

Executive Summary Backgrounder

No. 2148
June 23, 2008



Published by The Heritage Foundation

Why NATO Must Win in Afghanistan: A Central Front in the War on Terrorism

Sally McNamara

Jonathan Evans, director general of Britain's security service MI5 describes al-Qaeda and its associated groups as "the main national security threat that we face today." Through a series of attacks and attempted attacks, Islamist extremists have declared war on the values that underpin the liberal democracies of Britain, Europe, and the entire West.

A Growing and Evolving Threat. In an extraordinary public speech, Mr. Evans detailed a growing and evolving al-Qaeda threat to the United Kingdom, where at least 2,000 individuals have been identified as a threat to national security because of their support for terrorism. He went on to identify the increased threats posed by the "extension of the al-Qaeda brand" in both the Middle East and Europe.

When the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, NATO's founding members agreed on the sacred Article 5 clause stipulating that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." As a collective defensive military alliance, NATO rightly invoked Article 5 following al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks on the United States. The Alliance must now follow through on that invocation and continue to deny al-Qaeda a safe haven in which to operate by winning in Afghanistan.

The Need to Recommit to the Mission. With a catalogue of successful and thwarted al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on Britain and Europe since 9/11, it is

imperative that all NATO members recommit to the mission in Afghanistan. The terrorist attacks on London and Madrid serve as stark reminders of why NATO undertook the Afghanistan mission in the first place. Europe cannot afford to underestimate the incredible momentum that Islamist extremists—at home and abroad—will gain from signs of weakness by the Alliance in Afghanistan.

It is significantly obvious that al-Qaeda and its associates remain committed to a long, asymmetric war against the West and to attacking the values of liberal democracy. They must be fought tactically and strategically. On a tactical level, increased counterterrorism operations have contributed to major successes in the war on terrorism. Britain and Europe, like America, must continue to increase their capacity to conduct counterterrorist operations and vigorously pursue efforts to thwart terrorist plots, many of which are deeply interwoven.

Al-Qaeda Plots and Conspiracies. The catalogue of plots and conspiracies sponsored, inspired, and directed by al-Qaeda and targeted against Britain and Europe reveals a number of patterns that must be addressed:

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
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Produced by The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom

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- The prevalence of terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan,
- The role of hate preachers and extremist clerics,
- The importance of the mission in Afghanistan as a central front in the war on terrorism, and
- The continuing crucial need to maintain close cooperation and intelligence-sharing among Britain, Europe, and America.

Faced with these needs, if the war on terrorism is to be won, America and Europe must remain strong and reliable allies to each other. Europe must be under no illusion that it is not a prime target for al-Qaeda attacks—as well as a base of operations. A former Islamist extremist revealed last year that al-Qaeda held a summit in London to coordinate its activities in Britain: Such is their strength of presence there.

Conclusion. Although al-Qaeda took some heavy hits to its command and control structures when NATO first went into Afghanistan, it continues to motivate affiliated groups and to regroup in the tribal areas of Pakistan. As *Times* correspondent

Sean O’Neill has noted, “al-Qaeda has proved itself to be a resilient organization that absorbs blows, regroups, reforms its networks, and returns.”

The war in Afghanistan is ultimately not yet won, and gains made there remain under threat so long as the region remains susceptible to al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgencies. Now is the time for the NATO Alliance to show its backbone and defeat the scourge of al-Qaeda. NATO members cannot afford to underestimate the threat that al-Qaeda continues to pose to the West and its collective values of freedom, liberty, human rights, equality, and democracy. The political expediency of keeping troops out of harm’s way grossly miscalculates the long-term strategic implications of a resurgent Taliban and an al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan.

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Background

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Why NATO Must Win in Afghanistan: A Central Front in the War on Terrorism

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Jonathan Evans, director general of Britain's security service MI5 describes al-Qaeda and its associated groups as, "the main national security threat that we face today."¹ Through a series of attacks and attempted attacks, Islamist extremists have declared war on the values that underpin the liberal democracies of Britain, Europe, and the entire West. In an extraordinary public speech, Mr. Evans detailed a growing and evolving al-Qaeda threat to the United Kingdom, where at least 2,000 individuals have been identified as a threat to national security because of their support for terrorism. He went on to identify the increased threats posed by the "extension of the al-Qaeda brand" in both the Middle East and Europe.²

When the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, NATO's founding members agreed on the sacred Article 5 clause stipulating that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."³ As a collective defensive military alliance, NATO rightly invoked Article 5 following al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks on the United States.⁴ The Alliance must now follow through on that invocation and continue to deny al-Qaeda a safe haven in which to operate by winning in Afghanistan.

With a catalogue of successful and thwarted al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on Britain and Europe since 9/11, it is imperative that all NATO members recommit to the mission in Afghanistan. The terrorist attacks on London and Madrid serve as stark reminders of why NATO undertook the Afghanistan mission in the

Talking Points

- British and European security services have enjoyed significant tactical success, disrupting many terrorist plots and conspiracies through effective counterterrorism measures and international cooperation.
- Al-Qaeda and its associates remain committed to a long, asymmetric war against the West on both the tactical and strategic levels.
- One key tactic is to recruit, radicalize, and train homegrown terrorists for the purpose of attacking their homelands.
- Al-Qaeda systematically uses hate preachers and extremist clerics to recruit and radicalize homegrown terrorists for the purpose of attacking their homelands, often sending significant numbers to terrorist training camps abroad.
- A significant number of terrorist cells and plots overlap through a network of individuals and sleeper cells coordinated by al-Qaeda and its associates.
- NATO's success or failure in Afghanistan will be a major factor in determining whether the war against al-Qaeda ends in victory or defeat.

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first place. Europe cannot afford to underestimate the incredible momentum that Islamist extremists—at home and abroad—will gain from signs of weakness by the Alliance in Afghanistan.

It is significantly obvious that al-Qaeda and its associates remain committed to a long, asymmetric war against the West and to attacking the values of liberal democracy. They must be fought tactically and strategically. On a tactical level, increased counterterrorism operations have contributed to major successes in the war on terrorism. Britain and Europe, like America, must continue to increase their capacity to conduct counterterrorist operations and vigorously pursue efforts to thwart terrorist plots, many of which are deeply interwoven.

Al-Qaeda's British Plots and Conspiracies⁵

British police statistics from September 11, 2001, to March 31, 2007, show 1,228 terrorism-related arrests. Of the 132 persons charged with offenses under anti-terrorism legislation alone—such as encouragement of terrorism, preparation of terrorist acts, and training for terrorism—41 were convicted. An additional 183 people were convicted of offenses under other legislation, including murder, explosives offenses, and fraud.⁶

Britain's first al-Qaeda-related terrorist plot was uncovered in November 2000, and Bangladeshi-born Moinul Abedin was found guilty of planning to detonate a bomb and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.⁷ Since September 11, 2001, however, the number and scope of Islamist terrorist threats in the United Kingdom have increased significantly. The following plots and conspiracies can be identified from public information.

Plotting Aircraft Attacks on Key London Landmarks: Mohammed Afroz, September 11, 2001. Indian Mohammed Afroz confessed to being part of a global network of al-Qaeda operatives who had planned to follow the 9/11 atrocities with similar attacks on the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, and Tower Bridge.⁸ Afroz had been enrolled in a British flying school and, with other al-Qaeda operatives, planned to hijack an afternoon flight from Heathrow to Manchester on 9/11.⁹ The plot was frustrated when all flights were grounded immediately after the U.S. attacks. Afroz fled to India, where he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to seven years imprisonment in July 2005.¹⁰ Leading counterterrorism analyst Rohan Gunaratna revealed in his 2002 book *Inside Al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, that Afroz had trained in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and that the funding for the mission was tied directly to al-Qaeda.¹¹

1. Jonathan Evans, "Address to the Society of Editors," Manchester, November 5, 2007, at <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page562.html> (June 2, 2008).
2. *Ibid.*
3. NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," Washington, D.C., April 4, 1949, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm> (June 2, 2008).
4. NATO, "Statement to the Press by NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, on the North Atlantic Council Decision on Implementation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty following the 11 September Attacks against the United States," October 4, 2001, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011004b.htm> (June 2, 2008).
5. In cataloguing al-Qaeda-related plots and conspiracies to attack Britain and Europe, I focused primarily on major, post-9/11 plots to attack the homelands rather than on individual convictions for membership in a terrorist organization or attacks on British and European embassies. There has been a plethora of convictions related to Islamist terrorism across Europe, as well as convictions for plots to attack coalition troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. These go beyond the scope of this paper. Neither should this list of plots and conspiracies be considered an exhaustive list of al-Qaeda activity in Britain and Europe.
6. Home Office, "Terrorism and the Law," at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/> (June 2, 2008).
7. "Bomb Maker Jailed for 20 Years," BBC News, February 27, 2002, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1845218.stm (June 2, 2008).
8. Andy Lines, "Brit 9/11; Heathrow Hijack Then Big Ben Hit," *The Mirror*, June 12, 2002.
9. *Ibid.*
10. "Commons Terror Pilot Jailed," *The Express*, July 23, 2005.

Plotting Terrorist Attacks on NATO Warships: Hilal Jaber Awade El-Assiri, Zouhair Hilal Mohammed Tabiti, and Abdellah Msafer El-Ghamidi, May 2002. Al-Qaeda activated a three-man suicide-bomber cell to sail explosives-laden inflatable dinghies into NATO vessels, specifically targeting British and American warships that were patrolling off the British-owned island of Gibraltar. This thwarted attack was similar in style to al-Qaeda's successful attack on the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000, which claimed the lives of 17 sailors.¹² Hilal Jaber Awade El-Assiri, Zouhair Hilal Mohammed Tabiti, and Abdellah Msafer El-Ghamidi from Saudi Arabia were arrested in Morocco and subsequently jailed for 10 years in February 2003 for plotting the suicide mission.¹³ Tabiti admitted to meeting Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.¹⁴

Jubilee Plot to Assassinate Prime Minister Tony Blair: Unidentified Al-Qaeda Operatives, June 2002. Two specific plots targeting Tony Blair for assassination were identified by a British newspaper in January 2003, including a conspiracy to target the prime minister during the public celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee.¹⁵ The plot was given increased attention when further details were revealed in a 2005 book by former Scotland Yard chief Lord Stevens. No arrests have been reported specifically in relation to this conspiracy.

Multiple other al-Qaeda assassination plots against international leaders have been reported since 9/11, including a recent statement from a Brit-

ish al-Qaeda cell threatening both Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Tony Blair.¹⁶ An al-Qaeda plot targeting an unidentified British Cabinet minister for assassination was also thwarted by the police in 2006, although for security reasons no details have been released.¹⁷

Ricin Poison Plot: Kamal Bourgass, January 2003. After a tip from the Algerian security services, which had had al-Qaeda operative Mohamed Meguerba in their custody, British counterterrorism agents moved on a property in Wood Green, London, suspecting an imminent chemical attack. Police found ingredients and equipment for an unsophisticated chemical attack, as well as bomb-making instructions. No ricin itself was ever found to have been successfully created, although attempts had clearly been made.¹⁸ Meguerba at first identified Kamal Bourgass as "an Algerian affiliated to al-Qaeda" but later retracted the statement and denied involvement with him.¹⁹

Bourgass, who had in fact previously undertaken terrorist training with Meguerba in Afghanistan, had already fled the scene and was later arrested in Manchester, where he stabbed five policemen while attempting evasion. Detective Constable Stephen Oake died on the scene, and Bourgass was found guilty of his murder and of conspiracy to commit a public nuisance with the use of poisons and was sentenced to life in prison in April 2005.²⁰ British journalist Sean O'Neill later identified the "ricin poison plot" as an al-Qaeda conspiracy, probably

11. Ian Bruce, "Grounded Flights Saved Parliament from Al-Qaeda Strike," *The Herald*, June 12, 2002.

12. Nathan Yates and Andy Lines, "MI6 War: Agents on Trail of Shop Raid Network," *The Mirror*, June 12, 2002.

13. "Terror 3 Jailed," *The Mirror*, February 22, 2003.

14. Giles Tremlett, "Threat of War: Saudis Jailed for Al-Qaida Plot to Bomb British ships," *The Guardian*, February 22, 2003.

15. Tim Shipman, "Blair Target of Assassins," *The Sunday Express*, January 19, 2003.

16. Sean O'Neill, "News in Brief: Suicide Bomb Threat by 'British Al-Qaeda'," *The Times* (London), January 31, 2008, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article3279612.ece> (June 2, 2008).

17. Justin Penrose and Vincent Moss, "Cops Foil Al-Qaeda Plot to Assassinate a Cabinet Minister," *The Sunday Mirror*, September 10, 2006, at http://www.sundaymirror.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=17716706&method=full&siteid=62484&headline=cops-foil-al-qaeda-plot-to-assassinate-a-cabinet-minister--name_page.html (June 2, 2008).

18. "British Police Have Foiled Several Terrorist Plots Since Sept. 11," Associated Press, August 10, 2006, at <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-7283525.html> (May 23, 2008).

19. Nick Allen and Shenai Raif, "Suspect Links Bourgass to Bin Laden's Al-Qaida Camps," The Press Association, April 12, 2005.

20. William Langewiesche, "From the Perspective of a White Crow: A Face in the Crowd," *Vanity Fair*, February 2008, at <http://dc.tengre.net/2008/04/face-in-crowd.html> (June 3, 2008).

linked to a global cell headed by legendary Islamist terrorist Abu Doha, who is currently awaiting extradition to the United States for his alleged involvement in the “millennium plot” to blow up Los Angeles International Airport in 1999.²¹

Bourgass and Doha also had strong links to radical cleric Abu Hamza’s infamous Finsbury Park mosque.²²

9/11-Style Attacks on Heathrow Airport, Canary Wharf, and Big Ben: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Summer 2003. Vague and unconfirmed reports of an al-Qaeda plot to attack Canary Wharf and Heathrow Airport with 9/11-style hijackings first surfaced in late 2004, reported by two respected British news sources. Plans of Heathrow Airport were among key finds on the computer of leading al-Qaeda figure Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan following his capture in Pakistan.²³ Details slowly began to emerge, and the plot was eventually confirmed in a key U.S. intelligence report released in June 2006, which coincided with a statement by President George W. Bush that America’s detainment and interrogation program had prevented a high-profile 9/11-style attack on London targets including Heathrow Airport and Canary Wharf.²⁴ Full details of how advanced the plots were remain unclear.

This plot has since been linked to Prime Minister Tony Blair’s previously unexplained decision in February 2003 to deploy armored vehicles and troops to Heathrow Airport, which was widely criticized at the time as exaggerating the terrorist threat in the U.K.²⁵

September 11 mastermind and al-Qaeda’s third in command, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM),

was later linked to the conspiracy. KSM was captured and arrested in Pakistan in March 2003 and then transferred to Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. detention facility in Cuba. In March 2007, the U.S. military released transcripts of KSM’s hearing at Guantanamo Bay in which he confessed to 31 separate plots spanning the globe. As part of his confession, he acknowledged that “I was responsible for planning, surveying, and financing for the operation to destroy Heathrow airport, the Canary Wharf building, and Big Ben on British soil.”²⁶

In February 2008, KSM and five co-conspirators were charged with killing 2,973 people in the 9/11 attacks. U.S. authorities are seeking the death penalty.²⁷

Possession of Articles for Use in Terrorism: Andrew Rowe (aka Yusuf the Jamaican), October 2003. Upon his return from Frankfurt, where he met al-Qaeda henchman Lionel Dumont, British citizen Andrew Rowe was arrested and found to be in possession of socks laden with traces of the explosive TNT. He was acquitted on an explosives-related charge but found guilty of possession of articles for use in terrorism, including instructions on how to use a mortar and books of codes on terrorist-related activities. Rowe was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in September 2005.²⁸

British security services believe that since his conversion to Islam in 1990, Rowe had developed impressive al-Qaeda contacts, receiving funding and training from them during his international travels to wage global jihad. The security services, having had him under surveillance for some time, also believe that Rowe was planning an imminent

21. Sean O’Neill, “Was Ricin the Last Act of Terror Cell?” *The Times* (London), April 15, 2005, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article381245.ece> (June 3, 2008).

22. Sean O’Neill, “Lessons Are Learnt After Each Attack,” *The Times* (London), November 1, 2007, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article2781591.ece> (June 3, 2008).

23. Michael Evans and Sean O’Neill, “How Al-Qaeda’s London Plot Was Foiled,” *The Times* (London), November 24, 2004, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article394716.ece> (June 3, 2008).

24. Sean O’Neill and Daniel McGrory, “9/11 Prisoners Reveal British Terror Targets,” *The Times* (London), September 8, 2006, at http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/law/public_law/article632020.ece (June 3, 2008).

25. Paul Waugh, “Al-Qaeda Plot to Hit Canary Wharf,” *The Evening Standard*, June 22, 2006.

26. David Williams, “9/11 Mastermind: I Targeted Big Ben,” *The Daily Mail*, March 16, 2007.

27. Anton Antonowicz, “9/11 Gang Accused of 2,973 murders,” *The Mirror*, February 12, 2008.

28. Nick Craven and Laura Peek, “Targeted by the Tourist of Terror,” *The Daily Mail*, September 24, 2005.

attack on a major British airport. This plot has also since been linked to Prime Minister Blair's decision to deploy armored vehicles and troops to Heathrow Airport, although no specific link has been suggested between Rowe and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.²⁹

Possession of Information Likely to Be of Use to Terrorists: Abbas Boutrab, November 2003.

Algerian Abbas Boutrab, an explosives expert for an al-Qaeda offshoot, was convicted of possessing information likely to be of use to terrorists in December 2005 and sentenced to six years in jail following his capture in Belfast.³⁰ Boutrab was found in possession of 25 computer discs containing information such as how to bring down a passenger airliner.³¹ It was revealed that Boutrab maintained a close personal relationship with notorious Finsbury Park mosque hate preacher Abu Hamza, who himself was convicted of inciting murder in 2006.³² Hamza inflamed Boutrab's extremist beliefs, encouraging him to conduct dummy runs to Dublin Airport, where he planned to explode a device hidden in a talcum-powder tin aboard an aircraft.³³

Transatlantic Airplane Shoe-Bombing Plot: Saajid Badat, November 2003. Operating under the guidance of Belgium-based al-Qaeda operative Nizar Trabelsi, Badat was scheduled to detonate a shoe bomb mid-air aboard a U.S.-bound flight departing the U.K. on December 17, 2001, but lost his nerve. Fellow al-Qaeda plotter Richard Reid did not lose his and attempted to explode a shoe bomb aboard a Paris-to-Miami flight on December 22, 2001. Reid was overpowered by fellow passengers

and is currently serving a 110-year sentence in an American prison.³⁴

Badat and Reid were students of radical cleric Abu Hamza, who is responsible for recruiting, radicalizing, and recommending for terrorism training many of Britain's most dangerous al-Qaeda operatives.³⁵ Having been recommended for training at the al-Qaeda-affiliated Khalden terrorist camp in Afghanistan, Badat and Reid proceeded to volunteer for these suicide missions. However, upon returning to Britain, Badat changed his mind and, when arrested in November 2003, fully cooperated with the police. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison in April 2005. The United States may request his extradition after he has served his sentence in the U.K.³⁶

Bluewater Shopping Center/Ministry of Sound Fertilizer Bomb Plot: Omar Khyam, Waheed Mahmood, Anthony Garcia, Salahuddin Amin, and Jawad Akbar ("The Crevice Gang"), March 2004. In April 2007, five British nationals were convicted of an al-Qaeda bomb plot targeting a shopping center and a nightclub and were sentenced to life imprisonment. Anthony Garcia bought 1,300 pounds of fertilizer in November 2003, and in March 2004, the plotters were secretly recorded by the police trying to decide between the shopping center and nightclub as their preferred target. Police swooped in soon afterward, fearing an imminent attack.

It was revealed that ringleader Omar Khyam was radicalized by hate preacher Omar Bakri Mohammed,³⁷ the "Tottenham Ayatollah" famous for saying, "I want Britain to become an Islamic state. I

29. David Leppard, "Al-Qaeda's Heathrow Jet Plot Revealed," *The Sunday Times* (London), October 9, 2005, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article576410.ece> (June 3, 2008).

30. Jamie Doward, Mark Townsend, and Henry McDonald, "Focus Terror: The Making of a New Terror," *The Observer*, July 8, 2007, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jul/08/terrorism.henrymcdonald> (June 3, 2008).

31. "N. Ireland Jails Al-Qaida suspect," *UPI NewsTrack TopNews*, December 20, 2005.

32. Marin Breen, "The Deadly Conspiracy," *The News of the World*, February 12, 2006.

33. Martin Breen, "Price of Terror," *The News of the World*, August 12, 2007.

34. Tahira Yaqoob and Neil Sears, "From Model Pupil to Shoe Bomber," *The Daily Mail*, March 1, 2005.

35. John Twomey, "Mosque That Taught Terror," *The Express*, February 8, 2006.

36. Vikram Dodd, "Ex-Grammar School Boy Gets 13 Years for Shoe Bomb Plot," *The Guardian*, April 23, 2005.

37. Gordon Rayner, "How the Preachers of Hate Turned Suburban Boys into Zealots Bent on Mass Murder," *The Daily Mail*, May 1, 2007.

want to see the flag of Islam raised in 10 Downing Street.”³⁸ Salahuddin Amin gained inspiration from extremist cleric Abu Hamza, who also tutored 21/7 plotter Muktar Said Ibrahim and would-be plane bomber Abbas Boutrab.

It was later found that some of the plotters, including Omar Khyam, were known associates of 7/7 bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan, with whom they received al-Qaeda terrorism training in Pakistan.³⁹

Preaching Hate: Abu Hamza, May 2004. Abu Hamza became a focal point of the debate over hate preachers in Britain after establishing the infamous Finsbury Park mosque “as a centre of Islamist extremism in Europe.” Although he became somewhat of a caricature in the media initially, subsequent investigations have revealed him to be a key figure in the global Islamist terrorist movement and “Osama Bin Laden’s prime fixer.”⁴⁰ According to French security services, the one-eyed, hook-handed preacher recruited and radicalized multiple al-Qaeda supporters, sending them to terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.⁴¹

Hamza’s teachings were closely followed by several key convicted Islamist terrorists, including 21/7 ringleader Muktar Said Ibrahim, al-Qaeda henchman Dhiren Barot, fertilizer-bomb plotter Salahuddin Amin, and al-Qaeda explosives expert Abbas Boutrab.

Hamza was convicted of inciting racial hatred and six counts of soliciting murder and sentenced to seven years in prison in February 2006. He was also found guilty of possessing a terrorist manual, the “Encyclopedia of the Afghani Jihad” (a three-year

sentence to run concurrently). Upon release, he faces extradition to the United States, where he is wanted on a series of terrorism charges, including recruiting persons for terrorist training in Afghanistan, providing support to the Taliban, trying to set up a terrorist training camp in Oregon, and supplying materials to kidnappers in Yemen.⁴²

Dirty-Bomb Plotter: Dhiren Barot, August 2004. Senior al-Qaeda representative Dhiren Barot led a terrorist cell in planning attacks on key financial institutions in New York; Washington; Newark, New Jersey; and the United Kingdom. His cell planned multiple conspiracies to attack the British homeland, including a plan to attack London’s Underground tunnels and to set off dirty bombs—either of which would have caused mass civilian casualties.⁴³ They also wanted to explode gas cylinders packed into stretch limousines in a series of coordinated blasts.

Dhiren Barot was jailed for a minimum of 40 years in November 2006 for conspiracy to murder, a sentence that was later reduced to 30 years.⁴⁴ In June 2007, seven other men were convicted on the same charge, receiving sentences of between 15 and 26 years: Abdul Aziz Jalil (26 years); Junade Feroze (22 years); Mohammed Naveed Bhatti (20 years); Nadeem Tarmohamed (20 years); Zia Ul Haq (18 years); Omar Abdul Rehman (15 years); and Qaisar Shaffi (15 years). These seven men played a variety of supporting roles for al-Qaeda “general” Barot, who handpicked them for their different skills.⁴⁵

As was the case with fellow Islamist plotters Salahuddin Amin, Muktar Said Ibrahim, and Abbas Boutrab, Dhiren Barot was a follower of Abu

38. Audrey Gillan, “Militant Groups in the UK,” *The Guardian*, June 19, 2002, at www.guardian.co.uk/religion/Story/0,,739813,00.html (June 3, 2008).

39. Rayner, “How the Preachers of Hate Turned Suburban Boys into Zealots Bent on Mass Murder.”

40. Gordon Thomas and Andrea Perry, “Hamza’s Call to Murder the Queen,” *The Sunday Express*, February 12, 2006.

41. Duncan Campbell, Vikram Dodd, and Tania Branigan, “Guilty: The Cleric Who Preached Murder as a Religious Duty,” *The Guardian*, February 8, 2006, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/feb/08/topstories3.terrorism> (June 3, 2008).

42. “Abu Hamza: Hamza Faces a Further 100 Years in U.S. Jail After U.K. Release,” *The Birmingham Post*, February 8, 2006.

43. “U.K. Al-Qaeda Cell Members Jailed,” BBC News, June 15, 2007, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6755797.stm (September 18, 2007).

44. “Ocean’s 11 of Terror,” *The Daily Mail*, June 16, 2007.

45. *Ibid.*

Hamza. He also attended terrorist training camps in Pakistan.⁴⁶

Supporting Terrorism: Abu Izzadeen, Shah Jalal Hussain, Simon Keeler, Abdul Muhid, Abdul Rehman Saleem, and Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan, November 2004. These six men were individually convicted on a series of terrorism-related charges in April 2008, including terrorist fundraising and inciting terrorism abroad. Their convictions relate to a series of hate speeches given by the men at the infamous Regent's Park mosque and at other public events.⁴⁷ Muslim activist Abu Izzadeen, who rose to prominence in the British media after heckling then-Home Secretary John Reid on live television, called on Muslims to fight coalition troops in Iraq and donate money to insurgents.⁴⁸ Izzadeen also solicited support for Osama bin Laden, having been mentored by hate cleric and al-Qaeda's "spiritual leader" Omar Bakri Mohammed, who also radicalized 21/7 plotter Omar Khyam.⁴⁹

Ringleaders Izzadeen and Keeler were jailed for four and a half years for inciting and funding terrorism and an additional two and a half years for other terrorism-related offenses (to be served concurrently). The others received similar sentences for a series of terrorism-related offenses.⁵⁰

7/7 London Public Transportation Bombings: Mohammed Siddique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer,

Germaine Lindsay, and Hasib Hussain, July 7, 2005. A series of coordinated bomb blasts hit multiple London transportation targets during morning rush hour on July 7, 2005, killing 52 people (as well as the four suicide bombers) in Britain's deadliest terrorist attack. Three bombs exploded on London Underground trains less than a minute apart, and a fourth exploded on a bus shortly thereafter. In September 2005, al-Qaeda released to al-Jazeera television Mohammed Siddique Khan's suicide tape claiming official association with the bombings.⁵¹ Al-Qaeda released Tanweer's martyrdom video to coincide with the first anniversary of the bombings, claiming to have trained both Khan and Tanweer in bomb making.⁵²

Mohammed Siddique Khan was later revealed to have had contact with several al-Qaeda operatives, including a terrorist cell detailed on the computer of senior al-Qaeda communications operative Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan (arrested in Pakistan in 2004 but later released).⁵³ Siddique Khan also attended a terrorist training camp in Pakistan in 2003, one of several visits he made to Pakistan.⁵⁴ Khan and Tanweer visited Pakistan together just months before the attacks, probably for training and directional purposes, and there met up with 21/7 attempted bomber Muktar Said Ibrahim.⁵⁵ In late 2004, three of the bombers—Khan, Tanweer, and Hussain—also visited madras-

46. David Pallister, "National: Seven Linked to Al-Qaida Are Jailed for Terror Plot," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2007, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/jun/16/terrorism.alqaida> (May 23, 2008).

47. "Six Guilty of Terrorism Support," BBC News, April 17, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7352969.stm (June 3, 2008).

48. "Outspoken U.K. Activist Convicted of Raising Funds for Terrorists, Inciting Terrorism Overseas," Associated Press, April 17, 2008, at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2008/04/17/news/Britain-Outspoken-Activist.php> (June 4, 2008).

49. Lucy Ballinger, "Facing Life in Prison, the Cleric of Hate Who Ranted at John Reid," *The Mail*, April 18, 2008.

50. Lee Glendinning, "Muslim Cleric 'Devoid of Remorse' Gets 4 ½ Years for Terrorism offences," *The Guardian*, April 19, 2008, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/apr/19/uksecurity.ukcrime> (June 4, 2008).

51. Kevin Sullivan, "Claims of London Suspect Are Aired," *The Washington Post*, September 2, 2005, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/01/AR2005090102161.html> (June 3, 2008).

52. Massoud Ansari, "British Afghan Hunted as the Link Between Tube Bombers and al-Qaeda," *The Sunday Telegraph*, July 9, 2006, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1523459/British-Afghan-hunted-as-the-link-between-Tube-bombers-and-al-Qaeda.html> (May 23, 2008).

53. Matt Moore, "British Police Appeal to Public in Bombings Probe; Officials Abroad Investigate Local Links," Associated Press, July 15, 2005.

54. "Senior Al-Qaeda Leader Living Freely in London," *The Straits Times*, May 2, 2007.

55. Alan MacDermid, "MI5 Director: Terror Threat to Britain Is Widening," *The Herald*, November 6, 2007.

sas in Pakistan, where it is suspected they recorded their martyrdom videos.⁵⁶

All four bombers died in the attacks. Additional arrests were made, and Waheed Ali, Sadeer Saleem, and Mohammed Shakil are currently standing trial in connection with the bombings. Shakil and Ali previously traveled to Pakistan separately with plot ringleader Mohammed Siddique Khan.⁵⁷

Further investigation resulted in the arrest and conviction of Khalid Khaliq, who was found guilty of possessing an al-Qaeda training manual. Although the charge was unrelated to the 7/7 bombings, Khaliq was established as an associate of Khan's. Khalid Khaliq is currently serving a 16-month jail sentence.⁵⁸

21/7 Attempted London Public Transportation Bombs: Muktar Said Ibrahim, Yassin Omar, Ramzi Mohammed, Hussain Osman, and Manfo Asiedu, July 2005. Just three weeks after the 7/7 terrorist attacks, four explosions took place on other transportation targets in an almost identical al-Qaeda-style plot. However, the detonators failed to ignite the main explosive charges, and the plot failed. A fifth abandoned backpack was found days later, discarded in nearby woodland.

Muktar Said Ibrahim, Yassin Omar, Ramzi Mohammed, and Hussain Osman were jailed for life and sentenced to 40 years minimum imprisonment in July 2007, convicted of conspiracy to murder.⁵⁹

Their applications for leave to appeal against the convictions were also rejected in April 2008.⁶⁰ The man who abandoned the fifth backpack, Manfo Asiedu, was jailed for 33 years in November 2007 for conspiracy to cause explosions even though he "lost his nerve at the last moment."⁶¹

Ringleader Ibrahim attended sermons given by hate preacher Hamza⁶² and worked closely with Mohammed Hamid, otherwise known as "Osama bin London."⁶³ He also attended al-Qaeda terrorist training camps in Pakistan at the same time as 7/7 bombers Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer, where they likely coordinated their plots.⁶⁴ The trial revealed that the same highly unusual type of explosive was used in both the 7/7 and 21/7 plots and that the men were likely tutored by the same al-Qaeda trainer.⁶⁵ The judge, Justice Fulford, highlighted the deep interconnectivity between the 7/7 and 21/7 bombers at the trial, linking them to al-Qaeda.⁶⁶

A sixth plotter, Adel Yahya, was jailed in November 2007 for six years and nine months on a terrorism-related charge.⁶⁷ Five others received sentences of seven to 17 years in February 2008 for either assisting the plotters or knowing of the plots and keeping them secret: Wahbi Mohammed (17 years); Siraj Ali (12 years); Abdul Sherif (10 years); Ismail Abdurahman (10 years); and Muhedin Ali (seven years).⁶⁸ Four others, including Osman's wife Yeshe Girma, were convicted in June 2008, also for either

56. "7/7 Bomber Shehzad Tanweer Had Warned of More Attacks," *The Hindustan Times*, July 7, 2006.

57. David Williams and Lucy Ballinger, "7/7 Families See Bombers Strike," *The Daily Mail*, April 11, 2008.

58. "Al-Qaida Manual Man Jailed for 16 Months," *The Birmingham Post*, March 12, 2008.

59. Adam Fresco and Sean O'Neill, "Last 21/7 Plotter Admits Role in Failed Attack," *The Times* (London), November 10, 2007, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article2842755.ece> (June 3, 2008).

60. "21 July Plotters Lose Appeal Bid," BBC News, April 23, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7362408.stm (June 12, 2008).

61. "Fifth Bomber Jailed for His Part in Failed Suicide Plot," *The Birmingham Post*, November 21, 2007.

62. Tariq Panja, "British Police Face Awkward Questions After Surveillance Failed to Prevent 2005 Bombing Try," Associated Press, July 10, 2007, at <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/20070710-1518-britain-terrorismintelligence.html> (June 3, 2008).

63. Duncan Gardham, "Osama bin London, Mentor to 21/7 Bombers, Convicted," *The Daily Telegraph*, February 27, 2008.

64. Paul Cheston, "21/7 and 7/7 'Were Joint Operation,'" *The Evening Standard*, March 23, 2007.

65. David Williams, "The Trial of Terror Leads to Pakistan," *The Daily Mail*, July 11, 2007.

66. John Twomey, "21/7 Bomb Plotters Are Locked Up for at Least Forty Years," *The Express*, July 12, 2007.

67. Fresco and O'Neill, "Last 21/7 Plotter Admits Role in Failed Attack."

assisting the plotters or knowing of the plots and keeping them secret, and are awaiting sentencing.⁶⁹

Inciting Terrorist Murder: Younes Tsouli, Waseem Mughal, and Tariq Al-Daour, October 2005. Three men were convicted in July 2007 for inciting terrorist murder over the Internet. The men carried out al-Qaeda propaganda campaigns and operated extremist Web sites, distributing materials such as videos of beheadings and bomb-making instructions for suicide vests. Moroccan-born Tsouli and British-born Mughal both possessed material on the executions of British hostage Ken Bigley and American journalist Daniel Pearl and ran media campaigns encouraging people to fight jihad in Iraq.⁷⁰ Al-Daour posted comments about becoming “the new Osama”⁷¹ online, and an online communicant of his, Yassin Nassari, was subsequently found guilty of possessing documents likely to be useful to a terrorist and was jailed for three and a half years.⁷²

Further investigation revealed exactly how significant Tsouli was to the al-Qaeda propaganda machine, and his sentence was subsequently increased to 16 years. International arrests, including arrests of two individuals in the United States, were also made following a thorough search of Tsouli’s computer.⁷³

Attempted Car Bombings in London and Glasgow: Kafeel Ahmed and Billal Abdullah, June 2006. Two cars containing explosive materials

were discovered in London’s main entertainment district in June 2006, but they failed to detonate. A day later, Kafeel Ahmed and Billal Abdullah tried to drive a jeep packed with explosives into Glasgow airport but were frustrated by concrete security bollards. Ahmed proceeded to self-immolate, later dying from his injuries.

Abdullah, along with multiple other suspects in the intertwined cases, has been charged with conspiracy to cause explosions. Sabeel Ahmed, Mohammed Asha, and Marwah Asha are currently awaiting trial.⁷⁴ Ahmed, who was never charged with a crime because he failed to regain consciousness, was found to be a known associate of convicted terrorist and would-be plane bomber Abbas Boutrab, and British security services believe they were both members of the same Ireland-based al-Qaeda cell.⁷⁵

Possession of Terrorist Materials: Omar Altimimi, July 2006. Omar Altimimi was first brought to the attention of police on suspicion of money laundering, but upon arrest, he was found to be in possession of a “vast library of terrorist material” and had already selected targets for bombings, including nightclubs and airports.⁷⁶ The exact extent of his intentions remains unknown because of his early interception. The sleeper agent was convicted of terrorism and money laundering offenses in July 2007 and sentenced to nine years in prison.⁷⁷

68. Duncan Gardham, “Five Men Who Aided July 21 ‘Bombers’ Jailed,” *The Daily Telegraph*, February 5, 2008.

69. “Wife of 21 July Plotter Convicted,” BBC News, June 11, 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7448312.stm (June 12, 2008).

70. “Trio Fuelled Al-Qaeda Propaganda,” BBC News, July 4, 2007, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6264150.stm (June 3, 2008).

71. “London Court Jails Three for Online Terror,” Agence France-Presse, July 5, 2007, at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=070705142313.zr9n5g5g&show_article=1 (June 3, 2008).

72. “Man Jailed Over Terror Blueprints,” BBC News, July 17, 2007, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6902942.stm (June 3, 2008).

73. Justin Davenport, “Cyber Agent Ran Al-Qaeda Plots from Flat in W12,” *The Evening Standard*, January 16, 2008.

74. Jamie Doward, Mark Townsend, and Henry McDonald, “Focus Terror: The Making of a New Terror,” *The Observer*, July 8, 2007, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jul/08/terrorism.henrymcdonald> (June 3, 2008).

75. “Bomb Suspect Link to Jailed Airline Plotter,” *The Express*, July 9, 2007.

76. “Man Jailed over Terror Cell Plans,” BBC News, July 6, 2007, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/manchester/6277384.stm (June 3, 2008).

77. Ryan Sabey, “Terror Moles at Met,” *News of the World*, March 9, 2008, at http://www.newsoftheworld.co.uk/0903_alqaeda.shtml (June 3, 2008).

Full details of Altimimi's identity and sleeper cell also remain unclear, although he was found to have links to al-Qaeda, including Dhiren Barot's associate Junade Ferouze.⁷⁸ He was also found with significant amounts of al-Qaeda materials downloaded from password-protected Web sites on his computer, leading police to believe that he was a significant player for al-Qaeda, awaiting instructions since his arrival from the Netherlands in 2002.⁷⁹

Yusuf Abdullah (also known as Nashwan Gassar) was convicted on charges of money laundering unrelated to terrorism and sentenced to three years in jail.⁸⁰

Liquid Explosives Plot, August 2006. British and American intelligence officers thwarted a plan to detonate liquid explosives on at least seven commercial transatlantic flights headed from Britain for the U.S. and Canada. Using explosives and detonators disguised as drinks, cosmetics, and everyday electronic equipment, the explosions would have resulted in a projected death toll of at least 1,500.⁸¹ Eight British men have been charged with conspiracy to murder and endangering the safety of an aircraft: Abdulla Ahmed Ali (also known as Ali Ahmed Khan); Assad Sarwar; Tanvir Hussain; Mohammed Gulzar; Ibrahim Savant; Arafat Waheed Khan; Waheed Zaman; and Umar Islam (also known as Brian Young). Their trial began this past April.⁸²

Al-Qaeda's involvement in planning and executing this plot remains unclear, although the plot had "all

the hallmarks" of an al-Qaeda attack according to U.S. homeland security analyst Fran Townsend.⁸³ Abdulla Ahmed Ali was identified as one of the alleged cell leaders (along with Gulzar) and was said to be taking direction from al-Qaeda operative Rashid Rauf.⁸⁴ Rauf left the U.K. for Pakistan in 2002 after the murder of his uncle, a crime for which British police still seek to question him. Rauf was quickly arrested by the Pakistani security service after the airliner plots were foiled, but his mysterious disappearance from police custody in December 2007 means that little more is known about his role in the plot.⁸⁵

U.S. counterterrorism operatives later identified al-Qaeda's chief operational planner, Abu Obeida al Masri (now believed to be dead), as a possible overseer of the plot.⁸⁶

"Osama bin London's" Training Camps: Mohammed Hamid and Atilla Ahmet, September 2006. Mohammed Hamid, who dubs himself "Osama bin London," was arrested in September 2006 after being filmed by an undercover policeman organizing al-Qaeda-style terrorist training camps across Britain and inciting murder. Because he had groomed and trained the four failed 21/7 bombers, his conviction for three counts of solicitation to murder was announced only when the 21/7 trial concluded in February 2008. Hamid and his co-accused, Atilla Ahmet (also known as Abu Abdullah), discussed attacking various targets including the House of Commons and members of

78. "Terror Cell 'Sleeper' Is Jailed for Nine Years," *The Birmingham Post*, July 7, 2007.

79. John Steele, "Mystery Asylum Seeker Kept Bomb Manuals," *The Daily Telegraph*, July 6, 2007, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1556659/Mystery-asylum-seeker-kept-bomb-manuals.html> (June 3, 2008).

80. "Terror Cell 'Sleeper' Is Jailed for Nine Years."

81. James Auger, "Eight Britons on Trial over 'Unprecedented' 2006 Terrorist Plot Against Multiple Airliners," *Global Insight*, April 4, 2008.

82. David Stringer, "Airliner Bomb Plot Trial Begins in U.K.," Associated Press, April 4, 2008, at <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=4582434> (June 3, 2008).

83. Stephen Wright and David Williams, "Bomb Plot Traced Back to Al Qaeda," *The Daily Mail*, August 12, 2006, at <http://winterparking.blogspot.com/2006/08/daily-mail-bomb-plot-traced-back-to-al.html> (June 3, 2008).

84. John Crewdson, Kim Barker, and Stephen J. Hedges, "Leader of Airline Plot Identified as 'Cell Leader in Britain,'" *The Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 2006, at http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-30552346_ITM (June 3, 2008).

85. Ian Cobain, "Special Report: The Mysterious Disappearance of an Alleged Terror Mastermind," *The Guardian*, January 28, 2008, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/jan/28/pakistan.world1> (June 3, 2008).

86. Jerry Seper, "Terror Planner Dies on Afghan Border," *The Washington Times*, April 10, 2008, at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080410/NATION/666700676/1002> (June 3, 2008).

the British Royal family.⁸⁷ Al-Qaeda operative Ahmet, also a close associate and heir-apparent of Abu Hamza, was jailed for six years and 11 months for soliciting murder. Hamid was sentenced to remain in jail indefinitely, with a minimum term of seven and a half years.⁸⁸

Five others were arrested and jailed for attending Hamid's training camps: Kadar Ahmed, Kibley da Costa, Mohammed Roger Al Figari, Yassin Mutegom-bwa, and Mohammed Kyriacou. They received varying sentences ranging from three years and eight months to four years and 11 months.⁸⁹

The arrests were sparked when police raided a private Islamic school—the Jameah Islameah School—in East Sussex amid allegations of its links to terrorist networks and training camps. Both Hamid and Ahmet have been connected with the school, whose illustrious visitors include Ahmet's mentor, hate preacher Abu Hamza. Ahmet was filmed “educating” pupils at the school by singing pro-Taliban lyrics to the tune of Harry Belafonte's “Banana Boat Song.”⁹⁰ The government has since ordered the school to close for failing to provide adequate levels of education.⁹¹

Preparing to Carry Out Terrorist Attacks: Sohail Qureshi, October 2006. Sohail Qureshi was detained by British police as he attempted to board a flight to Pakistan carrying weapons, cash, and terrorist handbooks. He admitted that he was preparing to launch a terrorist attack; police speculate that he was

probably on his way to fight with the Taliban against British troops in Afghanistan.⁹² A long-standing al-Qaeda associate and fundraiser who trained at terrorist camps in Pakistan in the 1990s, Qureshi was sentenced to four and half years in prison in January 2008.⁹³ The British government is appealing what it considers an unduly lenient sentence.

Plan to Behead British Soldier: Parviz Khan, January 2007. In January 2008, Parviz Khan pleaded guilty to leading an al-Qaeda-backed plot to kidnap and decapitate a British soldier from Birmingham and post the video on the Internet.⁹⁴ He also pleaded guilty to sending equipment to extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan and was sentenced to a minimum of 14 years imprisonment in early 2008. It is believed that Khan was given authorization by al-Qaeda to carry out the attack during one of his deliveries to Pakistan in 2006.⁹⁵ Khan was also a follower of hate cleric Abu Hamza.⁹⁶

Three of his accomplices pleaded guilty to other terrorism-related offenses: Basiru Gassama (failing to disclose details of a terrorist plot: two years); Mohammed Irfan (helping Khan to supply equipment to extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan: four years); and Hamid Elasmr (helping Khan to supply equipment to extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan: three years and four months). Zahoor Iqbal was found guilty at trial for assisting Khan in the shipment of equipment to

87. Lucy Bannerman and Sean O'Neill, “Osama bin London, Trainer of 21/7 Plotters, Is Convicted,” *Times Online*, February 27, 2008, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article3441588.ece> (June 11, 2008).

88. “Terror Chief Who Called Himself ‘Osama bin London’ Jailed Indefinitely,” *Mail Online*, March 7, 2008, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-528566/Terror-chief-called-Osama-Bin-London-jailed-indefinitely.html> (June 3, 2008).

89. Simon Hughes, “52 dead? Not Even Breakfast to Me,” *The Sun*, February 27, 2008.

90. “Terrorist Sang About Attack to School Pupils,” *The Kent and Sussex Courier*, February 29, 2008.

91. Laura Clark, “School Linked to Jihad Training Ordered to Shut,” *The Daily Mail*, February 10, 2007, at http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/835680/school_linked_to_jihad_training_ordered_to_shut/index.html (June 3, 2008).

92. “Terrorist's Sentence ‘Too Lenient,’” The Press Association, April 22, 2008.

93. Charlotte Gill, “The Dentist Terrorist: British Muslim Who Planned to Murder U.K. Troops Jailed,” *The Daily Mail*, January 9, 2008, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-506841/The-dentist-terrorist-British-Muslim-planned-murder-UK-troops-jailed.html> (June 3, 2008).

94. Robert Jobson and Nicholas Cecil, “Soldier Prince Will Be No. 1 Terrorist Target Back in U.K.,” *The Evening Standard*, February 29, 2008, at <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-15415383.html> (June 3, 2008).

95. Rod Chaytor, “Hang Him Up Like a Pig,” *The Mirror*, February 19, 2008.

96. Martin Stote, “Ringleader of Beheading Plot Was Hamza Devotee,” *The Express*, January 31, 2008.

extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan and was sentenced to seven years in prison.⁹⁷

The Threat to the U.K.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown stated to the House of Commons in summer 2007 that since 9/11, there have been 15 attempted terrorist attacks on British soil and called on all countries “to confront a generation-long challenge to defeat al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist violence.”⁹⁸ However, the March 2008 National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom contains a stunning contradiction: “while terrorism represents a threat to all our communities, and an attack on our values and our way of life, it does not at present amount to a strategic threat.”⁹⁹

The Prime Minister’s *volte face* marks a profound break with his predecessor Tony Blair, whose strength and determination to fight the war on terrorism were driven by his instinctive understanding of the nature of the threat. When Blair recalled Parliament from its recess immediately following the 9/11 attacks, he remarked: “This was an attack not just on a number of buildings, but on the very notion of democracy.”¹⁰⁰

Britain’s security services are right that the Islamist terrorist threat has yet to reach its peak. MI5’s aggressive, tactical pursuit of terrorists is clearly working, having foiled several major plots that, if successful, would have resulted in mass civilian casualties.

But the nature of the threat facing Britain is undoubtedly strategic as well, and downplaying it to a tactical or law-and-order issue will prove counterproductive.¹⁰¹ The Prime Minister must accept that al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism should be dealt with both tactically and strategically. He must not be driven by a short-term political desire to break with the Blair years.

Al-Qaeda Plots and Conspiracies Against NATO’s European Members

Britain is not alone in being targeted by al-Qaeda and its associates. In a web of both interconnected and separate plots, Continental Europe has been forced to confront its own share of al-Qaeda plots and conspiracies. The following examples can be identified from publicly available information.

Klein Brogel Air Base Plot, Belgium: Nizar Trabelsi, September 2001.¹⁰² In July 2001, United Arab Emirates authorities arrested French-Algerian Djamel Beghal at Dubai International Airport for passport fraud. Upon further questioning, Beghal confessed to several al-Qaeda plots and conspiracies, a confession that proved critical to uncovering a much larger al-Qaeda network and multiple European-based terrorist cells.¹⁰³

Police quickly discovered a connection between Dutch-based Beghal and Belgian-based former professional soccer player Nizar Trabelsi. Trabelsi was planning to carry out a suicide-bomb attack on the U.S.’s NATO Klein Brogel base in Belgium, which is

97. James Cartledge, “Terror Plot: Dad’s Year of Hell for a Crime He Had No Part In,” *The Birmingham Evening Mail*, February 26, 2008.

98. Gordon Brown, in Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Vol. 463, Part No. 130, July 25, 2007, Column 841, at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070725/debtext/70725-0004.htm> (June 3, 2008).

99. Cabinet Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an Interdependent World*, March 2008, p. 11, at http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/documents/security/national_security_strategy.pdf (June 3, 2008).

100. Michael Settle, “NATO Pledges All for One and One for All; Palestinian Leader Is Among First to Donate Blood for Casualties,” *The Herald*, September 13, 2001.

101. This point was first made by Nile Gardiner, Ph.D. See “The Anti-Churchill,” April 1, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed040108g.cfm>.

102. Belgian authorities were put on heightened alert in December 2007 when they believed they had uncovered a plan to break Trabelsi out of prison. They even cancelled the annual New Year’s Eve fireworks show in the capital, Brussels. Fourteen suspected Islamist extremists were arrested, but they were released days later for lack of evidence.

103. Diana Muriel, “Thwarting Terror Cells in Europe,” CNN.com, January 23, 2002, at <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/10/26/inv.thwarting.cells/index.html> (June 4, 2008).

widely believed to house nuclear weapons. He had placed himself on a list of suicide-bombing volunteers after previously training at a terrorist camp in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁴

On September 13, Belgian authorities arrested Trabelsi and several other terrorist cell members in Brussels and Rotterdam. At Trabelsi's Brussels apartment, police found weapons and bomb-making materials, including large quantities of acetone and sulfur.¹⁰⁵ In September 2003, a Belgian court sentenced Trabelsi to the maximum of 10 years in prison for various offences, including being a member of a private militia, under a 1934 law that was used in the absence of stronger terrorism laws in Belgium in 2003.¹⁰⁶

Another defendant, al-Qaeda recruiter Tarek Maaroufi, was sentenced to six years for his involvement in the 2001 suicide assassination of heroic anti-Taliban military commander Ahmad Shah Massoud in Afghanistan. His sentence was later increased to seven years at appeal.¹⁰⁷ In total, 23 people were tried for a range of terrorist offenses. Five were acquitted, and 16 others, in addition to Trabelsi and Maaroufi, were convicted of a range of lesser crimes, including forgery and handling stolen goods, and received sentences of five years or less in prison.¹⁰⁸

“Shoe Bombing” Plot to Blow Up American Airlines Flight 63 from Paris to Miami: Richard Reid, December 2001. British-born al-Qaeda plotter Richard Reid attempted to explode a shoe bomb aboard American Airlines flight 63 from Paris to Miami, carrying 185 people, on

December 22, 2001. Reid was thwarted when a flight attendant caught him attempting to detonate the plastic explosives hidden in the lining of his shoe and acted in concert with other passengers to restrain him.¹⁰⁹

Reid was a regular attendee at the Finsbury Park mosque in South London and a graduate of al-Qaeda's Khalden training camp in Afghanistan. Upon arrest, fellow al-Qaeda operative Mohammad Mansour Jabarah claimed that Reid went to Afghanistan specifically to prepare for his shoe-bomb attempt. He also told investigators that Reid reported directly to al-Qaeda's number three operative, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.¹¹⁰

Reid is currently serving a 110-year sentence in an American prison, convicted of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and interference with flight crew using a dangerous weapon.¹¹¹

Plot to Attack Jewish or Israeli Targets in Germany: Shadi Abdallah, April 2002. German authorities arrested Osama bin Laden's former bodyguard Shadi Abdallah in April 2002, and he immediately confessed to being part of a terrorist cell that planned attacks on local Jewish targets, including the Jewish Museum in Berlin and Jewish discos and restaurants. With connections to both al-Qaeda and Abu Musab al Zarqawi's Islamic terrorist group al-Tawhid, Abdallah proved to be a key find for counterterrorism officials.¹¹² Abdallah was able to provide information on key al-Qaeda officials such as Mohammed Abateh, with whom he trained in Afghanistan.¹¹³

104. Constant Brand, “Al-Qaida Sympathizer's Appeal Rejected by Belgian Court,” Associated Press Worldstream, June 9, 2004, at <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1P1-95349304.html> (June 4, 2008).

105. Muriel, “Thwarting Terror Cells in Europe.”

106. Elaine Sciolino and Hélène Fouquet, “Terrorists in Europe Find Base in Belgium,” *International Herald Tribune*, October 10, 2005, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/10/09/news/belgium-5413344.php> (June 4, 2008).

107. Brand, “Al-Qaida Sympathizer's Appeal Rejected by Belgian Court.”

108. Stephen Castle, “Ex-Footballer Jailed over Al-Qa'ida Web in Europe,” *The Independent*, October 1, 2003, at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/europe/exfootballer-jailed-over-alqaida-web-in-europe-581730.html> (June 4, 2008).

109. Cary Booth Thomas, “Courage in the Air,” *Time*, September 1, 2002, at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101020909/aattendants.html> (June 4, 2008).

110. Maria Ressa, “Sources: Reid Is Al-Qaeda Operative,” CNN.com, December 6, 2003, at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/01/30/reid.alqaeda/> (June 4, 2008).

111. Yaqoob and Sears, “From Model Pupil to Shoe Bomber.”

112. Roger Boyes, “Helpful Terrorist Has Jail Term Cut to Four Years,” *The Times* (London), November 27, 2003.

In November 2003, Abdallah was sentenced to four years in prison, but he was released early after agreeing to turn states' evidence against his co-conspirators. In October 2005, Mohamed Abu Dhess, Ashraf al-Dagma, and Ismail Shalabi were sentenced to six to eight years in prison for their role in planning the attacks. The fourth cell member, Djamel Mustafa, was sentenced to five years for his role in plotting the attacks and for supporting the al-Tawhid terrorist organization.¹¹⁴

Accessory to Murder in the 9/11 Attacks, Germany: Mounir al-Motassadeq, November 2002. In January 2007, a German court sentenced Mounir al-Motassadeq to 15 years in prison for being an accessory to murder in connection with the 9/11 attacks.¹¹⁵ This was the end of the Moroccan's five-year journey through the German court system, including multiple trials and appeals that followed his initial arrest in November 2002.

Motassadeq first came to the attention of the German authorities in November 2001 when they discovered that he had power of attorney over a bank account held by Marwan al-Shehhi, who allegedly flew the second plane into the World Trade Center. Although he denied knowledge of the 9/11 attacks, Motassadeq admitted to attending an al-Qaeda terrorist training camp in Afghanistan and being a member of Mohammed Atta's radical Islamic group in Hamburg, which fostered close ties to al-Qaeda. Prosecutors accused Motassadeq of serving as the group's "treasurer" by handling funds for the living expenses of three hijackers: Atta, Shehhi, and Ziad Jarrah.¹¹⁶

Madrid Train Bombing: Emilio Trashorras, Jamal Zougam, and Othman el-Gnaoui, March 2004. On March 11, 2004, 10 bombs were detonated remotely during the height of rush hour on four commuter trains in Madrid, Spain, killing 191 people and injuring more than 1,800. Police subsequently defused an additional three bombs that failed to detonate and would have caused additional mass civilian casualties.

The bombing was conducted by the Moroccan Islamic Combat Group (GICM), loosely affiliated with al-Qaeda. Although the GICM operates independently of al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, met with a GICM leader in Afghanistan in 2000 to pledge political and military support for its campaigns.¹¹⁷ Terrorism expert Thomas Joscelyn has also identified multiple connections between the plotters and key al-Qaeda chieftains, such as convicted Spanish cell leader and 9/11 plotter Imad Yarkas and British-based hate cleric Abu Qatada.¹¹⁸

On April 3, Madrid police attempted to arrest two prime suspects, brothers Mohammed and Rachid Oulad Akcha. The brothers and five other men proceeded to detonate a suicide bomb, killing themselves and one police officer. One of the dead, Serhane ben Abdelmajid Fakheth ("The Tunisian"), has since been identified in reports as the ringleader of the bombings.¹¹⁹

At trial in October 2007, 21 people were found guilty on an array of terrorism charges related to the bombing, and seven defendants were acquitted. One of the acquitted was alleged mastermind Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, also known as "Mohamed the Egyptian." Osman is now serving a 10-year

113. "Germans Report U.S. Pakistan Attack Killed Al-Qa'idah Activist Trained in Germany," *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, January 30, 2006.

114. "Germany Convicts Terror Plotters," *BBC News*, October 26, 2005, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4377808.stm> (June 4, 2008).

115. "Germany: 9/11 Plotter Sentenced to 15 Years," *Facts on File World News Digest*, January 11, 2007.

116. "Profile: Mounir al-Motassadeq," *BBCNews.com*, December 4, 2006, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2223152.stm> (June 4, 2008).

117. "Madrid Train Bombing," *GlobalSecurity.org*, undated, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/ops/madrid.htm> (June 4, 2008).

118. Thomas Joscelyn, "The Real Madrid Bombers? It Was Al-Qaeda," *The Daily Standard*, November 1, 2007.

119. "Madrid Train Bombing," *GlobalSecurity.org*.

prison sentence in Italy after having been convicted on another terrorism-related charge there.¹²⁰

Three of the eight main suspects—Emilio Trashorras, Jamal Zougam, and Othman el-Gnaoui—received sentences from the Spanish court of 30,000 to 40,000 years but will serve a maximum of 40 years under Spanish law. The four other accused ringleaders—Youssef Belhadj, Hassan el Haski, Abdulmajid Bouchar, and Rafa Zouhier—were acquitted on murder charges but convicted on other terrorism-related charges and sentenced to 12 to 18 years in jail.¹²¹ Fourteen other people were also found guilty on lesser charges such as membership in a terrorist group.

A minor was sentenced to six years at an earlier trial in 2004 for transporting the explosives.¹²²

High-Profile French Targets, Including the Paris Metro, Major French Airport, and the Directorate of Territorial Security, June 2005 to September 2006. French counterterrorism officials went on record in December 2006 to say that they had foiled a conspiracy to bomb three specific targets: the Paris Metro, a major French airport (possibly Orly Airport), and the Directorate of Territorial Security. Although no details of the plots were given at the time, anti-terrorism coordinator Jean-Louis Bruguière said that 76 arrests had been made between June 2005 and September 2006.

It has since been reported that these plots were thwarted when a Paris-based Islamist cell headed by Safé Bourada was broken up in September 2005.¹²³

Bourada had previously been sentenced to 10 years in prison for attacks on the Paris Metro subway system in 1995, although he was released early in 2003 and put under surveillance. During his time in prison, he recruited new members for the cell that counterterrorism officers would break up in 2005.

Bourada and three of his associates—Ouassini Cherifi, Mohammed Benyamina and Kaci Ouarab—were arrested and jailed in September 2005 on various terrorism-related charges.¹²⁴ One cell member, Mohammed Benyamina, is believed to have had close ties to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq group. Kaci Ouarab procured the materials and expertise to make the bombs in Lebanon, and Bourada sought contact with Zarqawi's organization during a trip to Turkey. Both GSPC and al-Qaeda in Iraq are terrorist organizations that collaborate closely with al-Qaeda's central command.¹²⁵

Four additional arrests of individuals linked to Bourada's cell were made in March 2007.¹²⁶ No further information has been published pertaining to trial or sentence in relation to this conspiracy, although French law allows the authorities to hold suspected terrorists for up to four years without trial.¹²⁷

France's major terrorism threat has traditionally arisen from Algerian militants, a threat that was significantly heightened when a key Algerian Islamist terrorist group, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, announced a post-9/11 union with al-

120. Elisabetta Povoledo, "2 Are Guilty in Italy of Plotting Attacks: One Said He Planned '04 Madrid Bombings," *International Herald Tribune*, November 7, 2006, at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/11/07/news/terror.php> (June 4, 2008).

121. Graham Keeley, "Madrid Bombers Guilty: Three Ringleaders Are Jailed for Attacks That Killed 191 Commuters," *The Evening Standard*, October 31, 2007.

122. Paul Hamilos and Mark Tran, "21 Guilty, Seven Cleared Over Madrid Train Bombings," *Guardian.co.uk*, October 31, 2007, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/31/spain.marktran> (June 4, 2008).

123. "French Paper Reports Averted Terror Attacks in Europe," *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, November 7, 2005.

124. "Islamist Radicals Arrested in France Alleged to Have Trained to Make Bombs," *BBC Monitoring Europe*, October 9, 2005.

125. Clara Beyler, "The Jihadist Threat in France," *The Hudson Institute*, February 16, 2006, at http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/pubID.44/pub_detail.asp (June 12, 2008).

126. "Police: 4 Suspects With Alleged Ties to Terror Group Arrested in France," *Associated Press*, March 26, 2007, at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/03/26/europe/EU-GEN-France-Terror-Arrests.php> (June 4, 2008).

127. James Button, "9 Held as Paris Raids 'foil Metro attack,' France Facing a 'High-Level Threat,'" *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), September 29, 2005.

Qaeda to pursue its terrorist activities against French and other European targets.¹²⁸ U.S. terrorism expert Steve Emerson identified the GSPC as “an enemy that cannot be underestimated,” especially in light of their new alliance with al-Qaeda.¹²⁹ French counterterrorism expert Roland Jacquard noted, along the same lines as Emerson, that the GSPC–al-Qaeda union has significantly enhanced the ability of other Islamist cells to operate and carry out terrorist attacks in Europe.¹³⁰

European Resorts Bomb Plot: Christopher Paul, April 2007. In April 2007, U.S. authorities arrested Ohioan Christopher Paul on charges of supporting terrorists and conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction. Paul, also known as Abdulmalek Kenyatta, is accused of heading an al-Qaeda conspiracy to target Americans living in Europe by bombing European tourist resorts and U.S. government facilities overseas.

Paul, who converted to Islam in 1989 and trained at al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, is accused of traveling to Germany in 1999 to buy equipment and train co-conspirators in the use of explosives to attack European and American targets.¹³¹ He is also a known associate of would-be Brooklyn Bridge bomber Iyman Faris and convicted terrorist conspirer Nuradin Abdi.

Paul initially pleaded not guilty to three federal charges (conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction, and providing support to terrorists)

that carried the penalty of life in prison; but in June 2008, he settled a plea agreement, pleading guilty to charges of conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction in exchange for dropping of the other federal charges. The agreement came with a 20-year prison sentence, which will now be reviewed by the judge.¹³²

The Glasvej Case: Preparing Explosives for a Terrorist Attack in Denmark, September 2007. On September 4, 2007, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) arrested eight alleged Islamist militants accused of preparing explosives for terrorist attacks in Denmark and abroad. It has since been speculated that the Norreport train station was a potential target. Although the identities of the suspects have not been released, PET chief Jakob Scharf stated that they were “militant Islamists” with links to al-Qaeda’s leadership. The newspaper *Politiken* revealed in January 2008 that PET has pictures of one of the suspects training at a camp in either Pakistan or Afghanistan, and they are currently trying to identify other al-Qaeda operatives.¹³³

According to the former head of PET, Hans Joergen Bonnischen, “this could indicate that [al-Qaeda] now is able to pick up the phone and order a terror act in Denmark.”¹³⁴ In March 2008, Danish prosecutors filed terrorism charges against two suspects. The materials the men were manufacturing and planning to use matched those used in the London bombings in July 2005.¹³⁵ A third man was

128. Katrin Bennhold, “French Counterterror Forces on High Alert,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 20, 2006, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/12/20/news/france.php> (June 4, 2008).

129. “Testimony of Steven Emerson Before the United States House of Representative Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,” April 9, 2008, at <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/testimony/350.pdf> (June 4, 2008).

130. “Terror Takes the Stand: In Paris, the Trial of Two Accused Bombers Offers a Glimpse of What Al-Qaeda Might Do Next,” *Time International*, October 14, 2002.

131. Kevin Mayhood, “Evidence in Terror Case May Be Secret: Investigation of Columbus Suspect Included Wiretaps,” *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 29, 2007, at http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2007/04/29/accused.ART_ART_04-29-07_B1_Q16HI0H.html (June 4, 2008).

132. Meredith Somers, “Paul Enters Guilty Plea, Starts Process of Sentencing,” *Columbus Local News*, June 4, 2008, at http://www.snponline.com/articles/2008/06/04/multiple_papers/news/allwoterro_20080603_0420pm_1.txt (June 12, 2008).

133. “Danish Intelligence Said to Hold Pictures of Terrorist Suspect at Training Camp,” *BBC Monitoring Europe*, January 21, 2008.

134. “8 Terror Suspects Arrested in Denmark,” *International Herald Tribune*, September 4, 2007, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/09/04/europe/EU-GEN-Denmark-Terror-Arrests.php> (June 4, 2008).

charged with urging the kidnapping of Danes abroad in order to force the Danish authorities to release the other two.¹³⁶

Austrian Car Bomb Plot and al-Qaeda Propaganda Machine: Mohamed Mahmoud, September 2007. Austrian authorities arrested and detained alleged al-Qaeda cell leader Mohamed Mahmoud and his wife in September 2007 after surveilling them for some time and finding a video on the Internet threatening attacks against Austria and Germany in reprisal for their participation in NATO's mission in Afghanistan.¹³⁷ Mahmoud was quickly linked with al-Qaeda's Internet propaganda machine, the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), as well as Quebec-based immigrant Said Namouth, who is alleged to have made and edited bomb-making instructional clips on behalf of the GIMF.¹³⁸

The Austrian operation was conducted in close cooperation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who arrested Said Namouth at the same time, detaining him on charges of conspiracy to explode a car bomb in Austria. Namouth has since been charged with additional terrorism-related crimes and will go on trial in Canada in 2008.¹³⁹ Mahmoud and his spouse have been charged with being part of a terrorist organization and are awaiting trial in Austria.

Planned Attack on U.S. and German Military Targets, Including Ramstein Air Base: Fritz Martin Gelowicz, David Martin Schneider, and Adem Yilmaz, September 2007.¹⁴⁰ When the Sauerland cell was broken up in September 2007 after a substantial period of surveillance, agents found enough bomb-making materials to build bombs more powerful than those used in the 7/7 London bombings and the 3/11 Madrid attacks. German authorities stated that the U.S. military base at Ramstein was one of several potential targets in Germany.¹⁴¹ German Muslim convert Fritz Martin Gelowicz was identified as the leader of the al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) terrorist cell, having been radicalized and inspired by hate preacher Tolga Duerbin.¹⁴² Gelowicz had also met with the infamous 9/11 ringleader, Hamburg-based Mohammed Atta.¹⁴³

All three suspects had attended terrorist training camps in Pakistan that were identified as closely associated with al-Qaeda and Taliban leader Mullah Omar and where they were likely trained in making and using explosives.¹⁴⁴ The primary bomb-making materials found upon arrest were to make hydrogen peroxide-based bombs—the same kind that were used in the 7/7 attacks and a staple of al-Qaeda bomb-making.¹⁴⁵

135. "Danish Prosecutor Indicts Two on 'Terrorism' Charges," Agence France-Presse, March 25, 2008, at <http://www.haaba.com/taxonomy/term/308?q=node/109979> (June 4, 2008).

136. "2 Charged in Denmark with Preparing Terror Attack," *International Herald Tribune*, March 25, 2008, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/03/25/europe/EU-GEN-Denmark-Terror.php> (June 4, 2008).

137. "Austria Arrests Three in Latest Islamist Terror Plot in Europe," *Deutsche Welle*, September 12, 2007 at <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2780228,00.html> (June 4, 2008).

138. "Bomb Suspect's Quebec Journey: Attempts To Immigrate Were Unsuccessful Until He Married a Canadian Woman," *The Globe and Mail*, September 15, 2007.

139. "Bomb-Conspiracy Suspect Faces 3 More Charges," *The Globe and Mail*, April 16, 2008.

140. Although this conspiracy was unlikely to be directed by al-Qaeda, I believe there is sufficient evidence that al-Qaeda provided substantial know-how and support to make this plot possible, to warrant its inclusion on this list.

141. "U.S. House of Representatives Praise Germany for Arrest of Terror Suspects," Associated Press Worldstream, September 17, 2007.

142. Alexander G. Higgins, "Fritz and Daniel: Arrested Germans Raise Concerns About Involvement of Converts," *International Herald Tribune*, September 7, 2007 at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/09/07/europe/EU-GEN-Germany-Homegrown-Terror.php> (June 4, 2008).

143. Stefan Nicola, "Homegrown Terror Worries Germany," *UPI Energy*, September 10, 2007.

144. Dirk Laabs, "Taps in German Case Allegedly an Earful," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2007.

145. "German Official Calls for the Registration of Chemical Purchases in the Wake of Terror Arrests," Associated Press Worldstream, September 9, 2007.

Al-Qaeda Plots and Conspiracies Against the U.K. Since September 2001

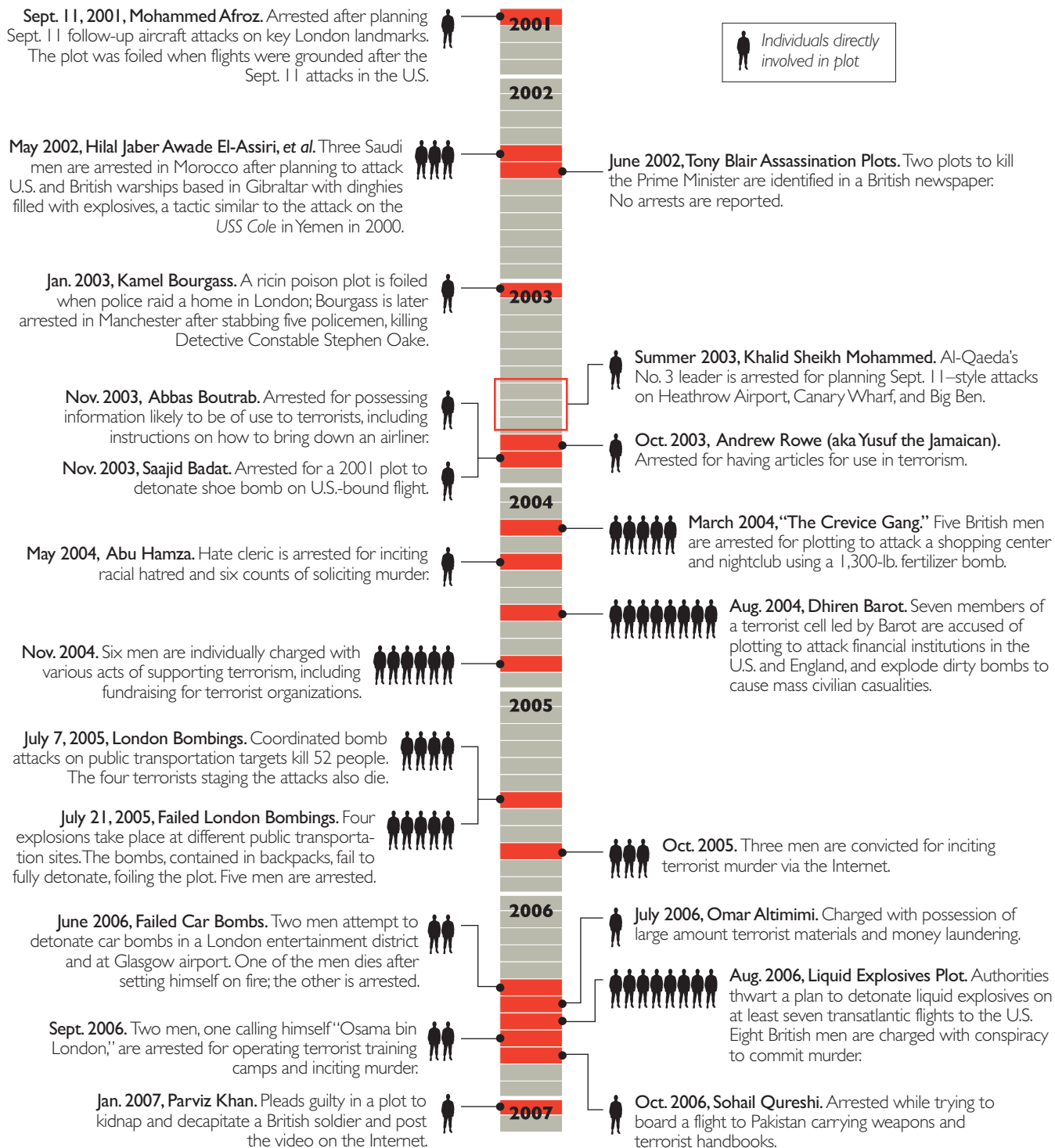


Chart 1 • B 2148 heritage.org

Al-Qaeda Plots and Conspiracies Against NATO's European Allies Since September 2001

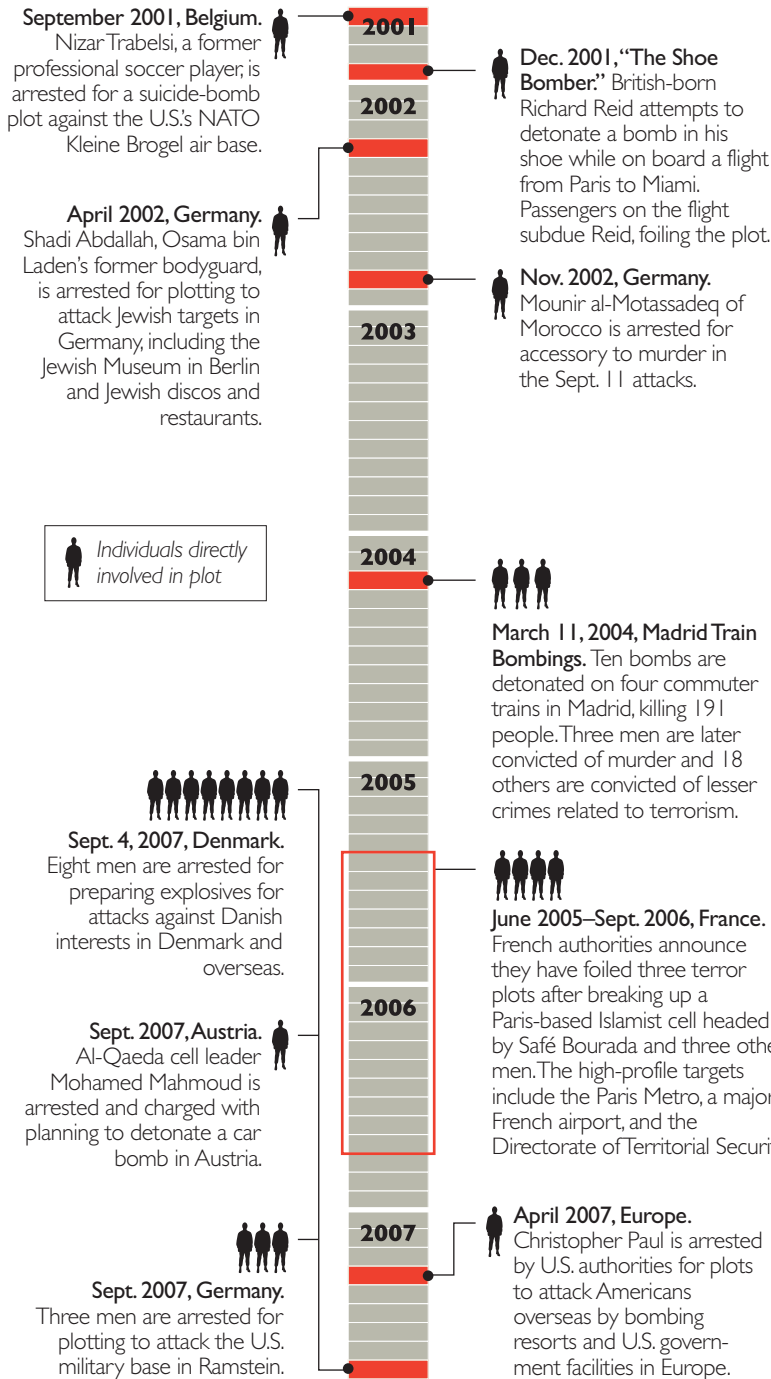


Chart 2 • B 2148 heritage.org

Why Afghanistan Matters

In an age where external and internal security are more and more interwoven, Afghanistan is a mission of necessity rather than one of choice. Just seven years ago...Afghanistan was the grand central station of terrorism. If this mission were not to succeed...Afghanistan would once again pose a clear and present danger to itself, its region, but also the broader international community.

—NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

Britain, Europe, and the United States have undertaken to improve counterterrorism operations and prevent future terrorist attacks through coordinated information-sharing and effective intelligence. As demonstrated, they have enjoyed tactical successes, individually as well as collectively.

However, the threat from Islamist extremism is also a strategic one, and all NATO members must fight it as such. NATO's success or failure in Afghanistan will be a major factor in either the defeat or victory of al-Qaeda and its boldness in continuing to pursue global terrorist activities. Afghanistan stands as a key strategic front in the war on terrorism and is a critical measure of whether Continental Europe has the will to pursue a long war against a patient and cunning enemy.

As NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission approaches its fifth year of operations, participant nations must address the real and fundamental challenges that remain. Regrettably,

however, the three legs of the ISAF stool—security, stability, and reconstruction—have not been undertaken by many of NATO's European members with anywhere near the enthusiasm needed to ensure Afghanistan's long-term stability.

First, the allies must deploy their troops according to where they are most needed as determined by military leaders, not politicians. German troops, for instance, are restricted to the relatively peaceful North. By contrast, the vast majority of militants are restricted to the South and some parts of the East. Reports show that in 2008, 91 percent of insurgent activities have taken place in 8 percent of Afghanistan's districts, largely in the South and some parts of the East.¹⁴⁶ NATO's pincer-like effort has squeezed the Taliban and its extremist supporters into smaller areas that ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are tackling, often under very brutal circumstances. NATO must work closely with the ANSF to ensure that adequate numbers of troops are committed—especially to Helmand and Kandahar, where more than half of all security incidents are taking place.¹⁴⁷

Alliance members must also commit additional troops. As it stands, additional commitments promised by European nations at NATO's Bucharest Summit this past April, including France's announcement of an additional 800 troops for eastern Afghanistan, will not change the overall security picture very much. The most significant recent commitment remains the United States' deployment of an additional 3,200 Marines in March, which still falls short of the 10,000 to 15,000 additional troops that military leaders have requested.¹⁴⁸ Long-standing members of the Alliance such as Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal

continue to stand back while their European allies such as Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Poland take the lead in providing troop strength.

Not only are German troops restricted to northern Afghanistan, but they operate under ludicrous national caveats. The fact that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were spearheaded by an al-Qaeda cell based in Hamburg should have been Germany's ultimate wake-up call regarding the al-Qaeda threat. When the German Sauerland cell was broken up in September 2007, Germany was again confronted with the harsh truth that Islamist terrorists, affiliated with and supported by al-Qaeda, continue to remain a threat at home and abroad and must be defeated.

Stunningly, this has not translated into a significant show of support for the Afghanistan mission. Its operational caveats are so cumbersome that a senior Taliban commander responsible for attacking coalition convoys and organizing a Baghlan bomb blast last year that killed 79 people recently escaped from German special forces in Afghanistan because its troops are forbidden from shooting except in self defense.¹⁴⁹

The sheer scale and scope of restrictions placed on many NATO soldiers by Alliance members represent a failure to commit to the mission and undermine the credibility of NATO as a modern war-fighting alliance. In March 2008, a German suicide bomber associated with the Sauerland cell drove an explosives-packed truck into a U.S. guard post in Afghanistan, killing two American soldiers.¹⁵⁰ Germany's unwillingness to tackle this type of barbarism head-on by moving its troops into the action or undoing its operational limitations fails the very ethos of NATO's obligation to collective defense.

146. NATO, "Progress in Afghanistan, Bucharest Summit 2–4 April 2008," p. 7, at http://www.nato.int/ISAF/docu/epub/pdf/progress_afghanistan.pdf (June 4, 2008).

147. *Ibid.*

148. Roger Cohen, "The Long Haul in Afghanistan," *International Herald Tribune*, February 27, 2008, at <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/02/27/opinion/edcohen.php> (March 17, 2008).

149. Allan Hall and Matthew Hickley, "German Army Officers Allow Top Taliban Commander to Escape... Because They Are Not Allowed to Use Lethal Force," *Daily Mail online*, May 20, 2008, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1020488/German-army-officers-allow-Taliban-commander-escape--allowed-use-lethal-force.html> (June 4, 2008).

150. Roger Boyes, "Bavarian Cueneyt Ciftci Is Germany's First Suicide Bomber," *The Times* (London), March 18, 2008, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article3571785.ece> (June 4, 2008).

Global partnership is an essential element to winning the war on terrorism, and if al-Qaeda is to be destroyed, it cannot be allowed a resurgence in Afghanistan. Many European countries, including those most at risk from al-Qaeda attacks, have indicated their inclination toward reconstruction and humanitarian missions rather than participation in often brutal combat. In forming new patterns of cooperation within the Alliance, it is sensible to draw upon the expertise and experience of certain member states in post-conflict reconstruction, and certainly much more needs to be done in this area in Afghanistan.

One program that has suffered from inadequate manpower is the Embedded Training Teams, which offer mentorship, advice, and training to Afghan National Army (ANA) battalions in areas such as intelligence, communications, and logistics. Fewer than 20 NATO troops are needed per Afghan battalion. The program has proven extremely successful in building a modern Afghan army and in communicating ISAF's message to ordinary Afghan communities.¹⁵¹ The Afghan National Police have now been bought into the training program in order to complement the overall security situation in Afghanistan.

However, the program desperately needs more trainers, especially for the police force, which is critical to Afghanistan's long-term stability. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently requested that NATO allies provide multiple teams of 12 trainers for this purpose.¹⁵² Europe can show its resolve by responding immediately.

"No Way to Fight or Win a War"

The danger is that the Alliance is essentially falling into a two-tiered alliance in which certain member states are withdrawing from risky military endeavors in exchange for commitments in the

field of reconstruction—which they will undertake only when the area has been made stable and secure by other members. Many NATO allies are failing to undertake even reconstruction missions in the absence of absolute security. As The Heritage Foundation's James Phillips and Lisa Curtis note:

This has put more of a burden on U.S., Australian, British, Canadian, and Dutch forces, which have undertaken most of the combat operations in southern Afghanistan. Danish, Estonian, and Romanian forces have been actively engaged in the fighting in other areas. The *de facto* segregation of coalition forces into frontline and "stand aside" units has undermined NATO's effectiveness, flexibility, and unity of purpose. This is no way to fight or win a war.¹⁵³

As demonstrated, Europe has proven an extremely accessible target for Islamist terrorists and a central front in the war on terrorism. It is incumbent on Europe to pull its weight in finishing off the Taliban once and for all. Support for the Taliban in Afghanistan is microscopic, with a majority of Afghans saying that the Taliban poses the biggest danger to the country.¹⁵⁴ A failure to secure the remaining parts of southern and eastern Afghanistan, however, would free up space for the Taliban's resurgence, with the simultaneous support and resurgence of al-Qaeda.

Europe's lack of commitment to the mission also has implications for the health of the NATO Alliance. The House of Commons Defence Committee recently reported that "NATO remains an indispensable alliance, the essential embodiment of the transatlantic relationship and the ultimate guarantor of our collective security."¹⁵⁵ However, it also surmised that a lack of forces and commitment to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan could diminish America's commitment to the Alliance.¹⁵⁶

151. Sergeant Frank Magni, "Vermont Guardsmen Train, Mentor Afghan Soldiers," *Defend America*, August 13, 2004, at <http://www.defendamerica.com/articles/aug2004/a081304b.html> (June 4, 2008).

152. "NATO Agrees to Train Kosovo Security Forces," *International Herald Tribune Europe*, June 12, 2008, at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2008/06/12/europe/EU-GEN-NATO-Defense.php> (June 12, 2008).

153. James Phillips and Lisa Curtis, "The War in Afghanistan: More Help Needed," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2124, April 17, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/bg2124.cfm>.

154. BBC/ABC/ARD Poll, December 2007, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/03_12_07_afghanpoll2007.pdf (June 4, 2008).

The NATO Alliance must finally move toward a comprehensive strategic political-military plan for Afghanistan, which they failed to do in Bucharest. The transatlantic alliance and the international community must work together to demonstrate their commitment to the stability of Afghanistan, as well as to the security of their own people, and to show their resolve to defeat al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Clear Patterns

The catalogue of plots and conspiracies sponsored, inspired, and directed by al-Qaeda and targeted against Britain and Europe reveals a number of patterns that must be addressed:

- **The prevalence of terrorist training camps.**

Training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan play a critical role in radicalizing young British and European Muslims and giving them the operational and tactical training to carry out large-scale terrorist attacks. *The Sunday Telegraph* recently revealed that between 3,000 and 4,000 recruits attended terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and returned to Britain before Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2001. Estimates for the total number of people who trained in Afghanistan's terrorist camps vary wildly from 20,000 to 70,000.¹⁵⁷

The dismantling of Afghanistan's training camps by NATO members who were systematically and mercilessly targeted by terrorists is unchallengeable as a collective act of self-defense. However, courtesy of the border tribal areas in Pakistan, al-Qaeda continues to maintain a number of its terrorist training camps, which serve as breeding grounds for attacks on both NATO troops in Afghanistan and members' homelands.

What needs to be done:

1. Cooperation with the Pakistani government should be increased to specifically target terrorist training camps and disband them. Washington and Islamabad should

work toward a coordinated strategy to eliminate the camps, using military force if necessary.

2. All Alliance members should follow Britain's example and make it a criminal act to train at a terrorist camp, either at home or abroad, and vigorously pursue convictions with strict sentences.

- **The role of hate preachers and extremist clerics.**

British and European terrorists are frequently recruited and radicalized by hate clerics and extremist foreign imams such as Abu Hamza, Tolga Duerbin, and Omar Bakri Mohammed, who have had an incredibly detrimental impact on efforts to combat Islamist terrorism and counter radicalization. Several countries, including Belgium and Britain, have introduced new legislation to combat this problem and prosecute those who advocate violence and incite terrorism.

What needs to be done:

1. In Britain and Europe, any imam or cleric caught inciting terrorism or advocating violence and public disorder should be prosecuted.
2. Britain and Europe should deport and permanently exclude foreign hate preachers who engage in unacceptable behaviors and threaten public order. If a prison sentence is delivered, such preachers should be permanently expelled from the host country once their sentences have been served.

- **The central importance of the mission in Afghanistan as a central front in the war on terrorism.**

What needs to be done:

1. Europe's leaders at the highest level should work with NATO to launch a thorough public diplomacy effort to communicate ISAF's mission and purpose effectively to the general public. They should launch a

155. House of Commons Defence Committee, *The Future of NATO and European Defence*, Ninth Report of Session 2007–08, March 20, 2008, p. 92, at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/111/111.pdf> (June 4, 2008).

156. *Ibid.*, point 94, p. 36.

157. Ben Leapman, "4,000 Trained at Afghan Terror Camps and Returned to the U.K.," *The Sunday Telegraph*, July 15, 2007.

coordinated domestic and international communications strategy to fully explain the Afghanistan mission and communicate the threats posed by a resurgence of al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

2. A comprehensive, strategic, political and military plan for Afghanistan should be concluded that makes a hard-hitting appraisal of what is needed, both politically and militarily, to make the effort in Afghanistan a success.
 3. NATO members should make firm commitments to eliminate operational caveats and address troop shortfalls.
- **The ongoing, essential importance of close cooperation and intelligence-sharing among Britain, Europe, and America.**

The ease of travel for terrorists, especially home-grown radicals, remains a problem for Britain and Europe in particular. Sharing information, coordinating lists of terrorists and foreign terrorist groups, and cooperating in the extradition of wanted persons must increase.

What needs to be done:

1. To facilitate smoother transfer of information and to make a statement in support of transatlantic cooperation, as a matter of principle, leaders of the European Union should agree to an umbrella agreement accepting U.S. data privacy standards as adequate to permit the transfer of information.
2. The United States, Great Britain, and the European Union must coordinate their lists of foreign terrorist organizations as closely as possible. As a symbolic gesture alone, it sends a powerful message that the West stands united in defeating the enemies of freedom and liberty, and it also acts as a

powerful financial sanction against the free flow of terrorist finances.

Conclusion

If the war on terrorism is to be won, America and Europe must remain strong and reliable allies to one another. Europe must be under no illusion that it is not a prime target for al-Qaeda attacks—as well as a base of operations. A former Islamist extremist revealed last year that al-Qaeda held a summit in London to coordinate its activities in Britain.¹⁵⁸

Although al-Qaeda took some heavy hits to its command and control structures when NATO first went into Afghanistan, it continues to motivate affiliated groups and to regroup in the tribal areas of Pakistan. As *Times* correspondent Sean O'Neill has noted, “al-Qaeda has proved itself to be a resilient organization that absorbs blows, regroups, reforms its networks, and returns.”¹⁵⁹

NATO members cannot afford to underestimate the threat that al-Qaeda continues to pose to the West and its collective values of freedom, liberty, human rights, equality, and democracy. The political expediency of keeping troops out of harm's way grossly miscalculates the long-term strategic implications of a resurgent Taliban and an al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan.

The war in Afghanistan is ultimately not yet won, and gains made there remain under threat so long as the region remains susceptible to al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgencies. Now is the time for the NATO Alliance to show its backbone and defeat the scourge of al-Qaeda.

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158. Shiv Malik and David Leppard, “Revealed: The Deadly Link of U.K.’s Islamic Terror Network,” *The Sunday Times* (London), May 6, 2007.

159. Sean O'Neill, “Followers of Abu Hamza Took Over His Mission,” *The Times* (London), February 27, 2008.