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Author: Dongen, Teun Walter van

Title: The science of fighting terrorism : the relation between terrorist actor type and counterterrorism effectiveness

Issue Date: 2015-11-18

9 Fighting Qutb's children: repression, prevention and the importance of world view in the jihadist movement in the UK

No European country in the twenty-first century faced a more severe threat from jihadist terrorism than the UK. The casualty rate of the London Bombings of 7 July 2005 were second only to the 2004 Madrid Bombings, and several of the most ambitious post-9/11 jihadist plots in Europe were planned in the UK. For instance, two weeks after the London Bombings, the British capital narrowly escaped a similar attack on its public transport system. The attack was very similar to the first London Bombing, except that this time the explosives failed to detonate.¹ Another major plot was dismantled in 2006, when MI5 found that a jihadist cell around ringleader Abdullah Ahmed Ali was working on a plan to simultaneously blow up a series of transatlantic flights.² It was not until May 2013 that the UK suffered its first fatal terrorist victim since the 7/7 Bombings, but one should be careful not to read this as a sign that the terrorist threat has been neutralised.³ Stuart Osborne, Senior National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism and Head of the Counter Terrorism Command at the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) claimed in March 2013 that “[o]n average we’ve probably had about one potential attack planned with an intent to create something similar to July 7 every year”.⁴ In a speech in 2007, MI5 director Jonathan Evans estimated the numerical strength of the British jihadist movement at some 2,000 people.⁵

¹ “Urgent Hunt for London Attackers,” *BBC News*, July 22, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4705933.stm.

² M.D. Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor: Plots against the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 48–49.

³ “Woolwich Machete Attack Leaves Man Dead,” *BBC News*, May 22, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-22630303>.

⁴ “Terrorism Plot Size of 7/7 Attacks ‘Foiled Every Year,’” *BBC News*, March 21, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21878867>.

⁵ J. Evans, “Intelligence, Counter-Terrorism and Trust” (MI5, November 5, 2007), <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/home/about-us/who-we-are/staff-and-management/director-general/speeches-by-the-director-general/intelligence-counter-terrorism-and-trust.html>.

The operational ambition level and size of the jihadist movement in the UK cannot be fully understood without a reference to the role London played in the international jihadist movement. In the 1980s and 1990s, London became a favoured refuge for jihadists from the Arab world and Central Asia. As the governments in the region started to crack down on the jihadist movements that were plotting their overthrow, many fighters were forced to leave their home countries. Their preferred safe haven was the UK, primarily because the British government followed a policy of limited intervention in the affairs of ethnic and cultural minorities, paid generous social benefits and was quick to grant asylum to political dissidents.⁶ By the late 1990s, the UK had attracted members from a wide variety of jihadist groups, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), the Algerian *Groupe islamique armée* (Armed Islamic Group, GIA), the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and the Egyptian Jemaah Islamiyyah (JI).⁷ Most of the jihadist refugees chose to live in London, which became home to a vibrant jihadist scene that acted as a logistical hub for the international jihadist movement. Because of the level and scope of jihadist activity, the British capital was disparagingly labelled 'Londonistan'.

Jihadists in London engaged in a wide variety of activities that contributed to the holy war in their home countries. They could openly claim their allegiance to jihadist groups and spread propaganda material. This was possible even after 9/11, when groups around extremist preachers distributed flyers that praised the perpetrators of 9/11 as heroes.⁸ But the Londonistani networks provided more substantial support as well. They raised funds for their brothers in arms in the Middle East and Central Asia, made travel arrangements for volunteers who wanted to join the fight in the Muslim lands and brought new recruits in touch with groups that ran training camps or religious schools

⁶ S. Ulph, "Londonistan," *Terrorism Monitor* 2, no. 4 (2004), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=26312&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=179&no_cache=1#.Ucv2GZxn24U](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=26312&tx_ttnews[backPid]=179&no_cache=1#.Ucv2GZxn24U).

⁷ C. Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of Al-Qa'ida and the Arab Jihadists* (London, Saint Paul and Beirut: SAQI, 2010), 112.

⁸ J. Kampfener, "Why the French Call Us Londonistan," *New Statesman*, 2002, <http://www.newstatesman.com/node/144386>.

in Pakistan or Afghanistan.⁹ In 2002, media reports revealed that some training in the use of AK-47s took place in a London mosque.¹⁰

For a long time, the British government turned a blind eye towards jihadist activities on its own soil. The notorious ideologue Abu Hamza even suggested that there was a security covenant of sorts, claiming that MI5 officers had told him with regard to his support for jihad: "Well, it's freedom of speech. You don't have to worry as long as we don't see blood on the streets."¹¹ This changed, of course, after 9/11.

Prime Minister Tony Blair often stressed the unprecedented nature of jihadist terrorism, beginning on 9/11, when he called Al Qaeda-style terrorism "the new evil in our world today".¹² It was on these grounds that he in later years defended the expansion of the legal apparatus that was in previous decades brought to bear on the Provisional IRA. For instance, the pre-detention trial period for terrorist offences was extended on the grounds that terrorist plots had to be disrupted at an early stage, which means that investigation has to take place on a slimmer evidence base than crimes that have actually been committed.¹³ Various kinds of new legislation were adopted to penalise not only acts of terrorism, but also membership of terrorist organisations and the making of public statements that were supportive of terrorism. Police powers were widened and potential targets were hardened against terrorist attacks.

⁹ E.T. Barbieri and J. Klausen, "Al Qaeda's London Branch: Patterns of Domestic and Transnational Network Integration," *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 6 (2012): 418; Petter Nesser, "Ideologies of Jihad in Europe," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 2 (2011): 476–477.

¹⁰ J. Burke, "AK-47 Training Held at London Mosque," *Observer*, February 17, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/feb/17/terrorism.religion>.

¹¹ C. Caldwell, "After Londonistan," *New York Times*, June 25, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/25/magazine/25london.html?pagewanted=all>. In an interview in 1998, Omar Bakri Mohammed, another radical preacher in Londonistan, also hinted at a security covenant. See Ulph, "Londonistan."

¹² "Full Text of Tony Blair's Speech," *Guardian*, September 11, 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/sep/11/september11.usa9>.

¹³ S. Hewitt, *The British War on Terror: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism on the Home Front since 9/11* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), 54.

Legal scholars and civil rights organisations protested many of the legal instruments that the government had acquired in the fight against terrorism, but the Labour government kept insisting that jihadist terrorism was an extraordinary threat that called for extraordinary measures.

This chapter will address the effectiveness of the British government response to jihadist terrorism after 9/11. In this, it will differ from the government counterterrorism reviews that are regularly published. The government appointed an independent reviewer to monitor the implementation of counterterrorism legislation, and the coalition government launched a review of the counterterrorism strategy that the Labour government adopted in 2003 and adapted in 2009.¹⁴ The Prevent pillar of the strategy, which contains measures to keep people from becoming terrorists, was reviewed separately in 2010.¹⁵ Although useful in assessing the way in which measures are implemented and used, including the identification of negative side effects these assessments rarely address the effects on the terrorist movement itself. Put differently, they do not address effectiveness in the way the term is used by the current author. The same goes for the scholarly literature about British counterterrorism, which has much to say about what British counterterrorism does to the position of ethnic minorities in the UK and to the country's human rights record, but not about its impact on the terrorists it is supposed to fight. Given the wealth of the available material, it should nevertheless be possible to make a first assessment whether British counterterrorism is doing what it set out to do.

¹⁴ D. Anderson, "Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation," accessed June 27, 2013, <https://terrorismlegislationreviewer.independent.gov.uk/>; *Review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers: Review Findings and Recommendations*, Cm 8004 (London: HM Government, 2011).

¹⁵ *Prevent Review: Summary of the Responses to the Consultation* (HM Government, 2011).

9.1 The jihadist movement in the UK

9.1.1 Ideology and strategy: from the near to the far enemy

Jihadist terrorists in the UK are representatives of the *takfiri* branch of political Islam. Characteristic of the takfiris, or “those who accuse others of apostasy”, is their claim to the right to declare other Muslims apostates.¹⁶ Other strands of Islam respect certain procedures in labelling someone an apostate. Only a select group of Islamic scholars have the right to issue a *takfir*, and they generally use this instrument with caution, careful as they are not to undermine the unity of the *ummah*. The takfiris are decidedly less restrained in this regard, and need little more than their own judgment to state that someone has strayed from true Islam to the extent that he or she has to be expelled from the Islamic community.¹⁷

The hostility towards other views is partially a reflection of the extreme standards by which the takfiris judge other Muslims. In essence, the takfiris want the *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community, to live in accordance with Islam as practiced and explained by Mohammed and his direct associates. They reject all other political views and governance structures as man-made and therefore impure and profane.¹⁸ A crucial element in takfiri thinking is that Islam should be saved from policies, laws and practices that were invented in the centuries after Mohammed. Modern-day *takfiri* ideologues, most prominently Sayyid Qutb, claim that large parts of the *ummah* have strayed from the righteous path centuries ago by changing their lifestyles, by rallying behind secular nationalist political agendas, and by opening the Muslim lands to western influences, both cultural and political.¹⁹ They view the history of the Islamic people as a descent into decadence, subservience and apostasy, and believe that

¹⁶ C.M. Blanchard, *Islam: Sunnis and Shiites* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 2.

¹⁷ G. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 31.

¹⁸ S. Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic World* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 173.

¹⁹ D. Thaler, “The Middle East: The Cradle of the Muslim World,” in *The Muslim World after 9/11*, ed. A. Rabasa (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2004), 92.

only a return to the Islam of the days of Mohammed can revitalise the *ummah*. As Qutb explained in his seminal work *Milestones*, “[i]f Islam is again to play the role of the leader of mankind, then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form. It is necessary to revive that Muslim community which is buried under the debris of the man-made traditions of several generations, and which is crushed under the weight of those false laws and customs which are not even remotely related to the Islamic teachings, and which, in spite of all this, calls itself the ‘world of Islam’.”²⁰

What is important with regard to jihadist terrorism in the UK is that “the debris of man-made traditions” is, at least partially, brought on the *ummah* by the West. The Islamic world, according to Qutb and other takfiris, is being held back by Western countries, which support secular regimes in the Middle East, are allies of Israel, and maintain military presence on Muslim lands. In order to restore Islam in its pure form, these forces must be removed from the Muslim world.²¹ Originally, this fight was to be waged in the Muslim lands. According to ‘classical’ jihadists, which for quite a while included Al Qaeda chiefs Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, the oppression and deception of the *ummah* had to be fought where it occurred.²² Furthermore, some jihadists in the western world respected a covenant with the countries where they lived. They considered themselves guests in the West, and felt that it was not allowed to carry out attacks against countries that were effectively their hosts.²³

This view was underpinned further by a more tactical consideration, derived from the experiences of the Algerian GIA, which had paid dearly for taking the fight against the French to Paris. In the mid-1990s, the

²⁰ S. Qutb, *Milestones* (Birmingham: Maktabah, 2006), 25.

²¹ T.R. Mockaitis, *The “New” Terrorism: Myths and Reality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 64.

²² F. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 29; F. Gerges, *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy* (Orlando, Austin, New York, San Diego, Toronto and London: Harcourt, 2006), 176.

²³ Nesser, “Ideologies of Jihad in Europe,” 174.

French capital was rocked by a series of terrorist attacks on the subway. Eight were killed and more than hundred were wounded. In the police crackdowns that were launched in response to the attacks, the GIA's support networks in several Western European countries were dismantled, and the group's campaign fizzled. From this, the jihadist community drew the lesson that it was better not to provoke the wrath of their host countries.²⁴ Some, however, changed their minds after 9/11 and the US-led invasion in Iraq in 2003. Several prominent Islamist extremists in the UK now agreed with Osama bin Laden that 'the far enemy' – that is, western countries on their own soil – was no longer off limits.

The first one was Abu Qatada, the Palestine-born Jordanian who is a wanted man in his country of birth for his alleged involvement in terrorist attacks on American and Israeli tourists.²⁵ He fled to the UK in 1993, where he became a central actor in the international jihadist network.²⁶ Soon after his arrival in the UK he became a preacher at the Finsbury Park mosque, widely known as a hotbed of Islamist extremism. He was known for his ultra-orthodox speeches, in which he applauded the killing of Jews, Americans and Brits.²⁷ The first time he gained some public attention in the UK was in 1995, when he held a sermon in which he approved of the killing of the wives and children of Algerians who had turned away from Islam.²⁸ At this point he was still advocating and materially supporting jihad in the Muslim world. After 9/11 he switched

²⁴ Ibid., 182.

²⁵ D. Casciani, "Profile: Abu Qatada," *BBC News*, November 13, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16584923>.

²⁶ P. Harris et al., "Britain's Most Wanted," *Observer*, May 5, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/may/05/religion.terrorism>.

²⁷ R. Booth, "Abu Qatada: Spiritual Leader for Deadly Islamist Groups?," *Guardian*, February 7, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/07/abu-qatada-spiritual-leader-islamist?newsfeed=true>.

²⁸ "Timeline: Abu Qatada's Legal Battle to Stay in Britain," *Telegraph*, November 13, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/9672154/Timeline-Abu-Qatadas-legal-battle-to-stay-in-Britain.html>.

sides and supported Al Qaeda and its attacks against the 'far enemy'.²⁹ He had close ties with Richard Reid, who in December 2001 tried to blow up a plane with explosives that were hidden in his shoes, and Zacarias Moussaoui, suspected of involvement in the 9/11 attacks. These connections prompted government officials and media to label him "the most significant extremist preacher in the UK" and "Bin Laden's right-hand man in Europe".³⁰

A similar volte-face regarding jihadist strategy was made by another prominent jihadist preacher in Londonistan. Omar Bakri Mohammed's career as an Islamic scholar started at the age of fifteen, when he joined the Muslim Brotherhood in his native Syria.³¹ Later he left the Brotherhood to join *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Party of Liberation), an organisation that he would have a turbulent relationship with, mainly because he favoured a more radical course than the leadership. He was ousted from the movement after he tried to launch a *Hizb ut-Tahrir* branch in Saudi Arabia against the wishes of the leadership, which felt this was too bold a move.³² He went on to form the radical jihadist group *al-Muhajiroun* (The Emigrants), but was expelled from the country and had to flee to the UK.³³ Here he went back to *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, but soon clashed with the leadership, which failed to appreciate Bakri Mohammed calling on Queen Elizabeth to convert to Islam and claiming that the *ummah* would carry on

²⁹ "Who Is Abu Qatada?," *Channel 4 News*, November 13, 2012, <http://www.channel4.com/news/who-is-abu-qatada>; Nesser, "Ideologies of Jihad in Europe," 181.

³⁰ P. Flanagan, "Abu Qatada: Sermons That Preach Hate and Murder," *The Express*, January 18, 2012, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/296346/Abu-Qatada-Sermons-that-preach-hate-and-murder>.

³¹ M. Abedin, "Al-Muhajiroun in the UK: An Interview with Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed," *Spotlight on Terror* 2, no. 5 (2005), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=290#.UcwN5xn24U](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=290#.UcwN5xn24U).

³² B.R. Farmer, *Radical Islam in the West: Ideology and Challenge* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 147–148.

³³ Abedin, "Al-Muhajiroun in the UK."

the fight until “the black flag of Islam flies over Downing Street”.³⁴ Undeterred by his falling out with *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, he formed a new incarnation of *al-Muhajiroun*. This latter group would gain him prominence in the British jihadist community, as he now called on his followers to carry out attacks in the UK. For instance, the organisation was linked to a terrorist plot in the UK involving a fertiliser bomb that was assembled to kill hundreds of British citizens.³⁵

Abu Hamza walked a path that was very different from that of his two peers. Born in Egypt, he first came to the UK on a student visa to study civil engineering. Later on he held jobs as a bouncer at a night club and as a bell boy in a hotel.³⁶ He became interested in Islam only in his late twenties, after his then wife found out that he was cheating on her and pressed him to change his ways.³⁷ He turned to Islam and started mingling in the radical jihadist community in London. In 1991, some four years after his conversion, he travelled to a training camp in Afghanistan to learn how to assemble explosives. During one session the device he was working on exploded, and he lost a hand and an eye.³⁸ As a result of this incident, he was forced to sport the glass eye and hook hand that became pivotal to his public image. Some have doubted the theological sophistication of Abu Hamza's sermons, but he appealed to the second generation immigrants who visited the Finsbury Park mosque, a logistical hub and meeting point for jihadists from all over Europe.³⁹ After a campaign in which he slandered the older generation that made up the

³⁴ Q. Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 9.

³⁵ J. Doward and A. Wander, “The Network,” *The Observer*, May 6, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/may/06/terrorism.jamiedoward>.

³⁶ S. O’Neil and D. McGrory, *The Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque* (London, New York, Toronto and Sydney: Harper Collins, 2006), 6 and 9.

³⁷ R. Pantucci, “The Tottenham Ayatollah and the Hook-Handed Cleric: An Examination of All Their Jihadi Children,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 3 (2010): 228.

³⁸ O’Neil and McGrory, *The Suicide Factory*, 26–28.

³⁹ O. Nasiri, *Inside the Global Jihad: How I Infiltrated Al Qaeda and Was Abandoned by Western Intelligence* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2006), 272; R. Lambert, *Countering Al-Qaeda in London* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2011), 82.

mosque's board and accused them of corruption, he became the Finsbury Park mosque's leading figure.⁴⁰ Like his mentor Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza was at first primarily interested in supporting jihad in the Muslims lands, especially Algeria, but his position changed after 9/11. Gradually, however, he came to support the global jihad as propounded by Al Qaeda.⁴¹

The significance of these men for the terrorist threat in the UK is that they, by making this strategic shift and reconsidering the strategic priorities of the jihadist movement, managed to mobilise second and third generation immigrants in the UK to open a front in the West. They had the credentials and the charisma to appeal to radicalising local young men, and used their position to gain recruits for the implementation of the new course, the fight in – as opposed to merely against – the West. As a result, their networks in, primarily, Afghanistan and Pakistan were now open to local radicals who wanted to carry out terrorist attacks in the UK. This meant that the latter had access to training camps, networks for transportation and paper forgery, and financial resources that were originally intended for use in the fight against western or apostate forces in the Muslim lands. What thus emerged, was a peculiar mixture of international and 'home grown' terrorism.

On the one hand, the jihadist movement in the UK started planning attacks that were supposed to be carried out in the UK by British citizens. But at the same time, the perpetrators of these attacks were embedded in an international network that provided inspiration and operational support. Also, the goals of the 'home grown' terrorists were largely similar to those of previous generations of jihadists. With only a few exceptions, the perpetrators of terrorist plots against the UK made clear that their actions were intended to make the British government pay the price for military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴² This suggests that

⁴⁰ R. Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 176.

⁴¹ Nesser, "Ideologies of Jihad in Europe," 181.

⁴² This point will be argued more elaborately in the section 'Restraint in the use of force'.

their strategy – attacking the enemy on its own soil instead of only in Muslim lands – may have been different from the strategy of ‘classical’ jihadist groups, but their objectives were the same: the liberation of Muslim lands from western domination.

9.1.2 Organisational structure

Jihadist terrorism has often been described as a form of leaderless resistance, consisting of autonomous cells that operate without outside assistance and guidance from other terrorist groups.⁴³ After the London Bombings of 7 July 2005, and especially after it had become clear that the attacks had been the work of British citizens, the terrorist threat to the UK was viewed this way as well. Experts and government officials alike believed that the 7/7 bombings were a manifestation of a new threat, namely that of independent, autonomous terrorist cells that were not or only marginally plugged in to the wider jihadist movement.⁴⁴ But while the label ‘home grown’ terrorism is possibly appropriate for the jihadist movement in other European countries, it fails to grasp the essence of the British jihadist scene, at least in the first years after 9/11.

Contrary to what one would expect when viewing the jihadist movement as a collection of autonomous, independent cells, the radical scene in the UK showed a remarkable degree of integration, meaning that members of the scene were in touch with a large number of other members. This point can be illustrated by the interactions of the terrorists involved in various plots. Mohammed Siddique Khan, the ringleader of the cell that committed the London Bombings of 7 July 2005, knew Omar Khyam and Mohammed Qayyum Khan, both of whom were involved in the fertiliser bomb plot that was thwarted in 2004.⁴⁵ Similarly, it is now known that

⁴³ This view is most famously put forth in Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*.

⁴⁴ See e.g. A. Kirby, “The London Bombers as ‘self-Starters’: A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 5 (2007): 423–425.

⁴⁵ H. Hallett, *Coroner's Inquest into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005*, 2011, 7–8; *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented? Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, Cm 7617 (London: Intelligence and Security Committee, 2009), 19.

Abdullah Ahmed Ali, leader of the plot to carry out a series of simultaneous terrorist attacks on transatlantic flights in 2006, had been in touch with Mukhtar Ibrahim, ring leader of the cell that carried out the failed attack in London on 21 July 2005.⁴⁶ Siddique Khan and Mukhtar Ibrahim may also have met, as they were at the same time in Pakistan to undergo training, and their respective cells' explosives, in both cases home-made, showed a striking resemblance.⁴⁷ Furthermore, both Siddique Khan and Mukhtar Ibrahim received terrorist training in the Lake District, near the Scottish border, from a man named Mohammed Hamid, who assigned himself the nickname 'Osama bin London'. Furthermore, Siddique Khan, Ibrahim and Ali all gained access to Al Qaeda's training facilities through the same man, Rashid Rauf, who helped them escape the Pakistani intelligence service ISI and introduced them to core Al Qaeda members.⁴⁸ Finally, even the jihadist cyber activist Younes Tsouli, often portrayed as a loner, turned out to have an extensive network of contacts in the groups around the famous preachers.⁴⁹ What these examples of contacts and shared acquaintances show, is that the jihadist movement was far from fragmented. Rather than a group of cells operating independently of each other, it was a vibrant scene, where members of terrorist cells frequently made use of the spiritual guidance and operational support offered by actors in the heart of Londonistan.

What held the movement together was the social infrastructure made up by the networks around Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri Mohammed.⁵⁰ In the mosques and bookstores that were run by these networks, as well as in the members' homes, militants could interact with fellow believers, discuss religious and political ideas and gain access to

⁴⁶ D. Casciani, "Liquid Bomb Plot: What Happened," *BBC News*, September 9, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7564184.stm.

⁴⁷ Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor*, 140.

⁴⁸ G. Corera, "Bomb Plot - the Al-Qaeda Connection," *BBC News*, September 9, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7606107.stm; N. Robertson, P. Cruickshank, and T. Lister, "Documents Give New Details on Al Qaeda's London Bombings," *CNN*, April 30, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/30/world/al-qaeda-documents-london-bombings>.

⁴⁹ Barbieri and Klausen, "Al Qaeda's London Branch," 425.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 421–422.

facilities to develop terrorist skills. One particularly important meeting point was the Finsbury Park mosque, effectively the headquarters of the network around Abu Hamza. The mosque was not just a platform to air extremist views, but also a logistical hub for the jihadist movement, as can be seen from the list of known jihadist terrorists that often came by. Shoe bomber Richard Reid, Zacarias Moussaoui, and several members of a cell that was planning a bioterrorist attack on the London Underground were reportedly frequent visitors.⁵¹ Three of the four perpetrators of the London bombings also attended services in the Finsbury Park mosque, as did Mohammed Hamid, who acted as a mentor to the cell that carried out the London bombings of 21 July.⁵² Another example is Parviz Khan, the ringleader of a plot to kidnap and behead a British soldier. Khan was an admirer of Abu Hamza, and regularly went to the Finsbury Park mosque to listen to the hook-handed cleric's sermons.⁵³ In the Finsbury Park mosque, these men were groomed as jihadist terrorists. They were vetted by the radical preachers and their associates, who also made arrangements for recruits to go to Afghanistan or Pakistan to visit a training camp.⁵⁴

In these training camps, the recruits learned terrorist skills, such as making explosives and using firearms. Also, much time was spent on religious schooling. The training was provided by experienced fighters, who tolerated little contradiction, as Omar Khyam told Mohammed Siddique Khan in March 2004: "The only thing I will advise you, yeah, is total obedience to whoever your emir is. Whether he is Sunni, Arab, Chechen, Saudi, British – total obedience. I tell you, up there you can get

⁵¹ N. Dean and N. Allen, "Finsbury Park Mosque's Terrorist Roll Call," *The Independent*, accessed May 16, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/incoming/finsbury-park-mosques-terrorist-roll-call-465867.html>.

⁵² Pantucci, "The Tottenham Ayatollah and the Hook-Handed Cleric," 236–237.

⁵³ D. Gardham, "Parviz Khan: Promising Footballer to Terrorist," *Telegraph*, February 18, 2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1579021/Parviz-Khan-Promising-footballer-to-terrorist.html>.

⁵⁴ J. Brandon, "Al-Qa'ida's Involvement in Britain's 'Homegrown' Terrorist Plots," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 3 (2009): 11–13.

your head cut off!”⁵⁵ While it is difficult to tell exactly what went on inside the training camps, it appears that the planning of the terrorist plots took place there as well. From a message he left his wife, it appears that Siddique Khan thought that he was going to Pakistan to carry out a suicide mission. Only after he returned to the UK did he start working on the London Bombings, which suggests that there had been a change of plan while he was in the training camp.⁵⁶ The plan for the 7 July Bombings was probably thought up in the camp, and the training that Siddique Khan underwent was tailored to the mission he was instructed to carry out. After he left Pakistan, he stayed in touch with his instructors to keep them up to date regarding the plot’s progress.⁵⁷ Some other British jihadists who went to training camps in Pakistan also underwent training that was specific to the attack they set out to commit after they got back to the UK.⁵⁸ In these cases too, core Al Qaeda not only helped British jihadists acquire terrorist skills, but was probably also involved in the decision making processes regarding the nature of the attacks.

The networks around the radical preachers and the training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan were thus crucial elements of the British jihadist movement, but this is not to say that jihadist terrorism in the UK was entirely a top-down affair. The group dynamic within jihadist cells was an important driver behind many terrorist plots. The radicalisation of these cells often started with small groups of young men, who knew each other from a mosque or from the neighbourhood they lived in. Before there was ever a plan for a terrorist attack, they got together in gyms,

⁵⁵ “MI5 Transcript of Bomber’s Conversation,” *Channel 4 News*, May 1, 2007, http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/society/law_order/mi5%2Btranscript%2Bof%2Bbombers%2Bconversation/491157.html.

⁵⁶ Hallett, *Coroner’s Inquest into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005*, 14.

⁵⁷ B. Hoffman, “Radicalization and Subversion: Al Qaeda and the 7 July 2005 Bombings and the 2006 Airline Bombing Plot,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 12 (2009): 1102.

⁵⁸ V. Dodd, “Airline Bomb Plotters’ Links to Al-Qaida and Other Convicted Terrorists,” *Guardian*, September 7, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/07/airline-bomb-plot-pakistan-links>.

mosques and Islamic bookstores to discuss religion and politics.⁵⁹ The cell members rallied around a ringleader, who was usually older than other cell members. Mohammed Siddique Khan is a case in point. Some ten years the senior of the other 7/7 bombers, he acted as a mentor to troubled youths in the Leeds neighbourhood of Beeston, which made him something of an authority figure to some in the community.⁶⁰ Together, members of British jihadist cells watched propaganda materials and held group discussions to steel the cell members' convictions as well as their willingness to carry out a terrorist attack. During this process, they also engaged in what can be described as 'male bonding', which included karate lessons, survival trips, paintballing and other activities that involve physical exercise.⁶¹ As cell members isolated themselves from the social circles they were part of before, their views hardened, and they became more and more committed to the terrorist attack they were to carry out eventually.

Over the years the cohesion and degree of integration of the British jihadist movement decreased. Until about 2007 there were, roughly speaking, two levels to the jihadist movement in the UK: the international jihadist networks that reached all the way to the training camps in Pakistan, and the cells made up of local, 'home grown' fighters. The two levels drew on each other in the fight against the occupation of Muslim lands. The international networks recruited locals to take the fight to British soil, and the locals used the international networks to gain the inspiration and skills needed for a terrorist attack. After the arrest of Abu Hamza, the expulsion of Bakri and the dismantlement of the Finsbury Park mosque as a radicalisation hotbed and international jihadist hub, the British jihadist movement began to move towards a structure more in line with the conventional wisdom that jihadist terrorism is scattered and that

⁵⁹ R. Briggs et al., *Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack: What the Coroner's Inquests Revealed about the London Bombings*, Occasional Paper (London: RUSI, 2011), 11; *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005* (London: House of Commons, 2006), 16–17.

⁶⁰ *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 16.

⁶¹ T. Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: From Conversion to Terrorism* (Copenhagen: Ministry of Justice, 2007), 37; *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 17.

jihadist cells operate with little direct top-down guidance. The most salient illustration of this trend was the emergence of the so-called lone wolves, jihadist terrorists who radicalised and planned an attack without having had direct contact with other jihadists. In 2008, Andrew Ibrahim was arrested before he could use the suicide belt he was making to blow himself up in a shopping mall in Bristol.⁶² A few weeks later, Nick Reilly tried to commit a suicide attack on a restaurant in Exeter, but the quality of the explosives he used was such that he injured only himself.⁶³ The third lone wolf was Roshonara Choudhry, a successful 22-year-old student who in 2009 tried to stab Stephen Timms, MP to punish him for his support for the invasion in Iraq.⁶⁴ The smaller cells that planned or committed attacks from 2009 onwards were also less connected to the larger jihadist community. For instance, the four men who were involved in the 2010 Christmas Bomb Plot acted fully on their own accord. They had made a list of targets, had been carrying out reconnaissance missions and had experimented with incendiary explosives, but at no stage did there seem to be any guidance from other terrorist groups. They had not been instructed to carry out their attack, nor had they received training in a training camp.⁶⁵ The same went for the cell that was arrested in 2013 for planning an attack against a rally by the English Defence League (EDL), a right-wing extremist organisation. At least at the time of writing (June 2014), there was no evidence that any of these men had been in a training camp in Pakistan.⁶⁶

⁶² R. Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists, Developments in Radicalisation and Political Violence* (London: Institutional Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2011), 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20–21.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

⁶⁵ P. Arnold, *CPS Statement on Sentencing of Nine Men for Terrorist Offences* (Crown Prosecution Service, February 9, 2012), http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/cps_statement_on_sentencing_of_nine_men_for_terrorist_offences/.

⁶⁶ E. Palmer, "Six Men Jailed for Plotting Terrorist Attack on EDL Rally in Dewsbury," *International Business Times*, June 10, 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/476702/20130610/six-jailed-bomb-terrorist-attack-edl-dewsbury.htm>.

The radicalisation of this new generation of British jihadists, took place on-line instead of in the Finsbury Park mosque. One particularly important source of inspiration was Anwar al-Awlaki. This US-born and Yemeni-based radical preacher already had some standing in the British jihadist movement before 2007, as he could count Mohammed Hamid, who brought together the perpetrators of the 21 July bombings in London, and Abdullah Ahmed Ali, the leader of the cell that wanted to bring down eight to ten transatlantic flights in 2006, among his followers.⁶⁷ He came to the attention of the US Government after a series of terrorist attacks by perpetrators who said they were inspired by his sermons. Nidal Hasan, who killed thirteen men in a shooting at a military base in Fort Hood, Texas, and Umar Farouq Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian who tried to detonate an explosive on an airplane bound for Detroit, were both followers of Awlaki, as were the members of the cell that tried to detonate a car bomb on Times Square in New York in 2010.⁶⁸ Awlaki's role in British terrorist attacks after 2007 is typical for the way the jihadist movement has evolved. Roshonara Choudhry, the perpetrators of the Christmas Bomb Plot and the cell that was dismantled in Birmingham in 2012 all radicalised under the influence of Awlaki's sermons. Even though they never met the man in person, they were deeply impressed by his worldview and answered his calls for attacks in the West.⁶⁹ This practice constitutes a marked difference from the way previous jihadists were inspired and convinced of the need for a terrorist attack. But while the ways in which British jihadists were egged on, had changed, the strategy was essentially similar: mass casualty attacks against the West to break their will to stay in the Muslim lands.

⁶⁷ V. Soria and M. Clarke, "Terrorism: The New Wave," *RUSI Journal* 155, no. 4 (2010): 26.

⁶⁸ B. Ross and L. Ferran, "How Anwar Al-Awlaki Inspired Terror from across the Globe," *ABC News*, September 30, 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/anwar-al-awlaki-inspired-terror/story?id=14643383#.UZ8ul5xn24V>.

⁶⁹ V. Dodd, "Roshonara Choudhry: Police Interview Extracts," *Guardian*, November 3, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/nov/03/roshonara-choudhry-police-interview>; Arnold, *CPS Statement on Sentencing of Nine Men for Terrorist Offences*; P. Lewis, "'Christmas Terror Plot' Suspects Are Remanded in Custody," *Guardian*, December 27, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/dec/27/christmas-terror-suspects-remanded>.

9.1.3 Modus operandi

The attacks by which British jihadists tried to force the British and their troops out of the Muslim lands show some salient patterns. First, the jihadist movement's preferred means of attack is clearly the improvised explosive device (IED). The majority of the terrorist plots involved explosives that the perpetrators themselves had put together from ingredients that were freely available and that were completely harmless as such, like hydrogen peroxide and fertiliser. In one case, the planned attack on the transatlantic flights of 2006, the perpetrators had to put the explosives together as they were in the process of carrying out the attack, but in most cases the plan was quite straightforward. The attackers assembled the explosives in the apartment of one of the cell members, took it to the place they wanted to attack and tried to detonate them.⁷⁰ Working with IEDs allows a cell to acquire weapons without drawing suspicion, but this way of working by no means guarantees operational success. There are plenty of manuals available on the internet, but even if the one that is used is accurate, working with freely available materials is not easy, and there is much that can still go wrong. Ingredients of home-made explosives are generally unstable, and the shelf time of bombs that are assembled this way is short. Furthermore, it is not easy to accurately time an explosion when using such devices.⁷¹ Factors like these explain the operational failures that occurred in some instances, such as the 21 July bombings and the attacks on the night club in London and Glasgow Airport in 2007. The second characteristic that was shared by most jihadist terrorist plots in the UK concerns target selection. The intended targets of jihadist terrorists include public transport systems, a night club, a rally of the EDL, a restaurant, a shopping mall, and an airport terminal, which shows that there was a clear inclination towards attacks that were unlikely to be foiled, and would result in many casualties.

⁷⁰ J. Edwards and B. Gomis, *Islamic Terrorism in the UK since 9/11: Reassessing the "Soft" Response*, International Security Programme Paper (London: Chatham House, 2011), 8–12.

⁷¹ M. Clarke and V. Soria, "Terrorism in the United Kingdom: Confirming Its Modus Operandi," *RUSI Journal* 154, no. 3 (2009): 51.

Attacks that display these two characteristics – mass casualty IED-attacks against ‘soft’ targets – account for the majority of jihadist terrorist attacks in the UK, but there have been plots that were very different in nature. The most elaborate one was the plan by the cell around ringleader Parviz Khan. In order to frighten British Muslims out of joining the British Army, Khan and his associates wanted to lure a British Muslim soldier out of a bar to kidnap and then behead him. Afterwards, a video of the beheading would be published to show British Muslims the fate that awaited them if they joined the Army.⁷² The four perpetrators were willing to invest weeks of their time trying to win the trust of the intended victim, but were arrested before they could put their plan into action. Roshonara Choudhry, whose attack was another exception to the rule, took a more direct approach. She made an appointment with Stephen Timms, MP, and tried to stab him as he was about to shake her hand. She was overpowered by a security guard, and Timms suffered only non-life-threatening wounds.⁷³

Whereas the government consistently labelled it one of the most important security threats to the UK, the British jihadist movement made only one deadly victim in the eight years after the 7 July Bombings. This modest body count has to be ascribed to good luck and the incompetence on the part of terrorists, but also to some aspects of British counterterrorism, to which we shall now turn.

⁷² D. Batty, “Ringleader of Beheading Plot Jailed for Life,” *Guardian*, February 18, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/feb/18/uksecurity>.

⁷³ V. Dodd and A. Topping, “Roshonara Choudhry Jailed for Life over MP Attack,” *Guardian*, November 3, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/nov/03/roshonara-choudhry-jailed-life-attack>.

9.2 Counterterrorism principles and jihadist terrorism in the UK

9.2.1 From the Provisional IRA to Al Qaeda: continuity or discontinuity?

The jihadist threat to the UK may have been one of the gravest in Europe, the UK also has a long history of non-jihadist terrorism and, consequently, counter-terrorism. During the course of the fight against the Provisional IRA, the British government had developed a legal framework and police and intelligence apparatus to deal with terrorism. Whether or not this means that there was continuity in the British policy against the Provisional IRA and on jihadist terrorism, however, is far from clear. As we have seen above, Tony Blair stressed the novelty of the jihadist terrorist threat, and argued that new tools were required. Charles Clarke, the head of the Counter Terrorism Command at the Metropolitan Police Service shared Blair's assessment: "Colleagues from around the world often say to me that the long experience that we have in the United Kingdom of combating a terrorist threat must have stood us in good stead. That the experience gained during some 30 years of an Irish terrorist campaign would have equipped us for the new challenges presented by Al Qaeda and its associated groups. To an extent that is true – but only to an extent. The fact is that the Irish campaign actually operated within a set of parameters that helped shaped our response to it."⁷⁴

That the British government felt that jihadist terrorism required different countermeasures is also clear from the legislation that was adopted after the campaign of the Provisional IRA had come to an end. Even before 9/11, the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act, the legal framework that was brought to bear on the Provisional IRA, was replaced by the Terrorism Act 2000. This latter set of laws contained some clauses that the Blair administration considered necessary to counter what was called

⁷⁴ P. Clarke, "DAC Peter Clark's Speech on Counter Terrorism" (Metropolitan Police, April 25, 2007), <http://content.met.police.uk/News/DAC-Peter-Clarks-speech-on-counter-terrorism/1260267589755/1257246745756>.

'international terrorism', a term that referred to jihadist terrorism. The definition of terrorism was broadened, and the police was granted the authority to make arrests in the absence of sufficient evidence to press charges. They also got the legal mandate to cordon off areas in case of a terrorist threat.⁷⁵ Soon after 9/11 the British government decided that Terrorism Act 2000 was not enough. The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 was adopted in December 2001 to plug the perceived gaps in the Terrorism Act 2000.⁷⁶ It contained, among a wide variety of other things, legislation to counter the financing of terrorist activities as well as legal possibilities to indefinitely detain foreign terrorist suspects who could not be deported or, for lack of evidence, charged and tried.⁷⁷ In subsequent years, counter-terrorist legislation was amended and expanded further. Participation in a terrorist organisation, presence in a terrorist training camp and glorification of terrorism were penalised. Furthermore, the maximum pre-charge detention of terrorist suspects was expanded from 14 to 28 days and the maximum penalties for some terrorism-related offences were increased.⁷⁸

This expansion of the legal arsenal demonstrates that the fights against the Provisional IRA and jihadist terrorism were waged with very different weapons. This discontinuity applies to non-legal instruments as well. The Prevent strategy, the British attempt to address the root causes of terrorism (section 9.2.6), had no equivalent in the British campaign against the Provisional IRA. It is true that intelligence played a role in both counter-terrorist policies, but in this field there are salient differences, too, especially regarding the intelligence tools that were used. The Provisional IRA was extensively infiltrated, and was crippled as a result of the work

⁷⁵ Hewitt, *The British War on Terror*, 33 and 91.

⁷⁶ D. Hirschel, W. Wakefield, and S. Wasse, *Criminal Justice in England And the United States* (Sudbury, Ontario and London: Jones & Bartlett, 2007), 304.

⁷⁷ "Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001" (TSO, November 2001), pt. 1, 2 and 4, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/24/pdfs/ukpga_20010024_en.pdf. This note refers to the original version of the Act, which has been amended after it was adopted in December 2001.

⁷⁸ "Terrorism Act 2006" (TSO, 2006), http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/11/pdfs/ukpga_20060011_en.pdf.

of informers and infiltrators (see section 7.2.4). MI5 lacked the capabilities and human resources, however, to successfully apply this approach against jihadist cells.⁷⁹ Also, we will see below that MI5's manpower was drastically increased after 2004, and that the new personnel was hired specifically to counter the jihadist terrorist threat. This means that intelligence efforts against jihadist terrorism in the UK were implemented by different people and with different skills.

Given this overhaul of British counterterrorism, the remaining paragraphs in this chapter will display few parallels between British counterterrorism against the Provisional IRA and against jihadist terrorism. From a methodological point of view, it is important to take note of this 'fresh start', since it can be argued that previous experience with the use counter-terrorism tools enhances their effectiveness, and that this would set this case apart from the ones discussed in the chapters 4 to 8. However, given that 9/11 clearly triggered a break with previous counterterrorism practices, it is safe to discount previous experience as a factor that might determine the outcomes of the application of the counterterrorism principles discussed below.

9.2.2 Law enforcement and direct action

The French intelligence services, who are said to have coined the term 'Londonistan', had long been annoyed by British leniency regarding Islamist extremism, but after 9/11, when the US launched the War on Terror, a crackdown was inevitable. One of the first important moves was the raid on the Finsbury Park mosque in January 2003. The police made seven arrests, and confiscated firearms, a stun gun, protective suits for use in CBRN-environments, hunting knives and hand cuffs, as well as large numbers of forged and stolen passports.⁸⁰ The mosque was closed down, which left Abu Hamza, who was not arrested during the raid, without a place to spread his message. Ever eager for opportunities to show his

⁷⁹ Hewitt, *The British War on Terror*, 120–121.

⁸⁰ "Mosque Raid Findings Revealed," *BBC News*, February 7, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4689816.stm.

defiance, Hamza took to preaching outside, on the square in front of the mosque. He kept this up until he, too, was arrested in August 2004.⁸¹ The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) failed to get him convicted for terrorism-related offences, but he was nevertheless convicted on eleven charges, including six counts of soliciting to murder and one count of possession of a document containing information likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism.⁸² Several of Abu Hamza's associates were arrested and convicted as well, among them Abdullah al-Faisal, an extremist preacher famous for calling on Muslim women to give their young children toy guns so they could practise for jihad, adding that "[t]his is the Jihad of a woman, to bring up her sons with a Jihad mentality not to be wimps but to be Mojahedeen."⁸³

Around the same time when the Finsbury Park mosque was shut down and the screws were being tightened on Abu Hamza, Abu Qatada was having his own problems with the law. In the 1990s, the authorities had sought his advice on how to deal with troubled youths in Muslim communities, but from 2002 on Abu Qatada was going in and out of jail while waging a legal battle against his deportation to Jordan, where he claimed he would be tortured.⁸⁴ Omar Bakri Mohammed, Londonistan's third major ideologue, did not wait for his arrest. He left the UK in August 2005, shortly after several media reported rumours that the UK government wanted to prosecute him for treason. He claimed he would return to the UK in a matter of weeks, but he was barred from entering the country by Home Secretary Charles Clarke, who explained his decision by saying that having Bakri in the UK was "not conducive to the

⁸¹ O'Neil and McGrory, *The Suicide Factory*, 267–268.

⁸² *Abu Hamza Convicted of Eleven Charges* (London: Crown Prosecution Service, 20066), http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/105_06/index.html.

⁸³ "El-Faisal, R v [2004] EWCA Crim 456" (Royal Courts of Justice, March 4, 2004), http://judgmental.org.uk/judgments/EWCA-Crim/2004/%5B2004%5D_EWCA_Crim_456.html.

⁸⁴ T. Judd, "Abu Qatada Extradition Latest: Radical Cleric Reveals He Will Return to Jordan Voluntarily If Its Parliament Guarantees Anti-Torture Treaty," *Independent*, May 10, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/abu-qatada-extradition-latest-radical-cleric-reveals-he-will-return-to-jordan-voluntarily-if-its-parliament-guarantees-antitorture-treaty-8610524.html>.

public good”.⁸⁵ In October 2004, Bakri had made another pre-emptive move when, acting on rumours that the organisation was about to be banned, he dissolved *al-Muhajiroun*. The organisation continued under two new guises, the Saved Sect and *al-Ghurabaa* (The Strangers), both of which were banned in 2006.⁸⁶ It then went on to become Islam4UK, which was banned in 2010.⁸⁷ In 2008, two leading members of the successor organisations to *al-Muhajiroun* were arrested and convicted for fundraising for terrorism and supporting terrorism overseas.⁸⁸ Furthermore, out of the 52 control orders (curtailments of the freedom of terrorist suspects, see the section on the rule of law) that were imposed in the period 2004-2011, 28 concerned foreigners, which indicates that the disruption of international networks was a priority in the use of this instrument.⁸⁹

The arrests, deportations, control orders, and bans clearly took their toll. By 2006, the jihadist scene could no longer function the way it had in the 1990s. The role of Londonistan as a hub for the international jihadist movement, where members could finance jihadist groups and organisations, acquire false passports and make travel arrangements for trips to training camps in the AfPak region, was played out.⁹⁰ During Londonistan’s heyday, support for jihad could be practiced and preached quite openly, but now had to take place in living rooms and small community centres, and on websites and other online forums. Some segments in the movement came up with creative ways to evade British

⁸⁵ “Cleric Bakri Barred from Britain,” *BBC News*, August 12, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4144792.stm; “Cleric Bakri ‘Will Return’ to UK,” *BBC News*, August 9, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/4133150.stm.

⁸⁶ C.Z. Raymond, *Al Muhajiroun and Islam4UK: The Group behind the Ban* (London: ICSR, 2010), 7–8.

⁸⁷ “Islam4UK Islamist Group Banned under Terror Laws,” *BBC News*, January 12, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8453560.stm>.

⁸⁸ “Six Guilty of Terrorism Support,” *BBC News*, April 17, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7352969.stm.

⁸⁹ D. Anderson, *Control Orders in 2011: Final Report of the Independent Reviewer on the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005* (Norwich: TSO, 2012), 30.

⁹⁰ R. Pantucci, “The Changing Scene in Londonistan,” *CTC Sentinel* 3, no. 2 (2010): 12.

law, like having sermons read out to the congregation by minors, who cannot be prosecuted for spreading extremist views. Nevertheless, the government crackdown severely limited the jihadist movement's capabilities, which is clear from the nature of the attacks that were plotted against the UK.

The biggest, most complex and – had they all been successfully carried out – most deadly plots that were planned in the UK, were planned in the period 2001-2006. The 7 and 21 July bombings, the plan to blow up transatlantic flights in 2006, the foiled shoe bombing in 2001, and the 2004 ricin plot included elements that displayed operational skills and ambitions. In some cases, the delivery of the explosives was original (ricin would be put on door handles, explosives were hidden in shoes), whereas in others the simultaneous execution of a series of attacks would maximise the shock value as well as the body count. Also, in all these cases, at least one cell member travelled to a training camp in Pakistan to acquire the skills and expertise needed to carry out the attack. Now that the international infrastructure in the UK was heavily damaged as a result of government repression, British jihadists had a harder time getting access to training camps. An external factor that played into this was the decreasing ability of core Al Qaeda to provide training and instructions to European recruits. Chased down and losing leading operatives in drone strikes, the group around Osama bin Laden was no longer able to play the role it had played previously.⁹¹

The decline of Londonistan was reflected in the terrorist attacks in the UK after 2007. They were smaller in scale, prepared in isolation and easier to carry out, although this latter characteristic was no guarantee for operational success. The car bombing in London in 2007 failed, as did the attack on Glasgow Airport by the same perpetrators the next day. Also, none of the three lone wolves reached their operational objectives. More recently, the police disrupted several attacks that would have amounted to a single bomb attack against a soft target (see the section on gathering

⁹¹ Soria and Clarke, "Terrorism: The New Wave," 24.

intelligence). It seems, thus, that the jihadist movement in the UK is no longer able to plan large-scale, complex attacks. In other words, the fragmentation of the jihadist movement in the UK forces cells to plan attacks without the assistance of a larger – let alone international – network. This has diminished the jihadist movement's operational capabilities. In this sense the direct action of the British government has achieved some success, and testifies to the effectiveness of the counterterrorism principle 'law enforcement and direct action'.

The crackdown on Londonistan has contributed to the reduction of the jihadist threat to the UK, but it is as yet doubtful that the jihadist movement has been fully eliminated. As late as 2013, some eight years after the 7 July Bombings, MI5 is still disrupting – and missing – terrorist plots. The most prominent radical preachers may have been removed from the scene, but others, often reaching out to their audiences through digital media, have taken their place. Anwar al-Awlaki even does so after his death. Also, the news that Omar Bakri Mohammed influenced the Michael Adebolajo, one of the suspects of the beheading of British soldier Lee Rigby in May 2013, shows that there are ways for the older generation of preachers to inspire a sympathetic audience.⁹² The most salient fact that suggests that jihadist terrorism is not defeated yet, is the willingness of some hundred British Muslims to travel to Syria to join radical Islamist groups in their struggle against the government forces of President Assad. Direct action has definitely played a role in the containment of jihadist violence, but it should be noted that, at least so far, it failed to eradicate the jihadist movement entirely. This is no reason to refrain from viewing British counterterrorism policing as effective, but it does show that this struggle, more so than in any of the other five cases, is still ongoing.

⁹² K. Sengupta, "Exclusive: Woolwich Killings Suspect Michael Adebolajo Was Inspired by Cleric Banned from UK after Urging Followers to Behead Enemies of Islam," *Independent*, May 24, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/exclusive-woolwich-killings-suspect-michael-adebolajo-was-inspired-by-cleric-banned-from-uk-after-urging-followers-to-behead-enemies-of-islam-8630125.html>.

9.2.3 Restraint in the use of force

Although the government response to the jihadist threat has so far been largely devoid of violent overreactions on a large-scale, there are nevertheless two elements in British counterterrorism that can be considered violations of the counterterrorism principle 'restraint in the use of force'. First, there is the low conviction rate for arrests on suspicion of terrorism-related offences, which suggests that many of the arrests of terrorism suspects are made, were unnecessary or otherwise ill-conceived. The second element concerns the stop and searches to which British citizens can be subjected in certain designated areas.

In the period 2001-2012 the British police made 2,174 terrorism arrests, that is, arrests of suspects who were thought to have been involved in terrorism or a related offence. Charges were pressed against 784 of these arrestees (36%). In 464 cases, 21% of the 2,174 arrests, the arrestees were charged for terrorism-related offences.⁹³ 379 of these 464 were prosecuted, and 283 were eventually convicted.⁹⁴ Information on the outcomes of the trials of suspects who were initially arrested for terrorism but subsequently charged with non-terrorism-related offences, is not available. Nevertheless, it is clear that only a small portion, some 13%, of those arrested for terrorism-related offences was convicted. Moreover, in the majority of cases (64%), there was not enough ground to press any charges at all.⁹⁵ The British government, supported by independent counterterrorism reviewer Lord Carlile, has defended these numbers on the grounds that the police cannot take any chances when they suspect that a terrorist attack is being prepared, meaning that arrests are sometimes made before enough evidence is collected to successfully

⁹³ There were Republican militants and domestic terrorists (left wing, right wing and animal rights extremists) among them (8%), but the majority (80%) of those charged were categorised as having been involved in international terrorism, a label that can be read as largely synonymous with jihadist terrorism. *Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and Subsequent Legislation: Arrests, Outcomes and Stops and Searches* (Home Office, 2012), 12.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

prosecute the perpetrators.⁹⁶ Regardless of the validity of such arguments, the numbers point to a large number of cases in which force was used without a desirable result.

Furthermore, these terrorism-related arrests were disproportionately made against ethnic minorities. The 2011 census established that about 7.5% UK citizens fell in the ethnic category 'Asian', but this same category accounted for 35% of the terrorism-related arrests. Similarly, the ethnic category 'Black' accounted for 3.3% of the British population and 10% of the terrorism-related arrests.⁹⁷ Against this background, many Muslims felt discriminated by the way the police handled the terrorist threat. Also, the police raids that accompanied many arrests brought the families of the arrestees in disrepute, as they felt they were being stigmatised in their communities as guilty of or involved in terrorism. Finally, the low conviction rate of the arrests gave them an air of randomness, from which many Muslims drew the conclusion that it could happen to them, too, even though they never had anything to do with terrorism or extremism.⁹⁸ In a response to the unrest caused by police repression, the Association of Muslim Lawyers released the *Information Guide for Muslim Communities Dealing with Anti-Terror Arrests / Raids*, explaining what can happen during a raid, why the government carries out such actions and how to deal with the consequences.⁹⁹

The second counterterrorism instrument which suggested an overreliance on the use of force on the part of the British government was the use of stop and search powers. The most important regulation in this regard was section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which gave the police so-called stop

⁹⁶ A. Carlile, *Report on the Operation in 2006 of the Terrorism Act 2000*, 2007, 27.

⁹⁷ *Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and Subsequent Legislation: Arrests, Outcomes and Stops and Searches*, 25; *Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales 2011* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2012), 3.

⁹⁸ T. Choudhury and H. Fenwick, *The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities* (Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011), 75–77.

⁹⁹ I. Nawaz and S. Warraich, *Information Guide for Muslim Communities Dealing with Anti-Terror Arrests / Raids* (Association of Muslim Lawyers), accessed May 23, 2013, <http://www.aml.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Resources/AntiTerrorRaidGuide.pdf>.

and search powers. If a certain area had been declared to be at risk of a terrorist attack, the police could stop and search all individuals and vehicles in that area, regardless of whether or not there was any reason to believe that that individual or vehicle could be linked in any way to a terrorist plot. The police were granted similar powers around ports and airports. Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 gave the police the legal mandate to carry out searches on individuals around these transport hubs.

The stop and search powers inscribed in section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 were used more than five hundred thousand times in the period 2001-2009. In the first years after the stop and search powers were introduced, the numbers of applications increased sharply, from some 10,000 in 2000/01 to 50,000 in 2005/06 and 210,000 in 2008/09.¹⁰⁰ The numbers declined again after the stop and search powers had been discredited and declared illegal by the European Court for Human Rights (see the section 'Rule of law'). There are fewer statistics available for stops and searches carried out under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, but going by the available numbers, it appears that these powers, too, are used tens of thousands of times per year. Some 82,000 examinations were reported for 2009/10, and a little over 60,000 for 2010/11 and 2011/12.¹⁰¹

The hundreds of thousands of stops and searches that have been carried out before section 44 was annulled, have yielded negligible results. First of all, since 9/11 the numbers of arrests made after stops and searches has never accounted for more than 1.5% of the annual number of stops and searches. Interestingly, this percentage is considerably lower than the equivalent percentages for other legal regulations that grant the police stop and search powers, such as the Criminal Justice and Public Order

¹⁰⁰ Choudhury and Fenwick, *The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities*, 31.

¹⁰¹ *Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and Subsequent Legislation: Arrests, Outcomes and Stops and Searches*, 48.

Act.¹⁰² What is more, none of the 283 arrests made after a stop and search in the period 2001-2012 resulted in a conviction for terrorism-related offences.¹⁰³ On the basis of these observations, counterterrorism reviewer Lord Carlile suggested on several occasions that the annual numbers of applications of the stop and search powers could be halved without compromising the UK's national security.¹⁰⁴ He was critical about stops and searches around ports and airports, as well, asserting that these, too, could be scaled down at no cost to the security of the British citizens and interests.¹⁰⁵

Much like the arrests for terrorism-related offences, the use of stop and search powers, from section 44 as well as from Schedule 7, disproportionately affects ethnic minorities. For instance, in the year 2007/08, 54 out of every 100,000 British citizens who are categorised as ethnically 'white' had to undergo a stop and search. This number lies at 179 for people in the category 'Asian', and at 186 for people categorised as 'black'. Similarly, in 2011/12, 27% of the people examined under Schedule 7 were 'Asian', a category accounting for 7.5% of the British population. People in the category 'black' accounting for 8% of the examinations under Schedule 7 and 3.3% of the British population. The numbers for 2010/11, the only other year for which these data are available, are roughly similar.¹⁰⁶ Many British Muslims claim that interrogation at airports has become a fact of life for them, but this has not kept them from expressing annoyance over the kinds of questions that are being asked. Customs officials inquire about Muslim passengers' political views,

¹⁰² C. Pantazis and S. Pemberton, "From the 'old' to the 'new' Suspect Community: Examining the Impacts of Recent UK Counter-Terrorist Legislation," *British Journal of Criminology* 49, no. 5 (2009): 655.

¹⁰³ Choudhury and Fenwick, *The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities*, 31; *Review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers: Review Findings and Recommendations*, 15-16.

¹⁰⁴ "Search Powers May 'Erode Trust,'" *BBC News*, October 23, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4369360.stm.

¹⁰⁵ A. Carlile, *Report on the Operation in 2009 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and of Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006*, 2010, 37.

¹⁰⁶ *Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and Subsequent Legislation: Arrests, Outcomes and Stops and Searches*, 48.

religious beliefs and positions on jihadism and terrorism. Also, some British Muslims have reported interrogations that appeared to be about people or organisations they have personal contacts with. In some cases they were even asked whether they were willing to act as informers for MI5.¹⁰⁷ In 2010 the government recognised the widespread perception that section 44 and Schedule 7 were being used in stigmatising and discriminatory ways, and issued a *Home Office Circular* containing guidelines for the use of these powers in order to soften their impact on ethnic minorities.¹⁰⁸

Given these numbers about the arrests and stop and search powers, it should come as no surprise that polls show that British Muslims feel that counterterrorism legislation is applied unfairly in and discriminatory ways.¹⁰⁹ The willingness among Muslim communities to cooperate with police forces is affected by such practices. This was tellingly illustrated in 2012, when a group of Birmingham men with a Pakistani background discovered a terrorist plot in their community. Rather than informing the police, they took action themselves. With the help of relatives in Pakistan, they tried to intercept cell members whom they knew to be on their way to a training camp.¹¹⁰ The police are worried about such instances of disregard of the authorities and are aware of the role that counterterrorism plays in bringing about tensions in the relations between local police forces and Muslim communities.¹¹¹ As Metropolitan Assistant

¹⁰⁷ Choudhury and Fenwick, *The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities*, 23–25.

¹⁰⁸ Carlile, *Report on the Operation in 2006 of the Terrorism Act 2000*, 32; *The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism: Annual Report* (London: HM Government, 2010), 9.

¹⁰⁹ *What Perceptions Do the UK Population Have Concerning the Impact of Counter-Terrorism Legislation Implemented since 2000?* (London: Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, 2010).

¹¹⁰ S. Laville and V. Dodd, "Birmingham Terror Gang Who Thought 7/7 Was Not Deadly Enough Found Guilty," *Guardian*, February 22, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/feb/21/birmingham-terrorists-al-qaida-suicide-bombers>.

¹¹¹ B. Spalek, S. el- Awa, and Z. McDonald, *Police-Muslim Engagement and Partnerships for the Purposes of Counter-Terrorism: An Examination* (Arts & Humanities Research Council, Religion & Society and University of Birmingham, 2008), 9, 12 and 17; S. Thornton and L. Mason,

Commissioner Ghaffur said, “the impact of this will be that just at the time when we need the confidence and trust of these communities, they may retreat inside themselves”.¹¹² This is, however, something very different than support for the jihadist movement.

In counterterrorism, the importance of restraint in the use of force is argued from the belief that overreliance on the use of force will antagonise the population and drive them into the arms of the terrorist movement. What is recognised less often, is that the step from antagonising the population to support for a terrorist group is far from a foregone conclusion. A 2009 poll showed that 78% of British Muslims identify themselves with the UK, a percentage considerably higher than among non-Muslims in the UK (50%). This loyalty to the British state also far exceeds that of Muslims in Germany (49%) and France (23%) to their respective states. Also, British Muslims appear to have more confidence in the media, the courts, the electoral system and financial institutions than non-Muslims in the UK.¹¹³ Furthermore, many British Muslims live in communities without cultural, familial or religious ties to the jihadist movement.¹¹⁴ When asked in 2005 whether they had ever encountered an extremist preacher, 69% of the Muslim respondents answered that they had not, 22% that they had only once or twice, and 5% said they regularly encountered radical preachers.¹¹⁵ These numbers show that, in spite of some practices that can be considered violations of the counterterrorism principle ‘restraint in the use of force’, the UK did not offer fertile ground

“Community Cohesion in High Wycombe: A Case Study of Operation Overt,” *Policing* 1, no. 1 (2007): 57–60.

¹¹² A. Blick, T. Choudhury, and S. Weir, *The Rules of the Game: Terrorism, Community and Human Rights* (York: Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, 2006), 34.

¹¹³ D. Gardham, “British Muslims Most Patriotic in Europe,” *Telegraph*, December 13, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/6802960/British-Muslims-most-patriotic-in-Europe.html>.

¹¹⁴ Choudhury and Fenwick, *The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities*, 10.

¹¹⁵ *YouGov Survey Results* (YouGov, 2005), 6, http://api.ning.com/files/D55WrS2s9*TiQtcySwOGuwGy5fi*qwcs5X-2PJrTOra591OIUrUfV90AiXu9TLw1RNRe7rM0*iz5beSRiQTsokt0oBE*kXT/YougovsurveyM.

for the jihadist creed, nor are there any indications that new recruits have flocked into the jihadist movement because of the heavy-handedness with which the government tries to keep the UK safe from terrorist attacks.

It is nevertheless true that violent responses to repressive counterterrorism measures have occurred. In August 2011 a police officer in the London neighbourhood of Tottenham fatally shot 29-year-old Mark Duggan, according to the police during an operation to fight gun crime in London's black communities. Duggan's friends and family organised a peaceful protest march, but matters spiralled out of control after a skirmish between police and protesters in front of the Tottenham Police Station. The next four days London and other major British cities were confronted with riots and looting on a scale and intensity that in recent years was only matched by the 2005 riots in the *banlieues* of Paris. Five died, and the estimated material damage amounted to more than £200 million.¹¹⁶ Interviews with participants showed that the riots were to a considerable extent a form of protest against the way second and third generation immigrants were treated by the police.¹¹⁷ It turned out that particularly the discriminatory use of the stops and search powers in the Terrorism Act 2000 created much bad blood between immigrant youths and the police.¹¹⁸ But while the riots were partially triggered by political factors, they were essentially a-political. There was no clear set of demands that the rioters wanted to force on the government. What this shows is that even violent backlashes from repressive counterterrorism do not necessarily take the form of terrorist attacks. British counterterrorism bred resistance, but not terrorism.

Another important point that needs to be taken into account when assessing the effects of repressive government actions in the UK, is that

¹¹⁶ M. Neligan, "Riots to Cost over £200 Million - ABI," *Reuters*, August 11, 2011, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/08/11/uk-britain-riots-cost-idUKTRE77A22H20110811>.

¹¹⁷ G. Morrell et al., *The August Riots in England: Understanding the Involvement of Young People* (London: National Centre for Social Research, 2011), 32–33.

¹¹⁸ D. Singh et al., *5 Days in August: An Interim Report on the 2011 English Riots* (Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2011), 64.

they do not appear to play a large role in the motivations of those that did join the British jihadist movement. It is important to realise that the jihadist movement in the UK wages a fight to fulfil the vision of Sayyid Qutb, whose main preoccupation was bringing change to the Muslim lands. There is little to suggest that British jihadists engage in violent action to improve the plight of Muslims in the UK. That the liberation of the Muslim lands was the overriding concern for the jihadist movement in the UK is clear from the pronouncements of the perpetrators themselves, who in most cases left little doubt about the reasons for their attacks. Mohammed Siddique Khan, for instance, said in his martyrdom video, released a year after the 7/7 Bombings: "The lands and interests of the states that took part in the aggression on Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan are considered targets for us, so anybody who seeks peace should stay away from these states."¹¹⁹ The ring leader of the cell that was planning the attacks on transatlantic flights in 2006, Abdullah Ahmed Ali, expressed a similar motivation for the terrorist plot he was involved in: "We've warned you so many times get out of our lands, leave us alone, but you have persisted in trying to humiliate us, kill us and destroy us."¹²⁰

Other British jihadists who committed or were planning terrorist attacks to punish the British government for the military presence Muslim soil, include Hussein Osman, one of the members of the cell that committed the 21 July bombings. During his trial he even claimed that the conflict in Iraq was more important to the cell than the shared religious experience: "More than praying we discussed work, politics, the war in Iraq ... we always had new films of the war in Iraq ... more than anything else those in which you could see Iraqi women and children who had been killed by US and UK soldiers."¹²¹ He may have been overstating this point to downplay his extremist convictions during his trial, but the emphasis of

¹¹⁹ V. Dodd and R. Norton-Taylor, "Video of 7/7 Ringleader Blames Foreign Policy," *Guardian*, September 2, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/sep/02/alqaida.politics>.

¹²⁰ "Suicide Videos: What They Said," *BBC News*, April 4, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7330367.stm.

¹²¹ T. Thompson et al., "Terror Suspect Gives First Account of London Attack," *Observer*, July 31, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/jul/31/july7.uksecurity5/print>.

the cell's motivation on Iraq is clear. Bilal Mohammed, the physician who committed a failed car bomb attack in London and drove a car filled into the terminal of Glasgow Airport similarly stressed the invasion in Iraq as a motivating factor: "My political views changed dramatically towards the [British] government. (...) They shared in murdering my people. It was the British government and American government. Without Blair, Bush couldn't have invaded Iraq."¹²² The lone operatives Nick Reilly, Andrew Ibrahim and Roshonara Choudhry, too, claimed to have acted out of rage over the western military presence in Iraq.¹²³ Similarly, in a meeting in 2010 between British government officials and radicalising youths, one of the latter reportedly said "he was angered by the death of women and children in Afghanistan and if given half a chance he would go abroad to fight British soldiers in Afghanistan. Another member of the group intervened and said, why do you want to go abroad when you can kill them here."¹²⁴

Further evidence for the importance of western foreign policy vis-à-vis the Muslim world are the suggestions by some suicide bombers that terrorist attacks would cease once the government would withdraw British forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. In his martyrdom video Mohammed Siddique Khan said: "Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight."¹²⁵ His fellow-perpetrator Shezhad Tanweer was even more explicit on this point. In his martyrdom video, he came close to tabling a demand: "What you have witnessed now

¹²² D. Casciani, "Iraqi Doctor's Road to Radicalism," *BBC News*, December 16, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7784799.stm.

¹²³ A. Staniforth and F. Sampson, *The Routledge Companion to UK Counter Terrorism* (New York and Milton Park: Routledge, 2012), 294; D. Gardham, "Andrew Ibrahim: How a Public Schoolboy Became a Terrorist," *Telegraph*, July 18, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/5850765/Andrew-Ibrahim-How-a-public-schoolboy-became-a-terrorist.html>; Dodd, "Roshonara Choudhry: Police Interview Extracts."

¹²⁴ N.M. Ahmed, "UK's Flawed Counter-Terrorism Strategy," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 9, 2013, <http://mondediplo.com/blogs/uk-s-flawed-counter-terrorism-strategy>.

¹²⁵ "London Bomber: Text in Full," *BBC News*, September 1, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4206800.stm.

[the 7/7 Bombings, TvD] is only the beginning of a string of attacks that will continue and become stronger until you pull your forces out of Afghanistan and Iraq and until you stop your financial and military support to America and Israel.”¹²⁶ Abdullah Ahmed Ali made a similar point in his martyrdom video: “Leave us alone. Stop meddling in our affairs and we will leave you alone.” The martyrdom videos of Ali’s fellow cell members Umar Islam and Waheed Zaman also contained statements to this effect.¹²⁷ A final example concerns Nick Reilly, the Islamic convert who, acting on instructions from two unknown men in the Middle East, tried to carry out a suicide bombing in a restaurant in Exeter in 2008. In a suicide note he had left at home, he called on Western governments to pull their forces out of Iraq and Afghanistan and to stop supporting Israel, adding that violence would go on “until wrongs had been righted.”¹²⁸

Only in later years have new kinds of motivations emerged. The cell that was dismantled in Birmingham in 2012 was planning to carry out a terrorist attack to revenge the cartoons of Mohammed by the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard. Talking about his martyrdom video, one cell member told the others that he had recorded the following warning to the unbelievers: “You people think that by making these cartoons of the Prophet, peace be upon him, you are going to defame him. No, you’ll never achieve this.”¹²⁹ Another plot that was not about western military presence in the Muslim world is the plan of the three-man cell that

¹²⁶ A. Cowell, “New Video of London Bomber,” *New York Times*, July 6, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/06/world/europe/06iht-britain.2134143.html?_r=0.

¹²⁷ “‘Suicide Videos’: What They Said.” Umar Islam’s exact words were: “‘I say to you disbelievers that as you bomb, you will be bombed. As you kill, you will be killed. And if you want to kill our women and children then the same thing will happen to you.’” Waheed Zaman similarly stated: “You will not feel any security or peace in your lands until you [stop] interfering in the affairs of the Muslim completely.”

¹²⁸ Staniforth and Sampson, *The Routledge Companion to UK Counter Terrorism*, 294.

¹²⁹ T. Whitehead, “How ‘Just Do It’ Bomb Plotters Planned Attacks as MI5 Followed Their Every Move,” *Telegraph*, February 22, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/9887233/How-Just-Do-It-bomb-plotter-planned-attacks-as-MI5-followed-their-every-move.html>.

wanted to carry out an attack on a gathering of the EDL.¹³⁰ In a written statement they had with them in their car when they were arrested, the three explained the action they were about to carry out as follows: "What we did today was a direct retaliation of your insulting of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) & also in retaliation of your crusade against Islam/Muslims on a global scale."¹³¹ From these words, one can speculate that may have had geopolitical factors in mind as well, but they were not specific about this, and their target selection suggested a focus on domestic politics. But while the plans of the Birmingham cell and the plot against the EDL constitute something of a deviation from an otherwise fairly consistent pattern, a recent trend again underscores the international orientation of the British jihadist movement. In 2012, it was estimated that some 50 British citizens had travelled to Somalia to join the fundamentalist militant group *al-Shabaab* (The Youth). This gave rise to some unease about the risk that such fighters would pose after their return to the UK.¹³² These concerns became more pressing in early 2013, when the news broke that some hundred British jihadists had travelled to Syria to join Al Qaeda-affiliated, Islamist extremist militias in their fight against the 'godless' regime of Bashir al-Assad.¹³³ Thus, instead of focussing on the troubles of British Muslims, such as the discriminatory use of stop and search powers and the arrests of innocent terrorism suspects, the movement again gives precedence to the liberation of Muslim lands.

Showing little interest in domestic British counterterrorism and its impact on Muslims, the jihadist movement prefers to focus on what goes on outside the UK. This mindset explains why the violations of the

¹³⁰ "Six Admit Planning to Bomb English Defence League Rally," *BBC News*, April 30, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-22344054>.

¹³¹ V. Dodd, "Jihadist Gang Jailed for Plot to Bomb EDL Rally," *Guardian*, June 10, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/jun/10/six-would-be-terrorists-edl-jailed>.

¹³² M. Clarke, "The Global Origins of New Terrorism," *UK Terrorism Analysis*, no. 1 (2012): 2-3.

¹³³ K. Sengupta, "Conflict in Syria Creates Wave of British Jihadists," *Independent*, March 13, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/conflict-in-syria-creates-wave-of-british-jihadists-8533386.html>.

counterterrorism principle 'restraint in the use of force' did not provide significant boosts for the jihadist movement. They did have negative side effects in other areas, but reasoned purely from a counterterrorism perspective, one can say that the rule that lacks of restraint in the use of force strengthens terrorist groups does not apply to the British fight against jihadist terrorism.

9.2.4 Rule of law

The discriminatory application of stop and search powers and the large numbers of arrests of innocent civilians were not the only aspects of British counterterrorism that deviated from the principles described in the first chapter. There were also several instances in which the British government was successfully challenged on the legality of such measures. The previous section concerned the way certain powers were used, but in several cases the British government had to concede that they were not allowed to have certain powers in the first place. The first major legal difficulty concerned Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. According to the provisions laid down in this Act, foreign nationals suspected of terrorism could be detained indefinitely without trial. This rule was introduced to enable the government to deal with foreign terrorist suspects who could not be deported, either because no country was willing to receive them, or because the suspect was likely to face torture in the receiving country.¹³⁴ This practice did not last long, as the Law Lords, the UK's highest judicial body, ruled in 2004 that it was a violation of the right to liberty as enshrined in article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights.¹³⁵

In response to the decision of the Law Lords, the British government resorted to another policy that would also turn out to be a breach of the

¹³⁴ M. Shaw and V. Miller, *Detention of Suspected International Terrorists: Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001*, Research Paper (London: House of Commons, 2002), 24–25.

¹³⁵ *Judgments - A (FC) and Others (FC) (Appellants) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department (Respondent)* (Law Lords, 2004), sec. 239, <http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKHL/2004/56.html>.

rule of law. The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 allowed the so-called control order, which could be imposed on terrorist suspects against whom there was too little evidence to press charges with a reasonable chance of success. Essentially, control orders restricted the freedom of suspects in order to keep them from engaging in terrorist activity. In concrete terms, control orders could forbid terrorist suspects from meeting certain people, accessing certain websites, visiting certain places and getting in touch with certain organisations. A control order could also include a house arrest for sixteen hours of the day, as well as a ban on the possession of certain objects and substances.¹³⁶ By 2010 some fifty people had been subjected to a control order.¹³⁷

The most fundamental objection that opponents levelled against the control orders was that they restricted the liberty of people who had not been sentenced, or even charged. In early 2011 an international group of human rights organisations even went as far as to say that the use of control orders was “the trademark of despots”.¹³⁸ But what made the control orders untenable was not to only the notion that they entailed the exacting of a penalty in the absence of a crime, but also the withholding from the suspects of the information on the basis of which the decision to impose a control order was made.¹³⁹ The government defended this practice by saying that the UK’s national security would be put at risk if such information, often supplied by MI5, was shared. The measure’s opponents found some vindication in an April 2006 ruling of the High Court, which stated that the control orders were a violation of article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.¹⁴⁰ This article holds that citizens cannot be curtailed in their freedom without “a fair and public

¹³⁶ “Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005,” 2005, sec. 1(4), http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/2/pdfs/ukpga_20050002_en.pdf.

¹³⁷ Anderson, *Control Orders in 2011*, 30.

¹³⁸ M. Townsend, “Britain’s Anti-Terror Control Orders Condemned as ‘Trademark of Despots,’” *Observer*, January 2, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/jan/02/control-orders-human-rights-coalition-review>.

¹³⁹ *Review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers: Review Findings and Recommendations*, 37.

¹⁴⁰ S. Knight, “UK Terror Suspect Wins Challenge against Control Order,” *Times*, April 12, 2006, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/law/article2215625.ece>.

hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law.”¹⁴¹ Another heavy blow to the control orders came in 2009, when the Law Lords ruled that the control orders were illegal as long as they did not respect the principle of open evidence. The suspect’s right to know why s/he was put under a control order could not be ignored in the name of national security.¹⁴² Home Secretary Alan Johnson appealed against the High Court’s decision, but the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court’s ruling in July 2010.¹⁴³ In the face of this legal defeat, and under the pressure of the Liberal Democrats, who were longstanding opponents of control orders, the coalition government that took power in 2010 decided to reform the control order.

In the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIM) Bill, which outlines the new version of the control orders, some forms of restriction of a suspect’s freedom are dropped. A terrorist suspect under a control order can, for instance, no longer be forced to relocate, and can no longer be barred from phone and internet use. Also, the Bill stipulates that a TPIM can last no longer than two years.¹⁴⁴ At the time of writing (June 2013), various human rights organisations and legal scholars still question the Bill’s legality, claiming that the changes have not addressed the fundamental problems of the control orders, such as the use of information that is routinely being kept from the suspect.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ *European Convention on Human Rights* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, n.d.), 9.

¹⁴² D. Casciani, “Terror Suspects Win Legal Battle,” *BBC News*, June 10, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/8092763.stm.

¹⁴³ D. Casciani, “Terror Suspects ‘Able to Sue’ over Control Orders,” *BBC News*, July 28, 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-10788933>.

¹⁴⁴ “Guidance: Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measure Bill,” *Inside Government*, May 23, 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-prevention-and-investigation-measures-bill-2>.

¹⁴⁵ *The Terrorism Prevention and Investigative Measures Bill: Control Orders Redux* (London: Amnesty International, 2011), 9–10; “TPIMs: Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures,” *Liberty*, accessed May 20, 2013, <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/terrorism/control-orders/index.php>; C. Walker and A. Horne, “The Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011: One Thing but Not Much the Other?,” *Criminal Law Review*, no. 6 (2012): 421–38.

Another instrument which constituted a violation of human rights was the right of the police to stop and search any person and any vehicle in areas where permission for such actions was granted by the Home secretary. As we have seen above, these powers could be used even if there was no reason to suspect a person of a crime. Soon after its introduction, section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, in which the stop and search powers were formulated, was unsuccessfully challenged. The High Court ruled in November 2003 that the stop and search powers were compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights and were proportionate in relation to the terrorist threat to the UK. The Law Lords upheld this ruling in 2006.¹⁴⁶

But this did not put matters to rest, as the police were widely criticised for discriminatory use of stop and search powers. Several human rights groups pointed out that the powers granted to the police in section 44 were used disproportionately against ethnic minorities.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, interviews and polls showed that there was a widespread feeling among ethnic minorities that the police, in the application of stop and search powers, had a tendency to single out people who were clearly recognisable as Muslims.¹⁴⁸ The powers were discredited further by the fact that, as we have seen above, it failed to result in a single terrorism-related conviction, even though it was applied tens of thousands of times per year.¹⁴⁹ Also, several areas turned out to have been designated for stop and searches without permission from the Home Secretary. As a

¹⁴⁶ "Terrorism Stop and Search 'Valid,'" *BBC News*, March 8, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4786456.stm.

¹⁴⁷ From *"War" to Law: Liberty's Response to the Coalition Government's Review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers 2010* (Liberty, 2010), 49; *Without Suspicion: Stop and Search under the Terrorism Act 2000* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2010), 41–42.

¹⁴⁸ R. Cowan and A. Travis, "Muslims: We Are the New Victims of Stop and Search," *Guardian*, March 29, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2004/mar/29/politics.humanrights>.

¹⁴⁹ A. Travis, "No Terror Arrests in 100,000 Police Counter-Terror Searches, Figures Show," *Guardian*, October 28, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/oct/28/terrorism-police-stop-search-arrests>.

result of these errors, thousands of people had been stopped and searched illegally.¹⁵⁰

In 2010, after a legal battle that had started in 2003, the European Court of Human Rights declared the stop and search powers illegal. According to the Court, the stops and searches constituted a violation of the right to privacy.¹⁵¹ In its judgment the Court also noted that “the risks of the discriminatory use of the powers against such persons is a very real consideration”, pointing out that “[t]he available statistics show that black and Asian persons are disproportionately affected by the powers”.¹⁵² In response to the ECHR ruling, the coalition government replaced section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 with a section that formulated a more circumscribed set of powers. Under the new law, a senior police officer could still designate an area for the application of stop and search powers, but only if s/he suspected that a terrorist attack was about to take place. The Secretary of State for Home Affairs now has to confirm a designation, and the maximum duration for stop and search powers in a given area was put at fourteen days.¹⁵³

As was explained in chapter 1, many authors have emphasised the importance of the state’s adherence to national and international law in countering terrorism, as breaches would strengthen the case of a terrorist organisation or movement. Breaking the law would, first, confirm terrorist claims about the state lacking legitimacy, and second, signal that the terrorists are a real threat. The preceding paragraphs have made it clear that there violations of international law did occur during the British

¹⁵⁰ A. Travis, “Stop and Search Used Illegally against Thousands,” *Guardian*, June 10, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/10/anti-terror-law-illegal-stop-search>; N. Herbert, “Stop-and-Search Authorisation” (House of Commons, June 10, 2010), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtoday/cmwms/archive/100610.htm#d2e358>.

¹⁵¹ *Case of Gillan and Quinton v United Kingdom* (Strasbourg: European Court of Human Rights, 2010), 43–44.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁵³ “Terrorism Act 2000 (Remedial) Order 2011 (SI 2011, No. 631) and Terrorism Act 2000, S 47A(1) & Sch 6B, Para 6, as Inserted by Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, S 61 and Sch 5,” n.d.

government's fight against jihadist terrorism, but it is doubtful that this has contributed to the terrorist threat in a meaningful way.

Given the low numbers of people being affected by control orders, opposition to this instrument was largely limited to human rights organisations and political parties. Amnesty International, Liberty and Human Rights Watch published reports that were highly critical of the control order regulations.¹⁵⁴ The Liberal Democrats were critical as well, although they accepted a revised version of the control order regulations when they became part of the coalition government in 2010.¹⁵⁵ In terms of popular resistance or dissent, control orders did not attract much attention. Lord Carlile of Berriew, QC, the UK's independent reviewer of counterterrorism legislation, also consults the wider public during his assessments and noted in a review of the control order regulation that he "received far more correspondence concerning stop and search under counter-terrorism powers, detention periods before charge, and activity at ports of entry".¹⁵⁶ This, too, suggests that the breach of the law constituted by the control orders has not given rise to a deep-seated mistrust of the British government, let alone an increase in the sympathy for jihadist groups.

The response of Muslim minorities to the stop and search powers has been described in the section 'Restraint in the use of force' and need to be repeated here, except to stress that the objections that people raised against it, were not framed in a jihadist narrative. Ethnic minorities may have felt a sense of discrimination, and they may be distrustful of, or even

¹⁵⁴ *Five Years on: Time to End the End the Control Orders Regime* (London: Amnesty International, 2010); H. Cartner and T. Porteous, "Letter to the UK Parliament on Control Orders," March 2, 2009, <http://www.hrw.org/node/81153>; *From "War" to Law: Liberty's Response to the Coalition Government's Review of Counter-Terrorism and Security Powers 2010*, chap. 1.

¹⁵⁵ N. Collins and D. Gardham, "Control Orders: Conservatives and Liberal Democrats Remain Deeply Divided," *Telegraph*, January 3, 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/8236037/Control-orders-Conservatives-and-Liberal-Democrats-remain-deeply-divided.html>.

¹⁵⁶ A. Carlile, *Fifth Report of the Independent Reviewer pursuant to Section 14(3) of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005*, 2010, 4.

hostile to, the police, but such sentiments have not moved them to take the side of jihadist terrorists. On their part, the jihadist movement does not seem to have seized on the British violations of the European Convention on Human Rights to underscore the lack of legitimacy of the British state or its anti-Muslim bias. None of the terrorist plots were intended as a protest against counterterrorist legislation and its alleged illegality, nor can they be understood as ways to force the British government to change its ways in this regard. Much like the instances where the British government violated the principle of restrained use of force, the breaches of the rule of law did not have an inflammatory and counterproductive effect on the British jihadist movement, and there is no evidence that they have drawn sympathizers to the movement.

9.2.5 Gathering intelligence

Intelligence gathering has been a thorny subject in debates on British counterterrorism ever since it transpired that MI5, the British security service, knew that 7 July plotters Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer were active in radical circles. Several official reviews of the performance of MI5 around the time of the 2005 London Bombings noted that Siddique Khan and Tanweer had been caught on tape having a conversation with several members of the cell that was working on the fertiliser bomb plot. Also, Siddique Khan appeared on camera surveillance footage from 2001, showing him participating in a jihadist training session in the north of England, organised by Osama bin London.¹⁵⁷

For a variety of reasons – Siddique Khan’s name was spelled differently in various databases, in some intelligence reports he and Tanweer were unidentified or had been identified under a wrong name – MI5 failed to connect the dots and did not have as adequate a picture of the London Bombers’ activities as it could have had. While a high-ranking MI5 officer (identified only as Witness G) admitted as much during the Coroner’s inquest into the London Bombings, a report from the Intelligence and

¹⁵⁷ Hallett, *Coroner’s Inquest into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005*, 5 and 7–8.

Security Committee claimed that, even if all available pieces of information had been integrated, there would not have been indications that Siddique Khan and Tanweer were planning an attack themselves.¹⁵⁸

Another factor that played a major role in the decision not to follow up in the clues about Siddique Khan and Tanweer was the lack of resources. After 9/11 the number of investigative targets – individuals whom MI5 deemed dangerous enough to follow – increased from 250 in 2001 to 800 in July 2005.¹⁵⁹ This meant that difficult choices had to be made about the allocation of resources and manpower. The vast majority of MI5's capacity in 2004 was taken up by Operation Crevice, especially after the ringleader of the cell that was under investigation started mentioning targets. Then, shortly after the cell that was planning the fertiliser bomb attack had been dismantled, MI5 discovered another cell that was nearing the execution of a terrorist plot. Operation Rhyme, which would end in August 2004 with the arrest of the members of this second cell, took up about as much resources as Operation Crevice. In other words, so MI5 claimed, there was little capacity left for the investigation of other cases, let alone those in which there were no concrete indications of an attack.¹⁶⁰

In a response to what was still widely considered an intelligence failure, the Labour government under Blair introduced several reforms to MI5. The British security service started operating regional branches in order to improve the organisation's understanding of the local circumstances. Also, the agency started working with so-called 'legacy teams', groups of intelligence officers that would investigate individuals who, like Siddique Khan and Tanweer, had been seen in the periphery of dismantled jihadist cells but were not directly relevant for the plot under investigation.¹⁶¹ The most important government response to the reviews of the intelligence

¹⁵⁸ *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?*, 24–27.

¹⁵⁹ *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005* (Intelligence and Security Committee, 2006), 8.

¹⁶⁰ *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?*, 9–11.

¹⁶¹ Hallett, *Coroner's Inquest into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005*, 17; *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?*, 46.

apparatus, however, was the drastic increase of the resources that came available to MI5. The British intelligence community's budget (in publicly available documents not broken down into separate budgets for MI5, MI6 and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)) doubled to almost £2 billion in the period 2001/2002 – 2011/2012. The number of MI5 staff increased from 1,500 before 9/11 to 4,000 in 2011.¹⁶² The newly-acquired resources were invested primarily in manpower, to the point where any more spending would have gone beyond MI5's capability to absorb new staff.¹⁶³ Some 75% of MI5's capacity was now deployed against jihadist terrorism in the UK.¹⁶⁴ Exact numbers are not available, but MI5 reported a strong increase of the number of investigative suspects that could be covered.¹⁶⁵

Intelligence agencies and security services are often pitied for their inability to publicly claim their successes. As a result of the secrecy that surrounds much of their work, so the reasoning goes, only the failures of the secret services, which become clear after terrorist attacks, are meted out in the press.¹⁶⁶ If this is the case for most secret services, MI5 is certainly an exception, as it is clear from publicly available information that they were involved in almost all foiled plots that occurred in the UK after the 2005 London Bombings. The first such instance occurred in 2006, when the cell that was planning an attack on a series of US-bound flights was dismantled. The cell's ringleader Abdullah Ahmed Ali was put under surveillance after he returned from a training camp in Pakistan. After the police had spotted him and other cell members dispose of hydrogen peroxide bottles, MI5 secretly searched Ali's apartment. They found a bomb factory, and decided to leave a camera and a microphone to keep

¹⁶² R. Norton-Taylor and N. Hopkins, "How the Shock of 9/11 Made MI5 Stronger," *Guardian*, September 7, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/07/911-spy-agencies-expansion>. See also <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/home/about-us/who-we-are/funding.html>.

¹⁶³ *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, 38.

¹⁶⁴ Briggs et al., *Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack*, 20–22.

¹⁶⁵ *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?*, 46; *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, 36.

¹⁶⁶ Hewitt, *The British War on Terror*, 103.

track of the cell's progress.¹⁶⁷ Parviz Khan, who wanted to kidnap and behead a British soldier to deter other Muslims from joining the Army, was bugged as well. Little information is available about MI5's role in the disruption of this plot, but it is known that some 8,500 man hours were spent on the processing of conversations that were recorded by a microphone that MI5 officers had planted in Khan's apartment in Birmingham.¹⁶⁸

In other cases microphones were hidden in cars rather than in apartments. The cell that was arrested around Christmas 2010 came to MI5's attention when its members were involved in skirmishes with right-wing extremist youths in Stoke. Afterwards, they carried on preparing a terrorist attack, unaware that MI5 was listening in on conversations they had in their cars.¹⁶⁹ The plans of four Luton men, convicted for preparation of a terrorist attack using a remote controlled toy car laden with IEDs, were foiled in a similar manner.¹⁷⁰ After MI5 had noticed that the cell was recruiting new members and that two of the men had travelled to a training camp in Pakistan, intelligence officers planted listening devices in the cars of two of the four men.¹⁷¹ A final example of a cell that MI5 had bugged, was the Birmingham Cell, a group of three men who were arrested in 2012 for preparing a terrorist attack. After two cell members had come back from Pakistan, they came to the attention of MI5, who found that the apartment of one of the cell members was used as a bomb

¹⁶⁷ Casciani, "Liquid Bomb Plot: What Happened."

¹⁶⁸ "Profile: Parviz Khan," *Guardian*, February 18, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/feb/18/uksecurity3>.

¹⁶⁹ D. Gardham, "How the MI5 Watchers Trapped the Home-Grown Terrorists," *Telegraph*, February 1, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/9055705/How-the-MI5-watchers-trapped-the-home-grown-terrorists.html>.

¹⁷⁰ J. Sutton, "Terror Plot Four Sentenced: Men behind Plan to Bomb TA Centre in Luton Are Jailed for More than 40 Years," *Luton on Sunday*, April 18, 2013, <http://www.luton-dunstable.co.uk/News/Terror-plot-four-sentenced-Men-behind-plan-to-bomb-TA-centre-in-Luton-are-jailed-for-more-than-40-years-20130418122249.htm>.

¹⁷¹ T. Whitehead, "Jihadists Planned to Attack Luton TA Base Using Remote Controlled Car Packed with Explosives," *Telegraph*, April 15, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/9994940/Jihadists-planned-to-attack-Luton-TA-base-using-remote-controlled-car-packed-with-explosives.html>.

factory. Convinced that the plot was serious, the secret service planted bugs in the apartment as well as in one cell member's car. The recordings that were made, were an important source of evidence in the cell members' trial.¹⁷²

Against these successes, one can pit a list of attacks that British intelligence did not pick up on. First, the planning of the three jihadist lone wolf attacks had gone unnoticed by MI5. Roshonara Choudhry and Nick Reilly failed, but were able to carry out their attack, and Andrew Ibrahim was only caught when people who visited the same mosque alerted the police when they suspected that the 19-year-old convert was radicalising and planning an attack.¹⁷³ The 2007 car bombings in London and Glasgow came as a surprise as well, although one of the two perpetrators, Bilal Abdullah, had been seen interacting with a group of radicals. At the time though, much like in the case of Siddique Khan and Tanweer, there was no reason to believe that Abdullah was involved in the planning of a terrorist attack.¹⁷⁴ More recently, as has been mentioned above, three British jihadists were caught on their way to carry out an attack against a rally of the EDL. They would have gone undetected if not for a routine check that revealed that there was something wrong with their car insurance. In the subsequent inspection of the vehicle, the police found the weapon, and the attack plan came to light.¹⁷⁵ At the time of writing (June 2013), the latest terrorist attack that MI5 missed out on, occurred in May 2013. Two men of Nigerian origin, both of whom were

¹⁷² Laville and Dodd, "Birmingham Terror Gang Who Thought 7/7 Was Not Deadly Enough Found Guilty."

¹⁷³ Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists*, 16.

¹⁷⁴ D. Gardham, "Car Bomber Bilal Abdulla Was Known to MI5," *Telegraph*, December 17, 2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3797943/Car-bomber-Bilal-Abdulla-was-known-to-MI5.html>.

¹⁷⁵ M. Taylor, "Six Would-Be Terrorists Were 'Not on Radar' of Security Services," *Guardian*, April 30, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/apr/30/six-wouldbe-terrorists-not-on-radar>.

known to MI5 as radicals, attacked and beheaded 25-year-old soldier Lee Rigby in broad daylight in a street near an Army base in London.¹⁷⁶

Overall, the record of British intelligence against jihadist terrorism is mixed. Before the 2005 London Bombings, two major attack plans were foiled, but this proved such a burden on MI5's capabilities that two other large plots (the 7 and 21 July Bombings) were missed. After the increase of the intelligence budget, the grasp of MI5 on the jihadist movement seems to have increased, but only for a certain type of cell. There were several instances where MI5 managed to penetrate a cell, mostly through technological means, which constitutes the output that goes with the programme theory for intelligence gathering as formulated in chapter 1. Furthermore, in all these cases, the intelligence thus gathered, helped in disrupting the plot and securing convictions against the perpetrators. For these cases the effectiveness of British counterterrorism is clear.

On the other hand, a sizable – almost equal – number of plots went undetected. When taking into account the differences between the detected and the undetected plots, it becomes clear that the effectiveness of British counterterrorism intelligence after 2005 is limited to larger cells of which at least one member went to Pakistan to undergo terrorist training (see figure 22).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ V. Dodd et al., "Woolwich Attack: MI5 Knew of Men Suspected of Killing Lee Rigby," *Guardian*, May 23, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/may/23/woolwich-attack-soldier-lee-rigby-mi5>.

¹⁷⁷ Edwards and Gomis, *Islamic Terrorism in the UK since 9/11*, 15.

		Number of perpetrators	
		Less than three	Three or more
Training	None of the perpetrators visited a training camp	London / Glasgow car bombings^a Andrew Ibrahim^c Nick Reilly^a Roshonara Choudhry^a Woolwich attack^a	Christmas Bomb Plot^b Attack against EDL^c
	At least one perpetrator visited a training camp		Transatlantic airline bomb plot^b Motorway Madness^b Birmingham Bombers^b Toy car bombing^b

Figure 22. Perpetrator characteristics of terrorist plotters in the UK after 2005

This finding confirms the widely shared notion that terrorist cells that are smaller and less integrated in a wider network leave fewer traces and are therefore more difficult to track down.¹⁷⁸ But what the British case also shows, is that this operational security comes at a price. Many of the post-7/7 plots that go undetected, displayed a certain amateurishness and did not cause many casualties. Mobilising resources for a large-scale attack is more difficult for small groups or lone operatives, which suggests that operational security goes at the expense of operational capabilities. Thus, while the MI5's intelligence gathering efforts were only effective against one segment of the jihadist movement, it is important to note that this segment is also the most dangerous one.

¹⁷⁸ See e.g. C. Dishman, "The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, no. 3 (2005): 238–239; G.G. Tabarani, *Jihad's New Heartlands: Why the West Has Failed to Contain Islamic Fundamentalism* (Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse, 2011), 158; W.H. Reid, "Controlling Political Terrorism: Practicality, Not Psychology," in *The Psychology of Terrorism: A Public Understanding*, ed. C.E. Stout, vol. 1 (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 4.

9.2.6 Addressing root causes and offering counter narratives

The first comprehensive counterterrorism strategy published by the British government already recognised the need for a more preventive strand. The 2003 document *Countering International Terrorism: the United Kingdom's Strategy*, which was kept classified until 2006, mentioned the importance of “the battle of ideas” and stressed that it was necessary to address “structural problems in the UK and overseas that may contribute to radicalisation, such as inequalities and discrimination”. It listed Prevent as one of the four main pillars of British counterterrorism, next to Pursue (arresting and trying terrorists), Protect (harden potential targets) and Respond (crisis management).¹⁷⁹ An important development that drove the adoption of the Prevent strand was the increasing flow of British citizens travelling to jihadist training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan after 9/11. But while officially on a par with the other three strands from the start, Prevent only gained prominence after the 7 and 21 July Bombings, which made it clear that the UK faced a ‘home grown’ as well as an external threat. Indeed, the revised counterterrorism strategy that came out in 2009 admitted that the root causes of the jihadist threat in the UK had not been given due attention.¹⁸⁰

In response to the 2005 attacks on the London subway, the government assembled a series of working groups to formulate recommendations on preventive policies against the ‘home grown’ jihadist threat. The final report of this exercise was published in October 2005, and provided input for *Preventing Violent Extremism Together: winning hearts and minds*, the action plan that was launched in April 2007.¹⁸¹ In essence the action plan entailed the financing of projects against extremism that were to be carried out by local governments. It stressed the promotion of shared values as one of the strategic priorities, and gave local actors – both

¹⁷⁹ *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy* (HM Government, 2006), 1–2.

¹⁸⁰ *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism* (HM Government, 2009), 82.

¹⁸¹ *Preventing Extremism Together Working Groups*, 2005; *Preventing Violent Extremism: Winning Hearts and Minds* (London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007).

governmental and non-governmental – the responsibility for the implementation of the action plan. The nature of the projects that were financed, varied widely, and included the development of educational materials against Islamophobia, English language courses in mosques, mentor programmes for Somalian youths who had been engaged in petty crime, sports events, cultural and culinary festivals, training courses for imams, and initiatives for the emancipation of women.¹⁸² The overall budget for projects carried out by local governments and their partner organisations amounted to some £65 million for the period 2007-2011.¹⁸³

From the outset the Prevent programme suffered from a series of rather fundamental flaws. First, Prevent was strongly associated with terrorism, which gave many in the British Muslim communities the impression that they were being distrusted and treated as a suspect community. In a response to the programme, the Islamic Society of Britain said: “The term ‘Prevent’ lends itself to the idea that there lies a dormant terrorist within Muslims; that somewhere, entwined in their instincts and licensed by their religious beliefs, there is the possibility that, albeit very rarely, will turn to terrorism against the state. And so we must do everything to ‘prevent’ that from happening.”¹⁸⁴ This characterisation of Prevent was lent credence by the strong correlation between the size of the Muslim community in a certain area and the amounts of Prevent funding that area received.¹⁸⁵ The practice of spending more Prevent money in areas with

¹⁸² A. Kundnani, *Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism* (London: Institute of Race Relations, 2009), 18.

¹⁸³ Initially, £6 million was allocated for the period 2007/08. In October 2007 it was decided to allocate a £45 for the period 2008-2011. A further £7.5 million was added in 2009, and another £5.75 from the Community Leadership Fund was available as well. See L. Maer, *Preventing Violent Extremism* (London: Parliament and Constitution Centre, 2008), 7-8; “Local Authorities Receive Fresh Cash Injection to Tackle Extremism” (The Department for Communities and Local Government, August 28, 2009), <http://www.govtoday.co.uk/home-affairs/50-police-emergency/1644-local-authorities-receive-fresh-cash-injection-to-tackle-extremism>; and “Written Answers for 23 April 2009” (House of Commons, April 23, 2009), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090423/text/90423w0019.htm#09042372000002>.

¹⁸⁴ *Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009/10* (London: House of Commons, Communities and Local Government Committee, 2010), 9.

¹⁸⁵ Kundnani, *Spooked!*, 13.

larger Muslim communities suggested that the government strongly associated the terrorist threat with Islam.

The suspicions of among Muslim communities were fanned further by instances in which Prevent projects were perceived primarily as part of the government's security policies.¹⁸⁶ Several participating organisations claimed that they had been approached by the police with requests for information, for example regarding the political views and social contacts of certain individuals. Some youth workers involved in Prevent projects even claimed that they were asked by MI5 to act as informers. They also related stories about how they had been harassed by the authorities when they refused to cooperate.¹⁸⁷ Regardless of the validity of these claims and the frequency of such incidents, the spying allegations did little to enhance the credibility of the Prevent programme among Muslim communities. In fact, as many felt that Prevent was merely, in the words of a Muslim public sector worker, "Pursue in sheep's clothing", there was a certain reluctance among Muslim civil society as well as among Muslim youths to participate in projects that were financed with Prevent money.¹⁸⁸ This prompted one respondent to euphemistically suggest during the review of the Prevent strategy that it "could be more effective in the future without the stigma of association with a security policy".¹⁸⁹

The second major problem was that local governments were not familiar with the problem at hand, and received little concrete guidance about what the Prevent programme should entail and achieve.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, much funding was spent on projects that were only very remotely, if at all, related to fighting terrorism or extremism. Examples include rap

¹⁸⁶ T. O'Toole, D.N. DeHanas, and T. Modood, "Balancing Tolerance, Security and Muslim Engagement in the United Kingdom: The Impact of the 'Prevent' Agenda," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 5, no. 3 (2012): 6–7.

¹⁸⁷ Kundnani, *Spooked!*, 28–30.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 26; *Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009/10*, 220.

¹⁸⁹ *Prevent Review: Summary of the Responses to the Consultation*, 8–10.

¹⁹⁰ O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood, "Balancing Tolerance, Security and Muslim Engagement in the United Kingdom," 7–8; *Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009/10*, 46.

workshops, funding for basketball and cricket clubs, multicultural food festivals, lectures on 'prophetic medicine' (the pronouncements of Mohammed on sickness and treatments) and camping gear for a Muslim scouting branch in Bristol.¹⁹¹ Equally ineffective but more damaging were the projects in which funding was unwittingly granted to extremist organisations by government officials who had no intimate knowledge about extremist groups.¹⁹² In one such case the Cordoba Foundation received Prevent funding for a debate on integration in which members of the Muslim Brotherhood and the pro-jihadist *Hizb ut- Tahrir* organisation were taking part. Unsurprisingly, 78% of the audience agreed afterwards with the statement that "political participation had failed Muslims."¹⁹³

Third, Prevent also strained the relations of the government with other religious minorities, who felt that Muslim communities were being rewarded for generating a terrorist threat. In an open letter, the Sikh Community Action Network took the government to task for a policy which "dedicated £80 million for the Muslim sector", while "the rest of the population remains ignored, excluded and forgotten".¹⁹⁴ Another Sikh civic organisation lambasted the government for feeding "victimisation among Muslims and a growing sense of resentment and marginalisation in other religious communities".¹⁹⁵

The first two of these three difficulties also hamstrung the more individually targeted strand of the Prevent strategy. The Channel Project,

¹⁹¹ D. Murray, "The Prevent Strategy: A Textbook Example of How to Alienate Just about Everybody," *Telegraph*, March 31, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/7540456/The-Prevent-strategy-a-textbook-example-of-how-to-alienate-just-about-everybody.html>.

¹⁹² P. Bowers, *Preventing Violent Extremism* (London: Parliament and Constitution Centre, 2013), 6.

¹⁹³ Brandon and Vidino, *Countering Radicalisation in Europe*, 16.

¹⁹⁴ J. Singh, "Are the British Still Deceiving the Sikhs?," *World Sikh News*, May 13, 2009, <http://archive.is/91zc>.

¹⁹⁵ "Memorandum from the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO)" (House of Commons, 2009), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65we04.htm>.

initiated in 2008 and still in place at the time of writing, was developed as a way to keep at-risk individuals from becoming involved in radical or terrorist activities. First-line professionals, such as police officers, social workers, youth workers and teachers, can report on individuals who they believe are vulnerable to terrorist or violent extremist groups. Such individuals are then subjected to a risk assessment by a panel of local stakeholders, including the police, and if they are considered potential terrorists or violent extremists, they are subjected to a Channel intervention.¹⁹⁶ The intervention is tailored to the specific situation of the individual involved, and may include various forms of therapy and counselling as well as activities aimed at the improvement of the individual's housing situation, job market prospects and social life.¹⁹⁷

Much like the Prevent projects addressed above, the Channel Project too, has been criticised for serving intelligence purposes. Participants in the implementation of Channel interventions have been approached by the police for details about the individuals involved¹⁹⁸, and the strong connection between Channel and counterterrorism caused British Muslims to stay away from the Channel project altogether.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the referrals to the Channel Project were made by professionals who knew little about radicalisation, leading to situations in which teachers referred high-school students expressing strong pro-Palestinian views to the Channel Project. Another testament to the apparent risk-aversity of the first-line professionals is the fact that dozens of the individuals referred to the Channel Project were no more than twelve years old. So as the government called on first-line professionals with no expertise in terrorism or extremism to recognise radicalisation, a phenomenon about

¹⁹⁶ *The Prevent Strategy: A Guide for Local Partners in England. Stopping People Becoming or Supporting Terrorists and Violent Extremists* (HM Government, 2008), 28.

¹⁹⁷ *Channel: Supporting Individuals Vulnerable to Recruitment by Violent Extremists. A Guide for Local Partnerships* (HM Government, 2010), 15; *Channel: Protecting Vulnerable People from Being Drawn into Terrorism. A Guide for Local Partnerships* (HM Government, 2012), 21.

¹⁹⁸ A. Kundnani, "Still Spooked" (Institute of Race Relations, 2011), <http://www.irr.org.uk/news/still-spooked/>.

¹⁹⁹ Choudhury and Fenwick, *The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities*, 64–65.

which even MI5 admitted that it is hard to spot²⁰⁰, there is no real way of knowing whether the people who went through the Channel Project represented genuine risks.

In the face of the difficulties of the Prevent strategy Theresa May, Home Secretary for the coalition government of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, announced a review of the Prevent policy of the Labour government. The findings of this review, which were presented in 2011 and confirmed the problems discussed above, were incorporated in a new Prevent strategy. The coalition government decided to focus Prevent more specifically on terrorism. Unlike its previous incarnation, the new strategy was not aimed at extremism *per se*, but only against cases where there was a real risk that extremism might veer into terrorism. Also, initiatives that smacked of community and cohesion building were taken out of the Prevent programme, so as to avoid the impression that the government was interested in such matters, not out of commitment to the well-being of Muslim communities, but only inasmuch as they contributed to national security. Another major shift was that funding was to be monitored more carefully to make sure, first, that resources are allocated to projects that clearly contribute to the goals of the *Prevent Strategy* goals and, second, that no extremist organisation receives government funding.²⁰¹

If we take the history of the Prevent programme back to the question of effectiveness, it should be noted that the implementation was so botched – poorly targeted interventions that alienated religious communities from the government – that it is hard to see how it could have contributed to the curbing of the jihadist movement in the UK. There is no evidence that it has, whereas recent jihadist plots and the British radicals travelling to Syria show that the jihadist creed still has some appeal, at least enough to sustain a terrorist threat.

²⁰⁰ A. Travis, "MI5 Report Challenges Views on Terrorism in Britain," *Guardian*, August 8, 2008, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism1>.

²⁰¹ *Prevent Strategy* (HM Government, 2011), 39.

However, the shortcomings of Prevent go beyond matters of implementation. Even for the projects that did not suffer from the flaws described in the preceding paragraphs, there is little reason – let alone evidence – to assume that they worked. While it is theoretically possible that the projects carried out under the aegis of the Prevent agenda have dissuaded some potential radicals from joining extremist groups, the case histories of known British jihadist terrorists make it clear that this is unlikely. Drawing mainstream civil society organisations into Prevent policies may have been helpful in improving the relations between the government and Muslim communities, but is not a feasible way to halt radicalisation processes that are characterised by a withdrawal from these very same civil society organisations.²⁰² The perpetrators of the 7 and 21 Bombings, for instance, adopted their extremist views as they established contacts in radicalisation hotbeds, like the *Iqra* bookstore and the Finsbury Park mosque. The hold that authority figures in the jihadist scene – ringleaders, preachers, Afghanistan veterans, core Al Qaeda members – had over aspiring jihadists in the UK – and elsewhere – was much more powerful than that of mainstream mosques and educational institutions.²⁰³ Another collective that plays an important role during a radicalisation process is the terrorist cell itself. In the UK, radical jihadist ideas are often formed by contact with peers. From several cells involved in plotting terrorist attacks in the UK, it is known that they engaged in intense discussions of their religious views and the importance of jihad in private settings. They discussed the situation in Iraq, and cemented their commitment to the cause by watching footage of US or British soldiers mistreating Iraqi citizens. In the cases of the lone wolves, the radicalisation process takes place in isolation, not in a setting where views

²⁰² Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe*, 37.

²⁰³ P. Nesser, "Joining Jihadi Terrorist Cells in Europe: Exploring Motivational Aspects of Recruitment and Radicalisation," in *Understanding Violent Radicalisation: Terrorist and Jihadist Movements in Europe*, ed. M. Ranstorp (New York: Routledge, 2010), 104–106; R. Alonso, "Radicalisation and Recruitment among Jihadist Terrorists in Spain: Main Patterns and Subsequent Counter-Terrorist Measures," in *Understanding Violent Radicalisation: Terrorist and Jihadist Movements in Europe*, ed. M. Ranstorp (New York: Routledge, 2010), 227; J. Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618 (2008): 88.

can be challenged and counter arguments can be inserted in an individual's thought process. For these cases, too, it is hard to believe that Prevent projects have had a major impact.

The point here is that the Prevent agenda – both before and after the review – located its counter-radicalisation efforts in places and organisations where radicalisation did not take place. In this sense, the assumptions on which the Prevent agenda was based, were unsound. Given that the radicalisation of British jihadists takes place in living rooms, radical mosques and bookstores, and behind personal computers, there is little chance that the message that was supposed to be spread by the Prevent projects have reached or convinced those that were truly at risk of becoming terrorists.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, the Prevent strategy focused on the situation in the UK, and did so on the assumption that jihadist terrorism was a politically radical spin-off of tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims in the UK. As has been argued in the sections on restraint in the use of force and ideology and strategy, however, most jihadist attacks served the purpose of liberating the Muslim lands, and had little to do with the inter-faith relations in the UK. The British jihadists fighting in Syria for jihadist militias demonstrate that the occupation of the Muslim lands by unbelievers is still one of the main drivers behind British jihadism. The Prevent agenda did not acknowledge this, since it left foreign policy largely unaddressed, which makes it all the less likely that the Prevent projects have been effective.

9.2.7 International cooperation

Like the Netherlands (see paragraph 8.3.5), the UK was very active in post-9/11 international counterterrorism cooperation. It played a prominent role in organisations like the EU, the UN, the FATF and the OSCE, but, as has been established in the case study on the Netherlands, many of these efforts concerned the creation of counterterrorism instruments rather than their actual application against terrorist threats.

²⁰⁴ The new strategy, too, stresses the importance of working with key sectors, which it identifies as “education, faith, health, criminal justice and charities”. See *Prevent Strategy*, 8–9.

This made it hard to treat these forms of international cooperation as instances of the counterterrorism principle 'international cooperation as defined in paragraph 3.3.3. Where the UK differs from the Netherlands is in its active contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom, in which British armed forces worked with the US to take out Al Qaeda cells and to destroy the training camps from which Bin Laden and his associates were planning their attacks against targets elsewhere in the world.²⁰⁵ As this was clearly an attempt to eliminate a foreign base, or safe haven, for terrorists in the UK and elsewhere in the West, we can see it as an application of the counterterrorism principle 'international cooperation'.

When assessing the effectiveness of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan vis-à-vis the British jihadist movement, the first thing that should be noted, is that most terrorists who underwent training and went on to carry out terrorist attacks in the UK had received their training in Pakistan, not in Afghanistan.²⁰⁶ Al Qaeda's main camps in Afghanistan were destroyed, and the organisation was forced to move to smaller camps in the Pakistani border region, where they could still exert their influence on foreign militants.²⁰⁷ The problem had been removed rather than solved. As has been observed above, the British jihadist movement lost contact with extremist networks in the AfPak region, but that was at least partially the result of the dismantlement of Londonistan. Lacking the contacts and the infrastructure get access to extremist training camps in

²⁰⁵ *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days* (Washington, DC, London and Islamabad: Coalition Information Centers, 2001), <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm#>; *Operation Enduring Freedom and the Conflict in Afghanistan: An Update*, Research Paper (London: House of Commons Library, International Affairs and Defence Section, 2001), 11.

²⁰⁶ Briggs et al., *Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack*, 4 and 6; "Profile: Muktar Ibrahim," *BBC News*, July 11, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/email_news/6634901.stm; "'Planes Plotter' Bought Chemicals," *BBC News*, June 10, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7446918.stm; Corera, "Bomb Plot - the Al-Qaeda Connection"; Gardham, "Parviz Khan: Promising Footballer to Terrorist"; D. Gardham, "'Fanatical' Beheading Plot Terrorist Jailed for Life," *Telegraph*, December 2, 2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1579018/Fanatical-beheading-plot-terrorist-jailed-for-life.html>; "Police Hunt Bomber's Associates," *BBC News*, December 10, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/devon/7775543.stm.

²⁰⁷ M. Sageman, "Confronting Al-Qaeda: Understanding the Threat in Afghanistan," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3, no. 4 (2009): 15.

the AfPak region, British jihadists largely began to strike it out on their own after 2006.

At the same time, though, what also may have contributed to stopping the influx from Western jihadists to the training camps is the controversial drone campaign in Pakistan. British involvement in the drone strikes has not been officially acknowledged at the time of writing (June 2014), but it appears that the GCHQ, the British signals intelligence service, is supplying intelligence to help the US locate the targets that need to be eliminated.²⁰⁸ Often criticised for causing civilian casualties and collateral damage, the drone strikes forced – and are still forcing – extremist groups to move around their training facilities, or hide them in caves. Also, afraid that their location will be betrayed to the US armed forces, Al Qaeda and likeminded organisations in the region are wary of newcomers who apply for training. In the old days, they could recruit fighters through trusted networks in Europe, but now that Londonistan has been dismantled and they have to spend much of their timing splitting up and regrouping to avoid being hit by drones, they are not as welcoming to foreign recruits as they used to be.²⁰⁹

As the drone strikes are making the Pakistan less hospitable for terrorist training camps, the cooperation with the US can be assumed to have made some contribution to the British jihadist movement's ability to tap into the resources and expertise of the jihadist groups in Pakistan. In this sense, the counterterrorism principle has been applied effectively, although the cutting-off of the British jihadist movement from the extremist support base in the AfPak region must at least partially attributed to domestic counterterrorism measures.

²⁰⁸ D. Leppard, "GCHQ Finds Al-Qaeda for American Strikes," *Sunday Times*, July 25, 2010, http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Defence/article353492.ece; M. Townsend, "GCHQ Civilian Staff Face War Crimes Charge over Drone Strikes in Pakistan," *Guardian*, March 12, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/11/gchq-staff-war-crimes-drones>.

²⁰⁹ J. Jordán, "The Effectiveness of the Drone Campaign against Al Qaeda Central: A Case Study," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 4–29.

9.3 Conclusion

For an accurate understanding of the nature of the jihadist threat to the UK, it is important to take into account the mismatch between the beliefs of the jihadist movement and the disenfranchised Muslims who were thought to be the support base of the jihadist movement. The former was made up of followers of Sayyid Qutb, and wanted to expel the US, or the West in general, from the Muslim lands. The latter had very few Islamist, let alone jihadist, sympathies, if any. In fact, it is far from clear that they were on the jihadist movement's radar. It is true that the British jihadist movement was fighting on behalf of the *ummah*, which would include Muslims in the UK, but their priorities lay overwhelmingly in the Arab world. They did not pick up on themes that could have made them more popular among moderate or a-political British Muslims, such as unemployment and discrimination. The expressed motivations behind their attacks and the give us little reason to think that jihadists in the UK were deeply concerned about the problems of Muslim communities in the UK.

This is an important observation with regard to the effectiveness of the various counterterrorism principles that were applied under Prime Ministers Blair, Brown and Cameron. First, it explains why the policies that constituted lacks of restraint in the use of force and legislation that was later declared illegal did not lead to an increase of support for the jihadists. British Muslims who felt discriminated against by the police, or by the government in general, did not see the jihadists as the champions of their cause. The jihadists, in their turn, displayed little desire to take up such a role. Consequently, Muslim youths expressed their disgruntlement over stops and searches and an overly strong focus on Muslims in counterterrorism policing in a variety of ways, but not in support for terrorist groups. The counterterrorism literature usually argues against overreliance on the use of force from a narrow counterterrorism perspective. The argument is that overreliance on the use of force plays into the hands of the terrorists, as it confirms the narrative they use to justify terrorist attacks. The same goes for violations of the rule of law. These, too, are believed to provide rhetorical ammunition to terrorist

groups, which are thought to attract recruits and other forms of support by pointing out the dictatorial or hostile nature of the state. The case of the jihadist movement shows that matters are not always this simple. We have seen above that the British government did act in ways that could easily be incorporated in radical narratives, and the London riots showed that there certainly was considerable resentment against the police. It is far from clear, however, that this has strengthened the jihadist movement in a meaningful way.

The explanation for the deviation of the rule propounded in the counterterrorism literature lies in the international roots of the jihadist movement in the UK. 'Londonistan', the network of jihadist ideologues and operatives that was formed in the 1990s, was an extension of the jihad as it was waged in Algeria, the Middle East and Afghanistan. Jihadist groups had to move their activities to the UK, but the Muslim lands were still very much on their minds. The networks were initially not interested in the UK as a target, and when they did turn against their country of residence, their political goals had not changed. Violations of the rule of law and excessive use of force by the police against Muslims were not themes that carried much importance in the jihadist rationale for the terrorist attacks.

The international dimension of the British jihadist movement, or in this case rather the British government's failure to grasp the importance of the international dimension, also played a role in the outcome of the attempts to address the root causes of the jihadist threat. The Prevent strategy was, at least until 2011, based on the assumption that terrorism could be prevented by creating community cohesion and by providing the right counterarguments. As some have rightfully pointed out, it had little to say about the effects of British foreign policy. Apart from poor implementation, programmes to alleviate inter-faith tensions and to promote notions of British citizenship were based on a misreading of the political agenda of the jihadist movement in the UK. This being the case, the fight against jihadist terrorism in the UK demonstrates the limits of the common wisdom that harsh responses to terrorist threats feed

terrorism. British government policy worked from the premise that jihadism in the UK was about what was going on in the UK, but the movement's priorities lay elsewhere. This explains why British jihadists did not cash in on the government's missteps in ways that other terrorist groups have.

But the importance of the international orientation of the jihadist movement for counterterrorism effectiveness does not end here. An important element of the embeddedness in the wider, international jihadist movement was the use of training camps, primarily in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Networks in Londonistan used their connections in the AfPak region to improve the terrorist skills of British recruits. The obvious advantage of this way of working was that British recruits could be groomed for the mission they were to carry out, but it also created a flaw in the movement's operational security. As we have seen in the section on intelligence, almost all plots that were foiled, involved at least one cell member who travelled to Pakistan or Afghanistan. As none of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks that did make it to the execution stage had been to a training camp, it is safe to say that the international link made plots vulnerable to British intelligence. So in this sense, too, the international orientation of terrorist groups makes for different counterterrorism outcomes, an assertion that strengthens the case that can be made about the importance of a group's intentions for the counterterrorism policies that can best be deployed against it.

	Outcome	Explanation
<i>Jihadist movement in the UK</i>		
Restraint in the use of force	Violations not counterproductive	Lacks of restraint in the use of force on the part of the British police (e.g. the stop-and-search powers and mistaken arrests) did not lead to increases of support for the jihadist movement
Rule of law	Violations not counterproductive	Several laws were declared illegal by the ECHR, but this did not translate into support for the jihadist movement
International cooperation	Effective	US-UK cooperation in Operation Enduring Freedom and the drone campaign in the AfPak region made it harder for British jihadists to access extremist training camps
Long-term commitment	Not applied	
Addressing root causes	Flawed implementation	Civil society organisations and the participants withdrew from the Preventing Violent Extremism Together programmes because they were deemed discriminatory and were suspected of being fronts of intelligence gathering operations
Law enforcement and direct action	Effective	The crackdown on Londonistan pushed the jihadist movement further underground and made it more difficult for jihadists to access training camps in the AfPak region, which undermined their ability to carry out large-scale attacks
Offering a counter narrative	Not applied	
Offering exits	Not applied	
Offering non-violent alternatives	Not applied	
Intelligence gathering	Effective	Intelligence gathering was effective with the reservation that only larger scale plots that could be linked to training camps in the AfPak region were foiled

Figure 23. Counterterrorism principles as applied against the British jihadist movement