

## “Target: America”



## Lone-Wolf Shooters Motivated by Al Qaidist Ideology:

Shooting Outside CIA Headquarters, El Al Ticket Counter Shooting,  
Shooting at the Seattle Jewish Federation

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Madeleine Gruen and Alfredo Kuilan

[mgruen@nefafoundation.org](mailto:mgruen@nefafoundation.org)

[akuilan@nefafoundation.org](mailto:akuilan@nefafoundation.org)

# Overview



Illustration from Issue 4 of Inspire Magazine, telling readers to fight today, go to paradise tomorrow

- This “Target: America” report examines three deadly shootings perpetrated by individuals (“lone-wolves”) who were not known to be directly connected to Al Qaida (AQ), or to any other terrorist group, but who were likely inspired by “Al Qaidist”\* ideology. In each of the three cases, the shooters were motivated by political grievances and their attacks were intended to avenge Muslims for acts they considered to be perpetrated by the United States.
- The report highlights possible indicators and makes recommendations for Best Practices to protect against lone-wolf shootings.

*\* The term “Al Qaidist” is used to describe an ideology that transcends borders and unifies individuals with a range of grievances into one movement and reflects a nuanced distinction between “al Qaida ideology,” which suggests doctrine that is conceived of, interpreted, and disseminated by a core source, and an ideology that is circulated independently and that morphs according to the requirements and interpretations of the community of its adherents. For more analysis, see, for example, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists” (International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, March 2011)*

# Overview

- AQ and AQ-associated spokesmen have been calling for lone-wolf and guerilla-style attacks to be carried out in the United States. They argue “individual jihad” is every Muslim’s obligation.
- Attacks and plots perpetrated by small cells and individuals have been on the rise in the U.S. The trend will likely continue, as more individuals are inspired by AQ’s call.
- Then-CIA director, Leon Panetta, said that lone-wolf terrorism is a “main threat to this country.”
- Lone-wolf and independent small-cell attacks are the most difficult for security and law enforcement agencies to interdict because there are so few visible advance indicators.
  - It is possible to map a terrorist organization, to identify operatives, and to know their functions. However, small cells and lone wolves are not necessarily part of an organized structure, and there may be no tangible links to outsiders.
  - Command and control assumes a certain degree of communication between a hub and operational nodes. Lone wolves do not necessarily communicate to others, so there is less opportunity to intercept them in the planning stage.
  - Operating in single or small cells creates more opportunities for attack, cheaper operations, and more burden on law enforcement and other security agencies.

# Al Qaida Calls for “Individual Jihad”

*“...the opportunity to carry out the divine obligation of fighting the enemies of Allah today is available to anyone who has the will and determination, regardless of where he might be.”*

- Adam Gadahn, June 2011



(See “You Are Held Responsible Only for Thyself – Part I

[http://nefafoundation.org//file/As-Sahab\\_Part1\\_060311.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org//file/As-Sahab_Part1_060311.pdf))

# Overview

- In each of the cases presented in this report, the attacks were planned in advance; firearms were obtained and targets were selected based on a desire to express a political grievance or to advance a political objective. Although these individuals were not apparently tied to a foreign designated terrorist organization, they were likely inspired by the ideology that defines AQ and other groups that perceive themselves to be at war with the United States because of its foreign policy. These acts are consistent with the definition of terrorism.





# Attacks

# 1993 Shooting Outside CIA Headquarters



- On January 25, 1993, at 7:52 am, Mir Aimal Kansi (a/k/a Kasi), then 29, walked down a row of cars firing with an AK-47 assault rifle as the cars waited for a red light to change outside the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. He killed two and wounded three others.
- Kansi fled the U.S. to Pakistan the day following the shooting using a ticket he bought with cash from an Arlington grocer. Although he spent most of the next four years in hiding in Kandahar, Afghanistan, he was eventually captured in a Pakistan hotel room by the FBI on June 15, 1997.

# 1993 Shooting Outside CIA Headquarters



Kansi arriving at the Fairfax County Jail on June 17, 1997, after his capture in Pakistan. [source: Associated Press]

- On the flight back to the U.S. to stand trial, Kansi gave a written and oral statement to the FBI agent who accompanied him in which he described his crime:  
***"[I] got out of my vehicle & started shooting into vehicles stopped at a red light. I shot approximately 10 rounds shooting 5 people. I aimed for the chest area of the people I shot. I then returned to my truck & drove back to my apartment."*** He also stated that ***"several days before the shooting I decided to do the shooting at the CIA or the Israeli Embassy but decided to shoot at the CIA because it was easier because CIA officials are not armed."***
- When the agent asked Kansi why he stopped shooting, Kansi replied "there was nobody left to shoot." Kansi added that he only shot males because it would be against his religion to shoot females.
- Kansi was executed in Virginia in 2002.

# El Al Ticket Counter Shooting: July 2002



- On July 4, 2002, Hesham Mohamed Hadayet, an Egyptian national who turned 41 that day, arrived at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) with a .45-caliber semiautomatic Glock pistol, a 9 mm Glock handgun, and a hunting knife.
- He opened fire at the El Al ticket counter, killing two and wounding four others, including the El Al security guard, who then shot and killed Hayadet.

# Shooting at Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle: July 2006



- At just after 4 pm on July 28, 2006, Naveed Haq, an American of Pakistani decent, gained entry into the secure facility of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle (JFGS) by holding a gun to a 13-year-old girl's back and stepping through the door with her.
- Once inside, Haq moved through the building and randomly shot six women, one fatally.
- A pregnant woman, who had been shot in the arm, managed to call 911. Haq took the phone from her and told the 911 operator that "this is a hostage situation." He demanded the operator contact the media because he wanted to "make a point" about U.S. foreign policy. He stated that he wanted "these Jews to get out," and demanded the U.S. withdraw its troops from Iraq.
- Haq did not resist arrest.
- He was convicted of murder in the first degree in December 2009 and was sentenced to life without parole plus 120 years.

# Shooter Profiles

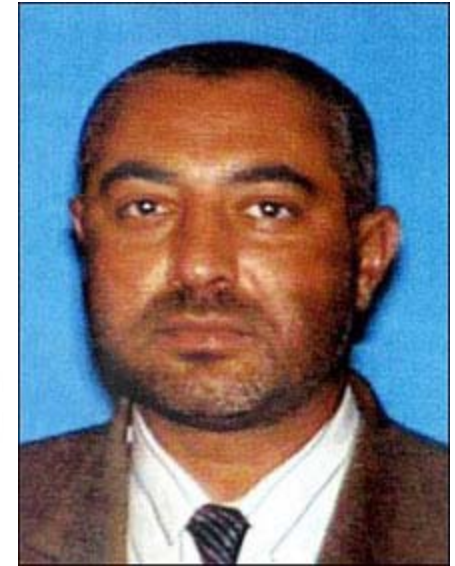


# Mir Aimal Kanshi

- Kanshi was born in Pakistan in February 1964.
- He received a master's degree in English Literature at Baluchistan University in Pakistan.
- In February 1991, Kanshi arrived in New York on a B-1 business visa, using the alias "Mir Aimal Kasi." He was issued a new passport by the Pakistan embassy later the same month after he reported that he had lost his documents. The new passport was issued under the name "Kanshi."
- He applied for political asylum in February 1992, claiming political persecution and fear of the Baluch tribe. He received permission to remain in the U.S. for one year, as the application was pending consideration.
- After his application for political asylum was rejected, Kanshi applied for legalization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. One of the requirements of this amnesty program was that the applicant must have entered the United States illegally prior to January 1, 1982. On his application, Kanshi claimed he entered the United States from Mexico and had lived here illegally from April 1981 to June 1987.
- While Kanshi's applications for legal residency were being processed, he took up residence in Reston, VA , and worked as a driver for a courier service.

# Hesham Mohamed Hadayet

- Hesham Mohamed Hadayet emigrated to the U.S. from Egypt in 1992.
- He had studied commerce in Cairo and worked as an accountant prior to moving to the U.S.
- A few years after his arrival, Hadayet applied for political asylum, claiming Egyptian authorities had arrested him, suspecting he was a member of the terrorist group Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.
- His request for asylum was denied in 1996, however, the process to deport him for overstaying his visa was dropped after Hadayet failed to show up for his INS hearing.
- He eventually gained permanent residency status through his wife who received an immigrant visa through the Department of State's lottery program.
- Hayadet lived in Irvine, CA with his wife and children, and worked as a limousine driver.



# Naveed Afzal Haq

- Naveed Haq was born on September 23, 1975.
- His parents immigrated from Pakistan in the early 1970s.
- His father, an engineer at a nuclear facility in southeast Washington, was a co-founder of the Islamic Center of Tri-Cities in West Richland, WA.
- He attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, then attended a school of dentistry in Pennsylvania, but his mental illness impaired his studies and he returned home to attend a community college. He graduated with a degree in electrical engineering.
- Haq was not known to be religiously devout.
- Haq was diagnosed with bipolar disorder 10 years prior to the shootings, and had a history of auditory hallucinations. He was prescribed Lithium and Depakote to treat his symptoms.
- He had difficulty finding and securing work. He lasted less than a day at a telemarketing job in 2004. The company fired him, citing “deliberate” malexecution of job requirements.
- Five years prior to the shooting, Haq traveled with his parents to Pakistan for an arranged marriage, but returned to the U.S. without his bride.





# Motivations

# Mir Aimal Kansi

- Kansi stated to the FBI, after his capture in Pakistan four and a half years after the attack, that he had shot his victims in retaliation for the U.S. bombings in Iraq and his belief that the CIA was too deeply involved in the internal affairs of Muslim countries. He further stated that he was concerned about the killing of Pakistanis by “U.S. components.”
- Kansi reaffirmed his justification for the shootings hours before his execution at Greensville Correctional Center on November 14, 2002, telling reporters he still objected to U.S. foreign policy, “specifically their pro-Israeli policy, their anti-Muslim, and their anti-Palestinian policy.”
- At the time, Kansi also told reporters he had “friends among the Taliban” and that he had once shaken Osama bin Laden’s hand in Kandahar, but added that Osama bin Laden would not have known him.



Mir Aimal Kansi

# Hesham Mohamed Hadayet

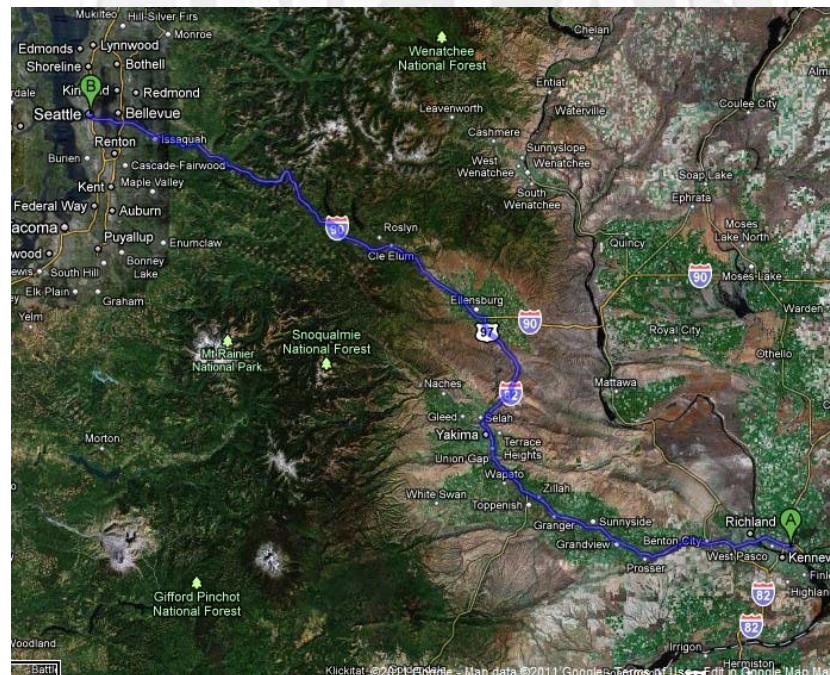
- There is no further publicly available information to confirm Hadayet's 1992 claim to INS officials that he had been arrested in Egypt on suspicion he was involved with Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.
- Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who is currently serving life in prison in the U.S. for his role in the New York City Landmarks conspiracy, was the leader of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya at the time Hadayet lived in Egypt. Rahman arrived in the U.S. in 1990, and based himself in three New York City-area mosques.
- In 1992, Rahman visited several mosques in Orange County, CA, where Hadayet lived, to raise funds. There is no reporting that suggests Hadayet was present for any of Rahman's lectures.
- Hayadet's wife, who had left for Egypt with the couple's children a week prior to the attack for a month-long visit, denied her husband had shown any signs of violent intentions.
- A former employee of Hadayet's limousine service told reporters that Hadayet often made anti-Israeli statements.



"The Blind Sheikh"  
Omar Abdel Rahman

# Naveed Haq

- Haq wrote documents on his father's computer expressing his anger over U.S. policy in the Middle East.
- He is reported to have surfed the Internet for foreign news, particularly about the Middle East.
- Haq made several trips to gun stores in the weeks prior to the shootings.
- He used Mapquest to locate Jewish targets in Seattle, and drove 180 miles from his parents' home in Pasco to attack the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle.



# Naveed Haq

## Haq 911 Call Recording

911: So, what do you...what do you want me to do? You know...

NH: I want you to call the media...

911: You know I can't just get us out of Iraq by you doing this...but...

NH: I want all the media...this is to make a point.

# Naveed Haq

- While still inside the building, with a gun pointed at one of his victims, Haq calmly stated his grievances to the 911 dispatcher. He stated he was:
  - “Very upset that you send bombs to Israel”
  - “Very upset that you stay in Iraq”
- After his arrest, Haq called his mother from jail and stated, “I got the Jews. I did the right thing.”
- At his trial, Haq claimed his shooting rampage at the JFGS was a result of “bad medical care” and a “cocktail of wrong medications,” and he pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity.

# Indicators and Best Practices



# Al Qaida Calls for Individual Jihad

*“America is absolutely awash with easily obtainable firearms. You can go down at a gun show at the local convention center and come away with a fully automatic assault rifle without a background check, and most likely without having to show an identification card, so what are you waiting for?”*

- Adam Gadahn, June 2011

(See “You Are Held Responsible Only for Thyself – Part I  
[http://nefafoundation.org//file/As-Sahab\\_Part1\\_060311.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org//file/As-Sahab_Part1_060311.pdf))

# Indicators and Best Practices

- In advance of a lone-wolf attack, there may not be the tangible indicators that one might see in advance of a terrorist attack committed by a terrorist group, because, when acting alone, the attacker may not communicate his movements to anyone, or take orders from a commander, or require much advance planning or funding. Thus, the opportunities to interdict may be difficult to identify, if there are any at all. However, responders need to be ready to take action when something seems “not quite right.”



# Indicators and Best Practices

- One fact that is universally true is that the shooter needs to obtain firearms and ammunition.
- In all three cases described in this report, the shooters obtained firearms through legal channels.
- Three days before the CIA shooting, Mir Aimal Kansi purchased the AK-47 assault rifle from a Chantilly, Virginia gun shop that had specially ordered it for him.
- The firearms dealer who sold the rifle to Kansi told investigators that he had to show Kansi how to put the weapon back together after Kansi disassembled it. He also instructed Kansi how to load and unload the weapon properly. The dealer considered it unusual that someone who was unfamiliar with an AK-47 would seek to purchase one. The dealer did not report the unusual purchase.
- It is illegal to sell an assault firearm to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen or legal resident of the U.S.



AK-47 similar to the one used by Kansi in the shooting outside CIA headquarters

# Indicators and Best Practices

- On his drive to the Jewish Federation, Haq pulled off the highway and shot each of his two guns once in order to determine which had the lighter trigger pull.
- Shooters may practice at shooting ranges or fire the weapon in a remote location prior to the attack. In urban areas, attackers may practice firing guns on rooftops.
- A lone-wolf shooter may not even practice shooting the firearm prior to the attack.
- Kansi did not know how to operate the AK-47 when he bought it, however, he became proficient enough to use it three days later.
- Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published complete directions concerning how to shop for, clean, and handle an AK-47 in its 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> issues of *Inspire Magazine*.



# Indicators and Best Practices

- A lone-wolf shooting attack is an inexpensive way to call attention to political grievances, inspire fear and panic, and drain local economies.
- Naveed Haq paid approximately \$800 for the guns he carried with him to the Seattle Jewish Federation. He was living on public assistance when the shooting took place.
- However, shooters may also receive funds through illegal means, such as narcotic sales, check fraud, identity theft, sale of counterfeit or bootleg music/movies/software.
- These illegal methods of fundraising give law enforcement the opportunity to interdict.



# Indicators and Best Practices

- Firearms are easy to acquire in the U.S., and are a simple alternative for lone-wolf plotters who are not familiar with explosives.
- Carlos Bledsoe used a gun to attack a recruiting center in Little Rock, Arkansas (see “Target: America: The Little Rock, Arkansas Recruiting Center Shooting”)  
[http://nefafoundation.org//file/FeaturedDocs/NEFA\\_littlerockrecruitingshooting.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org//file/FeaturedDocs/NEFA_littlerockrecruitingshooting.pdf)
- Antonio Martinez intended to use firearms to attack a military recruiting center in Maryland before he was offered an explosive device as part of an FBI controlled operation (see “Target: America: Plot to Bomb a Maryland Military Recruiting Center”)  
[http://nefafoundation.org//file/Martinez\\_FINAL0311.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org//file/Martinez_FINAL0311.pdf)



Antonio Martinez plotted to attack a Maryland recruiting station, first with firearms, then with a car bomb after FBI introduced agents to control the plot.

# Indicators and Best Practices

- Al Qaidist ideology resonates. It also provides a vocabulary to express grievances. Shooters may make comments to friends and co-workers in person, or make comments in chat forums and on social networking sites indicating they have been exposed to the al Qaidist narrative and have been radicalized by it.
- In the past few years, there has been an uptick in lone-wolf attacks and plots in which the participants were inspired by al Qaidist ideologues. Examples include, “Times Square Bomber” Faisal Shahzad (see “Target: America: Attempted Bombing in Times Square” <http://nefafoundation.org//file/TATimes-Square0111.pdf>), Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hasan (see “Target: America: Massacre at Fort Hood” [http://nefafoundation.org//file/nefa\\_forthood.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org//file/nefa_forthood.pdf)), and “The Underpants Bomber” Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (see “Target: America: Attempted Christmas Day 2009 Attack” [http://nefafoundation.org//file/TargetAmerica\\_NW253.pdf](http://nefafoundation.org//file/TargetAmerica_NW253.pdf))



Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif was arrested in June 2011 for plotting to launch a shooting attack on a military processing center in Seattle. Here, Abdul-Latif appears in a video he uploaded to YouTube in which he repeats the sentiments of one of his ideological inspirations, Anwar al-Awlaki. Abdul-Latif's plot is the subject of a forthcoming “Target: America” report.

# Indicators and Best Practices



**IF YOU SEE  
SOMETHING,  
SAY  
SOMETHING.**

- Security professionals should be aware of lone-wolf tactics and be prepared to protect against them.
- Robust human intelligence collection is a key component of a solid counterterrorism strategy.
- Vigilance prevents attacks. That includes good police work and an observant public that is conditioned to look for things that are unusual or out of place.

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