From the Balkans to ISIS

Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe
From the Balkans to ISIS

Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe
From the Balkans to ISIS: 
Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe

Contents

Acknowledgments ................................................................. ii
Abbreviations ................................................................. iii
Executive Summary ........................................................... iv

I. Introduction ........................................................................... 1
II. The Origins and Ideology of Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe .......... 2
III. The Infrastructure of Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe ............... 18
IV. Iran in the Balkans ............................................................. 30
V. A Micro-Case Study of Terrorist Networks: The Bosnian Connections to the WTC Attacks ......................... 35
VI. Policy Recommendations .................................................... 40

Appendix 1: Balkan Jihadi/Extremist Threat Matrix .......................... 47
Appendix 2: Balkan Jihadi Fatalities in Iraq and Syria ....................... 51
Appendix 3: Estimating the Size of the Militant Islamist Movement in Southeastern Europe ............... 53
Appendix 4: Balkan Militant Islamist Websites/Electronic Media ........... 60
Bibliography & Sources ............................................................ 90
Acknowledgments

This report is an updated, expanded and revised version of work that has previously appeared in a number of publications. For their kind permission to use these materials, I thank Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld of the American Center for Democracy (ACD), and Mr. James Denton, publisher of World Affairs Journal (Washington, DC.)
Abbreviations

AID—Agencija za Istraživanje i Dokumentaciju (“Agency for Research and Documentation”), a secret intelligence service affiliated with Izetbegović’s Islamist party

AIO—Aktivna Islamska Omladina (“Active Islamic Youth), a Bosnia-based youth organization composed of indigenous members of the Al Qaeda unit in the Bosnian jihad.

BIF—Bosanska Idealna Futura, incorporated in the US as the Benevolence International Foundation

BIK—Bashkesia Islame e Kosoves (Islamic Community of Kosovo)

ISIS—“Islamic State of Iraq and Syria”

IZBiH—Isamska Zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine (Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

LISBA—Levizja Islamike Bashkohu (Islamic Movement Unite)

OHR—Office of the High Representative

RS—Republika Srpska (Republic of Srpska, the Serb entity in Bosnia & Herzegovina)

SDA—Stranka Demokratske Akcije (“Party of Democratic Action”), Alija Izetbegović’s Islamist political party.

SHC—Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia & Herzegovina

SJCRKC—Saudi Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosova and Chechnya

TWRA—“Third World Relief Agency,” an Austro-Bosnian Al Qaeda front group

VEVAK—“Vezarat-e Ettela’at va Amniyat-e Keshvar,” the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and National Security, also known as MOIS.
Executive Summary

- Militant Islamism in southeastern Europe remains a distinctly minority-phenomenon. The available empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests only 5-10 percent of the Balkan Muslim populations adhere to it in some form. The majority of Balkan Muslims reject the views, attitudes and actions described in this report.

- Nevertheless, over the past several years the Balkans has emerged as a new front for militant Islamism. In June 2010, Islamist extremists bombed a police station in the central Bosnian town of Bugojno, killing one police officer and wounding six others. In February 2011, a Kosovo radical killed two US servicemen at Frankfurt Airport. In October 2011, a Sandžak Wahhabi attacked the US Embassy in Sarajevo. In April 2012, suspected Islamist extremists murdered five Macedonian citizens outside Skopje. In the first six months of 2012 alone, some 200 Iranian “businessmen” entered Bosnia, including an individual Israeli intelligence has tracked in Georgia, India and Thailand (all countries in which terrorist attacks have targeted Israeli officials over the past two years). In July 2012, Hezbollah operatives bombed a bus full of Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria. In March 2013, a Hezbollah operative was discovered monitoring Israeli citizens in Cyprus. In November 2013, a terrorist group composed of former Syrian jihad volunteers was uncovered in Kosovo. Two Balkan jihadis also carried out suicide-bombings in 2014.

- The ideology of these groups and individuals is explicitly misogynistic, homophobic, anti-democratic, anti-American and anti-Semitic. Glorifications of violence, celebrations of jihad, endorsements of suicide-terrorism, and the rejection of secular authorities and institutions are frequent tropes of Balkan militant Islamists.

- The growth of militant Islamism in southeastern Europe over the past two decades is not an accidental byproduct of the wars of the 1990s; it is the result of a long-term, planned effort of indigenous, clandestine Islamist circles operating in the Balkans since the 1930s.

- Militant Islamist groups in the Balkans tend to be extra-systemic, created and operating in opposition to existing Islamic religious institutions, which throughout the region tend to be more conservative and moderate.

- The militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe is neither unified nor monolithic. Several different factions exist, some more radical, others less so, some closer to the Saudis, some closer to the Iranians, some closer to the Saudis. Considerable infighting and feuding exists between different factions and leaders.

- Strongholds of Balkan Islamist militants provide the international jihadi movement with places to hide, recruit and train new adherents, and plan operations against local and international targets. Islamic “charities” and “NGO’s” provide jihadis with cover identities allowing them to circulate between the Middle-East, Europe, and North America, and the ability to launder and funnel monies to support terrorist actions and jihad around the globe.

- Considerable variation can be observed in the attitudes and relationships of elites in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Kosovo towards militant Islamism. In Albania and Kosovo, the predominantly Muslim-elites in power on the whole do not have an explicitly religious/Muslim political or social agenda. In Bosnia & Herzegovina, militant Islamism is supported by small, conspiratorial groups of militant Islamists that came to power in the 1990s, with hard-core elements of this group continuing to provide material support to the militant Islamist movement. Secularly-oriented Muslims in Bosnia & Herzegovina disapprove of the movement.

- Competition between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey for ideological/spiritual influence and control over the Balkan Muslim populations has increased since the 1990s.
A number of developments over the past two decades threaten to change the historically more moderate nature of Islam in the Balkans. These include the infiltration of thousands of jihadists from Afghanistan and the Middle-East into the region, the billions of dollars states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia have been spending in southeastern Europe to spread their influence, and the new generation of Balkan Islamic clerics educated in the Middle-East and indoctrinated in more puritanical and extreme versions of Islam.

Two distinct types of individuals compose the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe: 1) leaders tend to be clerics educated in the Middle-East; 2) lower-level adherents and followers tend to be alienated, disoriented young people, often estranged from their families and with a criminal background.

Analysts throughout the region report a consistent and successful effort by militant Islamists to infiltrate local political, social, educational and security institutions. Security sector reform in the region should thus focus on improving vertical coordination of existing security and intelligence services with international bodies such as NATO and Interpol to compartmentalize and limit the potential for security breaches. Horizontal integration of existing agencies and services would only serve to expand the access militant Islamists and their sympathizers and allies have to intelligence about their networks and activities.

International policy towards the spread of militant Islamism has been inconsistent, ranging from denial of the problem outright to occasionally hysterical over-reactions. Efforts to deal with the threat have been sacrificed for the sake of placating the movement’s Middle-Eastern patrons. More resources need to be devoted to intelligence-gathering on Balkan militant Islamist groups to enhance their identification, isolation, and removal, and more coordination is needed between regional and international authorities in combating the problem.

The danger confronting southeastern Europe and international policy in the region is not the establishment of radical Muslim states; it is that relatively small, clandestine groups of Islamist militants can use the area to provide material and logistical support for the global jihad movement.

There is an inverse relationship between the strength of militant Islamist movements in southeastern Europe and international efforts to create stable multiethnic democracies in the region: the stronger militant Islamism becomes, the lesser the chances international and local actors have to stabilize inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in the Balkans, or to create stable, tolerant, democratic states and societies.

The Balkan Blowback (i.e., the impact of Balkan volunteers to the Iraqi and Syrian jihads returning to southeastern Europe) is already being felt and portends an upsurge in militant Islamist activity in the region over the coming 1-2 years.
I. Introduction

Since the fall of communism two and a half decades ago, militant Islamism has been planting seeds and spreading roots in various parts of southeastern Europe, particularly the former Yugoslavia. With the help of local allies, militant Islamists have established training bases, recruiting stations, and safe-havens for would-be terrorists and terrorists on the run. Indeed, almost every major terrorist action of the recent past has roots or connections to the Balkans, including the 9/11 attacks, the August 1998 U.S. African embassy bombings, the December 1999 Millenium Bomb Plot targeting Los Angeles’ LAX Airport, the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Aden Harbor, the October 2002 Bali nightclub bombings, the November 2003 Istanbul bombings, the March 2004 Madrid Train bombings, the 7/7 London Underground bombing, the May 2007 Fort Dix bomb plot, the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, the July 2009 Raleigh Group conspiracy, and the January 2010 conspiracy to attack the New York subway system. The late Richard Holbrooke made clear the dangerous extent to which militant Islamism has infiltrated southeastern Europe when he noted that had it not been for the Dayton Peace Accords, “al-Qaeda would probably have planned the Sept. 11 attacks from Bosnia, not Afghanistan,” and a recent analysis by Radio Free Europe has noted that Bosnia has gone from being an importer of terrorists to an exporter.

Thus, understanding the ideology, beliefs, and capacity of the various groups comprising the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe has become important for western security interests, and for the ramifications they may have on plans to integrate the region into Euro-Atlantic political and economic structures. Unfortunately, a thorough review of the ideology and activities of these groups is cause for considerable concern. What has been developing in southeastern Europe is a movement based on extreme forms of religious and ethnic intolerance, opposed to modern conceptions of democracy, human rights and civil liberties, and virulently anti-American, anti-Semitic, misogynistic and homophobic.

Understanding the organization and infrastructure of militant Islamism in the Balkans is of course a crucial matter in dealing with the phenomenon and in determining its capacity to threaten U.S. and European security interests. Since the 1980s, militant Islamism in southeastern Europe has evolved from a relatively small, marginal, and conspiratorial effort of a few hundred people into a complex, multifaceted movement, comprising numerous bases in both urban and rural areas, extensive networks of organizations that can funnel monies and operational funds around the region and throughout the world, and fully modern and contemporary propaganda machinery using the latest social media to disseminate their ideology and facilitate communication amongst the movement’s members and adherents.

While at present these individuals and groups account for only ±10 percent of the Muslim populations in southeastern Europe, the extreme nature of their ideology, their organization, and the aggressive way in which they promote their agenda is already complicating western efforts to establish the tolerant, democratic, multiethnic states and societies Washington and Brussels claim as their goal in the Balkans. Moreover, they are providing a dangerous stepping stone for the global jihadis’ efforts to launch attacks in Europe and beyond.
II. The Origins and Ideology of Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe

The origins of militant Islamism in southeastern Europe can most directly be traced to the life and work of Bosnia’s late Islamist president, Alija Izetbegović. In the late 1930s, Izetbegović and a conspiratorial group of like-minded Islamist extremists formed an organization called the Mladi Muslimani (“Young Muslims”) whose goal, as Izetbegović personally noted, was the creation of a “great Muslim state,” or as one author has described it, an “Islamistan” throughout the Balkans, northern Africa, and the Middle-East, what today Abu el Baghdadi would call a caliphate. Towards this goal, the Mladi Muslimani swore an oath asking Allah to grant them perseverance on their “path of jihad” and their “uncompromising struggle against everything non-Islamic.” Tellingly, the name of their underground journal was Mudžahid (“Holy Warrior”). Ideologically, the Mladi Muslimani were influenced by the emergence of the contemporaneous Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the members’ early writings suggest that they were a group of Balkan Islamic puritans opposed to such things as Muslims associating with non-Muslims, the theater, the ballet, opera, circuses, dancing, men shaking hands with women, and mixed-gender beaches or mixed-gender evening promenades. The founders of the Mladi Muslimani claimed their goal was to produce Islamic “fanatics,” and looked to Islam in its purged, salafist form to provide an authentic Muslim alternative to communism or fascism as a way of organizing society.

During World War II, the Mladi Muslimani supported the idea of Bosnia & Herzegovina becoming an autonomous unit within the Third Reich, and ultimately a part of a global Islamic federation. The Germans, to their satisfaction, found “militant support” amongst the Mladi Muslimani, and many members of the organization served as recruiters for the Bosnian SS “Handžar” division formed by the pro-German Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin el-Huseini. Izetbegović was allegedly a member of the faction within the Mladi Muslimani who supported the Handžar Division, and some Mladi Muslimani joined the unit outright. The goals of this pro-Nazi faction in Bosnian politics were laid out in a Memorandum of the ‘National Committee’ of 1 November 1942 to His Excellency Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German People, which called on the Führer to lead the “300-million Islamic nation of the East... in the struggle against English imperialism, Jewry, Freemasonry and Bolshevism,” and went on to ask Hitler to make Bosnia a separate unit within the Third Reich under the direct control of his personally appointed administration. In a letter to Heinrich Himmler, the Al Azhar-educated chief imam of the Handžar Division, Husein ef. Đoso (whom one scholar has called “the most influential Islamic thinker in Bosnia until his death in 1982”) saluted the Reichsführer with the following words: “I consider it my duty to express my gratitude on behalf of the imams of the division and hundreds and thousands of the poor in Bosnia. We are prepared to lay down our lives in the struggle for the great leader Adolf Hitler and the New Europe.”

With the end of World War II, the Mladi Muslimani’s surviving members were rounded up and imprisoned as fascist collaborators. Izetbegović himself was in prison between 1946-1949. Nevertheless, Izetbegović’s political goals would remain faithful to those of the Mladi Muslimani throughout the rest of his political career. In his most famous political manifesto, the Islamic Declaration (written in 1970, the same year the Ayatollah Khomeini published his Towards an
Islamic Government) and showing the influence that one of Al Qaeda’s ideological antecedents, Sayyid Qutb, had had on his thinking. Izetbegović anticipated by some two decades Osama bin Laden’s concept of perpetual jihad, or the belief that “jihad will continue until the day of judgement,” when he warned,

There is no peace or co-existence between Islamic faith and non-Islamic social and political institutions . . . Our means are personal example, the book, and the word. When will force be added to these means? The choice of this moment is always a concrete question and depends on a variety of factors. However, one general rule can be postulated: the Islamic movement can and may move to take power once it is morally and numerically strong enough, not only to destroy the existing non-Islamic government, but to build a new Islamic government.

The fact that Izetbegović devotes a section in the tract to Pakistan (which Izetbegović called “our great hope”)—a religiously “clean” country formed by its violent secession from a larger multi-religious and multi-ethnic entity—had clear implications for Izetbegović’s views regarding multi-religious, multi-ethnic Yugoslavia. This is in contrast to the very critical view Izetbegović exhibited in the Islamic Declaration towards reformers in the Muslim world such as Kemal Atatürk; thus, as one scholar has observed, “The [Islamic] Declaration designated Pakistan as a model country to be emulated by Muslim revolutionaries worldwide. The Pakistan parallel also revealed Izetbegović’s vision of Yugoslavia’s fate as analogous to that of India after 1948.” Another interpretation of Izetbegović’s agenda and goals concluded that

Mi smo vojska Allahova
Za Islam se borimo
Ako treba život dati
Za šehadet poginuti

“We are the Army of Allah,
Fighting for Islam.
If we have to give our lives,
For martyrdom we will die”

-----marching song of Izetbegović’s El Mudžahedin battalion
In [Izetbegović’s] discourse with Westerners, in contrast to the Islamic Declaration, he used the language of multiculturalism. It is clear, at least in retrospect, that he hoped to establish an Islamic state in Bosnia but not necessarily an Islamist one. His ideal seems to have been the Ottoman Empire, an Islamic state in which non-Muslim dhimmis were tolerated.  

Indeed, many people who worked closely with Izetbegović were convinced that his primary goal was the creation of an ethnically- and religiously-homogenous Islamic state, and numerous outside observers and international officials who dealt with Izetbegović also came to believe that his professed desire for a multiethnic state was more a public relations ploy for western audiences rather than a sincere ideal.  

In subsequent years the political philosophy of the Mladi Muslimani and Izetbegović’s Islamic Declaration remained the policy guidebook for the Islamists he led to power in Bosnia. Eight of the forty original members of the political party Izetbegović founded in 1990, the Stranka Demokratske Akcije (the “Party of Democratic Action,” Bosnian acronym, SDA) were Mladi Muslimani, and several others were younger Islamists who had gone to prison with Izetbegović in 1983. Much like its Middle-Eastern sister movements such as Hamas or Hezbollah, throughout the 1990s Izetbegović’s SDA straddled the line between legitimate politics and terror.
In terms of Izetbegović’s vision for Bosnia, one of his SDA associates described it in the following terms:

The territory controlled by the Bosnian Army after the war will be a Muslim state . . . This is a desire of the Muslim people and, after all, our leaders: secular leader Alija Izetbegović and religious leader Mustafa Cerić (the latter one in a private conversation with me confirmed that the old dream of Alija Izetbegović, member of the organization Young Muslims, has been and remains the establishment of the Muslim state in Bosnia-Herzegovina; finally, his dream is close to realization and “he is not terribly upset because of that”) . . . The Muslim state will have a Muslim ideology, based on Islam, Islamic religious, legal, ethical and social principles, but also on the contents of Western origin which do not contradict Islamic principles . . . The Muslim ideology will be the basis for the complete state and legal system of the future Muslim state, from the state and national symbols, over the ruling national policy, to educational system, social and economic institutions, and of course, the Muslim family as the unit on which the whole state is based . . . the level of personal prosperity, besides personal initiative, will especially depend on the degree to which the individual accepts and applies the principles and spirit of the Muslim ideology.26

Indeed, the above-mentioned Mustafa Cerić, one of the founders of Izetbegović’s Islamist party and his handpicked choice to head Bosnia’s Islamic Community, would in September 1992 call on Muslims around the world to support what he called the Bosnian jihad against the Croat and Serb “crusade.”27 Izetbegović’s war effort took on other rhetorical trappings of jihad as well, with soldiers who died in Izetbegović’s army being designated “šehids” (martyrs for Islam),28 and individuals who led the war effort, such as Izetbegović’s vice-president, Ejup Ganić, being officially proclaimed “gazis” (i.e., Islamic warriors against the infidels).29

The view that Bosnia and other Balkan regions are “Muslim” has become a frequent refrain of the militant Islamists. According to a recent statement by the Syrian radical Omar Bakri Muhammed, “When Islam enters a territory, it becomes Islamic, therefore Islam is under obligation to eventually liberate it . . . Spain, for instance, is a Muslim territory. Eastern Europe, as well. Romania, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia ... due to its decision to send troops to Afghanistan and Iraq and its military co-operation with Israel, Bulgaria is also a legitimate target.”30

Other Islamists frequently express the same views. Elfatih Hassanein, a Sudanese national and longtime friend of Izetbegović’s, once noted that “Bosnia, at the end, must be Muslim Bosnia.”31 More recently, Mustafa Cerić has begun a campaign for Bosnia to be transformed into a “Bosnia” (i.e., Muslim state), claiming that all other peoples in Europe have their own national states, so Bosnia should be recognized as the Muslim national state

“The territory controlled by the Bosnian Army after the war will be a Muslim state . . . This is a desire of the Muslim people and, after all, our leaders: secular leader Alija Izetbegović and religious leader Mustafa Cerić (the latter one in a private conversation with me confirmed that the old dream of Alija Izetbegović, member of the organization Young Muslims, has been and remains the establishment of the Muslim state in Bosnia-Herzegovina; finally, his dream is close to realization and “he is not terribly upset because of that”) . . . The Muslim state will have a Muslim ideology, based on Islam, Islamic religious, legal, ethical and social principles, but also on the contents of Western origin which do not contradict Islamic principles . . . The Muslim ideology will be the basis for the complete state and legal system of the future Muslim state, from the state and national symbols, over the ruling national policy, to educational system, social and economic institutions, and of course, the Muslim family as the unit on which the whole state is based . . . the level of personal prosperity, besides personal initiative, will especially depend on the degree to which the individual accepts and applies the principles and spirit of the Muslim ideology.”26

Indeed, the above-mentioned Mustafa Cerić, one of the founders of Izetbegović’s Islamist party and his handpicked choice to head Bosnia’s Islamic Community, would in September 1992 call on Muslims around the world to support what he called the Bosnian jihad against the Croat and Serb “crusade.”27 Izetbegović’s war effort took on other rhetorical trappings of jihad as well, with soldiers who died in Izetbegović’s army being designated “šehids” (martyrs for Islam),28 and individuals who led the war effort, such as Izetbegović’s vice-president, Ejup Ganić, being officially proclaimed “gazis” (i.e., Islamic warriors against the infidels).29

The view that Bosnia and other Balkan regions are “Muslim” has become a frequent refrain of the militant Islamists. According to a recent statement by the Syrian radical Omar Bakri Muhammed, “When Islam enters a territory, it becomes Islamic, therefore Islam is under obligation to eventually liberate it . . . Spain, for instance, is a Muslim territory. Eastern Europe, as well. Romania, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia ... due to its decision to send troops to Afghanistan and Iraq and its military co-operation with Israel, Bulgaria is also a legitimate target.”30

Other Islamists frequently express the same views. Elfatih Hassanein, a Sudanese national and longtime friend of Izetbegović’s, once noted that “Bosnia, at the end, must be Muslim Bosnia.”31 More recently, Mustafa Cerić has begun a campaign for Bosnia to be transformed into a “Bosnia” (i.e., Muslim state), claiming that all other peoples in Europe have their own national states, so Bosnia should be recognized as the Muslim national state

“This is only the first round . . . further help will be necessary, and remain necessary, until Islam is victorious in this world.”

Izetbegović wartime military commander Rasim Delić addressing the El Mudžahedin battalion, Zenica, late 1995 (source: YouTube screenshot)
Independently of this, in April 2014 UK prime minister David Cameron ordered MI5 and MI6 to investigate Cerić’s ties to the Muslim Brotherhood along with those of another controversial Muslim activist because of their affiliation with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. The British government was at the time investigating the Muslim Brotherhood’s links to terrorism in the UK. Another Muslim politician, Sejfudin Tokić, has picked up this theme, arguing (with respect to Bosnia’s October 2013 census), “If there are more than 50% of us [Muslims], Bosnia will be a national state of Bosniaks and we will dominate the other two peoples.” In a recent sermon, the Bosnian Wahhabi leader Bilal Bosnić has claimed that everything “from Prijedor to the Sandžak” belongs to Muslims, and that non-Muslims in Bosnia should be required to pay the jizya, a poll tax imposed on non-Muslims in “Islamic” countries. On his deathbed, Alija Izetbegović went so far as to “bequeath” Bosnia to then-Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

From the Put Vjernika website. The quote from the Quran (5:51) reads, “O believers, do not take Jews and Christians as your friends.”

The belief that the Balkans are “Muslim lands” of course presupposes the understanding that sharia should ultimately be imposed throughout the region. As Izetbegović once told an interlocutor, “what is wrong with the sharia? Is it less humane to cut off a man’s hand than to take several years from his life in prison? You cut off the hand, it is done.” Similarly, according to Mustafa Cerić, “Sharia is the basis of faith for every Muslim, about which there is no discussion. Sharia is like the Ten Commandments for Christians.” On another occasion Cerić added,

As far as Islam is concerned, all countries belong to one of the following categories: Dar al-Islam, Dar al-Harb, or Dar as-Sulh. In the third category, Sulh, the situation is such that Islam or the shariah cannot be implemented fully, but the government should endeavour to put it into practice as much as possible [Bosnia is in] the third category. Therefore, we are obliged to try our best to put Islamic legislation into practice, but it is [not] realistic to implement shariah completely. That’s what I want, of course, but it will not happen just like that.
Recent public opinion surveys suggest a not-insignificant number of people in the region agree with such views. A 2013 Pew Research survey, for instance, found that 36 percent of Muslims in southeastern Europe believed in severe corporal punishment for criminals, and 13 percent favored executing people who leave Islam. The same poll also found that 20 percent of Muslims in Kosovo and 15 percent in Bosnia favor making sharia the law of the land. In Bosnia, the campaign to make public life sharia-compatible has become more and more visible. Wahhabi leaders Nusret Imamović and Bilal Bosnić, for instance, in early 2013 went on a public lecture campaign speaking on the theme “The Perfection of Sharia, the Danger of Democracy.”

A constant and central tenet in the ideology of Balkan militant Islamists has been a virulent form of ethnoreligious intolerance based on extreme interpretations of Islamic texts. Thus, an early essay by one of the Mladi Muslimani’s founding members exhorted Muslims to heed the Koranic injunction “O believers! Do not take infidels for friends in place of believers,” a sentiment frequently repeated in Islamist circles today. In the 1940s, the Mladi Muslimani issued a “Proclamation” in which their views on interethnic and inter-religious relations were evident:

We have to gather and form into battle lines everything that is good, and embark on the path of jihad with the Tekbir on our mouths, and decisively and mujahedin-like persevere until the final victory . . . Depending on friendship with Serbs or Croats, as has today become evident to every one of our people who has had any relations with them, is the biggest stupidity and self-deception of oneself and one’s community. Both have sufficiently shown us their goals and intentions and we will never again believe them, regardless of their attempting to convince us and prove to us their good intentions. We are forced to adopt this position all the more because the Quran, as our only guide, warns us when it says “Will you take the infidels as friends?” or “Neither the Christians nor the Jews will be your friends until you accept that which they represent” . . . [the Mladi Muslimani] conscious of the correctness of their intentions, with the help of Allah are embarking on jihad . . . the goal and task of the organization is not resolving some narrow and local problem, but a great and momentous idea which should solely guide every one of us, and that is the establishment of an Islamic order and implementing Islam in the lives of people . . . These are days of survival, that is, days of jihad, and our organization is faithfully following that path.

Good men must be hard to find: left: two Austro-Bosnian volunteer jihadi wives in Syria; center: Croatian-born Muslim-convert Irena Horak, wife of Al Qaeda propagandist Anwar Al-Awlaki (on right) killed in a U.S. drone strike in Yemen in September 2011 (source: Long War Journal)
Various manifestations of Islamist supremacist doctrine come out on the websites and in the publications Islamist groups maintain and publish. One Wahhabi website urges readers to reject international law because it grants non-Muslims the same rights as Muslims, and counsels readers that they should not drink coffee with non-Muslim co-workers—unless they are trying to convert them to Islam. Wahhabis in Bosnia also decry freedom of religion, because then “we Muslims would not be allowed to destroy statues . . . . which are worshipped in spite of Allah.” Grade school textbooks for Islamic religious classes in Bosnia now include the following: “Today Islamic countries are confronted with a form of blackmail: thus, if they want to join the United Nations, they have to tacitly renounce jihad as an organized form of Muslim interest.” Extremists such as Nezim Halilović-Muderis and Fatmir Alispahić call for the abrogation of international agreements such as the Dayton Peace Accords and the elimination of Bosnia’s entities and cantons. The International Crisis Group has similarly reported that Muderis and the Kosovo-born imam of the Vratnik White Mosque in Sarajevo, Sulejman Bugari, use their sermons “to preach hatred against Serbs and Jews and to advocate separation from Serbs.” Sometimes the militant Islamists’ rejection of secular authorities and institutions takes on tragicomic dimensions; for instance, a noted Bosnian Islamist radical, Jusuf Barčić, was killed in an automobile accident in March 2007 when the vehicle he was in refused to stop at a traffic signal.

Indicative of the ethnic distance Islamists try to impose between Muslims and non-Muslims are the views of Izetbegović’s inner circle. Džemaludin Latić, at one time the leading ideologist of Izetbegović’s SDA once announced that “spiritually and emotionally, I feel closer to a Muslim in the Philippines than I do to a Croat in Sarajevo,” and Latić has reportedly similarly endorsed the Ayatollah Khomeini’s death sentence against “the apostate Salman Rushdie,” saying “the Imam Khomeini’s fatwa is a must for every Muslim to carry out.” More recently, the aforementioned Wahhabi leader from Buzim, Bilal Bosnić, gave a sermon in which he claimed “We have to love the one who loves Allah, and hate the one who hates Allah. We have to hate infidels, even if they

![Image of a Bosnian Wahhabi leader Bilal Bosnić, ISIS publication “Dabiq” showing the black flag of jihad flying over Vatican City, and a YouTube clip of a Kosovo jihadi in Iraq, May 2014 (source: MEMRI TV)]
are our neighbors or live in our homes.”

Pointing to the effect that the promotion of such views is having, in a recent public opinion poll 93% of Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo said that all or most of their close friends were Muslims. Another frequent trope of Balkan militant Islamists is the view that non-Muslims cannot “understand” Muslims. Mustafa Cerić, for instance, on one occasion criticized a Bosnian Muslim family for hiring a Christian lawyer, because Christians “cannot understand Muslims.”

Predictably, individuals with such worldviews emphasize racial and religious purity, and a consistent trope of the militant Islamists has been that they are not even ethnically related to their Slav neighbors. The aforementioned Latić has vehemently argued against mixed marriages, claiming that “Mixed marriages, a symbol of misunderstood mutual life, are mostly ruined marriages in which big conflicts exist and children are frustrated by their origin.” Mirsad Čeman, a former secretary-general of Izetbegović’s Islamist party noted that under a Bosnian Islamist regime, “a normal Muslim will marry a Muslim woman and others will be the exception,” and Mustafa Cerić once claimed that mixed marriages “are just another form of genocide.” Unfortunately, such views were widespread; contrary to the myth about high rates of interethnic marriage in Bosnia spread by journalists and pop historians, even before the wars of the 1990s on average less than seven percent of Bosnian Muslims married individuals from a different ethnic or religious group, and amongst Croats and Serbs, the intermarriage rate was only about fifteen percent.

Misogyny is a central feature of the militant Islamists’ belief system. Islamist extremists advise their followers that “lazy wives” should be beaten, and remind adherents that the proper Islamic punishment for unmarried adulterers is 100 lashes, and for married adulterers death by stoning. To the militant Islamists, celebrating International Women’s Day is considered “un-Islamic.” In Kosovo, the mufti of Prizren, Irfan Salihu, publicly claimed in a recent sermon “Any woman who has intimate acts without being married according to provisions of the Islam is a slut and a bitch . . . Leave the garbage out so everyone will know which of them was used.” In Bosnian Wahhabi circles, girls are considered ready to be married at the age of 14, and women who argue with their husbands are deemed to be possessed by demons, the therapy for which is to have their backs cut with razor blades. In the Sandžak there have been a number of reports of Wahhabis engaging in female genital mutilation, and in Bosnia Arab “humanitarian organizations” allegedly tried to spread the practice during the war in the 1990s. (It should be stressed that officials of the Islamic Community in the Sandžak condemned the practice.) In the spring of 1999, Wahhabi’s violently broke up a conference in Sarajevo devoted to a discussion of women’s rights in Afghanistan. Polygamy is an accepted practice in Balkan Wahhabi communities; for instance, Bilal Bosnić has acknowledged having four wives. Reporting on new religious textbooks in Bosnia that describe the practice of women leading
Catholics in central Bosnia have been particular targets of the militant Islamists. As Vatican Radio recently reported, “Christians are massively leaving post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina amid mounting discrimination and Islamization.” On Christmas Eve 2004, Wahhabi convert Muamer Topalović murdered three members of a Bosnian Croat family as they were preparing to go to Midnight Mass. Vinko Cardinal Puljić, the Catholic archbishop of Bosnia, claims that although seventy new mosques have been built in Sarajevo alone, building approvals for churches “take years,” and he decried the fact that he had been denied permission to build a new church in Sarajevo for over a decade. Catholic nuns in Sarajevo now only go out in pairs for fear of being attacked by Islamist extremists, and report that Wahhabi bakers refuse to sell them bread, even when it is in plain sight.

Similarly, the bishop of Banja Luka, Franjo Komarica, has recently warned that “we mustn’t ignore the dark clouds arising to the southeast. Destructive, radical forces from the Arab world can very easily settle and flourish here.” Even Mother Theresa is the object of the Islamists’ intolerance and hatred. In a recent sermon in Skopje, an imam from Kosovo, Shefket Krasniqi claimed that the Macedonian-born Albanian nun, “belongs in the middle of Hell because she did not believe in Allah, the prophet and the Koran ...”

Indicative of the extent of anti-Catholic animosity Islamist extremists in the region promote is the fact that at least three plots against the late Pope John Paul II were linked to Bosnia. The first occurred during his pastoral visit to Sarajevo in April 1997, when a bomb was discovered under a bridge over which the Pope’s motorcade was supposed to pass only hours before his arrival. The perpetrators were never discovered. (Controversy about the Pope’s visit to Sarajevo had already erupted after Mustafa Cerić criticized local media for referring to John Paul II as “the Holy Father.”)

Another attempt to kill the Pontiff took place later in the year, when Italian police discovered an assassination plot targeting John Paul II during a pastoral visit to Bologna. All fourteen men arrested were travelling on Bosnian passports. One of the individuals suspected of involvement in the attempt was Bosnian jihad veteran Karray Kamel bin Ali, a.k.a., Abu Hamza, a Tunisian who had fought in the El Mudjahedin battalion (the Al Qaeda unit in Izetbegović’s army) during the war. In 2001, Italians authorities requested Abu Hamza’s extradition but Bosnian officials refused because Hamza had
“Bosnian citizenship.” Subsequently arrested in 2007, he was released from Zenica prison and allowed to take a short “holiday” during which he promptly escaped. News reports alleged that Bosnian security officials, including Tarik Sadović, a former security minister dismissed because of his refusal to expel foreign Islamist militants from Bosnia, had foreknowledge of Abu Hamza’s plans. (Interestingly, while in Zenica prison Abu Hamza was allowed to have phone and internet access.)

Bosnian-based extremists even plotted to attack John Paul II’s funeral. In 2005, Italian police uncovered a Gornja Maoča-based plan to attack the world leaders gathering in Vatican City to attend the Pontiff’s burial services.

The gay community is a predictable target of Islamist extremists. In September 2008, Wahhabis attacked participants in the Sarajevo Gay and Lesbian Festival, after which the chairman of the Bosnian Helsinki Human Rights Commission said that the incident was reminiscent of “the pogroms that happened in the times of Adolf Hitler.” The Sarajevo magazine Saff, a mouthpiece for Islamist extremists founded by local members of the El Mudžahedin battalion has been leading the anti-gay jihad in Bosnia. Recent Saff editorials, for instance, claim that “Fascism = Pederasty,” “Pederasty = Terrorism,” and “Pederasts are the Fathers of Pedophiles.” Typical of the views and argumentation one finds in Saff is the following:

For Americans, pederasts are important, not Muslims, because no one is allowed to beat pederasts, but America itself beats Muslims . . . the Nazis, the Zionists, and the pederasts are genuine masters at making themselves out to be victims [even when] no one is bothering them. That is how Hitler burned the Reichstag and blamed the Jews. That is how the Jews prepared 9/11 and blamed the Muslims. That is how pederasts often beat themselves and then blame others . . . Let us not forget that pederasty is a totalitarian ideology, ready to engage in manipulations, corruption, lies and violence, and thus prepared to engage in terrorism as a form of struggle to impose its view on the world.

Even Santa Claus has not been spared attacks from Balkan Islamists. In 1996, Alija Izetbegović initiated the anti-Santa campaign, announcing that “Santa Claus had no...
business appearing on state television” and criticizing local Muslims for celebrating New Year’s Eve. He was joined in this effort by Mustafa Cerić, who argued that Santa Claus was “not an appropriate symbol for Muslims.” In 2008, Sarajevo’s daycare centers banned the Bosnian equivalent of Santa (“Grandfather Frost”) because he was “not part of the Muslim tradition.”

Other Muslims (and Muslim historical sites) can be the target of such extremists as well. In November 2010, Macedonian Wahhabis set fire to a famous Sufi shrine in Tetovo, the Harabata Baba Bektashi complex, after years of trying to take possession of the site. In February 2012, the Sarajevo cantonal education minister resigned due to fears of being assassinated by Islamist extremists. What had earned the minister the wrath of the official Islamic establishment and other extremists was a proposal that primary students’ grades in religion classes not be factored into their overall grade point averages. A letter sent to the minister’s home stated “Abandon Allah and his religion and the hand of the faithful will get you.” Enclosed was a 7.32 caliber bullet. In August 2013, a Sunni extremist offered $20,000 for the murder of a professor at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo who specializes in Shia Islam (an even greater amount was offered if he was killed “with a sword”). In November 2013, an NGO activist from Novi Pazar critical of the way young women were being manipulated into wearing the hijab was threatened by local Wahhabis and had to be given police protection, and in Kosovo, Alma Lama, a prominent female politician, was forced to seek police protection after criticizing Islamist extremists. Other individuals in Kosovo who have criticized the militant Islamist movement have been beaten up or had their cars bombed.

Predictably, the most virulent forms of anti-Semitism are a favorite theme of Balkan Islamist militants. Izetbegović set the tone in his Islamic Declaration when he declared, the Zionists . . . have in Palestine extended a challenge to the entire Muslim world. Jerusalem is not just a question for the Palestinians, nor a question just for the Arabs. It is a question for all Muslim peoples To hold on to Jerusalem, the Jews must defeat Islam and the Muslims, which—thank God—is beyond their power . . . for the Islamic movement and all Muslims in the world there is only one solution: to continue the struggle, to extend it and prolong it, from day to day and year to year, without consideration for the victims or for how long the conflict might last, until [the Jews] are forced to return every piece of stolen land.

In January 2009, after Mustafa Cerić appeared on a Sarajevo television station calling Israeli actions in Gaza “genocide,” graffiti and posters equating the Star of David with a swastika appeared in various parts of Bosnia. The supposedly liberal Cerić has claimed that his critics are “judeo-centric,” and dismisses criticism as “Islamophobia”; as a U.S. embassy cable from Sarajevo put it, “When addressing issues of Wahhabi influence in Bosnia or charges of pedophilia by imams, Cerić has consistently offered a knee-jerk reaction of labeling critics “Islamophobes,” whether Christian or Muslim, suggesting that such criticism is itself part of a continuing ‘genocide,’ . . . Likewise, editors at Saff frequently refer to the “terrorist state of Israel” and promote numerous forms of Holo-

---

**From the Balkans to ISIS**

---

**SEERECON**
caust denial. Thus, one of Saff’s most prominent writers, Fatmir Alispahić, has decried the fact that one cannot find “Western studies” in Bosnia in which readers could learn that in postwar Europe no significant amounts of ashes were found, whereas “six million Jews would have produced at least one hill of dross,” and further points out that these studies claim that at most 300,000 Jews died during World War II, mostly of typhus. Alispahić goes on to argue that “Jews . . . through the media industry of the Holocaust, especially film, are deceiving the world about their suffering, so that they can deny Zionist imperialism and crimes.”97 Similarly, Bilal Bosnić has claimed that Jews are those who “create disorder on earth” and believe that “all are slaves, while they are the holy people.”98

At the Saudi-funded King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo, a focal point for Islamist extremists considered “a beehive of Al Qaeda activity,”99 a German journalist reported on a sermon preached by one of Izetbegović’s wartime commanders, Nezim Halilović-Muderis:

The obliteration of Israel is heralded in a torrent of words. “Zionist terrorists,” the imam thunders from the glass-enclosed pulpit at the end of the mosque. “Animals in human form” have transformed the Gaza Strip into a “concentration camp,” and this marks “the beginning of the end” for the Jewish pseudo-state. Over 4,000 faithful are listening to the religious service in the King Fahd Mosque, named after the late Saudi Arabian monarch King Fahd Bin Abd al-Asis Al Saud. The women sit separately, screened off in the left wing of the building. It is the day of the Khutbah, the great Friday sermon, and the city where the imam has predicted Israel’s demise lies some 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) northwest of Gaza. It is a city in the heart of Europe: Sarajevo.100

Another radical Bosnian cleric, Muharem Štulanović, the dean of the Faculty of Islamic Pedagogy in Bihać, has offered the following views:

There are three foreign-political factors that play a role in creating BiH—America, the Jews, and the Shiites. As far as the Americans are concerned, everything is known. It is one of the main enemies of Muslims and Islam in the world. Furthermore, the Jews are the enemies of Islam, and enemy number one at that. And Judgment Day will not come, that is faithfully in the Hadis and it is true, without the Muslims completely winning. Judgment Day will not come, the conclusion of this world, until the Muslims begin a total battle against the Jews, and in that battle the Jews will be so defeated that they will hide be-
Behind every tree and behind every rock. And every tree and every rock will say, “Oh, Muslim, Servant of God, here is a Jew, he has hidden behind me, come and kill him.”

In Macedonia, another radical cleric, Bekir Halimi, who leads an “NGO” named Bamiresia, has given verbal support for attacks on synagogues. The jihads in Iraq and Syria have given Balkan militant Islamists an opportunity to try to realize their ambitions; thus, as the Bosnian terrorist/Syrian jihad volunteer Bajro Ikanović explained in a recent interview, “The goal for all of us is death, especially in the battle against the Jews. Syria is not at all important to us. Our goal is Jerusalem.”

Support for Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda is frequently on evidence. In September 2012, a video surfaced of a group of Albanians in Macedonia gathered in a field singing

Oh Osama, annihilate the American army.
Oh Osama, raise the Muslims’ honor.
In September 2001 you conquered a power.
We all pray for you.

U.S. military raids on Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in October-November 2001 turned up evidence that Balkan extremists had made it to Central Asia, as evident in a letter written by Damir Bajrami, a Kosovo native who suggested new targets of opportunity in western countries:

I am interested in suicide operations. I have Kosovo Liberation Army combat experience against Serb and American forces. I need no further training. I recommend (suicide) operations against (amusement) parks like Disney.

In a similar vein, the Bosnian Wahhabi Bilal Bosnić has posted a song on YouTube in which he sings

The beautiful jihad has risen over Bosnia
And the Bosnian started calling “Allah Akbar” and praying
America had better know I am performing da’wa
God willing, it will be destroyed to its foundations
If you try to harm the mujahideen once more, oh infidels,
Our Taliban brothers will come from all over,
And they will sentence you with their swords.
America and all the other tyrants had better know
that all the Muslims are now like the Taliban,
Jihad, Jihad, oh Allah, will be the redemption of the believers.
Allah Akbar. Allah is my Lord.  
Listen, all my brothers, believers from all the world,  
With explosives on our chests we pave the way to Paradise.105

The effects of such propaganda are already apparent. As early as 2005, security officials had discovered a European-wide network of Islamist extremists recruiting young Scandinavian Muslims as suicide-bombers and sending them to Bosnia, which would then be used “as a staging ground for attacks elsewhere in Europe.”106 In March 2014, a Kosovo Islamist/Iraqi jihadi named Blerim Heta became “the Balkans’ first suicide bomber,” killing several dozen people in an attack in Baghdad. Heta’s family claimed his radicalization process started in April 2012 when he began attending sermons by the Kosovo imam Shefqet Krasniqi and the aforementioned Macedonian imam Bekir Halimi.107 In August 2014, a Bosnian suicide-terrorist, Emrah Fojnica, killed 24 people in another Baghdad attack.108 Fojnica had previously been arrested for accompanying Mevlid Jašarević on the day he attacked the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo.109

Unfortunately, a number of factors suggest that the ideology of militant Islamism in southeastern Europe has the potential for further growth. First, radical Islamist states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia continue to invest significant sums in the region, building mosques and madrasas in which more extreme interpretations of Islamic doctrine are taught, and expanding their influence through a variety of “NGOs” and “charities” (this latter topic will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections). Middle-Eastern funders have established some 25 madrasas (Islamic religious schools) in Bosnia through which some 2000 students have already passed,110 and the Islamic faculties in Bihać and Zenica, built with generous donations from Saudi Arabia, promote the more extreme Salafi/Wahhabi interpretations of Islam.111 In Kosovo, the Saudi Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosova and Chechnya (SJRKC) has built a network of some 98 primary and secondary schools in Kosovo’s rural areas, which then feed students into thirty specialized Koranic schools built throughout the state.112 Similarly, over the past twenty years dozens of new mosques and Wahhabi “teaching centers” funded by Middle-Eastern donors have been opened in Bulgaria, and number of which the government shut down in 2003 because of their ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and other extremist groups.113 Bulgarian security analysts have estimated that some 3000 youths have passed through these Wahhabi-funded educational centers in the past two decades.114 Middle-Eastern donors have also been active in Montenegro; in April 2014, for instance, a Kuwaiti foundation, Rahma al-Alamiya, opened an all-female madrasa for 200 girls in the village of Miljes, near the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica. Another all-female madrasa, opened in 2001, operates in Rožaje.115 This influx of Iranian, Saudi, and Turkish organizations in the region is promoting a view of state-society relations that are incompatible with the requirements of modern European democracies.

The combination of this large new cohort of the indigenous population being educated in local institutions organized and funded by Middle-Eastern organizations, together with the large number of locally-born Islamic clerics who have studied in the Middle-East (including individuals such as Nedžad Balkan, Jusuf Barčić, Bilal Bosnić, Mustafa Cerić, Nezim Halilović-Muderis and Nusret Imamović) carries with it the danger of transforming what has usually been considered a “moderate Balkan Islam” into something more radical. Esad Hećimović, a leading expert on the Bosnian jihadi movement, has noted that “There is now a new generation of Islamic preachers in Bosnia
who were educated after the war at Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and other countries. Thus, it is no longer possible to distinguish between ‘imported’ and ‘local’ versions of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina anymore. In 2012, some seventy percent of the officials in the official Islamic Community in Bosnia were due either to retire or for their mandates to expire, to be replaced by “new people, many of them educated abroad, notably in Saudi Arabia.”

A majority of the muftis in Bosnia have now been educated at Cairo’s Al Azhar Islamic university or other Islamic educational institutions in the Middle-East, where they were “exposed to Salafi teachings, schools of jurisprudence and lifestyles. Some of these imams [have] returned home with a hardened spirit and a politicized theocratic world-view, which they then tried to instill in their communities.” Similarly, in Montenegro, observers have suggested that Middle-Eastern educated extremists were able to make inroads into some sections of the Montenegrin Muslim population because “Montenegro’s ‘poorly educated’ mainstream imams were at a disadvantage against aggressive and self-assured newcomers claiming to practice ‘true Islam’. The fact that a majority of Balkan Islamic clerics and scholars are now being educated in the Middle-East—where they are not only trained in more extreme forms of Islamic doctrine, but also developing various unsavory relationships and networks—is an exceptionally negative development which requires considerably more attention. Militant Islamism is also beginning to create explicitly political movements; for instance, in Kosovo in February 2013, a group of religious extremists formed a political party named the “Islamic Movement to Unite” (Albanian acronym: LISBA), which one observer called “the first Muslim fundamentalist party in the Balkans,” although as yet it gains negligible electoral support.

As noted above, a distinct minority of the Muslim populations in southeastern Europe can be said to be members of the militant Islamist movement in the region, or to subscribe to the beliefs it represents. A survey conducted in Bosnia in 2007 found that three percent of the population adhered to Wahhabism (perhaps some 50-60,000 people), out of an estimated Muslim population of approximately two million, while another ten percent identified with it in some form. Current and former Bosnian Wahhabs, however, claim that the movement has many secret adherents. According to one former member, some forty percent of those adhering to the Wahhabi doctrine do not have the outward appearance of being Wahhabis. Other former Bosnian Wahhabis have claimed that Wahhabi sympathizers have “infiltrated schools, universities, and the media.” In Kosovo, security experts suggest about 50,000 people adhere to the more extreme Middle-Eastern forms of Islam, and are active in some thirty mosques around Kosovo. One specialist on Balkan Islam has warned that “Exponents of Saudi-financed Wahhabism and of the Muslim Brotherhood have penetrated the highest levels of the official Kosovo Islamic apparatus,” and one local expert has estimated that “the number of believers that follow a more extreme and fundamentalist interpretation of the Quran is growing.
in Kosovo.”126 In Macedonia, the mufti of Skopje, Ibrahim Šabani, has estimated that there are some 500-600 Wahhabis in the country (and possibly more),127 while other security specialists believe up to 3000 Wahhabis are active in Macedonia, mainly concentrated in areas around Skopje, Tetovo, Struga, and Kumanovo.128 In Montenegro it is believed that there are “several hundred Wahhabis,” primarily located near the towns of Rožaje, Plav and Gusiča.129 In the Sandžak, the International Crisis Group has estimated there are some 300 Wahhabis who control several mosques in the region,130 and some local analysts have claimed that the leader of the Islamic Community in Sandžak, Muamer Zukorlić, has close ties to the movement and receives funds from Wahhabi sources in Rome and Vienna.131 (In September 2014, the mufti of Montenegro, Reis Rifat Fejzić, similarly accused the Sandžak Islamic organization of supporting the Wahhabi movement.132) The growth of indigenous Balkan Islamist extremists is thus completing a circle in which natives are now taking the place of the foreign wave of extremists that moved into southeastern Europe in the 1990s; as one specialist on Al Qaeda in the Balkans has noted, in recent years there has been a substitution of foreign Islamist terrorists for “second generation” European Muslim converts and “Bosnian reverts.”133

As the preceding discussion suggests, there is some potential for militant Islamism to increase its influence in southeastern Europe over the coming years. Although it is highly unlikely that a majority of southeastern Europe’s Muslim populations would ever embrace the extreme forms of Islam found in the Middle-East and Central Asia, even relatively small-scale increases in the percentage of the population that adopts such views can do substantial damage to efforts to build stable multi-ethnic democracies in the region, and to western security interests in southeastern Europe. Moreover, as the Bosnian case shows, when historical circumstances have allowed militant Islamists to come to power and infiltrate various political and social institutions, the consequences are severe. As one long-time Izetbegović observer, Zlatko Dizdarević (the former head of Bosnia’s Helsinki Human Rights Committee) noted in 1999,

there is an infinite amount of proof for the claim that in the case of Izetbegović we are talking about a consistent concept of life and politics which he has realized, from which he has not stepped back, and which he, in the end, has realized . . . today we are the victims of a consistent view of the world which has shown itself to be fundamentally conservative, anachronistic, and fundamentally unacceptable for modern politics and the modern way of life . . . when you today read that same text and know that behind it in these ten years has existed the possibility of realizing that platform with the support of something which is called the state, which are called institutions of that state, such as the army, the police, etc., that those things, which 10 or 30 years ago one could proclaim a citizen’s right to their own opinion, grows into something which has a different dimension . . . the Islamic Declaration has been realized.134
III. The Infrastructure of Militant Islamism in Southeastern Europe

Over the past several years, the Balkans has emerged as a new battleground for militant Islamism. In June 2010, Islamist extremists bombed a police station in the central Bosnian town of Bugojno, killing one police officer and wounding six others. In February 2011, a Kosovo radical killed two US servicemen at Frankfurt Airport. In October 2011, a Sandžak Wahhabi attacked the US Embassy in Sarajevo. In April 2012, suspected Islamist extremists murdered five Macedonian citizens outside Skopje. In July 2012, Hezbollah operatives bombed a bus full of Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria. In March 2013, a Hezbollah operative was discovered monitoring Israeli citizens in Cyprus.135 (Hezbollah operatives are also known to have trained units of Izetbegović’s army).136 In Kosovo in November 2013, a terrorist cell composed of Syrian jihad volunteers was uncovered, and in September 2014, Albanian foreign minister Ditmir Bushati acknowledged that terrorist training camps for individuals joining the jihads in Iraq and Syria had emerged in Albania.137

As concerns grow about foreign jihad volunteers and the security threats they pose to their home countries if and when they return,138 one of the largest contingents of such foreign fighters come from the Balkans. According to one estimate, Bosnia has provided more Syrian jihad volunteers (per capita) than any other country in Europe,139 with several hundred citizens of Bosnia & Herzegovina now reported to be fighting in Syria,140 along with a large number of Bosnian émigrés.141 According to one report, thirty Bosnian veterans of the Syrian jihad have already returned to Bosnia,142 and the Sarajevo newsmagazine Slobodna Bosna has reported there are thirty women alone from Bosnia who have joined the Iraqi and Syrian jihads.143 Up to thirty individuals from the Sandžak have also joined the Iraqi and Syrian jihads,144 and four Croatian women have become wives of ISIS jihadis.145 Bosnia and Romania are also sources of weapons for the Iraqi and Syrian jihads, as the arrest of a Swedish imam-turned arms-procurer, Haythan Rahmeh, revealed.146

Joining this Bosnian, Croatian and Sandžak/Serbian volunteer jihad contingent is another large group of individuals from the southern Balkans. Up to 140 ethnic Albanians have been reported to be fighting alongside Islamist factions in Iraq and Syria,147 with the Kosovo “Skenderaj” group alone reportedly providing some forty Syrian jihad volunteers.148 A March 2014 study by the International Center for the Study of Radicalization estimates that some 300 individuals from Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia have joined the Iraqi and Syrian jihads.149 Priština media have reported that some 30 individuals from Kosovo went to Syria in January 2014 alone, and that six Albanians have already died in the fighting there.150 Several dozen individuals from Montenegro are also believed to have joined the Syrian jihad,151 although Aida Skorupan, who has closely followed the Wahhabi movement in Montenegro, believes the number of Montenegrin volunteers is significantly higher than the estimate of thirty or so individuals usually used.152 In September 2014, the CIA estimated that some 600-700 individuals from the Balkans had joined the jihads in Iraq and Syria.153 Albanian security specialist Ilir Kulla has claimed that the number of jihad volunteers from the region could be “in the thousands” if one includes individuals from the Balkan diaspora.154 Bosnian-based extremists also recruit volunteers for the Iraqi and Syrian jihads in other countries as well; Bilal Bosnić, for instance, is reported to have recruited five Slovenian nationals to join ISIS,155 and Italian media have claimed Bosnić is the “headhunter for ISIS in Italy.”156

“Although Western intelligence agencies never labeled [the mujahedin activities] in Bosnia al Qaeda jihad, it is now clear that is exactly what it was.”

———Former National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counter-Terrorism
Richard A. Clarke
Estimated Number of Balkan Jihadi Volunteers in Iraq and Syria
(by country)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Central Intelligence Agency, September 2014)

This cohort of Balkan jihad volunteers is largely drawn from pre-existing indigenous extremist
groups already operating in southeastern Europe. In 2010, a Bosnian security official estimated that
there are 3000 potential terrorists in Bosnia, and a former Al Qaeda operative, the Bahraini-born
Ali Hamad, claimed there are some 800 individuals in Bosnia of local origin making up a “white Al
Qaeda”: i.e., people who can pass through security checks avoiding racial profiling. In the imme-
diate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, NATO officials suggested there was a “hardcore group” of some
thirty individuals in Bosnia with direct links to international terrorism. Bosnia has also become
an important base of activity for security and intelligence services of various Islamist states; for
instance, an estimate released in late 2014 suggested that Iran, Pakistan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia
had some 1000 intelligence agents operating in Bosnia alone.

In an interesting example of comparative rates of radicalization, one observer has noted
that more individuals from the Balkans have joined the Iraqi and Syrian jihads than from
Central Asia or the Caucasus. By January 2014, the seriousness of the problem merited
the dispatch of a large, multiagency U.S. government delegation (including individuals from
the FBI, the NSA, the Department of State, and the Department of Justice) on a fact-finding
mission to the region.

The Balkan blowback from the Iraqi and Syrian jihads is already being felt. In November 2013,
six suspected terrorists (two of whom are believed to have fought in Syria) were arrested in Kosovo
on suspicion of plotting terrorist attacks using cell-phone activated explosive devices. The group
was also believed to have been involved in an attack on two American Mormon missionaries in
Priština on November 3rd. A group called “Xhemati i Xhehadit” subsequently warned police of
“painful attacks” if their comrades were not released, claiming that “without doubt, we have people
who love death more than you life in this world.” The continuing threat from militant Islamist
groups in the region was further on evidence in November 2013 when the largest illegal arms cache
discovered in postwar Bosnia was found near the central Bosnian town of Tešanj, in the heart of
territory where foreign mujahedin and their local allies operate. The weapons, which arrived in the
area about 1999, included over five-hundred 84mm grenades for rocket-propelled grenade launch-
ners, which local authorities claimed could be used for terrorist attacks or provided for use on other
jihad fronts. And the question intelligence agencies and security services now have to deal with
is what happens when these people return home, as was the case, for instance when in December
2013 German police arrested Kreshnik Berisha, an Islamic State fighter born in Germany from a
Kosovo émigré family, at Frankfurt Airport.

These have not been unexpected attacks and developments. Already in May 2007, a leading
American observer of Balkan Islam had noted that “a visitor to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania,
Kosovo, and Macedonia encountered unmistakable evidence that extremist intruders are opening
a Balkan front in the global jihad,” and in January 2010 Israeli officials warned that the Balkan
region “is global jihad’s next destination for creating an infrastructure and recruiting activists.”
Indeed, over the past three decades militant Islamists in the Balkans have created a sophisticated infrastructure consisting of four main components: 1) local allies in political, security, and religious establishments; 2) safe havens consisting of radical-controlled mosques and remote villages which provide militant Islamists places to recruit, organize, train and hide; 3) NGO's and financial institutions providing terrorists with cover identities and the ability to clandestinely transfer operational funds; and 4) various electronic and print media promoting their extremist ideology. Such complex, multi-faceted organization allows militant Islamist groups to sustain the occasional crackdown or arrest without substantial damage to their networks or infrastructure as a whole.169

Local Allies

The existence of an indigenous cadre of Balkan militant Islamists made it relatively easy for Al Qaeda and other Islamist extremist groups to implant themselves in Bosnia and extend their operations throughout Europe in the 1990s. Estimates of the number of non-indigenous mujahedin who moved to Bosnia during this period range from several hundred to six thousand.170 After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, Bosnia, according to one study, became “[a] new refuge, close to both the heart of Europe and the Middle East... an excellent tactical base for espionage, fundraising, and terrorist activities... a major center for terrorist recruitment and fundraising... a place where recruits could train, coalesce into cells, and seek shelter from prosecution by foreign law enforcement.”171 Along similar lines, as Douglas Farah has noted,

Map depicting the origin and approximate numbers of foreign mudžahedin moving into Bosnia between 1992-1995 (source: Oluic, 2008).
Qaeda activity. The Americans believe that Bosnia had become the pipeline for Al Qaeda volunteers who wanted to join up with the resistance in Iraq," and the former NATO commander in Bosnia, U.S. Army Major General Virgil Packett, claimed that “Bosnia [had] moved from being a sanctuary for terrorism to a gateway for terrorism.” Other concurrent studies suggested that Bosnia had become a command and control center for various groups of regional militants due to the existence of an extensive network of individuals sympathetic to the militant Islamist cause.

Increasing the threat and capacity of Balkan militant Islamists is the support and cooperation they receive from local authorities sympathetic to their cause. In February 1996, NATO forces raided an Iranian-operated terrorist training camp in Bosnia where they found plans to NATO installations, booby-trapped children’s toys, and essays on how to assassinate political opponents and critical journalists. The camp’s director was the personal intelligence advisor to Alija Izetbegović (this event is described in more detail in section IV). Alija Izetbegović’s son Bakir (currently a member of the Bosnian state presidency) has admitted to personally being in touch with leading mujahedin figures in Bosnia such as Imad al-Husin, a.k.a Abu Hamza. The younger Izetbegović was also reportedly caught trying to sell surface-to-air missiles to Al Qaeda in Iraq, for which American officials threatened him with a trip to Guantanamo.

A Saudi terrorist named Ahmed Zuhair, a.k.a. Abu Hanzala, wanted in connection with the September 1997 Mostar Car bombing and the November 1995 murder of U.S. citizen William Jefferson near Tuzla, was revealed to have been hiding at one point in the apartment of the Travnik chief of police (American intelligence ultimately captured Zuhair in Pakistan and transferred him to Guantanamo). Ali Hamad, a Bahraini-born Al Qaeda operative, has claimed that “from the political and military leadership in Sarajevo at the time we received the highest privileges and immunity from the police,” and that Al Qaeda figures would visit Bosnia with “state protection.”

Local allies also provide international jihadists with new identities allowing them to travel and conduct operations around the world. A secret report prepared for the Clinton Administration in late 2000 “shocked everyone” when the scale on which the Izetbegović regime had provided travel documents to international extremists was revealed. By one count some 12,000 Bosnian passports were distributed to international jihadists, and both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia
accused the Izetbegović regime of giving Bosnian passports to known terrorists. The distribution of new identities to international terrorists proved a useful way for the Izetbegović regime to evade provisions in the Dayton Peace Accords which required foreign fighters to be expelled from the country; thus, as security expert Evan Kohlmann has noted,

The Dayton Accords had specifically mandated that the Bosnian government expel soldiers who were not of ‘local origin.’ In order to evade this provision, Izetbegović’s regime simply issued thousands of BiH passports, birth certificates, and other official paperwork to various members of the foreign [mujahedin] battalion . . . many of the most dangerous ones . . . were protected by religious and political hardliners at the most senior levels of the Bosnian government, and thus were able to easily ‘melt into’ mainstream Bosnian society.

Osama bin Laden himself was the owner of a Bosnian passport, and Western reporters even saw him Izetbegović’s office during the war. According to Abdel Bari Atwan, bin Laden visited mujahedin camps in Bosnia three times between 1994-96, and Ayman al-Zawahiri took personal charge Al Qaeda’s efforts in Bosnia. bin Laden bodyguard Nasser Abdel al-Bahri, a.k.a. “the Father of Death” was also a Bosnian jihadist veteran, as was bin Laden’s son-in-law, Sulaiman abu Ghaith. In the 1990s, Al Qaeda operative Safet Abid Catovic was given cover as a diplomat at Bosnia’s UN Mission in New York. In 1998, three months before the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, Mamdouh Mahmoud Salim, the mastermind of the attacks, visited Bosnia on a “business trip” on a visa issued to him by the Bosnian consulate in Ankara. In September 1999, Turkish police arrested Mahrez Auduni (at the time considered one of bin Laden’s top aides) traveling on a Bosnian passport. As late as March 2014, the chairman of the security committee in Izetbegović’s Islamist party was a man on the U.S. government’s Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List, and otherwise widely considered to be a leading Iranian agent in Bosnia.

**Balkan Bases**

In remote, isolated villages around the Balkans militant Islamists have developed a
network of extra-territorial, sharia-run enclaves that serve as recruiting stations for local converts and safe havens for jihadists from around the world. Bulgaria’s former chief mufti, Nedim Gendzhev, claims that extremists are trying to create a “fundamentalist triangle” formed by Bosnia, Macedonia and Bulgaria’s Western Rhodope mountain range. Adding to concerns about the threat militant Islamist groups in the region pose is their often strategic choice in establishing outposts and bases. According to a 2014 Austrian intelligence report, for instance, the milieu in which militant Islamism in southeastern Europe flourishes, the Wahhabi movement, continues to grow and build new communities, one example of which can be seen in the northwestern Bosnian village of Bosanska Bojna (near Velika Kladuša), where Wahhabis have begun establishing a new settlement only a few dozen meters from the Croatian border, making it an ideal base for smuggling individuals and other contraband into and out of the EU.

In remote Bosnian villages such as Bočinja Donja, inhabited by some 600 people, extremists live “separate lives untroubled by local police, tax-collectors or any other authorities. Outsiders never set foot in the small community.” Bočinja Donja has been associated with numerous international terrorists, including Karim Said Atmani, the document forger for the Millenium Bomb plot. After would-be LAX bomber Ahmed Ressam was arrested on the U.S.-Canadian border in December 1999, U.S. officials tried to track down his former roommate, Atmani, who was known to be traveling between Sarajevo and Istanbul. Bosnian officials denied that Atmani had ever been there; however, investigators later learned that Atmani had been issued a Bosnian passport six months earlier; Khalil Deek, arrested in December 1999 for his involvement in a plot to blow up Jordanian tourist sites; and Omar Saeed Sheikh, involved in the murder/beheading of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, were there as well, and Al Qaeda’s second-in-command, Ayman al Zawahiri, also is known to have visited the village in 1997 and spent much of the 1990s in nearby Bulgaria.
Another Bosnian village, Gornja Maoča, was formerly the headquarters of Bosnia’s main Wahhabi leader, Nusret Imamović, whom the U.S. State Department in September 2014 designated one of ten “global terrorists.” According to a former resident of Gornja Maoča, members of the community who know Arabic regularly inform members about news and information from Al Qaeda websites, and some residents claim to personally know the editor of *Inspire* (Al Qaeda’s online publication). Large weapons caches have been discovered in forests surrounding the village, and the village has frequently been used as a way station for extremists joining jihads in Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Yemen. In October 2011, the Sandžak Wahhabi Mevlid Jašarević left the village on the day he attacked the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo. One of his companions that day, Emrah Fojnica, died in a suicide-bombing in Iraq in August 2014. Another visitor to Gornja Maoča was Edis Bosnić, a Bosnian émigré living in Jacksonville, Florida, who was arrested in the village in February 2010. Bosnić had maintained contact with Adis Međunjanin, another Bosnian émigré living in New York City who was arrested for his involvement in the plot to blow up the New York City subway system. Another Wahhabi outpost in Bosnia is Bužim (near Bihać) in northwestern Bosnia, home to Bilal Bosnić, known for his YouTube spots supporting suicide bombings, glorifying the Taliban, and various anti-Semitic rants.

In these remote Islamist-controlled areas, under the guise of “youth camps,” former mujahedin take young people into the local hills and forests where they are given military training and give the new cadres the chance to build relationships needed to sustain extremist networks. The camps are intentionally non-permanent, making it more difficult for security officials to track them. The training regimens typically last 6-7 weeks, and involve intensive religious indoctrination and other activities, such as...
as watching videos of jihads in Afghanistan and Iraq. Between 1992 and 1995 alone, some 2000 people are believed to have undergone “religious training” at just one such camp, run by Egyptian-born Imad al-Misri. In March 2007, Serbian police raided one such camp in the mountainous Sandžak region straddling the border between Serbia and Montenegro, arresting a number of individuals and seizing weapons, explosives, and food stocks. The group was allegedly planning to attack western embassies in Belgrade. In March 2008, several remote mountain cottages were discovered in central Bosnia where military equipment was stored and evidence suggested military-style exercises had been held. The cottages were discovered after a map was found in the Sarajevo apartment of Rijad Rustempašić, called by police “one of the most notorious and most violent radical Bosnian Muslims.” Would be shoe-bomber Saajid Badat trained in just such a Bosnian terrorist training camp in 1998. Similarly, in July 2013 a raid near the village of Kalošević, close to the central Bosnian town of Tešanj, uncovered the largest stash of undeclared weaponry and explosives found since the end of the Bosnian war, including over 500 rocket-propelled grenades. Local inhabitants of the village claimed the arms and ammunition were hidden there on the order of a high-ranking member of Izetbegović’s party Bosnian media cite as one of the main local liaisons with Al Qaeda operatives in the country.

Throughout the western and southern Balkans, extremist-led mosques also serve as bases for militant Islamists. The Saudi-funded King Fahd Mosque and Cultural Center in Sarajevo has been called “the epicenter of the spreading of radical ideas” in Bosnia, which for a number of years functioned autonomously under the direct supervision of the Saudi embassy in Bosnia. In 2003, the CIA attempted to infiltrate the King Fahd mosque’s Al Qaeda cells with a Pakistani double agent, Abdulrahman Khadr, the son of a prominent Al Qaeda official. The success of the effort remains unclear. The White Mosque in Sarajevo is the headquarters of Sulejman Bugari, a Kosovo Albanian-born imam whom some reports have described as a go-between and point-of-contact for Albanian and Bosnian extremists. In Kosovo, the Makowitz mosque on the outskirts of Priština and the Mitrovica mosque are reportedly recruiting militants to fight alongside Islamist groups in Iraq and Syria. In Macedonia, Wahhabi extremists have taken control of four mosques in Skopje, and are active in western parts of the country as well.

Some of the most violent elements in the Balkan Islamist movement are headquartered outside the region. For instance, the Sandžak extremist Nedžad Balkan, considered a leader in the Takfirí movement in both Bosnia and Serbia, has established himself in the Sahaba Mosque in Vienna’s 7th Bezirk, while another prominent Bosnian militant Islamist, Muhamed Porča, is based in Vienna’s al-Tawhid mosque, frequented by Asim Cejvanović, the Bosnian émigré who attacked the US embassy in Vienna in October 2002.

Throughout the Balkans, prisons also serve as recruiting grounds for militant Islamists; in Zenica prison in Bosnia, for instance, militant Islamists such as Abu Hamza have established cells that recruit and indoctrinate inmates, as a result of which, as one security expert noted, “they come out of prison as professionals, ready to do terrorist acts.” Militant Islamists have also taken advantage of young people afflicted by drug addiction; in one example, the International Crisis Group has reported how the imam of
Sarajevo’s Vratnik White Mosque runs a program which brings drug-addicted young people from Sandžak to a “rehabilitation center” in Sarajevo, whereupon “when the former addicts return, almost all sport Wahhabi beards and dress and appear to adhere to a fundamentalist form of Islam.”

NGOs and Financial Institutions

Militant Islamists support their efforts in southeastern Europe through a network of “NGO’s,” “charities” and “humanitarian aid” organizations, often funded by known Al Qaeda financial donors. The CIA has estimated that one third of the Bosnian NGO’s operating worldwide have terrorist connections or employ people with terrorist links. During the Bosnian jihad, various NGO’s with known ties to Al Qaeda funneled several hundreds of millions of dollars to Izetbegović’s war effort, and U.S.-based “charities” with close ties to Osama bin Laden, such as Care International, Inc., received checks with memo lines reading “Bosnia mujahedin,” “for jihad only,” and “Chechen Muslim fighters.” Of the estimated $800 million the Saudis alone gave to Bosnia after Dayton, some $100 million is untraceable, lost in a maze of Al Qaeda front organizations funding terror activities worldwide. In the aftermath of 9/11, a raid in Sarajevo on just such a “charity,” the Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia, netted “maps of Washington, material for making false State Department identity cards and anti-American manuals designed for children.” (The Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia has been named as a defendant in the lawsuit brought by 9/11 victims and families in U.S. federal court.) Also found in Sarajevo in March 2002 was Al Qaeda’s donor’s list, the so-called “Golden Chain.”

Among the Al Qaeda-linked organizations working in the Balkans have been the Benevolence International Foundation (which had offices and personnel in Chicago), the “Taibah Foundation,”
the “Global Relief Foundation,” which operated in Bosnia and Kosovo, and al Haramain, which was active in Albania. The Turkish-based IHH (the “Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief,” or Insani Yardim Vakfi in Turkish) which was involved in the Mavi Marmara incident off the Israeli coast in May 2010, began its activities in Bosnia in the 1990s. In June 2010, Turkish authorities began an investigation of the group’s founder, Bülent Yıldırım, for funding Al Qaeda. Although impossible to verify independently, the Iranian news agency Farsnews has claimed that IHH had recruited 769 Albanians (as of August 2013) to join the “Free Syrian Army.” Of those, Farsnews claimed that 450 had defected and gone on to join the Al Nusra front. In Kosovo, a leading political analyst, Ilir Deda, has claimed that Middle-Eastern “charities” invested some $800 million there between 1999-2010.

The lack of transparency in many Middle-Eastern-based banking institutions makes it extremely difficult to track the flow of monies to militant groups in the region. Monies donated for legitimate charitable purposes often get siphoned off and used to support weapons purchases or to provide support for families of imprisoned or killed jihadis. Members of the Al Qaeda cell in Albania, for instance, working under the cover of various Middle-East based charities (such as the Islamic Revival Foundation, an organization with alleged ties to Bin Laden), were required to contribute 26 percent of their salaries to support the global jihad; one such individual claimed that he diverted $800 per month (from funds intended for Albanian orphans) for such purposes. Monies provided from such sources have also financed political asylum applications in western countries, helping militants establish terrorist cells in Europe and the U.S. The Islamic Revival Foundation ran an “educational institute” in the Albanian town of Elbasan, consisting of four buildings, surrounded by a high wall topped with barbed wire. By 2010, the Albanian government had seized and confiscated some $7.5 million (USD) in assets from two individuals and thirteen foundations believed implicated in terrorist finance. In Macedonia, U.S. officials have alleged that the NGO “Bamiresia,” run by radical cleric Bekir Halimi, was involved in a variety of schemes laundering Middle-Eastern
money in the region. Among other things, Halimi’s students received funds from Al-Waqf Al-Islamiya, an organization known for providing funds for individuals who want to go on jihad. As usual, money buys influence; thus, in Kosovo Stephen Schwartz has claimed that “a Saudi-based Wahhabi group operating in Western Europe exercises alarming financial influence over the highest Kosovo Islamic leadership.” Islamist NGO’s and humanitarian groups also finance sending school-age children to study in countries such as Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria where they are indoctrinated in extreme forms of Islam.

Militant Media and Propaganda

Militant Islamists in the Balkans have developed an extensive array and network of print periodicals, bookstores, websites, and YouTube spots spreading religious intolerance, glorifications of violence, and anti-American, anti-Semitic, anti-democratic messages. Islamic bookstores from Belgrade to Novi Pazar distribute tracts by Islamist extremists such as Yussuf Qaradawi and Sayyib Qutb. Websites such as the “Way of the Believer” (putvjerника.com), “Way of Islam” (stazomislama.com), Ensarije Serijata (“Partisans of Sharia” http://www.geocities.ws/ensarije_serijata/index-2.html), “Saved Community” (spasenaskupina.com, affiliated with Bilal Bosnić), “News of the Community” (vijestiummeta.com), and the Sandžak Wahhabi website kelimetul-haqq.org promote jihad, suicide bombings, and the killing of non-Muslims. These websites also relay news from other jihadi fronts, sermons by extremist preachers from the Middle-East, and messages from Al Qaeda leaders; for instance, the PutVjernika website recently carried “A New Order from Zawahiri: Focus on Attacks on American Interests.” Militant Islamist extremist networks also use videos of snipers killing American soldiers in Iraq to recruit new volunteers for the Iraq jihad. According to Fahrudin Kladicanin, the co-author of a recent study on Balkan extremists’ use of the internet and social media, “The number of those who are ‘liking,’ making comments and sharing the content of these pages, especially when it comes to religious leaders, extreme Islamists and Wahhabists, is rising on a daily basis.” The Facebook profiles of almost all such extremist leaders have over 5,000 “friends” and even more “likes.” In October 2014, the Islamist extremist website Vjesni Ummeta claimed that in one 24-hour period 110,905 unique readers visited their website, and the aforementioned radical imam from Kosovo Shefqet Krasniqi reportedly gets more YouTube hits than any Kosovo politician. The Facebook page Krenaria Islame (Albanian for “Islamic Pride”), which posts pictures and stories of Albanians fighting in Syria, has 2,500 followers. According to

“A New Order from Zawahiri: Focus Your Attacks on American Interests.” From the PutVjernika website (posted on 12 October 2013), maintained by Bosnian extremists in Gornja Maoča. Note that southeastern Europe is claimed as part of Al Qaeda’s proposed Caliphate.
the Tirana-based security expert Arjan Dyrmishi, “If all the followers of this page were identified as terrorists, they would make a small army and pose a major problem. Such a large number of followers would pose a concern, even if these people were to be identified only as supporters of political Islam.”240 As of mid-October 2014, Vijesti Ummeta had 13,551 Facebook fans, and Saff had 12,352. The Albanian-language website ligjeratayislame.com, which posts sermons by the extremist imam Bekir Halimi, had 20,763 likes. An October 2014 YouTube search of the “SalafiMedia Balkan” channel returned 943 results.

Evidence of the increasing technological sophistication of Balkan militant Islamists have been recent episodes in which they have engaged in low-level cyber-warfare. An extremist from the central Bosnian town of Bugojno, Haris Čaušević (suspected of involvement in the June 2010 bombing of a police station in Bugojno in which one police officer was killed) was accused of hacking several government websites,241 and in Kosovo in August 2009, the website of the newspaper Express, which had run articles critical of militant Islamists in Kosovo, was hacked, with the culprits imposing an Al Qaeda flag on the website and various threats in Albanian and English.242

The Sarajevo-based extremist publication Saff was originally founded by indigenous Bosnian members of the Al Qaeda unit in the Bosnian jihad (the El Mujahedin brigade), who formed an organization called Aktivna Islamska Omladina (“Active Islamic Youth,” local acronym, AIO). According to the U.S. State Department, the AIO spreads extremist views and has links with radical groups in Western Europe and the U.S.243 Saff is available in both print and an online electronic version which the State Department has described as anti-American and tending towards extremism. AIO has also established itself in various cities and towns in Macedonia.244 A Wahhabi TV channel in Kosovo, ironically called “Peace TV,” established by the radical preacher Zahir Naik, “insults . . . in aggressive terms, spiritual Sufis, Shia Muslims, non-fundamentalist Sunnis, Jews, Christians, and Hindus, among others.” In his sermons Naik has praised Osama bin Laden and supported terrorism.245
IV. Iran in the Balkans

A major concern amongst Western security officials over the past two decades has been containing Iranian influence in southeastern Europe, particularly in Bosnia. This concern has increased in recent years as the possibility of military conflict over Iran’s nuclear program has grown, raising fears Iran or its allies such as Hezbollah could retaliate to such an attack by launching counter-strikes outside the Middle-East. When a suspected Hezbollah suicide-bomber attacked a bus in Burgas, Bulgaria in July 2012, killing six Israeli tourists, it confirmed to many observers that southeastern Europe was indeed a potential front for Iran or its proxies in any future conflict.

Western concern over the possibility that pro-Iranian Islamist factions in southeastern Europe could cause serious problems for Western interests in the event of military conflict with Tehran has increased in recent years. In the first six months of 2012 alone, 200 Iranian “businessmen” were granted visas to enter Bosnia. More ominously, an Iranian diplomat known to have been in Georgia, Thailand and India (all countries in which there have been terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens) has now been stationed in Bosnia. In August 2012, the American and British ambassadors to Sarajevo privately warned Bosnian officials to cut their ties to Iran, and a former international high representative in Bosnia publicly told the Bosnians that their future lay with the EU, not with Iran. More ominously, in September 2012 a Sarajevo newspaper claimed that pro-Iranian factions in the Bosnian government were re-activating para-intelligence cells leftover from the time Alija Izetbegovic.

In 2014 Tehran again began intensifying its espionage efforts in Bosnia. Iranian agents were reported to be making contacts with Bosnian “NGO’s” with known extremists ties, and meeting with individuals from the Wahhabi village of Gornja Maoća. A high-ranking MOIS official, Abolghazem Parhizkar, made two trips to Bosnia in 2014, and other Iranian agents have been observed shuttling between Istanbul, Sarajevo, and Vienna on a frequent basis. By this time, it was believed that Iran, Pakistan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had some 1000 intelligence agents operating in Bosnia.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Izetbegović and his colleagues had been inspired and encouraged by the Ayatollah Khomeini’s Islamic Revolution in Iran. Several of Izetbegović’s closest collaborators at the time secretly went to Iran in January 1982 to attend anniversary celebrations marking the establishment of the Islamic Republic, and to attend a congress aimed at the reunification of Sunni and Shia Islam. These activities, together with the views promoted in the Islamic Declaration, earned Izetbegović a second prison term in 1983 in a trial in which a dozen other Bosnian Islamists were also sentenced. The indictees of the 1983 trials would in 1990 form the core of Izetbegović’s newly-formed political party, the SDA. One of those tried with Izetbegović at this time, Omer Behmen, was in 1992 entrusted with the job of becoming the Izetbegović regime’s ambassador to Tehran. Another 1983 trial indictee, Hasan Čengić, would in the 1990s be widely seen as the leading Iranian agent in Bosnia. (According to the former chief of the CIA’s unit for tracking Osama bin Laden, Michael Scheuer, Čengić was one of the agency’s top surveillance targets in Europe in the 1990s.)

Iranian influence in the former Yugoslavia was also spread at this time by educational exchanges in which several hundred Yugoslav Muslim students were sent to study in Iranian institutions. By 1989, there were a reported 606 Iranian nationals in Yugoslavia.

The Bosnian war in 1992 opened the doors for Iran to exponentially increase its influence in Bosnia. Iran was one of the first Islamic countries to provide support to the Izetbegović regime, and within a few weeks of the outbreak of fighting UN peacekeepers were already reporting the arrival of Iranian forces in Bosnia. Moreover, with the tacit approval of the Clinton Administration the Iranians provided Izetbegović with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Cairo, February 2013
begovic’s war effort with considerable military, intelligence, and logistical support. Throughout this period, the Iranians developed an extensive intelligence network throughout the territory and in the various institutions controlled by Izetbegović’s forces, running a well-developed ring of “charities” in cities such as Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica, Bihac, and Vinko.256 The Iranians also initiated an intensive training program for Bosnian intelligence and security officials during this time.257 The importance of Bosnia in Iranian plans was evident in the sheer number of Iranians visiting the country; for instance, in June 2000 alone, 1,298 Iranian passport holders entered Bosnia on one- and two-week visas. Only 116 “officially” departed. Although many of these “visitors” might have been involved in human trafficking operations, the ease with which Iranian agents could enter Bosnia and then disappear was obvious.258

Importantly, during the war the Izetbegović regime’s preference for Iran as a sponsor and model was very apparent. According to Cees Wiebes, throughout the conflict “Turkey and Saudi Arabia were very willing to deliver weapons and to lure Izetbegović away from Iran, but the orientation of the Bosnian government was far more towards Iran.”259 American intelligence operatives in Bosnia came to the same conclusion. Robert Baer, a CIA agent stationed in Sarajevo during the war, claimed that “In Sarajevo, the Bosnian Muslim government is a client of the Iranians . . . If it’s a choice between the CIA and the Iranians, they’ll take the Iranians any day.”260 Along similar lines, John Sray (former G-2 for UNPROFOR during the Bosnian war) noted,

The Bosnian Muslim government certainly does not reflect the image of a liberal western-style democracy as the press misleadingly portrays it. This group remains Islamist-dominated and desperately attempts to hide its true sentiments. It is more likely to be influenced by Iran and the Mujahedin than by anyone in the West. These radical groups may remain underground or depart during NATO’s deployment, but they will return later to ensure that the Bosniac population becomes properly politicized and obedient to fundamentalist doctrine.261

This was also the conventional wisdom within the State Department. Should Croats and Serbs secede from Bosnia, according to one former US diplomat, the result would be “a non-visible rump Islamic state that would be a platform for Iranian terrorism.”262 Similarly, amongst scholars there was a belief that a Muslim mini-state in Bosnia “could hardly be [a] secular pro-Western entity . . . It could very well seek its sources of ideology, inspiration and arms from the East.”263 By the war’s end public opinion polls showed some 86% of the Bosnian Muslim population expressed a positive attitude towards Iran.264

Indeed, Washington would soon have dangerous evidence of the degree to which the Izetbegović regime had become Iranian clients. When a new CIA station chief was sent to Sarajevo in 1995, he was immediately betrayed by his local Bosnian colleagues to Iranian agents who quickly began preparing his assassination.265 Iranian support was also what the Izetbegović regime counted on in its efforts to lift the arms embargo; as Sićajdžić admitted in one conversation with Carl Bildt, lifting the arms embargo would allow “ten thousand Iranian soldiers” to come to Bosnia.266 Izetbegović also used his frequent visits to Iran to give more credibility to the threats he issued against his opponents; for instance, in October 1992, standing at the tomb of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Izetbegović threatened to launch poisonous gas attacks against the Serbs.268
With the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in December 1995, one of the main goals of U.S. policy became reducing the influence of Iran and the various mujahedin forces in Bosnia. This proved a difficult task, for pro-Iranian factions had by this time become deeply embedded in numerous Bosnian institutions. According to a leaked CIA report Izetbegović himself was “literally on the [Iranian] payroll,” receiving on just one occasion $500,000 (US) in cash from Iranian agents.269 Tellingly, the Iranian ambassador to Bosnia was the only foreign diplomat accompanying Izetbegović on his electoral campaign in 1996,270 and on one of Haris Silajdžić’s trips to London, Margaret Thatcher herself observed that he was escorted by Iranian guards and transported in Iranian vehicles.271

By 1997, it was estimated that Iran had approximately 200 agents in various Bosnian institutions. A particular Iranian target was the American-sponsored “arm and train” program for the Muslim-Croat Federation Army. Thanks to the support of key allies within the Izetbegović regime, Iranian intelligence services were able to infiltrate drivers, translators, and clerical personnel into the program, all of whom had been picked by the pro-Iranian faction in Izetbegović’s security service. For instance, the chief liaison with the US Defense Department for coordinating the “arm and train” program, General Dzemal Merdan, was also Izetbegović’s officer in charge of relations with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and one of the founders of the “7th Muslim Brigade” which had incorporated the mujahedin forces in Bosnia.272 The Iranians were also running a network of 5-7 training camps in central Bosnia for an intelligence service that Izetbegović had set up in January 1996 in contravention of the Dayton Accords,273 and during this period the Bosnian government was training military personnel in Iran as well.274 Iran also extended its influence in Bosnia by infiltrating agents into various charities, news agencies, and even a hamburger chain in Sarajevo.275

The most concerted U.S. effort to purge pro-Iranian officials from positions of influence in Bosnia was the removal of Hasan Čengić, one of Izetbegović’s closest collaborators. As noted earlier, Čengić had gone to prison with Izetbegović in the 1980s and during the war was the SDA’s primary fundraiser abroad, using this position to establish strong contacts in many Islamic countries. In the summer of 1996, under strong American pressure (including a threat to halt the “arm and train” program), Izetbegović was forced to dismiss Čengić as deputy defense minister in the Federation, along with the first director of Izetbegović’s secret intelligence service, the Agencija za istraživanje i dokumentaciju (“Agency for Research and Documentation,” or AID), Bakir Alispahić.276 Despite American objections, however, both Čengić and Alispahić continued to play very important roles within Izetbegović’s movement. Čengić himself was reputedly one of the wealthiest people in Bosnia and
remained the leader of the pro-Iranian wing of the SDA. By one account, Čengić was even supposed to succeed Izetbegović as SDA leader until American officials made it clear to the latter that in such a case the SDA would join Hezbollah and Hamas on the U.S.’ list of terrorist organizations.277 For his part, Alispahić used his ties with Iran and his connections within the Bosnian intelligence community to allegedly amass a small fortune of his own; according to one report, Alispahić controlled an Iranian funded Muslim drug-smuggling network stretching to Europe and North America.278

Both during and after the war, Iran’s intelligence service, VEVAK, took particular interest in operating terrorist training camps in Bosnia. On 14 February 1996, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher travelled to Sarajevo where, in a meeting with Izetbegović, he insisted that such camps be closed. Izetbegović personally assured Christopher that no such terrorist facilities existed in Bosnia. Less than twenty-four hours later, NATO forces raided just such a camp near the Bosnian town of Pogorelići run by Iranian and Bosnian intelligence agents. After inspecting the camp, the NATO commander in Bosnia, Admiral Leighton Smith, told reporters that “No one can escape the obvious, there is terrorist training activity going on in this building and it has direct association with people in the government.”279

Among the objects found at the Pogorelići camp were plans to NATO installations in Bosnia, essays on how to assassinate regime opponents, and booby-trapped children’s toys. Individuals who attended courses at the camp were trained to commit various forms of terror, such as assassinating political opposition figures of the Izetbegović regime, manufacturing car bombs and booby-trapped children’s toys, and various forms of ecological terrorism. Among the “student essays” confiscated at the camp was one by Adnan Dugonjić, who wrote “Our job is assassinating important figures, blackmail, kidnapping, forgery of money, and the creation of ecological catastrophes in certain areas.” Another student planned an assassination of Muslim opposition leader Muhammed Filipović, suggesting “The liquidation can be carried out by us, or by a hired person who is not a member of intelligence … I suggest liquidation by poisonous chemical placed in water or food or transferred by skin.”280

In the predictable coverup that followed NATO’s raid on Pogorelići, Izetbegović’s intelligence service would subsequently change the identities of the Bosnians NATO arrested at the camp.281 Other individuals connected to Pogorelići were not so lucky. A few months after the raid, Nedžad Ugljen, a highly-ranked member of AID considered to be a leader of the pro-Iranian faction within Izetbegović’s security service, was suspected by his colleagues of preparing to approach the Americans and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia with information about Bosnian ties to Iran and various war crimes. Before he could talk, Ugljen was assassinated in Sarajevo in September 1996. His killers have never been found.

The Iranian factor remains an important variable in the current Bosnian security calculus. To take but one example—Alija Izetbegović’s son, Bakir Izetbegović, currently a member of the three-man Bosnian presidency, is widely seen as the leader of the pro-Iranian faction in Bosnian Muslim political circles. One of the younger Izetbegović’s main advisors is Fikret Muslimović, the head of the Association of Iranian-Bosnian Friendship.282 Meanwhile, the former commandant of the Pogorelići camp, the aforementioned Bakir Alispahić, as late as March 2014 remained the head of the security committee of Izetbegović’s SDA—despite being on the black list of individuals prohibited from visiting the U.S. because of terrorist ties.283 Sarajevo is now home to the largest Iranian embassy in Europe, and several hundred Iranians are active in Bosnia whether as diplomats, journalists, “charitable workers,” or attached to the Iranian Cultural Center in Sarajevo. There is also believed to be a pro-Iranian, pro-Shiite faction within the Bosnian religious establishment (despite the fact that Bosnian Islam itself is Sunni).

Since the end of the war, Iran has invested considerable sums and energy into various forms of “public diplomacy,” promoting academic and cultural ties with elite circles in Bosnia. One example of such efforts was the establishment of a Persian-Bosnian College outside Sarajevo which offers graduating students trips to Iran.284 By some accounts, the Iranian government and Iranian security services are promoting Shia’ proselytizing and missionary work in Bosnia, and a small Shia community has been formed in the village of Lješeva (on the outskirts of Sarajevo), part of an overall Shia community in BiH estimated to have some 250-300 members.285 Other organizations that promote
closer Bosnian-Iranian ties are the Fondacija Mulla Sadra (website: http://www.mullasadra.ba/), and the Ibn Sina Naučno-istraživački institut (website: http://www.ibn-sina.net/) which promotes academic and intellectual dialogue between Bosnian and Iranian scholars. Some members of the official Islamic Community in Bosnia are claimed to be secret adherents of Shiism, and plans are reportedly underway to build a Shia university in Bosnia.286

Along with these more public aspects of the Iranian presence in Bosnia, Tehran’s more surreptitious efforts in Bosnia continue. In May 2013, it was discovered that the second and third secretaries at the Iranian embassy in Sarajevo, Hamzeh Doolab Ahmad and Jadidi Sohrab, had been establishing ties with Nusret Imamović and his Wahhabi community in Gornja Maoča, reportedly bringing “cash and best wishes.” Under western pressure the two Iranian diplomats were ultimately expelled from the country.287

Despite this history, however, the concerted Iranian effort to establish a Balkan or Bosnian beachhead in Europe has had only limited success. The limits to Iranian influence in Bosnia were evident when Bosnia voted in June 2010 in favor of tightening sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council, revealing the utility of having Croat and Serb members of the Bosnian presidency exert their influence on Bosnian foreign policy. Iran’s room for maneuver in Bosnia is also limited by the substantial autonomy of Bosnia’s Croat-populated cantons and the Serb entity in Bosnia, the Republika Srpska, where the Iranians enjoy no sympathy. Moreover, a three-way struggle is taking place now within the Bosnian Muslim political and religious establishment as well which pits Iranian sympathizers against one group that is in favor of closer ties with Saudi Arabia, and another that sees Turkey as the appropriate role model for Bosnia.

Iran has also been active in other Balkan states, albeit not so prominently. In Albania, for instance, Iran has also attempted to create what Reza Shafaf has called “a foothold in the European continent.” As in Bosnia, the attempted Iranian infiltration of Albania followed the pattern of setting up “charities” and “cultural organizations” that serve as front organizations for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and VEVAK.

Despite such efforts, however, Iran draws little popular sympathy in Albania. President Sali Berisha, for instance, was an outspoken critic of the Ahmadinejad regime; in August 2012 Berisha claimed that “Ahmadinejad’s Nazi declarations should be a wake-up call that Iran’s nuclear program should be stopped by any means, as the greatest threat to peace and stability in the world.”288 Another sore point in Albanian-Iranian relations is the fact that several dozen members of an anti-Islamic Republic resistance group, the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK) are with U.S. support being resettled from Iraq to Albania. MEK is a controversial group that had earlier been listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. government, but in recent years has been seen as useful in the effort to contain Tehran.289

It remains unclear how influential Iran can remain or become in southeastern Europe. As with the militant Islamist threat in the region in general, there is little danger of an Iranian-style Islamic republic being established in Bosnia or anywhere else in the Balkans. What is a very real and present danger, however, is that Iranian cells or pro-Iranian factions in the region could provide the logistical infrastructure for an Iranian counter-strike in the Balkans should conflict erupt between Tehran and the West. Iran’s infiltration of official institutions in Bosnia should also give NATO pause for concern regarding Bosnia’s eventual admission into the alliance. As a NATO member, Bosnia would be privy to much of the intelligence shared amongst alliance members. With Iranian agents still in many positions of power in Bosnian institutions, this essentially means that they would have access to NATO intelligence, planning and operations.
V. A Micro-Case Study of Terrorist Networks: The Bosnian Connections to the World Trade Center Attacks

In April 2008, the late Richard Holbrooke claimed “If it had not been for the Dayton Peace Accords, 9/11 would probably have been planned in Bosnia, not in Afghanistan.”290 The numerous Bosnian connections to both World Trade Center attacks suggest that the situation was probably even more serious than Holbrooke realized. Although it is unlikely that Izetbegović or his associates had prior knowledge of or approved of the two World Trade Center attacks, what is known is that Bosnia served as the common stomping ground for many of the individuals involved in the attacks.

This of course follows a well-established, predictable pattern of what ensues when militant Islamist movements take control of territory and institutions and ideological affinities impel them toward alliances with the most extreme elements along the militant Islamist spectrum. Whether observing Afghanistan under the Taliban, Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Lebanon under Hezbollah, the Gaza Strip under Hamas, Sudan under Hasan al-Turabi and his National Islamic Front, or Bosnia under the Izetbegović regime, such movements consistently provide the permissive environments and safe havens Islamist terrorists need to set up the organizations and infrastructure required to plan operations, train and recruit new adherents, and hide from Western intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

The first World Trade Center bombing in February 1993 was financed in part by monies provided by the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), a Vienna-based “Islamic charity” founded by a long-time Izetbegović associate, the Sudanese national Elfatih Hassanein. Former National Security Agency analyst John Schindler has called TWRA “Bosnia’s unique gift to radical Islam and Al Qa’ida . . . the Bosnian ‘model’ of how to use NGOs and aid money to pay for jihad and terrorism.”291 Along similar lines, J.M. Berger has claimed that in large part through TWRA “Bosnia raised more money for extremism than virtually any other event you can point to in history.”292 According to Thomas Joscelyn,

TWRA was run by senior Bosnian government officials, and sponsored the relocation of hundreds, if not thousands, of jihadists to Bosnia to fight in the 1990s. While carrying out some legitimate humanitarian functions as a cover, TWRA was really a front for global terrorist operations.293

A number of Alija Izetbegović’s closest associates were on the board of TWRA. At a meeting in Vienna on 14 September 1992 attended by Izetbegović, Ejup Ganić, Haris Siljadžić and Hassanein, Izetbegović intimates Irfan Ljevaković, Husein Živalj and Derviš Djudjević were elected to TWRA’s board.294 (Živalj, and Djudjević had gone to prison with Izetbegović in 1983. Ljevaković was charged with running a terrorist training camp in Central Bosnia in April 2002). Other sources have claimed that Hassanein, Mustafa Cerić, Hasan Čengić (widely considered to be the leading Iranian agent in Bosnia), and Bakir Izetbegović (currently a member of Bosnia’s joint state presidency) also controlled the Vienna TWRA account.295

By some accounts, TWRA alone collected $400 million (US) for Izetbegović’s war effort,296 while other reports claim as much as $2.5 billion passed through TWRA on its way to Bosnia.297 TWRA also ran a covert program attempting to use US military personnel serving in Bosnia to convert to Islam and join Al Qaeda. At least a dozen US soldiers reportedly participated in this effort.298
Clement Rodney Hampton-el, an American who had trained in terrorist camps in Afghanistan, admitted in federal court that he had obtained TWRA funds to operate military-style training camps in New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania for individuals who would go on to be involved in the 1993 World Trade Center attack.\(^ {299} \) In addition to obtaining TWRA funds from Vienna, Hampton-el is also reported to have gone to Bosnia circa 1992-93.\(^ {300} \) Another TWRA employee, John Fawzan, was discovered to have been the suicide bomber involved in the October 1995 attack on the police headquarters in Rijeka, Croatia.\(^ {301} \) In December 1995, an individual wanted in connection with the first World Trade Center bombing was killed by Bosnian Croat forces near Zepce in central Bosnia.\(^ {302} \)

Another individual involved with TWRA was Omar Abdel-Rahman, a.k.a. “the blind sheik,” convicted in U.S. federal court for seditious conspiracy in the Landmarks Bombing Plot in 1993, which had targeted the United Nations Building, the Lincoln and Holland tunnels, the George Washington Bridge, and FBI headquarters in Manhattan. After the first World Trade Center bombing, the FBI succeeded in turning Rahman’s former Sudanese-born driver into an informant, who began telling American officials about a terrorist organization named “Al Qaeda.” In 1993-94 the driver travelled to Sudan and met with bin Laden. In 1994, he began working for the CIA and was sent by the agency to infiltrate Bosnian Al Qaeda cells. Unfortunately, his identity was betrayed, and he was killed by Al Qaeda operatives in Bosnia at some point in 1994-95.\(^ {303} \)

The Bosnian connections to the greatest mass murder in American history are just as direct. Khalid Sheikh Muhammed, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, fought in the Bosnian jihad and was given Bosnian citizenship. Two other 9/11 bombers, Khalid al Mindhar and Nawaf al Hazmi, also fought in Izetbegović’s army.\(^ {304} \) The British journalist Eve-Anne Prentice of *The Guardian*
and German journalist Renate Flottau of Der Spiegel reported meeting Osama bin Laden in Izetbegović’s office during the war, and bin Laden was even given a Bosnian passport by Izetbegović’s foreign ministry. When asked to respond to allegations that he had met bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, Izetbegović evasively replied “During and after the war I met with thousands of people coming from the Islamic world but I can remember the faces and names of only a few.”

The Bosnian politician Sejfudin Tokić has claimed that Council of Europe officials had told him of the existence of a photograph showing Izetbegović with bin Laden.

The core group behind the 9/11 attacks was Al Qaeda’s so-called “Hamburg cell,” led by Bosnian jihad veteran Mohammed Haydar Zammar, reportedly the man who recruited Mohammed Atta, the ringleader of the 9/11 attacks. Zammar has been variously described as the “patron” of the Hamburg Cell, the man “under whose tutelage” it operated, and “a sort of surrogate father to the pilots surrounding Mohammed Atta.” Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, “coordinator” of the 9/11 attacks, was seen in Bosnia in the summer of 1996. Other 9/11 participants have been reported to have had Bosnian connections as well.

Sarajevo rental-car agent Reda Seyam, named by a Spanish court as “Osama Bin Laden’s financier in Europe,” deposited $250,000 into an account controlled by Mamoun Darkanzli, an Hamburg businessman of Syrian origin with known ties to the 9/11 bombers. Seyam himself was subsequently implicated in the October 2002 Bali nightclub bombings.

Darkanzli attracted the attention of the Bundesnachrichtendienst (the German intelligence service, or BND) when they noticed he had power-of-attorney over a German bank account opened by Mamdouh Mahmud Salim. According to U.S. government lawyers, Salim “was present for the founding of al Qaeda, served on its shurah (consultation) council, issued fatwahs authorizing violence against America and authorized efforts to obtain uranium for nuclear weapons for al Qaeda . . . [Salim] described Bosnia as the base for al Qaeda operations in Europe.” Salim, who was subsequently convicted in U.S. federal court for being the organizer of the August 1998 U.S. African embassy bombings, travelled to Bosnia on a “business trip” three months before the bombings at the invitation of the Bosnian-based “Ljiljan Commerce Group” on a visa issued to him by the Bosnian consulate in Turkey.

The Ljiljan Commerce Group was owned by Enaam Arnout, who was also the director of a Chicago-based “Islamic charity” named the Benevolence International Foundation, with a Sarajevo-based subsidiary organization called “Bosanska Idealna Futura” (BIF). Although Arnout denied knowing bin Laden, federal prosecutors found photographs of the two together at the Al Masada mudžahedin camp in Afghanistan dating back to 1988.

Raids on the Sarajevo BIF office in March 2002 turned up Al Qaeda’s donor’s list, the so-called “Golden Chain,” documents relating to Al Qaeda’s founding, and scans of handwritten correspondence between bin Laden and Arnout. Raids on the Sarajevo residences of BIF employees turned up loaded submachine guns, ski masks, and instruc-
tion manuals for improvised explosive devices (IED’s), missiles and mortars, and falsified identity documents. Between June 2000 and September 2001, the BIF transferred $1,414,404 from a Swiss bank to its checking account in Chicago. These monies were then redistributed to BIF offices abroad. In March 2002, the US Embassy in Sarajevo was shut down after it was learned that Al Qaeda operatives had met in Sofia where they decided that “in Sarajevo something will happen to Americans similar to New York last September.” Subsequently, Munib Zahiragić, a BIF director in Sarajevo and former member of Izetbegović’s secret police was arrested in connection with the plot, and charged with leaking classified documents which allowed a member of Al Qaeda in Bosnia to escape capture.

Another organization used to support the Bosnian jihad was the Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia (SHC), which a U.S. federal court ruled was “a fully integrated component of al Qa[ea]da’s logistical and financial support infrastructure.” Raids on SHC offices in Sarajevo in October 2001 found “computer hard drives containing photos of the World Trade Center, the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the U.S.S. Cole (all targets of terrorist attacks); documents about pesticides and crop dusters; photos and maps of Washington, D.C. (with prominent government buildings marked); and instructions for fabricating U.S. State Department badges.”

Left: “It was not a significant matter. It was not a big threat. It didn’t become a big threat.” Former U.S. ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith on the Islamist terrorist threat emanating from Bosnia; right: “the terrorists involved in the 9/11 atrocity had connections in several European countries—BiH not among them” (?) former High Representative Paddy Ashdown
An indication of how secure Al Qaeda leaders must have felt in Bosnia at this time is the fact that in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, security officials claimed that some seventy Al Qaeda members were planning to flee from Afghanistan for Bosnia in anticipation of expected U.S. attacks on the Taliban. 322

* * * * *

One month after the 9/11 attacks, Alija Izetbegović resigned from the last of his public positions. As one analyst noted,

Despite desperate attempts to conceal his duplicity in his dealings with Muslim militants, Izetbegović’s days as a respected political leader were permanently over. A month after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, he officially stepped down as head of Bosnia’s most powerful Muslim nationalist party, citing health reasons.323

Upon Izetbegović’s death in October 2003 the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) announced that he had been under investigation for war crimes.

In 1996, the Third World Relief Agency was awarded a gold medal by the Izetbegović government for its “services to Bosnia.” In the same year, the Central Intelligence Agency named TWRA an NGO that “employ[s] members or otherwise facilitate[s] the activities of terrorist groups operating in Bosnia.”324

After the war, European investigators discovered financial documents showing that Hasan Čengić, one of Alija Izetbegović’s closest political allies, had provided TWRA funds to Wa’el Hamza Julaidan, one of Al Qaeda’s co-founders.325 In May 2008, Bosnian Federation TV reported that Čengić “personally signed a money transfer intended for the Al-Qai’dah 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.”326

In December 2013, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second District restored a lawsuit brought by 9/11 families and victims that named the Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a defendant in a case they have brought in U.S. federal court.

In March 2014, Bosnian jihad veteran Sulaiman abu-Ghaith was convicted in US Federal Court for conspiring to kill Americans during the 9/11 attacks.

“Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” President George W. Bush, September 20th, 2001. Pictured: Alija Izetbegović with Abu el-Maali, aka, “the little Osama bin Laden,” central Bosnia, circa 1995. el-Maali, considered to be under Izetbegović’s “personal protection,” was in direct personal contact with Osama bin Laden.
VI. Policy Recommendations

A long-overdue effort to dismantle the militant Islamist infrastructure in southeastern Europe finally began in late 2014. In March, seven individuals were arrested in Albania for recruiting volunteers to join Al Qaeda forces in Syria. The individuals involved, including the imams of two Tirana mosques, Genci Balla and Bujar Hysi, were charged with ‘recruiting of individuals in order to carry terrorist acts, incitement and propaganda.’ In August 2014, forty suspected Islamist militants with ties to the Syrian and Iraqi jihads were arrested in Kosovo. Raids at sixty different locations, including private homes and makeshift mosques, resulted in the discovery of several weapons stockpiles, including AK 47’s, small-calibre weapons, and electronic communications equipment. Among the individuals arrested were a number who were believed to have either returned to Kosovo after fighting with Al Nusra or ISIS, or were involved in their recruitment. Fourteen “NGO’s” suspected of involvement with Islamist extremists also had their accounts blocked. Subsequent raids in September in Priština, Mitrovica and a dozen other locations around Kosovo rounded up individuals such as Fuad Ramiqi, the leader of the Muslim religious party LISBA, and Shefqet Krasniqi, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Priština.

On 3 September 2014, Bosnian police began an operation code-named “Operation Damascus” conducted over seventeen locations and resulting in the arrest of sixteen individuals, including Bilal Bosnić. The apprehended individuals were accused of financing and publicly supporting terrorist activities, organizing terrorist groups, and recruiting individuals to fight in Iraq and Syria. Adding to the urgency of arresting Bosnić was undoubtedly the fact that he had recently voiced his support for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s proclamation of the “Islamic State.” Arrest warrants were also submitted for a number of Bosnian citizens already believed to be abroad. On September 24th, the U.S. State Department named two of the most prominent Balkan militant Islamists, Bosnian Wahhabi leader Nusret Imamović and Kosovo extremist Lavdrim Muhaxheri, specially-designated global terrorists. Imamović had already left Bosnia in late 2013 and joined the Al Nusra front in Syria; in the aftermath of his being blacklisted by the State Department, his website, PutVjernika, was apparently shutdown. In October, Serbia charged five men from Novi
Pazar and Belgrade with recruiting volunteers to join ISIS and arranging for their travel to Iraq and Syria. Among those arrested was Abid Podbičanin, a Sandžak native who had studied in Medina and was the leader of the Furkan center of the Islamic Youth of the Sandžak in Novi Pazar. A frequent visitor of Podbičanin’s Furkan center had been Mevlid Jašarević, who carried out the October 2011 attack on the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo. Also in September, Slovenian police arrested a number of suspected Islamist extremists, including two individuals who had recently returned to Slovenia after participating in the Iraqi and Syrian jihads.

It is still too early to tell how serious these blows have been to the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe. As noted above, the movement’s infrastructure is designed in such a way as to absorb such occasional crackdowns without causing serious overall damage. Moreover, some of these actions inevitably were geared more towards mollifying international demands for action or settling scores with domestic political opponents. In Kosovo, a number of those arrested (such as Shefqet Krasniqi) have already been released.

Nevertheless, the recent surge of attention devoted to the problem of militant Islamism in southeastern Europe should make it difficult to continue ignoring the problem. For the past two decades, the focus of the international effort in the Balkans has been on things that are only of secondary or tertiary importance to vital western interests, while the growth and spread of a movement completely antithetical to U.S. and European values and beliefs has been largely ignored. Paradoxically, international policy in southeastern Europe has been guided by the belief that militant Islamists are not a threat to stability in the Balkans, but if they go to Iraq or Syria the very same individuals suddenly become global terror threats. A corollary to this paradox is the frequently-posed argument that it is of only tangential interest or importance that so many individuals involved in various terrorist actions around the world have travelled through the Balkans—an argument that conveniently elides the fact that during their time spent in the region these individuals have developed numerous connections with like-minded indigenous extremists, sowing the seeds for new generations of radicals that threaten Balkan stability, and indeed U.S. and western security interests around the globe.

The challenge now confronting local and international policymakers in dealing with southeastern Europe’s militant Islamist movement is calibrating a response which neither exaggerates nor ignores the threat. Unfortunately, over the past two decades the tendency has been much more towards the former. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, a former High Representative in Bosnia, Wolfgang Petritsch, somewhat incredibly claimed that
“no evidence has been provided [that Bosnia] has served as a base for Al Qaeda.”335 Similarly, even after the October 2011 attack on the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo, the current High Representative in Bosnia, Valentin Inzko, would claim that the Wahhabis in Bosnia “pose no danger to Europe.”336

Indicative of the way in which international officials have tried to bury the story about the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe is the fact that Mevlid Jašarević’s attack on the U.S. embassy only merited mention in paragraph 88 (out of 98) in the High Representative’s semi-annual report to the UN Secretary-General.337

Sometimes international officials have even sabotaged efforts to deal with the militant Islamists. Former international High Representative Paddy Ashdown in October 2002 removed from office the only Bosnian official who had shown a desire to confront the militant Islamist infrastructure in the country.338 Ashdown also parroted the line that Bosnia had no terrorist connections, on one occasion claiming that “the terrorists involved in the 9/11 atrocity had connections in several European countries -- BiH not among them . . . I am confident that BiH is not and will not become a base for any kind of terrorism.”339 The unfortunate reality, however, as Evan Kohlmann has put it, is that individuals who deny that such terrorist groups are operating in the Balkans “are either lying or have no idea what they are talking about.”340 Either way, such attitudes are not serving U.S. or European interests, or protecting the security of ordinary citizens in the Balkans and beyond.

In Kosovo, the international community has likewise often sabotaged efforts to confront militant Islamism. According to Kosovo’s former interior minister Bajram Rexhepi, when he was trying to propose draft laws against religious extremism,
I was told by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg we could be sued for denial of religious freedom. . . . I asked [the Europeans] ‘if your states were to consider their national security at risk because of this problem, would you maintain such abstract respect for human rights? Probably not. Then why experiment on us in Kosovo?341

To a significant extent this denial of the militant Islamist danger in southeastern Europe is due to the fact that international efforts to deal with the problem have been driven more by political correctness and the desire to mollify the movement’s Middle-Eastern patrons than by a serious effort to confront its root causes. Although as argued in this study the majority of the Muslim populations in southeastern Europe remains relatively moderate and pro-western (in comparison to Muslim populations in the Middle-East and Central Asia), significant empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests that 5-10 percent of the Balkans’ Muslim populations have become radicalized. The threat in Bosnia is more serious, however, because (as seen above) important segments of the political, religious, and security establishments have close ties to the international jihadist movement.

Even such relatively small numbers, however, provide Islamist militants with numerous ideological, logistical and human assets to seriously threaten regional stability and American, European and Israeli interests. Given the above, crafting an effective counter-terrorism strategy aimed at eradicating the influence of Islamist militant groups in the Balkans requires the following:

-----Create an effective organizational and bureaucratic framework for pooling intelligence resources. Unfortunately, in this regard the situation in southeastern Europe poses particular problems. Although by their very nature intelligence and counter-intelligence efforts benefit from various agencies sharing information, the complex reality of the phenomenon in southeastern Europe creates particular difficulties for implementing such policies where allies and sympathizers of militant Islamism have infiltrated government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Predictably, such people deny or attempt to cover up their connections with Islamist terrorists.342 But the consequences of such infiltration are obvious; as one analysis in Bosnia concluded,

the results of the investigations conducted between 1993 and 2001 regarding relations between terrorists and humanitarian organizations in the country have been ignored, marginalized or even covered up. The first independent investigation on the relationship between terrorists and humanitarian organizations was conducted in 2001, at the strong request of US officials. Basically, the results have not been published, and major suspects would disappear when they came under investigation or police surveillance. 343

Thus, in situations such as those obtaining in places like Bosnia, security sector reform should focus on improving vertical coordination of existing security and intelligence services with international bodies such as NATO and Interpol to compartmentalize and limit the potential for security breaches. Horizontal integration of existing agencies and services would only serve to expand
the access militant Islamists and their sympathizers have to intelligence about their activities and networks. Unfortunately, as numerous experts have noted, existing institutions have refused to confront the problem.344

-----

Increase support for intelligence-gathering efforts against militant Islamist groups in southeastern Europe. After the 2003 invasion of Iraq intelligence resources devoted to monitoring conditions in southeastern Europe were drastically cut, leading experts such as Douglas Farah to bemoan the fact that although there remains a small, dedicated group gathering intelligence on these types of operation . . . [t]heir work is given a low priority and the entire intelligence-gathering structure, providing what little reliable information available on radical Islamic movements and leaders in Bosnia, is slated to disappear at the end of the year. This is an incredibly short-sighted move by international donors who no longer want to pay relative pocket change, only a few million dollars a year, to keep the operation going.345

A number of experts have suggested ways in which the intelligence effort against militant Islamists in southeastern Europe could be stepped up; for instance, by encouraging law-enforcement and intelligence services to incorporate social-network analysis in their study of the relationships between extremists and their potential activities, and more expanded use of various cyber-warfare and surveillance techniques (such as cookie softwares, the creation of “honey pot” websites, and keystroke reconstructions of hacked computers) to disrupt and destroy Islamist terrorist networks in the region.346

-----Adopt more concerted and consistent efforts to isolate and remove Islamist militants from positions of power and influence. Over the past two decades, the international community
has used various powers (including issuing war crimes indictments, the HR’s so-called Bonn Powers, and intense political pressure) to remove from positions of power and influence individuals even suspected of “endangering the peace process.” Unfortunately (and inexplicably) these powers have only on rare occasions been used against militant Islamists (a few rare examples have been the U.S. push in 1997 to remove Izetbegović protégés Hasan Čengić and Bakir Alispahić from office, or the 2009 case of former Bosnian defense minister Tarik Sadović who was obstructing the effort to expel of Al Qaeda operatives from Bosnia).

-----Redouble efforts to dismantle the infrastructure supporting militant Islamist networks in southeastern Europe. With the exception of a brief period after the 9/11 attacks, over the past two decades both international and local officials have essentially ignored the expansion and growth of the militant Islamist infrastructure in southeastern Europe. During this time, militant Islamists recruiting new followers and raising funds for jihad have travelled around Europe unhindered, extra-territorial enclaves harboring international terrorists have been allowed to function, and media propagating the most vile hate speech have continued to operate. Containing the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe will require instituting international travel bans on extremist activists, shutting down their media outlets, strangling their sources of finance, and returning constitutional order and the rule-of-law to militant Islamist outposts.

-----Change and update the legal framework to make it easier to conduct surveillance on and prosecute militant Islamist groups. On the positive side, a number of countries in the region have recently adopted more stringent legal prohibitions against citizens being involved in foreign conflicts. The Council of Europe’s Country Profiles on Counter-Terrorism Capacity provide useful checklists for the legislation enacted in various member-states. In Serbia, a law presently in parliament would criminalize recruiting for foreign conflicts. In April 2014, Bosnia introduced jail terms of up to ten years for individuals either recruiting or volunteering to fight in foreign conflicts in an attempt to deter people from going to Syria. Similar legislation passed in Macedonia in September 2014 envisions five year prison terms for individuals either participating in foreign conflicts or otherwise found to be in indirect support of such actions.

-----Indigenous Islamic institutions should speak out more forcefully against individuals and organizations recruiting individuals for jihad. Mainstream public opinion amongst the Muslim
populations of southeastern Europe on the whole condemns the phenomenon of local young people going to fight on foreign jihadi fronts, and the leaders of official Islamic institutions have as well. Still, the perception amongst many observers is that this condemnation must be much more forceful and explicit.\textsuperscript{351}

The actual and potential return of hundreds of Balkan militant Islamists from the Iraqi and Syrian jihads adds increased urgency to the need for international and local officials to concentrate and devote their efforts to this problem. As the EU’s \textit{Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2014} has noted, the threat to the EU from extremists returning from the Syrian jihad is likely to “increase exponentially” in the near future.\textsuperscript{352} Given the infiltration of militant Islamists into so many political, social, and religious institutions in southeastern Europe and the sophisticated infrastructure they have created, this is a particularly pressing issue for southeastern Europe. As Esad Hećimović has warned in the case of Bosnia, “Radical Islamic groups are waiting for a resurrection of the violent conflict . . . It is still conceivable that Islamic leaders and groups are waiting for a new jihad.”\textsuperscript{353} The same could be said for the situation throughout the western and southern Balkans.

Militant Balkan Islamists, for their part, are not hiding their long-term intentions. As a Bosnian jihadi fighting in Syria recently noted, “I left Bosnia with the intention only to return with weapons in my hand. I am a part of the revolution and this is the morning of Islam . . . [by allowing us to leave Bosnia] your intelligence agencies made a mistake thinking that they would be rid of us, however, the problem for them will be the return of individuals trained for war.”\textsuperscript{354}
# Appendix 1

## BALKAN JIHADI/EXTREMIST THREAT MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Balkan Jihadi/Extremist Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Trade Center Bombing</td>
<td>February 1993</td>
<td>Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) 356, Clement Rodney Hampton-el</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rijeka Police Headquarters Car Bombing</td>
<td>October 1995</td>
<td>Anwar Shaaban, John Fawzan (TWRA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi National Guard Building Bombing, Riyadh</td>
<td>November 1995</td>
<td>Muslih Al Shamran 357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lille G7 Car bombing attempt/ Roubaix Gang</td>
<td>March 1996</td>
<td>Christophe Caze, Lionel Dumont 358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope John Paul II Assassination Plot, Sarajevo</td>
<td>April 1997</td>
<td>(Never discovered) 359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope John Paul II Assassination Plot, Bologna</td>
<td>September 1997</td>
<td>Algerian Group 360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millenium Bomb Plot</td>
<td>December 1999</td>
<td>Karim Said Atmani 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Trade Center/Pentagon</td>
<td>September 2001</td>
<td>Khalid Sheikh Muhammed, Nawaf al-Hazmi, Khalid al-Mindhar, Ramzi Binalshihb 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Pearl Murder</td>
<td>February 2002</td>
<td>Omar Saeed Sheikh 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali Nightclub Bombings</td>
<td>October 2002</td>
<td>Reda Seyam 369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Balkan Jihadi/ Extremist Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andelić Family Murders, Konjica</td>
<td>Christmas Eve 2002</td>
<td>Muamer Topalović</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyadh Bombings</td>
<td>May 2003</td>
<td>Khalid al-Juhani(^{370}) Abdel Karim Al-Tuhami Al-Majati(^{371})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul Bombings</td>
<td>November 2003</td>
<td>Habib Aktaş(^{372}) Azad Ekinci(^{373})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid Train Bombings</td>
<td>March 2004</td>
<td>Amer Azizi(^{374}) Abdelmajid Bouchar(^{375})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Khobar Massacres Murder/beheading of U.S. citizen Paul Johnson</td>
<td>May/June 2004</td>
<td>Abdel Aziz Al-Muqrin(^{376})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theo van Gogh murder</td>
<td>November 2004</td>
<td>(Murder weapon traced to Bosnia)(^{377})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope John Paul II Funeral Bombing Plot</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
<td>Gornja Maoča Cell(^{378})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Underground Bombing</td>
<td>July 2005</td>
<td>Abu Hamza al-Masri(^{379})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarajevo Western Embassies Attack Conspiracy</td>
<td>October 2005</td>
<td>Mirsad Bektašević Abdulkadir Cesur Bajro Ikanović(^{380})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City Mall Massacre</td>
<td>February 2007</td>
<td>Sulejman Talović(^{381})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Dix Bomb Plot</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>Dritan Duka Shain Duka Ejljvir Duka(^{382}) Agron Abdulahu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna U.S. Embassy Attack</td>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Asim Cejvanović(^{383}) Mehmed Dzudzić</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic/International Targets Plot</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Rijad Rustempašić Muhamed Meco Abdullah Handžić Edis Velić Muhamed Ficer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Balkan Jihadi/Extremist Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| UK Bomb Plot/”PM Threat”                        | August 2008     | Krenar Lusha, et. Al.  

| Mumbai Bombings                                 | November 2008   | Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi  

| Raleigh Group Conspiracy                         | July 2009       | Enes Subašić  

| NYC Metro Attack Conspiracy                      | January 2010    | Adis Medunjanin  

| Mavi Marmara                                    | May 2010        | Bülent Yıldırım  

| Bugojno Police Station Bombing                   | June 2010       | Naser Palislamović  

| Sarajevo U.S. Embassy Attack                     | October 2011    | Mevlid Jašarević  

| Tampa Nightclub Bombing Plot                     | January 2012    | Sami Osmakac  

| Frankfurt Airport U.S. Servicemen Murder         | February 2012   | Arid Uka  

| Skopje Murders                                   | April 2012      | Ali Demri  

| Burgas Bus Bombing                                | July 2012       | Balkan Hezbollah Cell  

| Australia Terrorist Cell                         | September 2012  | Adnan Karabegović  

| Kosovo Terrorist Cell                             | November 2013   | “Xhemati i Xhehadit”  

| Nigde, Turkey Terrorist Attack                   | March 2014      | Albanian and Kosovar Syrian jihad veterans  


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Balkan Jihadi/ Extremist Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad Suicide Attack</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Blerim Heta⁴⁰⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad Suicide Attack</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
<td>Emrah Fojnica⁴⁰¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2

### BALKAN JIHADI CASUALTIES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

(REPORTED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
<th>DATE OF DEATH</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>FORCE / AFFILIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anri Maliqi</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>Nov-12</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naman Demolli</td>
<td>Pristina, Kosovo</td>
<td>Nov-12</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermal Xhelo</td>
<td>Vlore, Albania</td>
<td>Dec-12</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Nusra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis Jangulli</td>
<td>Debar, Macedonia</td>
<td>Jan-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Nusra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emrah Pilipovic</td>
<td>Velika Kladusa, BiH</td>
<td>Jan-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamit Muslija</td>
<td>Laprake, Albania</td>
<td>Jan-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muaz Ahmeti</td>
<td>Presevo, Serbia</td>
<td>Feb-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamant Rasha</td>
<td>Debar, Macedonia</td>
<td>Feb-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Nusra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhamet Koprova</td>
<td>Mitrovica, Kosovo</td>
<td>Mar-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moussa Ahmadi</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Mar-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muaz Sabic</td>
<td>Zenica, BiH</td>
<td>Apr-13</td>
<td>Aleppo, Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldar Kundakovic</td>
<td>Novi Pazar, Sandzak</td>
<td>May-13</td>
<td>Aleppo, Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adis Salihovic</td>
<td>Rozaje, Sandzak</td>
<td>May-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasim Zeqiri</td>
<td>Gostivar, Macedonia</td>
<td>May-13</td>
<td>Damascus, Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sami Abdullahu</td>
<td>Skopje, Macedonia</td>
<td>Jul-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nmetullah Imeri</td>
<td>Skopje, Macedonia</td>
<td>Aug-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmedin Velic</td>
<td>Sarajevo, BiH</td>
<td>Sep-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Nusra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dervis Halilovic</td>
<td>Nemile, BiH</td>
<td>Sep-13</td>
<td>Damascus, Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Abdulzafar” (Nom de guerre)</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anri Maliqi</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Nusra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dervis Osmanovic</td>
<td>Zenica, BiH</td>
<td>Sep-13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pajtim Olluri</td>
<td>Lipljan, Kosovo</td>
<td>Sep-1</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senad Kobas</td>
<td>Travnik, BiH</td>
<td>Nov-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halit Maliqaj</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebu Bilal</td>
<td>Zenica, BiH</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebu Ismail</td>
<td>Teslic, BiH</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>ORIGIN</td>
<td>DATE OF DEATH</td>
<td>PLACE</td>
<td>FORCE / AFFILIATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernes Vehabovic</td>
<td>Zenica, BiH</td>
<td>Dec-13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azmir Alisic</td>
<td>Sanski Most, BiH</td>
<td>Jan-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amir Kargic</td>
<td>Travnik, BiH</td>
<td>Jan-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mevludin Cicvara</td>
<td>Vitez, Bosnia</td>
<td>Jan-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mujo Hamidovic</td>
<td>Sjenica, Sandzak</td>
<td>Jan-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirza Ganic</td>
<td>Novi Pazar, Sandzak</td>
<td>Jan-14</td>
<td>Aleppo, Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Korvafaj</td>
<td>Vlora, Albania</td>
<td>(before March 2014)</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Al Nusra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferid Tatarevic</td>
<td>Zenica, BiH</td>
<td>Mar-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blerim Heta</td>
<td>Ferizaj, Kosovo</td>
<td>Mar-14</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anri Maliqi</td>
<td>Tirana, Albania</td>
<td>Mar-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munifer Karamelski</td>
<td>Bosnia, Italy</td>
<td>Mar-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adnan Rexhepi</td>
<td>Kumanovo, Macedonia</td>
<td>May-14</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nusmir Pjanic</td>
<td>Kalesija, BiH</td>
<td>May-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midhat Djono (aka “Usama Bosni”)</td>
<td>Hadzici, BiH</td>
<td>May-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ismar Mesinovic</td>
<td>Teslic, BiH</td>
<td>July 2014 (?)</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriot Matosi</td>
<td>Gnjilane, Kosovo</td>
<td>Aug-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emhrah Fojnica</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Aug-14</td>
<td>Baghdad, Iraq</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idajet Balliu</td>
<td>Dragostunja, Albania</td>
<td>Aug-14</td>
<td>Aleppo, Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midjen Haljil Ljatifi</td>
<td>Srbica, Kosovo</td>
<td>Aug-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sejdin Omerdzic</td>
<td>Zenica, BiH</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>Ajnul-Arab, Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Xhelal”</td>
<td>Skopje, Macedonia</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramo Pazarac</td>
<td>Teslic, BiH</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>Koban, Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima Mahmutovic</td>
<td>Srebrenik, BiH</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>Raqqa, Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melos Selami Kosumi</td>
<td>Gnjilane, Kosovo</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jure Korelec</td>
<td>Medvod, Slovenia</td>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>ISIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

ESTIMATING THE SIZE OF THE MILITANT ISLAMIST MOVEMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Estimating the size of the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe provides several difficulties. The first is providing a precise definition of the phenomenon itself. The approach taken in this report, i.e., that militant Islamism is a doctrine which espouses an aggressive, if not always violent, approach to imposing Islamic laws and precepts on the state and society at large, is of course somewhat vague, and whether or not a specific individual or group should be included or excluded will be open to debate. Although militant Islamism can be defined and understood in various ways, as a general rule the Wahhabi movement in southeastern Europe approximates many of the attributes of the phenomenon.

A second difficulty lies in finding adequate public opinion or survey data. The only data this author has seen dealing with the issue is a reported 2007 Bosnian study which found that three percent of (the presumably Muslim) population claimed to adhere to Wahhabism, and a further ten percent identified with it in some form.\(^402\) Current and former Bosnian Wahhabis, however, claim that the movement has many secret adherents, and allegedly some forty percent of those supporting Wahhabi doctrines do not have the outward appearance of being Wahhabis.\(^403\) Other former Bosnian Wahhabis have claimed that Wahhabi sympathizers have “infiltrated schools, universities, and the media.”\(^404\)

In Kosovo security experts estimate about 50,000 people adhere to the more extreme Middle-Eastern interpretations of Islam,\(^405\) and one expert on Balkan Islam has warned that “Exponents of Saudi-financed Wahhabism and of the Muslim Brotherhood have penetrated the highest levels of the official Kosovo Islamic apparatus.”\(^406\) Another security specialist has claimed that “the number of believers that follow a more extreme and fundamentalist interpretation of the Quran is growing in Kosovo.”\(^407\)

In Macedonia, members of the official Islamic community have estimated that there are some 500-600 Wahhabis in the country (and possibly more),\(^408\) while other security specialists believe up to 3000 Wahhabis are active in Macedonia, mainly concentrated in areas around Skopje, Tetovo, Struga, and Kumanovo.\(^409\)

In Montenegro “several hundred Wahhabis” are reportedly active, primarily located near the towns of Rožaje, Plav and Gusinje.\(^410\)

In 2005, the International Crisis Group estimated there were some 300 Wahhabis active in the Sandžak who control several mosques in the region.\(^411\)

In the absence of more specific data on the size of the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe, useful information can be gleaned from the Pew Research Center’s 2013 survey of public opinion amongst various Islamic communities entitled *The World’s Muslims: Religion, Politics & Society*.\(^412\) Most evident in the study is the fact that the Muslim populations in southeastern Europe are by far the most moderate in their views and attitudes of any Islamic population in the world. Thus, overwhelming majorities (some 80-90%) of the Muslim populations consistently show relatively tolerant and moderate positions on a variety of issues concerning the state, society, and religious affairs.

Extrapolating from the survey data provided in the Pew report does, however, give an indication of the size of the militant Islamist phenomenon in the region. Although the survey does not ask specific questions such as “Do you adhere to Wahhabism?”, aggregating responses to a cluster of questions regarding issues typically associated with militant Islamism, such as suicide-terrorism,
capital and corporal punishment, apostasy from Islam, polygamy, and the desirability of imposing sharia law can serve as proxies for more direct questions about an individual’s particular loyalties to extreme interpretations of Islamic doctrine.

The 2013 Pew report surveyed the Muslim populations in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Kosovo, with fieldwork for all three countries being carried out between October 2011—January 2012. Although the Pew report does not mention the size of the Muslim populations in each country, this exercise uses statistics provided by the Central Intelligence Agency’s World Factbook as a standard reference to estimate the overall numerical size of the Muslim population in each given country. The World Factbook’s population estimates are then multiplied by the percentage’s reported in the 2013 Pew report to provide rough estimates of the size of the militant Islamist movement in each country. Thus, the following equation is used to calculate the size of a militant Islamist population in a given country:

\[ N \times PRP = \text{Estimated size of militant Islamist population} \]

Where \( N \) equals the CIA’s estimate for the size of the Muslim population for a particular country, and \( PRP \) equals the percentage response to specific Pew Research report questions.

For the three countries covered by the survey, the CIA estimates the Muslim populations thus:

- Albania: 1,775,882
- BiH: 1,548,657
- Kosovo: 1,766,243

With these numbers we can then begin to estimate the size of the militant Islamist movement in each country. As noted above, the estimate is based on responses to a cluster of questions deemed to reflect the attitudes and philosophies of Wahhabism/militant Islamism. The first concerns individual attitudes towards the imposition of sharia law. According to the Pew report, the positive responses per country can be seen below:

Thus, 12 percent of Muslims in Albania favor making sharia the law of the land, 15 percent of Muslims in BiH, and 20 percent of Muslims in Kosovo. Applying these numbers to the above equation returns the following numbers:
Albania (N = 1,775,882) x 0.12 = 213,106

BiH (N = 1,548,647) x 0.15 = 232,297

Kosovo (N = 1,766,243) x 0.20 = 353,249

Another question the Pew report posed to participants in its survey pertained to attitudes regarding suicide bombings; specifically, the question asked “Do you feel that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilians are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies?” In the below, the positive responses “Often justified” and “Sometimes justified” are aggregated together; thus,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel that suicide bombing and other forms of violence are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albania</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above responses, the number of individuals who believe suicide bombings are “Often” and “Sometimes” justified to defend Islam is as follows:

Albania (N = 1,775,882) x 0.06 = 106,553

BiH (N = 1,548,647) x 0.03 = 46,459

Kosovo (N = 1,766,243) x 0.11 = 194,287

The Pew survey also asked respondents to provide their views on severe forms of corporal punishment; specifically, question 92c asked “Do you favor or oppose punishments like whippings and cutting off hands for crimes like theft and robbery?” The positive responses were as follows:
In terms of actual numbers, the responses suggest the following:

Albania (N = 1,775,882) x 0.09 = 159,829

BiH (N = 1,548,647) x 0.13 = 201,324

Kosovo (N = 1,766,243) x 0.10 = 176,624

A follow-up question (Q92d) asked respondents “Do you favor or oppose stoning people who commit adultery?” The positive responses were as follows:

Albania (N = 1,775,882) x 0.06 = 106,552

BiH (N = 1,548,647) x 0.06 = 92,919

Kosovo (N = 1,766,243) x 0.09 = 158,962
Q92d asked respondents “Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for people who leave the Muslim religion?”, with the positive responses as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Albania (N = 1,775,882) x 0.02 = 35,517

BiH (N = 1,548,647) x 0.04 = 61,946

Kosovo (N = 1,766,243) x 0.03 = 52,987

Finally, Q84b asked respondents about another issue often associated with Wahhabi/militant Islamist communities, i.e., attitudes towards polygamy. Thus, in response to a question as to whether polygamy is morally acceptable or morally wrong (or whether it is a moral issue at all), the positive responses were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12% of respondents in Albania, 15% in BiH, and 20% in Kosovo favor polygamy.
Albania (N = 1,775,882) x 0.10 = 177,588
BiH (N = 1,548,647) x 0.04 = 61,946
Kosovo (N = 1,766,243) x 0.21 = 370,911

Averaging out the responses to the above five questions which in this theoretical exercise represent the value or belief system of the “typical” militant Islamist hypothetically yields the potential following sizes of the militant Islamist movement in each of the three countries:

Albania = 117,208
BiH = 92,919
Kosovo = 190,754

Although the figures for Albania and BiH seem plausible, the estimate for the size of the militant Islamist movement in Kosovo seems rather high in comparison to the other two countries. This is probably due to the exceptionally large number of positive responses in Kosovo to the question about polygamy. A number somewhere in the range of 125,000 — 140,000 thus seems more plausible.

In analyzing the above data, the encouraging news is that substantial majorities of southeastern Europe’s Muslim populations reject extreme interpretations of Islamic doctrines and texts.

On the other hand, a critical albeit-small mass of the population does appear to have internalized and now espouses the more extreme versions of Islam common in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, or Saudi Arabia. Within the three countries surveyed, the data suggests some 147,000 people believe apostates from Islam should be given the death penalty, 359,000 people believe adulterers should be stoned to death, 530,000 people believe in cutting off hands and whippings for various crimes, 300,000 people endorse suicide-bombings to defend Islam, and close to 800,000 people believe sharia law should be adopted in their countries.

The Pew report unfortunately did not cover Muslim attitudes in other Balkan countries, but were Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia to be included, the size of the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe would most probably number over 500,000 people.

Other anecdotal and inferential evidence suggests the Wahhabi/militant Islamist movement in the region is continuing to grow and attract new adherents, or is at least attracting more individuals interested in learning about extreme-Islamist perspectives on current events. As noted above, the aforementioned 2014 Austrian intelligence report claimed that the Wahhabi movement in Bosnia continues to grow and build new communities. Similarly, interest in extremist websites is growing at a rapid pace. In the one month between mid-October 2014 and mid-November 2014, the number of Facebook fans of the extremist website Vijesti Ummeta increased by over ten percent, from 13,551 to 15,133 (as of 22 November 2014). In the same period the extremist website Saff showed a similar increase in the number of Facebook fans, rising from 12,352 to 13,496 (as of 22 November 2014), another increase of some ten percent.

Potential increases in the size of the militant Islamist movement in southeastern Europe raise important concerns for both domestic and international policymakers. Arguably, relatively normal democratic politics can be sustained in these societies if the size of the militant Islamist movement remains at current levels and remains a marginal phenomenon. What is unknown, however, is what the impact on these states and societies would be if, for instance, the militant Islamist movement in the region was to grow from 5-10 percent of the population to 15-20 percent.
An implicit argument in this analysis is that the origins of any terrorist threat emanating from southeastern Europe will most likely be found in the *milieu* which gives rise to such individuals—the militant Islamist movement. Thus, knowledge of the number of individuals who espouse or endorse the core values of this movement is crucial to determining the actual size of the movement itself. For security and intelligence agencies, these numbers should provide an indication of the magnitude of the challenge they are facing, and help them in deciding upon an adequate allocation of resources to containing the threat.
## Appendix 4

**BALKAN MILITANT ISLAMIST WEBSITES/ ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEBSITE/MEDIA</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>ORIENTATION/EDITORIAL POLICY</th>
<th>ASSOCIATED WITH</th>
<th>FACEBOOK FANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balkanski Emirat</td>
<td><a href="http://balkanskiemirat.blogspot.com/">http://balkanskiemirat.blogspot.com/</a></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Nusret Imamović</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensarija Šerijata</td>
<td><a href="http://www.geocities.ws/ensarije_serjata/onama.htm">http://www.geocities.ws/ensarije_serjata/onama.htm</a></td>
<td>Islamist/Pro-Taliban</td>
<td>Abu Hamza al-Misri</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelimetul-Haqq</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kelimetul-haqq.org/">http://www.kelimetul-haqq.org/</a></td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>Nedžad Balkan</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PutHilafeta</td>
<td><a href="http://puthilafeta.blogspot.com/">http://puthilafeta.blogspot.com/</a></td>
<td>Islamist/Pro-ISIS</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PutVjernika</td>
<td><a href="http://www.putvjernika.com">www.putvjernika.com</a></td>
<td>Pro-al Nusra Front</td>
<td>Nusret Imamović</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PutVjernika (Facebook portal)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/putvjernika.official">https://www.facebook.com/putvjernika.official</a></td>
<td>Pro-al Nusra Front</td>
<td>Nusret Imamović</td>
<td>5,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SalafiMedia Balkan</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/SalafiMediaBalkans">https://www.youtube.com/user/SalafiMediaBalkans</a></td>
<td>Pro-ISIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saff</td>
<td><a href="http://www.saff.ba">www.saff.ba</a></td>
<td>Islamist/Anti-ISIS</td>
<td>Fatmir Alispahić, Ezhar Beganović</td>
<td>14,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spašena Skupina</td>
<td><a href="http://www.spasenaskupina.com">www.spasenaskupina.com</a></td>
<td>Islamist/Pro-ISIS</td>
<td>Bilal Bosnić</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stazom Islama</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stazomislama.com">www.stazomislama.com</a></td>
<td>(non-political)</td>
<td>Idriz Bilbani</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vijesti Ummeta</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vijestiummeta.com">www.vijestiummeta.com</a></td>
<td>Islamist/Pro-ISIS</td>
<td>(unknown)</td>
<td>16,370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

1. “Islamism” is here defined as a doctrine calling for the imposition of Islamic laws and precepts on the state and society at large. “Militant Islamists” refers to those individuals who reject secular institutions and advocate an aggressive (if not completely violent) approach to imposing such a system. Although roughly equivalent to Gilles Kepel’s definition of “salafi jihadism,” the term “militant Islamism” is more appropriate in the Balkan case since Balkan Islam adheres to the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence, as opposed to the Hanbali school from which Salafism derives. The most extreme and violent subset of the militant Islamists is usually considered the takfiri movement who support using violence even against other Muslims if they are not devout. For a useful dissection of the various factions and trends amongst militant Islamists, see Muhamed Jusić, “Islamistički pokreti u XX stoljeću i njihovo prisustvo u Bosni i Hercegovini,” in Islamska scena u Bosni i Hercegovini (Sarajevo: Udruženi-je Ilmijje Islamske Zajednice BiH/Fondacija Konrad Adenauer, 2011), 29-41. Here it is imperative to stress that Balkans Muslim populations generally have a more moderate and secular outlook than those in North Africa or the Middle-East. Thus, relatively few Balkan Muslims can be considered Islamists, and only a subset of those militant. The problem of Islamist terrorism in southeastern Europe is usually equated with the Wahhabi movement, although, as one truism goes, “Not all Wahhabis are terrorists, but all terrorists are Wahhabis.”

2. For a listing of international terrorist actions that have Balkan roots or connections, see Appendix 1, “Balkan Jihad/Extremist Threat Matrix,” page 45.


8. The “Zakletva” (Oath) of the Mladi Muslimani dates from approximately 1947; see Trhulj, Mladi Muslimani, op. cit., 121.


10. Thus, one of the Mladi Muslimani’s original members, Emin Granov, wrote a pamphlet in the organization’s early years entitled “Kako čemo se boriti” (“How we will struggle”) in which he explains the following: “Ideological strength . . . gives us the necessary fanaticism with which we will feverishly and persistently defend Islam to the end. We will fight with equal fanaticism in any discussion, polemics, war of nerves, whether in physical, political, military struggle! That’s how Mladi Muslimani should be! . . . The strength and effect of our reaction depends upon our fanaticism and ideological development. The more fanatic and developed we are the stronger our reaction will be . . . When a person loves and values something fanatically, in this concrete case Islam, then it hurts and insults them when someone dismisses, laughs at, attacks or destroys it. In our ideological upbringing and development we will choose people who are combative to the end, irreconcilable and fanatic advocates of Islamic thought, because our entire movement depends upon such people! . . . How must Mladi Muslimani be! Muslims, and if possible all of them, but Mladi Muslimani unconditionally, must be determined and irreconcilable fighters, hard and fanatic in their Islamic convictions . . . and the bright future of Islam will be assured!” See Granov’s essay in Trhulj, Mladi Muslimani, op. cit., 122-125. (Emphasis added added).


12. See Enver Redžić, Muslimansko autonomaštvo i 13. SS divizija (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987), 205. In recent years, a neo-fascist fringe group has been formed in Bosnia named Bosanski Pokret Nacionalnog Ponsa (“the Bosnian Movement of National Pride”) which explicitly claims to have a “national socialist” program. Although the party maintains a website and appears to distribute leaflets in various cities around Bosnia, it remains a minuscule fringe group. For more on Bosnia’s most explicitly fascist party, see the group’s website at http://www.bosanski-nacionalisti.org, and Marija Arnautović, “Osnovan Bosanski Pokret Nacionalnog Ponsa,” Radio Slobodna Evropa, 12 February 2014, at http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/neonacisti_bih/1956417.html, accessed on 30 April 2014 at 10:12am EST.

As cited by Vuk Bačanović, “SS oficir za bratstvo i jedinstvo,” BH Dani 855 (Sarajevo), 1 November 2013, 32—34.

For the full text of the “Memorandum,” see Redžić, *Muslimansko autonomaštvo i 13. SS divizija*, op. cit., 71-79.


38. See Zorica Ilić, “Dr. Mustafa Cerić: Od Pohvala do Osuda,” *Deutsche Welle*, 16 November 2012, at http://www.dw.de/dr-mustafa-ceri%C4%87-od-pohvala-do-osuda/a-16384747, accessed on 16 October 2013 at 2:56pm EST. On another occasion, Cerić similarly noted, “Of course if you look at the Sharia of the way it is presented as the poenal (sic) law – cutting the head and cutting the hand on (sic) so on . . . Then of course your understanding of Sharia is fearful and is appalling to you . . . [but] I cannot disavow myself from the Sharia.” See Cerić’s interview, “Second Hour: Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia,” conducted on 18 March 2007, at http://www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s1874731.htm, accessed on 10 October 2013 at 3:43pm EST.


41. A video of the February 2013 lecture by Imamović and Bosnić in Tuzla is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgMzQiITTDQ As of October 2014 it has received over 5,650 hits. Some five hundred people were in the audience. For a report on the meeting, see Robert Coalson and Maja Nikolic, “Radical Islamists Seek to Exploit Frustration in Bosnia,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 1 March 2013, at http://www.rferl.org/content/bosnia-islamists/24916517.html, accessed on 27 October 2013.

42. See the aforementioned essay by Granov, Kako ćemo se boriti,” in Trhulj, *Mladi Muslimani*, op. cit., 122-125.

43. For just a sampling of such references, see “Srebrenica je Mekka u Bošnjaka,” *Saff* (Sarajevo), no. 320, 29 June 2012, 5; see also Dzenanna Karup’s interview with several members of Aktivna Islamska Omladina (AIO), a group with close ties to the Wahhabi’s, where again readers are reminded that Muslims “should not take Jews and Christians as friends.” See Karup, “Kur’an je naš ustav,” *BH Dani* 72 (Sarajevo), 30 March 1998, at http://www.bhdani.com/archiva/72/tekst172.htm, accessed on 25 November 2012 at 11:05am EST.

44. See the Proglas (“Proclamation”) of the Mladi Muslimani, available in Trhulj, *Mladi Muslimani*, op .cit., 126-128. The Proglas was written at some point in the 1940s (no specific date provided), penned by organization members in Mostar and accepted by the organization’s leadership in Sarajevo. “Tekbir” is the Arabic term for the phrase “Allahu Akbar” (i.e., “God is Great”).


50. Oslobodenje (Sarajevo), 26 September 1997, 8.


52. See Bosnić’s sermon, “Muslimani, Jedno Tijelo,” at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyiDp5jeOPE, accessed on 19 November 2013 at 11:09am EST. As of October 2014 the sermon had received 8,360 hits.


54. See Tihomir Loza, “Apartheid Redux,” at http://www.tol.org/client/article/21168-apartheid-redux.html The belief that ethnoconfessional differences impose barriers between people has long been a trope of Islamists in the region. In the late 1980s, for instance, the anthropologist Tone Bringa related the following discussion she had with a Muslim cleric in the central Bosnian village she studied: “the local hodža (Islamic instructor) reminded me that there was a limit to my friendship with and understanding of the Muslims. Ultimately I was not one of them, I was not Muslim.” See Bringa, Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), xvi.

55. The aforementioned “Memorandum” of 1942, for instance, claimed that “Even if we live in this land in which the majority consists of Slavic peoples, even if we speak the Bosnian language which is similar to Serbo-Croatian, by race and by blood we are not Slavs, but Goths in origin.” See Redžić, Muslimansko autonomaštvio i 13. SS divizija, op. cit., 72. Mustafa Imamović, the author of a recent history entitled Historija Bošnjaka, suggests that throughout history the Bosnian Muslims intermixed very little with neighboring Slav populations. According to Imamović, “the Bosnian Slavs, later the Bošnjaks or Bosnian Muslims . . . mixed very little with other peoples . . . Bošnjaks rarely mixed blood even with other non-Slavic Muslims, despite the strong spiritual ties with the Islamic Orient.” See Imamović, Historija Bošnjaka (Sarajevo: Preporod, 1998), 23. This theme has been taken up by Muslim clerics in the Sandzak as well; for instance, the Mufti of the Islamic Community in Serbia, Muamer Zukorlić, has urged his followers to claim that they are “Illyrs” rather than Slavs; see “Zukorlić: Mi Bošnjaci smo poreklom Iliri,” Politika (Belgrade), 6 May 2010.


57. Ibid. Today, the aforementioned Ćeman is a judge on Bosnia’s Constitutional Court.

58. See Sabrina Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991, 2nd Edition (Bloomington, In: Indiana University Press, 1992), 21. A 1998 United States Information Agency (USIA) public opinion survey also found little evidence of interethnic unions; for instance, 99% of Bosnian Muslim respondents said that their mother had been Muslim, and 98% said their fathers had been Muslims. Among Bosnian Serbs, the respective figures were 95% and 98%, and among Bosnian Croats, the respective figures were 99% and 100%. Source: Public Opinion in Bosnia-Hercegovina Volume V: Two Years After Dayton (Washington, DC: United States Information Agency, April 1998), page 171, Tables 159-160.


70. See the interview published by Aid to the Church in Need, “Bishop in Bosnia-Herzegovina: instability plays into the hands of the extremists,” at http://www.churchinneed.org/site/News2&page=NewsArticle&id=8055&news_iv_ctr=1001, accessed on 6 November 2014 at 10:02am EST.


74. See Kemal Kurupahić, “Missed Opportunities in Post-War Bosnia,” in Media and Global Change: Rethinking Communication for Development (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales septiembre. 2005), Chapter 21, at http://sala.clacso.edu.ar/gsdl252/cgi-bin/library?e=d-000-00---0edicion--00-0-0--0prompt-10---4------0-1l--1-ru-Zz-1---20-preferences---00&cl=CL2.1&d=HASH014b1be2d97caf5ab80fba27.5.3&gc=1, accessed on 2 December 2012 at 12:16pm EST.

75. See the interview published by Aid to the Church in Need, “Bishop in Bosnia-Herzegovina: instability plays into the hands of the extremists,” at http://www.churchinneed.org/site/News2&page=NewsArticle&id=8055&news_iv_ctr=1001, accessed on 6 November 2014 at 10:02am EST.


82. See “Father Christmas Banned in Kindergartens in Bosnia,” The Telegraph (UK), 28 December 2008, at http://www.ne...


91. 92. 90. 89. 88. 87. 86. 85. 84. 83. 82. 81. 80. 79. 78. 77. 76. 75. 74.
99. As noted by the PBS Frontline documentary “Son of Al Qaeda,” at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/khadr/family/cron.html, accessed on 15 January 2015 at 10:02am EST.

100. See Mapr, “The Prophet’s Fifth Column: Islamists Gain Ground in Sarajevo,” op. cit. The reference to Jews as “animals” is not the rant of an isolated extremist, it is relatively mainstream in Islamist religious and political circles. Thus, in 2010, the recently deposed president of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi, urged Egyptians to “nurse our children and our grandchildren on hatred for Jews and Zionists . . . the descendants of apes and pigs.” See David D. Kirkpatrick, “Morsi’s Slurs Against Jews Stir Concern,” The New York Times, 14 January 2013, at http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/15/world/middleeast/egypts-leader-morsi-made-anti-jewish-slurs.html?_r=0, accessed on 14 March 2013 at 2:02pm EST.


111. See the comments by Professor Adnan Silajdžić of the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo in the program “Tkz. Selefije i Vehabije,” (Sarajevo: Bosnian Federation TV program Priština), 1 April 2014, at http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/rrfimi-i-familjes-se-kamikazit-nga-kosova-que-vrau-50-persona-ne-bagdad-e-mashtruan-ndigue-ligjeratat-e-shefqet-krasniqit-6019/, accessed on 24 September 2014 at 9:47am EST.


113. See Mayr, “The Prophet’s Fifth Column: Islamists Gain Ground in Sarajevo,” op. cit. The reference to Jews as “animals” is not the rant of an isolated extremist, it is relatively mainstream in Islamist religious and political circles. Thus, in 2010, the recently deposed president of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi, urged Egyptians to “nurse our children and our grandchildren on hatred for Jews and Zionists . . . the descendants of apes and pigs.” See David D. Kirkpatrick, “Morsi’s Slurs Against Jews Stir Concern,” The New York Times, 14 January 2013, at http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/15/world/middleeast/egypts-leader-morsi-made-anti-jewish-slurs.html?_r=0, accessed on 14 March 2013 at 2:02pm EST.

114. See ibid., accessed on 12 August 2014 at 9:26am EST.


117. See Azinovic’s comments in Rusmir Smajilhodžić, “Saudi Style Wahhabism Flourishes in Bosnia,” Middle East Online, 29 September 2010, at http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=41577, accessed on 11 February 2014 at 12:56pm EST. Similarly, Senad Agić, a Bosnian imam in the United States, warned in 2004 that Wahhabi groups in Bosnia “are increasing in strength, publishing magazines, and have their own radio stations. If that is not monitored and controlled, there is a possibility that traditional Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina will change.” See Agić’s comments as quoted by Stephen Schwartz, “Wahhabism and Al Qaeda in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” The

118. See Kerem Ötkem, “New Islamic actors after the Wahhabi intermezzo: Turkey’s return to the Muslim Balkans,” (European Studies Center, University of Oxford: December 2010), 19. As of 2005, Ahmet Alibasić has reported that there were 100 Bosnian students in Saudi Arabia, 60 in Syria, 40 in Egypt, 35 in Jordan, 30 in Iran, 10 in Pakistan, 10 in Turkey, and 20 in Malaysia. See Alibasić, “Traditional and Reformist Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Cambridge Programme for Security in International Society Working Paper No. 2, 17 February 2008), 4.

119. See the State Department cable entitled “Radical Islam in Montenegro” (Origin: Embassy Podgorica, Cable date 10 July 2009), Reference # PODGORICA 00000171, at http://www.cablesearch.net/cable.php?id=09PODGORICA171, accessed on 11 February 2014 at 1:04pm EST.


122. See Ikanović’s statements in “Selefije u ‘svetom ratu’: ekskluzivna ispovijest bh. džihad ratnika u Siriji,” op. cit.


124. See the interview with Zlatko Dizdarević in (Sarajevo), No. 124, October 1999. Along similar lines, Dževad Đević’s Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina (SBiH), has claimed “Alija Izetbegović was the father of [the project to set up an Islamic republic in Bosnia.] . . . This type of BiH is Izetbegović’s life’s work.” See Galijasovic’s interview with Sara Babić, “Silajdžić je doveo mudžahedine u Bosnu,” Nacional (Zagreb), 14 November 2006, at http://www.nacional.hr/clanak/29058/silajdzic-je-doveo-muzahedine-u-bosnu accessed on 12 April 2013 at 9:57am EST; Bosnia’s Dangerous Tango: Islam and Nationalism (Brussels/Sarajevo: International Crisis Group, 26 February 2013); A. Cerneys and R. Green, “The Global Jihad Movement in Bosnia: A Time Bomb in the Heart of Europe” (Washington, DC: Middle East Media and Research Institute, June 2012); Slaven Blavicki, “Islamist Terrorist Networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2009); Yossef Bodansky, Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America (New York: Forum, 2001); Evam E. Kohlman, Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Kenneth Morrison, “Wahhabism in the Balkans” (Defence Academy of the United Kingdom: Advanced Research and Assessment Group, February 2008); and former National Security Agency analyst John R. Schindler, Unholy Terror: Bosnia, Al-Qa’ida and the Rise of Global Jihad, op. cit. Kohlman’s book provides the most detailed analysis of Al Qaeda’s move from Afghanistan to Europe. The Schindler volume is the best extant work placing...


According to Bujro Ikanović, a well-known Bosnian extremist who has been in Syria since January 2013. Ikanović had been arrested in Bosnia in 2005 for his involvement in the Bektašević plot, an aborted attempt to launch suicide-terrorist attacks against western embassies in Sarajevo. See “Selefiše u ‘svetom ratu’: ekskluzivna ispovijest bh. džihad ratnika u Siriji,” 10 July 2013, at http://source.ba/clanak/1400134/vijesti/Ekskluzivna%20ispovijest%20bh.%20d%C5%BEihad%20ratnika%20u%20Siriji?, accessed on 7 July 2013 at 10:05am EST. As of January 2014, some 15 Bosniacs (Muslims either from Bosnia proper or the Sandžak) have reportedly been killed in Syria, eleven from Bosnia and four from the Sandžak. See “Mujo Hamidović iz Sjenice poginuo u Siriji,” *SandžakPress* (Novi Pazar), 22 January 2014, at http://sandzakpress.net/mujo-hamidovic-iz-sjenice-poginuo-u-siriji, accessed on 22 January 2014 at 5:35pm EST.


According to research done by Rafaël Lefèvre of the University of Cambridge, see “Swede Behind Syria Arms
See Ali Hamad’s interview with Renate Flottau entitled “Weiße Qaida in Bosnien: ‘Mit Motorsägen zerstückeln,’” Radio Slobodna Evropa, 28 May 2013 at 10:05pm EST. According to Aida Ćorović, a human rights activist from Novi Pazar, “white Muslims” from the Balkans are a good terroristic force because they are very familiar with other Europeans and look different from other Muslims. It is easy to place them in order to manage terroristic acts without being easily noticed.” As quoted by Jure Korelec, “Are Terrorists Recruiting ‘white Muslims’?” The Southeast European Times, 20 November 2013 at 11:48am EST.


164. See “Xhemati i Xhihadit” kërçënon me sulme Policinë e Kosovës” [Xhemati and Xhijahdist] denounces the police of Kosovo,” at http://www.putvjernika.com/balkan/dzemati-dzhihada-prijeti-napadima-policiji-kosova.html, accessed on 13 November 2013 at 9:02am EST.


168. See N. K., “Iranski špijuni opet aktivni u BiH,” *Dnevni Avaz* (Sarajevo), 20 October 2014, at http://www.avaz.ba/clanak/141675/iranski-spijuni-opet-aktivni-u-bih, accessed on 22 February 2013 at 8:27am EST. Sray was the G-2 (Chief, Intelligence Section) for the UN Command in Sarajevo during the Bosnian civil war. A former Bosnian jihadi/mujahedin from Syria, Abu Hamza al-Suri, has on the other hand claimed that foreign-born members of Izetbegović’s Al Qaeda battalion, the *Kofterbat el-Mujahidin* (otherwise known as the El Mudzhahid battalion), only numbered about 300 fighters. See Abu Hamza’s interview with Franco Galdini, “From Syria to Bosnia: Memoirs of a Mujahid in Limbo,” *The Nation*, 19 December 2013, at http://www.thenation.com/blog/177669/syria-bosnia-memories-mujahid-limbo#, accessed on 3 February 2014 at 10:43am EST.

169. A point made by Bodanov, see *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*, op. cit., 100.

170. LTC. John E. Sray (USA) put the number at 4000; see Sray, “Mujahedin Operations in Bosnia” (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, February 1995) at http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/muja.htm, accessed on 22 February 2013 at 8:27am EST. Sray was the G-2 (Chief, Intelligence Section) for the UN Command in Sarajevo during the Bosnian civil war. A former Bosnian jihadi/mujahedin from Syria, Abu Hamza al-Suri, has on the other hand claimed that foreign-born members of Izetbegović’s Al Qaeda battalion, the *Kofterbat el-Mujahidin* (otherwise known as the El Mudzhahid battalion), only numbered about 300 fighters. See Abu Hamza’s interview with Franco Galdini, “From Syria to Bosnia: Memoirs of a Mujahid in Limbo,” *The Nation*, 19 December 2013, at http://www.thenation.com/blog/177669/syria-bosnia-memories-mujahid-limbo#, accessed on 3 February 2014 at 10:43am EST.


173. See the transcript to the PBS Frontline documentary, “Son of Al Qaeda,” op. cit.


177. When Abu Hamza was arrested in Bosnia, the younger Izetbegović offered “to help in any way.” See the transcript of the raid by the tactical advisor to the NATO CINC in Bosnia, see Col. David Hunt (USA, Ret.), They Just Don’t Get It (New York: Crown Forum, 2005), 1-4.

178. According to STRATFOR analyst Marko Papic; see “Bosnia/Serbia: Dodik Wins RS Presidential Race,” 4 October 2008, at http://www.stratfor.com, accessed on 13 February 2014 at 9:22am EST. The former deputy director of Bosnia’s state level intelligence agency, SIPA (the Bosnian equivalent of the FBI), has similarly claimed “Bosnia has become a breeding ground for terrorists, including some on international wanted lists. We can clearly say that.” See Kole, “Are Terrorists Recruiting ‘white Muslims’?” op. cit.


198. See Pyes et. al., “‘Bosnia Seen as Hospitable Base and Sanctuary for Terrorists,’” op. cit.


209. See Karen McVeigh, “Former al-Qaida operative turned informant testifies in Abu Hamza trial,” The Guardian (UK), 28 April 2014, at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/28/abu-hamzaa-trial-saajid-badat-testifies Accessed on 7 May 2014 at 12:32pm EST. Badat’s email address was “sacrifice72@yahoo.com” with the “sacrifice” signifying his willingness to be a suicide bomber, and the “72” referring to Al Qaeda’s doctrine that suicide terrorists are given 72 virgins in Paradise. See “Would-be bomber, Saajid Badat, used sacrifice72 as his email name.” Agence France-Presse, 30 April 2014, at http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1500876/would-be-bomber-saajid-badat-used-sacrifice72-his-e-mail-name, accessed on 7 May 2014 at 12:37pm EST.


212. For the story of Abdulrahman Khadr, see the PBS Frontline Documentary “Son of Al Qaeda,” op. cit.


215. See Karen McVeigh, “Former al-Qaida operative turned informant testifies in Abu Hamza trial,” The Guardian (UK), 28 April 2014, at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/28/abu-hamzaa-trial-saajid-badat-testifies Accessed on 7 May 2014 at 12:32pm EST. Badat’s email address was “sacrifice72@yahoo.com” with the “sacrifice” signifying his willingness to be a suicide bomber, and the “72” referring to Al Qaeda’s doctrine that suicide terrorists are given 72 virgins in Paradise. See “Would-be bomber, Saajid Badat, used sacrifice72 as his email name.” Agence France-Presse, 30 April 2014, at http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1500876/would-be-bomber-saajid-badat-used-sacrifice72-his-e-mail-name, accessed on 7 May 2014 at 12:37pm EST.


220. See Kurop, “Al Qaeda’s Balkan Links,” op. cit.


From the Balkans to ISIS


228. See, for instance, Oluic, “Radical Islam on Europe’s Frontier—Bosnia & Herzegovina,” op. cit., 45.


231. For descriptions and analyses of the content of these websites and YouTube spots, see Ceressjes and Green, “The Global Jihad Movement in Bosnia—A Time Bomb in the Heart of Europe,” op. cit.; Halmovici, “Vehabije u Bosni: Od Bočinje do Maoče,” op. cit.; and Blavicki, Islamist Terrorist Networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, op. cit., 31-35.


236. See Alice and Kaletovic, “Bosnia Investigates Radical Threats,” op. cit.


248. See the comments by former high representative Wolfgang Petritsch, “BiH se mora okrenuti ka Evropi, a ne Iranu!,” Dnevni Avaz (Sarajevo), 28 August 2012, at http://www.avaz.ba/vijesti/intervju/bih-se-mora-okrenuti-ka-evropi-ne-iranu, accessed on 11 October 2012 at 6:59am EST.


253. See Scheuer’s comments in Sarajevo Ricopter, op. cit.


258. See Scheuer’s comments in Kepel, Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam, op. cit.


264. As cited by Bagherzadeh, “‘Lingering iranianness in Bosnian-Herzegovine,’” op. cit., 416.

world/nato-links-bosnia-government-to-training-center-for-terrorists.html, accessed on 24 September 2014 at 2:32pm EST.

266. For the story of the foiled Iranian plot to kill the CIA station chief in Sarajevo, see H.K Roy (pseudonym), Betrayal in the Balkans, August 2001, at www.worldandi.com In 1995, Hezbollah operatives were also discovered in what is believed to have been a plan to assassinate U.S. officials in Croatia. See James Risen and Doyle McManus, “Terrorist Risk to Americans in Croatia is Linked to Iran,” The Los Angeles Times, 21 May 1996, at http://articles.latimes.com/1996-05-21/news/mn-6549 1_terrorist-threat, accessed on 24 March 2014 at 6:25pm EST.


280. As quoted by Anes Alic and Jen Tracy, “Training for an Islamic Bosnia,” Transitions Online, 26 April 2002. Another reported target of the Pogorelici trainees, the Sarajevo lawyer Faruk Balijagić, narrowly escaped an assassination attempt at the Sarajevo Holiday Inn only ten days after meeting with Izetbegović to discuss state terrorism and crime. For a detailed report on attempts to liquidate Bosnian opposition leaders, see Senad Avdić, “Novi dokazi o terorizmu celnika A1D-a: Kako je pripremana likvidacija Fikreta Abdica,” Slobodna Bosna 284, at http://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/tekstovi_pdf/284.pdf.


284. See S. Numanović, “Izetbegović i Dodik na listi nepoželjnih?” Dnevni Avaz (Sarajevo), 23 May 2013, at http://www.avaz.ba/vijesti/teme/izetbegovic-i-dodik-na-listi-nepozeljnih/, accessed on 3 June 2013 at 7:05pm EST.


289. See “Iranske diplomate napustili teritoriju BiH,” Dnevni Avaz (Sarajevo), 14 May 2013, at http://www.avaz.ba/sport/


292. See Berger’s comments in Sarajevo Ricochet (Oslo: Fenris Film, 2010). Directed by Ola Flyum and David Heb-ditch. In the same documentary, former Bosnian diplomat Muhammed Filipović claims that the elder Izetbegović apparently spent so much time alone in the apartment of the forementioned Hassanein that his security detail began to believe they had a sexual relationship. Filipović is also of the belief that the TWRA funds were controlled by a relatively small circle of people, i.e., Aljia and Bakir Izetbegović and Hasan Cengić. Bakir Izetbegović’s central role in his father’s policies during this period are widely acknowledged. In one interview, for instance, the elder Izetbegović publicly stated that he most readily accepted his son’s advice. See Aljia Izetbegović’s interview entitled “Odgovori Aljje Izetbegovića na 100 pitanja magazina Start,” at http://www.mm.co.ba/index.php/bs/aktuelno/vijesti-iz-bih/930-odgovori-aljje-izetbegovica-na-100-pitanja-magazine-start, accessed on 9 November 2014 at 9:43am EST. Similarly, as a leading Bosnian journalist, Vildana Selimbegovic, has noted, “for a long time it has not been a secret that the recent president of the presidency Aljia Izetbegović, through his son Bakir controlled the military and police officials at the highest levels, and it’s an open secret that around the younger Izetbegović specifically a team of the unofficial Bosnian secret services has been formed.” See Selimbegovic, “Žrtva rata orlova i Ševa? Kome je smetao Nedžad Ugljen?” BH Dani 178 (Sarajevo), 27 October 2000.


294. For the most detailed investigation into TWRA’s operations made public so far was carried out by German police authorities at the request of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). See Expert Report Concerning the Area—Financial Investigations—relating to the judicial assistance request, ref. no. INV/10289/T09-PH (245), dated 8/27/2002 of the “Office of the Prosecutor” (OTP) of the International Court of Criminal Justice for the Former Yugoslavia relating to the “Third World Relief Agency” (TWRA) Vienna/Austria. Meckenheim: Federal Office of Criminal Investigations, ST-45-2-185-02, 8/28/2003.


From the Balkans to ISIS

Reda Seyam was an Egyptian suspected of helping to finance the October 2002 Bali bombings which killed over 315.

See “Germany Nabs Suspected Al Qaeda Financier,” The Chicago Tribune (Dateline Berlin, 16 October 2004), accessed on 11 October 2014 at 11:45am EST.


301. Ibid., 152-53.


313. For instance, Michael A. Ledeen, Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has reported that Mohammed Atta, the operational leader of the 9/11 attack, trained in terrorist camps in Bosnia, and that Said Bahaji, another key member of the Hamburg cell, had been in Bosnia as well. See “Talking to Iran,” The Wall Street Journal, 18 August 2007, at http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB118739533381601535, accessed on 16 July 2014.


316. See “United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, United States of America vs. Enaam M. Arnout, Section 5, 68-69.


325. See the documents reported in Sarajevo Ricochet, op. cit.


327. See Besar Likmeta, “Albania Nabs Suspected Al Qaeda Recruiters,” op. cit.


335. See Petritsch, “Islam is Part of the West, Too,” *The New York Times*, 20 November 2001, at http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/20/opinion/20PETR.html, accessed on 9 April 2014 at 2:04pm EST. Petritsch did add the proviso “although this cannot be excluded,” although given the fact that he had been in Bosnia over two years at this point, to be unaware of the role Bosnia played in the greatest security threat to Western interests in the post-Cold War era reveals the willful ignorance all too many Western officials have about conditions in the region. Six months later, Petritsch continued to promote the same obfuscations, claiming that “Rumours have it that there is evidence that Al-Qaeda has a substantial base in Bosnia. That is not true.” See Petritsch’s interview with *Financeel Dagblad*, 80
From the Balkans to ISIS

336. See “Inzko: Vehabije u BiH nisu opasnost Evropi,” Al Jazeera, 1 March 2012, at http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/inzko-vehabije-u-bih-nisu-opasnost-evropi, accessed on 3 February 2014 at 11:57am EST. Indeed, given such inaction by international officials in Bosnia, perhaps Mustafa Cerić was not being entirely facetious when he claimed that “If Al Qaeda collaborators are in BiH, then the Office of the High Representative and NATO are responsible for their existence.” See Cerić’s comments as quoted in “Cerić tvrdi da u BiH nema simpatizera Al-Qaide,” Dnevnik.hr, 19 August 2007, at http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/svijet/ceric-tvrdi-da-u-bih-nema-simpatizera-al-qaide.html, accessed on 30 March 2014 at 11:16am EST.


338. It has been speculated that Ashdown purged Alibabić on the advice of Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, also known as MI6), allegedly because Alibabić bore some grudge against SIS and had begun leaking the names of SIS agents in Bosnia hunting war crimes suspects. See Henry de Quetteville and Hugh Griffiths, “MI6 Spies Exposed by Balkan Rivals,” The Telegraph (UK), 27 September 2004, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/4193735/MI6-spies-exposed-by-Balkan-rivals.html, accessed on 24 October 2014 at 12:12pm EST.


342. Understandably, Izetbegović and his circle consistently lied about the presence of jihadis and Iranian security forces in Bosnia. At the signing ceremonies for the Dayton Peace Agreement in Paris in December 1995, President Clinton told Izetbegović that it was imperative for all the mujahedin and Iranian forces to leave Bosnia in accordance with the agreement just signed. As Holbrooke described it, “Izetbegović told the president that the bulk of such personnel ‘had already left,’ a statement we knew not to be true.” See Holbrooke, To End a War (New York: Random House, 1998), 321. Former NATO commander General Wesley Clark had a similar experience when dealing with Izetbegović and his closest associates. After the Paris signing ceremonies for the Dayton Accords, Clark went to Sarajevo to himself impress upon the Muslim leadership the overriding importance of removing the mujahedin and the Iranians from Bosnia. Izetbegović told Clark to talk to his intelligence chief, Alispahić. When Clark discussed the mujahedin/Iranian problem with Alispahić, the latter said he had been misinformed. When Clark presented evidence that the US had accumulated about the mujahedin/Iranian presence in Bosnia, Alispahić told him it was incorrect. Alispahić then went to the extent of signing a statement certifying that no Iranian terrorists were in Bosnia running training facilities. See Sead Numanović, “Iranci su nam bili posebna briga, to su, u suštini, bili teroristi!,” Dnevni Avaz (Sarajevo), 4 October 2013, at http://www.avaz.ba/vijesti/intervju/iranci-su-nam-bili-posebna-briga-to-su-u-sustini-bili-teroristi, accessed on 7 October 2013 at 10:05am EST. Secretary of State Warren Christopher received the same treatment. In February 1996, Christopher went to Sarajevo to impress upon Izetbegović the need to shut down the terrorist training facilities in Bosnia. Izetbegović assured Christopher that “I am sure that they don’t exist, and I just spoke with my intelligence director, Bakir Alispahić, and he told me the same” See Anes Alic and Jens Tracy, “Training for an Islamic Bosnia,” Transitions Online, 26 April 2002, at http://www.tol.org/client/article/4246-training-for-an-islamic-bosnia.html, accessed on 30 June 2012 at 1:57pm EST.

343. See Blavicki, “Islamist Terrorist Networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” op. cit., 63.

344. For instance, according to Vlado Azinović, “any resolute action aimed at reestablishing law and order [in Wahhabi villages] would enrage the country’s official Islamic Community. In recent years, this body in charge of the religious affairs of Bosnian Muslims and a driving force behind the ruling Party of Democratic Action, was quick to brand as Islamophobia any criticism of Salafi radicalization in Bosnia.” See Azinović, “The True Aims of Bosnia’s ‘Operation Light’,” at http://www.rferl.org/content/The_True_Aims_Of_Bosnia's_Operation_Light/1954254.html, accessed on 25 April 2012 at: 7:40pm EST. Similarly, according to Nenad Pejić, “There are countless examples of local authorities in Bosnia failing to act properly against Islamic extremism. The majority of these criminal cases have not been resolved and when the terrorists are identified the trials take years . . . Islamic community leaders and local politicians described terrorist acts in BiH as isolated “criminal acts” and not a consequence of growing Islamic extremism. Attempts to initiate police investigations of the Wahhabi movement were often defined as Islamophobic.” See Pejić, “Wahhabist Militancy in Bosnia Profits from Local and International Inaction,” The Jamestown Terrorism Monitor 9, Issue 42, 17 November 2011, at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38681, accessed on 26 April 2012 at: 8:49am EST. According to Rešid Hafizović, a professor at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, “The reaction of the top of the Islamic community has always been understood by the Wahhabi gang as a tacit green light for their actions. That this is
true is confirmed by the fact that every new Wahhabi attack in the country has been worse, more planned out, and more dangerous.” See the interview with Hafizović, “Vehabije dolaze po tapiju na BiH,” Oslobodenje (Sarajevo), 5/6 November 2011, 32. Available at http://www.srbord.com/doc/74688492/Vehabije-dolaze-po-tapiju-na-BiH-intervju-dr-Re%C5%A1i-Hafizovi%C4%87-Oslobo%C4%87enije-05-11-2011-god, accessed on 24 June 2012 at 7:26 pm EST. According to another Sarajevo academic, Esad Duraković, “Wahhabi doctrine . . . has expanded very seriously, it has metastasized in the institutions of the Islamic Community: in some madrasas, at some faculties of the Islamic Community, etc. Wahhabis pronounce their own fatwas, that is, they give their own formal and parallel interpretations of Islam, and the Islamic Community is silent. Thus, the Wahhabs have entered deeply into the system, they are educating the youth, while the leadership of the Islamic Community is silent or compliments them for being the “new Muslims.” See the interview with Esad Duraković, “Vehabizam je ovdje izrazito suicidna ideologija, tragično je što to ne shvataju mnogi muslimani, ni Bošnjaci,” 5 November 2011, at http://www.depo.ba/front/vehabizam-je-ovdje-izrazito-suicidna-ideologija-tragicno-je-sto-to-ne-shvataju-mnogi-muslimani-ni-bosnjaci, accessed on 24 June 2012 at 7:44pm EST. Similarly, the leading Bosnian journalist tracking Islamist extremists in Bosnia, Esad Hečimović, has noted “Even though the Bosnian tragedy is in the very center of the motivations of [Al-Qaeda], never did one single Bosnian-Herzegovinian religious, national, or state leader oppose these abused ideological interpretations which created a pretext for the new crimes against civilians from Jerusalem to New York.” See Hečimović, “Nastavak ‘pobjede iz Jemena’?,” op. cit. Similarly, Mustafa Spahić, another leading Islamic cleric in Bosnia, has said of Mustafa Ceric’s refusal to confront the Wahhabi movement in Bosnia, “He is not fulfilling his duties. He travels to Germany and collects one award after another instead of dealing with the radicals here.” See Walter Mayr, “The Prophet’s Fifth Column: Islamists Gain Ground in Sarajevo,” op. cit. Similarly, in Kosovo, according to Ilir Deda, one of Kosovo’s leading political analysts, “The institutions have not dealt with this issue . . . Radical Islam is mid- to long-term one of the biggest dangers for Kosovo, because they are aiming to change our social fabric.” See Deda’s comments as quoted by Sylvia Poggioli, “Radical Islam Uses Balkan Poor to Wield Influence,” National Public Radio, 25 October 2010, at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php/storyId=130801242, accessed on 16 October 2013 at 2:39pm EST.


348. The Council of Europe’s Country Profiles on Counter-Terrorism Capacity are available at http://www.coe.int/UD/dlapil/codexeter/country_profiles.asp Although useful for background on legislation that has actually been passed by individual countries, the CoE’s Country Profiles unfortunately reflect little actual knowledge of the problematic outside of where legislation stands in each country’s political/bureaucratic process.


351. As one expert on the Balkan militant Islamist phenomenon has observed: “If we look at this within international dimensions, Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi is the person who is calling people to join the jihad in Syria, but if you ask about this in Bosnia & Herzegovina itself, then you will see that Sheik Qaradawi was received here by the new reis-ul-Ulema Kavazović, by the former reis Ceric, and by the BiH presidency member Bakir Izetbegovic, and no one in any way publicly objected to his call for jihad in Syria. How can we now criticize young men for going to jihad in Syria, if at the same time we do not ask those people who are publicly calling for jihad what their position on this is?” See the comments by Esad Hečimović in “Mudžahid Senad Kobaši iz Zenice poginuo u Siriji,” BH Magazin, 24 November 2013, at http://www.bhmagazin.com/bih-index/item/16403-mud%C5%BEahid-senad-koba%C5%A1-iz-travnika-poginuo-u-siriji-foto.html, accessed on 1 November 2014 at 10:34am EST.


354. See “Selefeje u ‘svetom ratu’: eksluzivna ispovijest bh. džihad ratnika u Siriji,” op. cit.

355. “Balkan jihadi/extremists” are here defined as either foreign or indigenous individuals who participated in the Balkan wars of the 1990s or spent time in the region over the past twenty years.
356. Some of the operational funds for the first World Trade Center bombing in February 1993 were provided by the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), a Vienna-based “Islamic charity” run by a long-time Izetbegović associate, the Sudanese national Elfâth Hassamein. Osama bin Laden was known to work through TWRA. TWRA and the first World Trade Center bombing is described in detail in section V.

357. Bosnian jihad veteran Muslih al-Shamrani was involved in the November 1995 bombing of the Saudi National Guard building in Riyadh in which five Americans and two Indian nationals were killed. al-Shamrani was a Sunni from Saudi Arabia who had participated in the jihad in Afghanistan as well as in Bosnia. He was beheaded by the Saudi government in 1996. See Kohlmann, Al-Qaeda’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network, op. cit., 158; Peter L. Bergen, Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden (New York: Touchstone, 2002), 90; and Joshua Teitelbaum and David Long, “Islamic Politics in Saudi Arabia,” Washington Institute Policy Watch 259 (9 July 1997), at http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/islamic-politics-in-saudi-arabia, accessed on 7 January 2015 at 4:04pm EST.

358. Lionel Dumont was a French convert to Islam who participated in the Bosnian jihad, where his nom de guerre was “Abu Hamza.” In March 1996, together with another French-Muslim convert, Christophe Caze, Dumont was part of the so-called “Roubaix Gang,” which in early 1996 participated in a spate of armed robberies in France, culminating in a car-bombing of the police station in Lille, two hundred meters away from where French president Jacques Chirac was supposed to open the G7 meeting two days hence. Caze was killed attempting to flee France, while Dumont returned to Bosnia and again became involved in criminal activities. During the course of one of his robberies he killed a policeman. He was ultimately tracked down and arrested in an apartment in ??? belonging to the Interior Ministry of Zenica-Doboj Canton. After little more than a year in prison, Dumont escaped from a Sarajevo prison just five days he was supposed to be extradited to France. As Kohlmann notes, French officials were immediately suspicious of the timing, adding that “Perhaps Bosnian officials were embarrassed at the prospect of what Dumont might testify to in a French court . . . . [that] senior-level members of the Bosnian government continued to provide covert protection to the Arab mujahideen, even after they had committed cold-blooded crimes against innocent Bosnian Muslims themselves.” See Kohlmann, Al-Qaeda’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network, op. cit., 194-97.


361. Bosnian jihad veteran and Finsbury Park Mosque Imam Abu Hamza al Misri would later claim that the Afri can Embassy bombings were retaliation for the arrest and deportation of several members of Al Qaeda’s Albanian cell. See his 2002 interview with PBS’ Frontline: In Search of Al Qaeda, at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/search/interviews/almasri.html, accessed on 8 May 2014 at 1:17pm EST.


370. The May 2003 Riyadh bombings involved a coordinated triple car-bombing of several compounds housing foreign citizens in Saudi Arabia. Thirty-four people were killed in the attacks, including seven Americans. Bosnian jihad veteran Khalid al-Juhani was the mastermind of the operation. al-Juhani had assumed command of Al Qaeda operations in the Persian Gulf after the capture of Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri (also a Bosnian jihadi veteran), who was suspected of involvement in the attack on the USS Cole (see above). See Richard B. Schmitt, Josh Meyer and Robin Wright, “High Terror Risk is Declared,” The Los Angeles Times, 21 May 2003, at http://articles.latimes.com/2003/may/21/nation/na-alert21; accessed on 10 November 2014 at 9:10am EST; Mark Hosenball, “Al Qaeda Strikes Again,” Newsweek, 25 May 2003, at http://www.newsweek.com/al-qaeda-strikes-again-137523; accessed on 10 November 2014 at 9:18am EST.

371. Bosnian jihad veteran Abdel Karim Al-Tuhani Al-Majati was a Moroccan Al Qaeda member involved in the May 2003 Riyadh bombings. He was killed by Saudi security forces in April 2005. For more on Al-Majati, see “An Al Qaeda Love Story: From Morocco to Bosnia to Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, via New Jersey,” MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 984, 9 September 2005, at http://www.memri.org/report/en/print1471.htm; accessed on 11 November 2014 at 4:08pm EST.

372. Bosnian jihadi veteran Habib Aktaš was the alleged mastermind of the Istanbul bombings that killed some 60 people in attacks on the British consulate, an HSBC bank in Istanbul, and two synagogues on November 15th and November 20th 2007. Among the fatalities was the British consul-general in Istanbul. Turkish authorities believed that Aktaš was the head of the Al Qaeda cell in the country. See Karl Vick, “Al Qaeda’s Hand in Istanbul Plot,” The Washington Post, 13 February 2007, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/ AR2007021201715.html; accessed on 4 May 2013 at 8:24am EST; and “Istanbul Bombing Suspects Charged,” BBC News, 25 February 2014, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3486536.stm; accessed on 7 October 2014 at 12:17pm EST.


375. Abdelmajid Bouchar, a Moroccan suspected of involvement in the Madrid Train bombings, was arrested in a train after it had crossed the Serbian border in June 2005, travelling on forged Iraqi documents. Security officials believe Bouchar was transiting through Serbia trying to make his way to the Middle-East. See “Arrest May Indicate Balkans-Al Qaeda Link,” FoxNews, 29 August 2005, at http://www.foxnews.com/story/2005/08/29/arrest-may-indicate-balkans-al-qaeda-link/; accessed on 19 November 2014 at 11:17am EST. Spanish officials said Bouchar’s fingerprints had been found at the rural home where the bombs used in the Madrid attacks were believed to have been assembled, and in the Madrid apartment where seven individuals suspected of involvement in the attacks blew themselves up during a confrontation with police. Bouchar had apparently also used Bulgaria as a hideout. See Al

376. For more on Bosnian jihad veteran Al-Muqrin, see “Profile: Abdul Aziz Al-Muqrin,” at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3821237.stm, accessed on 3 February 2014 at 12:35pm EST.


378. In 2005, Italian investigators discovered a plot to bomb the funeral of Pope John Paul II which had originated in Gornja Maoča. The plot involved smuggling eleven rocket launchers, C4 explosives and detonators into Italy from a safe house in Zagreb using human trafficking channels through Trieste. Seid Redžematović, a member of the Aktivna Islamska Omladina (AIO) connected with the Gornja Maoča Wahhabi community, was arrested on the day of the Pope’s funeral, suspected of planning a suicide attack at the funeral. Several other individuals were arrested as well. See Fiorenza Sarzanini, “Commando con lanciarazzi: puntava all’ Italia,” Corriere della Serra, 26 August 2005, at http://www.corriere.it/Primo_Piano/Cronache/2005/08_Agosto/26/sarzanini.shtml, accessed on 10 December 2014 at 5:09pm EST; “Terrorist Cells and Recruitment in Bosnia,” CSIS Transnational Threats Update 3 (No. 10), August/September 2005, 2; Rade Marojević and Daniel Williams, “Terrorist Cells Find Foothold in the Balkans,” The Washington Post, 1 December 2005; Schindler, Unholy Terror: Bosnia, Al-Qa’ida, and the Rise of Global Jihad, op. cit., 316; Dženana Halimović, “Vehabije u Bosni: Od Bočinje do Maoče,” at http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/maoca_vehabije_selefije_akcija_svjetlost/1950070.html, accessed on 19 November 2013 at 10:38am EST; and Leslie S. Lebl, “Islamism and Security in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (May 2014), 9. It is worth noting that despite the fact that a Bosnia-based plot to carry out an attack on one of the largest gatherings of world leaders in history had been uncovered, the OHR’s subsequent 28th and 29th Reports to the UN Secretary-General made no mention of this.

379. Abu Hamza al-Masri was the imam of London’s Finsbury Park mosque, and considered to be the spiritual leader of the London 7/7 bombers. Abu Hamza fought in Bosnia in the 1990s, married a Bosnian war widow, and was granted Bosnian citizenship. In July 2005, Douglas Farah reported that Western intelligence officials had been warning that a large quantity of high-level plastic explosives had gone missing in Bosnia, and “if there were an attack in Europe, it would be very likely the materiel would have been obtained in Bosnia.” See Farah’s comments at http://counterterrorismblog.org/2005/07/douglas_far_london_and_the_p.php, accessed on 7 February 2014 at 10:06am EST. In the aftermath of the 7/7 bombing, Scotland Yard’s investigation led to Sarajevo after it was discovered that one of the bomber’s relatives and three other UK residents had gone to the King Fahd mosque. According to a Bosnian police official, ‘Four British men were being watched in the UK and then we received word from British police that they were coming to Sarajevo. One of them was the relative of one of the July 7 bombers. They spent most of their time in the King Fahd Mosque, which is used by very extremist Muslims.’ Sarajevo’s King Fahd mosque has reportedly become a popular destination for second-generation Pakistani and Afghan youths in the UK. See Nick Pisa, “Terror Hunt for 7/7 Bomber’s Relative in Bosnian Mosque,” The Mail on Sunday (London), 12 February 2006, 23. (Original in the author’s archive.) Among Abu Hamza al Masri’s other acolytes were would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid, and 9/11 “20th Hijacker,” Zacarias Moussaoui.


381. On 12 February 2007, Bosnian émigré Sulejman Talović opened fire on shoppers in Salt Lake City’s Trolley Square Mall, killing five people and wounding four others, including a pregnant woman. Police said he had a backpack full of ammunition and his intention was “to kill as many people as possible.” During the attacks he was wearing a necklace containing a miniature Quran. Three years earlier Talović’s school had already alerted police that he was looking at weapons on the internet and boasting that his grandfather “was in the jihad.” The day before the attack, Talović had told a friend that “tomorrow will be the happiest day of my life, but it will happen only once.” Some witnesses claim to have heard Talović shouting “Allahu Akbar!” during the attack. See Paul Sperry, “Could the Kenya Attack Happen Here? It Did.” The New York Post, 12 October 2013, at http://nypost.com/2013/10/12/could-the-kenya-mall-attack-ever-happen-here-it-already-did/, accessed on 20 September 2014 at 11:12am EST. An FBI report on the Trolley Square Massacre found that Talović “may have thought about committing a shooting attack for years,” and “held prejudicial beliefs against Serbs, homosexuals, and African...

388. A suspected plot to bomb the Catholic cathedral in Sarajevo, the Franciscan monastery of the Holy Spirit outside of the town of Fojnica, and to sabotage electricity supply stations to EUFOR bases in Bosnia and attack EUFOR Liaison and Observation Teams in the country was disrupted in March 2008 with the arrest of the above group. Among the items police discovered were explosives hidden in books (designed to explode when they were opened). This group was particularly interested in attacking EUFOR teams whose members came from countries with soldiers deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. One member of the group, Edis Velić, had participated in jihad in Chechnya. See Damir Kaletovic and Anes Alic, “Terror Plot Thwarted in Bosnia,” ISN Security Network (Zurich), 28 March 2008, at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?ots591=4888caaa0-b3db-1461-98b9-e20e7b9c13d4&lng=en&id=53864, accessed on 13 February 2014 at 10:29am EST.

389. In August 2008, an illegal Albanian émigré living in the UK, Krenar Lusha, was arrested after police raided his home and discovered 72 liters of petrol, documents called “Ragnar’s Detonators” and “The Bomb Book,” and videos entitled “Hezbollah Military Instructions Manual,” and “Mobile Detonators.” Also found in Lusha’s home were fourteen mobile phones and videos of live headshots by Islamist extremist groups. Lusha was in the process of downloading other Hezbollah materials at the time the police raided his home, including a video on how to use mobile phones as bomb detonators. During the trial the prosecutor revealed that the Hezbollah materials included information on how to make missiles and suicide vests. Lusha had also claimed on dating websites that he was a “terrorist” and a “sniper” and that he “loved” watching Americans and Jews get killed. Remarkably, despite being an illegal alien in Britain, he had been given a 100% mortgage by a British bank. See “NatWest handed Al Qaeda ‘terrorist’ and a ‘sniper’ and that he ‘loved’ watching Americans and Jews get killed. Remarkably, despite being an illegal alien in Britain, he had been given a 100% mortgage by a British bank.” See Nate Carlisle, “FBI Found Talovic Had a History with Trolley Square,” The Salt Lake Tribune, 25 June 2009, at http://www.sltrib.com/ci_12382259, accessed on 20 September 2014 at 11:25am EST.


393. In August 2008, an illegal Albanian émigré living in the UK, Krenar Lusha, was arrested after police raided his home and discovered 72 liters of petrol, documents called “Ragnar’s Detonators” and “The Bomb Book,” and videos entitled “Hezbollah Military Instructions Manual,” and “Mobile Detonators.” Also found in Lusha’s home were fourteen mobile phones and videos of live headshots by Islamist extremist groups. Lusha was in the process of downloading other Hezbollah materials at the time the police raided his home, including a video on how to use mobile phones as bomb detonators. During the trial the prosecutor revealed that the Hezbollah materials included information on how to make missiles and suicide vests. Lusha had also claimed on dating websites that he was a “terrorist” and a “sniper” and that he “loved” watching Americans and Jews get killed. Remarkably, despite being an illegal alien in Britain, he had been given a 100% mortgage by a British bank. See “NatWest handed Al Qaeda terrorist 100% mortgage to buy £93,000 he turned into a bomb factory,” The Daily Mail (UK), 16 December 2009, at http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1236301/Bank-blasted-giving-Al-Qaeda-terrorist-100-mortgage.html, accessed on 16 October 2014 at 1:22pm EST; and Duncan Gardham, “Albanian ‘terrorist’ caught with bomb-making materials in his home, court hears,” The Telegraph (UK), 17 November 2009, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/6591313/Albanian-terrorist-caught-with-bomb-making-materials-in-his-home-court-hears.html, accessed on 16 October 2014 at 1:28pm EST. Lusha was implicated in a larger plot involving four other individuals who allegedly intended to assassinate UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former prime minister Tony Blair. See “Fifth Man Facing Terror Charges,” BBC News, 9 September 2008, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7606384.stm, accessed on 16 October 2014 at 1:28pm EST.


395. In July 2009, Bosnian native Enes Subašić and Kosovo native Hysen Sherifi were arrested as part of the “Raleigh Group” suspected of being involved in a “multi-year conspiracy to murder persons abroad and provide material support to terrorism.” Sherifi was also charged with planning to attack U.S. soldiers at the Marine base in Quantico, Virginia. See “North Carolina Resident Anes Subasic Sentenced for Terrorism Violations,” http://www.fbi.gov/charlotte/press-releases/2012/north-carolina-resident-anes-subasic-sentenced-for-terrorism-violations, accessed on...
15 September 2012 at 11:47am EST.

388. Bosnian émigré Adis Medunjanin was one of several conspirators planning attacks on the New York subway system. According to prosecution documents, Medunjanin travelled to Pakistan along with other conspirators and trained at Al Qaeda camps. The plot involved Medunjanin and two other terrorists strapping on backpacks and carrying out suicide attacks on NYC subways. On the verge of being arrested, Medunjanin made a 911 call saying “We love death more than you love life,” and proceeded to drive his car into another vehicle on the Whitestone Bridge in a failed suicide attack attempt. In November 2012, Medunjanin was convicted of conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction, to commit murder abroad, and of providing material support to Al Qaeda and receiving military training at an Al Qaeda camp. He was sentenced to life imprisonment plus 95 years. See Most Secret, “Man Convicted of a Terrorist Plot to Bomb Subways is Sent to Prison for Life,” The New York Times, 12 November 2012, at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/17/world/crime/terrorist-conspiring-to-attack-subway-sentenced-to-life.html?_r=0; accessed on 17 November 2014 at 7:16pm EST; see also Tom Hays, “Medunjanin Got Al Qaeda Training,” Associated Press, 9 January 2012.


391. See Esad Hećimović, “Gaza Flotilla Official Was Foreign Fighter in Bosnia War,” Intelwire 13 June 2010, at http://news.intelwire.com/2010/06/gaza-flotilla-official-was-foreign.html, accessed on 13 February 2014 at 8:41am EST. Atalay fought in Izetbegović’s “7th Muslim Brigade” (in which the mujahedin units were incorporated) from 1992-1994, after which he became head of the IHH office in Sarajevo. For more on how Islamic charitable organizations such as IHH provide logistical support to terrorist groups, see Marc Champion, “Aid Group, Israel Primed for Clash, Flotilla Review Shows,” The Wall Street Journal, 7 July 2010, at http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB1000142405274870455349031510961398, accessed on 19 June 2014 at 8:03am EST.


394. In January 2012, Kosovo émigré Sami Osmakac was arrested by the FBI in Tampa, Florida, for planning attacks in Tampa which were to include a car-bombing and hostage taking. Osmakac had already acquired an AK-47 and what he believed to be actual explosives. He had told and FBI informant that “We all have to die, so why not die the Islamic way?”, and in a martyrdom video he made shortly before his arrest he claimed he was acting out of revenge for American “wrongs” towards Muslims. See “Kosovo Native Plotted Bombings, Bloodshed in Tampa, Feds Say,” CNN, 9 January 2012, at http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/09/justice/florida-terror-arrest/ Accessed on 26 June 2012 at 10:17am EST. Osmakac had apparently become radicalized on visits to Kosovo, during which he met with local Islamist extremists. See “Official: Fla. Bomb Suspect Met Radical Islamists in Kosovo,” USA Today,

395. In February 2011, a native of Kosovo, Arid Uka, approached a group of US servicemen waiting at a bus terminal at Frankfurt Airport, asked if they were going to Afghanistan, then began shouting “God is the Greatest,” and shooting his weapon. During the attack Uka killed two US servicemen and wounded two others. He was about to attack a fifth soldier when his gun jammed. See Souad Mekhennet, “Gunman in Germany Wanted ‘Revenge’ for Afghanistan,” The New York Times, 4 March 2012, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/05/world/europe/05germany.html?ref=europa, accessed on 30 June 2014 at 2:22pm EST. At his trial, Uka claimed that he had been radicalized by jihadi videos on the internet. See “Frankfurt Airport Gunman Jailed for Life,” at http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16984066, accessed on 30 June 2014 at 2:12pm EST.

396. On Orthodox Easter, April 2012, five ethnic Macedonians were murdered by a lake on the outskirts of Skopje. Their bodies had been lined up and they appeared to have been killed execution style. In June 2104, six ethnic Albanians from Macedonia whom the police had alleged were members of an Islamist extremist cell were convicted of the crime. See Sinisa Jakov Marusic, “Six Albanians Jailed for Macedonia ‘Terror’ Murders,” BalkanInsight, 30 June 2014, at http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-mass-murder-trial, accessed on 30 June 2014 at 1:35pm EST. Materials found on the computer of one of the defendants included videos that glorify jihad, promote the establishment of an Islamic state, and call for the execution of Christians in “revenge killings.” See Sase Dimovski, “Macedonian Ethnic Terrorism Motives Verdict Revealed,” BalkanInsight, 28 October 2014, at http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-ethnic-terrorism-verdict-details-revealed, accessed on 28 October 2014 at 9:27am EST.

397. In the summer of 2012, Australian police investigated a radical group composed of émigré Bosnians in Melbourne. Among those arrested was Adnan Karabegović, who was found to have been collecting the Al Qaeda magazine Inspire, including an edition which recommended bombing the Sydney Opera House. The group was led by Harun Mehčević, a radical cleric who had left the mainstream Bosnian Islamic community in Melbourne several years earlier to form a more extreme Salafist group. See Cameron Stewart, “How Informer’s Fears Triggered Terror Raid,” The Australian, 15 September 2012, available at http://alfurqan.com.au/home/307-how-informers-fears-triggered-terror-raids, accessed on 19 June 2014 at 8:18am EST. Upon his arrest, Karabegović was also in possession of a USB stick that “contained a number of electronic document files titled “Plans”, including information on how to construct a semi-automatic machine gun and grenade, how to make tear gas and knock-out drops, and a guide on sniper weapons . . . During the search of Karabegovic’s home, police found a small piece of paper hidden in the back of a picture frame with the words “Nitric acid 2 gal” and “Amoniem nitrEt 1.5t”, as well as handwritten notes on sniper tactics, two imitation handguns, large hunting knives, a laptop computer and two USB devices. Nitric acid and ammonium nitrate are both precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of explosives. For more on the circumstances surrounding Karabegovic’s arrest, see Mark Russell, “Terror Accused had bomb-making formula, court hears,” The Age (Victoria), 6 December 2012, at http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/terror-accused-had-bomb-making-formula-court-hears-20121206-2ax8s.html, accessed on 19 June 2014 at 8:26am EST. During the course of its investigation into the Mehčević-Karabegović group, Australian police recorded the latter discussing preparations for jihad, plans to poison water supplies, and making bombs to kill Australian non-Muslims. See Shannon Deery, “Melbourne Man Accused of Terrorism-Related Charges, Including How to Make a Bomb to Spark a Bushfire, Court Hears,” The Herald Sun, 8 April 2013, at http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/south-east/melbourne-man-in-court-accused-of-terrorism-related-charges-including-how-to-make-a-bomb-to-spark-a-bushfire/story-fgno-vmh-1226614962839, accessed on 19 June 2014 at 8:33am EST. Karabegović was also recorded discussing his plans to go to Bosnia for training. See “Adnan Karabegović htio na obuku u BiH?”, Dnevni Avaz (Sarajevo), 8 April 2013, at http://www.avaz.ba/vijesti/iz-minute-u-minutu/adnan-karabegovic-htio-na-obuku-u-bih, accessed on 19 June 2014 at 8:49pm EST. In September 2014, Numan Haider, an Afghan émigré in Australia who had attended lectures at Melbourne’s Al Furqan Mosque (run by Harun Mehčević), was killed after stabbing two police officers. See Emily Crane, “Teen Terrorist Suspect Shot Dead by Police Once Belonged to a Radical Muslim Group Targeted by Police in 2012,” The Daily Mail (UK), 24 September 2014, at http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2767515/teen-terrorist-suspect-shot-dead-police-belonged-radical-muslim-group-targeted-terrorism-raids-2012.html, accessed on 29 September 2014 at 6:02am EST.


399. See Besar Likmeta, “Turkey Arrests Albanians after ‘Terror’ Attack,” BalkanInsight, 21 March 2014, at http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/three-albanians-arrested-in-turkey-terror-attack, accessed on 21 March 2014 at 10:03am EST. The attack (which killed three people, including a police officer, a soldier, and a truck driver) involved two Albanian nationals and one from Kosovo. Initial reports suggest the individuals involved were Syrian jihad veterans.


403. See Ikanović’s statements in “Selefije u ‘svetom ratu’: eksluzivna ispovijest bh. džihad ratnika u Siriji,” op. cit.

404. See the statements by “Nermina” (pseudonym), a former Bosnian Wahhabi who left the movement, as quoted by Ahmetasevic, “Emissaries of Militant Islam Make Headway in Bosnia,” op. cit.


410. State Department cable entitled “Radical Islam in Montenegro,” op. cit., ftn. 87.


413. The World Factbook lists “Muslims” and the Sufi order of “Bektashis” as separate categories. For simplicity’s sake they are aggregated in this calculation.

414. The World Factbook does not provide a breakdown of the religious demographics in Kosovo, so percentages are taken from a Wikipedia article entitled “Demographics of Kosovo,” which cites information based on official census data in Kosovo. Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Kosovo


416. Ibid., Q92c, 220.

417. Ibid., Q92d, 221.

418. Ibid., Q92b, 219.

Books


**Academic/Intelligence/Policy Articles**


Levitt, Matthew A. “The Political Economy of Middle East Terrorism.” Middle East Review of International Affairs 6 (December 2002), 49—65.


Pena, Charles V. “Al Qaeda: The Balkans Connection.” Mediterranean Quarterly 16 (Fall 2005).


Journalistic/News Reports


Jovanovic, Ivana; Brajshori, Muhame; and Ciocoiu, Paul. “Radical Islamist Threatens Balkans with Terror Attacks.” SETimes, 8 October 2012


---

O’Connor, Mike. “Spies for Iran are Said to Gain a Hold in Bosnia.” *The New York Times*, 28 November 1997

-----“Police Official’s Methods Raise Ethnic Fears in a Region of Bosnia.” *The New York Times*, 16 June 1996,


Toshkov, Veselin; Nisic, Sabina; Stojanovic, Dusan; Semini, Llazar; Qena, Nebi; Becatoros, Elena. “Radical Islam on Rise in Balkans, Raising Fears of Security Threats to Europe.” *Associated Press* (dateline Skopje), 18 September 2010


Wilkinson, Tracy. “Muslim Regime Says Bosnia is No Place for Santa Claus.” The Los Angeles Times, 28 December 1996

----- “Sarajevo Leaders’ Acts Demonstrate Enduring Bigotry,” The Los Angeles Times, 5 May 1996


**JTF-GTMO Detainee Assessments (chronological order, by reference name)**

-----”Abu Zubaydah.” Internment Serial Number (ISN) US9GZ-010016DP (S). Date: 11 November 2008

----- “Tariq Mahmud Ahmad.” ISN US9EG-000535DP. Date: 30 September 2008

-----“Mustafa Ait Idr.” ISN US4AG-010004DP. Date: 30 June 2008.


-----“Khalid Shaikh Muhammed.” ISN US9KU-010024DP (S). Date: 8 December 2006

-----“Ramzi Abdallah Mohammed Bin al-Shihb.” ISN US9YM-010013DP (S). Date: 8 December 2006.

-----“Abd al-Rahim Hussein Muhammad Abdah al-Nashiri.” ISN US9SA-010015DP. Date: 8 December 2006.

----- “Jum’a Muhammad Abd al-Latif al-Dosari.” ISN US9BA-000261DP. Date: 28 July 2006


**U.S. State Department Diplomatic Cables (in chronological order)**

“Bosnia: BiH Federation Police Search Benevolence International.” Embassy Sarajevo: Cable No. 00934. Date: March 2002

“Bosnia: Terrorist Suspects will be Indicted at State Court.” Embassy Sarajevo: Cable No. 000732. Date: 6 April 2006.


“Macedonia: Leadership Crisis in Islamic Community of Macedonia Quiets at Start of Ramadan.” Embassy Skopje: Cable No. 000559. Date: 4 September 2008.


“Bosnia: Reis’ing Toward Trouble.” Embassy Sarajevo: Cable No. 000226. Date: 24 February 2009.


“Montenegro: Radical Islam in Montenegro.” Embassy Podgorica: Cable No. 0000171. Date: 10 July 2009.

“Bosnia: High-Profile Prisoner Disappears.” Embassy Sarajevo: Cable No. 000946. Date: 3 August 2009.

Documentaries/Recorded Sermons/Videos/YouTube Spots


Odred El-Mužahedin Bosna (Production: Unknown). Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kngioq0TK0I

Šejh Nusret Imamović i Bilal Bosnić—Lukavac (Video of a 2011 public seminar in Tuzla). Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPfn8PR3DCE

Teror vehabija u srednjoj Bosni (“The Terror of the Wahhabis in Central Bosnia”). Sarajevo:
FTV 60 minuta episode, aired on 14 February 2009. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1XRXcCupYo


Sarajevo Ricochet. Oslo: Fenris Film, 2010. Directed by Ola Flyum and David Hebditch.


Forthcoming SEERECON Special Reports

- *The Energy Sector in Southeastern Europe* (scheduled publication date June 2015)
- *Russian Policy in Southeastern Europe, SEERECON Security and Intelligence Series Special Report No. 2* (scheduled publication date December 2015)
- *The Airline Industry in Southeastern Europe: Problems and Potentials* (publication date June 2016)
- *The Future of NATO in Southeastern Europe, SEERECON Security and Intelligence Series Special Report No. 3* (scheduled publication date December 2016)
SEERECON is a strategic advisory and political risk analysis firm providing corporate clients, investors, and security professionals information crucial to understanding current and future developments in southeastern Europe.

Situated at the intersection of the European Union, Russia, and Turkey, the countries of southeastern Europe comprise an economic space of some fifty million people, interconnected by a number of free-trade agreements and composed of states either in or on the road towards European Union membership.

Regional security is the responsibility of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which all of the states of southeastern Europe are either full members or members of NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PFP) program.

SEERECON’s special analytical reports, produced by a network of experts with extensive experience and political access in southeastern Europe, provide clients with information tailored to their specific requirements, and forward-looking analyses critical to political, economic, and business decision-makers.

SEERECON also provides business and corporate clients with a full array of advisory and consulting services, including developing strategies for market entry, performing due diligence investigations, carrying out surveys of local competitive and legal environments, and assessing political risk conditions.

For more information on SEERECON’s client services, please send inquiries and requirements to info@seerecon.com
www.seerecon.com