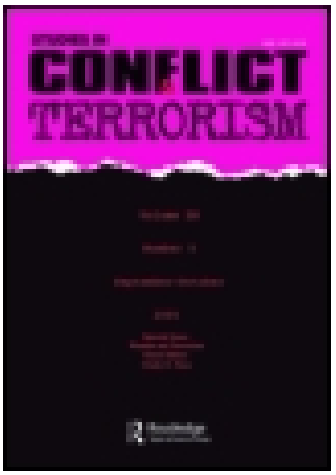

Studies in Conflict & Terrorism
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uter20

Belgian and French Foreign Fighters in Iraq 2003-2005: A Comparative Case Study

Timothy Holman[a]
[a] S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Singapore
Published online: 11 May 2015.

Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 0:1–19, 2015

ISSN: 1057-610X print / 1521-0731 online
DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2015.1038105

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Belgian and French Foreign Fighters in Iraq 2003–2005: A Comparative Case Study

TIMOTHY HOLMAN

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
Singapore

Efforts to understand the distinction between foreign fighting and domestic terrorist acts have focused for the most part at the macro level. This study investigates if this difference is observed at the network level. The Iraq foreign fighter mobilization, which was significant, both numerically and, in terms of its visibility, is used for this analysis. The participation of Belgian and French foreign fighters is examined due to the perceived level of threat they posed in the period 2003–2005 and while absolute numbers are relatively low, these two countries may have provided just under a quarter of the all European foreign fighters in this period. Observations are generated and then compared to research on domestic attack networks in Europe and the United Kingdom. The article finds that the two networks were involved in foreign fighter activity and did not engage in domestic attack activity. Involvement in domestic attacks occurred at a later time via individuals who had left the network, individuals on the periphery of the original foreign fighter network or individuals who unsuccessfully attempted to engage in foreign fighter activity.

In 2004 and 2005, European and U.S. press reports quoted intelligence and law enforcement officials assessing the threat from persons traveling to Iraq from Europe, particularly France but also Belgium. These individuals were commonly referred to as foreign fighters but also as terrorists and *jihadists*. The content of these statements often had an underlying assumption that an individual traveling to Iraq would pose a terrorist threat to their state of origin when they returned. By 2008, officials describing foreign fighters were less alarmist in their description of the threat. The reasons given for the change of assessment were less people were traveling, those that had traveled were arrested and in prison, or were not coming back because they were dead.

Recent research has enabled a debate to develop about the role of Sunni Muslims as foreign fighters in civil wars and insurgencies.[1] This research suggests that foreign fighter mobilizations are a frequent form of engagement in political violence. These macro-level investigations have determined the frequency, size, and location of such mobilizations and sought explanations as to why these occur.

This article has a twofold goal, first to examine Belgian and French foreign fighter networks; second from this examination develop an understanding of differences between foreign fighter networks and domestic attack networks. Analysis will take place at the network level, which has been largely unexplored in relation to foreign fighters. This level

Received 17 January 2015; accepted 14 March 2015.
Address correspondence to Timothy Holman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 9J Hillcrest Road, 286711 Singapore. E-mail: tfnholman@gmail.com

has been chosen for two reasons; first, researchers have argued social movements recruit in dense social networks and second, network level analysis has frequently been applied to terrorist networks.[2] This enables comparisons to be made between the case studies in this article and earlier research on terrorist networks.[3]

European Foreign Fighters in Iraq

The available evidence indicates that foreign fighters in Iraq were a minority perhaps numbering 4,000 at their peak between 2004 and 2005 and comprising 5 percent of total Iraqi Sunni insurgency.[4] In the absence of publicly available Sinjar-type documents for the period 2003–2005; evaluating the extent of participation of foreign fighters from Europe is problematic but not impossible.[5] Hegghammer estimated "at least 100" persons from Europe traveled to Iraq and suggests that the participation of European-based foreign fighters was minimal with the majority of foreign fighters coming from Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.[6]

Trévidic estimates that 30 French foreign fighters traveled to Iraq.[7] Fourteen persons have been identified by name as traveling from France to Iraq in the period 2003 to 2005.[8] The number of Belgian residents or nationals who traveled there in the same period is six to eight.[9]

In September 2004, the French authorities opened a preliminary judicial investigation into Iraq networks. This investigation resulted in the development of three judicial cases that concerned networks active from 2003 to 2005; the 19th (or Buttes-Chaumont) network, the Montpellier network and the Nice network. The 19th network, the largest group sent the most individuals into Iraq. The Montpellier network sent two persons to Syria, one of who traveled to Iraq; the second desisted and returned to France where he was arrested.[10] The Nice network was the investigation of the French authorities into connections between individuals in the Kari network in Belgium to France.[11] This group sent at least one individual into Iraq.[12]

The Belgian Judicial Police conducted two investigations into Iraq networks active between 2003 and 2005 that resulted in trials. The first investigation, Kari, received a significant level of publicity due to the involvement of a European female convert in a suicide attack in Iraq in November 2005. The second investigation concerned the activities of an individual who is suspected to have traveled to Iraq and then returned to Belgium where they are alleged to have acted as a recruiter or facilitator for individuals wanting to travel to Iraq and Afghanistan.[13] It is possible that the police conducted other investigations that never went to trial.[14] These two networks sent five to six persons into Iraq. The Kari network sent four persons to Iraq and the second network may have involved two individuals who traveled to Iraq. The individual who returned to Belgium denies having been in Iraq.[15]

French and Belgian foreign fighters represent at minimum 23 percent and at maximum 39 percent of the, at least, 100 Europe-based foreign fighters who traveled to Iraq.[16] Based on the available data, 91 percent of named foreign fighters from Belgium and France entered Iraq in the 2004–2005 peak period. Two networks, the 19th and the Kari, were responsible for sending the majority (57 percent) of these individuals to Iraq. These networks operated between March 2003 and December 2005. The period after December 2005 may have seen only two individuals successfully enter Iraq although at least another eight persons sought to travel from Belgium or France to Iraq. In the period 2003 to 2008, 46 percent to 60 percent of those intending to travel may have been arrested before being able to reach Iraq.

Street Praying Men: The 19th Network, Paris, France

The origins, if networks really have fixed beginnings, of the 19th group (a reference to the Arrondissement in Paris where the majority of the members lived), can be traced back to Benyettou's contacts as an adolescent between 1997 and 1999 with two individuals, Youssef Zemmouri and Mohamed Karimi, and to Boubakeur el-Hakim's travel in 2000 to Syria to study.[17] Benyettou's contact with Zemmouri (his brother-in-law with connections to Algerian terrorist networks in France) and to Mohamed Karimi (a Moroccan, linked to one of the same networks as well as to a radical internet site Assabyle) brought him into the sphere of both militant Islamist doctrine and the organization and structure of facilitation networks. Sometime in 2000, Boubakeur el-Hakim traveled to Syria to study Arabic, which he continued to do intermittently until the impending United States invasion when he traveled to Iraq to defend the Iraqi people against the planned invasion.[18] It is probable that without Benyettou's religious background and the bone fides of being Zemmouri's brother-in-law as well as el-Hakim's Syrian contacts that the network may not have been able to function. Given the function of the network—foreign fighter facilitation—it would have been difficult for it achieve its ends without the participation of these two individuals.

In March 2003, a French radio journalist in Baghdad, recorded Boubakeur el-Hakim yelling, "All my mates in the 19th, they need to come and take part in the jihad, I am here, it is me, Abu Abdallah, I am in Iraq, my brothers who are over there come and defend Islam."[19] This statement in some ways defines the network; describing the contours (friends), ambitions (defending Islam), and the network's core members; Boubakeur el-Hakim exhorts his friends but names Benyettou (Abu Abdallah). The wider group seems to have been mobilized or rather come to public attention at a series of protests against the Iraq war (2003) and against the banning of the veil (early 2004) where the group was both vocal and visible.[20] These protests and their public praying drew the attention of the French Renseignements Généraux (Police Intelligence).[21]

The 19th network may have been in contact with as many as 50 persons.[22] However, only a small fraction of these individuals were actively involved in foreign fighter activity. Press reports indicate that there were 11 participants involved in organizing or participating in traveling to Iraq.[23] The network was active from March 2003, when Boubakeur el-Hakim first traveled to Iraq until late January 2005 when the French authorities arrested its remaining members in France. In this 20-month period, particularly throughout the spring and summer of 2004, eight members traveled to Iraq. At least four of the eight fought in Fallujah; in mid-2004, three of them—Peter Cherif, Mohamed el-Ayouni and Tarek Ouinis—were together, along with Algerians, Saudis, Tunisians, and Yemenis in a foreign fighter house in Fallujah.[24] In late 2004, U.S. military forces captured Cherif and Cheikhou Diakhabi, Ouinis was killed and el-Ayouni survived, and was detained by the Syrian authorities and then expelled to France. The Syrian authorities captured Boubakeur el-Hakim and expelled him to France, Redaoune el-Hakim and Abdelhalim Badjoudj died in suicide attacks while the fate of Salah Touré remains unknown.[25]

The network was comprised of the el-Hakim brothers and friends (Peter Cherif, Mohamed el-Ayouni, Tarek Ouinis and Thamer Bouchnak) from the same neighborhood or schools in Paris, aged in their late teens to early twenties, all of them French but born to families with ties to Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, or Mali.[26] The majority of the members were single, with high-school level qualifications, and were unemployed or had menial jobs; pizza delivery, a janitor, an itinerant seller in outdoor markets. Some had prior

convictions for minor criminal offences but were not actively involved in criminal activity at the time of their engagement in foreign fighting activities.

The network does not appear to have resorted to criminal activity to finance the travel to Syria and into Iraq. They were self-financing using their own savings and money collected from sympathizers or supporters. Benyettou collected €2000 to pay for trips from sympathizers.[27] There was also intra-group solidarity; Thamer Bouchnak used €8000 of his own savings from odd jobs, to finance his projected trip to Iraq. He also paid for another member, Chérif Kouachi, who was to travel with him; both were arrested in January 2005 before they could fly to Syria.[28]

After the arrests, initial reporting suggested that the group were considering planning terrorist attacks against French or foreign interests in France. Citing investigators, members of the group were alleged to have evoked the "possibility" of violent activity against Jewish interests although there was no evidence of planning or a specific target.[29] There were internal disagreements about the legitimacy of carrying out an attack in France, with the acknowledged religious expert and alleged leader, Benyettou, opposing the idea. Part of the motivation for the eventual attack against Jewish interests appears linked to the fact that a group member had been sacked by his employers and he wanted to take revenge.[30] One report suggests that this member may have carried out the attack although this incident was not mentioned at trial.[31] Investigators did not find arms or bomb-making material.[32] They did recover videos of the conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya and Palestine as well as speeches by Karimi, one of Benyettou's mentors, from the Assablye website. At trial Benyettou stated that, "these videos, it's the same ones that you find on other guys in the neighborhood, even on the mobile phones."[33] The primary energy, financial resources as well as the beliefs and intent of the network, were directed at facilitating travel to Iraq.[34]

The French authorities' investigations led to further arrests in France of small groups or individuals with alleged connections to the 19th network. On 23 May 2005, one person was arrested who had followed Benyettou's religious courses; the individual was not charged and not brought to trial and does not figure among those who traveled to Iraq.[35] In July, another individual, with connections via his brother to members of the network in which Benyettou's brother-in-law had been involved in 1998, was arrested and expelled to Algeria.[36] In September 2005, another six individuals were arrested. This group was in the process of setting up a network to transit potential foreign fighters through Cairo, Egypt and then to Syria. One of this group's members was in contact with Benyettou.[37] This individual would appear in later Iraq foreign fighter facilitation investigations in 2007 in France.[38]

Between 2005 and 2007, following the January 2005 arrests of Benyettou, Bouchnak, and Kouachi, the three of the four surviving members of the group who had traveled to Iraq returned to France while one remained in prison in Iraq. The Syrian authorities expelled el-Ayouni and el-Hakim, and Cherif who escaped from Badush prison in Iraq traveled clandestinely to Damascus, Syria, where he sought French diplomatic assistance to return to France.[39] The majority of the network were tried in March 2008 and sentenced in May 2008.[40] The trial and sentencing marked the end of the 19th group that had not been effectively operational since the police disrupted it three years earlier.

However, it did not mark the end of the network's influence in terms of the relationships and connections developed during its existence between 2003 and 2005. In December 2008, the French authorities arrested Rany Arnaud, who they believe was in the process of organizing the logistics for an attack against the headquarters of the Direction centrale du renseignement intérieur (French Internal Security Service: DCRI) in Paris.[41]

French investigators established that as early as 2005 Arnaud was in contact with the 19th group, In March 2007, he had been in contact via e-mail with Peter Cherif. In the same year he traveled to Syria as well as to Algeria in 2008.[42]

On 18 May 2010, the French police, arrested 14 individuals, in connection with a plan to free an imprisoned terrorist sentenced for the 1995 Paris metro bombings; nine of the individuals were charged and remanded in custody including Thamer Bouchnak, Mohamed el-Ayouni, and Chérif Kouachi; all of whom had previously been involved in the 19th network. A search of Bouchnak's house found plans of the prison.[43]

In July 2013, the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior announced that they were seeking to arrest Boubakeur el-Hakim in connection with the assassination of two opposition politicians in Tunisia. Press reporting alleged that el-Hakim was responsible for shooting both men. El-Hakim's links to armed networks in Tunisia were unclear but it appears that he has remained active with Sunni extremist elements.[44]

The primary, if not exclusive, activity of the 19th network between 2003 and 2005 was foreign fighter related. Involvement in domestic terrorist activity occurred through the activities of individuals on the periphery of the network or the regrouping or continued association of elements of the network.

Thieves and Healers: The Kari Network in Brussels, Belgium

In the absence of overt activities similar to the 19th group, who were involved in public protests, the beginnings of the Kari network are more difficult to determine. There are no obvious connections to individuals with prior connections to terrorist networks similar to those of Benyettou. There are a number of links, which suggest proximity or interest in militant Islam and perhaps foreign fighters. Younes Loukili knew Mesut Sen, a Belgian resident, who following his detention in Pakistan in 2001, was detained in Guantanamo Bay and returned to Belgium in 2005.[45] They both grew up in the same neighborhood and attended school together.[46] Loukili stated that they had taken Arabic classes together.[47] A letter from Sen to Loukili, while Sen was in Guantanamo, was found during house searches.[48] It is unclear, if this relationship was anything more than a friendship. Between 2003 and 2004, there are other indications of an interest in foreign fighters; Loukili purchased a copy of Malika el-Aroud's book, Soldats de lumière (Soldiers of Light) in 2003, Pascal Cruypenninck had a signed copy of the book, and Bilal Soughir received an e-mail from el-Aroud in 2004 discussing making a financial contribution to her activities.[49]

The Belgian Federal Police began a judicial investigation in July 2005, when they received information from the Surete d'Etat Belge (Belgian Security Service) that there was a network sending individuals to Iraq to fight.[50] The investigation established that members of the group, Kotob Soughir and Younes Loukili, had already traveled into Syria and Iraq in 2004.[51] The French authorities, based on a request from the Belgian authorities, investigated the activities of Bilal Soughir's brother-in-law, Ahmed ben Taieb, which led to a trial in France. On 28 November 2005, details of the death of a female Belgian convert, Muriel Deguaque, in a suicide attack in Iraq were leaked to the press.[52] On 30 November, there were 11 house searches in Belgium. Other members of the network, including two couples, seemed to be approaching the point where they might travel to Iraq.[53]

The Kari network was composed of the Soughir brothers and their immediate friends. The core of the group was Bilal Soughir, Nabil Karmun and Younes Loukili. Karmun had known the Soughir brothers since childhood and they lived within a short distance of each

other in the same neighborhood in Brussels.[54] They appear to have been active from early to mid-2004 onward. The core group on average was in their early 30s, a decade older than the Butte-Chaumont network, they were either unemployed or in some cases working in temporary employment. The Soughir brothers were involved in social security fraud and the resale of stolen goods, particularly power tools like drills, saws, and sanders.[55]

A number of other individuals would later interact with core of the network. They in-turn, would bring in their friends; for example, Pascal Cruypenninck met the group through contact with Younes Loukili at a local gym. Issam Goris met Cruypenninck through his *hijama* (folk medicine) practice. Goris contact with the core group was relatively late in the evolution of the network. Loukili also encountered Goris via the *hijama* practice, possibly through attending conferences or meetings at a local organization named *La Plume* where Goris was known.[56] Ahmed Ben Taieb was connected to the group because; he came, like the Soughir family from Akouda in Tunisia. He is also Bilal Soughir's brother-in-law, having married one of his sisters. Malek Charahili met Bilal Soughir and Younes Loukili in prison in Syria between January and February 2005.[57]

The group successfully sent four persons into Iraq, Kotob Soughir, Younes Loukili, Issam Goris and Muriel Degauque. A fifth, Nabil Karmun, traveled to Syria in July 2004 but decided not to continue into Iraq.[58] Bilal Soughir was in contact via money transfers with Samir Meijri based in Nice, France who also traveled to Iraq.[59] Loukili initially denied having been in Iraq and maintained that he had lost his leg in a car accident in Syria. During the trial, he eventually admitted that he had traveled to Iraq and had lost his leg in Fallujah.[60] It is possible that when the Belgian Federal Police disrupted the group, they were in the process of facilitating the travel of two more couples to Iraq.[61] The group enabled Kotob Soughir and Youness Loukili to fight in Iraq. Loukili was present in Fallujah. Kotob Soughir is believed to have died in late 2004. Loukili was exfiltrated from Iraq and met Bilal Soughir in Damascus, Syria; both were detained and imprisoned.[62] Upon their release, both returned via different routes to Belgium. In 2005, Bilal Soughir helped facilitate the travel of Degauque and Goris. Degauque carried out a suicide attack that appears not to have killed anybody. Goris was killed a day later in a raid by U.S. forces.[63]

It is unclear how the group acquired the initial contacts to connect themselves to the foreign fighter networks in Syria. It is possible they got them through their presence at Abu Nour Mosque in Damascus, through Raphael Gendron or through Ben Taieb, who may have been in Iraq in 2003. By 2005, they had a network of contacts, developed from the time Bilal Soughir and Youness Loukili had spent in prison in Syria in early 2005, where they met Malek Charahili, a Tunisian, and Kheireddine, an Algerian.[64] Despite these contacts, they had difficulty getting both Goris and Degauque into Iraq. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was reluctant to have Goris bring his wife. There were a series of telephone calls between the Soughir, Charahili, the Turkey-based facilitator, and an Algerian AQI member, Abu Asil al-Jaziri. In September 2005, Degauque returned to Belgium because it appeared that she would not be able to travel with Goris into Iraq. Bilal Soughir asked Malik Charahili on 17 October 2005 to recommend Issam Goris to Abu Asil and that Abu Asil guarantee Goris to the "brother" who would host him in Iraq.[65] These contacts appear to have led to the couple traveling together into Iraq.

The network used their criminal pursuits, particularly social security fraud, to finance their activity. Bilal Soughir organized for members of the network to receive their social security payments while in Syria and Iraq.[66] Following the probable death of Kotob Soughir, he continued to collect his brother's payments. They justified this activity by giving some of the funds to the Mosque and because the money was supporting the "cause." Giving money to the Mosque made it *halal* (permitted).[67] The criminal activities

extended to involvement in the production of fraudulent documents, as well as the acquisition of passports. Soughir traveled to the Ukraine to try to obtain passports. He also had his brother send passports from Thailand. This activity was used to support the social security fraud as well as to bring, Ben Taieb, his brother-in-law illegally from Tunisia to Europe, and to finance the activities of the wider foreign fighter community particularly Charahili.[68]

Even though Sunni extremist propaganda in the form of video cassettes of foreign fighters and visits to militant websites was found, the group was motivated by a hatred of the United States, the invader.[69] They referred to the Americans as "hamburgers." This motivation was expressed as part of a religious discourse. The group talked of killing "enemies of God" describing them as "sons of pigs" and "monkeys."[70] The members were religious; they prayed regularly and they often invoked "Allah" or used religious terminology in their telephone conversations. A group member described Soughir as having, "only one word in his head that is jihad."[71] However, Soughir stated he was not a terrorist and described himself as someone "... feeling concerned by the war in Iraq."[72] Some of their behavior, particularly the theft and social security fraud, was in apparent contradiction with their religious beliefs. Not all of the members were equally religious or committed to the foreign fighting activities of the group. Two of them seem to have been involved due to their connections via kinship and friendship and less by shared religious motivation.[73] The younger brother of Bilal Soughir, had a girlfriend in Thailand and his involvement with the false travel documents was likely connected to financing this relationship as well as facilitating his drug use.[74] The second person was a friend of Bilal Soughir from their neighborhood in Brussels. He appears to have been involved because of their friendship and his ability with computers to produce false documents.[75]

Despite the international contacts and travel, the network was small and relatively self-contained. A Belgian law enforcement official described networks in Belgium at the time as a "patchwork of self-radicalising local groups with international contacts, but without any central engine and any central organizational design."[76] Some members of the group had a number of links or connections to other individuals with varying degrees of implication in other terrorist cases. A member of the group, who was investigated but not charged and nor tried, had previously come to the attention of the Belgian Federal Police during the "Asperges" investigation. A suitcase, belonging to a member of that network arrested in Spain, was found in his house. This individual also received two text messages from Younes Loukili asking him to put Bilal Soughir in contact with an associate of the Moroccan Islamic Fighting Group, who had been investigated in Belgium.[77] Younes Loukili was in contact with Raphael Gendron, their conversations at the time of the investigation concerned finding a wife for Malik Charahili.[78] Another Belgian foreign fighter, Hafid el-Bahri, who traveled to Iraq in 2006, was reported to have been in contact with Goris, and Saïd Arissi, who would be arrested in 2008 in connection to travel to Afghanistan.[79]

The Kari network was involved in sending individuals to Iraq and bringing them back to Belgium. During the investigation, there were limited elements found that pointed to domestic attack intent or planning. In a house search a document with bomb-making instructions that may have belonged to Kotob Soughir was found among a collection of propaganda materials.[80] Bilal Soughir, Younes Loukili, and Nabil Karmun have all been released from prison and to date they have not been re-investigated or re-arrested for further activities. One member of the group investigated but not charged and not tried, later appeared in the context of a later Franco-Belgium investigation into a Toulouse-based foreign fighter network.[81]

Foreign Fighter Networks and Domestic Attack Networks

Hegghammer has argued, based on a macro-level examination of *jihadists* in the West that most prefer foreign fighting, and in their majority do not return for domestic operations, but if they do these operations tend to be more effective and more lethal.[82] Hegghammer ascribes this behavior to a norm that foreign fighting is more legitimate than domestic attack operations.[83] Van Dongen, in his study of the terrorist attack complexity in Europe, observes that 10 of the 11 most complex attacks in Europe had at "least one perpetrator who had received training or gained experience in actual jihad."[84] Van Dongen's analysis while potentially interesting does not discriminate between a foreign trained terrorist and a foreign fighter, therefore it is difficult to determine from Van Dongen's analysis, the real impact of a foreign fighter on domestic planning. The key component brought out in Hegghammer's analysis is that while foreign fighters may possess the resources to carry out attacks at home, they do not have the intent due to issues of legitimacy and perceived norms about the use of political violence.

A way of determining intent or the presence of these norms is to examine the 19th and Kari networks to assess whether there are any general characteristics that can be attributed to foreign fighter networks as opposed to domestic attack networks. The two networks are compared against both qualitative and quantitative criteria drawn from the work on terrorist attack networks by Mullins and Dolnik, the criteria are a combination of questions related to the composition and activities of the network.[85] The two networks are then evaluated against research on domestic attack networks.

Network Composition

In broad terms, the two networks share a number of differences but in the interior of the network, the sociodemographics and member experiences are relatively homogenous (see Tables 1 and 2). This is similar to Sageman's observation of "local homogeneity ... but global heterogeneity."[86] The 19th group was a decade younger than the Kari network, which also had a female member. Some of the 19th group had prior criminal convictions for minor offences. The Belgian network was actively engaged in criminal actions to support their activity. Both groups shared similarities in that their members held menial jobs or were unemployed. They held mostly high-school level qualifications. Most were dual nationals or had ties to another country. The majority were not married; an exception being Loukili who had two wives or others like Cherif, who had a girlfriend at the time of joining but from whom he become estranged as his involvement in the group deepened. Family and friendship connections pre-dated the involvement of the core individuals in foreign fighting activity. A combination of fraternal relationships, the Soughir brothers and the el-Hakim brothers, and small groups of friends from the same areas of the cities of Brussels and Paris bound both networks. Defense lawyers in the two cases suggested that the networks were about persons connected by friendship and a similar environment and that group dynamics drove members of the networks into activities that in reality they did not want to participate.[87]

Network Activities

The 19th network was originally overt, participating in public protests against the Iraq war and the banning of veils in French schools. In contrast, the Kari network were not identified through overt activities but brought to the notice of the police by a report from

Table 1
Quantitative comparison of 19th and Kari networks

Network features	19th	Kari
No. backwards connections/links to prior terrorist activity	2	1
No. in immediate network	12	11
No. of foreign fighters	9	4
No. intended foreign fighters from network	11	10
No. foreign fighters killed in combat zone	3	3
No. foreign fighters captured in combat zone	2	0
No. foreign fighters captured leaving combat zone	2	1
Average joining age	19	30
No. forwards links/connections to later terrorist activity	5	1
No. foreign fighters in domestic operations network	1	0
Time 1: From first traveler to last traveler	15 months	19 months
Time 2: In transit zone (average time)	2 months	2–3 months
Time 3: In combat zone (average time)	5 months	5 months
Time 4: In active combat (average time)	>weeks?§	>weeks?§
Time 5: Return to country of origin (average time)	2 years	13 months
Time 6: From return to domestic operation	4 years	n/a

§The data is unclear on the exact amount of time the individuals spent fighting in Iraq. Adapted from Sam Mullins and Adam Dolnik. 2010. "An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modelling the Development of Islamist Terror Cells in the West." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 2 (1): 3–29, and reprinted with the permission of the publisher (Taylor & Francis Ltd., http://www.tandfonline.com).

the Belgian security service. Members of the groups were for the most part already religious before their engagement in network. Some members of the 19th group were relatively recent re-converts. The networks were operating and had sent individuals into Iraq before police investigations began. Over a limited period, the members of the networks found a common cause, fighting U.S. military forces in Iraq, the invaders of a Muslim land. Both networks had had relatively limited contact with prior terrorist activity. Contact tended to have been with individuals related to them, like Benyettou, or tangential contact with persons actively involved in promoting radical Islam, like el-Aroud who sold Loukili and Cruypenninck copies of her book.

The networks were active for a period of 23 months, the 19th from March 2003 to January 2005 and the Kari network from February 2004 to December 2005. Both networks' activity ended because the police arrested their remaining members. The two networks operated in fits and starts, sometimes active, sometimes less so. The Kari network had three broad periods of activity; in the summer of 2004 when two of their members traveled to Syria and then into Iraq; early 2005 when the group was trying to bring a wounded Younes Loukili back from Syria; and finally the period from September to November 2005 when they were actively trying get both Issam Goris and Muriel Degauque into Iraq. The 19th network also saw periods of intense activity, in the spring and summer of 2004 when eight members traveled to Syria and into Iraq. Then there appears to have been a halt until late 2004 when they attempted to send two more individuals to Syria, both of whom the French authorities detained in January 2005 prior to travel.

Travel to Iraq was through a transit destination, Damascus, Syria, where members of the networks, sometimes spent two to three months before being able to cross over into

Table 2
Qualitative comparison of 19th and Kari networks

Network features	19th	Kari
Recent Immigrants	No	No
Dual Nationals	Yes	Yes
Education	High-school	High-School
Employed	Some (menial jobs)	Unemployed
Majority married	No	No
Original group setting	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Pre-existing associations	Yes	Yes
Family ties	Yes	Yes
Group is overt or clandestine	Overt	Clandestine
Criminal activities to support network	No	Yes
Religious by time of activity	Yes	Yes
Travelers leave as one group	No	No
Travelers leave in waves	Yes	Yes
Use of indirect travel to combat zone	Yes	Yes
Direct travel to combat zone	No	No
Suicide operations intended	Yes	Yes
Suicide operations executed	Yes	Yes
Success of suicide operation	No	No
Operating prior to detection by law enforcement	Yes	Yes
Disrupted by law enforcement activity (no further foreign fighters sent)	Yes	Yes
Did members continue activities in another foreign fighter network	No	Yes
Did members continue activities in domestic operations network	Yes	No

Adapted from Sam Mullins and Adam Dolnik. 2010. "An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modelling the Development of Islamist Terror-Cells in the West." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 2 (1): 3–29, and reprinted with the permission of the publisher (Taylor & Francis Ltd., http://www.tandfonline.com).

Iraq. Both networks rented accommodation in Damascus. While the data is difficult to interpret, it appears that the amount of time spent fighting in Iraq, prior to death or capture, was relatively short. Peter Cherif entered in September 2004 and was captured in December 2004, Younes Loukili appears to have entered Iraq in the fall of 2004 and was wounded in November 2004. Tarek Ounis who traveled into Iraq with Cherif was killed on 20 September 2004 and may have spent days or weeks inside Iraq before dying. The individual who appears to have spent the longest period fighting in Iraq in the insurgency was Mohamed el-Ayouni, who entered at the same time as Cherif and was also wounded but remained in Iraq until late 2005. His case seems to have been the exception.[88]

Both networks sent fewer foreign fighters than was intended due to disruption by law enforcement, and individuals, who traveled to Syria but then decided not to proceed to Iraq. The arrests by French and Belgian police may have stopped the travel of six persons (four Belgians and two French). The groups saw members captured in the combat zone or

while transiting through Syria. Elements from the networks participated in a mix of combat operations in Iraq, with five persons fighting in Fallujah in November 2004 while three others were involved in suicide operations. These operations, while executed, did not kill anybody apart from the participant. Loukili states that he joined Kotob Soughir in Fallujah and that while there he saw two French foreign fighters.[89] In total the networks sent thirteen persons into Iraq, six died in Iraq and five were captured. Eventually four members were able to return to their country of origin, three to France and one to Belgium.

Foreign fighter networks while not necessarily similar in relation to their sociodemographic composition, share a number of traits in terms of their intent, engagement in combat activities in a civil war or insurgency, and in activities which are primarily, if not exclusively, directed at the facilitation of travel to and from conflict zones through the provision of finances and material support (money, passports, or contacts).

Domestic Attack Networks

Bakker as well as Clutterbuck and Warnes have conducted research on domestic attack networks in Europe. The Bakker study is used to compare the composition of domestic attack networks with the two foreign fighter networks. The Clutterbuck and Warnes study is used to compare activities; what do domestic attack networks do that is the same or different to foreign fighter networks? While the Clutterbuck and Warnes study focuses on terrorist plots in the United Kingdom, it is the best study on domestic attack plot behavior currently available.

Bakker's study, used a sample of 31 cases involving 242 persons, looking at social background and circumstances of joining the *jihad*. Bakker excluded foreign fighter networks from his study. His analysis found that a majority had connections outside of Europe, a high number had criminal records, all almost all were male and that many members of the various networks were connected by kinship and friendship.[90] A comparison of the 19th and Kari networks with Bakker's sample suggests that there is no difference in "social background" or "circumstances of joining the *jihad*" between individuals involved in domestic attack networks or in foreign fighter networks.

Clutterbuck and Warnes examined the six most serious plots and attacks from 2004 to 2007 in the United Kingdom. Their analysis covered group composition as well as functioning; of particular interest is the examination of how the attack networks functioned.[91] They identified 11 elements related to attack planning. These are similar to the process described by Drake, "choosing potential targets; gathering information; planning the attack; executing the attack . . . and issuing communiqués."[92] Broadly, these elements relate to the planning and execution of a terrorist attack (see Table 3). They range from the collection and exploitation of information for planning the attack to the acquisition of materials to construct an improvised explosive device (IED) as well as the making of martyrdom videos or other communications about the planned attack. The indicators developed by Clutterbuck and Warnes are present to varying degrees in their six case studies. The foreign fighter networks share four of these elements with attack networks. The elements— use of documents and criminality to advance terrorist activity, allaying suspicion and other personal behaviors—are arguably common to a broad range of clandestine behavior and are useful in equal measure to foreign fighter networks as much as domestic attack networks. The indicators material to the preparation of an attack, surveillance, target selection, explosives acquisition and a place to build the IED, are all absent from the Kari and 19th foreign fighter networks.

Table 3
Comparison of domestic attack network and foreign fighter networks

UK attack cells	19th	Kari
Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and dry-runs	No	No
Targets attacked or selected	No	No
Targets considered	No	No
Suicide videos and other personal communication		
Explosives	No	No
Premises	No	No
Use of documents to advance terrorist activity	Yes	Yes
Use of criminality to advance terrorist activity	No	Yes
Acquisition of firearms	No	No
Allaying suspicion	Yes	Yes
Other personal behaviors	Yes	Yes

The networks are sociodemographically similar but different in terms of key elements of their behavior (i.e., an absence of planning to attack in their country of residence).[93] The essential difference between a foreign fighter network and a domestic attack network is finally one of intent, and as Hegghammer has argued, perhaps this intent is based on norms related to the legitimacy of fighting abroad compared to committing a domestic attack.[94] The members of the 19th and Kari networks, including some of those who had returned, described their motivation for traveling to Iraq. During his trial Youness Loukili, told the Belgian court, "I did not wish to die as a martyr. I wanted to help the Iraqis, militarily, to chase out the Americans. If I was to die that would have been a plus but it was not an end in itself. ... It was about fighting an injustice."[95] Pascal Cruypenninck told the court; "I thought Goris was in Iraq to attack a prison and set the prisoners free. He had been impressed by the stories about torture in Abu Ghraib. I did not believe that it was for a suicide attack."[96] Thomas Bouchnak, a thwarted traveler stated; "I really wanted to fight but not in just any group. If I was fired upon, maybe I would be dead but I did not have the intention to take part in a suicide attack."[97]

The Kari and 19th networks appear to have been disrupted by the arrests and judicial trials. The core members as a whole or in part did not re-start foreign fighter activities with the remnants of the network. Once interrupted, the networks do not seem to have reformed, rather a limited number of individuals, formerly associated with the networks found other entities and formed other links and associations to continue engagement in activities linked to foreign fighting or domestic attack networks. In the case of Kari, none of the core members has been reported as re-engaging. Three members of the 19th network were arrested and charged for their alleged roles in planning to help a convicted terrorist escape from prison and fourth is currently being sought for his involvement in Sunni extremist activity in Tunisia.

Does What Happened in Fallujah Stay in Fallujah?

This research had a twofold goal, first to examine Belgian and French foreign fighter networks; second, from this examination develop an understanding of eventual differences between foreign fighter networks and domestic attack networks.

The conclusions are necessarily limited by the data used, the size of the comparison sample, and the fact, that terrorist activity involves human beings who bring ambiguity, fluid motives and shifting behavior which means that terrorism and political violence will not always be responsive to rigid categorization.[98] The conclusions described here should be regarded as a series of observations based on the data discussed.

These observations are that there was a foreign fighter mobilization to participate in the Sunni insurgency in Iraq from 2003 onwards. Foreign fighters were a minority within the insurgency. European foreign fighters were the smallest grouping. The primary method for joining these mobilizations is through networks. These networks receive and interpret, whether in a sophisticated manner or in a bastardized form foreign fighter frames. These frames in turn draw a response encouraging individuals to solicit joining and in doing so maintain the momentum of the mobilization.

Belgian and French foreign fighters accounted for at least 23 percent of foreign fighters originating from the European Union. Networks were involved in trying to send fighters from 2003 to 2007. The peak period was 2004 to 2005 when the majority of successful entries into Iraq occurred. Post-2007, there appear to have been no further Belgian or French foreign fighters entering Iraq to fight. From 2007 onward, foreign fighters turned their attention to the Afghanistan–Pakistan theater and Somalia.

A comparison of the sociodemographic composition of foreign fighter networks with domestic attack networks found that there were little to no differences. The two foreign fighter networks were not exactly the same in terms of size, ethnicity, or age but they were internally homogenous. Similar to attack networks in the United Kingdom, foreign fighter networks in Belgium and France comprised in their majority small groups of males, mostly single and under-employed, who knew each other through friendship and kinship.

A comparison of the activities of these two foreign fighter networks with domestic attack networks in United Kingdom found that there were a range of activities that were similar but that the activities essential to preparing and executing an attack were absent from the foreign fighter networks. The foreign fighter networks were involved in facilitating, through the provision of both ideological motivation and logistical aid, members to participate in combat operations within the context of a civil war or insurgency outside of their country of origin or primary residence. A foreign fighter network is distinct from a domestic attack network where the goal is the planning and execution of an attack in the members' country of origin or primary residence.

The examination of the networks did lead to a number of observations about foreign fighter networks that, given the size of the data sample, require further research. Not all members of the network actually fight; some of them remain involved in providing logistics support or ideological motivation. Not all members of the network who have the intention to travel actually arrive in the combat zone. This is due to a combination of factors ranging from an individual getting "cold feet" to a member being arrested at the time of travel. The time actually spent in the combat zone varies and in the cases of the Kari and 19th networks ranges from a few weeks to in the longest case, perhaps seventeen months.

A final series of observations relates less to the networks themselves but to intelligence and law enforcement activities. The networks existed before detection, but as the friendship or kinship links tend to predate activity in foreign fighting, it is difficult to "detect friendships." The networks were relatively short-lived, being active over a period of 23 months as opposed to permanent structures. The covertness level of the networks varied, the 19th were publicly active in the political protest sphere before turning to foreign fighting. Law enforcement arrests, judicial processes, and trials tend to disrupt and put a stop to network activity but not necessarily to the engagement or activities of all of

the individuals. Some members will later engage in domestic attack activity. This activity can be in the context of another group or network, for example el-Ayouni's involvement in planning a prison break, el-Hakim's participation in political violence in Tunisia, or Arnaud's planning an attack in Paris.

These findings support macro-level studies, which argue that foreign fighting is the preferred choice of many Sunni extremists in the West. They do not support the conclusion that foreign fighters are responsible for plots that are more successful or more lethal.[99] This is due to two factors; firstly Hegghammer widened his definition of foreign fighters to include foreign travelers; that is, those who were seeking training and who are not necessarily foreign fighters; and secondly the data sample used here is relatively small compared to Hegghammer's large *n*-study.

A number of objections could be made to these findings. Is it necessary to make this distinction between types of involvement in political violence, does it not obscure or further confuse analysis of engagement in political violence? Distinguishing between foreign fighters and foreign trained terrorists or those who engage in domestic attacks, is a further unhelpful disaggregation of actor types that may lead to further confusion about Sunni extremist engagement in violence. It is argued here that the findings suggest that nuance and refining understanding about foreign fighter networks is necessary and this could lead to an enhanced comprehension of how foreign fighter networks function and how members transition into domestic attack activity.

A second objection is that the data sample is too small for the findings to have any validity. Obviously, more research with a wider sample is necessary to validate the findings and further refine the observations made in this study. Nonetheless, the sample represents the networks responsible for the majority of foreign fighters from Belgium and France during the peak period of mobilization.

This article found that Belgian and French foreign fighters might have represented a quarter of all European foreign fighters in Iraq. The majority traveled between 2004 and 2005. Two foreign fighter networks, Kari and 19th, were responsible for the bulk of these individuals. These networks were involved exclusively in supporting the movement of foreign fighters to Iraq and bringing back into Europe individuals who had been fighting or were wounded. The sociodemographic composition of foreign fighter networks and domestic attack networks is similar, if not the same. Based on an investigation and comparison of the activities of domestic attack networks and the two foreign fighter networks, the French and Belgian did not show intent to engage domestic attacks. Some members or individuals on the fringe of the networks did later engage in domestic attack activity but this was in the context of recomposed networks or another group. Historical review of cases and network level analysis has the potential to provide detailed insight into foreign fighter behaviors, the evolution of foreign fighter network activity as well as connections or moves to domestic attack networks.

Acknowledgement

Elements from the 19th network appeared on the author's blog following the January 2015 attacks in France.

Notes

1. Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security* 35(3) (2010), pp. 53–94; Thomas Hegghammer and Jeff Colgan,

"Islamic Foreign Fighters: Concepts and Data." Paper Presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, Montreal, (2011), pp. 1–26, Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice Between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," *American Political Science Review* 107(1) (2013), pp. 1–15. David Malet, "Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity In Civil Conflicts." Ph.D. Thesis, The Faculty of The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences of the George Washington University (2009); David Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters?: Historical Perspectives and Solutions," *Orbis* 54(1) (2010), pp. 97–114; Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31(5) (2008), pp. 412–433 and Frank J. Cilluffo, Jeffrey B. Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstrop, "Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones," Homeland Security Policy Institute, The George Washington University (2010).

2. Rik Coolsaet, "Terrorism and Radicalisation: What Do We Know Now?," in Rik Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (2nd ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate: 2011), p. 261; Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 177–186; Donatella Della Porta, "On Individual Motivations in Underground Political Organizations," in John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, eds., *Terrorism Studies: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 235; Florence Passy, "Socialization, Connection, and the Structure/Agency Gap: A Specification of the Impact of Networks on Participation in Social Movements," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 6(2) (2001), p. 178; Olivier Roy, "Al-Qaeda: A Truly Global Movement," in Rik Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (2nd ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 22–23; Marc Sageman, "The Turn to Political Violence in the West," in Rik Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (2nd ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 116–129.

3. Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*. Nederlands Instituut voor Internationale Betrekkingen, Clingendael. Working Paper (2006); Edwin Bakker, "Jihadi Terrorists in Europe and Global Salafi Jihadis," in Rick Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Edwin Bakker, "Characteristics of Jihadi Terrorists in Europe (2001–2009)," in Rik Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (2nd ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Sam Mullins and Adam Dolnik, "An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modelling the Development of Islamist Terror-Cells in the West." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 2 (1) (2010), pp. 3–29; Sam Mullins, "Terrorist Networks and Small Group Psychology," in David Cantor, ed., *The Faces of Terrorism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009); Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Sageman, "The Turn to Political Violence in the West."

4. Hegghammer and Colgan, "Islamic Foreign Fighters: Concepts and Data," pp. 16 and 20. See also Jonathon Steele, *Defeat: Why They Lost Iraq* (London and New York: I B Tauris, 2008), pp. 73–74; Feurat Alani, "Djihad; La filière des trois Français," *Le Point*, 10 February 2005; Jonathan Finer, "Among Insurgents in Iraq, Few Foreigners are Found," *The Washington Post*, 16 November 2005; Patrick J. McDonnell, "Coalition Gains Insight into Iraq's Foreign Insurgents," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 February 2004; Jim Michaels, "Foreign Fighters Leaving Iraq, Military Says," *USA Today*, 21 March 2008.

5. The Sinjar documents, recovered from Al Qaeda in Iraq during a U.S. military operation in Sinjar in September 2007, contained detailed biographical information for foreign fighters allowing analysis of country of origin. A less detailed document was recovered during the al-Fajr Operation in Fallujah, in November 2004. See Multi-National Corps-Iraq [MNC-I], "Telling the Fallujah Story to the World (Third Cut)," Iraq Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF) & MNC-I Effects Exploitation Team, 20 November 2004. A copy is in the possession of the author. Other documents have not been made publicly available although their existence has been alluded to in press reporting. See Christophe Dubois, "Un char a tiré, mon bras a été arraché," *Le Parisien*, 2 October 2006 and "Procès terrorisme: Ali Tabich conteste s'être rendu en Irak," 16 April 2012, Belga.

6. Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?," pp. 4–5. Multi-National Force in Iraq [MNF-I], *Situational Update*, 8 December 2005. Previously available at the now defunct MNFI website. A copy is in the possession of the author. Multi-National Force in Iraq [MNF-I],

Situational Update, 20 April 2006. Previously available at the now defunct MNF-I website. A copy is in the possession of the author.

7. Marc Trévidic, *Terroristes: Les 7 piliers de la deraison* (Paris: JC Lattes, 2013), p. 148.

8. Associated Press, "Filières irakiennes de Montpellier: Hamid Bach condamné à six ans ferme." *Associated Press*, 11 June 2008; Jean Chichizola, "Les islamistes du XIXe arrondissement voulaient frapper en France," *Le Figaro*, 29 January 2004; Christophe Dubois, "Sur la trace de jeunes des 19eme." *Le Parisien*, 19 September 2005; Dubois, "Un char a tiré, mon bras a été arraché"; Jospeh Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records*. Harmony Project (New York: Combating Terrorism Center, Department of Social Sciences, U.S. Military Academy West Point, 2007); Mohamed Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom* (United States: Institute of Peace Press. 2007), pp. 202–205; Daniel McGrory and Michael Evans, "The Deadly Trail of a Mystery Bomber," *The Times*, 23 June 2005.

9. One individual contests having traveled to Iraq and a second individual, captured in Iraq, denies having been involved with foreign fighter networks. Belga, "Procès terrorisme: Ali Tabich conteste s'être rendu en Irak." ; La Dernière Heure, "Un rapatriement sans conditions: La famille d'Oussama Atar, retenu en Irak dans un état de santé déplorable, lance un SOS," *La Dernière Heure*, 3 September 2010; Interview, 25 February 2013.

10. Jean-Louis Bruguière, *Ce que je n'ai pas pu dire* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2006), pp. 453–455.

11. Interview, 25 February 2013.

12. Ibid.

13. Belga, "Procès terrorisme: Ali Tabich conteste s'être rendu en Irak."

14. BBC Monitoring, "Belgian Diplomat to Visit Terror Suspect in Iraqi Jail" [Report by Wouter Verschelden and Bart Beirlant: "Government Sends Diplomats to Belgian in Iraqi Cell"], 29 March 2007. Published by Belgian newspaper De Standaard website on 28 March 2007. La Dernière Heure, "Un rapatriement sans conditions."

15. Belga, "Procès terrorisme."

16. Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?," p. 5.

17. Patricia Tourancheau, "Un ticket pour le jihad," *Libération*, 21 February 2005; Patricia Tourancheau, "Destination fatale," *Libération*, 22 February 2005.

18. Jean Chichizola, "Boubaker el-Hakim: Des geôles syriennes à celles de la DST," *Le Figaro*, 4 June 2005.

19. Dubois, "Sur la trace de jeunes des 19eme."

20. Tourancheau, "Un ticket pour le jihad."

21. Ibid.

22. Bruguière, *Ce que je n'ai pas pu dire*, p. 446; Jean Chichizola, "Un chef spirituel de 23 ans à la tête du groupe des Buttes-Chaumont," *Le Figaro*, 4 February 2005.

23. Chichizola, "Boubaker el-Hakim" and Christophe Dubois, "Mohamed, enrôlé pour combattre en Irak; Terrorisme," *Le Parisien*, 9 February 2005.

24. Christophe Dubois and Francoise Labrouillere, "Itineraire d'un petit francais saisi par le djihad," *Paris Match*, No. 3069, 13 March 2008.

25. Chichizola, ; Dubois, "Mohamed, enrôlé pour combattre en Irak; Terrorisme."

26. Dubois, "Mohamed, enrôlé pour combattre en Irak" and Elaine Sciolino, "France Seizes 11 Accused of Plotting Iraq Attacks," *The New York Times*, 27 January 2005.

27. Elise Vincent, "Farid Benyettou, 26 ans, le prédicateur devenu recruteur," *Le Monde*, 27 March 2008.

28. Tourancheau, "Un ticket pour le jihad."

29. Associated Press, "Filières irakiennes: Projets d'attentats en France," *Associated Press*, 28 January 2005.

30. Tourancheau, "Un ticket pour le jihad."

31. Piotr Smolar, "Trois hommes mis en examen et écroués après le coup de filet dans l'enquête sur la 'filière irakienne,'" *Le Monde*, 1 February 2005.

32. Associated Press, "Filières irakiennes."

33. Chichizola, "Un chef spirituel de 23 ans à la tête du groupe des Buttes-Chaumont"; Jean Chichizola, "Un 'référent religieux' à bonne école," *Le Figaro*, 9 February 2005; Anne-Charlotte De Langhe, "Filières irakiennes: sept jeunes djihadistes jugés à Paris," *Le Figaro*, 20 March 2008.

34. Associated Press, "Filières irakiennes"; "Trois hommes mis en examen et écroués après le coup de filet dans l'enquête sur la 'filière irakienne'"; Chichizola, "Les islamistes du XIXe arrondissement voulaient frapper en France."

35. Le Figaro, "Un suspect interpellé; Filières Irakiennes," *Le Figaro*, 25 May 2005.

36. Thierry Portes, "Un imam radical expulsé vers l'Algérie ; Islamisme Reda Ameuroud avait déjà été arrêté plusieurs fois. Une dizaine d'autres prêcheurs devraient être renvoyés dans les jours qui viennent," *Le Figaro*, 30 July 2005.

37. Pascal Ceaux, "Une filière égyptienne de départ pour l'Irak a été démantelée en Seine-Saint-Denis; Six personnes ont été placées en garde à vue," *Le Monde*, 21 September 2005; Christophe Dubois, "Une nouvelle cellule islamiste démantelée; Filières irakiennes," *Le Parisien*, 20 September 2005.

38. Interview, 22 February 2013.

39. Chichizola, "Un chef spirituel de 23 ans à la tête du groupe des Buttes-Chaumont"; Dubois and Labrouillere, "Itineraire d'un petit francais saisi par le djihad"; Elise Vincent, "Des Français âgés de moins de 25 ans, habitants d'un arrondissement populaire de Paris, avaient décidé de partir combattre au nom de l'islam," *Le Monde*, 27 March 2008.

40. Le Monde, "Jusqu'à sept ans de prison pour les membres de la filière irakienne du 'XIXe arrondissement,'" *Le Monde*, 15 May 2008.

41. Jean Chichizola, "Un apprenti terroriste voulait 'faire sauter' la Direction du renseignement," *Le Figaro*, 11 March 2009.

42. Ibid. and Jean-Marc Ducos, "Garde à vue dans une enquête antiterroriste; Projet d'attentat," *Le Parisien*, 26 March 2009.

43. Le Monde, "Djamel Beghal projetait de faire évader un ancien terroriste," *Le Monde*, 25 May 2010 and Damien Delseny, "Le commando rate des braquers et des islamistes," *Le Parisien*, 19 May 2010.

44. Patricia Tourancheau and Isabelle Hanne, "A Tunis, un Français derrière la mort de Brahmi," *Libération*, 26 July 2013.

45. See The New York Times Project, The Guantanamo Docket for more information about Mesut Sen. Available at http://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo/detainees/296-mesut-sen

46. Interview, 25 February 2013.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.; Interview, 22 February 2013; La Libre, "Malika El Aroud impliquée dans l'affaire Degauque: L'ex-épouse de l'assassin du commandant Massoud n'est cependant pas inculpée," *La Libre*, 10 October 2007; Chris De Stoop, *Vrede Zij Met U, Zuster: Het verhaal van een westerse zelfmoordterroriste*. (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2010), p. 178.

50. De Standaard, "Martelaren voor terrorist Al Zarqawi," *De Standaard*, 16 October 2007.

51. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, 26 June 2008, pp. 48–49.

52. For a detailed account regarding Degauque see De Stoop, Vrede Zij Met U, Zuster and Paul Landau, Pour Allah jusqu'a la mort: Enquete sur les convertis a l'islam radical (Paris: Rocher, 2008), pp. 13–29.

53. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 53.

54. Ibid., p. 73, and Interview, 25 February 2013.

55. Ibid.

56. Literally "sucking," a form of traditional medicine, where blood is drawn by vacuum from a small skin incision for therapeutic purposes. *La Plume* later became notorious when a woman died during an exorcism. Jean-Pierre Borloo, "Une ASBL au Coeur de l'islam radical," *La Libre*, 16 December 2005.

57. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 53.

58. Ibid., p. 49.

59. Meijri's name and contact details were on the 2007 Sinjar foreign fighter list recovered by the U.S. military during an operation in Iraq. Thierry Oberlé, "Le bottin d'al-Qaida sur le Net," *Le Figaro*, 24 January 2008.

60. Christophe Lamfalussy, "Loukili a perdu sa jambe à Falloudja," *La Libre*, 19 October 2007.

61. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 53.

62. Lamfalussy, "Loukili a perdu sa jambe à Falloudja."

63. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 44.
64. Ibid., p. 53.
65. Ibid., p. 52.
66. BBC Monitoring, "Terror Suspects Studied at Syrian Koranic Schools While on Belgian Welfare," 23 October 2007 [Report by "me": "Terror Suspects Profited in the Name of Allah"]. Published by Belgian newspaper De Standaard on 23 October 2007.
67. Interview, 25 February 2013.
68. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 58.
69. Ibid. and Interview, 25 February 2013.
70. Ibid., p. 33.
71. Ibid.
72. Lavenir.net, "Appel Bxl: décision le 26/06/08 pour la filière kamikaze," *Lavenir.net*, 15 May 2008.
73. Interview, 25 February 2013.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Rik Coolsaet and Tanguy Struye de Swielande, "Belgium and Counterterrorism Policy in the Jihadi Era (1986–2007)," Working Paper 40/2007, (Real Instituto Elcano, 2007), p. 4.
77. BBC Monitoring, "Terror Trial Reveals Belgian Iraq Suicide Bombers' Ties with Moroccan Group" [Text of report by "me" entitled "Link between GICM and Iraq Kamikazes"], 23 December 2005, published by Belgian newspaper De Standaard website on 23 December 2005.
78. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 56.
79. Jean-Pierre Borloo, "Une filière syro-irakienne: Un Bruxellois jugé pour sa participation à Al-Qaïda," *Le Soir*, 20 January 2011 and Jean-Pierre De Staercke, "Cinq ans requis contre El-Bahri: Ce résident belge a intégré une cellule d'Al-Qaïda en Irak," *La Dernière Heure*, 21 January 2011.
80. Judgment of the 12th Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Brussels, Belgium, p. 49.
81. Interview, 22 February 2013.
82. Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?," pp. 12–13.
83. Ibid., pp. 7–10.
84. Teun Van Dongen, "The Lengths Terrorists Go To: Perpetrator Characteristics and the Complexity of Jihadist Terrorist Attacks in Europe 2004–2011," *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Agression* (2013), p. 17.
85. "Terrorist Networks and Small Group Psychology" and Mullins and Dolnik, "An Exploratory, Dynamic Application of Social Network Analysis for Modelling the Development of Islamist Terror-Cells in the West." pp. 3–29.
86. Sageman, "The Turn to Political Violence in the West," p. 122.
87. Jean-Pierre Stroobants and Piotr Smolar, "La Belgique est devenue une base du djihadisme en Europe," *Le Monde*, 18 December 2005 and Agence France Presse, ""Filières irakiennes," de Paris à Bagdad, itinéraires d'apprentis djihadistes," *Agence France Presse*, 30 January 2005.
88. Christophe Dubois, "Le djihadiste français blessé en Irak écroué à Paris," *Le Parisien*, 1 July 2006.
89. Lamfalussy, "Loukili a perdu sa jambe à Falloudja."
90. Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe*, p. 79; Lindsay Clutterbuck and Richard Warnes, "Exploring Patterns of Behaviour in Violent Jihadist Terrorists: An Analysis of Six Significant Terrorist Conspiracies in the UK," RAND Europe Report TR-923-ANT (Cambridge: RAND Corporation, 2011) have conducted research on domestic attack networks in Europe. Sageman, "The Turn to Political Violence in the West," has examined activity in the West. Other analyses of attack networks and activity in Europe include Peter Nesser, "Chronology of Jihadism in Western Europe 1994–2007: Planned, Prepared, and Executed Terrorist Attacks," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31(10) (2008), pp. 924–946 and Javier Jordan, "Analysis of Jihadi Terrorism Incidents in Western Europe, 2001–2010," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 35(5) (2012), pp. 382–404. These studies, while useful, did not provide the basis for a direct comparison at the network level between the foreign fighter networks and domestic attack networks.
91. Clutterbuck and Warnes, "Exploring Patterns of Behaviour in Violent Jihadist Terrorists," pp. 35–41.
92. Charles J. M. Drake, "The Role of Ideology in Terrorists' Target Selection," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10(2) (1998), pp. 54–72.

93. Studies of a Moroccan foreign fighter network operating in 2006 to 2007 from Tetaoun also show a number of similarities with the Belgian and French networks. See Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy: Violent Extremism, Sacred Values, and What it Means to be Human* (London: Penguin, 2010), pp. 211–224 and Andrea Elliot, "Where Boys Grow Up to Be Jihadis," *The New York Times*, 25 November 2007.

94. Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?," pp. 7–9.

95. Agence France Presse, "Procès du réseau de la kamikaze belge: un accusé reconnaît avoir combattu en Irak," *Agence France Presse*, 19 October 2007 and Agence France Presse, "Belgique: la rare confession de Youness, combattant anti-américain en Irak," *Agence France Presse*, 19 October 2007.

96. De Standaard, "Horen, zien en zwijgen in naam van Allah," De Standaard, 24 November 2007.

97. Agence France Presse, "Belgique."

98. Institut national des hautes études de sécurité (INHES), Expertise Collective Des Terrorismes en Europe: Échanges entre chercheurs et services chargés de la lutte anti-terroriste (Paris: Institut national des hautes études de sécurité, 2006), pp. 24 and 43.

99. Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?"