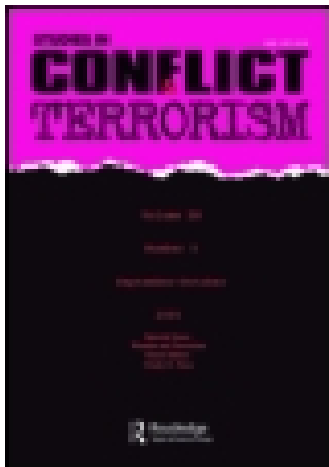


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### Could Hamas Target the West?

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## Could Hamas Target the West?

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*A violent Islamist organization, Hamas, is also a nationalist movement that holds “resistance” to Israel as its highest goal. Unlike global terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda, Hamas has traditionally confined its violent activities to the local arena comprising Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. While citizens of Western countries have been killed in Hamas’ indiscriminate suicide bombings, Hamas has not taken its violent campaign abroad targeting Israeli diplomats or Western allies. Indeed, several layers of disincentives mitigate against Hamas targeting Israeli interests abroad or targeting Western interests. But under what conditions might Hamas be prepared to target Western interests? The answer to this question requires a level of analysis approach that considers Hamas as an organization, as a conglomerate of semi-independent cells, and as a wellspring for rogue cells and independent actors, with these last two entities posing the greatest future threat. Contrary to conventional wisdom, there is precedent for Hamas considering the attacks on Israeli interests abroad and on Western interests themselves. In final analysis, the author believes Hamas unlikely to attack Western interests in the short term. But the following analysis reveals that under certain conditions Hamas’ attack calculus could change in the future.*

On 22 March 2004, Israeli security forces assassinated Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yasin. His deputy and successor, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, issued a statement implying that Hamas would avenge Yasin’s death with attacks on Israel—and on the United States. “The war against Islam is the same war which is launched in Iraq,” Rantissi proclaimed. “In Palestine also, there is a war against Islam. So, the Islamic nation should wake up and shake the land under the feet of those Zionists and the Americans who back them.” Although Rantissi withdrew the threat the next day, the State Department immediately issued a travel advisory warning Americans of possible terrorist threats. The advisory warned: “In the aftermath of the killing of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a Hamas spokesman has threatened revenge against Israel and U.S. interests . . . all U.S. citizens [are urged] to depart Gaza as early as it is safe to do so. . . .” Four weeks later, on 17 April 2004, Rantissi himself was killed by an Israeli rocket in a targeted assassination. At Rantissi’s funeral procession, a masked Hamas member in camouflage told the *Washington Post*, “Bush stands next to Sharon and after that they assassinate Rantissi.” The militant said he

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believed it was meaningful that American and Israeli leaders had met just prior to the attack on Rantissi. "We should carry our fight against the Americans as much as we are against Israel," concluded the militant. "Israel and America share the same face." Hamas political leader Khaled Mishal also blamed America for the assassination, suggesting that Bush had endorsed the missile attack during a White House meeting with Sharon. "What Bush told Sharon in the White House three days ago is the clearest green light and cover for Sharon's crimes and for what has happened to Dr. Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi. Thus, it [the United States] is the one responsible for this crime."<sup>1</sup>

U.S. authorities took the Hamas threat seriously, particularly because Hamas had threatened U.S. interests in the past. For example, on 18 December 2001, Hamas issued a statement warning that, "Americans [are] now considered legitimate targets as well as Israelis." In June 2002, an official Hamas website featured a chat room discussion in which participants discussed various ways to kill a hypothetical group of American citizens in Israel proper or the Gaza Strip. Among the proposed ways to dispose of the Americans was running over the "American dogs," throwing a Molotov cocktail at their cars, burning them in their cabin on the beach, poisoning them, or shooting them "as an example for others like them." Such murders, said one participant, would make "Americans understand they are not safe in Muslim countries."<sup>2</sup>

Despite such expression of violent anti-Americanism, Hamas has not joined Al Qaeda's global jihad. They have not yet bought into the strategy (shared by many other outgrowths of the Muslim Brotherhood) that militants can best undermine local governments by targeting the Western powers that support them. Despite shared ideological roots with Al Qaeda-affiliated groups like the Egyptian Islamic Group, Hamas sees itself as a local "resistance" organization and has traditionally limited its operations to targeting Israelis in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Although many foreigners have died in Hamas attacks, these have been incidental casualties of the group's indiscriminate terrorist attacks, not intentionally targeted victims. But there is reason to question whether Hamas's local focus will continue, or if—and under what conditions—Hamas may expand its focus to include targeting Western interests. Nor is the prospect of such an expansion of targets determined solely by Hamas's top leadership. Indeed, it is far more likely that intentional attacks on Western interests would be the work of Hamas cells or individual members acting independently—either completely on their own or with tacit approval from Hamas leaders. Not only could a change in Hamas *modus operandi* occur at multiple decision-making levels, it could target Western interests in one of several ways. Hamas activists may target Israeli or Jewish interests abroad, target U.S. or other Western interests in Israel and the Palestinian territories, or target Western interests abroad.

### Anti-Western Rhetoric

When asked, Hamas leaders typically say the group's terrorist operations are strictly limited to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. In a March 2004 interview following the Israeli assassination of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, Khaled Mishal insisted, "Our strategy hasn't changed. We will not shift the battle outside of Palestine." That same day, Hamas leaders Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi and Mahmoud Zahar also emphasized this position to reporters. Rantissi said, "We are inside Palestinian land and acting only inside Palestinian land. We are resisting the occupation, nothing else. Our resistance will continue just inside our border, here inside our country." Zahar told an American journalist, "You (Americans) are people innocent of the Zionist conspiracy that is fooling you and is stealing your money. You are not our target."<sup>3</sup>

But the string of denials was itself prompted by earlier statements suggesting the Hamas was considering American targets. Immediately following Yasin's assassination Rantissi stated, "We knew that Bush is the enemy of God, the enemy of Islam and Muslims, Bush and Sharon. The war of God continues against them and I can see the victory coming up from the land of Palestine by the hands of Hamas." Rantisi quickly withdrew his implicit threat, however, as the implications of making veiled threats to American interests settled in. Within days he issued a new statement, saying, "If they (Americans) are worried, then they are stupid because we have said it many times that we will target only our enemy, the (Israeli) occupiers." In April 2004, Rantissi said, "We say to the Muslim people of Iraq, we are with you in your struggle against American terror and destruction, we are with you in your war in defense of Islam. We say to the fighter and commander Mokutada a-Sadr: Hamas stands by your side and blesses your Jihad and wishes you with the help of God, that you will win and be victorious." Indeed, there does appear to be an internationalization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict taking place in the Palestinian territories. In the years following the September 2000 outbreak of the Intifada, pamphlets, posters, and compact disks featuring Hamas leaders alongside leaders of the Iraqi insurgency and Chechen terrorists have appeared throughout the West Bank. Rallies and protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip increasingly feature protestors chanting anti-American slogans like "Death to America from Jerusalem to Baghdad" in front of burning Israeli, British, and American flags.<sup>4</sup>

Hamas leaders often lay blame for Israeli military operations at the feet of the U.S., pointing out that Israel buys most of its advanced weaponry from America. When Rantissi was assassinated by Israel, Khaled Mishal dubbed Bush's purported support for the assassination a "war declaration (against the Islamic nation) by this evil administration in the United States which is . . . allied with the evil entity led by Sharon." Hamas increased its threatening rhetoric in the months following the Yassin and Rantissi assassinations, as Israel expanded the scope of its operations and began targeting the group's operatives not only in the West Bank and Gaza Strip but also in neighboring Lebanon and Syria. In September 2004, an explosion in Damascus presumably coordinated by Israeli agents killed Hamas operative Izzaddin Sheikh Khalil. In December of that year, a bomb nearly killed Musbah Abou-Houwaileh, another Hamas operative in Syria. After the first Syrian bombing, Mousa Abu Marzook said, "now that Israel has expanded its war against Hamas to include neighboring countries, there are many voices calling for attacking Israeli targets abroad." Hamas's Qassam Brigades issued a statement warning that their previous policy of letting "hundreds of thousands of Zionists travel and move in capitals of the world" may have to change now that "the Zionist enemy has opened a new door for the struggle by transferring the battle outside Palestine . . ."<sup>5</sup>

Hamas officials acknowledge they had considered attacks abroad even before the Israeli operation in Syria. In September 2002, Hamas official Mohammad Nazzal declared, "Until today, the issue of carrying the fight outside Palestine is under study and no decision has been taken in that sense." Indeed, the U.S.-led war on terror appears to have instigated an internal Hamas debate regarding the targeting of Americans. On 17 December 2001, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives released a joint manifesto declaring, "Americans are the enemies of the Palestinian people." The manifesto went on to proclaim that Americans "are a target for future attacks." Also in December, "sources in the Hamas military wing," informed a *Time* Magazine correspondent, "somewhere in a Hamas safe house, militants inflamed by the American war in Afghanistan are debating whether it is time to add U.S. targets in Israel and the territories to their hit list." The 31 July 2002, suicide bombing at Jerusalem's Hebrew University bombing was indication to some Hamas-watchers that the hardliners may have gained the upper hand in this debate. Five Americans were killed

and four wounded in the Hamas attack, which targeted a location known for its large population of American and other foreign students. According to U.S. officials privy to the investigation into the attack, there was reason to believe Hamas had calculated the likelihood that Americans would be killed or injured.<sup>6</sup>

American authorities take Hamas threats against Western interests seriously, even though such threats have historically proven to have more bark than bite. In April 2004, the FBI noted that Hamas does maintain the capacity to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States. The Bureau concluded that Hamas has operatives stationed in the United States, although the terrorist group did not then appear intent on acting on its military capability. The FBI reasoned that Hamas relies on America primarily as a fund-raising base, and is loathe risking its financing infrastructure in the United States; conducting attacks on U.S. soil would place Hamas in the crosshairs of the U.S.-led global war on terror. And indeed, Hamas leaders have a long record of issuing empty threats against Western interests, typically in response to actions that have targeted Hamas leaders. One of the earliest threats Hamas issued against American interests, for example, came after the 1995 arrest of Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook in New York City on immigration charges. Marzook was detained for 22 months as authorities considered deporting him to Israel to face charges there. A Hamas statement issued at the time warned that the group had taken “the decision to strike and to hit back if the United States makes this move.” But in 1997, Marzook was deported to Jordan instead, and nothing came of the Hamas threat.<sup>7</sup>

### Caught in the Act

Given their history of empty-seeming threats, the conventional wisdom is that anti-Western rhetoric by Hamas leaders is more designed to radicalize new recruits than promote actual attacks. That assumption came under considerable pressure in 2003, when Israeli officials arrested a man named Jamal Akal and discovered that Hamas had, in fact, planned attacks in North America. In 1999, Jamal Akal left the Nuseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip where he was born and emigrated to Ontario, Canada. There he enrolled at the University of Windsor, began studying for a degree in social work, and became a Canadian citizen. Akal appeared to be a model immigrant, and returned to Gaza in October 2003, ostensibly to find a Palestinian bride. It would later come out that his month in Gaza was not devoted to romantic pursuits.<sup>8</sup>

On 1 November 2003, Israeli authorities arrested Akal as he was leaving Gaza en route back to Canada. Israeli authorities charged that Akal’s ostensible social visit was a ruse; his real object was not a bride but training for Hamas operations in Canada and the United States. A lawyer hired by Akal’s family conceded that Akal had been approached by Hamas operatives in Gaza about conducting operations in Canada. The attorney acknowledged that Akal was trained in the use of small arms during his visit, but insisted Akal did not agree to carry out the plans. Whether or not Akal agreed to execute the mission, the admission that Hamas attempted to recruit a Palestinian with citizenship in a Western country to carry out attacks in that country would appear to mark a significant departure in Hamas modus operandi.<sup>9</sup>

According to Israeli authorities, Akal admitted that during his month in Gaza he was trained in explosives production and taught to use an M-16 by a Hamas operative named Ahmed Wahabe. Wahabe allegedly tasked Akal to return home and “gather information (via the media) on a senior Israeli official who was arriving in the U.S. Wahabe instructed Akal to then monitor the senior Israeli official’s movements and attempt to assassinate her in a sniper attack. Wahabe also asked Akal to attack members of the U.S. and Canadian

Jewish communities, either by shooting or by bombing their homes and/or cars.” According to information released by Israeli authorities, “Wahabe told Akal (inter alia): ‘New York is an easy place to find Jews’.” In a statement issued by the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa, an Israeli official confirmed that Akal was to use his Canadian passport to “carry out terrorist attacks in North America against Israeli and Jewish targets. . . . Some of the scenarios for those terrorist attacks were assassinating a high-level Israeli official during his visit to North America, booby-trapping cars that belong to Israeli officials—diplomats—and killing a Jew who would come across Mr. Akal’s way.”<sup>10</sup>

Akal was specifically instructed to draw on the support of Hamas sympathizers in Canada to fund his attacks. According to an Israeli report, he was to contact worshipers in Canadian mosques and “raise funds, ostensibly for the families of suicide bombers, which he would actually use for purchasing a weapon and financing his expenses in monitoring his prospective targets and in perpetrating attacks.” At the time of Akal’s arrest, he and Wahabe were allegedly awaiting approval from Hamas political leaders in Damascus to conduct the attacks under Al Qaeda’s name, not Hamas’s, in an effort to evade the potential blowback of conducting such attacks in the West. The arrest of Akal confirmed officials’ suspicions that Hamas operatives—acting on their own or in concert with Hamas leadership—are willing and able to execute attacks abroad. But the revelation of Hamas’s international intentions was the product of increased Israeli monitoring of suspicious foreigners in the wake of an earlier Hamas attack perpetrated by two British Muslims of Pakistani origin.<sup>11</sup>

In the early hours of 30 April 2003, two Britons carried out a suicide attack targeting Mike’s Place, a bar frequented by Westerners located next to the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv. They sat at a table for several hours, waiting for the bar to fill to capacity. Then Asif Hanif, from West London, detonated his suicide vest just outside the bar, killing 3 people and injuring 65 others. Omar Sharif, from Derby, fled the scene when his explosive device malfunctioned. Sharif attempted to escape by swimming out to sea, but was found two weeks later drowned off the Israeli coast. The attack marked the first time Hamas ever deployed foreign, non-Palestinian operatives. British officials believe the pair was first spotted and recruited in Britain and subsequently spent time in Syria, where they met Hamas officials and received training. Hamas delayed claiming responsibility for the attack for eleven months, but in March 2004 Hamas released a 90-minute video of the bombers’ joint living will, asserting that the attacks were timed to the one-year anniversary of the assassination of Ibrahim al-Makdeh, the founder of the Hamas Qassam Brigades. Wearing green Hamas bandanas and standing in front of a portrait of al-Makdeh, Hanif offered a prayer: “Who is Tony Blair and George Bush?” he asked. “I wish for the Almighty God either to guide them, or for his wrath to come down upon them.”<sup>12</sup>

## **Hamas’s Global Reach**

The recruitment of British bombers abroad is just the latest evidence that Hamas maintains an international presence capable of facilitating attacks at home or carrying them out abroad. Hamas’s international activities explain the group’s designation by the U.S. Treasury Department as a terrorist group of “global reach.” In 2003, National Security Council terrorism czar Richard Clarke testified, “al Qaeda is a small part of the overall challenge we face from radical terrorist groups associated with Islam. Autonomous cells, regional affiliate groups, radical Palestinian organizations, and groups sponsored by Iran’s Revolutionary Guards are engaged in mutual support arrangements, including funding.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the FBI has long warned of the presence of Hamas and other terrorist groups in the United States. According to FBI officials, some 50–100 Hamas and Hezbollah members with

military training are present in the United States. In 1999, the FBI's Counterterrorism Threat Assessment and Warning Unit reported that "Extremist groups such as the Irish Republican Army, Palestinian Hamas, the Egyptian al-Gama al-Islamiyya (IG), and the Lebanese Hezbollah have supporters in the United States," the report noted. "The activities of these U.S.-based cells," it continued, "revolve primarily around fund-raising and low-level intelligence gathering."<sup>14</sup> By describing the activities of groups like Hamas as "primarily" involving fund-raising and intelligence activities, the report implicitly acknowledged that already in 1999 the FBI was aware such groups were also engaging in other, secondary activities of a potentially operational character. The reference to groups like Hamas engaging in "low-level intelligence gathering" suggests at least some of these groups had an interest in securing pre-operational surveillance for off-the-shelf contingency planning. In other words, although they expressed no immediate interest in conducting operations, they wanted short-notice operational capability should conditions change. The real question, then, is under what conditions might groups like Hamas, that have not traditionally targeted U.S. or Western interests, decide to conduct operations against Western interests?<sup>15</sup>

Testifying before Congress in February 2002, then-Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet expressed his concern that conditions for such attacks could be in the making. Tenet warned that if groups like Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), or Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) "feel that U.S. actions are threatening their existence, they may begin targeting Americans directly, as Hizballah's terrorist wing already does."<sup>16</sup>

Certainly, the phenomenon of mixing terror activity and dawa activism, especially charity work, is not unique to the West Bank and Gaza. Hamas activists working for foreign charities tied to the dawa have also engaged in planning terror operations. According to a 1996 CIA document released in 2003, Mohammad Sa'd Darwishy al-Shazy, a suspected Hamas operative and Human Relief International (HRI) employee in Croatia, plotted terror attacks there in 1993 and used a local charity office and mosque to "promote ideas for terrorist acts." The CIA report cited intelligence indicating that, "al-Shazy's group was considering committing anti-Jewish bombings there, and included the heads of the Zagreb offices of the Saudi High Commission and the Kuwaiti Joint Relief Committee, the head of the HRI's Vienna office, and members of the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) and the privately-run Qatar Charitable Society."<sup>17</sup> Also in Croatia, according to the CIA report, the director of the Zagreb office of the Kuwaiti Joint Relief Committee, Professor Sheikh Abu Adil Uthman al-Haydaer, "was described by an associate as a 'powerful Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood member.'" The group also planned to assassinate a former Algerian Prime Minister, PLO Chairman Arafat, and to conduct bombings to support the "brother Algerians" in Croatia. Although none of the plots discussed by members of this group appear to have been carried out, their intentions, terrorist affiliations, and planning meeting are illuminating.<sup>18</sup>

The CIA report tracked Hamas activity not only in the Balkans but in the Philippines as well. The report warned that office in Manila employed "the majority of Hamas members in the Philippines" and that a "high ranking" IIRO official led Hamas meetings there. Subsequent investigation in several countries, including the United States and Saudi Arabia, has indicated that the IIRO is an Al Qaeda front organization with links to Hamas and many other groups.<sup>19</sup> Such activity, U.S. officials warned, has the potential to "justify and support terrorist activities." The CIA's documentation of Hamas activity in Asia correlates with Israeli intelligence assessments that "Hamas officials in Syria are in contact with Islamic organizations in Asia."<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, Hamas maintains financial and logistical links to a wide array of international terrorist groups. A Hamas delegation participated in the 1995 Islamic People's Congress in Sudan, where they met Osama bin Laden and representatives of Algerian, Pakistani, Tunisian, and other terrorist groups. In Pakistan, the leader of a jihadist organization there openly admitted to having "person-to-person contacts" with other groups, adding, "sometimes fighters from Hamas and Hezbollah help us." Asked where contacts with groups like Hamas and Hezbollah are held, the Pakistani answered, "a good place to meet is in Iran." Offering insight into the importance of interpersonal relationships between members of disparate terrorist groups, he added, "We don't involve other organizations. Just individuals."<sup>21</sup>

In another sign of the group's global reach, Romanian intelligence in 2002 reportedly investigated 73 Hamas supporters there, mostly on university campuses. Hamas operatives in Romania were said to operate there "under the screen of the Islamic and Cultural League in Romania." According to their investigation, Romanian intelligence concluded, "Hamas benefits from the logistics of the Islamic and Cultural League," and that Hamas posed a "potential threat" in Romania, "fueled by the possibility of [Hamas] carrying out attacks on Israeli and U.S. interests or objectives worldwide."<sup>22</sup> Hamas supporters abroad have also played distinctly operational roles in Hamas terrorist attacks. Consider the case of Mohammad Qassem Sawalha, a Hamas activist and longtime Muslim leader in Britain. According to an indictment, Sawalha and his co-conspirators actively assisted Hamas activists planning terrorist attacks. Similarly, Marwan Ismail Dahman, a Palestinian-born Spanish engineer, was jailed in May 2005 on suspicion of having helped designed a new Qassam rocket for Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Police found copies of rocket designs Dahman reportedly faxed to terrorist operatives, as well as corresponding receipts for these faxes in his home in eastern Spain. Dahman admitted to the presiding judge that he approached Hamas and offered technical assistance in redesigning an enhanced rocket after Israel's 2004 assassination of Adnan al-Ghoul, the original architect of the Qassam rocket.<sup>23</sup>

### **Disincentives against Attacking the West**

Despite their international presence, Hamas has never actually carried out a terrorist attack beyond its traditional area of operations in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. For example, Hamas' decision to run in the Palestinian elections, its participation in the Palestinian National Unity Government, and its control of Gaza even after the collapse of that unity government mitigate against a Hamas decision to target Western interests. Moreover, Hamas believes itself to be engaged in "resistance," not terrorism. Many supporters of Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups condemned the 11 September attacks in the U.S. (2001), the 11 March attacks in Spain (2004), and the 7 July (2005) attacks in Britain. Clearly, maintaining this distinction is paramount for Hamas and its supporters. In assessing the potential threat from Palestinian groups that rely on American dollars, FBI officials concluded that their "extensive fund raising activity itself acts as a disincentive for operational terrorist activity in the United States."<sup>24</sup> Hamas leaders have verbalized this sentiment. According to an FBI summary transcript of a 1993 Hamas meeting in Philadelphia, the participants mentioned "all the [support] activities they are talking about pertain to the activities within the United States. They also mentioned it is not to this best interest [sic] to cause troubles in the American theater."<sup>25</sup>

But U.S. actions taken against Hamas operatives and organizations in the United States in the wake of the 11 September attacks may be slowly removing this disincentive from the



Hamas calculus. Chief among these actions are the closure of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLFRD) in December 2001 and issuance of indictments in Dallas and Chicago against prominent Hamas operatives. Consider just a few examples of the well publicized, overt American actions targeting Hamas operatives and organizations in the United States since September 2001:<sup>26</sup>

- Five days before the 11 September attacks, FBI and U.S. Customs Service agents raided the offices and froze the assets of Infocom, an Internet company linked to Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook, who has been listed as a Specially Designated Terrorist by the U.S. government.
- On 26 November 2001, the Immigration and Naturalization Service deported Ghassan Dahduli. Dahduli was a longtime leader of the Hamas-associated Islamic Association for Palestine and an associate of convicted Al Qaeda operative Wadi al-Hage.<sup>27</sup>
- On 4 December 2001, the Bush administration froze the assets of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, labeling it a Hamas front organization. Included in the freeze were two financial institutions linked to Hamas and based in the Palestinian territories: the al-Aqsa International Bank and the Beit al-Mal Holdings Company.<sup>28</sup>
- On 5 June 2002, Joyce and Stanley Boim were awarded \$156 million after a jury in Chicago found the HLFRD and the Quranic Literacy Institute liable for the death of their teenage son, David Boim. He had been shot by Hamas militants while waiting for a bus in Jerusalem in 1996. The two charities were forced to pay after prosecutors successfully proved they were guilty of illegally funding a terrorist organization.<sup>29</sup>
- On 22 August 2003, the U.S. Treasury Department designated Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, and five other senior Hamas officials as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. Their assets were frozen and all financial transactions with them by American nationals were prohibited.<sup>30</sup>
- On 27 July 2004, five former leaders of the HLFRD were arrested on charges of providing financial support for Hamas. The men were charged with raising \$12.4 million and then funneling it to Hamas. The trial, which began in July 2007, was ongoing as of September 2007.<sup>31</sup>
- In August 2004, a federal indictment unsealed in Chicago charged Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook, Mohammad Salah, and Abdelhaleem Ashqar with racketeering conspiracy and using bank accounts in a variety of U.S. states to launder millions of dollars to support murders, kidnappings, and assaults perpetrated by Hamas. Salah was also charged with providing material support for terrorism and obstruction of justice, and accused of recruiting and training new members of Hamas in the United States. Ashqar was already under house arrest on related charges of contempt and obstruction of justice. Salah and Ashqar were arrested in Illinois and Virginia, respectively; Marzook, who resides in Damascus and is considered a fugitive by the U.S. government.<sup>32</sup>
- On 8 February 2005, a federal judge ordered Abdel Jabber Hamdan deported from the United States. The court determined Hamdan understood—or should have understood—that the money he was raising for the HLFRD was being used to support Hamas. Hamdan had been held on immigration violations since July 2004, the same day an indictment was unsealed against HLF.<sup>33</sup>
- On 19 February 2006, the U.S. Treasury blocked the assets of KindHearts, an Ohio NGO, citing its financial support of Hamas. According to a 2006 Treasury

Department statement, “KindHearts is the progeny of the Holy Land Foundation and Global Relief Foundation, which attempted to mask their support for terrorism behind the facade of charitable giving.” KindHearts reportedly sends aid to Hamas in both Lebanon and the West Bank.<sup>34</sup>

Shuttering front organizations, seizing their assets, and prosecuting and deporting their members are all key measures necessary to curb the activities of terrorists and their supporters within the United States. Ironically, they may in fact go a long way toward removing at least some of the disincentives that mitigated against Hamas carrying out an attack against U.S. interests.

### **Analysis: The Likelihood of a Hamas Attack Abroad**

Facing the removal of many disincentives to attack, might Hamas now decide to target U.S. or other Western interests? Analyzing that likelihood demands a “levels of analysis” approach that acknowledges the various levels of decision making inherent in large terrorist groups. Some decisions are made at the group’s headquarters level by a governing council, political bureau, or secretary general. Others may be decided at the level of a regional commander in charge of a network of cells, by a single rogue cell acting on its own, or even by groups of individuals or single members operating on their own as “lone wolves.” Each of these scenarios presents counterterrorism officials with especially thorny problems, both in terms of the tactical operational options available to counterterrorism forces, as well as the political options available to decision makers.

The Jamal Akal story is a case in point. Interviews with several senior Israeli intelligence officials produced a variety of opinions regarding what level leadership was aware of the plot to dispatch Akal to North America as a Hamas sleeper agent. According to the public statements of an Israeli official, Hamas leaders in Damascus were not only aware of the plot but were asked to approve the idea of executing an attack and issuing a claim in the name of Al Qaeda, not Hamas. An Israeli official described Akal as a “sleeper” agent who was trained and “told to wait for instructions.” Akal’s family and friends, the official added, included known Hamas military operatives. Another senior Israeli intelligence official echoed this assessment, but added, “Akal was an extraordinary departure.” This official added that the issue of conducting attacks abroad “had come up before, and Hamas leadership has said ‘No attacks versus [the] U.S.’”<sup>35</sup>

But other Israeli intelligence officials came to a slightly different conclusion. They noted that within Hamas “there are no rogue operations, but cells do push the boundaries” in terms of how they carry out their approved operations. The Akal operation, these officials assessed, was more of a “local initiative” than a plot approved by the Hamas leadership. According to one Israeli intelligence official, the Akal plot was developed under the operational oversight of Qassam Brigade commander Mohammad Deif, a senior official with close ties to Hamas leaders abroad. Still, other Israeli government analysts concluded that the Akal episode was an example of how operational activists “can and do act beyond the guidance of headquarters.” The cell that trained and attempted to dispatch Akal, these analysts added, was an example of a rogue action carried out by a local element insufficiently subordinate to Hamas’s overall leadership. It is not uncommon, said the analysts promoting this interpretation, for local cells to engage in this kind of unilateral contingency planning for potential operations at a later date.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Likelihood of Attack against the United States Ordered by Hamas Leadership***

On 26 November 2004, the State Department issued a travel warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. "The U.S. Government has information," the report stated, "indicating that American interests could be the focus of terrorist attacks, including within Israel."<sup>37</sup> The report noted that "since October 2003, militants on several occasions have temporarily abducted Western personnel, and spokesmen for the Hamas terrorist organization have made statements threatening attacks against U.S. interests." Five months earlier a senior Palestinian security official had warned Americans to avoid the Gaza Strip. "I encourage the Americans not to come here," he said. "I cannot ensure their safety."<sup>38</sup>

In fact, Hamas leaders have been threatening U.S. interests since long before 2003. In 1994, when Sheikh Mohammad Siyam was the Hamas representative to Sudan, he told the Sudanese weekly *Drapur al-Jdida* that any U.S. action against Hamas would lead the group to retaliate "against American interests in the world." While noting that Hamas had not yet targeted U.S. interests, Siyam kept that door open. "We advise the U.S. to keep its distance from us. General Farah Aydid, with his muddy boots, shortened the noses of Clinton and George Bush in Somalia. We have many militants of this type in the Hamas."<sup>39</sup> Hamas clearly supports the efforts of other groups who would attack U.S. interests. Hamas leader Rantissi published an article on a Hamas website in April 2003 entitled "Why shouldn't we attack the United States?" arguing that attacking the United States was not only "a moral and national duty—but, above all, a religious one."<sup>40</sup> Rantissi reiterated this sentiment in the context of the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Rantisi said, "I call on Iraq to prepare an army of would-be martyrs and prepare tens of thousands of explosive belts. Blow yourselves up against the American army. Bomb them in Baghdad. I call on all Arab nations to burn ground underneath the feet of the Americans in all capitals."<sup>41</sup>

In 1997, Hamas did consider attacking Western interests in Israel. Late that year, Hamas operatives planned to storm an unspecified Western embassy in Jerusalem and take hostages in an effort to gain the release of Hamas members in Israeli jails. According to Israeli prosecutors, Hamas operative Abdallah Bakri planned the operation to be similar to the seizure of the Japanese embassy in Lima the previous year. Bakri worked closely with senior West Bank Hamas leaders Muhi a-Din al-Sharif and Imad Awadallah, both of whom he admitted hiding in his home for several weeks. Years later, Hamas nearly succeeded in executing a terrorist attack targeting Israeli tourists vacationing in Egypt's Sinia peninsula over the High Holiday period in September 2004. Then-Shin Bet director Avi Dichter reported to the Israeli cabinet at the time that his service shared actionable intelligence with Egyptian authorities who took preemptive action to thwart the attack. Dichter added that an Israeli air raid on a Gaza soccer field where Hamas operatives were training for the mission a week earlier also helped foil the plot.<sup>42</sup>

Historically, there have been moments when Hamas attacks abroad have appeared likely. The March 2004 assassination of Sheikh Yasin caused Israeli analysts particular concern because Yasin was one of the most vocal opponents to targeting Western interests among senior Hamas leaders. There was therefore significant debate within the Israeli intelligence community over whether to assassinate Yasin. Without Yasin to restrain more globally oriented jihadists within Hamas, Israeli intelligence officials feared the Hamas response to Yasin's assassination might have included an attack on Jews or Israeli abroad (Israeli security officials describe attacks on Jewish targets abroad as Israel's "soft underbelly"). According to one senior Israeli official, the fact that Hamas did not carry out such an attack following the attack on Yasin "strengthens the assessment that it would really take a great deal to make Hamas—as an organization—cross the threshold and conduct operations abroad."<sup>43</sup>

This issue came up again a few months later when Israeli agents carried out a series of bombings targeting Hamas leaders in Syria and Lebanon in late 2004. Some of these attacks failed, but one senior Hamas operative, Izzaddin Sheikh Khalil, was killed in Damascus in September 2004. One mourner at Khalil's funeral was among those calling for Hamas to conduct attacks abroad, insisting, "We want to fight them [the Israelis] outside Palestine through their embassies, airline agencies and even their places of worship."<sup>44</sup> Hamas threats to conduct attacks abroad, explained one analyst, "were a direct effort against Israeli attacks abroad." According to this school of thought, failure to respond to Israeli strikes against Hamas leaders abroad would "undermine Hamas' deterrent message." But, once again, Hamas did not conduct attacks abroad following these Israeli strikes either.<sup>45</sup>

On several occasions Hamas leaders have debated the issue of conducting operations abroad, according to a senior Israeli security official recounting intelligence reports on these debates. To date, four central arguments against such action have prevailed in these discussions. On ideological grounds, most Hamas leaders are adamant that the group focus on its specific mission of liberating Palestine. On practical grounds, operational leaders stress that the group has limited resources and argue against dispersing the group's capabilities abroad. Hamas leaders are also very wary of carrying out any action that may undermine their claim that Hamas "resistance to occupation" is inherently different from Al Qaeda-style terrorism. And from a public relations and financial and logistical support perspective, Hamas leaders are careful not to draw the ire of the international community or alienate Palestinians, most of whom would oppose operations abroad.<sup>46</sup>

According to some Israeli analysts, if Hamas leaders were to sanction an attack abroad it would therefore not target Western interests. A Hamas attack abroad, these experts concluded, would not be executed Al Qaeda-style to kill as many random people as possible; it would be a focused attack on an Israeli or Jewish target. It is also likely that a Hamas attack abroad would not be claimed by Hamas, as appears to have been the intention in the case of the foiled Jamal Akal plot in North America. There is no unanimity of opinion among Israeli analysts regarding the likelihood that Hamas would conduct attacks abroad. But, according to these analysts, there are "fragments of information and intelligence assessments," suggesting Hamas could conduct attacks abroad. Although some Hamas leaders, including operational commanders and senior leaders outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, are considering the idea of conducting attacks abroad "very seriously," these experts stress that they have traditionally focused on developing contingency plans that have yet to be acted on. A greater threat, these and other analysts suggest, comes from semi-independent or rogues cells.<sup>47</sup>

### *Likelihood of Hamas Attack from Semi-Independent Cells*

"The biggest concern," one Israeli official has said, "is about rogue cells and Hamas individuals close to al Qaeda" carrying out attacks on their own. And elements of Palestinian terrorist groups have in the past carried out attacks without the knowledge of the entire group. Sometimes such operations are carried out by cells without informing senior leadership; in other cases one part of a group's leadership will task a cell with a mission without the knowledge or approval of other parts of the group's decision-making apparatus.<sup>48</sup>

In August 2003, an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire was abruptly undermined by a Hamas suicide bombing in Jerusalem that killed 18 people (including several children) and wounded over 100 more. Even as Hamas political leaders in the Gaza Strip denied the group was behind the attack, other Hamas members issued a claim of responsibility for the bombing. Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantissi initially asserted that Hamas was not involved,

but Israeli police quickly identified the suicide bomber as a Hamas operative after finding his identity card at the scene. Hamas's Qassam Brigades later released a videotape of the bomber, Raed Abdel Hamid Misek, in which he declared his intention to carry out the suicide operation in revenge for the pre-cease-fire killing of a Hamas leader in Hebron. Misek's suicide bombing is indicative of the splits that exist within Hamas and suggests that elements of the group may carry out attacks without the knowledge of other cells or leaders.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, it is not at all rare for Hamas cells to operate on their own, or independently of sister cells and some leaders. Consider the Hamas military cell caught in February 2005 that planned to fire Qassam rockets at Israeli communities from positions within the West Bank. That cell, led by Yihie Sayid Mussa Zivad, a senior Hamas military commander in the northern West Bank area, was believed to be directly funded by Hamas leaders abroad and operated independently of other military cells in the West Bank. According to a statement issued by Israeli security services, such cases highlight the ability of particular segments or factions within a group to carry out operations on their own without the approval of the full spectrum of the group's leadership. It is therefore insufficient to note that Palestinian groups traditionally have not targeted Americans or Westerners, or to quote the statements of certain group leaders insisting they never would, because decisions are sometimes made by segments of these groups that act on their own without consulting the group at large.<sup>50</sup>

### *Likelihood of Hamas Attacks from Rogue Cells*

Rogue cells, operating at their own initiative and without the knowledge or approval of more senior operational or political decision makers, represent another level at which terrorist groups are capable of conducting attacks abroad. Commenting on an Islamic Jihad suicide bombing that threatened to unravel the Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire in February 2005, Nasser Juma, a leader of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, noted that even if the "main groups" agreed to a cease-fire, a "lone bomber" or "militant cell" could still carry out an attack. That same month Hamas leader Khaled Mishal said that Hamas fugitives would not sign pledges to cease attacks either, rejecting an Israeli proposal to stop hunting fugitives if they signed a pledge to halt attacks and turn in their weapons.<sup>51</sup>

Rogue terrorist elements tied to Hamas have already targeted Western interests. On 15 October 2003, Palestinian militants targeted a clearly marked American diplomatic convoy with a roadside bomb in Gaza. Ironically, the terrorists targeted a convoy comprised not of security officials, but of State Department officials on a mission to identify potential Palestinian recipients of Fulbright Scholarships. This was the first successful roadside bombing of an American convoy, but it was not the first attempt. In June 2003, another marked U.S. convoy narrowly escaped injury in a similar attack when unknown assailants detonated two roadside bombs. Within 24 hours of the successful bombing, described by the State Department as "the most lethal attack ever to directly target U.S. interests in Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza,"<sup>52</sup> Palestinian security forces arrested several suspects, including members of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC). The PRC, a motley crew of loosely associated radical Palestinians from Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah, and the various Palestinian security services, claimed responsibility for the attack. According to an Israeli report, during the period of calm (*tahdiya*) to which Hamas agreed to abide in the spring and summer of 2005, the PRC served "as Hamas' forward operational arm." Although they later rescinded their claim of responsibility, the PRC is known for the kind of powerful remote-controlled roadside bomb that targeted the U.S. convoy; its operatives perfected the technique over the two previous years, successfully destroying three Israeli

tanks in Gaza with the same type of explosive. According to the State Department, the PRC remains the primary suspect in the attacks. Similarly, the Ahmed Abu Rish Brigades—a Gaza Strip-based collection of disaffected Fatah operatives with close ties to Hamas—has abducted foreigners in Gaza and announced that its Jihadist ambitions go far beyond Israel. According to group spokesman Abu Haron, “our banner is jihad everywhere, even Chechnya. Our aim is to liberate every piece of land in Palestine, including what is now called Israel.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Likelihood of Hamas Attacks from “Lone Wolves”**

Lone wolves, or terrorists with either no ties to a group—or acting completely independently of the group to which they belong—represent a particularly difficult threat to preempt. Lone wolves tend not to appear on the radar of counterterrorism officials until they are well into the planning stages of an attack, or later. As explained by FBI official M. E. Bowman, the greatest threat is from someone “who, while otherwise leading a normal life somewhere in the world, decides to become a terrorist.” Bowman describes such a terrorist as “the proverbial needle in the haystack,” and laments this “occasional, or the part-time, or the one-time terrorist on whom we have limited ability to focus intelligence efforts.”<sup>54</sup>

Consider, for example, the case of Ali Hassan Abu Kamal, the gunman who opened fire on tourists at the Empire State Building in New York in February 1997. Apparently distraught and in debt, Kamal killed a Danish national and wounded six other people before killing himself. In a two-page “Charter of Honour” he left behind, Kamal asserted that the Americans, British and French are the “first enemy” for “turning the Palestinians homeless” and said that his “restless aspiration is to murder as many of them [Zionists] as possible, and I have decided to strike at their own den in New York, and at the very Empire State Building in particular.” In July of that same year, two Palestinian men were arrested in their apartment in New York City, accused of plotting an attack on New York City subways. New York police raided the Brooklyn apartment of Gazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer and Lafi Khalil, both from the West Bank, and found several pipe bombs, including some wrapped together and equipped with toggle-switch detonators—the type of explosives often used for suicide bombings. When the officers entered the apartment, one of the suspects attempted but failed to detonate one of the explosives. Abu Mezer later confessed that the plan was to detonate the explosives on a busy New York City subway. While a law enforcement official reported that Abu Mezer and Khalil were tied to Hamas, the head of the FBI’s New York office quickly issued a correction saying that investigators had not yet linked the suspects to Hamas. Police found a note in the apartment denouncing U.S. support of Israel and demanding that several Arabs held in U.S. and Israeli prisons on charges of terrorism be released.<sup>55</sup>

More recently—in April 2004—a Lebanese-Canadian firebombed a Jewish school in Montreal in retaliation for the assassination of Sheikh Yasin. The 19-year-old attacker, Sleiman Elmerhebi, was not affiliated with any group but left a note outside the burned school warning that “our [sic] goal was only to sound the alarm without causing deaths . . . but this is just the beginning. If your crimes continue in the Middle East, our attacks will continue.” And in August 2004, U.S. law enforcement officials arrested a man plotting to bomb a federal office building in downtown Chicago. In the process of planning his attack, the man, Gale Nettles, asked an FBI informant posing as an accomplice to put him in contact with a member of either Al Qaeda or Hamas.<sup>56</sup>

Although none of these were Hamas operatives, each acted in perceived concert with the objectives of Hamas, in retaliation for attacks on Hamas, or in attempted cooperation

with Hamas. In February 2005, FBI Director Robert Mueller testified that, “currently, the most likely threat of terrorist attacks from Palestinian groups to the U.S. homeland is from a “lone wolf” scenario.” Such an attack would be carried out by individuals, Mueller said, “who may embrace the ideology of a Palestinian terrorist group, but act without assistance or approval of any established group.”<sup>57</sup>

### **Likelihood of Attacks from Non-Hamas Jihadists**

Early in his career, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian militant and cofounder of Al Qaeda, coordinated attacks on Israeli targets from Jordan. Only later did he move to Afghanistan and become a leading light in the jihad against the Soviet Union and in the formation of the Afghan jihad’s international support network that would later morph into Al Qaeda. Hamas activists see their jihadist ideology as a direct outgrowth of the militant ideology Azzam promoted. Today, many radicalized Palestinians make the same leap Azzam did from engaging in a “near jihad” against Israel and secular Palestinians to a “far jihad” against the “head of the snake”—America and other countries seen as supporting Israel. There are many Palestinians in positions of authority within Al Qaeda, and individual relationships between Al Qaeda operatives and Hamas members are common. According to a January 2001 National Security Council memorandum, Al Qaeda had “recently increased its contacts with the Palestinian rejectionist groups, including Hizbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.” These relationships are to be expected, because many of the Muslim Brotherhood–affiliated terrorist front organizations financing Al Qaeda also provided funding to Hamas.<sup>58</sup>

Still more disturbing, U.S. intelligence agencies report that after four years of successive losses in the ongoing global war on terror, Al Qaeda operatives are actively seeking to lure Hamas activists to replenish Al Qaeda ranks. According to FBI director Robert Mueller, the Bureau is concerned “about the possibility that individuals who are members of groups previously considered to be peripheral to the current threat, could be convinced by more radical, external influences to take on facilitation or even worse—an operational role—with little or no warning.” That already appears to be happening.<sup>59</sup>

According to the FBI, “al Qaeda commanders and officials stationed in Western countries, including the United States, have recruited operatives and volunteers to carry out reconnaissance or serve as couriers.” According to the affidavit, the post–11 September crackdown on Al Qaeda has spurred the organization to place “renewed emphasis” on finding “confirmed jihadist supporters in the United States by trying to enlist proven members of other groups such as Hamas to make up for the vacuum on the field level.”<sup>60</sup>

Then there is the case of Nabil Awqil, who was trained in Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and returned to the Gaza Strip to conduct operations against Israeli interests in Israel.<sup>61</sup> In September 2005, Israeli prosecutors charged another Palestinian, Mahmoud Waridat, with receiving training in small arms and bombmaking at Al Qaeda’s al Farouq camp in Afghanistan in 2001. Waridat reportedly declined to join Al Qaeda following the training, preferring to put his skills to use in his native West Bank.<sup>62</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Israeli analysts believe that although it is currently still not in Hamas’s interest to conduct attacks against Western interests, those interests are likely to change. “It is a matter of time,” a group of senior analysts concluded in November 2004. Among Palestinian terrorist groups, the analysts noted, Hamas is the most active abroad. And although there is no

specific evidence of operational ties between Hamas activists and global jihadist elements, there is a “critical mass of sporadic indications” of such links.<sup>63</sup> It is less likely that a Hamas attack would be called for by senior Hamas leaders and approved by the group’s Shura Council, and more likely it would involve individual activists or cells acting on their own—or through their own personal connections to more globally oriented jihadists. Their conclusion on the question of Hamas carrying out an attack abroad is disconcerting: “The clock is ticking—it will happen.”<sup>64</sup>

Several factors loomed large in the Israeli analysis, but none more than the Hamas radicalization campaign overseen by the Hamas dawa. When angry, frustrated, or humiliated Palestinians regularly listen to sermons in mosques in which Jews, Israelis, and even Americans are depicted as enemies of Islam and Palestine, Hamas’s official policy may not restrain individual enthusiasm. Also, recent events may convince elements within Hamas to break with the group’s traditional *modus operandi* and attack Western interests. Some of the more radical leaders may feel that Israeli attacks on Hamas leaders abroad leave them little choice but to respond with similar attacks on Israelis or Jews abroad. Certainly, any tangible counterterrorism action taken against Hamas by American or other Western forces—such as a Western-led international intervention force—would lead hardened Hamas operatives to respond with attacks against those forces. Likewise, progress toward peace could marginalize Hamas and cause hardliners within it to break with moderates. Those hardliners may well choose to increase the number and lethality of attacks, and could also shift the group’s targeting to include Western interests.

In the wake of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and as Israel completes the construction of a security barrier around the West Bank, Hamas may find it increasingly difficult to infiltrate suicide bombers into Israel. According to the Israeli Army, Palestinian groups executed 59 “successful” suicide attacks in 2002. By 2004, that number had dropped by 75 percent. Although attacks on the remaining Israeli settlements and military installations in the West Bank are expected, such operations lack the effect of terrorizing Israeli society in the same way that does bombings of Israeli cafes and buses. Should Hamas find itself incapable of mounting attacks on Israeli territory from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, some fear its default option may be Israeli or Jewish targets abroad.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, Hamas has made successful inroads in Palestinian refugee camps outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, particularly in Lebanon. Sanabil, a Hamas charity in Lebanon that was designated a terrorist entity by the U.S. Treasury Department, was especially active in militant Palestinian camps like Ayn al-Hilweh. In the likely event that a negotiated two-state agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority does not meet the full expectations of Palestinians living in refugee camps abroad, some of these neglected Palestinians—many of whom have ties both to Hamas and global jihadist groups in Lebanon like Osbat al-Ansar—may decide to conduct attacks on Israeli, Jewish, or Western targets abroad. Should any of these scenarios materialize, Hamas could easily draw on its grass-roots dawa organizations around the world to help facilitate its operations.

Although Israeli analysts and this author remain skeptical that Hamas will target Western interests in the near term, some analysts close to Hamas believe such an attack will happen sooner rather than later. Writing in *The Palestine Chronicle* in July 2004, following the assassinations of Yassin and Rantissi, an author affiliated with the United Association for Studies and Research (UASR; founded by Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook) concluded, “sixteen years after Hamas’ establishment, the world will probably see an attack [by Hamas] on foreign soil for the first time. Leaders of Hamas’ military wing will now seek the expansion of their war against Israel. The Zionist state’s interests—embassies, consulates, cultural centers, diplomats—across the globe are potential targets.”<sup>66</sup>



## Notes

1. Rantissi threat from Al-Jazeera TV, " Hamas Leader al-Rantisi Declares "Battle is Open," Al Jazeera TV, 22 March 2004, translated text available in *BBC Monitoring Middle East—Political*; For travel advisory see U.S. Department of State, "Travel Warning: Israel, the West Bank and Gaza," 23 March 2004; Regarding Rantissi's funeral see Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, " Hamas Chief Mourned by Thousands in Gaza," *Washington Post*, 19 April 2004, available at (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A21798-2004Apr18.html>); For Mishal reaction see Albert Aji, "Damascus-Based Hamas Leader Blames America for Rantisi's Killing," Associated Press, 18 April 2004.

2. For 2001 Hamas statement see Gregory Katz, " Hamas Defies Arafat, Pledges More Attacks: Americans Added As Targets As Group Plans To Avenge More Deaths," *Dallas Morning News*, 18 December 2001; For 2002 chat room discussion see Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson's Unit, "The Hamas Website Provides a Platform for Surfers Who Support the Murder of American Citizens," *Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson's Unit*, 26 June 2002, available at ([www.idf.il/english/announcements/2002/june/forum\\_hamas.stm](http://www.idf.il/english/announcements/2002/june/forum_hamas.stm)).

3. Mishal quote from Khaled Abu Toameh, "Rantisi: Hamas won't Hit US," *Jerusalem Post*, 25 March 2004; Rantissi and Zahar quotes from Lara Sukhtian, " Hamas Leaders say Militants are not Targeting United States," Associated Press, 25 March 2004.

4. For Rantissi threat see Associated Press, "New Hamas Chief: Bush is 'Enemy of God,'" 28 March 2004; Rantissi's retreat statement from Agence France Presse, "Despite Rantissi Pledge Not to Target Americans, US Still Sees Hamas as Threat," 25 March 2004; For comments on space shuttle Columbia and Iraq see Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), "Press Release Communicated By Israeli Security Sources," 18 April 2004, available at (<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terror+Groups/Abdel+Aziz+Rantisi.htm>); Regarding Hamas radio station see Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S.) Special Information Bulletin, "Incitement on local radio stations: Sawt al-Aqsa, a Hamas radio station operating from the Gaza Strip, broadcasted a sermon calling upon the terrorist organizations to unite in order to resume the violent confrontation with Israel (the intifada), and lashing out against the US and the UK. The Palestinian Authority condemned the incitement and threatened to take measures against it," 17 July 2005, available at ([http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/7\\_05/al\\_quds\\_b.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/7_05/al_quds_b.htm)); For pamphlets see C.S.S. Special Information Bulletin, " Hamas identifies with and supports Chechen and international Islamic terrorism on CDs found in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories. The CDs are distributed by Hamas to Palestinian youth in various educational institutions," September 2004, available at ([http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/9\\_04/chechnya.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/9_04/chechnya.htm)); Protest slogans from Israel Ministry of Defense, "PA Allows Pro-Iraq Rallies," 13 January 2003.

5. For Rantissi statement see Albert Aji, "Damascus-based Hamas Leader Blames America for Rantisi's Killing," Associated Press, 18 April 2004; For Marzook statement see Toameh, " Hamas Urges Israel's Beduins Not to Serve in IDF," *Jerusalem Post*, 16 December 2004; For Qassam Brigades statement see Toameh, " Hamas Split Over Exporting Terror Campaign," *Jerusalem Post*, 26 September 2004.

6. For Nazzal statement see Agence France Presse, " Hamas Official Denies Decision to Strike Israel Abroad," 26 September 2004; Regarding Hamas/PIJ joint manifest see Ha'aretz, " Hamas and Islamic Jihad: We Will Continue Suicide Bombings," 17 December 2001; Regarding *Time* Magazine see Johanna McGeary, "Radicals on the Rise: Militant Islamic Group Hamas Enjoys a Boost in Popularity As It Goes about Its Business of Slaughtering Israelis," *Time*, 17 December 2001; On 17 August 2002, Israeli authorities broke up the Hamas cell responsible for this and other bombings. Under interrogation, Mohammad Odeh (who placed the bomb at the university and then detonated it remotely) indicated that his intent was not to target Americans but to avoid injuring Arabs—a strange assertion given the university's large Israeli Arab population. See Serge Schmemmann, " Hamas Members Held in Recent Bombings," *New York Times*, 22 August 2002; Regarding U.S. officials' calculations see author interviews with U.S. officials, Washington, D.C., 1 August 2002.

7. Regarding FBI conclusions see Eli Lake, " Hamas Agents Lurking in US, FBI Warns. Fears Rantisi's Vow to Attack May Awaken Operatives Here," *New York Sun*, 29 April 2004; For Hamas statement see Agence France Presse, " Hamas Threatens 'Strike' Against US Interests," 11 February 1997.

8. Regarding Akal's emigration to Canada see "[Corrected] Hamas-trained Terrorist, Canadian National, Arrested by ISA," *Independent Media Review Analysis* (IMRA), 8 December 2003, available at (<http://imra.org.il/story.php3?id=19094>). See also Stewart Bell, "Envoy Faces Censure for Hamas Revelation," *National Post*, 6 December 2003.

9. Bell, "Envoy Faces Censure for Hamas Revelation."

10. Regarding Akal's training and tasking by Wahabe see IMRA, "[Corrected] Hamas-trained Terrorist, Canadian National, Arrested by ISA"; Regarding Israeli authorities see Bell, "Arrest 'Prevented Terror Attack': Rebutting Ottawa's Skepticism, Israel Alleges Akkal was Bound for New York to Kill Jews," *National Post* (Canada), 9 December 2003; Israeli Embassy in Ottawa's statement from Jeff Sallot, "Canadian is Hamas Assassin, Israel Says," *Globe and Mail*, 5 December 2003.

11. IMRA, "[Corrected] Hamas-Trained Terrorist, Canadian National, Arrested by ISA." In August 2007, Akal was released from prison. See "Canadian Freed from Israeli Jail Heads Home," CTV.ca, 30 August 2007, available at ([http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/ctvnews/20070829/gaza\\_prisoner\\_070830/](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/ctvnews/20070829/gaza_prisoner_070830/)).

12. For series of events at Mike's Place on 30 April 2003 see *The Queen v. Parveen Akther Sharif et al*, (Central Criminal Court), United Kingdom, Amended Opening Note, 15 April 2004; According to a report commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Justice, authorities have documented other cases where European converts to Islam went to Damascus to study—as Hanif and Sharif did—but "were inserted into regular strongholds of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood." See Michael Taarnby, "Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe: Trends and Perspectives," Danish Ministry of Justice, 14 January 2005, available at (<http://www.jm.dk/image.asp?page=image&objno=73027>); Government lawyers stated to the court in the course of their prosecution of several of the bombers' family members who knew of the pending attacks but did nothing to stop them in *The Queen v. Parveen Akther Sharif et al*; For the bombers' living will see Ian MacKinnon, "British Suicide Bombers Boast About Killings," *The Times*, 9 March 2004.

13. U.S. Senate Banking Committee, *Testimony of Richard A. Clarke*, 22 October 2003, available at ([http://www.senate.gov/~banking/\\_files/clarke.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/~banking/_files/clarke.pdf)).

14. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terrorism in the United States: 30 Years of Terrorism, a Special Retrospective Edition," FBI Publication No. 0308, Counterterrorism Threat Assessment and Warning Unit, Counterterrorism Division, 1999.

15. U.S. Senate Banking Committee, *Testimony of Richard A. Clarke*, 22 October 2003, available at ([http://www.senate.gov/~banking/\\_files/clarke.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/~banking/_files/clarke.pdf)). For the FBI report see Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terrorism in the United States: 30 Years of Terrorism, A Special Retrospective Edition," FBI Publication #0308, Counterterrorism Threat Assessment and Warning Unit, Counterterrorism Division, 1999.

16. Central Intelligence Agency, *Worldwide Threat—Converging Dangers in a Post-9/11 World: Testimony of Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*, 6 February 2002, available at ([www.cia.gov/cia/public\\_affairs/speeches/dci.speech\\_02062002.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/dci.speech_02062002.html)). For internal FBI review see Lake, " Hamas Agents Luring in U.S., FBI Warns."

17. Untitled CIA document; Author's personal files. Referenced in Glenn Simpson, "Officials Had Information Many Years Before 9/11 Attacks, Report Indicates," *Wall Street Journal*, 9 May 2003.

18. Untitled CIA document, author's personal files; the document is referenced in Glenn Simpson, "Officials Had Information Many Years Before 9/11 Attacks, Report Indicates," *Wall Street Journal*, 9 May 2003. Interestingly, in 2002 the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Office of Rasu-L-Ulama, donated \$50,000 to a Hamas charity in the West Bank. See C.S.S. Special Information Bulletin, *The Union of Good: an umbrella organization comprised of more than 50 Islamic charitable funds and foundations worldwide. It in fact channels "charity" money and provides*

other items for Hamas-affiliated institutions in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories, contributing to sustaining the support-system infrastructure of Palestinian terrorism through the so-called financial jihad, February 2005, available at ([http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/2\\_05/funds.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/sib/2_05/funds.htm)).

19. See U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Public Affairs, "Treasury Designates Director, Branches of Charity Bankrolling Al Qaida Network," 3 August 2006, available at (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp45.htm>).

20. For the CIA report see Untitled CIA document, author's personal files; the document is referenced in Simpson, "Officials Had Information Many Years Before 9/11 Attacks, Report Indicates"; For subsequent investigations see U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, States Subcommittee on International Trade and Finance, Testimony of Matthew A. Levitt, 1 August 2002, available at (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/levitt/levitt080102.htm>); U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Public Affairs, *Written Testimony of David Aufhauser, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, United States Senate*, 25 September 2003, available at (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/js760.htm>). For U.S. officials' warning see Brian Murphy and Mike Casey, "Saudi Charity in Tsunami Region Raises Concerns About Spreading Islamic Extremism," Associated Press, 6 February 2005; Regarding the CIA's documentation see MFA, "The Financial Sources of the Hamas Terror Organization," 30 July 2003, available at (<http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0nm0>). For Khalifa and his U.S. fundraising tour see Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 114; Regarding Khalifa and relations with IIRO employees in the Philippines see Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, p. 145.

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