



LONE WOLF TERRORISM AND OPEN SOURCE JIHAD: AN EXPLANATION AND ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

Al Qaeda and Daesh publish English language magazines to appeal to Western supporters and encourage them to join their cause as a fighter or as a lone wolf terrorist. A key feature of Al Qaeda's magazine, *Inspire*, is a section titled Open Source Jihad, which provides aspiring jihadists with step-by-step instructions to carry out lone terror attacks in the West. By examining ten attack types that have been published over the past six years, this paper explains Open Source Jihad, presents cases where these types of attacks have been carried out, and assesses the threat presented by the easy access to Open Source Jihad.

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

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INTRODUCTION

Lone Wolf Terrorism

Lone wolf terrorism is exceedingly difficult to detect and therefore prevent. The attackers are usually citizens of the country that they are attacking, so they cannot easily be traced or stopped at borders. They are able to carry out their attacks with readily available materials, from purchasing a gun to creating a rather simple bomb out of materials that can be bought at a hardware store with little suspicion. If a country wanted to eradicate lone wolf terrorism, it would need to completely eliminate the sale of goods such as guns, fireworks, nails, pressure cookers, lead pipes, Christmas lights, and matches. And even then, those committed to carrying out a lone attack would just have to get a little bit more creative or acquire the necessary materials on the black market.

This paper focuses on radical Islamist lone wolf terror attacks, particularly those inspired by Al Qaeda and Daesh¹, which follow the pattern of attacks outlined in Al Qaeda's "Open Source Jihad" in their magazine, *Inspire*. One of the greatest challenges when combatting and preventing radical Islamist lone wolf attacks is that it is a challenge of combatting ideology rather than a force of ground troops. Western powers fighting against radical Islamist terror organizations, can beat them back from territory, block their funding, and imprison all of their leaders, cutting them off from all outside communication, and still lone wolf terror attacks would occur. This is in part due to the lack of outside demand and hierarchy characteristic of lone wolf attacks. There is no chain of command through which to track these soldiers of leaderless jihad. There is no cable to be intercepted telling them where, when, and how to attack. This is self-directed terror in the name of a global ideological movement that is nearly impossible to track or identify until they strike.

Lone wolf terrorists operate individually, without belonging to an organized terror group or network. Their attacks are "conceived and directed by the individual

¹ Also referred to as the Islamic State (IS), Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL)

without any direct command or hierarchy.”² While lone wolf attackers can, and often do, identify with the ideology of a particular terror organization, they do not collaborate on their attacks with these organizations. Similarly, a lone wolf terrorist may have contact with members of an established terror organization but those members do not have any influence in orchestrating the lone actor’s attack. For example, there is evidence that Nidal Hassan, the perpetrator of the 2009 Fort Hood shootings, had been in email correspondence with Anwar al Awlaki of Al Qaeda, but showed no direct sign of terrorist intent in these emails. Rather it appears that this correspondence strengthened Hassan’s opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and his inclination towards Al Qaeda’s ideology.³ This case appears to follow the common pattern of radicalization attributed to lone wolf terrorists where personal grievances, in Hassan’s case his opposition to America’s wars abroad and forcing Muslim soldiers to fight in them, are bolstered by a connection to online sympathizers, Hassan’s communication with al Awlaki, that pushes someone from disaffected individual to lone wolf terrorist.⁴ Within this vein, there are also lone wolves and lone wolf packs: lone wolves are a pair who radicalize and carry out an attack together and a lone wolf pack is a small group of individuals who self-radicalize with the jihadist narrative and carry out an attack.⁵

Lone wolf terrorists pose a unique threat compared to established terror organizations in that they are incredibly difficult to identify before they strike, posing a major security threat across the globe.⁶ Scholars and policy makers alike tend to view terrorism as a collective, group activity and therefore focus on the group dynamics and collective socialization in analyzing the planning and execution of terror attacks. Lone wolf terrorists, on the other hand, “may identify or sympathize with extremist movements but, by definition, do not form part of these movements”

² Ramon Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33 (2010): 856.

³ Ramon Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33 (2010): 857.

⁴ Mark Hamm and Ramon Spaaij, “Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies,” Report for the U.S. Department of Justice, February 2015, 2.

⁵ Raffaello Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists,” *Developments in Radicalization and Political Violence*, (2011): 44-45.

⁶ Jeffrey D. Simon, “Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding a Growing Threat,” in *Lone Actors – An Emerging Security Threat*, ed. Aaron Richman and Yair Sharan (Amsterdam: IOS Press BV, 2015), 3-7.

themselves.⁷ One of the major advantages in leaderless resistance is that jihadists can seriously disrupt the functions of a community or state without having to resort to the scale of 9/11-style attacks in order to be effective; smaller attacks have proven to still be psychologically devastating on the population.⁸ Furthermore, they are not concerned with alienating supporters in the same way that terror organizations are.⁹

Historically, lone wolves had fewer physical, financial, and intellectual resources, so they were less capable of planning and carrying out complex attacks.¹⁰ This means that lone wolves tended to use firearms as their weapon of choice, particularly in the US due to the ease of access there.¹¹ Financial resources are no longer such a major constraint; as will be shown later in this paper, a terror attack can effectively be carried out with a few thousand dollars in supplies. With the advent of the internet, intellectual resources are readily available for the would-be terrorist to both promote radicalized ideologies and to receive instruction on how to carry out attacks, from advice on how to avoid detection by the authorities to step-by-step instructions on how to build a bomb with easily available materials that will not raise suspicion.

In 2008 the United States government launched “Operation Vigilant Eagle” in response to “an increase in recruitment, threatening communications, and weapons procurement” by extremist groups, white supremacists and militia/sovereign citizen extremist groups within the US.¹² A lone wolf initiative was later added in an attempt to identify potential lone attackers before they can act violently. The prevalence of lone wolf terrorism is not limited to radical Islamism, but is also prominent among white supremacists, such as Anders Breivik of Norway, and anti-abortion activists.

⁷ Ramon Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33 (2010):856-857.

⁸ Geroge Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 3.

⁹ Jeffrey D. Simon, “Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding a Growing Threat,” in *Lone Actors – An Emerging Security Threat*, ed. Aaron Richman and Yair Sharan (Amsterdam: IOS Press BV, 2015), 4.

¹⁰ Michael Becher, “Explaining Lone Wolf Target Selection in the United States,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37 (2014): 962.

¹¹ Michael Becher, “Explaining Lone Wolf Target Selection in the United States,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37 (2014): 970

¹² Gary Fields and Evan Perez, “FBI Seeks to Target Lone Extremists,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2009, accessed June 13, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124501849215613523>

Lone wolves often broadcast their intent through statements, threats, letters, and video proclamations and can potentially be identified from these declarations.¹³

The challenge that law enforcement officers face in this respect is two-fold. First, these declarations are often made during or shortly before the attacks. Sixteen minutes into her attack at a community center in San Bernardino, California, Tashfeen Malik posted on Facebook “We pledge allegiance to Khalifa bu bkr al baghdadi al quarishi”, referring to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of Daesh.¹⁴ While this declaration of allegiance aids authorities in investigating the motivation of this attack, it does little to help them apprehend the assailants before they could carry out their attack. The second challenge is a question of free speech. Merely posting on a social media site that one agrees with Daesh or Al Qaeda’s ideologies or reading their magazines is not enough to indict an individual in most countries. In a notable exception, possession of Al Qaeda’s *Inspire* has led to prosecutions in the UK under the Terrorism Acts.¹⁵ Authorities tread carefully around the line between free speech and threats of terror, producing overcrowded and therefore largely ineffective watch lists.¹⁶ Indeed, the US’ Terrorist Identities and Datamart Environment (TIDE) had 1.1 million people listed as of 2015. Cherif and Said Kouachi, who attacked *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in 2015, were on the American terror watch list for years, and known to have travelled to Yemen where they may have received training from Al Qaeda.¹⁷ No mechanism to monitor potential lone wolf terrorists can be invariably successful in preventing attacks, but a reevaluation and restructuring of terror watch lists and sharing of these lists among countries may be necessary to counter the threat of increasingly mobile lone wolf terrorists. Sharing such information among law

¹³ Mark Hamm and Ramon Spaaij, “Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to forge Prevention Strategies,” *The U.S. Department of Justice*, February 2015, 9.

¹⁴ Pamela Engel, “Here’s the ISIS message the female San Bernardino shooter posted on Facebook during the attack,” *Business Insider*, December 17, 2015, accessed June 14, 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-message-tashfeen-malik-posted-on-facebook-during-attack-2015-12>

¹⁵ Ian Black, “Inspire magazine: the self-help manual for al-Qaida terrorists,” *The Guardian*, May 24, 2011, accessed June 14, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2013/may/24/inspire-magazine-self-help-manual-al-qaida-terrorists>

¹⁶ “Questions raised about effectiveness of terror watch-list,” *Homeland Security News Wire*, October 25, 2007, accessed June 14, 2016. <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/questions-raised-about-effectiveness-terror-watch-list>

¹⁷ Coleen Rowley, “Visa Waiver Program Has Sam Weak Links; Mass Surveillance and Terrorist Watchlisting Don’t Work,” *Huffington Post*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 14, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/coleen-rowley/visa-waiver-program-has-t_b_8710714.html

enforcement agencies and states is also vital when monitoring those who access and publish jihadist materials online. While viewing these materials themselves is not illegal, it may give authorities an indication of impending threats. This paper seeks to explain and assess Open Source Jihad as presented by Al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine and how adherents of radical Islamist organizations, Al Qaeda and Daesh in particular, have carried out these methods of attack. First Al Qaeda and Daesh's English language magazines will be explained as recruitment tools that encourage lone attacks and the use of Open Source Jihad. Ten Open Source Jihad operations will be explained with examples given of their execution where possible. Finally, the measures taken by Western governments to prevent lone wolf attacks using these methods will be discussed including an assessment of the threat presented by the easy online availability of Open Source Jihad.

English Language Literature: *Dabiq* and *Inspire*

In 2004, Abu Musab al Suri, a prominent Al Qaeda strategist, published *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, a 1,600-page manifesto that outlined his strategy for global jihad. With the pragmatism of a military commander, al Suri explained the three primary categories of jihad from 1963 to 2001: the school of Dynamic Organization, the school of Open Fronts, and the school of Individual Jihad. He deemed Dynamic Organizations, secret regional organizations that seek to topple existing apostate governments through armed jihad, a failure. Particularly with increased American and Western presence in the region after 9/11, Dynamic Organization is no longer a viable option. He noted the successes of Open Front Jihad, confronting the enemy in existing theaters of conflict, particularly in the case of Afghanistan where an Islamic government was eventually established. He suggested that the future of global Islamic jihad would be in combining Open Front Jihad and Individual Jihad, which compliments Open Front Jihad by mobilizing the ummah

(community of Muslim believers) and achieving a greater global impact.¹⁸ Participants in Individual Jiahd, now often referred to as lone wolf terrorists, are advised to strike wherever they can hurt the enemy the most, inflict the highest casualties, and inspire more Muslims to join in jihad.¹⁹ *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance* remains integral in Al Qaeda's modern strategy, particularly concerning mobilizing followers to join Open Front Jihad and Individual Jihad.

In June 2011, As Sahab, Al Qaeda's media wing, published a video titled "You are Responsible Only for Yourself" that urged Muslims in the West to take it upon themselves to acquire weapons and target major public figures and institutions in their home countries.²⁰ Adam Gadahn, an American and senior Al Qaeda operative, implores Muslim viewers in the West to "remember that they are perfectly paced to play an important and decisive part in the jihad against the Zionists and Crusaders" by striking the enemy from within.²¹ In this 10 minute video, Gadahn focuses on the easy access to guns in the United States which provides a "golden opportunity and blessing" from God that must be taken advantage of.²² He claims that attacks within the land of the enemy are a stronger weapon than fighting in the arenas of Open Front Jihad, indicating a shift from al Suri's aforementioned strategy.²³ This is conceivably due to the considerable pool of recruits already available in the theaters of jihad to join the fight, making lone wolves who can strike from within the West more strategically valuable.

¹⁸ Abu Musab al Suri, *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance*, 7-9.

<https://ia800409.us.archive.org/24/items/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistance-EnglishTranslationOfSomeKeyPartsAbuMusabAsSuri/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistanceSomeKeyParts.pdf>

¹⁹ Abu Musab al Suri, *The Call for a Global Islamic Resistance*, 12.

<https://ia800409.us.archive.org/24/items/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistance-EnglishTranslationOfSomeKeyPartsAbuMusabAsSuri/TheCallForAGlobalIslamicResistanceSomeKeyParts.pdf>

²⁰ Ramon Spaaij, "Lone Actors: Challenges and Opportunities for Countering Violent Extremism," in *Lone Actors: An Emerging Threat* eds. Aaron Richman and Yair Sharan, (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2015), 124.

²¹ "Adam Gadahn American Jihadi, Al Queda Video Released June 2 2011," MRCTV, last modified June 5, 2011. <http://www.mrctv.org/videos/adam-gadahn-american-jihadi-al-queda-video-released-june-2-2011>

²² "Adam Gadahn American Jihadi, Al Queda Video Released June 2 2011," MRCTV, last modified June 5, 2011. <http://www.mrctv.org/videos/adam-gadahn-american-jihadi-al-queda-video-released-june-2-2011>

²³ "Adam Gadahn American Jihadi, Al Queda Video Released June 2 2011," MRCTV, last modified June 5, 2011. <http://www.mrctv.org/videos/adam-gadahn-american-jihadi-al-queda-video-released-june-2-2011>

Al Qaeda and its offshoot, Daesh, use English language magazines to invite new recruits to join the fight on the front lines as mujahideen and to carry out independently planned attacks in the West. These organizations and their magazines were chosen for the focus of this paper because of their growing role as motivators of radicalized Islamist lone wolf attacks in the West and their focus on recruitment in the United States and Europe via English language literature. Al Qaeda's magazine, *Inspire*, was first published in 2010 under the direction of Anwar al Awlaki, an American-born Muslim preacher and member of Al Qaeda in Yemen,²⁴ and edited by Samir Khan, an American national who moved to Yemen in 2009 to join Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.²⁵ Written in familiar American vernacular, *Inspire*, does just as its name implies, it inspires its followers and calls its readers to join jihad on the front lines as soldiers or to engage in jihad in the land of the enemy. It also encourages Western readers to plan attacks and strike the *kufir* (disbelievers or infidels) from within, outlining methods of attacks in a feature penned by the 'AQ Chef' called "Open Source Jihad." Similarly, *Dabiq* was first published in 2014 and called on readers to "sacrifice everything precious to them for the sake of fulfilling their duty to Allah" and to immigrate to the Daesh if possible.²⁶ It condemns the West for its perceived aggression against Islam and lauds "'lone' knights of the Khalifah" who strike against the "crusader powers of the West."²⁷

Open Source Jihad

While both magazines leave a similar impression (praising martyrs who died in the name of Islam, encouraging attacks from within the West, inviting readers to join the mujahideen on the front lines, quoting texts and commentary from the Quran to empower and inspire readers, touting the organizations' accomplishments), Al

²⁴ Robert Wright, "Drone Strikes and the Boston Marathon Bombing," *The Atlantic*, April 21, 2013, accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/drone-strikes-and-the-boston-marathon-bombing/275164/>

²⁵ Robbie Brown and Kim Severson, "2nd American in Strike Waged Qaeda Media War," *The New York Times*, September 30, 2011, accessed June 23, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/01/world/middleeast/samir-khan-killed-by-drone-spun-out-of-the-american-middle-class.html>

²⁶ "Foreword," *Dabiq* 13, January 2016, 3.

²⁷ "Foreword," *Dabiq* 12, November 2015, 2-3.

Qaeda's *Inspire* has the Open Source Jihad feature. Open Source Jihad is "a resource manual for those who loathe the tyrants; includes bomb making techniques, security measures, guerrilla tactics, weapons training, and all other jihad related activities" that would allow those so inclined to "train at home instead of risking dangerous travel abroad" to join the fight on the front lines.²⁸ Open Source Jihad is presented as an easier and likely more effective way to support the ummah. The various operations and tactics are designed to avoid attracting the attention of the authorities while preparing for the attack; it's DIY terrorism for the average disaffected individual.²⁹ In the words of al Awlaki himself: "I was a preacher of Islam involved in non-violent Islamic activism. However, with the American invasion of Iraq and continued US aggression against Muslims, I could not reconcile between living in the US and being a Muslim, and I eventually came to the conclusion that jihad against America is binding upon myself, just as it is binding on every other able Muslim."³⁰ The message is abundantly clear and repeated in every issue: if you feel the same, follow these instructions and you too can be empowered against an oppressive enemy.

To further embolden would-be jihadists, both magazines extol the jihadists who fight on behalf of radical Islam at home and abroad. This includes page long obituaries praising the name and memory of those who died fighting with the mujahideen and full articles dedicated to lone jihadists who carry out attacks abroad. For example, Issue 11 of *Inspire* featured 20 pages of praise for the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings and the perpetrators, the Tsarnaev brothers.³¹ When explaining how to become an 'urban assassin' in Open Source Jihad, the magazine hails Nidal Hassan, the 2009 Fort Hood shooter, as aspirational for would-be jihadists, like a David against the Goliath of the United States.³² *Inspire* further lauds Faisal Shahzad, who attempted to detonate a car bomb in Times Square in 2010, and whose notable

²⁸ "Open Source Jihad," *Inspire 1*, June 2010, 32.

²⁹ "Open Source Jihad," *Inspire 1*, June 2010, 32..

³⁰ Anwar al Awlaki, "Shaykh Anwar's Message to the American People and Muslims in the West," *Inspire 1*, June 2010, 57.

³¹ Abu Ziyad Al-Muhajir, "The Inevitable," *Inspire* Issue 11, May 2013, 16-22.

Abu Abdillah Almoravid, "Who & Why," *Inspire* Issue 11, March 2014, 28-33.

Muhannad J.S., "America's Bitter Harvest," *Inspire* Issue 11, March 2014, 34-35.

³² "Open Source Jihad," *Inspire 9*, May 2012, 39.

inside work within the West Al Qaeda claims led to the resignation of the director of national intelligence at the time.³³

Although *Dabiq* does not contain a specific section giving instructions for carrying out lone attacks in the West, it goes to great lengths to name and praise lone attackers and encourages others to follow in their footsteps. This includes commendation of Numan Haider, who stabbed two counter terrorism police officers in Australia, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau who shot and killed a Canadian soldier in Ottawa, Martin Couture-Rouleau, who killed a Canadian soldier in a hit-and-run, and Zale Thompson, who attacked four policemen with a hatchet in Queens, New York.³⁴ They also feature a full article praising Amedy Coulibaly for his piety and attacks in Paris in January 2015. In this article, Daesh also welcomes Coulibaly's wife to the *khalifah*, reassuring other would-be jihadists that their families would be cared for by Daesh after their *shaheed* (martyrdom).³⁵ *Dabiq* further cheers Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi for attacking a Prophet drawing competition in Garland, Texas in 2015.³⁶ *Dabiq* also focused its praise on Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, who shot and killed 14 people in San Bernardino, California in 2015. Notably, *Dabiq* celebrated that they planned and carried out the attack as a married couple, "aiding one another in righteousness."³⁷ In both publications, they frame these attacks as the direct result of Western, American in particular, offenses against and interference in the Muslim world. While *Inspire* provides the guidance for carrying out lone wolf attacks, *Dabiq* goes to great lengths to encourage them.

It should be noted that while the attacks mentioned above and those further expanded upon in this paper may resemble those outlined in Open Source Jihad and encouraged in the pages of *Dabiq*, there is no direct causal link between these magazines and the attacks. However, these materials are freely and easily available online. In many cases, investigators discovered these materials in the possession of the perpetrators of these attacks or they admitted to reading them. In publishing these

³³ "Open Source Jihad," *Inspire 1*, June 2010, 33.

³⁴ John Cantile, "If I were the US President Today..." *Dabiq 5*, November 2014, 37.

³⁵ "The Good Example of Abu Basir Al- Ifriqi," *Dabiq 7*, February 2015, 68-71.

³⁶ "Foreword," *Dabiq 9*, May 2015, 3.

³⁷ "Foreword," *Dabiq 13*, January 2016, 3.

English language magazines, both Al Qaeda and Daesh aim to propagate their brand of radical Islamism and call on readers to join in their fight, either on the front lines or as lone jihadists who attack the Western enemy from within. In *Dabiq*, Daesh prioritizes building the Khalifah and in *Inspire* al-Qaeda pushes lone attacks in order to compel policy change in the West. As these materials are widespread and compelling, it is reasonable to believe that they had some influence in the decision-making, planning, and execution of the attacks featured in this paper while not directly causing them.

OPEN SOURCE JIHAD ATTACK INSTRUCTIONS

Attacks carried out

Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom: The AQ Chef

Perhaps the most infamous of *Inspire's* Open Source Jihad articles, this 'recipe' teaches a would-be jihadi, or anyone with internet access, how to build a bomb with readily available ingredients that generally will not raise suspicion when purchased. For a jihadi, these materials have the added advantage of being easily disposed of or hidden in the case of a police search. A smaller pipe-bomb can be ready in a matter of days and kill around ten people, or a larger bomb can be prepared in about a month and kill dozens of people, according to the AQ Chef. The only are easily accessible or purchasable ingredients³⁸ This bomb's 'recipe' is the basis for many of the other Open Source Jihad bombs and is so straightforward it reads like a middle school science lab manual.

This article gained international attention after the April 2013 Boston Marathon bombings in which two brothers used a bomb recipe very similar to the one above to kill 3 and wound at least 264 at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. The brothers, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, detonated two pressure cooker-bombs containing

³⁸ "How to make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom," *Inspire 1*, June 2010, 33-40.

BB-like pellets and nails that were hidden in backpacks.³⁹ Many researchers have studied how these two brothers, Muslim immigrants from Chechnya and American citizens, were radicalized and driven to commit this act; however this paper is more concerned with how they acquired the know-how to create these bombs and how they avoided detection of their plans.

Upon search of their home, the police found copies of *Inspire* saved on their computer, the article “Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom” in particular. Although the Tsarnaevs’ pressure cooker bomb largely follows the procedure outlined above, they substituted or added extra ingredients and developed a more sophisticated triggering mechanism using toy car remote controls.⁴⁰ Evidence suggests that Tamerlan, the older brother, received some bomb making guidance during a trip to Dagestan, Russia, which may explain the more advanced triggering method.⁴¹ When fleeing the police, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar threw homemade pipe bombs at the police that again appear to follow this recipe from *Inspire*.⁴²

Although they were not directly affiliated with Al Qaeda, the brothers were linked to Al Qaeda in ideology and consumed the English language materials of Anwar al Awlaki, including *Inspire* and his sermons on YouTube. *Inspire*’s 11th issue praises the Tsarnaevs’ choice of Boston as the target for the attack since it was not considered a high-risk target like New York City or Washington DC. Furthermore, it asserts that the bombings “have exposed many hidden shortcomings of the American security and intelligence system”⁴³ and showed that 1-2 lightly armed people could disrupt a city as large as Boston.⁴⁴ Indeed, there was a nearly 2 percent drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average the day of the attack, 0.82 percent of which

³⁹ “Boston Marathon Terror Attack Fast Facts,” *CNN*, April 8, 2015. Accessed June 2, 2016. <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/06/03/us/boston-marathon-terror-attack-fast-facts/>

⁴⁰ Ekaterina Stepanova, “Lone Wolves and Network Agents in Leaderless Jihad (The Case of the Boston Marathon Bombing Cell)” in *Perseverance of Terrorism: Focus on Leaders*, eds. M. Milosevic and K. Rekawek (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2014), 56.

⁴¹ Brian Bennet, Richard A. Serrano, and Ken Dilanian, “Boston bombs showed some expertise,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2013. Accessed June 2, 2016. <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/apr/24/nation/la-na-boston-fbi-bomber-20130425>

⁴² “Bombs tossed at cops show to marathon bombing jury,” *CBS News*, March 19, 2015. Accessed June 2, 2016. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/boston-marathon-bombing-trial-jury-pipe-bombs/>

⁴³ Abu Ziyad Al-Muhaji, “The Inevitable,” *Inspire* 11, May 2013, 22.

⁴⁴ Abu Ziyad Al-Muhaji, “The Inevitable,” *Inspire* 11, May 2013, 35.

is attributed directly to the attacks. Terrorist attacks on this scale cause profit expectations to go down and risk premiums to go up due to uncertainty and the destruction of physical and intangible capital.⁴⁵ Therefore, this attack falls within Al Qaeda's categorization of an indirect economic target that hurts the target country's economy without directly damaging any economic structures, such as banks or the New York Stock Exchange, while also showing the government's intelligence weaknesses and creating an atmosphere of fear and terror.⁴⁶ Al Qaeda claimed the Tsarnaev's as their own in *Inspire* after the bombings, further incentivizing readers to also carry out attacks and achieve the same notoriety.⁴⁷

When an attack like this happens, it is inevitable to ask "could this have been prevented?" In this case, Al Qaeda makes the point that "lone-jihad is impossible to counter and stop, except when basic cooking ingredients and building materials become illegal!"⁴⁸ While "impossible" might be a little extreme, this type of do-it-yourself attack is very hard to track since the materials necessary for this bomb (matches, a battery, nails, Christmas lights, a clock, and a pressure cooker) could very well just be necessary for a holiday celebration. So while it may be nearly impossible for authorities to prevent jihadists from acquiring the materials to make this type of bomb the way they would track someone attempting to acquire an assault rifle or fissile materials for a weapon of mass destruction, they are not completely without the means to prevent this type of attack.

Indeed, the FBI investigated Tamerlan Tsarnaev in 2011 because the Russian government shared their belief that he had become an Islamic radical, but the investigation did not yield substantial evidence to support that warning. Tamerlan was also on a database that matches names from passenger manifests with lists of suspected extremists. He was flagged at immigration in JFK airport when he returned from Russia in 2012, but was not pulled aside by customs agents because he wasn't

⁴⁵ Thomas Baumert, Mikel Buesa, and Timothy Lynch, "Impact of Terrorism on Stock Markets: The Boston Bombing Experience in Comparison with Previous Terrorist Events," *Institute of Industrial and Financial Analysis, Complutense University of Madrid*, 88 (2013): 4-6.

⁴⁶ "Neurotmesis: Cutting the Nerves & Isolating the Head," *Inspire* 13, December 2014, 64.

⁴⁷ Therese Postel, "The Young and the Normless: Al Qaeda's Ideological Recruitment of Western Extremists," *The Quarterly Journal*, Fall 2013, 115.

⁴⁸ Abu Ziyad Al-Muhajir, "The Inevitable," *Inspire* Issue 11, May 2013, 31.

high enough on the list.⁴⁹ Although these mechanisms exist to apprehend violent extremists before they are able to carry out an attack, their effectiveness is often limited by lack of personnel to fully investigate and follow up on every potential attacker. In this light, the Tsarnaevs' attack exposed the vulnerabilities in the American intelligence system and very well may inspire others; even though the brothers were apprehended after the fact, their attack will not be seen as any less of a success in the eyes of like-minded extremist jihadists due to the highly destructive effects.⁵⁰

Assassinations

To instruct aspiring jihadists in how to carry out assassination operations, the AQ Chef is replaced by the External Operation Team, emphasizing this attack as more of an intelligence operation than previous Open Source Jihads. This adds a sense of individual prestige and intellect not found in other Open Source Jihad articles. The External Operation Team breaks down carrying out an assassination into five parts: specifying the target, collecting information, generating the plan, preparing for the operation, and executing the operation. They present assassination as a valuable tactic that can produce great results with little cost against America in particular, who carries out both large-scale military operations and assassinations via drones.

A target should be selected based on the strategic or tactical advantages. The External Operation Team encourages readers to concentrate their efforts on important personalities in the West that directly affect the outcome of the war, since the West "is based upon intellect and individual personalities not on thought or opinion."⁵¹ Therefore, this Open Source Jihad focuses on strategic assassinations of specific personalities rather than tactical assassinations, such as assassinating American military or security personnel. The 10th issue of *Inspire* features a full page

⁴⁹ Brian Bennet, Richard A. Serrano, and Ken Dilanian, "Boston bombs showed some expertise," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2013. Accessed June 2, 2016.

⁵⁰ Rohan Gunaratna and Cleo Haynal, "Current Emerging Threats of Homegrown Terrorism: The Case of the Boston Bombings," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 7 (2013). Accessed June 13, 2016.

⁵¹ "Assassination Operations," *Inspire* 14, September 2015, 66.

‘advertisement’ with a “Wanted Dead or Alive for Crimes Against Islam” list for any readers in need of guidance selecting a target. The list is primarily composed of cartoonists who have depicted the Prophet.⁵² *Inspire* also presents an expanded list of strategic targets in its 14th issue, including economic personalities such as Robert James Shiller, a Professor of Economics at Yale University, and wealthy entrepreneurs and company owners such as Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, and Warren Buffet, the third wealthiest man in the world.⁵³ *Dabiq*, on the other hand, urges readers to target ‘apostate’ Muslim leaders such as Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran, leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, President Erdogan of Turkey, and Muslim leaders in the West.⁵⁴

An aspiring assassin should next consider where and when to stage their attack. They need to collect information on where the target lives, works, and socializes. In collecting this information, the aspiring assassin should find the answer to the question of when; they need to keep track of when the target is at specific locations and points of vulnerability in their routine to attack. This and additional information can be collected through general means of communication, such as social media, television, and magazines, or by specific means of communication through the target’s close friend or regular contact. Information should also be collected on the targeted building for the attack. This article focuses on assassination in the target’s workplace.⁵⁵

Based on the information gathered, the would-be assassin must then generate a simple plan to efficiently attain the best results. This can be achieved by exploiting the target’s weak points where they have the least protection. The assailant must ask himself or herself what the best technique for achieving their goals is, and if they intend to carry out a martyrdom or assault operation. If it is an assault, a retreat plan

⁵² “Wanted Dead or Alive for Crimes Against Islam,” *Inspire* 10, March 2013, 15.

⁵³ “Assassinations – Field Tactics,” *Inspire* 14, September 2015, 84-87.

⁵⁴ “The Murtadd Brotherhood,” *Dabiq* 14, April 2016, 28-43.

⁵⁵ “Assassination Operations,” *Inspire* 14, September 2015, 67.

must also be prepared that can cover all traces of the assailant's involvement in the operation.⁵⁶

Preparation for the operation comes in three stages: acquiring or preparing the weapon, training with said weapon, and psychologically and spiritually preparing for the attack. The External Operation Team suggests using more than one weapon for the operation, but reminds the reader to set aside time to prepare explosives at home since they are not readily available fully serviceable. Other weapons such as knives and firearms are readily available on short notice and therefore do not require much preparation. This article recommends that the reader train in hand-to-hand combat and in strength training at a gym and with firearms at a shooting range to become comfortable with their weapon of choice. *Inspire* issues 4 and 5 provide guidance for using an AK 47, including caring for the weapon and shooting stances. It also advises the reader to practice with small amounts of their explosives before the final attack to ensure the bomb won't fail. Finally, before carrying out their attack an aspiring assassin needs to isolate himself or herself in worship and remember "what Allah has promised for the Martyr in His path" and how their actions will benefit the Khalifah.⁵⁷

An aspiring assassin should camouflage themselves in order to hide their identity and avoid arousing suspicion as they close in on their target; they should have a cover prepared and be able to easily answer the question, "Why are you here?" The External Operation Team emphasizes the importance of stealth and deception when infiltrating the workplace, concealing both one's identity and weapon when entering the building and bypassing security. If the aspiring assassin prefers a forceful assault infiltration, then it is recommended that they use automatic weapons and hand grenades. In this case, the objective is to kill a specific target while also causing as much collateral damage and death as possible.⁵⁸ Since hand grenades are not widely available to civilians in the West, Open Source Jihad provides a guide for making them at home that closely follows the recipe in 'Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom'. The switches can be found in household electronic devices, such as lamps and

⁵⁶ "Assassination Operations," *Inspire* 14, September 2015, 68.

⁵⁷ "Assassination Operations," *Inspire* 14, September 2015 69.

⁵⁸ "Assassination Operations," *Inspire* 14, September 2015 64-71.

flashlights, and the AQ Chef provides guidance for removing the switches from their original devices. Although this style of improvised explosive device (IED) is not used in the following case studies, it could be implemented in future attacks following this Open Source Jihad model.

This assassination guide was likely published in response to the January 2015 attack at *Charlie Hebdo* satirical magazine in Paris to encourage readers to carry out similar attacks, possibly with the addition of these homemade hand grenades. Two brothers, Cherif and Said Kouchi, attacked the French satirical magazine with Kalashnikovs wearing black balaclavas and bulletproof vests. The gunmen forced an employee to give them the entrance code to the building and entered the conference room during the magazine's weekly editorial conference. 15 staff members—cartoonists, editors, and writers—were gathered in the room, including the editor Stephane Charbonnier, known as Charb. After killing Charb, the gunmen indiscriminately opened fire on the room, killing 12 in total. The attack lasted approximately 20 minutes and the gunmen left the building, stealing a car from a man outside, telling him “You can tell the media we’re from al-Qaida in Yemen.”⁵⁹ Police lost track of the brothers directly after the attack; the brothers were killed two days later after two separate hostage standoffs and police raids.⁶⁰ This attack was one in a three-day series of attacks, including the murder of a policewoman and an armed attack on a Jewish grocery store.⁶¹

Al Qaeda claimed this attack by the Kouchi brothers was done in their name and emphasized the lone jihad nature of it.⁶² Charb was on *Inspire*'s “Wanted: Dead or Alive for Crimes Against Islam” list; by publishing this list for lone actors to access, these attackers had “no direct connection with the Jihadi Organization except by

⁵⁹ Jon Henley and Kim Willsher, “Charlie Hebdo attacks: ‘It’s carnage, a bloodbath. Everyone is dead,’” *The Guardian*, January 7, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/07/charlie-hebdo-shooting-paris-magazine-target-raid>

⁶⁰ Adam Chandler and Dashiell Bennet, “A Dramatic End to the French Hostage Standoff,” *The Atlantic*, January 9, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016 <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/hostages-paris-supermarket-charlie-hebdo-killers-police/384378/>

⁶¹ Michael Martinez, Dominique Debucquoy-Dodley, and Ray Sanchez, “Vignettes: More about the 17 killed in French terror attacks,” *CNN*, January 11, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/10/world/france-paris-who-were-terror-victims/>

⁶² Sam Aboudi, “Al Qaeda claims French attack, derides Paris rally,” *Reuters*, January 14, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-shooting-aqap-idUSKBN0KN0VO20150114>

means of inspiring and guiding Lone Mujahideen.”⁶³ *Inspire* praises the Kouchi brothers for their shrewd information gathering and physical and weapons training before their operation. It notes the prudence in attacking during the weekly meeting to also strike against those complicit in the magazine’s publication of images of the Prophet. They claim that the operation was ordered in central leadership (in the publication of Charb on the hit list) and carried out at the attackers’ discretion in order to ensure secrecy.⁶⁴ It is possible that Al Qaeda published this Open Source Jihad guide after the success of the attacks on Charlie Hebdo to inspire readers to carry out a similar operation. Eyewitnesses described the attackers as “extremely well-trained,” conceivably due to the AK training guides in an earlier issue.⁶⁵ Regardless of where they got their training, the Kouchi brothers exemplified the cool and professional air that *Inspire* hopes readers will want to emulate by carrying out similar attacks.

Unlike in the United States, in France there is no protected right to bear arms and there are strict laws on gun ownership. To legally acquire a gun, one would need a hunting or sporting license which then needs to be repeatedly renewed and involves a psychological evaluation.⁶⁷ Therefore, it is fair to assume that the Kouchis acquired their Kalashnikovs illegally through the black market. A likely source is the illegal arms market in Belgium, fed by Balkan weapons from the former Yugoslavia.⁶⁸ France’s gun laws did not fail in the sense that the guns used for this attack were not legally purchased by people who should have been prohibited from buying guns. Black market arms trade is by definition unregulated and therefore exceedingly difficult to monitor.

⁶³ Ibrahim ibn Hassan Al-A’siri, “Charlie Hebdo – A Military Analysis,” *Inspire* 14, September 2015, 40.

⁶⁴ Ibrahim ibn Hassan Al-A’siri, “Charlie Hebdo – A Military Analysis,” *Inspire* 14, September 2015, 40-42.

⁶⁵ “Charlie Hebdo attack: Witness accounts,” *BBC*, January 7, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30720706>

⁶⁶ See Abu Salih, “Training with the AK,” *Inspire* 4, January 2011, 42-43. And Abu Salih, “Training with the AK,” *Inspire* 5, March 2011, 24-25.

⁶⁷ Adam Taylor, “France has strict gun laws. Why didn’t that save Charlie Hebdo victims?” *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/01/09/france-has-strict-gun-laws-why-didnt-that-save-charlie-hebdo-victims/>

⁶⁸ Christopher Woolf, “Where did the Paris attackers get their guns?” *PRI*, January 15, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://www.pri.org/stories/2015-01-15/where-did-paris-attackers-get-their-guns>

Eleven months after the attack at Charlie Hebdo and three months after the publication of the “Assassination Operations” Open Source Jihad in *Inspire*, Syed Farook and his wife Tashfeen Malik carried out an attack on Farook’s workplace, fatally shooting 14 people and injuring at least 21 others. Farook left an office holiday party for San Bernardino Department of Public Health employees, returning half an hour later with his wife and fired up to 150 bullets inside the party.⁶⁹ Farook also placed a bag with a remote controlled IED on a table at the party upon entering, although it was never detonated.⁷⁰ The couple fled in an SUV and both died during a shootout with the police.⁷¹ Upon inspection of Farook and Malik’s home, the police discovered a stockpile of ammunition and a dozen homemade pipe bombs. They also had the materials to make additional pipe bombs, indicating that the couple did not intend for this to be a martyrdom operation and had other attacks planned.⁷²

Farook and Malik acted in line with much of the advice in Open Source Jihad for carrying out an assassination. The key difference is that Farook and Malik appear to have focused on the strategic goal of generalized terror rather than killing a specific personality. They prepared their IEDs in advance in their home and had multiple weapons at their disposal as per the assassination advice above. Evidence suggests that they were planning an assault mission and had a black SUV to retreat after their attack. They acquired their weapons, two handguns and two assault rifles, legally in California and practiced with them at a gun range in Los Angeles, again following the assassination advice in Open Source Jihad.⁷³ Since Farook was an employee of the San Bernardino Department of Public Health, he had a reason to be at the holiday

⁶⁹ Christine Hauser, “Police: 21 Wounded, 12 Pipe Bombs Discovered,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/live/san-bernardino-shooting/police-21-wounded-12-pipe-bombs-discovered/>

⁷⁰ “California Man Charged with Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorism and Being ‘Straw Purchaser’ of Assault Rifles Ultimately Used in San Bernardino, California, attack,” Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, last modified December 17, 2015. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/california-man-charged-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorism-and-being-straw>

⁷¹ Jack Donal, Richard A. Serrano, Brian Bennet, Alan Zarembo, and Richard Winton, “Feds probe possible terrorism links in San Bernardino massacre,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-san-bernardino-shooting-main-20151203-story.html>

⁷² Jennifer Medina, Richard Perez-Pena, Michael S. Schmidt, and Laurie Goodstein, “San Bernardino Suspects Left Trail of Clues, but no Clear Motive,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/san-bernardino-shooting.html>

⁷³ Jennifer Medina, Richard Perez-Pena, Michael S. Schmidt, and Laurie Goodstein, “San Bernardino Suspects Left Trail of Clues, but no Clear Motive,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/san-bernardino-shooting.html>

party where the attack took place and would be familiar with the layout. Farook and Malik kept their plans of the attack just between themselves and one accomplice and acquired all the materials necessary for their attack legally in order to avoid detection. They appear to have followed the same five steps (specifying the target, collecting information, planning the attack, preparing for the attack, and executing the attack) even without having targeting an individual personality.

Farook bought the two handguns legally in California. Enrique Marquez, Farook's former neighbor, bought the two assault rifles used in the attack legally in California, although it is unclear if the transfer of the assault rifles from Marquez to Farook was legal.⁷⁴ In a December 17, 2015 affidavit, Marquez stated that Farook introduced him to radical Islamic ideology and converted him to Islam. He also said that he and Farook had read Al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine and alleged that Farook was interested in joining Al Qaeda in the Arabia Peninsula in Yemen. Marquez purchased the two assault rifles in 2011 as part of another plot with Farook that never came to fruition, and was aware of Farook and Malik's plans when he transferred the weapons to them for their attack in 2015. In the affidavit, Marquez explained his familiarity with using remote-controlled devices to detonate IEDs and that he and Farook got instructions on how to make IEDs from *Inspire*.⁷⁵ This evidence points to Farook and Malik acting as true lone wolves who were able to use Open Source Jihad materials to successfully carry out a terror attack.

This attack prompted a renewed discussion in the United States about preventing gun violence since the firearms used were purchased legally under California law. The IEDs, while not legal to produce or possess, were built with legally acquired materials. 1,600 additional rounds were found in their vehicle in

⁷⁴ Jennifer Medina, Richard Perez-Pena, Michael S. Schmidt, and Laurie Goodstein, "San Bernardino Suspects Left Trail of Clues, but no Clear Motive," *The New York Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/san-bernardino-shooting.html>

⁷⁵ "California Man Charged with Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorism and Being 'Straw Purchaser' of Assault Rifles Ultimately Used in San Bernardino, California, attack," Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, last modified December 17, 2015. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/california-man-charged-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorism-and-being-straw>

addition to 2,900 rounds found in their home.⁷⁶ There is no limit on the amount of ammunition that American citizens can purchase and keep in their homes.⁷⁷ Although California law bans assault-style, semiautomatic rifles with detachable magazines, the type used by Farook and Malik, there is a loophole. The basis of this law is prohibiting guns that use detachable, high-capacity magazines and can fire a large number of rounds and be reloaded quickly. However, the law does not consider an ammunition magazine to be detachable if a ‘tool’ is required to remove the magazine from the weapon. Gun owners can purchase an assault weapon if it has a small device known as a ‘bullet button’ that releases the ammunition magazine by using the tip of a bullet as a ‘tool,’ still allowing one to remove and replace a detachable ammunition magazine quickly.⁷⁸ This attack also brought up questions of early detection of terror attacks. Farook was born in Chicago, Illinois to Pakistani immigrant parents. Malik was born in Pakistan and immigrated to the United States when she married Farook. Neither had a criminal record or was being monitored by the police. Malik travelled on a Pakistani passport and Farook visited Saudi Arabia twice, once for Hajj and once for meeting Malik before bringing her to the United States, but this was not enough to raise any security red flags.⁷⁹

Shortly before the attack, Malik pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of Daesh,⁸⁰ Daesh hailed the attackers as ‘supporters’ of their group and encouraged others to follow in their footsteps, but did not claim direct responsibility for their attack. Daesh further praises Farook and Malik for carrying out the attack as a married couple and “thereby aiding one another in righteousness” and martyrdom,

⁷⁶Christine Hauser, “Police: 21 Wounded, 12 Pipe Bombs Discovered,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/live/san-bernardino-shooting/police-21-wounded-12-pipe-bombs-discovered/>

⁷⁷ Sari Horwitz, “Guns used in San Bernardino were purchased legally from dealers,” *The Washington Post*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/suspects-in-san-bernardino-shooting-had-a-small-arsenal/2015/12/03/9b5d7b52-99db-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html

⁷⁸ Sari Horwitz, “Guns used in San Bernardino were purchased legally from dealers,” *The Washington Post*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/suspects-in-san-bernardino-shooting-had-a-small-arsenal/2015/12/03/9b5d7b52-99db-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html

⁷⁹ Jennifer Medina, Richard Perez-Pena, Michael S. Schmidt, and Laurie Goodstein, “San Bernardino Suspects Left Trail of Clues, but no Clear Motive,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/04/us/san-bernardino-shooting.html>

⁸⁰ Peter Bergen, “What explains the biggest U.S. terror attack since 9/11?” *CNN*, December 5, 2015, accessed June 21, 2016. <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/04/opinions/bergen-san-bernardino-terror-attack-explain/index.html>

emphasizing Malik's virtue in engaging in jihad even though it was not required of her the same way the Khalifah demands it of her husband.⁸¹ They cite Quranic verses saying that Allah promises to care for those left behind by martyrs, referring to Farook and Malik's infant daughter, and that family ties and children should not prevent one from joining jihad. This two page article at the beginning of the thirteenth issue of *Dabiq* strives to embolden readers to carry out attacks of this nature on their own in America, Europe, and Australia.⁸²

The Hidden Airplane Bomb

In 2009 Umar Farok Abdulmutallab, known as Umar al-Farouq in *Inspire*, attempted to detonate a bomb on an airplane using a plastic explosive hidden in his underwear. Four years later, the AQ Chef presented an updated version of the chemistry focused recipe for other aspiring jihadists. It features hydrogen peroxide, found in most pharmacies, and the AQ Chef instructs readers on how to increase its concentration from 6% to 30%. They recommend finding acetone, another main ingredient, in nail polish remover, but warn that some formulas mix the acetone with other materials making it inoperable for this recipe and offer an alternative method for producing acetone using eggshells and vinegar. Sulfuric acid, also known as clear battery acid, is widely available and there is no need to concentrate it as the dilute form is used for this recipe. The AQ chef provides step-by-step instructions for safely combining these materials into the detonator, complete with guiding photographs and warnings to only use plastic or glass utensils, not metal. To avoid detection, the AQ Chef instructs readers to apply silicone to the surface of the bottle and cover the ignitor with a plastic bag sealed with scotch tape. Then cover the entire bomb with silicone to further seal it in order to avoid detection by biological and non-biological detectors in airports.⁸³ This is one of the AQ Chef's most complex Open Source Jihad

⁸¹ "Foreword," *Dabiq* 13, January 2016, 3.

⁸² "Foreword," *Dabiq* 13, January 2016, 4.

⁸³ "Making the Hidden Bomb," *Inspire* 13, December 2014, 72-99.

recipes to date, but the modified form used by Abdulmutallab in 2009 demonstrated that it could be destructive.

In the same article, the AQ Chef explains ways to breach airport security to further encourage readers to carry out this type of attack. They cover four types of security commonly found at airports: metal detectors, scent detectors, frisking, and imaging machines. To breach metal detectors, both walk-through machines and hand metal detectors, use non-metallic materials to construct the bomb, as described above. To bypass biological scent detectors [i.e. trained dogs,] be sure to cover the explosive in a non-porous material, silicone in the case outlined in this article. Imaging machines can detect the bomb presented in this recipe, but the AQ Chef emphasizes that these machines are not found in all airports, particularly in smaller local airports.⁸⁴

This recipe notably deviates from reports about Abdulmutallab's bomb in that it does not use pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN), a highly volatile substance that served as the incendiary in Abdulmutallab's bomb.⁸⁵ On December 25th, 2009, Abdulmutallab boarded a flight from Lagos to Detroit via Amsterdam with a PETN based explosive device sewn into his underwear. He passed through airport screenings in Lagos and Amsterdam with this bomb undetected. According to testimony from other passengers on the flights, Abdulmutallab spent about 20 minutes in the bathroom as the plane approached Detroit and covered himself with a blanket upon returning to his seat. They heard a popping noise "like firecrackers" and smelled a "foul odor," then noticed that Abdulmutallab's trouser leg and the wall of the plane next to him were on fire.⁸⁶ He was sitting in a window seat with the bomb attached to the leg that was against the wall of the aircraft, indicating that he wanted to blow a

⁸⁴ "Breaching Security Barriers," *Inspire 13*, December 2014, 70-71.

⁸⁵ Guy Adams, "Bomber warns: there are more like me in Yemen," *Independent*, December 29, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/bomber-warns-there-are-more-like-me-in-yemen-1852092.html>

⁸⁶ Kevin Krolicki and Jeremy Pelofsky, "Nigerian charged for trying to blow up U.S. airliner," *Reuters*, December 26, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFLDE5BP03M20091226>

hole in the side of the aircraft at a high altitude.⁸⁷ If the PETN had detonated as intended, he likely would have achieved that aim instead of suffering burns on his body and being neutralized by other passengers on the plane until he could be handed over to the authorities in Detroit upon landing.⁸⁸ PETN is relatively stable and can be detonated either by heat or a shockwave; it appears that Abdulmutallab used a syringe filled with nitroglycerin as the detonator.⁸⁹

Abdulmutallab was decidedly not a lone wolf actor, but a lone attacker: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) claimed the attack and said that they armed Abdulmutallab with the bomb in retaliation for increased crackdowns on the group. Indeed, Abdulmutallab claimed to have spent a month in Yemen where he received lessons on how to detonate the device and evade airport security screenings by putting the bomb in his underpants. In publishing this Open Source Jihad recipe, Al Qaeda likely wanted to promote Abdultallab as an icon who “managed to penetrate all devices and modern advanced technology and security checkpoints in international airports,” defied “the large myth of American and international intelligence,” and exposed the West’s vulnerability.⁹⁰ Although this attack was a failure in the sense that the bomb did not detonate as designed, it did achieve Al Qaeda’s objective of heightening public fear and burdening airports, and therefore Western governments, “with expensive and time-consuming security procedures.”⁹¹

Abdulmutallab was on a British security list after he applied for a student visa for a fictitious degree at University College London, but not on a terror-related list

⁸⁷ Ian Sample, “PETN – hard to detect and just 100g can destroy a car,” *The Guardian*, December 27, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/27/petn-pentaerythritol-trinitrate-explosive>

⁸⁸ Guy Adams, “Bomber warns: there are more like me in Yemen,” *Independent*, December 29, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/bomber-warns-there-are-more-like-me-in-yemen-1852092.html>

⁸⁹ Ian Sample, “PETN – hard to detect and just 100g can destroy a car,” *The Guardian*, December 27, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/27/petn-pentaerythritol-trinitrate-explosive>

⁹⁰ Guy Adams, “Bomber warns: there are more like me in Yemen,” *Independent*, December 29, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/bomber-warns-there-are-more-like-me-in-yemen-1852092.html>

⁹¹ “Underwear bomber Abdulmutallab sentenced to life,” *BBC*, February 16, 2012, accessed June 22, 2016 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-17065130>

that would have had his details passed around the international security community.⁹² From November 2009, he was on a third tier watch list on Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) in the United States, a list with approximately 550,000 names on it at the time.⁹³ His father also contacted the American embassy in Nigeria to warn them that he was concerned that his son may have become radicalized.⁹⁴ The less easily accessible materials necessary for this attack, such as the medical syringe, drip needle, and tubing can be found in hospitals and medical clinics. Although this specific Open Source Jihad operation has not been carried out to date, this information combined with Abdulmutallab's attempted attack demonstrates the potential viability of this operation, or at least the possibility for emboldened reproduction. The greater threat from this Open Source Jihad is not the potential destruction of this style of bomb, for it has not been successfully implemented, but the methods for bypassing security.

Car Bombs Inside America

To the Muslim youth seeking empowerment through strength, power, and intelligence, the AQ Chef has a message: "using car bombs gives you all that."⁹⁵ This installment of Open Source Jihad has a distinctive feature: "OSJ Specialist Consultancy". The AQ Chef offers the reader "field data" comprised of both general and specific targets in the United States, United Kingdom, and France as well as particular times one should plan to strike. They prioritize the United States and crowded places, such as sports events, election campaigns, or festivals, and emphasize targeting people rather than buildings with this bomb. In the United States, the AQ Chef highlights targeting Washington DC and New York, Northern Virginia where

⁹² "Bomb suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab on UK watch-list," December 29, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/8432180.stm

⁹³ Kim Sengupta and David Osborne, "Nigerian in aircraft attack linked to London mosque," *Independent*, December 28, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/nigerian-in-aircraft-attack-linked-to-london-mosque-1851452.html>

⁹⁴ Guy Adams, "Bomber warns: there are more like me in Yemen," *Independent*, December 29, 2009, accessed June 22, 2016. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/bomber-warns-there-are-more-like-me-in-yemen-1852092.html>

⁹⁵ "Car Bombs in America," *Inspire* 12, March 2014, 64.

there is a strong military and federal agency presence, Chicago, and Los Angeles. They single out the US Open tennis tournament and restaurants on M street in Washington DC as places that attract high-profile personalities and are therefore valuable targets. In the United Kingdom, the AQ Chef identifies crowded football matches, tennis tournaments, and horse races as prime targets. Specifically, they propose detonating the bomb at the end of the sporting event as people are leaving the stadium in order to elicit the highest casualties and most panic. They also mention the Savoy Hotel in central London as a place that attracts businessmen and high profile targets in the evenings. In France, train stations, the French League Cup, the Louvre, and French Riviera are named as prime targets. The effects of this attack could also be magnified by carrying it out on Christmas or New Year's Eve, during election season in the United States, or during the Bastille Day Military Parade in Paris.⁹⁶

In 2010, Faisal Shahzad attempted to detonate a car bomb composed of propane and gasoline tanks, fireworks, fertilizer, and a clock and battery detonator. Shahzad drove a Nissan Pathfinder with the car bomb to Times Square in New York City. He remotely detonated the device, but there was no explosion. A nearby tee shirt vendor saw smoke coming out of the rear vents of the vehicle, and noting that the engine was running and the hazard lights were on he called the police.⁹⁷ In the car's gun locker, police discovered a pressure cooker-type metal pot containing wires and M-88 firecrackers.⁹⁸ No one was seen fleeing the vehicle in person or on camera, and the windows were strongly tinted obscuring Shahzad's identity. Shahzad was only connected to the attack because the key to his Connecticut home was found in the Pathfinder and traced back to him.⁹⁹ In line with Open Source Jihad's emphasis on avoiding detection in planning the operation, it appears Shahzad deliberately purchased weak bomb ingredients in an effort to avoid drawing the authorities'

⁹⁶ "Car-bomb: Field Data," *Inspire* 12, March 2014, 70-71.

⁹⁷ Al Baker and William K. Rashbaum, "Police Find Car Bomb in Times Square," *The New York Times*, May 1, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016,

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/02/nyregion/02timesquare.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁹⁸ CNN Wire Staff, "Police examining video from Times Square," *CNN*, May 3, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016. <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/CRIME/05/02/times.square.closure/index.html>

⁹⁹ Andrew P. Pachtman deposition and charges against Faisal Shahzad, presented before Honorable Kevin Nathaniel Fox, United States Magistrate Judge, Southern District of New York, May 4, 2010. <http://s3.amazonaws.com/nytdocs/docs/333/333.pdf>

attention. In particular, law enforcement officials tried to make it more difficult to buy volatile ammonium-nitrate-grade fertilizer after the Oklahoma City bombings, leading Shahzad to purchase non-explosive fertilizer that likely prevented his car bomb from properly detonating.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, the license plate on the Pathfinder was from a Ford truck and Shahzad had removed the vehicle identification number from the passenger compartment. Shahzad was identified as the owner of the car by a duplicate vehicle identification number found on the engine block.¹⁰¹

Shahzad claimed that he drew inspiration from the teachings of Anwar al Awlaki. It does not appear that he had direct contact with al Awlaki, but said that he did read al Awlaki's English language writings. Shahzad, who was born in Pakistan, said he got the bomb-making techniques from the Pakistani Taliban during a five-month trip to Pakistan's tribal areas; the group claimed responsibility for the attack. However, federal investigators believed that Shahzad was the sole plotter inside the United States and only received basic know-how from other militants.¹⁰² Shahzad is celebrated in *Inspire* for his unsuccessful attack as an example of a steadfast believer who struck back against the belligerent West and readers are called upon to follow in his footsteps.¹⁰³

Although this attack could not have been carried out following the instructions in Open Source Jihad since it was published after Shahzad's arrest, it demonstrates vulnerabilities to car bombing attacks and follows a similar recipe as that in *Inspire*. If detonated properly, police believed that this bomb could have caused mass casualties due to the high pedestrian traffic in the area and the fireball it likely would have created.¹⁰⁴ Again, this is not the type of attack that could be prevented by

¹⁰⁰ Anahad O'Connor, "Weak Times Sq. Car Bomb Is Called Intentional," *The New York Times*, July 21, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/21/nyregion/21bomb.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FTimes%20Square%20Bomb%20Attempt%20\(May%201%2C%202010\)](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/21/nyregion/21bomb.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FTimes%20Square%20Bomb%20Attempt%20(May%201%2C%202010))

¹⁰¹ Scott Shane, "Lapses Allowed Suspect to Board Plane," *The New York Times*, May 4, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/05/nyregion/05plane.html>

¹⁰² Yochi J. Dreazen and Evan Perez, "Suspect Cites Radical Imam's Writings," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 6, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704370704575228150116907566>

¹⁰³ "Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom," *Inspire* 1, June 2010, 33-40.

¹⁰⁴ CNN Wire Staff, "Police examining video from Times Square," *CNN*, May 3, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/CRIME/05/02/times.square.closure/index.html>

restricting access to the materials used to make the bomb. Shahzad attempted to flee to Dubai and was apprehended by authorities on the plane minutes before takeoff. This reflects lapses in security. Shahzad was added to the no-fly list the morning of his intended departure, yet the airline he was flying, Emirates, did not check the updated list and allowed him to make a reservation and pay for the ticket in cash hours before departure. The Transportation Security Administration now checks passenger manifests against the no-fly list instead of airlines.¹⁰⁵ Despite heightened security measures to apprehend lone terrorists once identified, it is still exceedingly difficult to detect a lone wolf car bomber before they execute their attack due to the inconspicuous nature of the materials required to build the bomb.

Pickup Truck Mowing Machine

Not every terrorist attack needs to involve an explosion or mass shooting. According to Louise Richardson, terrorism is “politically motivated violence directed against non-combatant or symbolic targets which is designed to communicate a message to a broader audience” with the goal of bringing about political change.¹⁰⁶ For the would-be jihadi who may think the IED has been overused, Open Source Jihad presents the option of “the ultimate mowing machine.” This attack is designed to “use a pickup truck as a mowing machine, not to mow grass but to mow down the enemies of Allah.”¹⁰⁷ That means using a truck with steel blades attached to the front to run over as many people as possible and to have a backup weapon to further attack bystanders when the truck is inevitably stopped. This mission “should be considered a martyrdom operation” as an attacker is likely to be without an escape route.¹⁰⁸ Open Source Jihad also recommends hitting a random, crowded restaurant in Washington DC during a lunch hour in order to have the added benefit of targeting government employees and garnering greater media attention. This article further outlines the

¹⁰⁵ Scott Shane, “Lapses Allowed Suspect to Board Plane,” *The New York Times*, May 4, 2010, accessed June 22, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/05/nyregion/05plane.html>

¹⁰⁶ Louise Richardson, “Terrorists as Transnational Actors,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 11 (1999): 209.

¹⁰⁷ Yahya Ibrahim, “The ultimate mowing machine,” *Inspire 2*, October 2010, 54.

¹⁰⁸ Yahya Ibrahim, “The ultimate mowing machine,” *Inspire 2*, October 2010, 54

advantages of this particular attack as it does not involve other people, so there is a lower risk of federal agencies becoming aware of the plans. It also requires very little preparation: at its most basic just the acquisition of a weapon with ammunition and a truck. If a would-be jihadist would really like to go above and beyond in terrorizing the *kufir*, it is also suggested to set off a pressure cooker bomb first, causing the victims to flee in a certain direction and mowing them down in a more concentrated crowd.¹⁰⁹

This type of attack has great appeal for aspiring jihadists with limited access to weapons or explosives. According to the American Department of Homeland Security, indicators of a potential ramming attack include: unusual modifications to vehicles such as homemade attempts to reinforce the front; the purchase, rental, or theft of heavy duty vehicles and equipment especially when paying in cash; attempts to infiltrate places that are closed off to traffic, like festivals or farmers markets; and the vehicle operator's apparent unfamiliarity with operating the vehicle or equipment.¹¹⁰ While states already regulate who can legally operate private and commercial vehicles through licensing requirements, there are not policy measures in place that are specifically aimed at preventing this kind of attack because it weaponized something common in everyday life.

On July 14, 2016, Mohamed Lahouaiej Boulel, a French national of Tunisian birth, ran a 19-ton cargo truck through a promenade in Nice, France, as nearly 30,000 people were gathered to watch Bastille Day fireworks. It appears that he entered the Promenade des Anglais by ramming through a barrier by a children's hospital and drove 2km down the promenade, deliberately swerving to hit as many people as possible on the pedestrian street; at the end of this attack, 84 were dead and 202 injured.^{111,112} Bouhlel began shooting from the truck with a 7.65mm handgun, aiming

¹⁰⁹ Yahya Ibrahim, "The ultimate mowing machine," *Inspire 2*, October 2010, 56-57.

¹¹⁰ "Terrorist Use of Vehicle Ramming Tactics," Roll Call Release published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in collaboration with the Interagency Threat Assessment Coordination Group, December 13, 2010. <https://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-TerroristRamming.pdf>

¹¹¹ Tom Morgan, David Chazan, Camilla Turner, Lydia Willgress, James Rothwell, Saphora Smith, Martin Evans, Peter Allen, and Jannat Jalil, "Nice terror attack: 'soldier of Islam' Bouhlel 'took drugs and used dating sites to pick up men and women,'" *The Telegraph*, July 17, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/17/nice-terror-attack-police-vans-blocking-promenade-withdrawn-hour1/>

primarily at the police, before he was killed by police firing on the truck.¹¹³ France's state of emergency, which was set to expire on July 26th, was extended for another three months in response to this attack, 10,000 additional soldiers were sent to help police with patrols, and reserve forces were mobilized and sent to France's borders.¹¹⁴ French security services refuted speculation that they had relaxed precautions after the end of the Euro 2016 football tournament that had just ended.¹¹⁵

Daesh claimed Bouhlel as a "soldier of Islam" and reports stated that he shouted "Allahu Akbar" as he drove down the promenade.¹¹⁶ He had a criminal record of assault, domestic violence, and robbery but was not on any terror watch lists and only began attending mosque in April 2016 according to his wife.^{117,118} There was no evidence as of July 16th that Bouhlel was radicalized via Daesh propaganda or that he received training or orders from the group.¹¹⁹ However, he also sent £84,000 to his family in Tunisia days before the attack, possibly suggesting that a terror group compensated the out of work delivery driver.¹²⁰

¹¹² Barbara Surk, "Everything we know about the Nice Bastille Day attack," *Politico*, July 15, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.politico.eu/article/everything-we-know-about-the-nice-bastille-day-attack-france-terrorist/>

¹¹³ "Nice attack: At least 84 dead as lorry rams into crowd," *Al Jazeera*, July 15, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/france-truck-plows-crowd-nice-bastille-day-160714214536526.html>

¹¹⁴ Barbara Surk, "Everything we know about the Nice Bastille Day attack," *Politico*, July 15, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.politico.eu/article/everything-we-know-about-the-nice-bastille-day-attack-france-terrorist/>

¹¹⁵ "Nice attack: Lorry driver confirmed as Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel," *BBC*, July 15, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36808020>

¹¹⁶ Tom Morgan, David Chazan, Camilla Turner, Lydia Willgress, James Rothwell, Saphora Smith, Martin Evans, Peter Allen, and Jannat Jalil, "Nice terror attack: 'soldier of Islam' Bouhlel 'took drugs and used dating sites to pick up men and women,'" *The Telegraph*, July 17, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/17/nice-terror-attack-police-vans-blocking-promenade-withdrawn-hour1/>

¹¹⁷ Henry Samuel and Tom Morgan, "Who is the Nice terror attack suspect? Everything we know so far about Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel," *The Telegraph*, July 18, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/15/who-is-the-nice-terror-attacker-everything-we-know-so-far/>

¹¹⁸ Tom Morgan, David Chazan, Camilla Turner, Lydia Willgress, James Rothwell, Saphora Smith, Martin Evans, Peter Allen, and Jannat Jalil, "Nice terror attack: 'soldier of Islam' Bouhlel 'took drugs and used dating sites to pick up men and women,'" *The Telegraph*, July 17, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/17/nice-terror-attack-police-vans-blocking-promenade-withdrawn-hour1/>

¹¹⁹ Alissa J. and Aurelein Breeden, "ISIS Claims Truck Attacker in France Was Its 'Soldier'," *The New York Times*, July 16, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/world/europe/isis-nice-france-attack.html?_r=0

¹²⁰ David Chazan, Tom Morgan, and Camilla Turner, "Bastille Day terrorist was radicalised within months and sent £84,000 to his Tunisian family days before attack," *The Telegraph*, July 17, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/16/bastille-day-terrorist-was-radicalised-within-months-and-sent-84/>

At the time of writing police were still carrying out investigations on his home and property and there is no publicly available evidence that Bouhlel consumed *Dabiq* or *Inspire*. However, his attack follows the advice in Open Source Jihad for the “ultimate mowing machine” including being familiar with the location of the planned attack and having a backup weapon. Although he did not attach steel blades to the front of the truck, he targeted a very crowded pedestrian area; CCTV footage shows Bouhlel scrutinizing the Promenade des Anglais on two separate occasions in the days before the attack, likely preparing to best execute the attack. Furthermore, in issue 12 of *Inspire*, the Open Source Jihad article on using car bombs names Bastille Day festivities and the French Riviera as ideal targets for aspiring jihadists.¹²¹ Although at the time of writing there is no proof that Bouhlel was inspired by either *Dabiq* or *Inspire*, this attack further demonstrates the potential threat of Open Source Jihad attacks.

Attacks not yet carried out

Destroying Buildings

In an Open Source Jihad article, the AQ Chef sets forth for the reader how to demolish a building using a chemical or mechanical explosion. The article emphasizes the necessity of three components for either type of explosion: oxygen, fuel, and ignition. To ignite the gas, simply use the triggering mechanism described in “Make a bomb in



Source: “Destroying Buildings,” *Inspire* 4, January 2011, 39.

the kitchen of your Mom” involving a Christmas light, a battery, matchstick heads, and a clock. To employ this tactic in destroying a building, the AQ Chef seeks to exploit a building’s center of gravity by striking at the corners to bring the building down. The image to the left from *Inspire* highlights the “soft spots” of a structure where aspiring jihadists should focus their explosion.¹²²

¹²¹ “Car-bomb: Field Data,” *Inspire* 12, March 2014, 71.

¹²² “Destroying Buildings,” *Inspire* 4, January 2011, 39.

In a later issue of *Inspire*, the AQ Chef points to a 2014 gas explosion in East Harlem, New York as an example of the feasibility and effectiveness of this type of attack without claiming this incident as an attack by Al Qaeda.¹²³ Rather, this particular explosion that killed eight people was likely caused by a gas leak due to improperly welded gas pipes that allowed leakage.¹²⁴ However, the scope of this explosion reveals how destructive the intentional attack described above could be. This explosion resulted in 8 deaths, over 50 people injured, 100 families displaced, and the suspension of the Metro-North Railroad service. It also cost Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the gas company ultimately held responsible, \$1.9 million in equipment damages, emergency response activities, remediation, and replacement.¹²⁵ Assuming similar results, an intentional attack of this nature by a lone wolf would achieve Al Qaeda's and Daesh's terror aims by inflicting great economic costs, showing government intelligence weakness by allowing the planning of this attack to go undetected, and creating a general atmosphere of fear and terror.¹²⁶

And again the inevitable question is “can we do something to prevent this type of attack?” Directly, no. We cannot eliminate gas as an energy source for buildings, we cannot ban or require background checks for buying propane canisters, and we cannot bar someone who may have extremist leanings, even someone on a terror watch list, from renting an apartment. This attack would likely have little appeal to *Inspire*'s readers compared to other Open Source Jihad attacks because it does not offer the same prestige and glory as a martyrdom operation or handling firearms and making bombs. However, if an aspiring jihadist wants to cause mass destruction without risking a martyrdom operation, this attack when executed correctly would allow the perpetrator to collapse an entire building and survive free of personal implication to carry it out again.

¹²³ “Exclusive Interview with the AQ-Chef,” *Inspire* 13, December 2014, 19-20.

¹²⁴ Patrick McGeehan, “Con Edison and New York City are Faulted in East Harlem Explosion,” *The New York Times*, June 9, 2015, accessed June 15, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/10/nyregion/consolidated-edison-is-largely-liable-in-deadly-east-harlem-explosion-regulators-find.html?_r=0

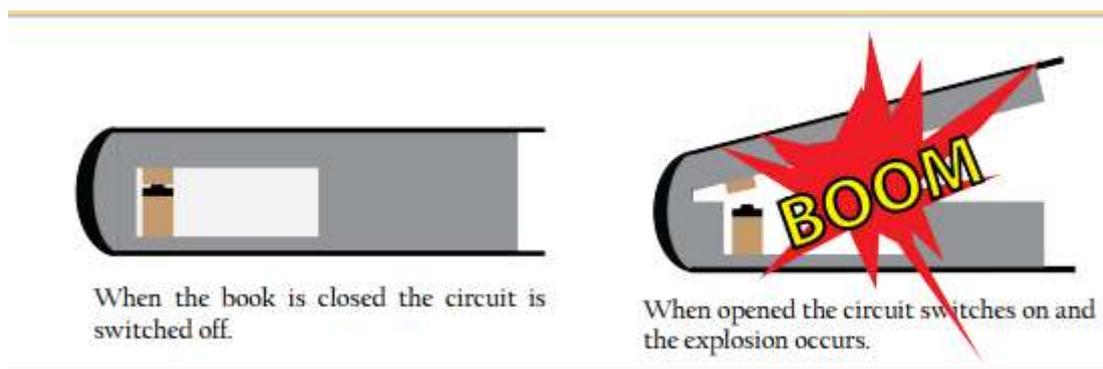
¹²⁵ National Transportation and Safety Board Accident Report, “Natural Gas-Fueled Building Explosion and Resulting Fire,” accident date March 12, 2014, report date June 9, 2015.

<http://www.nts.gov/investigations/AccidentReports/Pages/PAR1501.aspx>

¹²⁶ “Neurotmesis: Cutting the Nerves & Isolating the Head,” *Inspire* 13, December 2014, 64.

This style of attack may be relatively effective if carried out on a massive scale throughout the target country. It follows both Al Qaeda and Daesh's urgings that readers execute the attacks on their own if possible with simple materials in order to avoid detection.¹²⁷ Road crashes cost the United States approximately \$231 billion each year without, to public knowledge, an organization systematically intentionally causing additional crashes.¹²⁸ If carried out regularly by Al Qaeda and Daesh's adherents, this style of attack could have severe economic impacts on the target country. If they publicized their execution of attacks to cause road accidents in the name of these extremist organizations, it would further their cause by spreading fear and distrust of the government for not preventing these attacks.

Parcel Bomb



Source: "OSJ: Home Assassinations - Parcel Bomb," *Inspire* 15, May 2016, 76.

In later installments of Open Source Jihad, the AQ Chef proposes the three following methods for assassination, constructing a parcel bomb, a magnetic car bomb, and a door bomb. Using the hand pipe bomb method explained in the "Assassination Operations" Open Source Jihad in *Inspire* 14, the parcel bomb attack involves preparing a bomb in a parcel, such as a box or a book, that will detonate when opened. Unlike many of the other bomb recipes from the AQ Chef, this one specifically requires a push switch, found on many electronic lamps, so that the circuit does not connect when one first pushes and holds the switch, but connects upon release. They

¹²⁷ "Reflections on the Final Crusade," *Dabiq* 4, October 2014, 44

¹²⁸ "Road Crash Statistics," Association for Safe International Road Travel, accessed June 28, 2016 <http://asirt.org/initiatives/informing-road-users/road-safety-facts/road-crash-statistics>

advise putting the bomb in a book and cutting out the pages to create a cavity for the bomb and using a wooden block to create a small platform for the push switch trigger so that the bomb will detonate when the book is opened. The bomb composition and circuitry is the same as described in many other bomb recipes, so a regular reader of *Inspire* would be familiar with it. The AQ Chef insists that readers test the circuit with a lamp before attaching the bomb and ensuring that the light only turns on when the book is opened, not closed, for the sake of the jihadist's safety. Once the parcel bomb is prepared, it is sent to the target in the mail or placed in where it is known that the target will open it in order to decrease the risk of the bomb being detected in mail screenings.¹²⁹ Notably, parcels are usually only screened for illicit or dangerous substances when they are coming from abroad, not when they are sent within the same country.¹³⁰

On the individual level, one can possibly recognize a parcel bomb by several indicators, including: an unknown sender, no return address, the package appearing excessively secured, an unprofessionally wrapped parcel endorsed "Fragile – Handle with Care" or "Rush Delivery," and if the package appears to be wrapped to ensure the sender's anonymity with homemade labels or cut-and-paste lettering.¹³¹ This operation could appeal to readers since it is not a martyrdom operation and doesn't require the attacker to be present at the time of detonation, protecting their anonymity. Although this method is designed first and foremost to be used in assassination operations, it has the added effect of creating public fear and mistrust of a government service.

Magnetic Car Bomb

This bomb also follows the familiar pipe bomb recipe favored by the AQ Chef, but with a triggering mechanism activated by a car's forward motion. This is done by

¹²⁹ "OSJ: Home Assassinations – Parcel Bomb," *Inspire* 15, May 2016, 74-79.

¹³⁰ "The Journey of Your Mail," An Post, accessed June 28, 2016 <http://www.anpost.ie/anpost/schoolbag/primary/our+people/the+journey+of+your+mail/>

¹³¹ "Suspicious packages, Letters or Substances: Letter and Parcel Bomb Recognition," Caltech Security, accessed June 28, 2016 https://security.caltech.edu/Threats/Letter_and_Parcel_Bomb_Recognition

creating a detonator such that the wind generated by the car's forward motion would force two pieces of metal together and complete the electrical circuit. This 'wind switch' will serve as the detonator. The ignitor is the same type used for the airplane bomb outlined in issue 13, made from a Christmas light. The AQ Chef instructs readers to insert the detonator into a bomb like the airplane bomb constructed in issue 13. The bomb should have a large magnet attached to it so that it can be affixed under the car of the target; when the car moves forward the wind created will push the two pieces of metal of the detonator together, closing the circuit and detonating the bomb.¹³²

As this is meant to be used in assassination operations, the key to success is access to the target's car and guarantee that they will be in it next time it is driven. It is reasonable to assume that the most of the high profile personalities that *Inspire* and *Dabiq* have on their hit lists would have security measures in place that would restrict unauthorized access to their vehicles. Alternatively, this method could be used against random civilians' cars that would not have these security measures, but that would not produce the mass casualties and widespread terror that terrorists aim to incite. Due to the relatively complex construction requirements and inability to cause mass casualties, this is unlikely to be a preferred method.

The Door Trap Bomb

As part of the series on carrying out assassinations, the AQ Chef includes a recipe for a bomb that will be detonated upon a door being opened. While the bomb itself is the same as the pipe bomb outlined in issue 14 in the Open Source Jihad "Assassination Operations" article, the triggering mechanism is modified. The detonation circuit is created with a battery, on/off toggle switch, decorative lamp ignitor, and a 'trap breaker.' In this recipe, the trap breaker is the two wires necessary to complete the circuit; one is shaped into a loop, the other into a hook so that when the hook wire is pulled it will catch on the loop and complete the circuit. It is

¹³² "OSJ: Home Assassinations – Magnetic Car Bomb," *Inspire* 15, May 2015, 80-85.

designed such that when the door is opened, the hooked wire will catch the looped wire, completing the circuit and triggering the explosion. The AQ Chef reiterates the importance of using a test lamp first to ensure that the electrical circuit is set up appropriately and that the bomb will successfully detonate.¹³³

The success of this operation relies on having uninterrupted lone access to the target's home or office and assumes that the target will be the first to open the door once the bomb is set. Such unpredictable factors make this assassination method difficult to carry out, especially on high profile targets. One of the main disadvantages is the uncertainty that the desired target will be the one to open the door first. This style of bomb also seems to have a higher risk of accidentally being triggered as it is put in place. If the attack fails in killing the target, perhaps because the detonation is unsuccessful or someone else opens the door first, then the target will be on high alert and add security measures, making another attempt that much more difficult. The same security precautions that are already in place to prevent home break-ins and robberies should be sufficient to prevent an attacker from breaking in, planting this bomb, and fleeing the scene.

Causing Road Accidents

Occasionally the AQ Chef strays away from recipes for bombs and suggests an unconventional route for terrorizing the *kufir*. One such route is to cause auto-accidents, either with lubricative oil or bursting tires. The lubricative oil attack recipe is the simplest one proposed in Open Source Jihad: the idea is that the slippery surface will cause a vehicle to slide out of control or flip over. As usual, the AQ Chef reminds their readers to avoid executing this plan in any area with CCTV cameras or witnesses. The second method for causing road accidents is to build a 'tire burster' with sharp nails to damage a car's tires.

Although this type of attack does not have the same shock and panic that terror attacks with bombs or guns often inspire, the AQ Chef points out that "the *Kuffar* and

¹³³ "OSJ: Home Assassinations – The Door Trap Bomb," *Inspire* 15, May 2016, 86-89.

their insurance companies will be so sick of the terror caused and money wasted by these simple operations that they will press their government to stop the tyranny against Muslims.”¹³⁴ This is also the kind of attack that would appeal to someone who is only considering joining the jihad and is not ready to fully commit. There is a degree of depersonalization since both methods take very little preparation, can be set up on the roads in minutes, and allows the terrorist to be far away when the actual accident occurs. Additionally, the materials necessary would arouse no suspicion when purchased, and even if they were seen in the attacker’s home they would not reveal the attacker’s intent. Causing road accidents in this manner allows one to feel a part of jihad without getting blood directly on their hands or doing something that connotes a terrorist act in the way that planting a bomb or carrying out a mass shooting does.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Conventional law enforcement focuses on apprehending the perpetrator after a crime is committed; this approach is not adequate for dealing with lone wolf terrorists whose only focus is causing as much death and destruction as possible without regard for their own survival.¹³⁵ Modern tactics for combatting homegrown lone wolf terrorism focus on “attempting to prevent radicalization of susceptible individuals, ... electronically and physically surveilling suspected terrorists, denying would-be terrorist the means to carry out attacks, engaging with community leaders, and providing physical security for vulnerable locations.”¹³⁶ An emphasis here should be placed on denying would-be terrorists the means to carry out their attacks, specifically denying access to weapons and specialized knowledge, including bomb-making skills, operational and weapons training, and information about targets.¹³⁷ There is usually a

¹³⁴ “Causing Road Accidents,” *Inspire* 10, March 2013, 52-55.

¹³⁵ Brian Michael Jenkins, “Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies: Radicalization and Recruitment to Jihadist Terrorism in the United States since 9/11,” *RAND Corporation Occasional Paper*, (2011): vii.

¹³⁶ Beau D. Barnes, “Confronting the One-Man Wolf Pack: Adapting Law Enforcement and Prosecution Responses to the Threat of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Boston University Law Review*, 92 (2013), 1634.

¹³⁷ Beau D. Barnes, “Confronting the One-Man Wolf Pack: Adapting Law Enforcement and Prosecution Responses to the Threat of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Boston University Law Review*, 92 (2013), 1638-1639.

sizeable gap between a would-be terrorist's intent and capabilities that Open Source Jihad tries to close, with mixed results.

Reading and possessing *Dabiq* and *Inspire* or any other jihadi materials is not enough to characterize someone as a terrorist. Most Western governments ensure legal protection of individual beliefs and free speech; only when these beliefs and speech manifest intent to engage in violence can there be a case for legal intervention.¹³⁸ Law enforcement agents try to monitor potential threats via watch lists composed of people who have expressed, through word, action, or association, possible inclination to carry out a terror attack. However, officials face the challenge of having too much intelligence and too many people on these lists; they have taken the steps to monitor potential terrorists, but don't have the ability to keep track of inconsistencies in their activities that would indicate an impending attack. Penal codes are based on proving that an individual has taken steps to carry out a specific act, not just talking or thinking about it.¹³⁹ Counter terrorism officials draw the line between freedom of expression and terror related offenses where free speech becomes an incitement of violence; when voicing grievances or an ideology turns to calling for violence in the name of that grievance or ideology, it is no longer a protected free speech.

A common radicalization model is: development of personal and/or political grievances, finding an affinity with online sympathizers, identifying an enabler, broadcasting intent, and a triggering event that brings about an attack.¹⁴⁰ Technologies such as internet chatrooms, websites, and social media have bolstered lone wolf terrorism in the 21st century by giving lone wolves greater access to

¹³⁸ Brian Michael Jenkins, "Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies: Radicalization and Recruitment to Jihadist Terrorism in the United States since 9/11," *RAND Corporation Occasional Paper*, (2011): vii.

¹³⁹ Rukmini Callimachi, "How Do You Stop a Future Terrorist When the Only Evidence is Thought?" *The New York Times*, June 21, 2016, accessed June 23, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/22/world/europe/france-orlando-isis-terrorism-investigation.html?action=click&contentCollection=U.S.&module=Trending&version=Full®ion=Marginalia&pgtype=article&_r=0

¹⁴⁰ Mark Hamm and Ramon Spaaij, "Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to forge Prevention Strategies," *The U.S. Department of Justice*, February 2015, 2.

sympathizers and enablers¹⁴¹ and giving them access to guidance for carrying out their attacks including bomb making guides in addition to advice for avoiding detection. These online materials, particularly jihadist publications, seek to inspire recruits to fight against the West on the frontlines and as lone attackers by providing motivation and instruction to carry out terror attacks. While these publications tout the successes of lone attackers—even when they are not successful in carrying out their primary objective, as was the case with Faisal Shahzad and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab—they disregard the overwhelming number of fruitless attacks. For example, in 2009 an Al Qaeda operative who pioneered the underwear bomb later used by Abdulmutallab placed the same style of bomb in his anal cavity and attempted to assassinate Prince Mohammed bin Nayef of Saudi Arabia in a suicide bombing. The bomb detonated prematurely, only killing the suicide bomber.¹⁴² Al Qaeda's recruitment is based on offering unremarkable individuals the opportunity to be part of a huge movement and the chance to achieve international fame. It has been argued that governments and the media unwittingly help terrorist groups recruit when speaking of the brilliance and danger posed by these groups. Perhaps if media and government reports focused on the futility of these attacks, such as a PETN bomb in the anal cavity, then fewer people would find inspiration in these attacks to join Al Qaeda or Daesh.¹⁴³ A report on this attack by the US private intelligence services firm STRATFOR labeled this attack as “tactical shift,” described suicide bombers as “creative when it comes to hiding their devices,” and that this method is “ideal for assassination.”¹⁴⁴ This gives too much credit to a failed assassin who only killed himself. Daniel Freedman of Forbes magazine makes the point that if the government and media response had instead been to ridicule the attacker and mock Al Qaeda for “sending an idiot, it’s highly unlikely that his example would have inspired anyone to join Al Qaeda. If

¹⁴¹ Mark Hamm and Ramon Spaaj, “Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to forge Prevention Strategies,” *The U.S. Department of Justice*, February 2015, 11.

¹⁴² Daniel Freedman, “Al Qaeda’s Dumbest Terrorists,” *Forbes*, September 26, 2011, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielfreedman/2011/09/26/al-qaedas-dumbest-terrorists/#18a3a2edcc62>

¹⁴³ Daniel Freedman, “Al Qaeda’s Dumbest Terrorists,” *Forbes*, September 26, 2011, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielfreedman/2011/09/26/al-qaedas-dumbest-terrorists/#18a3a2edcc62>

¹⁴⁴ “Saudi suicide bomber hid IED in his anal cavity,” *Homeland Security News Wire*, September 9, 2009, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/saudi-suicide-bomber-hid-ied-his-anal-cavity>

anything, potential recruits might have had second thoughts.”¹⁴⁵ The likelihood of failure, both in assassinating the target and in achieving martyrdom, and death or life in prison coupled with international ridicule is far from appealing.¹⁴⁶ So while governments try with limited success to prevent radicalization and limit access to the materials necessary to carry out these attacks, they could also work to prevent recruitment of lone wolves by publicizing their low chances of success and unreliability of the recipes available online.

However, radical Islamist groups no longer rely on conventional media coverage the way that they once did. Terrorist attacks are meant to send a political message to a wider audience; this message is spread through conventional media coverage that benefits from selling stories of violence. Terror groups now have social media and their own websites and publications to spread their political message and propagate their narrative of an attack. *Dabiq* repeatedly promotes its attacks or attacks done in its name in the West “to take revenge for any aggression against [the Khalifah]’s religion and people, sooner rather than later [and] let the arrogant know that the skies and the lands are Allah’s.”¹⁴⁷ *Dabiq* praises the “brave knights” who carried out the October 2015 downing of a Russian commercial jet and November 2015 attacks in Paris as retaliation for Russia and France joining airstrikes against Daesh. It emphasizes the nobility of martyred “lone” knights of the Khalifah who struck against the West and would “not let [the Khalifah]’s enemies enjoy rest until enemy blood is spilled in revenge for the religion [of Islam] and the Ummah.”¹⁴⁸ Contemporary reporting on terror attacks, which overwhelmingly focuses on successful attacks, is not the sole aid for terror groups in recruiting since they have their own publications and means of reaching their target-audience. Although conventional media coverage is not vital to jihadi groups’ recruitment as it once was, it does have an impact on public opinion and therefore the government targeted by the attack.

¹⁴⁵ Daniel Freedman, “Al Qaeda’s Dumbest Terrorists,” *Forbes*, September 26, 2011, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielfreedman/2011/09/26/al-qaedas-dumbest-terrorists/#18a3a2edcc62>

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Freedman, “Al Qaeda’s Dumbest Terrorists,” *Forbes*, September 26, 2011, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielfreedman/2011/09/26/al-qaedas-dumbest-terrorists/#18a3a2edcc62>

¹⁴⁷ “Foreword,” *Dabiq* 12, November 2015, 2-3.

¹⁴⁸ “Foreword,” *Dabiq* 12, November 2015, 2-3.

The real question is: does Open Source Jihad actually provide aspiring jihadists with the knowledge and capabilities to carry out viable and damaging terror attacks? The evidence indicates that the answer is: probably not. With the most notable exception being the Boston Marathon Bombing, none of the resources provided in Open Source Jihad have materially and definitively facilitated the successful execution of a terror attack. While the assassination procedures are similar to the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and in San Bernardino, the corresponding Open Source Jihad article provides mostly common sense guidance. The airplane bomb and car bomb were both unsuccessful in their original execution and there is no evidence that the updated recipes published in *Inspire* are any more likely to be successfully carried out. The proposal to use gas explosions to blow up buildings as a mechanism of terror is rather basic in design. Although the ultimate mowing machine is equally basic, the events in Nice show that it can be devastatingly effective. It would not be difficult to come up with these types of attacks without having read Open Source Jihad. The proposals to cause road accidents are a watered down version of terrorism that is unlikely to appeal to aspiring jihadists or be carried out often enough to have a real terror impact. “How to make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom” pressure cooker bomb and other bomb making manuals and idea pages, including how to make a magnetic bomb, parcel bomb, door bomb, and grenades for assassinations, are the only point of real concern because the Boston Marathon Bombings demonstrate the efficacy of the pressure cooker bomb and its variations. Intelligence and security agencies could benefit from paying close attention to suggested targets in these articles as areas to enhance security. While these articles may motivate and inspire likeminded readers to carry out their own jihadist attacks, they largely do not provide original, capacity-raising information that increases the likelihood or lethality of a given attack.

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