

The Terrorism Threat in Europe

Presentation by Prof. Alex P. Schmid
Director, Centre of the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence
University of St. Andrews.
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“As a rule of thumb, one learns more about a terrorist group by looking at its victims than at its manifestos”. – W. Laqueur (1978).

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to be here at the time of the completion of a project in which my institute, the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, is one of the partners. Since efforts in the United Nations to do something for victims of terrorism have not brought much in terms of results¹ I am pleased to see that the European Commission has shown a more active interest in victims and survivors of terrorism.

There is something special to victims of terrorism, something that sets them apart from many other victims. They are, by and large innocent civilians, not active participants in a conflict. Terrorism, like genocide, is a unilateral attack of the armed on the defenceless. The victims of terrorism are threatened or destroyed in peacetime, or outside war zones, unexpectedly and without provocation from the side of the victims. For the terrorists, the victim is only an instrument, not the ultimate target. To quote one terrorist (the Harvard-educated Una – bomber Theodore Kaczynski [1995]):

”In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we’ve had to kill people”.²

In other words, the victim is sacrificed by the terrorist so that the terrorist’s message is – thanks to the news value we give to violence - given access to our news system and through our media enter our minds so that we get scared and ask ourselves “Will I be next?”

¹ In 1996 several UN Member States called for the establishment of an UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Terrorism and in 1998 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek the views of Member States on the possible establishment of such a voluntary fund (in analogy to the voluntary fund for victims of torture). In November 2004, after the Beslan tragedy, Security Council resolution 1566 established a Working Group which was, inter alia, tasked “...to consider the possibility of establishing an international fund to compensate victims of terrorist acts and their families, which might be financed through voluntary contributions....”.

² *New York Times*, June 1995; cit. Thomas J. Badley. *Defining International Terrorism: A Pragmatic Approach. Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 1998), p. 98.

“Kill one, frighten ten thousand”, - that’s how an old Chinese word summarized the mechanism underlying terrorism. Terrorism is violence for communication, and the victimization serves as message generator to reach us.³ The more spectacular, ruthless, brazen the terrorist victimization, the more media coverage it gets and the more scared we might get. Our “freedom of information” is re-framed by the terrorists in their “freedom to intimidate us”. Terrorists play to international public opinion via the mass media, and since more and more of our reality is media-ated, media-made perceptions become realities and in this way terrorists often manage to set the agenda for governments and societies with their ‘war on the cheap’ against unarmed civilians.

The one group too often neglected in the conflict between terrorists and governments are the victims. They pay the main price. The victims and survivors suffer physically and psychologically and, if we are unaware of their needs and feelings, might suffer a second time by our lack of care or by ill-considered forms of care. They deserve our solidarity for they are innocent, they deserve our help for they pay the price of us not having been able to prevent and control those conflicts which give rise to terrorism. But for the grace of God, or good luck, we could have been them. We were saved because we rode on a different train, flew in a different aircraft and were not at the wrong time in the wrong place when the bomb exploded.

What we have tried to do in this project, with our recommendations, is to show how to give the primary and secondary victims, those who were killed or injured as well as those who survived but were bruised, physically or psychologically, the best possible care and attention . My colleagues will tell you more about that.

I want to discuss with you “The Threat of Terrorism in Europe”. How scared should we be? How threatened are we? The terrorists, by definition, want us to be “very scared” and some politicians also try to warn us and inevitably – and sometimes not so inevitably - contribute to the scare, as do the news media from whom bad news seems to be good news. Some academics think the threat from Al Qaeda is grossly “overblown”.⁴

If we want to come to a more objective assessment of the threat of terrorism, we need some benchmarks and some metrics. Let us look at some data to put things into perspective. These data are often not comparable as different working definitions of “terrorism” are used. Yet they give us at least an approximation of the size of the problem.

Before I present you some such data, first of all I want you to realize that terrorism should not be our only or even our main worry. Four years ago, a UN Blue-ribbon high-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, listed, in its report “A more secure world” terrorism alongside other very significant threats:

³ Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf. Violence as Communication. Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media. London, Sage, 1982.

⁴ John Mueller. Overblown. How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats and Why We Believe Them. New York, Free Press, 2006.

Table 1 : Main threats of the 21st Century, according to the Secretary-General’s ‘Blue Ribbon Panel’:

- **Poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation**
- **Conflict between and within States**
- **Nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons**
- **Terrorism**
- **Transnational organized crime**

Source: A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility. New York, United Nations, 2004, p. 23 (Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, para. 164d, 2 December 2004).

Compared to climate change and the ensuing environmental degradation, all our other threats pale into secondary and tertiary significance. Many type of calamities costs as many or more lives than terrorism, To give you an example: On 9/11 2602 people died in the World Trade Centre. On an average day, more children are killed by measles (2,700). Every day, some 24,000 people die from hunger. That puts the threat of terrorism in some perspective.

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Table 2 : Other Lethal Events with no specific “news value” on 11 September 2001

- **Est. number of children killed by measles on 11 Sept. 2001: 2,700**
- **Est. number of people who die in a car accident on 11 Sept. 2001: 3,000**
- **Est. number of children killed by diarrhoea on 11 Sept. 2001: 6,020**
- **Est. number of people who died of hunger on 11 Sept. 2001: 24,000**

Source: *New Internationalist* 2001:19;cit. Karim H. Karim. Making Sense of the “Islamic Peril”. Journalism as cultural practice. In: Barbie Zelizer & Stuart Allan (Eds.). Journalism after September 11. London, Routledge, 2002, p.103. – Since the year 2000, basic food prices in the world have risen by 75%⁵. - . Louise Richardson. What Terrorists Want. Understanding the Terrorist Threat. London, John Murray, 2006, p. 183.

When we look at the Threat of Terrorism in Europe, we might be inclined to turn to Europol. The picture you get from Europol is, in my view, completely misleading.

Table3: Terrorist Attacks in the European Union (2006)

	<i>Islamist</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Austria</i>	0	0	1
<i>Belgium</i>	0	1	1
<i>France</i>	0	294	294
<i>Germany</i>	1	12	13
<i>Greece</i>	0	25	25
<i>Ireland</i>	0	1	1
<i>Italy</i>	0	11	11

⁵ Richard Wachmann. Surging food prices put the world on high alert. *The Observer*, 2 March 2008, p.8 (Section: Business & Media).

<i>Poland</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Portugal</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Spain</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>145</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>UK</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>497</i>	<i>498</i>

Source: Europol. EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2007. The Hague, Europol, 2007, p.13.

You will be surprised that only one out of almost five hundred events is associated with Jihadist terrorism. The Europol table reflects the type of information member states are willing to share with the Europol office in the Hague. They are not based on a uniform definition but on the definitions of Member States which can be broad or narrow.⁶

According to the Europol data there were, in 2006, 498 attacks carried out in 11 of the 27 EU Member States. Altogether 706 individuals suspected of terrorism were arrested in 15 Member States of the EU in 2006.⁷ The majority of the attacks resulted in limited material damage. Attacks on property without human casualties should, in my view, not enter the statistics on terrorism at all. The vast majority of the attacks were, according to the Europol report “not intended to kill”.⁸ Most of these attacks – 424 out of the 498 – were listed as separatist attacks. Yet more than half of them took place in Corsica and consisted, I suspect, of little more than burning down French second holiday homes whose owner’s refused to pay criminal “protection” money. All 283 incidents reported for France took place in Corsica. Of the 136 incidents reported by Spain, only one, the attack at the Madrid airport on 30 December 2006, resulted in casualties (two people were killed). There were, in 2006, 55 left-wing and anarchist attacks in the EU, mainly in Greece, Italy, Spain and Germany. As far as Islamist terrorism is concerned, there were, in the EU, no successful attacks in 2006.

However, there was, one failed terrorist attack on two regional German trains near Cologne by two suitcase trolley bombs containing gas cylinders on 31 July 2006, is the only incident of Islamist terrorism that appears in these statistics. Not on this template are other attempted, but unsuccessful or dwarfed attacks, like the much more serious Al Qaeda attempt to bring down in mid-air as many as ten airliners with liquid explosives in plastic soft drink bottles on flights across the Atlantic which became known on 10 August 2006.

Except for the Madrid and London bombings of 2004 and 2005 we have so far been spared “catastrophic terrorism”. However, that does not mean that the threat is not there, or is overblown. We have also to look at the foiled and failed attacks to get a better idea of what the terrorists are up to. In the United Kingdom, for instance, there were since the year 2000, 17 known plots of which only the one on 7 July 2005 against commuters in the London transport system was successful. The picture provided by Europol, in other words, is only the tip of the iceberg.

Let us look at some data longitudinally, and cross-regionally and by country..

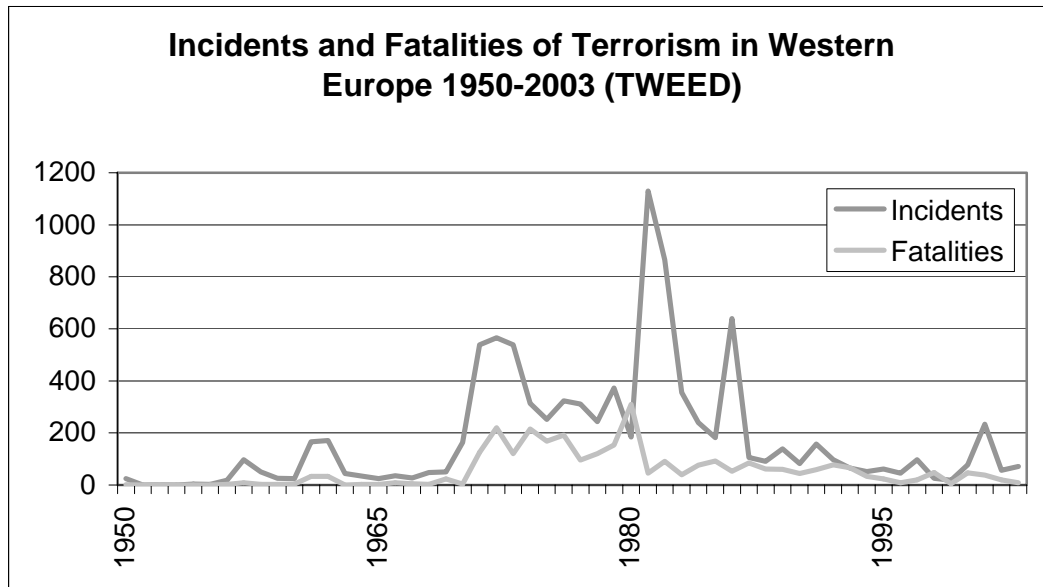
⁶ As the report explains: “For practical reasons, the data collected for the TE-SAT 2007 relies on Member States’ definitions of terrorist offences” (p. 9). Elsewhere it says “Along with the failed terrorist attack that took place in Germany, Denmark, and the UK each reported one attempted terrorist attack. No further information on prevented or disrupted Islamist terrorist networks was made available by these Member States’ law enforcement authorities”. (p.18).

⁷ Europol. EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2007. The Hague, Europol, March 2007, p.3.

⁸ Ibid.,p.17.

Here is, to begin with, a longitudinal look for the period 1950 – 2003 for Western Europe:

Table 4: Incidents and Fatalities of Terrorism in Western Europe, 1950 – 2003⁹



This picture reflect “homegrown” European terrorism. As you can see, it was only in the late 1960s that terrorism became a major problem in Western Europe and abated to some extent in the 1990s only to resurface in the 21st century. The end of the Cold War weakened left-wing terrorism in Western Europe. This particular Norwegian TWEED database, however, does not include countries on the Balkan where political violence included a great deal of terrorism but also went well beyond terrorism in the 1990s.

This Table

[show powerpoint]

covers only internal West European terrorism in 17 countries, not Middle Eastern terrorism which began to affect Western Europe in 1972 with the attack on the Olympic Games in Munich¹⁰ as Palestinian terrorists decided to conduct some of their operations in Europe.

⁹ Data kindly provided by Jan Oskar Engene, Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen in Norway where the TWEED Database is located. The data refer to 17 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. – For discussion, see: Jan Oskar Engene. *Terrorism in Western Europe. Explaining the Trends since 1950*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2004.

¹⁰ Jan Oskar Engene. *Terrorism in Western Europe. Explaining the Trends since 1950*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2004, p.61

**Table 5 :Terrorist Incidents and Fatalities in Western European Countries
1950-2003 – TWEED Database¹¹**

• Country	• Incidents	• Fatalities
	4,247	1,505
<i>United Kingdom</i>		
<i>Spain</i>	853	689
<i>Italy</i>	580	303
<i>France</i>	2,917	179
<i>Germany (GFR until Oct. 1990)</i>	341	
		105
<i>Ireland</i>	32	50
<i>Belgium</i>	32	39
<i>Portugal</i>	580	28
<i>Greece</i>	341	28
<i>Netherlands*</i>	34	10
<i>Finland*</i>	1	7
<i>Switzerland</i>	38	6
<i>Austria</i>	17	5
<i>Sweden*</i>	6	4
<i>Norway*</i>	3	1
<i>Denmark*</i>	5	0
	n.d.	0
<i>Luxembourg</i>		
• Total	9,542	2,959

Fatality rates varied greatly from country to country with the United Kingdom suffering more than one thousand fatalities and four other countries – Spain, Italy, France and Germany suffering more than one hundred fatalities in the second half of the 20th century from terrorist attacks. Since this particular database was utilizing only one source – Keesing’s Historical Archive – and excludes external terrorism brought to Europe there is considerable under-reporting here. Some other figures give us higher casualty rates. “The troubles” in Northern Ireland, caused, all told, more than three thousand deaths and ETA killed more than 821 people since 1968 while more than twice that number, 1798 civilians were killed in Northern Ireland since 1969. Almost 40,000 got injured

¹¹ Incidents include fire bombings (Molotov Cocktails) which may lead to inflated figures sometimes, especially for the U.K. in 1981. All countries where there is no data available for the time period of 1950-1970 are marked with an asterisk. Countries are sorted according to the highest death toll.

during “The Troubles” between 1969 and 2001.¹² Altogether, some 200 “homegrown” militant groups killed, in the second half of the twentieth century, almost 3,000 people in Western Europe – about the same number that died on a single day in September 2001 in New York when Al Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The high position of France on this list has mainly to do with the persistent high-level violence in Corsica which we already saw reflected in the distorted Europol statistics.

Not included in this table is the impact of Middle Eastern Terrorism in Europe which was quite significant in the 1980s. Out of a total of 418 acts of Middle Eastern terrorism during that decade, 340 incidents (81%) occurred in Western Europe.

Table 6 : Middle Eastern Terrorism in Europe, 1980-1989

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>
France	60
Italy	42
United Kingdom	42
Greece	41
Spain	39
Cyprus	31
Germany	25
Austria	23
Belgium	13
Switzerland	9
Denmark	5
Others (Malta, Sweden, Portugal, Netherlands)	10

Source: D. Pluchinsky, 'Middle Eastern Terrorist Activity in Western Europe in the 1980s: A Decade of Violence'; in Y. Alexander and D. Pluchinsky (Eds.), *European Terrorism Today and Tomorrow*. New York, Brassey's 1992, p.6.

In the last ten years the picture has been changing. Turning to another American dataset (RAND), we find the following for the period 1998-2004:

Table 7 : Severity of Terrorism in terms of Number of Incidents in Europe, 1998-2004, in declining order of frequency, according to START's Global Terrorism Database-2.

	<i>Number of incidents</i>
Spain	284
Northern Ireland	235
France	152
Greece	126

¹² Wikipedia as of 05 March 2008, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Ireland#Lives_lost_and_injured_in_the_22Troubles.22

Italy	47
Macedonia	31
Rest of Europe	184
All of Europe (inc. Russia and Turkey)	1.718

Source: GTD2 College Park, University of Maryland (START), as of 03-03-2008¹³

¹ MIPT figures, consulted 10 May 2007; from www.tkb.org.

If we look at the countries which suffered most terrorist attacks in the period 1998-2004, two West European ones were among the top twelve: Spain and the United Kingdom with Northern Ireland.¹⁴

If we look at the last decade as a whole from a regional perspective, the following picture emerges:

Table 8: Terrorist Incidents > by Region Range: 01/01/1998 - 03/03/2008

<u>Region</u>	<u>Incidents</u>	<u>Injuries</u>	<u>Fatalities</u>
<u>Africa</u>	<u>572</u>	<u>8639</u>	<u>2694</u>
<u>East & Central Asia</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>393</u>	<u>164</u>
<u>Eastern Europe</u>	<u>1455</u>	<u>5127</u>	<u>2010</u>
<u>Latin America & the Caribbean</u>	<u>1834</u>	<u>2648</u>	<u>1688</u>
<u>Middle East / Persian Gulf</u>	<u>13865</u>	<u>54707</u>	<u>28248</u>
<u>North America</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>2408</u>	<u>2996</u>
<u>South Asia</u>	<u>4881</u>	<u>17953</u>	<u>7744</u>
<u>Southeast Asia & Oceania</u>	<u>1738</u>	<u>5552</u>	<u>1748</u>
<u>Western Europe</u>	<u>3087</u>	<u>1787</u>	<u>401</u>
TOTAL	27680	99214	47693

Source: MIPT, at <http://www.tkb.org>, as of 03/03/2008

This particular database does not focus specifically on the countries in the European Union but has two listings, one for Western Europe and one for Eastern Europe.

¹³ GTD2 describes its definition in these terms: "In the absence of a universally accepted definition of terrorism, GTD2 uses various coded criteria to cover a broad range of definitions of terrorism through a combination of inclusiveness and filtering. The goal is to have a dataset that is useful to as many segments of the research community as possible". For the GTD1 dataset, START had a more explicit working definition: "The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation". . . – <http://www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd>, as of 03-03-2008.

¹² If we look at the countries which suffered most terrorist attacks in the period 1998-2004, two West European ones were among the top twelve: Spain and the United Kingdom with Northern Ireland. On top of the list of countries targeted was India, with nearly 1,000 incidents, followed by Colombia, with more than 600 incidents, the Russian Federation with more than five hundred incidents. Iraq, Algeria and the Philippines all had more than 400 incidents and Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Israel had all then 200 incidents, like Spain and Northern Ireland. – GTD2: 12 Countries with the Most Attacks, 1998-2004; http://209.232.239.37/gtd2/charts/12_countries.gif, as of 03032008 – GTD2: 12 Countries with the Most Attacks, 1998-2004; http://209.232.239.37/gtd2/charts/12_countries.gif, as of 03032008.

In terms of incidents, Western Europe was, in the last ten years, the scene of 11% of all recorded incidents worldwide while Eastern Europe was the scene of less than half o that. Here are some of the same set of data in the form of a pie-chart.

[Powerpoint here]

In terms of casualties (fatalities and injured) Western Europeans had to mourn for less than 1.5% of all casualties while the figure for Eastern Europe was higher, presumably including high-fatality incidents caused by Chechen terrorism which raised the percentage to just below 5% of all casualties worldwide. The main theatre of terror in the last decade has been the Middle East with 50 percent of all incidents and more than 56% of all casualties.

Returning to longitudinal data, we find that the year 2004 – the year Iraq was invaded – is a watershed year.

Table 9: Number of Terrorist Incidents Worldwide, according to MIPT (domestic and international)

<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>	<i>Injured</i>
1998: 1,286	2,172	8,202
1999: 1,172	874	2,534
2000: 1,150	783	2,570
2001: 1,732	4,571	6,403
2002: 2,648	2,763	7,349
2003: 1,897	2,346	6,200
<u>2004: 2,646</u>	<u>5,066</u>	<u>10,860</u>
2005: 4,976	8,192	15,262
2006: 6,425	11,964	20,789
2007 3,479	8,763	18,694
Total: 27,669	47,596	99,072

Source: MIPT (www.tkb.org), 20 March 2007. – It should be noted that MIPT does not count civilians killed by governments.

In 2004 - underlined here in the powerpoint - fatalities more than doubling compared to 2003 and the figures were rising in the next two years. According to the RAND dataset in 2006 almost 12,000 people were killed and more than 20,000 were injured in 6,425 incidents - a rise also largely caused by events in Iraq. Compared to the 2006 high, there was a substantial drop in both incidents and casualties in 2007 ¹⁵

If we look at a particular year – 2004 - we see that from 208 attacks by Jihadists, only three took place in Western Europe. However, one of the three was the Madrid bombing of 11 March 2004 which cost 191 lives and saw some 1.800 people getting wounded. The figures for Eastern Europe in terms of frequency are three times as high due to the Chechen conflict but the main theatres of terror are the Middle East with almost forty percent of the jihadist incidents and Central and South Asia with almost half of all Jihadist incidents.

¹⁵ MIPT figures, consulted 10 May 2007; from www.tkb.org.

Table 10: Geopolitical Regions of Jihadis Terrorist Attacks 2004

	Frequency	Percentage
Central and South Asia	103	49.5
Middle East and Gulf Region	81	38.9
Magreb	6	3.2
South East Asia	6	3.2
Western Europe	3	1.6
Eastern Europe	9	4.3
Total	208	(100)

Source: Fernando Reinares. Es el Terrorismo Internacional Como nos lo imaginamos? Un Estudio Empirico sobre la Yihad neosalafista global en 2004. Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, 2005. p. 4, at <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/207.asp>, consulted on 25 July 2005.

If we turn from a regional to a country perspective we find, for the year 2006, that only one European country was among the 14 targeted by jihadists.¹⁶

Table 11: Location of Jihadist attacks in 2006 (n=208)

Afghanistan	36.1%
Iraq	30.7%
India	7.2%
Saudi Arabia	6.3%
Pakistan	4.8%
Russia	4.3%
Algeria	2.9%
The Philippines	2.4%
<u>Spain</u>	1.4%
Uzbekistan	1.4%
Turkey	1.0%
Egypt	0.5%
Indonesia	0.5%
Syria	0.5%
Total	100%

Source: Fernando Reinares. Is International Terrorism What We Thought It Was? Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, 2005, at www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/227.aps, as of 13 February 2007, p.3.

Turning yet to another database, this time from the US government, it emerges that worldwide, about half of the terrorist incidents take place in Afghanistan and especially Iraq - both zones of conflict where European troops are present.

Table 12 : Terrorist Incidents Worldwide in 2005 and 2006 according to US National Counter Terrorism Center

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

	2005	2006
Incidents of terrorism worldwide	11,153	14,338
Incidents of terrorism in Iraq	3,468	6,630
Incidents of terrorism in Afghanistan	491	749
Incidents worldwide, excl. Iraq and Afghanistan	7,194	6,959

Source: US National Counter Terrorism Centre as quoted in US Department of State. Country Reports on Terrorism and Patterns of Global Terrorism. Washington, C, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 21 March 2007, p.3; available at www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82739.htm, consulted on 04/05/2007

In situations like Afghanistan and Iraq it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between acts of terrorism and “collateral damage”, between terrorism and legitimate forms of insurgence and between counter-insurgency and war crimes.

There have been so many attacks worldwide, that we tend to forget all but those closest to home or to our own safety. Even of these major Al Qaeda (inspired) attacks in the last ten years, you probably do not remember all:

Table 13: Major Al Qaeda related/inspired Terrorist Attacks

8/7 1998: Attacks on US embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salam	224 deaths
9/11 2001: Attacks on US targets, incl. WTC, with four airplanes	2.602 deaths
10/12: Bomb attacks in Bali on Western Tourists	202 deaths
5/12 2003: Attack in Riyadh on expatriates compound	35 deaths
5/16 2003: Morocco: 5 attacks on foreign and Jewish sites:	32 deaths
11/15 2004 Two attacks in Istanbul on Jewish synagogues	25 deaths
11/20 2004: Attack on British consulate in Istanbul	32 deaths
3/11 2004: Ten bombs explode in four trains in Madrid	192 deaths
7/7/2005: Attack on London underground and bus	52 deaths

Source: Spiegel Jahrbuch 2003. Hamburg & Muenchen, Der Spiegel Verlag/ Deutscher TaschenbuchVerlag, 2003, pp. 538-543 ; Spiegel Spezial. Terror: der Krieg des 21. Jahrhunderts. Hamburg, Der Spiegel, 2/2004, pp. 55; Der Fischer Weltalmanach 2005. Frankfurt a. M., Fischer Verlag, 2004, p.434.

Very few of you have probably heard of most of these foiled and failed attacks:

Among the more than thirty known failed and foiled attacks in Europe, figure the following:

Table 14: Sample of Failed and Foiled Jihadist Acts of Terrorism in Europe since 9/11

- 2001, Dec. Richard Reid’s shoe bombing plot against a Paris-Miami flight**
- 2002 March: Plot to blow up US embassy in Sarajewo**
- 2002, Dec.: Plot by Chechens to attack Eiffel tower and a commercial center in Paris**
- 2003: Plot to crash aircrafts into Canary War and Heathrow**
- 2004 March: UK authorities stop fertilizer bomb attacks on London (’Crevice’)**
- 2004 April: foiled bombing attempt against highspeed train Madrid-Sevilla**
- 2004: Attempt to bomb Schiphol airport in the Netherlands**
- 2005 Sept.: foiled attack on Paris Metro, airport or DST**
- 2006, July: Attempt to bomb trains in Koblenz, Germany**

2006 Aug: plot against 10 airliners en route from UK to USA
2006, Sept.: plot to bomb facilities in Odense, Denmark
2007, June: Plot to bomb London city targets and Glasgow airport
2008 Jan: Plot to attack Barcelona and other European metro system uncovered

Source: Marc Sageman. *Leaderless Jihad. Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, passim; Edwin Bakker. *The European Jihadi Terrorist: Dispelling Myths and Searching for the Truth*. Unpub. Paper, July 2007, pp. 30-31; *Reuters*, 26 January 2008.

These attacks are more often than not the work of local “homegrown” jihadists. There has, according to Marc Sageman, not been any attack planned by Al Qaeda’s core group in Pakistan/Afghanistan since the 7/7/ 2005 bombings in the London Transport system.¹⁷ What we see more and more is that “a bunch of guys” get together and plan an attack of their own which they “dedicate” to Al Qaeda.

What are the main targets of so-called homegrown jihadists in Europe?. In recent years, they have tried to target Europe in a large variety of places and people:

Table 15 : European Targets of 44 Planned, Failed and Foiled Jihadist Terrorist Attacks, 1994-2006

<i>Symbolic targets:</i>	Eiffel Tower; Churches; Synagogues.
<i>Major events:</i>	G-7 meeting; World Soccer Cup Final.
<i>Common people:</i>	Christmas market, shopping centres; nightclubs; funeral of Pope.
<i>Government:</i>	Embassies, Ministry of defense; House of parliament, Supreme court.
<i>Transport:</i>	Airports; aircrafts; trains; passenger ships; subway.
<i>Business:</i>	Trade centre.
<i>Infrastructure:</i>	Nuclear power plant; air force base; computer backup server centre.

Source: Derived from Rob de Wijk and Carla Relk. *Doelwit Europa. Complotten en aanslagen van moslimextremisten*. Amsterdam, Mets & Schildt, 2006, pp. 104-182.

Not only has the targeting become more indiscriminate. The lethality of terrorist attacks has also increased in recent years. Before the rise of the suicide-bombings, fatality rates were limited. In fact, the average casualty rate for terrorists incidents in the last forty years was about five victims per incident – 1.5 killed and 3.5 injured.¹⁸

However, with the rise of the “new terrorism” and suicide bombings this is changing. There have been some 1,000 (958 to be exact) suicide attacks since 1998, resulting in 12,160 deaths and 29,509 injuries. The average suicide attack, in other words, kills a dozen people (12.7) and injured more than 30 (30.8) others. That is almost nine times more than the average terrorist attack¹⁹.

¹⁷ Marc Sageman. *Leaderless Jihad. Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, p. 127.

¹⁸ Based on RAND figures from the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) for the period 1968-2008. The database records international terrorist incidents from 1968 – 1997 and both domestic and international incidents since 1998. The database records between 01/01/1968 and 03/05/2008 35,688 incidents with 55,758 fatalities and 127,854 people injured. – www.tkb.org/IncidentDataModule, as of 6 March 2008.

¹⁹ MIPT figures at www.tkb.org.

Before 9/11 the conventional wisdom was that “Terrorists want a lot of people watching, they don’t want a lot of people dead”. After the surprise success at the World Trade Center, terrorist intent to producing mass casualties has increased. So far we have (according to the RAND database), seen six incidents causing more than 300 fatalities and 28 attacks causing more than 100 fatalities since 1968.²⁰

Statistics on terrorism are still problematic and not just those of Europol. American statistics also show great discrepancies. Earlier I referred to a RAND dataset which reported for the year 2006 that almost 12,000 people got killed and more than 20,000 were injured in 6,425 incidents.

Here is another dataset, developed under the responsibility of the National Counter Terrorism Coordinator. Its summary of the data for 2006, the last year for which full data are available, refers to 14,338 incidents where RAND had less than half: 6,425 incidents. The casualty figures – deaths and injured combined – which RAND provides us with was about 32,000 casualties in 2006 while the NCTC figures are 40,600 and 58,000 respectively, depending on whether we take a narrow definition of terrorism (counting civilian casualties only) or include government personnel and paramilitary personnel.

Table 16 : Victims of Terrorism, 2006, according to US NCTC

- Ca. 58.000 individuals were either killed or injured worldwide by terrorist attacks
 - 40,600 of the killed or injured victims of terrorism were identified by open sources simply as civilians
- Government officials (leaders, police, departmental personnel, paramilitary personnel such as guards) were victims in 11,200 cases in 2006.
 - Well over 50 % of the victims were Muslims, and most were victims of attacks in Iraq

Source: US National Counter Terrorism Centre as quoted in US Department of State. Country Reports on Terrorism and Patterns of Global Terrorism. Washington, C, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 21 March 2007, p.5; available at www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82739.htm, consulted on 04/05/2007

The data I presented to you were mainly quantitative in nature. They show a rising line, although some of the data for 2007 indicate some decline compared with those for 2006. But what are the qualitative trends? According to Brynjar Lia, one of the best researchers in Europe, there are ten factors that make for a high, and quite possibly increasing level of terrorism in the years to come

Table 17: Ten Factors Facilitating Future Terrorism, according to Brynjar Lia

- Resilience and longevity of the international jihadist networks
- unipolar exclusionist and interventionist world order

²⁰ RAND database, as reproduced on www.tkb.org (MIPT), accessed on 5 March 2008.

- weak transitional states
- non-state actors in global politics
- globalisation of organized crime
- Middle East oil dependence
- Migration and ethnic heterogenisation of Western societies
- Growing information interconnectedness
- Proliferation of deadly technologies
- Out-of-area spill-over from ongoing armed conflicts

Source: Brynjar Lia. *Globalisation and the Future of Terrorism. Patterns and Predictions*. London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 187-188.

. In his work ‘Globalisation and the Future of Terrorism. Patterns and Predictions (2005), from which this list is taken, Lia identified a number of important structural factors in today’s world creating more propitious conditions for terrorism²¹ His conclusion was that “Regrettably, high levels of terrorism are going to be with us for a very long time”.²²

Conclusion

Brynjar Lia’s assessment is shared by most knowledgeable experts with access to classified data.

Philippe Errera, from the French Foreign Ministry noted two years ago, in March 2006, that there is a gap in threat perception between specialists and public opinion.²³ Last year, in June, Jean-Louis Bruguiere, the French counter-terrorism judge, warned that “The actual threat for Europe is high, very high indeed”.²⁴ What the public sees are only the few large successful attacks, not the many foiled and failed attacks. Most people tend to remember only the major attacks and not the minor ones of which there are many. According to yet another dataset, acronymed WITS (Worldwide Incidents Tracking System), there were, between 2004 and 2007, in Europe, 1,507 incidents in which 490 people got killed, 76 were taken hostage, and 4053 people got wounded.²⁵

Despite Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, we have been very lucky. Between 2000 and 2005, Western European governments discovered and disrupted between 15 and 30 “planned mass-casualty attacks” by terrorists affiliated with or inspired by Al Qaeda.²⁶ In 2007 alone, 50 terrorist attacks were foiled in the European Union, according to EU commissioner Franco Frattini.²⁷ Mike McConnell, the Director of US National Intelligence, referred last month to

²¹ Brynjar Lia. *Globalisation and the Future of Terrorism. Patterns and Predictions*. London, Routledge, 2005, p. 187.

²² Brynjar Lia, op. cit., p. 197.

²³ Philippe Errera. Threat Perception in Europe Today, 31 March 2006; cit. International Institute for Strategic Studies at <http://www.iiss.org/conferences/counter-terrorism-series/>

²⁴ During a press conference in Madrid, Spain, on 28 June 2007.

²⁵ <http://wits.nctc.gov>, as of 03/03/2008. Figures refer to period 01/04/2004 – 09/29/07. WITS is the US National Counterterrorism Center’s database of terrorist incidents.. – The working definition for terrorism under WITS is: “...terrorism occurs when groups or individuals acting on political motivation deliberately or recklessly attack civilians/non-combatants or their property and the attack does not fall into another special category of political violence, such as crime, rioting, or tribal violence.”

²⁶ Petter Nesser. ‘Jihad in Europe: Post-millennium patterns of jihadist terrorism in Western Europe’. Presentation for the conference

²⁷ Frattini Admits Threat of EU ‘Home-Grown Terrorists’. *EU Observer*, 17 January 2008.

“...the growing number of radical, self-generating cells in Western countries that identify with violent Salafi objectives”.

He held that they “...all suggest growth of a radical and violent segment among the West’s Muslim populations”.²⁸

In fact, less than ten days ago the German Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schaeuble, warned that Al Qaeda had take a decision to attack Germany and last fall the German Secretary of State August Hanning had warned of the danger of an attack with the help of a radiological dispersal device.²⁹

[Powerpoint : Countries targeted by Al Qaeda]

There is a discernable logic in the Jihadist attacks. The immediate goal of the jihadists is to force countries which have troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to withdraw them, e.g. in the German case to withdraw 3,000 troops from northern Afghanistan.³⁰ **According to Michael Leiter, the acting Director of the US National Counterterrorism Center, “...al-Qaeda is attempting to divide Europe from America by appealing to the large Islamic emigre population in Europe to pressure heir leaders to leave Afghanistan”.**³¹ **McConnell concluded that “...the threat from such homegrown extremists is greater in Europe” [but] the US is not immune”.**³² **This is also reflected in the number of arrests: some of the most radical advocates of jihadi activism operate in Europe. While there have been about 60 arrests in the United States of people thought to be connected to Islamist terrorism, there were over 2,300 arrests in Europe, including in Great Britain, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Italy and Bosnia since 9/11.**³³

I regret to say that our conclusion must be that the threat of mass casualty terrorism in the European Union is real, and while conflict resolution and prevention should be our first line of defence, we will not be able to prevent every possible attack without turning our open societies into police states. We therefore have to prepare also for consequence management and taking good care of the victims is a vital part of that.

Thank you for your attention.

²⁸ He added: „Our European allies regularly tell us that they are uncovering new extremist networks in their countries.” This is not so amazing, given that the number of Muslims among the 12-20 million Muslims in Europe who either tolerate or support religiously or politically motivated violence is substantial. They offer a fertile field for recruitment. In Germany, for instance, according to a study commissioned by the Ministry of Interior, it was found that 6 percent of Germany’s Muslims – equivalent to about 180,000 people, have an ‘affinity to violence’ in the sense that they either tolerate or support religiously or politically motivated violence in the name of Islam. . – ADD SOURCE.

²⁹ Schaeuble: AL-Kaida plant Anschlaege gegen Deutschland. *Reuters* (Deutschland), Sonntag , 2 March 2008 , 4:55 MEZ.

³⁰ Frederick Pleitgen. German Fears Over Al-Qaeda Activity. *CNN*, 13 February 2008.

³¹ Officials Say European Terrorism Threat Higher. *Washington Post*, 14 February 2008, p. A17.

³² J. Michael McConnell. Director of National Intelligence. Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 5 February 2008.. Washington, DC., 2008 (SSCI ATA FEB 2008 – DNI Statement for the Record),. p.9.

³³ Marc Sageman. *Leaderless Jihad. Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, pp. 90 and 133.. – There are between 12-20 million Muslims in Europe and about 2.35 million in the United States.