Global Network Terrorism (April 10, 2006) :
Comparative Anatomy and Evolution
An Open-Source, People-Based Approach

PIs:
Scott Atran, Marc Sageman

Graduate Student Research Team:
Justin Magouirk, Dominick’ Wright,
Laith Alattar, Noor Huda Ismail, DarcyNoricks

Consultant:
Ken Ward
General Hypothesis

• The growth and development of Global Network Terrorism (GNT) is largely a decentralized and evolutionary process, based on contingent adaptations to unpredictable events and improbable opportunities, more the result of blind tinkering (of fragmentary connections between semi-autonomous parts) than intelligent design (hierarchical command and control).

• As in any natural evolutionary process, individual variation and environmental context are the creative and critical determinants of future directions and paths.

• To ignore or essentialistically abstract away from variation and context is to entirely miss the character of GNT along with better chances for intervention and prevention from the bottom up rather than the top down.
Needed: A Public, People-Based Database

- A major problem facing a rigorous and comprehensive study of terrorism today is a lack of strong, quantitative data on network relationships that is freely available for scientific research in the academic, policy, and government communities.

- Such access is critical to the peer review that characterizes science.
People-Based vs. Incident-Based Databases

- Incident-based databases (e.g., MIPT, GTD, ICT, RAND / START, etc.) provide a wealth of quantitative data for modeling terrorist events that have been recorded, sometimes along with sensational claims for being able to predict and project them as well (e.g., spectral analysis, scale free modeling).
- In fact, all such large-scale databases are incident-based catalogues of terrorist events (telling where such events took place, by whom and with what types of damage).
- They are not very useful for answering such important questions as: Who is a terrorist? How do these people come to commit such violent acts? Who facilitates their actions and supports them? How do terrorists become radicalized? What motivates them? What makes some of them defect?
The Fallacy of Prediction

• Claims for predictive power of incident-based databases usually revolve around analyses of the frequency of regularities in past events to project cyclic patterns of events into the future (e.g., via spectral analysis, the application of which to terrorism has not changed substantially with regard to insights in over 20 years).
• But predictions based on such frequencies may lull us with knowledge of familiar patterns and make us less secure even if they do capture most regularities. This is because relatively rare, low probability events account for the lion’s share of the historically important political, social and economic changes brought on by terrorism.
• (Indeed, if there were available means to predict what happened after New York, in Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, Madrid and London, then we should ascribe criminal negligence to authorities).
Not Scale Free

• Scale-free networks, such as air traffic or the internet, grow indefinitely large or small, in the manner of embedded Russian dolls, because nodes are preferentially connected to previously well-connected nodes.

• By contrast, post-9/11 terrorist networks have “bumpy” and non-uniform, idiosyncratic growth patterns that depend on small-group dynamics and niche-filling opportunities that cannot be predicted in advance, somewhat as in biological evolution.

• Lack of prediction, however, does not mean absence of pattern (e.g., family resemblances in the structure of time series for a set of terrorist events) or trend (e.g. from centralized and hierarchical to decentralized and bridged), as with complex adaptive systems generally.
Assessing Reliability

• A people-based database provides information on how people are attracted to terrorist groups, enlisted into them, radicalized, motivated, and sometimes defected from them.

• The key problem with such a database is twofold: incompleteness of information and questionable reliability. This is especially relevant to social network analysis, where the erroneous postulation of even a single link between two nodes can dramatically change a graph (for example, a straight line can become a circle, and a fragmented network of two regional clusters can appear to be globally whole).

• Rigorous criteria for judging the reliability of information is therefore indispensable. Accordingly, we are establishing a rating system for putative connections between people; for example, relatively high reliability is accorded captured documents, court transcripts, gov’t commissions, and intercepted communications; lesser reliability is accorded to good investigative reporting by journalists or fieldworkers with access to the information. Least reliability is accorded to initial newspaper reports and the opinions of experts.
Jihadi Database

• In October 2005 we began creating a database of Southeast Asian Jihadis, merging this database with Marc Sageman’s database of 400-500 Al-Qaeda associates

• To date, we’ve gathered information on several hundred Jihadis from Southeast Asia – using open sources and informants (including militant madrassah graduates, former Jemaah Islamiyah leaders and foot soldiers, and former Australian, U.S. and SE Asian intelligence officers and fieldworkers).
Database Foundations: 1. Bios

- Each database consists of two foundations. The first is a detailed categorization of basic biographical and socio-economic data on jihadis that includes date of birth, place of birth, nationality, ethnicity, education, links to madrassahs, madrassah type, occupation, and class, as well as detailed information on current organizational affiliation and previous organizational affiliation (both militant and non-militant).

- This part of the database also details incarceration, release, and death information. This work will be vital for addressing the importance of madrassahs as centers for terrorist group recruitment. We will also be able to address the importance of madrassah ties in linking different cliques of jihadists within particular attacks such as Bali.
Database Foundations: 2. Relations

- The second database foundation addresses the vast network of connections that form the glue that holds the diverse array of jihadis together. This work includes a comprehensive examination of acquaintance, friendship, family, madrassah, and terrorist training (Afghanistan, southern Philippines) ties.
- These ties are rigorously documented based on a methodology created to discern differences in the strength of ties over time and in the reliability of the ties based on the available open-source information. All ties are meticulously sourced with a focus on primary documents.
- This time-series connection data will allow us to examine how counter-terrorist activities affect terrorist network structures. Specifically, it will allow us to test the hypothesis that al Qaeda, JI and other jihadist groups are moving from a hierarchical organizational model in which a centralized leadership structure directs the overall organization activities, towards a leaderless resistance model in which small groups engage in resistance or violent activity without central coordination.
Some General Features of Global Network Terrorism: “Born-Again” Jihad is Not Nihilistic

- Despite atavistic cultural elements, global jihadism is a thoroughly modern movement filling the popular political void in Islamic communities left in the wake of discredited western ideologies co-opted by corrupt local governments.

- Appeals to Muslim history and calls for a revival of the Caliphate are heartfelt, though to some extent **jihadism is increasingly a counter-movement** to the ideological and corresponding military thrust ensconced, for instance, in the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, which enshrines liberal democracy as the “single sustainable model of national development right and true for every person, in every society - and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies.”
• Jihadism’s apocalyptic yearnings and born-again vision of personal salvation through radical action are absent from traditional Sunni Islamic exegesis and, indeed, perhaps as much may be learned about them from the New Testament’s *Book of Revelations* as from the *Qur’an*

• Nor does Islam *per se* or “Muslim civilization” really have anything to do with terrorism – no more than some impossibly timeless or context-free notion of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or Buddhism can be held responsible for the dead millions these religious traditions have been accused of.
• Yet, it is nonsense to claim that Al Qaeda and its sympathizers have no morality and simply want to annihilate Western civilization.

• In general, charges of nihilism against an adversary usually reflect the willful ignorance regarding the adversary’s moral framework.

• The ultimate ambition of Global Jihad is to inaugurate a just and righteous society for believers world over.

• Newer attacks are mostly carried out by small groups and personalized networks which form part of an ever spreading, decentralized and egalitarian world movement that would exorcise cultural humiliation and lack of political dignity, of which foreign occupation may be just one manifestation, globalization another.
Hypothesis - Leaderless Jihad

- Social network analysis allows us to test the hypothesis that Jihadi groups are moving from a hierarchical organizational model towards a leaderless resistance model.

- Under a leaderless resistance model, small groups engage in resistance or violent activity independently without central coordination. Leadership figures provide inspiration to members and affiliated organizations - however, jihadis engage in terrorist activity without consulting the leadership.
Connecting the Dots: The Madrid Example

The changing jihadi landscape is revealed in the formation of the cell responsible for the 2004 Madrid train bombings.

As early as October 2002, the substitute imam of the Takoua Mosque in Madrid, was informing Spanish police under the codename “Cartagena” that a band of friends, unhappy with the mosque’s seemingly moderate preachings, had begun calling themselves Al Haraka Salafiya, “The Salafi Movement.”
Cost Comparison: Open vs. Classified Sources

• April 10, 2006: Spanish government issues indictment of 29 people over Madrid train bombings

• We anticipate that a comparison of our use of open sources vs. gov’t use of classified sources that resulted in the indictment against the Madrid plotters will show similar results for all essential details (though open source research involves a fraction of the costs)
1990-1994 (The Syrian Core)

• Syrian Muslim Brotherhood exiles relocate to Spain and the persecution and oppression of Syrian dictator Hafez Assad

– **Imad Barakat Yarkas (700)**, Kalaje Zouyadi (701), and **Mustafa Setmariam (703)** are some members of the primary group that constitutes the Syrian “core” in Spain
Time Stamp: 1990-1994
The Syrian “Core” Transforms: 1995-1999

– In 1994, the “core” group, including the Palestinian preacher, Sheik Saleh (704), establishes a support group for *jihadi* soldiers, Soldiers for Allah that eventually attracts veterans from the conflicts in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Chechnya (finance, shelter, medical care)
  • Amer Azizi (705), Othman el Gnaout (706), Said Berraj (707), Driss Chebli (708), and the Benyaich brothers
– In 1995, Setmariam (703) leaves for London to become editor of *Al Ansar*, while Saleh leaves for Jalalabad
– As the remaining leader, Yarkas (700) also immigrant students and young people seeking to establish themselves in the community
– Half-brothers Jamal Zougam (710) and Mohammed Chaoui (711)—who reconnect with a childhood friend, Berraj (707)—and a distressed but capable student: **Serhane ben Abdelmajid Fakhet (712)**.

* • ’95 Judge Garzon targets group: wiretap surveillance & penetration (police officer is Maussili Kalaji, of Syrian origin)
• The Belhadj brothers (from the Belgium-based Groupe Islamique Marocain) enters into liaison with Spanish group, probably through Berraj

* • After Bosnian war, Yarkas
  – links up with other European networks (Milan, London, Brussels, Hamburg, Paris)
  – sends people to Afghanistan and Indonesia
  – supports al Qaeda operations in Europe

- **Jamal Ahmidan (714)**, from Tetuan (Morocco) comes to Spain during the early 1990s and by the mid-1990s has established a profitable drug gang—his brother, two childhood friends, and a few others—that poses as club bouncers while dealing ecstasy at the door.
  - Ahmed Ahmidan (716), Mohammad Oulad Akcha (715, J. Ahmidan’s lieutenant), Rachid Oulad Akcha (717), Abdennabi Kounjaa (718), Rachid Aglif (719), and Rifaat Asri (720)

- The group also develops an association with another small-time dealer, **Rafa Zuheir (721)** that will prove important in the future.
2000-2001

• Jamal Ahmidan (714) is convicted of a drug-related homicide in Morocco and begins a 2 ½ year sentence that witnesses his transformation into a radical

• Spanish al Qaeda expands its base to include Mustafa Mayouni (713) among a number of others

• Moh Belhadj (731) from the Belgium-based Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (whose leader is brother Youssef Belhadj, 731) and Moh Alfalah (732) make intermittent contact with Fakhet et al.
Time Stamp:
1/2001-6/2001
Network Purging: 2001²

• **In the aftermath of 9-11**, Judge Garzon’s Operation Datil culminates with the arresting of Yarkas (700) as the head of Spanish Al-Qaeda
  – Berraj (707) and the Benyaich brothers (709, 734) go into hiding, while Zougam (710) assumes a low profile (Berraj, Benyaich & Azizi had been arrested and released in Istanbul Oct. ‘02, probably on way to Chechnya)
  – Maymouni (713), Fakhet (712) and Chebli (708) are remaining members that must regroup in pursuit of the al Qaeda-inspired cause
  – Official ties to the “core” al Qaeda leadership (730) are now severed
• Rabei el Sayed (724), a self-proclaimed connected radical and expert in explosives, arrives in Spain
  – His bellicose, anti-Semitic preaching impresses two students that are roommates, Basel Ghayoun (725) and Anghar el Morabit (726) and have ties to remnants of Yarkas’s group
Prison Connections and other Parallel Networks: 2001²

• Jose Suarez Trashorras (722) and Antonio Castro Torro (723), two cousins engaging in the smuggling of dynamite and drugs, receive prison sentences.

• Rafa Zuheir (721) receives a prison sentence for jewelry theft and shares a cell for a few months with Castro Torro.
Network Incubation and Reconsolidation: Mid-2002

- Maymouni (713), Fakhet (712) and Chebli (708) continue their pursuit of Yarkas’s original mission of the Salafi Jihadi movement by regularly meeting at Faisal Allouch’s (727); Moh Alfalah (732), also at meetings.
Early Release: 2002¹

- Suarez Trashorras (722) gains an early release for he and his cousin Castro (723) by becoming an informant for the police

- Zuheir (721) follows suit and gains an early release by becoming an informant for the narcotics department
Time Stamp:
1/2002-6/2002

Network Legend
- prison connection
- "strong" tie
- "medium" tie
- "weak" tie
- al Qaeda "core"
- Syrian "core"
- Soldiers for Allah cohort
- ICM Connection
- M-30/Abu Bakr Mosque cohort(s)
- Ahmadiyah gang
- Suarez gang
- Unaffiliated
- al Qaeda affiliated
- outside operations
- al Qaeda Internet Network

Structural Hole
Radicalization and Network Penetration: 2002

- Abdelkader el Farssaoui (codename CARTAGENA), a new imam at the Villaverde mosque that the Yarkas remnant attends, becomes an informant to the police on the Salafi Jihadi movement.

- Cartagena reports that the group has a Takfiri (Egyptian radical Islamist) orientation and that he has seen Maymouni (713), Fakhet (712), Chebli (708), Berraj (707), and Rabei (724) at the Allouch (727) meetings.
The Growth of Apocalyptic Violence in the Diaspora

• Although two Takfiri groups, Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Al-Jamaat Al-Islamiyya, EIJ) and Egyptian Islamic Group (Al-Gama’a Al-Islamiyya, EIG) have common roots in Egyptian society, one crucial difference between them is that the EIJ leadership under Dr. Ayman Zawahiri left Egypt to join Bin Laden in Afghanistan whereas EIG remained behind in Upper Egypt (Said).

• Hostile reaction by Saidis to the 1997 EIG massacre of some 50 tourists at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Luxor, and to interference by expatriate jihadis and loss of trade, effectively ended EIG’s ability to mount military operations.

• By contrast, Al-Zawahiri continues to urge jihadis everywhere to inflict the greatest possible damage and cause the maximum casualties on the West, no matter how much time and effort these operations take, and regardless of consequences.
• According to Cartagena, they called themselves “Al-Haraka Salfiya” (The Salafi Movement) and met:

“clandestinely, with no regularity or fixed place, by oral agreement and without any schedule, though usually on Fridays.”

• Soon, the informal group of mostly homesick Moroccan descendants and émigrés “reached the conclusion that they had to undertake jihad.”

• By November 13, 2002, opinion within the group began to shift against “going to other countries to undertake jihad, when operations were possible in Morocco and Spain.”

• On November 20, Fakhet (712) marries Maymouni’s (713) 16 year-old sister
Pursuing Crime Full Time: 2002

- Suarez Trashorras (722) quits his job at Conchita mine and turns his complete attention to selling drugs and supplementing this income with selling stolen dynamite
In Search of Customers: 2003

• Suarez Trashorras (722), seeking to capitalize upon his access to stolen dynamite, has Castro Torro (723) contact Zuheir (721) about locating potential customers
  – Zuheir represents a “structural hole” between the Suarez Trashorras and Ahmidan networks in that he is the one connection (albeit weak) between the two with non-redundant relations. This will prove important in the ensuing progression toward the attack.

• Bureaucratic politics prevents the effective sharing of this information after Zuheir repeatedly notifies his handlers
Network Legend
- ~ prison connection
- ~ "strong" tie
- ~ "medium" tie
- ~ "weak" tie
- ~ al Qaeda "core"
- ~ Syrian "core"
- ~ Soldiers for Allah cohort
- ~ ICGM Connection
- ~ M-30/Abu Bakr Mosque cohort(s)
- ~ Ahmadian gang
- ~ Suareh gang
- ~ Unaffiliated
- ~ al Qaeda affiliated
- ~ outside operations
- ~ al Qaeda Internet Network


Structural Hole
Police Pressure and an Ascending Leader: 2003

- With Cartagena’s information in hand, the Madrid Antiterrorist Brigade begins surveilling the Yarkas remnant, which Zougam (710) and Chaoui (711) have recently rejoined
  - Fakhet (712), Ghayoun (725), Morabit (726), and Berraj (707)
  - Feb. 27, 2003: Rabei (724) flees for France (stays with cousin) and then Italy under the increased police pressure
  - June ’03: Authorities arrest Chebli (708), Maymouni (713), and the Benyaich brothers (709) for their participation in the Casablanca bombings
• March ’03, U.S and Spain invade Iraq

• 5/16/03: Casablanca bombings

• Group approves Fakhet as informal leader

• Fakhet (712) regularly visits Yarkas (700) in prison

• Spring ’03: Fakhet downloads “preparation for jihad” about tactics (bombs, cell phone detonators, operations in Bali & Casablanca)
Merging of Networks: 2003

• Sometime during the summer, after Cartagena has relocated to another mosque, the Yarkas remnant and the Ahmidan gang merge
  – It remains uncertain as to how this merger occurred. J. Ahmidan’s recent radicalization in a Moroccan prison probably contributed

• In the summer, Zuheir (721), who has “weak” ties to both independent networks, mentions to J. Ahmidan (714) that Trashorras (722) is looking to sell dynamite and arranges a meeting between the two gangs by fall of the same year
  – J. Ahmidan (714), Mohamed Oulad Akcha (715), R. Aglif (719), Trashorras, and Castro Torro (723)

• The merged Fakhet-Ahmidan network further expands. Moh Alfalah (732) introduces Alleka Lamari (729), a suspected Algerian GIA member, but who may have simply been radicalized in jail after a mistaken arrest in April ’97 (Lamari released in June 2002 - probably also mistakenly - because he was confused with another inmate with a similar name; authorities issued a warrant for his re-arrest in July 2003, but by then he was underground with the Spanish group)

• Fakhet continues visiting Yarkas (700) and intensifies his studying of Islam in his effort to gain greater credibility as the group’s leader
Mobilization: The Internet

• On December 10, 2003 Fakhet downloads on his hard drive an Internet document on the Zarqawi-associated Global Islamic Media Front website that espouses attacking American allies in the war against Iraq, titled “Iraqi Jihad, Hopes and Risks, which calls for “two or three attacks … to exploit the coming general elections in Spain in March 2004”
Pursuit of a Strategy and Strengthened “Ties”: 2004¹

• 1ˢᵗ week of 04, 3 shipments of Goma-2 dynamite
• 1/28/04, J. Ahmidan (714) rents safehouse in Chinchon
• 2/04: 4/8 anti-terror squad pulled for security of Royal wedding
• 2/14/04 meeting: Suarez (722) sells Ahmidan 200 Kilos of dynamite & detonators for 7000 Euros & 30 Kilos of Hashish
• 2/15/04, Suarez weds Toro’s (723) sister (J.
Time Stamp:
Execution

• Group make the bombs, 10 Kilos of dynamite, surrounded by nails & a cell phone triggering a detonator.
• On 3/11/04, in morning, they drive the Kangoo to Alcalá de Henares, where they board four different trains.
• 13 bombs in four trains.
  – 3 explode 7:38 @ Atocha Station
  – 4 more explode on a train 16 seconds late pulling into Atocha
  – 2 more explode @ El Pozo station, three miles away, 2’ later
  – 1 explodes @ Santa Eugenia station, 5’ later
  – 2 unexploded bombs discovered in debris & blown up by police
  – 1 discovered @ police station in middle of night & defused
• 191 died & over 1,500 injured
Arrests

- Perpetrators return to Chinchon house, have BBQ celebrating event & empty it of evidence. Bring dynamite to Leganes home.
- Zougam is arrested on 3/13/04 (from phone chip)
- Zuheir informs police that Ahmidan bought dynamite from Suarez. He’s arrested shortly after.
- Suarez & Toro arrested
- Rabei called Ghayoun & Morabit
- Warrants for Fakhet, Ahmidan, Oulad Akcha brothers & Kounjaa
Suicides

- 4/2/04: similar bomb discovered on Madrid Seville high speed line near Toledo
- Perpetrators found in Leganes apartment: police tries to negotiate, but perpetrators commit suicide; Fakhet, Ahmidan, Oulad Akcha brothers, Kounjaa, Rifaat & Lamari (Bouchar runs away after giving alarm, contacts Ibrahim Alfalah to get Youssef Belhadj’s tel. number; Moh Belhadj and Moh Alfalah flee to Belgium to join Youssef)
- Explosive belts to be used in future suicide bombings:
  - Madrid Lerida high speed line
  - Bilingual (English) primary school
  - Jewish Recreational Center outside Madrid
  - Jewish Hostel in Avila
  - Market at Easter
Post-Attack Devolution: Further Arrests and Suicides

• Ahmed Ahmidan (716) arrested (3/30/04)
  – 60 Kilos of Hashish, 126K of Ecstasy + $70K: $1.7 to 2 million
  – Operation: $54K to $71K, all from drug sales
• Morabit (726) arrested (4/8)
• Rabei (724) arrested (6/7)
• Youssef Belhadj (735) arrested (2/1/05)
• DNA evidence shows Alfalah (732) dies in suicide mission in Iraq (May ’05), probably along with Moh. Belhadj (731, though evidence is not yet conclusive)
• Setmarian (703) arrested in Pakistan (11/05)
Time Stamp:
Current Status 2006

Defunct Network Legend

= Incarcerated/Jailed & Awaiting Trial
= Dead
Clarifications

• Political intrigue and competition between the Spanish Popular party and its rival, the Socialists explain allusions to an al Qaeda connection that the evidence fails to substantiate
  – Al Qaeda beliefs and subsequent persuasion via jihadi documents found on the Internet and publicly stated appeals formed the ideological basis for an otherwise “home grown” terrorist action

• The police reports (especially Cartagena files) show that targeting trains to force Spain out of the coalition in Iraq was only a late goal emanating from an informal network dedicated to the simple but diffuse project of undertaking jihad to defend and advance a Salafist vision of Islam.
Al Qaeda Classic: The Wrong Model

• Engineering (General Staff) Paradigm:
  – Ideology → strategy → tactics
  – Decision → plan (target analysis) → execution

• Reality is full of contingencies & events are results of variety of negotiations:

• “Al Qaeda is patient, plans for years, and is meticulous about details.”

• Astute strategist, backed up by general staff, which carefully crafts battle plans with detailed target analysis to defeat the West.
Al-Qaeda is Dead, Long Live Al-Qaeda: An Overview of Global Jihad Today

- What is emerging is this (10 empirical generalizations):

  1. The old Al-Qaeda network has severely fragmented and decentralized; it has not launched a successful attack since Tunisia in 2002.

  2. The mostly Egyptian and Saudi hardcore around Bin Laden really don't know who many of the new terrorists are and can't reliably communicate with them if they did know.

  3. Most jihadis today live in the diaspora, joining the jihad outside their country of origin (> 80%), and are therefore not worried about retaliation against home populations; most had no religious education until they became “born again” in their late teens or early adulthood.
4. There is no recruitment per se to jihad, only enlistment. Most people join the jihad through friendship (about 70%) and kinship (about 20%); the rest is mostly through schools, but we have been doing research within the schools and find that those have provided suicide bombers (e.g., in Indonesia) less than 10% of the students join the jihad, and of that 10% most do so through friendship and kinship, roughly along the lines of the non-madrassah individuals who join jihad.

5. The preferred cell size of these “bands of brothers” of fictive kin, who are as willing to die for one another as a parent for a child or one sibling for another, is 8 members (that’s about the number of intimate friendship relationships that people across the world tend to develop between 15-30 years old; before then, primary relations are mostly with immediate kin and neighbors, and after, few enduring new relationships tend to form other than with one’s own affines, i.e., family by marriage). Different cells have increasingly little physical contact with one another. They are often self-constituting, and self-mobilizing, and then radicalize through the internet.
6. Previous formal or informal membership in action-oriented groups, such as soccer or cricket teams, may facilitate the passage from radicalization into Jihad and on to joining suicide attack teams (London bombers, Hebron Hamas bombers, JI bombers).

7. Outside of Palestine, most jihadis are married (the testosterone theory of jihad should be chucked), and in Palestine anyone who says he wants to be a martyr to get virgins in Paradise is rejected by leaders of Hamas or PIJ as being unworthy of sacrifice (same for Indonesia’s Jemaah Islamiyah).

8. A plurality of suicide bombers have college education or advanced technical training (except for the Maghreb-European contingent), and are professionals or semi-professionals. The largest single professional category represented is engineer.
Virtual Jihad: The Internet as Organizer of “Leaderless Resistance”

9. We have begun entering websites into our database and modeling them as agents. We are finding that web agents control resources and information much as did physical agents, like Bin Laden, did before (e.g., the Global Islamic Media Front site is very important today - used by Zarqawi and European jihadis to plan bombings).

10. Although websites are assuming central actor, bridge and hub positions in the network, the network itself is shifting profoundly to an acephalic "leaderless resistance." See the online musings of Mustafa Setmariam Nasar (aka Abu Mus’ab Al-Suri), the new global jihadi Web “star” and principal theoretician of “leaderless jihad."

Da’wah lil-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah Al-’Alamiyyah (A Call for the Islamic Global Resistance).

II. Hypothesis: Radical madrassahs and religious teachers play critical role in Southeast Asia

• *Radical* madrassahs in SE Asia provide a staging ground for *both* recruitment and creation of tight-knit social networks that radicalize members, providing a “ready-made band of brothers” for young males, “give religious and ideological focus” to these groups, and provide a “particular action-oriented focus.”

• “Radical” refers to madrassahs that 1) focus a significant part of curriculum on violent jihadist activities; 2) actively or passively support jihadi organizations like Jemaah Islamiyah, Ring Banten, Laskar Jundullah, certain wing of Darul Islam, etc.; and 3) have defined links to terrorist / extremist group leadership.

• As a result, SE Asian networks, when compared to European networks, will tend to be more 1) centralized (organized around teachers) and densely organized; 2) apt to maintain structural identity over time; and 3) able to survive by reforming into operationally coherent fragments when under police or military attack (but illustrating this last point requires multiple events).
Background: Interview with Nasir Abas

• Nasir Abas, who trained Bali bombers Imam Samudra (node 1) and Ali Imron (node 27), received his religious training from Jemaah Islamiyah founders Abdullah Sungkar (deceased) and Abu Bakr Ba’asyir (node 10) in Malaysia before they sent him in 1991 for three years military training in Afghanistan. He became a top JI military trainer but also gave religious instruction. In April 2001 Ba’asyir appointed Abas head of Mantiqi 3, one of JI’s strategic area divisions, which covered the geographical region of the Philippines and Sulawesi and was responsible for military training and arms supply. In July 2005 Abas published Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah (Unveiling Jamaah Islamiyah). The first part of the book details JI’s organization, ideology and strategy. The second part is a rebuttal to Samudra’s own book Aku Melawan Terroris and what Abas believes to be a tendentious use of the Quran and Hadith to justify suicide bombing and violence against fellow Muslims and civilians.

• In an interview with S. Atran in Jakarta in August 2005, Abas says that he quit JI over Ba’asyir’s refusal to condemn or contain the operations and influence of Riduan Isamuddin (aka Hambali, node 520). According to Abas, Hambali, who was JI’s main liaison with Al-Qaeda and a close friend and disciple of 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Muhammed, was given control of Mantiqi 1, which covered the geographical region of Malaysia and environs and was strategically responsible for JI finances and economic development. But Hambali was dissatisfied being saddled with “economy” and wanted to play a more active role in the conflict zones. The then-leader of Mantiqi 3, Mustafa (now in custody) blocked Hambali from muscling in on his area but Hambali was able to send fighters to fight Christians in Ambon (Maluku) in 1999, which was under Mantiqi 2 (covering most of Indonesia and strategically responsible for JI recruitment and organizational development). Encouraged by success in heating up the Maluku crisis, Hambali decided first to extend his (and al-Qaeda’s) conception of Jihad to all of Indonesia (including the 1999-2000 bombings of the Atrium Mall and the Philippines Ambassador’s house in Jakarta, and a series of coordinated Church bombings in 2000) and then to “globalize” the Jihad by networking militants to enlist suicide bombers to hit Western targets and interests, beginning with the 2002 Bali bombings.
Bali I Attack
(October 2002)

Evolution of Jemaah Islamiyah Network
1985-1989

- The Bali network is beginning to form with four key sources
  - Pesantren al-Mukmin (Ngruki) ties (10, 26, 244) in Java. This is the founding pillar of Jemaah Islamiyah
  - First generation Afghan training ties (26, 244, 520) developed during Soviet-Afghan war
  - Family relationships (26, 27, 29 are brothers)
  - Serang Group (responsible for the Gold Robbery used to finance Bali) is beginning to form (78 forms ties with 1)
Evolving Bali Network 1985-1989

Color codes refer forward to state of actors at time of attack in 2002. Central actors appear as large nodes (circles, triangles, squares), other important facilitators are medium-sized. Triangles represent links to post-Bali operations, and squares represent known al Qaeda core.
1990-1994

- Second generation of Afghan training ties are formed (27, 167, 202, 209, 265, 522)
- Further development of the Serang Group (6, 32)
- First documented ties between Hambali and the al Qaeda core (520 and 650)
- Pesantren Lukmanul Hakiem ties are established (10, 26, 244, 249, 261, 520). This is the second pillar of JI established by Ngruki founders during the Malaysian exile
Evolving Bali Network 1990-1994

- Serang Group
- Lukman Group
- Afghan Ties
- Non-Jihadists
- Misc. Other
- al Qaeda Core
- Link to other Attacks
- Link to al Qaeda
1995-1999

- Pesantren Lukmanul Hakiem in Malaysia becomes the center of radical activity (1, 10, 26, 27, 29, 244, 249, 261, 358, 520, 522)
- Suicide bomber (524) establishes links with the Serang group
- Ba’asyir formalizes ties with the al Qaeda core (10 and 650). These ties are based on a letter from Sungkar / Ba’asyir to Darul Islam commanders stating that they were the representatives of Bin Laden in Southeast Asia (August 3, 1998)
Evolving Bali Network 1995-1999

- Serang Group
- Lukman Group
- Afghan Ties
- Non-Jihadists
- Misc. Other
- al Qaeda Core
- Link to other Attacks
- Link to al Qaeda
• There are few changes from 1999 to 2000

• Additions of logistics (81) and high-level planner ties (584)

• Note: Evidence from the Zacarias Mousooaui sentencing trial (4/06) now indicates that Hambali and Samudra were in close contact with one another in 2000, along with Mukhlas & Co.

  - Hambali sends Mukhlas to meet 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.
2001

• No major changes in the Bali network
2002

- Several dramatic changes occur
  - February 2002 Bangkok meeting between 26, 249, 261, 358 (financier), 520, 584
  - Serang group relationships are finalized before the Gold Robbery (6, 31, 32, 34, 78, 239, 111, 524)
  - August 15th meeting at Hernianto’s house attended by 1, 26, 27, 29, 81, 127, 202, 209, 244, 522
  - Two non-jihadists are added to the network for key explosive sales and logistics roles (587, 590)
  - Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the suicide bombers are brought into the main Bali network (524, 588)
Evolving Bali Network 2002

- Serang Group
- Lukman Group
- Afghan Ties
- Non-Jihadists
- Misc. Other
- al Qaeda Core
- Link to other Attacks
- Link to al Qaeda
Intra-Madrassah Linkages

- The Bali bombing was planned and perpetrated by a radical minority group within JI led by Hambali (node 520) that wanted to implement a more violent jihad through bombings of soft targets associated with Westerners such as the United States and Australia. This minority group planned a bombing outside of the group's mantiqi zone of influence, with little or no coordination from those in the mantiqi leadership that were supposed to control activities in that area of Indonesia.

- The radicals (Hambali, Mukhlas, Azhari, Top, Mat, DulMatin, Amrozi, Zulkarnaen, etc) are all either teachers, students, or associated with Lukmanul Hakim in some capacity, even if it is only to visit frequently for sermons.

- The fact that over half of the main network connections are associated with Lukmanul Hakim bolsters the importance of intra-madrassah connections.

- But not all or only the intra-madrassah connections were critical to the operation.
Extra- and Inter-Madrassah Linkages: The Importance of Imam Samudra

- Imam Samudra (node 1) is the key link between the Serang group, which was responsible for the Gold Robbery used to fund the Bali bombing, and the overall Bali network.
- Imam Samudra was chosen as field commander given that he was predisposed to violent jihad (see Samudra’s book, *Aku Melawan Terroris*, which justifies terrorist acts with verses from the Qur’an and Hadith).
- Samudra is linked to the overall network through Lukmanul Hakim madrassah ties and Afghanistan training ties and to the Serang group through Madrassah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) ties.
- Clearly, madrassah ties are important in linking separate but important aspects of the overall network.
2003

- The first round of arrests (1, 10, 26, 29, 81, 358, 587, 590) dramatically affects the network, resulting in a fractured network of relationships. Only Ba’asyir is known to maintain contacts with the outside while in prison.
Evolving Bali Network 2003

- Serang Group
- Lukman Group
- Afghan Ties
- Non-Jihadists
- Misc. Other
- al Qaeda Core
- Link to other Attacks
- Link to al Qaeda
2004

- The second round of arrests (27, 127, 167, 202, 209, 520) decimates the network, including the probable elimination of links with the al Qaeda core
- Remaining ties probably still at large except for 249, who was killed after Bali II
Evolving Bali Network 2004

- Serang Group
- Lukman Group
- Afghan Ties
- Non-Jihadists
- Misc. Other
- al Qaeda Core
- Link to other Attacks
- Link to al Qaeda
Discussion: Global Network Terrorism Isn’t Uniform

• We are currently undertaking a comparative study of moderate versus militant madrassahs to see if and at what stage (entry level, mid level, graduate) extremist ideology becomes a “sacred value” that motivates violent action. Others have argued that religious schools do not provide the tools to carry out extremist violence. This is is less applicable to Southeast Asia, where madrassahs like Pesantren al-Mukmin, Lukmanul Hakiem, Dar us-Syahadah, and Pesantren al-Islam have been critical. JI has chosen an effective strategy of pairing this education with training in Afghanistan, Philippines, and remote parts of Indonesia for the "best and brightest". The madrassah experience provides the religious and ideological training that is then supplemented with militant training. This religious and ideological training provides the core foundation for creating "true believers" like three of the four captured Bali bomb plotters, who refuse to express remorse for their actions and thus spare themselves a death sentence (the fourth did express remorse and his sentence was commuted).

• But in Europe self-starting cells and “bottom-up” enlistment and mobilization into Jihad, and radicalization via internet, are reliably more prevalent than “top down” organization and recruitment; and relatively small and tight-knit friendship and kin networks are much more important than the more wide-ranging teaching and training networks of the Afghan Alumni and madrassahs.
Conclusion: A Relational, People-Based Approach to Understanding Global Network Terrorism

• The major problem facing the study of terrorism today is a lack of strong, quantitative relational data that is freely available for scientific research in the academic, policy, and government communities.
• This dearth of data unfortunately results in theoretical modeling often divorced from important policy questions our gov’t faces in ongoing efforts to fight global terrorism.
• Thus, we have a vast number of modelers with “hammers” that are searching willy-nilly for “nails”, but which have little conception of the empirical reality that should guide their search and constrain the class of models that should be looked at.
• In order to fruitfully marry theoretical modeling to gov’t policy we need to first establish a comprehensive, freely available relational database that the research community can utilize to guide and test theoretical models.