in functioning states may seek training in weak state safe havens or from state-sponsored groups. This travel and association with other terrorist groups present as an

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197 Hoffman, “Radicalization and Subversion,” 1102.
opportunity to identify or interdict terrorists seeking to establish a sanctuary in a functioning state.

The level of popular support available to each group depended heavily on the law enforcement reaction to the terrorist group. A measured but determined law enforcement crackdown on the terrorist group diminished sympathy for the group post-attack. However, nothing increased support for the group faster than a perceived overreaction by law enforcement. In particular, the BKA capitalized on the RAF’s miscalculation in its 1972 bombing campaign by changing its counterterrorism tactics to improve West German perceptions of the police and garnering support in its manhunt for RAF members. This resulted in key arrests that effectively disrupted the first generation of RAF members.

Both groups and their supporters exploited freedom of movement, civil liberties, and knowledge of the legal system to conduct their organizational and operational activities. This required local knowledge and—in some cases—specialized skill, which local support could provide or augment. The London 7/7 cell received guidance on how to manipulate the UK financial system to obtain funds through financial fraud, which they apparently used to finance their operation. The RAF had well-documented help from local lawyers who were key to the group’s propaganda efforts in prison. They also utilized sympathizers with knowledge of cars and explosives to assist with financing efforts and building devices. These individuals provided a degree of legitimate cover to the RAF’s efforts.
One question unexplored in this research is the relationship of the terrorist safe haven to the freedom of movement and association, enjoyed by both the RAF and the 7/7 cell, and to popular support. In some instances, the groups’ supporters enabled the terrorists to exploit these liberties and—in at least one case—brought them to the attention of law enforcement. Popular support for the RAF was critical to the group’s ability to overcome law enforcement efforts to restrict the group’s movements once it came under police scrutiny. The 7/7 members’ associations garnered limited law enforcement attention. A study involving a terrorist group that enjoyed popular support but also had a constrained operating environment would help test the nexus between degree of political freedom, popular support, and terrorist safe havens.

These cross-case generalizations demonstrate the ways in which popular support can provide a source of protection and anonymity to terrorist groups in their safe havens when those sanctuaries are within functioning states. The fact that they apply across case studies of both a left-wing terrorist group and an Islamic extremist group strengthens the applicability of the thesis. Per Kittner’s definition of a safe haven, the case studies indicate the groups were able to conduct the activities necessary in a safe haven: the raising of funds; a communications network for effective command-and-control; training; access to weapons and other materiel; and a logistics network to enable travel, transactions, and access to needed illicit items, such as fraudulent
documents. One notable exception is the ability to obtain training, which, as highlighted earlier in this section, required some travel abroad by both groups. The RAF needed to conduct safe haven activities on a wide scale because it used West Germany as both an organizational and operational safe haven. The London 7/7 cell performed the same activities on a smaller scale with the exception of establishing a command-and-control network, which it did not need because it did not use London to establish an organizational safe haven. However, the cell did have the ability to communicate with key individuals both in the UK and elsewhere, indicating the possibility of constructing such a network.

\[^{198}\text{Kittner, 308.}\]
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has important conceptual implications for U.S. national security policy. The definition of a safe haven commonly used in U.S. policy documents should expand to include the notion of safe havens in functioning states and the role popular support plays in creating a permissive environment for terrorist groups. An updated definition of safe haven would help change the accepted notion of safe haven. It should also impact government formulae for prioritizing areas as potential safe havens, which should not focus exclusively on weak governance. An expanded definition would also change the standards by which the U.S. government measures the effectiveness of its efforts to deny terrorist groups their safe havens.

This research points to the importance of addressing the underlying causes or grievances that might lead a population to support terrorism. The importance of identifying and engaging isolated communities to deny terrorist groups possible recruits is recognized; this understanding should also include the knowledge that these isolated communities can also become sources of organizational support. The RAF case study in particular points to the need for law enforcement to consider carefully its messaging and community engagement strategies when initiating an operation against a domestically-based terrorist group. Law enforcement agencies should monitor popular


\footnote{200 “The 9/11 Commission: Denying Sanctuaries to Terrorists,” 35.}
response to ensure the campaign has a positive effect on counterterrorism efforts, and they should re-evaluate the campaign periodically in light of public response.

Redefinition of the notion of a safe haven ought to have a cascading effect on U.S. foreign policy mechanisms designed to enhance partner countries’ counterterrorism capabilities. Guidance to law enforcement in other countries should reflect the ways in which a safe haven could develop in a well-governed state or area. Law enforcement in particular should be aware of the implications of counterterrorism measures for increasing or diminishing popular support for terrorists. U.S. mechanisms should devote resources not only to institutions improving governance, but also to those that bolster civil society and increase participation in the political process.


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