



## AIR CARGO SECURITY POLICY NEWSLETTER

al-Qaeda franchise operations

2011 EU Terrorism and Trend Report & the EU-US Counterterrorism Relationship May 04, 2011

*“Osama bin Laden dead is a great deal better than Osama bin Laden alive, but the truth is that his death may mean rather more to his enemies than to his followers.....”*

This is the opening statement in a recent article entitled “The Evolution of al-Qaeda” published in the Economist Magazine. The article continues:

*“.....Apart from the occasional rambling video recording smuggled to Al Jazeera, Mr bin Laden’s main value to al-Qaeda was his ability to inspire and unify as the network evolved into a classic franchise operation,*

*albeit one based on quasi-tribal forms of allegiance”*

Notwithstanding the plethora of articles and speeches on this subject the Economist, as usual, brings order into the thinking on this subject.

*“.....In the past ten years, even as “core al-Qaeda” in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan has been ground down by special forces and drone attacks to no more than a couple of hundred active members, its network has spread, new operational leaders have been recruited and trained, resilient*



*cells formed and new bases established. Core al-Qaeda has learned how to work with local and nationalist jihadist groups, helping to amplify and re-orient their violence, sometimes encouraging and presiding over collaboration between groups.”*

The Economist article closes with the following comment:

*“.....After a decade of relentless military and financial attrition, al-Qaeda may not be what it was, but it has evolved into something no less dangerous. Like a smart chief executive, Mr bin Laden’s greatest achievement is to have built something that no longer needed him”*

The full Economist article can be accessed at:

[http://www.economist.com/blogs/clausewitz/2011/05/osama\\_bin\\_laden](http://www.economist.com/blogs/clausewitz/2011/05/osama_bin_laden)

## **2011 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report**

This interesting Europol document reports on the following terrorism activities during 2010:

- Islamic;
- Separatist;
- Left-wing and anarchist;
- Right-wing; and
- Single issue.

Highlights extracted from the section entitled “Key Judgments” indicate:

*“Returning jihadists from conflict zones continue to be a threat to the EU. They return with specific contacts, skills and modi operandi, and the potential intent to apply these in EU Member States”.*

*“The connections between terrorist and organised criminal activities appear to be growing. Crime is being extensively used to finance terrorist activities. Criminal activities that terrorist groups are involved in, either through affiliation with individual criminals and criminal groups or through their own operations, can include the trafficking of illegal goods and substances such as weapons and drugs, trafficking in human beings, financial fraud, money laundering and extortion. Separatist terrorist groups such as the PKK/KONGRA-GEL and LTTE are involved in the trafficking of drugs and human beings to raise funds for their terrorism activities. Separatist and ethno-nationalist terrorist groups rely substantially on extortion to finance their activities”.*

*“The economic recession is conducive to political tensions and, in a number of Member States, is triggering both left- and right-wing extremists to demonstrate their views both on the recession’s causes and on the solutions required. This is raising public order concerns and threatening social cohesion. Growing unemployment, especially among young people seeking to enter the job market, has radicalised some youths, even those with relatively high levels of education. In 2010, 45 left-wing and anarchist attacks occurred. The increased use of violence led to six fatalities”*



*“In 2010, protests by single-issue extremist groups increasingly focused on the fur industry. These groups are becoming increasingly network-based - they use various methods of communication to prioritise, coordinate and support direct action. Campaigns of animal-rights activists indicate a shift of activities from the UK towards the European mainland which started in 2008/2009 and continued in 2010. There are indications that some members of animal rights, anarchist and environmental extremist groups are moving towards a shared ideology. Environmental extremism is on the increase”.*

The good news was that:

*“In the past year, several EU Member States have successfully prevented attacks by Islamist terrorist groups, which aimed to cause mass casualties. During 2010, 179 individuals were arrested for offences linked to Islamist terrorism, representing a 50% increase compared with 2009. Furthermore a higher proportion of the arrests related to the preparation of attacks in the EU (49% in 2010 compared with 10% in 2009)”*

The full Europol Report can be viewed at:

[http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU\\_Terrorism\\_Situation\\_and\\_Trend\\_Report\\_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2011.pdf](http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU_Terrorism_Situation_and_Trend_Report_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2011.pdf)

### **The EU–U.S. Counterterrorism Relationship: An Agenda for Cooperation**

Sally McNamara, Heritage Foundation, March 2011

Notwithstanding the on-going discussions between the Commission and the US

authorities regarding cooperation in counterterrorism, the following “talking points” form this Heritage Foundation Backgrounder raise some thought provoking issues for the Community:

- *“The EU has become a major actor in counterterrorism policymaking. While some policies have aided the fight against global terrorism, many have advanced unnecessary EU programs and created ineffective institutions.*
- *Although the Islamist terrorist threat requires strong transatlantic cooperation, the EU–U.S. counterterrorism relationship has been marked as much by confrontation as it has by cooperation.*
- *The European Parliament has challenged two vital data-transfer deals between the EU and the U.S. and will continue to oppose U.S. counterterrorism policies in the future on the basis of enhanced powers granted by the Lisbon Treaty.*
- *Europe is one of Hezbollah’s primary fundraising bases, yet there is little prospect of the EU adding the terror group to its list of foreign terrorist organizations.*
- *The U.S. must continue to invest in its bilateral relationships with individual EU states, especially for intelligence-sharing and counterterrorist operations”.*

The heritage Foundation Backgrounder can be viewed at:

[http://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2011/pdf/bg2528.pdf](http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2011/pdf/bg2528.pdf)

