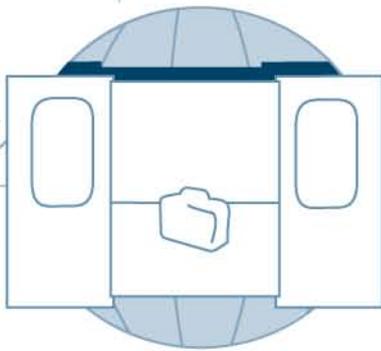




Compass 2020

Germany in international relations
Aims, instruments, prospects



Terrorism in the 21st century

The rule of law as a guideline
for German policy

Peter R. Neumann

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The „Compass 2020“ project represents the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung’s contribution to a debate on Germany’s aims, role and strategies in international relations. „Compass 2020“ was started in 2007, the year in which German foreign policy had been very much in the limelight due to the country’s presidency of the EU Council and the G8. Since then, some 30 articles written for this project as well as a number of events provided an overview of the topics and regions that are most important for German foreign relations.

All the articles are structured in the same way. Firstly, they provide information about the most significant developments, the toughest challenges and the key players in the respective political fields and regions. The second section analyses the role played hitherto by German / European foreign policy, the strategies it pursues and the way in which it is perceived. In the next section, plausible alternative scenarios are mapped out illustrating the potential development of a political field or region over the next 15 years. The closing section formulates possible points of departure for German and European policy.

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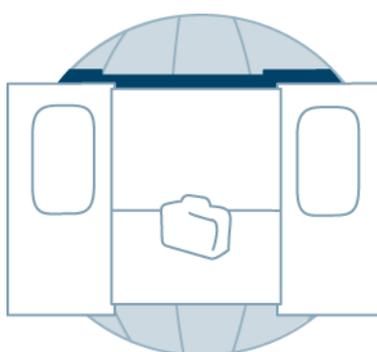
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Abstract

Since 2001, global terrorism has become one of the biggest domestic and international challenges for Germany. The paper outlines key influences that have marked the transformation of terrorism over the last three decades. The paper highlights the threat from Salafi jihadist terrorism, and how it has evolved since the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the subsequent 'War on Terror'. But it also points to other potential sources of future terrorism in Western societies, such as the anti-globalisation movement, right-wing extremists, and evangelical Christians. The paper shows how German policymakers have responded to these challenges. Though German counter terrorism policy is by no means harsher than comparable policies in other European countries, the German domestic 'security packages' nevertheless touched on a number of specifically German 'taboos'.

Internationally, Germany has been keen to emphasise a more multilateralist approach, opposing the Iraq war and stressing the need to address the root causes of terrorism rather than merely its violent manifestations. Berlin participates actively in all international forums and plays a positive role in pushing for a more integrated framework based on fighting terrorism through the rule of law. However, the German engagement in the international Afghanistan mission suffers from strategic weaknesses, lack of initiative, and high domestic disapproval ratings.

Forecasting future developments, a first scenario – 'Al Qaeda resurgent' – presupposes that Al Qaeda will re-establish some of its pre-2001 capabilities in the tribal areas of Pakistan and will continue to represent a substantial threat to the region and the West. A second scenario – 'leaderless jihad' – assumes that the process of diffusion will continue and that, by 2020, Al Qaeda will have evolved into a more or less meaningless label, with groups of leaderless cells engaging in uncoordinated, small-scale, albeit potentially numerous attacks.

In either case, governments' future anti-terrorism policies should focus on strengthening resilience and fighting terrorism through the rule of law. At the domestic level, it will be essential for countries like Germany to focus on community policing and helping Muslims integrate into Western society. It will also be important to strengthen efforts at international collaboration – whether ad hoc or through multilateral institutions. The relationship with Pakistan needs to be deepened. More broadly, though, it will be important for Germany to define and establish its role in the international fight against terrorism – especially with regards to its mission in Afghanistan – and then pursue it with vigor.

I. Framework: The Changing Faces of Terrorism

Terrorism is a method, which can be used by any person or group and for any kind of motive. As a form of violence, terrorism tells us little about the people who employ it, nor does the tactic itself explain why it is being used. Before embarking on a more detailed analysis and projection of trends, it is therefore worth remembering that lumping together and prescribing standardised solutions for vastly different violent conflicts based merely on tactical similarity – that is, the use of ‘terroristic’ means – does not lead to valid predictions. As Brian Jenkins put it, terrorism is merely the ‘thin crust atop a very deep pie’, and it cannot therefore be understood without reference to the specific political and societal conditions in which it occurs. Any attempt to derive wide-ranging insights about the causes and possible solutions for particular violent conflicts based solely on their ‘terroristic’ manifestations must fail.

With these limitations in mind, this section aims to identify some trends and developments which help explain the context in which terrorism has been used as a tactic and is likely to be used in the future. The following sub-sections will describe some of the changes in the nature of terrorism, which – taken together – are frequently referred to as ‘new terrorism’; outline how the rise of Salafi jihadist terrorism and the resulting War on Terror have changed the dynamics of Islamist militancy; and offer some informed comments about other radical movements which may resort to terrorism in the future.

I.1 Old and new terrorism

In the late 1990s, it became obvious that terrorism had changed. Some analysts coined the term ‘new terrorism’ in order to describe what they believed were fundamentally new ways for terrorists to operate and express their violence. They also argued that the ‘new terrorism’ had resulted from the forces of late modernity and, in particular, globalisation, which had manifested themselves in three areas that will be discussed in the following paragraph.

First, terrorist groups continue to be relatively small organisations, but their *structures* have become more diffuse and their reach has extended into transnational space. In contrast to the more formalised organisations of ‘old’ terrorism, ‘new’ terrorist groups are often described as networks, because hierarchies have been replaced with personal relationships. What matters is not someone’s formal rank but whom they know and what kinds of connections they can facilitate. Furthermore, these structures often extend beyond national boundaries. Unlike old terrorism, which usually had a well-defined geographical ‘centre of gravity’ to which all the group’s activity could be related, some of the new terrorists have no single permanent geographical point of reference. As the example of Al Qaeda shows, the place in which most of the group’s operations take place may not be identical to the place from which the majority of its recruits originate or where its leadership is based.

Cheap international travel and modern communication technologies are partly responsible for this transformation. For example, no longer restricted by geographical distance, terrorist groups have been able to take advantage of ‘weak’ or ‘failed’ states with lax security regimes in which to base their organisations and host training camps. At the same time, there are wider developments which need to be taken into account. The demand for transnational identities, for instance, cannot be understood without considering global migration and the consequent splitting of identities, which made an increasing number of people – especially, it seems, the second and third generation descendants of immigrants to Western Europe – susceptible to ideas and ideologies that have no national point of

reference. Furthermore, the Internet has created an entirely new social environment in which a sense of (global) community can be projected.

The second area in which significant change has taken place is that of terrorists' *aims and ideologies*. As Bruce Hoffman points out, whereas in the late 1960s, not a single terrorist group anywhere in the world could be described as religiously motivated, by the mid-1990s, their 'share' had risen to nearly one third of all terrorist groups. This included Christian anti-abortionists in the United States, Jewish extremists in the West Bank, the Buddhist inspired cult Aum Shinrikyo (responsible for the nerve gas attack against the Tokyo underground in 1995), and various groups in the Muslim world ranging from Hezbollah to Al Qaeda. Nationalism, of course, remains a strong motivator of terrorism. However, it is important to note that – in many of the places where the kind of nationalism adopted by terrorist groups used to be secular and/or left-wing – nationalism is now mixed with religious themes. In the Israel/Palestine conflict for example, the (secular) PLO has made way for the (religiously inspired) Hamas. Likewise, in Chechnya and Kashmir, formerly secular groups have now adopted religious themes and symbols.

Ideologically, the rise of religiously inspired terrorism can be traced back to the so-called 'religious revival' which began in the 1970s. Arguably, the renewed interest in religion constituted a more or less consistent response to feelings of insecurity and uncertainty that were caused by the encounter with late modernity and, then, globalisation. In that sense – though seemingly anachronistic – the religious revival must be seen as thoroughly modern in its genesis and manifestations. Indeed, the politicisation of the revivalist movements often resulted from the perceived failure of supposedly modern, secular ideologies (especially in the Arab world) and/or the widening gap between 'fundamentalist' lifestyles and increasingly secular and liberal societies (especially in the West). In either case, these conflicts demanded a radical transformation of society according to religious principles and thus pushed some of their activists into the political sphere.

Third, terrorism has evolved as a *method*. Needless to say, even old terrorists often killed civilians and – occasionally – their operations were aimed at producing large numbers of casualties. In the era of new terrorism, however, mass-casualty attacks against civilian populations seem to have become routine and intentional rather than 'mistakes' or 'exceptions', and terrorists' use of weapons of mass destruction has for the first time become a real possibility. Indeed, all major databases recording terrorist incidents bear out the rise of mass-casualty attacks in no uncertain terms. What databases often do not record, however, is that the increase in lethality has been accompanied by an increase in brutality. Partly, of course, this is reflected in the deliberate targeting of civilian populations – often through suicide bombers – but it also becomes evident when looking at individual tactics, such as the public beheading of kidnap victims which would have been unimaginable some decades ago. Whereas killing people used to be secondary to the communicative effects that could be achieved through a particular terrorist action, it now seems as if the two considerations – violence for violence's sake and symbolic value – have merged.

There are numerous plausible explanations for this trend. On the one hand, in an era in which audiences are de-sensitised to seeing violence on their television screens and media usage has become more diversified, the threshold for what is considered shocking or terrifying has risen, so that ever more gruesome and deadly attacks are necessary in order for terrorists to 'get through', reach people and affect their attitudes and behaviour. On the other hand, the trend towards greater lethality and brutality has been underpinned by the decline of 'universalist' – especially left-wing – ideologies and their replacement with 'particularist' ideas, which define certain ethnic, religious or racial

groups as 'others', that is, as less human or less worth of consideration than their own. Religiously inspired ideologies, of course, are one part of this trend, but such 'identity ideologies' also underlie the activities of many nationalist groups.

Taken together, these trends – the diffusion and transnationalisation of terrorist group structures; the rise of religiously inspired ideologies; and the greater lethality and brutality of terrorist operations – constitute what is commonly referred to as 'new terrorism'. The term describes the major developments that have taken place in the past three decades. It does not suggest, however, that the transformation has been uniform and universal, and that *all* terrorist groups have now turned into mass-casualty producing transnational networks. Nor does it mean that these new trends will be unimportant and/or continue uninterrupted for the next decades. Forecasting is not as easy as drawing a straight line from the past. Indeed, as will be seen in the next section, unexpected events can play a major part in shaping the dynamics and wider framework within which terrorism takes place.

1.2 Salafi jihadism and the War on Terror

The most significant terrorist threat in recent years has come from the so-called Salafi jihadist movement, which is often referred to as Al Qaeda. In Al Qaeda's view, every Muslim has an individual duty to defend the *ummah* through violence or 'armed struggle' (often referred to by Salafi jihadists as *jihad*). The objective of this *jihad* is to eliminate the obstacles that stand in the way of creating a single Muslim nation (the caliphate), which will unite the community of believers (the *ummah*) and be governed by Sharia law as well as strict social practices derived from a literalist interpretation of the *Quran* (known as *Salafi* or *Wahhabi*). Al Qaeda justifies violence against the secular regimes in the Middle East, non-Muslim interests in the Muslim world, as well as outside influences that are judged to prevent the rise of the *ummah* and symbolise, or contribute to, the continued suppression, exploitation and occupation of the Muslim world. According to the most extreme interpretation of Al Qaeda's ideology, this may include all so-called unbelievers, or *kaffir*.

Al Qaeda originated from the foreign – mostly Arab – fighters which participated in the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. During the 1990s, Al Qaeda increasingly concentrated on the so-called 'far enemy', that is Western powers who were believed to sustain oppressive regimes in the Middle East. Its campaign of mass-casualty attacks culminated in the September 11 attacks against the United States in 2001, which killed 3000 people – more than any other terrorist attack in modern history. The United States Government perceived Al Qaeda's actions as an act of war and promptly declared its own 'War against Terror', which was meant to eliminate Al Qaeda and – more broadly – the conditions that were believed to have facilitated its emergence.

In addition to numerous measures aimed at improving 'homeland security' – such as stricter border controls, emergency preparedness, restrictions on civilian air travel, etc. – the 'War on Terror' led to two major foreign wars. The aim of the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 was to deprive Al Qaeda of the sanctuary that it had been granted by the (then) Taliban government, including several training camps in which Muslims from all over the world were provided with the skills necessary to engage in violent *jihad*. The relationship between the 'War on Terror' and the invasion of Iraq in early 2003, on the other hand, was less clear. Al Qaeda had no presence in Iraq prior to the war, nor was there any direct link between the September 11 attacks and the Iraqi regime. Still, some of the supporters of the war argued that it was necessary to prevent Saddam Hussein's

suspected stockpile of weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists. Others believed that Iraq could become a 'beacon of democracy', which would eliminate the conditions of oppression that had led many Muslims in the Arab world to support Al Qaeda.

The American-led War on Terror has produced mixed results:

- There have been no further attacks against the American 'homeland'. Salafi jihadists have carried out a series of terrorist attacks in Europe (most prominently, the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005), but – though shocking – these were on a much smaller scale than the events of September 11. Furthermore, Al Qaeda's safe haven in Afghanistan has been eliminated, and most of Al Qaeda pre-2001 leadership has either been killed or detained.
- Al Qaeda's two leaders – Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman Al Zawahiri – are still at large, and – despite spending billions on pursuing Al Qaeda's leadership – there is no sign that they might be caught any time soon. Furthermore, Western forces are now faced with a prolonged insurgency in Afghanistan for which there appears to be no easy exit strategy. To make matters worse, Al Qaeda seems to have set up new 'bases' in the tribal areas of Pakistan, where the group is said to run training camps and other vital facilities.
- Aspects of the 'War on Terror' are widely thought to have radicalized Muslims across the world, providing Al Qaeda with a fresh pool of sympathizers and potential recruits. This is especially true for the Iraq war, which – in the eyes of many skeptical Muslims – confirmed Al Qaeda's narrative of the West at war with Islam. The same applies to the detention of suspected *jihadists* at Guantanamo Bay, the 'rendition' of suspects to countries in which torture is being practiced, and the systematic abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.
- At the same time, Al Qaeda has had its own backlash to deal with. According to Richard Barrett, the United Nations' highest ranking official monitoring the activities of the group, even in places where Al Qaeda used to be highly active – such as Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, and Saudi-Arabia – the terrorist campaign has lost traction, not least because of the number of innocent Muslims that have been killed in Al Qaeda attacks.¹ A real watershed, it seems, has been Al Qaeda's attempt to launch a civil war in Iraq, with many suicide attacks against Iraqi Shiites which Muslims across the world have strongly condemned.

In addition to the United States acting unilaterally and through 'Coalitions of the Willing', there have been numerous initiatives by multilateral actors. For example, following the September 11 attacks, the United Nations (UN) Security Council established a Counterterrorism Committee and adopted a number of resolutions aimed at curbing proliferation. This was followed by a series of initiatives in the General Assembly, which adopted a Global Counterterrorism Strategy in 2006. While partially successful in generating a global consensus for the need to fight Al Qaeda, there continue to be substantive political differences between member states (especially between the West and the Arab world) over what constitutes terrorism more generally. This has hindered the adoption of a definition of terrorism under international law, and has also made a comprehensive, multilateral approach towards fighting terrorism impossible.

The European Union (EU) has made concerted efforts to improve counter-terrorism coordination among member states. Particularly important have been provisions to facilitate the extradition of suspects and judicial cooperation more generally. However, measures

1] Richard Barrett, 'Seven Years After 9/11: Al-Qaida's Strengths and Vulnerabilities', *ICSR Future Action Series*, September 2008; available at www.icsr.info.

aimed at pooling intelligence and other sensitive information, as well as more wide-ranging proposals for centralizing counter-terrorism policy at the European level, have been resisted by many member states. Especially the larger Western European states regard the EU as too cumbersome and bureaucratic to facilitate the kind of quick action that is needed in order to fight terrorism effectively. Some states are also reluctant to share secret intelligence information through EU bodies, such as EUROPOL.

The future trajectory of the Salafi jihadist movement is difficult to predict. Though there can be no doubt that Al Qaeda has lost support, it is too early to announce its demise. Pakistan has unquestionably become the key 'battleground' for the foreseeable future, because it is from here that most of Al Qaeda's activities emanate. Furthermore, there is a large pool of disenfranchised, aggrieved Muslims across the world – especially in Europe – who seem to be willing to take action if and when the opportunity arises.

History tells us that terrorist 'waves' last for at least one generation or 30 years, and – depending on origin – this one may have reached its peak but is far from over. The Salafi jihadists may never accomplish their ultimate aim, but they have proven that they can cause tremendous damage and loss of life in their attempt to do so.

I.3 Other threats

As pointed out earlier, terrorism is nearly always linked to radical, popular movements, which produce violent splinters, and decided that only dramatic action can break the population's indifference and/or compel governments to take notice and change policy. In Western countries – including Germany – there are three such movements, which have repeatedly been linked to violent activities and whose activities may escalate in the future.

First, the anti-globalisation movement believes that the kind of globalisation currently taking place is a mere continuation of imperialist practices whereby the political and economic elites in the so-called Global North impose neo-liberal, exploitative practices on the Global South. Extreme environmentalists, which are part of this movement, have had no qualms about breaking the law and, on several occasions, have used acts of violence to get their message across. Leaderless and decentralised groups like the Earth Liberation Front, which has been active in North America and part of Western Europe, are prototypes for the kind of terrorism that could come out of this movement alongside the even less structured anarchist movement. Given their universalist ideological orientation, however, it seems unlikely that such groups would resort to Al Qaeda-style mass-casualty attacks against civilians.

The second movement which has emerged in direct response to the pressures emanating from globalisation is the anti-immigrant Right across Western Europe and North America. Like the anti-globalisation movement, it opposes neo-liberal economic policies, especially the liberalisation of trade and immigration, but it does so from a particularist, identity-based perspective. The movement's constituency consists of globalisation 'losers' in the West, that is, unskilled workers and those on low incomes who have been exposed to increased competition and who feel that their identity as well as their livelihoods are under threat from foreigners 'invading' their countries. So far, the movement has largely manifested itself in the rise of populist right-wing parties in Western Europe, who have successfully competed in elections in countries like Belgium, Austria and France, but there has also been a rise in the number of incidents in violent attacks. There are frequent and ongoing discussions among neo-Nazis about the establishment of a 'Brown Army Faction' similar to old left-wing terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s. The right-wing

extremist movement is highly networked already, and this would probably be reflected in any future terrorist group. Considering their particularist ideas, the repertoire of tactics is likely to include not only assassinations of, say, prominent public figures of foreign, Muslim or Jewish descent but also attacks against soft targets, such as mosques and immigration centres.

Third, there continues to be a residual threat from non-Islamist religious groups, especially evangelical Christian groups. This may be less relevant to Germany, but it certainly plays a role in the United States, where parts of the evangelical movement have merged with the racist, anti-government Right. In the literature, these groups are frequently described as 'millenarian', because they believe in a final 'showdown' before the coming of a new Messiah.² Faced with a black President and a left-wing government, such groups may interpret the new situation as the coming of a final confrontation with the forces of evil that requires them to strike out at their perceived enemies. There can be no doubt that individuals or extremist groups within this movement will see themselves and their way of life as being under threat, justifying nearly any action to change the course of history.

It seems clear, therefore, that it would be mistaken to focus exclusively on Salafi jihadism in terms of future terrorist threats. Rather, it is important to understand the wider context within which terrorist threats emerge. For the foreseeable future – certainly until the year 2020 – the conditions that will shape global terrorism are marked by the contradictory effects of globalization and late modernity. Arguably, these forces have produced Salafi jihadism, but they have also brought about other movements, including the anti-immigrant right, the anti-globalisation movement, and even fundamentalist Christian groups. Not all of them will embark on violent activities on the scale of the September 11 attacks against the United States, but they all possess the potential of engaging in terrorist activities that will divide societies, target democratic institutions and their leaders, or – at the very least – produce considerable social and economic damage. How these developments have affected German policymaking will be the subject of the next section.

2] See, for example, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), esp. Chapter 2 'Soldiers of Christ'; D.J. Mulloy, *American Extremism: History, Politics and the Militia Movement* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004);

II. German Policy

Like other Western European countries, Germany had had to deal with terrorism long before the rise of 'new' terrorism and Al Qaeda in particular. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Red Army Faction's campaign destabilized the constitutional order like perhaps no other single threat in the post-war period. Furthermore, although there have been no successful attacks against Germany in the post-September 11 period, the threats emanating from Salafi jihadism and the War on Terror have affected Germany in multiple ways. Soon after September 11, it became clear that the leader of the cell that was responsible for the attacks and some of his associates had been radicalized in Hamburg and used Germany as a safe haven. Germany's initial support for the US-led War on Terror, in particular the deployment of German troops to Afghanistan, made Germany a more prominent target for Salafi jihadists. Despite its refusal to participate in the invasion of Iraq, Germany was mentioned in several Bin Laden messages, and in 2006 and 2007, the country barely escaped devastating attacks against civilian targets, which – on both occasions – would have been on the scale of London and Madrid. There is no reason to believe that this threat has subsided or gone away.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the German government – then led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder – passed two so-called 'security packages', which included a host of measures aimed at tightening up anti-terrorism legislation and providing law enforcement and security agencies with more powers and resources. These and subsequent measures were not unusually draconian or repressive when compared to the policies implemented by other European countries, but they still touched on several, specifically German dilemmas and 'taboos'. For example, the creation of a joint terrorism analysis centre (*Gemeinsames Terrorabwehrzentrum*, or GTAZ) in which relevant security agencies would share information raised the question of the traditionally strict separation between law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Likewise, there has been an extensive debate about the deployment of armed forces inside Germany, which started with the question of whether the government should have the power to order the Air Force to bring down civilian aircraft. More broadly, much of the internal debate revolved around where key competencies related to the fight against terrorism should lie, with federal agencies pushing to have a greater say in areas which have traditionally rested with the federal states.

In the area of foreign policy, despite Chancellor Schröder's initial promise of 'unlimited solidarity' with the United States, the German approach has been distinct from that of the United States and several of its leading allies. As Wilhelm Knelangen points out, while Germany agreed to participate in the War on Terror militarily, this has been balanced by an emphasis on strengthening multilateral mechanisms (especially the United Nations) in the fight against terrorism and the need to address grievances and 'root causes' that were believed to be conducive to the emergence of terrorism.³ As a result, Germany led the effort to bring together (under the auspices of the UN) key actors from within Afghanistan and the international community to negotiate transitional arrangements for the government of Afghanistan in late 2001. Germany's 'softer' approach towards counter-terrorism can also be seen in the government's refusal to participate in the more aggressive counter-insurgency operations that are being carried out by the United States, Britain and other NATO allies in the south of Afghanistan. Moreover, it helps in understanding the German government's outspoken opposition to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which soured relations between the United States and Germany until Schröder left office in 2005.

3] Wilhelm Knelangen, 'Die deutsche Politik der Terrorismusbekämpfung' in Thomas Jäger, Alexander Höse and Kai Oppermann (eds.), *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2007), pp. 173-97.

Yet, while seemingly consistent, the German approach towards counter-terrorism – especially its foreign policy component – has not yet had a significant impact. In the area of security policy, German capabilities – both military- and intelligence-based – are too limited in order for Germany to be considered a significant actor. The continued German refusal to deploy troops in the south of Afghanistan is a cause of resentment among major NATO allies and has put a significant strain on NATO as a military alliance. Indeed, while rejecting the ‘militaristic’ approach of the United States, Britain and others, Germany, however, has not yet spelled out in detail its comprehensive approach to resolve the ongoing problems in Afghanistan. With the exception of the Petersberg Agreement in 2001 and the German G8 initiative to improve the bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Germany has rarely been seen to take the initiative, reacting rather defensively whenever other countries have asked to do more. In fact, despite Germany’s commitment to reconstruction and peace-building, as well as its contribution – be it financial or otherwise, Germany has come to be regarded by many of its key allies as a second-rate player which follows rather than leads.

In the multilateral sphere, Germany’s contribution to the fight against terrorism has been a sincere attempt to make international institutions – especially the UN and the EU – more relevant, with Germany participating actively in all international forums and playing a positive role in pushing for a more integrated framework based on fighting terrorism through the rule of law. However, there are inherent limits to how effective such efforts can be, given that there is no overwhelming desire by many countries to deal with terrorism through multilateral institutions, or – as in the case of the UN – no consensus on what terrorism constitutes (see previous section).

Germany’s policy of ‘muddling through’ may have worked so far, but it is unlikely to represent a viable long-term policy. Considering the German population’s well-known lack of enthusiasm for their country’s engagement in Afghanistan, Germany has become a prime target for Salafi jihadists who have been keen to exploit such instances of political discontent in the past (for example, in Spain in 2004). In the immediate future, therefore, an Al Qaeda inspired attack against civilian targets in Germany and/or attacks against German troops or German civilians in Afghanistan are the most likely terrorist threat scenarios. To stop any potential attack from dictating policy on Afghanistan or any other question, it is essential for German policymaking to become more consistent and proactive.

III. Scenarios

Drawing up scenarios for the future of terrorism is a risky business. Terrorist attacks – especially of the kind that occurred on September 11 – are rare events. They are nearly impossible to predict, yet – as we saw in 2001 – they can change not only the dynamics of terrorism but the course of history.

The following two scenarios are not so much about the future of terrorism but rather about the different ways in which the currently dominant terrorist threat – that is, that of Salafi jihadism – may evolve in the next decade or two, taking into account the different developments and influences that were sketched out in the first section of this paper. The scenarios are based on the most controversial debate that has taken place in the field of terrorism studies for years, with Bruce Hoffman of Georgetown University arguing the first scenario ('Al Qaeda resurgent') and Marc Sageman – currently scholar-in-residence at the New York Police Department – advocating the second ('leaderless jihad').

III.1 Scenario 1: 'Al Qaeda resurgent'

Scenario 1 is based on a pessimistic interpretation of intelligence reports according to which Al Qaeda has managed to re-establish some territorial bases in the tribal areas of Pakistan,⁴ where neither the government of Pakistan nor, indeed, its British imperial predecessor have ever managed to exercise effective control. Protected by tribal leaders and the Pakistani Taliban, the group will be able to resurrect some of the infrastructure and facilities it had lost as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Needless to say, 'with its rugged terrain and suspicion of outsiders',⁵ Al Qaeda will find it difficult to achieve the degree of sophistication and stability it once had in Afghanistan, but the territory may nevertheless provide the group with the opportunity to regain a secure base from which to establish control over its global movement, as well as direct and train its supporters.

In the course of the next decade Al Qaeda may therefore regain at least some of the strength and discipline it had lost following the September 11 attacks, with Pakistan emerging as the 'centre of gravity' for its activities. This will have serious consequences for the stability of the region. The group will attempt to continue its involvement in the insurgency in Afghanistan, providing logistics, terrorist training and – possibly – Western volunteers for what – by 2020 – might have become a long drawn-out, low-level war. As a result of its coalition with the Pakistani Taliban, the group will increasingly engage in operations against the Pakistani state or Pakistani society. Given the weak overall structure of Pakistan, occasional Al Qaeda attacks against civilian, political and/or Western targets in Pakistan will further weaken any attempt to bring stable governance to the country. This might also complicate relations and lead to serious tensions with the neighboring nuclear power, India, if it turns out – as, apparently, in the case of the recent Mumbai attacks – that terrorist attacks in India or against Indian targets have been planned or organised from Pakistan.

Al Qaeda differs from local 'jihadist' groups by having explicitly global aspirations, and it will be in Al Qaeda's interest, therefore, to open up its bases to foreign volunteers, especially young Muslims from the Arab world and the West. The consequences of Al Qaeda's resurgence will therefore be felt far beyond the region. By 2020, an entirely new generation of 'jihadists' will have gone through Al Qaeda's training camps, who will have returned to their home countries and re-created the kind of global network that emerged

4] Bruce Hoffman, 'The Myth of Grassroots Terrorism: Why Osama bin Laden Still Matters', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2008.

5] Barrett, 'Seven Years', pp. 10-1.

in the 1990s. In addition to being trained in terrorist tactics, this 'second generation' of Al Qaeda will harness the full power of the Internet to coordinate attacks as well as communicate and propagate their views. Though not necessarily large in numbers, the new generation will launch occasional attacks against civilian targets in Western cities. Given the perpetrators' training, these attacks are likely to produce large numbers of civilian casualties. Attacks with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials will have been attempted, but – given the significant constraints for non-state actors in making these effective – there is only a small chance that they will succeed in creating significant damage.

As mentioned above, the dynamics that are likely to unfold are hard to predict. It is safe to say, though, that Western powers will find it hard to sit back and refrain from any intervention, especially when it becomes obvious that a devastating attack against a Western country was planned and organised from Al Qaeda's base in Pakistan. This is especially true for the United States. It seems clear, therefore, that – by 2020 – Western countries will have become more involved in countering Al Qaeda in Pakistan. If Al Qaeda manages to launch another September 11 type attack against the United States, a full-scale intervention by the United States cannot be ruled out. This would have a devastating effect on the situation in Pakistan by uniting the majority of the population against the 'foreign invader' and probably suck the United States into another long drawn-out conflict with substantial casualties and unpredictable consequences not only for the region but for global security more generally.⁶ If, on the other hand, the Western involvement consists of a continuation and, possibly, further intensification of unmanned aerial attacks against targets in the tribal areas, the consequences will be less dramatic, but – given the likelihood of military 'mistakes' and civilian casualties – may still contribute to the radicalisation of young Muslims across the world. In any case, the fragile position of Pakistan's government will be further undermined, with diminished prospects for stability in the region.

III.2 Scenario 2: 'Leaderless jihad'

Marc Sageman believes that there is little reason to be concerned about Al Qaeda's alleged resurgence in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which he believes is either irrelevant or vastly overstated by Western intelligence agencies. From his perspective, the really significant development has been the diffusion of Al Qaeda and the Salafi jihadist movement in the years since 2001 and the kind of 'leaderless jihad' it has produced. While Sageman concedes that Al Qaeda used to be a more or less centralized organization – albeit one with franchises all over the world – prior to the invasion of Afghanistan, in subsequent years it has reversed the flow of command and control: rather than top down, it now functions from the bottom up. Formal hierarchies no longer matter, and while Bin Laden and his deputy may still be important symbols – like Che Guevara during the Cold War – their role is merely inspirational. In Sageman's view, 'each local network carries out its attacks without coordination from above... [Al Qaeda] lacks a firm overarching strategy, [yet] it still has an agenda set by general guidelines found on the Internet, which is the virtual glue maintaining a weak appearance of unity'.⁷

This means that, by 2020, Al Qaeda will have become an increasingly meaningless label that is adopted by aggrieved Muslims across the world in order to justify violent attacks against targets in their home countries. There will be more attacks, but – given the recruits' lack of training and coordination – they will be smaller in scale. Many of these at-

6] I am grateful to Anatol Lieven for this insight.

7] Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 144.

tacks will fail to produce any significant casualties. Rather than spectacular attacks, like the September 11 attacks against the United States, Al Qaeda inspired attacks in 2020 will resemble the attempted car-bombing of Glasgow Airport in 2007, which – because of the faulty construction of the bombing and device and the lack of planning – produced no casualties at all. Such attacks may still cause a degree of panic, instability and divide societies – especially when they are carried out by local, home-grown networks of young Western Muslims – but they are unlikely to trigger large-scale interventions. As a result, the focus of counter-terrorism policy will shift from foreign to domestic policy.

In the leaderless jihad scenario, it will become more difficult to recognize a clear strategy, or identify concrete grievances to which terrorist attacks could be seen as a response. Since neither Bin Laden or any of his lieutenants will have the power to frame terrorist attacks according to a single narrative, local groups will respond to a variety of pressures and perceived grievances, ranging from foreign spill-overs – the situation in Pakistan, Israel-Palestine, and/or other international conflicts – to the purely local, including 'symbolic' disputes such as the so-called 'cartoon crisis'. Many of these issues will be raised and articulated in seemingly anarchic web forums on the Internet, and it will consequently be difficult to identify particular triggers that cause individual and groups of recruits to turn to violent action.

By 2020, therefore, the Al Qaeda phenomenon will have degenerated into a form of violent youth culture, which is perpetrated by amateurs who often do not possess the skills, training, resources and strategic direction to carry out attacks that would have significant strategic consequences. If Western powers refrain from launching large-scale interventions in the Muslim world that are prone to re-igniting the cycle of radicalisation, it is possible that Salafi jihadism will have reached the tail end of the 30 year period in which terrorist 'waves' typically evolve. While there may still be young Muslims who are attracted to the movement and its message, mainstream Muslim communities will have decisively turned against it and the numbers of sympathizers and supporters will have decreased significantly. By 2020, therefore, the phenomenon of Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda inspired terrorism will be in the process of fading away.

IV. Recommendations

This chapter will not detail recommendations for how terrorism should be fought in general. There exists a wealth of literature on counter-terrorism, and it would neither be wise nor possible to attempt to summarise this literature here.⁸ Rather, the aim of this chapter is to outline specific options for action based on the analysis presented above. The following sub-sections will cover options for German foreign policymaking; implications derived from the discussion of scenarios; and some general guidelines on how to minimize the impact of the changing framework within which terrorism is likely to take place.

IV.1 German foreign policy

The incoming U.S. administration presents German foreign policymakers with a unique opportunity but also a challenge. The new American government's instincts are closer to the strategy originally articulated by the German government than those of the Bush White House, and this will present Germany with a unique opportunity to gain influence and steer the 'War on Terror' – or whatever it may be called – into a more productive direction. The following actions should be considered:

Help develop a comprehensive plan for international engagement in Afghanistan

Germany needs to end its policy of 'muddling through' and become a leader in the discussion of how to proceed with international engagement in Afghanistan. Together with the United States, Germany should take the initiative and develop a positive, coherent plan that will reflect a better balance between 'soft' and 'hard' measures.

Invest in capabilities

To be successful in shaping the international agenda will require a willingness of Germany to play a more prominent part in all aspects of the global struggle against terrorism. This means further investment in the capability of German military and intelligence, which has been lagging behind that of its allies for many years. Only by improving its capabilities in these areas will Germany gain the leverage necessary to influence discussions about other aspects of policymaking in this area.

This also implies that German rhetoric on reconstruction and peace-building needs to be matched by action. If Germany wants to be seen as a 'force for good' in places like Afghanistan, it needs to show leadership by investing more significantly than hitherto in programmes that are likely to promote this agenda.

Win the population's support

German policymakers have failed to explain to the German population why German participation in missions like Afghanistan is useful and necessary. The result has been a lack of support and a potential vulnerability that may be exploited by terrorists. If the German government is convinced that its participation and presence in Afghanistan is useful and desirable, it must make a stronger and more consistent case for it.

8] For an excellent overview, see Ronald Crelinsten, *Counterterrorism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

IV.2 Responding to scenarios

Arguably, both scenarios outlined in Chapter 3 contain some truth. Al Qaeda seems to have embedded itself in the tribal areas of Pakistan, yet there has also been a diffusion of structures which has made the movement more difficult to deal with. Policymakers, therefore, will have to prepare for both possibilities. The following recommendations are priorities for action:

Deepen the relationship with Pakistan

Whatever happens in the tribal areas, it seems near-certain that Pakistan will be a 'centre of gravity' in the fight against global terrorism for years to come. The aim for all Western governments should be to help the Pakistani government to improve its capacity to fight terrorism, but also to stabilize its position vis-à-vis the Pakistani population, normalize its relationship with India, and prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists or foreign regimes.

Coordinate action with regards to Pakistan with Western and regional powers

In deepening international involvement in Pakistan, it will be important to coordinate German actions closely with the two Western powers that, for both current and historical reasons, have the closest relationship with the Islamabad government, namely the United States and Britain. This will be of benefit to Germany not only in that resources are multiplied but also in having influence over potentially negative interventions. Where possible and useful, multilateral institutions may also have a role to play, though it would be dangerous to overrate their ability to bring about quick and positive change.

Focus on community policing

The second scenario requires a more local focus, reflecting the fact that the threat will emanate primarily from 'home-grown' networks. This implies that governments need to get to know their communities better. Investment in community policing – including the recruitment of ethnic minority police officers – should therefore be a priority alongside the building of social capital within minority communities, so they are in a position to address grievances – real and perceived – through the democratic political process rather than having to resort to violence.

Work on integration and citizenship

European governments, including Germany, also need to continue to work on issues like citizenship and integration as well as promote a positive narrative of what it means to be Muslim and German, both within communities and in cyberspace. Ultimately, the threat from Salafi jihadism will only subside in Western European societies once better, more inclusive societies have been constructed in which the narratives of exclusion and alienation will no longer resonate.

IV.3 Dealing with future crises

Given the wider context within the 'new' terrorism has emerged – that is, late modernity and globalization – it will be important for populations to understand that the risk from terrorism can be minimized but that it cannot be eliminated entirely. In order to deal with future crises, the following actions should be taken:

Strengthen resilience

However destructive and shocking, terrorism is unlikely to destroy democracy or our 'way of life' unless people or the government overreact. It will be crucial, therefore, for governments to develop a communications strategy that explains how terrorism is a serious threat to law and order, but that the terrorists cannot win as long as people respond to the threat in a measured way. Government communications should highlight the criminal nature of terrorist activities (thereby refusing to accord them political legitimacy) and emphasise how they are carried out by a small minority within the Muslim population.

Develop a robust legal framework within the rule of law

Terrorists aim to divide societies, and if governments engage in overly repressive measures in order to show that they are 'tough', they risk alienating sections of society whose support is crucial in defeating terrorism. Measures, such as profiling or detention without charge, that are aimed at one particular segment of society in a seemingly non-discriminatory fashion, are likely to be counterproductive and wholly negative, and should therefore be avoided.

Especially following a terrorist attack, the pressure from public opinion to engage in harsh and punitive policies will be considerable, but this must be resisted. History has shown that, in the long term, good policework and the pursuit of terrorists through the courts of law are by far the most reliable means of countering the threat without incurring a backlash. Measures can and should be robust, but they should always be perceived as legitimate and within the rule of law.

Improve international collaboration

New terrorism routinely crosses borders, and it has consequently become more difficult to deal with at the domestic level. It will be important, therefore, to improve measures aimed at facilitating international collaboration. In doing so, however, it will be important to be pragmatic about the kinds of frameworks through which international solutions are being pursued. At times, it will be possible to establish international legal frameworks or work through multilateral institutions. In certain situations, however, ad hoc coalitions will develop from the bottom-up, with more formalized structures only emerging at a later stage.

Monitor other potential sources of terrorism

The threat from Salafi jihadism is by far the most significant terrorist threat at this point in time, but it will be important for governments to keep monitoring other potential sources of terrorism, especially terrorist activities on the far Right. Neo-Nazi attacks against Muslims and Islamist terrorism may have a self-perpetuating effect, and it is essential, therefore, not to focus on one at the expense of the other.

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