



Universiteit
Leiden

The Netherlands

Understanding Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: responses to terrorist tactics and insurgent strategies

Boeke, S.

Citation

Boeke, S. (2022, June 16). *Understanding Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: responses to terrorist tactics and insurgent strategies*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3309811>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3309811>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a PhD has been compared to running a marathon. This take is unfair to the PhD candidate, as there is no clear route to follow. There are only a multitude of paths, many of which invariably turn out to be insurmountable obstacles or dead ends. In misty and chilly weather, the whole exercise resembles a years-long test of navigation as well as perseverance. I am very grateful to all those who offered support, either during the whole process, at the start/finish or just somewhere along the route. As I skillfully navigated from one detour to the next distraction and delay, the quiet encouragement (or commiseration) that I received made a big difference.

First I would like to thank my supervisors, Edwin Bakker and Bibi van den Berg. It was a lunch with Edwin ten years ago which sparked my interest in a job in academia, and it is only fitting that he supervised my part-time PhD. Bibi was a fantastic colleague at the Cyber Security Academy, and for a long time I was uncertain whether I would write my PhD on terrorism in Mali or Cyber Security governance. Cyber was the focus of all my teaching, much of my research and had also culminated in some peer-reviewed articles that were waiting to be stitched together in a seemingly logical fashion. In the end I chose AQIM (why?), but Bibi's support and assistance remained invaluable.

Three of the articles in this dissertation were written with co-authors. I would like to thank Antonin Tisseron, Giliam de Valk and Bart Schuurman for the enjoyable and fruitful cooperation, and also for their permission to incorporate our joint products here. In all my work with co-authors the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. I would also like to thank the members of my sounding boards, who reviewed the articles before they were submitted to official peer-review, and in particular Isabelle Duyvesteyn, whose insights I really appreciate. I am also grateful for the constructive feedback from the doctoral committee - Beatrice de Graaf, Han van Dijk, Bas Rietjens, Frans Osinga and Dennis Broeders.

My trips to Mali were made possible by Liesbeth van der Heide and Gregory Chauzal. Koro Traoré welcomed us warmly, and with one phone call assured access to Bamako's central prison in Liesbeth's project. General Philippe Bras (French army) ensured the success of the high-level workshop for the ICCT project 'Transitioning from military interventions to long-term counterterrorism – the case of Mali'. Oscar Langley made the covers for the three booklets of this NATO Science for Peace and Security project, and I am grateful that he was also prepared to design the cover for this dissertation.

I left Leiden University nearly three years ago, but look back on an inspirational time in academia. I would like to thank all those who put up with me at the Centre for

Terrorism and Counterterrorism (which later became ISGA), and also at ICCT and the CSA. A special thanks to my paranymphs Bart & Wietse, and to Daan, Jeanine, Constant, Willemijn, Jelle, Ernst, Vlad, Wouter, Sanneke, Marieke, Astrid and Caroline. On the cyber side, it was an honour to work with Dennis, the two Jan's, Els, Mireille and Jacqueline. Teaching detracts enormously from the time available to research and write, but the interaction with students was always fun, surprising and immensely valuable. I probably learned more from the students in the executive masters Cyber Security than they did from me, and it is great to still be in touch with some.

Last but not least I would like to thank my friends and family for their support. Liesbeth & Jan-Michiel provided a beautiful setting where I could work and escape. Julia and Vera were pillars of support, in many ways. The practical assistance of Alain and Jacqueline, my parents-in-law, has been indispensable from the beginning; they even facilitated a 9-month expedition to the ENA so that I could improve my French. My brothers Andre, Alex and Stefan, and their families - and of course my in-laws - have always been an encouragement. I owe so much to my parents; my mother - who I wish was still here - and my father - who continues to inspire. My children Joséphine, Vadim, Helena and Raphael have tolerated my writing time quite well, and I am very proud of them. Finally, my wife Anne has made this all possible. Thanks to her patience (not just with this PhD, but with a lot more...), this project has joined many others on a great journey together.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Sergei Boeke (1976) was born in the Hague, the Netherlands. He completed his secondary education at the Royal Grammar School, Guildford, in the United Kingdom. In 1994 he joined the Royal Netherlands Naval College in Den Helder. Commissioned as a supply officer in 1997, he studied law at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam, specialising in international and criminal law. After graduation he held several posts in the Navy, serving on various warships and with the Second Marine Battalion. He completed mountain and arctic training in Norway, and was deployed with Stabilization Force Iraq (SFIR 2) to Al-Muthanna in 2003/4. After a short posting as fellow at the Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael, he took part in the 'diplomatic class' and worked in the Department of Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. Moving back to the Ministry of Defense in 2008, he became deputy head of the Afghanistan Team in military intelligence. In 2011, he completed a nine-month training for high-level civil servants at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) in Strasbourg, France. In February 2013, he switched to academia, lecturing and conducting research at Leiden University, Campus the Hague. His areas of interest included cyber-security governance and terrorism in the Sahel. In July 2019 he left university and became the Political Advisor (POLAD) of the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC), a new NATO headquarters based in Ulm, Germany. He is married to Anne and has four children: Joséphine, Vadim, Helena and Raphael.

