

Global Network Terrorism:

I. Sacred Values and Radicalization

II. Comparative Anatomy and Evolution

(NSC briefing, White House, Washington DC, April 28, 2006)

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I. Moral Logic and Growth of Martyrdom and Support for Extreme Violence in Cultural Conflicts Interviews with Hamas and Jemaah Islamiyah, and Surveys with Supporting Populations

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1. Global Network Terrorism: “Born-Again” Jihad is Not Nihilistic

- It is nonsense to claim that Al Qaeda and its sympathizers have no morality and simply want to annihilate Western civilization, or simply want to go back to the Dark or Middle Ages.
- Charges of nihilism against an adversary usually reflect willful ignorance regarding the adversary’s moral framework.
- The ultimate ambition of Global Jihad is to inaugurate a just and righteous society for believers world over.
- Newer attacks are mostly carried out by small groups and personalized networks which form part of an ever spreading, decentralized and egalitarian world movement – a massive, media-driven transnational political awakening – that would exorcise cultural humiliation and lack of political dignity, of which perceived foreign occupation may be just one manifestation, globalization another (including tourism).

Joining the Jihad: It's Enlistment, Not Recruitment

- ***Recruitment*** into most Jihadi groups is not like most recruitment into a national police or army or university.
- Almost entirely a ***grass-roots enlistment operation*** that is ***bottom up rather than top down*** in the sense that individuals in jihadi networks bring in other ***family members, friends, co-worshippers or co-workers***.
- Organizations seek ***operatives*** who are usually ***better educated and well off*** relative to surrounding population, often with families and good careers or prospects (though somewhat less true of Europe-Maghreb jihadi networks or suicide bombers in Iraq).
- ***Value-committed people show willingness to invest in the future and delay immediate gratification*** (e.g., like medical students who work and study intensely without initial reward). ***So***, unlike most regular army and police, ***they can better sustain resource-deficient insurgencies***.
- Groups like ***Al-Qaeda and Hamas*** also ***spectacularly sacrifice their (and the community's) best and brightest to increase political "market share"*** in the competition for popular support (a "costly signaling" strategy, rooted in evolutionary psychology, that gains trust).

Suicide Bombing: Strategic Logic or Moral Logic?

- Current analyses stress the “strategic logic,” organization, and risk assessments involved.

Sheikh Hamed al-Betawi

(Spiritual guide of **Hamas**, author’s interview, Sept. 2004, Nablus, West Bank)

“Our people don’t own airplanes and tanks, only human bombs. Those who carry out martyrdom operations are not retarded, not hopeless, not poor, but are the best of our people. They do not flee from life. They are educated, not illiterate, successful in their lives.” (Note: demographic profiling supports these claims)

- Instrumental reasons are important but not sufficient to explain exponential growth in suicide attacks.

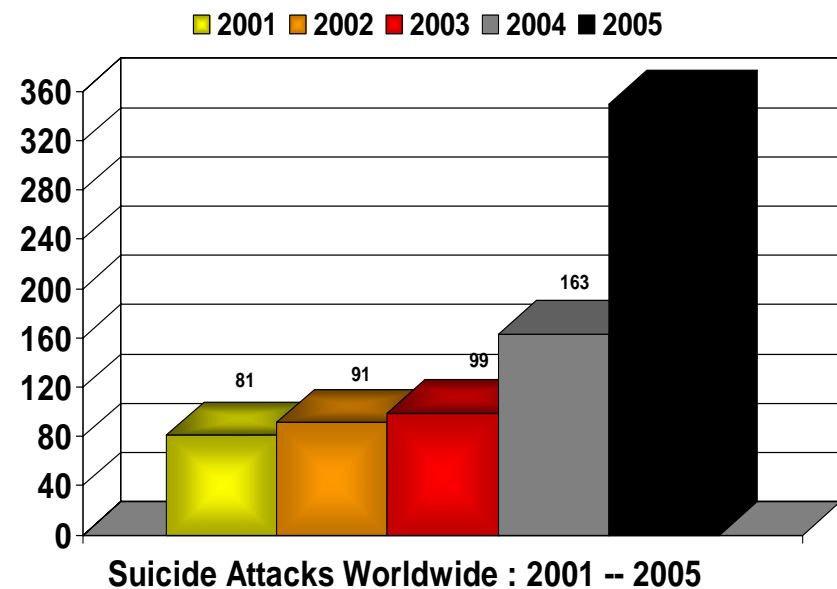
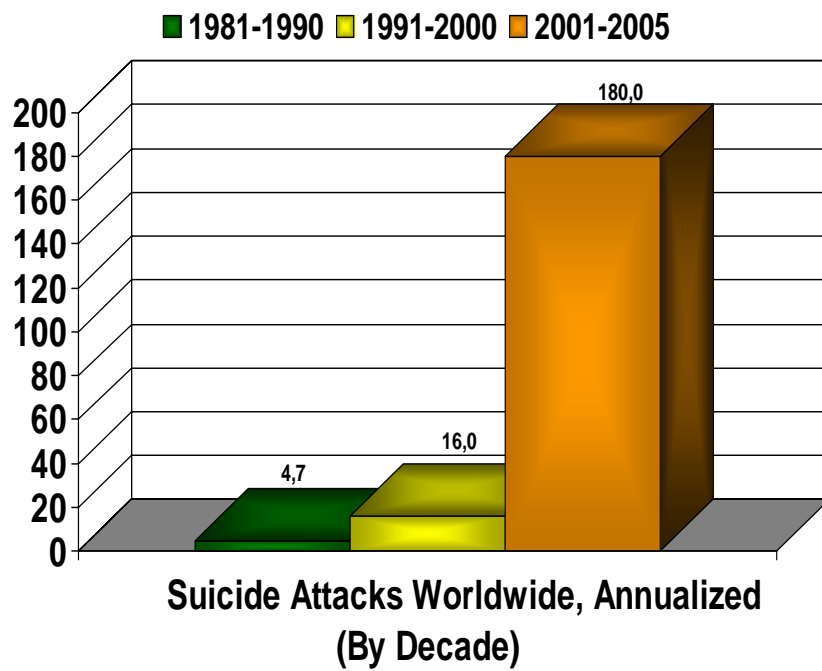
Abu Bakr Ba’asyir

(Emir of **Jemaah Islamiyah**, author’s interview, Aug. 2005, Cipinang Prison, Jakarta)

“There is no nobler life than to die as a martyr for Jihad. None. The highest deed in Islam is Jihad. If we commit to Jihad, we can neglect other deeds, even fasting and prayer.” (Note: this is a radically new view of Islam that trumps all pillars of Islam except profession of faith)

Suicide attacks – the most virulent form of terrorism – were perhaps once mainly organized campaigns by militarily weak forces aimed at ending perceived occupation of the attackers’ homeland. But they are now banner actions for a modern global movement that is religious in inspiration, and claims the role of vanguard for a massive, transnational political awakening spurred by near universal access to world media.

Suicide attacks have grown exponentially, and account for < 5 percent of terrorist events, but \cong 50 percent of casualties



- **When Egyptian beduin are dying to kill European tourists and Egyptians who cater to them,**
- **when British citizens blow themselves up along with other Brits because of Iraq and Afghanistan,**
- **when Malaysian bombers kill Australians and Balinese Hindus in Indonesia as “self-defense” in a “clash of civilizations” between Islam and America,**
- **when Arabs from over a dozen countries rush to embrace death Iraq in order to explode Shi’ites (who are more supportive of Iran than the U.S.),**
- **when Iraqi Sunnis kill mostly Jordanian Sunnis to avenge the “Crusader-Shi’ite” conspiracy that extends to the shores of the Mediterranean and beyond,**
- **then it’s quite a stretch to see the common denominator being secular struggle over foreign occupation of a homeland**
- **– unless “foreign occupation” includes tourism, and “homeland” expands to at least three continents**

Don't Confuse Levels of Decision:

Supporting Population vs. Individual vs. Organization

- *At the level of the organization, strategic calculations of utility are often critical, but not exclusive (terrorist leaders are often sincere).*
- *For the individual and community, moral imperatives often trump utility and rational choice, as in acts of terrorism or heroism.*
- Claims that suicide attacks aim primarily to force out intruders from the attackers' perceived homeland, though primarily true before 9/11, are no longer so.

Moral Barriers to the Rational Resolution of Cultural Conflicts

Instrumental decision-making involves strict cost-benefit calculations regarding goals, and entails abandoning or adjusting goals if costs for realizing them are too high. *Much more is known about economic decision making than about morally-motivated behavior.*

- There is little knowledge or study of *morally essential or sacred values*, which *differ from* instrumental values *of realpolitik and the marketplace by incorporating ethical (including religious) beliefs* that can drive action “independently of its prospect of success.”
- We show that standard political and economic proposals for resolving longstanding conflicts (e.g., just material compensation for suffering) may not be the optimal when conflicts involve clashes of essential values.

Results from interviews with would-be martyrs **(12 Hamas, 12 Jemaah Islamiyah)**

From interviews with Islamist militants, we find that individuals who enlist in Jihad, especially would-be martyrs (suicide bombers), often seem motivated by non-instrumental values that trump rational self-interest.

Such values are “non-instrumental” because they do not seem very sensitive to standard calculations regarding cost and benefit, to quantity, to tradeoffs across moral categories (e.g., family vs. God), to commensuration between different cultural frames, or even to the transitive orderings of preferences that define rationality in standard choice and utility theories (i.e., if A is preferred to B, and B is preferred to C, then A should be preferred to C).

Violation of such values leads to moral outrage and typically "irrational" vengeance ("get the offender, even if it kills us").

Sacred values appear to support non-instrumental moral action because “virtue has its own reward,” and can’t be avoided because “I couldn’t live with myself otherwise.”

Instrumental vs. Non-instrumental Reasoning (militants)

Instrumental: Would-be martyrs and their sponsors use instrumental reasoning when focusing on the consequences of their actions, which involves strict cost-benefit calculations regarding goals, and entails abandoning or adjusting goals if the costs of realizing them are too high.

Interviewees would usually agree to the substitution of a roadside bombing that would not kill the bomber for a suicide bombing that would, and they would also agree to delay a roadside bombing to fulfill a commitment to one of the sacred pillars of Islam, such as making a first pilgrimage to Mecca.

Non-instrumental: But when the choice before them highlights clashing values, then moral considerations seem to trump utilitarian ones. This yields non-transitive reasoning. For example:

Interviewees say it's wrong to refuse to delay a suicide operation for a first pilgrimage, or to prevent lethal retaliation against the bomber's family or town. From a *utilitarian* perspective, then, preference for roadside **bombing > suicide bombing, and pilgrimage > roadside bombing**; however, from a *moral* ¹⁰ perspective, **suicide bombing > pilgrimage**.

Sacred Values Surveys with Palestinian Refugees

(N= 535) and Israeli Settlers (N = 601)

(with Jeremy Ginges and Khalil Shikaki)

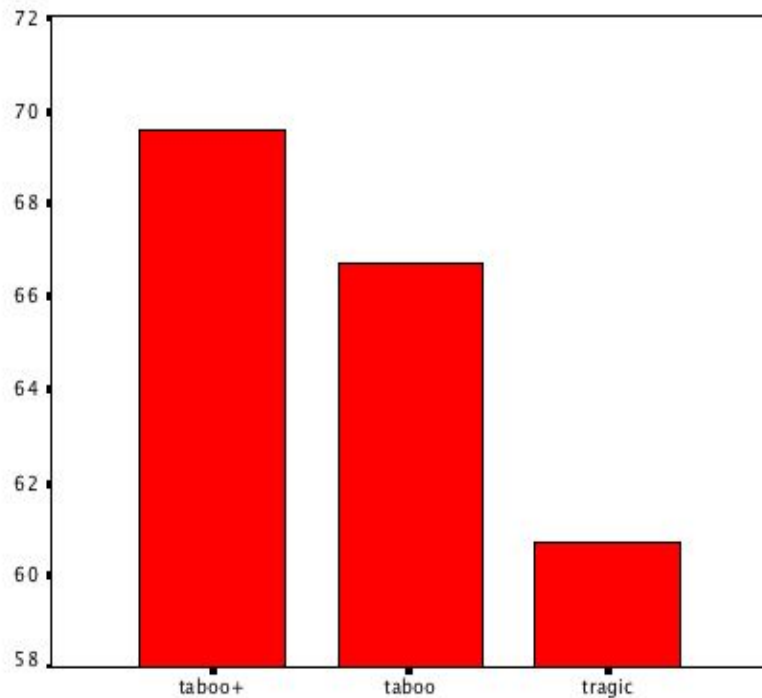
- Participants were randomly assigned first to two scenarios (“recognize” or “relinquish”) and then to one of three types of trade-offs (“taboo”, “taboo+”, or “tragic”). “Recognize” and “relinquish” scenarios yielded similar results.

Relinquish Scenarios for Palestinian Refugees:

- **Taboo** - suppose the United Nations organized a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians. Under this treaty:
 - Palestinians would be required to give up their *right to return* to their homes in Israel.
 - There would be two states – a Jewish state of Israel and a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.
- **Taboo+** - Additional clause:
 - In return, the USA and the European Union would give Palestine 10 billion dollars a year for 100 years.
- **Tragic** - Additional clause:
 - On their part, Israel would give up what they believe is their sacred right to the West Bank.

Refugee predictions of % of population ready to use violence to oppose: a peace deal perceived to violate a collective moral value (“taboo” condition), the taboo deal plus an instrumental incentive (“taboo+”), or the taboo deal plus a collective moral concession without instrumental value from the adversary (“tragic”)

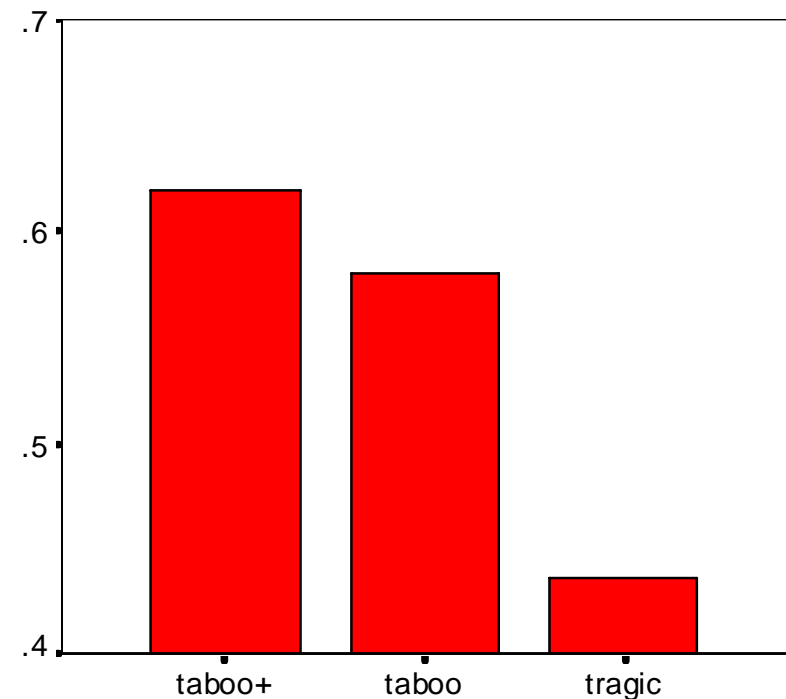
(linear trend: $F[1, 195] = 5.698, P = .018$)



Refugees reporting ‘joy’ at hearing of suicide bombing

(relative to overall mean estimate)

(linear trend, $F[1, 418] = 7.48, P = .007$)



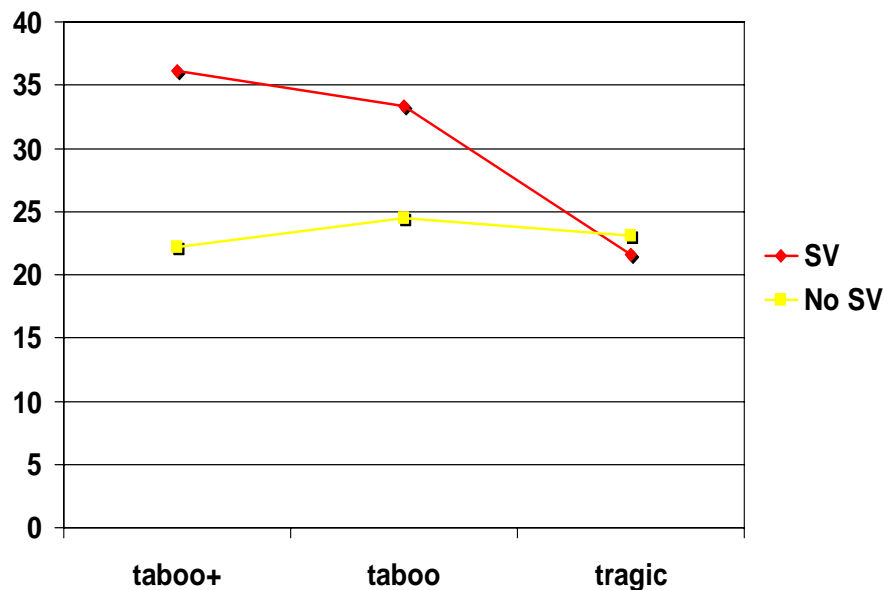
Israeli Settler survey

Given to 601 Jewish residents of the West Bank and Gaza on Aug. 11, 2005, four days before Jewish settlers were made to leave Gaza.

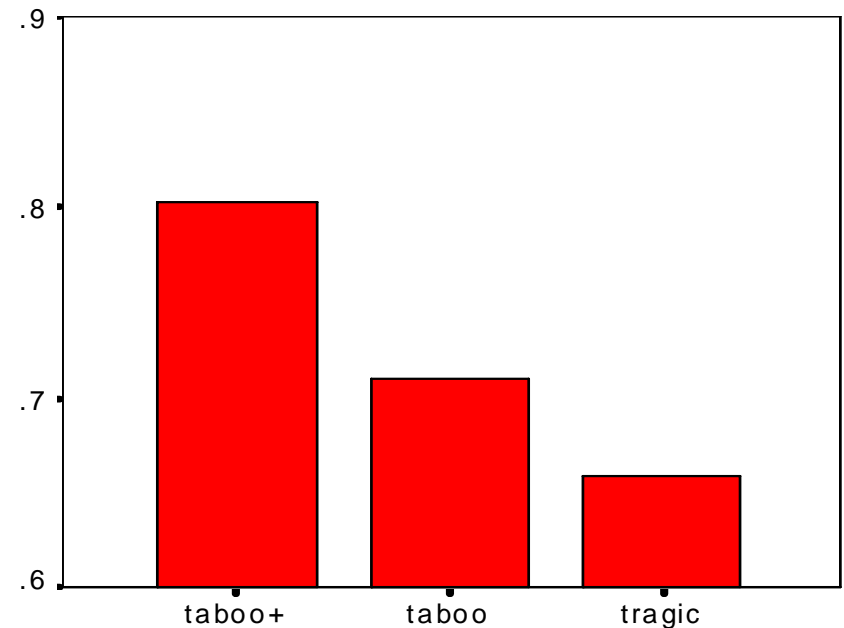
About half of those surveyed disagreed with the following statement:

“There are extreme circumstances where it would be permissible for the Jewish people to give away some part of Eretz Israel [Land of Israel].”

Predictions of % of population ready to use violence to oppose “taboo+,” “taboo” and “tragic” peace deals for those holding **Eretz Israel** as a sacred value (SV) vs. not (No SV)
(linear trend, $F[1, 384] = 7.201, P = .008$)



Settlers reporting ‘anger’ or ‘disgust’ at a deal (relative to overall mean estimate)
(linear trend, $F[1, 260] = 4.436, P = .036$)



Overall Results for Israeli Settler and Palestinian Refugee Studies

- These experiments reveal that in political disputes where sources of conflict are cultural, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or emerging clashes between the Muslim and Judeo-Christian world, ***violent opposition to compromise solutions may be exacerbated rather than decreased by insisting on instrumentally-driven tradeoffs, while non-instrumental symbolic compromises may reduce support for violence.***
- More generally, ***the trend of emotional intensity and support for violence, in each case is inconsistent with a strictly instrumental rationality account of human behavior.***

Non- Instrumental reasoning among supporters of suicide bombing vs. non-supporters

- **Q:** if a chosen martyr's father became ill and his family asked him to take care of his father, would it be acceptable to delay the action indefinitely?

Pro-suicide bombing = 72 % Anti-suicide bombing = 77%

- **Q:** would it be acceptable to permanently forego martyrdom if there were a significantly high chance that the chosen martyr's family would be killed in retaliation?

Pro-suicide bombing = 43 % Anti-suicide bombing = 72%

- **Q:** And what if the bombing attack led to the destruction of olive trees and the bombing of his home town and school and the death of the students? Would it be acceptable to forego the attack in this case?

Pro-suicide bombing = 43% Anti-suicide bombing = 71 %

Discussion

- Palestinians who support suicide bombing are **less** likely to support abandoning extreme violence to save a whole family or village from destruction at enemy hands than to merely help out a family member.
- This suggests that those who have become radicalized to violence (as measured by support for suicide actions) **respond to both sticks (enemy counter-violence) and carrots (taboo+ tradeoffs)** with even **greater support for violence**.
- Recall, however, that in interviews with actual members of action groups (e.g., Hamas members of “martyr groups” and Jemaah Islamiyah Mujahedin) there was overwhelming refusal to abandon a suicide attack **either** to prevent lethal retaliation against the family **or** to help out a sick father.
- This suggests that **those who have joined groups committed to acting** in support of radical violence may **reject all tradeoffs**

Possible Lessons: Conflict Over Headscarves in France

- Perhaps were France to yield on allowing Muslim women to wear headscarves in public schools, the effects would now reverberate throughout the Muslim world to the good.
- The problem, however, is that France, unlike the USA considers signs of physical and religious distinction in school as affronts to the symbolically defining value of French political culture ever since the French Revolution, namely, a universal and uniform sense of social equality (however lacking in practice).
- America's ideal of cultural diversity is perceived by the entire political spectrum in France as an attempt to force an alien notion of community and identity between the only two moral entities recognized in that country – the individual and the state.
- But recall the results of “tragic tradeoff” experiment with Palestinian refugees and Israeli settlers: even a token sacrifice of one side's symbolically held position may weaken the other side's rigid adherence to its own adversarial position.

An Historical Precedent: 'Ping-Pong Diplomacy'

- Consider, in this regard, the case of “ping-pong” diplomacy between the USA and China, which was originally conceived at the University of Michigan, the sacrifice of something of marginal value to one side (losing a ping-pong match where, ping-pong was considered a “basement sport” by most of the U.S. population) was amplified by its value-differential into producing something of great symbolic value for the other side (ping-pong was a sport of national prestige to China).
- This exchange contributed to a historic breakthrough during the Cold War. (Note that cricket matches between India and Pakistan are not likely to have such an effect because cricket has more or less equal value for both countries, so that game becomes zero-sum, with only a loser and a winner).
- Contrast this with the efforts of Japan to conciliate China in 2005, which were destroyed by the Japanese Prime Minister’s symbolic attendance at a World War II shrine. Also, much of the back-and-forth between the American colonies and Britain in the lead up to the revolutionary war concerned the validity of a tax that Britain set deliberately at a low level to make the symbolic point that it had the right to tax the colonies as it chose.

Discussion: The Risk of Not Considering Sacred Values

- The power of sacred values is something the US administration, and much of the public, increasingly appears to take to heart at home but not abroad.
- Current risk management approaches to cultural and political conflicts often assume that adversaries model the world on the basis of rational choices that are equivalent across cultures.
- But our recent work suggests that culturally distinct value frameworks constrain preferences and choices in ways not readily translatable (substitutable) across moral frameworks.
- Planning and acting in ignorance or disregard of different value frameworks may exacerbate conflict, with grievous loss of national treasure and lives.

What **Not** to do about Sacred Values

- Without internet, extreme fragmenting and decentralization of the jihadi movement into a still functioning global network might not be possible.
- So, efforts should foster alternative peer groups for cultural orphans in cities and cyberspace who are as committed and compassionate towards their own members as are terror groups, but in life-enhancing ways and unto others. This means careful monitoring, rather than just taking down, existing jihadi websites. What is needed is subtle infiltration of opportunities to create chat rooms and also physical support groups that advance causes that can play to jihadi sentiments but which are not destructive, like providing faith-based social services.
- Another possibility is to **set up parallel networks** (even sports clubs) that can siphon off action-oriented young adults before a **downward spiral sets in where core meaning in life is sought, and found, in religious networks that sanctify vengeance at any cost against stronger powers, even if it kills the avenger.**

- The key is not to try to undermine sacred values that inspire people to radical action, or attempt to substitute one's own preferred values by force or propaganda: Studies in cognitive and social psychology show that such tactics usually only incite further moral outrage and extreme behavior.
- Rather, the aim should be to show how deeply-held values can be channeled into less belligerent paths. In interviews with mujahedin who have rejected suicide bombing, I find they remain very committed to Salafi principles and their religion remains rock steady and deep. But those who seem to best succeed in convincing their brethren to forsake wanton killing of civilians do so by promoting alternative interpretations of Islamic principles that needn't directly oppose Salafi teachings.
- What else to do? U.S. tsunami relief arguably has been the only significant victory since 9/11 in the struggle to prevent enlistment of future terrorists for jihad (unfortunately, Kashmiri jihadi groups are the primary helpers in Pakistan for recent earthquake victims there). But **don't attach strings to aid** (that only backfires).

Significance of Sacred Values for Radical Action: Necessary but not Sufficient for Action

- The power of faith, stimulated by **sacred values**, imbue people with a sense of **mission**; and **perceived violation of those values** compels them to support **actions against the perceived outrage**.
- Commitment to sacred values is usually **a necessary condition for a jihadi group to commit a terrorist act**, but **need not be necessary each particular individual involved** (friends and family may become active members of the group – at least initially – primarily because they are friends or family, rather than because they share commitment to sacred values and perceptions of violations of those values that call for action).
- But **motivation and intent are not sufficient for a committing a terrorist act** (most people with motivation and intent don't act). The key issue for radicalization unto action is how to get from a group's necessary commitment to the sacred, and desire to act on its behalf, to the actual individuals' that act (as opposed to supporters who share militant values but don't act, or actors who join for kinship or friendship rather than for values).
- Political events (e.g., the Iranian revolution, 9/11, invasion of Iraq) and general conditions that foment revolutionary discontent (denial of civil liberties, dashed expectations, perceived humiliation) are part of the landscape that canalizes (radicalizes) people towards terrorism. But, at the operational level (the one that concerns intelligence, police, dealing with a war on the ground), **far more important are the contingent relationships between the individual actors themselves, and the actual and evolving cliques, cells, bridges and networks these individuals form**.

II. Global Network Terrorism:
Comparative Anatomy and Evolution
An Open-Source, People-Based Approach

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General Hypothesis

- The growth and development of Global Network Terrorism (**GNT**) is largely a decentralized and evolutionary process, based on contingent adaptations to unpredictable events and improbable opportunities, more the result of blind tinkering (of fragmentary connections between semi-autonomous parts) than intelligent design (hierarchical command and control).
- As in any natural evolutionary process, individual variation and environmental context are the creative and critical determinants of future directions and paths.
- To ignore or essentialistically abstract away from variation and context is to entirely miss the character of **GNT** along with better chances for intervention and prevention from the bottom up rather than the top down.

People-Based vs. Incident-Based Databases

- Incident-based databases (e.g., MIPT, GTD, ICT, RAND / START, etc.) provide a wealth of quantitative data for modeling terrorist events that have been recorded, sometimes along with sensational claims for being able to predict and project them as well (e.g., spectral analysis, scale free modeling).
- In fact, all such large-scale databases are incident-based catalogues of terrorist events (telling where such events took place, by whom and with what types of damage).
- They are not very useful for answering such important questions as: Who is a terrorist? How do these people come to commit such violent acts? Who facilitates their actions and supports them? How do terrorists become radicalized? What motivates them? What makes some of them defect?

The Fallacy of Prediction

- Claims for predictive power of incident-based databases usually revolve around analyses of the frequency of regularities in past events to project cyclic patterns of events into the future (e.g., via spectral analysis, the application of which to terrorism has not changed substantially with regard to insights in over 20 years).
- But predictions based on such frequencies may lull us with knowledge of familiar patterns and make us less secure even if they do capture most regularities. This is because relatively rare, low probability events account for the lion's share of the historically important political, social and economic changes brought on by terrorism.
- (Indeed, if there were available means to predict what happened after New York, in Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, Madrid and London, then we should ascribe criminal negligence to authorities).

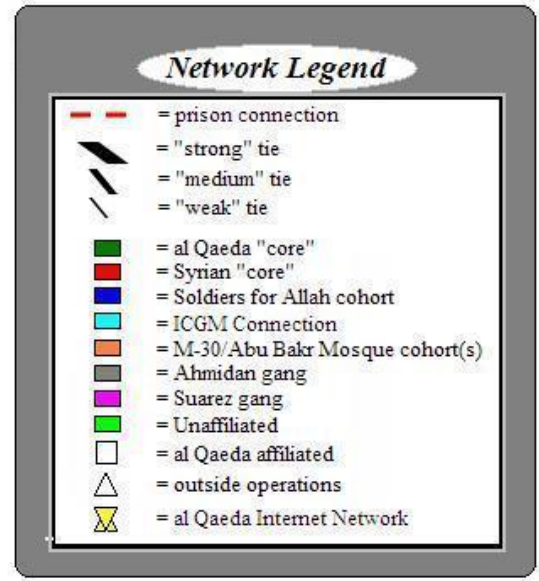
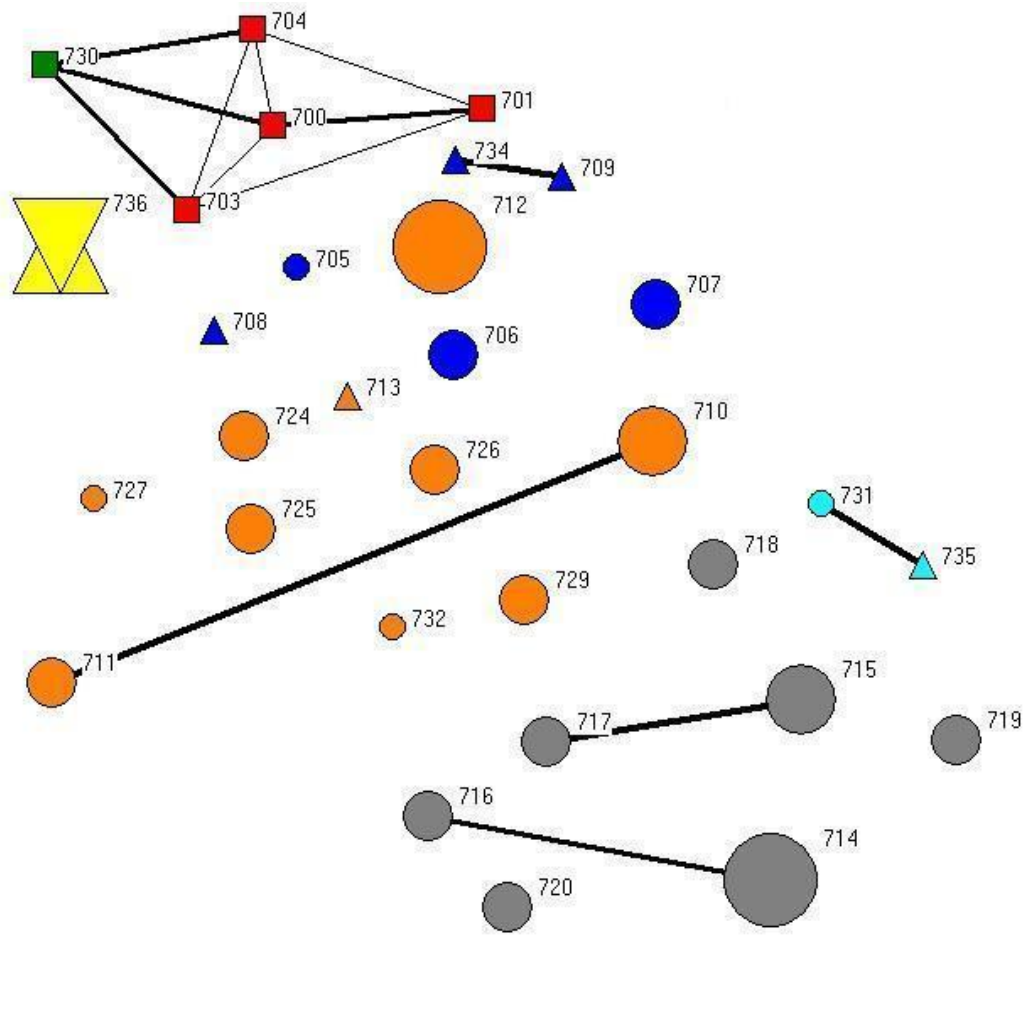
Hypothesis - Leaderless Jihad

- Social network analysis allows us to test the hypothesis that Jihadi groups are moving from a hierarchical organizational model towards a leaderless resistance model.
- Under a leaderless resistance model, small groups engage in resistance or violent activity independently without central coordination. Leadership figures provide inspiration to members and affiliated organizations - however, jihadis engage in terrorist activity without consulting the leadership.

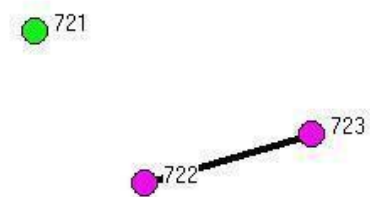
Connecting the Dots: The Madrid Example

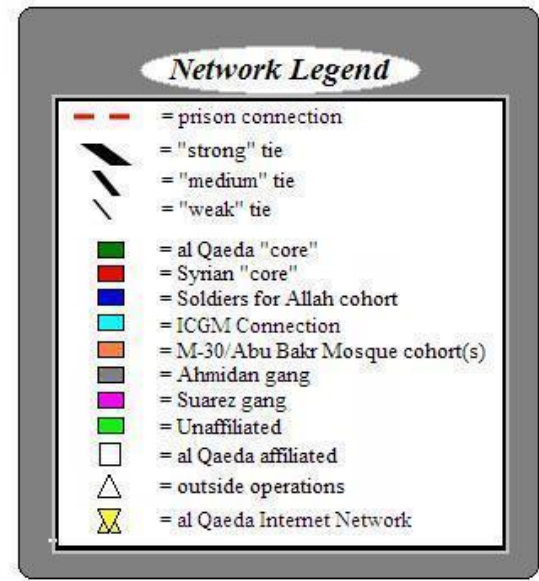
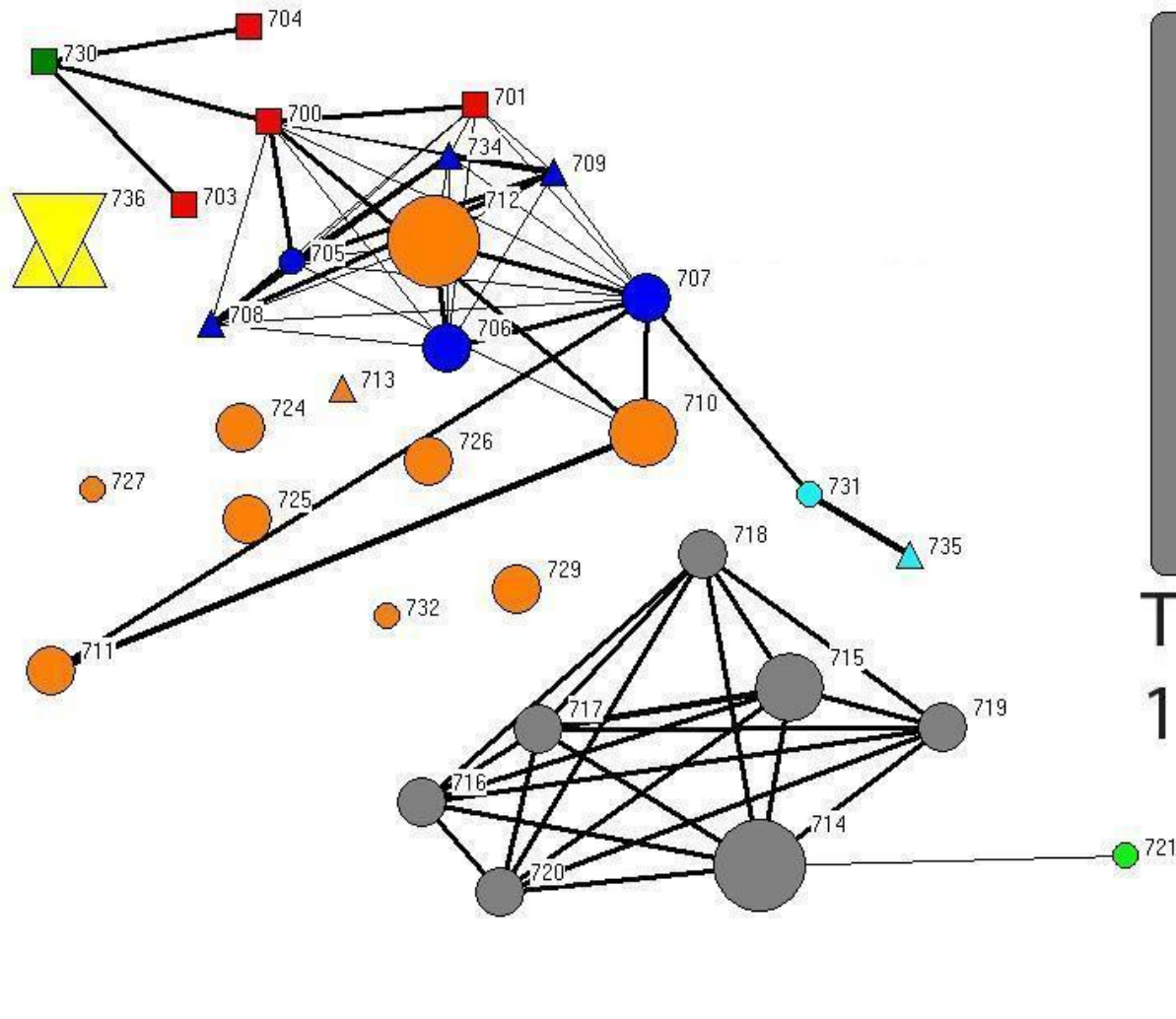
The changing jihadi landscape is revealed in the formation of the cell responsible for the 2004 Madrid train bombings.

As early as October 2002, the substitute imam of the Takoua Mosque in Madrid, was informing Spanish police under the codename “Cartagena” that a band of friends, unhappy with the mosque’s seemingly moderate preachings, had begun calling themselves *Al Haraka Salafiya*, “The Salafi Movement.”

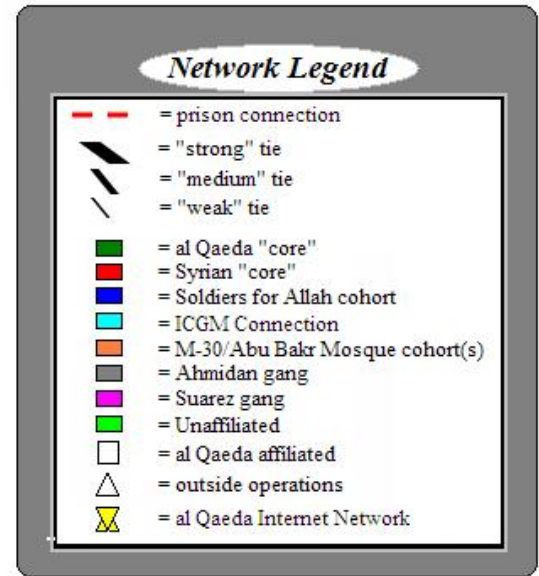
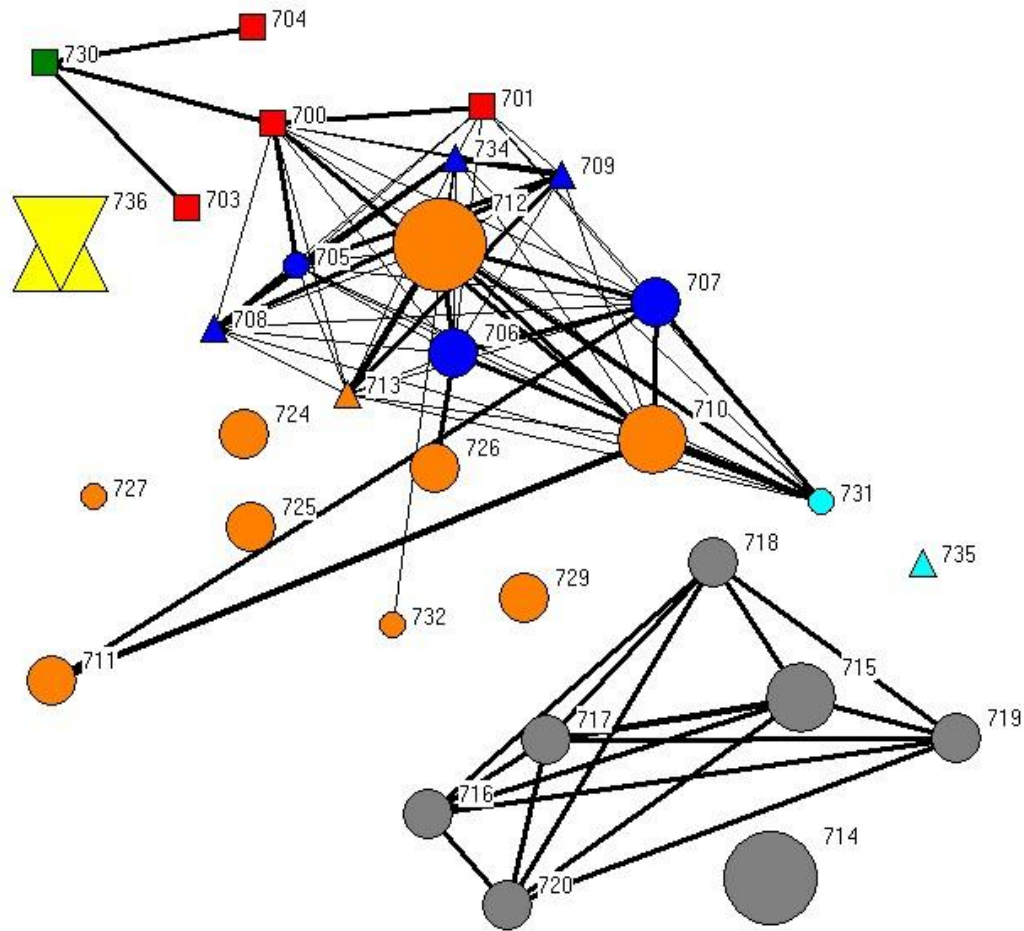


Time Stamp:
1990-1994

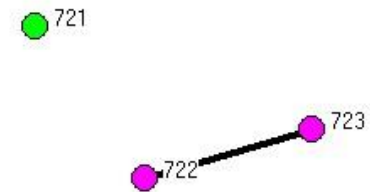


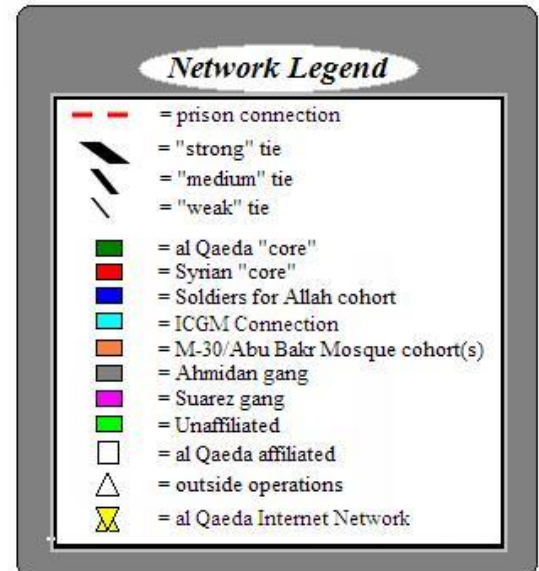
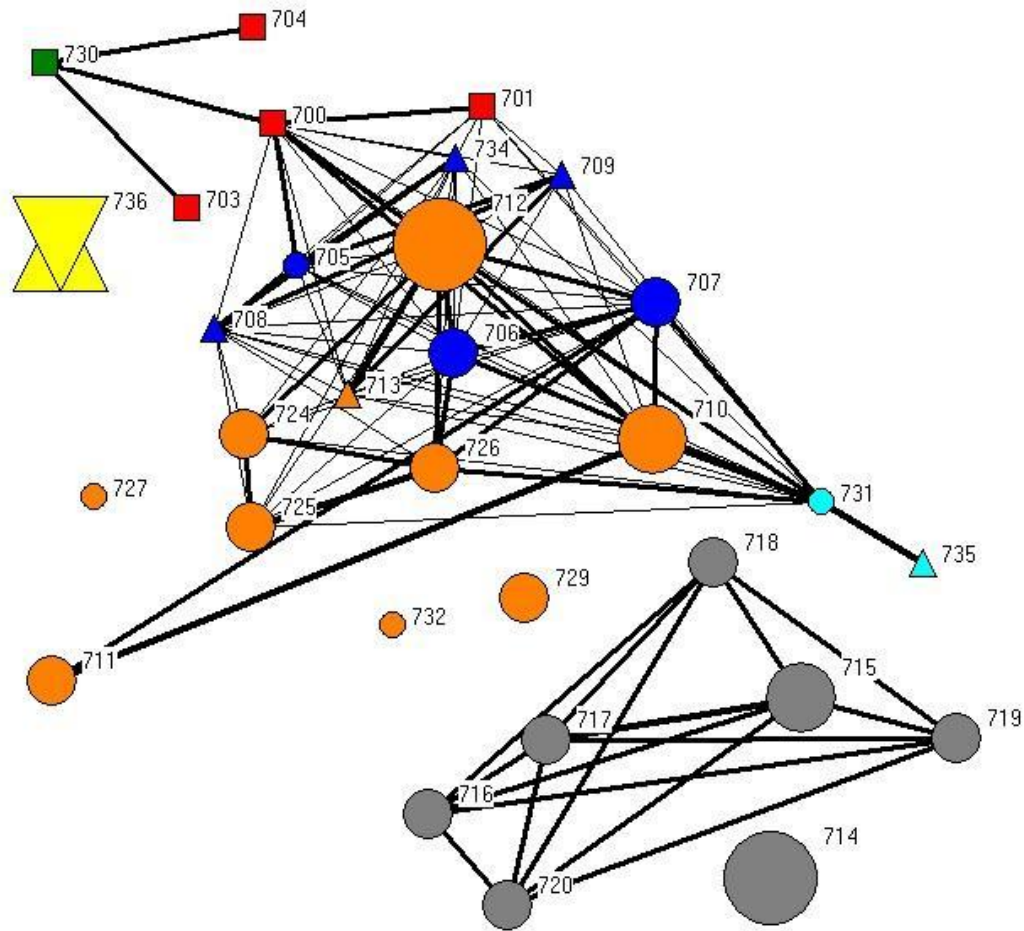


Time Stamp:
1995-1999

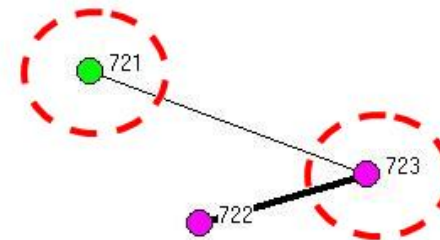


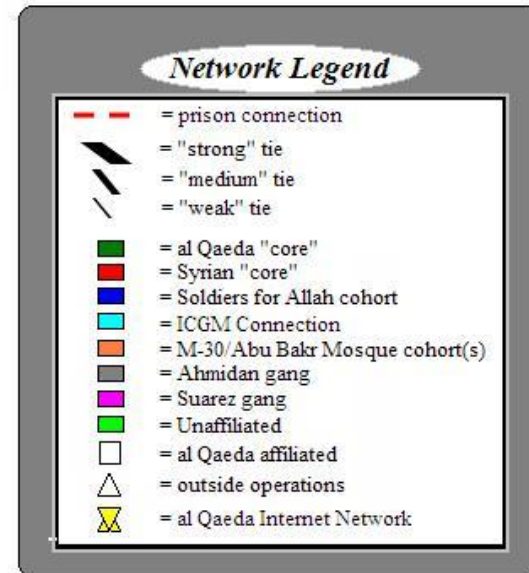
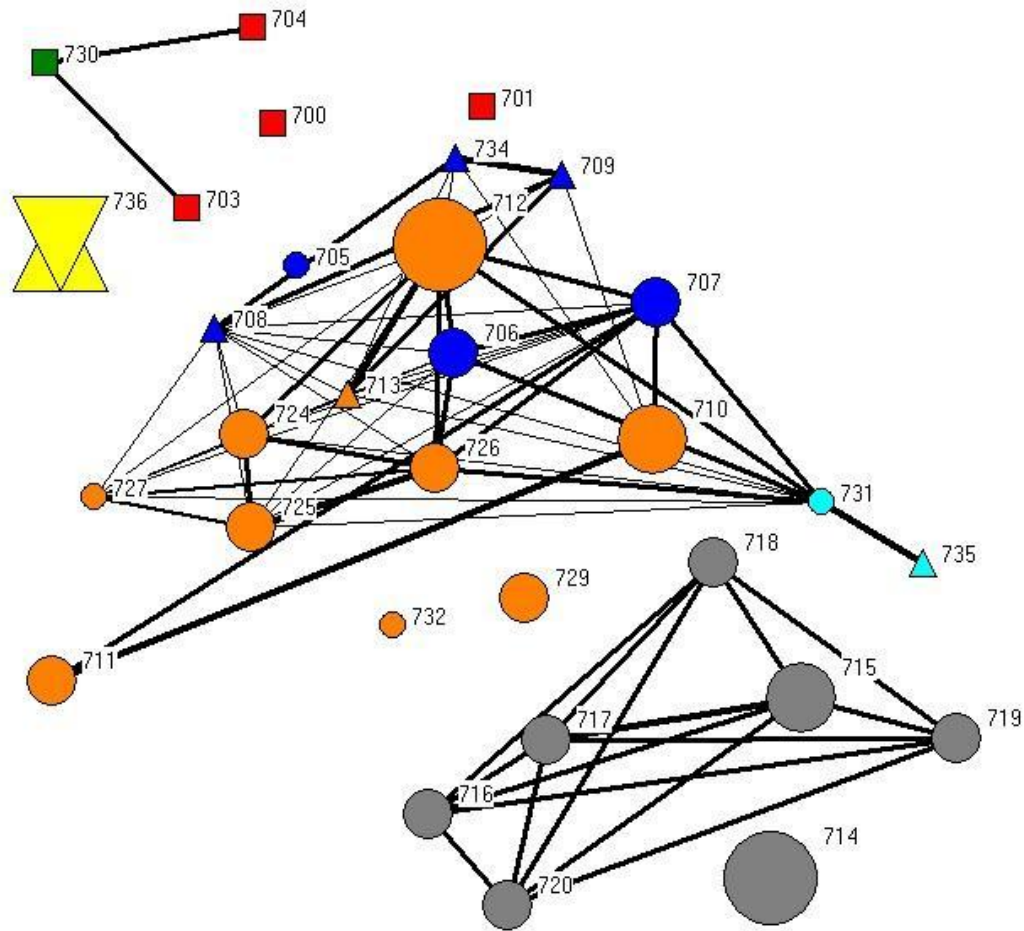
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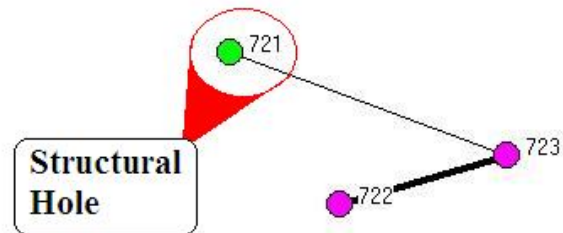


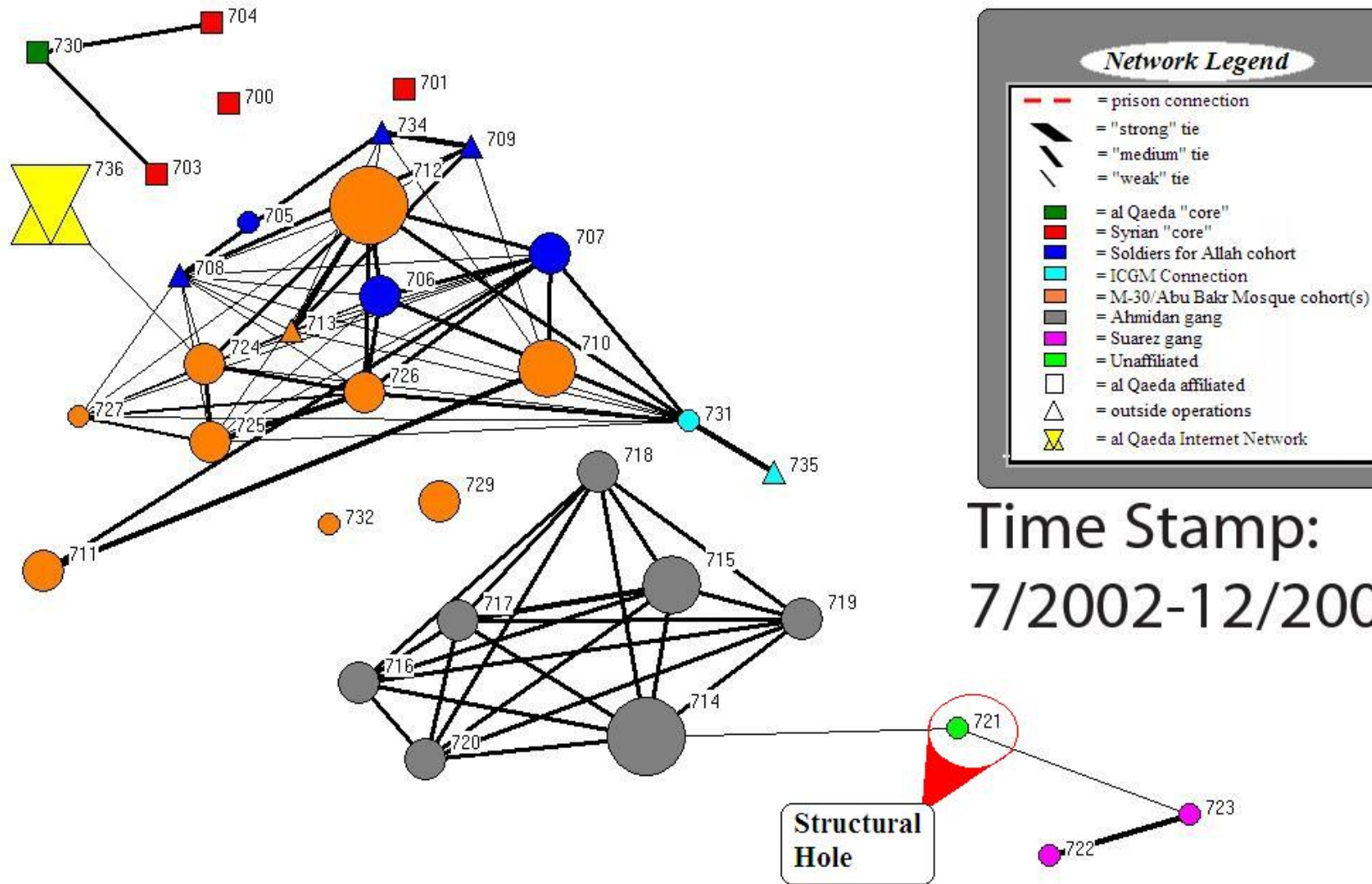
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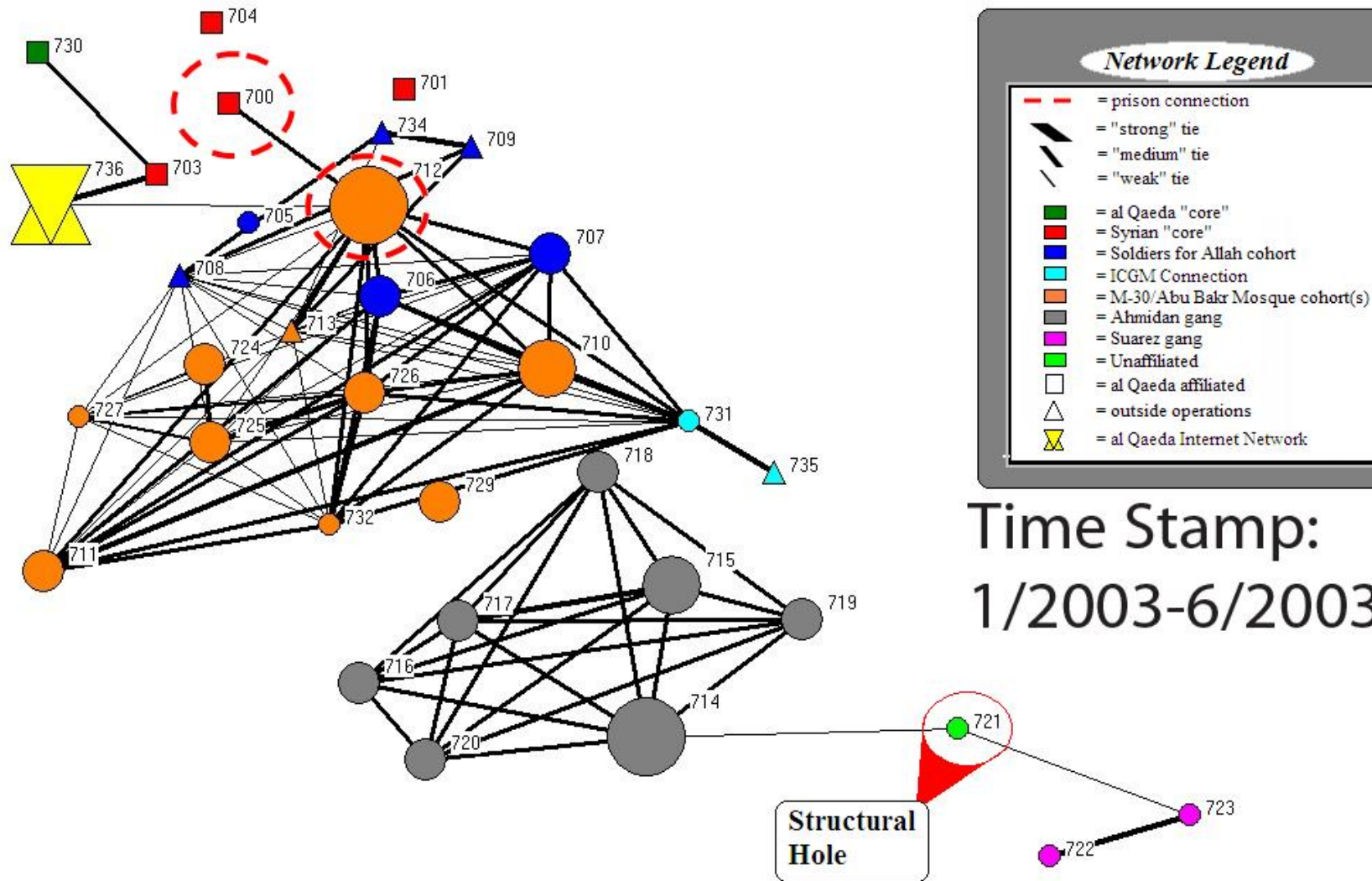


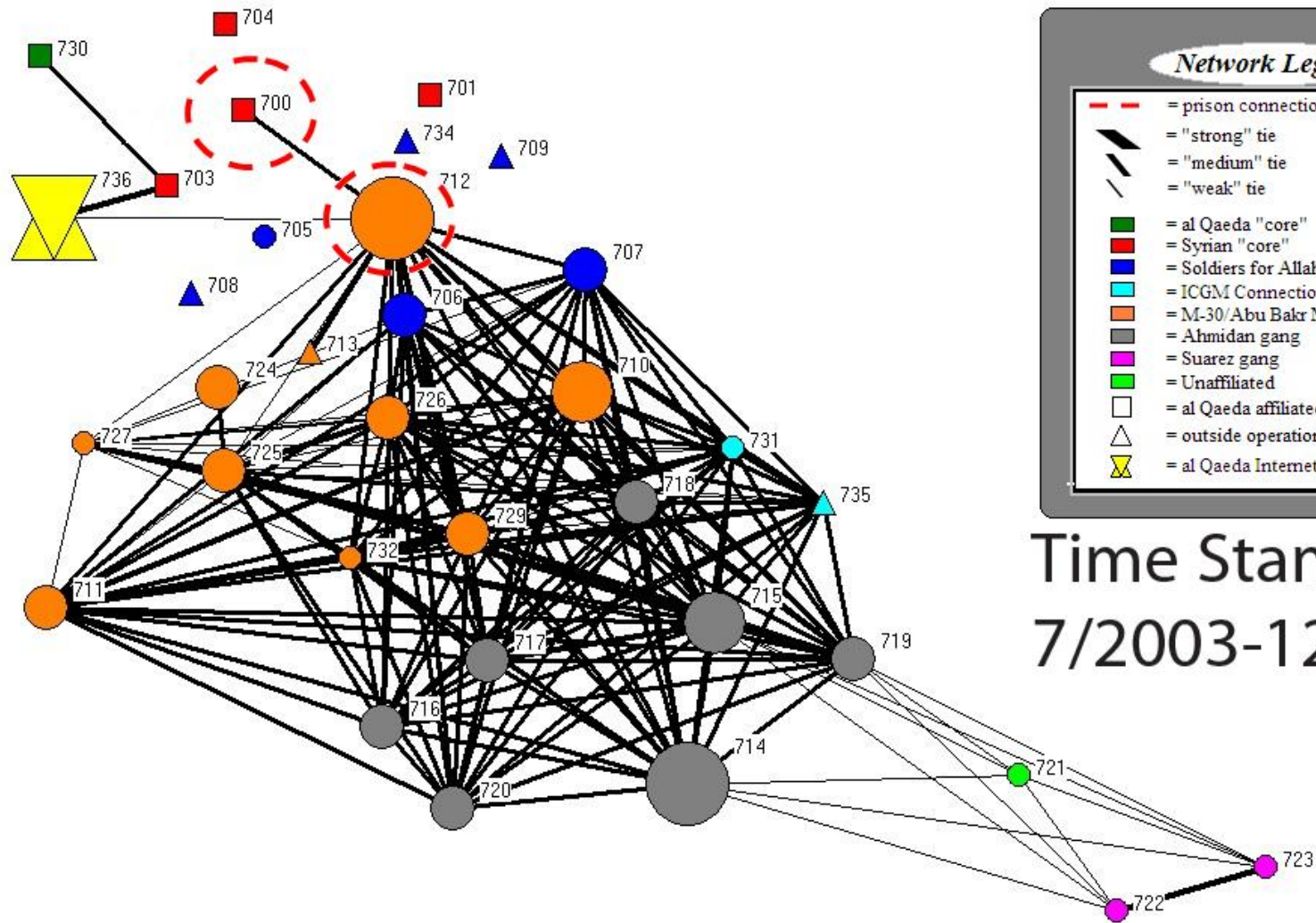


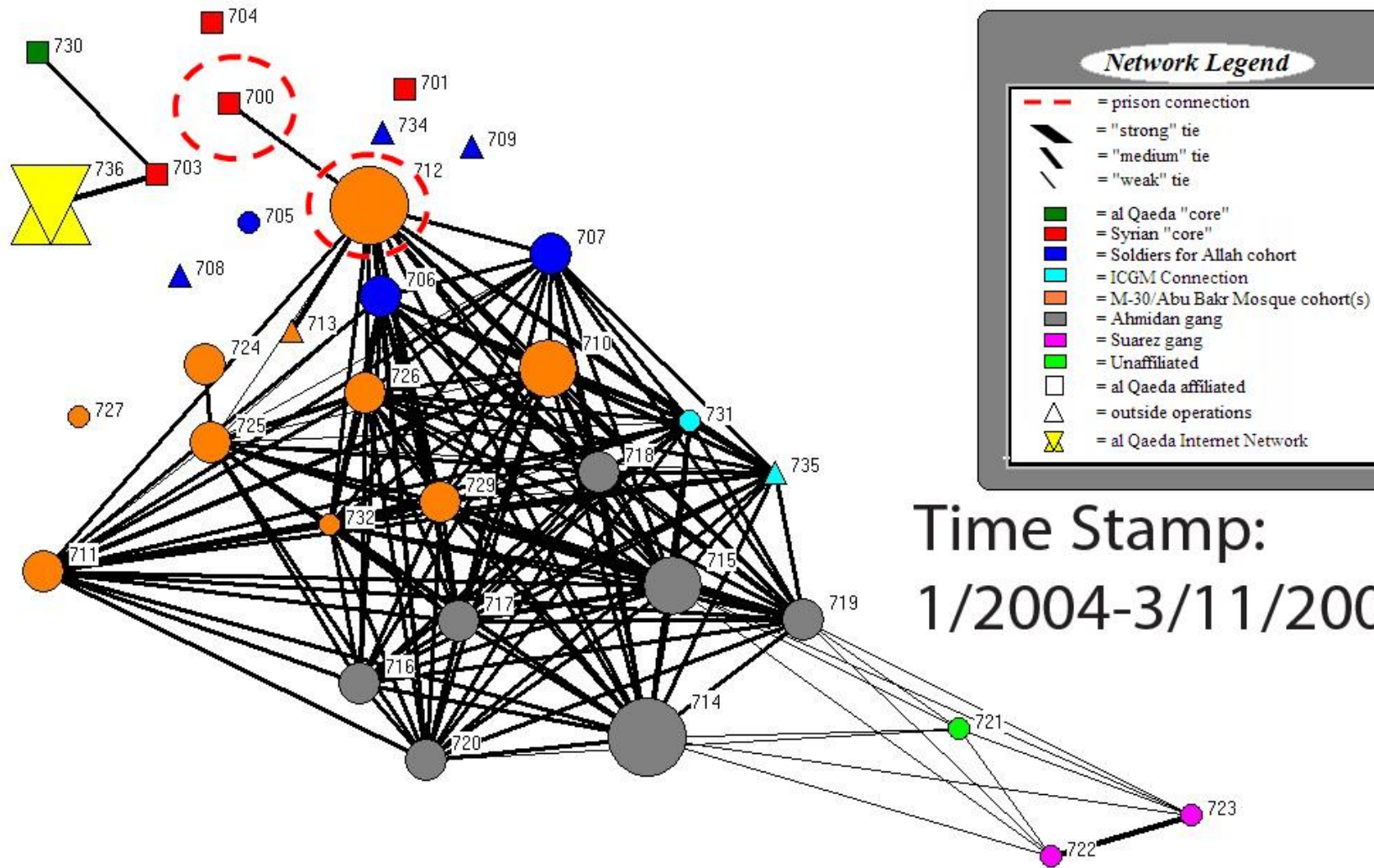
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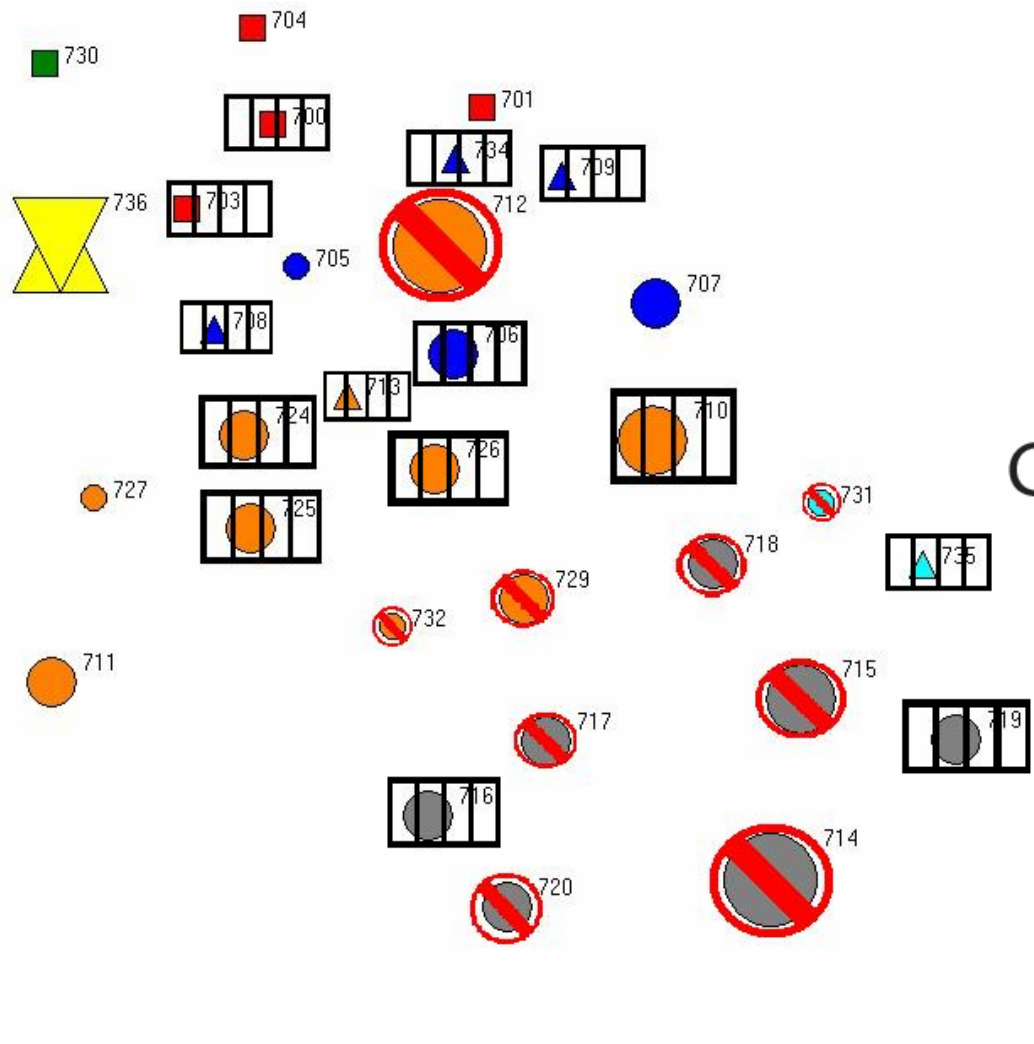












Defunct Network Legend

- = Incarcerated/Jailed & Awaiting Trial
- = Dead

Time Stamp:
Current Status 2006

Some Lessons:

Al Qaeda Classic is the Wrong Model

- Engineering (General Staff) Paradigm:
 - Ideology → strategy → tactics
 - Decision → plan (target analysis) → execution
- “Al Qaeda is patient, plans for years, and is meticulous about details.”
- Astute strategist, backed up by general staff, which carefully crafts battle plans with detailed target analysis to defeat the West.

Al-Qaeda is Dead, Long Live Al-Qaeda: An Overview of Global Jihad Today

- What is emerging is this (**10 empirical generalizations**):
 1. The old Al-Qaeda network has severely fragmented and decentralized; it has not launched a successful attack since Tunisia in 2002.
 2. The mostly Egyptian and Saudi hardcore around Bin Laden really don't know who many of the new terrorists are and can't reliably communicate with them if they did know.
 3. Most *jihadis today live in the diaspora*, joining the jihad outside their country of origin (> **80%**), and are therefore not worried about retaliation against home populations; most had no religious education until they became “born again” in their late teens or early adulthood.

Who Joins Jihad?

4. There is no recruitment per se to jihad, only enlistment. *Most people join the jihad through friendship (about 70%) and kinship (about 20%);* the rest is mostly through schools, but we have been doing research within the schools and find that those have provided suicide bombers (e.g., in Indonesia) less than 10% of the students join the jihad, and of that 10% most do so through kinship (especially senior Jemaah Islamiyah operatives) and friendship.
5. The *preferred cell size* of these “*bands of brothers*” of *fictive kin*, who are as willing to die for one another as a parent for a child or one sibling for another, is *8 members* (that’s about the number of intimate friendship relationships that people across the world tend to develop between 15-30 years old; before then, primary relations are mostly with immediate kin and neighbors, and after, few enduring new relationships tend to form other than with one’s own affines, i.e., family by marriage). Different cells have increasingly *little* physical contact with one another. They are often self-constituting, and self-mobilizing, and then radicalize through the internet (e.g., the Netherlands Hofstad group)

6. Previous formal or informal **membership in action-oriented groups** (soccer or cricket teams, training camps, etc.) may facilitate the passage from radicalization into Jihad and on to joining suicide attack teams (London bombers, Hebron Hamas bombers, JI bombers, Afghan Alumni).

7. Outside of Palestine, **most jihadis are married** (the testosterone theory of jihad should be chucked), and in Palestine anyone who says he wants **to be a martyr to get virgins in Paradise is rejected** by leaders of Hamas or PIJ as being unworthy of sacrifice (same for Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah).

8. **A plurality of suicide bombers have college education** or advanced technical training (except for the Maghreb-European contingent), and are professionals or semi-professionals. The **largest single professional category** represented is **engineer**,⁴² followed by government and security agents (also doctors).

Virtual Jihad: The Internet as Organizer of “Leaderless Resistance”

9. We have begun entering websites into our database and modeling them as agents. We are finding that web agents control resources and information much as did physical agents, like Bin Laden, did before (e.g., the Global Islamic Media Front site is very important today - used by Zarqawi and European jihadis to plan bombings).
10. Although websites are assuming central actor, bridge and hub positions in the network, the network itself is shifting profoundly to an acephalic "leaderless resistance."

See the online musings of Mustafa Setmariam Nasar (aka Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri), the new global jihadi Web "star" and principal theoretician of "leaderless jihad," in *Da'wah lil-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah Al-'Alamiyyah (A Call for the Islamic Global Resistance)*.

- There are important similarities to the 1983 treatise on "Leaderless Resistance," by Louis Beam, former Aryan Nations ambassador and Texas Klu Klux Klan leader, <http://reactor-core.org/leaderless-resistance.html>, and a looping back into the Aryan Nation's new doctrine of "Aryan Jihad," www.aryan-nations.org/about.htm.

Policy Bottom Lines

1. Symbolic concessions can work far better than instrumental bribes or pressures.
2. Prevention is more effective from the bottom up than top down.
3. Don't use missiles and tanks to swat mosquitoes or you may wind up just creating more swamp holes for breeding grounds.