Executive Summary

- Tehran’s hegemonic aspirations in Syria and the wider Middle East are well-documented. From the very beginning of Islamic State’s (IS) rise to power in 2014 as it swept through Syria and Iraq it provided military support in terms of arms, ammunition and manpower for the regular forces and Shia militias opposing its advance.
- The CIA’s recent release of most the documentation captured in the US mission to kill Osama bin Laden in 2011 has revealed that the unlikely saviour of al-Qaeda is Iran. Al-Qaeda apparently covertly embarked on what is described as a remarkable pact with the Shia state. President Donald Trump has used the alleged link of political Islam with extremism to justify his intention to de-certify the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) which he feels is unacceptable, however he is facing what is described as ‘overwhelming European opposition to the move.’
- Ankara’s support to the Syrian Turkmen brigades which fought alongside the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) in 2015 against the regime forces of President Bashar al-Assad demonstrates its willingness to support, albeit tacitly, extremist groups to promote its political aspirations in the region.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s links to extremism – Section 4:

- The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) persistently describes itself as an organisation which wishes to effect change through peaceful means only, however many believe that this is not the case and that extreme violence is part of its ideology to promote political Islamism. Those Gulf States and others who have outlawed the organisation know very well that this is the case, however a number of countries, particularly in the West, continue to accept the MB’s rhetoric of peace and in many cases, such as the US, the UK and Qatar have offered its members sanctuary and a platform to promote the groups malevolent message.

Assessment of current state of al-Qaeda and its affiliates – Section 5:

- Founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda has mounted attacks on civilian and military targets in various countries, including the 1998 US embassy bombings, the September 11 attacks on the US, and the 2002 Bali bombings. The US government responded to the September 11 attacks by launching the ‘War on Terror.’ With the loss of key leaders, culminating in the death of Osama bin Laden in
2011, al-Qaeda’s operations have devolved from actions which were controlled from the top down, to actions by associated groups and lone-wolf operators.

**Assessment of current state of Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates – Section 6:**

- Nearly three years since the group’s elusive leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a self-styled Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria, this most violent movement is reeling from losses across its so-called caliphate. Its greatest prize Mosul, its biggest hub in Iraq, has fallen to the US-led coalition forces and its de-facto capital in Syria, Raqqa, has fallen to the predominantly Kurdish US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The capture of territory and the destruction of all its institutions are pushing the group from its conventional, ground holding military threat back to its ideological and terrorist roots.

**Terrorist Diaspora – Section 7:**

- Modern terrorist groups have experienced an unprecedented proliferation throughout the world and in particular those groups which are either part of the al-Qaeda or IS network or are affiliated or have sworn allegiance to them. Social media and the myriad of communication methods have provided the groups with a worldwide audience to peddle their radicalized messages as part of their recruitment and communication strategies.

**Current threat spectrum – Section 8:**

- The current threat spectrum extends across the globe and the list of terrorist attacks in Annex A is a testament to the fact that modern terrorists can strike anywhere at any time. His or her choice of weapons has ranged from edged weapons to firearms and explosives to using vehicles as instruments of death and destruction. The truck used in the Bastille Day attack in Nice is noted as the most deadly, non-explosive or firearm incident to date.

**Terrorism Threats to GCC – Section 9:**

- Terrorist threats to the GCC are ever present. The prevention of which presents an ongoing battle mostly beyond the gaze of the unsuspecting public, and so far, comparatively few have been successful. Saudi Arabia endured a series of attacks by AQ and IS jihadists, which predominantly targeted Shia mosques, however as security has increased and improved, and the intelligence networks have expanded incidents have reduced exponentially. The pressure which the Saudi-led coalition and government forces are putting on Houthi rebels in Yemen has led to threats that they will target ports and airports in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The fact that these threats have been issued demonstrates how effective the military operations and blockade against them has been and that their only defence is to threaten actions which in reality they are not thought to be equipped or capable of achieving.
- The main threat for GCC countries remains with individuals who are radicalized online and who, using the simple terrorist techniques posted on the sites, may carry
out random attacks. Such jihadists are an excellent means for the groups to maintain a constant level of fear throughout the population and from a security services point of view they are almost impossible to pre-empt as they are rarely known to intelligence services prior to initiating an attack.

**UAE Counter-Extremism Strategy – Section 10**

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a long and proud record of condemning terrorism and Islamist extremism in all its forms. Through its work with international partners, the UAE continues to demonstrate its commitment to confronting, degrading and eradicating terrorism and extremism across the Middle East and beyond.

- In particular, recognising the need to counter extremist propaganda, in July 2015 the UAE launched the Sawab Centre. This is a collaborative project with the US, aimed at contesting extremist propaganda and terrorist messaging – particularly online.

- The UAE is also home to Hedayah (meaning ‘Guidance’ in English), the Global Centre for Excellence in Countering Violent Extremism is an international body hosted by the UAE. It aspires to provide communities and governments around the world with tools to increase their capabilities to counter extremism and recruitment efforts by terrorist organizations.

- In 2017, the UAE established a Ministry of Tolerance, led first by HE Sheikha Lubna al-Qasimi and since October by one of the most senior and respected members of Abu Dhabi’s ruling family, HE Nahyan bin Saeed al-Nahyan. In so doing, the UAE’s leadership has created a specific focus on the promotion of ‘tolerance’ at the heart of UAE government and the nation’s leadership sought to send a clear message that extremism in any form is not acceptable within Emirati society. As the new ministry’s website explains: “Tolerance is a virtue and an intrinsic part of the Islamic culture. It is observed at all levels: individual, organisational and national. With more than 200 nationalities living peacefully and successfully in the UAE, the UAE society has been an undisputed example of being a tolerant and inclusive country. Now, the Federal Government is keen to promote acceptance and understanding as core values of the society.”

- In October 2017, the UAE Cabinet approved the National Tolerance Programme. Amongst a number of aims, the UAE makes clear that the launch of the UAE Charter of Tolerance, Coexistence and Peace is intended not only to promote these key elements of society at large but also the oppose violence, extremism and racism. To support the Ministry’s work, the UAE has also established a ‘Tolerance Centre’ which will provide a forum for research into the promotion of tolerance and to encourage all members of Emirati society to show respect for others. The UAE government has

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placed considerable emphasis on this new initiative, not only as a societal benefit but also as a means of combating extremism and terrorist violence.

**European perception versus GCC perception – Section 11:**

- The European perception of terrorism and extremism is based on its secular view of religious violence. The EU’s pragmatic, liberal, business and trade-orientated policies have little time for religion and concentrate efforts on the pursuit of economic stability and peace for member states. Some analysts would suggest that, with the odd exception, both methods of governance are failing to curb the ongoing threat of extremism and terrorism.
- In contrast, the Gulf Cooperation Council nations have always abided by their strict adherence to their Muslim faith which manifests itself to varying degrees within their societies. In the past, the international community has been viewed GCC states as propagators of extremism, particularly in more conservative Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia. The UAE does not suffer from the same high levels of radicalization as it has a more moderate and tolerant approach to the running of its Islamic society.

**Conclusions - Section 11:**

- Extremism and terrorism remain a constant threat to the fabric of world society where numerous world terrorist organisations and those who support them are actively engaged in doing everything in their power to disrupt and in some cases destroy the status quo in the countries they are targeting.
- The linkage between political Islam and extremism has been made with Iran and its association and support of Shia militias such as Hezbollah and the new revelations of its aid to al-Qaeda. Qatar remains subject to a GCC boycott primarily as a result of its unrepentant support for terrorist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Turkey has metamorphosed into an Islamist quasi-dictatorship whose support of terrorist Turkmen groups and other extremist opponents of the Syrian regime has made the US and others question its continuing suitability as a member of NATO and aspirant member of the EU. Saudi Arabia has also been accused of supporting extremist groups opposed to the Syrian regime.
- The hegemonic aspirations of Iran have occasioned deep rifts between it and many Arab and Western nations and its interference and support for a myriad of terrorist groups, which has included al-Qaeda and Hezbollah, has caused it to be internationally condemned from many quarters. Some analysts believe that despite the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 2015, its intent to manufacture a nuclear capability remains a matter of genuine and continuing concern.
- The Muslim Brotherhood, which is blamed for being the initial model for Islamic extremism, has paid a heavy price for its actions, particularly in its birthplace, Egypt, and remains banned in a number of countries, although in others it can operate relatively freely. Western nations remain unwilling to take action against the group which outwardly promotes a message of peace but has been proven, as in Egypt, to embrace violence to achieve its goals. It remains a danger to the stability of nations and an inspiration for radical extremists.
• Al-Qaeda has maintained its ability to conduct operations across the globe and, as was predicted, has capitalized on the demise of Daesh which at one point had eclipsed it as the foremost terrorist group in the world. The loss of Osama bin Laden was a grievous blow, however with the support of Iran and others it has emerged as a true survivor and with a global network containing tens of thousands of foot soldiers willing to do its nefarious and malevolent bidding.

• As IS diminishes and its so-called caliphate is all but destroyed it is a widely held belief that it will resort once more to an organisation using the cell structure system which will continue its strategy of terror, albeit on a much smaller scale. Its network of Sunni supporters in Syria and Iraq will provide it with the logistical support to remain a potent force for years to come. There is also suspicion that IS could attract support from Iran on the basis of the similar flawed pragmatism that has seen Iranian support and encouragement for Al-Qaeda.

2. **Chronology of terrorism since 2001 (9/11) (contained in Annex A):**

In the United States, the University of Maryland’s National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) tracks the incidence of incidents year by year. It also maintains the Global Terrorism Index. This reveals an increasing tempo of terror attacks worldwide, although it is noteworthy that the steady erosion of Islamic State Group (IS or Daesh) throughout 2016 and 2017 has led to a noticeable decline in the frequency and quantity of terrorist attacks around the world.
3. **Perceptions of linkage between political Islam and extremism:**

An ongoing theme in the war of words between Tehran and Riyadh has seen Iran’s leadership continuing to promote the notion that Saudi Arabia supports Islamist extremism and has suggested that it is deliberately backing ‘Takfiri’ groups, i.e. Daesh and al-Qaeda, to advance its own political agenda across the Middle East and beyond. An Iranian foreign ministry spokesman stated, ‘this tactical use of terrorism by regional and global players is a strategic game which will have long-term and strategic repercussions.’

For some time Iran has been engaged in this policy which has exploited the deepening hostility between the two nations in an attempt to try to shift the West’s long-standing anti-Iranian discourse and instead to paint Saudi Arabia as the primary supporter of terrorism in the region rather than Iran. For a time the Iranian policy gained some traction, particularly as the war in Yemen has dragged on and the humanitarian crisis has deepened. In a move that suggests that a shift away from instinctive Western support for Saudi may be starting to happen, some Western politicians in both the US and Europe have risked criticising Saudi as supporters and financiers of terrorism and Islamist extremism. Iran has sought to intensify this breach in a bid to take political and diplomatic advantage of what appears to be both America and Europe’s cooling enthusiasm for Saudi Arabia, and to some extent the rest of the Arabian Gulf. However, the arrival of President Donald Trump served to push back some of the gains made by those who wished to isolate the kingdom with the signing of a multi-billion dollar arms contract shortly after his investiture. It is common knowledge that Riyadh has supported certain rebel groups in the war in Syria, some of which are extremist groups, however as they were fighting the common enemy, Daesh, this has been largely overlooked,

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3 http://www.start.umd.edu/
principally because Washington was providing similar support to what it described as ‘moderate’ rebel groups.

Tehran’s hegemonic aspirations in Syria and the wider Middle East are well-documented. From the very beginning of Daesh’s rise to power in 2014 as it swept through Syria and Iraq it provided military support in terms of arms, ammunition and manpower for the regular forces and Shia militias opposing its advance. It has always backed the Lebanese terrorist group, Hezbollah and has maintained a steadfast level of support to the regime forces of President Bashar al-Assad. The arrival of the Russians and to a lesser extent Turkey bolstered its position and as a result it has increased its influence exponentially across the region, even extending as far as Yemen, where it has been supplying arms, ammunition and training for the al-Houthi rebels. The surface to surface missiles fired from al-Houthi positions which damaged some Saudi-led coalition shipping were believed to have been supplied by Tehran. Both Saudi Arabia and the US now accuse Iran of supplying ballistic missiles to the al-Houthi rebels in Yemen, including one that targeted the kingdom’s capital of Riyadh and its international airport on 4 November. The Saudi foreign minister directly accused Hezbollah of firing the missile and said the attack amounted to ‘an act of war.’

The CIA’s recent release of most of the documentation captured in the US mission to assassinate Osama bin Laden has revealed that the unlikely saviour of al-Qaeda is Iran. Al-Qaeda apparently covertly embarked on what is described as a remarkable pact with the Shia state. CIA director, Mike Pompeo, suggested the al-Qaeda-Iran pact had been an ‘open secret’ during the Obama administration, which he said had ‘failed to act.’

President Donald Trump has used the alleged link of political Islam with extremism to justify his intention to de-certify the Iran nuclear deal which he feels is wholly unacceptable, however he is facing what is described as ‘overwhelming European opposition to the move.’

The allegations of a link between Iran and al-Qaeda has come to light after the US raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound revealed documents, which amongst other evidence, stated that ‘negotiations between al-Qaeda and the Revolutionary Guards in Tehran touched on funding and arming the Sunni terror outfit so it could strike at American targets.’

In the light of the new evidence and interviews conducted with senior al-Qaeda members and Osama bin Laden’s family over the last five years, the link which has often been dismissed in the past appears to be gaining more credibility.

The report⁴ catalogues the covert activities of various agents and the alleged involvement of the US. It outlines the role of al-Qaeda operative Mahfouz Ibn el-Waleed in 2001 who apparently brokered the deal to support and train the group and provide sanctuary for its members and their families in Iran.

Only 400 strong when the Twin Towers fell, damaged by the US invasion of Afghanistan and then later overshadowed by Daesh, al-Qaeda now, with its leadership split between Iran, Pakistan, and Syria, has quietly rebuilt itself to the point of being able to call on tens of thousands of foot soldiers. Melding with anti-Assad forces, reducing its volubility, and toning down the barbarity associated with it during the al-Zarqawi years, a reformed al-Qaeda allied, trained and equipped by Hezbollah and the Quds Force are models for how it might now evolve.

Many analysts have said that al-Qaeda was the organization which was most likely to survive and indeed benefit from the demise of the more reckless Daesh, it appears that its dangerous liaison with Iran continues to bear it much fruit.

The Western and other ‘apologists’ for the Iranian regime have long been promoting it as an essentially ‘normal and progressive nation, keen on regional stability, fighting terrorists, and insisting only on its right to self-defence.’ The released documents tell an entirely different story which confirms what many analysts have suspected for years in that al-Qaeda and the Islamic Republic of Iran are not so much enemies as rivals. Although they have profound theological differences, al-Qaeda is Sunni, Iran’s mullahs are Shia, they have forged a common bond.

The unlikely relationship which was suspected but could not be conclusively proved, that is until now, reveals that al-Qaeda and the theocrats in Tehran do manage to cooperate, collaborate and collude. Why have the two groups which have such irreconcilable differences of belief formed a pact? US analyst, Clifford May, asserts that both believe they have a religious duty to wage a jihad against the ‘arrogant,’ which means ‘insufficiently submissive infidels’, and naturally the Americans (the great Satan) and the Israelis (the little Satan) are at the top of both of their lists.

Although Turkey is not featuring widely in the international news of late, the once democratic nation lead by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is continuing with its Islamification process. One commentator said that ‘the signposts ahead are bleak indeed, despotism, terrorism, and possible civil war. Just over the horizon, scenarios like ‘failed state’ and forced partition are coming into view.’ The referendum in April which voted in favour of new presidential powers for President Erdogan refocused attention on government abuses in the aftermath of the coup, including a purge which has gone far beyond those who backed the putsch to target those who oppose the president’s policies. Tens of thousands of academics, judges and members of the security forces have been dismissed and top opposition politicians and dozens of journalists have been arrested. The instigation of a constitution which dispenses with Turkey’s parliamentary system in favour of an executive presidency, or more accurately, an imperial Islamic presidency is now a reality.

Ankara’s support to the Syrian Turkmen brigades which fought alongside the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) in 2015 against the regime forces of President Bashar al-Assad demonstrates its willingness to support, albeit tacitly, extremist groups to promote its political aspirations in the region.
Concerns are apparently reverberating around the corridors of the Whitehouse were it states that the day may be approaching when US policymakers may have to decide what action to take with a NATO ally who no longer may be a suitable member of the organisation.\(^5\)

In a closed-door briefing to US lawmakers last January, Jordan’s King Abdullah II said that President Erdogan ‘believes in a radical Islamic solution to the problems in the region and the fact that terrorists are going to Europe is part of Turkish policy.’\(^5\)

President Erdogan’s pursuit of an Islamist dictatorship is almost complete and as a consequence many view him as a growing threat to US interests. His policies are certainly endangering the well-being and stability of Turkey, which remains a vital member of NATO. But they are also fanning the flames of extremism and terrorism beyond Turkey’s borders, particularly in Syria and the Middle East, but increasingly in Europe as well. The country that is supposed to be a reliable bulwark for security and stability on NATO’s southern flank is fast becoming a major source of risk to both the alliance’s democratic values, and more importantly, its own interests.

4. **The Muslim Brotherhood’s links to extremism:**

The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamic organization which was founded in Ismailia in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in March 1928 as an Islamist religious, political, and social movement. Importantly, the Muslim Brotherhood embraced the notion of ‘jihad’ as a sacred duty – both inside and beyond the state. The group spread to other Muslim countries, but its largest membership remains centred on Egypt. It manifested itself as a party of opposition to the standing government and was subject to a series of crackdowns in 1948, 1954, 1965 after plots, or alleged plots, of assassination and overthrow were uncovered. It is alleged that former Egyptian MB member, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was involved in the assassination of President Anwar Sadat on 6 October 1981. Following the 2011 Revolution the group was legalized, and in April 2011 it launched a civic political party called the Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt) to contest elections, including the 2012 presidential election and its candidate Mohamed Morsi became Egypt's first democratically elected president. One year later, following massive popular demonstrations, Morsi was ousted and arrested. Many Western nations view the MB as a group which borders on legitimacy; accordingly permitting and tolerating its presence in those countries. The warning from those countries which have designated it a terrorist organization since 2014 such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and Russia do not give it the benefit of any doubt and view it as a malevolent and seditious organization which should have any and all legitimacy and freedom to operate taken from it.

The Muslim Brotherhood persistently describes itself as an organisation which wishes to effect change through peaceful means only, however many believe that this is not the case and that extreme violence is part of its ideology to promote Islam. Those Gulf States and others who have outlawed the organisation know very well that this is the case, however a number of countries, particularly in the West, have accepted the MB’s rhetoric of peace and

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in many cases, such as the US, the UK and Qatar have offered its members sanctuary and a platform to promote the groups malevolent message.

After the election of President Donald Trump the new Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, stated that he intended to 'upend the disastrous policy of support to the Muslim Brotherhood' by the Obama administration. He described the MB as the 'tip of the Sunni Islamic supremacist spear.'

The MB is perceived to have benefited significantly during Obama’s two terms in office. Secretary of State Tillerson has maintained his aims to reduce the growth of Islamic extremism and with the ongoing demise of Daesh he stated that it will now 'allow us to increase our attention on other agents of radical Islam like al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and certain elements within Iran.' The policy envisions a much harder line on Islamic extremism, which, if the policy is carried through, as one observer noted that, ‘the days of Islamist coddling will end.’

The MB always portrays itself as an organization which desires to effect change through peaceful means, however the deception of the MB has slowly been revealed to the US, initially by its Arab allies and more recently by a series of reports exposing its true intent. The group’s explanatory memorandum for North America produced in 1991 seeks the ‘destruction of Western civilization from within,’ a term also used is ‘civilization Jihad.’ The very fact that its ideological leaders, Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, imbued the group with a totalitarian theological-political ideology fixated on spreading Sharia law over the world through means both violent and peaceful, reveals how the group could never achieve its aims without a recourse to violence.

The chief counterterrorism adviser on the US National Security Council under Presidents Clinton and Bush told a Senate committee in 2003 that ‘the Muslim Brotherhood has provided the ideological model for almost all modern Sunni Islamic terrorist groups. Hamas, al-Qaeda and Palestinian Islamic Jihad were listed.

Although the Brotherhood regularly distances itself from violence, its Palestinian affiliate, Hamas, is overtly violent and has been designated a terrorist organization by the US since 1997.

The Arab League Secretary General and former Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, said in an interview before Mr Trump’s inauguration, ‘the Muslim Brotherhood is the legitimate parent of every violent movement in the region, historically.’ Many hard line Islamic extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda, have modelled their core existence on the MB, but have added extreme violence into their philosophies.

A note in Osama bin Laden’s recently released diary offers his praise for al-Jazeera, Qatar’s popular news-and-propaganda outlet, which some may view as him also praising Qatar’s overt support for the Muslim Brotherhood. Also in the diary, Bin Laden reflects on the Muslim Brotherhood and how it ‘influenced his view of the world and led him to commit his life to jihad.’ If the FBI’s ‘most wanted terrorist’ drew his inspiration from the ideology and history of the MB then why are so few nations listening to those whom have designated it as a terrorist organization?
A crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in the US may seem to be the obvious route to curbing the rise of Islamic extremism, however, as always, there are positives and negatives with such a policy. Despite the MB losing much credibility after the crackdown on dissent and economic meltdown during former President Mohamed Morsi’s turbulent year in power in Egypt, it still retains millions of supporters. Some observers believe that outlawing the group could complicate US relations with critical allies in the region such as Turkey. Others do not feel that a country which chooses to support the MB whilst other allies do not is a serious issue. On the condition that the MB does not import any form of sedition into countries which do not support it from allies who do support it. It is therefore unlikely that security, arms trading and economic relations will be affected.

A number of Arab countries accept that the Muslim Brotherhood is part of their societies and have allowed members to take positions in their governments and form political parties, such as Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait. The head of the Brotherhood-dominated Egyptian Revolutionary Council, Maha Azzam, said that designating the MB in the US as a terrorist organization would force members underground, make them angry and will radicalize them which will undoubtedly be viewed by many as nothing more than a direct threat. In other words ‘if you designate us as a terrorist group we will become one!’ It is not what one would expect from one of the heads of the group which advocates a peaceful approach. Such protestations are unlikely to sway the opinion of the new US administration as it initially supported Senator Ted Cruz’s bill in Congress to designate it as a foreign terrorist organisation.

The Obama administration’s foreign policy in the Middle East has been seen by some as ‘risk adverse’ at best and ‘damaging’ at worst. One of the major difficulties has always been its attempts to draw a distinction between Islamists and terrorists, where it argued that lumping them together was making the fight against violent extremists harder. The consequence of the political and military dithering has seen the emergence of Russia, Turkey and Iran as the major powerbrokers with the most influence in the region. The more pragmatic ‘black and white’ approach of the Russians was initially seen as the wrong choice, but it has since proven to have been more effective. The fall of Aleppo to the Russian, Iranian and Syrian regime forces was seen by some as the defining moment where the balance of power and influence shifted away from Washington, thereby allowing Moscow to assume its position as the leading nation in the region.

The report by the South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF)\(^6\), which is an organisation working to promote freedom, democracy and peace in South Asia and Europe, does not, on the surface, seem to be extraordinary. It compares the MB with Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and describes them as ideological brothers and draws parallels between the two Islamist organisations. Interestingly the founder of JeI, Maulana Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi, is said to

have been ‘deeply influenced’ by the MB but the MB is said to have ‘borrowed heavily from his writings.’

It states that ‘both groups have a similar ideology that permits the use of extreme violence for promoting Islam in society.’ And during the periods that they have been in the government, namely the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from June 2012 to July 2013 and JeI-BD in Bangladesh in 2001, they have been marked by incidents of increasing violence against women, minority Muslim communities and political institutions. Moreover, both groups have also been known to give birth to extremely radical offshoots, al-Qaeda and Hamas in case of the MB, and the Islamic Chhatra Shibir in the case of JeI-BD.

The study clearly brings out the deep ideological similarities between Islamist movements like the MB and JeI-BD, which despite their democratic rhetoric and apparent wish to adopt democratic practices such as elections to come to power, believe in a Millennial Islamic Movement to establish their ‘cherished goal’ of a global caliphate, or ‘God's Kingdom’, in which women and minorities would not enjoy equal opportunities and rights. The very fact that the groups openly wish to discriminate should have precluded the West from supporting them, however it has not occurred. The author makes a very astute observation when he says, ‘their lip service to democracy and apparent acquiescence to secular law reflects their pragmatism, not their transformation into liberal democratic organisations.’

The report states that the MB and JeI have been ‘the ideological inspiration for a multitude of terrorist groups in various parts of the world. It added that the followers of these ideologies have adopted multi-pronged strategies, namely the spread of the ‘Madrassa’ system of education to mould the thinking of Muslim youth, adherence to a uniform dress code, mass conversions and the negation of national boundaries on the grounds of religion and intolerance towards other sects and religious beliefs. The study cautions that the spread of such violent Islamic thought has the potential of pushing the world into a violent confrontation between Islam and other religions.’

5. **Assessment of current state of al-Qaeda and its affiliates:**

Al-Qaeda is a militant Sunni Islamist multi-national organization founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and several other Arab volunteers who fought against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. After May 2011, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda’s Deputy Operations Chief prior to bin Laden’s death, assumed the role of commander, according to an announcement by al-Qaeda on June 16, 2011. He replaced Saif al-Adel, who had served as interim commander.

Al-Qaeda operates as a network made up of Islamic extremist, Salafist jihadists. It has been designated as a terrorist group by the United Nations Security Council, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, the United States, Russia, India, and various other countries. Al-Qaeda has mounted attacks on civilian and military targets in various countries, including the 1998 US embassy bombings, the September 11 attacks, and the 2002 Bali bombings. The US government responded to the September 11 attacks by launching the ‘War on Terror.’ With the loss of key leaders, culminating in the death of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda’s operations have devolved from actions that were controlled
from the top down, to actions by associated groups and lone-wolf operators. Characteristic techniques employed by al-Qaeda include suicide attacks and the simultaneous bombing of different targets. Activities ascribed to it may involve members of the movement who have made a pledge of loyalty to bin Laden, or the much more numerous 'al-Qaeda-linked' individuals who have undergone training in one of its camps in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq or Sudan. Al-Qaeda ideologues envision a complete break from all foreign influences in Muslim countries, and the creation of a new caliphate ruling over the entire Muslim world.

On March 11, 2005, al-Quds al-Arabi published extracts from Saif al-Adel's document 'al-Qaeda's Strategy to the Year 2020.' Abdel Bari Atwan summarizes this strategy as comprising five stages to rid the Ummah (the whole community of Muslims bound together by ties of religion) from all forms of oppression:

1. Provoke the United States and the West into invading a Muslim country by staging a massive attack or string of attacks on US soil that results in massive civilian casualties.
2. Incite local resistance to occupying forces.
3. Expand the conflict to neighbouring countries, and engage the US and its allies in a long war of attrition.
4. Convert al-Qaeda into an ideology and set of operating principles that can be loosely franchised in other countries without requiring direct command and control, and via these franchises incite attacks against the US and countries allied with the US until they withdraw from the conflict, as happened with the 2004 Madrid train bombings, but which did not have the same effect with the July 7, 2005 London bombings.
5. The US economy will finally collapse by the year 2020, under the strain of multiple engagements in numerous places, making the worldwide economic system, which is dependent on the US, also collapse, leading to global political instability, which in turn leads to a global jihad led by al-Qaeda, and a Wahhabi Caliphate will then be installed across the world, following the collapse of the US and the rest of the Western world countries.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed who was one of the al-Qaeda planners of the 9/11 attacks stated, 'we will win because Americans don’t realize... we do not need to defeat you militarily; we only need to fight long enough for you to defeat yourself by quitting... Eventually, America will expose her neck for us to slaughter.' He lists a series of capitulations by Western countries, Spain’s retreat from Iraq in 2004 which James Phillips said, 'will be perceived as a huge political triumph for al-Qaeda and like-minded Islamic radicals, probably their most important achievement since September 11, 2001.' The Bataclan massacre in Paris, the French reaction – absolutely nothing. The Berlin massacre at a Christmas market, the German reaction – absolutely nothing. In contrast, when one Jordanian pilot was burned alive by Daesh, King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein of Jordan delivered a press conference barely containing his anger and promptly dispatched his warplanes which bombed a number of Daesh targets in retaliation for the murder.

The list of al-Qaeda direct and indirect affiliates which include some which have left the organization and joined the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant are contained in Annex B.
Iran has been revealed, in what is an interesting twist to an already complicated story, as the unlikely saviour of al-Qaeda which apparently covertly embarked on what is described as a remarkable pact with the Shia state. CIA director, Mike Pompeo, suggested the al-Qaeda-Iran pact had been an ‘open secret’ during the Obama administration, which he said had ‘failed to act.’

President Donald Trump has used the alleged link to justify his intention to de-certify the Iran nuclear deal which he feels is wholly unacceptable, however he is facing what is described as ‘overwhelming European opposition to the move.’

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In the light of the new evidence and interviews conducted with senior al-Qaeda members and Osama bin Laden’s family over the last five years the link which has often been dismissed in the past appears to be gaining more credibility.

The report (Ref 1) catalogues the covert activities of various agents and the alleged involvement of the US. It outlines the role of al-Qaeda operative Mahfouz Ibn el-Waleed in 2001 who apparently brokered the deal to support and train the group and provide sanctuary for its members and their families with Tehran.

Only 400 strong when the Twin Towers fell, damaged by the US invasion of Afghanistan and then later overshadowed by Daesh, al-Qaeda now, with its leadership split between Iran, Pakistan, and Syria, has quietly rebuilt itself to the point of being able to call on tens of thousands of foot soldiers. Melding with anti-Assad forces, reducing its volatility, and toning down the barbarity associated with it during the Zarqawi years, a reformed al-Qaeda allied, trained and equipped by Hezbollah and the Quds Force are models for how it might now evolve.

Many analysts have said that al-Qaeda was the organization which was most likely to survive and indeed benefit from the demise of the more reckless Daesh, it appears that its dangerous liaison with Iran continues to bear it much fruit.

The fact that the documents have finally been released by the director of the CIA, Mike Pompeo, means that the Iranians have been exposed as being closely linked with al-Qaeda. Iran’s foreign minister, Javad Zarif, and those ‘apologists’ for the regime have long been promoting Iran as an essentially ‘normal and progressive nation, keen on regional stability, fighting terrorists, and insisting only on its right to self-defence.’ They may now need to adjust their stances in the light of the new evidence.

The released documents tell an entirely different story which confirms what many analysts have suspected for years in that al-Qaeda and the Islamic Republic of Iran are not so much enemies as rivals. Although they have profound theological differences, al-Qaeda is Sunni,
Iran’s mullahs are Shia. For 1,400 years, no peace process has resolved the split between these two readings of Islam.

However, the unlikely relationship which was suspected but could not be proved, that is until now, reveals that al-Qaeda and the theocrats in Tehran do manage to cooperate, collaborate and collude. Why have the two groups which have such irreconcilable differences of belief formed a pact? US analyst, Clifford May asserts that both believe they have a religious duty to wage a jihad against the ‘arrogant,’ which means ‘insufficiently submissive infidels,’ and naturally the Americans (the great Satan) and the Israelis (the little Satan) are at the top of their lists.

Mr May’s ‘scattergun’ approach finishes by pointing out a note in Osama bin Laden’s diary in which he offers praise for al-Jazeera, Qatar’s popular news-and-propaganda outlet. He is perhaps alluding to Qatar’s overt support for the Muslim Brotherhood. Also in the diary, Bin Laden reflects on the Muslim Brotherhood and how it ‘influenced his view of the world and led him to commit his life to jihad.’ Some observers may be of the opinion that Mr May is guiding the reader to view those nations which support the Muslim Brotherhood in a wholly different light.

6. **Assessment of current state of Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates:**

Nearly three years since the group’s elusive leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a self-styled Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, IS (or Daesh) is reeling from losses across its so-called caliphate. Its greatest prize Mosul, its biggest hub in Iraq, has fallen to the US-led coalition forces and its de-facto capital in Syria, Raqqa, has fallen to the predominantly Kurdish US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

President Bashar al-Assad’s Russia and Iran-backed forces have recaptured most of Syria from the militant group and are fighting to capture al-Boukamal, the last town still in Daesh hands. The haemorrhaging of its territory is not its only concern, as over the last eight to ten months the group has seen a steady erosion of its finances, many of its prominent and capable leaders have been killed and Muslim hackers have targeted the Amaq News Agency which is Daesh’s online propaganda network. Some analysts have compared the hack with the physical destruction of Daesh’s caliphate which has been steadily crumbling in both Syria and Iraq. Although, the amount of genuine propaganda has reduced significantly it is concentrating on releasing quality pieces such as instructional materials on how to plan terror attacks which could still prove to be extremely dangerous.

The capture of territory and the destruction of all its institutions are pushing the group from its conventional, ground holding military threat back to its ideological and terrorist roots.

Prior to being assassinated by a US drone strike last year, Daesh spokesman, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, stated that ‘potential setbacks in Mosul and Raqqa would not spell the group’s end. He clarified the group’s philosophy and position on its reversal of fortunes by saying, ‘no, defeat is losing the will and the desire to fight.’

Most of Daesh’s jihadists have embraced martyrdom and made the attackers in Mosul, Raqqa and other cities and towns pay a high price. Those who choose to stand and fight and
die are usually the foreign fighters, as the locally recruited Sunni fighters traditionally have tended to try to flee. Chechens are unlikely to be welcomed back by the head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, and nor are those North Africans who filled the ranks of the group, particularly from Morocco and Tunisia. The main supplier of jihadists for Daesh, Saudi Arabia is also unlikely to give any returnees anything other than a lengthy jail sentence.

The formation of terrorist cells is likely to be well under way and the recent revelations that thousands of heavily armed Daesh fighters were bussed out of Raqqa under a news blackout agreed with the SDF means that the large desert areas will provide their next strongholds. The fight will continue, however it will be in the form of the ‘War of the Flea’ (the classic study of guerrilla warfare by Robert Taber) where small bands of fighters will form underground cells in Syria and Iraq and continue their jihad.

Daesh was adept at absorbing many of the Sunni tribes into its organization and has built a network of well structured and supplied networks specifically created to maintain its fighters in just such a situation that it now finds itself in. Phase two of the war on Daesh is beginning which some analysts believe may take decades to defeat.

The likelihood of some of the fighters switching allegiances to other groups is possible, however due to some of the vicious turf wars between the groups many may not be welcome, particularly the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly known as the al-Nusra Front).

US figures estimated that at least 75% of Daesh fighters have been killed since the war began and there are now estimated to be around 12000 to 15000 left. The fear of fighters returning to their homes in large numbers to carry out ‘lone wolf’ attacks has not materialised and is not thought to present a significant threat.

The list of Daesh (Islamic State) supporters and those which have expressed their allegiance are contained in Annex C:

7. **Terrorist Diaspora:**

Modern terrorist groups have experienced an unprecedented proliferation throughout the world and in particular those groups which are either part of the al-Qaeda or Daesh network or are affiliated or have sworn allegiance to them. Social media and the myriad of communication methods, and particularly the encrypted ones, have provided the groups with a worldwide audience to peddle their radicalized messages as part of their recruitment and communication strategies.

8. **Current threat spectrum:**

The current threat spectrum extends across the globe and the list of terrorist attacks in Annex A is a testament to the fact that modern terrorists can strike anywhere at any time. His or her choice of weapons has ranged from edged weapons to firearms and explosives to
using vehicles as instruments of death and destruction. The truck used in the Bastille Day attack in Nice is noted as the most deadly non-explosive or firearm incident to date.

9. **Terrorism Threats to GCC:**

Terrorist threats to the GCC are ever present. The prevention of which presents an ongoing battle which is raging, mostly under the noses of the unsuspecting public, and so far, comparatively few have been successful. Saudi Arabia endured a series of attacks by Daesh jihadists, which predominantly targeted Shia mosques, however as the security has increased and improved and the intelligence networks have expanded the incidents have reduced exponentially. Bahrain was subjected to, what some have described as an attempt at an 'Arab Spring' by elements of the majority Shia population, however the unrest has largely been resolved but sporadic terrorist incidents are ongoing.

The pressure which the Saudi-led coalition and government forces are putting on the al-Houthi rebels in Yemen has led to threats that they will target ports and airports in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The very fact that these threats have been issued demonstrates how effective the military operations and blockade against them has been and that their only defence is to threaten actions which in reality they are not thought to be equipped or capable of achieving. Although they have had some success with Iranian supplied surface to surface missiles, the 4 November Iranian missile fired from a ground location in Yemen which targeted Riyadh is an indication of their capabilities albeit through their proxy Iran. The land-based attack was intercepted, however some analysts have suggested that a missile fired from a ship may be more successful as it may more easily by-pass the Saudi missile defence systems. Over one hundred missiles have been fired from Yemen into Saudi Arabia since 2015, however most have been intercepted by Saudi missile defence systems.

Although a mission to fire a seaborne missile at a Saudi, UAE or other GCC country from a ship may be difficult to execute, it may enjoy more success than a land-based one. Overall, the threat of a successful short to medium range missile attack is thought to be low.

The main threat remains with individuals who are radicalized online within their respective countries and who, using the simple terrorist techniques posted on the sites, carry out random attacks. Such jihadists are an excellent means for the groups to maintain a constant level of fear throughout the population and from a security services point of view they are almost impossible to pre-empt as they are usually unknown to the intelligence services prior to initiating an attack.

Al-Qaeda has been keen to benefit from the demise of Daesh and as such is likely to encourage its members to maintain the momentum of attacks worldwide with a specific emphasis on targeting Western countries, especially the US and the UK in order to once again present itself as the leader in global terrorism and jihad.

10. **UAE Counter-Extremism Strategy**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a long and proud record of condemning terrorism and Islamist extremism in all its forms. Through its work with international partners, the UAE
continues to demonstrate its commitment to confronting, degrading and eradicating terrorism and extremism across the Middle East and beyond.

The UAE also accepts that violent extremism will not be defeated by military force alone and that a more wide-ranging strategy is required. This includes: disrupting funding; countering the recruitment of foreign fighters; improved border security; opposing the spread of hate and promotion of violence via the web and social media; and, preventing the use of religious centres to radicalise and recruit vulnerable or impressionable young people.

The UAE has actively worked with the US and others in the fight against IS (Daesh) and has committed military contingents to supporting counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen.

Through monitoring and enforcement, the UAE has disrupted the illicit financing of extremist groups through the UAE financial system and within UAE borders. In 2014 it also established the Joint UAE-US Financial Counterterrorism Task Force aimed at enhancing cooperation, coordination and information sharing to shut down terrorist financing networks and cut off the flow of funds to extremists. David Cohen, the US Treasury Department’s under-secretary for combating terrorism and financial intelligence has been quoted saying: “the UAE is steadfastly committed to preventing funding for IS, for Al Nusra Front [and] we have a very good close relationship with the Emiratis in combating terrorist financing.” The establishment of the US-UAE Task Force followed a similarly successful initiative with Saudi Arabia that has been in operation since 2003.

This co-operative effort is not universally accepted in the rest of the GCC and David Cohen is again on the record expressing his concern that neither Qatar nor Kuwait have been willing to proceed against flows of terrorist financing through their financial systems.

Recognising the need to counter extremist propaganda, in July 2015 the UAE launched the Sawab Centre. Again, this is a collaborative project with the US is aimed at contesting extremist propaganda and terrorist messaging – particularly online. Sawab has placed a specific emphasis on amplifying credible Islamic voices, whether these are organizations active in the anti-extremism field, moderate religious scholars, or well-known personalities. In addition, Sawab has sought to amplify credible religious narratives to counteract IS rhetoric and has cooperated with like-minded entities including Al-Azhar.

The UAE is also home to Hedayah (meaning ‘Guidance’ in English), the Global Center for Excellence in Countering Violent Extremism. It aspires to be a “think and do” tank that provides communities and governments around the world with tools to increase their capabilities to counter extremism and recruitment efforts by terrorist organizations. Hedayah was created by the UAE, US, and other member countries of the Global Counterterrorism Forum in 2012. Member nations include many countries whose citizens have funded or exported radicalism, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The motivation

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7 https://www.thenational.ae/world/joint-us-uae-task-force-to-choke-off-isil-funding-1.265483
was to share ideas, outside of existing intelligence and security partnerships, for “redirection of terrorist support and potential recruits through non-coercive preventive measures.”

11. **European perception versus GCC perception:**

The Gulf Cooperation Council nations have always abided by their strict adherence to their Muslim faith which manifests itself to varying degrees within their societies. Saudi Arabia is acknowledged as the custodian of the Holy city of Mecca and has adopted a system of religious rule called Wahhabism which is synonymous with Salafism, however some Salafists consider the term ‘Wahhabi’ derogatory. It is an ultraconservative Islamic doctrine and religious movement, designed to restore pure monotheistic worship by devotees. It does not enjoy universal support across the Muslim world as some of its opponents have described it as a distortion of Islam. Others have blamed it for turning some of its practitioners into extremists. Al-Qaeda and Daesh are deeply rooted into the system. The fact that Saudi Arabians form the largest component of Daesh appears to endorse this view. The GCC perception of Islamic terrorism is such that it is acknowledged but it is not accepted. Emiratis follow the Sunni branch of Islam and around 44% are Salafists, however their interpretation is much less extreme which is reflected in their adoption of an Islamic society which shows a considerable amount of moderation and tolerance without compromising on its Islamic values and standards.

The European perception of terrorism and extremism is based on its secular position as it has relinquished its Judeo-Christian roots from the heart of its societies. A more pragmatic, liberal, business and trade orientated policy has little time for religion and concentrates its efforts on the pursuit of economic stability and peace for its member states. Some analysts would suggest that, with the odd exception, both methods of governance are failing, however the anomaly is the UAE which has remained largely free from terrorism and the mass murder attacks experienced in many Arab nations, the US, Europe and other world nations.

12. **Conclusions:**

Terrorism and extremism remain a constant threat to the fabric of world society where numerous world terrorist organisations and those who support them are actively engaged in doing everything in their power to disrupt and in some cases destroy the status quo in the countries they are targeting. Advances in technology, particularly in communications has exponentially increased the world reach of terrorist groups which can advertise, radicalize and recruit their audience to the greatest effect. Social media sites and in particular those encrypted media portals provide domains where terrorists and those who aspire to be terrorists can freely and securely discuss, plot, plan and direct their activities under the noses of those security agencies and services which are attempting to prevent them achieving their objectives and break up their networks. The ease of movement, particularly in the European Union, has aided the proliferation of terrorism which has seen groups such as

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8 http://www.hedayah.ae/
al-Qaeda, Daesh and their affiliates and supporters embed themselves throughout the fabric of many societies.

The linkage between political Islam and extremism has been made with Iran and its association and support of Shia militias such as Hezbollah and the new revelations of its aid to al-Qaeda. Qatar remains subject to a GCC boycott primarily as a result of its unrepentant support for terrorist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Turkey has metamorphosed into an Islamic dictatorship whose support of terrorist Turkmen groups and other extremist opponents of the Syrian regime has made the US and others question its suitability as a member of NATO. Saudi Arabia has also been accused of supporting extremist groups opposed to the Syrian regime.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which is blamed for being the initial model for Islamic extremism, has paid a heavy price for its actions, particularly in its birthplace, Egypt, and remains banned in a number of countries, although in others it can operate relatively freely. Western nations remain unwilling to take action against the group which outwardly promotes a message of peace but has been proven, as in Egypt, to embrace violence to achieve its goals. It remains a danger to the stability of nations and an inspiration for radical extremists.

Al-Qaeda has maintained its ability to conduct operations across the globe and, as was predicted, has capitalized on the demise of Daesh which at one point had eclipsed it as the foremost terrorist group in the world. The loss of Osama bin Laden was a grievous blow, however with the support of Iran and others it has emerged as a true survivor and with a global network containing tens of thousands of foot soldiers willing to do its nefarious and malevolent bidding.

As Daesh diminishes and its so-called caliphate is all but destroyed it is a widely held belief that it will resort back to being an organisation using the cell structure system which will continue its reign of terror albeit on a much smaller scale. Its network of Sunni supporters in Syrian and Iraq will provide it with the logistical support to remain a potent force for many years to come.

The world is now braced for the shift of the emphasis of terrorism, as Daesh ceases to become a conventional war fighting Islamist army and opens a new chapter of small scale and deadly terrorist attacks throughout the globe. In the meantime al-Qaeda and its affiliates are engaged in a similar campaign albeit on a much larger scale.

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Mark McKinney is an acknowledged expert on international terrorism and extremism. He also continues to conduct research into the impact of political Islam in the Middle East and globally. Recently, he has embarked on a programme of research into the emergence of Non-State Actors as an increasingly prominent actor in the strategic relations of the region.
ANNEX A

Chronology of terrorism since 2001 (9/11):

11 September 2001, US: On 11 September 2001, al-Qaida terrorists hijacked four passenger jets on the east coast of the US and deliberately flew two of them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan and another hit the Pentagon in Virginia. The fourth plane never reached its intended target, crashing in Pennsylvania. These acts killed almost 3,000 people.

12 October 2002, Bali bombings in the tourist district of Kuta on the Indonesian island of Bali. The attack killed 202 people (including 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, and people from more than 20 other nationalities). A further 209 people were injured. Various members of Jemaah Islamiyah, a violent Islamist group, were convicted in relation to the bombings, including three individuals who were sentenced to death. The attack involved the detonation of three bombs: a backpack-mounted device carried by a suicide bomber; a large car bomb, both of which were detonated in or near popular nightclubs in Kuta; and a third much smaller device detonated outside the United States consulate in Denpasar, causing only minor damage. An audio-cassette purportedly carrying a recorded voice message from Osama bin Laden stated that the Bali bombings were in direct retaliation for support of the United States' war on terror and Australia's role in the liberation of East Timor.

23 October 2002, the Moscow theatre hostage crisis was the seizure of a crowded Dubrovka Theatre by 40 to 50 armed Chechens that involved 850 hostages and ended with the death of at least 170 people. The attackers claimed allegiance to the Islamist militant separatist movement in Chechnya. They demanded the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya and an end to the Second Chechen War. The attackers had numerous explosives, with the most powerful in the centre of the auditorium, that, if detonated, could have brought down the ceiling. After the murder of two female hostages two-and-a-half days in, Spetsnaz operators from Federal Security Service (FSB) Alpha and Vega Groups, supported by a Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) SOBR unit, pumped an undisclosed chemical agent into the building's ventilation system and raided it. All 40 of the attackers were killed, with no casualties among Spetsnaz.

11 March 2004, Spain: A series of bombs exploded in a coordinated attack on four commuter trains in the Spanish capital, Madrid, which killed 192 people and wounded more than 1,800. An Islamist group with links to al-Qaida was blamed for the attack. Twenty-one people, mostly Moroccans, were convicted of involvement in the attack, which was the deadliest in Europe since Pan Am Flight 103 blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.

1 September 2004, The Beslan school siege lasted three days, involved the capture of over 1,100 people as hostages (including 777 children), and ended with the death of at least 385 people. A group of armed Islamist terrorists, mostly Ingush and Chechen, occupied School Number One (SNO) in the town of Beslan, in the Russian region of North Ossetia. The hostage-takers demanded recognition of the independence of Chechnya, and UN and Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. On the third day of the standoff, Russian security forces stormed the building with the use of tanks, incendiary rockets and other heavy weapons. At
least 330 hostages were killed, including 186 children, with a significant number of people injured and reported missing.

**2 November 2004**, the Netherlands: Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, a strong critic of fundamentalist Islam, was shot, stabbed and slashed across the throat while cycling through Amsterdam. Dutch-Moroccan Muslim Mohammed Bouyeri was later sentenced to life imprisonment for the film-maker’s murder, which a Dutch court ruled was a terrorist attack.

**7 July 2005, UK**: Four suicide bombers with explosives in rucksacks attacked tube trains and a bus in central London, killing 52 rush-hour commuters and injuring hundreds more. It was the worst single terrorist atrocity on British soil. The killers were later identified as British al-Qaida sympathisers Shehzad Tanweer, Hasib Hussain, Mohammed Sidique Khan and Jermaine Lindsay.

**26 November 2008**, 10 members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, an Islamist militant organisation based in Pakistan, carried out a series of 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days across Mumbai. Transport terminals, cafes, hotels, cinemas and a hospital were targeted. LeT reiterated its aim to introduce an Islamic state in South Asia and to “liberate” Muslims residing in Indian Kashmir. The attacks drew widespread global condemnation, killing 164 people and wounding at least 308. On 29 November, India's National Security Guards (NSG) conducted ‘Operation Black Tornado’ to flush out the remaining attackers; it resulted in the deaths of the last remaining attackers at the Taj Hotel and ending all fighting in the attacks. The Government of India said that the attackers came from Pakistan, and their controllers were in Pakistan. On 7 January 2009, Pakistan confirmed the sole surviving perpetrator of the attacks was a Pakistani citizen.

**March 2012**, France: Mohamed Merah, who espoused radical Islam and said he had links to al-Qaida, killed three Jewish schoolchildren, a rabbi and three French paratroopers in a series of point-blank shootings in and around the southern town of Toulouse during the month. Merah was shot dead after a standoff with police.

**15 April 2013**, the Boston Marathon bombing was a terrorist attack, and related shootings, that occurred when two pressure cooker bombs exploded during the Boston Marathon in April 2013. The bombs exploded about 12 seconds and 190m apart near the marathon's finish line. The explosion killed 3 civilians and injured an estimated 264 others. The FBI took over the investigation and, on April 18, released photographs and a surveillance video of two suspects. The suspects were identified later that day as Chechen brothers Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Shortly after the FBI released identifying images, the suspects killed a policeman, carjacked a civilian car, and initiated an exchange of gunfire with the police in nearby Watertown. During the shootout, a two police officers were injured; one dying from his wounds nearly a year later. Tamerlan Tsarnaev was shot several times in the shootout and his brother subsequently ran him over with the stolen car in his escape. Tamerlan died shortly after arriving at hospital.

**22 May 2013**, UK: British-born Muslim converts Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale murdered British soldier Lee Rigby in an al-Qaida-inspired terrorist attack outside Woolwich army barracks in south London. The pair ran over Rigby before they stabbed him and tried to hack off his head with a meat cleaver. They both claimed that they were “soldiers of Allah” and motivated by the plight of Muslims abroad to carry out the killing.
21 September 2013, unidentified gunmen attacked Westgate shopping mall, the most expensive shopping centre in Nairobi, Kenya. The attack resulted in at least 67 deaths, and more than 175 people were reportedly wounded in the mass shooting. The extremist Islamist group al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the incident, which it characterised as retribution for the Kenyan military's deployment in the group's home country of Somalia. Many media outlets also suspected the insurgent group's involvement in the attack based on earlier reprisal warnings it had issued in the wake of Operation Linda Nchi from 2011 to 2012. Kenyan authorities arrested dozens of people in the aftermath of the attack, but had not announced any suspects directly related to the siege.

24 May 2014, Belgium: A gunman murdered four people in an attack at the Jewish Museum of Belgium in the centre of Brussels. Mehdi Nemmouche, a French national who had spent a year fighting with Islamists in Syria, was arrested and charged with the killings. The victims were two Israeli tourists, a French female volunteer and a Belgian employee of the museum.

22 October 2014, Canada: Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, a petty criminal, shot and fatally wounded a soldier at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. The gunman, who had recently applied for a passport and apparently claimed he wanted to travel to Libya, then stormed into Canada's parliament where he was shot dead.

15 December 2014, Australia: Police shot dead gunman Man Haron Monis, an Iranian-born immigrant who claimed to be a supporter of Islamic State, following a 17-hour siege at a Sydney cafe. Two hostages – a 34-year-old man and a 38-year-old woman – were also killed in the ensuing police raid.

16 December 2014, seven militants from the Pakistani Taliban attacked an army-run school in the north-west of Pakistan, killing 132 children and nine adults. The victims were mostly aged between 12 and 16 and were gunned down in their classrooms by the militants. This was the deadliest ever terror attack to occur in Pakistan and resulted in the death penalty being reinstated for six of the attackers (the seventh and mastermind, Omar Khorasani, was killed in a drone attack in 2016), all of whom were foreign nationals. The massacre sent shockwaves through the country and the Pakistani Taliban was widely condemned. Parallels in the nature and preparation of the attack have been drawn with the Beslan school siege in North Ossetia, Russia, in 2004.

7 January 2015, France: Masked gunmen shot dead 12 people at the Paris office of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Four of the magazine's cartoonists, including its editor, were among those killed, as well as two police officers. Brothers Said and Chérif Kouachi, who had attended militant training camps in Yemen, were shot dead in a standoff with the gendarmerie near Charles de Gaulle airport.

9 January 2015, France: Gunman Amedy Coulibaly killed four people, including a policewoman, in a kosher supermarket in Paris and took others hostage. In a video released after his death, Coulibaly pledged allegiance to Islamic State and said he had coordinated his attack with the Kouachi brothers.

14 February 2015, Denmark: Omar el-Hussein killed two people and wounded five others in two attacks at a cultural centre and synagogue in Copenhagen. The gunman, a radicalised
petty criminal, was killed by police in an exchange of fire after the worst attack on Danish soil for decades.

**10 October 2015**, the death toll of 103 civilians outside Ankara Central railway station on 10 October was the deadliest terror attack in Turkey’s history. The two bombs that detonated were seemingly targeted at a peace march that was protesting against the growing conflict between the Turkish Army and the separatist Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). It was also timed to be close to the upcoming general election to cause maximum disruption. Although no organization claimed responsibility for the attacks, both bombers had links to ISIL, who the Turkish government in turn placed the blame.

**31 October 2015**, Metrojet Flight 9268 disintegrated above the northern Sinai on 31 October 2015 on route from Egypt to Russia. The aircraft was carrying 217 passengers and seven crew members; all of whom were killed. Of those aboard, mostly tourists, there were 219 Russians, four Ukrainians, and one Belarusian. The possibility that a bomb was put on the aircraft at Sharm el-Sheikh led several countries to suspend flights to that airport. Although the cause was initially unclear, shortly after the crash, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)'s Sinai Branch, claimed responsibility for the incident. By November, British and American authorities suspected that a bomb was responsible for the crash and the Russian Federal Security Service announced on 17 November that they were sure that it was a terrorist attack, caused by an improvised bomb.

**13 November 2015**, Paris: A wave of coordinated gun attacks and suicide bombings killed at least 127 people and seriously wounded almost 100 at a series of venues across Paris. Eight assailants have been killed, seven of them in suicide bombings, a French prosecutor has said, but police are still hunting accomplices. The French president, François Hollande, has blamed Islamic State for the massacre and a state of emergency has been declared across France.

**22 March 2016**, three coordinated nail bombings occurred in Belgium: two at Brussels Airport in Zaventem, and one at Maalbeek metro station in Brussels. In these attacks, 32 victims and three perpetrators were killed, and over 300 people were injured. Another bomb was found during a search of the airport. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the attacks. The bombings were the deadliest act of terrorism in Belgium's history. Two suicide bombers, carrying explosives in large suitcases, attacked a departure hall at Brussels Airport. A third bomb was found in a search of the airport and was later destroyed by a controlled explosion.

**12 June 2016**, Omar Mateen, committed a terrorist attack/hate crime inside Pulse, a gay nightclub, in Orlando, Florida. The shooting killed 49 people and injured 53 others. In a phone call to 911 shortly after the shooting began, Mateen swore allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and stated that the shooting was triggered by the US killing of Abu Waheeb in Iraq in May. Mateen was shot and killed by the police following a three-hour standoff. The attack was the deadliest mass shooting by a single shooter, the deadliest incident of violence against LGBT people in US history, and the deadliest attack in America since the 9/11 attacks in 2001. The CIA found no links between Mateen and ISIL.
1 July 2016, six militants attacked a bakery and held hostages in Dhaka. 22 civilians were killed, 18 of whom were foreigners, making this the worst terrorist attack in Bangladesh’s history. A commando battalion set up a perimeter in the early hours of the next morning and launched a raid to rescue the remaining hostages. 13 hostages were saved, whilst five of the militants were killed during the counter-attack. Whilst ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, the Bangladeshi government blamed Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, an Islamic fundamentalist organization that operates in Bangladesh. All the attackers were in their late teens or early 20s and identified as wealthy men from the elite, having attended private schools and universities in Bangladesh and educated with western curricula.

4 July 2016, four suicide bombings exploded across Saudi Arabia on 4 July 2016. Four people were killed when a bomb exploded in the parking lot of the Al-Masjid an-Nabawi. The second and third suicide bombers targeted the Shia mosque in Qatif, but no one else was harmed. The final explosion occurred after police tried to arrest the suicide bomber near the US consulate in Jeddah. Two Saudi Arabian police officers were injured. The attack was the first ever terror attack that occurred in Medina. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks but ISIS is suspected.

14 July 2016, a 19-tonne cargo truck drove into crowds celebrating Bastille Day on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, France. 86 people were killed and a further 434 were injured. The driver, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, was shot and killed by the police during an exchange of gunfire. Two agencies linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed that the attack was inspired by the organisation. Prosecutor François Mollins stated that the attack had been planned for months and that Lahouaiej-Bouhlel had help from accomplices. In August, at least five people were taken into custody on charges of terror offense. In September, 8 more suspects were arrested.

19 December 2016, a truck was deliberately driven into the Christmas market at Breitscheidplatz in Berlin, leaving 12 people dead and 56 injured. One of the victims was the original driver, Lukasz Urban, from Poland, who was found shot dead in the passenger seat. The subsequent investigation found that the driver had been killed several hours before the truck was driven into the market. The perpetrator was Anis Amri, a failed asylum seeker from Tunisia. Amri had previously been sentenced to four years in prison for violence and robbery, which he served in two jails in Sicily. He was then told to return to Tunisia, but the authorities there refused to accept him, around this time (in 2015) it is believed he went to Germany. After a four day manhunt, Amri was killed in a shootout with police in Milan, Italy.

1 January 2017, a lone gunman killed 39 and injured 70 more at the Reina nightclub in the Besiktas district of Istanbul at around 01:15 on New Year’s Day, 2017. The attacker escaped a police cordon on the night, but was later arrested in the city on January 17, ISIL claimed credit for his actions. 2016 had seen heightened tensions between ISIL and Turkey, as Turkish forces had used military force in Syria against ISIL for the first time. Istanbul had also been subject to several terror attacks, such as an attack on their airport and the Vodafone Arena, which had killed 48 and 46 people respectively. 17,000 police officers were on duty in the city, including one that was shot dead as the perpetrator stormed the nightclub.
22 March 2017, a car was deliberately driven into pedestrians on the pavement along the south side of Westminster Bridge, killing three and injuring 50. After the car crashed into a perimeter fence at the Westminster side of the bridge, the attacker abandoned it and ran into New Palace Yard where he fatally stabbed an unarmed police officer. A nearby firearms police officer, seeing the attack, shot and killed the assailant. The attack lasted just 82 seconds in total. The perpetrator of the attack was Khalid Masood, a 52 year-old British man who changed his name and converted to Islam in 2005. He had previously served two prison sentences; for grievous bodily harm in 2000 and for possession of an offensive weapon in 2003.

22 May 2017, a suicide bombing occurred at Manchester Arena in Manchester, England, following a concert by American singer Ariana Grande. The attacker was Salman Ramadan Abedi, a 22-year-old British Muslim, who detonated a shrapnel-laden homemade bomb at the exit of the arena after the show. Twenty-two people were killed - including victims as young as eight years old. A further 119 were injured, 23 critically. Abedi was initially suspected of working within a terrorist network, and various people were arrested in connection with the incident. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the attacks though police later said they believed he had acted largely alone. This attack came just weeks after an attack on Westminster and one week before 8 people were killed in a van and knife attack on London Bridge.

3 June 2017, three Islamist terrorists: ringleader Khuram Shahzad Butt, Youssef Zaghba and Rachid Redouane committed the third major terrorist incident in the United Kingdom of the year. Two of the three men were known to police. Butt was a Pakistani born British citizen, an investigation had been opened on him by counter-terrorism officers following reports of him attempting to radicalise children. He was also featured on a Channel 4 documentary The Jihadis Next Door. Zaghba, born in Morocco to a Moroccan father and Italian mother, was living in east London and held a dual Moroccan and Italian citizenship. He was monitored continuously whilst living in Italy and had been placed on a watch list that was shared with several countries including the UK. Redouane was not previously known to police and was claimed to be either Moroccan or Libyan.

19 June 2017, as large crowds of worshippers were leaving the Finsbury Park Mosque after their nightly prayers in the holy month of Ramadan, they were struck by a hired van, driven by Darren Osborne, a father of four from Wales. Osborne was not known to police, and was not described as suspicious or racist by his neighbours, friends or relatives, but is said to have been troubled for some time. He drove over 150 miles throughout the evening in the hired van to north London, and mounted the pavement in a similar fashion to the London Bridge attack just weeks before. He was detained by members of the public present before the police arrived. The attacker acted alone and was self-radicalised against Muslims following the recent Islamist attacks in London and Manchester. He was quoted as shouting “I want to kill Muslims” and “this is for London Bridge”. The attack has been treated as a terrorist incident by police and terrorism charges have been applied.

17 August 2017, a van was driven into pedestrians, crashing for about 550m, on La Ramblas in Barcelona, Spain. The attack claimed the lives of 13 victims, and injured a further 130. The driver then fled on foot and hijacked a car, by stabbing and killing his 14th victim. Nine hours later, on the 18th of August 2017 in nearby Cambrils, five men in an Audi
A3, thought to be linked to the van attacker, drove the car into a crowd of people before it overturned. The 5 men then exited the vehicle wearing fake suicide vests and began to attack bystanders with knives. Police shot dead all five assailants, who killed one woman and injured 6 others. Younes Abouyaaqoub, believed to be the driver of the van used in Barcelona attack, was shot and killed by police four days later on 21 August, near a gas station in Subirats about 25 miles from Barcelona.

15 September 2017, at around 8:20am BST, a partial explosion occurred on a busy London Underground train, at Parsons Green tube station, in London, England. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the incident through its news outlet, Amaq. The explosion was the result of a homemade bomb, that had been left in a bucket inside a shopping bag. It is believed parts of the device were bought online. In the aftermath wires could be seen hanging out as well as a black towel. It was reported that the device also had a timer attached and was packed with knives and screws. Security minister, Ben Wallace, said the bomb contained TATP, the same explosive used in the 2005 London Underground bombings and the November 2015 Paris attacks. The improvised device sent a fireball through the carriage during the Friday morning rush hour, leaving some passengers with flash burns and others with crush injuries as a result of the rush to leave the scene.

1 October 2017, in the Southern French port city of Marseille, two young women, Mauranne, 20, a medical student from Marseille, and Laura, 21, a trainee nurse from Lyon, were stabbed to death outside Saint-Charles train station. The attack was claimed by Islamic State’s media arm, Amaq. The suspect arrived at the main station at 13.32 and sat on a bench in the square outside. At 13.45 he approached his first victim whom he stabbed several times, after which he fled the scene only to return and claim his second victim, whom he also stabbed repeatedly. Witnesses reported him shouting “Allahu Akbar” before each attack. Soldiers patrolling the station then shot the attacker dead as he ran towards them. It is believed he had multiple fake identities that he had been using in France and North African Countries since 2005, but was officially named by police as Ahmed Hanachi, a 29-year-old Tunisian illegal immigrant.

14 October 2017, Somalia witnessed the worst terrorist attack in its history when a blast caused by a truck bombing in the capital, Mogadishu, killed over 350 people and injured over 400. Two attackers, driving a Toyota minivan and large truck carrying both homemade and military style explosives intended to bomb an airport compound in the Somali capital where international peace keeping organisations are based. After the minivan was detained at a checkpoint, the truck detonated earlier than planned, in the heart of the capital. The al-Qaeda linked Jihadist group, Al-Shabaab, are believed to be behind the deadly attack, though no official claim has been made by the organisation. The incident drew international condemnation and Somali president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, declared three days of mourning following the attack. This was then met with strong protests from the public in a show of defiance.

31 October 2017, shortly after 3pm local time, a rented vehicle struck cyclists and pedestrians in New York, as it drove down a cycle path on West Houston Street, Lower Manhattan. It was driven for many blocks before hitting a school bus and coming to a halt. The driver exited the vehicle holding what appeared to be two hand guns before he was shot in the abdomen by a police officer. The incident killed 8 people and injured 12 (including the
suspect). It was the worst act of terror New York has seen since 9/11. The attacker was named as Sayfullo Saipov, a 29-year-old Uzbek Immigrant who claimed to be inspired by Islamic State. Videos containing Islamic State propaganda were found on his phone. The attack fits the recent pattern of vehicle attacks perpetrated by Islamic State.
ANNEX B

Al-Qaeda's direct affiliates are as follows:

• Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
• Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)
• Al Qaeda in Yemen
• Al-Qaeda in Somalia
• Al Qaeda in the Lands Beyond the Sahel
• Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
• Al-Qaeda in Syria (Jabhat Fateh al-Sham)
• Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
• Al-Qaeda in Lebanon
• Al-Qaeda in the Malay Archipelago
• Al-Qaeda in Kurdistan
• Al-Qaeda in West Africa
• Al-Qaeda in Bosnia and Herzegovina
• Al-Qaeda in Gaza
• Al Qaeda in Spain
• Al-Qaeda in Sinai Peninsula (Jund al-Islam)
• Al-Qaeda in Mali
• Al-Qaeda in Caucasus and Russia

Al-Qaeda's indirect affiliates include the following, some of which have left the organization and joined the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant:

• Ansar Dine
• Abu Sayyaf (pledged allegiance to ISIL)
• Ansar al-Islam (merged with ISIL on August 29, 2014)
• Turkistan Islamic Party
• Caucasus Emirate
• Fatah al-Islam
• Islamic Jihad Union
• Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
• Jaish-e-Mohammed
• Jemaah Islamiyah
• Lashkar-e-Taiba
• Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
• Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group
• Rajah Sulaiman movement
ANNEX C

The list of Daesh (Islamic State) supporters and those which have expressed their allegiance are as follows:

- al-I’tisam of the Koran and Sunnah [Sudan] – 1 Aug. 2014 – Support
- Ansar al-Tawhid in India [India] – 4 Oct. 2014 – Allegiance
- al-Ghuraba [Algeria] – 7 Jul. 2015 – Allegiance
- Djamaat Houmat ad-Da’wa as-Salafiya (DHDS) [Algeria] – 19 Sep. 2015 – Allegiance
- al-Ansar Battalion [Algeria] – 4 Sep. 2015 – Allegiance
- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) [Pakistan/Uzbekistan] Video – 31 Jul. 2015 – Allegiance
- Leaders of the Mujahid in Khorasan (ten former TTP commanders) [Pakistan] – 10 Jan. 2015 – Allegiance
- Jaish al-Sahabah in the Levant [Syria] – 1 Jul. 2014 – Allegiance
- Islamic State Libya (Darnah) [Libya] – 9 Nov. 2014 – Allegiance
- Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) [Indonesia] – Aug. 2014 – Allegiance
- Mujahideen Indonesia Timor (MIT) [Indonesia] – 1 Jul. 2014 – Allegiance
- Central Sector of Kabardino-Balkria of the Caucasus Emirate (CE) [Russia] – 26 Apr. 2015 – Allegiance
- Mujahideen of Tunisia of Kairouan [Tunisia] – 18 May 2015 – Allegiance
- Mujahideen of Yemen [Yemen] – 10 Nov. 2014 – Allegiance
• Supporters for the Islamic State in Yemen [Yemen] – 4 Sep. 2014 – Allegiance
• Ansar al-Islam [Iraq] – 8 Jan. 2015 – Allegiance
• Boko Haram [Nigeria] – 7 Mar. 2015 – Allegiance
• The Nokhchico Wilayat of the Caucasus Emirate (CE) [Russia] – 15 Jun. 2015 – Allegiance
• al-Ansar Battalion [Algeria] – 4 Sep. 2015 – Allegiance