

NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM POLICY PAPER

THE MILITANT PIPELINE

Between the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region and the West

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Of the 32 “serious” jihadist terrorist plots against the West between 2004 and 2011, 53 percent had operational or training links to established jihadist groups in Pakistan and just 6 percent to Yemen.

A decade after 9/11, despite growing concerns over Yemen, Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and swaths of the country’s northwest arguably remain al Qaeda’s main safe haven, and the area from which it can hatch its most dangerous plots against the West.¹ Al Qaeda’s presence in these areas has long threatened international security. It was in Peshawar in Pakistan’s northwest that al Qaeda was founded in 1988, and ever since Pakistan’s border region with Afghanistan has been a gateway for recruits joining the terrorist network and its affiliates, and an area in which its senior figures have felt comfortable planning operations, including the 9/11 attacks. After being driven out of Afghanistan, it was on the Pakistani side of the border that al Qaeda built up a new safe haven.² And while bin Laden went to ground in Abbottabad in the settled areas of Pakistan some 70 miles north of Islamabad where he was killed on May 2, 2011, many of his key lieutenants remain in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Recent years have seen increased numbers of Westerners travelling to the region for paramilitary training, with 100 to 150 suspected of making the trip in 2009 and reports of recruits continuing to stream in during 2010 and 2011, according to Western counterterrorism officials.³ While many went there because the area is the principal point of

entry to join the fighting in Afghanistan, the presence of al Qaeda, and its sustained ability to train recruits and persuade them to launch attacks in the West, continue to make the FATA what President Obama called in 2009 “the most dangerous place in the world.”⁴

U.S. officials have recently suggested that when it comes to the U.S. homeland, al Qaeda’s affiliate in Yemen – al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) – could now pose a greater threat than “al Qaeda Central” in the tribal areas of Pakistan. In February 2011, Michael Leiter, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) testified, “Al Qaeda, we believe, in Pakistan is at one of its weakest points in the past decade, and it is continuously forcing -- being forced to react to a reduced safe haven and personnel losses, but it remains a very determined enemy,” and added, “I actually consider al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, with Awlaki as a leader within that organization, probably the most significant risk to the U.S. homeland. I’m hesitant to rank them too carefully.”⁵

According to a senior U.S. counterterrorism official, while it can be debated whether the Yemeni or Pakistani branch of al Qaeda poses the greatest threat, the terrorist safe haven in Pakistan remains the more dangerous to the

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United States as well as other Western countries. While only one terrorist group in Yemen threatens the United States, several groups are now operating in the tribal areas of Pakistan with a track record of targeting the U.S. homeland.⁶

This paper's findings put the relative threat from al Qaeda safe havens in Pakistan and Yemen to the West in some historical context. In a survey below of the 32 "serious" jihadist terrorist plots against the West between 2004 and 2011, 53 percent had operational or training links to established jihadist groups in Pakistan and just 6 percent to Yemen.

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This paper will illustrate how an intensification in the CIA drone campaign and Pakistani military operations in Pakistan's tribal areas have reduced al Qaeda's ability to operate in the area, but by no means removed it, as the terrorist network has shown a significant ability to adapt its operations to the threat from the missile strikes.

In recent years, despite the intensification of drone strikes in Pakistan, this paper finds that Pakistan has continued to incubate more serious terrorist plots than Yemen. Between January 2009 and June 2011 there were seven serious plots against the West in which plotters were trained or directed by jihadist terrorist groups in Pakistan and just two linked in this way to Yemen. Both those plots – the Christmas Day 2009 attempt to bomb an airliner approaching Detroit and the October 2010 "package bomb plot" against cargo planes – were directed against the United States, which was also targeted by an equal number of serious plots linked to

Pakistan during this period – the September 2009 plot by Najibullah Zazi to bomb New York and the May 2010 attempt to bomb Times Square.

These metrics do not yet bear out Obama administration claims that the terrorist threat from Pakistan's tribal areas has been reduced. In 2010 there were four serious plots against the West with an operational or training link to Pakistan, the most in any year since al Qaeda began to consolidate a safe haven in the tribal areas of Pakistan in 2004. Two of these plots saw plotters train in Pakistan a year before activating plots against the West (the July 2010 plot by Norwegian militants and the August 2010 Canada plot), while two saw militants train in Pakistan the same year (the May 2010 Times Square plot and the December 2010 plot to attack a newspaper in Denmark).

If al Qaeda and its allies have now been weakened in the tribal areas, fewer plots should be expected in 2011 and 2012, as there tends to be a lag between militants training in Pakistan and plots being launched. This will be the truest test of Obama administration's claims.

This paper extends the research of a previous iteration of this paper, published in February 2010, which outlined five case studies of Western militants traveling to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region for training between 2003 and 2008. The five case studies, which were chosen because the most open source information was available on them, charted the emergence of the FATA and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as the North West Frontier Province, or NWFP) as a terrorist safe haven.

- The U.K. fertilizer ("Crevice") bomb plotters (training sponsored by al Qaeda in the NWFP 2003)
- The U.K. airline plotters (trained by al Qaeda in FATA 2005-06)
- The German "Sauerland" group (trained by the Islamic Jihad Union in FATA in 2006)
- The Danish recruit Hammad Khurshid (trained by al Qaeda in FATA in 2007)

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- Bryant Neal Vinas and the Belgian-French group (trained by al Qaeda in FATA in 2008)

This edition includes five new case studies of Western militants who trained in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region between 2008 and 2010.

- Najibullah Zazi's New York group (trained by al Qaeda in FATA in fall 2008)
- The Manchester Plotters (trained by al Qaeda in FATA in fall 2008)
- The alleged Norway Cell (trained by al Qaeda in FATA in winter 2008-2009)
- Failed Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad (trained by the Pakistani Taliban in FATA during winter 2009-10)
- The 2010 Hamburg cell (trained by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and al Qaeda in FATA in 2009-10)

Drawing on interrogation reports, courtroom testimony, confessions, and statements of these Western recruits – as well as interviews with family members and attorneys of the recruits and Western officials with knowledge of their cases - this paper will describe the new realities of al Qaeda's mountainous sanctuary from the perspective of the Western militants who travelled there. Their rare eyewitness accounts—in large part viewed as credible by Western intelligence agencies—shed light on how al Qaeda's capabilities have been affected by drone strikes, the sorts of training camps it now runs, how its relations with other jihadist groups have deepened, how it has continued to attract Western recruits and persuade them to launch attacks in the West, and the degree to which it can now control such operations from its mountain base. The paper will also examine the degree to which Westerners are joining militant groups allied with al Qaeda in the FATA and bordering areas of the NWFP.

A Survey of Serious Plots Against the West 2004-11

In order to gauge the recent danger posed by terrorist safe havens along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, I examined the links between the region and what I assessed to have been the “serious” Islamist terrorist plots against the homelands of Western countries since 2004, the year in which al Qaeda and its allies started to consolidate their position along the border. By “serious,” I mean every plot in which Islamist terrorists killed or were acquiring the capability to kill at least 10 people.

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Methodology

It is, of course, very difficult to be categorical about what constitutes a “serious” terrorist plot, because it is difficult to measure the true danger posed by plots that were thwarted before terrorists could carry out their plans. Nevertheless, I attempted to build a list using the following objective criteria.

First, I included the three plots that killed 10 or more people.

Second, I included the plots that likely would have killed a significant number of people if explosive devices or weapons had not malfunctioned—a total of eight plots, including the Christmas Day 2009 attempt to blow up Northwest Airlines Flight 253 by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian.

Third, I included the thwarted plots in which suspected cell members were alleged to have acquired—without the assistance of undercover law enforcement agents—bomb-

making components or a stockpile of weapons that they planned to use to kill a significant number of people. This category totaled 21 plots, including the alleged September 2009 plot to blow up targets in New York by Afghan immigrant Najibullah Zazi.

By this assessment, there have been 32 serious plots against the homelands of Western countries since 2004.⁷

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Of course, these categories are not a perfect means by which to classify serious terrorist plots. By my assessment, four additional plots posed a significant potential threat

because plotters undertook detailed target planning and surveillance: the August 2004 U.K. “gas-limo plot,” the December 2008 plot by Rany Arnaud to target the headquarters of the French counterterrorism services in Paris, the August 2009 plot by al Shabab-linked terrorists to attack a military base in Australia, and the October 2009 plot by suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba operative David Headley, an American, to target a Danish newspaper. Two of these were directed from Pakistan. However, all these plots were thwarted before plotters acquired any bomb components or weapons enabling them to realize their plans, so they were excluded from the survey of serious plots.⁸

The 32 serious plots and their operational and training links to jihadist groups overseas are outlined chronologically in the table below.

2004 to 2011: Serious Plots Against the West

2004-11 32 SERIOUS PLOTS	Target description	Why classed as “serious”?	Operational direction from overseas?	Did at least one plotter train overseas after 9/11?	Resolution of case
1. Madrid bombings, March 2004	Madrid commuter trains	191 killed and more than 1,000 injured	Possible. One ringleader had communications with an al Qaeda operative in the tribal areas of Pakistan. ⁹	No. The Madrid cell acquired dynamite in Spain rather than travelling overseas to receive bomb-making instruction. ¹⁰	7 blew themselves up rather than surrender to police. 17 found guilty in relation to plot. ¹¹
2. U.K. fertilizer bomb plot foiled by Operation Crevice, March 2004	Civilian targets in London	Sophisticated planning and acquisition of bomb components	Yes. Al Qaeda leaders directed group to launch attacks in Britain.	Yes. All 7 of those convicted trained in NWFP in 2003. ¹²	5 convicted of conspiracy to murder in the U.K. 2 others linked to plot convicted in U.S. and Canada. ¹³
3. Torrance, California, plot, thwarted in July 2005	Military facilities and Israeli and Jewish facilities in Los Angeles area	Plotters acquired weapons (which they used for armed robberies to finance plot). ¹⁴	No. The plot was entirely home-grown.	No. The plotters did not travel outside the United States.	4 were convicted for their role in the plot. ¹⁵
4. London bombings, July 7, 2005 (known as 7/7)	London transport system	52 killed	Yes. Directed by al Qaeda, as indicated by videos recorded by two plotters and later released by al Qaeda’s propaganda unit, As Sahab. ¹⁶	Yes. 2 of the bombers trained in NWFP in 2003 and are believed to have trained in FATA in 2004. ¹⁷	The 4 suicide bombers were killed in the attacks.
5. Attempted London bombings, July 21, 2005 (known as 7/21)	London transport system	Would likely have killed dozens if TATP detonators (which detonated) had created enough energy to explode main charge	Yes. Ringleader Muktar Said Ibrahim is suspected of having met with al Qaeda leaders in the Af-Pak border area in winter of 2004-05. ¹⁸	Yes. Ibrahim is believed to have received explosives training in Pakistan. ¹⁹	4 were convicted in the U.K. for conspiracy to murder.

6. Australian plot thwarted by Operation Pendennis, November 2005	Targets in Melbourne and Sydney	Acquisition of bomb components and sophisticated planning and surveillance ²⁰	No. The militants appear to have acted independently of any established jihadist group.	Yes. One of the Sydney-based plotters is alleged to have trained in Lashkar-e-Taiba camp in Pakistan in late 2001 and early 2002. One of the Melbourne plotters trained in Pakistan before 9/11. ²¹	17 have been convicted in connection to the plot, 8 from Melbourne and 9 from Sydney. ²²
7. Plots in Netherlands by Hofstad group, 2003-06	Assassination of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and targets in Amsterdam	Stockpiling of weapons	No. The plots appear to have been hatched autonomously.	Yes. Two members of the Hofstad group are believed to have received training in Pakistan in 2003. A third travelled there but likely did not receive training. ²³	10 were originally convicted in relation to the plots, including ringleader Mohammed Bouyeri. After a series of legal judgments, 7 will be retried. ²⁴
8. Plot by Toronto 18, thwarted June 2006	Targets in Ontario	Acquisition of bomb components ²⁵	No. The plot appears to have been hatched autonomously.	Yes. One of group is believed to have travelled to Pakistan's NWFP for training in late 2005. ²⁶	7 admitted guilt and 4 were convicted in connection to the plot. Charges against the other 7 were stayed or dropped. ²⁷
9. Attempted attack on German commuter trains, July 2006	Two German commuter trains leaving Cologne	German authorities say device could have killed up to 70 people if it had been properly constructed. ²⁸	No. The plot appears to have been hatched autonomously.	No. The men did not receive any explosives training.	2 have been convicted for the plot. An additional suspect was killed in clashes between Fatah al-Islam and the Lebanese government in May 2007. ²⁹

10. Transatlantic airline plot, thwarted August 2006	At least seven transatlantic airliners. More than 1,500 could have been killed.	Acquisition of bomb components and sophisticated planning. Police seized hydrogen peroxide and chemical constituents of HMTD.	Yes. Plot was orchestrated by senior al Qaeda commanders in FATA.	Yes. Several of the plotters trained in FATA between 2004 and 2006. 7 of those convicted were in Pakistan sometime in 2004-06. ³⁰	10 have been convicted in relation to the plot, 4 of whom were convicted of conspiracy to blow up airliners. ³¹
11. Denmark “Vollsmose” case foiled, September 2006	Undisclosed targets in Denmark	Acquisition of bomb-making components. Police seized ammonium nitrate and 50 g of TATP.	No. The cell acted autonomously.	No. Bomb-maker Mohammed Zaher, a Dane of Palestinian origin, claimed in court he had learned how to make TATP from the Internet. He testified that “military training” in his youth helped him handle the explosives. ³²	3 were convicted of the plot. ³³
12. Attempted bombings in London and Glasgow, June 2007	A London nightclub and Glasgow Airport	Dozens could have been killed had propane bombs detonated. ³⁴	Possible U.K. intelligence agencies believe Iraqi doctor Bilal Abdulla met with members of al Qaeda in Iraq but no evidence was presented at trial showing he was acting under its orders. ³⁵	No. British counterterrorism officials do not believe the cell received training. No evidence was presented in court about training. ³⁶	1 died in the attack and 1 was convicted for the attack. ³⁷
13. Fort Dix plot thwarted, May 2007	Fort Dix Army base in New Jersey	Acquisition of weapons, including assault rifles	No. The plot was entirely home-grown.	No. The cell conducted weapons training on a shooting range in the United States. ³⁸	5 were convicted of conspiring to kill American soldiers. ³⁹

14. Copenhagen “Glasvej” plot thwarted, September 2007	Targets in Europe	Acquisition of bomb-making components	Yes. Ringleader Hammad Khurshid met with top al Qaeda leaders in FATA.	Yes. Khurshid received al Qaeda instruction in how to make TATP bombs in FATA in 2007.	2 were convicted in connection to the plot. ⁴⁰
15. Plot by Sauerland group in Germany thwarted, September 2007	American service members in Germany at discos and other crowded spaces	Acquisition of bomb-making components	Yes. Plotters were directed to attack targets in Europe by senior Islamic Jihad Union leaders in FATA. ⁴¹	Yes. 4 trained in how to concentrate hydrogen peroxide for bomb-making in FATA in 2006. ⁴²	4 were convicted for the plot. ⁴³
16. Barcelona plot thwarted, January 2008	Barcelona Metro system	Acquisition of bomb-making components ⁴⁴	Yes. Allegedly directed by the Pakistani Taliban.	Yes. One of the plotters is alleged to have trained in FATA. In total 8 plotters spent time in Pakistan in the months leading up to the plot. ⁴⁵	11 were convicted of membership in a terrorist organization plotting to stage suicide attacks. A protected witness was not tried. ⁴⁶
17. U.K. plot to launch suicide bombing in Bristol, thwarted April 2008	Bristol shopping center	Andrew Ibrahim put together a suicide vest and successfully manufactured HMTD in preparation for his planned attack. ⁴⁷	No.	No.	Ibrahim was convicted for the plot. ⁴⁸

<p>18. Alleged Plot against targets in Manchester thwarted April 2009.</p>	<p>Shopping center in Manchester</p>	<p>Alleged ringleader Abid Naseer is accused by US authorities of having “purchased ingredients and components necessary for the preparation of explosive devices.”⁴⁹</p>	<p>Yes. According to US authorities the alleged plot was directed by al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan’s tribal areas who were also plotting attacks against New York and Norway. Abid Naseer, one of the alleged Manchester plotters is accused of receiving tasking from al Qaeda and having “maintained frequent contact with the al Qaeda leadership” while in the U.K.⁵⁰</p>	<p>Yes. U.S. authorities allege Naseer received al Qaeda training in Pakistan.⁵¹ This likely took place in the fall of 2008.</p>	<p>11 were arrested in connection to the plot, including 10 Pakistani nationals who had entered the U.K. on student visas. Because of a lack of admissible evidence none of the suspects were charged in the U.K. in relation to the plot. Pakistani national Abid Naseer faces extradition to the U.S. after being indicted for allegedly being part of an international terrorist conspiracy. Several of the suspects left the U.K. ahead of being ordered deported on national security grounds.⁵²</p>
<p>19. Alleged plot against Quantico Marine Barracks in Virginia, thwarted July 2009</p>	<p>Marine Corps Base Quantico</p>	<p>Acquisition of guns and ammunition</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>No. But one individual linked to the alleged cell is believed to be at large in FATA. Ringleader Daniel Boyd is alleged to have trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan before 9/11.⁵³</p>	<p>2 were indicted for plot.</p>

20. Alleged plot by suspected cell led by Najibullah Zazi to attack New York, thwarted September 2009	New York City subway lines and other New York targets		Yes. According to U.S. authorities the plotters were directed to launch the attack by senior al Qaeda leader Saleh al Somali. ⁵⁴	Yes. Zazi and two other alleged plotters were accused of training with al Qaeda in FATA in fall 2008. ⁵⁵	3 U.S. residents were indicted for preparing to carry out the plot. 2 including Zazi pleaded guilty. Adis Medunjanin pleaded not guilty and is set to go on trial.
21. Shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, November 2009	U.S. military personnel deploying for Iraq and Afghanistan	14 killed	Possible Sanctioning Nidal Hasan was in communication with Anwar al-Awlaki, a cleric linked to al Qaeda in Yemen (AQAP). ⁵⁶	No.	Nidal Hasan, who has pleaded not guilty, faces trial.
22. Attempted attack on Northwest Airlines Flight 253, Christmas Day 2009	A passenger jet en route to Detroit	Authorities said that if main PETN charge had been detonated, plane could have been brought down. ⁵⁷	Yes. Plot directed by al Qaeda in Yemen (AQAP). ⁵⁸	Yes. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab received instruction in Yemen.	Abdulmutallab, who has pleaded not guilty, faces trial.

<p>23. Attempted bombing of New York's Times Square by Faisal Shahzad in May 2010</p>	<p>Times Square. Shahzad told investigators he also had other targets, including Grand Central Station and the Rockefeller Center in New York City. He hoped to launch one of those attacks two weeks after the Times Square attempt.⁵⁹</p>	<p>Shahzad believed his device would kill at least 40 but his principle device, a fertilizer-based bomb malfunctioned and sizzled rather than detonating and the propane tanks and petrol bomb in his car also failed to work. Authorities stated that the bomb could have been "devastating." According to the NYPD, Shahzad's purchase of weak explosive materials contributed to the failure of his device.⁶⁰</p>	<p>Yes. Shahzad was acting in collaboration with the Pakistani Taliban who asked him to launch an attack in the United States, discussed targets, and helped fund the plot. Subsequently a video was released of Shahzad in the presence of Pakistani Taliban leader Haikimullah Mahsud.⁶¹</p>	<p>Yes. Shahzad stated in court that he received five days of bomb training from the Pakistani Taliban in "Waziristan" during a stay with them between December 9, 2009 and January 25, 2010.⁶²</p>	<p>Shahzad pleaded guilty to all ten counts against him.⁶³</p>
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<p>24. Alleged Plot by Norwegian terrorist cell thwarted in July 2010</p>	<p>The target is not known with certainty. Alleged ringleader Mikael Davud confessed the target was the Chinese Embassy in Oslo. But another alleged plotter confessed the target was the Jyllands Posten newspaper in Denmark, which published controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in 2005.⁶⁴</p>	<p>The plotters obtained at least one liter of Hydrogen Peroxide. The quantity was sufficient to make one large explosive device or several smaller devices. The plotters also obtained chemicals that can be used to make the detonating substance TATP.⁶⁵</p>	<p>Yes. Western officials say the alleged plot was directed by senior al Qaeda operative Saleh al Somali and linked to plots against New York and Manchester. The alleged ringleader, Mikael Davud, a Norwegian citizen of Uighur descent, allegedly had contacts with al Qaeda dating back to 2001-2. Davud also allegedly had close ties to, and was in touch with, the Turkistan Islamic Party a China-focused Jihadist group based in Waziristan.⁶⁶</p>	<p>Yes Davud is suspected of receiving training in an al Qaeda camp in Waziristan in the winter of 2008-2009.⁶⁷</p>	<p>2 suspects were arrested in Norway and a third was extradited to Norway after being arrested in Germany. They face trial for the plot. Two have confessed to plotting an attack but provided conflicting accounts of the target. Some have speculated that this was a tactical measure to escape conspiracy charges. One of the three has pleaded not guilty.⁶⁸</p>
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<p>25. Plot to target Canada thwarted in August 2010</p>	<p>The suspects are alleged to have discussed attacks on specific government buildings and city public transit systems and were at the beginning of the planning process.⁶⁹</p>	<p>Two of the plotters were charged with possessing an explosive substance with intent to cause harm. The materials in question were 50 circuit boards useful in the creation of improvised explosive devices that were found at the residence of suspected plot ringleader Hiva Alizadeh.⁷⁰</p>	<p>Yes. Canadian authorities state that alleged plot ringleader Hiva Alizadeh belonged to a “terrorist group with links to the conflict in Afghanistan” but did not name the group.⁷¹ The group is believed to be a jihadist group linked to al Qaeda and its affiliates in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.⁷²</p>	<p>Yes. Canadian authorities allege Alizadeh trained to build explosives on a trip to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.⁷³ He is believed to have trained there in 2009.⁷⁴ Another alleged cell member travelled to Pakistan in 2006.⁷⁵</p>	<p>3 Canadian men face trial for the plot in Canada, charged with conspiracy to knowingly facilitate a terrorist activity. Canadian authorities allege the men conspired with 3 other men outside Canada other unnamed individuals in Canada, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Dubai to commit terrorism-related offences.⁷⁶</p>
<p>26. Attempted bombing of U.S. bound cargo planes in October 2010 by devices hidden in printer cartridges sent from Yemen to Chicago by FedEx and UPS.</p>	<p>Western intelligence officials believe the target was cargo planes. The device intercepted in London appeared timed to detonate over the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. The timer consisted of a modified cell phone alarm clock.⁷⁷</p>	<p>British authorities stated that had they not detected the U.K. device, it could have brought down a U.S. bound aircraft.⁷⁸</p>	<p>Yes. U.S. authorities stated the attempted attack was carried out by AQAP in Yemen. The group subsequently claimed responsibility.⁷⁹</p>	<p>Yes. AQAP bomb-maker Ibrahim al Asiri is believed to have constructed the devices.</p>	<p>It is not known whether one-time Western residents were directly involved in the plot. Two American citizens Anwar al Awlaki and Samir Khan had joined forces with AQAP in Yemen.</p>

<p>27. Suicide Bombing in Stockholm in December 2010 by Taimur Abdulwahab al Abdaly</p>	<p>Christmas shoppers in central Stockholm. Only al Abdaly was killed in the attack. Swedish authorities believe a device on his person detonated prematurely.⁸⁰</p>	<p>Al Abdaly had put together a car bomb using gas tanks and three explosive devices on his person. Swedish authorities believe that had they functioned correctly at least 60 or 70 could have been killed.⁸¹</p>	<p>Likely direction from Iraq. Abdaly claimed in a suicide statement to have been acting under the orders of al Qaeda in Iraq. British intelligence suspect he had ties to the group and together with their Swedish counterparts are investigating his movements in Iraq.⁸²</p>	<p>Likely training in Iraq. An Iraqi counterterrorism official stated al Abdaly was trained by terrorists in Mosul, Iraq.⁸³</p>	<p>Al Abdaly was killed in the attack. Swedish authorities are investigating whether others in Sweden helped him put together the device. In March an individual was arrested in Glasgow in relation to the case.⁸⁴</p>
<p>28 Plot to attack London Stock Exchange and other London targets thwarted December 2010.</p>	<p>Targets included the London Stock Exchange, the American Embassy, and a number of prominent religious and political leaders.⁸⁵</p>	<p>The group allegedly ignited and tested incendiary material in preparation for a terrorist attack.⁸⁶</p>	<p>No. British authorities believe the group was inspired by al Qaeda rather than being directed by them.⁸⁷</p>	<p>Possible Several of the suspects travelled to Pakistan, where British officials believe they may have received terrorist training. But U.K. authorities do not have concrete indications that they received such training.⁸⁸</p>	<p>9 were charged by British authorities in relation to the plot and await trial.⁸⁹</p>

<p>29. Plot to attack Danish Newspaper by alleged Swedish terrorist cell thwarted in December 2010.</p>	<p>Copenhagen Offices of Jyllands Posten, the newspaper responsible for publishing controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in 2005. The plotters allegedly aimed to conduct a similar style attack to the 2008 Mumbai attack and may have aimed to take and execute hostages.⁹⁰</p>	<p>The plotters, who were arrested after driving from Stockholm to Copenhagen, had allegedly acquired a submachine gun, silencer, and a second weapon and wristbands useful in restraining individuals.⁹¹</p>	<p>Yes. Danish authorities stated the plotters had “relations to international terror networks” Those connections were made in Pakistan.⁹²</p>	<p>Likely. Three of the alleged plotters spent time in Pakistan in 2009. One of them also travelled to fight in Somalia in 2006.⁹³ The alleged ringleader of the plot– Mounir Dhari – spent more than a year in Pakistan, returning shortly before the planned attacks. Western counterterrorism officials suspect he received training during this period.⁹⁴</p>	<p>Four were arrested in Denmark and charged with the plot. One was charged in relation to housing the group in Denmark.⁹⁵</p>
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<p>30. Alleged Plot to attack U.S. targets by Khalid Aldawsari thwarted in February 2011.</p>	<p>Aldawsari allegedly researched online a variety of possible plans and targets including a backpack bomb on a Texas nightclub, car bombs on New York streets, an attack on soldiers who served at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, and an attack on the home of former President George W. Bush. ⁹⁶</p>	<p>The FBI allegedly found components and chemicals useful for bomb-making in Aldawsari's residence. Aldawsari allegedly wrote in his journal that he deliberately travelled to the United States to plot a terrorist attack. He allegedly researched how to make the explosive compound T.N.P online.⁹⁷</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Aldawsari was charged with attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction.⁹⁸ He has pleaded not guilty.</p>
<p>31. Attack by Alleged Gunman Arid Uka on U.S. airmen at Frankfurt Airport in March 2011</p>	<p>U.S. airmen travelling in a bus at Frankfurt airport.</p>	<p>Two were killed but ten or more could have been killed had the attacker's gun not jammed. 15 U.S. servicemen were on the bus at the time of the shooting.⁹⁹</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Uka has been charged with the attack and faces trial.</p>

32. Plot foiled in Dusseldorf, Germany in April 2011.	The alleged cell had not yet developed concrete target plans. ¹⁰⁰	The alleged cell had started experimenting with a substance from a camping gas stove they hoped would be useful in making detonators. ¹⁰¹	Yes. In the Spring of 2010 a senior al Qaeda operative in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region directed alleged ringleader Abdeladim El-K to launch a bombing attack in Germany. ¹⁰²	Yes. The three alleged cell members trained in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Alleged ringleader Abdeladim El-K was present in the region in the first half of 2010. ¹⁰³	Three have been charged with the plot.
TOTALS 32 plots Serious Plots per Country* U.S. 10 U.K. 8 Scandinavia 5 Germany 4 Canada 2 Spain 2 Holland 1 Australia 1 *2006 Airlines Plot Counted as Plot against both UK and US			14 plots directed from Pakistan 2 plots directed from Yemen 1 plot likely directed from Iraq 15 plots not directed by overseas groups. Serious Plots Directed from Pakistan per Country* U.K. 5 U.S. 3 Scandinavia 3 Germany 2 Canada 1 Spain 1 *2006 Airlines Plot Counted as Plot against both U.K. and U.S.	17 plots involved training in Pakistan after 9/11. Up to 48 individuals trained in Pakistan in these plots. 2 plots involved training or bomb-makers in Yemen 1 plot involved training in Iraq. 12 plots saw no overseas training or overseas bombmakers involved.	166 plotters in serious terrorist cases convicted, deported, awaiting trial, or deceased.

Color key

Yellow = link to Pakistan

Green = link to Yemen

Orange = link to Iraq

Survey Findings

This survey of the 32 “serious” plots against the West since 2004 throws into sharp relief the danger posed by terrorist safe havens in Pakistan.

Most serious anti-Western plots had clearly defined Pakistan links. The majority of serious plots against the West had clearly defined links to Pakistan. In 17 of the 32 serious plots (53 percent) plotters either received direction from or trained with al Qaeda or its allies in Pakistan.

44 percent of serious anti-Western plots were directed by Pakistan-based jihadists. Underlining Pakistan’s emergence as an operational headquarters for terrorists determined to attack the West, al Qaeda and its allies in Pakistan had direct operational ties to 44% (14 of 32) of the serious plots in the West since 2004. (See Figure 1). “Core” al Qaeda has been tied definitively to nine of these plots.

The majority of serious anti-Western plots saw cell members receive some training in Pakistan. The survey also indicates that there is a strong correlation between plotters travelling to train in Pakistan and serious terrorism plots. The survey found that in 17 of the 32 serious plots against the West (53 percent of such cases) alleged terrorists received training in camps in Pakistan. (See Figure 2).

The exact location of training is not known in every case, but in at least fifteen cases there are indications that it occurred in the FATA or bordering areas of the NWFP.

In the serious terrorism cases with a training link to Pakistan, the pattern was often for only some of the group—frequently the leading figures in the conspiracy—to make the trip to receive terrorist instruction. This is reflected in the fact that of the 166 Western residents convicted, deported, deceased, or awaiting trial in the serious cases surveyed, up to 48 individuals or 29 percent

of all alleged plotters, received training in Pakistan after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.¹⁰⁴

A record number of serious plots were linked to Pakistan in 2010. In 2010 there were four serious terrorist plots against the West in which plotters either were directed by, or trained with established Jihadist groups in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, the most in any year since al Qaeda began to consolidate a safe haven in FATA. (See Figure 3).

The majority of anti-Western plots were directed by overseas jihadists. If plots hatched by al Qaeda affiliates in Yemen and Iraq are also taken into consideration, then 53 percent of all serious plots in the West since 2004 (17) were orchestrated by established jihadist groups, demonstrating the continued relevance of “leader-led” jihad.

63 percent of serious Western plots have clearly defined overseas links. The proportion of serious plots with either a training or operational link to organized jihadist groups worldwide was higher still. Overall there were 20 serious plots in which participants either received training or were given mission orders at a jihadist encampment overseas - 63 percent of all serious plots.

These findings have important implications for Western policymakers. The fact that the majority of serious plots against the West since 2004 saw plotters either trained or directed by established jihadist groups, and the fact the frequency of Pakistan-linked plots has increased over the last two years despite an intensification in drone attacks, means that high priority should be given to developing comprehensive strategies to shrink terrorist safe havens around the world, particularly in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The threat posed by plots hatched in the FATA was underscored by the 2006 transatlantic airline plot, which officials say had the potential to kill over 1,500 people—arguably as potentially deadly as all the other plots in the last seven years combined.¹⁰⁵

Figure 1: Operational Direction of Serious Terrorism Plots Against the West 2004-2011

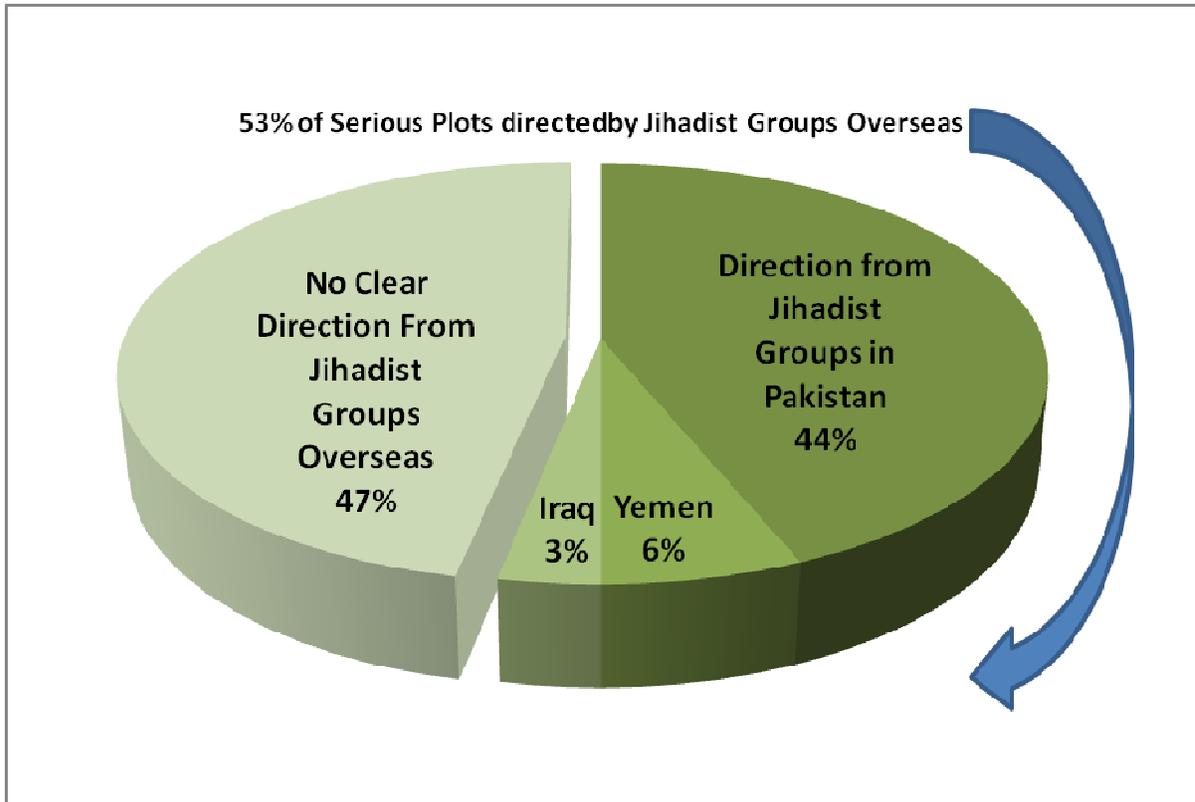


Figure 2: Location of Training in Serious Terrorism Plots against the West 2004-11

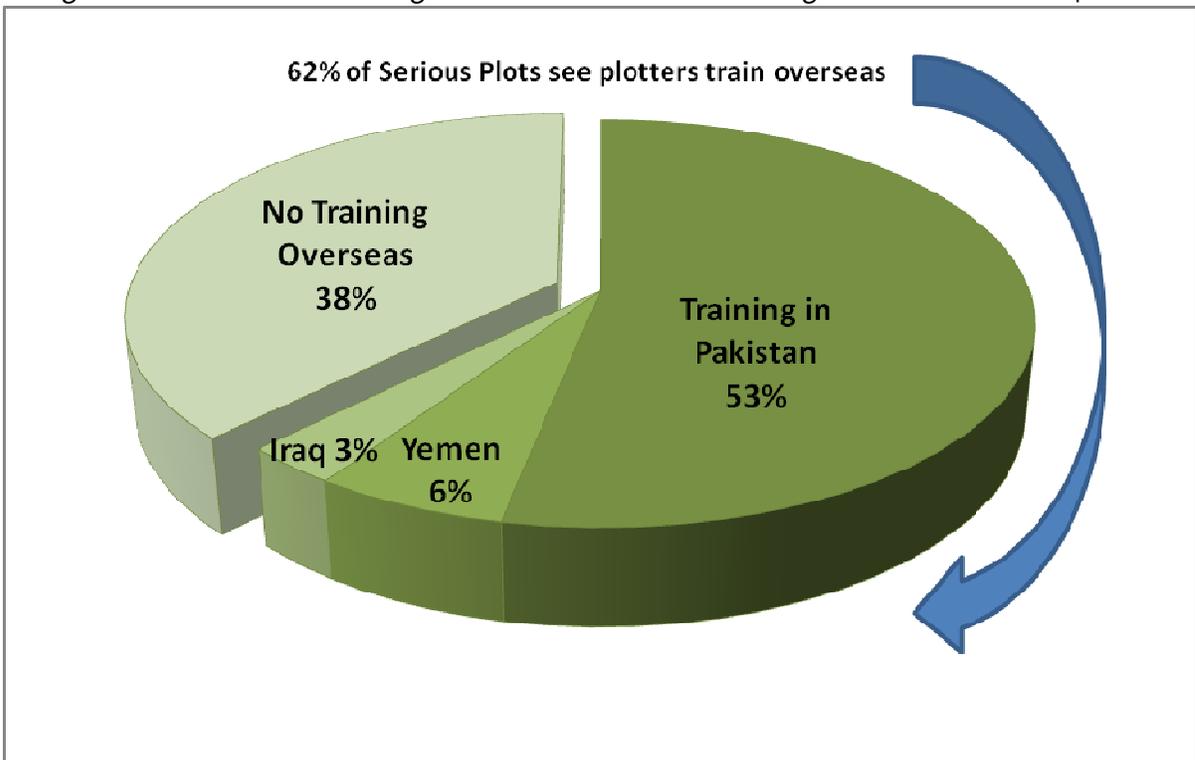
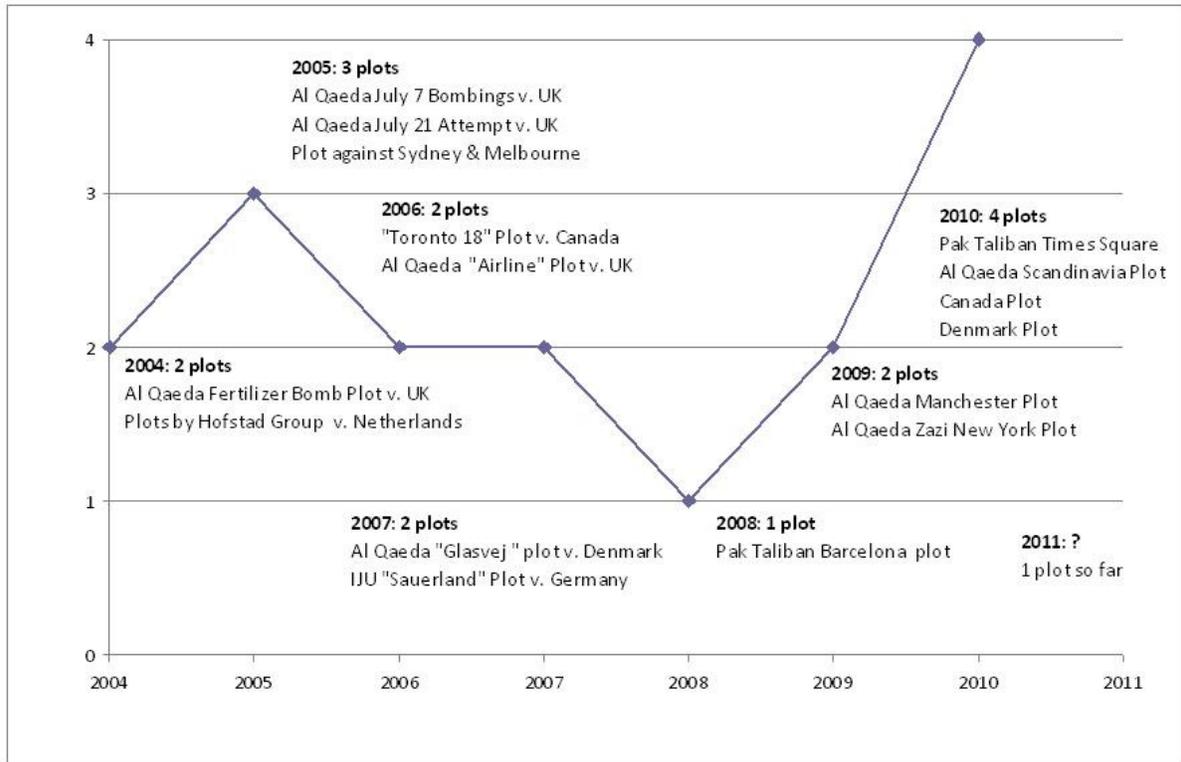


Figure 3: Serious Terrorist Plots against the West with a direction or training link to Pakistan 2004-10



Terrorism Made in Pakistan: A Country by Country Overview

United Kingdom

Until recently Britain was the Western country most vulnerable to al Qaeda's safe haven in Pakistan. In 2008, U.K. authorities judged that 75 percent of plots since 9/11 could be traced to Pakistan.¹⁰⁶ My survey of serious plots against the West showed that 5 serious plots were directed against the U.K. by established jihadist terrorist groups in Pakistan between 2004 and early 2011, more than any other country.

Most of the Western militants travelling to Pakistan in the years after 9/11 were from Britain, a function of its large Pakistani diaspora community and the large number of visits members of this community made each year (some

400,000) to their ancestral country, and the fact that al Qaeda's ideology had made more inroads in Britain than in any other Western country.¹⁰⁷ Only later did Pakistan become the preferred destination for militants from the European continent, countries with much smaller, though growing, Pakistani communities.¹⁰⁸

Like most Western Islamist militants who travelled to Pakistan after 9/11, the majority of these British militants had an ambition—if not always well defined—to receive military training so they could join the fighting ranks of the "mujahedeen."¹⁰⁹ By my assessment of the hundreds of Western militants who have gone to Pakistan since 9/11, very few made the journey expressly to get terrorist training to launch attacks in their home countries. Most set their eyes on fighting the United States and its allies in Afghanistan, something reflected in the ten case studies outlined in my research on the militant pipeline.

Several U.K. al Qaeda cells who received direction and training in Pakistan were detailed in the previous iteration

of this study: the 2004 plot by Dhiren Barot to attack targets in the UK, the 2004 fertilizer plot foiled by “Operation Crevice,” the July 7, 2005 London attack, the July 21, 2005 plot to attack London, and the 2006 airline plot. According to a U.S. counterterrorism official, Britain still has the most expansive jihadist facilitation network of any Western country.¹¹⁰

Connecting with al Qaeda was not difficult for British radicals. During the 1990s, British extremists had built up a web of connections with al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and in the first few years after 9/11 there were plenty of facilitators around to connect would-be British jihadists with al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan.¹¹¹ The pattern was for small groups of British extremists to fly to major Pakistani cities such as Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi, and be met by U.K. contacts at the airport, who would house them and eventually help link them up with training. Helpful in this regard was the fact that U.K. extremists were present in several Pakistani cities, forming a loose network that spanned the country from Lahore to Islamabad and from Karachi to Peshawar.¹¹²

Between 2004 and 2006 many of those arrested in serious U.K. terrorism cases were of Kashmiri origin, with several first becoming involved in Jihadist activities after joining Pakistani groups active in Kashmir. This suggests that the Kashmiri cause played a role in their decision to travel to Pakistan. For example, a recent inquest into the July 7, 2005 bombings found that ringleader Mohammed Siddique Khan, who grew up in an area of northern England in which almost every Pakistani family is from Kashmir, developed a particular interest in the Kashmiri cause and received his first Jihadist training in a camp in Kashmir with the militant group Harakat ul Mujahideen (HuM) in 2001, with whom he briefly travelled into Afghanistan.¹¹³ Because a disproportionate number of British Pakistanis come from Kashmir, groups like this -- and Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed -- were an obvious first choice for British militants travelling to Pakistan. The deepened ties of these groups to al Qaeda in

the years after 9/11 made them in turn an easy stepping stone to Bin Laden’s terrorist network.¹¹⁴

In April 2009, British police broke up what security services at the time described as a “very serious plot” to attack shopping centers in Manchester by 10 suspected al Qaeda terrorists, mostly visiting students from Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province, the FATA, and Punjab.¹¹⁵ The plot was part of a wider al Qaeda conspiracy targeting New York and Scandinavia.¹¹⁶

It is possible that travel flows from the U.K. to Pakistani camps have recently slowed, partly because militants have started to travel to other jihadist fronts such as Yemen and Somalia in larger numbers.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, since 2006 fewer plots have emerged involving British extremists with a connection to Kashmir.¹¹⁸ British counterterrorism officials have always found it very difficult to gauge the volume of travel to the camps because once individuals arrive in Pakistan it is virtually impossible to track their movements and distinguish them from other travelers to Pakistan. Some militants have also disguised their travel routes to Pakistan, travelling by very circuitous routes to avoid their passports being stamped.¹¹⁹

It is possible that travel flows from the U.K. to Pakistani camps have recently slowed, partly because militants have started to travel to other jihadist fronts such as Yemen and Somalia in larger numbers.

In 2011 the threat from these travel flows remained. In September 2010 British intelligence sources indicated they believed around twenty British militants were present in Jihadist encampments in the tribal areas of Pakistan training in bomb-making and firearms for attacks against the U.K.¹²⁰ That month a British militant – by the name of Abdul Jabbar¹²¹ - suspected of possible involvement in an al

Qaeda Mumbai-style plot against Europe that triggered an unprecedented U.S. travel advisory - was reportedly killed by a drone strike in the tribal areas.¹²² Jabbar had reportedly attracted concern after boasting of his plans to set up an al Qaeda splinter group - the British Islamic Army - to plot attacks in the UK at a gathering of militants in the summer of 2010 in North Waziristan. His brother was also reportedly involved in the plot, but escaped being killed by drones.¹²³

More British militants appear to have been targeted in the tribal areas since the death of Jabber. Two British nationals were reported killed in a drone strike in December 2010 in North Waziristan.¹²⁴

Continental Europe

Since 2006 an increased number of militants from Continental Europe have travelled to Pakistan and received terrorist training. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border region has increasingly replaced Iraq as the destination of choice for would-be jihadists travelling from the European continent, because they were put off by al Qaeda in Iraq's dwindling fortunes, negative reports of their barbaric excesses, and the perception that joining their ranks would result in them quickly being deployed as suicide bombers, according to a European counterterrorism official.¹²⁵

The opportunity to fight in Afghanistan by contrast did not lose its luster, and only became more appealing to European jihadist recruits, because of propaganda videos put out by militant groups fighting there in various European languages, depicting an idealized jihadist lifestyle and a glorious struggle against U.S. forces portrayed as committing atrocities. The result was more Europeans transiting through the tribal areas of Pakistan to try to join the fighting in Afghanistan and more opportunities for al Qaeda to recruit Europeans for attacks back in their home countries.¹²⁶

As outlined in the previous iteration of this study a popular travel route for European militants trying to reach Pakistan was to travel illegally through Turkey and Iran using people smugglers. In particular the town of Zahedan in eastern Iran emerged as a staging point for European militants traveling to Pakistan. Other European militants attempted to fly directly to Pakistan.

In 2010 and early 2011 there was no indication that these travel flows slowed.¹²⁷ Despite the increase in travel flows, a facilitation network is yet to emerge in continental Europe on the scale of the U.K., except in Germany which now has what some counterterrorism officials say is the second largest facilitation network in the West.¹²⁸

Germany

Germany has seen a particularly alarming rise in travel flows to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Four men who were part of the "Sauerland Cell," profiled in the last edition of this study, were arrested in Germany in September 2007 for plotting to attack American targets in the country, trained with the al Qaeda-affiliated Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) in North Waziristan in the summer of 2006.

Germany has seen a particularly alarming rise in travel flows to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.

In March 2009 a group of eleven militants from the same Hamburg mosque that 9/11 lead hijacker Mohammed Atta once attended set off from Germany for Pakistan in order to join the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a jihadist group affiliated with al Qaeda. Eight of their number, including two women, reached North Waziristan. After receiving training with the Uzbek group a number of the group developed ties to al Qaeda according to German intelligence officials, and five of their number allegedly

became involved in an a wider al Qaeda conspiracy against Europe first made public by Western authorities in the fall of 2010 which included hitting European cities with Mumbai-style gun attacks.¹²⁹

The group was part of a rising number of Germans who have travelled to join jihadist groups in the tribal areas of Pakistan, fifteen percent of whom are converts to Islam.¹³⁰ German authorities believe at least 220 German residents received training in Pakistan in the years after 9/11 and believe nearly half of them have returned to Germany.¹³¹ German intelligence officials say around forty are still suspected of being in the tribal areas of Pakistan.¹³² Of concern to German authorities several of those who have come back remain radical and are still in communication with militants linked to al Qaeda in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.¹³³

An even greater number of German extremists have aspired to travel to receive training in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. In 2009 more than 130 German militants planned to receive training there according to German officials.¹³⁴

German officials say that the increased number of Germans travelling to Pakistan is a product of rising radicalization in the country fuelled by German language radical websites and social media. They say it is also a reflection of the fact that the U.S. war in Afghanistan has emerged as the number one hot-button issue in German extremist Islamist circles.¹³⁵ The IJU and IMU have also played a prominent role in recruiting Germans for jihad in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, by releasing German language propaganda videos.¹³⁶ Moreover, members of the “Sauerland Cell” helped to set up a recruiting network for the IJU in Germany, facilitating travel to the tribal areas of Pakistan, after returning from training with the IJU in North Waziristan in 2006.¹³⁷ German militants have increasingly taken their wives with them to Pakistan, underlining the lure of the area to Western militants.¹³⁸

Around 2009 a small group of Germans in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region previously part of the Islamic Jihad Union – up to a dozen – founded a new group called the German Taliban Muhajideen, which has continued to release propaganda videos calling on new recruits from Germany and issue threats against the country.¹³⁹

Recent court cases in Germany have revealed the existence not only of a militant pipeline taking recruits to the tribal areas of Pakistan but also a parallel pipeline in which extremists in Germany send money and equipment to German militant comrades in the region.¹⁴⁰ The leader of the German Taliban Mujahideen - Fatih T (also known as Abd al-Fattah al-Muhajir) requested a network of supporters in Berlin send him \$2,000 every three months.¹⁴¹

Rami Makanesi a German militant present in FATA in 2009-10 told German investigators that Uzbek groups received 200,000 Euro that Germany-based militants had channeled from Turkey in December 2009.¹⁴²

The intensification of drone strikes in the tribal areas appears not to have yet stanching the enthusiasm of German militants to make the trip according to German intelligence officials.¹⁴³ Several Germans and their wives were arrested attempting to return to Germany in 2010.¹⁴⁴ “So many people arrive every month that there are problems finding places for them to stay,”¹⁴⁵ Rami Makanesi, a member of the March 2009 Hamburg travel group, told authorities after his June 2010 arrest.

In 2010 and 2011 an average of five militants left Germany every month to try to receive training in the tribal areas of Pakistan.¹⁴⁶ Those setting off included a five strong group of militants from Berlin who departed in August 2010. Two, including an alleged recruiter and fundraiser for the IJU, were arrested in Turkey, but three of the group are believed to have reached the tribal areas of Pakistan.¹⁴⁷

In April 2011 German police broke up an al Qaeda bomb plot centered on Dusseldorf involving three Islamist extremists - two of whom were German citizens - who had allegedly trained in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Their suspected ringleader Abdeladim el-K, a Moroccan national, was allegedly directed to launch the plot by senior Libyan al Qaeda operative Atiyah Abd al-Rahman when the two met in an al Qaeda training camp in Pakistan in the Spring of 2010, and allegedly continued to be in contact with al Rahman through coded communications on the internet before the Moroccan's arrest in Germany.¹⁴⁸

Belgium

In January 2008 a group of seven militants from Belgium and France entered Waziristan, where several of them subsequently received explosives training with al Qaeda. Several of the group were subsequently convicted for participation in the activities of the Al Qaeda terrorist group.¹⁴⁹

According to a senior Belgian counterterrorism official, ten Belgian residents are currently suspected of being with militant groups in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. The official stated that Belgian authorities like their counterparts in other Western countries found it difficult to gauge the numbers travelling to the region from Belgium for jihad.¹⁵⁰ The official stated that a growing Pakistani diaspora in Belgium has added to concerns about travel flows to the region.¹⁵¹

France

French authorities have concrete indications that between 20 and 30 French nationals may now be tied to jihadist groups in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.¹⁵² However, one French intelligence estimate put the potential number as high as 200 or 250.¹⁵³ Underlining the dangers of these travel flows, in the fall of 2010 a militant returning from the region suspected of meeting with al Qaeda

operatives was arrested on suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack in France.¹⁵⁴

French intelligence services believe that would-be jihadists continue to travel to the region in greater numbers than other Jihadist fronts such as Yemen and Somalia, but that there has been greater diversification in choice of destinations in recent years.¹⁵⁵ France's growing Pakistani Diaspora community – now by one estimate approaching 100,000 - has added to concerns about travel flows to Pakistan.¹⁵⁶ French intelligence services are particularly concerned about French nationals who travelled to Pakistan five or six years ago and feel they have a better handle on those who made the trip more recently.¹⁵⁷

In April 2011 two French nationals were arrested in Lahore, Pakistan after meeting with Umar Patek, an Indonesian al Qaeda linked operative. The two French nationals – one of whom was of Pakistani descent and one of whom was a convert – met Patek so that he could transport them for training in North Waziristan, according to Pakistani intelligence officials.¹⁵⁸

Italy

Italian officials suspect a number of militants have travelled from Italy to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. A growth in the Pakistani diaspora community in Italy, as in other countries, is adding to security officials' concerns.¹⁵⁹

Spain

In January 2008, Spanish police arrested eleven members of an alleged Pakistani Taliban cell in Barcelona accused of plotting to attack the city's Metro system and other targets in Europe. All were subsequently convicted of the plot. Some of them were alleged to have received training in the tribal areas. Six members of the alleged cell were legal residents of Barcelona and some of those travelled to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region in the run up to the plot. Five others arrived in Spain for the first time in the

three months before the plot, including two of the presumed suicide bombers.¹⁶⁰ According to a Spanish counterterrorism source, the radicalization of a small but significant minority of the Muslim community in Spain, and the growth of the Pakistani diaspora community have created concern about the potential of militants travelling from Spain for terrorist training in Pakistan. However, Spanish militants are thought to be currently travelling to North Africa and the Sahel in greater numbers than to Pakistan for training.¹⁶¹

According to Fernando Reinares, a senior analyst for international terrorism at Elcano Royal Institute in Madrid, Spanish militants, like their counterparts across Europe, have had a desire to train with established jihadist groups overseas, preferring to “engage in jihad as a collective action than as isolated fighters.”¹⁶²

Scandinavia

Scandinavian governments have grown increasingly concerned about travel flows to Pakistan.¹⁶³ My survey of serious plots between 2004 and 2011 showed that more serious plots (three) were directed against the region by jihadist groups in Pakistan than any other Western countries except the U.K. and the U.S., a development likely explained in part by the cartoons controversy. In the spring of 2007, Hammad Khurshid, a Danish al Qaeda recruit of Pakistani origin, was taught by al Qaeda instructors how to make TATP detonators in a camp in North Waziristan. He was arrested in Copenhagen in September 2007 and subsequently convicted of plotting to launch attacks on targets in Denmark and elsewhere in Europe.¹⁶⁴

Scandinavian governments have grown increasingly concerned about travel flows to Pakistan.

In late 2008, Mikael Davud, a Norwegian citizen of Uighur descent, travelled from Norway to Waziristan, where al

Qaeda provided him training and directed him to launch a plot against Scandinavia, in a wider al Qaeda conspiracy that also involved plots against Manchester and New York. Davud and two co-conspirators were arrested in July 2010. Davud was charged with plotting an attack, and is set to be tried, after confessing to planning to attack the Chinese Embassy in Oslo. Authorities believe the true target may have been the Jyllands Posten newspaper in Copenhagen which published controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.¹⁶⁵

In early 2010 a number of Swedish militants set off for Pakistan through Europe and Iran, part of an increased number of Swedes travelling to join with jihadist groups in the area in recent years, according to Swedish counterterrorism sources. Among their number were three individuals – Munir Awad, Mounir Dhari and Sahbi Zalouti - who were arrested in December 2010 and charged with allegedly plotting to launch a “Mumbai Style” attack against the Jyllands Posten newspaper in Copenhagen.¹⁶⁶

Awad and Zalouti - travelling separately - were arrested by Pakistani authorities in August 2010 before they could reach North Waziristan and subsequently deported, according to Swedish counterterrorism sources. Pakistani security forces found \$10,000 in cash in Awad’s minibus. Dhari, the suspected ringleader in the plot, evaded capture, and is believed to have received training in Pakistan, before returning to Sweden shortly before his arrest.¹⁶⁷

Swedish and Danish counterterrorism officials suspect the plot was organized by al Qaeda -linked terrorists in Pakistan.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, investigators have revealed an intriguing set of connections between the plot and a network linked to David Headley, an American terrorist who helped plan the 2008 Mumbai bombings.¹⁶⁹

Awad, one of the alleged plotters, had links to “Farid,” a Swedish-Moroccan Islamist extremist in Stockholm who met with Headley in the Summer of 2009 in relation to a plot Headley himself was planning against the Jyllands

Posten newspaper in Copenhagen that year.¹⁷⁰ Headley had been instructed to meet with Farid by Ilyas Kashmiri, a senior al Qaeda operative and commander in the Kashmiri militant group Harakat ul Jihad Islami (HuJI) who encouraged Headley to attack the newspaper, raising the possibility that the subsequent December 2010 Jyllands Posten plot was also masterminded by Kashmiri.¹⁷¹ Western intelligence agencies believe Kashmiri was also responsible for a plot to launch Mumbai style attacks on several other European cities that led to an unprecedented U.S. State Department Advisory for Europe in October 2010.¹⁷² U.S. counterterrorism and Swedish counterterrorism officials believe the plot against Denmark was part of the wider conspiracy.¹⁷³

Swedish counterterrorism officials continue to be concerned about travel flows to Pakistan, but say Somalia is also increasingly emerging as a destination for Swedish militants

Swedish counterterrorism officials continue to be concerned about travel flows to Pakistan, but say Somalia is also increasingly emerging as a destination for Swedish militants. A report by the Swedish intelligence agency SAPO published in December 2010 stated, “Almost all known cases of Swedes wanting to join the armed Islamic extremist groups are currently traveling to Somalia or to border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan.”¹⁷⁴

Netherlands

In the Netherlands two members of the Hofstad group that plotted terrorist attacks on the country are believed to have received training in Pakistan in 2003. A third member of the group travelled there but likely did not receive training.¹⁷⁵ Travel flows to the region continue to worry Dutch intelligence officials. A September 2010 report by

Dutch intelligence service AIVD stated, “The root of the threat to the Netherlands and Europe still lies in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. In recent years, several individuals from the Netherlands have gone to this area to take part in the jihad.”¹⁷⁶

Austria

At least one Austrian national has joined the ranks of al Qaeda in the last five years. Abdullrahmen Hilal Hussain, aka “Driss” a 28 year old Austrian-born militant of Syrian descent travelled to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region in March 2006 and became a deputy to Saleh al Somali, a deceased senior al Qaeda leader. In 2008 Hussain was tasked with directing the training of the Belgian-French group that had travelled to Waziristan that year.¹⁷⁷ It is possible Hussain very quickly became involved in al Qaeda operations against the West after arriving in FATA. According to a senior Western counterterrorism official, the handler of the Belgian-French group, described by the official as an Arab militant who spent time in Austria, is also suspected of earlier having had a planning role in the 2006 transatlantic airline plot.¹⁷⁸

In June Austrian police arrested three suspected militants at Vienna airport allegedly on their way to training camps in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. A fourth suspect, an alleged recruiter and fund-raiser for the FATA-based German Taliban Mujahideen was also arrested.” In May German police arrested another Austrian national suspected of also recruiting and raising funds for the group.¹⁷⁹

North America

United States

Worryingly for U.S. counterterrorism agencies, in the last three years, more American residents have travelled to Pakistan and received terrorism training than in previous years. Two hundred thousand U.S. residents travel to

Pakistan each year, making it hard for U.S. counterterrorism officials to track would-be Jihadists.¹⁸⁰ The large travel flows are explained by the fact that Americans of Pakistani origin make up a significant number of the United States' 2.6 million strong Muslim community.¹⁸¹

Worryingly for U.S. counterterrorism agencies, in the last three years, more American residents have travelled to Pakistan and received terrorism training than in previous years.

One of those who travelled to Pakistan - Bryant Neal Vinas, a Catholic Latino convert to Islam from Long Island - received bomb-making training from al Qaeda in Waziristan after joining the terrorist outfit in March 2008. After his arrest, Vinas confessed to helping al Qaeda develop a plot to attack the Long Island Rail Road.¹⁸²

In September 2009 the FBI broke up a plot to bomb New York City by three U.S. residents directed to launch attacks by al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan as part of the wider conspiracy that also targeted Manchester and Scandinavia. Their ringleader Najibullah Zazi, an Afghan street vendor who grew up in New York received terrorist training from al Qaeda after travelling to Pakistan in August 2008.¹⁸³ Joining him on the trip were two New York high school buddies—Adis Medunjanin, an American of Bosnian descent, and Zarein Ahmedzay, a U.S. citizen of Afghan descent.¹⁸⁴ According to U.S. prosecutors, Zazi scanned handwritten instructions on how to make TATP detonators and e-mailed them to himself after being trained in Pakistan's tribal areas. In early 2010 Zazi and Ahmedzay pleaded guilty to planning to attack New York City subway lines with hydrogen peroxide bombs and TATP detonators. Medunjanin has pleaded not guilty.¹⁸⁵

Another American resident, David Headley, spent significant time in the FATA in the years before his October

2009 arrest. Headley, a Chicagoan of Pakistani descent, pleaded guilty to involvement in the 2008 Mumbai attacks and a plot to attack the offices of the Jyllands Posten newspaper that published controversial cartoons of the prophet Mohammed.¹⁸⁶ According to the criminal complaint in his case, he had key planning meetings in Pakistan's tribal areas in the first half of 2009 with Ilyas Kashmiri, a Pakistani militant commander then closely allied with Qaeda.¹⁸⁷

In November 2009 five Americans who attended a mosque in Alexandria, Virginia and dubbed the "D.C. Five," secretly travelled to Pakistan allegedly in order to fight jihad in Afghanistan. Shortly after arriving in Pakistan, the group was arrested by Pakistani police in Sargodha, 120 miles to the south of Islamabad, and subsequently convicted by a Pakistani court on terrorism charges.¹⁸⁸ According to a Pakistani police report the five had been recruited online by Qari Saifullah Akhtar, an al Qaeda-linked jihadist in Pakistan who first connected with one of their number through the interactive comments section of a YouTube video showing attacks on American troops. Akhtar, according to Pakistani prosecutors, is a senior operative of Harakat ul Jihad al Islami (HuJI), a Pakistani militant group with close ties to al Qaeda and the Taliban.¹⁸⁹ The case appears to be one of the first examples of Western extremists recruited directly online by established jihadist groups in Pakistan.¹⁹⁰

Americans continued to be endangered by their countrymen training in Pakistan in 2010. On May 1, 2010 Faisal Shahzad, a U.S. citizen of Pakistani descent attempted to detonate a car bomb in New York's Times Square. Shahzad had been directed to launch the attack by the Pakistani Taliban and received training from the group in late 2009 and early 2010 in Waziristan.

Several Americans are still believed to be at large in the FATA, including Jude Kenan Mohammad, an individual with links to an alleged North Carolina jihadist cell charged with plotting to attack the Quantico Marine Barracks in

Virginia, Adnan El Shukrijumah, a U.S. citizen of Saudi descent who joined al Qaeda in Afghanistan shortly before 9/11 and who is alleged to have played a key role in planning al Qaeda's 2009 plot against New York, and Adam Gadahn, a Californian resident turned al Qaeda spokesman who left the United States for Pakistan in the late 1990s.¹⁹¹

U.S. counterterrorism officials have stepped up their monitoring of Americans travelling to the country - in partnership with Pakistani authorities - which officials say has significantly improved their ability compared to three years ago to detect individuals intending to engage in jihadist activity.¹⁹² U.S. counterterrorism officials say they are yet to see an al Qaeda facilitation network taking recruits to Pakistan in a way that exists in Britain.¹⁹³

According to a senior U.S. counterterrorism official, fewer American extremists appear to have travelled to Pakistan in 2010 and early 2011 than in 2009.

According to a senior U.S. counterterrorism official, fewer American extremists appear to have travelled to Pakistan in 2010 and early 2011 than in 2009. "The story of 2010 was about travel flows to Somalia rather than Pakistan or Yemen," stated the official, "The D.C. 5 case appears to have dissuaded some Americans from going to Pakistan. Of course there is always the worry that people are travelling there without our knowledge. A tightening up by security services in Yemen has also seen a fall off in travel flows from the United States to Yemen as far as we can see."¹⁹⁴

In recent years U.S. extremists also allegedly funded established Jihadist groups in Pakistan. In March 2010 Raja Lahrasib Khan a Chicago taxi driver was arrested after allegedly providing tens of thousands of dollars to Ilyas Kashmiri, an al Qaeda-linked Pakistani Jihadist.¹⁹⁵ In May 2011 three U.S. citizens of Pakistani descent living in

Florida, including two Imams, were charged with sending at least \$50,000 through bank accounts and wire transfers to the Pakistani Taliban.¹⁹⁶

Canada

Canadian intelligence services have grown increasingly concerned about Canadian residents travelling to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region in recent years, and are aware of several small groups recently travelling to Waziristan for terrorist training.¹⁹⁷ Canadian intelligence officials are also worried about travel flows to Somalia, because of the country's large Somali diaspora community.¹⁹⁸

In 2003 a Canadian citizen – Mohammed Momin Khawaja - trained with British al Qaeda recruits in Pakistan's NWFP who subsequently plotted to blow up fertilizer bombs in London before they were arrested in Operation "Crevice." Khawaja was convicted in relation to the plot in Canada in 2009. Authorities said his role in the plot had been to build detonators.¹⁹⁹

In late 2005 Jahmaal James, one of the alleged members of the "Toronto 18" accused of planning to attack targets in Ontario, Canada in 2006, travelled to Balakot in the North West Frontier Province where authorities suspect he received Jihadist training.²⁰⁰

U.S. authorities allege that Imam personally provided bomb-making training to Najibullah Zazi's New York group in al Qaeda encampments in Waziristan in 2008.

In March 2007 two Canadian citizens – Maiwand Yar, 27 and Ferid Ahmed Imam, 30, an immigrant from East Africa – traveled by air via Europe to Peshawar, Pakistan, where having entered the country on student visas they

arranged to receive terrorist training in firearms, scouting, guerrilla warfare and explosives somewhere in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. That training likely occurred in the mountains of Waziristan, where the duo appear to have become linked to al Qaeda. U.S. authorities allege that Imam personally provided bomb-making training to Najibullah Zazi's New York group in al Qaeda encampments in Waziristan in 2008. Yar and Imam, still believed to be at large in the tribal areas of Pakistan, were charged by Canadian authorities with terrorist activity in March 2011. A third Canadian, who disappeared with the duo in March 2009 and was thought to have also travelled to Pakistan has not to date been charged.²⁰¹

In October 2009 U.S. authorities charged Canadian Pakistani Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Chicago resident, with providing cover for plots by Lashkar-e-Taiba American operative David Headley.²⁰² Rana was found guilty on several charges in June 2011, including providing material support to the group, though he was acquitted of involvement in the Mumbai plot.²⁰³

In August 2010 Canadian police broke up an alleged plot to target government building and public transport systems by three Canadian citizens educated to a high level – Hiva Alizadeh, a 30 year old immigrant from Iran, Khurram Sher, a 28 year old of Pakistani descent, and Misbahuddin Ahmed, a 26 year old of Pakistani descent.²⁰⁴

Alizadeh was allegedly encouraged to attack Canada by a jihadist grouping based in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region connected to al Qaeda and its Pakistani affiliates. Alizadeh, the plot's ringleader, allegedly trained to build explosives on a trip in 2009 to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.²⁰⁵ He joined a terrorist group "with links to the conflict in Afghanistan" whom he continued to communicate with from Canada according to Canadian authorities, who did not name the group.²⁰⁶

Canadian authorities stated that three other Canadian residents that are no longer in Canada conspired in the plot

together with unnamed individuals in Canada, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Dubai. Alizadeh, Sher, and Ahmed have pleaded not guilty and are set to go on trial.²⁰⁷ Canadian intelligence officials are concerned Canadian nationals continue to travel to the tribal areas of Pakistan for training and that a number have joined jihadist groups there.²⁰⁸ In January 2011 the Asia Times quoted a Pakistani jihadist who claimed that 12 Canadian militants were receiving bomb-making training for attacks against Canadian cities in al Qaeda camps in North Waziristan after having spent time in Afghanistan, a claim Canadian intelligence agencies were not immediately able to verify.²⁰⁹

Australia

Several militants from Sydney and Melbourne convicted for a 2005 plot to attack targets in Australia trained in Pakistan. One of the Sydney-based plotters is alleged to have trained in a Lashkar-e-Taiba camp in Pakistan in late 2001 and early 2002. One of the Melbourne plotters trained in Pakistan before 9/11.²¹⁰

2002-04: The Emergence of a Safe Haven

The loss of safe haven in Afghanistan was traumatic to al Qaeda. No less distressing for the group's leaders was the decision by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to join the U.S. war on terrorism, something few top al Qaeda leaders imagined possible before 9/11.²¹¹ In late 2001 and early 2002, dozens of al Qaeda operatives were arrested trying to cross the border into Pakistan, a country that many had assumed would be a sanctuary. "We are going from misfortune to disaster.... Pakistan has almost been drowned in one push," an operative believed to be Saif al-Adel, a senior Egyptian al Qaeda commander, wrote to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in June 2002.²¹² Those al Qaeda leaders who were not captured crossing the border mostly fled to Pakistani cities or across the border into Iran. In the following months, several key leaders who went into hiding in Pakistani cities were arrested by authorities there,

including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was apprehended in Rawalpindi in February 2003.²¹³ Such arrests contributed to al Qaeda concentrating its operations increasingly in Pakistan's tribal areas.²¹⁴ During 2003 al Qaeda moved in particular into South Waziristan around Wana and Shakai, where they were protected by local tribal leaders.²¹⁵ According to Mohammed Junaid Babar, an American al Qaeda recruit, al Qaeda operatives could lie low in the FATA because it was outside the control of the Pakistani government.²¹⁶

The previous iteration of this research contained a case study outlining the travel to Pakistan of the U.K. "Crevice" cell that planned to blow up fertilizer bombs in London in 2004.

2005-07: A Safer Safe Haven

In 2004, under pressure from the United States, the Pakistani army launched a number of offensives against militants in the Waziristan agencies. However, these operations succeeded only in temporarily displacing al Qaeda and its Taliban allies.²¹⁷ During 2005 al Qaeda set up new bases in North Waziristan and Bajaur.²¹⁸ The heavy-handed nature of the Pakistani offensives, and the perception that Pakistan's army was fighting alongside an infidel power that had invaded two Muslim countries, contributed to the growing radicalization of Pashtun tribes in the area—leading them to afford al Qaeda greater sanctuary. Bin Laden's terrorist network took full advantage by increasingly integrating its fighters with local tribes through marriage. Furthermore, al Qaeda's increasingly close relationship with powerful Kashmiri militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed helped it build its capabilities across northwestern Pakistan.²¹⁹ The Kashmiri groups had increasingly bought into bin Laden's concept of global jihad because of the Iraq war and Musharraf's participation in the war on terrorism.

All this was compounded by a series of hollow peace deals the Pakistani military signed with militants in North and

South Waziristan in 2005-06 that made the area yet safer for al Qaeda.²²⁰ Emboldened, Taliban fighters increasingly killed off or intimidated tribal elements who did not agree with their hard-line view, neutralizing potential opposition to al Qaeda's foreign recruits. Facing no interference from the Pakistan military, al Qaeda took advantage of its new freedom of movement in North and South Waziristan to set up training facilities deep inside the FATA.

From 2006 al Qaeda began to exert greater command and control over plots than it had in plots launched in previous years, possibly as a result of having bolstered its position in Pakistan's tribal areas. Once the airline plotters returned to Britain after meeting with al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan, they communicated much more with their al Qaeda handlers than did the fertilizer bomb or 7/7 plotters.²²¹ During the final months of the plot, the British al Qaeda operative Rashid Rauf, based in Bahawalpur in southern Punjab, was in near constant communication with the U.K. cell—through coded e-mails, texts, and phone calls. By delegating significant authority to a senior operative outside the tribal areas, al Qaeda was able to exert more control over the airline plot than any since 9/11.²²² Further evidence that the terrorist group's ability to communicate with operatives overseas seemed to be improving was the growing number of audiotapes and videotapes being produced by al Qaeda, which was able to distribute them increasingly quickly. By 2006, As Sahab, al Qaeda's propaganda arm, was responding to news events by producing and distributing videos in less than a week.²²³

The last iteration of this paper profiled the summer 2006 "airline plot" against the U.K. (the most serious al Qaeda plot since 9/11), the "Sauerland" cell, which trained in the FATA in 2006 and sought to attack American targets in Germany, and Hammad Khurshid, a Danish citizen who was linked to a conspiracy to blow up unspecified targets in Europe with homemade bombs.

2008-10 Adapting to drones

In the summer of 2007, a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate judged that al Qaeda in the FATA had regenerated “key elements of its Homeland attack capability.”²²⁴ In the second half of 2007, al Qaeda further strengthened its position in the tribal areas. The Pakistani army’s storming of the Red Mosque in July 2007 intensified an insurgency among Pashtun militants and contributed to the emergence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, or the Pakistani Taliban), a conglomeration of extremist groups in Pakistan’s tribal areas sympathetic to al Qaeda’s goals and ideology.²²⁵ Its leader, Baitullah Mehsud, offered al Qaeda even greater sanctuary and protection in South Waziristan.

This was offset, however, by an escalation of U.S. drone strikes in the tribal areas. In 2008, the strikes began to inflict significantly more pain on al Qaeda in Pakistan. According to a count by Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann of the New America Foundation, there were 33 Predator strikes in the FATA that year, compared to just nine in the previous four years.²²⁶ According to the study, at least 133 militants were killed by drone strikes in 2008, more than in the four previous years combined.²²⁷ Of those killed in 2008, about a dozen were senior al Qaeda operatives whose expertise and experience made them difficult to replace.²²⁸

The last iteration of this paper profiled Bryant Neal Vinas and a Belgian-French group, all of whom trained in Pakistan’s tribal areas during 2008. The picture they presented was of a terrorist organization being forced to adapt under growing pressure from drone strikes. One of the Belgian recruits, Hicham Beyayo, stated that during their time in the FATA, they were moved around a lot because the drone strikes were known to be “very effective.”²²⁹ Their accounts suggested that al Qaeda successfully adapted to the harsher security environment by further decentralizing its operations in Pakistan’s tribal areas and training recruits indoors in small mountain shacks, allowing al Qaeda to continue to offer bomb-

making training to Western recruits during 2008, some of it remarkably sophisticated.²³⁰ To minimize casualties from drone strikes, fighters were housed in groups of ten or less.²³¹ According to Belgian court documents, a senior al Qaeda operative – Saleh al Somali – oversaw Vinas’s training.²³²

However, the decentralization of al Qaeda’s structures appears to have created some costs for recruits. Two members of the Belgian-French group described feeling increasingly cut off, bored, and fed up with the primitive living conditions in their mountain shacks. They often did not seem to know what their next orders would be or where their handlers would take them. They also described feeling deeply frustrated about being repeatedly given false promises that they would be able to fight in Afghanistan.²³³ The Belgian French group also described their frustration at having to pay around \$1800 each for training and equipment, something which may have been reflective of al Qaeda’s cashflow problems.²³⁴

Vinas’s account revealed that fighters from different militant groups—al Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the Uzbek organizations—mixed freely. Hierarchies were not always clear. Bands of fighters from different groups spontaneously merged to undertake cross-border raids in Afghanistan, something the recruits appear to have relished above almost anything else.²³⁵ Walid Othmani, one of the French recruits, stated that al Qaeda in the tribal areas was known as the “Arab group” and had about 300 to 400 members, fewer than some other groups. “Most of the group were from Saudi Arabia... you find people from the Middle East, North Africa, Africans, Turks, but the majority are Arabs,” he told his French interrogators.²³⁶

The descriptions provided by Vinas and the Belgian-French group of how they first connected with al Qaeda further illustrated the changed circumstances for bin Laden’s terrorist organization. After 9/11, al Qaeda was not able to maintain the large guesthouses in Peshawar through which it had previously processed arriving volunteers, nor was it

able to cherry-pick recruits from two dozen large training facilities previously maintained by jihadists in Afghanistan. The accounts by the Westerners also indicated that al Qaeda was increasingly dependent on whichever militants reach its safe haven in the tribal areas. But that has created headaches for both al Qaeda and potential recruits. Both Vinas and the Belgian-French group were initially regarded as potential spies when they first entered the tribal region and tried to connect with al Qaeda.

In 2009 and 2010 the terrorist group appears to have come under increased pressure due to a greatly increased number of drone strikes during 2009 and 2010. According to the New America Foundation count, there were 53 such strikes in 2009, killing at least 266 militants, around double the number in 2008. In 2010 there were a record 118 strikes, killing at least 581 suspected militants.²³⁷

A State Department report, published in August 2010, examining terrorist activity around the world in 2009 concluded that leadership losses in the tribal areas of Pakistan made it “tougher for al Qaeda to raise money, train recruits, and plan attacks outside of the region.” But it also found that “al Qaeda’s core in Pakistan remained the most formidable terrorist organization targeting the U.S. homeland,” and had “proven to be adaptable and resilient.”²³⁸

In 2009 the U.S. stepped up its targeting of Taliban elements within the tribal areas, shifting from mainly targeting al Qaeda in order to stem the number of cross border raids against U.S. troops in Afghanistan and to respond to Pakistani pressure to target the Pakistani Taliban.²³⁹

The wider target list may help explain why al Qaeda appears to have been less hurt by the increase in drone strikes than other militant groups. According to the New America Foundation research, around half a dozen of those killed in 2009 were senior al Qaeda operatives, half the figure of the previous year.²⁴⁰ Despite the successful targeting in May

2010 of Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, one of al Qaeda’s key figures, that year saw around the same number of al Qaeda leaders killed by drone strikes in the tribal areas as in 2009.²⁴¹ 94 percent of those killed in 2010 were lower level militants.²⁴² The lower number of top al Qaeda commanders being killed may be a result of the extra precautions taken by senior operatives within the group, as well as the decision by some leaders to move deeper inside Pakistan. In the first half of 2011 there were only two senior al Qaeda operative confirmed killed in drone strikes.²⁴³

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The threat of drones may have led the terrorist network to increasingly take its instruction on the road, training recruits from different militant groups such as JeM, the Pakistani Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Janghvi in temporary training camps set up by the groups, according to researchers at West Point’s Combating Terrorism Center.²⁴⁴ Al Qaeda also appears to have adapted its propaganda operations. As Sahab released nearly 100 tapes in 2007, but that number was halved in 2008, presumably because of the intensification in the drone campaign. As Sahab’s propaganda output was restored in 2009, however, suggesting it moved its media operations deeper into Pakistan.²⁴⁵

In October 2009, Pakistan sent 30,000 ground troops into South Waziristan in an attempt to clear the area of al Qaeda and its allies. According to a senior U.S. counterterrorism official interviewed at the start of the campaign, the Pakistani military operations had the potential to be a game-changer if they were extended throughout the FATA.²⁴⁶ By the end of 2010 the Pakistani military had also conducted military operations against insurgents across all

the other tribal agencies, except North Waziristan. But according to the Obama administration, none of these operations succeeded in permanently clearing these areas of militants because of the Pakistani military's inability to mount an effective counterinsurgency campaign.²⁴⁷ According to a German militant present in the tribal areas in 2009 there were only around 700 Pakistani Taliban fighters in South Waziristan at the onset of the Pakistani military operation, and they were ordered to evacuate the area before the offensive.²⁴⁸

U.S. intelligence agencies did not judge the Pakistani Taliban to have been defeated during the initial phases of the operation in South Waziristan.²⁴⁹ An October 2010 internal White House assessment judged that thereafter "Pakistani military operations advanced slowly" because they were not able to stabilize areas after militants were cleared. During 2010 militants started returning to South Waziristan, according to the assessment.²⁵⁰

By 2010, the Pakistani military's continued reluctance to engage in operations in North Waziristan had become a source of increasing frustration to Western governments. The area in and around Mir Ali, the second-largest town in the tribal agency, had become the epicenter for al Qaeda terrorist plots against the West. The airline plotters, the Danish recruit Hammad Khurshid, the Sauerland group, the Belgian-French group, Bryant Neal Vinas, Zazi's New York group, and Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad all trained or spent time in the area between 2005 and 2010.

In early 2010 al Qaeda set up a new terrorist outfit in the tribal areas of Pakistan called the 313 Brigade. Named after the number of companions of the Prophet in the first battle of Islam, the brigade was tasked with plotting attacks, primarily in Pakistan, India, and South Asia, but also against the West. Its first leader was Egyptian al Qaeda commander Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, who was head of al Qaeda's military committee until his death in a drone strike in June 2010, according to the sources in the region of Noman Benotman, a former Libyan jihadist, previously

personally acquainted with al Qaeda's top leaders, and now a senior analyst at the Quilliam Foundation, a British counterextremist policy center. The 313 Brigade was subsequently led by Ilyas Kashmiri, a long-time senior commander of the Harakat al Jihad Islami (HuJI) who had recently joined the al Qaeda fold.²⁵¹

According to Benotman, the 313 Brigade operates several camps in the tribal areas of Pakistan and has emerged as an umbrella outfit for cooperation between al Qaeda and various Pakistani jihadist groups, including Lashkar e Taiba, Jaish e Muhammad, Harakat al Mujahedin and the Pakistani Taliban. More than 100 fighters – and perhaps as many as 200 – mainly from Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh, are attached to it, according to Benotman.²⁵²

The 313 Brigade created concern in the West because of Kashmiri's track record of targeting the West. In 2009 he directed David Headley, an American Jihadist, to plan an attack against the Jyllands Posten newspaper in Copenhagen.²⁵³ In 2010 Kashmiri began developing plans to launch Mumbai-style attacks against Europe, a plot which when discovered by Western intelligence agencies led to a U.S. travel alert for Europe in October 2010 and a raised alert level in Germany the following month after intelligence indicated that there was a threat of a gun and hostage attack against the Reichstag in Berlin.

Bin Laden personally authorized the Mumbai-style plot against Europe according to U.S. counterterrorism officials.

Bin Laden personally authorized the Mumbai-style plot against Europe according to U.S. counterterrorism officials.²⁵⁴ Kashmiri was one of the few al Qaeda operatives reporting directly up to Osama bin Laden, according to Chicago taxi driver Raja Lahrasib Khan, 56, an alleged American Pakistan-born terrorist fundraiser. The revelation after bin Laden died that he had communicated with senior

al Qaeda operatives through messages placed onto thumb drives and passed to couriers made Khan's claims all the more intriguing.²⁵⁵

Khan, whose meetings with an undercover FBI agent were secretly recorded in February and March 2010, claimed to have known Kashmiri for fifteen years and to have met him in Miram Shah in North Waziristan Pakistan in 2008. He also stated he had previously provided cash to Ilyas Kashmiri and was about to return to Pakistan to once again meet with the terrorist leader, to again provide cash donations. When bringing more than \$10,000 in cash, he said, it was necessary to travel through Europe to avoid questions at U.S. airports, illustrating that the militant pipeline from the West has brought money as well as manpower to al Qaeda.²⁵⁶

Western intelligence services believe that Kashmiri was also planning to carry out Mumbai-style attacks against the United States.²⁵⁷ Khan, the Chicago taxi driver, appeared to confirm that by telling an undercover FBI agent that Kashmiri "wanted to train operatives to conduct attacks in the United States."²⁵⁸ Khan was arrested in Chicago in March 2010 after allegedly discussing a possible bomb attack in the United States and has pleaded not guilty to materially supporting al Qaeda.²⁵⁹

In April 2010 al Qaeda's leadership in Pakistan's tribal areas was further strengthened when Saif al Adel, a former lieutenant in the Egyptian army, was released from Iran and reconnected with the terrorist group in the tribal areas of Pakistan, taking on what was effectively the "chief of staff" position.²⁶⁰ After the death of bin Laden in May 2011 he apparently temporarily took over the interim leadership of the terrorist organization.²⁶¹

The FATA Safe Haven in 2011

No eyewitness accounts have yet emerged of al Qaeda's Pakistani safe haven in 2011. It is likely however that North Waziristan and other parts of the tribal areas remain a

destination where Western militants can travel to receive training. In Europe there remains a strong desire amongst militants to travel to Afghanistan to fight U.S. and NATO troops. Intensified drone strikes have not yet stanching the enthusiasm of Western extremists wanting to travel to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. In May 2011 a militant captured by NATO forces in Afghanistan after making his way from Germany revealed that foreign militants were "converging" on Pakistan in order to launch attacks on coalition forces in Afghanistan.²⁶²

It is unclear whether Western militants will continue to stream in. An increased number of Westerners were killed in drone strikes in 2010, including militants from the U.K. and Germany. And in March 2011 a senior Pakistani military official in North Waziristan publicly acknowledged the effectiveness of the drone campaign, stating it was killing mostly "hard core militants" and few civilians.²⁶³

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The pressure exerted on al Qaeda by this intensified campaign of drone strikes was noted by the terrorist organization, in a rare public acknowledgment in early 2011. "There were many areas where we once had freedom, but now they have been lost," Ustadh Ahmad Farooq, an al Qaeda media spokesman based in Pakistan, stated in an Urdu-language audiotape in late January. "We are the ones that are losing people, we are the ones facing shortages of resources. Our land is shrinking and drones are flying in the sky," he stated.²⁶⁴

That pressure may have eased for a while after drone strikes were temporarily halted between mid January and mid

February, during a time of rising diplomatic tension between the United States and Pakistan over the temporary incarceration of a CIA official in Pakistan.²⁶⁵ That tension intensified in April 2011 when Pakistani officials demanded major reductions in CIA activity in Pakistan, including a curtailment of drone strikes, a demand which has called into question the CIA program.²⁶⁶ The U.S. operation that killed Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011 at his compound in Abbottabad around 70 miles north of Islamabad led to a further escalation of tension between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the prospect of a Pakistani counterinsurgency operation in North Waziristan – the key step in removing al Qaeda’s ability to operate in the area - appears to have receded further in 2011, with Pakistani officials retreating from earlier promises of an impending effort to clear the area of militants and insisting that any operation would be conducted on a timetable of their choosing.²⁶⁷ In early June the Pakistani military denied remarks by U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen that a Pakistani military operation was being planned in North Waziristan.²⁶⁸

Moreover, in the first half of 2011 the Pakistani government appeared distracted by an increasing wave of religious militancy within its main cities spawned by a controversy over a blasphemy law. The flooding of much of Pakistan in the summer of 2010 had already diverted attention away from tackling militancy in the tribal areas, offering an opportunity to Pakistani militant groups to regroup, and improve their popularity by showcasing their relief efforts, like after the 2005 Kashmir earthquake.²⁶⁹

In early 2011 the Pakistani military undertook a new campaign to clear Mohmand and Bajaur agencies of militants, but with little apparent immediate success. According to the Obama administration the repeated attempts to clear the area of militants were a “clear indicator of the inability of the Pakistani military and government to render cleared areas resistant to insurgent return.”²⁷⁰ In March 2011 the Obama administration made

the bleak assessment that “there remains no clear path toward defeating the insurgency in Pakistan.”²⁷¹

Any descent into political chaos in the rest of 2011 could see al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban expand their operations once again in northwest Pakistan, especially in the aftermath of bin Laden’s death, which militants have already cited as a cause for attacks.²⁷²

Case studies of Western militants who trained in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region between 2008 and 2010

Case Study 6: Zazi and the New York plotters

In August 2008, three young men arrived in Pakistan from the United States. They were allegedly intent on fighting American troops in Afghanistan. While they do not appear to have met Bryant Neal Vinas himself, they established contact with several of the same al Qaeda commanders Vinas met with in the tribal areas of Pakistan, including Saleh al Somali.²⁷³ Their ringleader was Najibullah Zazi, a New York street vendor who had gone to high school in Queens, New York, just a few blocks from where Vinas had lived when he was very young.

In September 2009 U.S. thwarted Zazi’s plot to blow up several subway lines in New York City, the most serious attempted al Qaeda plot on U.S. soil since 9/11.

According to court documents, in late August 2009, Zazi and two close friends left the United States determined to fight jihad in Afghanistan, flying from Newark Liberty International Airport to Peshawar, agreeing on a cover story that Medunjanin was making the trip to get married. The friends – Adis Medunjanin, an American of Bosnian descent and Zarein Ahmedzay, an American of Afghan descent - had grown up with him in Queens, New York. Zazi’s group initially intended to fight on behalf of the Taliban fighting U.S. troops. Medunjanin later told investigators they wanted “to do something in response to

what was going on against Islam.” According to Medunjanin, the group did not initially want to join al Qaeda because they did not want to perform suicide missions but instead wanted to fight U.S. troops in Afghanistan with guns.²⁷⁴

After arriving in Peshawar, the New York trio stayed with Zazi’s uncle in the outskirts of the northwest Pakistani city, before setting off days later in a taxi bound for the Torkham border area of Pakistan. They were turned back when a Pakistani border guard noticed Medunjanin’s light-colored skin, according to his subsequent account to the FBI and an account contained in Ahmedzay’s plea deal. Upon their return to Peshawar, Zazi enlisted his cousin to help find another way to get into Afghanistan, according to Medunjanin. Zazi’s cousin told them he knew some people and would help get the three of them into a training camp.²⁷⁵

In Peshawar the New York trio started visiting mosques near Zazi’s uncle’s house asking the local people if they could assist them getting into a training camp in Waziristan to fight Jihad, according to Medunjanin. It was a quest that had obvious parallels with Bryant Neal Vinas’s earlier attempts to organize similar training, illustrating the ad hoc steps taken by would-be Jihadists travelling to Pakistan from the West.²⁷⁶

Eventually the New York trio met an individual at a mosque who called up a contact to arrange for them to be picked up according to Medunjanin. It was by this roundabout way that they first became connected with Bin Laden’s terrorist organization. The man who picked them up was an al Qaeda facilitator by the name of “Ahmad” who was to play a key role in their future plot against New York, and a larger al Qaeda conspiracy to attack Manchester and Scandinavia.²⁷⁷

The Zazi case revealed the continued importance of Peshawar as gateway to al Qaeda. While the city no longer has the network of guesthouses that were used to process

arriving recruits, a more informal facilitation network appears to exist for volunteers looking to receive jihadist training. It was in Peshawar in early 2008 that American al Qaeda recruit Bryant Neal Vinas finally found a contact that connected him to al Qaeda in the tribal areas of Pakistan.²⁷⁸ After being picked up by Ahmad, the al Qaeda facilitator, the New York trio set off on a two day drive to Miram Shah in North Waziristan in Ahmad’s 4-door Toyota, driving through the mountains in order to use roads with less checkpoints to minimize the chance Pakistani military would notice Medunjanin’s light skin and stop them, according to Medunjanin’s subsequent interview with the FBI.²⁷⁹

In Miram Shah, the New Yorkers were told by their handlers to go to a newspaper shop in the town. After waiting for more than three hours, a small caravan of vehicles consisting of three or four sedans and pickup trucks arrived. Two men exited the vehicles and addressed the New Yorkers in English introducing themselves as Abdul Hafeez and Ibrahim.²⁸⁰ According to Ahmedzay they did not reveal their true identities. In reality they were senior al Qaeda operatives Saleh al-Somali and Rashid Rauf.²⁸¹ Rauf later died in a drone strike in the early stages of planning in November 2008.²⁸² Al-Somali was later killed in a drone strike in North Waziristan in December 2009.²⁸³

The New York trio told Rauf and al Somali that they wanted to fight in Afghanistan, but the al Qaeda duo told them they would be more useful to their terrorist organization if they returned to New York and launched suicide bombings there, according to Ahmedzay’s account.²⁸⁴ Medunjanin denies the group was ever directed to launch a plot in the United States.²⁸⁵

The alleged plot was subsequently organized by Rauf, al-Somali and a third member of al Qaeda’s external operations outfit - Adnan el Shukrijumah, 35, an American of Saudi origin. Shukrijumah had travelled to Afghanistan just before 9/11 and at first worked as a lowly dish washer

for the terrorist group, and appears, like Rauf, to have quickly risen up the ranks to become an important planner.²⁸⁶ The American's elevation reflected al Qaeda's thinning bench as drone strikes continued to take a toll, but also its ability to quickly promote useful operatives familiar with the West.

Rauf and al Somali organized for the New York trio to receive two weeks of religious and paramilitary training in a small encampment in North Waziristan consisting of a few houses.²⁸⁷

U.S. authorities allege that their principal instructor – a man of east African descent known to them as Yousef – was also from North America. They allege that Yousef's real name was Ferid Imam, a Canadian militant who had travelled to Pakistan in 2007. Imam is believed still at large in the region, and was identified as a weapons instructor by Zazi, Medunjanin, and Ahmedzay, after their arrest. They did not appear to have known his true identity at the time.

In March 2011 terrorism charges against Imam were unsealed by U.S. and Canadian authorities. His involvement in the conspiracy, like that of Shukrijumah and Rauf, underlined the increasingly important role of Western operatives within al Qaeda.²⁸⁸

In his clear American-accented English, Yousef provided instructions about the rewards of fighting and dying for Jihad, and also instructed the New York trio in how to use various weapons such as AK-47s, machine guns, and rocket propelled grenade launchers, Medunjanin later told the FBI. Most days involved early starts and time spent in the classroom where the recruits were able to handle the AK-47s. The training culminated with the group being taken up to the mountains on one day to fire the weapons, including AK-47s and rocket propelled grenades, Medunjanin remembered.²⁸⁹

The Americans slept in the house of Imam, the Canadian trainer, who developed a friendly banter with them. While in the house they were shown videos of the 9/11 attacks, the

Madrid bombings, and the London attacks, in what may have been a psychological ploy by al Qaeda to persuade them to sign up for an operation against the United States.

During their training, al Qaeda leaders continued to encourage them to return to the United States and conduct suicide operations, Ahmedzay later told U.S. authorities. According to Medunjanin, Somali thought him a “diamond” because of his ability to speak English and his light skin tone.

Medunjanin described a hierarchy in the encampment in which Saleh al Somali was the amir. He described the facility as less of a training camp and more a training area consisting of a few houses, similar to the small shacks described by the Belgian-French group that al Qaeda had shifted its training to because of the drones.²⁹⁰

Like for the Belgian-French group, the threat of drones was ever present.

Like for the Belgian-French group, the threat of drones was ever present. In the daytime the New York trio did not spend too much time outdoors. “There was the fear of a missile attack coming from the unmanned drones that were overhead. These drones could be heard overhead and sometimes seen flying in the skies overhead,” remembered Medunjanin.²⁹¹

According to Ahmedzay, he and his two New York friends eventually agreed to participate in an attack against the United States, and had further conversations with al Qaeda about the timing of the attacks and possible target locations in Manhattan. Al Qaeda leadership emphasized the need to hit well-known structures and maximize the number of casualties, according to Ahmedzay's subsequent guilty plea.²⁹²

After the initial training, the three Americans left Waziristan and appear to have returned to Peshawar. The plan was for Ahmedzay and Zazi to return to Waziristan a month later to receive explosives training from al Qaeda. Ahmedzay later changed his mind about attending the training, and Zazi resolved to go by himself. On September 25, 2008 Medunjanin boarded a flight to the United States back to Peshawar, leaving his other two friends behind in Pakistan, because, U.S. authorities maintain, his visa to Pakistan had expired.²⁹³

In November 2008 Zazi was again transported from Peshawar by the al Qaeda facilitator Ahmad to Waziristan so that he could obtain explosives training from al Qaeda.²⁹⁴ He was taught how to construct bombs out of concentrated hydrogen peroxide and TATP - for an attack on New York, the same easily-purchasable components used in several previous al Qaeda plots. He also further discussed target locations in New York, including subway trains in New York City.²⁹⁵

According to U.S. prosecutors, Zazi scanned handwritten instructions on how to make TATP detonators and e-mailed them to himself after receiving the training. Ahmedzay also later reviewed the notes, according to his guilty plea.²⁹⁶ In January 2009 Zazi and Ahmedzay boarded flights in Peshawar back to the United States and started to put their plans into effect.²⁹⁷

What Zazi did not know was that his plot was one of a trio of plots against Western countries that Somali, Rauf, and Shukrijumah had set into motion in Pakistan the previous November.

Zazi's plot - like several of the al Qaeda plots in the U.K. - appears to have been largely-self financed. Court documents show that Zazi opened numerous credit cards

and amassed a debt of over \$50,000 before filing for bankruptcy in March 2009 after returning to the United States.²⁹⁸

What Zazi did not know was that his plot was one of a trio of plots against Western countries that Somali, Rauf, and Shukrijumah had set into motion in Pakistan the previous November.²⁹⁹

Case Study 7: The Manchester plotters

The second plot, allegedly involving a group of nine Pakistani nationals led by Abid Naseer, 24, a Pakistani militant from Peshawar dispatched to northwest England, targeted the U.K.

Naseer first entered the U.K. in September 2006 under a 3 year student visa to study at John Moores University in Liverpool, but dropped out after a week and enrolled in a the Manchester College of Professional Studies, a bogus higher education institution, presumably to maintain his visa status. Three friends of Naseer in Peshawar who the security services believe were subsequently involved in the plot arrived in the U.K. at the same time as him, enrolled at John Moores University, dropped out, and then enrolled at the same dubious institution. A fourth friend - Tariq ur Rehman, 39, originally from Miram Shah in North Waziristan - arrived in the UK in September 2007 and took the same steps as the others.³⁰⁰ By the end of 2007 most of the Pakistani nationals subsequently implicated in the plot had arrived in the U.K.

It is not clear how many of Naseer's cell were involved in terrorist plotting before first entering the U.K., and it is possible that some - or indeed all of the others - were recruited into the alleged conspiracy after they got there. However, British investigators suspect that Naseer himself was already involved in terrorist plotting when he first entered the U.K. in 2006.³⁰¹

Once in the U.K. the Pakistani nationals found accommodation in and around Liverpool and Manchester and enrolled or applied to university courses in the U.K., some of them apparently genuinely pursuing their studies. To help fund their stay all but one took part time jobs as security guards.³⁰² Naseer made a trip to Pakistan in 2007 and a second trip in late September 2008. While in Pakistan on the second trip he kept in touch with Rehman, the North Waziristan-born militant, back in the U.K.³⁰³ In November Rehman joined him in Peshawar.³⁰⁴

Security services believe that their group was by then actively plotting an attack in the U.K. Before Rehman left for Pakistan he had taken a series of surveillance pictures of the Arndale shopping center in Manchester, subsequently one of the alleged targets of the plot. The pictures, which were later recovered from a thumb drive, included trees in bloom and people in shirtsleeves, suggesting initial planning may have been underway before Naseer left for Pakistan in late September 2008.³⁰⁵

While in Peshawar in November, Naseer appears to have met with Ahmad, the al Qaeda point person and terrorist chauffeur in the Zazi plot.³⁰⁶ Ahmad likely conveyed to Naseer that al Qaeda's external operations section had approved targeting the Manchester shopping center.

Ahmad's dealings with Naseer and Zazi in the city illustrated al Qaeda's leaders continuing ability to communicate with and recruit operatives in Pakistan outside their safe haven in North Waziristan. U.S. authorities allege that Naseer, like Zazi, received training from al Qaeda instructors.³⁰⁷ If these allegations are true, it is a reasonable assumption that Naseer received this bombmaking instruction on his second and last trip to Pakistan in the fall of 2008 and that Ahmad, his al Qaeda contact in Peshawar, had some role in arranging it.

Naseer returned to the U.K. on November 20, 2008 and allegedly started to put the plan into operation. Over the following months he allegedly maintained email contact

with Ahmad via email accounts and a code he and Ahmad had agreed on in Pakistan. Ahmad acted as a middleman requesting updates on progress, passing them on to al Somali in North Waziristan, and sending back messages offering advice, including in response to questions about the required strength of explosive chemicals.³⁰⁸ Rauf had been killed before these communications began.

British security services believed one of those messages indicated that the group was planning the attack between April 15 and April 20, 2009.³⁰⁹ Police swooped in on April 8, arresting eleven Pakistanis and one British citizen in raids across northwest England. One of the Pakistani nationals was quickly released and one was subsequently cleared of involvement. Naseer faces extradition and trial in the United States. The others returned to Pakistan before deportation proceedings were completed.³¹⁰

Case Study 8: The Norway plotters

The third plot centered on Norway. In the winter of 2008 to 2009 al Qaeda's external operations chief al Somali, assisted by Shukrijumah, allegedly directed a Norwegian militant Mikael Davud to start preparing an attack in Scandinavia, possibly against the Chinese Embassy in Norway or the Jyllands Posten newspaper in Denmark at the center of the cartoons controversy.³¹¹ The opportunity was presented after Davud, a Norwegian citizen of Uighur descent, trained in an al Qaeda camp in Waziristan in late 2008 and early 2009.³¹² Two other Norwegian residents, who did not travel to Pakistan, were allegedly recruited into the plot in the summer of 2009 after Davud returned from Pakistan, and were arrested, along with Davud, in July 2010.³¹³

Davud, who attended a madrasa in Karachi in the late 1990s, reportedly first made contact with al Qaeda in 2001 and 2002.³¹⁴ That connection may have been made through a Chinese jihadist group, affiliated with al Qaeda. Davud had longstanding ties to the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), a FATA based jihadist group seeking independence for

China's Xinjiang province. Underlining the close ties between al Qaeda and the TIP, in April 2009 the U.S. Treasury Department designated a Uighur militant named Abdul Haq as leader of TIP and a member since 2005 of the shura council of al Qaeda. It is not clear whether the TIP had a role in the plot.³¹⁵

Before leaving for Pakistan in 2008, Davud was in close touch with leaders of the TIP; investigators ascertained that in September 2008 one of the group's commanders tried to call Davud's Norwegian mobile phone number.³¹⁶ That fall according to Norwegian authorities, Davud travelled to Turkey with his wife where he met an al Qaeda facilitator before travelling on to al Qaeda's safe haven in Waziristan. At some point along the way - like Zazi's group and Naseer, the Manchester plotter - he met with Ahmad, the al Qaeda coordinator.

During his time in Pakistan, Davud appears to have connected with a British national suspected of a link to the 2004 plot against targets in London broken up by Operation Crevice.³¹⁷

In May 2009, shortly before returning to Norway, Davud sent an email to Ahmad in Pakistan. After several unanswered messages, Davud began to communicate by email with Ahmad, in which he promised to pay off an unspecified "debt" and allegedly asked for bombmaking guidance using coded language.³¹⁸

The New York, Manchester, and Norway plots had several elements in common. Although officials do not believe they met or trained together, the bombmaking components each group obtained were remarkably similar, suggesting they had all been schooled to build identical devices based on a TATP detonator and a hydrogen peroxide main charge.³¹⁹ And in each case, plotters once they returned to their home countries communicated with their terrorist handlers in Pakistan through coded email messages with Ahmad, the al Qaeda point man. Indeed in late August Zazi initiated contact with Ahmad, who replied to him on September 6.

Over the next two days - just a week before the planned attack - Zazi sent messages in coded language previously agreed with Ahmad that the suicide operation was ready to proceed, and to seek the precise instructions for constructing one of the explosives. He had already by this stage constructed a sufficient quantity of detonator explosive to assemble multiple bombs for the attack.³²⁰

These communications illustrated the "continuing service" of al Qaeda's bomb-making instructors in Pakistan to recruits who had passed through their camps. Long distance bomb-making assistance had also been a feature of the 2004 U.K. fertilizer plot, the July 7, 2005 London bombings, and the 2006 airline plot.

Case Study 9: Times Square Bomber Faisal Shahzad

The May 1, 2010 attempted car bomb attack on New York City's Time Square by Faisal Shahzad, 30, a decade-long U.S. resident of Pakistani descent who had recently acquired citizenship, powerfully illustrated the continuing dangers posed by the terrorist safe haven in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Shahzad had three devices in his car - a fertilizer-based bomb, gas cylinders, and petrol tanks - but all three failed.³²¹ Authorities later stated the attack could have been "devastating."³²² Shahzad subsequently confessed to having received five days of bomb training from the Pakistani Taliban during a stay in their encampments in Waziristan between December 9 and January 25, 2010.

The plot, he later testified, was hatched there in collaboration with the Pakistani Taliban who asked him to launch an attack against the United States and helped fund the plot.³²³ The plot appears to have been personally authorized by Hakimullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban, underlining the increasing commitment of the group to participating in Bin Laden's Global Jihad. In

July 2010 video footage emerged of Shahzad shaking hands and hugging Mehsud in Pakistan.

The footage was part of a forty minute video entitled “A brave effort by Faisal Shahzad to attack United States in its own Land,” produced by Umar Media, the video production unit of the Pakistani Taliban, illustrating the terrorist group’s determination to gain maximum propaganda advantage from the attack.³²⁴ Part of the motivation for the Pakistani Taliban appears to have been revenge for the U.S. drone strikes that killed Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud in August 2009 and nearly killed Hakimullah Mehsud in January 2010.³²⁵

Shahzad by all accounts was an unlikely candidate for jihad. The son of a wealthy and secular-minded Pakistani air force officer, he moved to the United States in 1999 to study, landed a \$50,000 a year administrative position for a cosmetics company in Connecticut, and in 2004 married a Pakistani-American woman with whom he had two children.³²⁶

But Shahzad became radicalized while working in Connecticut in the years after 9/11, angered by U.S. military interventions in the Muslim world and influenced by the online sermons of prominent radical English speaking clerics such as Anwar al Awlaki.³²⁷

However, it was in Pakistan where he made frequent trips that Shahzad developed the connections that would later allow him to join up with the Pakistani Taliban. During time spent in Islamabad, Shahzad reportedly reconnected with Shahid Hussain, a friend from business school in Connecticut who had moved back to Pakistan, and the two men started attending the Red Mosque in the city, a mosque that by 2007 had become a hotbed of Taliban extremism.³²⁸ A heavy handed and bloody operation by the Pakistani military to clear the mosque of militants in July 2007 appears to have been a “triggering moment” for Shahzad.

In 2008, Shahzad, Hussain, and a third militant they befriended in Islamabad – Muhammad Shouaib Mughal, an owner of a computer store in Islamabad – attempted to join the ranks of the Taliban through a relative of a Pakistani Taliban leader they had met at the mosque. Shahzad was rejected because his father’s military background made the Pakistani Taliban suspect he could be a spy. Shahzad subsequently asked his father permission to join the ranks of the mujahideen in Afghanistan, but his father refused.³²⁹

Shahzad returned to the United States, but continued to be determined to join the Taliban. Like Bryant Neal Vinas before him, he was not put off by initial setbacks. In June 2009 Shahzad travelled again to Pakistan, determined, he later stated, to leave the United States “for good.” At this point returning to the United States to launch a terrorist attack did not seem to be on his mind. Indeed when he got to JFK airport he phoned his wife to ask her if she would follow him to Pakistan. She did not, instead moving to Saudi Arabia.³³⁰

After arriving in Pakistan, Shahzad stayed with his parents in Peshawar for six months. “I was trying to figure out a way to join the Taliban,” he later stated in court.³³¹ During this time Shahzad, a native Pashtun, became deeply angered by U.S. drone strikes in the neighboring tribal areas, something he subsequently claimed formed part of his motivation for attacking the United States.³³²

Shahzad finally got the chance to join up with the Pakistani Taliban after reaching out to his acquaintance Mughal, the computer store owner, who had received training from the group and was now in a position to vouch for him and Hussain.³³³

In December, Shahzad, Hussain, and a third militant met in Mughal’s home in Rawalpindi, and then drove to the tribal areas where Mughal left them with an instructor and two aides affiliated with the Pakistani Taliban.³³⁴ Hussain

and Mughal were arrested in Pakistan after the failed attack on Times Square.³³⁵

Like most other recruits to militant groups in the tribal areas before him, Shahzad appears not to have joined the Pakistani Taliban deliberately to plot an attack in the United States. This appeared to be yet another case of opportunism by a terrorist group there. According to people familiar with the case it was only after Pakistani Taliban leaders realized that Shahzad had an American passport that they asked him to return to the United States to carry out an attack and discussed targets with him.³³⁶

During five weeks starting in mid December 2009 the trio of new recruits received boot camp style training followed by explosives training.³³⁷ Shahzad appears to have been instructed in how to make a range of devices, including the ones he eventually constructed.³³⁸

In Waziristan Shahzad was also given an initial \$5,000 in cash by the Pakistani Taliban.

In Waziristan he was also given an initial \$5,000 in cash by the Pakistani Taliban.³³⁹ Court documents stated that “thereafter, Shahzad returned to the United States and, over the course of three months in early 2010, he purchased all of the components necessary for his bomb, including fertilizer, propane and gasoline, and he received approximately \$12,000 in cash from the TTP to help fund the attack.”³⁴⁰ Shahzad stated he also had \$4,500 of his own savings from his work in the United States available to finance the attack, but had requested the extra money after returning to the United States, bringing his combined funds for the operation to \$21,500.³⁴¹ The funds were allegedly forwarded to him by his acquaintance Muhammad Shouaib Mughal, the Pakistani computer-store owner linked to the Pakistani Taliban, through Pakistani money handlers in the United States using the hawala

system, demonstrating terrorist groups continued ability to circumvent increased international monitoring of bank transfers.³⁴²

Unlike several previous al Qaeda plots emanating from Pakistan which were mostly self-financed, the Times Square plot was mostly funded by the Pakistani Taliban, suggesting the group may have developed deeper pockets than bin Laden’s terrorist organization.

Like in several previous al Qaeda plots, Shahzad’s bombmaking instruction continued after he left Pakistan. According to U.S. authorities, after his return to the United States, Shahzad maintained regular contact with members of the Pakistani Taliban over the internet.³⁴³ The messages were sent to Mughal who acted as a point person in the plot according to people familiar with the case.³⁴⁴ “Using software programs that were installed on his laptop computer while he was in Pakistan, Shahzad and the TTP were able to exchange information about the bomb he was building, the vehicle he had purchased, and other topics,” court documents stated, revealing a worrying ability, following a string of plots thwarted by electronic intercepts, for terrorist groups in Pakistan to communicate with operatives in the West without being detected.³⁴⁵

Some counterterrorism specialists had previously predicted that al Qaeda could go “off the grid” in mounting future operations, because of the risk of electronic intercepts, but Shahzad’s testimony indicates that the terrorist organization has instead found new ways to communicate with operatives in the West from its safe havens overseas without being tracked, a deeply concerning development.³⁴⁶ Shahzad was helped by his ability to secretly communicate with the Pakistani Taliban. “As May 1 approached, Shahzad, applying the training he had received from the TTP, single-handedly assembled the bomb at his residence in Connecticut,” court documents stated.³⁴⁷ Presumably the extra tuition over the internet was made necessary by the fact that Shahzad only received five days of bombmaking instruction in Pakistan.

After the attack failed, Shahzad advised one of his TTP associates in Pakistan via the internet of what he had done, according to U.S. authorities, underlining the close command and control the group exerted over the operation.³⁴⁸

Case Study 10: The 2010 Hamburg Cell -- trained in FATA 2009-2010

In March 2009, three months before Shahzad left the United States, an eleven-strong group – nine men and the wives of two of their number - set off from the northern German port city of Hamburg with the hope of linking up with jihadists in the tribal areas of Pakistan so that they could join the fighting against U.S. troops in Afghanistan.³⁴⁹ The group included Ahmed Sidiqi, 37, a German citizen of Afghan descent, who was arrested in Kabul, Afghanistan in July 2010 and taken to Bagram air force base for questioning. His interrogation shed light on his group's involvement in al Qaeda plotting against Europe and helped trigger in October 2010 an unprecedented U.S. travel advisory for the Continent.³⁵⁰

All the men in Sidiqi's travel group belonged to the Taiba mosque in Hamburg, the same mosque – then known as Al Quds - frequented in the 1990s by lead 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta, Ramzi Binalshibh and two other members of the Hamburg cell that took active roles in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.³⁵¹ Sidiqi, who worked as a cleaner at Hamburg International airport, had himself been part of Atta's circle in the late 1990s and had been under observation by German security services in the years after 9/11.³⁵²

After 9/11 the mosque became a magnet for al Qaeda sympathizers across Europe. "Everybody wanted to come and pray where Mohammed Atta prayed," said a German intelligence official.³⁵³ Following Sidiqi's arrest, German authorities shut down the mosque.³⁵⁴

"Everybody wanted to come and pray where Mohammed Atta prayed," said a German intelligence official.

It was a close associate of Atta – Naamen Meziche, 40, a French citizen of Algerian descent - that recruited Sidiqi's travel group from the Taiba mosque, according to German intelligence officials.³⁵⁵ Meziche had committed much of his adult life to al Qaeda's cause according to German intelligence officials. In the years after 9/11 they suspected he helped recruit Europeans to join Abu Musab al Zarqawi's terrorist organization in Iraq.³⁵⁶

Sidiqi's group coalesced as a distinct group within the mosque in late 2008 according to German intelligence officials - just a few months before they set off for Pakistan - allowing German authorities little time to learn of their intentions. According to German intelligence officials a junior member of the group – Rami Makanesi, 25, a German of Syrian descent - provided the group with additional links to militants in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Makanesi had a personal connection to two brothers in Bonn – Mounir and Yassin Chouka - who had recently travelled to Pakistan to join up with the IMU, and have since taken on propaganda roles for the group by appearing in a series of German language IMU videos.³⁵⁷

German intelligence officials believe it was by exploiting their contacts with the Chouka brothers that the Hamburg travel group joined up with the IMU when they reached the tribal areas of Pakistan.³⁵⁸

German intelligence officials say that the travel logistics to Pakistan were managed by the eldest member of the group - Asadullah Muslih, 52, a German citizen of Afghan descent, who was Meziche's deputy within the group.³⁵⁹ Muslih, who made several trips to Pakistan in the preceding years, boarded a plane to Pakistan ahead of the others in February 2010.³⁶⁰

Just prior to their departure the other members of the group spoke about an upcoming trip to Spain in their conversations. The calls were a ruse. The Hamburg militants realized they were being monitored and wanted to disguise their departure, according to German intelligence officials. Sidiqi told his family he planned to travel to start a new life in Afghanistan but did not reveal any intention to join militant groups fighting there.³⁶¹

In order to maximize their chances of getting to Pakistan the group decided to split into small groups and travel there by different routes, some flying from different airports on flights connecting through the Gulf and others transiting through Iran.³⁶² Makanesi subsequently described how he and Meziche were transported by people smugglers from Zahedan in eastern Iran to Pakistan, a path well-trodden by previous European Jihadist volunteers. “It was very very simple,” Makanesi recalled.³⁶³

For most of the group the plan worked. But three of the Hamburg militants were prevented from reaching the tribal areas of Pakistan. One member of the group did not even manage to leave Germany. Mohammad Mohammadi, 25, a German of Iranian descent, was arrested as he boarded a flight at Frankfurt airport. Two others were arrested on their arrival in Karachi, Pakistan.³⁶⁴

After they got to Pakistan, Meziche, Makanesi, Sidiqi, and Shahab Dashti, 27, a Hamburg resident of Iranian descent, joined up with the IMU in their encampments in North Waziristan, where they joined forces with several other Germans recruited by the group, including the Chouka brothers from Bonn.³⁶⁵ Two of the Hamburg group – Sidiqi and Dashti – brought their wives with them, increasingly a trend for German militants travelling to the area.³⁶⁶

Like previous waves of Western arrivals, the Hamburg group was not immediately trusted. According to Makanesi, Uzbek militants took away his money and possessions,

interrogated him, and confined him indoors when he first arrived.³⁶⁷

Once welcomed into jihadist ranks the Germans interacted with Islamist militants from across the world. The Iranian Hamburg militant Dashti stated in an October 2009 IMU propaganda video “[there] is this powerful, indescribable, beautiful and loving brotherhood shared among the mujahideen, brothers from the most diverse countries – from Russia, Morocco, Tunisia, China, Turkey, from Europe, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Iran – all together in one dugout.”³⁶⁸

Several of the Hamburg group were given training by the IMU in the area around Mir Ali in North Waziristan, according to German intelligence officials, the same area in which the German “Sauerland” plotters who targeted Ramstein Airforce base were trained by the IJU in 2006.³⁶⁹ Makanesi described spending time in an encampment in South Waziristan near the border with North Waziristan.

After spending time in the IMU encampments, several members of the Hamburg group moved to Mir Ali itself where they lived in adjoining houses, according to Sidiqi’s subsequent account, illustrating that the town itself, as well as the surrounding countryside, was still in 2010 a safe haven for Western militants.³⁷⁰

Whilst spending time with IMU fighters in North Waziristan, Meziche exploited his longstanding connections to figures within al Qaeda to connect the Hamburg group with bin Laden’s terrorist organization according to German intelligence officials.³⁷¹ One of Meziche’s contacts in militant circles in the tribal areas was Said Bahaji, a friend of Meziche’s from Hamburg.³⁷² Bahaji, a German citizen of Moroccan origin and a close associate of Mohammed Atta, left Germany for Karachi ten days before the September 11 attacks, and is suspected of subsequently developing close connections to al Qaeda in the tribal areas of Pakistan.³⁷³ In around May or June 2010 there was a reunion in Mir Ali between Meziche, Sidiqi and

Bahaji, according to Sidiqi's subsequent account. Dashti, the Hamburg-Iranian recruit, was there too.³⁷⁴

The Hamburg recruits appear to have progressively deepened their ties al Qaeda, and increasingly interacted with senior operatives in the terrorist group. Makenesi later admitted to having trained in an al Qaeda training camp in the tribal areas and having participated in armed operations by Jihadists in the area.³⁷⁵

The Hamburg recruits appear to have progressively deepened their ties al Qaeda, and increasingly interacted with senior operatives in the terrorist group.

Sidiqi told American interrogators that he met with Ilyas Kashmiri, al Qaeda's recently appointed military chief, and the head of the 313 Brigade, a paramilitary outfit created by the terrorist group.³⁷⁶ What Sidiqi told U.S. interrogators about his meeting with Kashmiri alarmed Western security officials. Kashmiri, he claimed, told him that he had already sent teams to Germany and Britain to carry out Mumbai-style gun attacks.³⁷⁷ Sidiqi also described a secretive meeting in Mir Ali in the early summer of 2010 between members of the Hamburg group and Younis al Mauretani, a senior al Qaeda figure in which additional attack plans against Europe were discussed directly involving the Hamburg group. Little is known about Mauretani, but he is thought to be from North Africa and involved in al Qaeda's external operations.³⁷⁸

Before his meeting with the al Qaeda operative, Sidiqi stated he was forced to take a battery out of his cell phone and had to pass through several checkpoints.³⁷⁹ He claimed that Naamen Meziche and Shahab Dashti also attended the meeting, and that all three were recruited into plans to attack European cities. Mauretani planned to travel with them back to Europe to plan the attack, according to Sidiqi.

Sidiqi described Dashti as a foot soldier in the plot and Meziche as having a planning role. He stated that two other members of the Hamburg group – Makenesi, the militant with the connections to the IMU and Muslih, the travel coordinator – were also brought into the conspiracy.³⁸⁰

Mauretani told the Germans that he had sent a request to bin Laden to establish a cell. Mauretani reportedly reached out to bin Laden through Atiyah abd al Rahman, a senior al Qaeda ideologue.³⁸¹ Files subsequently discovered in bin Laden's Abbottabad compound reportedly tied bin Laden to the plot against Europe.³⁸² After his death it emerged al Qaeda's leader had been communicating with al Qaeda operatives through thumb drives containing emails provided to a courier.³⁸³

Sidiqi did not reveal what sort of attacks the Hamburg group was planning, nor their timing, nor how a group on the radar screen of Western security agencies planned to slip back into Europe.³⁸⁴ German intelligence officials believe they were in the early stages of planning, making it possible they were part of a second phase of attacks planned by al Qaeda against Europe.³⁸⁵ Although their exact role in the wider al Qaeda plot against Europe may not yet have been determined, the live-fire training exercises the Hamburg group received from the IMU would have provided them with the sorts of skills needed to participate in a Mumbai-style gun attacks against European cities.

Sidiqi stated that Mauretani provided the Hamburg group with instructions on how to communicate secretly on the internet, showing them how to use an encrypted email communication site called "Mujahideen Secrets," in yet another indication that al Qaeda has continued to use electronic communications to plot attacks.

Sidiqi's revelations about the attack plans discussed with Kashmiri and Mauretani, combined with other intelligence, led the U.S. State Department to issue an unprecedented travel advisory for Americans in Europe in October. The information also contributed to several European countries

warning of the risk of a Mumbai-style attack, including the raising by Germany of its threat level in November 2010 because of additional intelligence suggesting a threat of gun attack on the Reichstag in Berlin.³⁸⁶ German intelligence believes al Qaeda had initially planned to launch a first wave of attacks against Europe around November 2010.³⁸⁷

Two of the Hamburg group was arrested in the Summer of 2010 after they tried to find a way to get back to Germany. In June Makanesi was arrested by Pakistani security forces in Bannu on his way of the tribal areas, possibly after a tip-off by German security services. Makanesi had called up the German embassy in Islamabad to schedule an appointment so that he could return to Germany.³⁸⁸ In July Sidiqi was arrested in Kabul shortly after scheduling an appointment at the German embassy to get a new passport to return to Germany, according to his family.³⁸⁹ Family members of both men have claimed that the men were trying to get back to Germany not to plot attacks but because they were fed up with conditions in the tribal areas.³⁹⁰

The Hamburg group do appear to have found some of their time in the tribal areas of Pakistan tough-going, just like members of the Belgian-French group in 2008.

Whatever their motivation for returning to Europe, the Hamburg group do appear to have found some of their time in the tribal areas of Pakistan tough-going, just like members of the Belgian-French group in 2008.

Like that group, the Hamburg group were asked to pay their handlers fees for expenses incurred during in Jihadist encampments. The Hamburg group were asked to pay for food and accommodation by the IMU and made an increasing number of requests to relatives and friends in Germany for funds.³⁹¹

In telephone calls and emails back home members of the Hamburg group complained about the cold conditions in North Waziristan and the lack of creature comforts, sounding progressively less enthusiastic about waging jihad. Makanesi, who was overweight, complained about having to march long distances carrying heavy weapons.³⁹² Additionally, the Hamburg group found it difficult to communicate with the Uzbek group because they could not speak their language. German intelligence officials say that ill health led Sidiqi's brother Sulaiman to return to Germany shortly after arriving in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. German authorities do not suspect he was involved in al Qaeda plotting or received training.

Drones also represented a real and in the end deadly threat to the group. Meziche and Dashti were killed in an October drone strike in Mir Ali shortly after the existence of the plot against Europe was publicly revealed, which also killed three other German militants, according to European and Pakistani intelligence officials.³⁹³ Mounir and Yassin Chouka, the IMU brothers from Bonn, reportedly narrowly missed being killed in the attack.³⁹⁴ The strike appears to have been launched in order to disrupt al Qaeda plans to attack Europe.³⁹⁵

Sidiqi remains in U.S. custody. Makanesi was deported to Germany in August 2010 where he was taken into custody and charged with terrorist offences. In May 2011 he pleaded guilty to agreeing to collect funds in Europe for al Qaeda and making himself available for other unspecified missions. According to his account al Qaeda released him from further participation in combat operations in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region after he agreed to raise around 20,000 Euros (\$29,000) every six months for the organization and to act as a contact for the terrorist group in Germany.³⁹⁶

Rami Makanesi's Travels Through Waziristan

Rami Makanesi, one of the members of the Hamburg Jihadist group, provided a detailed account of his time in the tribal areas of Pakistan to German police services after being deported to Germany. The 180-page transcript of his September 2010 interrogation provides the most recent eyewitness account of al Qaeda's safe haven in the FATA, shedding new light on the terrorist group's operations there.³⁹⁷

Makanesi described arriving in Mir Ali in North Waziristan in the Spring of 2009 with Hamburg militant Naamen Meziche, and connecting with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Meziche, after linking up with the Uzbeks, soon set off to look for an Arab group to train with.³⁹⁸

After six weeks with the IMU, Makanesi decided to leave their encampments and set out to find Meziche. When he reached the nearest Taliban outpost he asked to be taken to Arabic speakers, and was then taken to a residence in which several militants, including South Africans, were staying. Soon after he was visited by al Qaeda operatives from what he described as the group's intelligence branch, who asked him detailed information about his family and friends in Germany.³⁹⁹

Around June Arabs belonging to what Makanesi described as an al Qaeda subgroup came to pick Makanesi up and transported him to a settlement of mud huts two to three hours away in the Waziristan mountains. On his arrival he was again grilled by al Qaeda operatives. Fearing infiltration by a U.S. or Pakistani agent, the al Qaeda subgroup did not want to take any chances when Makanesi first connected with them. According to Makanesi, fighters were not allowed to communicate with family back home and had to remain for two years before formally joining al Qaeda.⁴⁰⁰

In the mountains Makanesi was given two weeks of weapons instruction inside a residence. The training was

quite rushed and consisted of classroom sessions on weapons such as Kalashnikovs and sniper rifles. He was told he would not yet receive bomb-making training. He recalled that the threat of drones meant he was not given shooting practice outdoors. And he claimed that his lack of funds meant he was unable to procure a weapon, illustrating the terrorist organization's continued cash shortages.⁴⁰¹

Makanesi stated there were perhaps 30-40 subgroups of al Qaeda in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, suggesting the terrorist network has continued to decentralize its operations in the face of drone strikes. Makanesi described how al Qaeda was now a "title" and "heading" to describe a constellation of Jihadist groups in the area, including militants from the Arab world, Turkestan, Tajikistan, and "even the Taliban."

During his time with the al-Qaeda subgroup, Makanesi came across Lebanese militants, Algerians, Kuwaitis, Turks, Tajiks, and French militants of North African descent. Makanesi described how these foreign fighters lived in small mud huts with locals and how the locals brought them food and cooked for them, and warned them of drones flying overhead. By his account, Al Qaeda and local Taliban fighters cooperated closely.⁴⁰²

His comrade Meziche had joined another al-Qaeda subgroup in the mountains nearby, where around June 2009 he received training on weapons and mortars, and conducted weapons firing exercises on a motorbike. As had become the norm for al Qaeda in the tribal areas, this instruction took place in and around a village rather than in a dedicated training camp. In mid August 2009 Makanesi was reunited for a time with Meziche and Ahmad Sidiqi in the mountains near his encampment.⁴⁰³

Makanesi described drone attacks as a constant danger to militants living in North Waziristan, significantly constraining their freedom of movement. By his account militants in the tribal areas had become very paranoid of

spies working for the United States. “Agents walk around with chips ... and stick them to cars or throw them in houses and then they are hit with drones,” he stated. Makanesi claimed he personally knew 20-25 individuals killed by drones and that many civilians were killed by the strikes. Foreign militants were prohibited from leaving their residence unless they were given permission and were in the presence of a Pashtun guide out of concern they would be targeted for drone attacks by agents working for the United States. In July 2009 Makanesi recalled that there were so many drone attacks that his al-Qaeda handlers constantly changed his location. “It was so chaotic,” he recalled.⁴⁰⁴

Around October 2009, at the onset of Pakistani military operations in South Waziristan, Makanesi left the al Qaeda encampments in the Waziristan mountains and moved to Mir Ali, where he was again re-united with his Hamburg associate Ahmed Sidiqi. As he approached the town he came across a series of Pakistani Taliban checkpoints, illustrating the degree to which the area had become a safe haven for pro-al Qaeda militants. His Taliban interlocutors were able to immediately locate Sidiqi for him in Mir Ali.⁴⁰⁵

In Mir Ali, where he found lodgings for 5 Euro a month, Makanesi described how he was able to frequently communicate with his family back in Germany by visiting internet cafes and phone kiosks in the town’s bazaar, demonstrating the continued ability of FATA-based militants to communicate with individuals in Europe. He stated that during his time in Mir Ali he was sent funds totalling 1400 Euro by his wife in Germany for what he claimed were his living expenses. The money was transferred by Western Union to Peshawar and then sent through the hawala system to Mir Ali, illustrating the ease with which funds can be sent to the tribal areas from the West.⁴⁰⁶

According to Makanesi the largest contingent of foreign militants in Mir Ali were Turks, a group of at least 100-150. He stated there were also around 100 “Tatars” in the town

and around 5-10 Arabs. In April, when the Summer fighting season began in Afghanistan, the town virtually emptied of foreign fighters, he recalled.⁴⁰⁷

Makanesi stated that while living in Mir Ali he did not formally belong to any group. The FATA terrorist safe-haven of 2009-2010 described by Makanesi was chaotic and disorganized. To participate in Jihad, Western recruits could choose between a myriad of Jihadist subgroups, whose lines had become blurred. After he had separated from the IMU, Makanesi moved around the tribal areas mostly on his own. He and his Hamburg associates had to rely time and time again on their own self-initiative. Their Jihadist trajectory seemed to depend more on chance encounters than any guiding hand from al Qaeda.

Around March 2010 Makanesi told his interrogators that he and Meziche made an unsuccessful attempt to travel from Mir Ali to join the fighting in Afghanistan. He stated that fighters setting off for Afghanistan were limited to groups of ten to limit potential losses from drone strikes.⁴⁰⁸ According to Makanesi’s account the Pakistani soldiers they met on their expedition treated his group in a friendly way. “We waved at the Pakistani soldiers... I could not believe that there was this friendship between the Taliban and the Pakistani army,” Makanesi recalled.⁴⁰⁹

When he returned to Mir Ali around April, he increasingly longed to return home to his family in Germany, according to his account. Eventually he found a way to do this and still be useful to the al Qaeda cause. Mohammed Junos, a North African operative in charge of an al Qaeda subgroup asked him to return home to fundraise for them, arranging secret ways for them to communicate by email. “Because the economy is quite good in Germany,” Makanesi stated, “they wanted to build a bridge for money.”⁴¹⁰

Conclusion

Despite growing concern over Yemen, the tribal areas of Pakistan remain al Qaeda’s number one safe haven and the

most threatening to the West as a whole. According to U.S. intelligence officials, al Qaeda's leadership in Pakistan is in communication more frequently than before with the group's affiliates in Yemen and Somalia, in an effort to coordinate operations.⁴¹¹

Despite growing concern over Yemen, the tribal areas of Pakistan remain al Qaeda's number one safe haven and the most threatening to the West as a whole.

While drone strikes and the recent Pakistani military operation in the tribal areas have knocked al Qaeda onto the defensive, the terrorist group has reasonably successfully adapted its operational structures to take account of the harsher security environment. The latest eyewitness accounts from Western recruits suggest that as recently as 2010 al Qaeda was able to offer recruits the sort of bombmaking training that would be useful for attacks in the West. And Western militants have continued to stream into the tribal areas.⁴¹²

The case studies contained in this paper suggest that most Western recruits were drawn there by the desire to fight U.S. and allied troops in Afghanistan, providing al Qaeda opportunities to recruit these operatives for attacks against the West. But it would be wrong though to draw the conclusion that this by itself warrants an acceleration of the withdrawal of troops from the region. Western officials warn that any precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan would likely provide al Qaeda an even greater sanctuary in the region, and new opportunities to plot attacks.⁴¹³

This paper has shown that by some measures al Qaeda's safe haven in Pakistan has actually become more dangerous in recent years. More serious plots emerged in the West in 2010 linked to established jihadist groups in Pakistan than

in any year since al Qaeda built up its operations in FATA in the early 2000s.

If upbeat assessments from the Obama administration stating that al Qaeda and its allies have recently been significantly weakened in the tribal areas prove accurate, fewer plots should be expected in future years. The death of bin Laden, long an inspirational magnet for recruits, may lessen the enthusiasm of Western militants for travelling to the region.

While Obama administration officials have stated publicly that AQAP in Yemen may recently have emerged as a greater threat to the U.S. homeland than "al Qaeda Central," the threat from al Qaeda in Pakistan remains high. And as those officials concede, it is difficult to rank which is now the more dangerous. Furthermore, while al Qaeda in Pakistan still appears to be plotting large-scale attacks, AQAP has signaled it may try to launch smaller scale plots against the United States in the future with more frequency, something which may reduce the likelihood of significant loss of life in any one attack by the group.⁴¹⁴

The FATA safe haven continues to be the greater threat to the United States, as well as other Western countries.

The FATA safe haven continues to be the greater threat to the United States, as well as other Western countries, given the decades-long presence of al Qaeda's leaders, numerous bombmaking instructors, training facilities, and facilitators in the region, and the presence of several Pakistani militant groups like the Pakistani Taliban increasingly determined to attack the United States.

While Osama bin Laden's death is a deep blow to al Qaeda, the re-emergence of Saif al Adel, a highly capable operative, within the al Qaeda "Central" organization, means the

organization still has the “brainpower” to continue to plan ambitious attacks against the United States like the 2006 airline plot. The death of Ilyas Kashmiri in a drone strike in June 2011, now confirmed by U.S. officials, was however a further blow to the organization.⁴⁵

In the last three years, as outlined in detail in the previous iteration of this paper, a growing number of Westerners have also joined groups affiliated with al Qaeda. Of all Western countries, Germany has seen the most alarming rise of its citizens traveling to the tribal areas, largely a product of recruitment drives by Uzbek jihadist groups. The dangers caused by these flows were highlighted by an unprecedented Europe-wide terror alert in the autumn of 2010 linked to a group of militants who had traveled to Pakistan’s tribal areas from Hamburg in 2009. The plot was a wake up call that the threat from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region was very much alive more than a decade after Mohammed Atta travelled to the Afghanistan-Pakistan from the northern German port city.

As the 9/11 attacks illustrated, a small group of determined terrorists can create great carnage. In 2006, al Qaeda operatives in North Waziristan recruited, trained, and directed a group of British militants to blow up more than half a dozen transatlantic airliners, a plot that if successful could have killed more than 1,500 people and created significant global economic repercussions. According to British authorities, the airline plotters were just weeks away from building bombs that would have been undetectable by airport scanners and powerful enough to bring down airliners.⁴⁶

Almost half a decade later, al Qaeda operatives still enjoy significant sanctuary in North Waziristan, demonstrated by their continued ability to distribute videos from the region.⁴⁷ New encryption methods used by the group in online communications now also appear to have offered al Qaeda operatives in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region greater command and control of plots in the West than ever before. As long as Western militants continue to stream in,

al Qaeda and allied groups will continue to have the opportunity to plot attacks of similar ambition to the 2006 airline plot and retain the capability to launch attacks in Europe and the United States on a scale similar to the 2005 London bombings.

1 See for example British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, “Statement on Security and Counterterrorism,” House of Commons, January 20, 2010.

2 Bin Laden’s terrorist network has had a significant presence in Pakistan ever since its founding in Peshawar in 1988. Western militants transited through Pakistan to reach Afghanistan, including those who carried out the September 11, 2001 attacks. Mohammed Atta and two other Hamburg militants who piloted hijacked planes on 9/11 were recruited by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan after connecting with pro Al Qaeda militants in the Pakistani border town of Quetta in late 1999. Dozens of other Western militants joined Al Qaeda in the 1990s after spending time in guest houses in Peshawar. Furthermore, the 9/11 plot itself was partly coordinated from Pakistan, where Hamburg resident Ramzi Binalshibh and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed spent stretches of time in the lead up to the attack, including in Quetta. See The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, p. 160-9 224-225

3 Craig Whitlock, “Flow of Terrorist Recruits Increasing,” Washington Post, October 19, 2009; Lolita C. Baldor, “Terror Training Camps Are Smaller, Harder to Target,” Associated Press, November 9, 2009. According to a senior U.S. counterterrorism official interviewed by the author in March 2011 while fewer American militants appear to have travelled to Pakistan in 2010 and early 2011, European counterterrorism officials have not indicated that travel flows have slowed from Europe during this period. U.S. and European counterterrorism officials interviewed by the author in early 2011 said it was very difficult to quantify the number of Western militants traveling to the region each year. A Belgian official told the author that Western intelligence agencies have now established that more recruits traveled to Afghanistan in the 1990s than was realized at the time and he expected the same would apply for militants traveling to Pakistan in recent years. Personal Interview with Belgian counterterrorism official, Brussels, January 2011. British counterterrorism officials have always found it very difficult to gauge the volume of travel to the camps because once individuals arrive in Pakistan it is virtually impossible to track their movements and distinguish them from other travellers to Pakistan. Some militants have also disguised their travel routes to Pakistan, travelling

by very circuitous routes to avoid their passports being stamped. Personal Communication with Senior British counterterrorism Source, November 2009.

4 White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Prepared Remarks of President Barack Obama: A New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," March 27, 2009.

5 Michael Leiter, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), Testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee, February 9, 2011. In December 2010 White House counterterrorism advisor John Brennan stated that Al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen was "now the most operationally active node of the al Qaeda network. Larry Shaughnessy, "US Official: Al Qaeda in Yemen Greater Threat than in Pakistan," CNN, December 18, 2010.

6 Personal Interview with Senior U.S. counterterrorism Official, March 2011

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10 Thomas Catan, "191 Dead, Thousands of Victims--but the 'Mastermind' Is Cleared," Times (London), November 1, 2007.

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13 Ibid.; "Khawaja Sentenced to 10½ years in Prison," CBC, March 12, 2009.

14 Rachanee Srisavasdi, "Man Sentenced for Role in Plot to kill Jews, Attack Military Bases," Orange County Register, August 17, 2009.

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110 Personal interview with senior U.S. counterterrorism official, New York, March 2011.

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training in Kashmir. That training was organized by British terrorist Omar Saeed Sheikh who in January 2002 orchestrated the murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Danny Pearl, according to Babar's witness statement. According to Babar the brothers then returned to the UK. Thereafter, according to the testimony, Jabber and his brother kept in touch with several of the plotters, including ringleader Omar Khyam. Jabber described himself to Babar as being under the orders of Abdul Hadi, a senior Iraqi Al Qaeda operative now being held in Guantanamo who authorized the UK fertilizer bomb plot. At some point the brothers appear to have returned to live in the Punjab region of Pakistan. See UK and Taliban links of Drone Death Man Abdul Jabbar, BBC Newsnight, October, 11, 2010; Official transcript obtained by author of Regina v. Omar Khyam et al., testimony of Mohammed Junaid Babar, Central Criminal Court, March 23-29; Tim McGirk, "Who Killed Danny Pearl?," Time, January 27, 2003; Jabber once spoke at a meeting featuring Abdullah al Faisal a radical Jamaican cleric now banned from the UK and had contact with convicted extremist British cleric Abu Hamza al Masri. Official transcript obtained by author of Regina v. Omar Khyam et al., testimony of Mohammed Junaid Babar, Central Criminal Court, March 23-29, 2006;

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299 US Department of Justice, Charges Unsealed Against Five Alleged Members of Al Qaeda Plot to Attack the United States and United Kingdom, July 7, 2010.

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302 Lord Carlile of Berriew, Operation Pathway Report Following Review, October 2009.

303 "Terror Suspect Abid Naseer Wanted by US Authorities," BBC, December, 15, 2010

304 Ibid.

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306 Duncan Gardham, "Manchester Bomb Plot Students Were Planning Coordinated Attack Against New York and Scandinavia," Daily Telegraph, December 16, 2010

307 Extradition Ruling: The Government of the USA V. Abid Naseer, City of Westminster Magistrates Court, January 21, 2011.

308 Special Immigrations Appeals Commission, Open Judgment Abid Naseer et al., May 18, 2010; Duncan Gardham, Pakistani student Britain couldn't deport was 'involved in planning attack in US,' Daily Telegraph, July 7, 2010. Duncan Gardham, "Manchester Bomb Plot Students Were Planning Coordinated Attack Against New York and Scandinavia," Daily Telegraph, December 16, 2010; "Manchester terror plot emails," Daily Telegraph, July 30, 2009.

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310 "Source: 12 Arrested in 'Very Serious Terrorist Plot,'" CNN, April 8, 2009; "Al Qaeda ringleader' wins appeal against deportation," BBC, May 18, 2010; Extradition Ruling: The Government of the USA V. Abid Naseer, City of Westminster Magistrates Court, January 21, 2011.

311 See Petter Nesser and Brynjar Lia, "Lessons Learned from the 2010 Norwegian Terrorist Plot," CTC Sentinel 3:8 (2010); "Norway 'Bomb Plot' Underscores Al Qaeda Pitfalls," Associated Press, August 29, 2010; "New al-Qaida Leader Knows US Well," Associated Press, August 6, 2010; Lars Aker Haug, "Frykter terror-tilståelsene er taktisk spill," Aftenposten, October 1, 2010.

312 Petter Nesser and Brynjar Lia, "Lessons Learned from the 2010 Norwegian Terrorist Plot," CTC Sentinel 3:8 (2010); Yassin Musharbash, "Festgenommene Qaida-Verdächtige Norwegisches Terror-Puzzle," Der Spiegel, July 8, 2010; Norway "Bomb Plot" Underscores Al Qaeda Pitfalls, Associated Press, August 29, 2010

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315 The TIP is likely the same as a group Chinese authorities refer to as the East Turkistan Islamic Movement. See Edward Wong, "Chinese Separatists Tied to Norway Bomb Plot," New York Times, July 9, 2010.

316 "Davuds mobilnummer funnet hos uigurtopp," Dagbladet, August 2, 2010

317 The British national was Ibrahim Adam. Investigators found passport photos of Adam in the possession of one of the alleged Norwegian cell members, who claimed he was asked to assist in procuring false passports for Adam with a view to bringing him into the country. Amund Bakke Foss, Francis Lundh, and Daniel Pinheiro Harbo, "Terrorsiktet ble bedt om å skaffe falskt pass," Verdens Gang, July 12, 2010;

Frode Hansen and Harald S. Klungtveit, "Terror-ettørsøkte Ibrahim (23) skulle hjelpes inn i Norge med falsk pass," *Dagbladet*, July 16, 2010

318 Norway "Bomb Plot" Underscores Al Qaeda Pitfalls, Associated Press, August 29, 2010

319 Norway "Bomb Plot" Underscores Al Qaeda Pitfalls, Associated Press, August 29, 2010. Zazi obtained the components necessary to make TATP and Hydrogen Peroxide and his bomb notes indicated that he was also going to mix flour and oil in with the Hydrogen Peroxide to improve the explosive power of the main charge. See Memorandum of Law in Support of the Government's Motion for a Permanent Order of Detention - United States of America v. Najibullah Zazi, United States District Court, Eastern District of New York, September 24, 2009, p. 7. The Norwegian plotters allegedly obtained Hydrogen Peroxide and the chemicals necessary to make TATP. See Norway "Bomb Plot" Underscores Al Qaeda Pitfalls, Associated Press, August 29, 2010. "Norge var terrormålet," *Aftenposten*, July 10, 2010; "Ekspllosivene ble ikke oppbevart hos siktede," *Aftenposten*, July 11, 2010 Large quantities of flour and oil were found on the Manchester plotters. US Department of Justice, Charges Unsealed Against Five Alleged Members of Al Qaeda Plot to Attack the United States and United Kingdom, July 7, 2010. Their intercepted communications with Ahmad in Pakistan allegedly contained coded references to Hydrogen Peroxide. See Dominic Casciani, "Manchester Terror Plot: The Emails," BBC, May 18, One of the suspected Manchester cell member worked for a hair products company and had access to peroxide based products capable of use in bomb-making purposes. See Lord Carlile of Berriew, Operation Pathway Report Following Review, October 2009, p. 5

320 Duncan Gardham, "Manchester Bomb Plot Students Were Planning Coordinated Attack Against New York and Scandinavia," *Daily Telegraph*, December 16, 2010; Memorandum of Law in Support of the Government's Motion for a Permanent Order of Detention - United States of America v. Najibullah Zazi, United States District Court, Eastern District of New York, September 24, 2009, p. 7; Memorandum of Law in Opposition to the Defendant's Motion to Suppress His Post-Arrest Statements, USA vs. Adis Medunjanin, United States Eastern District Court Eastern District of New York, February 25, 2011

321 Transcript of Faisal Shahzad Statement in Court in which he pleaded guilty to all charges against him. USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010.

322 The government's conclusion that the device could have been devastating was based on a bomb test by the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) of an device "identical to Shahzad's bomb in all respects except that the JTTF bomb technicians ensured that their detonating components would detonate." Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v. Faisal Shahzad, United

States District Court Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010 p.5 and p.8; According to the NYPD, Shahzad's purchase of weak explosive materials contributed to the failure of his device. Anahad O'Connor, "Weak Bomb Called Intentional," *New York Times*, July 21, 2010.

323 Transcript of Faisal Shahzad Statement in Court in which he pleaded guilty to all charges against him. USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010.

324 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010

325 Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau: Pakistan Taliban Source: Times Square Bombing Attempt was "Revenge Against America," *Newsweek*, May 6, 2010.

326 Andrea Elliot, Sabrina Tavernise and Anne Barnhard, "For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent," *New York Times*, May 15, 2010.

327 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

328 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

329 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

330 Andrea Elliot, Sabrina Tavernise and Anne Barnhard, "For Times Sq. Suspect, Long Roots of Discontent," *New York Times*, May 15, 2010.

331 Transcript of Faisal Shahzad Statement in Court in which he pleaded guilty to all charges against him. USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010.

332 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010; Transcript of Faisal Shahzad Statement in Court in which he pleaded guilty to all charges against him. USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010.

333 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

334 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

335 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

336 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

337 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," *New York Times*, June 22, 2010.

338 Transcript of Faisal Shahzad Statement in Court in which he pleaded guilty to all charges against him. USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010.

339 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010. Shahzad had earlier stated in court that he received an initial \$4000.

340 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010

341 Transcript of Faisal Shahzad Statement in Court in which he pleaded guilty to all charges against him. USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010

342 See Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010; Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," New York Times, June 22, 2010; Benjamin Weiser, "Charges of Getting Cash to Failed Times Sq. Bomber," New York Times, September 15, 2010.

343 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010; Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," New York Times, June 22, 2010

344 Andrea Elliot, "Militant's Path from Pakistan to Times Square," New York Times, June 22, 2010

345 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010

346 Al Qaeda's increasing ingenuity in masking its communications was revealed in UK trial of Rajib Karim, a British-Bangladeshi terrorist operative who was convicted of terrorism offences in February 2011. The court heard how in early 2010 Karim communicated in coded phrases from the UK with American AQAP terrorist-cleric Anwar al Awlaki in Yemen through deeply-encrypted word documents that were stealthily digitally compressed and then uploaded to pages of web hosting sites that only the parties in question knew the web addresses of. Karim communicated with Awlaki via his brother in Yemen. Troublingly, the documents were encrypted using software easily downloaded from the internet. The messages appear not to have been intercepted by Western intelligence agencies. Even after finding the communications on Karim's website it took British investigators a significant time to decipher the communications, only succeeding after they found the cipher codes and passwords in a file on his the computer, illustrating how difficult it would be to track such

messages in real time. Karim's case confirmed a pattern seen elsewhere. In Germany militants are believed to be secretly communicating with Jihadist groups in Pakistan, having found ways to evade monitoring, according to a senior German intelligence source. In Pakistan's FATA several members of a travel group from Hamburg recruited by al Qaeda were instructed in 2010 how to encrypt their communications. See Andrew Carey and Paul Cruickshank, "Terror Planning by Muslim Cleric Awlaki Described in UK Trial," CNN, February 1, 2010; Andrew Carey, "British Airways Worker Guilty of al Qaeda linked Terror Plot," CNN, February 28, 2011; Prosecution Opening Statement, The Queen V Rajib Karim, Woolwich Crown Court, February 1, 2011 which was attended by the author; Senior German Intelligence Source, November 2010; Personal Interview with German Intelligence Official, October 2010

347 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010.

348 Government's Memorandum in Connection with the Sentencing of Faisal Shahzad, USA v Faisal Shahzad, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 29, 2010

349 Personal Interview with German intelligence Officials, August 2010.

350 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Hamburg Cell at the Heart of Terrorist Plot Against Europe," CNN, October 4, 2010.

351 The Hamburg contingent that took an active role in the 9/11 plot were Mohammed Atta, Marwan al Shehhi, Ziad Jarrah who piloted planes in the attack and Ramzi Binalshibh the point person in the plot. See The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, pp. 160-169.

352 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Europe Warned of Mumbai-Style Terror Attacks," CNN, September 29, 2010.

353 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Hamburg Cell at the Heart of Terrorist Plot Against Europe," CNN, October 4, 2010.

354 German authorities did not move to shut down the mosque because of legal obstacles and because they were obtaining valuable intelligence through monitoring its activities. Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials August 2009. See Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Controversial Hamburg Mosque's Radical Cleric," CNN, November 11, 2010.

355 Underlining his close ties to the 9/11 conspirators, Meziche was the husband of the daughter of Mohammed Fazazi, a radical Moroccan preacher who influenced Atta's Hamburg group. Furthermore, Meziche received a 34 second call from Binalshibh - the point-person in the 9/11 plot - just before Binalshibh fled Germany six days before the September 11 attacks. German intelligence officials believe that Sidiqi's group was also inspired by the preaching of Mamoun Darkazanli, the lead

imam of the Taiba mosque who had been part of Atta's circle and was suspected of ties to pre-9/11 al Qaeda fundraising. Darkazanli, aware that he was being watched, was careful not to be too specific in his calls for jihad, according to German officials. A bid to extradite Darkazanli to Spain to face terrorism charges was blocked by German Courts. Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Controversial Hamburg Mosque's Radical Cleric," CNN, November 11, 2010. See Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Hamburg Cell at the Heart of Terrorist Plot Against Europe," CNN, October 4, 2010; Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials August 2010; David Crawford, "Probe Links European Plot to 9/11," Wall Street Journal, October 16, 2010; David Crawford, "Probe Links European Plot to 9/11," Wall Street Journal, October 16, 2010; Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Controversial Hamburg Mosque's Radical Cleric," CNN, November 11, 2010.

Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Heightened Concerns in Europe Over Potential Terrorist Attack," CNN, October 12, 2010.

357 In a subsequent interrogation Makanesi stated that in the FATA he was re-united with Abu Safiyya, a German comrade of the Chouka brothers, whom Makanesi had met in a mosque in Bonn. Makanesi claimed he was surprised to meet Abu Safiyya in FATA. Interrogation Transcript: German Police Services' Questioning of Rami Makanesi, September 3, 2010 obtained by author, p. 53

358 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials, August 2010

359 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials August 2010.

360 Christoph Scheuermann and Andreas Ulrich, Disillusionment in Afghanistan: The Fate of 11 Aspiring Jihadists from Germany, Der Spiegel, October 18, 2010.

361 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, Members of Hamburg Group Linked to European Plot are Back in Germany," October 8, 2010

362 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials August 2010. Ahmad Sidiqi, his wife, his brother Sulaiman, and Shahab Dashti and his wife took a flight from Hamburg to Peshawar via Doha on March 4. Rami Makanesi and Naamen Meziche departed on March 5 traveling overland through Iran. Michael Wallinger, Alexander Janzen, and Mohammed Mohammadi set out on March 9 the first two catching flights from Vienna and the latter arrested as he attempted to board a flight at Frankfurt airport. See Christoph Scheuermann and Andreas Ulrich, "Disillusionment in Afghanistan: The Fate of 11 Aspiring Jihadists from Germany," Der Spiegel, October 18, 2010.

363 Interrogation Transcript: German Police Services' Questioning of Rami Makanesi, September 3, 2010 obtained by author, pp. 21-28

364 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Members of the Hamburg Terror Group linked to European Plot are back in Germany," CNN, October 8, 2010.

365 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials August 2010; Verfassungsschutzbericht 2009 Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, June 2010. (Official Report of Hamburg's Intelligence Services for the year 2009)

366 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials August 2010. IMU propaganda videos released in 2009-10 featured German speaking Jihadists and their families living in encampments in the tribal areas. See Paul Cruickshank, "Enlisting Terror, Al Qaeda's Recruiting Challenges," Janes, November 2009

367 Marcel Rosenbach and Holger Stark, "Homegrown Terror Takes on New Dimensions," Der Spiegel, May 9, 2011; Interrogation Transcript: German Police Services' Questioning of Rami Makanesi, September 3, 2010 obtained by author, pp. 31-32

368 Dashti was the only member of the Hamburg travel group identified by German intelligence officials in the IMU video. German officials believe the others did not want to appear in the video in case that attracted the attention of Western security agencies. Personal Interview with German Intelligence Official, October 2009. See Verfassungsschutzbericht 2009 Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, June 2010. (Official Report of Hamburg's Intelligence Services for the year 2009); As of late 2010 the video – Der Vorzug des Jihad - was easily accessible on Youtube.

369A flavor of the training they received can be seen in an IMU video released in October 2009 which featured Dashti appealing on camera for new recruits and showed several German militants firing guns and rockets in what appeared to be live fire exercises in the mountains of Waziristan. In the same video German militants are featured sitting next to Tahir Yuldashev the then leader of the IMU, and a reported member of al Qaeda's Shura Council. Ibid; Bill Roggio, "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Confirms Leader Tahir Yuldashev Killed," Long War Journal, August 16, 2010.

370 Holger Stark and Matthias Gebauer, "9/11 Connection: Hamburg-Based Islamists Targeted in US Drone Strike," Der Spiegel, October 11, 2010

371 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials, October 2010.

372 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "European Plot Directed by Senior Al Qaeda Leader," CNN, October 6, 2010; Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials, October 2010

373 The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, p.164. In October 2009 Pakistani military claimed to have found Said Bahaji's passport in the town of Sherwangeeni in South Waziristan which they had captured from militants suggesting that he had joined Al Qaeda. Passport with 9/11 Suspect's Name Found in Pakistan, CNN, October 29, 2009.

374 Holger Stark and Matthias Gebauer, "9/11 Connection: Hamburg-Based Islamists Targeted in US Drone Strike," Der Spiegel, October 11, 2010.

375 Hakan Erdem, "German Confesses to Being Al Qaeda Member," Reuters, May 5, 2011

376 Duncan Gardham, "Mumbai-style Attack Cells 'Already in Britain' al Qaeda Chief Claimed," Daily Telegraph, October 4, 2010.

377 Duncan Gardham, "Mumbai-style Attack Cells 'Already in Britain' al Qaeda Chief Claimed," Daily Telegraph, October 4, 2010.

378 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "European Plot Directed by Senior Al Qaeda Leader," CNN, October 6, 2010.

379 Sidiqi claimed Mauretani had risen to be Al Qaeda 's number three and was a spiritual leader in the group. Holger Stark: Interrogations in Afghanistan: German Authorities Reserved About Terror Warnings," Der Spiegel, October 4, 2010.

380 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Hamburg Cell at the Heart of Terrorist Plot Against Europe," CNN, October 4, 2010

381 Marcel Rosenbach and Holger Stark, "Homegrown Terror Takes on New Dimensions," Der Spiegel, May 9, 2011

382 "Diary: Bin Laden eyed new targets, big body count," Associated Press, May 11, 2011

383 Ibid; Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman, How Bin Laden emailed without being detected by U.S. , Associated Press, May 12, 2011

384 Holger Stark: Interrogations in Afghanistan: German Authorities Reserved About Terror Warnings," Der Spiegel, October 4, 2010; Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Heightened Concerns in Europe over Potential Terrorist Attack," CNN, October 12, 2010

385 Personal Interview with German Intelligence Officials October 2010.

386 "Threat Revealed: Terrorists Believed to be Planning Attack in Berlin," Der Spiegel, November 20, 2010; Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Europe Warned of Mumbai Style Terror Attacks," CNN, September 29, 2010

387 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Europe Warned of Mumbai Style Terror Attacks," CNN, September 29, 2010

388 Yassin Musharbash, Holger Stark and Susanne Koelbl, "Suspected Jihadist Nabbed: Police in Pakistan Arrest German Islamist," Der Spiegel, June 22, 2010; "Arrest in Pakistan: Conflict in Berlin Over Handling of a German Jihadist," Der Spiegel, June 29, 2010

389 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Sidiqi's father: My Son is not a Killer," CNN, October 5, 2010

390 Ibid; Personal Communication with Contact in touch with Makanesi's family, 2010

391 Christoph Scheuermann and Andreas Ulrich, Disillusionment in Afghanistan: The Fate of 11 Aspiring Jihadists from Germany, Der Spiegel, October 18, 2010

392 Christoph Scheuermann and Andreas Ulrich, Disillusionment in Afghanistan: The Fate of 11 Aspiring Jihadists from Germany, Der Spiegel, October 18, 2010

393 "Pakistan: 5 German Nationals Killed in Drone Strike," CNN, October 5, 2010; Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Heightened Concerns in Europe over Potential Terrorist Attack," CNN, October 12, 2010.

394 Amir Mir, British Islamic Army Hit by Drones, The News (Pakistan), December 20, 2010

395 A Turkish Jihadist website carrying messages from Uzbek militant groups announced that Dashti had been killed in a strike against a militant encampment in Waziristan where German and Tajik fighters were living. See Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Jihadist Website: One of Hamburg Terror Group Killed in Drone Strike," CNN, October 7, 2010. No mention was made of Meziche by Jihadist websites and German officials have yet to receive full confirmation that he was killed. German intelligence officials believe Asadullah Muslih is still at large in Pakistan. See Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Heightened Concerns in Europe over Potential Terrorist Attack," CNN, October 12, 2010

396 "Al Qaeda dealt battlefield, court setbacks with 2 dead, 1 guilty plea," CNN, May 5, 2011.

397 Interrogation Transcript: German Police Services Questioning of Rami Makanesi, September 3, 2010 obtained by author

398 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 30

399 Makanesi Interrogation, pp. 65-67

400 Makanesi Interrogation, pp. 68-73

401 Makanesi Interrogation, pp. 65-73. Makanesi stated that after the Pakistani military offensive in North Waziristan in the fall of 2009 the price of a Kalashnikov rose to 1000 Euro.

402 Makanesi Interrogation, pp. 64-71

403 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 74 and pp. 109-110

404 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 46, 66, 70 and 105

405 Makanesi Interrogation, pp. 80-81

406 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 42 and 133

407 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 106

408 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 120

409 Makanesi Interrogation, p. 124

410 Makanesi interrogation pp. 139-143, 154, 159. Makanesi stated that in December 2009 Uzbek groups had received 200,00 Euro from German-based militants who had channeled funds via Turkey. It appears that al Qaeda wanted to build their own revenue stream.

411 Schmitt and Sanger, "Some in Qaeda Leave Pakistan for Somalia and Yemen."

412 It is difficult to be certain about the overall number of Westerners travelling to the tribal areas. The evidence suggests that the number is rising in several Western countries, such as Germany, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it may have dropped in others, for example Britain.

413 Personal Interviews with Western Intelligence Officials, 2010

414 AQAP cleric Anwar al Awlaki has stated he would prefer launch smaller attacks in the U.S. than larger attacks elsewhere. See Prosecution Opening Statement, The Queen V Rajib Karim, Woolwich Crown Court, February 1-3, 2011

415 Brian Bennett, "U.S. has verified Al Qaeda operative's death, official says," LA Times, July 8, 2011

416 Greenberg, Cruickshank, and Hansen, "Dateline NBC," 2008.

417 In recent years these videos have grown in sophistication and the al Qaeda leaders featured in them have appeared more comfortable. Ayman al-Zawahiri, for example, has for the last several years been shown with a bookcase behind him or with curtains visible.