

SASMA Portal 2010

What can we learn from the recent terror Plot to hit the United States? - Yechiel Barazany

- [Yechiel Barazany](#)

Al-Qaeda's recent attempt to carry out cross-border terrorism has yet again proved its determination to attack the West. For the last two - three months, Europe and the United States have maintained a high level of alert after a number of failed attempts to carry out attacks by Al-Qaida using European Muslims or Muslim converts trained and sent by the organization's Overseas Operational Division based in Yemen and Pakistan. Part of these actions were aimed against public transportation facilities, mainly underground trains, Cargo Airplanes, and other 'quality targets' in major cities both in Europe and the States. This is a clear indication that the threat posed by radical Islamic elements is stronger than ever.

This reflects an important element in the fabric spun Al - Qaeda built over the years as part of its action strategy to cooperate with regional umbrella organizations that voluntarily enter under the wing of the "Al - Qaeda" brand name. It should be emphasized that the organizations which identify with the apocalyptic worldview of- Al Qaeda, provide assistance and operational materials within the regions they operate in. This is part of the increased effort of Al-Qaida headquarters to execute attacks against the United States, Europe and their allies among the Arab states, who take an active role in the coalition against fundamental Islam. Al-Qaeda's goal is to prove that almost a decade after 9/11, the spirit behind the global Jihad struggle against the West is still live and kicking.

Two months ago during SASMA's 2nd Business security conference in Warsaw, I was asked by the organizers to speak about the terrorist threats which may arise during the coming FIFA 2012 games taking place in Poland and in Ukraine. During my visit to Warsaw, I was astonished by the general perception and phlegmatic approach towards terrorism threats. Strategically, Europe (I am relating the games to Europe as a whole and not Poland or Ukraine specifically) makes a soft and comfortable target for perpetrators as it has serious vulnerabilities that, if exploited by terrorists could significantly increase the risks during the games. Europe holds various communities ready and willing to provide shelter and support to potential attackers. The ease of movement, lack of sufficient security monitoring between the

EU countries, and low level security personnel without the necessary training and background, are only some examples of Europe's problems.

In addition, and although Europe is directly involved in the war against terrorism (in Iraq and Afghanistan), we see a fascinating phenomenon taking place within politically liberal Europe. The right-wing is getting stronger and leading an unprecedented campaign to restrict the expansion of radical Islam. In England and Belgium, new laws prohibiting women from wearing the traditional Burqa are in progress whilst in France they are already implemented. Switzerland has established a law disallowing the building of minarets, and in the Netherlands a new right-wing anti-Islamic prime minister has been elected who will surly adopt a similar approach. As a result of the above, it is clear that Europe is not only an easy target, but motivation to attack is high.

Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have clearly identified these vulnerabilities, encouraging terrorist activities through individual activists or small cells that embrace their radical concept and act on their own self-initiative according to the "one thousand sharp knives strategy". This strategy does not require a wide range of highly or experienced intensive training, nor does it require specific commanders' approval or special overseas training. The purpose of this strategy is to perform multiple attacks resulting in mass casualties, less flashy or spectacular, but their cumulative psychological effect and economic damage may be significantly exhausting.

It is worth mentioning that for the last two years Al-Qaeda has suffered a series of severe beatings by the security forces of the United States, NATO and their allies. These resulted in significant damages to the mechanisms under the leadership of the organization primarily responsible for international terrorism. However, the organization has once again proven its ability to recover.

For these reasons, it seems that skepticism and complacency to terrorism threats prior to the 2012 games is due to the fact that terrorists failed to recently carry out a mass casualty attack. This could lead to an "unexpected surprise" and prove that the campaign against radical Islamic terror from Al-Qaeda is still far from being over and will probably keep occupying the security and intelligence services for the next decade, at least.

Yechiel Barazany

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