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AICGS POLICY REPORT

ISLAMIST TERRORISM IN GERMANY:
THREATS, RESPONSES, AND THE
NEED FOR A STRATEGY

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American Institute
for Contemporary
German Studies

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

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FOREWORD

One year after Germany's largest jihadist terrorist attack, and only two years after Angela Merkel's decision to open the country's borders to nearly a million refugees and asylum-seekers, German policymakers are still struggling with how to maintain security and privacy within a federal system. It is part of a broader discussion of identity, values, and pragmatism that dominated the 2017 federal elections and continues to make waves throughout society.

This Policy Report examines the nature and the scope of the terrorist threat in Germany, a country whose Muslim population does not share the same characteristics as that in France or Great Britain, and how terrorist organizations sought to engage German Muslims in their cause. It discusses how the refugee crisis made the flow of terrorists from the Middle East to Germany easier, and how terrorists appealed to refugees fleeing to Europe to take up their fight. Finally, it looks at government responses to terrorism, identifying where new strategies are needed and where transatlantic cooperation is necessary. In the end, the author identifies five elements that will allow the German government to overhaul its domestic security and counterterrorism efforts: limit refugee numbers, centralize the security architecture, improve border controls, strengthen intelligence, and carry the fight to the enemy.

This report continues AICGS' commitment to providing innovative policy-relevant analysis of the challenges and choices facing Germany and the United States. We are grateful to the author for sharing his insights and to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for its generous support of this Policy Report.



Dr. Jackson Janes
President, AICGS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2016 was a crisis year for German domestic security. Five terrorist attacks hit the country, and seven more were foiled by the security authorities, so that the perception spread that a new age of heightened domestic security risks had begun. This view was corroborated by the first successful mass casualty attack on December 19, 2016, when a Tunisian refugee drove a trailer truck into a popular Christmas market in the western city center of Berlin, killing twelve and wounding nearly a hundred. Perhaps most disturbingly, three of the five attacks were perpetrated by refugees, who had entered the country recently. Many Germans began to believe that a causal relation existed between the “refugee crisis” of 2015 and the palpable deterioration of domestic security.

The attacks aggravated an already tense security situation, which was shaped by the decision by the Islamic State (IS) to attack the country and by the growing number of Germans who had joined the organization in Syria. In order to counter the threat posed by terrorists among the refugees, jihadist returnees, and homegrown militants, Germany will have to adopt a new, much tougher approach to jihadist terrorism. First and foremost, the country needs a soberer approach to the refugee problem, limiting their numbers and submitting newcomers to strenuous vetting processes. Second, more centralized and more professional structures dealing with matters of national security are needed. Third, the country has to re-establish control over its borders, if possible together with its partners in the Schengen/Dublin area. Fourth, the country’s intelligence services need a complete overhaul and political support for their mission in order to do their jobs effectively. Fifth, Germany will have to develop the political will and military capabilities to carry the fight to the terrorists, if they ever come close to establishing territorial control again in the Middle East, Africa, or Asia.

As German and U.S. security are closely intertwined, close transatlantic cooperation will be essential to Germany’s ability to counter jihadist terrorism in the years to come. For the time being, the country has no capabilities to independently fight IS and al-Qaeda. Therefore, Germany needs to preserve the transatlantic alliance even though disagreements might at times seem to dominate the relationship. Countering jihadist terrorism is a priority of the Trump administration, as it was for its predecessor and will be for its successor. By ending its status as a free-rider on transatlantic security, Germany could prove its value as an ally beyond the fight against jihadists.

INTRODUCTION

On December 19, 2016, the Tunisian refugee Anis al-Amri drove a trailer truck into a popular Christmas market in the western city center of Berlin, killing twelve and wounding nearly a hundred. The first mass casualty attack by a jihadist terrorist in Germany was the culmination of a terrible year for German counterterrorism. During 2016, five terrorist attacks hit Germany, and although only the one in Berlin was lethal, the perception spread that a new age of heightened domestic security risks had begun.

Perhaps most disturbingly, three of the five attacks were perpetrated by refugees, who had entered the country recently. This simple truth prompted many Germans to believe that there was a causal relation between the “refugee crisis” of 2015 and the palpable deterioration of domestic security in the country. The numbers of refugees trying to reach Europe rose after the Arab Spring of 2011 had transformed into violent confrontations between authoritarian regimes and increasingly radical insurgents in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Already in 2012, the number of refugees entering Germany reached 78,000 and rose to 130,000 the next year before climbing to a new high of 200,000 in 2014. The following year, an unprecedented 800,000 people entered the country. This influx was made possible by a shift in the travel patterns, with refugees avoiding the dangerous passage via Libya and the Mediterranean to Italy, travelling instead via Turkey and the Aegean Sea and thence along the “Balkan route” to Western Europe. The biggest contingents came from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

As was known from late 2015, there was a considerable number of terrorists among the refugees. Some were sent by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to perpetrate attacks in Europe, while others were susceptible to jihadist propaganda and decided to perpetrate attacks only after they came to Germany. Their arrival came at a time when the domestic security situation had already worsened. This was mainly due to two developments connecting the situation in Germany to the battlefields of Iraq and Syria. By early 2014, ISIS had made the strategic decision to attack France, Britain, and Germany by sending foreign fighters back to their home countries to perpetrate attacks. This was especially serious because the number of Europeans travelling to Syria skyrocketed in 2014. The declaration of the Caliphate and the proclamation of the Islamic State (IS) attracted far more foreign fighters than the militant group ISIS ever had. As a result, the number of German foreign fighters in Syria had risen to an unprecedented 600 in late 2014.¹ Germans had begun to produce propaganda pieces in their mother tongue threatening their home country with attacks on its soil and everything that was by then known about ISIS suggested that they might follow up on their boastful threats. The arrival of hundreds of actual and potential terrorists among the refugees augmented the size of the jihadist milieu in Germany considerably. The short-term result was a considerable deterioration of the security situation in 2015 and 2016, and an increasing polarization of German politics. The view spread that the government was partially responsible because of its liberal approach to the influx of refugees and a perceived weakness in its fight against the terrorists.

In 2017, the situation improved considerably, with only one minor attack occurring before December. The security authorities thwarted several plots and exerted increasing pressure on jihadist elements, not the least on the refugees among them. In the course of time, they learned more about individuals and groups that had found their way to Germany in the preceding years. There were worries, though, that the quiet was deceptive and that the sheer number of potential terrorists would be impossible to control, so that crucial information about terrorists hiding as refugees might be missed. Furthermore, it was obvious that there were long-term risks associated with the influx of such a large number of refugees from civil war countries. Many observers from the conservative side of the aisle cited the French example, where the jihadist threat was highest in Europe, because its enormous North African populations (who had flocked to the country from the 1950s) had shown a more than average sympathy for the jihadist struggle against the French state. With populations who have been exposed to the thought of many jihadist groups in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, it is highly likely that the risks posed by the jihadist scene in Germany might rise in the coming years.

In order to counter this threat, Germany will have to adopt a new, much tougher approach to jihadist terrorism, which to many will not seem to be compatible with the political culture of the country. First and foremost, Germany needs a more sober approach to the refugee problem, limiting their numbers and submitting newcomers to strenuous vetting processes. Second, more centralized and more professional structures dealing with matters of national security are needed. Third, the country also has to re-establish control over its borders, if possible together with its partners in the Schengen/Dublin area. Fourth, the country's intelligence services need a complete overhaul and political support for their mission in order to do their jobs effectively. And finally, Germany will have to develop the political will and military capabilities to carry the fight to the terrorists, if they ever come close to establishing territorial control again in the Middle East, Africa, or Asia.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE THREAT

The nature and scope of the threat in Germany are today shaped by three factors. One is the rapid growth of the Salafist scene in Germany just like in other European countries. It remains the most important recruitment pool for jihadist terrorists and its numeric expansion has paralleled an unprecedented increase of the number of German terrorists. Nearly 1,000 Germans travelled to Syria to join jihadist organizations, their overwhelming majority ISIS/IS.² The second is the strategic decision by al-Qaeda and ISIS to attack European nations. While al-Qaeda's ambitions in this regard have been known for more than a decade now, ISIS adopted its anti-European strategy in early 2014, explicitly targeting France, Britain, and Germany. Starting in May 2014, a wave of attacks in these and some smaller countries set in, nearly all of them connected to the Iraqi organization. The third factor that has aggravated the threat to Germany has been the refugee crisis of 2015. Increasingly, Syrians, North Africans, and others who reached Germany as refugees have decided to attack their host countries. Some of them have been sent by ISIS while others only decided after their arrival to fight on behalf of the Mossul Caliphate.

Salafists and Jihadists in Germany

Among the big European nations, Germany hosts the smallest number of jihadists and Salafists. The latter are reported between 10,000 and 20,000 strong, while the violent milieu is believed to count about 1,000 to 2,000 activists. Since 2012, more than 950 Germans travelled to Syria. In 2017, more than a third of these had returned and about 150 were reported dead.³ But at the same time, several hundred jihadist refugees—most of them from

Syria, but also from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries—strengthened the movement on the German front. Although it is too early to say how many new jihadists entered Germany, the numbers were substantial, as evidenced by a wave of arrests and trials against jihadists from Syria and other countries that started in 2016.

With the obvious exception of the refugees, whose *Weltanschauung* (world view) was by and large shaped in their home countries, the overwhelming majority of German jihadists was recruited in Salafist circles in Germany. The first emerged in Germany in the 1990s in small and isolated communities in bigger cities where young Arabs settled to study at universities. Compared to Britain and France, this development came relatively late, which was probably due to the composition of the Muslim community in Germany. Most Muslims in the country are of Turkish origin, who proved less prone to Salafist and later jihadist radicalization than their Arab and Pakistani-origin brethren in the neighboring European nations. In fact, the first jihadist ideological writings only became available in Turkish (and German) in 2005/2006, so that it was difficult for non-Arabic speakers in Germany to get acquainted with Salafist and jihadist thought.

Therefore, the first Salafist and jihadist groups were dominated by Arabs. There were only a few local religious authorities, so that their mosques and cultural centers heavily relied on travelling preachers based in the Middle East and North Africa or some individuals with limited religious knowledge. In the early 2000s, though, the German Salafist scene grew quickly, and an increasing number of mosques were taken over by small groups and an increasing number of Salafi

preachers. At that time, the first German and Turkish-speaking preachers began to test their skills, and the movement grew quickly. While in the late 1990s only a few hundred Muslims in Germany subscribed to Salafist views, their number rose to several thousand in the early 2000s.

From about 2005, it became obvious that the rise in Salafist mobilization coincided with, and probably caused, the emergence of a jihadist milieu. Salafist mosques all over the country became recruitment centers for jihadist groups, which centered around increasingly charismatic preachers. The nucleus of the jihadist scene had been the Multicultural House (*Multikulturhaus*) in Neu-Ulm, where a small Egyptian group around Yehia Yousef (b. 1958) and Reda Seyam (b. 1959 or 1960)—who would later become the highest-ranking German in IS— assembled young supporters and encouraged them to join the war against the Russians in Chechnya.⁴ When the Multicultural House was closed by the Bavarian authorities in December 2005, and Yehia Yousif fled to Saudi Arabia, the torch was passed to younger preachers and recruiters. Important jihadist centers emerged in the big cities of former West Germany, including Bonn, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Berlin.

How dangerous the movement was became obvious in 2007, when the “Sauerland cell” was arrested. It consisted of two converts and two Turkish Muslims who had partially radicalized under the tutelage of Yehia Yousif. The four did not manage to travel to Chechnya, but ended up in Pakistani North Waziristan, where they joined an Uzbek affiliate of al-Qaeda, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). The group sent them back to Germany with the task to attack American and Uzbek targets, most probably centering on Ramstein airbase and its surroundings, the biggest American installation of that kind in Europe. Before they executed an attack, though, they were arrested by German police in the “Sauerland” region in North Rhine-Westphalia, hence the name of the group.⁵

The fact that Germans joined Uzbek organizations showed a peculiarity of the German scene until 2015. Many German jihadists were of Turkish and/or Kurdish origin and spoke Turkish and/or

German, but not Arabic. At that time, this deficiency made it more difficult for them to join al-Qaeda, which remained a primarily Arab organization in whose ranks Arabic was the lingua franca. From 2007, however, the numbers of Germans travelling to Waziristan quickly rose, with two to three dozen joining the IJU and the bigger Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which at that time was more of a rival than an ally of al-Qaeda. Only toward the end of the decade did Germans enter al-Qaeda more frequently, with the result that the organization sent some of them back from Pakistan to Europe in order to perpetrate attacks in 2010 and 2011.

In 2011 and 2012, it might have seemed that the danger subsided, after al-Qaeda, the IMU, and IJU had lost important leaders and many fighters to American drone strikes, and most operatives who had been sent to Europe had been arrested.⁶ But in the background, the Salafist scene continued to grow, showing that their ideologies had an enormous potential to reach young Muslims. More Salafist preachers spread their teachings in ever smaller cities and towns in Germany, and the numbers of followers quickly reached between 10,000 and 20,000. Among them, the jihadists also gained in strength and now built centers in heretofore unlikely smaller cities like Dinslaken, Hildesheim, and Wolfsburg. From late 2012/early 2013, the growing jihadist milieu found a new cause in Syria, and in the course of the next five years, more than 950 persons travelled to Syria and joined Salafist and jihadist organizations. This was an enormous number if one considers the 220 jihadists who had travelled to Chechnya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia between 1997 and 2011. While the main reason seems to have been the emergence of powerful Salafist networks in Germany which spread the ideology, practical issues played a role. It was far easier to travel from Germany to Syria than to Pakistan, Chechnya, or Somalia. This was partly because German and Turkish nationals do not need a passport to travel to Turkey, but also because the Turkish government acquiesced and encouraged the travels of foreign fighters to the neighboring country.

The emergence of the Islamic State in June 2014 added a powerful pull-factor: Salafists worldwide

had long envisioned an “Islamic state” modeled along the lines of the pious forefathers, in which their interpretation of Islamic law, the Sharia, would be applied. The successes of IS in establishing state-like structures in Syria and Iraq and the declaration of a caliphate convinced many Salafists that this ideal state had finally been founded. This belief explains the rising numbers of young Muslims leaving their home countries worldwide to Syria.⁷ Whole families and many more women than before travelled to Syria to live in the new “Islamic state,” and it was only in mid-2015, when IS finally came under pressure in its core territories, that the numbers decreased again.

Terrorist Strategies and Tactics

In the course of 2014, the number of Germans and other Europeans in IS territory rose rapidly. In late 2013, the first Germans who had taken part in the fighting in Syria had returned to their home country. These returnees were generally regarded as the major terrorist threat to Germany. The main reason was the experience with foreign fighters who had taken part in former jihadist campaigns in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Pakistan, and Somalia, and who had been responsible for some of the most devastating attacks in the Middle East, the U.S., and Europe since the 1990s.

Furthermore, returnees from the jihadist battlefields tended to be more dangerous whenever they were sent by organizations who had not only trained them, but also gave them logistical and financial support and helped with the planning of the operation. This had become obvious in the second half of the 1990s, when al-Qaeda found its refuge with the Taliban in Afghanistan and established itself as an organization ready to attack the U.S. The result was a wave of increasingly sophisticated attacks, which culminated in the events of September 11, 2001. With the emergence of IS, a new jihadist organization decided to take on Western countries. In contrast to al-Qaeda, though, it focused its first attacks on Western Europe rather than the U.S. Several months before the declaration of the Caliphate, in winter 2013/2014, the IS leadership decided to send European recruits back to conduct operations in France, Britain, Germany, and

possibly other European nations.⁸ To that effect, IS maintained lists on which European fighters in Syria could register before they were sent back to their countries of origin.⁹ The first clue as to the dangers posed by the Iraqi organization was given to the Europeans with an attack in Brussels. On May 24, 2014, the French-Algerian Mehdi Nemmouche opened fire in the Jewish Museum in the Belgian capital, killing four people. Shortly before the crime, the perpetrator had returned from Syria via Frankfurt.¹⁰

Brussels was only the first in a string of attacks in Belgium and France, some of which were thwarted by the authorities. They culminated in the big operations of November 13, 2015, when an IS hit team attacked several targets in Paris, including the night club Bataclan and the *Stade de France* football stadium, where a friendly between the French and German national soccer teams was taking place. In one of the most lethal terrorist attacks that happened on European soil, the terrorists managed to kill 130 people and injured more than 350 by using AK 47 assault rifles and explosive belts. During the investigations, it soon became clear that the attacks had been planned in Syria, where the ten perpetrators had been trained months before. Its ringleader, the Belgian-Moroccan Abdalhamid Abaaoud (aka Abu Umar al-Baljiki) had been travelling back and forth between Syria, Turkey, Belgium, and France using the routes that were taken by refugees fleeing the wars in the Middle East and South Asia toward Central Europe. In order to hide the preparations and keep European security services busy, he had ordered other Belgian and French IS fighters to perpetrate smaller attacks. The perhaps most noteworthy attack besides the one in Brussels was a failed attempt to open fire with an AK 47 in a Thalys high speed train connecting Amsterdam and Paris after a stop in Brussels. When his gun jammed, the perpetrator, the Moroccan Ayyub al-Khazzani was overpowered by passengers.¹¹ Most perpetrators of the smaller plots had also been in Syria, but had been sent back after a short training. Before leaving, they were given instructions on how to safely communicate with the center in Syria, money, and the order to attack in Europe.¹²

In the years 2014-2017, a clear pattern of IS attacks in Europe emerged. Although politics and the media often focused on lone actors and their alleged importance in European terrorism, most of the plots had a clear connection to IS. The originator was a unit inside the organization responsible for “external operations,” a part of the IS secret police called “the security” (*al-amn*).¹³ This institution is the most secretive branch of the organization and is responsible for internal and external intelligence including assassinations and terrorist plots. In Syria and Iraq, “the security” is tasked with the administration of its own prisons where political enemies and hostages of IS are incarcerated. It also hunts down real and alleged enemies of IS on its territory, among them former fighters of competing insurgent groups and oppositionists of all persuasions.¹⁴ Outside of Syria and Iraq, the IS secret police commanded cells and individuals who assassinated enemies of IS in Turkey; scouts and traffickers who helped IS personnel travel to Europe and other countries and looked for possible targets; and the terrorists who perpetrated attacks from 2014 onward. While the exact hierarchy of the security remains unknown, the external operations unit of IS security was headed by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, one of the leading figures of the organization until his death in August 2016.¹⁵ Several French speakers are reported to have coordinated the Paris and Brussels attacks from Syria, while Abaaoud served as the on-the-spot head of the operation in France.¹⁶ Other foreigners were also represented, although the exact membership remains unclear until today.¹⁷

From its likely inception in 2013/2014, this IS body supervised three categories of attacks: first, the “organized” or “directed” plots, in which IS recruits would train in Syria and be sent to Europe, where they would perpetrate an attack—possibly with the help of newly recruited supporters. This was the case in Paris in November 2015, but the Brussels cell which perpetrated the attack on the Brussels airport and metro on March 22, 2016, was also part of this structure under the command of the IS external operations division.¹⁸ Although IS sent more trained fighters to Europe, and scouts cased European cities for targets, the Paris and Brussels attacks remained the only successful larger plots

until late 2017. The smaller attacks perpetrated by IS returnees who had been trained for single-actor attacks might be counted as “organized plots” as well.

The second category of plots were those executed by lone actors who were “inspired” by IS (or al-Qaeda) propaganda. These are jihadists who have not visited Syria and have not been trained by IS, nor do they maintain any contacts with the organization. Instead, they typically follow jihadist propaganda on the internet and/or new social media and come to the conclusion that they have to act alone. These lone actor terrorists are not as common as politics and media would like to make people believe, but their numbers have increased in the age of the Islamic State. This is mainly the case because the organization itself began to call upon its followers to perpetrate lone-actor attacks beginning in September 2014, as a reaction to the beginning of the air campaign by the U.S. and its allies. The IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani called for those followers who were not able to travel to Syria to perpetrate attacks in the U.S., France, and other Western countries with simple weapons like knives, poison, and even rocks.¹⁹

From mid-2015, when pressure on IS in Syria and Iraq mounted, the calls for IS followers to perpetrate attacks in their home countries became commonplace in IS-propaganda. In Western countries, some heeded the call. Lone-actor attacks became especially widespread in the U.S., where liberal gun laws allowed IS terrorists to operate more effectively than in Europe. The attacks in San Bernardino (CA) on December 2, 2015, where the Pakistani couple Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik killed 14 and wounded 22, and in Orlando (FL), where the Afghan American Omar Mateen went on a shooting spree in a gay nightclub, killing 49 and wounding nearly 60, were the most prominent examples.²⁰

Since 2015, IS perfected a third form of “enabled” terrorist attacks, which combined elements of the “organized/directed” and the “inspired” attacks. Although the terrorists in these cases act alone or in a very small group, they communicate with IS personnel who act as virtual coaches, providing the

volunteers with advice concerning the selection of targets and weapons, sometimes up to the very moment of the attack. These plots have been increasingly widespread in Europe since 2015, and have only decreased in 2017 due to the losses of territory and personnel that IS suffered in Syria. In the preceding years, it seems as if the organization had maintained dozens of people who first disseminated propaganda, often with the aim to help potential recruits find a way to Syria. From 2015, these propagandists shifted their efforts and now established contacts with recruits in Europe and further afield in order to prompt them to attack their home countries.²¹ By using different social media, including encrypted apps like Telegram, they managed to avoid the scrutiny of European security authorities.

Refugees as Terrorists

Although Germany is among the European nations with the highest numbers of foreign fighters in Syria—Germany counts about 950, France 1,900, and Britain roughly 850—the number of terror plots was quite limited for a long time. Most strikingly, the German fighters who returned—more than 300 until late 2017—are not reported to have plotted a single attack in their home country. This stood in sharp contrast to their French brethren, who executed dozens of attacks from 2014. Already in 2015, the IS planners had realized that they had a problem with the German jihadists. This was reported by the IS returnee Harry Sarfo from Bremen, who joined IS in Syria between April and June 2015. In a conversation about attacks in Europe, one of his superiors reportedly told him that IS had more than enough recruits in France, but that Germans who had declared their willingness to execute attacks “got cold feet.”²²

The reasons for this difference in the readiness of French and German recruits to sacrifice their freedom or even their lives remain unclear. But part of the explanation might lie in the differing social bases of jihadism in France and Germany. French jihadism in the age of the Islamic State has been shaped by activists who in their majority hail from North Africa. But while the movement was dominated by Algerians in the 1990s, current patterns

point to the importance of Moroccans and—to a lesser extent—Tunisians. Both nationalities represent the most dynamic force of global jihadism since 2012, with Moroccans and Tunisians forming two of the three largest contingents of foreign fighters in Syria (the third being the ubiquitous Saudis) and Moroccan and Tunisian-origin Europeans dominating the terrorist scenes in France, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands.²³

In Germany, Moroccan and Tunisian-origin jihadists also play a role, but their numbers are low compared to neighboring countries because the overall numbers of migrants from these countries are low. Instead, people of Turkish origin form the bulk of the migrant community in Germany, counting about 2.5 million (including Turkish Kurds). Although Turks are underrepresented in jihadist circles in the country (in relation to their overall numbers), a plurality of German foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq are of Turkish origin. The national and ethnic origin might explain the lesser degree of radicalization among the Germans because Turks and members of the Turkish diaspora have never been as prone to jihadist ideology as many Arabs. The difference was first noted by the broader public after the Brussels attack on March 22, 2016. In the Belgian capital, Turks and Moroccans form the biggest migrant groups, but while many Moroccans drifted into the jihadist underground, hardly any young Turks were won over by IS—although Moroccans are far better integrated into Belgian society than Turks are.²⁴ This was especially hard to swallow for left-of-center observers in Europe, who see the lack of integration and the marginalization of many young Muslims as one of the main drivers of jihadist radicalization.

The lack of attractiveness of IS ideology among Turks is partly due to the ideological competition the jihadists face in Turkey, where different forms of nationalism and non-jihadist Islamism retain strong influence on many young people. Even many Turkish jihadists, who theoretically believe in a supranational community of true believers, resent the fact that al-Qaeda and IS are dominated by Arabs. Furthermore, not long ago, jihadism was an ideology propagated exclusively by Arabs (and

South Asians, but that is a different topic) in Arabic language publications. Only when jihadist ideological material became available in Turkish from the middle of the last decade did al-Qaeda and IS win over more supporters among Turks in Turkey and Europe—to the effect that the Turkish jihadist community was still relatively small when IS appeared on the Syrian scene in 2013. What applies to the Turks seems to apply to the German jihadist scene, or at least important parts of it, as well. The German jihadist milieu emerged more than a decade later than the French and remains considerably weaker.²⁵ Also, German jihadists until now seem far less determined to sacrifice their freedom or their lives than their brethren in France because they have not as wholeheartedly adopted jihadist ideology.

In 2014 and 2015, the influx of more than a million refugees from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia to Central Europe presented IS with an opportunity to send non-European terrorists instead of its unreliable German recruits. Just like the civil war in Syria and the re-emergence of IS, the refugee problem was a result of the Arab Spring of 2011. This was felt immediately in Germany, where the number of refugees quickly rose from 78,000 in 2012 and 130,000 in 2013, to 200,000 in 2014 and a record high of more than 800,000 in 2015. Other European nations—with the notable exceptions of Austria and Sweden—were not affected in the same way as Germany because they refused to let refugees enter their countries and provide for their living.

Although the Paris attacks conclusively showed that IS had used the Balkan route to send French and Belgian foreign fighters together with Middle Eastern personnel to France, the evidence pointing at similar movements into Germany was at first scarce. It was only in late 2015 and in the course of 2016 that a series of events showed that Germany was a target as well. “Organized” or “directed” cells of IS fighters and several individuals were arrested in different German cities. Perhaps most troubling was that they even employed a division of labor, a fact that might serve as evidence of how seriously IS took its activities in Germany and how professionally the group operated. At least half

a dozen scouts were known to roam the Balkan route and Western Europe, reporting back to Syria which travel routes were the least dangerous and where which documents were needed.²⁶ Once settled in their host countries, the scouts would case possible targets. At least one of these emissaries, the Syrian Shaas Al Mohammad, cased the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate, and Alexanderplatz in Berlin between summer 2015 and early 2016 in preparation for a potential attack. German security services suspected that the actual attack was planned to be perpetrated by a hit team, but no further information could be gleaned from the observation of the suspect.²⁷

There were also at least three IS cells in the country suspected to have planned terrorist attacks. The most important one consisted of three young Syrians from Aleppo city and province who were arrested in the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein in September 2016. They had travelled to Germany via the Balkan route in November 2016 and had been equipped with a cellphone on which the Telegram app and the number of their handler in Syria had been installed. Although it was not established what exactly their task was, the IS connection was obvious.²⁸

Other terrorists who became active in 2016 seem to have belonged to the “enabled” category. Some of them were “homegrown,” i.e., Germans who had not left the country, while most were recent refugees from Syria, North Africa, or Afghanistan/Pakistan. The two homegrown plots were one bomb attack on April 16 against a Sikh temple in Essen, which left the priest of the community seriously injured. The perpetrators were young German Turks, who were reported to be connected to a Salafist network in the Ruhr region. The other case was Safiya S., a 15-year-old girl from Hanover, who had entered the Salafist scene under the influence of her Moroccan mother. Although she was part of a group of young jihadists, she seemed to have acted alone when she attacked a policeman in Hanover main train station on February 26. She had hidden a knife in the sleeve of her abaya and acted suspiciously. When the police patrol of two controlled her, she stabbed one officer in the neck, perilously injuring him. Most

importantly, Safiya S. stood in contact with IS handlers until shortly before the attack, among them Shadi Jabar (alias Umm Issa al-Amrikiya), an Australian propagandist who recruited European women and girls from an IS base in al-Bab in Syria.²⁹ In late January 2016, Safiya had travelled to Istanbul in order to continue to Syria and join IS, but the IS handlers ordered her back to Hanover to perpetrate the attack.³⁰

Such “enabled” attacks became the norm for the coming IS activities in Germany. On July 18, the allegedly Afghan refugee Riaz Khan Ahmadzai attacked a Chinese tourist family with an axe and a knife in a local train close to Würzburg in the state of Bavaria. He perilously injured the father before he fled into the city, where he was killed by a police SWAT team. Shortly after, the IS news agency Amaq published a video in which Riaz swore loyalty to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Up to the attack, he had been in constant contact with an IS coach, who had tried to persuade him to use a car. The Pashtun declined, though, arguing that he did not know how to drive.³¹ Only six days after, on July 24, Germany witnessed its first suicide attack. The Syrian Mohammed Daleel detonated a self-built bomb close to the entrance of a music festival in Ansbach in Bavaria. He only killed himself, though, because the main part of the device did not explode. Shortly thereafter, a video appeared on IS social media accounts, showing the young man renewing his oath of loyalty to Baghdadi. In an article in its *al-Naba* magazine, IS published an obituary explaining that Daleel had already fought for the organization in Iraq before it spread its activities to Syria in 2011.³²

If one does not count the terrorists, all these attacks were not lethal, so that they could hardly be seen as successes by IS. This changed on December 19, 2016, when Anis Amri drove a truck into a popular Christmas market in the West Berlin city center, killing twelve and wounding nearly a hundred. Amri managed to flee from the scene, but was killed four days later by police in Milan, Italy. The attack was not only noteworthy as the biggest one ever perpetrated by Islamist terrorists in Germany, but because Amri had been known to the authorities for more than a year. Although he

was seen as an extremely dangerous potential terrorist by many who knew the case, he managed to plan, organize, and execute the attack, laying bare severe shortcomings in the German security architecture.

Most importantly, the federal structure proved to be the main reason for the fracas. Amri had first come to the attention of the authorities in North Rhine-Westphalia, where he lived in a refugee shelter. A confidential human source had warned that Amri had called upon like-minded individuals to perpetrate attacks and planned to procure automatic rifles, arguing that “they kill Muslims every day, so that I have to kill them as well.”³³ Police officials from North Rhine-Westphalia presented their information in the Joint Counterterrorism Center (*Gemeinsames Terrorismusabwehrzentrum*, GTAZ) in February in Berlin and stated that they expected Amri to continue plotting on a long-term basis. Their colleagues from the Federal Criminal Police (*Bundeskriminalamt*, BKA) did not share their sense of urgency and categorized Amri as a minor threat instead. The state police continued to observe Amri, but had to stop when he boarded a bus to the capital Berlin, where the state police (*Landeskriminalamt*, LKA) was obliged to take over. Instead of continuing the observation, as suggested by their colleagues in North Rhine-Westphalia, the Berlin LKA decided to arrest Amri, take photos and fingerprints, confiscate his mobile, and then let him go. By now, the Tunisian knew that he was being monitored and adapted his behavior, communicating only via encrypted media or in person and trying to shake off the observation teams on his track. Although Amri remained a topic in deliberations in Berlin, no more incriminating materials could be discovered. Some police officials concluded that Amri no longer posed an imminent threat and in fall 2016, he fell off their radar. Even four pressing warnings by Moroccan intelligence, which seems to have operated in jihadist circles in Berlin, could not convince the Germans that Amri was a threat indeed.³⁴ Again, before perpetrating the attack, the jihadist filmed a short video in which he swore loyalty to Baghdadi.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

The German government's responses to the deterioration of domestic security tend to lack strategic input, and focus on matters of detail. In the aftermath of the Berlin attack, this was most obvious in the public debate over the introduction of electronic ankle shackles for Islamists deemed dangerous by the authorities. The measure was introduced by the federal government in June 2017, but critics hinted that it was part of the state authorities' prerogatives. In actual practice, only Bavaria made use of the law in two cases until late 2017.³⁵ In the meantime, though, Germany made other moves in order to decrease the domestic threat. First, it limited the number of refugees arriving in the country. Although this step was not primarily prompted by security considerations, it eased the pressure on the security authorities, who were overwhelmed with the sheer number of suspects. Second, the government made steps toward an increased centralization of the security architecture.

Limiting and Controlling the Refugee Flow

At no point since the chaotic days in 2015 did the federal government in fact admit that its loss of control over the influx of refugees had contributed to the deterioration of domestic security in 2016. In fact, many officials would contest the widespread notion that the government had indeed lost control. The chancellor herself refused to retract her decision to open the border by stating that this had been an imperative in order to avoid a "humanitarian catastrophe."³⁶ On the ground, though, the Merkel government quickly changed its policies and attempted to close the borders in the face of the refugees.

The centerpiece of German efforts to avoid a repetition of the events in summer 2015 was the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement. This document was signed on March 18, 2016, and it stipulated that Turkey stop the stream of refugees illegally crossing the Aegean Sea from its territory. The Europeans, on their part, would pay Turkey €6 billion until 2018 to improve the living conditions of refugees in Turkey.³⁷ Although it was an agreement between the EU and Turkey, Germany was the driving force behind the negotiations because most other European nations had not accepted refugees in similar numbers. The endeavor was controversial, however, because many observers deemed Ankara the main actor responsible for the events of 2015. Until the spring of that year, Turkey had received some 1.7 million Syrians who fled the civil war in their home country. For reasons unknown until today, it decided to ease control of its western borders, so that suddenly, the refugees saw an opportunity to enter Europe. Once they reached the Greek mainland, most of the surviving migrants travelled along what was then baptized the "Balkan route" toward Austria and Germany. With the numbers of arrivals rising daily and border authorities unable to cope with the situation (in May 2015 they gave up on efforts to register all the incoming people), Chancellor Angela Merkel decided on September 4, 2015, to open the borders to the refugees coming through the Balkan route. Thus, Germany gave up control over its borders, and by the end of 2015, some 890,000 refugees had made their way to the country, tens of thousands without having been registered, thousands or more under false identities, and hundreds or more actual or former members of militant groups.

In the following years, the Turkish government effectively sealed its western borders, hindering refugees from leaving the country westward. Therefore, the German government claimed that it was, in fact, its agreement that had eased the pressure on Greece and the other Europeans. This is, however, only part of the truth. From late summer 2015, some Balkan states like Hungary and Macedonia started building fences at their southern borders, because they could not cope with the enormous influx of refugees passing through and becoming stranded in their territories. Ultimately, it was mainly an Austrian initiative which led to the closure of the Balkan route. On February 17, 2016, the government in Vienna limited the number of entries per day and thereby forced countries on the route to close their borders, a necessary step if they did not want to be overwhelmed by migrants. Crucially, when Macedonia closed its borders, the number of refugees passing from Turkey to Greece decreased considerably—about a month before the agreement with Turkey was signed.³⁸

After a lull of several months, the refugee flow changed its direction and an increasing number of migrants turned to Libya in 2016 and 2017, crossing the Mediterranean to Italy. The European Union—this time under the leadership of Italy, but with France and Germany heavily involved—entered an agreement with the Libyan interim Government of National Accord in August 2017. The Europeans offered UN-supported Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj generous support and investments if the Libyan coast guard hindered refugees and their traffickers from leaving the country in the direction of Italy.³⁹ This approach was highly controversial because the interim government only controls parts of western Libya and is dependent on militias to extent its influence outside of the capital Tripoli. Furthermore, it was reported that the EU—and especially Italy—paid off local militias in western Libya to keep them from trafficking migrants to Italy.⁴⁰ But reports were encouraging, the number of migrants who managed to leave Libya to Europe declined precipitously from July 2017.⁴¹

On the part of the German government, this amounted to a next to total change of its refugee

policies from 2015. Losses of the ruling parties in state elections to the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) and pressure by the more conservative Christian Social Union (CSU)⁴² triggered Chancellor Merkel's turnaround. But security considerations also played a role. During 2016, it became impossible to negate the nexus between the refugee crisis and the deterioration of domestic security, and the warnings of German police and intelligence services became ever more outspoken.⁴³

Centralizing the Security Architecture

The Anis Amri case had highlighted the fact that the German security architecture was not only highly fragmented, but also that this fragmentation had made it easy for the Tunisian terrorist to escape surveillance when he crossed state borders. The institutional disorder is a direct result of the federal structures of Germany, where thirty-eight security authorities fight terrorism. These are the Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt*, BKA), the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*, BfV), the Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*, BND), the Military Counterintelligence Service (*Militärischer Abschirmdienst*, MAD), and the German Customs Investigation Bureau (*Zollkriminalamt*) on the federal level. On the state level, every one of the sixteen states controls its own Criminal Police Office (*Landeskriminalamt*, LKA) and an Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Landesverfassungsschutz*, LfV).

These structures go back to Allied orders promulgated in the first years after World War II, when West Germany was expected to remain under occupation for a long time. Problems became ever more obvious, though, after Germany regained its full sovereignty in March 1991 and had to deal with growing threats to its domestic security including organized crime and terrorism. With the states trying to shield their prerogatives concerning domestic security, rampant bureaucratic infighting, and differing legal, professional, and financial standards of security institutions, the German security architecture showed extreme weakness when

confronted with highly motivated adversaries. After the 9/11 attacks, these weaknesses prompted former federal interior minister Otto Schily (SPD) to demand a more stringent centralization, with the state authorities submitting to the control of their federal colleagues. The proposal was met with decisive resistance by the powerful state interior ministers so that Schily's team developed the Berlin-based Joint Counterterrorism Center (GTAZ) as a compromise solution. Founded in December 2004, the GTAZ was not an institution in its own right, but a meeting place for all institutions countering Islamist terrorists in Germany, with the Federal Criminal Police (BKA) dominating from the beginning. But despite being a remarkably creative solution to an intractable stalemate between the federal government and the states, the new unit did not solve the problems emanating from the fragmentation of the German system.

After the December 2016 attack in Berlin, the task to publicly convey the message that Germany would fight Islamist terrorists more decidedly fell to the interior minister, Thomas de Maizière (CDU). Despite being a known proponent of liberal approaches, de Maizière demanded a centralization of the German security architecture, especially domestic intelligence.⁴⁴ Just like after 2001, state interior ministers protested so that it quickly became clear that the proposal would not be implemented. Those among them who agreed that a tougher approach was needed argued that the federal system worked well, but that some states did not provide the security authorities with sufficient legal competencies—especially when preventively tackling potential dangers (*Gefahrenabwehr*).⁴⁵ Therefore, Bavarian interior minister Joachim Herrmann and others proposed standardizing state police laws—effectively demanding more liberal states like North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin strengthen their defenses.⁴⁶

As a consequence, the larger centralization proposed by de Maizière did not come about. But the federal government decided to strengthen the coordinating functions of the Joint Counterterrorism Center. In summer 2017, the working group risk management (*AG Risikomanagement*) was founded as a new subunit to the GTAZ. This group

would categorize known “endangerers” (*Gefährder*) according to how dangerous they were thought to be, make recommendations to the state authorities, or, if need be, start telephone surveillance and observations by itself.⁴⁷ “Endangerer” is the bureaucratic expression used by German police for persons judged to be ready to perpetrate attacks at any time—675 persons in May 2017 and 705 in October 2017.⁴⁸ Suspects in contact with endangerers are called “relevant persons,” so that the two categories together form a rough equivalent of a terrorism watch list.⁴⁹ The creation of the new unit signified a major change because the GTAZ's focus shifted from emphasis on certain cases (*“Gefährdungssachverhalte”*) to that of individuals thought to pose a threat. Even more importantly, the BKA now had an instrument to oversee all measures against “endangerers,” whose categorization, surveillance, and observation until 2017 had been a prerogative of the states.⁵⁰

Fighting IS and al-Qaeda On Their Soil

Germany also took part in the fight against IS (and al-Qaeda) abroad, trying to deprive these organizations of the opportunity to plot attacks in the West from secure holdouts in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. At least in theory, most policy-makers accepted the hypothesis that in order to avoid large-scale attacks in Europe, IS had to be weakened militarily in Syria and Iraq. But while the afore-mentioned domestic measures mirrored the increasing threat to the country, the German government only half-heartedly joined the fight against the Iraqi organization on its own soil in Iraq and Syria.

This policy was in line with former military engagements. In Afghanistan after 2001, Germany had sent troops to stabilize the country—some 900 remain there today—but insisted that they were stationed in a seemingly quiet corner of the country. Therefore, German forces were sent to the Kunduz area in late 2003. After the Taliban insurgency reached this region in 2008, German troops withdrew to their bases and avoided dangerous military confrontations whenever possible.⁵¹ In Syria and Iraq, the German government followed a similar pattern: It rhetorically supported the U.S.-led coal-

tion, which began airstrikes against IS in Iraq in August and in Syria in September 2014.⁵² In practice, though, the German participation in Syria was mainly symbolic. In December 2015, the Bundestag decided to send six Tornado reconnaissance aircraft which were to be stationed in Incirlik and a frigate that was sent to support the French navy in the eastern Mediterranean.⁵³ Most importantly, Germany thereby refrained from taking part in actual combat against IS. Due to disagreements with the Turkish government, the Tornados were withdrawn from Incirlik in June 2017, and deployed to Jordan in late September. Their influence on the effectiveness of the coalition airstrikes seems to have been negligible.

German support for the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq became more consequential, although the means were far more limited. After IS had threatened the Kurdish capital Erbil in summer 2014, the German government decided to provide the Kurdish troops with assault rifles, other light weapons, and different types of military vehicles. Most importantly, though, Germany sent Milan anti-tank missiles. Although outdated—the first Milan were produced in the early 1970s—the missiles proved an ideal weapon against IS suicide bombers. Since 2014, the organization began to use droves of lightly armored vehicles as its means of choice against Peshmerga defenses, which suffered from a serious lack of heavy weapons. With the arrival of the Milan, the Kurds were able to defend themselves against the suicide cars and begin advances against the jihadist group. The German Bundeswehr also provided training to the Peshmerga forces.

DOMESTIC SECURITY AND THE UNITED STATES

A Shared Threat

Events since 2001 have shown that German and U.S. security are closely intertwined. This first became obvious after the 9/11 attacks, when it transpired that three of the four pilots targeting New York and Washington, DC, had lived in Hamburg since the early to mid-1990s. In the following years, American installations, personnel, and civilians in Germany became targets as well. Most importantly, in 2007, the Sauerland group, which was sent to Germany on behalf of the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), seems to have decided to perpetrate attacks on Ramstein airbase and off-base facilities frequented by Americans in the area.⁵⁴ The facility in Rhineland-Palatinate is the biggest of its kind in Europe and probably remains high on the (virtual) list of potential targets for a jihadist attack. That jihadists monitor the American presence in Germany closely became obvious in August 2014, when the German jihadist Silvio Koblitz (aka Abu Azzam al-Muhajir) threatened an attack on Büchel airbase, also in Rhineland-Palatinate, arguing that this was the place where the U.S. military stores the last remaining nuclear weapons on German soil.⁵⁵ Although standard knowledge among specialists in Germany, the deployment of nuclear weapons in Büchel was not widely known so that it was a surprise when the information was presented in a jihadist text originating in Syria.

Furthermore, some of the most serious terrorist plots in recent years have targeted transatlantic air travel between Europe and the United States. In 2009 and 2010, Yemen's al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) made multiple attempts to detonate explosives on airliners headed to the United States. In the most dangerous plot, the Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to ignite a

bomb in his underwear when his plane—which had taken off in Amsterdam—approached Detroit airport on Christmas Day in 2009. Al-Qaeda has not given up on its plans to attack transatlantic air traffic and IS seems to have developed a strong interest in bringing down airliners as well. Its affiliate “Sinai Province” (Wilaya Sina’) even managed to detonate a bomb in the cargo space of a Russian airliner shortly after take-off in the Egyptian tourist city of Sharm el-Sheikh. The attack on October 31, 2015, killed all 224 passengers and crew on board.⁵⁶ The threat was compounded by intelligence reports that jihadist organizations continued working on explosive devices in the batteries of electronic equipment, triggering restrictions on laptops and other electronic devices on flights to the U.S. from spring 2014. In July 2014, passengers in Europe were required to switch on their electronic devices like laptops and mobile phones before boarding flights to the U.S. In May 2017, the U.S. government deliberated a ban on laptops and tablet computers as part of the carry-on language on flights to the U.S. Shortly before, the U.S. had introduced this measure on flights from certain countries in the Middle East and Africa. After negotiations with the European Union, the U.S. set the prohibition aside, on condition that European airports adopt stricter security measures.⁵⁷

Outsourcing Counterterrorism

As a consequence of this shared threat and similar threat assessments, both the U.S. and Germany have cooperated closely in the fight against Islamist terrorism. The U.S. is primarily motivated by the afore-mentioned threats to its security by terrorists in Germany and by the need to prop up the defenses of an ally uneasy about the tougher

dimensions of counterterrorism. Germany accepts that U.S. security authorities have become a sort of clearing house for international counterterrorism and by superior American means to combat IS and al-Qaeda. In the German case, though, the relationship is especially asymmetrical because Germany has virtually outsourced parts of its counterterrorism to the U.S.

This is especially true for counterterrorism abroad because German governments have been extremely reluctant to join military campaigns against terrorist groups even after the country became fully sovereign. Since the beginning of the American drone war in Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2007/2008, German jihadists have become targets of airstrikes, especially when they were in contact with high-ranking al-Qaeda personnel.⁵⁸ This policy was continued in Syria, after hundreds of Germans joined IS in 2013 and 2014. Not much is publicly known about airstrikes targeting Germans, but leading German jihadists have been attacked. The best-known example is Denis Cuspert, who is the perhaps the most prominent German jihadist in IS ranks, although he does not seem to hold any important position. He was reported dead after an airstrike targeting his car on October 16, 2015. Returning IS fighters reported that they met him alive shortly after the attack.⁵⁹

The leftist opposition in Germany and the media are highly critical of the targeted killings of Germans by the U.S. military. Some parliamentarians and journalists suspect that the attacks are made possible or at least facilitated by information about the jihadists that German security authorities forward to the U.S. Although it is far from clear that the U.S. needs help to track down German IS members in the Middle East, it is well known that the German government provides the U.S. security authorities with the data of “endangerers.”⁶⁰ As result, the government has made a habit out of being as discreet as possible about the dealings between the German security services and their American counterparts. The rising threat in Germany seems to have convinced policymakers in Berlin that they might be more open about the importance of U.S. assistance than in the past. In unusual frankness, interior minister Thomas de

Maizière said that without the U.S., the Germans would be “blind and deaf.”⁶¹

How true that was became obvious in fall 2016. Initial information provided by the National Security Agency (NSA) led to the discovery of a plot by the Syrian refugee Jaber al-Bakr who is believed to have planned an attack on Berlin’s Tegel airport and was arrested in Leipzig in October 2016.⁶² This was not coincidental as in most cases in which major terrorist plots were foiled by German security authorities after 2001, initial information about terrorist communications was provided by the NSA. This was, for example, the case when the famous Sauerland cell planned attacks on American targets in 2007 and when al-Qaeda ordered the Düsseldorf cell to perpetrate mass-casualty attacks in 2010.⁶³ Without American help it is very likely that more terrorist attacks would have taken place in Germany in recent years.

To some extent, the asymmetric relationship between U.S. and German security authorities is not exceptional. As the sole remaining superpower, the United States has unparalleled counterterrorism capabilities. The NSA and CIA have supported global counterterrorism operations, and strengthened bilateral relations with partner services in many key U.S. allies, not just Germany. However, Germany is still a special case because of the immense discrepancy between Germany’s economic might and leadership role in the European Union and its weak and fragmented domestic security architecture. Other European countries such as France and the United Kingdom have far more extensive intelligence collection capabilities for counterterrorism. This system is partly a result of structures imposed by the Allies during the occupation of West Germany after 1945. The best example is perhaps the Federal Intelligence Service (BND), the German foreign and military intelligence service, which was built under the auspices of the CIA. When the Cold War ended, subsequent German governments reduced the BND’s budget, hampering recruitment of a new generation of talent. After 9/11, policymakers realized the importance of foreign and military intelligence. But they had a long way to go to rebuild many parts of the organization.

Decrypting Communications

What is worrisome is that the U.S. did not have any information in many of the plots in Europe after 2014 and was therefore unable to help its partners. Due to the weaknesses of intelligence collection in Germany, the negative repercussions were especially serious there. This new problem might be a reflection of the rising number of potential terrorists in Europe. But more importantly, it is a result of the increasing use of encryption technologies by jihadist organizations. By simply using commercial apps like WhatsApp, recruits have managed to evade the scrutiny of international intelligence services. For some time at least, IS provided the fighters it sent to Europe with mobile phones and the pre-installed Telegram app, which they subsequently used to communicate with their headquarters. As a result, U.S. and other countries' services have experienced increasing difficulties monitoring terrorist communications. This first became public knowledge after the Paris attacks in November 2015. The perpetrators had communicated among each other and with their superiors in Syria without their adversaries getting access. The situation was similar in most of the German plots, where the terrorists communicated with their handlers in Syria and possibly Libya until shortly before the attack.

It was paradigmatic for German counterterrorism that the security authorities primarily placed their hope on the ability of their American partners to find technical solutions. Nearly a year after the Paris attacks, the head of German domestic intelligence, Hans-Georg Maaßen, admitted in a newspaper interview that the intelligence services' abilities to get access to commercially encrypted communication were still extremely limited and that Germany relied on "foreign partners," i.e., the NSA and CIA.⁶⁴ At the same time, the government decided to work on the German defenses as well. First and foremost, the government created a new authority called the Central Office for Information Technology in Security (*Zentrale Stelle für Informationstechnik im Sicherheitsbereich, ZITIS*), which was established in April 2017. Its stated aim is to provide German police and intelligence with technical solutions to monitor encrypted communication.⁶⁵ Many observers were skeptical that this

step would lead to greater independence from American efforts.⁶⁶ Therefore, Maaßen even demanded that German intelligence services broaden their surveillance of internet traffic in ways reminiscent of the NSA's activities. In October 2017, he demanded that his service should be empowered to monitor domestic internet traffic with pre-defined search terms, so-called selectors, to find out about suspicious activities and thereby clues about potential terrorists.⁶⁷ Such a demand by the head of German security authority was unprecedented. In preceding years, many Germans had seen the NSA as a threat rather than an ally and even the government had criticized the American government harshly. Maaßen's demand showed quite clearly that the government prepared for a more decisive fight against terrorists in the future.

ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY

Although Germany has taken some steps in the right direction, it needs a more comprehensive overhaul of its security policy in general, and its counterterrorism in particular. Most importantly, the government has to devise a strategy and act accordingly. The declared aims should be to gain early knowledge of impending threats, thwart plots on German targets within the country and abroad, and destroy terrorist organizations threatening our national security. This might sound banal, but the German debate is often detached from the basics of counterterrorism. This is especially true when it comes to the necessity of strong intelligence services and the need to deny terrorists safe havens wherever they might be.

The overhaul should be done on the basis of a sober interpretation of reality in the country and abroad. With the number of potential terrorists rising for years, the threat posed by jihadist terrorism will not soon dissipate. This is the case internally, as the return of fighters from Syria and Iraq, the attractiveness of jihadist ideology among parts of the refugee population, and the release of many prisoners convicted to relatively lenient terms promise problems in the years to come. Externally, continuing instability in the Middle East will mean that organizations like IS and al-Qaeda will likely find new safe havens and areas of operations and threaten the region, Europe, and the wider world from there.

Such a strategy would consist of six main elements, which are basic requirements if Germany shall succeed:

Limiting Refugee Numbers

Germany has to limit the numbers of refugees arriving from the jihadist war theaters of the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. The partly uncontrolled influx of more than 1.5 million refugees from these areas since 2012 has led to a deterioration of domestic security unprecedented in German history after World War II. The new government should continue to limit the numbers and vet prospective migrants before allowing them into the country. Only the CSU has brought forward a concrete number of 200,000 refugees per year. If they come from civil war countries like Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, this might already be an exceedingly tall order from a security perspective. German security services are still struggling to cope with the refugees who entered the country but subsequently disappeared and a growing number of terrorist suspects among recently arrived persons. Any substantial growth of the refugee population would threaten the successes of 2017, when the situation improved.

Centralizing the Security Architecture

Germany needs a more centralized security architecture. The current system is highly fragmented and clearly not adequate for a sovereign state dealing with increasingly dangerous domestic security matters. This is not only a matter of cooperation and coordination. Some of the state security authorities are clearly not up to their task, especially in East Germany, so that cooperation cannot provide any positive results. The proliferation of joint centers on the model of the GTAZ—the Joint Internet Center (*Gemeinsames Internetzentrum*, GIZ), the National Cyber Defense Center

(*Nationales Cyber-Abwehrzentrum*, NCAZ), the Joint Extremism and Terrorism Defense Center (*Gemeinsames Extremismus- und Terrorismusabwehrzentrum*, GETZ), and Joint Analysis and Strategy Center Illegal Migration (*Gemeinsames Analyse- und Strategiezentrum illegale Migration*, GASIM)⁶⁸—is a clear indication that subsequent German governments saw a greater need for centralization but lacked the power to force the states to give up their prerogatives.

Any centralizing drive should include both police and intelligence services and could start with an overhaul of especially weak state authorities. The state police offices (LKA) should be put under the control of the BKA and the state intelligence offices under the BfV. This does not mean that new institutions like the U.S. Department of Homeland Security should be created, which would need years to organize itself. Instead, the state offices should remain in place in order to profit from their local contacts and experiences.

Improving Border Controls

Germany and the EU also need to reorganize their border controls. The very fact that some European states that are part of the Schengen/Dublin area returned to controlling their national borders shows that the system is in a severe crisis. The main cause is that the fathers of the Schengen treaty in the 1990s did not take the scenario of mass migration and arguably any transnational security threats into account. It is perhaps the gravest short-term problem that especially Italy and Greece have not been able to effectively control their borders in recent years. For the time being, the situation has improved because of the refugee agreements with Turkey and Libya, but there is no guarantee that relations with Turkey will not deteriorate. In Libya, the situation is even worse because the Libyan “government” is too weak to effectively patrol its borders if it does not cooperate with militias who are undermining its very existence. Furthermore, refugees are already trying to find alternative routes via Egypt and Tunisia, which might gain importance in the coming years. Egypt seems to be counting on agreements with the EU similar to the ones with Turkey and Libya, which would substantially

increase the income of the state.

In order to solve these problems, it is paramount that the Schengen borders function like national border controls of better-organized European states. This requires that all 26 signatory states (which include Switzerland and Norway as non-EU members) and their security authorities have access to the data that were produced in the state of entry. The Schengen Information System (SIS) contains the basic data, but does not yet allow for an automated search of biometrical data. If a name is spelled incorrectly, an identification will be impossible—an especially serious deficit when dealing with transliterated Arabic names.⁶⁹ Although interior minister de Maizière promised a European entry-and-exit register in summer 2017, the Union was far from acting as if it had one external border to be protected by all. It was telling that de Maizière declared that the EU states “wanted to make the mutual use of security-relevant data possible” and promised steps after the election of the new German government in September 2017.⁷⁰ This was quite a cautious wording and a generous timetable for an issue that had been urgent for years already, and showed that a lot remained to be done.

Strengthening Intelligence

Germany will also have to strengthen its intelligence services if it wants to counter the jihadist threat. Other countries such as France and the UK have far more extensive intelligence collection capabilities for counterterrorism. This is mainly due to a deep distrust of strong and unified security authorities that many Germans developed as a reaction to the two German dictatorships of the twentieth century, and specifically the cunning and brutality of the Gestapo secret police and the Stasi intelligence services. As a consequence, whenever German governments have introduced changes after 9/11, these mainly focused on the police forces. This has rendered the intelligence services increasingly irrelevant and the security authorities heavily dependent on third states, especially the U.S.

But however powerful, U.S. intelligence is not omniscient and Germany could also contribute a great deal more than it currently does to global counterterrorism efforts. Terrorist threat vectors across the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and Europe continue to increase the overall intelligence requirement. In France, Belgium, and Germany since 2014, plotters appear to have established communication lines with IS in Syria without early detection, and plots that might have been foiled on the basis of signals intelligence went ahead. Whether the reason for this failure is the increased amount of electronic communication, the use of encryption by the terrorists, or other reasons, the United States can use every reliable partner to improve intelligence—especially with on-the-ground surveillance and detection. The financial resources of the German government make it a particularly strong candidate for closer cooperation.

Although German services will not develop capabilities on a scale like those of the NSA, they could focus their activities on countries where Germany has special interests and German police and intelligence have special capabilities. One obvious choice here is Turkey, because Germany has deep political, socio-economic, and cultural relations with this country. Furthermore, Germany hosts the largest number of Turkish and Kurdish speakers outside Turkey, who, however, are often seen as a risk factor rather than an asset by German intelligence services. The recruitment of migrant talent could help the German authorities to improve their performance, which has been less than adequate in recent years. The development and acquisition of new technology and the recruitment of more and better personnel are of course equally important desiderata.

Carrying the Fight to the Enemy

A successful German effort to prevent future attacks will also require a foreign dimension. Even a limited commitment of airpower and small numbers of American boots on the ground have been successful against IS in Iraq and Syria. But the organization remains a substantial threat, with several “formal” provinces, several more informal provinces, and a demonstrated ability to guide and

inspire people across the globe. Furthermore, the Middle East remains in turmoil so that terrorist structures are likely to find retreats in other countries in the coming years. Therefore, it is possible that other military campaigns will be needed to destroy or at least weaken Islamic State (and al-Qaeda) structures in the Middle East and/or beyond. In such cases, Germany should take part in militarily more meaningful ways than it has done in Syria. The deployment of combat troops should not be a taboo if transatlantic security interests are at stake again. This is not to say that Germany should not insist on political and diplomatic steps, but it should give up its resistance against military campaigns even if they are necessary to preserve domestic security in Europe.

Close German-American cooperation will be essential to Germany’s ability to counter jihadist terrorism in the years to come. For the time being, the country has no capabilities to independently fight IS and al-Qaeda. France and Britain might be better prepared, but they are not able to effectively replace the U.S. if only because of the exceptional reliability all administrations have shown in security matters. The country and its European partners need to preserve the transatlantic alliance even though disagreements might at times seem to dominate the relationship. Countering jihadist terrorism is a priority of the Trump administration, as it was for its predecessor and will be for its successor. By ending its status as a free-rider on transatlantic security, Germany could prove its value as an ally not only in the fight against jihadists.

NOTES

- ¹ Daniel H. Heinke and Jan Raudszus, "German foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq," *CTC Sentinel* 8 (January 2015), pp. 18-21 (p. 19), <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sentinel-January-2015-vol-8-issue-122.pdf> (accessed November 23, 2017).
- ² Due to the difficulties of obtaining German citizenship, many jihadists from Germany hold documents from their original home countries. Whenever I use the term "German" here, it designates sociological Germans. These are people who have been born in the country or spent at least large parts of their lives there, regardless of their actual nationality.
- ³ The official numbers are listed on the website of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), the domestic intelligence service. <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/arbeitsfelder/af-islamismus-und-islamistischer-terrorismus/zahlen-und-fakten-islamismus/zuf-is-reisebewegungen-in-richtung-syrien-irak> (accessed November 1, 2017).
- ⁴ On the details, see Guido Steinberg, *German Jihad. On the Internationalization of Islamist Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), pp. 62-65.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-76.
- ⁶ The only operative who had been to the Pakistani tribal areas and who successfully perpetrated an attack was the French-Algerian Mohammed Merah. After returning from a short stay in Pakistan, he perpetrated attacks in Toulouse and Montauban, killing seven. Dan Bilefsky and Maâa de la Baum, "French Gunman Seen as Homegrown Militant," *The New York Times*, 22 March 2012.
- ⁷ Syria returnees confirmed the importance of the "Islamic state" to the emigrants. Interrogation of Nils Donath, Higher State Court (*Oberlandesgericht*) Duesseldorf (in the author's presence), 21 and 22 January 2016. See the statement of a Saudi IS veteran as quoted in Ian Fisher, "In Rise of ISIS, No Single Missed Key but Many Strands of Blame," *The New York Times*, 18 November 2015.
- ⁸ The first returnee suspected of having been sent by IS with the task to perpetrate attacks was the French-Algerian Ibrahim Boudina. He was arrested in his hometown close to Cannes on February 11, 2014, but seems to have left Syria in late December 2013. Rukmini Callimachi, "How ISIS Built the Machinery of Terror Under Europe's Gaze," *The New York Times*, 29 March 2016.
- ⁹ The first returnee to describe this process was Nils Donath from Dinslaken. He had joined IS in late 2013 and became a member of its dreaded secret police named "the security" (*al-amn*). He claimed that he had registered for undefined activities in Europe after receiving a permission by the IS governor of Raqqa. The list was maintained by the German-Egyptian Reda Seyam, who was the governor's deputy responsible for administrative issues. Interrogation of Nils Donath, Higher State Court (*Oberlandesgericht*) Duesseldorf (in the author's presence), 20 January 2016.
- ¹⁰ Scott Sayare, "Suspect Held in Jewish Museum Killings," *The New York Times*, 1 June 2014.
- ¹¹ Steven Erlanger, "Profile Emerges of Suspect in Attack on Train to Paris," *The New York Times*, 22 August 2015.
- ¹² Rukmini Callimachi, "How ISIS Built the Machinery of Terror Under Europe's Gaze," *The New York Times*, 29 March 2016. There are different reports about the encryption methods used. While Callimachi speaks of Truecrypt, other evidence points at the widespread use of the Telegram app.
- ¹³ The fighters working for the secret police are named "the security people" or "amniyun" in Arabic. They are ordered to hide their faces by using balaclavas in public and during work hours in general.
- ¹⁴ The structure of the "security" in Manbij has been detailed by Nils Donath in court. Donath himself had served in this branch of the secret police for several months in 2014. Interrogation of Nils Donath, Higher State Court (*Oberlandesgericht*) Duesseldorf (in the author's presence), 21 and 22 January 2016.
- ¹⁵ Rukmini Callimachi, "3 Operatives From ISIS Are Killed in U.S. Strike," *The New York Times*, 14 December 2016.
- ¹⁶ Sebastian Rotella, "U.S. Identifies Key Player in ISIS Attacks on Europe," *PBS Frontline*, 19 October 2016, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/u-s-identifies-key-player-in-isis-attacks-on-europe/?utm_medium=N/A&utm_campaign=frontline_2016&linkId=30126074
- ¹⁷ A surviving member of the external operations unit is the Chechen Ahmed Chataev, who lived in Austria after 2003, but was also reported to have been to Ukraine, Sweden, and Georgia in the following years. He joined IS in Syria in early 2015 and is reported to have remained an active member of its external operations unit in Eastern Syria until October 2017. In November 2017, he was reported to have died in a shootout with the police in Tbilisi, Georgia.
- ¹⁸ Rukmini Callimachi, "ISIS Operative Suspected in Paris and Brussels Attacks Is Identified," *The New York Times*, 22 November 2016.
- ¹⁹ "Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful. A new statement by IS spokesman Abū Muhammad al-'Adnānī ash-Shāmī," dated September 22 2014, p. 12, <https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/bitstream/handle/10066/16495/ADN20140922.pdf> (accessed November 23, 2017).
- ²⁰ Joel Achenbach, Sari Horwitz, "Report on San Bernardino shootings describes the horror responders saw," *The Washington Post*, 10 September 2016; Dan Barry, Serge F. Kovaleski, Alan Blinder and Mujib Mashal, "From Troubled Child to Aggrieved Killer," *The New York Times*, 19 June 2016.
- ²¹ This shift in activities is obvious in the career and writings of the British IS propagandist Omar Ali Hussain (Abu Said al-Britani). He published a highly influential travel guide for aspiring European IS members, in which he gave advice on how to reach Syria as safely as possible. In a November 2015 edition, he also called for attacks on unbelieving politicians, police officers, etc., if it was not possible for the recruit to leave the country. Abu Sa'eed Al-Britani, "Advice for Those Seeking Hijrah," *Al-Bab* (Syria), 23 November 2015, p. 28. Abu Said was part of a team of social media activists which coached prospective attackers via the telegram app.
- ²² Interrogation of Harry Sarfo by State Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Bremen, 10 December 2015, p. 140.
- ²³ On the contingents in Syria in late 2017, see e.g., Richard Barrett, "Beyond the Caliphate. Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees," *The Soufan Center*, October 2017, <http://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017.pdf>
- ²⁴ Andrew Higgins, "A Close Look at Brussels Offers a More Nuanced View of Radicalization," *The New York Times*, 19 April 2016.
- ²⁵ On the emergence of the jihadist milieu in Germany, see Steinberg, *German Jihad*, 11-34.
- ²⁶ Author's interviews with European intelligence officials during 2016 and 2017.
- ²⁷ The young Syrian (born 1997) from Deir ez-Zor province was convicted to five years in jail in May 2017. Kammergericht Berlin, Urteil gegen Shaas Al Mohammad, Berlin, 19 May 2017.
- ²⁸ Interview with European law enforcement official, 15 May 2017.
- ²⁹ "Sister of Parramatta shooter was 'top Isis recruiter,' says Pentagon," *The Guardian*, 8 May 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/08/sister-of-parramatta-shooter-was-top-isis-recruiter-says-pentagon> (accessed November 23, 2017). Umm Issa and her husband Abu Issa al-Amriki (aka Abu Saad al-Sudani) were killed in an American airstrike in al-Bab on 22 April 2016.
- ³⁰ Safiya S. was sentenced to six years youth custody. Oberlandesgericht Celle: Urteil gegen Safiya S. und Mohamad Hasan Kharsa, Celle, 26 January 2017.
- ³¹ Holger Schmidt, *Wie sicher sind wir? Terrorabwehr in Deutschland* (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 2017), pp. 21f.#
- ³² "Abu Yusuf al-Karrar," *Al-Naba* No. 40, 21.10.1437 [= 26 July 2016].
- ³³ Mohamed Amjahid, Daniel Müller, Yassin Musharbash, Holger Stark, Fritz Zimmermann, "Ein Anschlag ist zu erwarten," *Die Zeit* 15/2017, 6 April 2017.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Reiko Pinkert und Ronen Steinke, "Der Plan geht nicht auf," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 25 October 2017.

- 36 Tina Hildebrandt und Heinrich Wefing, "Macht Merkel noch Merksels Flüchtlingspolitik?" *Die Zeit*, 2 September 2017, <http://www.zeit.de/2017/36/fluechtlingspolitik-angela-merkel-europa-abschottung> (accessed 19 October 2017).
- 37 Till Schwarze, "Für Merkel funktioniert der Deal," *Zeit online*, 2 February 2017, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2017-02/fluechtlingsabkommen-tuerkei-eu-inhalt> (accessed 19 October 2017).
- 38 Manuel Bewarder, "Merkel und die Flüchtlinge; Die Krise einer Kanzlerschaft," *WELT online*, 23 September 2017.
- 39 "Unsicherer Pakt mit Milizionären; Eindämmung in Libyen," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30 August 2017.
- 40 Christoph Ehrhardt, "Libysche Menschenschmuggler: Heute Schleuser, morgen Partner," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 September 2017.
- 41 Alissa J. Rubin and Jason Horowitz, "African Leaders Urged to Slow Migrants," *The New York Times*, 29 August 2017.
- 42 The conservative "Union" in Germany consists of two parties. One is the CDU led by Chancellor Angela Merkel and the other the CSU, currently headed by Bavarian prime minister Horst Seehofer. The CSU only competes in state and federal elections in its home state of Bavaria, while the CDU competes in all other 15 states. In the Bundestag, both parties form a joint parliamentary group. The CSU tends to represent a more conservative part of the political spectrum than the CDU.
- 43 Stefan Locke and Eckart Lohse, "In tödlicher Mission," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 October 2016; The first report about the warnings appeared a year earlier: Stefan Aust and Claus Christian Malzahn, "Aufstand gegen Merkel?" *Welt am Sonntag*, 25 October 2015.
- 44 Thomas de Maizière, "Leitlinien für einen starken Staat in schwierigen Zeiten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 January 2017.
- 45 There are important differences especially concerning preventive measures. In Bavaria and Hesse, the police are allowed to monitor phone communications of persons deemed to be dangerous Islamists before an official investigation has started. In North-Rhine Westphalia, this is illegal. Florian Flade, "Neue BKA-Einheit hat Gefährder ständig im Visier," *Die Welt*, 4 July 2017, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article166234536/Neue-BKA-Einheit-hat-Gefaehrder-staendig-im-Visier.html> (accessed October 20, 2017).
- 46 Conny Neumann and Martin Knobbe, "Bei der Polizei gibt es Baustellen, SPIEGEL-Gespräch mit Bayerns Innenminister Joachim Herrmann über vorbeugende Haftstrafen für islamistische Gefährder," *Der Spiegel* 32 (2017), 5 August 2017, 42-44.
- 47 Florian Flade, "Neue BKA-Einheit hat Gefährder ständig im Visier," *Die Welt*, 4 July 2017, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article166234536/Neue-BKA-Einheit-hat-Gefaehrder-staendig-im-Visier.html> (accessed October 20, 2017).
- 48 Reiko Pinkert and Ronen Steinke, "Der Plan geht nicht auf," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 25 October 2017.
- 49 For an official definition of the term, see Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Ulla Jelpke, Dr. André Hahn, Martina Renner, Kersten Steinke und der Fraktion DIE LINKE. – Drucksache 18/13301 – Instrument des Bundeskriminalamtes zur Risikobewertung potentieller islamistischer Gewalttäter, 2.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 Steinberg, *German Jihad*, 222-228.
- 52 See, for instance, Sven Afhüppe, Till Hoppe, Thomas Sigmund, "Es wird ein langer Kampf" (Interview mit Ursula von der Leyen), *Handelsblatt*, 27 November 2015.
- 53 Bundestag stimmt für Einsatz gegen Terrormiliz "Islamischer Staat"; Mandat bis 31. Dezember 2016 befristet / Von der Leyen: "Keine Bodentruppen in Syrien," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 December 2015.
- 54 Steinberg, *German Jihad*, 76.
- 55 Klaus Brandt, "Silvio K. droht mit Anschlag auf Atombombenlager," *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 August 2014.
- 56 Erin Cunningham, "Russian airliner crashes in Sinai," *The Washington Post*, 1 November 2015.
- 57 "USA fordern schärfere Sicherheitskontrollen an Flughäfen in Europa," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 June 2017, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/reise/flugsicherheit-usa-fordern-schaerfere-sicherheitskontrollen-an-flughaefen-in-europa-1.3565824> (accessed 4 December 2017); Robert Wall and Susan Carey, "Stricter U.S. Rules Set for Airlines," *The Wall Street Journal* (Europe Edition), 24 July 2017.
- 58 For instance, the German national Bünyamin Erdogan was killed by a drone strike in Mir Ali in October 2010. Steinberg, *German Jihad*, 173. The attack targeted Qari Husain Mehsud, a commander of the Pakistani Taliban responsible for training suicide bombers.
- 59 Police Interrogation of Ali Rahal, Neubrandenburg, 15 December 2015, p. 10.
- 60 In March 2017, the daily "Die Welt" reported that Germany had provided the FBI with the data of about 380 "endangerers." Florian Flade, "Deutschland schafft Kampf gegen Terror kaum alleine," *Die Welt*, 14 March 2017.
- 61 Quoted after: Georg Mascolo and Reiko Pinkert, "Der kleine Bruder will mehr," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 November 2016.
- 62 Bakr was able to flee from the police and was only caught after fellow Syrians he had asked for a place to spend the night captured him. Dunja Ramadan, "Ihr habt uns stolz gemacht"; Erleichterung, Freude und Wut auf den mutmaßlichen Bombenbauer von Chemnitz: Im Internet feiern Exil-Syrer die Festnahme des Verdächtigen durch Landsleute," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 12 October 2016.
- 63 Steinberg, *German Jihad*, 236-237.
- 64 Im Gespräch: Hans-Georg Maaßen, Präsident des Bundesamts für Verfassungsschutz; "Als er Heißkleber kaufte, musste so schnell wie möglich gehandelt werden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 October 2016.
- 65 Georg Mascolo and Reiko Pinkert, "Der kleine Bruder will mehr," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 November 2016.
- 66 Author's interview with German law enforcement official, 23 May 2017.
- 67 Markus Decker, "Verfassungsschutz fordert mehr Rechte; Die drei Geheimdienst-Chefs stehen den Kontrolleuren im Bundestags erstmals öffentlich Rede und Antwort," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 6 October 2017. See also: Florian Flade, "Spione greifen nach dem vollen Werkzeugkasten," *Die Welt*, 7 October 2017.
- 68 Clemens Binninger, Armin Schuster, "Schutz vor Terror; Warum wir ein deutsches FBI brauchen," *WELT online*, 9 April 2017.
- 69 Holger Münch, "Sind Sie sicher?" *Spiegel Online*, 15 April 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/terrorabwehr-sind-sie-sicher-gastbeitrag-von-bka-praesident-holger-muench-a-1142948.html> (accessed December 6, 2017). In fact, Anis Amri's last name was Amiri.
- 70 "Wir werden mit der Bedrohung leben müssen," Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) über Terror, Fahndung per Gesichtserkennung und seine Erfahrung in der Flüchtlingskrise," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 11 June 2017.



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