

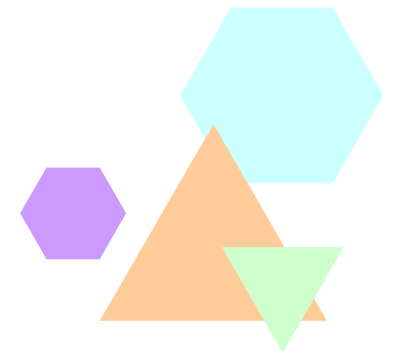


ASSESSING THE TERRORIST THREAT

Nathan Lee Rhoden

October 22, 2010

Tokyo, Japan





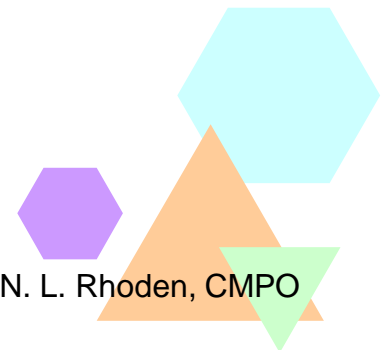
BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

ASSESSING THE TERRORIST THREAT

A REPORT OF THE BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER'S
NATIONAL SECURITY PREPAREDNESS GROUP

**THE BIPARTISAN
POLICY CENTER**

BY PETER BERGEN AND BRUCE HOFFMAN
SEPTEMBER 10, 2010



N. L. Rhoden, CMPO

Key to Map Symbols



Terror Group



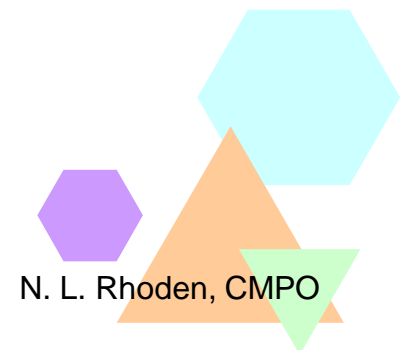
Terror Attack



Terror Plot



Terror War (Jihad)







Manchester Plot, 2009

- On April 8th, 12 men (including 10 Pakistani's on student visas) were arrested in a suspected plot to bomb shopping centers in and near Manchester, England.
- Evidence included coded email using the girls' names to refer to different bomb-making chemicals, with phrases like “weak and difficult to convince” and “crystal clear” used to refer to the strength of the chemicals.
- A top secret briefing document was caught on film by a photographer outside Downing Street, and led to a hastier raid than originally planned.
- All 12 were released, 11 were deported back to Pakistan.





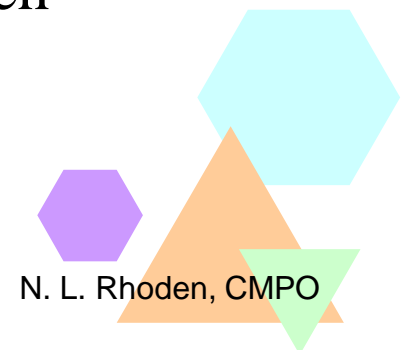
Oslo Plot, 2010

- On July 8th, three men were arrested (2 in Norway, 1 in Germany) based on information obtained from the New York Plot, 2009 (subway bombing).
- All three men held Norwegian residency, but one was a Muslim Uighur from China, another was an Iraqi Kurd, and the third man was an Uzbek national.
- Al-Qaeda called for an attack on Norway in retaliation for the 500 Norwegian troops in Afghanistan and the “Muhammad cartoons” that were republished in Norway.



Moscow Attack, 2010

- On March 29th, two female suicide bombers detonated on the Moscow Metro during the morning rush hour.
- The first bomb went off at 7:56am in Lubyanka station, and the second at 8:36am in Park Kultury station.
- The first bomber was a 17-year-old girl, and the other was a 28-year-old computer science teacher with degrees in both mathematics and psychology.
- 40 people were killed, and over 100 injured.
- Responsibility was claimed by the Islamist Chechen separatists of the Caucasus Emirate.





Barcelona Plot, 2008

- On January 18th, Spanish authorities thwarted a suicide bomber plot against on the Barcelona subway system.
- The nine Pakistanis and two Indians were arrested in haste, but, while bomb-making equipment was found, only 20 grams of actual explosives were seized.
- A French informant was exposed by the Spanish, and French officials said the Spanish destroyed a valuable intelligence asset useful for future probes into Islamist activities in Europe.
- The suspects were acting on orders from the “Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan” (TTP) a Pakistani Taliban organization with links to al-Queda.





Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

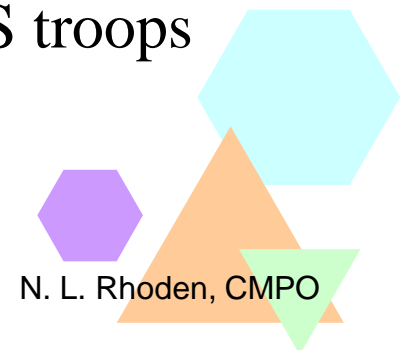
- In September 2006, the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat changed its name to “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb” (AQIM).
- Traditionally focused only on Algerian targets, recently it has bombed the UN building in Algiers and attacked the Israeli embassy in Mauritania.
- AQIM also commonly raises operational funds through kidnap ransoms, which it shares with like-minded jihadist groups elsewhere.





Iraq Campaign

- On March 20, 2003, a multinational force led the United States and the United Kingdom invaded Iraq.
- While the initial stated aim was to topple the Saddam Hussein regime, and locate weapons of mass destruction, it evolved into a complex counterinsurgency and nation building effort.
- While last U.S. “combat brigade” left Iraq on August 19th, and on August 31st President Obama declared an end to combat operations, approximately 50,000 U.S. troops still remain in Iraq in an "advise and assist" capacity.
- According to a Status of Forces Agreement, all US troops are required to leave Iraq by the end of 2011.





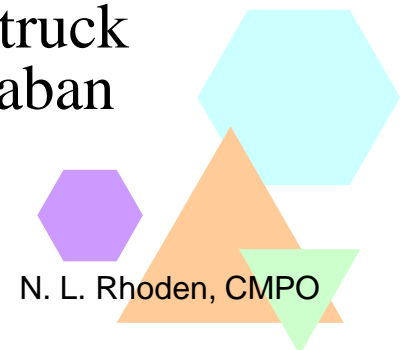
Al-Qaeda in Iraq

- While no longer able to control large areas of the country, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) has proven resilient, successfully conducting large-scale bombings in central Baghdad in 2009 and 2010.
- In the first three months of 2010, there were more terrorist incidents in Iraq (566) than in any other country in the world, and these attacks killed at least 667 people.
- Even a weakened and numerically reduced terrorist group, which has suffered successive losses of key top leaders, is still capable of inflicting severe pain on a targeted society, thus undermining public trust in the ability of the authorities to maintain order and protect its citizens.



Saudi Arabia Campaign

- The US sent troops to Saudi Arabia in 1990 after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, and this US military presence, near the holiest sites in Islam (Mecca and Medina), humiliated some Muslims into insurgency.
- On May 12, 2003, simultaneous attacks on three foreign compounds in Riyadh killed 35 and wounded over 160, prompting a harsh crackdown on the insurgency.
- More than 600 suspects were arrested, and bomb-making equipment, guns, bomb belts, and thousands of other weapons were seized.
- Despite those efforts, on November 8th, a suicide truck bomb detonated outside a housing compound in Laban Valley, killing 18 and wounding 122.







Kampala Attack, 2010

- On July 11th, two suicide bombers killed at least 64 people, and injured 70 more, in Kambala, Uganda.
- One bomb was detonated at a restaurant, and the other was detonated at a ruby club, both of which were filled with crowds watching a screening of the final match of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.
- A third unexploded suicide bomber vest was later found.
- Al-Shabaab, an Islamist Somali militia group, now known to have strong ties to al-Qaida, claimed responsibility.
- This was al-Shabaab's first attack outside of Somalia.



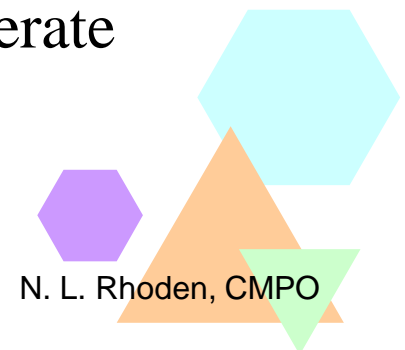
al-Shabab

- The origins of al-Shabab are not clearly known, but former members say it was founded as early as 2004.
- In September 2009, al-Shabab formally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.
- Al-Shabab has convinced at least two Americans (young men of Somali descent) to become suicide bombers.
- On October 29, 2008, Shirwa Ahmed (from Minneapolis) drove a truck into a government compound in Somalia, killing 20, including UN and other foreign workers
- On September 17, 2009, two stolen U.N. vehicles loaded with bombs blew up at the Mogadishu airport, killing 12 peacekeepers of the African Union, and it is believed that Omar Mohamud (from Seattle), was one of the drivers.



Somalia Campaign

- The Somalia Campaign is an ongoing conflict, that includes the infamous Battle of Mogadishu (“Blackhawk Down”) in 1993.
- “The Somali War” officially began on July 20, 2006 when U.S. backed Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia to prop up the Somali TFG (Transitional Federal Government).
- The withdrawal of Ethiopian troops in early 2009 has not brought a conclusion to the conflict, and fighting continues between hard line Islamist factions and more moderate factions within the Somali government.





al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has begun to expand its terrorist attacks beyond Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as demonstrated by their attempt to explode a bomb on a flight over Detroit on Christmas Day 2009.
- Two recent shooting and several other incidents in the US have been linked with the AQAP.
- A key AQAP operative is the American-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, has also radicalized several other persons arrested in diverse places such as England and Singapore.
- On April 6, 2010, it was reported that President Obama had authorized the targeted killing of al-Awlaki, making him the first US citizen ever placed on the CIA target list.



Yemen Campaign, 2008

- Following the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, President Ali Abdullah Saleh made an effort to eliminate the Islamist militant presence in Yemen, but his efforts were not completely effective, and many US workers and others have continued to be killed.
- On September 17, 2008, Al Qaeda militants attacked the U.S. Embassy in San'a'. 19 people were killed, including: six militants, six policemen and seven civilians.
- As a result, the US focus on Yemen as a potential terrorist hub has increased, and on January 27, 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called Yemen "an urgent national security priority."





Afghanistan Campaign, 2002

- The Afghanistan Campaign began in 2002 when the US and British military invaded Afghanistan in response to the 911 Terror Attacks.
- While the initial stated aim was to locate and capture (or kill) Osama bin Laden, destroy Al-Qaeda, and remove the Taliban regime which supported terrorism, it has since evolved into a complex counterinsurgency effort.
- On December 1, 2009, President Obama deployed an additional 30,000 troops, but he also proposed to begin troop withdrawals 18 months from that date.





al-Qaeda Central

- Al-Qaeda was founded in Afghanistan around 1988-89.
- As of August 6, 2010, the current chief of operations is considered to be Adnan Gulshair el Shukrijumah, replacing Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, but its main strength stems not only from its central leadership in Pakistan, but also from its recent cooperation with other like-minded groups.
- In the past several years, small numbers of al-Qaeda instructors embedded with other terror groups have functioned as trainers and force multipliers, similar to the way that US Special Forces function.
- In addition to Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba, al-Qaeda has seeded a number of franchises around the world that have little or no contact with al-Qaeda Central itself.



Taliban in Pakistan

- The Taliban governed Afghanistan from 1996 until it was overthrown in 2002, but since 2004 it has revived as a strong insurgency based in Pakistan.
- The Taliban is primarily made up of Hanafi traditionalists among the Pashtun tribes who wish to enforce one of the strictest interpretations of Sharia law ever seen.
- The Taliban have received valuable training, supplies and arms from the Pakistani government, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and many of their 25,000 recruits come from madrasas in Pakistan.
- The Taliban in Pakistan has begun to reach beyond Pakistan's borders to plot attacks in Europe and the United States.



Mumbai Attack, 2008

- On November 26th, at least ten well-trained terrorists committed more than ten shooting and bombing attacks across Mumbai, India's largest city.
- The coordinated attacks lasted three days and left 173 dead and at least 308 more wounded.
- They targeted busy streets, hotels, a train station, a college, a hospital, a movie theater, and a Jewish outreach center.
- Ajmal Kasab, the only attacker to be captured alive, eventually disclosed that he and his fellow attackers were members of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)
- The Indian Government said that the attackers came from Pakistan, and their controllers were in Pakistan.



Lashkar-e-Taiba

- The Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) was founded in Afghanistan and after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army in 1989, their objective has been to create a new Islamic state and to "liberate" Muslims residing in Indian Kashmir.
- The LeT headquarters is in the Punjab province of Pakistan, and, as of December, 2008, US intelligence officials believed that Pakistan's main intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), continued to give the LeT significant intelligence help and protection.
- It is reported that the LeT provides individuals for the outer circle of Osama bin Laden's personal security.





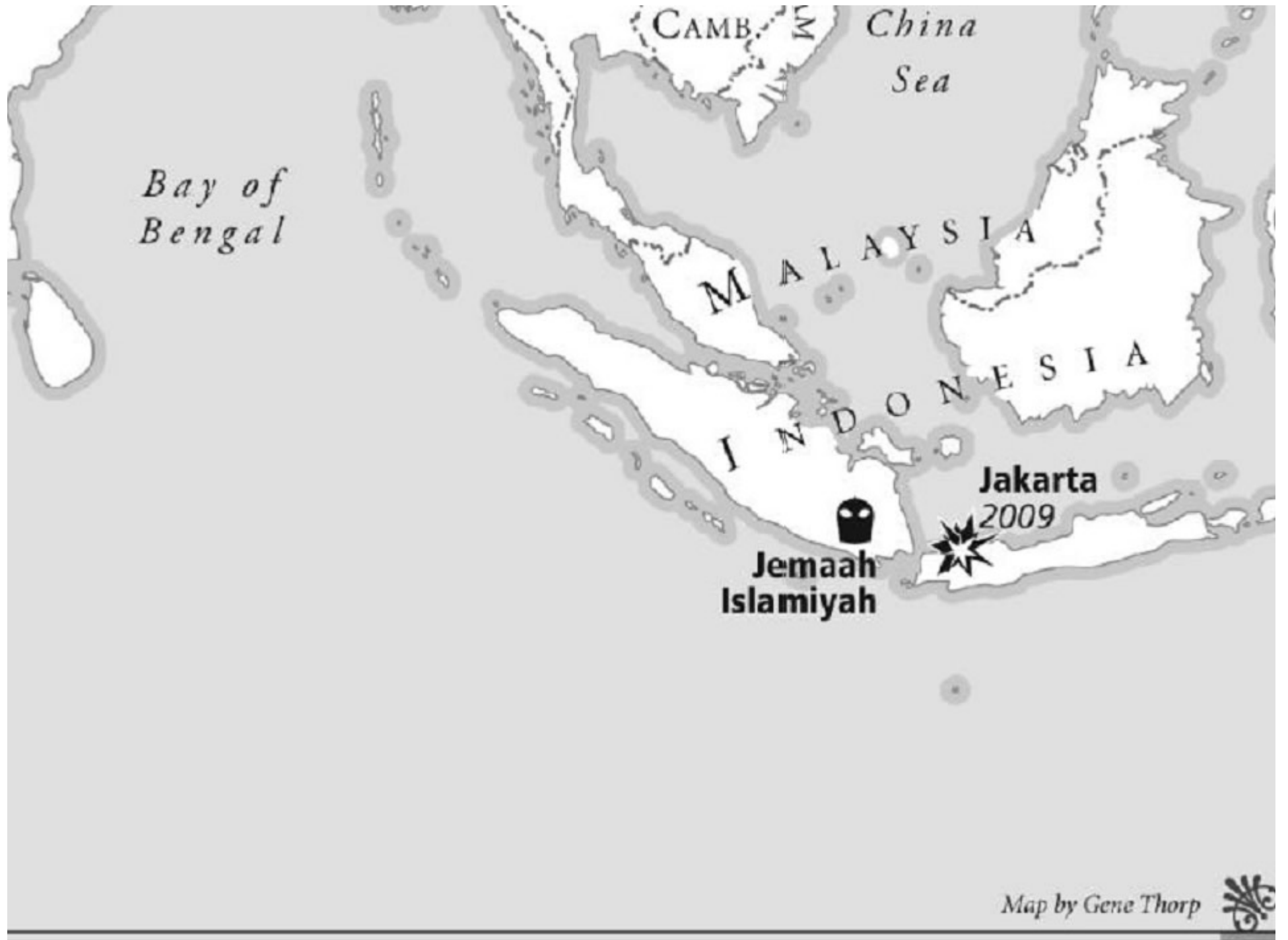
Uzbek Militant Groups.

- The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) was formed in 1991, and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) is a more recent, and more militant spinoff.
- The IMU's primary goal is to establish an Islamic state in Uzbekistan and has not explicitly threatened outside targets, but the IJU has clearly joined al-Qaeda's global jihad.
- The IJU has attracted a great many foreign recruits in the last three years, the majority from Germany, including at least 30 Germans last year.
- The 2007 German "Sauerland Cell" which had stored 700 kgs of a hydrogen peroxide-based mixture and 26 military-grade detonators and were attempting to build car bombs, is a prime example of IJU global terror activity.



Pakistan Campaign, 2002

- Pakistan is presently gripped by terrorism with more than 5,500 civilians being killed in 2008 and 2009.
- The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the CIA encouraged the "mujahideen" to fight the the Soviet Union.
- Now, these same groups are taking on the Pakistani government, allegedly because it has allied itself with the US in the global war on terror, but the "Poppy and Kalishnikov Culture" (over 80% of the world's supply or \$3.5 billion in 2006), is at the heart of the problem.
- Pakistani authorities are currently holding the commander of the Mumbai attacks, but according to the US he is not being adequately interrogated and "he continues to direct LeT operations from his detention center."





Jakarta Attack, 2009

- On July 17th, at around 7:50am, the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in Jakarta, Indonesia, were attacked by separate suicide bombers who had both checked into their hotels as paying guests several days earlier.
- 7 people were killed, and more than 50 people were wounded in the blasts.
- These twin suicide bombings (about 5 minutes apart) came four years after the 2005 Bali bombings which killed at least 20 and injured over 100 people.
- Jemaah Islamiah is also believed to be responsible for several other bombings in 2002, 2003 and 2004.





Jemaah Islamiah

- On January 1, 1993, Jemaah Islamiah (JI) was formally founded as a militant organization dedicated to creating an Islamic State incorporating Indonesia, Malaysia, the southern Philippines, Singapore and Brunei.
- JI increased its capabilities in 1998 when it, established contact with al-Qaeda and began to provided financial and logistical support to Al-Qaida operations .
- JI's shifted its attention to targeting US and Western interests in Indonesia and the wider Southeast Asian region since 911 and the start of the US-led war on terror.
- JI's terror plans in Southeast Asia were exposed when its plot to set off several bombs in Singapore was foiled by the local authorities in December 2001.

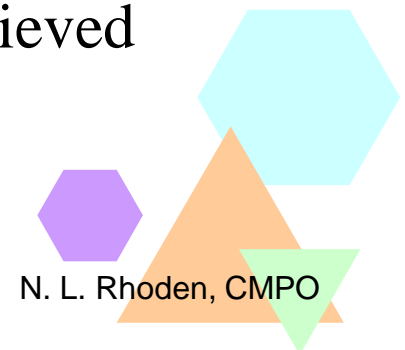






Little Rock Attack, 2009

- On June 1st, a drive-by shooter killed one serviceman and wounded another in front of a US military recruiting office in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad (formerly Carlos Bledsoe) was arrested with a rifle and over 500 rounds of ammunition, and he told police that he intended to kill as many Army personnel as possible.
- Muhammad stated in court that he had been sent by al-Qaeda and that "the attack was justified according to Islamic Laws and the Islamic Religion."
- Muhammad visited Yemen in 2007 where it is believed that he was radicalized by the AQAP.





Fort Hood Attack, 2009

- On November 5th, Nidal Malik Hasan, a US Army psychiatrist, opened fire at his workplace in Fort Hood, Texas. (Ft. Hood is the most populous US military installation in the world, located near Killeen, Texas.)
- The attack killed 13 people and wounded 30 others.
- Hasan is an American-born Muslim of Palestinian descent who was in contact with Anwar al-Awlaki. (Intelligence agencies intercepted 18 emails between them between December 2008 and June 2009.)
- AQAP and al-Awlaki have declared Hasan a hero, saying that "fighting against the U.S. army is an Islamic duty".



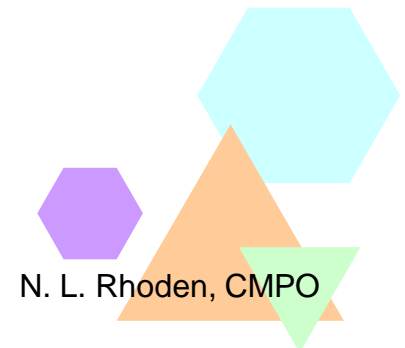
New York Plot, 2009

- In September 19th, Najibullah Zazi (an Afghan citizen with legal residency) was arrested.
- Zazi cooperated with authorities after learning that his mother and father could face criminal penalties, and pled guilty to conspiring to conduct coordinated suicide bombings on subway trains during rush hour at the two busiest New York City subway stations.
- Zazi underwent weapons and explosives training at an al-Qaeda training camp in Pakistan in 2008, and he has said that the intent of the planned suicide mission was to draw the attention to activities of the US military in Afghanistan.
- His cooperation has led to several arrests in Norway, Germany, Pakistan and the United Kingdom.



Detroit Plot, 2009

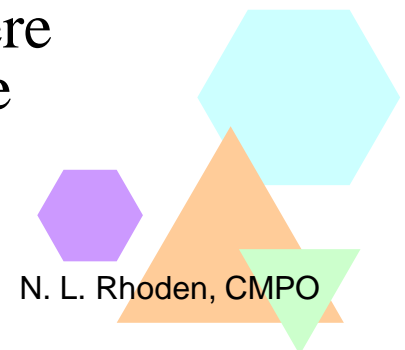
- On December 25th, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a passenger on NW-253 from Amsterdam to Detroit, tried to set off plastic explosives sewn into his underwear.
- There were 290 people on board the plane, and if the bomb had detonated as planned, many more would likely have been killed on the ground.
- The 23-year-old "Christmas Day Bomber" was well educated and came from a very well-to-do Nigerian family.
- On December 28, 2009, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) claimed responsibility for the attempted bombing, and it is believed that Anwar al-Awlaki, participated in planning the attack.





New York Plot, 2010

- On May 1st, an attempted car bombing of Times Square was foiled when two street vendors alerted police.
- Two days later federal agents arrested Faisal Shahzad, a 30-year-old Pakistan-born, naturalized US citizen, who admitted to attempting the car bombing and said that he had trained at a Pakistani terrorist training camp.
- A claim of responsibility by the Taliban in Pakistani was at first publicly dismissed by US authorities, but Attorney General Eric Holder later admitted that the Taliban had directed and financed the attack.
- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned of "severe consequences" should an attack like this ever to be successful and traced back to Pakistan.



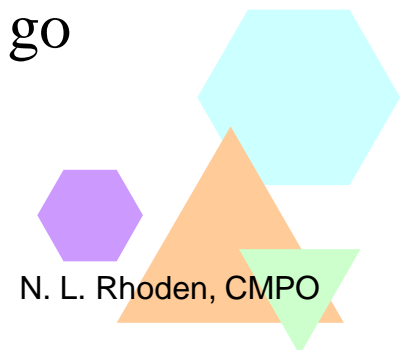
Some Disquieting Trends

- It is obvious that more and more foreign terrorist groups, with a hitherto local agenda, are now seeking to operate on a broader, more ambitious global canvas.
- Conventional wisdom, which long held that the terror threat is primarily external, involving foreigners coming from overseas has now been shattered.
- And the comforting stereotype that terrorists are poor, uneducated, provincial loners, has also been refuted.
- Furthermore, the hope that a “melting pot” would prevent radicalization and recruitment, has fallen to the wayside.
- Al-Qaeda and its allies have obviously embraced a new strategy of attrition that is deliberately designed to overwhelm, distract, and exhaust its adversaries.



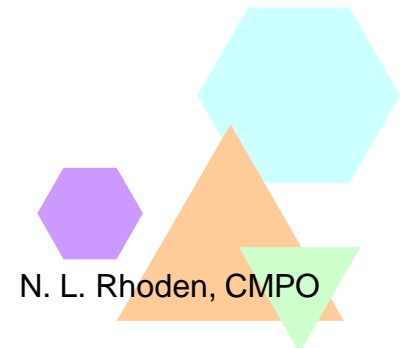
Diversity & Numbers

- The new al-Qaeda strategy “to overwhelm, distract, and exhaust” has also been adopted by other terror groups.
- This new strategy has both economic and operational components, but “cost performance” is at its root.
- Economically, they hope to force the US and its Allies to spend more on domestic security and remain involved in costly overseas military commitments.
- Operationally, they seek to flood already stressed intelligence and law enforcement agencies with enough “noise” (low-level threats) to distract them from more serious terrorist operations, allowing such plots to go unnoticed until they succeed.



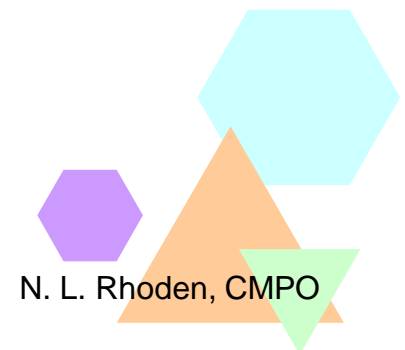
al-Qaeda's Strengths

- Al-Qaeda has great ideological influence on other jihadist groups.
- Al-Qaeda top leadership (including, Osama bin Laden) remains alive, although in hiding.
- Al-Qaeda is still able to guide the overall direction of the jihadist movement around the world, through videotapes and audiotapes.
- Al-Qaeda can provoke a massive amount of overwrought media coverage based on attacks that don't even succeed.



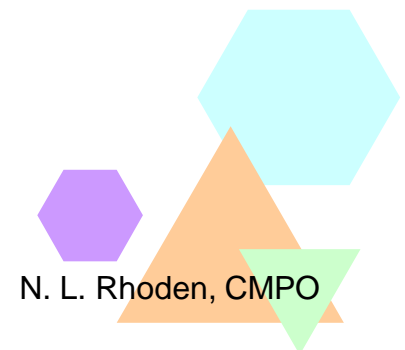
Strategic Weaknesses

- Al-Qaeda keeps killing Muslim civilians.
- Al-Qaeda has not created a genuine mass political movement.
- Al-Qaeda's leaders have constantly expanded their list of enemies.
- Al-Qaeda has no real positive vision.



Questions?

nathan@cmppo.org



N. L. Rhoden, CMPO