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## Would-Be Warriors

Incidents of Jihadist  
Terrorist Radicalization  
in the United States  
Since September 11, 2001

Brian Michael Jenkins



INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE AND IDEAS

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## Preface

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This paper examines the extent of jihadist radicalization in the United States, discusses who is being recruited, and assesses the domestic terrorist threat posed by the recruits. It then looks at how the recruits were identified by U.S. authorities and asks what this means for domestic counterterrorist strategy. The findings should be of interest to local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities.

Between September 11, 2001, and the end of 2009, 46 publicly reported cases of domestic radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorism occurred in the United States; 13 of those cases occurred in 2009. Most of the would-be jihadists were individuals who recruited themselves into the terrorist role. Some provided assistance to foreign terrorist organizations; some went abroad to join various jihad fronts; some plotted terrorist attacks in the United States, usually with little success because of intervention by the authorities. The threat of large-scale terrorist violence has pushed law enforcement toward prevention rather than criminal apprehension after an event—or, as one senior police official put it, “staying to the left of the boom,” which means stopping the explosions or attacks before they occur. This shift toward prevention requires both collecting domestic intelligence—always a delicate mission in a democracy—and maintaining community trust and cooperation.

This publication results from the RAND Corporation’s Investment in People and Ideas program. Support for this program is provided, in part, by the generosity of RAND’s donors and by the fees earned on client-funded research.

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## Summary

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Between September 11, 2001, and the end of 2009, a total of 46 cases of domestic radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorism were reported in the United States. In some of the cases, individuals living in the United States plotted to carry out terrorist attacks at home; some were accused of “providing material support to foreign terrorist organizations”; and some left the United States to join jihadist organizations abroad. All these individuals can be called “homegrown terrorists.”

Forty-six cases of radicalization in a period of little more than eight years may seem significant, but in each case, an average of only three people were accused—and half of the cases,

**Half of the cases, including some of the fully formulated plots to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States, involved only a single individual.**

including some of the fully formulated plots to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States, involved only a single individual. Only 125 persons were identified in the 46 cases.

Although the numbers are small, the 13 cases in 2009 did indicate a marked increase in radicalization leading to criminal activity, up from an average of about four cases a year from 2002 to 2008. In 2009, there was also a marked increase in the number of individuals involved. Only 81 of the 125 persons identified were indicted for jihadist-related crimes between 2002 and 2008; in 2009 alone, 42 individuals were indicted. The remaining two individuals were indicted in January 2010 in connection with a plot uncovered in 2009.

### Who Are the Recruits?

Most of America’s homegrown terrorists are U.S. citizens. Information on national origin or ethnicity is available for 109 of the identified homegrown terrorists. The Arab and South Asian immigrant communities are statistically overrepresented in this small sample, but the number of recruits is still tiny. There are more than 3 million Muslims in the United States, and few more than 100 have joined jihad—about one out of every 30,000—suggesting an American Muslim population that remains hostile to jihadist ideology and its exhortations to violence. A mistrust of American Muslims by other Americans seems misplaced.

**Many of the jihadist recruits in the United States began their journey on the Internet.**

Many of the jihadist recruits in the United States began their journey on the Internet, where they could readily find resonance and reinforcement of their own discontents and people who would legitimate and direct their anger. Some of the recruits gained experience on the streets. At least 23 have criminal records—some of them very long records—for charges including aggravated assault, armed robbery, and drug dealing. A good percentage of those arrested could be described as having the experience and skills that would make them dangerous.

But what is most at issue here are intentions, not ability. The 46 cases demonstrate earnest intent. The individuals were ready to be terrorists. Their ideological commitment was manifest. Some were naïve, some were adventurers, some were misguided. But many were no doubt sincere in their anger and determination, having made the ideological leap to armed jihad. They came into contact with U.S. authorities when they tried to act on their beliefs. They had, in the words of one prosecutor, “jihadi hearts and jihadi minds,” and juries convicted them on their intent.

## The 1970s Saw Greater Terrorist Violence

While radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorism are cause for continuing concern, the current threat must be kept in perspective. The volume of domestic terrorist activity was much greater in the 1970s than it is today. That decade saw 60 to 70 terrorist incidents, most of them bombings, on U.S. soil every year—a level of terrorist activity 15 to 20 times that seen in most of the years since 9/11, even counting foiled plots as incidents. And in the nine-year period from 1970 to 1978, 72 people died in terrorist incidents, more than five times the number killed by jihadist terrorists in the United States in the almost nine years since 9/11.

America’s perception of the terrorist threat today differs greatly from what it was 35 years ago. It is not the little bombs of the 1970s but fear of another event on the scale of 9/11 or of scenarios involving terrorist use of biological or nuclear weapons that drives current concerns. In response, the country has conceded to the authorities broader powers to prevent terrorism. However, one danger of this response is that revelations of abuse or of heavy-handed tactics could easily discredit intelligence operations, provoke public anger, and erode the most effective barrier of all to radicalization: the cooperation of the community.

## Are We Doing This Right?

Traditional law enforcement, in which authorities attempt to identify and apprehend a perpetrator *after* a crime has been committed, is inadequate to deal with terrorists who are determined to cause many deaths and great destruction and who may not care whether they themselves survive. Public safety demands a more preventive approach—intervention *before* an attack occurs.

**Public safety demands a more preventive approach—intervention before an attack occurs.**

As long as radicalization and recruitment to terrorism remain a reality, domestic intelligence collection, always a delicate mission in a democracy, will remain a necessary activity. Under appropriate controls, intelligence operations can disrupt terrorist recruiting, uncover terrorist plots, and discourage those who would turn to violence.

And by preventing dramatic terrorist actions that inevitably create fear and alarm, intelligence operations can also prevent overreactions by the general public, allay unwarranted suspicions, and thereby protect vulnerable minorities (in this case, the American Muslim community) against official discrimination and even individual acts of revenge.

Meanwhile, expanded efforts must be made through community policing and other means to work with members of the Muslim community. These efforts must entail work-

ing with the community actively and consistently to address issues of crime, fears of crime, the suspicions of authorities, and other community concerns.

**As long as radicalization and recruitment to terrorism remain a reality, domestic intelligence collection, always a delicate mission in a democracy, will remain a necessary activity.**

Relatives and friends are often more likely than the authorities to know when someone is turning dangerously radical and heading toward self-destruction. On occasion, relatives and friends have intervened. But will they trust the authorities enough to notify them when persuasion does not work? Citizen involvement is essential, but so is maintaining positive police relations with all members of the community without stigmatizing any group or privileging special interests.

On occasion, relatives and friends have intervened. But will they trust the authorities enough to notify them when persuasion does not work? Citizen involvement is essential, but so is maintaining positive police relations with all members of the community without stigmatizing any group or privileging special interests.

## Recruitment Will Continue

The homegrown jihadist threat in America today consists of tiny conspiracies, lone gunmen, and one-off attacks. The continued trust and cooperation of the Muslim community, tips to police from the family members and close acquaintances of those heading toward violence, alert citizens, and focused intelligence-collection efforts will remain essential components of the thus-far-successful containment of domestic jihadist terrorism. But prevention will not always work. More attempts will occur, and there will, on occasion, be bloodshed.

**As long as America's psychological vulnerability is on display, jihadists will find inspiration, and more recruitment and terrorism will occur.**

In addition to traditional law enforcement, police intelligence collection, and community policing, public reaction is an essential component of homeland defense. Needless alarm, exaggerated portrayals of the terrorist threat, unrealistic expectations of a risk-free society, and unreasonable demands for absolute protection will only encourage terrorists' ambitions to make America fibrillate in fear and bankrupt itself with security. As long as America's psychological vulnerability is on display, jihadists will find inspiration, and more recruitment and terrorism will occur. Panic is the wrong message to send America's terrorist foes.

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## Would-Be Warriors: Incidents of Jihadist Terrorist Radicalization in the United States Since September 11, 2001

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The killing of 13 people at Fort Hood in November 2009 by an Army psychiatrist, the March 2010 arrest in Yemen of a young Somali-American in a roundup of suspected al Qaeda members, and the recent indictment in the United States of a woman who styled herself “Jihad Jane” while planning to murder a Swedish cartoonist have focused nation-wide attention on the threat posed by persons living in the United States who are swept up in the ideology of radical jihadism and become homegrown terrorists. This paper examines the extent of jihadist radicalization in the United States, discusses who is being recruited, and assesses the domestic terrorist threat posed by the jihadist recruits. It also looks at how they were identified and what this means for domestic counterterrorist strategy.

**More cases of radicalization on U.S. soil were reported in 2009 than in any year since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but the number of cases, 13, hardly represents an explosion of radical fervor, especially since half of them involved lone individuals.**

More cases of radicalization on U.S. soil were reported in 2009 than in any year since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but the number of cases, 13, hardly represents an explosion of radical fervor, especially since half of them involved lone individuals. Whether this indicates a trend remains to be seen, but jihadist recruiting will continue.

### An Average of Six Cases a Year

Between September 11, 2001, and the end of 2009, a total of 46 cases of domestic radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorism were reported in the United States. In some cases, individuals living in the United States plotted to carry out terrorist attacks at home; some were accused of “providing material support to foreign terrorist organizations” (U.S. courts have defined “material support” broadly); and some left the United States to join jihadist organizations abroad. All of these individuals can be called “homegrown terrorists.” They demonstrate that radicalization and recruitment to terrorism can and does take place within the United States. The 46 cases are listed at the end of this paper. They all meet one simple criterion for inclusion in the list: They have resulted in indictments, in the United States or abroad.

Plots by foreign terrorists to prepare or carry out attacks in the United States (or en route to the United States) are not included in the list. The omitted terrorists include Richard Reid, the “shoe-bomber” who tried to blow up an American airliner bound for New York in 2001; Dhiren Barot, an Indian national who in 2004 proposed bombing financial institutions in

the United States following a detailed reconnaissance he had completed while visiting before 9/11; a group in Lebanon that in 2006 discussed blowing up one of the subway tunnels under the Hudson River; a group in the United Kingdom that in 2006 plotted to blow up airliners flying between London and the United States; and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian who in December 2009 attempted to detonate a bomb on an airliner flying between Amsterdam and Detroit. The list also excludes the various ideas and targets for terrorist attacks in the United States considered by al Qaeda's chief operational planner, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and revealed during his interrogation. None of those cases can properly be called homegrown terrorism.

The list also omits individuals who were arrested in the United States for engaging in criminal activity to provide financial support for non-jihadist groups such as Hezbollah, who were involved with charities subsequently discovered to be sources of terrorist funding, or who were engaged in violent campaigns related to non-jihadist issues such as animal rights and abortion.

The 46 cases cited here do not represent the sum of jihadist radicalization in the United States. Open cases—ongoing investigations that may lead to future arrests—are not included, nor are terrorist plots that were disrupted without arrests, for example, when the plotters became aware of or were deliberately made aware of surveillance and backed off. It is difficult to document these latter cases. After all, it is hard to count events that do not occur.

Not all of the 46 cases involve fully formulated terrorist plots. Fifteen consist of individuals or small groups that either had participated in training abroad and then returned to the United States but were not planning any mission or that had gone abroad or planned to go abroad to join jihad elsewhere (some wanted to fight in the active insurgencies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia). The cases also include clusters of recruits who came together to train for jihad but had not yet developed any operational plans, as well as a few individuals who were arrested for providing material support to jihadist terrorists but who had not been part of any specific terrorist plot.

In 24 of the cases, the defendants were accused of plotting to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States. In 19 of these, the terrorists had identified potential targets and discussed operational plans. In 10 of the 19, they conducted reconnaissance, and in 11 of them, they possessed, acquired, or tried to acquire explosives or other weapons, often without taking much care to avoid identification. In three of the

**Only two of the . . . cases resulted in fatalities. . . . The perpetrators in both cases were lone gunmen who had decided to kill—a difficult-to-detect and all-too-common occurrence in the United States that often has nothing to do with terrorism.**

10 cases that went as far as reconnaissance (the Riverdale synagogue plot, the Smedi case, and the Finton case—all in 2009), the plotters actually initiated attacks with what they believed to be explosives but what in fact were harmless substances given to them by law enforcement authorities. Only two of the remaining five cases—both of which occurred in 2009—resulted in fatalities: the murder of one soldier and wounding of another at an Army recruiting office in Arkansas and the murder of 13 people and wounding of 31 others by Army Major Nidal Hasan at Fort Hood, Texas. Significantly, the perpetrators in both cases were lone gunmen who had decided to kill—a difficult-to-detect and all-too-common occurrence in the United States that often has nothing to do with terrorism.

Although 46 cases of radicalization in a period of little more than eight years may seem significant, an average of only three people were accused in each case—and half of the cases, including some of the fully formulated plots to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States, involved only a single individual. Thus, only 125 persons were indicted in the 46 cases. It is not possible to cite a definitive total, however, since two of the cases involve missing Somalis who may have been recruited to return to Somalia to fight on the side of the pro-al Qaeda group al-Shabab.

Although the numbers are small, the 13 cases in 2009 indicate a marked increase in radicalization leading to criminal activity. From 2002 to 2008, there were about four cases a year, on average. There was also a marked increase in 2009 in the number of individuals involved. Of the 125 individuals who have been indicted since 2002 (not counting the missing Somalis), 81 were indicted between 2002 and 2008 (although the charges against one were dismissed), an average of about 12 individuals a year. But in 2009 alone, 42 people were indicted for jihadist-related crimes, 14 of them for recruiting Somalis. The remaining two individuals were indicted in January 2010 in connection with a plot uncovered in 2009.

## Who Are These Homegrown Terrorists?

As of January 2010, all but two of the U.S.-based perpetrators were men. The two exceptions are the ex-wife of one of the men arrested in the 2002 Portland Seven case and Colleen LaRose, the woman who called herself Jihad Jane.

Nearly all the domestically radicalized terrorists have been Muslims or converts to Islam. Those who claimed no ties to Islam include Ronald Grecula, who was angry at the U.S. government in connection with a dispute over child custody, and Michael Reynolds, who offered to blow up the Trans-Alaska Pipeline on behalf of an undercover agent he believed was an agent of al Qaeda. Reynolds was fascinated with explosives and wanted money. The Liberty City Seven, arrested for plotting to blow up buildings in Miami and Chicago, were members of the Seas of David, a splinter of the Moorish Science Temple of America. Their religion combined the teachings of Christianity and Islam, but one member also earned money by conducting voodoo ceremonies.

**Few of America's accused terrorists seem to have arrived at jihadism through a process of profound spiritual discernment.**

While the synergetic beliefs of the Liberty City Seven may be consigned to the category of the eccentric, few of America's accused terrorists seem to have arrived at jihadism through a process of profound spiritual discernment. We have no metric for measuring faith, but the attraction of the jihadists' extremist ideology for these individuals appears to have had more to do with participating in action than with religious instruction.

Beyond their common beliefs, America's homegrown terrorists are a diverse group. Information on national origin or ethnicity is available for 109 of the 125 individuals named in the radicalization cases. Most are U.S. citizens. Sixteen of them come from Pakistani families, and 16 come from Somali families. Twenty are of Yemeni (8), Jordanian (7), Egyptian (2), Iraqi (1), Lebanese (1), or Palestinian (1) origin. Seven come from the Muslim areas of the Balkans: Albania (3), Kosovo (2), and Bosnia (2). Twelve are native-born Caucasians, and 12 are African-Americans, seven of whom belong to the Seas of David, while five others are converts

to Islam. Two are Hispanic-Americans. The remainder are first- or second-generation immigrants from or nationals of Guyana, Trinidad, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Eritrea, or Turkey.

While the Arab and South Asian communities are statistically overrepresented in this small sample, the number of terrorist recruits is still tiny.

The four cases involving Somalis in America who went to Somalia (Maldonado, Kazui, and the two Somali recruiting cases) indicate a continuing effort to radicalize and recruit Somali-

**Most of these individuals recruited themselves into the role of terrorists in response to jihadist propaganda and to events in the world that could be portrayed and perceived as assaults on Islam.**

American residents to join al-Shabab.

Three cases—the 2003 Northern Virginia cluster case, the 2005 Brent case, and the 2009 Headley case—were linked to the Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Christopher Paul, Jose Padilla, Lyman Faris, Bryant Vinas, Sharif

Mobley, and Najibullah Zazi are individuals who received training and instruction from al Qaeda. These 13 cases, which constitute one-fourth of the total, illustrate the ability of domestic extremists and prospective extremists to connect with foreign terrorist organizations, receive training, and become terrorist operatives in the United States. There is, however, no evidence of an organized terrorist underground in this country—no army of “sleepers,” as some once feared. Most of these individuals recruited themselves into the role of terrorists in response to jihadist propaganda and to events in the world that could be portrayed and perceived as assaults on Islam.

Many of the jihadist recruits in the United States began their journey on the Internet, where they could readily find resonance and reinforcement of their own discontents and people who would legitimate and direct their anger. The dramatic growth in the number of jihadist websites and chat rooms, especially the significant increase in English-language sites from a handful to hundreds, has made the narrative and message of violent jihad more accessible and compelling to those who cannot read or speak Arabic (Abu-Nasr and Keath, 2009). Native-born U.S. citizens, currently acting as spokespersons for the jihadist cause, have become motivators. They include Adam Gadahn, a Californian who speaks on behalf of al Qaeda; Omar Hammami, who makes jihadist recruiting videos in Somalia; and Yemen-based Anwar al-Awlaki, who communicated with Nidal Hasan and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab and who also inspired Michael Finton.

Given the direct American military involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan and the growing indirect involvement in Somalia and Yemen, more jihadist echoes in the United States should probably be anticipated. Today’s conflicts are not geographically confined. There are no frontiers, no front lines, no home fronts. The battlefield is everywhere. There is no distinction between combatants and bystanders. It is also important to remember that these individuals believe that the entire Islamic community is the target of aggression by the United States, Israel, and other infidel powers. Armed defense, according to this view, is a necessary and personal duty. For some, the jihadist narrative can be compelling.

A mistrust of American Muslims by the American public seems misplaced, however. There are more than 3 million Muslims in the United States, and few more than 100 have joined jihad—about one out of every 30,000—suggesting an American Muslim population that remains hostile to jihadist ideology and its exhortations to violence.

In a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2006, 68 percent of American Muslims expressed an unfavorable opinion of al Qaeda. That does not mean that the remaining 32 percent held a favorable view, as 27 percent declined to offer any opinion. Only 5 percent expressed a positive view of al Qaeda, and this was at the height of the war in Iraq, which clearly provoked negative attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy. Seventy-four percent of younger Muslims, those under the age of 30, expressed unfavorable views of al Qaeda, although at the same time, 7 percent expressed favorable views of the organization (Pew Research Center, 2007). These figures indicate that individuals turning toward violence would find little support in the Muslim community. They are not Mao's guerrillas swimming in a friendly sea. Even assuming wider antipathy among U.S. Muslims toward certain U.S. policies in the Middle East or in the war on terrorism, the jihadists' propaganda machine is returning a very low yield of recruits.

One may also presume that more individuals than have been identified started down the path of radicalization but were dissuaded from proceeding by family and friends or dropped out on their own. There are anecdotal reports of intervention by worried U.S. family members and friends. In 2009, five Virginia residents sought terrorist training in Pakistan, and their families, worried about their missing sons, contacted U.S. authorities. Two excellent new studies, *Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim Americans* (Schanzer, Kurzman, and Moosa, 2010) and *Terrorist Dropouts: Learning from Those Who Have Left* (Jacobson, 2010), underscore the importance of community and close acquaintances in halting or reversing an individual's growing commitment to terrorist violence. Of course, we have no way of counting those who did not become full-blown terrorists. The success of the authorities in uncovering plots and the well-publicized arrests that followed may also have had a broad deterrent effect.

**Individuals turning toward violence would find little support in the Muslim community. They are not Mao's guerrillas swimming in a friendly sea.**

Information on the ages of the missing Somalis is incomplete, but we have age information for 109 of the would-be jihadists who have been identified. (The age given after each name in the chronology at the end of this paper is the individual's age at the time of arrest.) The ages range from 18 to 70, from angry young people to angry old fools.

The average age of the homegrown terrorists at the time of their arrests was 31. The median age, which may be more meaningful, was 27, somewhat older than that of the most violence-prone cohort of the U.S. population (men between the ages of 18 and 24). Forty-seven of the terrorists were 30 years old or older at the time of arrest. Whether this higher age reflects lasting commitment or an accumulation of disillusionment is not clear.

Information about the education levels of those arrested is incomplete. The jobs they held and the criminal records of some suggest that many are high school dropouts (or immigrants in entry-level jobs). But at least 16 are known to have had some university training in subjects including computer sciences, engineering, pharmacology, and medicine, and at least four had graduate training. At least 11 had some military training, and at least 24 attended some kind of terrorist training camp. Three saw action in Afghanistan. Some left the United States to seek terrorist training or to join jihadist groups abroad that were engaged in armed conflict. Others engaged in weapons training locally.

Some gained experience on the streets. At least 23 have criminal records—some of them very long criminal records—for charges including aggravated assault, armed robbery, and drug dealing. Some may be foolish, but they are not fools who flinch at violence. A good percent-

age of them could be described as having the experience and skills that would make them dangerous.

The paucity of readily available information prevents us from writing the biographies that might reveal how these individuals became so radical in their views that they embraced violence. Until we can answer basic questions about the trajectories radicalized individuals have followed, our ability to understand and counter radicalization will be severely limited. In any case, America's would-be jihadist warriors should not be underestimated.

## What Did They Intend to Do?

Most of the plots could be described as more aspirational than operational. Putting aside fantastic schemes such as the plots to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge or shoot down airliners with surface-to-air missiles, the would-be terrorists contemplated attacks on easy targets: shopping malls, subways and commuter trains, synagogues, federal and commercial buildings, banks, Army recruiting centers and other military facilities, the Trans-Alaska pipeline, and fuel storage tanks at John F. Kennedy Airport. Of course, these are the same kinds of targets that terrorists have attacked abroad in Madrid, London, and Mumbai, with deadly results. The plotters also thought about assassinating prominent U.S. politicians and a Pakistani diplomat.

**Success in disrupting the terrorist plots has kept a lid on potential community tensions.**

One can do no more than speculate about the casualties that would have resulted had the attacks succeeded. In the 1970s, domestic terrorists in the United States favored symbolic violence—midnight bombings in front of corporate headquarters—and tended to avoid casualties. In contrast, jihadist terrorists seek high body counts, as their targeting indicates. If the domestic jihadists had managed to fulfill their ambitions, there would have been scores of casualties, potentially hundreds. And the terrorists' successes might have inspired other attacks.

Any continuing campaign of lethal terrorism would have kept the country on edge, certainly heightening suspicion directed at the Muslim community. And that could have led to ugly incidents. Trust would have been a collateral casualty. Success in disrupting the terrorist plots has kept a lid on potential community tensions.

Probably not all, but undoubtedly some, of the interrupted plots, if undiscovered, would have matured into actual terrorist attacks. At the trials of the arrested would-be terrorists, defense attorneys downplayed the risks, portraying the accused as harmless pawns who got caught up in jihadist fantasies, as dimwits and dupes easily manipulated by fast-talking confidential informants, as barely competent bumbler who, without the direction of U.S. government agents acting as infiltrators, would have been incapable of translating their rhetoric into action on their own. Yet prisons are filled with dangerous felons who also could be accurately described as fools, dummies, and barely competent bumbler. Neither are all terrorists the diabolical master criminals depicted in suspense novels. Joining a terrorist plot does not require high SAT scores—enthusiasm suffices. An individual can be dumb and dangerous.

There is no long mile between the terrorist wannabe and the lethal zealot. A group of young hotheads angrily banging their fists on the table needs only one very determined, reasonably competent individual to propel them down a deadly path. The four men responsible

for killing 52 people in the July 7, 2005, terrorist bombings on London's subways and a bus were organized by a youth worker. His co-conspirators included an employee of a fish-and-chip shop and a reported petty drug dealer. Their average age was 22; two were in their teens. Lack of obvious terrorist skills did not preclude their lethality.

What is most at issue here are intentions, not competence. The 46 cases demonstrate earnest intent. The individuals were ready to be terrorists. They were not necessarily good terrorists, but their ideological commitment was manifest. Some were naïve, some were adventurers, some were misguided. But many were no doubt sincere in their anger and in their determination, having made the ideological leap to armed jihad. They came into contact with U.S. authorities when they tried to act on their beliefs by going off to join groups they knew had been identified as terrorist organizations or by attempting to obtain the means to carry out terrorist acts at home. Some offered to build bombs for others believed to be terrorists. Some willingly detonated what they believed were bombs, anticipating that the results would be deadly. They had, in the words of one prosecutor, "jihadi hearts and jihadi minds," and juries convicted them on their intent (Tempest, 2006, quoting Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Tice-Raskin).

### No Terrorist-Prone Personality

Marc Sageman's insightful work, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Sageman, 2004), and the excellent empirical research of Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt of the New York Police Department (Silber and Bhatt, 2007) and of Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman (Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, 2009) have increased our understanding of radicalization in the United States. To these must be added the more recent work, mentioned above, of Schanzer, Kurzman, and Moosa (2010) and Jacobson (2010). Journalists tracking the trajectory of individual jihadists have also produced some excellent articles.<sup>1</sup>

Such research has enabled us to trace the steps by which one typically evolves from an ordinary individual to a willing jihadist recruit, although "recruit" may be a misleading term in that it suggests conventional military recruiting. While there are "spotters" who identify and assist in the radicalization of malleable individuals, the process of ingesting the jihadists' radical ideology and embracing violence on its behalf involves individuals reaching out as much as it involves recruiting by others—the drive is as much internal as it is external. It is self-recruitment and very much an individual matter. That means that while it is possible to identify the phases of jihadization, it is not possible to predict who will become a jihadist.

There is no easily identifiable terrorist-prone personality, no single path to radicalization and terrorism. Many people may share the same circumstances, but only some will, as a consequence, adopt radical views, and only a handful of the radicals will go further to become terrorists. The transition from radical to terrorist is often a matter of happenstance. It depends on whom one meets and probably on when that meeting occurs in the arc of one's life. Some self-radicalizers become fiercely determined to demonstrate their commitment with guns and bombs, ready to sacrifice their own lives, dedicated to pulling others along with them. Others who proceed along the path of radicalization may lack an accelerant; their commitment may

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Elliott (2010), Horowitz (2005), Khatchadourian (2007), and NEFA Foundation (2009).

be strong, but the means are not at hand. They may run into more-determined zealots, then find themselves propelled into terrorist plots, or they may encounter a government-run confidential informant who can offer them the means they lack.

## The 1970s Saw Greater Terrorist Violence

While radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorism remain cause for continuing concern, the current threat must be kept in perspective. What *has not* occurred is just as significant as what *has* occurred: Thus far, there has been no sustained jihadist terrorist campaign in the United States. There are many possible reasons: Al Qaeda simply lacked the assets to carry out

### **The volume of domestic terrorist activity was much greater in the 1970s.**

terrorist operations. The local Muslim community rejected al Qaeda's appeals and actively intervened to dissuade those with radical tendencies from violence. Domestic intelligence efforts were expanded and improved and thus far have succeeded in thwarting all but two actual attacks. Surveillance of radical venues, real or imagined, plus actual arrests contributed to a deterrent effect. Guns are readily available, but the ingredients of explosives became harder to obtain and were more closely monitored. Security visibly improved. While constant government admonitions early in the decade to remain vigilant seemed silly afterthoughts to dire warnings of imminent attack, citizens became more watchful and reported suspicious activity, which in at least a few of the cases yielded real results, adding further to a deterrent effect.

The scale of the September 11, 2001, attacks tended to obliterate America's memory of pre-9/11 terrorism, yet measured by the number of terrorist attacks, the volume of domestic terrorist activity was much greater in the 1970s. That tumultuous decade saw 60 to 70 terrorist incidents, mostly bombings, on U.S. soil every year—a level of terrorist activity 15 to 20 times that seen in the years since 9/11, even when foiled plots are counted as incidents. And in the nine-year period from 1970 to 1978, 72 people died in terrorist incidents, more than five times the number killed by jihadist terrorists in the United States in the almost nine years since 9/11.

In the 1970s, terrorists, on behalf of a variety of causes, hijacked airliners; held hostages in Washington, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco; bombed embassies, corporate headquarters, and government buildings; robbed banks; murdered diplomats; and blew up power transformers, causing widespread blackouts. These were not one-off attacks but sustained campaigns by terrorist gangs that were able to avoid capture for years. The Weather Underground was responsible for 45 bombings between 1970 and 1977, the date of its last action, while the New World Liberation Front claimed responsibility for approximately 70 bombings in the San Francisco Bay area between 1974 and 1978 and was believed to be responsible for another 26 bombings in other Northern California cities. Anti-Castro Cuban exile groups claimed responsibility for nearly 100 bombings. Continuing an armed campaign that dated back to the 1930s, Puerto Rican separatists, reorganized in 1974 as the Armed Front for National Liberation (FALN), claimed credit for more than 60 bombings. The Jewish Defense League and similar groups protesting the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union claimed responsibility for more

than 50 bombings during the decade. Croatian and Serbian émigrés also carried out sporadic terrorist attacks in the United States, as did remnants of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>2</sup>

Some of these groups clearly benefited from the support of radicalized subcultures or sympathetic ethnic communities, which made suppression difficult. And domestic intelligence collection was less sophisticated in the 1970s than it is today. The techniques that had in previous decades allowed authorities to penetrate large organizations such as the Communist Party or the Ku Klux Klan did not work with the tiny, more-fluid terrorist gangs of the 1970s. Domestic intelligence also operated under greater constraints, which reflected a very different public perception of threat but also a reaction to revelations of prior abuses connected with domestic intelligence operations.

**Heavy-handed tactics . . . could easily discredit all intelligence operations, provoke public anger, and erode the most effective barrier of all to radicalization: the cooperation of the community.**

The contrast between the level of terrorist violence in the United States today and that in the 1970s is indicated in RAND's chronology of terrorism, which records 83 terrorist attacks in the United States between 9/11 and the end of 2009, only three of which were clearly connected with the jihadist cause. (The RAND database includes Abdulmutallab's failed Christmas Day attempt to detonate a bomb on an airplane.) The other jihadist plots were interrupted by authorities. In addition to the jihadist attacks, this total includes the anthrax letters sent in late 2001, which killed five people, as well as numerous low-level attacks by environmental extremists (38) and animal-rights fanatics (12), which account for most of the violence. In all, 24 people were killed between 9/11 and the end of 2009, including the 13 who died at Fort Hood.

America's perception of the terrorist threat today differs greatly from the perception of 35 years ago. Current concerns are driven not by the little bombs of the 1970s but by fear of another event on the scale of 9/11 or of even more frightening scenarios involving terrorist use of biological or nuclear weapons. In response, the nation has conceded to the authorities broader powers to prevent terrorism. But that attitude could change with revelations of abuse or with heavy-handed tactics, either of which could easily discredit all intelligence operations, provoke public anger, and erode the most effective barrier of all to radicalization: the cooperation of the community.

## Are We Doing This Right?

This historical perspective raises the question, Are we intervening in the process of jihadist radicalization and recruitment in appropriate and effective ways? Some of the recent arrests have been heavily criticized as reflections of post-9/11 paranoia, Islamophobia, and national hysteria. Critics have compared the government's arrests of Muslims on terrorism charges to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. In that case, however, 120,000 Japanese were uprooted and deprived of their liberty solely because they were Japanese. In this case, 100 alleged terrorist plotters were arrested on criminal charges and brought to trial. An exception to this was Jose Padilla, who was initially detained and held without criminal

<sup>2</sup> The statistics are taken from Jenkins (1980).

charges. But overall, the internment of the Japanese and the arrest of terrorist plotters differ in principle, in practice, and in magnitude. Such over-the-top comparisons obscure the more fundamental question of how to halt radicalization without abandoning the basic tenets of justice.

Traditional law enforcement, in which authorities attempt to identify and apprehend a perpetrator *after* a crime has been committed, is not adequate to deal with terrorists who are

**The informant often plays the role of an enabler, offering people with extreme views but faint hearts the means to act.**

determined to cause many deaths and great destruction and who may not care whether they themselves survive. Public safety demands a more preventive approach—intervention *before* an attack occurs. But merely being radical is by itself no crime; many upstanding citizens and even leaders were once radicals. What, then, should trigger intervention?

In many of the 46 cases, the triggering event was a crime. Actions such as joining or attempting to join a known terrorist group, conspiring to carry out a specific attack, or offering to assist an enemy all manifest a clear criminal intent. But not all cases are so clear-cut, and many may rest heavily on an interpretation of the ultimate intentions of the accused. That puts the American justice system perilously close to prosecuting people solely on the basis of what is in their hearts and on their minds. It is slippery terrain and not a domain where one ought to feel comfortable.

Often, police intelligence depends on the use of confidential informants, which may be the only way to break into a conspiracy. There are, however, possible abuses in the employment of confidential informants, especially given the very broad interpretation of providing material assistance to a terrorist group and the difficulty of determining intent, particularly since one of the characteristics of many terrorist perpetrators is their malleability. Confidential informants are often determined to prove their value to their police handlers, whether the currency is cash or avoiding trouble relating to other criminal charges. Informants are also likely, of necessity, to display undiluted zeal in order to gain credibility among jihadist zealots. Thus, the informants can easily become *agents provocateurs*, subtly coaxing radicalized but hesitant individuals into action. Even without providing overt encouragement, the informant often plays the role of an enabler, offering people with extreme views but faint hearts the means to act, thereby potentially facilitating actions that otherwise might not occur. Whether justice is done ultimately depends on a jury, which is why guilt is decided in a trial, not on the basis of what is in an intelligence dossier.

**Expanded efforts must be made through community policing and other means to work with members of the Muslim community. . . . It is a matter of building trust.**

Not everyone agrees that justice has been done in all cases. Professional intelligence and law enforcement officials themselves wonder how far they can reach without repeating past excesses. Objective observers remain skeptical of the charges in several of the cases. Juries comprising frightened citizens do not always reach unbiased verdicts. National consensus is fragile. Risks must be carefully weighed.

As long as radicalization and recruitment to terrorism remain a reality, domestic intelligence collection, always a delicate mission in a democracy, will remain a necessary activity. Under appropriate controls, intelligence operations can disrupt terrorist recruiting, uncover terrorist plots, and discourage those who would turn to violence. And by preventing dramatic

terrorist attempts that inevitably create fear and alarm, intelligence operations can also prevent overreactions by the general public, allay unwarranted suspicions, and thereby protect vulnerable minorities (in this case, the American Muslim community) from official discrimination and even individual acts of revenge.

At the same time that intelligence operations are being undertaken with appropriate controls, expanded efforts must be made through community policing and other means to work with members of the Muslim community. This is not merely a matter of eliciting their public denunciations of jihadist terrorism when it occurs—a reassuring gesture that some non-Muslims seem to demand as proof of patriotism. Nor is it a matter of enlisting the Muslim community as an army of snitches. It is a matter of working with the community actively and consistently to address issues of crime, fears of crime, the suspicions of authorities, and other community concerns. It is a matter of building trust.

Relatives and friends are often more likely than the authorities to know when someone is turning dangerously radical and heading toward self-destruction. On occasion, relatives and friends have intervened. But will they trust the authorities enough to notify them when persuasion doesn't work? The local Arab and Muslim community assisted in thwarting the plot of the Toledo Three in 2006. The worried families of five young men who in 2009 headed for Pakistan to seek terrorist training notified authorities. And although the case of Abdulmutallab, the would-be bomber of the Amsterdam-to-Detroit flight, was not a case of radicalization in the United States, his worried father had gone to the American embassy with concerns about his son's radicalization. Had his concern been followed by appropriate action, a near tragedy for the passengers and crew of the flight and a personal tragedy for Abdulmutallab's family might have been avoided.

**The paucity of responses to jihadist exhortations points to another component of efforts to counter radicalization and recruiting. In a classic insurgency, this would be referred to as “winning hearts and minds.”**

This kind of citizen policing does not involve the police in religious or political debates, which are matters for the community. And it should not be a matter of working exclusively through, and thereby empowering, individuals or organizations that claim to represent the entire community but may have their own personal or political agendas. Rather, it is a matter of maintaining positive relations with all members of the community without stigmatizing any group or privileging special interests.

Any conclusions about the comparative effectiveness of these anti-terrorist measures must remain tentative. The only true measure of success is the absence of terrorist events. By that measure, efforts to date have been successful.

The empirical evidence in the individual cases indicates that success derives from a variety of means. Intelligence clearly has proved extremely effective in uncovering recruiting and support for terrorist organizations and in thwarting terrorist plots. In several cases, the initial leads came from interrogations of terrorists apprehended abroad or from foreign intelligence. In one case, the lead came from an ongoing criminal investigation. And in at least five cases, and possibly more, authorities were tipped off by alert citizens. Therefore, citizen involvement is also essential.

The paucity of responses to jihadist exhortations points to another component of efforts to counter radicalization and recruiting. In a classic insurgency, this would be referred to as “winning hearts and minds.” It is an over-used phrase, and the United States today hardly faces

an insurgency, but the principle is sound. That is, the ability of any subversive movement to generate armed action depends on the attitude of the population it perceives as its constituency and recruiting reservoir. Popular rejection will not preclude some individuals from responding, often for idiosyncratic reasons, but it will keep the numbers small.

## Recruitment Will Continue

There is no evidence that America's Muslim community is becoming more radical. Overt expressions of Muslim militancy are muted and rare. Recruitment and self-recruitment to jihadist terrorism are, however, likely to continue. Those seeking answer-all belief systems, a sense of meaning, self-importance, belonging to something greater than themselves, adventure, or an opportunity to display their commitment with pretensions of danger will find reinforcement in the jihadists' appeals, which increasingly concentrate on galvanizing Western audiences to action.

Al Qaeda's spokesmen are pushing hard. On January 25, 2010, Osama bin Laden proclaimed Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to be a hero, despite the failure of his attack, and linked his action to the plight of the Palestinians, thereby seeking credit among an audience for whom al Qaeda has done little.<sup>3</sup> While bin Laden speaks Arabic, al Qaeda's American-born spokesmen deliver their messages in English.

In a videotape released on March 8, 2010, Adam Gadahn praised Major Nidal Hasan as "the ideal role model for every repentant Muslim" and pointed out that even unsuccessful attacks can "bring major cities to a halt, cost the enemy billions, and send his corporations into bankruptcy."<sup>4</sup>

**Needless alarm, exaggerated portrayals of the terrorist threat, unrealistic expectations of a risk-free society, and unreasonable demands for absolute protection will only encourage terrorists' ambitions to make America fibrillate in fear and bankrupt itself with security.**

On March 17, 2010, Anwar al-Awlaki praised Abdulmutallab for costing the U.S. government billions in new security arrangements, and he criticized the U.S. government for trying to portray the attack by Major

Hasan as an individual act of violence and ignoring its ideological motivation. Al-Awlaki urged American Muslims to follow in Hasan's path and turn against their government.<sup>5</sup>

That jihadist leaders have been reduced to appeals for others to carry out even small-scale attacks in the United States is evidence of an operational decline that America's homegrown terrorists will not be able to reverse. Nevertheless, the theme is consistent: American Muslims must take action themselves. Their battlefield is America itself. Don't wait for another 9/11. Small-scale attacks, actions by individuals, even operations that fail can cause great alarm and oblige the infidels to divert vast sums to security.

<sup>3</sup> Bin Laden's message was aired in Arabic on al-Jazeera Television on January 24, 2010. An English translation is available through BBC Monitoring Middle East—Political, January 24, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Adam Gadahn's video was produced by al Qaeda's media arm, Al-Sahab Establishment for Media Production, and was disseminated by Al-Fajr Media Center, March 7, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Awlaki's audiotape was reported by both al-Jazeera and CNN (see CNN, 2010).

That, then, is the threat America faces at home today: tiny conspiracies, lone gunmen, one-off attacks rather than sustained terrorist campaigns (although a lone gunman killing at random could sustain a campaign, as we saw in the case of the Beltway sniper attacks in 2002).

The continued trust and cooperation of the Muslim community, tips to police from family members and close acquaintances of those heading toward violence, alert citizens, and focused intelligence collection efforts will remain essential components of the thus-far-successful containment of domestic jihadist terrorism. But prevention will not always work. More attempts will occur, and there will, on occasion, be bloodshed—as in any armed conflict.

In addition to traditional law enforcement, police intelligence collection, and community policing, public reaction is an essential component of homeland defense. Needless alarm, exaggerated portrayals of the terrorist threat, unrealistic expectations of a risk-free society, and unreasonable demands for absolute protection will only encourage terrorists' ambitions to make America fibrillate in fear and bankrupt itself with security.

Bin Laden would not have publicly attached himself to Abdulmutallab's failed bombing attempt unless he was persuaded that the young Nigerian had caused national upset—a tactical failure but a strategic success. As long as America's psychological vulnerability is on display, jihadists will find inspiration in the actions of individuals like Nidal Hasan and Umar Abdulmutallab. And more recruitment and terrorism will occur. Panic is the wrong message to send America's terrorist foes.

## A Chronology of the Cases

### 2002

- **Jose Padilla.** Jose Padilla (32), a U.S. citizen, convert to Islam, and al Qaeda operative, was arrested upon his return from the Middle East to the United States. Although there is no question of his al Qaeda connection, his mission remains unclear.
- **The Lackawanna Six.** Six Yemeni-Americans—Sahim Alwar (26), Yahya Goba (25), Yasein Taher (24), Faysal Galab (25), Shafal Mosed (23), and Muktar al-Bakri (21), all U.S. citizens—were arrested for training at an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan.
- **The Portland Seven.** Seven individuals—Patrice Lumumba Ford (31), Jeffrey Leon Battle (31), October Martinique Laris (25), Muhammad Ibrahim Bilal (22), Ahmed Ibrahim Bilal (24), Habis Abdulla al Saoub (37), and Maher Hawash (38) (six Americans and a Jordanian national)—were arrested for attempting to join al Qaeda and the Taliban.
- **Earnest James Ujaama.** Earnest James Ujaama (36) was arrested for providing support to the Taliban.
- **Anwar al-Awlaki.** Anwar al-Awlaki (31) was born in New Mexico, studied engineering in college and motivation in graduate school, then became an increasingly radical imam. After being questioned by the FBI several times, he left the United States in 2002 and went to Yemen, where he is now a leading spokesperson for al Qaeda.

### 2003

- **Lyman Faris.** Lyman Faris (34), a naturalized U.S. citizen, was arrested for reconnoitering the Brooklyn Bridge for a possible al Qaeda attack.

- **The Northern Virginia Cluster.** Eleven men were arrested in June 2003 for training at a jihadist training camp abroad and planning terrorist attacks: Caliph Basha Ibn Abdur Raheem (28), Sabri Benkhala (27), Randall Todd Royer (39), Ibrahim al-Hamdi (25), Khwaja Mahmood Hasan (27), Muhammed Aatique (30), Donald T. Surratt (30), Masoud Ahmad Khan (33), Selfullah Chapman (31), Hammad Adur-Raheem (34), and Yong Ki Kwon. Two other individuals were also arrested in connection with the group: Ali al-Tamimi (40) and Ali Asad Chandia (26). Six of the accused pleaded guilty. Another three were convicted. Benkhala was acquitted but was later charged and convicted of making false statements to the FBI. The case against Caliph Basha Ibn Abdur Raheem was dismissed.
- **Ahmed Omar Abu Ali.** Ahmed Omar Abu Ali (22), a U.S. citizen, was arrested by Saudi authorities and later extradited to the United States for providing support to a terrorist organization and plotting to assassinate the president of the United States.

## 2004

- **Amir Abdul Rashid.** Ryan Gibson Anderson (26)—a convert to Islam calling himself Amir Abdul Rashid—was a soldier in the U.S. Army at Fort Lewis, Washington, when he was arrested in February 2004 for contacting Islamist websites related to al Qaeda and offering information about the U.S. Army.
- **Mohammed Junaid Babar.** Mohammed Junaid Babar (31), a Pakistani-American, was arrested in New York for providing material support to al Qaeda.
- **The Herald Square Plotters.** Shahawar Martin Siraj (22), a Pakistani national, and James Elshafy (19), a U.S. citizen, were arrested for plotting to carry out a terrorist attack on New York City's Herald Square subway station.
- **The Albany Plotters.** Yassin Aref (34) and Mohammad Hossain (49), two leaders of a mosque in Albany, New York, were arrested for attempting to acquire weapons in order to assassinate a Pakistani diplomat.
- **Adam Gadahn.** Adam Gadahn (26), an American convert to Islam, moved to Pakistan in 1998. In 2004, he was identified as a member of al Qaeda planning terrorist attacks in the United States and subsequently became one of al Qaeda's principal spokesmen.
- **Nuradin Abdi.** Nuradin Abdi (32), a Somali native, was indicted in June 2004 for plotting with Lyman Faris to blow up a Columbus, Ohio, shopping mall.

## 2005

- **The New York Defendants.** Three defendants—Mahmud Faruq Brent (32), who had attended a training camp in Pakistan run by Lashkar-e-Taiba; Rafiq Abdus Sabir (50), a medical doctor who volunteered to provide medical treatment to al Qaeda terrorists; and Abdulrahman Farhane (52), who agreed to assist in fundraising for the purchase of weapons for insurgents in Afghanistan—were linked to defendant-turned-informant Tarik Shah (42), who was arrested in May 2005 for offering to provide training to insurgents in Iraq. Shah identified his co-defendants, and all four were convicted.
- **The Lodi Case.** Hamid Hayat (22) and his father, Umar Hayat, two Pakistani-Americans, were arrested in June 2005 for secretly attending a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. Umar Hayat ultimately pleaded guilty of lying to federal authorities.

- **The Torrance Plotters.** Kevin James (29), Levar Washington (21), and Gregory Patterson (25), all U.S. citizens, and Hammad Riaz Samana (21), a permanent resident from Pakistan, were charged in August 2005 with planning to carry out terrorist attacks on National Guard armories, a U.S. military recruiting center, the Israeli consulate, and Los Angeles International Airport. (This case is sometimes referred to as the Sacramento Plot.)
- **Michael Reynolds.** Michael Reynolds (47), a U.S. citizen, acquired explosives and offered them to an informant whom he believed was an al Qaeda official to blow up the Trans-Alaska pipeline in return for \$40,000.
- **Ronald Grecula.** Ronald Grecula (70) was arrested in Texas in May 2005 for offering to build an explosive device for informants he believed to be al Qaeda agents.

## 2006

- **The Liberty City Seven.** Seven Americans—Narseal Batiste (32), Patrick Abraham (39), Stanley Grunt Phanor (31), Naudimar Herrera (22), Burson Augustine (21), Lyglenson Lemorin (31), and Rotschild Augustine (26)—were charged in June 2006 with plotting to blow up federal buildings in Florida and the Sears Tower in Chicago.
- **Syed Hashmi.** Syed “Fahad” Hashmi (30), a Pakistani-born American, was arrested in London on charges of providing material support to al Qaeda.
- **Derrick Shareef.** Derrick Shareef (22) was arrested for attempting to buy handguns and hand grenades for a planned suicide attack on an Illinois shopping mall.
- **The Fort Dix plotters.** Six men—Mohammad Ibrahim Shnewer (22), Serdar Tatar (23), Dritan Duka (28), Shain Duka (26), Elljvir Duka (23), and Agron Abdullahu (24)—were charged with plotting to carry out an armed attack on soldiers at Fort Dix, New Jersey. (The three Duka brothers were Albanians living in the United States illegally; the other three plotters were legal U.S. residents.)
- **The Toledo Three.** Mohammad Zaki Amawi (26), Marwan El-Hindi (43), and Wassim Mazloum (25) were arrested in Toledo, Ohio, for plotting to build bombs to use against American forces in Iraq.
- **The Georgia Plotters.** Syed Harris Ahmed (21) and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee (20), an American and a Pakistani from Atlanta, Georgia, were arrested in April 2006 for discussing potential targets with terrorist organizations and receiving instruction in reconnaissance.
- **Daniel Maldonado.** Daniel Maldonado (27), an American convert to Islam, was arrested for joining a jihadist training camp in Somalia.

## 2007

- **Hassan Abujihad.** Hassan Abujihad (31), a former U.S. sailor, was arrested in April 2007 for giving the locations of U.S. naval vessels to an organization accused of supporting terrorists.
- **The JFK Airport Plotters.** Russell Defreitas (63), Abdul Kadir (55), Kareem Ibrahim (56), and Abdal Nur (57) were charged in June 2007 with plotting to blow up aviation fuel tanks at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. Defreitas, a U.S. citizen, was arrested in Brooklyn. The other three plotters—one Trinidadian (Ibrahim) and two Guyanese citizens (Kadir and Nur)—were arrested in Trinidad and extradited to the United States.

- **Omar Hammami.** Now known as Abu Mansour Al-Amriki, Omar Hammami (23) left Alabama some time not later than 2007 to join the al-Shabab group in Somalia. He later appeared in the group's recruiting videos.

## 2008

- **Christopher Paul.** Christopher Paul (43), a U.S. citizen living overseas, was arrested upon his return to the United States in April 2008 for having plotted terrorist attacks on various U.S. targets.
- **Bryant Vinas.** Bryant Vinas (26), an American convert to Islam, was arrested in Pakistan and extradited to the United States for having joined al Qaeda in Pakistan. He also provided al Qaeda with information to help plan a bombing attack on the Long Island Rail Road.
- **Somali Recruiting Case I.** As many as a dozen Somalis may have been recruited in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, area by Shirwa Ahmed to fight in Somalia. Ahmed subsequently may have been killed in a suicide bombing in Somalia.
- **Sharif Mobley.** Sharif Mobley (26), a U.S. citizen of Somali descent, moved to Yemen in 2008, ostensibly to study Arabic and religion but in reality, authorities believe, to join a terrorist organization. He was later arrested by Yemeni authorities in a roundup of al Qaeda and al-Shabab militants. In March 2010, he killed one guard and wounded another in an attempt to escape.

## 2009

- **The Riverdale Synagogue Plot.** James Cromite (55), David Williams (28), Onta Williams (32), and Laguerre Payen (27) were arrested in New York in May 2009 for planning to blow up synagogues.
- **Abdulahakim Mujahid Muhammad.** In June 2009, Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad (23), also known as Carlos Bledsoe, a Muslim convert, killed one soldier and wounded another at an Army recruiting station in Arkansas.
- **The North Carolina Cluster.** Daniel Boyd (39), a U.S. citizen who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, was arrested in July 2009 along with his two sons, Zakarlya Boyd (20) and Dylan Boyd (22), and four others, including three U.S. citizens—Anes Subasic (33), Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan (22), and Ziyad Yaghi (21)—and Hysen Sherifi (24), a legal U.S. resident from Kosovo, for plotting terrorist attacks in the United States and abroad.
- **Betim Kaziu.** Betim Kaziu (21), a U.S. citizen, was arrested in September 2009 for traveling overseas to join al-Shabab or to attend a terrorist training camp in Somalia.
- **Michael Finton.** Michael Finton (29), an American convert to Islam, was arrested in September 2009 for planning to blow up a federal courthouse in Springfield, Illinois.
- **Hosam Maher Smadi.** Hosam Maher Smadi (19), a Jordanian citizen living in the United States, was arrested in September 2009 for planning to blow up an office building in Dallas, Texas.
- **Najibullah Zazi.** Najibullah Zazi (25), a permanent U.S. resident from Afghanistan, was arrested in September 2009 for receiving training in explosives at a terrorist training camp in Pakistan and buying ingredients for explosives in preparation for a terror-

ist attack. Indicted with Zazi were his father, Mohammed Zazi (53), and Ahmad Afzali (38), both for making false statements to federal investigators; neither was involved in the terrorist plot. In January 2010, authorities arrested Adis Medunjanin (24), a Bosnian immigrant, and Zarein Ahmedzay (25), an Afghan immigrant, and charged them with participating in the plot.

- **Tarek Mehana.** In October 2009, federal authorities in Massachusetts arrested Tarek Mehana (27), a dual citizen of the United States and Egypt, for conspiring over a seven-year period to kill U.S. politicians, attack American troops in Iraq, and target shopping malls in the United States. Two other individuals were allegedly part of the conspiracy.
- **David Headley.** In an increasingly complicated case, David Headley (49), a Pakistani-American and resident of Chicago, was arrested in October 2009 along with Tahawar Rana (48)—a native of Pakistan and a Canadian citizen—for planning terrorist attacks abroad. Headley was subsequently discovered to have participated in the reconnaissance of Mumbai prior to the November 2008 attack by the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Headley pleaded guilty in March 2010.
- **Colleen Renee LaRose.** Calling herself “Jihad Jane” on the Internet, Colleen Renee LaRose (46) was arrested in October 2009 for plotting to kill a Swedish artist whose drawings of Muhammad had enraged Muslims and for attempting to recruit others to terrorism. Her arrest was concealed until March 2010. LaRose pleaded guilty to the charges.
- **Nidal Hasan.** In November 2009, Nidal Hasan (38), a U.S. Army major, opened fire on fellow soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13 and wounding 31.
- **The Pakistan Five.** In November 2009, five Muslim Americans from Virginia—Ulmar Farooq (25), Ramy Zamzam (22), Waqar Hassan Khan (22), Ahmad Abdullah Mini (20), and Ameen Hassan Yemer (18)—were arrested in Pakistan for attempting to obtain training as jihadist guerrillas. Khalid Farooq, Ulmar Farooq’s father, was also taken into custody. The five were charged by Pakistani authorities with planning terrorist attacks.
- **Somali Recruiting Case II.** In November 2009, federal authorities indicted eight men for recruiting at least 20 young men in Minnesota for jihad in Somalia and raising funds on behalf of al-Shabab. By the end of 2009, a total of 14 indictments had been handed down as a result of the ongoing investigation. Those indicted, all but one of whom are Somalis, were Abdow Munye Abdow, Khalid Abshir, Salah Osman Ahmad, Adarus Abdulle Ali, Cabdulaahi Ahmed Faarax, Kamal Hassan, Mohamed Hassan, Abdifatah Yusef Isse, Abdiweli Yassin Isse, Zakaria Maruf, Omer Abdi Mohamed, Ahmed Ali Omar, Mahanud Said Omar, and Mustafa Salat. No age information is available.



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