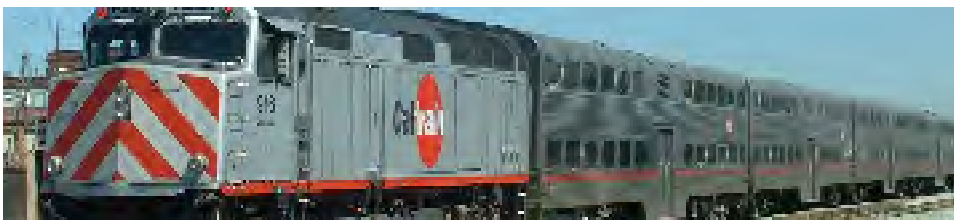


Trains, Concert Halls, Airports, and Restaurants—All Soft Targets: What the Terrorist Campaign in France and Belgium Tells Us About the Future of Jihadist Terrorism in Europe



MTI Report WP 12-10



MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA-21). MTI then successfully competed to be named a Tier I Center in 2002 and 2006 in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Most recently, MTI successfully competed in the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2011 to be named a Tier I Transit-Focused University Transportation Center. The Institute is funded by Congress through the United States Department of Transportation's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (OST-R), University Transportation Centers Program, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by private grants and donations.

The Institute receives oversight from an internationally respected Board of Trustees whose members represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from a Board assessment of the industry's unmet needs and led directly to the choice of the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. The Board provides policy direction, assists with needs assessment, and connects the Institute and its programs with the international transportation community.

MTI's transportation policy work is centered on three primary responsibilities:

Research

MTI works to provide policy-oriented research for all levels of government and the private sector to foster the development of optimum surface transportation systems. Research areas include: transportation security; planning and policy development; interrelationships among transportation, land use, and the environment; transportation finance; and collaborative labor-management relations. Certified Research Associates conduct the research. Certification requires an advanced degree, generally a Ph.D., a record of academic publications, and professional references. Research projects culminate in a peer-reviewed publication, available both in hardcopy and on TransWeb, the MTI website (<http://transweb.sjsu.edu>).

Education

The educational goal of the Institute is to provide graduate-level education to students seeking a career in the development and operation of surface transportation programs. MTI, through San José State University, offers an AACSB-accredited Master of Science in Transportation Management and a graduate Certificate in Transportation Management that serve to prepare the nation's transportation managers for the 21st century. The master's degree is the highest conferred by the California State University system. With the active assistance of the California

Department of Transportation, MTI delivers its classes over a state-of-the-art videoconference network throughout the state of California and via webcasting beyond, allowing working transportation professionals to pursue an advanced degree regardless of their location. To meet the needs of employers seeking a diverse workforce, MTI's education program promotes enrollment to under-represented groups.

Information and Technology Transfer

MTI promotes the availability of completed research to professional organizations and journals and works to integrate the research findings into the graduate education program. In addition to publishing the studies, the Institute also sponsors symposia to disseminate research results to transportation professionals and encourages Research Associates to present their findings at conferences. The World in Motion, MTI's quarterly newsletter, covers innovation in the Institute's research and education programs. MTI's extensive collection of transportation-related publications is integrated into San José State University's world-class Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the information presented herein. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation, University Transportation Centers Program and the California Department of Transportation, in the interest of information exchange. This report does not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the U.S. government, State of California, or the Mineta Transportation Institute, who assume no liability for the contents or use thereof. This report does not constitute a standard specification, design standard, or regulation.

REPORT WP 12-10

**TRAINS, CONCERT HALLS, AIRPORTS, AND RESTAURANTS—
ALL SOFT TARGETS: WHAT THE TERRORIST CAMPAIGN IN
FRANCE AND BELGIUM TELLS US ABOUT THE FUTURE OF
JIHADIST TERRORISM IN EUROPE**

Brian Michael Jenkins
Jean-François Clair

June 2016

A publication of

Mineta Transportation Institute

Created by Congress in 1991

College of Business
San José State University
San José, CA 95192-0219

TECHNICAL REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report No. CA-MTI-16-1532	2. Government Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle Trains, Concert Halls, Airports, and Restaurants—All Soft Targets: What the Terrorist Campaign in France and Belgium Tells Us About the Future of Jihadist Terrorism in Europe		5. Report Date June 2016	
		6. Performing Organization Code	
7. Authors Brian Michael Jenkins and Jean-François Clair		8. Performing Organization Report MTI Report WP 12-10	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Mineta Transportation Institute College of Business San José State University San José, CA 95192-0219		10. Work Unit No.	
		11. Contract or Grant No. DTRT12-G-UTC21	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address California Department of Transportation U.S. Department of Transportation Division of Research, Innovation and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Systems Information Research and Technology MS-42, PO Box 942873 University Transportation Centers Program Sacramento, CA 94273-0001 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20590		13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report	
		14. Sponsoring Agency Code	
15. Supplemental Notes			
16. Abstract <p>The terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, which left 130 dead, and in Brussels on March 22, 2016, in which another 35 people were killed, underscore the heightened terrorist threat Europe faces as those who left European countries to join the ranks of the Islamic State or other jihadist fronts in the Middle East return home. Some come back disillusioned, others traumatized by their experience, but some return determined to bring the war home. Their goal is slaughter. Their targets vary—concert venues, sports stadiums, churches, restaurants, trains, airport terminals—all public places where people gather. That coincides with a long-term trend identified in previous MTI research—public surface transportation is especially attractive to terrorists seeking high body counts.</p> <p>The attacks in Paris and Brussels were part of a continuing campaign of terrorism that began in 2014. Many of the earlier events attracted less international attention because police uncovered the plots or because their attacks failed. By connecting the events, we were able to discern more about the group behind the campaign. And this, in turn, told us more about the subculture from which this terrorist enterprise emerged.</p> <p>The network responsible for the terrorist campaign combined fighters returning from Syria with local confederates who provided the returnees with logistical support and additional recruits. This combination enhanced the group's operational capabilities. The relationships among the participants preceded the terrorist campaign. Many were petty criminals and had carried out crimes or served in prison together. Those returning from Syria were clearly a more violent bunch—they carried out most of the suicide bombings or died in shootouts with police.</p> <p>The terrorist network emerged from a subculture that transcended the criminal underworld and a radicalized underground. While these young men went to Syria to fight for the Islamic State, some saw Syria as a base from which to launch a terrorist campaign at home. The network appears to be the creation of a terrorist entrepreneur who the Islamic State either ordered or exploited to carry out the campaign. It is not clear whether the Islamic State was the incubator or, as French authorities believe, the central command behind the attacks.</p> <p>While this particular network has been largely dismantled, a number of suspects remain at large and the embryos of new networks have been uncovered. The terrorist threat to Europe remains high. The number of Americans going to Syria is a fraction of that seen in Europe, and domestic intelligence efforts have proved remarkably effective in uncovering terrorist plots.</p>			
17. Key Words Terrorism; Network; Abaaoud; Europe; Islamic State	18. Distribution Statement No restrictions. This document is available to the public through The National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161		
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified	20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages 32	22. Price \$15.00

Copyright © 2016
by **Mineta Transportation Institute**
All rights reserved

To order this publication, please contact:

Mineta Transportation Institute
College of Business
San José State University
San José, CA 95192-0219

Tel: (408) 924-7560
Fax: (408) 924-7565
Email: mineta-institute@sjsu.edu

transweb.sjsu.edu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Richard Daddario for his thorough review and Andrew Liepman for his helpful comments and advice during the preparation of this essay. We also want to thank Janet Deland who edited multiple earlier versions of the manuscript and Ellen Pifer who edited the final copy.

The authors thank MTI staff, including Executive Director Karen Philbrick, Ph.D.; Publication Support Coordinator Joseph Mercado; Executive Administrative Assistant Jill Carter; and Webmaster Frances Cherman.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Future of Jihadist Terrorism in Europe	1
The Abaaoud Network—A Terrorist Campaign Going Back to 2014	3
Not Master Villains but Deadly Thugs	5
The Brussels Attack and Further Arrests	6
A New Operational Configuration	7
Abaaoud Went to Syria, While Abdeslam Stayed Home	8
A Subculture of Crime and Jihad	10
Bringing the Armed Struggle Home to Europe	11
Incubator or Central Command?	13
The Problems with Europe’s Response	15
The Future Threat	20
Implications for the United States	21
Participants in the Abaaoud Campaign	23
Key Figures in the Abaaoud Network	23
About the Authors	31

THE FUTURE OF JIHADIST TERRORISM IN EUROPE

Their leader was dead, their comrades were in custody and reported to be talking, police were closing in. Fearing imminent arrest, four members of French-Belgian terrorist network still at large in Belgium had to move fast. The original plan had been to carry out suicide bombings at La Defense in Paris, but going back to Paris would mean crossing borders that were now in a high state of alert and would be too risky. With ample explosives but few operatives, they decided instead to carry out suicide bombings at the Brussels Airport and a metro station. These were easy targets, close by, accessible to individuals carrying suitcases, and they would give the attackers the high body counts they sought.

They succeeded in killing 35 people, injuring over 300. It was the bloodiest terrorist attack in Belgium's history. There are still members of this network believed to be at large and the embryos of new networks have been uncovered. Further attacks are possible.

For the past two decades, the Mineta Transportation Institute has monitored and analyzed terrorist attacks directed against surface transportation, which are often part of broader terrorist campaigns. Previous reporting, for example, has examined in detail the Irish Republican Army's bombing campaign against British transport; terrorist plots in Spain, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, and; long-term trends in attacks on surface transportation in Europe and North America.

When the attacks occurred in Brussels on March 22, 2016, the authors were already engaged in an analysis of the network responsible for the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. This was a follow on to our earlier analysis of the terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 and our even earlier analysis of the 1995-96 terrorist campaign in France, which began with the terrorist bombing of a commuter train in Paris and included an attempt to derail a high-speed passenger train.¹ The new 2015 campaign included a plot to gun down passengers on the high-speed train between Brussels and Paris.

We set out to answer three questions:

1. What do these most recent attacks in Europe tell us about the current and future terrorist threat?
2. What do the most recent attacks say about the ability of European authorities to uncover and prevent further attacks?
3. What implications does the terrorist activity in Europe have for the United States?²

¹ Brian Michael Jenkins and Jean-Francois Clair, "Attempting to Understand the Paris Attacks," *The Hill*, February 25, 2015; "Predicting the 'Dangerousness' of Potential Terrorists," *The Hill*, February 26, 2015, and; "Different Countries, Different Ways of Countering Terrorism," *The Hill*, February 27, 2015. For the account of the 1995-96 terrorist campaign, see Brian Michael Jenkins, Bruce R. Butterworth, and Jean-Francois Clair, *The 1995 Attempted Derailing of the French TGV (High Speed Train) and a Quantitative Analysis of 181 Rail Sabotage Attempts*, San Jose, CA: The Mineta Transportation Institute, March 2010.

² We would like to thank Richard Daddario for his thorough review and Andrew Liepman for his helpful comments and advice during the preparation of this essay. We also want to thank Janet Deland who edited multiple earlier versions of the manuscript and Ellen Pifer who edited the final copy.

This report, which reflects both French and American perspectives, brings together what we know about recent terrorist attacks. It is based on information collected from published and private sources and examines the future trajectory of terrorism in Europe and beyond. Media coverage too often gives us a disconnected view of events. But we believe that it is important to see these individual attacks as part of a broader, continuing campaign by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) waged by a network of returning foreign fighters being assisted by both ISIL and by local confederates.

Media coverage too often gives us a disconnected view of events.

The analysis found that there weren't many significant difference between those who went to Syria to fight and those who stayed home, some of whom had tried or planned to go abroad themselves. However, being in Syria contributed to further radicalization, facilitated new connections, and possibly added some operational skills. Those who went to Syria also seem to be more violent, though it is not exactly clear why. It may be that their decision to go abroad to fight reflected a higher degree of ideological commitment. They may have been attracted in particular by ISIL's reputation for extreme violence. Possibly, they were further radicalized while with ISIL. The existence of confederates at home meant returning fighters were not isolated.

This combination enabled terrorists to operate at a higher level than could be achieved by either returning fighters or local supporters separately, and it significantly raises the threat posed by ISIL. It is not clear how much of the campaign is owed to the ambition of an individual terrorist entrepreneur who, with the support of ISIL, was able to assemble a network of operatives versus how much the campaign reflects a strategic initiative by ISIL. It could be that ISIL is trying to build a durable underground network in Europe. Such efforts may be more successful in countries with large marginalized and alienated immigrant communities that for years have been the targets of religious radicalization. These communities host subcultures that meld the criminal underworld and the radical underground, a long-term problem for society.

The existence of confederates at home meant returning fighters were not isolated.

This brings us to the question of why France and Belgium were targeted. The operatives chose them because this was home territory. But it may be more than that. Did the participants in these attacks go abroad to fight and die in the Islamic State or to specifically acquire skills and elicit support for a campaign against their hated oppressors at home?

The leader of the network in Syria was clearly pursuing a campaign at home (whether this was at his own initiative or in response to orders from ISIL's leadership is unclear). It appears that at least some of the others went to fight in Syria, but were recruited by the network's leader to instead return.

ISIL encourages attacks by its supporters in all countries. It may have calculated that French and Belgian nationals would have a good chance of success on their own turf. Because of their large Muslim diasporas, ISIL may also see France and Belgium as an ideal place to provoke tensions and gain new recruits. France plays a major role in military efforts against ISIL, which makes it a politically suitable target as well. Belgium ended its participation in the coalition's air campaign in June 2015 and fields only a small training mission in Iraq, but

the March 2016 attacks in Brussels reflected a last-minute decision by operatives on the run who calculated that attempting another major assault in France was too risky. France was the network's primary target. Belgium was its primary base of operations.

Europe finds itself ill-prepared to deal with this threat, especially if it presages a more ambitious campaign that is directed and supported by ISIL. For many years, European governments have discounted the terrorist threat. They also have sought to reduce their security expenditures, and are generally hostile to security measures, which are portrayed as threats to civil liberties.

European security forces have therefore been obliged to operate in a difficult environment. Until the recent terrorist attacks, they have lacked the necessary political support and resources to deal with homegrown terrorists suspected of planning attacks nor the growing number of people traveling to and from Syria. Few security forces have effective outreach programs to communicate with the affected communities, policing is subject to tight constraints, and information-sharing remains inadequate.

These are relatively new problems that have emerged only in the past four years. Police are now uncovering and dismantling numerous terrorist cells. Given adequate resources and time, authorities should be able to gain the upper hand. But underlying societal problems will take a long time to fix. Continuing terrorist attacks and the deluge of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa are further deepening social divides. Paradoxically, absent a catastrophic terrorist event or a sustained campaign of large-scale terrorist attacks, European attitudes may not fundamentally change or change fast enough. This situation guarantees future failures of security and increases in social tensions.

Given adequate resources and time, authorities should be able to gain the upper hand.

THE ABAAOUD NETWORK—A TERRORIST CAMPAIGN GOING BACK TO 2014

The terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016 are part of a longer and continuing jihadist terrorist campaign. They were carried out by a network of French and Belgian operatives that were also responsible for an earlier series of successful attacks, as well as failed attempts and foiled plots, going back to 2014, when Mehdi Nemmouche, a French national with a long criminal record killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. (A chronology of the terrorist attacks, failed plots, and participants appears at the end of this report listing event and participants.)

Nemmouche went to Syria in 2012 after his release from prison in France. While serving in the ranks of ISIL, he boasted to French hostages held by ISIL about his plans to return and carry out a large-scale attack in France. While in Syria, Nemmouche reportedly made contact with Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a Belgian national of Moroccan descent who had joined ISIL in 2013 and who was assembling the group that would later carry out the Paris attacks. We know now that Nemmouche and Abaaoud remained in touch by telephone after Nemmouche returned to Europe in 2013. Other terrorist attacks had been carried out by jihadists in Europe prior to

Nemmouche's attack at the Jewish Museum was the first one known to be connected with the Abaaoud network.

this time, but Nemmouche's attack at the Jewish Museum was the first one known to be connected with the Abaaoud network.

Some of the attacks that have occurred since the Jewish Museum attack appear to have been initiated by individuals inspired by ISIL's continuing exhortations to violence.³ However, a number of other terrorist plots are connected with Abaaoud's terrorist network, including one uncovered in Verviers, Belgium.

A week after the January 2015 attack on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, Belgian police raided a hideout in Verviers where they suspected a group was planning to carry out a major terrorist attack. In the ensuing gun battle, two suspects were killed and a third was wounded. All were Belgian nationals who had served with ISIL in Syria. Their intended targets were locations selling copies of the issue of *Charlie Hebdo* that came out after the Paris attack, vowing that the publication would not be intimidated by terrorists. At the hideout, Belgian police found weapons and also explosives, which had never before been used by jihadists in Europe up to this time. The Verviers cell reportedly was receiving instructions from Abaaoud.⁴ Although a number of fugitives are still at large, the cell is now considered to have been dismantled.

In April 2015, French police arrested Sid Ahmed Ghlam, an Algerian national who had previously been stopped from going to Syria. Authorities found weapons in his car and plans to attack churches in the Parisian suburb of Villejuif. The authorities believed that Ghlam had murdered a woman during an attempted carjacking. Like the Verviers cell, Ghlam was receiving guidance from someone in Syria whom authorities now believe to have been Abaaoud.⁵

Ghlam was receiving guidance from someone in Syria whom authorities now believe to have been Abaaoud.

In early August 2015, French police arrested Reda Hame, another jihadist returning from Syria. Shortly after he arrived in Syria, Hame was selected and quickly trained by Abaaoud soon after his arrival in Syria. His mission was to carry out an attack at a concert venue, although he denied to authorities that he was going to go through with it. The Hame investigation revealed another terrorist cell.

On August 21, 2015, Ayoub El Khazzani, a Moroccan living in France who had reportedly spent time in Syria, attempted to open fire on passengers on the Thalys, a high-speed train that runs between Amsterdam and Paris. The assault was prevented when he was tackled and subdued by three American tourists and a British passenger. French authorities later linked Abaaoud to this attempted attack.

³ There were three other terrorist attacks in France in 2014—one stabbing and two incidents where terrorists deliberately ran their cars over pedestrians. In January 2015, two brothers, Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, attacked the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in the name of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), while their acquaintance Amedy Coulibaly killed five people in separate attacks in the city on behalf of ISIL. None of these attacks are believed to have been connected with Abaaoud's network.

⁴ In February 2015, a knife-wielding individual who earlier had tried to go to Syria but was turned back by Turkish authorities stabbed three French soldiers in Nice. This attack was also not connected with Abaaoud's network.

⁵ On April 26, 2015, a delivery driver decapitated his employer, and in May, a French soldier was seriously wounded in a knife attack at a railway station near Paris. In July, two deliberate explosions caused fires at a refinery in France. French authorities also uncovered a plot by four terrorists who planned to attack French Army facilities and kidnap and behead a senior French Army officer. French authorities do not attribute responsibility for these incidents to Abaaoud's network.

On October 29, 2015, just two weeks before the attacks in Paris, French police arrested an individual who was plotting to carry out an attack on personnel at the naval base in Toulon. French authorities believe this plot was connected to ISIL and possibly to the Abaaoud network.

Some analysts have interpreted these many attempts as merely diversionary tactics, intended to keep the authorities off balance and distract their attention from the planning of the Paris attacks, which were being prepared well before November 2015. However, while it is true that some of the plots have a certain hasty, hit-or-miss quality, terrorists generally strive to succeed.

NOT MASTER VILLAINS BUT DEADLY THUGS

Until November 2015, the Abaaoud network had not succeeded in carrying out a single major attack other than Nemmouche's assault at the Jewish Museum. The Viviers plot was uncovered and thwarted, and the intended carnage at the church in Villejuif was aborted when Ghlam accidentally shot himself in the leg and called for emergency services. The gunman intending to shoot passengers on the Thalys apparently could not properly operate his weapon and was promptly disarmed.

The network's inability to carry out a successful attack changed on November 13, 2015, when Abaaoud personally led a combined assault on a football stadium, restaurants, and a concert hall in Paris, killing 130 people. Abaaoud's team had changed its *modus operandi*. While earlier attacks all involved only firearms (although police also found explosives in the Verviers hideout) the Paris attackers were armed with suicide belts.

While earlier attacks all involved only firearms the Paris attackers were armed with suicide belts. This was a first for France.

This was a first for France and may be a case in which capabilities determined tactics. The Abaaoud network had a competent bomb-maker who was able to build improvised explosive devices using triacetone triperoxide (TATP), a volatile explosive compound made with bleach. French officials point out that TATP has been manufactured in Syria, by ISIL in particular.

The availability of explosives does not automatically lead to suicide bombings. In the Madrid terrorist attack of 2004, terrorists left ten bombs in train coaches, causing explosions that killed 192 people. Suicide bombings are intended to be dramatic demonstrations of commitment, but they also suggest desperation and rage. Abaaoud's bomb-maker blew himself up at Brussels Airport, but he may have had apprentices, and others certainly can be trained. Multiple suicide bombing attacks have now occurred in London, Paris, and Brussels, so this tactic is now firmly established in European terrorist playbooks.

Although the November 2015 Paris attacks were the deadliest attacks in France since the Algerian War, the death toll could have been much higher. One of the eight designated suicide bombers ditched his explosives and fled. Four others detonated their suicide vests but managed to kill only themselves and one other person—far fewer deaths than typical with suicide bombings. While the suicide bombings achieved only limited results,

the gunmen in the Paris attack knew how to handle their weapons, which may have reflected training in Syria, although shooting at unarmed civilians requires cold blood, not military skills.

The Paris attacks show that advanced military training is not required to carry out deadly attacks. In fact, amateurs can be lethal. (This is something Americans know all too well from mass shootings.) One former French police official described the attacks as “fortunately, a mixture of sophistication and improvisation.” The most important attribute of the attackers appears to have been their willingness to kill wantonly.

The most important attribute of the attackers appears to have been their willingness to kill wantonly.

Seven of the attackers died in the Paris attacks. Three others, including Abaaoud, escaped. Five days later, Abaaoud and another operative were located in a Paris suburb and were killed in a shootout with police. According to police, the two fugitives intended to blow themselves up at the regional trade center in La Défense, near Paris. The third terrorist, Salah Abdeslam, evaded capture for four months, but was eventually apprehended in Belgium.

THE BRUSSELS ATTACK AND FURTHER ARRESTS

As part of the continuing law enforcement offensive aimed at preventing further terrorist attacks, on March 15, 2016 Belgian police, during a raid on a suspected terrorist hideout, killed Mohamed Belkaid. Belkaid was an Algerian who listed his residence as Sweden. He joined the Islamic State in 2014, and became an associate of Abdeslam. According to the Islamic State’s online magazine *Dabiq*, published on April 8, 2016, Belkaid had sacrificed himself in the gun battle to enable Abdeslam to escape, but not for long. Two days later, police cornered him in his old neighborhood in Brussels where he had been hiding out since November 2015.

The apprehension of Salah Abdeslam on March 17, 2016 along with reports that he was talking to the authorities worried some of the terrorists still at large. Fearing imminent arrest and long-term imprisonment, they decided to end their lives in a bloody last act. On March 22, two terrorists carried out suicide bombings at Brussels Airport, and one terrorist blew himself up on a Brussels subway. Their bombs contained more explosives than those used in the Paris attacks, and 35 people (in addition to the terrorists) died in the two bombings. It could have been much worse. A third attacker at the airport abandoned his bomb and escaped. The Brussels attacks underscore the danger of desperate acts as police close in.

On March 24, 2016, French police arrested Reda Kriket, who they suspected was about to carry out an attack. (At the same time, Dutch police arrested Anis Bahri, who had traveled to Syria with Kriket.) At Kriket’s apartment in Argenteuil, police found five AK-47s, a submachine gun, seven pistols, a large quantity of ammunition, homemade explosives, and ingredients to make more, as well as tear-gas canisters and fake passports.

Kriket was recruited, as was Abaaoud, through the so-called Zerkani Network in Belgium. Kriket and Abaaoud, along with Najim Laachraoui, one of the suicide bombers at Brussels

Airport, and Chakib Akrouh, who escaped with Abaaoud after the November attacks and blew himself up during the battle with police in the Saint Denis raid in which Abaaoud was also killed, were all associates of Khalid Zerkani, a radical Islamist preacher who ran a criminal network, using the proceeds to send recruits to Syria. In 2015, Belgian authorities prosecuted Zerkani and 31 members of his ring, only 13 of whom were present in court—the others were in Syria. Abaaoud was sentenced *in absentia* to 20 years in prison, and Kriket, (also in absentia) was sentenced to 10 years.

However, Kriket and Bahri are not believed to be part of the Abaaoud network, but rather constituted a separate, perhaps embryonic group. ISIL has attracted and hosted terrorist entrepreneurs who exploit the asylum and contacts it provides, to assemble formations to carry out terrorist operations in their home countries.

ISIL has attracted and hosted terrorist entrepreneurs who assemble formations to carry out terrorist operations in their home countries.

On April 8, 2016, Belgian police arrested two more members of the Abaaoud network, Mohamed Abrini and Osama Krayem. Abrini had been caught on a surveillance camera with Abdeslam at a French gas station just two days before the terrorist attacks in Paris. In custody, he admitted that he was the third man photographed at the Brussels Airport. Initially the terrorists still at large after the Paris attacks, thought about striking Paris again, but the arrest of Abdeslam caused them to consider that too risky and they chose the airport and metro station as their targets. Krayem, a Swedish citizen who traveled on a false Syrian identity, admitted that he was the man seen talking to Khalid Bakraoui just before Bakraoui blew himself up at the Brussels metro station.

The information provided by Abdeslam, Ayari, Kriket, Abrini, and Krayem should shed further light on the terrorist group's plans and capabilities. At least some members of the Abaaoud network, estimated before the Paris and Brussels attacks to number between 80 and 150, not all of whom have been identified, are still at large and may be planning further attacks.

A NEW OPERATIONAL CONFIGURATION

As opposed to isolated terrorist attacks, a sustained terrorist campaign requires a network to provide hideouts, assemble arsenals, and plan new attacks. This support structure can take many forms. Efforts to destroy any existing terrorist networks and independent cells intensified after the attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in January 2015, and still more after the November 2015 attacks. Authorities arrested hundreds of terrorist suspects and uncovered numerous hideouts, where they found stockpiles of weapons and explosives, indicating plans for future attacks. We are gradually getting a better picture of the organization behind the attacks.

A number of analysts have pointed to the similarities between the November 2015 attacks and the 2008 attacks in Mumbai. Yet there are important differences. The 2008 attacks were organized by Laskar-e-Taiba (LeT), an Islamist extremist group based in Pakistan. LeT, reportedly assisted by former members of Pakistan's army and intelligence services, conceived the operation, conducted the reconnaissance, carefully selected, trained,

and equipped the operatives—all Pakistanis—and helped them get to Mumbai. During the attack itself, LeT commanders, based in Pakistan and watching developments on television, gave real-time tactical guidance to the attackers. In terms of organization, Paris was nothing like Mumbai.

In the 9/11 attacks in the United States, al Qaeda's operational planners did the planning, selected members of the team, and financed the operation. Operatives, none of whom came from the United States, covertly slipped into the country. Final details were left to Mohamed Atta, the leader of the group, but al Qaeda's top leaders remained very much in charge of the operation. The 9/11 attackers did not rely on local confederates.⁶

In terms of organization, Paris was nothing like Mumbai.

In several other al Qaeda plots since 9/11, foreign volunteers traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan were able to make contact with jihadist fronts. They were trained in bomb-making and sent back to their own countries to plan and carry out their own attacks—a little like launching wind-up mice with no control over where they might go and what they might do. The returning jihadists decided on the targets and timing of the attacks and made their own preparations with minimal contact or support from a jihadist command center abroad.

The attack on *Charlie Hebdo* represents yet another form of organization. Although the Kouachi brothers claimed loyalty to AQAP, the attack was a purely local operation, conducted entirely on their own initiative. Amedy Coulibaly, who carried out the concurrent attack on a Kosher deli in Paris, claimed to be a supporter of ISIL, yet there is no evidence of a direct connection between Coulibaly and ISIL, although his wife fled to Syria to join ISIL on the day of Coulibaly's attack in Paris.

The unique confluence of circumstances in both Europe and Syria has produced a new operational configuration of jihadist terrorism, which combines European operatives returning from Syria with a local support structure in Europe. The Muslim diasporas in France and Belgium have produced a large population of disaffected young men, many of whom are already engaged in criminal activities and now have adopted extremist ideologies. The civil war in Syria offered them an opportunity to join other like-minded fanatics in ISIL, where they receive training in weapons, bomb-making, and clandestine communications and are sent back to Europe to carry out attacks.

Back in their home countries, unlike the 9/11 and Mumbai attackers, the newly trained terrorists can rely on a local network of local confederates ready to work with them. And unlike those involved in some of the subsequent al Qaeda plots or the Kouachi brothers' attack, the operatives in Europe remain under operational control of commanders in Syria.

ABAAOUD WENT TO SYRIA, WHILE ABDESLAM STAYED HOME

The Abaaoud network is an example of this new configuration where European fighters are returning from Syria to link with and inspire local radicals. Abaaoud and Abdeslam, both

⁶ Two of the 9/11 hijackers lived in San Diego for a while where they received assistance from another Saudi resident in the area. Some believe that he was aware of their plans and helped finance their stay, but an investigation by the FBI found no evidence of involvement and he was never charged.

Belgians of Moroccan descent, lived in the same neighborhood in Brussels and had known each other for years. Like many members who joined Abaaoud's network, they engaged in petty crime

Many members who joined Abaaoud's network engaged in petty crime resulting in frequent short prison stays.

resulting in frequent short prison stays. Abaaoud and Abdeslam did time in prison together in 2010 after being convicted of a holdup. When he was arrested, Abdeslam pretended that it was not him but his brother Ibrahim who originally knew Abaaoud. (Ibrahim was one of the suicide bombers in the Paris terrorist attacks.) In 2013, Abaaoud went to Syria, where he joined ISIL. While in Syria, he personally selected a group of French and Belgian fighters for terrorist missions in Europe.

Abdeslam had a long history of low-level drug-dealing and petty crime. Unlike Abaaoud, he did not travel to Syria, but he played a key role in Abaaoud's terrorist campaign in Europe. While Abaaoud was the operational commander of the campaign, Abdeslam was in charge of logistics. It sounds like a supporting role, but it was crucial to the group's success. Jihadists returning from Syria brought increased commitment and expertise. Local confederates provided hideouts, helped obtain weapons and bomb-making materials, arranged for transport, and offered other forms of material and moral support. This local support increased the capacity of the returning fighters. Returning jihadists were not isolated individuals living on the run. They were on familiar home territory, and they were plugged into an underground that offered them the means to continue their campaign.

Abdeslam was one of eight suicide bombers designated to participate in the Paris attacks, but at the last minute he decided not to die and ditched his suicide belt in a suburb of the city. He called two friends in Belgium to pick him up and fled back to Brussels, where he hid out in his old neighborhood until he was arrested by police in March 2016. It is hoped that he will tell the authorities about ISIL's European network and how the recruits in Syria are returning to Europe.

Abaaoud's support network appears to have been more developed in Belgium than in France. The terrorists planned the Paris attacks and built the bombs in Belgium, arriving in Paris only the day before the attacks. On the run after the attacks, Abaaoud and Akrouh apparently had no escape plan and nowhere to go. Abaaoud reached out to his cousin Hasni Ait Boulahcen to find a hiding place. He had reportedly stayed at her apartment the night before the attack. Boulahcen picked the two men up and brought them to a flat that belonged to a friend in Saint-Denis, a suburb of Paris.

Seeking assistance, Boulahcen approached a criminal she knew, but he refused to help. Abetting the escape of terrorists who had killed so many people, including several Muslims, was too dangerous. The Saint-Denis apartment was not a secure place because Boulahcen was already under surveillance for suspected involvement in drug trafficking. Within five days, police located the hideout and surrounded it. Abaaoud, Akrouh, and Boulahcen were all killed in the ensuing gun battle. Abdeslam managed to escape. He was picked up by two friends and taken to Belgium, where he hid out for four months.

A SUBCULTURE OF CRIME AND JIHAD

In many respects, Abaaoud's terrorist enterprise is unique and not easily replicable. It emerges from circumstances in one particular Brussels suburb, and it depends on relationships forged in Belgium's criminal underworld. Many of those connected with Abaaoud's network have long criminal records and have been in and out of jail, where some first embraced Islamist ideologies.

Recruiting criminals for terrorist operations is not a new phenomenon. In the mid-1990s, Algerian Islamists used young criminals to carry out their terrorist campaign in France. Most of those arrested for terrorist activities since then have long criminal records. Today, Syria's civil war has further transformed these criminals into a terrorist fraternity that has overwhelmed ill-prepared authorities and a remarkably nonchalant judicial system.

Belgium and France, in particular, have produced contingents of angry young men who have grown up in Muslim slums around Brussels, Paris, and other cities.

But Abaaoud's terrorist circus also reflects a broader social phenomenon. It is not simply a matter of successful recruiting. It born out of a subculture of crime and jihad that exists within Western Europe's Muslim diaspora. More than 5,000 fighters have joined ISIL from European countries, mainly Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany, where large marginalized immigrant communities provide a reservoir of jihadist volunteers.

The volume of jihadist volunteers suggests deeper societal issues. Many factors have made it difficult for immigrants to successfully assimilate, although the problem is not the same in all European countries. Belgium and France, in particular, have produced contingents of angry young men who have grown up in Muslim slums around Brussels, Paris, and other cities. Others, however, point out that the underlying problem is not barriers to assimilation, but self isolation, the rejection of democratic and secular codes of behavior, and identity issues that encourage adherence to extremist ideologies and hostility toward government institutions, especially the police.

Despite the underlying antagonisms, not all members of Europe's Muslim immigrant communities spurn the values of the societies in which they reside or support violent ideologies. Jihadists make up only a tiny fraction of Europe's total Muslim population. For this small group, however, violent jihad has become their principal mode of expression.

The size of the supporting subculture is harder to estimate. All underground movements have concentric rings of supporters, reflecting degrees of commitment from adherents ready to actively assist terrorists to individuals willing to merely look the other way. To put it in Maoist terms, this criminal-jihadist subculture provides the sea in which the terrorist fish swim.

Many In Europe and elsewhere would reject this explanation as incomplete. They would argue that the root cause of today's terrorism is not the socioeconomic plight of Europe's Muslim

Many In Europe and elsewhere would argue that the root cause of today's terrorism is not the socioeconomic plight of Europe's Muslim immigrants.

immigrants. Instead they argue the cause is the externally financed radicalization of their communities, which has been taking place over the past 20 years. They say that part of the problem is the misguided accommodation by governments unwilling to see radicalization for the dangerous development it is. This situation is the topic of an intense debate, one that is now being fueled by the deluge of refugees flowing into Europe from the Middle East.

BRINGING THE ARMED STRUGGLE HOME TO EUROPE

ISIL offers its foreign recruits the chance to live in and build what it portrays as an “authentic Islamic state” and to take part in the coming showdown between believers and infidels, although nation-building while preparing for end-of-times battles seems contradictory.

The recruits themselves come for many reasons. Religious zeal brings some. Others seek salvation as a solution to personal crises. Some are attracted by the opportunities for slaughter. ISIL’s recruiting emphasizes brutality and attracts individuals who are not offended by atrocities but rather are driven by violent fantasies—it is the congregation of thousands of such persons at camps in Syria that makes ISIL especially dangerous. Still others are looking to gain combat skills and contacts that will enable them to wage jihads in their own countries.

It is interesting to note that the number of women going to Syria and Iraq is greater than the number who previously went to other jihadist fronts. Of the approximately 600 individuals who have left France for Syria, 30 percent were women. Their motives may differ from those of the men.

Intentions may change after arrival in Syria. One volunteer came wanting to fight for ISIL, but Abaaoud convinced him that he could best serve the cause by carrying out a terrorist attack back home. He warned the man that if he refused, another would be given his passport.

Others may need less convincing. For them, Syria is a stopover, not an end destination. Hatred of their perceived oppressors back home brought them to Syria in the first place. Connecting with ISIL helps them exact their revenge. The target of their wrath is the society that, in their view, has persecuted them. For them, Syria is a base for their own campaign of terrorism against their home country.

Syria is a base for their own campaign of terrorism against their home country.

ISIL’S foreign fighters will scatter or die. If ISIL is defeated militarily in Syria and Iraq, its local fighters can go underground to continue the armed struggle.⁷ But the European fighters, even those of Arabic ancestry, may stand out too much to survive in a clandestine resistance movement. They must either move on to other jihadist fronts or risk returning home.

How are they getting back? We know that Abaaoud boasted about his ability to go back and forth. Two of the returning jihadists involved in the Paris attacks returned to Europe as refugees, using false identities. On December 15, 2015, Austrian authorities arrested an Iraqi and an Algerian man at a Salzburg refugee camp, who were both traveling on forged Syrian passports. They had entered Europe via Greece and subsequently admitted that

⁷ Brian Michael Jenkins and Colin Clarke, “In the Event of the Islamic State’s Untimely demise...,” *Foreign Policy*, May 11, 2016.

they were supposed to have participated in the Paris attacks. In addition to these four, are others returning as refugees with fake papers or are they being smuggled back via secret networks? This is a major concern of U.S. authorities, who worry that once back in Europe, ISIL operatives will then be able to easily get into the United States. Abdelslam, who appears to have assisted in the return of some foreign fighters, may be able to shed light on how they were able to so easily evade arrest during their return journey.

Europol recently estimated that up to 5,000 Europeans who traveled to Syria to join ISIL have returned.⁸ This seems to be a remarkable number, especially since European authorities had previously estimated that a total of 5,500 individuals went to Syria from Europe, although the flow of volunteers has continued since that estimate was made. If the estimate of returning fighters is correct, it would mean that most of them have already come back.

Other estimates of the number of returnees are more conservative. An analysis by the Associated Press in November 2015 estimated that more than 1,200 European jihadists had returned to their home countries.⁹ A more recent study by the International Centre for Counter Terrorism based in the Hague indicated that of 4,000 Europeans who had gone to fight in Syria, 30 percent had returned to Europe, which would put the total again at 1,200.¹⁰ Given these figures, the number of arrests in 2015 and after the Paris and Brussels attacks would constitute only a small portion of this total, suggesting that many are still at large.

The Associated Press in November 2015 estimated that more than 1,200 European jihadists had returned to their home countries.

French officials believe the figure of 5,000 returnees to be exaggerated. The figure of 1,200 seems more realistic and conforms more closely to individual national estimates. France has been one of ISIL's major sources of recruits among the European nations, adding more than 1,000 people to the jihadists' ranks. According to the latest French figures, approximately 600 French nationals are currently known to be in Syria. French authorities believe that 167 have been killed in the war zone, and 250 are believed to have returned to France and the whereabouts of 235 are unknown. In addition to those who have gone to Syria, about 800 were suspected of wanting to go, although lately it has become more difficult to do so.

Of course, not all of those who went to Syria did so as fighters—some went to offer aid. And some who did go to Syria as fighters will have come back disillusioned or traumatized by their experience. That still leaves a significant number who may be determined to pursue violent jihad.

⁸ Lizzie Dearden, "Isis: Up to 5,000 Jihadists Could Be in Europe After Returning from Terror Training Camps Abroad," *Independent*, February 20, 2016, citing Europol Director Rob Wainwright.

⁹ Lori Hinnant and Raf Casert, "Over 1,200 European Jihadis Have Returned in Past Two Years," *AP: The Big Story*, Associated Press, November 17, 2015.

¹⁰ International Centre for Counter Terrorism, updated figures cited on iccc.nl website, April 5, 2016.

INCUBATOR OR CENTRAL COMMAND?

It is difficult to determine who is in charge. Did ISIL merely exploit the determination of a terrorist entrepreneur to assemble and lead a group of French-speaking jihadists to wage their own campaign in France and Belgium? Or does the terrorist campaign led by Abaaoud indicate a strategic decision by ISIL's top leadership to launch a global terrorist campaign? Is ISIL the incubator or the central command of the jihadist campaign in Europe?

Is ISIL the incubator or the central command of the jihadist campaign in Europe?

ISIL's propaganda machine continuously threatens its foes abroad and calls for believers in Western countries to kill disbelievers in any manner or way, and it applauds them when they do. Recent attacks have been carried out in the name of ISIL—including the sabotage of a Russian airliner in Egypt last October. ISIL provides only the broadest directions and no resources for such homegrown attacks, but it applauds them as a part of its broader campaign. ISIL also provides training to foreign recruits, knowing that they intend to use these skills in terrorist campaigns when they return home.

Terrorist operatives arrested in France tell of being ordered to carry out attacks or to hold off. Presumably, these instructions came from Abaaoud, but that does not tell us whether the operations carried out by Abaaoud's network are the enterprise of an entrepreneurial commander and a group of European fighters taking matters into their own hands or a project directed by ISIL's top leaders.

In recent history, a number of large terrorist organizations have established separate commands to conduct external operations. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) offers an early and effective example. Led by Wadi Hadad, who assembled a group of European and Arab operatives within the PFLP known as the PFLP-EO (External Operations) carried out a series of dramatic terrorist attacks, including the takeover of OPEC's headquarters in Vienna in 1975, They hijacked a French airliner to Entebbe in 1976. And they were also responsible for the 1980 bombing of the Rue Copernic synagogue in Paris.

Al Qaeda established a separate command to plan and conduct external operations. Recruiting for these activities was highly selective, and al Qaeda leaders maintained close control over planning and preparations. The 1998 bombings of two American embassies in Africa and the 9/11 attacks were spectacular successes. Al Qaeda's Millennium Plot was disrupted in 1999, and the attempt to sink the USS *Cole* in 2000 failed, although 17 U.S. sailors were killed. After the Syrian civil war began, U.S. intelligence analysts worried that al Qaeda was setting up an enterprise, the Khorasan Group, in its Syria affiliate, Jabhat al Nusra. (Some analysts remain skeptical about the existence of such a separate operational element.)¹¹ The Khorasan group was the target of American airstrikes and the United States claimed to have killed its leader in July 2015. Although the bulk of U.S. airstrikes in Syria are directed against ISIL, the United States has also targeted Jabhat al-Nusra's leadership.

¹¹ Adam Taylor, "The strange story behind the 'Khorasan' group's name," *The Washington Post*, September 25, 2015.

Abaaoud was responsible for the network in France and Belgium, but without ISIL support, his operations would not have been possible. It is extremely difficult for any recruit to leave Syria without ISIL's permission—those allowed to leave are considered operatives. (This also means that those wanting to get out of ISIL may agree to become terrorist operatives only in order to escape.) At least some of the operatives were given money when they departed. All maintained contact with Abaaoud.

Abaaoud was responsible for the network in France and Belgium, but without ISIL support, his operations would not have been possible.

The crucial question is whether the return of those foreign fighters signals a strategic decision by ISIL to make what was sideshow to the conflict in Syria and Iraq into the center ring. Although some analysts remain skeptical, others, including French officials, believe that ISIL's leadership has decided to launch terrorist operations in Europe and beyond. The results of the investigations of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris led Europol's newly established Centre for Counter Terrorism in the Hague to conclude that ISIL has established an "external action command trained for special forces-style attacks in the international environment."¹² One French official stated publicly that ISIL has set up special training camps where it has trained 400 attackers to be infiltrated into Europe.¹³ The original source of this information is critical. ISIL, like al Qaeda, is adept at disseminating disinformation calculated to cause alarm among an already anxious population. Does Europe confront an army of sleepers—terrorist operatives in place awaiting instructions from ISIL—or is this an apparition conjured by ISIL's propagandists to create uncertainty and alarm?

French authorities are persuaded that many of the recent attacks were "ordered, directed, and organized" by ISIL, including the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and Brussels in 2016, the attempted attack on the Thalys high-speed train, and the thwarted attacks uncovered in Verviers, Villejuif, Paris, and possibly Toulon. Some of the targets were selected in Syria. One operative told police that he was told to prepare for an attack in a public place but would be told the actual location later. However, in some cases the choice of the precise target and timing of the attack may be left up to the individual. Authorities hope that Abdeslam will shed more light on this issue.

French authorities are persuaded that many of the recent attacks were "ordered, directed, and organized" by ISIL.

While European jihadists may be motivated by faith-driven nihilism, ISIL also has much to gain and risks little by launching a terrorist campaign in Europe? It risks little by doing so. It is already the target of Syrian, Iraqi, and Kurdish military offensives on the ground and a bombing campaign by coalition forces and Russia. As a terrorist organization, ISIL is already excluded from any ceasefires or participation in future settlement talks. European governments are unlikely to send ground forces to Syria no matter what the provocation. And ISIL might view Western military intervention, were it to occur, as a positive development.

¹² Europol, *Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State Terrorist Attacks: Review Held by Experts from Member States and Europol on 29 November 2015*, The Hague, January 18, 2016.

¹³ Lori Hinnant and Paisley Dodds, "IS trains 400 Fighters to Attack Europe in Wave of Bloodshed," *AP: The Big Story*, Associated Press, March 23, 2016.

Moreover, terrorist attacks in Europe may distract attention from ISIL's battlefield setbacks in Syria and Iraq. They attract attention and recruits for a continuing jihad and inspire further attacks.

Terrorist attacks also distract European authorities. A sufficient level of terrorist violence at home may demoralize European publics and their governments, persuading them to withdraw from the anti-ISIL campaign in the Middle East. France has been a major participant in anti-ISIL efforts and is ISIL's principal European target.

French authorities worry that the number of young Muslim radicals will continue to increase as a consequence of immigration and the influence of more and more radical imams who instruct their followers to reject the principles and rules of French society, including some who encourage jihad. Terrorist attacks make Europe's Muslim population the object of suspicion and strengthen the arguments of anti-immigration groups. ISIL may dream of fomenting a religious civil war in Europe or at least of making some European countries ungovernable.

ISIL may dream of fomenting a religious civil war in Europe or at least of making some European countries ungovernable.

A European terrorist campaign could become a distraction for ISIL's leadership, but the funding for it poses little challenge. A few thousand dollars to field each of a thousand operatives amounts to a few million dollars—a seemingly modest investment. The European fighters have little future in ISIL and are eager to kill their hated “oppressors” at home.

Even without a grand strategic plan, there may be a correlation between ISIL's fortunes on the battlefield and its attacks outside the Islamic States declared Caliphate. As its foes press forward, its foreign fighters will die in its defense or they will disperse. Doomsday plans will become more attractive.

THE PROBLEMS WITH EUROPE'S RESPONSE

Similar to the response of Americans immediately after 9/11, many Europeans have asked why the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels were not discovered and prevented. They could not have been a strategic surprise. European police had uncovered numerous terrorist plots inspired or sponsored by jihadist groups like al Qaeda. In 2014, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, ISIL's chief propagandist, had specifically called for terrorist attacks in Europe. It was well known that thousands of European nationals, especially individuals from France and Belgium, had gone to Syria to join ISIL.

Abaaoud and a number of the others involved in his network were known to authorities as jihadist radicals for years before the attacks. Their names were on watch lists. Arrests earlier in 2015 indicated that European fighters were returning from Syria determined to carry out attacks in public places—both concert venues and churches came up as targets in previous plots. After the attempted attack on the Thalys train, France's security services had information that ISIL was planning further attacks on public places. The threat level was high.

Despite this, Abaaoud was able to travel back and forth between Europe and Syria, pass security checkpoints in Europe, deploy terrorist operatives, assemble a large terrorist network, acquire weapons, build bombs, and carry out major terrorist attacks. The available intelligence was simply not specific enough to prevent the attacks. This often happens. In this case, however, a number of failures were due to a set of broader problems.

One problem is the volume of the threat faced by European authorities. In France, thousands of people are suspected of planning to go or having gone to Syria, some of whom are believed to have returned to plot terrorist attacks at home. French authorities simply lack the resources to deal with that many subjects, so surveillance capabilities are stretched. Many of the individuals involved in the recent attacks were well known to French intelligence. Their names had been on various watch lists, but it was impossible to closely monitor all of them.

Many of the individuals involved in the recent attacks were well known to French intelligence, but it was impossible to closely monitor all of them.

European intelligence services and police are now recruiting new personnel to deal with the threat they face. Even before the attacks on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, the French government had announced its intentions to expand its security services. As they expand, they will be better able to take down terrorist networks, but hiring and training new personnel takes time. It took the United States several years after 9/11 to reorganize its intelligence efforts and increase its capabilities for dealing with the new threat.

French officials say their main goal is to have a coherent internal security system with adequate resources, especially in the area of intelligence. Internal security was neglected for a very long time. For example, the 2008 White Paper on Defense and Security allowed the recruitment of 900 people for the external services but none for internal security. In 2016, French security officials are more confident that they have what they need to effectively respond to the terrorist threat.

European authorities are also struggling to deal with the availability of weapons. French and Belgian terrorists, with criminal backgrounds and aided by local confederates, have been able to easily acquire arsenals, despite strict gun controls. Stopping the black market traffic of automatic weapons coming mainly from the Balkans has proved to be difficult. Apparently, underworld gun dealers have no qualms and see little risk in arming terrorists. Gun dealers are also managing to reactivate weapons that have previously been deactivated.

French and Belgian terrorists, with criminal backgrounds and aided by local confederates, have been able to easily acquire arsenals, despite strict gun controls.

Although a number of European countries prohibit information gathered in intelligence operations to be used in court, French and other security services rely heavily on electronic surveillance. New encryption technologies have made it harder to intercept and decipher terrorist communications, which, in turn, makes it more difficult to uncover conspiracies and prevent attacks. In a February 2016 interview, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director John Brennan indicated that the CIA knew ISIL was plotting an attack days before the slaughter in Paris. "The system was blinking red," Brennan said. "We knew in the days

just before [the attack] that ISIL was trying to carry out something ... but the individuals involved have been able to take advantage of newly available means of communication that are walled off from law enforcement officials.”

Brennan described ISIL’s encryption as “very sophisticated,” adding that “there is a lot that ISIL probably has under way that we don’t have obviously full insight into.”¹⁴ This is a problem faced by law enforcement worldwide.

Attitudes in Europe pose another challenge to organizing an effective response. Europeans accuse Americans of grossly overdoing things—and that may be in large part true, Europeans can be accused of reckless indifference when it comes to security. It takes constant, overwhelming, sophisticated surveillance and attention to catch and stop terrorists. Some of the security lapses in Europe are stunning. For example, two of the terrorists who blew themselves up in the Paris attacks had come to France through Turkey, using Syrian passports that did not belong to them. Records show that at least one of them passed through several European countries, including Greece, where his fingerprints were taken.

Most European governments are unwilling to invest in security. While Americans exaggerate threats, Europeans tend to discount them. Fears of trampling civil liberties, guilt over past transgressions, complicated political coalitions, and the requirement for unanimous consent among European states all combine to limit what European governments can and will do. Cynics point out that the European countries that are least willing to invest in security are, not surprisingly, those that have suffered the least from terrorism.

Europe’s intelligence services and police operate under tight constraints. Germany imposes strict limits on surveillance and data retention. Belgian law prohibits police raids at night. After the January 2015 attacks in Paris, the French services recommended opening judicial investigations on all suspected terrorists on their watch list. This proposal was rejected. When terrorists struck again in November, however, the French government declared *l’etat d’urgence*—a state of emergency, which allowed police to search suspects’ flats and houses. It also enabled police to conduct hundreds of operations, seize weapons and documents, and place many individuals under house arrest. While French police considered these actions to be positive, others, including a panel of United Nations experts, denounced the measures as excessively harsh.

The issue here is not whether measures that may impinge on civil liberties should be carefully considered. They should always be challenged, and in some cases, society should accept risks in order to ensure the continuing freedom of the population. But the conflicting demands of combating terrorism and protecting the liberal state create a powerful tension. Public opinion wobbles, and the pendulum swings back and forth on this issue. In Europe, memories of real oppression and laudable devotion to lofty ideals carry enormous weight in the ongoing debate.

In Europe, memories of real oppression and laudable devotion to lofty ideals carry enormous weight in the ongoing debate.

¹⁴ CIA Director John Brennan on 60 Minutes, CBS 60 Minutes, February 14, 2016. Others dispute that the Paris attackers used advanced encryption to conceal their plans.

This philosophical debate complicates how to handle the immediate practical problems presented by a growing population of violence-prone jihadists. During the state of emergency more individuals subject to controls and suspects have been under administrative surveillance, but once the state of emergency ends, so will the expanded surveillance.

Suppression is only one aspect of counterterrorism. Many believe that community outreach efforts by police also must improve. The British have invested heavily in efforts to communicate with Muslim communities and prevent radicalization. Police in other European countries that have made less effort are often seen as adversaries in some Muslim neighborhoods. French authorities, however, point out that France's Muslim community is well represented at both the national and local levels. Many of the elected officials in the French suburbs where Muslim communities congregate are Muslims. But representation alone has not prevented radicalization, and in some areas, local officials fear retaliation if they speak out against the extremists. Several imams are under police protection.

European governments are still dragging their feet on sharing information.

Lack of cooperation among Europe's intelligence services and law enforcement organizations remains another major problem. Intelligence and law enforcement remain bastions of national sovereignty and European governments are still dragging their feet on sharing information.

French authorities are still trying to fathom how Abaaoud, despite being the subject of an international arrest warrant, was able to travel back and forth across Europe under his own identity. Escaping after the attacks in Paris, Abdeslam and two confederates were stopped but allowed to pass through a Belgian security checkpoint. In some cases, European security forces have received vital information about returning fighters without sharing or acting upon it. For example, Turkey warned the Netherlands that it had deported Ibrihim El Bakraoui, who it considered a dangerous radical. He later turned out to be one of the bombers at Brussels Airport. It is not clear what the Dutch authorities did; Belgian authorities admitted that they knew about Turkey's warning but mishandled it.

France has pushed for greater European cooperation on intelligence-sharing across Europe, but the European Parliament opposes a number of its suggestions, including the proposed Passenger Name Record directive that would force airlines to provide passenger data to European Union (EU) governments to help fight terrorism. These differences in attitude reflect different assessments of the terrorist threat, differing policies on how to deal with returning fighters, deep ideological and philosophical differences among European governments and political parties, and even differences about whether cooperation is best achieved through European mechanisms or bilateral agreements. Absent continued large-scale terrorist attacks, European attitudes and policies seem unlikely to change fundamentally.

Cooperation outside of EU institutions appears stronger. Under the Club de Berne agreement, which dates back to 1971, the 28 EU nations, along with Norway and Switzerland, share intelligence. After the 9/11 attacks, the Club de Berne created a Counter Terrorist Group to exchange information on terrorism. The exchange is entirely voluntary and, since it is outside of the EU, operates independently of EU political institutions.

Some Europeans argue that working to prevent terrorist attacks in Europe is not enough. Attacks will continue as long as ISIL and other jihadist enterprises survive in Syria and elsewhere, so ISIL must be destroyed. But accomplishing that would require increased military efforts and working with Syrian authorities and their Russian allies—moves European governments are loath to do.

Still others in Europe argue that more-fundamental changes are necessary. They worry that a growing number of people in Europe's Muslim communities are adopting attitudes that are incompatible with European values. According to this view, ISIL's European terrorist networks are just one aspect of a deeper divide.

This brings us to a delicate, but critically important, issue. On the basis of observations and concrete cases, the French security services have for a long time warned that organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist groups in France have been pushing French Muslims to reject the precepts of French society. Some religious figures have gone further and encourage violent jihad. This, French intelligence officials argue, has affected the attitudes and behavior of a growing number of young people in France and other European countries. Many European governments are reluctant to admit a relationship between religion and violence, fearing that even mentioning a possible link will unfairly tarnish the Muslim community with the actions of few fanatics. They don't want to risk alienating the support of that community, whose cooperation is necessary to suppress the terrorist threat. Salafists, they argue, do not pose the terrorist threat, but are allies in combatting it. The French view of the Muslim Brotherhood also directly contradicts the official U.S. view, which sees the group and other fundamentalist but non-violent organizations and as competitors to the violent fanatics represented by ISIL.

French security services have for a long time warned that organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist groups in France have been pushing French Muslims to reject the precepts of French society.

The 2015 terrorist attacks in France, however, have persuaded French authorities that religious extremism does influence behavior and that in order to effectively combat terrorism, society must also fight the radical ideologies behind it. Openly acknowledging a relationship between terrorist attacks and the underlying beliefs that promote them, France's Prime Minister said after the attacks in January 2015, "We must combat the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood in our country, we must combat Salafist groups in our neighborhoods."¹⁵ Following the more recent attacks, the Prime Minister called for Republican action against radical Islam, although he was careful to say that France was at war not with a religion or a civilization but rather with radical beliefs.¹⁶

Lest this seem offensive to Muslims, it is noteworthy that in December 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the creation of an alliance of Muslim nations aimed at "the disease of Islamic extremism."¹⁷ And in a broad way, this is not too far from efforts in both the United

¹⁵ Euro-Islam, "Valls Wants to 'Combat the Discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood in France,'" Euro-Islam.com, February 20, 2015.

¹⁶ Braden Goyette, "French Prime Minister Valls: We Are at War Against Terrorism and Radical Islam," *The World Post*, January 10, 2016.

¹⁷ Brian Michael Jenkins, *A Saudi-Led Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism: Welcome Muscle in the Fight Against Terrorism, Desert Mirage, or Bad Idea?* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-189-RC, 2016.

Kingdom and the United States aimed at countering violent extremism. It is interesting to note that in the United States, the federal government has cleansed violent extremism of any religious reference—the target of countering violent extremism is a neutral, abstract, almost extraterrestrial extremism.

French authorities have gone further and are taking specific action to combat the dissemination of radical Islam, including the deportation of non-citizen imams preaching violence. French authorities are also closely examining the foreign funding of the growing number of Salafist mosques.

THE FUTURE THREAT

Almost certainly, the threat of further terrorist attacks in Europe will remain high. Deaths and arrests have decimated the Abaaoud network's operational component, but many of its members, especially in its logistics component, remain at large. As police close in, the prospect of imminent arrest may drive some to carry out desperate attacks like the one in Brussels.

Nevertheless, we should not overreact to the discovery of alarming terrorist plans in the hideouts that have been uncovered. When not shooting or blowing people up, terrorists spend their time thinking about all the things they might do. Contemplating and documenting ever more diabolical schemes brings psychological satisfaction. Few of these fantastical aspirations ever mature into concrete terrorist actions. They provide insights into terrorist thinking, but they do not necessarily represent imminent threats.

When not shooting or blowing people up, terrorists spend their time thinking about all the things they might do.

Although there are reports of arrests in several countries, authorities have not yet uncovered other extensive networks like Abaaoud's, although new ones may arise. If the intelligence indicating that ISIL has embarked upon a terrorist campaign in Europe is correct, then hundreds of terrorist operatives may already be at large. There also may be smaller clusters and individuals ready to take action like the Kouachi brothers and Coulibaly, without being part of any structured network. As we have seen already, unaffiliated individuals or tiny groups inspired by ISIL's propaganda may decide on their own to carry out attacks on its behalf.

Returning fighters pose a long-term threat. Many more will return from the Middle East. No doubt, some of them will want to drop out and lay low, but many of those involved in attacks have shown remarkable persistence despite repeated arrests and jail time. They might take action years after their return.

The underlying societal problems will take a long time to fix. Radicalization will continue. Meanwhile, the recent terrorist attacks have succeeded in adding to tensions in the continent's Muslim communities and they have fueled hostility by others toward its growing Muslim refugee population. Authorities worry that terrorists are exploiting refugee flow to infiltrate Europe. Given the chaos the influx of so many refugees has created, that is quite possible.

Many of those involved in attacks have shown remarkable persistence despite repeated arrests and jail time.

But there is another dimension to the refugee issue. Many of the refugees are young men arriving without families—a traditional pattern in refugee flows—but these men also have very little education. They will have difficulty finding employment in Europe’s highly automated manufacturing and information-driven service industries, especially given Europe’s already high unemployment rates. In age alone, they already represent a problematic cohort. Unemployed and dependent on social welfare or consigned to menial jobs, facing a hostile society, some of these young men may slip into petty crime or become targets for radical ideologies and jihadist recruiters.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Terrorist attacks in Europe attract far more media attention than attacks in other areas of the world, which tend to be ignored for a variety of reasons. Reports of horrific attacks followed by news of more arrests and the discovery of further terrorist plots make Americans tune in. They also feed upon American anxieties, cause alarm, and lead to threat inflation.

There is no question that ISIL poses a terrorist threat to the United States. It adds a layer to the terrorist threat faced by the country since the 9/11 attacks almost 15 years ago. Both al Qaeda and ISIL remain committed to inspiring, instigating, and supporting terrorist attacks in the United States. That said, the circumstances in the United States differ from those in Europe in several important ways.

The number of Americans who have traveled to Syria to join ISIL is a fraction of the number of Europeans who have gone. European jihadists number in the thousands. In the United States, the number—including those expressing the desire to join ISIL, those who have been arrested on the way, and those who have gone, some of whom have been killed—is in the low hundreds. While there was a noted increase in U.S. would-be travelers to Syria in 2014 and 2015—a reflection of ISIL’s effective use of social media and an even more robust response by the authorities—the numbers are still tiny compared to those of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Jihadist propagandists are getting a meager return in the United States.

The number of Americans who have traveled to Syria to join ISIL is a fraction of the number of Europeans who have gone.

Jihadist ideologies have gained little traction in the United States. America’s Muslim immigrant populations have, with a few exceptions, assimilated well and overall are better off than those in Europe. In the United States, radicalization and recruitment—which is usually self-recruitment—is an individual decision, often reflecting personal crises. The majority of jihadist terrorist plots in the United States involved a single individual. Where conspiracies are found, they are tiny and involve a few family members or close friends. Three Duka brothers joined the 2007 jihadist plot to attack soldiers at Fort Dix. Daniel Boyd and his two sons were arrested in 2009 as part of a jihadist cluster in North Carolina. Two Tsarnaev brothers carried out the bombings at the Boston Marathon. And most recently, Syed Farook and his wife killed 17 people in San Bernardino, California.

Beyond some isolated recruiting efforts, there is no evidence of any organized radicalized underground in America. America’s Muslims understandably may chafe at police

intelligence operations in their communities, ugly displays of prejudice, and the scrutiny to which they are subjected to where security measures are in force. Yet as a group, America's Muslims generally remain hostile to jihadist ideologies and often are the source of investigative leads for the authorities. Would-be terrorists seeking confederates or connectivity beyond the Internet risk being snared by police undercover operations. As a result, terrorist attacks and plots in the United States, while potentially lethal, are usually one-offs. The threat ends with the attack or the plot. New conspiracies start over at the beginning—there is no institutional learning.

U.S. intelligence efforts, although still not optimal, have been remarkably successful.

Suspected American fighters returning from Syria are subject to immediate arrest. Those left at large may be confidential police informants. Most importantly, returning fighters are more isolated than their European counterparts. Unlike those in Belgium and France, American jihadists have no support network to provide them with hideouts or help them prepare terrorist operations.

The hundreds of thousands of refugees flowing into Europe can get there on small boats or across land borders. That is not the case with refugees coming from the Middle East or North Africa to the United States. They must spend months in refugee camps abroad while being vetted for entry. Security measures have been tightened to prevent European or other jihadists from obtaining entry visas.

Finally, U.S. intelligence efforts, although still not optimal, have been remarkably successful. The 9/11 attacks obliged the United States to urgently address challenges that the European Union is only beginning to tackle. These resulted in a thorough overhaul of the U.S. intelligence community. Police and federal authorities are now linked through Joint Terrorism Task Forces and Fusion Centers. Barriers to the rapid collation, analysis, and exchange of information have been greatly reduced. And as a result, nearly 90 percent of the jihadist plots in the United States since 9/11 have been uncovered and thwarted by the authorities.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE ABAAOUD CAMPAIGN

The following chronology of events includes all of the attacks, foiled plots, and major arrests. The chronology also identifies 37 individuals believed to be connected with Abaaoud's terrorist network, although the connections of a couple of them are questionable. French press reports have identified more than 40 others who are believed to have somehow been involved with the terrorist campaign.

The network was based in Belgium. Of those whose nationality is known, 15 were Belgian nationals; 13 were French (a number of whom lived in Belgium). Several others were North African nationals (also living in Belgium).

Of the 37 individuals listed here, at least 21 joined ISIL in Syria. Clearly the Syrian veterans were the most violent members of the network as indicated in the following numbers: Seven of them carried out suicide bombings in the Paris attacks and one in the Brussels attacks. In contrast, two other designated suicide bombers, neither of whom went to Syria, decided not to detonate their devices. Four more Syrian returnees died in shootouts with police. And another ISIL veteran, Mehdi Nemmouche, gunned down four people in Brussels.

This proclivity toward violence is perhaps not surprising as a majority of the returnees from Syria had prior criminal records for theft, armed robbery, and carjacking. Their decision to go to Syria and join ISIL also may reflect a higher degree of commitment and perhaps attraction to the kind of violence ISIL advertised in its recruiting. Their experience in Syria also may have conditioned them to violence.

The chronology also shows that although police failed to prevent the deadly attacks in Paris and Brussels, police intervention did break up terrorist plots on at least five occasions. The Verviers and Argenteuil cells appear to have been especially dangerous. Despite the lack of adequate resources and persistent problems of coordination, after the Paris and Brussels attacks, police in France and Belgium were able to arrest or kill the network's leaders and a number of its most violent members. However, as of mid-May 2016, a number of the suspected associates of the network remain at large. Further arrests are likely. Further terrorist attacks are possible.

KEY FIGURES IN THE ABAAOUD NETWORK

Abdelhamid Abaaoud—Belgian; petty criminal with multiple arrests for robbery and assault; left with his 13 year-old brother to join ISIL in Syria in January 2014; became leader of Franco-Belgian terrorist network; in telephone contact with Nemmouche before the latter's 2014 attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels; suspected of being organizer and financier of the Verviers cell; killed in a shootout with French police in Saint Denis on November 18, 2015, five days after the November 2015 Paris attacks.

Salah Abdeslam—French (born in Belgium); friend of Abaaoud since childhood; petty criminal; he and Abaaoud participated in a theft for which they were both convicted in 2011; key logistics coordinator for Abaaoud's network; connected to members of the Verviers cell; along with his brother was supposed to be one of the suicide bombers

in the November 13 Paris attacks but abandoned his suicide belt and fled back to Belgium; escaped shootout with Belgian police on March 15, 2016; arrested on March 18, 2016.

Abu Mohammad al-Adnani—Syrian; one of ISIL's senior leaders and official spokesman for ISIL; broadcast speech in September 2014 calling on supporters to kill disbelievers in Western countries; reportedly the leader of ISIL's external operations and considered by some to be coordinator behind Abaaoud's network; reportedly wounded by U.S. airstrike in January 2016.

January 3, 2014—Arrest in Greece

Greek police stopped a taxi near the Turkish border. The passenger was Ibrahim Boudina, a French citizen on his way back from Syria. In his luggage, they found 1,500 euros and bomb-making instructions. However, since there was no warrant for his arrest, they let him proceed. At the time, Boudina was known to French authorities, who had been listening to the telephones of his relatives and friends. They knew that Boudina's mother had received a phone call from Syria, informing her that her son had been sent on a mission. On February 11, 2014, police closed in on the family's apartment and arrested Boudina. At the apartment, they found more than a pound of homemade highly explosive triacetone triperoxide (TATP). It is not clear that Boudina was part of Abaaoud's network, but he is the first of the returning foreign fighters to be arrested for plotting terrorist attacks in Europe.

Ibrahim Boudina—A French citizen, traveled to Syria and joined ISIL in 2013, returned to France and was arrested in February 2014. He is presumed to have been preparing to carry out a terrorist attack in Cannes.

May 24, 2014—Brussels Museum Attack

A lone gunman named Mehdi Nemmouche opened fire on the Jewish Museum in Brussels, killing three people and wounding a fourth, who subsequently died. The gunman escaped but was arrested on May 30, 2014. He was reportedly in touch with Abaaoud by telephone months before the attack.

Mehdi Nemmouche—A French citizen with a long criminal record. He went to Syria in 2012 and joined ISIL. He was was one of the jailers of Western hostages and spoke to them about conducting an attack on the Bastille Day parade in Paris.

January 15, 2015—Foiled Terrorist Plot in Verviers

Belgian police raided a hideout where three members of a suspected terrorist cell were believed to be plotting a major terrorist assault involving automatic weapons and explosives, possibly on an airport. The group was reported to be in telephone contact with Abaaoud, who was in Greece at the time. Two individuals were killed during the subsequent shootout. A third escaped, but he was arrested four days later. Authorities subsequently charged a total of 16 people (including French, Belgian, Moroccan and Dutch nationals) for their connections with the cell. As of May 2016, nine of them were still at large.

Sofiane Amghar—A Belgian citizen convicted of theft and armed robbery. He joined ISIL in Syria in April 2014. He returned to Belgium and was killed in a shootout with Belgian police during raid on January 15, 2015.

Khalid Ben Larbi—A Belgian citizen with a criminal record for theft and robbery joined ISIL in Syria in April 2014. He returned to Belgium and was killed in a shootout during police raid on January 15, 2015.

Marouan El Bali—A Belgian citizen believed to be the quartermaster for the cell. Other sources describe him as the commander of a large-scale attack that was being prepared by the cell. He escaped the shootout with police, but was arrested four days later.

Mohamed Arshad Hamja Mahmud Hajni—Believed to be a Belgian citizen who is in custody awaiting trial.

Umar Demache—An Algerian citizen who was arrested in Greece on January 17, 2015. He is awaiting trial in Belgium.

Souhaid el Abdi—A Belgian citizen who traveled to Turkey for several weeks in 2014. He admitted in court to being a specialist in forging identity papers, but denied he was a radicalized jihadist. He is in custody in Belgium.

Walid Hamam—A French citizen who arrested with Umar Demache in Greece, but was then erroneously released and remains at large.

April 19, 2015—Foiled Plot to Attack Churches in Villejuif

French police arrested a man who called for medical assistance. He claimed to have accidentally shot himself in the leg, but police believe the self-inflicted injury was suffered while he was attempting to hijack a car during a young woman was murdered. The investigation turned up automatic weapons, ammunition, bulletproof vests and plans to attack churches in the Villejuif. According to French authorities, the suspect, identified as Sid Ahmed Ghlam, operated under instructions from Abaaoud. In addition to Ghlam, several other arrests were made.

Sid Ahmed Ghlam—An Algerian national, resident of France, who attempted to travel to Syria, but was arrested and returned by Turkish authorities. He was arrested after calling for emergence services, claiming to have accidentally shot himself.

August 15, 2015—Foiled Plot to Attack a Concert Venue Plot

Acting on information provided by a Spanish jihadist during interrogation in another European country, French police began monitoring a suspected returning jihadist named Reda Hame. On August 15, they moved in to arrest him. During his interrogation, he revealed that he had been sent by an ISIL commander nmaed Abaaoud, to carry out an attack on a crowded rock concert, but that the specific target had not yet been selected.

Reda Hame—A French citizen who joined ISIL in June 2015. Soon after his arrival in Syria, he was recruited by Abaaoud and quickly trained for a terrorist operation to be carried out somewhere in Europe. He was arrested by French police on August 15, 2015 two months after he returned to France.

August 21, 2015—Attempted Attack on Thalys High-Speed Train

On August 21, 2015, a lone gunman emerged from the lavatory of the Thalys high-speed train as it crossed into French territory between Brussels and Paris. He wounded one passenger with a pistol, but his automatic rifle jammed and several passengers were able to overpower and subdue him. A total of four people were injured.

Ayoub El Khazzani—A Moroccan national living in France and Belgium. He was a low-level drug trafficker known to authorities in Spain and France as a jihadist radical. Authorities believe he was acting under the direction of Abaaoud. He is currently awaiting trial.

October 29, 2015—Foiled Plot in Toulon

French police arrested an individual allegedly planning to carry out an attack at the French naval base in Toulon. Some French authorities link this plot with ISIL, but the evidence of a direct connection is not clear.

Hakim Marnissi—French; tried to join ISIL several times; passport taken away and put under surveillance by the authorities; tried unsuccessfully to obtain firearms; ordered a knife via the Internet; suspected of planning to attack sailors at the French naval base in Toulon.

November 13, 2015—Coordinated Terrorist Attacks in Paris

Ten men divided into three teams carried out simultaneous attacks in Paris. One team of three attackers headed for the Stade de France, a football stadium. Prevented from entering they detonated their bombs outside. A second team of three opened fire at restaurants and nightclubs in Paris. One of the attackers killed himself with a suicide bomb while the other two fled. A third team of three terrorists seized hostages at the Bataclan concert hall. All three wore suicide vests; two blew themselves up when police assaulted the hall; the third terrorist's vest exploded when he was hit by gunfire. In all, seven of the attackers wore suicide vests. Abdeslam was to have been the tenth attacker, but he discarded his vest before the attack and escaped to Belgium. The attacks left 129 dead and 362 wounded. In addition to the 14 terrorists named below, authorities have arrested or identified 22 others who are suspected of having some supporting role in the Paris attacks.

Abdelhamid Abaaoud—The Belgian leader of the Franco-Belgian terrorist network. He was the architect of the Paris attack and escaped after it, but was killed in a shootout with police in Saint Denis several days later. (See Abaaoud in “Key Figures” above.)

Salah Abdeslam—A French citizen who served as logistics coordinator for the network. He was supposed to be a suicide bomber, but abandoned vest and fled. He was arrested in Belgium on March 17, 2016. (See Abdeslam in “Key Figures” above.)

Ibrahim Abdeslam—A French citizen and brother of Salah Abdeslam. Like many of the others in the network, he had a long criminal record with numerous convictions before going to Syria. He was one of the suicide bombers and detonated his vest at a restaurant, but managed to kill only himself.

Fouad Mohamed-Aggad—A French citizen with a record of petty crime. He traveled to Syria in 2013 and was one of the three attackers at the Bataclan concert hall. He was killed in the attack.

Samy Amimour—A French citizen who was arrested in 2012 for attempting to travel to fight for a jihadist front in Yemen and put under police control. Nonetheless, he left for Syria in 2013. He was one of three attackers at the Bataclan concert hall and was killed in the attack.

Khalid El Bakraoui—A Belgian citizen with a long criminal record, he provided logistics support to the Paris attackers and ultimately detonated a suicide bomb in the Brussels Metro on March 22, 2016.

Hasni Ait Boulahcen—A Belgian citizen who was a friend and accomplice of Abaaoud, she provided logistics support. She was killed by a suicide bomb during a gun battle with police on November 18.

Bilal Hadfi—A French citizen who was living in Brussels. He traveled to Syria and was one of the suicide bombers killed in the attack at the Stade de France.

Najim Laachraoui—A Belgian citizen who traveled to Syria in 2013. He was known to have been with Salah Abdeslam and Mohamed Belkaid on the Austrian-Hungarian border in September 2015. He provided logistics support for the Paris attacks and was reportedly the group’s principal bomb maker. He was killed when he detonated a suicide bomb at Brussels airport in March 2016.

M. al-Mahmod—A French citizen who lived in Belgium. He traveled to Syria and returned to Europe through Greece. He was one of three suicide bombers at Stade de France.

Ahmad al-Mohammed—He possessed a Syrian passport, but his true identity still unknown. Most likely a member of ISIL, he entered Europe through Greece. He was one of the three suicide bombers at Stade de France.

Ismael Omar Mostefai—A French citizen who had multiple convictions for petty crime. He was reportedly in Syria between the Fall of 2013 and the Spring of 2014. He was one of the gunmen at the Bataclan concert hall and killed himself with a suicide bomb.

Chakib Akrouh—A dual Belgian-Moroccan citizen, he joined ISIL in Syria in 2013. He had earlier been sentenced in absentia for recruiting fighters for ISIL. He traveled back and forth between Syria and Europe at least twice in 2013 and 2015. He escaped with Abaaoud after the Paris attack, but was killed detonating a suicide bomb during the November 18 shootout with French police.

Lazez Abraimi—A Moroccan who was a resident of Belgium who allegedly helped Abdeslam hide out in Belgium. He was arrested on November 19, 2015.

Hamza Attou—A Belgian citizen who helped Abdeslam escape to Belgium. He was arrested on November 16, 2015.

Mohammed Amri—A Belgian citizen arrested on November 16, 2015.

November 18, 2015—Shootout with Police in Saint Denis

Five days after the Paris attacks, acting on a tip, French police raided a suspected terrorist hideout in the Paris suburb of Saint Denis. In the subsequent shootout,

Abdelhamid Abaaoud—Belgian; (See Abaaoud in “Key Figures” and “Paris Attacks” above.)

Hasna Ait Boulahcen—Belgian; a cousin of Abaaoud, she helped him escape after the Paris attack; killed by a suicide explosion during the gun battle. (See Boulahcen in “Paris Attacks” above.)

Chakib Akrouh—Held dual Belgian-Moroccan citizenship, he was one of the gunmen who participated in the November 13, 2015 Paris attack. He was killed detonating a suicide bomb during the gun battle (See Akrouh in “Paris Attacks” above.)

March 15, 2016—Shootout with Belgian Police

Salah Abdeslam—(See Abdeslam in “Key Figures” above.)

Mohamed Belkaid—An Algerian citizen with a long criminal record, he lived in Sweden where he had a long criminal record. He traveled to Syria where he joined ISIL. He was killed in the shootout. According to ISIL propaganda, he fought with police, sacrificing himself to enable Abdeslam to escape.

Sofiane Ayari also known as **Monir Ahmed Alaaj** or **Amine Choukri** (both false identities)—A Tunisian who was arrested in Belgium at the same time as Abdeslam. He traveled to Syria and arrived in Greece in September 2015. He and another returning fighter, Naim al Hamed, were picked up by Abdeslam in Germany in September 2015. He escaped the March 15 shootout, but was later arrested.

March 18, 2016—Arrests in Belgium

Salah Abdeslam—French; (see “Key Figures” above).

Sofiane Ayari—Tunisian; (see Shootout with “Belgian Police March 15, 2015” above.)

March 22, 2016—Coordinated Terrorist Attacks in Brussels

Members of the Abaaoud network still at large in Belgium had originally contemplated a follow-up attack at the La Defense shopping mall in Paris. But with security tight and the arrest and reported cooperation of Abdeslam, they considered that plot too risky. Worried that police were closing in, they instead decided to carry out an attack locally in Brussels. Using their available explosives, they assembled four bombs, three of them much larger than the explosives vests used in the Paris attacks. Three bombers went to the airport where they detonated the two larger devices. The third bomber threw abandoned his device and fled. The fourth bomber went to the Maalbeek Metro Station and detonated his backpack device on the train. In all, 34 people were killed plus the three suicide bombers, more than 300 were injured. In addition to the five terrorists named below, authorities have arrested six others suspected of supporting the attackers.

Mohammed Abrini—A Belgian and Moroccan citizen, he provided logistics support to the November 13 Paris attacks, driving some of the attackers to their targets. He was to have been a third suicide bomber at the Brussels airport, but abandoned his device and fled. He was arrested on April 8, 2016. It is interesting to note that his younger brother joined ISIL in January 2014 and was killed in Syria seven months later.

Brahim El Bakraoui—A Belgian citizen with a long criminal record, he was one of two suicide bombers at the Brussels airport. Both he and his brother were convicted bank robbers and carjackers. Turkish officials identified him as a foreign fighter returning from Syria in 2015 and notified European authorities.

Khalid El Bakroui—A Belgian citizen with a long criminal record, he provided logistics support to the Paris attackers. He was the suicide bomber in the Brussels Metro; (See Bakraoui in “Paris Attacks” above).

Najim Laachraoui—A Belgian citizen and one of the two suicide bombers at the Brussels airport. He reportedly made the bombs used in the Paris attacks. (See Laachraoui in “Paris Attacks” above.)

Osama Krayem also known as **Naim al Hamed**—A Swedish citizen who reportedly was radicalized in his early twenties. He traveled to Syria to join ISIL in 2014. He and Sofiane Ayari (see March 18 Arrests above) were picked up by Abdeslam in Germany in September 2015. He was seen with Metro bomber Khalid El Bakroui and then arrested in Belgium on April 8, 2016.

March 25, 2016—New Terrorist Cell Discovered in Argenteuil

French police arrested a French national and subsequently raided a hideout in Argenteuil where they found a cache of weapons and explosives. Authorities said that the arrest foiled a terrorist plot, which was in the advanced stages of planning, but provided no further details. On the same day, authorities in the Netherlands arrested Anis Bahri, who had traveled to Syria together with Reda Kriket. Although Kriket and Abaaoud were both recruited by the same man—this plot is not part of the Abaaoud network, but rather a separate, perhaps nascent network. There is a cautionary tale in that. ISIL is attracting and hosting terrorist entrepreneurs—Abaaoud is not the only one.

Reda Kriket—A French citizen and convicted armed robber; he was convicted in absentia in July 2015 for being part of a terrorist network. He served as a recruiter for ISIL. He and Anis Bahri are both believed to have traveled to Syria together. He was arrested in March 2016.

Anis Bahri—A French and convicted armed robber, he traveled to Syria with Kriket between late 2014 and early 2015. He was arrested in the Netherlands at the request of French authorities. Dutch police found additional ammunition at his apartment in Rotterdam.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BRIAN MICHAEL JENKINS

Brian Michael Jenkins is the director of the Mineta Transportation Institute's National Transportation Center and since 1997 has directed the Institute's continuing research on protecting surface transportation against terrorism and other serious forms of crime.

He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in fine arts and a Masters degree in history, both from UCLA. He also studied at the University of Guanajuato, Mexico, and in the Department of Humanities at the University of San Carlos, Guatemala, where he was a Fulbright Fellow and received a second fellowship from the Organization of American States.

Commissioned in the infantry at the age of 19, Mr. Jenkins became a paratrooper and ultimately a captain in the Green Berets. He is a decorated combat veteran, having served in the Seventh Special Forces Group in the Dominican Republic during the American intervention and later as a member of the Fifth Special Forces Group in Vietnam (1966–1967). He returned to Vietnam on a special assignment in 1968 to serve as a member of the Long Range Planning Task Group; he remained with the Group until the end of 1969, receiving the Department of the Army's highest award for his service. Mr. Jenkins returned to Vietnam on an additional special assignment in 1971.

In 1983, Mr. Jenkins served as an advisor to the Long Commission, convened to examine the circumstances and response to the bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Lebanon. In 1984, he assisted the Inman Panel in examining the security of American diplomatic facilities abroad. In 1985–1986, he served as a member of the Committee of the Embassy of the Future, which established new guidelines for the construction of U.S. diplomatic posts. In 1989, Mr. Jenkins served as an advisor to the national commission established to review terrorist threats following the bombing of Pan Am 103. In 1993, he served as a member of the team contracted by the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey to review threats and develop new security measures for the World Trade Center following the bombing in February of that year.

In 1996, President Clinton appointed Mr. Jenkins to the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security. From 1999 to 2000, he served as an advisor to the National Commission on Terrorism, and since 2000, he has been a member of the U.S. Comptroller General's Advisory Board.

Mr. Jenkins serves as a Senior Advisor to the President of the RAND Corporation. He is a Special Advisor to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and a member of the advisory board of the ICC's investigative arm, the Commercial Crime Services. Over the years, he has served as a consultant to or carried out assignments for a number of government agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As part of its international project to create a global strategy to combat terrorism, the Club of Madrid in 2004 appointed Mr. Jenkins to lead an international working group on the role of intelligence.

Mr. Jenkins is the author of numerous published research reports, books, and articles on terrorism and security. His latest book is *When Armies Divide*.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS CLAIR

Jean-Francois Clair is a former Inspector General of Police. He served 35 years in France's Security Service, the Directorate of Territorial Security (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire) (DST), the country's internal intelligence system with responsibilities similar to those of the FBI in the United States and MI-5 in the United Kingdom. From 1983 to 1997, he was the head of DST's Anti-Terrorist Branch. In 1998, he was promoted to deputy director of DST, a position he held until his retirement in 2007.

Dr. Clair received a PhD in Public Law from the University of Paris in 1969 and graduated from the Institute for Higher Studies for National Defense (Institut des haute études de défense nationale) (IHEDN) in 1993.

Dr. Clair currently teaches in the Graduate School of International Affairs at the institute d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences-Po) and at the Institute for International and Strategic Research (IRIS). He is a frequent lecturer at the George Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany, and he has participated in international symposia on terrorism and security issues (Singapore, 2007 and 2008; Berlin, 2008; and Oslo, 2009). He is also in charge of research for the French Administration.

MTI FOUNDER

Hon. Norman Y. Mineta

MTI BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Founder, Honorable Norman Mineta (Ex-Officio)
Secretary (ret.), US Department of Transportation
Vice Chair
Hill & Knowlton, Inc.

Honorary Chair, Honorable Bill Shuster (Ex-Officio)
Chair
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
United States House of Representatives

Honorary Co-Chair, Honorable Peter DeFazio (Ex-Officio)
Vice Chair
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
United States House of Representatives

Chair, Nuria Fernandez (TE 2017)
General Manager and CEO
Valley Transportation Authority

Vice Chair, Grace Crunican (TE 2016)
General Manager
Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Executive Director, Karen Philbrick, Ph.D.
Mineta Transportation Institute
San José State University

Joseph Boardman (Ex-Officio)
Chief Executive Officer
Amtrak

Anne Canby (TE 2017)
Director
OneRail Coalition

Donna DeMartino (TE 2018)
General Manager and CEO
San Joaquin Regional Transit District

William Dorey (TE 2017)
Board of Directors
Granite Construction, Inc.

Malcolm Dougherty (Ex-Officio)
Director
California Department of Transportation

Mortimer Downey* (TE 2018)
President
Mort Downey Consulting, LLC

Rose Guilbault (TE 2017)
Board Member
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain)

Ed Hamberger (Ex-Officio)
President/CEO
Association of American Railroads

Steve Heminger* (TE 2018)
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Diane Woodend Jones (TE 2016)
Principal and Chair of Board
Lea+Elliot, Inc.

Will Kempton (TE 2016)
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission

Art Leahy (TE 2018)
CEO
Metrolink

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux (Ex-Officio)
Director General
International Union of Railways (UIC)

Abbas Mohaddes (TE 2018)
CEO
The Mohaddes Group

Jeff Morales (TE 2016)
CEO
California High-Speed Rail Authority

Beverley Swaim-Staley (TE 2016)
President
Union Station Redevelopment Corporation

Michael Townes* (TE 2017)
Senior Vice President
Transit Sector, HNTB

Marlene Turner, Ph.D. (Ex-Officio)
Interim Dean, College of Business
San José State University

Richard A. White (Ex-Officio)
Interim President and CEO
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

Bud Wright (Ex-Officio)
Executive Director
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

Edward Wytkind (Ex-Officio)
President
Transportation Trades Dept., AFL-CIO

(TE) = Term Expiration or Ex-Officio
* = Past Chair, Board of Trustee

Directors

Karen Philbrick, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Hon. Rod Diridon, Sr.
Emeritus Executive Director

Peter Haas, Ph.D.
Education Director

Donna Maurillo
Communications Director

Brian Michael Jenkins
National Transportation Safety and Security Center

Asha Weinstein Agrawal, Ph.D.
National Transportation Finance Center

Research Associates Policy Oversight Committee

Asha Weinstein Agrawal, Ph.D.
Urban and Regional Planning
San José State University

Jan Botha, Ph.D.
Civil & Environmental Engineering
San José State University

Katherine Kao Cushing, Ph.D.
Environmental Science
San José State University

Dave Czerwinski, Ph.D.
Marketing and Decision Science
San José State University

Frances Edwards, Ph.D.
Political Science
San José State University

Taeho Park, Ph.D.
Organization and Management
San José State University

Diana Wu
Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
San José State University



MINETA
TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
MTI



SAN JOSÉ STATE
UNIVERSITY

Funded by U.S. Department of
Transportation and California
Department of Transportation

